Putnam Has First Deaths

By Chip Rowe

Putnam County has had its first COVID-related deaths, according to data released Wednesday (April 1) by the county, citing the Putnam Hospital Center in Carmel. It is not clear how many county residents have died. The county referred questions about the deaths to the hospital, which said that seven patients had died there of COVID-19, including two on March 31, but declined to provide further details beyond saying that not all seven fatalities were Putnam County residents.

The deaths were first reported on a Community Impact Dashboard that the county updates with the latest numbers related to the pandemic. As of April 1, a section was added with figures provided by the hospital. The chart says the seven deaths were “since March 6,” but the representative said that when the hospital began collecting data, not the date of the first death. She declined to say when the first COVID-19 death had occurred.

Besides the deaths, the hospital noted on April 2 that it has 21 patients confirmed

(Continued on Page 6)

Escape from New York

Rush for COVID-19 relief prompts bidding wars

By Leonard Sparks

A ranch house in Continental Village drew a tsunami of offers.

A $6,000-a-month rental with views of Lake Valhalla was snapped up sight-unseen.

Local real estate brokers say they’ve been scrambling to find houses for purchase or long-term rental for people fleeing the densely packed environment of New York City, which has about one-fifth of the nation’s COVID-19 cases and a fourth of its deaths.

In other cases, city residents under contract to buy houses in the Highlands pressed brokers to complete the purchases so they could move in earlier than scheduled.

About three weeks ago, “we saw something that was unprecedented — all of us in the real estate business were talking about it,” said Bill Hussung, principal broker and owner of Robert A. McCaffrey Realty in Cold Spring, on March 23.

(Continued on Page 9)

Open Space Institute Buys Breakneck Chalet

Nonprofit declines to discuss plans for property

By Brian PJ Cronin

The catering chalet just south of the Breakneck Ridge Tunnel on Route 9D in Philipstown has a new owner.

On March 18, the nonprofit Open Space Institute purchased the property from Inncredible Caterers & Events for $1.875 million, according to Putnam County records. The site was formerly the home of the Breakneck Lodge, which opened in 1935 and operated through the 1990s.

Located just steps from the Breakneck trailhead and the Metro-North train stop, with an unobstructed view of Storm King Mountain across the Hudson River, the building at 3250 Route 9D had been operated for the past 20 years as a banquet hall by Inncredible, which

(Continued on Page 9)

Maloney: Trump Response to Pandemic ‘Frustrating’

Congressman working from home in Philipstown

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

As the COVID-19 threat spread across the Hudson Valley and the nation, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, the Democrat whose district includes the Highlands, traded his House office on Capitol Hill for his house office in Philipstown.

He returned briefly to Washington, D.C., to vote on key legislation but otherwise, with the House in recess, has been working from home, where his daughters, Daley, a 2019 Haldane graduate now at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, and Essie, a Haldane junior, dig into their own assignments after schools closed. Maloney’s husband, Randy Florke, is a real estate broker and also homebound.

(Continued on Page 7)
FIVE QUESTIONS: CARL GAROFOLO JR.

By Michael Turton

Carl Garofolo Jr. is in his 26th year as the host of Hudson Valley Sports-Talk, which airs Sunday at 10 a.m. on WBNR-AM (1260) in Beacon and WLNA-AM (1420) in Peekskill.

How did you break into sports talk radio?

I always had the bug; I've followed sports since I was 4 or 5 years old. I didn't have the stature to be a professional athlete. I wanted to interview people. I did radio at Iona College and about 29 years ago got on the air with WKIP in Poughkeepsie, doing a live weather forecast every half-hour from midnight until 8 a.m. Later I did a Thursday night, live sports talk program on WHVW from a restaurant in Hyde Park. In 1994 I started Hudson Valley Sports-Talk. Tony Navarro and Carl Lindbergh do the show with me now.

Who were your early sports talk heroes?

Art Rust Jr. was one of the first. And Marv Albert, of course, I used to call in to his show. I watched Bill Mazer on Channel 5. I also listened to Marty Glickman on the radio and Howard Cosell on Wide World of Sports.

Would you like to do play-by-play?

I've done some, but it's not my forte. I'm more of a color analyst. I can take a game and break it down: what this team does well, what that team does well; what this team will try to do; how that team will counter. As an 8- or 9-year-old I'd put four or five black-and-white TVs in the living room, each on a different game. My friends would come over. I'd kill the sound and do the color commentary.

What question always spawns a heated debate?

“Who's the greatest player of all time?” But you can't compare eras. Athletes today are bigger, stronger, faster. What made Joe DiMaggio great? You can't measure heart, intestinal fortitude and determination on a stopwatch. Joe Louis in boxing, Mickey Mantle in baseball, Paul Hornung in football—they'd be superstars today because they would find a way. People say Wilt Chamberlain wouldn't be great today because basketball is not a center's game anymore. He would figure it out. The cream of the crop figures it out. One of my complaints about sports museums is they've become watered down with marginal players. When you say Jim Brown, you think Football Hall of Fame. There's no discussion.

What would you change in sports?

The parents and coaches with delusions of grandeur who think their child or player is going to be the next Wayne Gretzky. The reality is less than 1 percent ever get to the top level. People watch a baseball game and say a guy stinks because he hits .250. If they knew what it took to get there they'd never say that. You should always chase your dream. The problem is parents and coaches who get crazed.

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EMAIL

Michele Gedney
ads@highlandscurrent.org

On the Spot

By Michael Turton

What will you look forward to most when things get back to normal?

Being able to enjoy going out in public.

Finally paying teachers their worth; the pandemic's been a crash course in their value to parents.

The many celebrations with friends, and raising a glass to my cousin Richie, who lost his life to this virus.
Two and a half years after buying the property, the owner of the historic 64-acre Tioronda Estate on the outskirts of Beacon is planning an “adaptive reuse” of the campus that, if approved, would transform the former Craig House psychiatric center into an upscale hotel.

The Craig House would be refurbished as a 15-room boutique hotel while an adjacent wing, along with new construction, would add 200 more rooms. Later phases of the project could include a 25,000-square-foot “Nordic spa” (incorporating an existing brick schoolhouse); 40 “treehouse” suites along a ridge on the west side of the property, facing the Hudson River; a conference center; a co-working facility; and a music studio.

The proposal has not been submitted to the Beacon Planning Board, which must approve any construction at the site, but project officials on Monday (March 30) shared the plan with the Beacon City Council, which met by video conference.

“I look at this as almost being part of Main Street,” especially when the greenway is complete, said Bernard Kohn, who led the investment group that paid $5.5 million for the property in 2017.

“This could become a real life of the city. It will bring a tremendous amount of jobs,” said Kohn, who in 2018 also purchased 248 Tioronda, a commercial and residential project just across Fishkill Creek that is awaiting city approval. “It’s going to be something very special.”

The council members mostly seemed impressed by the plan. The council would need to rezone the property, which is limited to residential, for it to proceed.

“This is probably the best solution [for the parcel], as opposed to it being cut up into condominiums,” said Council Member George Mansfield.

The 14,000-square-foot mansion on the property was built in 1859 for Gen. Joseph Howland and his wife, who later donated the estate for the care of the mentally ill. Part of the property was purchased by two doctors who in 1915 opened a psychiatric hospital specializing in addiction treatment, calling it Craig House.

Zelda Fitzgerald, Frances Seymour (the wife of Henry Fonda and mother of Peter and Jane Fonda) and Rosemary Kennedy (the elder sister of President John F. Kennedy) all spent time at the facility.

After purchasing the property, the investors considered residential development, but “we came to the conclusion that hospitality would be a really exciting use for the site,” Alexander Blakely, the project architect, told the council. “We thought this was a great use of the natural terrain.”

As planned, the development will preserve much of the site’s rolling landscape while minimizing its carbon and building footprint, he said.

The two-story “modern wing” of the Craig House — an extension built in 1979 — would include a rooftop lounge, along with the additional hotel rooms, but will need two stories added, Blakely said.

Kohn and Blakely asked the council for feedback but did not indicate when they planned to submit a proposal to the Planning Board.

“If you’re comparing this to housing, housing [creates] no jobs,” observed Mayor Lee Kyriacou. “This is a net benefit.”
**LETTERS AND COMMENTS**

Trail guides

I was disturbed by the mean-spirited responses of some letter-writers to Brian PJ Cronin’s “outing” of a state-owned trail in Philipstown (Letters and Comments, March 27). Concern about outsiders bringing infection from the city is reasonable; rampant NIMBYism is not. These are public lands. Is anyone trying to bar Philipstown residents from Central Park? We need to manage the Route 9D corridor, and hopefully the Fjord Trail and possibly a weekend shuttle from safe parking will do this. But the song doesn’t go, “This land is my land, it isn’t your land.”

Twenty years ago, I moved from Brooklyn to Cold Spring because I fell in love with the trails. Wiccopee Pass is on my map, but I hadn’t noticed it. Thank you, Brian! Do hordes of New York City residents really read The Current? Wow.

Fran Hodes, Cold Spring

People coming here to hike don’t know anything about the closures or warnings to stay away (“Hike, or Stay Home?” March 27). They aren’t in hiking groups or they don’t look up the towns before coming. I’m proud of Beacon residents for staying in and hoping no more visitors increase the risk.

Samantha Jones, via Facebook

I’m surprised that the 2018 survey done by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference found that most hikers at Breakneck are from the “immediate” area, especially on weekends. Are the hikers rescued on Breakneck mostly locals? I would never hike Anthony’s Nose, the Torne, Mount Beacon, Pelton Pond or Breakneck on a busy weekend. The number of cars at those trailheads can’t be mostly locals.

