

The HIGHLANDS Current



Beacon Quarantine [PAGE 12](#)

NOVEMBER 6, 2020

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Incumbents Hold Seats

Voter turnout about the same — just more voters

By Chip Rowe

Incumbents in the Highlands held onto their seats this week in the U.S. House, state Assembly and state Senate.

In the Assembly, Sandy Galef, whose district includes Philipstown, and Jonathan Jacobson, whose district includes Beacon, each easily won reelection. Both are Democrats.

In the Senate, Sue Serino, a Republican,

held off a second challenge from Democrat Karen Smythe, whom she defeated in 2018 by 688 votes of 118,000 cast. This time, Serino built a comfortable lead of about 19,500 votes that should hold up against any surge for her opponent in absentee ballots.

In the U.S. House, Sean Patrick Maloney, a Democrat and Philipstown resident, declared victory in his bid for a fifth term with 47 percent of the vote, saying the absentee vote would only widen his margin over Republican challenger Chele Farley.

(Continued on Page 9)



Voters waited in line on Election Day (Nov. 3) at the Methodist church on Main Street in Cold Spring.

Photo by Ross Corsair

No Layoffs or Tax Increase in Dutchess Budget Plan

County saves \$11 million from buyout program

By Leonard Sparks

For months, Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro and other county leaders warned of potential mass layoffs and cuts in services if President Donald Trump and Congress did not agree on a pandemic aid package for local governments.

With no aid in sight, the county instead will use nearly \$10 million from a reserve fund and savings from an employee buyout program to deliver a proposed \$502 million budget for 2021 that contains no layoffs

and no property tax increases, according to Molinaro.

Under the proposal, spending would fall by \$18 million and the county tax rate by 2.5 percent, from \$3.26 to \$3.18 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

To offset anticipated losses of \$6.1 million in sales tax revenue and \$4 million in state aid, the county will rely on about \$11 million saved when 152 employees accepted offers to retire or leave their jobs for payouts in 2021, said Molinaro.

The budget is before the county Legislature, which can amend the plan before a final vote.

(Continued on Page 8)

COVID2021 WHAT LIES AHEAD?

What Have We Learned About Schools?

Students and teachers adjust to pandemic education

By Jeff Simms

Matt Landahl, the superintendent of the Beacon City School District, may have had more of an idea than most that something was afoot before the COVID-19 pandemic hit U.S. soil early this year. But he said no warning could have prepared him for what has unfolded in the Highlands over the last eight months.

A college friend who works for the U.S. Department of State was stationed in Italy, one of Europe's most dangerous hot spots during the initial spread of the coronavirus. At the end of February, Landahl recalled last week, his friend sent a text message that read: "Get ready. This is really bad."

After the first positive cases were reported in New York in March, a team of Dutchess County school administrators began discussing how to proceed.

Their first meeting, Landahl said, focused on handwashing.

By the second week of March, the county executive, Marc Molinaro, had joined the call, and the discussion progressed to preparing for school closures and the deployment of laptops and other materials to students.

Friday, March 13, was scheduled as an off-day for students in Beacon and a workday for teachers. But Molinaro had announced the first positive COVID case in Dutchess on March 12 — Putnam's would come three days later — and, by March 16, Gov. Andrew Cuomo had closed public schools statewide for two weeks.

"I felt a closure would be happening on some level," Landahl said. "I knew something big was happening," and during the meetings with other superintendents, "it started to crystallize what we needed to prepare for."

(Continued on Page 6)

■ ABOUT THIS SERIES

COVID-19 has upended the world, the nation, our state and the Highlands. In the nearly eight months since the pandemic began, New York residents have managed to bring the infection rate under control, with the statewide average at less than 2 percent, among the lowest in the nation.

As we approach the cold winter months, we decided to take a closer look at the effects of the pandemic on three important aspects of daily life. Last week we examined its impact on mental and physical health, specifically the psychological effects of isolation and damage to relationships and the prospects for a vaccine. (See highlandscurrent.org.)

This week we study the effects on education by checking in with local schools to see how their hybrid and virtual models are working six weeks into the year.

Next week we will explore the pandemic's effects on the local economy, including unemployment, how restaurants will fare once outdoor dining is no longer an option, how local gyms are doing and whether the commuting culture will ever be the same.

5Q FIVE QUESTIONS: LISA SIMPSON

By Chip Rowe

Lisa Simpson is the Southern Dutchess coordinator for the Mid-Hudson Chapter of Mensa International, a society for people with high intelligence quotients (IQs).

How does a person qualify to join Mensa?

We offer a proprietary, standardized, two-hour test overseen by a proctor. We haven't been doing it since the shutdown, but it can be taken online. There are also certain other tests that Mensa will consider [such as those administered by schools or psychologists, or the GRE, ACT or SAT taken decades ago]. Mensa is looking for people with IQs of 134 or higher, which is considered in the 98th percentile, or the top 2 percent. Our chapter has 180 members, and there are about six from the Beacon area. There is no typical Mensan.

You are the games night host for the group. What does that mean?

Before the shutdown, I hosted monthly games night. The national Mensa also hosts an annual event called Mensa Mind Games that lasts four or five days. Manufacturers send us games to play and evaluate, including the instructions. We endorse a few as



Mensa Select, and the company can market them by saying that geniuses played them and had a good time.

Do you have a favorite game?

I'm a word-game person: I like Scrabble; Quiddler, which is like Scrabble with cards; Rewordable; codewords; Cards Against Humanity; Exploding Kittens.

What prompted you to join?

I had heard of Mensa but I am horrible at math so didn't want to embarrass myself taking the test. Most people have a math or language brain; few have both. But you don't have to be the smartest person in the room to qualify. I got a 1300 on the SAT and

was maybe 15th in my class of 100 at Pawling High School. I completed a Mensa mini-quizz that popped up online and did well enough they recommended the proctored test, which I took at the Marlboro library with about 15 other people.

Was that before or after you appeared on Jeopardy?

It was about a year after. I had taken the test for the show about 20 times but never been chosen as a contestant. I remember watching with my 92-year-old grandmother when Ken Jennings was on his winning streak and she said, "You're answering all the questions. You should be on the show." I said, "Grandma, I've been trying for 20 years." She looked me straight in the eye and said, "Try harder." I took the test again and was chosen. I flew to California for the taping but — spoiler alert — I missed the Final Jeopardy question. It was some obscure clue about George Bernard Shaw. But I still won two grand. And oddly, two of the clues in the game were about Dutchess County: One was about a book written by Norman Vincent Peale, who was from Pawling, and the other was about Vassar College. I missed the Norman Vincent Peale question, which is hard to believe — I was married in his church. That was my 23 minutes of fame.

ON THE SPOT

By Michael Turton

What sound really irritates you?

“

It's a classic:
Fingernails on a
blackboard. I can't
even think about it.

”



~ Nico Stone, Garrison

“

A hand rustling
around in a bag
of potato chips.