Breakneck has been a problem for years. Too many hikers, too many trains stopping, too many injuries, too much damage to the trails, and too many cars. Its lot should be closed simply because it is a difficult hike. Mount Beacon should be closed because of the stairs — you can’t remain 6 feet apart. There are many hikes in the area that are less traveled. But even during this pandemic, those hikes have only slightly more traffic.

Michelle McCoy, via Facebook

I was disappointed at the tone of many of the letters concerning the trail suggestion by Brian PJ Cronin.

My husband, Terry Weber, is the person who built the benches shown in the photo that accompanied Brian’s column. For the past 15 years, we have been trail maintainers, which includes clearing deadfalls, clearing culverts, picking up trash and weedwhacking. In those 15 years most of the trail damage was caused by motorcyclists, not hikers.

This area is part of Fahnstock State Park. Due to increased use, the master plan for Fahnstock includes new trails. We are delighted to see more use being made of these trails as I started my walk last week, there were seven cars parked at the trailhead mentioned in the article. I passed three or four small groups of hikers or dog walkers, all respectfully keeping their distance. I hope additional folks find our trails to be as charming as we do, so they can avoid the hypercrowded trails in Beacon.

Terry and I continue to monitor the trails and to make improvements. We hope our neighbors from near and far enjoy the outdoors — it is not exclusively for those of us who live on East Mountain.

Dinky Romilly, Cold Spring

What a bunch of nosey, controlling people. I’m not going to stop hiking, and there is not much anyone can do about that. If you’re at risk, stay home, and I’ll stay away from you.

Let people enjoy the outdoors while they are being forced not to work.

Tolon Lijoi, via Facebook

The parks maybe should belong to the locals, but they don’t. I guess locals here never visit New York City. That’s someone’s local.

Ann Hofstedt, via Facebook

—

**Correction & Update**

In a photo by Ross Corsair that appeared in the March 27 issue, a staff member at a drive-thru coronavirus testing station at Dutchess Stadium was identified as a nurse. In fact, she is a member of the lab registration staff who checks to make sure drivers have a doctor’s order and an appointment before they are sent ahead to the nurses for testing. (The registration staff wear pink smocks and the nurses wear blue.) One reader expressed concern that the staff member shown was not wearing her mask correctly; photographs were only taken when the station was closed.

We neglected, in our letter to readers in the March 27 issue, to credit Russ Cusick for his beautiful photograph of the Hudson River.

—
COUNTING THE HIGHLANDS

At right are response rates to the 2020 U.S. census as of April 1, along with historical data. If a household doesn’t respond online, the agency sends a paper questionnaire. If there is still no response, a census taker will be dispatched over the summer to knock on the door, although those operations are now uncertain due to the coronavirus.

GIFT SHOPS AND BOOKSTORES, AS WELL.

I suggest that, in addition to items for our own use, we buy gift cards (if possible, in large amounts) for birthdays and the holiday season. I’m sure shopkeepers would appreciate the cash infusion now, to be redeemed by friends and family later.

Jacqueline Foertsch, Cold Spring

NURSING-HOME VISITS

The state Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is an advocacy program available to anyone residing in a nursing home, adult-care facility or family-type home. It advocates for residents to address their quality-of-life and quality-of-care issues, along with their rights. In Putnam, Rockland and Westchester counties, the program is sponsored by the Long Term Care Community Coalition.

At this time, when visitation to facilities has been restricted, we would like families and residents to know that the program must abide by state and federal health guidelines that do not allow for in-person visits. However, we can receive calls and emails with any concerns or questions about care. Call 855-582-6790 or email judy@ltccc.org.

As you can imagine, residents are in much need of an advocacy program during this unprecedented time. We will be scheduling our next training session when social distancing protocols are lifted and will be looking for volunteers to become ombudsmen and help us advocate on behalf of our long-term care residents.

Judy Farrell, Philipstown

Farrell is the regional program coordinator of the Long Term Care Community Coalition.

REAL ESTATE

I read with great disappointment the plea by a Beacon real estate agent to “help” New York City residents who wish to escape a lockdown by coming to the Hudson Valley (Letters and Comments, March 27). What part of “stay home and save lives” is not connecting? What of the thousands of people who have already died and who may potentially die and the only sure potential weapon we have is to self-isolate? We are not asking them or us to self-isolate or shut down our business for months or years. It’s for 30 or 60 days.

I know it’s a long time. I’ve just been furloughed from my job for at least 60 days, so I know it’s not easy. And I’m caring for my grandson whose college had to shut down. But take heart, this won’t last forever. Think how much better everyone will be, and hopefully what we will learn from this.

I grew up and worked in New York City and love it as much as anyone. But as an older person with medical issues, I am extremely grateful to our governor for his strong positions and for all he’s doing for our great state to try to keep us as safe as possible. I believe all of us need to do our part, particularly for those at most risk.

Stacey Gibson, Garrison

GIFTCARD SUPPORT

When our beloved businesses on the Main Streets of Beacon and Cold Spring are open again, I hope residents will show their support with an outpouring of shopping in all stores—not just restaurants but gift shops and bookstores, as well.

Kacie Grossman, via Facebook

Still Stuck

Last week we reported on the Timmer family of Garrison, who are stranded in Puerto Natales, Chile, because of the coronavirus pandemic. “Stuck in Patagonia,” March 27. We asked Neil Timmer on Wednesday (April 1) for an update.

“The most recent numbers suggest that there are 63 cases of COVID-19 in the Magellanes region, with the majority (53) in Punta Arenas, which is going on full lockdown today. Punta Arenas is the city we would have to fly out of to reach Santiago to fly out of the country.

“In Puerto Natales, there are armed guards on the street to enforce a curfew from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. We are seeing more people walking around wearing masks. From its website, it appears LATAM [the Chilean national airline] is running flights to the U.S., at least to Miami, but they end up getting canceled at the last minute because I don’t think anyone is on them.

“So, it appears we are here for a while. We are mostly staying in the house, working on schoolwork and trying to get out for the occasional hike or walk, much like we would be doing at home.”

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LETTERS AND COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 4)

Other countries have stay orders specifying that outdoor activity be within 2 kilometers of your home. I think that makes sense.

Kacie Grossman, via Facebook

We have found the situation with parking at the trailheads in Philipstown to be a risk to public health. The governor has issued executive orders to mandate social distancing. In an effort to support those executive orders, the Town of Philipstown has issued a state of emergency. Along with this, I have called for a ban on parking at trailheads in Philipstown to prevent gathering of large groups.

This plan has been approved by the state Department of Health. Anyone who was out and about on March 20 and 21 saw hundreds of people gathering at trailheads as if nothing were happening. This was in complete disregard for all of our safety.

The local law does not intend to prevent people from entering the forest. It does seek to prevent people from gathering in large groups. All people need to start taking it seriously or the consequence will be the overwhelming of our health care system. This will only end with all of us taking the action of being a hero and staying home.

This will only end with all of us taking the action of being a hero and staying home.

Richard Shea, Philipstown

Shea is the Philipstown supervisor.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS

It shocks me that this is a concern of the Village Board (“Cold Spring Wants Short-Term Rentals Shut Down,” March 27). I grew by St. Mary’s Church in Cold Spring yesterday and there were at least 100 people congregating at the Farmers’ Market. That deserves the “Really?” of the week.

Michael Post, via Facebook

Really? Is this what we have become? It’s fine to have visitors come at other times and spend their money. We are all New Yorkers: north, south, east, middle and west!

Maryjane MacNair, via Facebook

The members of the Village Board should go to the Airbnb site and submit a complaint. That is their responsibility — it has always been — not to have townsfolk policing our neighbors. If there are short-term renters, that’s one thing, but family and friends and second homeowners aren’t welcome?

Things are tense, but the general existing hostility to short-term renting doesn’t become more relevant now. The Village Board has had the option to go to Airbnb to locate those who aren’t following the code.

Irene Pieza, via Facebook

I’m guessing government officials need to be more clear: When they ask you to stay home, they mean your home, not someone else’s.

Eileen Anderson, via Facebook

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RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL

LANDSCAPE & HARDSCAPE

DESIGN & INSTALLATION
Coronavirus Update
(from Page 1)

to have COVID and another seven awaiting test results. In a statement issued with the dashboard that first revealed the deaths, Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell said it would provide “complete local data about the epidemic,” adding, “now that Putnam Hospital is sharing its information with the county, we will also be able to include hospital admissions and more. We want the public to have as complete a picture as possible of the local impact of the coronavirus epidemic.”

- Dutchess County reported seven deaths in the past week related to COVID-19, raising its total to nine. A 61-year-old man died on Sunday (March 29) at Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie “after being admitted for an unrelated condition and tested positive for COVID-19, which was confirmed positive,” the health department said. A second man, 52, died Tuesday (March 31) at Vassar Brothers after being admitted with shortness of breath, and on Wednesday (April 1), a 68-year-old woman with underlying health issues died at her home. On April 2, the county confirmed four fatalities including a 28-year-old male.

- Dashboards released by Dutchess and Putnam showed that, as of April 2, Beacon had 44 confirmed cases and Philipstown had 19. The Dutchess dashboard also has data on testing, hospitalizations, deaths and recoveries, and call volume. See dutchessny.gov/coronavirus and putnam-countyny.com/covid19.

- State health officials said that, as of Thursday (April 2), 226 people have tested positive for the coronavirus in Putnam County. 667 in Dutchess, 11,567 in Westchester, 3,751 in Rockland, 240 in Ulster and 1,993 in Orange. Statewide, there were 92,381 positives, including 51,809 in New York City.

- On April 2, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, who districts the Highlands, announced that Dutchess County will receive $856,000 in emergency funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. In addition, Newburgh will receive $514,000.

- Philipstown Supervisor Richard Shea said on April 2 that the state parks department has opposed two executive orders he sent to the state Department of Health for approval to restrict parking near state-owned trailheads. He said the health department is required to respond to him within 24 hours and, when he had not received an answer to his March 27 request, “we made inquiries. That is when we were told that NYS Parks had written to them advising them that they were not in favor of the actions that the Town of Philipstown was trying to take to limit parking,” Shea wrote in an email. “We are not saying to close the parks. We are asking to temporarily limit parking. I’m not holding out a lot of hope at this point.”

- Shea and other five town supervisors in Putnam wrote to state and federal officials on April 2 to complain that the county health department “is not being given the same considerations” as larger health departments in the area, noting that, per capita, Putnam has more positive tests than all but three other counties in the state. The supervisors reported that after exhausting its specimen collection tubes and swabs at a drive-thru testing event on March 21, the county health department has not been able to secure more supplies and suspended testing.

- The Putnam County health commissioner issued an order directing anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 to go into isolation or face a fine of up to $2,000 per violation per day. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring their children comply with the order or face the same fines, he said.

- The Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley on March 31 announced a new charitable fund, Putnam Covid Response (putnamcovidresponse.org), to raise money to provide “immediate critical resources to nonprofit agencies meeting the basic needs of residents.” Last week, the group created a similar fund, Dutchess Responds (communityfoundationshv.org/DutchessResponds), as well as one for Ulster County.

- The federal government on March 30 announced that automatic distribution of economic-impact payments will begin in the next three weeks to everyone who filed a tax return in 2018 or 2019. Filers with adjusted gross income up to $75,000 for individuals and up to $150,000 for married couples filing joint returns will receive the full payment of $1,200 per adult. For filers with higher incomes, the amount is reduced by $5 for each $100 above the threshold. Single filers with income of more than $99,000 and joint filers who earned more than $198,000 and have no children will not receive payments. Parents will also receive $500 for each dependent child. See irs.gov/coronavirus.

- Because of social distancing restrictions, funeral homes across the state have restricted the number of mourners at services. In obituaries, many families are noting that a memorial will be held at an unspecified later date. At Libby Funeral Home in Beacon, only spouses and children of the deceased are allowed to attend, with others watching through a live video feed. “Trying to serve families virtually is not what we set out to accomplish,” said Matthew Florillo, who owns Libby and said he has handled arrangements for several COVID-19 victims. “Nearly 2,500 people in New York state have died.” In Cold Spring, at the Clinton Funeral Home, families are opting for “simple services — no viewing,” said Anthony Calabrese, its manager and funeral director. “Everybody understands what’s going on.” Cemeteries also are limiting graveside services to 10 people and requiring that mourners stand at least 6 feet apart, and the Archdiocese of New York on March 26 banned funeral Masses.

The town supervisors in Putnam reported that after exhausting its specimen collection tubes and swabs at a drive-thru testing event on March 21, the county health department has not been able to secure more supplies and suspended testing.
County and Police Reach Contract Agreement

Deputies will receive annual raise of 2.5 percent

By Holly Crocco

A
fter three years of negotiations, the Putnam County Legislature will this month vote on a new five-year contract with the union that represents its sheriff's deputies.

The three legislators who serve on the Personnel Committee voted unanimously on March 30 to send the proposed agreement to the full Legislature, which is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, April 7.

The contract, which would be effective from Jan. 1, 2017 (when the previous contract expired), through Dec. 31, 2022, includes an annual base salary increase of 2.5 percent.

“This has been a very long and arduous process, and there certainly have been some bumps in the road along the way, with many proposals and counterproposals exchanged,” said Legislator Ginny Nacerino (R-Patterson), who chairs the committee.

“I believe this is a very fair contract with improved operational efficiencies in place and equitable benefits.”

During the committee meeting, which was held via audio webcast because of social-distancing regulations, Nacerino explained that County Executive MaryEllen Odell, Sheriff Robert Langley Jr., County Attorney Jennifer Bumgarner and union President Daniel Hunsberger executed an agreement on March 31 that outlined specific changes to the previous contract.

“Our Putnam County Sheriff’s Department is taking a big sigh of relief right now because they can take care of their families, and I'm happy to be part of taking care of them so that they can take care of us,” said Legislator Nancy Montgomery (D-Phillipston), who is on the committee.

Sheriff Paul Jonke (D-Brewster), the third committee member, said the proposal also has no “hidden increases,” such as combining clothing allowances with salaries; changes shift scheduling in a way that should reduce overtime spending; and firms up a drug and alcohol testing policy.

It would cost the county an additional $865,090 this year and $886,717 next year.

Tonight’s passage is significant and comes at a crucial time, especially with the COVID-19 outbreak looming and the enormous effort it has had on our health, safety and welfare,” Nacerino said. The members of the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) are “at the front line,” she said.

Jonke said he supported the agreement but expressed frustration at the lengthy negotiations.

“It could have been a matter of weeks or months to agree upon the contract that we’re moving forward with,” he said.

“The leadership of the PBA harassed this body; I was personally attacked — I was personally followed by police officers,” Jonke charged. “I find it very difficult to believe that it took three years and the amount of intimidation that was attempted to get to this point. I'm a little disgusted, but this is a win for the county!”

He later clarified that his comments were not directed at the “rank-and-file” members of the union but at its leaders and their tactics, “which were below what we expect when it comes to law enforcement.

“I have great respect for our sheriff's deputies,” said Jonke. “They do hard work; they do difficult work — it’s work I would never want to do. God bless them.”

Hunsberger did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

Legislator Neal Sullivan (R-Mahopac) also spoke of “missteps by certain people and not of the Legislature or the administration” in trying to reach an agreement.

“If, at the beginning of the process, people were levelheaded and would have been willing to work with us and the administration, we could have got here a long time ago,” he said. “But instead, people choose a very different and bumpy road that caused a lot of unnecessary friction.”

Nacerino replied that, while there has been a bit of “strife,” the county and the union should focus on the future.

“We're all in a better place,” she said.

With the coronavirus outbreak we understand a little better and a little clearer what the big picture is versus pettiness or remarks that were not called for.”

Other legislators also voiced support for ratifying the contract.

Legislator Joseph Castellano (R-SouthEast) said that any time there are union negotiations, there must be give-and-take by both sides, but “everybody came to a reasonable conclusion,” he said.

“It’s good to see a good and fair contract in front of us that we're able to vote on,” added Legislator Amy Sayegh (R-Mahopac Falls).

“I know that since I've been on the Legislature (in 2018), that is something I have never seen.”

Maloney (from Page 1)

The Current spoke with Maloney by phone on Wednesday (April 1).

President Trump has avoided calling a nationwide quarantine. He also has been reluctant to use the Defense Production Act to compel industries to manufacture ventilators and other equipment. What, if anything, can Congress do?

If you’re asking whether the 435 members of the House and 100 members of the Senate can become the president of the U.S. because Donald Trump isn’t using the tools he’s been given, the answer is, “No, we can’t.” He isn’t using the authority he already has. The Defense Production Act is the most glaring example. The question is, why? The delay is inexusable and the consequences are horrific, when you listen to governors having to compete with one another, bidding up the price of ventilators and personal protective equipment, for no reason. There should be a centralized, coordinated, forceful presidential command and control structure. It’s frustrating. What’s missing is leadership.

So what about Congress?

Congress needs to fund this effort and we have done so — more than $82 trillion of critically needed relief measures, with billions of research and technical funding for testing and vaccine production and all the things necessary to combat the virus. That funding and those measures need to be implemented by the president. Help is on the way, with a scope and level greater than anything in American history. Yet there are more things Congress needs to do, particularly in economic recovery.

When the threat ends, will Congress investigate the White House's response to the pandemic?

Absolutely. There should be a bipartisan, independent commission that looks at all aspects of the pandemic and our response, to learn, and to demand accountability, so we are never in this position again.

If one of the committees you sit on holds hearings, what question would you most want to ask a White House official?

Several areas cry out for answers. First: How have we failed so spectacularly to have a national testing system in time to do some good? What changes do we need to make to fix that? And why did we not work with the Chinese and South Koreans to share data? We had weeks and weeks of lead time, to get organized, that we squandered. I want to know why that responsibility wasn’t better handled.

Health officials have been attacked online for their statements about COVID-19. Do you think the Russians could be behind some of it, creating fake social media accounts to disseminate disinformation?

We are absolutely concerned about malign foreign influence on social media. We’ve seen it as an issue for the last four years, at least. I haven’t seen any evidence that they are trying to spread COVID disinformation or to divide us, but it wouldn’t surprise me. It would be completely in line with the Russian playbook.

Where are you these days?

I’m in Cold Spring. My kids haven’t left our property, except to go for a walk, for the last two weeks, since school got out. We are playing by the rules, the Centers for Disease Control guidelines [on staying home and practicing social distancing outdoors]. We’re taking this very seriously. We’re doing fine. I have to give my kids credit. They’re still doing their homework. They have a positive attitude. They’ve been helping out around the house. We’ve been getting a lot of projects done. And I’ve been able to focus as I need to.

What else would you say to the public?