”



~ Heather Lockyer, Beacon

“

A fork scraping
on someone's
teeth.

”



~ Raquel Nave, Garrison

HOWLAND CULTURAL CENTER

Sat. Nov. 7 – 8 pm*
LIVESTREAM: THE VALLEY HOUR
Variety show's singing hosts Annalyse & Ryan

Sun. Nov. 8 – 1 – to 5 pm
ART EXHIBITION: LATTIMORE STUDIO & STUDENTS
20 artists showing works in mixed media
(Face masks required) Also Nov. 14 and 15

Sat. Nov. 14 – 8 pm*
LIVESTREAM: THE ARTICHOKE Storytelling series
Tix: theartichoke.ticketspice.com/nov2020 (*includes on-demand access)

Sun. Nov. 15 – 8 pm
STREAM: JESSE MILLS and RIEKO AIZAWA
Violin and piano
Tix: howlandmusic.org/ALIVEmusic_HCMC.html
(sponsored by ALIVEmusic)

AND MORE
Fri. Nov. 13 – 7 pm: Hudson Valley Poets
pre-register: information@howlandculturalcenter.org
Sat. Nov. 21 – 1 to 5 pm: Holiday Small Gifts Show and Sale
Fri/Sat/Sun/Mon thru Dec. 21 plus 22 and 23
Sat. Nov. 21 – 8 pm: Livestream, pianist Jamie Saft
presented by Elysium Furnace Works

HCC will NOT be open for in-person audience during performances

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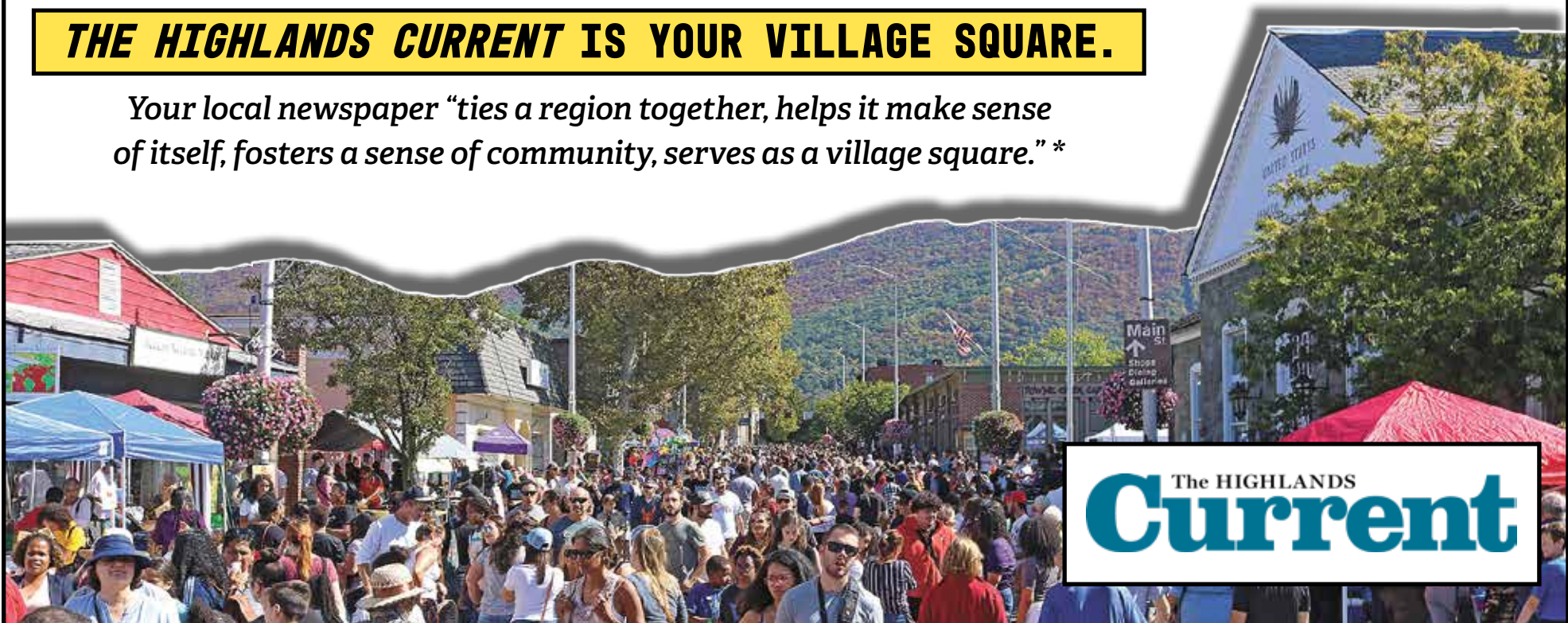
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*From media columnist Margaret Sullivan in her recent book *Ghosting the News: Local Journalism and the Crisis of American Democracy*.

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PUBLISHER

Highlands Current Inc.
142 Main St.
Cold Spring, NY 10516-2819
291 Main St., Beacon NY 12508

FOUNDER

Gordon Stewart (1939 - 2014)

EDITOR

Chip Rowe
editor@highlandscurrent.org

SENIOR EDITOR

Leonard Sparks

BEACON EDITOR

Jeff Simms

ARTS EDITOR

Alison Rooney
arts@highlandscurrent.org

SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

Michael Turton

REPORTERS

Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong
Brian PJ Cronin • Joe Dizney
Pamela Doan • Deb Lucke
Skip Pearlman

LAYOUT DESIGNER

Pierce Strudler

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Michele Gedney
For information on advertising:
845-809-5584
ads@highlandscurrent.org
highlandscurrent.org/ads



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Tell us what you think

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

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

Quiet Halloween

We had so much fun on Halloween and were able to navigate the village safely. It was almost entirely local families, and it was so nice to finally have a special day that felt almost normal. I'm grateful to the many neighbors who made the extra effort to give our children a happy Halloween.

Andrea Hudson, *via Facebook*

We had a blast not having the street swamped with out-of-towners. So many friends decorated their houses and it was incredible. I hope Cold Spring remains local again, like in the old days.

Christine Peterson, *via Facebook*

We got more trick-or-treaters than usual on Main Street while Parrott was quieter.

Carolynn Elwell, *via Facebook*

I got my first trick-or-treaters in 32 years in Nelsonville.

Mary Alice Boyle, *via Facebook*

It was awesome! Thank you to all the houses that participated and creatively made it a safe and fun night. The kids needed it.

Amy Parks, *via Facebook*

Congrats to all the winners of the *Parade in the Paper* costume contest (Oct. 30). I had a blast being a judge!

Ronzell Smith, *Beacon*

Congratulations to all the winners. It wasn't easy being a judge!

Maureen McGrath, *Cold Spring*

Thank you so much from the Darhan-soffs. We were impressed with all the costumes and surprised and excited to be chosen as the "funniest" winner.

Louise Julier, *Beacon*

Beacon budget

You reported that the proposed Beacon budget would eliminate the Police Department's canine program — the officer will stay but the dog will not ("Protestors Gather Outside Beacon Mayor's Home," Oct. 23).

Now, there's a great decision. In order to satisfy people and say you cut costs, get rid of probably one of the lowest-cost services with the greatest impact.

Is there a separation agreement for the dog? After all, it's employed by the department. I hope the city is forced to support the dog during its life.

Robert Vargo, *via Facebook*

Early voting

I voted at the Putnam County Board of Elections in Carmel on Oct. 24 ("Voters Face Long Lines," Oct. 30). By my count, about 200 people joined me in line. It took just over two hours to reach the polling station. (Mercifully, the BOE made two portable restrooms available.) Based on the schedule for early voting, the polls were open for 66 hours — time for just 1 in 10 voters to cast their ballots.

We should be grateful to the state Legislature for permitting early voting, and for Gov. Andrew Cuomo's decision to accept concern about COVID-19 as a valid excuse for absentee voting. But we can do better. I hope, for future elections, New York State will fund, and the Putnam County BOE will staff and organize, an early voting site in each town. In addition, every registered voter should receive a ballot one month before the election, with enough time to complete it, mail it and, if necessary, resolve any questions, including signature matches. Ballots should be canvassed once they are accepted. There is no reason to delay the tally to Election Day.

For our republic to be successful, every voter must be able to securely cast his or her ballot, unimpeded. That, at least, should be beyond debate.

Michael Armstrong, *Cold Spring*

The Democratic commissioner in Putnam County was right to want two early-voting sites because of the turnout, but the Republican commissioner thought one would be enough. Perhaps it had nothing to do with their politics but was just the way they look at the procedure. But this has to be left versus right, just like everything else, as long as it sides with the left.

Judy McLaughlin, *via Facebook*

The editor responds: Our story did not state that politics was a factor in the commissioners' judgments about how many sites would be needed.

Parking experiment

It was risky for Cold Spring Mayor Dave Merandy to rent parking spots at Mayor's Park without approval from the Village Board ("One-Day Parking Experiment," Oct. 30). But he did a nice job seizing the opportunity and collecting revenue for our small village. The state didn't try to do anything to help out with the crowds of hikers, but our mayor did! Kudos, Mr. Mayor.

Ralph Falloon, *via Facebook*

Falloon is a former mayor of Cold Spring.

As a bonus, parking cars at Mayor's Park is a solution to the pesky geese problem.

Eugenie Parrella, *via Facebook*



(Continued on Page 5)

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 4)

Parrott Street trees

Often, we don't realize how much we need or love particular trees until we lose them. I saw tears shed on my block when a stately maple necessarily came down about a decade ago — by grown folks, and not just me! ("Tree Removal," *Letters and Comments*, Oct. 23). My children were little then, and they were so sad they put together a "thank you" ceremony to express our family's gratitude for the tree's service as shade, shelter and beauty.

Before the adoption of Cold Spring's Village Tree Ordinance, there was no public notice before street trees came down. One day, a truck would arrive, there was a lot of noise and a tree was gone. It usually wasn't replaced, because there wasn't a plan or money to do so. Now, with the tree ordinance in place, we have an opportunity — and a municipal mechanism, via the Tree Advisory Board — to advocate for our public trees and be part of the decision-making process to manage our "community forest."

The Tree Advisory Board actively monitors our public trees, cares for them to extend their lives and, when trees are necessarily removed, ensures that they are replaced with as many caliper inches of new trees as possible. The Village Board has made proactive decisions to invest budget and staff time to the stewardship of our public trees. The village budget doesn't have a lot to spare, so spending on public trees must be offset by grants and generous donations from private citizens. You, too, can contribute by making a gift to the village and requesting that it be earmarked for tree planting.

The tree ordinance (and the Tree Advisory

Board it requires) was the brainchild of resident Jen Zwarich. She will demur and acknowledge everyone else who worked with her. She and the Tree Advisory Board make decisions about the fate of our trees based on facts, knowledge and professionalism. And I'm going to guess that when they finally do have to decide to take a public tree down, their hearts are as heavy and teary as my kids' hearts were that day on the sidewalk a decade ago.

Kathleen Foley, *Cold Spring*

Foley is a newly elected member of the Village Board. A longer version of this letter is posted at highlandscurrent.org.

I loved those trees when I lived on Parrott Street in the 1950s. What a sad ending.

Lin Ellis, *via Facebook*

While acknowledging and appreciating

the efforts of Jen Zwarich, we are talking about the sudden removal of five trees on one block of Parrott Street. I understand that the Tree Advisory Board is acting on the recommendation of an arborist. Given that the recommendation is to take five trees down simultaneously — five trees that have stood through many storms and are unlikely to all be at a similar state of instability — one would wish that a second opinion was obtained.

This is not to say the decision was arbitrary or made lightly. But given the fact that all of the trees are still fully producing leaves, even if one determines that they are all getting to the end of life, it seems the trees could be cut down over years, on a schedule in which the budget supports replacing any trees removed. Given the high cost of removing the trees, both in dollars and in diminishing the environ-

ment, I would hope a second arborist can be brought in to verify that this draconian step is required.

Robert Leiter, *Cold Spring*

Calendar adjustments

I'm not turning my clock back on Nov. 1 (*On the Spot*, Oct. 23). Nobody needs any extra hour of 2020!

Craig Muraszewski, *via Instagram*

Action Park

The documentary on Action Park in Vernon, New Jersey, made me cry, and it also made me grateful that I didn't die there ("The Most Dangerous Amusement Park in the World," Oct. 23).

Lindsay Jean Fastiggi, *via Instagram*

I wasn't allowed to go!

Bekah Tighe, *via Instagram*

NOTICE**PHILIPSTOWN PLANNING BOARD****Public Hearing – November 19th, 2020**

The Philipstown Planning Board for the Town of Philipstown, New York will hold a public hearing on Thursday, November 19th, 2020 starting at 7:30 p.m. via zoom to hear the following appeal.

If you would like to attend, please email kmacintyre@philipstown.com to request login information before 7:00 pm on November 19th, 2020.