It’s not going to be over in a couple of weeks. All of us, doing a little, will ultimately mean more than a few people doing a lot. The only silver lining is that we have support one another and work together because we are all affected. We have an opportunity to rediscover the power in our common humanity and common vulnerability and reconnect ourselves to building a better community where we are more supportive of one another and more committed to the things that really matter in this life. Hopefully, that small bit of good can come out of this whole terrible thing.
Coronavirus Update
(from Page 6)
York City in a study of the psychological impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The researchers are looking for volunteers to complete an anonymous online survey that takes 20 to 30 minutes. Given the likelihood of future pandemics, Prout said the study “will help us identify those who are at greater risk, inform public health policy and design interventions that are cost-effective and provide relief.” The Yeshiva researchers are collaborating with a psychologist at the University of Pisa, where the project began during the first week of the Italian government’s lockdown. See bit.ly/covid-study.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on March 27 ordered all schools to remain closed until at least April 15. He also ordered districts to continue remote learning through spring break. The Haldane and Beacon districts had scheduled their recesses for April 6 to 13, and Garrison for April 6 to 10. “I know that many of our families were looking forward to a break from school next week, but we have a civic and social responsibility to follow the governor’s order,” wrote Haldane Superintendent Philip Benenate in a note to parents.

Cuomo on March 27 ordered all “nonessential” construction to shut down. Essential projects include roads, bridges, transit facilities, utilities, hospitals or health care facilities, affordable housing and homeless shelters.

The deadline to upgrade driver’s licenses to Real ID, which will be required as identification to board domestic flights, was extended from Oct. 1, 2020, to Oct. 1, 2021.

Two officers at the Dutchess County Jail tested positive for COVID-19, a jail administrator told the Poughkeepsie Journal. In addition, 31 inmates were in quarantine as of Sunday (March 29). No inmates have been tested, he said.

Veggie Go-Go, which is owned by Lynn and Greg Miller of Cold Spring, is raising funds to provide meals to health care workers and homeless shelters. Every $500 donated will trigger an order for 25 individually packaged meals, valued at $20 each, being sent to a participating restaurant. The families of workers at medical centers and testing sites. See gofundme.com/1/feed-the-front.

Elections scheduled for April 28, including village elections and the presidential primary, were moved to June 23, the same day as congressional and legislative primaries.

Central Hudson has said it will not suspend service for customers who are unable to pay their bills. Contact the utility through cenhus.com or by calling 945-452-2700. Central Hudson also donated $25,000 to Dutchess Responds and $20,000 to the Hudson Valley Food Bank.

The Garrison School PTA launched a campaign to raise money to provide food for residents who are impacted by economic concerns. Donate at paypal.me/gupspta. The school nurse will coordinate safe distribution of food and gift cards.

Beacon Mayor Lee Krystacou said that while city parks remain open, “outdoor gatherings are extremely restricted” and that the city would enforce the rule. Residents who see a problem should call the police because complaining on social media is “ineffective at correcting behavior,” he said.

Republican Gregg Pulver, the chair of the Dutchess County Legislature, canceled its April meeting, citing an order from the county executive to limit gatherings to 20 people. In a letter sent to Pulver in response, eight Democratic members (including Nick Page and Prits Zernike, whose districts each include part of Beacon) said he should instead arrange to hold the meeting by videoconference or phone. Pulver replied that changing the date of a meeting or its location would require a resolution by the Legislature, and that a meeting held by phone would need to be an “emergency meeting,” not a routine one.

The SallyAnder shop in Beacon had begun manufacturing 1,000 soap bars per day in preparation for the busy spring season, said owner Sallie Austin Gonzales. After the shutdown, she began donating the soap — 2,500 bars so far — to Beacon and Newburgh schools for free distribution. Along with access to food and medication, she thought, what do people need now more than soap? “We have a lot of soap; it’s ready to go; it’s fresh,” she said. “This is where we live and work. This isn’t the time to profit; it’s time to help each other.”

Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell said on March 27 that the county-owned golf course in Mahopac will remain open, with social-distancing restrictions. In addition, all “nonessential touch points,” such as hole pins, water coolers, ball washers and bunker rakes, will be removed, carts will be limited to one rider, and only reservations will be accepted.

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Reform Law Spurs New Hires at Dutchess D.A.

Office says it’s diverting cases to handle workload

By Leonard Sparks

T he Dutchess County District Attorney’s Office said it needs $650,000 to spend on new hires and is triaging cases to meet the demands of a 3-month-old law requiring prosecutors to more quickly turn over evidence to defendants.

County legislators last month unanimously approved using contingency funds to hire three assistant district attorneys, an investigator, two assistants and a confidential secretary to comply with revised rules for discovery, the process during which prosecutors share evidence with suspects and their attorneys.

The rules, which took effect Jan. 1 as part of a package of new laws that also eliminated bail for relatively minor crimes, gives district attorneys 15 days after an arraignment to turn over evidence. It also expanded the list of materials that must be automatically shared, including police body-camera footage and grand jury testimony.

Through February, Dutchess County prosecutors had sent 774 requests to law enforcement agencies for material covered by the law, said Chief Assistant District Attorney Matthew Weishaupt.

He said the district attorney received 60,985 files that needed to be examined, including body-camera footage and files that may require redactions.

Weishaupt pointed to an arrest in which five officers with body cameras each recorded five hours of footage. Reviewing the footage “amounts to about 60 hours’ worth of work,” he said.

“It’s been a tremendous challenge and a tremendous burden — not just to us but to every district attorney’s office and law enforcement agency in the state,” Weishaupt said.

In Putnam County, District Attorney Robert Tendy has criticized the new rules, saying they place a similar burden on his prosecutors. Tendy said he used a grant obtained by state Sen. Pete Harckham, whose district includes eastern Putnam, to upgrade his office’s computer system and “we are beginning the discussion with the Legislature regarding staffing and compensation in our office, issues that absolutely must be addressed.”

Under the law, prosecutors can ask a court for a 30-day extension. Before the reforms went into effect, prosecutors only had to share what they had sometime before the trial began, and defense attorneys had to make a written request. The new law includes “automatic” discovery, which requires prosecutors to share what they have without prompting.

Weishaupt said Dutchess prosecutors have set up a process to identify cases that can be disposed of through “diversion” — such as adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, treatment or community service — so they can focus on the most serious offenses. The diverted cases tend to be for low-level misdemeanors like petit larceny and seventh-degree drug possession, he said.

(Continued on Page 22)
PROPER SPACING — While visiting her son in Mahopac on March 27, Kay Corkrum of Garrison came across these neighbors having a chat, while Kyle Good spotted three vehicles (right) practicing social distancing on Indian Brook Road near Constitution Marsh in Garrison.

TAKE A GANDER — Holly Mentzer of Main Street in Nelsonville decorated her “lawn geese” (hunting decoys) in tribute to health care personnel working on the front lines against COVID-19. Drivers are asked not to honk.

Photos provided

AROUND TOWN

PROPER SPACING — While visiting her son in Mahopac on March 27, Kay Corkrum of Garrison came across these neighbors having a chat, while Kyle Good spotted three vehicles (right) practicing social distancing on Indian Brook Road near Constitution Marsh in Garrison.

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Photos provided

UNA VISIONE GLOBALE: ARTE POVERA’S WORLDS

Lecture Series:
Pino Pascali: Between Arte Povera and the Mediterranean
Valérie Da Costa
April 4, 2020, 3:00-5:00 p.m. EST on Instagram Live, IGTV and our website
Live Q+A on Instagram Live on April 4, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. EST
www.magazzino.art/magazzinodacasa
@magazzino

objects

Follow the Current on Twitter & Facebook
The Calendar

Newspaper Launches in Beacon

By kids, for kids, and growing rapidly

By Alison Rooney

It’s not that Lucas Simms was bored. The opposite was true, actually. “Everybody I’ve talked to this week loves it, being at home,” he reports.

Still, being confined has been frustrating — particularly the lack of access to his friends at the Hudson Hills Academy in Beacon — for the 8-year-old.

But he has found diversions. There are “porch visits” with friends. And there’s the weekly newspaper he launched. The Beacon Kids Times, which is published on Thursdays and distributed free by email, is attracting correspondents and readers from all over the city. It more than delivers on its promise of “reviews, art, outdoors, more.”

Although his favorite subject is math (and his favorite ice cream flavor, cookie dough), Lucas surely took inspiration for the Times from his dad, Jeff Simms, a reporter for The Current, although he says his mother, Heidi Kitlas, who works with the paper on fundraising, deserves “25 percent credit” for the idea. For some reason, the couple did not dissuade their son from creating competition for The Current in Beacon, especially for the younger demographic.

Inside the Times are contributions from reporters such as Fiona, who assesses “What’s Happening? The Amazing Outdoors,” and Daley, who provides tips on what to wear and what to do, based on the forecast. Reviewers, with opinions to spare, include Hazel, a comic book expert, who gives the thumbs-up to Scooby Doo, Where Are You? #102, noting: “What I liked about the story is that it is funny and silly and there’s a twist because you might think it is one person but it might be the other. I like all of it. I don’t have a part that I don’t like.”

Silas, a video game expert, explains Mope.io: “The levels of that are Pterodactyl, which is a desert animal, Kraken and King Crab, which are water animals, T-Rex and Dragon, are grass animals, Yeti, which is an arctic animal and Phoenix, which is a lava animal.”

The centerpiece drawing, by Macon, is titled, “One of My Favorite Things to Do Right Now is Build Legos with Dad.”

In the March 26 issue, there was room for every submission. But for the second edition, Lucas found himself with a dilemma. “There’s a lot more people who know about it now,” he says. “Once it came out, people told other people, and now there are people I don’t even know, so we may have to leave out some things. I’ll decide that when it happens.”

Then, he added: “When I first started this, my dad was thinking we were in competition. But now we’re kind of winning.” (To join The Current, visit highlandscurrent.org/membership.)

At the end of each issue of the Times, there is a riddle selected by Lucas. On March 26, it was: How do you get out of a room with no windows and no doors but the room has a mirror and a table?