Joseph Pell Lombardi, 19 Fieldstone Ridge, Cold Spring TM#16.11-1-9,7&5

(Sub-division approval to adjust the line dividing lands of leach from lands of Lombardi)

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

Dated at Philipstown, New York, October 15th, 2020

NOTICE**Philipstown Planning Board****Site Visit – November 15th, 2020**

The Philipstown Planning Board will meet on Sunday, November 15th 2020 at 9:30 am to inspect the following sites:

Christopher Flagg & Heidi Snyder, 699 Old Albany Post Road, Garrison, NY TM#61.-3-6

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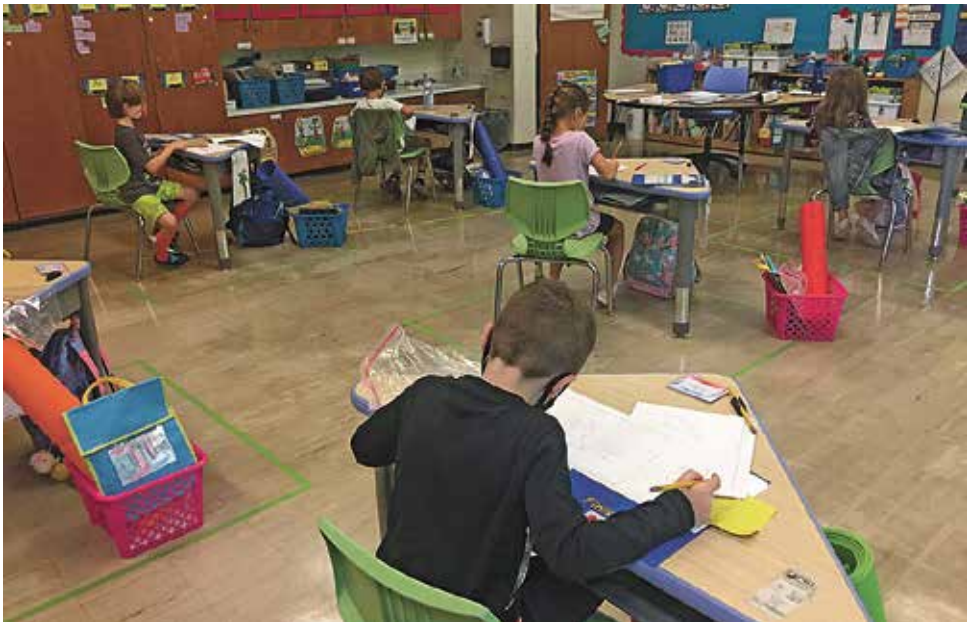
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Teachers at Rombout Middle School in Beacon prepared earlier this year for classes to begin.

Photo by Meredith Heuer



Inside a classroom at the Garrison School, where students attend daily unless their parents or guardians opted for all-virtual learning.

Photo by Maria Slippen

COVID 2021

WHAT LIES AHEAD?

(Continued from Page 1)

Cuomo made subsequent announcements of two-week closures until, on May 7, he said schools would not reopen until the fall.

Since that Friday the 13th, COVID-19 has been “on everybody’s mind every single day,” Landahl said, noting that he took an “alleged vacation” with his family in August and conducts text-message meetings with district staff frequently on Sundays.

While the Class of 2020 graduated in virtual ceremonies and other socially distanced events, administrators in the Highlands were already planning for reopening in the fall.

In July, Cuomo asked every district to submit detailed reopening plans for in-person, virtual and hybrid instruction.

The Garrison district, because of an abundance of space, was able to bring all students who chose the option back in person. Haldane also had enough space to bring elementary and middle school students back in person, while the high school is on a hybrid two- or three-day a week in-person schedule.

Beacon offered hybrid and virtual options, with about 65 percent choosing hybrid.

“The challenge over the summer was coming up with those three different schedules,” said Carl Albano, the Garrison superintendent. “Typically, we start scheduling in the spring and you refine it over the summer.”

But to meet Cuomo’s deadline, “all of them needed to be developed in a very short period of time,” Albano said, while, in the case of the all-virtual model, attempting to improve on what had been thrust upon the schools in the spring.

SCHOOL	STUDENTS POSITIVE	TEACHERS/STAFF POSITIVE
HALDANE MIDDLE SCHOOL	0	0
HALDANE HIGH SCHOOL	1	1
HALDANE ELEMENTARY	0	0
BEACON HIGH SCHOOL	2	1
ROMBOUT MIDDLE SCHOOL	0	1
GLENHAM ELEMENTARY	0	0
FORRESTAL ELEMENTARY	0	1
SARGENT ELEMENTARY	0	0
SOUTH AVENUE ELEMENTARY	0	0
GARRISON SCHOOL	0	0
HUDSON HILLS ACADEMY (BEACON)	0	0
MANITOU SCHOOL (PHILIPSTOWN)	0	0

Source: [Schoolcovidreportcard.health.ny.gov](https://schoolcovidreportcard.health.ny.gov), as of Nov. 4

SIX WEEKS IN

After reopening in September, the Garrison, Haldane and Beacon districts each had made it through the first six weeks of the year when Landahl announced a positive test at Beacon High School on Oct. 28. Later that afternoon, he announced a second case at the high school and an initial positive test at Rombout Middle School. On Oct. 31, a case was confirmed at J.V. Forrestal Elementary School, as well as on Nov. 5 at South Avenue Elementary.

With about 2,800 students, Beacon is the largest, by far, of the three Highlands school systems. In most school officials’ minds, it was a question of when, not if, a positive test would show up.

The individuals — the district cannot release identifying information due to federal privacy laws — are quarantining while officials conduct contact-tracing studies. The middle and high school

were closed until Thursday (Nov. 5), with students pivoting to an all-virtual schedule. Forrestal is scheduled to reopen on Nov. 12; South Avenue remains open because of limited exposure to the individual there.

The infections don’t indicate a failure in Beacon, Landahl said, but that the protocols set in place in the district are working. Clusters of cases that aren’t contained by quarantining, daily temperature checks, contact tracing and other measures would signal a breakdown in the system, he said.

“Our students and staff have done a great job adjusting to the health and safety protocols,” the superintendent said. “I never thought students would wear masks this well. We have a lot of people making a lot of sacrifices.”

Teachers and administrators this fall have sought to provide as near-normal an educational experience as possible, said Julia Sniffen, the Haldane High School princi-

pal. With Haldane elementary and middle school students in school five days a week, except for families who’ve chosen to go all-virtual for health concerns or other reasons, instruction has gone smoothly, she said.

But for high school students, “there is an added layer of pressure now at that level to get them the breadth” of the curriculum needed to prepare them for Regents exams, year-end standardized tests which were canceled last spring. (On Nov. 5, the state Education Department announced the cancellation of the January Regents. No decision has been made on the June and August tests.)

“The teachers are struggling to get through the content,” Sniffen said. “Their pacing is definitely slower than it has been in the past.”

Nonetheless, the principal said, after working all summer, the district has improved upon lessons learned in the spring.

“We were in full-on crisis mode,” after Cuomo shut the schools down in March, she said, which led Haldane officials to temporarily adopt a “do-no-harm” policy through the end of the academic year.

As in many other school districts, attendance requirements were relaxed and grading was not as strict during the shutdown. But since reopening, Haldane teachers have returned to traditional grading scales, while students must log in at the beginning of each class if they’re attending virtually.

“Whether you’re at home or you’re here, you’re at school,” Sniffen said.

In Beacon, teachers also began planning with Landahl and other administrators for reopening early in the summer.

Whereas last spring was about deploying — laptops, wireless hot spots and even free groceries, along with volunteers from Mutual Aid Beacon — the fall has been about anticipating, Landahl said.

Enduring the spring shutdown led the district to buy 25,000 disposable masks and other personal protective equipment in June. Air-circulating ventilation systems were installed in district school buildings and additional hot spots for free distribution to students without reliable internet access at home were purchased.

“The thing we keep saying is we’re trying to seek out the next thing to prepare for, to stay one or two steps ahead,” Landahl said.

(Continued on Page 7)



Students at the Garrison School work on socially distanced art projects.

Photo by Maria Slippen

(Continued from Page 6)

“None of it’s a surprise anymore.”

The district’s 276 instructors have risen to the challenge as well, said John Burns, the president of the Beacon Teachers’ Association.

“I don’t know if I could do this,” said Burns, who retired from the classroom in 2016 but continues to lead the union. “They’re putting forth an amazing effort. Everybody’s in it and everybody’s positive but, at the same time, the demands on time and technology are overwhelming.”

Haldane parent Christine Johanson said this week that her daughter, a 10th grader, has responded well to the hybrid schedule.

“She loves it,” Johanson said. “I think back to when I was in high school — what would be better than two days on, two days off?”

The on-off schedule provides balance and a degree of normalcy, which Johanson called a best-case scenario considering the alternatives. With independent reading and research assignments, her daughter is “busy most of the day, if not a little bit more” on her virtual days, although Johanson also worries about students meeting all of the state’s curriculum goals.

“My daughter is a good student, so in that sense we’re lucky,” she said. “But I can only imagine the teachers are having a tougher time with some students. There is a huge risk of falling behind.”

ONLY A MATTER OF TIME?

The Mid-Hudson Region’s COVID-19 infection rate on Wednesday (Nov. 4) was at 2.4 percent, after hovering closer to 1 percent for much of the summer. In the past week, Dutchess and Putnam counties have both been under 2 percent.

Still, given the temporary closures in the last week in Beacon, and the tremendous spike in cases nationwide, it’s hard not to ask: Is it only a matter of time before the virus spreads further and Cuomo shuts schools down again?

“You see record-breaking positivity rates across the nation, and even though New York is still comparatively low with infections, experts are calling for exponential growth with the virus this winter,” Albano said. “You combine all these things and you do kind of feel that you’re on borrowed time.”

Before the announcements of confirmed

COVID-19 by the Numbers

■ PUTNAM COUNTY

Number of confirmed cases:

1,896 (+71)

New Cases in Philipstown: 4

Tests administered:

65,294 (+3,648)

Percent positive:

2.9 (-0.1)

Number of deaths:

64 (+1)

■ DUTCHESS COUNTY

Number of confirmed cases:

5,669 (+161)

Active Cases in Beacon: 17

Tests administered:

231,138 (+12,099)

Percent positive:

2.5 (0.0)

Number of deaths:

166 (+1)

Source: New York State Department of Health, with weekly changes in parentheses, as of Nov. 4. New cases in Philipstown for the week ending Oct. 29.

cases in Beacon, Landahl said he’d heard rumors that the district planned to shut down in January or February. No one’s planning that far ahead, he said.

“We’re taking this a day at a time,” he said. “We may have new information on any given day that changes our thinking.”

“There’s a majority of teachers who want to be at school,” added Burns. “Some have said that we’ll be gone by the end of the

State’s Financial Woes Trickle Down to Schools

Lack of aid could bust budgets for 2021-22

By Jeff Simms

The pandemic’s effect on education could be felt for years, as New York State struggles to balance its own budget while continuing to provide essential aid to public school districts.

Haldane and Garrison are far less dependent on state aid than Beacon because of their relative wealth and larger tax levies, but in Beacon, state funding made up 45 percent, or roughly \$30 million, of the district’s 2020-21 budget.

The state aid formula is based on districts’ ability to generate revenue through property taxes. Haldane’s 2020-21 budget relied on about \$3 million in state aid, or 12 percent of its budget, while Garrison’s was \$881,000, or 8 percent.

However, said Julia Sniffen, the principal of Haldane High School, any cuts in aid are going to be significant because of the costs incurred by schools to provide both virtual and in-person instruction, as well as COVID-related equipment.

At Garrison, where the parents of 48 of the district’s 215 students initially elected to go all-virtual, the school board voted this past summer to spend \$500,000 on an online tutoring system with state-certified teachers for 2020-21.

Garrison Superintendent Carl Albano said this week that he’s optimistic that a federal stimulus package will be passed to boost state coffers in New York and elsewhere. If not, “there would be an impact here, but for all schools, especially higher-need districts, I’m hopeful that the federal government will support education and the states.”

Beacon’s 2020-21 budget was based on the state’s forecasting in its own budget, which was adopted in March, just as the pandemic hit the U.S. But as a result of a \$14 billion revenue decline due to the spread of the virus,

New York State in August announced it would withhold 20 percent of its aid payments to school districts.

In Beacon, a freeze that significant could affect cash flow, said Ann Marie Quartironi, the district’s deputy superintendent. The district has not had to borrow to pay its bills since Quartironi has been there, but if it did, it would likely take out “revenue anticipation notes,” or short-term loans similar to the bonds school districts use to finance capital projects.

Quartironi said that the Beacon district had increased its fund balance by the end of the 2019-20 school year in anticipation of diminished aid in the current academic year and beyond.

“If we do get a federal stimulus and we don’t have to use fund balance, then we’ll have more for 2021-22,” she said.

If the financial situation gets really bad, the district would have to make cuts to its budget, with staffing the first area to reduce, although “it’s never something we want to do,” Quartironi said.

About five or six teachers are on schedule to retire next year, she said, and a handful of others could choose to retire. If cuts become necessary, the district will see if those positions can be left unfilled, Quartironi said, before considering layoffs and, in a worst-case scenario, programming cuts.

School districts in New York typically begin hearing whispers at the end of a calendar year about the amount of aid to expect in the upcoming state budget. Beacon has received increased funding in each of the last three years, and while even a flat aid package for 2021-22 would be satisfactory, “I have a feeling it’s going to be less,” Quartironi said.

A state budget representative would offer few details this week, saying only that New York’s 2022 fiscal budget “will include school aid funding for the 2021-22 school year and will be negotiated with the Legislature for an April 1 deadline, as is done every year.”

year, but most of us are trying to make this work. We’re not panicking.”

The day that schools close again may come, but Sniffen said she doesn’t regret the push last summer to reopen in person, even if it’s only temporary.

“You look at students and you recognize that school can be a constant for them,” she explained. “Seeing them and connecting with them helps you evaluate what they

need. The academic piece is at the forefront of what we do, but their social and emotional needs are also at the forefront right now. Seeing them — it makes every sleepless night worth it. It makes every meeting worth it, to know you’re doing everything to support them the best you can.

“I don’t leave every day in a bad place,” Sniffen said. “I leave most days saying, ‘We made a difference.’”

Putnam Legislators Lock Up Sheriff's Funds, Give Themselves a Raise

Approve \$164.2 million in spending for 2021

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

Putnam legislators this week approved a \$164.2 million 2021 county budget after locking up \$108,000 for Sheriff's Department road and river patrols and giving themselves raises.