The answer: You look in the mirror two times, you see what you saw, you take the saw and cut the table, two halves make a whole, you jump in the hole and cry for help, but your voice is hoarse, so you jump on the horse and ride away.

Be on the alert: The first kid to email a correct answer to the riddle each week gets a prize delivered to his or her porch.

To sign up for the Beacon Kids Times, or to contribute articles, email beaconkidstimes@gmail.com.

Learning Their Letters

Book club for kids will revert to ‘snail mail’

By Alison Rooney

Turning lemons into lemonade, Split Rock Books, unable to host its usual slate of monthly book clubs at its Cold Spring store, is turning back the clocks. Their latest endeavor, The Epistolary Project, will rely on what adults remember as “letters,” aka “snail mail.”

Members of the Middle Reader Book Club (ages 7 to 11) will read a book, then write a letter, and receive a letter.

To join the club, a child just has to purchase the April selection, Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer, at splitrockbks.com. In normal times (i.e., a month ago), the members of the club would have read the book and gathered one afternoon at the store to discuss it while snacking on juice boxes and cheddar bunnies.

In this curve-flattening era, the club instead will “dive into an epistolary novel and write each other good old-fashioned snail mail,” said Heidi Bender, who co-owns Split Rock with her husband, Michael. “We wanted to make space for some off-screen time.”

(Continued on Page 14)
THE WEEK AHEAD
Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)
For a complete listing of events, see highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

COMMUNITY
SAT 4
One Poem a Day Won’t Kill You
GARRISON
Desmond-Fish Library | bit.ly/read-poem
Last month, the library and The Current teamed up to revive this annual event to recognize National Poetry Month in April. The idea was that community members would be recorded at the library reading their favorite poems. Unfortunately, few recordings took place before the library closed. However, we are able to collect and share poem recordings online. Visit the link above and use your phone, tablet or computer to record a favorite poem to share with the community — something we all may need during this challenging and humbling time, notes Ryan Biracree, the library’s digital services coordinator. If you have questions or technical difficulties, email him at ryan@desmondfishlibrary.org.

TUES 7
Knitting Meet-Up
GARRISON
11 a.m. Desmond-Fish Library
Via Zoom. Email Lucille Merry at lucille@desmondfishlibrary.org for registration information. Continues weekly.

THURS 9
Paper Crafts Workshop
GARRISON
6 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
Via Zoom. The workshop will take place each week via Facebook.

FOOD RESOURCES
SAT 4
One Poem a Day Won’t Kill You
GARRISON
Desmond-Fish Library | bit.ly/read-poem
Last month, the library and The Current teamed up to revive this annual event to recognize National Poetry Month in April. The idea was that community members would be recorded at the library reading their favorite poems. Unfortunately, few recordings took place before the library closed. However, we are able to collect and share poem recordings online. Visit the link above and use your phone, tablet or computer to record a favorite poem to share with the community — something we all may need during this challenging and humbling time, notes Ryan Biracree, the library’s digital services coordinator. If you have questions or technical difficulties, email him at ryan@desmondfishlibrary.org.

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GARRISON
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Via Zoom. The workshop will take place each week via Facebook.

SAT 4
Philipston Food Pantry
COLD SPRING
9 – 10 a.m. First Presbyterian Church
10 Academy St. | 845-265-3220
presbychurchcoldspring.org
Also SAT 11.

SAT 4
Farmers’ Market
COLD SPRING
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. St. Mary’s Church
1 Chestnut St. | csfarmmarket.org
See the website for ordering information and protocols. The market is held outside and only a few customers are admitted at a time. Also SAT 11.

SAT 4
Food Pantry
BEACON
10 – 11 a.m. St. Andrew’s Church
15 South Ave. | 845-831-1369
beacon-episcopal.org/food-pantry
Also SAT 11.

SAT 4
Food Pantry
BEACON
10:30 a.m. – Noon.
Beacon Recreation Center
23 W. Center St. | 845-202-7199
Provided by New Vision Church of Deliverance. Also SAT 11.

SAT 4
Lovingkindness in Difficult Times
GARRISON
4 p.m. Garrison Institute
garrisoninstitute.org
Sharon Salzberg, a student of Buddhism since 1971 and the author of Real Happiness at Work, will lead a live practice via Zoom. Registration required.

HEALTH & FITNESS
SAT 4
Lovingkindness in Difficult Times
GARRISON
4 p.m. Garrison Institute
garrisoninstitute.org
Sharon Salzberg, a student of Buddhism since 1971 and the author of Real Happiness at Work, will lead a live practice via Zoom. Registration required.

MON 6
Grab-and-Go
BEACON
10 – 10:30 a.m. Beacon High School
101 Matteawan Road
10:30 – 11 a.m. South Avenue Elementary
60 South Ave. | beaconsk12.org
On Monday, you can pick up two breakfasts and two lunches, and on Wednesday you can grab three days’ worth of food. If you need meal delivery, email landahl.m@beaconk12.org or text 845-372-2286. Also WED 8.

MON 6
Community Soup Kitchen
BEACON
11 a.m. – Noon.
Tabernacle of Christ
483 Main St. | 845-728-8196
Every day except Sunday.

MON 6
Meditation Group
GARRISON
Noon. Garrison Institute
garrisoninstitute.org
Via Zoom. Online registration requested. Offered weekdays.

MON 6
Story Time
GARRISON
1:30 p.m. Garrison Institute
garrisoninstitute.org
Via Zoom. Online registration requested. Offered weekdays.

TUES 7
Transforming Pandemic Panic
GARRISON
4 p.m. Garrison Institute
facebook.com/garrisoninstitute
In this free webinar, Dan Siegel will speak to turning panic into “receptive presence and growth.”

VISUAL ARTS
SAT 4
Arte Povera’s Worlds
PHILIPSTOWN
3 p.m. Magazzino Italian Art
magazzino.art
In this livestreamed lecture and Q&A, Valérie Da Costa will address the concept of “the Mediterranean” in the work of Pino Pascali.

SAT 4
Social Saturday
GARRISON
4 p.m. Garrison Art Center
@garrisonartcenter on Instagram
Join a virtual open studio to stay connected with the arts community and artists. The Zoom meeting ID is 996 412 237.

SAT 11
Magazzino da Casa
COLD SPRING
3 p.m. Magazzino Italian Art
magazzino.com/magazzino
This weekly series will feature discussions with artists, Magazzino leadership and collaborators, as well as lectures by leading scholars.

KIDS & FAMILY
MON 6
New Parents Support Group
GARRISON
11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
Via Zoom. Email beautifulfammax12@gmail.com for registration information. Continues weekly.

MON 6
Live at Five
BEACON
5 p.m. Beacon Performing Arts Center
facebook.com/beaconperformingartscenter
Sing and dance for some fun relief. Offered weekdays.

CIVICS
SAT 4
Gov. Cuomo Live Briefing
10:45 a.m. Twitter @NYGovCuomo
Continues daily.

MON 6
City Council
BEACON
7 p.m. City Hall
cityofbeacon.org
Closed to the public but a video will be posted. See highlandscurrent.org/meeting-videos.

TUES 7
Putnam County Legislature
CARMEL
7 p.m. Historic Courthouse
Putnamcountyny.gov
Closed to the public but the audio of the meeting will be broadcast at putnamcountyny.com/legi/legislative-meetings.

TUES 7
Board of Trustees
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Village Hall
coldspringny.gov
Closed to the public but a video will be posted. See highlandscurrent.org/meeting-videos.

Online Musical Instrument Lessons
One-on-one. Inspiring instructors.
We can still make music.
play@beaconmusicfactory.com

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162 Main St. Beacon, NY 12508 *call 845-544-3296 to arrange
Living Inside Jonathan Kruk’s Brain

A less traditional route is to live a life so colorful, so eccentric, so surprising that you end up a character in one of Jonathan Kruk’s stories.

This is how the miser Ashael Bell quartered his way out of obscurity. As Jonathan tells it, Bell owned a lot of real estate...

But he chose to live in hillside caves around Garrison instead. He’d come down off the mountain with long hair, a thick beard, and rumpled clothes to collect rents. When he was found floating in the Hudson in 1837, his heirs claimed several hundred thousand dollars were missing.

Did he take it with him or is it still hidden in the Hudson Highlands? Incidentally, Jonathan hikes there a lot.

Another character that lives in Jonathan’s imagination is the American Revolutionary Soldier Robert Shurtliff. The handsome youth showed up at Fishkill Supply Depot to join the Fourth Mass Regiment. They headed south to fight the Loyalists in Westchester. Shurtliff took a lead ball in his thigh. The gallant patriot refused treatment and removed it himself with a needle and thread. Shurtliff later served under Lafayette at the Battle of Yorktown. After being discharged, he returned to Massachusetts, married, and gave birth to several children. Robert Shurtliff was also known as Deborah Sampson.

And who could forget the serving girl at Warren’s Tavern? She was so busy gawking at George Washington, who had stopped in to dine, that she fell up the stairs. General Washington laughed himself silly. He probably needed a giggle at that point.

If you’re in search of immortality, an exotic haido can help. Nathaniel Parker Willis was the leading magazine writer of his day. He built a home called Tellerwood in Cornwall and promulgated a Hudson Highlands lifestyle. But it was his man bun over each ear that ensured him a place in the Kruk pantheon.

Jonathan Kruk’s book Legends and Lore of the Hudson Highlands can be ordered at splitrockbliss.com

In today’s memory © Deb Shackle 2020
Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer, written by Kelly Jones and illustrated by Katie Kath, is a tale told in letters from a 12-year-old to her grandmother, after the girl moves from a city to a farm. The story turns when the girl discovers one of the chickens can move objects with its brain.