The meeting agenda did not include their salary hikes, which they introduced and approved near the end of the 2-hour-plus session, conducted by audio connection on Oct. 29.

Legislator Nancy Montgomery, who represents Philipstown on the nine-member Legislature, cast the only vote against the budget after objecting strenuously to diverting Sheriff's Department money to a contingency account. The total involved \$65,000 in overtime for road patrols and \$43,000 for the marine unit on the Hudson River.

Montgomery also opposed the legislative pay raise.

The Legislature's final budget of \$164,291,181 exceeds County Executive MaryEllen Odell's draft version by \$127,987, which the legislators provided by taking more from the reserve account than Odell anticipated. They kept the property tax levy at Odell's recommended \$45,561,412.

The budget takes effect Jan. 1.

Legislative raises

The legislators voted 5-4 to increase their pay by 2.4 percent, to \$41,819 annually, beginning in 2021.

The part-time legislators last gave themselves a raise in December 2017, when they boosted their salaries by 14 percent after 10 years of no increases. They also receive health benefits. (Dutchess legislators last year approved a 3 percent annual raise to their base salary of \$15,450.)

"I'm not sure raises are a wise use of money at this time," Montgomery remarked. Instead, she said, during the pandemic and associ-

ated economic struggles, Putnam should focus on families' needs and the community. "This budget does not do that." Legislators William Gouldman of Putnam Valley, Joseph Castellano of Brewster and Toni Addonizio of Kent, who chairs the Legislature, joined her in voting against the increase.

Several legislators also made statements endorsing the budget's 2.4 percent raise for the county's 140 department heads, managers and related personnel. Supporters said the hikes were appropriate so that the salaries for upper-echelon employees exceed those of subordinates. The raises include one for Putnam County Sheriff Robert Langley Jr., to \$156,492, an increase of about \$19,220, and for Odell, to \$166,125, after beginning, about eight years ago, at \$148,635.

Sheriff's Department

The decision on river and road patrol funding overrode plans by Legislator Paul Jonke of Southeast, who chairs the legislative Protective Services Committee, to cover overtime by transferring money from county jail accounts and similar sources, with zero fiscal impact.

At a public hearing, also held by audio connection, three days before the budget vote, elected officials and constituents from Philipstown criticized cuts to essential services, including the Sheriff's Department.

Like Montgomery, Langley is a Philipstown resident and Democrat.

Six days after the budget vote, Republican legislators targeted Sheriff's Department overtime incurred over the summer.

On Oct. 29, Montgomery asserted that in refusing to transfer the \$43,000 for river duty, the Legislature was "defunding the marine patrol and discontinuing the partnership with the Coast Guard and New York State Police" and others. During the COVID-19 crisis, boating has increased, she said, and the marine unit "is very important to my district. I don't understand why we're jeopardizing safety. It's not the time to cut this. The Coast Guard is astounded

(Continued on Page 24)

Philipstown Officials Criticize County Budget

Tourism, policing, services at issue

By Holly Crocco

Philipstown officials and residents last week loudly and clearly opposed reductions in funding by the Putnam County Legislature for tourism, social services and policing.

They commented on Oct. 26 during a public hearing held via audioconference because of pandemic restrictions. The Legislature approved the budget three days later without making any changes in response to the criticism.

Kathleen Foley, who on Tuesday (Nov. 3) was elected to the Cold Spring Village Board, called the budget process a "sham," including the virtual hearing in which technical difficulties apparently hindered some people trying to chime in.

"This is absurd to me. This is not a public hearing," she said. "The language the Legislature used around this whole budget process is about how 'bare-bones' and 'slim' this is. This budget is slim for departments that the Legislature and county executive want to punish; it is unrestrained for cronies that you want to reward."

In her proposed budget, County Executive MaryEllen Odell included contractual salary increases for union members, as well as a 2.4 percent salary increase for management. But

she cut Sheriff Robert Langley's request for \$716,000 for patrol overtime to \$520,000.

Cold Spring Mayor Dave Merandy said the Sheriff's Department has been critical to maintaining order in the village as tourism continues to soar. Cold Spring has put additional officers on duty on weekends, which costs the village about \$1,000 per weekend, said the mayor.

"We need help — whatever you can send our way is appreciated," said Merandy. "I understand that with COVID, you're going to have a lot of restraints put on the budget and I expected that, but looking at the rest of your budget it doesn't look like it affected much."

Spending for tourism promotion was also tightened. In 2019, Putnam received \$68,000 in state funds and the county contributed \$136,000. In 2020, the state contributed \$60,000 and the county provided \$60,000. The county will spend \$50,000 in 2021, but no state funds are expected.

Philipstown Town Board member Judy Farrell added: "Tourism is not just marketing; it's supporting the infrastructure of the village."

"Entertaining cuts to real essential services like village aid, the sheriff, the Department of Social Services, legal aid and cemeteries while entertaining raises for elected officials — that's not right," said Philipstown Supervisor Richard Shea.

Dutchess Budget *(from Page 1)*

Molinaro said that, under the budget, some services "may take longer to provide as we serve more people with fewer employees."

Of the positions approved for buyouts, some will be eliminated and others left vacant, according to the county. The deleted positions include 12 corrections officers (for a savings of \$920,000), two probation officers (\$125,000), drug counselors and social workers in the Health Department and other positions in the Office of Probation and Community Corrections.

Dutchess is also proposing 10 new positions, including a deputy commissioner for housing at an annual salary of \$114,005; an

executive director for the Human Rights Commission (\$102,028); an elections specialist (\$84,000); and a communications specialist for the Health Department (\$67,486).

Police reform is also reflected in the budget, said Molinaro. Next year, every Dutchess County sheriff's deputy will begin wearing a body camera and the county will provide procedural justice and implicit bias training to every law enforcement agency in the county. The county said that 200 officers have signed up to attend the eight-hour classes by the end of the year.

The county's mobile crisis intervention team will expand and "work more closely than ever" with police officers and Mental Health America, an anti-racism organiza-

tion, said Molinaro. Mental Health America, Astor Services and PeopleUSA will also take over the operation of the Dutchess Stabilization Center in Poughkeepsie, which provides services to people in crisis 24 hours a day.

In an effort to diversify county police forces, the county will amend its college credit requirement for the officer civil service exam, which mandates that applicants have at least 60 college credits. With the change, new officers will have five years to earn the 60 credits.

The draft budget also provides \$1.1 million to support home-based services for seniors, including case management, adult day care, personal care and housekeeping

and Lifeline units. Next year, with \$50,000 in funding from the federal CARES Act, Dutchess will test a new transportation program for seniors.

What's Next for the Budget

Nov. 10: Virtual town hall, noon

Nov. 19: Virtual town hall, 6 p.m.

Nov. 30: Legislative hearing, 7 p.m.