Once a club member finishes the book, it’s time to write a letter using a stationery kit available online from Grace Lo at Supplies for Creative Living in Cold Spring (suppliesforcreativeliving.com).

“This is not a school assignment, so the kids have freedom with their letters,” Bender says. “They can write a response to the book, but they can also just write about their lives right now. What makes them happy? Are they worried or scared? Do they miss their friends? They can also simply have fun with their letters and include drawings, stickers, anything they like. For kids who want to write about the book and need a little help, Grace will be posting activity sheets and prompts.”

Letter-writers are asked to sign them with their names and ages.

“It’s a big change for all of us, and Grace and I both feel that a creative outlet can help,” Bender says.

Virtual Storefront

A year ago, for National Poetry Month, Split Rock Books and the Haldane Arts Alliance displayed student poetry in the bookstore’s window. This year, under special circumstances, and with help from school librarian Carolyn Llewellyn, they’ve created a virtual storefront to share work by Haldane’s second-graders. See splitrockbks.com.

Book club members will mail their letters to Split Rock, the bookstore will send each off to another member and the sender will receive a letter in return. The project will continue through April, or “longer if we’re having too much fun to stop,” she says.

Bender said that anyone who knows a child who would like to participate but whose family may not be able to afford the books should email her at info@splitrockbks.com.
Spring Awakenings
Standing guard to protect vernal pools
By Brian PJ Cronin

You hear them before you see them, a high-pitched chorus of cheeps. Then the mist parts as the trail descends and you see their source: A trailside vernal pool on Bull Hill, or Mount Taurus.

For many Highlands residents, it’s a familiar sound that is instantly recognizable as those of spring peepers, the tiny frogs that take to pools and swamps to call for mates. But for those who don’t live in watery areas such as the Highlands, the sound can be confusing.

That’s where Arden Blumenthal comes in. For two weeks in March, Blumenthal served as a vernal pool steward for the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, spending her days positioned at a spot on the Washburn Trail.

“If you hear a high-pitched chorus of cheeps, the mist is lifting and the trail is departing and you see their source: A trailside vernal pool. It is the only sound we can hear, and it sounds a lot like sirens,” she says with a laugh.

Vernal pools are isolated and temporary wetlands that appear in the spring when water that was frozen in the ground starts to melt. If the water hits bedrock or hard clay, it will travel to the surface, forming a pool that lasts until the end of summer.

Because there are no fish in these ponds, amphibians can breed and lay eggs without being gobbled up. That is why amphibians seek them out, sometimes traveling up to a quarter of a mile once they emerge from hibernation. The season begins with the low quack of wood frogs, followed by the high-pitched cheeps of peepers, and then, finally, the silent salamanders. “They’re this natural, temporal stratification of when everybody gets busy,” Blumenthal says.

The pool that Blumenthal was stationed near is far from the only one in the Highlands, or even on Bull Hill. During some springs, even puddles near the fire tower on Mount Beacon will fill with tadpoles. But this particular pool’s spot next to a popular hiking trail makes it an ideal location to educate the passing public.

As important as the pools are, they’re threatened. Blumenthal’s role was to speak to hikers about the importance of the pools and their fragility. Unleashed dogs are a particular threat. As a dog owner herself, Blumenthal says she understands the appeal of letting a pup run free in the mountains, which unfortunately includes splashing around the vernal pools. She says that in the hundreds of interactions she had with hikers, those who had their dogs unleashed were happy to leash them after hearing about how dogs could impact the pools.

“People respond well because I’m not that intimidating,” she says. “I’m pretty chipper.”

Blumenthal moved to Beacon to join the Trail Conference only six weeks ago, after she defended her master’s thesis at Purdue University on human/wildlife interactions as it relates to seabirds. Like the pools, Blumenthal’s position as a vernal pool steward was temporary. She began the job the day the trails were reopened after a large fire on Breakneck Ridge, and it ended when the Trail Conference began telling hikers to stay home in response to overcrowding on popular trails while social distancing is in effect.

Having fewer hikers will benefit the pools, Blumenthal notes. But the restrictions also limit the number of people who will learn about them. “The vast majority of visitors have no idea what spring peepers or vernal pools are,” she says. “How can you protect something if you don’t know it exists?”

The Chirper Chorus

Blumenthal is optimistic that the vernal pool steward program will return next spring, and she hopes to expand it to include citizen scientists. As she envisions it, volunteers will visit the pools a few times throughout the season to record data such as the air temperature, if it’s raining in the past 24 hours and the frog call density on a scale of 0 to 3. (Zero is no calls, one means a few individual calls so that the listener can count the number of frogs, two means the calls are overlapping but the listener can still count the frogs, and three means a chorus.)

The data would allow the Trail Conference to map the pools, noting when the wood frogs are peaking and when the spring peepers start, as well as to create a record of the dates of the breeding seasons. As the Highlands continue to heat up, that kind of record would be useful in determining whether climate change is affecting amphibian breeding seasons.
Spicy!

New Cold Spring shop will be filled with flavors

By Alison Rooney

As American palates expanded with restaurants (remember those?) serving cuisine that originated around the globe, so did the appreciation of the spices that flavor them.

While the suburban home of the last century might have included “exotics” such as paprika, today’s home is as likely to have several varieties, including perhaps a couple made in Spain (sweet or hot) or several of Hungary’s eight flavor profiles.

Nine years ago, Lindsay Jean Fastiggi decided it was time to tap into that market and founded Spice Revolution, which specializes in small-batch, locally sourced spices and blends, along with baked goods. For years, she has sold her products at farmers markets and online and she planned this spring to open a storefront at 161 Main St. in Cold Spring (the former Current office).

The coronavirus delayed those plans, although customers can shop at spice-revolution.com and arrange for curbside pickup or delivery. In the meantime, Fastiggi has filled her windows with product. “We’re using the time to get the store to be exactly what we want, so when it’s time to open it’ll be perfect,” she says.

The Shrub Oak native had many jobs in the food industry (she’s a pastry chef by trade), but it wasn’t until she was giving guided tours at a high-end, artisanal chocolate store in New York City that the lightbulb went on.

“I noticed a lot of people having conversations about spices,” she recalls. “They would say they were to find and not good quality.” She began with 30 spices and opened a small shop in Dobbs Ferry shop but it faltered, especially after Hurricane Sandy.

She had more success with farmers markets. “We were able to meet producers and providers and also see the needs of each more clearly,” she says, adding that she could “answer the 1,000 questions” that customers have about spices.

She and her husband decided on Cold Spring for a retail operation after spending time in the outdoors here with their 3-year-old daughter — “She’s already a foodie.” She had more success with farmers markets. “We were able to meet producers and providers and also see the needs of each more clearly,” she says, adding that she could “answer the 1,000 questions” that customers have about spices.

Spice Revolution’s home-baked goods include a sweet-and-savory egg tart made with local eggs, cheese, greens and edible flowers. There is also a variety without cheese for those who can’t have dairy, Fastiggi says. And the spices are used in many of the baked goods. “We want to prove to our customers that sugar and flour is not a flavor,” she says.

Once retail is allowed, Spice Revolution’s home-baked goods include a sweet-and-savory egg tart made with local eggs, cheese, greens and edible flowers. There is also a variety without cheese for those who can’t have dairy, Fastiggi says. And the spices are used in many of the baked goods. “We want to prove to our customers that sugar and flour is not a flavor,” she says.

Seven Spices

We asked Lindsay Jean Fastiggi to name what she considered the five essential spices, and to recommend two of her own seasonings.

1. Salt (the most important flavor enhancer around)
2. Pepper (the most popular spice in the world)
3. Garlic powder
4. Cinnamon
5. Ginger

Lindsay Jean Fastiggi, of Spice Revolution

1. Shallot Pepper (dried French shallots, salt and pepper)
2. Garlic Pepper (garlic, onions, herbs, salt and pepper)
Shakespeare Fest Forced to Make Adjustments

Cancels one play, reduces ticket prices

By Alison Rooney

Faced with diminished ticket sales and uncertainty about whether it will be able to host audiences in June because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival has canceled the production this year of a work it commissioned, The Venetian Twins, and will present Richard III and Love’s Labor’s Lost consecutively, instead of in rotation, to provide more flexibility in hiring and rehearsing.

In addition, the festival is selling tickets at up to 44 percent off at hvshakespeare.org — from $25 to $60 each, with further discounts for children, students and seniors — that can be used for any performance. The discounts are designed to raise the funds needed to move forward and may or may not end up being real.

"Got me thinking, we can’t continue to sell tickets based on a calendar which at this point we know is highly subject to change," he said in a videotaped statement. "It’s just so hard to know what next week or next month or the middle of the summer is going to look like, or to predict when it will again be safe to gather artists to go into rehearsal or to gather an audience to enjoy a show under the tent."

McCallum noted that last year, the festival sold 3,000 tickets during the last week of March, compared to 118 this year.

"I want to say a special thank you to those hardy souls who bought those tickets," he said, adding that the meager sales "gots me thinking, we can’t continue to sell tickets based on a calendar which at this point we know is highly subject to change and may or may not end up being real. But if we let the uncertainty undermine our season, then we’re sunk, because we need that infusion of revenue to pay our artists when they go into rehearsal."

Reporter’s Notebook

Time to Lean on Old Friends

By Michael Turton

Last week, as anxiety increased exponentially, along with the spread of the virus whose name shall not be spoken, I came home to find my porch occupied by an old friend I hadn’t laid eyes on in nearly 50 years.

It was a book, the latest in my small collection that are important to me, some from long ago. I forget I had ordered it and its arrival made me smile.