Visit bit.ly/dutchess-budget for information.

Election *(from Page 1)*

As it happens, turnout was about the same in Dutchess and Putnam in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections — there were just more voters.

About 75 percent of registered voters cast their ballots in early voting, by mail or on Election Day, with about 148,000 votes in Dutchess and 54,000 in Putnam as of Nov. 3, according to election officials.

That was 16,000 more votes in Dutchess than in 2016 and 5,500 more in Putnam, but both counties also saw about a 15 percent increase in the number of registered voters. About 40 percent of voters in Dutchess and Putnam took advantage of early voting sites or mailed in their ballots.

Election officials released tallies for early voting and Election Day soon after the polls closed, but, in New York state this year, absentee ballots postmarked by Election Day can arrive at the Boards of Election on or before Nov. 10. Both counties will begin counting absentee ballots next week.

State Senate

With 118,384 votes counted, Serino led by a margin of 19,430 to represent the 41st District, which includes most of Dutchess and the western half of Putnam County. Smythe, who would need to win an overwhelming percentage of the uncounted absentee ballots, conceded defeat on Nov. 4.

"I congratulate Sen. Serino on her victory and on a race well-run," Smythe said in a statement. "Even with 30,000 absentee ballots outstanding, I do not see a different outcome."

Serino won 58 percent of the vote in Putnam and 69 percent in Dutchess.

State Assembly

Sandy Galef easily defeated her Republican challenger, Lawrence Chiulli, to win her 14th, 2-year term representing a district that includes Philipstown, although Chiulli improved his standing from 2018. Galef won 51 percent of the vote in Putnam County and 57 percent overall. In 2016, Galef won 65 percent.

Jonathan Jacobson defeated his Republican challenger, Andrew Gauzza IV, with 55 percent of the vote, winning a second, 2-year term representing a district that includes Beacon. Jacobson won 71 percent of the vote in Beacon.

State Supreme Court

In a race among seven challengers for four seats to represent the 9th District on the State Supreme Court, Sam Walker, a Mount Vernon judge, led with 20 percent of the vote with 93 percent of precincts reporting but no absentee ballots. Alexandra Murphy, a former assistant DA in Manhattan, had 13 percent; Robert Ondrovic, a trial attorney from White Plains, had 11.6 percent and Loren Williams, a Newburgh judge, had 11.2 percent.

U.S. House

In the 18th District, which includes the Highlands, Maloney led Farley by about 8,100 votes of more than 280,000 cast, without absentee ballots counted. Scott Smith, who appeared on the Serve America Movement (SAM) and Libertarian lines,



A caravan of vehicles with Trump flags and banners drove past the early voting site at the Fishkill Town Hall on Route 52 on Sunday (Oct. 25).

Photo by Alejandro Lopez

received just under 1 percent. Maloney won Dutchess County with 50 percent and Farley won Putnam County with 57 percent.

In a statement issued at 1:45 a.m. on Wednesday (Nov. 4), Maloney said that "it is clear" that once absentee ballots are counted, "our margin of victory will only increase." Maloney won 56 percent of the vote in 2018 and 2016.

Farley on Oct. 25 made a late challenge to the ballot, filing a lawsuit in state court that claimed the general election ballots were invalid because they listed Smith as the Libertarian candidate.

Smith received endorsements from the Libertarian Party committees in Orange and Dutchess counties but the state party did not endorse a candidate.

In dismissing the lawsuit on Oct. 29, Justice Mary Smith of the State Supreme Court in Westchester County noted that in-person voting had already started when it was filed and that Smith had been identified as the Libertarian candidate since April.

Presidential

In Dutchess County, Republicans Donald Trump and Michael Pence won just under 50 percent, excluding absentee ballots, while Democrats Joe Biden and Kamala Harris had 48 percent. In Putnam, Trump/Pence won 59 percent and Biden/Harris, 39 percent.

Dutchess County Judge

In a contest that will hinge on absentee ballots, Peter Forman, the Republican incumbent, was leading Democratic challenger Jessica Segal as of Election Night by 7,385 votes of 120,065 cast. There were

nearly 28,000 Dutchess absentee ballots to be counted as of Nov. 3, including 14,765 from Democrats, 5,284 from Republicans and 6,699 from independents, according to the Board of Elections.

Redistricting

Dutchess voters approved, with 62 percent of the vote, the creation of a seven-person redistricting commission to redraw the county's legislative boundaries next year based on data from the 2020 census.

Putnam County

In Cold Spring, Heidi Bender and Kathleen Foley were elected unopposed to the Village Board, filling two seats that will be vacated by Lynn Miller and Steve Voloto. Camille Linson was reelected as Philipstown Town Justice.

Voter Dies at Polls

A Cold Spring resident died on Tuesday (Nov. 3) while waiting outside the United Methodist Church on Main Street for the polls to open, according to the Cold Spring Police Department.

Richard Lucchesi, 68, of 14 Parrott St., was apparently waiting alone outside the church at 5 a.m. for the polls to open about an hour later. According to the CSPD, a poll worker heard a noise, opened the door and found Lucchesi on the ground.

Poll workers called 911 and a paramedic pronounced Lucchesi dead at the scene, according to police.

Anthony Mole, a 1993 Haldane graduate and Patterson town judge, was elected to a 10-year term as one of the two Putnam County Court judges. He will succeed James Rooney, who is retiring. Wendy Erickson, a nurse at Putnam Hospital Center, was elected as one of three county coroners. Both ran unopposed.

Three incumbents returned to the county Legislature for three-year terms. William Gouldman, whose district includes Putnam Valley, and Amy Sayegh, whose district includes Mahopac, both Republicans, ran unopposed. Toni Addonizio, a Republican who represents Kent and is chair of the Legislature, easily defeated Democratic challenger Vincent Fiorentino with 61 percent of the vote.

CURRENT CONVERSATIONS

New Trustees Q&A



MONDAY NOV. 9 | 7:00-7:45 PM

Join us in conversation with Kathleen Foley and Heidi Bender, newly elected Cold Spring Village Board Trustees.

REGISTER TO ATTEND:

highlandscurrent.org/current-conversations

NOTICE

Philipstown Planning Board

will hold their regular Monthly Meeting on November 19th, 2020 7:30 p.m. virtually via Zoom.

If you would like to attend, please email KMACINTYRE@PHILIPSTOWN.COM to request login information before 7:00 p.m. on November 19th, 2020.

AROUND TOWN



▲ **QUIET HALLOWEEN** — This photo was taken at 6 p.m. on Halloween night (Oct. 31) on Parrott Street in Cold Spring, a neighborhood that is traditionally mobbed with trick-or-treaters. The few homes decorated are owned by neighbors who are “always the most into it,” a resident said. *Photo provided*



◀ **NEW RESTAURANT** — El Coyote, the Mexican bar and restaurant on Route 9 in Garrison, opened for business on Oct. 19. Its debut, initially planned for early 2019, had been postponed a number of times, most recently because of the pandemic shutdown, said Manager Jose de Jesus. The restaurant is located in the building formerly occupied by the Stadium Restaurant and Sports Museum, which closed in 2017. *Photo by Michael Turton*



▲ **FOWL FUN** — The Beacon Hood Chicken, aka “The Mayor,” on Oct. 27 visited Mireia, who was celebrating her second birthday in quarantine because she contracted COVID-19. *Photo provided*



WORK FROM HOME FATIGUE?