That evening, it also made me laugh. My boss, Joyce Simmonds, gave me I Hate to Cook Book for my 22nd birthday. I was the first male travel counselor hired by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism — working in an all-female office, with women mostly in their late 20s. They had a field day with me. I had just moved to Toronto from Oldcastle, a place that makes Garrison look like a metropolis.

Shortly after I was hired, my co-workers conspired to call me while I manned the tourism information line, which was part of my training. A sweet voice asked me about a nudist camp close to my hometown. I was doubly mortified. She was asking me about nudity! And I had never heard of the camp! It was fictitious. They got me.

In truth, “the girls” treated me well, more like a younger brother than the inexperienced country boy I was. I was touched by Joyce’s gift, meant to help me through my current book collection began several years ago, motivated by the vivid memory of Grade 3 and riding my bike to the bookmobile, where I chose Through the Green Gate. It was the first time I had chosen a book on my own.

Several decades later, I was almost as excited to find it again online, used, and ready to be shipped.

When it arrived, the book’s pleasant rural setting was only vaguely familiar. It was the artwork I remembered clearly — beautiful watercolors, featuring adults and kids all dressed way too well. It was a great start to my fledgling collection.

Allow me to introduce a few other old friends.

Scrubs on Skates chronicles a high school hockey player. I wasn’t in high school yet when I first read it, but hockey was my passion. The author, Scott Young, was a sports reporter for the Globe & Mail in Toronto who also did color commentary on Hockey Night in Canada, credentials that kept my eyes glued to every page. Somehow, my fondness for the book increased when his son Neil went on to become a music legend.

During the summer before Grade 9, I was surprised to receive a long list of required reading for English class. My eyes skimmed over Shakespeare and Steinbeck and fell upon a book titled, The Eagle of the Ninth. I actually shouted, “Yes! A baseball story!”

What a letdown to learn it was about the disappearance of the Imperial Roman army’s ninth legion around 120 AD. However, the book’s portrayal of one of history’s great mysteries seized my imagination. There’s only one textbook in my little library: Latin for Canadian Schools, and it does not hold pleasant memories. I acquired it as a backhanded tribute to Father McGinn, whose teaching method included a heavy hunk of oak named Handy Andy. Each time a student made a mistake, he wrote his name on the blackboard. At the end of class, everyone whose name appeared on the board lined up, bent over and endured a painful, Barry Bonds-style hit on the ass.

For each hit, we drew a sketch of Handy Andy in our textbook — the way military pilots might record their kills. At year’s end I had earned 17 Handy Andys, and I was far from the worst. I still twitch when I leaf through that book.

Who Has Seen the Wind, by W.O. Mitchell, is much more pleasant to revisit. I usually give an author a page to get my attention, but this book, introduced simply as “the story of a boy and the wind,” had me at the first sentence: “Here was the least common denominator of nature, the skeleton requirements simply, of land and sky — Saskatchewan prairie.” I’ve never been to the Saskatchewan prairie. But I feel like I have.

One treasure remains elusive. It was written in the 1930s or 1940s. I’ve searched for The Pitcher, which is about baseball, not the Roman army, numerous times. I read it as a young teenager, quite proud of myself because it was the thickest book I had ever conquered. The hunt continues.

We can all use some relaxation these days. Why not reacquaint yourself with some old friends you once found between two covers?

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Shop Local, Online

The following is a list of merchants in the Highlands who have online shopping carts; many are offering free or discounted delivery. A clickable list is posted at highlandscurrent.org.

APPAREL
Cape Cod Leather (Cold Spring) capecodleather.com
Colorant (Beacon) thisiscolorant.com
Kaight (Beacon) kaightshop.com
La Mère Clothing + Goods (Beacon) lamereclothingandgoods.com
Last Outpost Store (Beacon) lastoutpoststore.com
Loopy Mango (Beacon) loopymango.com
Lorraine Tyne Bridal (Beacon) lorainetyne.com
Mountain Tops Outfitters (Beacon) mountaintopsoutfitters.com
New Form Perspective (Beacon) nfpstudio.com
Poor George Vintage (Cold Spring) shoppoorgeorge.com
Reservoir (Beacon) reservoir.us
Swing (Cold Spring) swingshopping.com

BEER & WINE
Artisan Wine (Beacon) artisanwineshop.com
Dennings Point Distillery (Beacon) denningspointdistillery.com
More Good (Beacon) drinkmoregood.com

BOUTIQUES
Batt Florist and Sweets (Beacon) battsfloristandsweets.com
Beacon Candle Company beaconcandlecompany.com
Beacon D’Lites beacondlites.com
Bird’s Creations (Cold Spring) bcssoapncandle.com
The Blue Olive (Cold Spring) theblueolive.com
Burkelman (Cold Spring) shopburkelman.com
Cold Spring Apothecary coldspringapothecary.com
Cold Spring General Store coldspringgeneralstore.com
D. Thomas Miniatures (Cold Spring) bit.ly/MinisNow
The Gift Hut (Cold Spring) thegiftut.com

JEWELERS
Jaymark (Philipstown) jaymarkjewelers.com
King + Curated (Beacon) thecuratednyc.com
Lewis & Pine (Beacon) lewispine.com

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
EraGuitar (Beacon) eraguitar.com
iGuitar Workshop (Nelsonville) iguitarworkshop.com
Jake’s Main Street Music (Beacon) jakesmainstreetmusic.com
Lord of the Strings (Beacon) johntvergaramusic.com

PET CARE
Feed R Us (Beacon) feedsrus.net

BOOKS
Antipodean (Garrison) antipodean.com
Riverside (Nelsonville) facebook.com/riversidebooks
Split Rock (Cold Spring) splitrockbkcs.com

MUSIC
From time to time, fully imagine yourself on the other side — the moment that you return to a beloved person, place or room full of joyful people. Imagine that moment, and how good it will feel when this is all over.

Remember that you can still laugh. Laughing helps us “unplug” from worries. It helps us reset, no matter what it is you’re laughing about.

By Michael McKee, PhD

The Highlands Current
April 3, 2020
The Bear Facts
Biologist shares info on common species
By Alison Rooney

For Emily Carrollo, a state wildlife biologist, every week is bearish.

The focus of her work for the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is solving issues of bear-human conflict in seven counties of the Hudson Valley. Extending on both sides of the river, her area has varying landscapes and population densities and includes the stretch from Garrison to Beacon.

She spoke last month at the Desmond-Fish Public Library about her job, which involves capturing and immobilizing black bears that are creating nuisances but also public outreach, such as her presentation, which was sponsored by the Putnam Highlands Audubon Society.

After introducing herself, Carrollo asked members of the audience to share any stories they had about black bears. Accounts included spotting a bear and her two cubs at a corner of Church Street in Cold Spring and an incident on Lane Gate Road where someone thought they’d heard a mouse, opened the front door and encountered a bear that scampered up the mountain.

Fleeing is typical behavior, Carrollo said, because of people, not bears. Attacks only occur when the bear is scared.”

Each bear complaint is entered into a database and “most of the time we’ll find that the same street has multiple callers,” says Carrollo. She noted “it’s illegal to feed black bears in New York, by accident or intentionally. If there’s a problem, you can’t continue to do things like feed cats on your back steps.”

Bears will be emerging from their winter semi-slumber soon, although Carrollo said black bears are not true hibernators. “They slow down; there’s not much eating but they could grab a snack if it’s a warm day. This spring we’re expecting bears out a bit earlier because it’s been warmer and there’s already some blooming foliage for them to consume.”

Black bear dens usually “look like a giant bird’s nest” on the ground, “because as long as the cubs are covered, they’re fine,” she said. “They also create rock dens or move into rock cavities — anything warm and cozy. Occasionally they den up in trees, especially in areas prone to flooding.”

Black bears usually den from mid-November through mid-April, especially when there’s a harsh fall. “This past fall, though, there were lots of beetchnuts and acorns for them to consume. Their omnivorous diet typically consists of berries, seeds, nuts, insects, ants, carrion, wild greens and live prey, most often a fawn.”

Black bears give birth in January in the den. They can have from two to six cubs who weigh, at birth, between seven and 11 ounces. They’re blind and deaf when born and usually stay with their mother for about 18 months. The father does not help raise the cubs. A bear lives 20 to 25 years. Adult females have a range of 10 to 20 square miles and males 100 square miles.
Roots and Shoots

Gardening in a Crisis

By Pamela Doan

A friend emailed this week to ask how my garden was coming along, assuming my shelter-in-place lifestyle would lead to great things.

I laughed. Then I cried a little.

Everyone’s circumstances during this unprecedented suspension of normal life are so different. Some people are bored, looking for ways to fill their days; others are struggling to balance children, work and other demands and complications.

Here are a few ways to get fresh air and the stress relief of making things grow, from the very small to the more time-consuming.

If you have 15 minutes and want to grow food …

Microgreens are the answer. Available as seed mixes, microgreens are the seedlings of vegetables like cabbage, kale, radish and other leafy greens. They grow fast, can be harvested repeatedly once the first true leaves appear, and are pretty foolproof. In just a week or two, you can be eating fresh greens that are full of nutrients in salads, sandwiches and other dishes.

Use any size shallow tray or container that’s handy and is at least 2 inches deep. The roots aren’t deep. Use whatever soil you have available. A sterile potting soil means less chance of weeds or disease, but garden soil is fine. Scatter the seeds and water. Place in a sunny window; it’s too early to plant outside. Keep the soil moist.

After a week or two, when the first true leaves appear (depending on the mix), microgreens can be cut and eaten as needed. If you don’t cut them to the soil level, many varieties will regrow and can be harvested again. Or just add new seeds to the areas that are harvested to have a continuous source of fresh greens.

If you’ve got free time for a couple of days …

Involve any willing residents in your home in plotting out a vegetable garden in raised beds or in the ground. Building raised beds is more time-consuming, but it’s easier in the long term and will require less maintenance. Detailed instructions can be found on many websites and my husband created a step-by-step guide for a friend that I’ll share if you email me.

As of this writing, there are local sources for seeds and plants, including Sabellico, Vera’s, Adam’s Fairacre Farms and One Nature Garden Center, as well as online ordering. It’s best to call ahead to discuss protocols and inventory before venturing out.

Seed swap and local gardener resources

Panic-buying of seeds has made headlines this week and many online resources are reserving them for commercial growers or delaying orders. While I haven’t delved deep into this anxiety-inducing trigger point, as a community we can help each other by sharing seeds and transplants responsibly. The Philipstown Garden Club, Master Gardener Volunteers from Cornell Cooperative Extension and other local gardening groups on Facebook can help you find resources and seeds.

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.

Stay home and involve even the youngest members of the household in the garden. Photo by P. Doan

If you have three to 40 hours (or more) …

Take a class. The Cornell Cooperative Extension and Penn State Extension offer dozens of free classes online. Learn about pruning, healthy soil, mulching, vegetable growing and many more practical skills.

The New York Botanical Garden has moved many of its classes online, ranging from orchids to rooftop vegetable gardens and basic botany and horticulture classes. The classes aren’t free; fees depend on the length of the course.

The Ecological Landscape Alliance is a nonprofit membership organization based in the Northeast that charges $25 to $100 annually, depending on your affiliation. It has many webinars, workshops and recorded classes on all aspects of sustainable landscaping available. See ecolandscaping.org.

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Reform Law (from Page 9)

Through February, the Dutchess District Attorney’s office was diverting 29 percent of cases, he said. Last year “it was much lower — maybe 10 percent,” he said.

“Simply put, we cannot, under the new discovery law, keep every case that’s charged within the system because we would never be able to comply with discovery, even with the new positions,” Weishaupt said.

Critics say because the old rules, derided as the “blindfold law,” allowed prosecutors to withhold information at the last minute, defense attorneys had little time to respond. Prosecutors also could withhold what they knew during plea-deal negotiations or before a defendant testified before a grand jury.

The law includes a list of 21 types of material that must be shared, including co-defendant statements, grand jury testimony, witness names, lab results, electronic recordings such as 911 calls, “materials favorable to the defense,” deals cut with prosecution witnesses and evidence collected from cell-phones and computers. Prosecutors can ask a court to shield information they feel should be withheld, such as the names of witnesses who may be endangered.

The law also requires the defense to share the evidence it gathers with prosecutors. Alex Rosen, the criminal division bureau chief for the Dutchess County Public Defender Office, said that, before the law, his office would typically get key discovery material from prosecutors “if we’re lucky, 10 days before trial.”

Defense attorneys are now automatically receiving body- and dash-camera footage, surveillance video, grand jury testimony and other material.

“Now I get to look at that and say to myself, ‘You know what, my client needs to see this. How are we going to address this issue [in our defense]? Oh, look. Here’s some contradictory information,'” Rosen said.

“Having the opportunity to do that — instead of within a week’s period [before trial] — and have months to look through that stuff, that’s critical,” he said.

Judges can impose a range of sanctions if prosecutors fail to comply with the deadlines, including declaring a mistrial or dismissing some or all charges.
Puzzles

**CROSS Current**

**ACROSS**
1. Uncategorized (Abbr.)
5. Web address
8. Portent
12. Maleficence
13. Menagerie
14. Scruff
15. Reading material
17. Matures
18. World-weariness
19. Salty solutions
21. Fix, in a way
24. Raw rock
25. Knighted woman
28. Nuisance
30. Kennedy or Koppel
33. Carte lead-in
34. Newton or Stern
35. Anger
36. Gasoline stat
37. dilbert’s workplace
38. Check bar codes
39. Born
41. Fourth dimension
43. Marketplaces of old
46. Got up
50. Story
51. Belgian surrealist Rene
54. Ear-related
55. Individual
56. List-ending abbr.
57. — moss
58. Workout venue
59. Sources for sauces

**DOWN**
1. Viral Internet phenom
2. Terrible guy?
3. Autograph
4. Contract section
5. Submachine gun
6. Reagan or Howard
7. Leopold’s co-defendant
8. Broadcasting
9. Attractive
10. Duel tool
11. Loch — Monster
12. Speed along
13. Church section
14. Leavening agent
15. Water barrier
16. Jungfrau, for one
17. Mississippi bloom
18. Munro pseudonym
19. Historic period
20. Hideaway
21. Concept
22. Epidodic TV show
23. Put up
24. Scratch
25. On
26. Fence opening
27. Urban pall
28. Maestro Klemperer
29. Go no farther
30. Congers, e.g.
31. Whatever number
32. Jewel

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**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. like the Rockies (11)
2. box office purchases (7)
3. they hunt down leaks (8)
4. Adriana Lima and Kate Upton (6)
5. strappy footwear (7)
6. put firmly in the soil (7)
7. 35mm and digital (7)

**SUDOCURRENT**

Answers will be published next week. See highlandscurrent.org/puzzle for interactive sudoku.
The Seniors: Baseball

**By Skip Pearlman**

That's the sound of the clock running out on the spring sports season at Haldane and Beacon high schools.

State and Section 1 officials were scheduled to re-assess the shutdown on Monday (March 30), but by then had already decided to pause competition for at least another two weeks. Gov. Andrew Cuomo has ordered all schools closed and extracurricular activities stopped until at least April 15.

While sports and just about everything else have taken a back seat during the COVID-19 pandemic, seniors at both schools had high hopes for the 2020 season.

Senior baseball players we spoke with this week were split — some believe the season is lost, while others say they would be happy to play a single game, or even to get to see their teammates.

“I have to hold on to hope that the season will survive, because I desperately want it to,” said Ty Long, a pitcher and first baseman for Beacon High School. “But realistically, the chances of it going on are getting slimmer each day.”

Sean Lise, a Beacon catcher, envisions part of the season being saved. “We may only get to play a few games in May,” he said.

Shane Green, a pitcher and infielder, said he was trying to remain measured. “I’m not getting my hopes too high,” he said. “Everybody is just trying to stay positive. I would even be happy with a reduced schedule. I just want to play my senior year of baseball.”

Outfielder Finnian Costello echoed that sentiment, saying that he’d like to see “a few games at least, just to get into the baseball vibe.”

By contrast, outfielder Omar Dolmus said he is resigned to the fact that his high school career has ended. “I feel like it’s over, with everything going on, and with the small amount of time we have left,” he said.

The Bulldogs’ All-League pitcher and third baseman Besim Dika also said he didn’t think the season could be saved.

At Haldane, outfielder Kole Bolte, a fourth-year varsity player, is the team’s only senior. “A few days ago I was hopeful, but at this point, we’re not going back to school until at least mid-April,” he said. “Even if we were to have sports, there are many other schools that may decide to cancel, leaving us with no one to play against.”

Nearly all the players said what they miss most is not the game itself as much as their teammates and friends.

“The hardest part is to be productive,” Dika said. “I am working, and a lesson learned is that everything happens for a reason, and not everything goes as planned in life.”

That lesson has resonated with Bolte, as well. “You have to appreciate everything you have, because you never know when you won’t have it. Going to the field and playing baseball or going out to eat or to the movies with your friends, you never thought twice about it.”

If the teams don’t get to play baseball this spring, each senior will be left wondering what might have happened during his final high school season.

Asked for a “dream-season” scenario, Costello offered: “In the sectional title game, each player comes up big. Sean ‘Chico’ Lise is behind the dish, and Besim Dika is throwing fireballs. Perfect day. Maybe one or two clouds in the sky, with a slight breeze. Winning and dog-piling ‘Box’, our assistant coach.”

For Bolte, the dream season would not be about seeing how far the team could advance in the tournament “but how much we could improve. I was looking forward to seeing how I improved from last year.”

“I wanted to be able to have younger players look up to me like I looked up to the older players when I was their age,” he said. “There were two people in particular, Justin Maldonado and Anthony Sinchi, who always encouraged me and helped to make me a better player. I hoped to be able to do that for someone.”

Dika’s said he imagines ending a title game in dramatic fashion. “Going up to the plate and hitting a walk-off to win the sectional championship,” he said.

“We’d be an above-average team who struggled early in the season,” Green predicted of the Bulldogs. “We’d battle through adversity, find our identity and start to win more games. Toward the end of the season, we’d be on a win streak heading into sectionals. We would be the No. 1 seed, upset higher-seeded teams along the way, end up in the championship, and bring the trophy back to Beacon.”

For now, at least, the players wonder what the rest of their spring will look like.

“It stinks, but there’s nothing we, as kids, can do,” Green said. “I’d miss the baseball season, prom and graduation the most. This is what you look forward to for all of high school. If they get canceled, it will hurt.”

Costello said that if the season is canceled, “while it would be sad, it would be the right choice. It would be great if we could resume our normal lives, but it could be far too risky to be in close contact with others.”

Haldane Coach Simon Dudar said he feels for his players. “We’ll stay hopeful until we get that final word,” he said, adding that “in the grand scheme of things, it’s not the most important thing.”

Beacon Coach Bob Atwell noted his players’ frustration and disappointment, but said “they’re still holding onto hope. We all are, because we have to.”

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**Lost Season**

This is the first in a series of articles in which The Current will profile senior athletes at Haldane and Beacon high schools who are likely to miss their spring seasons.

**Haldane’s Kole Bolte**

**Beacon’s Shane Green**

**Beacon’s Besim Dika**

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*For mail delivery, see highlandscurrent.org/delivery*