Coworking + Private Offices in Beacon

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beahivebzzz.com

Cold Spring Soundtrack
Marinella Senatore
September 9 - November 7, 2020
Organized by Magazzino Italian Art Foundation

Community members are invited to share an audio recording capturing any sound reflective of their current moment. Each and every contribution will be incorporated into a symphony.

Volunteers can participate by leaving their recordings by calling +1 (845) 476-8409 and leaving a voicemail, or sending an audio recording via text message or email to opencall@magazzino.art.

For more information visit www.magazzino.art



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ITALIAN ART**



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Curated by Mel Bochner
In collaboration with
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October 3, 2020 - January 11, 2021
Magazzino Italian Art, Gallery 8

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Kringle's
Christmas House
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for the season
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The Calendar

Filmed Before a Live Audience

The Artichoke returns to the Howland

By Alison Rooney

Storytelling is making a comeback at the Howland Cultural Center with the return of *The Artichoke*.

Hosted by Drew Prochaska, the series — which nearly always sold out — returns on Saturday (Nov. 14) as a livestream. The show will be performed before a small audience (the other storytellers and a few Howland staff members) and broadcast online, and also filmed and made available for a month to ticketholders.

Prochaska, who brought storytelling to the Howland in January 2019, is producing the show with John Blesso, a Beacon resident who, in addition to spinning a yarn, hosted his own storytelling nights at Dogwood and Oak Vino that are now on hiatus because of the pandemic shutdown.

Others on the Nov. 14 bill include Christian Finnegan, Michelle Carlo, Kambri Crews, Martin Dockery and Jim O'Grady.

Prochaska and Blesso met through Dogwood “and we hit it off and decided to space out our events so they didn't conflict,” Blesso recalls. “Drew was deep into that world in the city. He got the very best from New York City to come to his shows. They also loved that Drew paid them, which is rare in the world of storytelling. Performers love it here.”

Prochaska has said he named his series *The Artichoke* as a metaphor for “performers who start out rough but blossom during the telling of their tale,” such as the bud, “a greyish green thistle with pointy leaves but a tender heart.”

Modeled after a storytelling series on National Public Radio called *The Moth*, performers present their tales extemporaneously in 10-minute blocks.

Blesso says he and Prochaska and other storytellers aren't entirely comfortable telling stories on Zoom without any in-person spectators.

“Drew and I have both been invited to tell stories by Zoom, but being alone and telling your story to a wall feels edgy but not the good kind of performing edgy,” Blesso says. “I felt uncomfortable and anxious because I had no idea if what I was saying was landing. That's why for us it was so important to

do our livestream from an actual stage with all of the performers together in front of a socially distanced audience. We need that back-and-forth connection.”

Blesso moved to Beacon six years ago. He is a writer — he published a memoir in 2007 — and a landlord who renovated a mixed-use building in Brooklyn and a two-family house in Beacon.

He has been working on a second memoir for the past decade and that process turned him to storytelling, he says. “I was planning on publishing it in parts on Kindle, and I thought if I could turn some of the chapters into stories, it would help with the book,” he says. “That's why I first began with storytelling.”

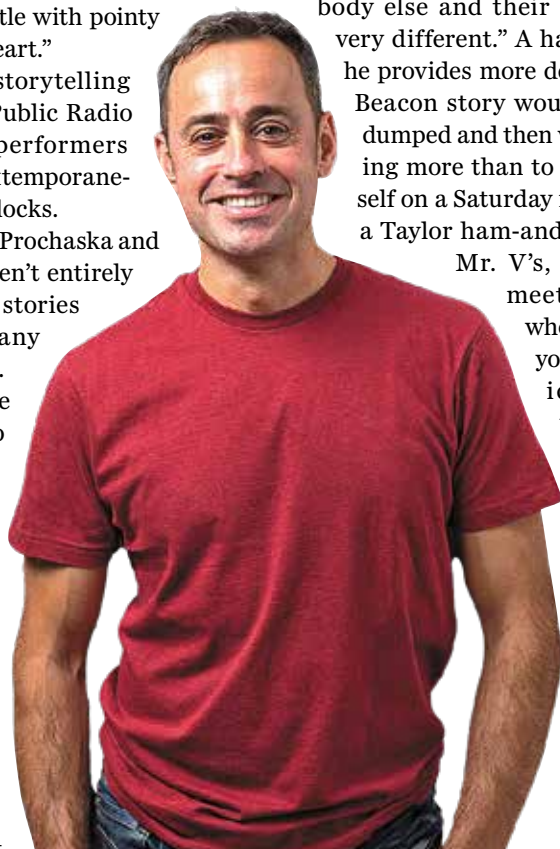
Blesso feels that some of the best stories are about mundane things.

“A lot of people think a good story has to involve armed conflict or beating cancer, or something like that, but that's not true,” he says. “The story should have stakes and a beginning, middle, end. When I first started, there were so many things I didn't properly respect about the form. I thought if you were a writer it would be like a major leaguer going to play softball, but they are different formats. The way that you write is not the way that people speak. If there's not something that is actively advancing the action and supporting your story, you have to get rid of it. There may be things you think are compelling but don't belong in the story.”

Asked what he would consider a great Beacon setting, he says: “I'm tempted to say Main Street. Somebody sets out to do something on Main, they run into some-

body else and their day becomes very different.” A half-hour later, he provides more detail: “A great Beacon story would be getting dumped and then wanting nothing more than to console yourself on a Saturday morning with a Taylor ham-and-cheese from Mr. V's, and then to meet the person who will become your next significant other while waiting in line...”

Tickets for the Nov. 14 livestream of The Artichoke are \$15 at theartichoke.ticketspice.com/nov2020.



John Blesso

Photo by Tom Moore



Rick Holbrook and Todd Hulet

Photo by Kristin Teig

Betting on Beacon

Amid shutdown, three retailers open in city

By Alison Rooney

While The Snooki Shop at 508 Main St., a clothing store owed by Nicole Polizzi of *Jersey Shore* fame, got a lot of attention before its Nov. 1 opening, three other retailers have also planted flags in Beacon in the past few weeks.

Afton Road
137 Main St.

Rick Holbrook, a potter, works in sets of four. That's how he grew up, he says, with his mother, father and sister, Shannon, “connected to family and sitting down to a meal together. I was a quiet child who kept to myself and fell into my creative being.”

Most of that growing up was done on Afton Road in Danville, Virginia, which became the name of his pottery store.

He began studying the form in college, although his focus was photography, which he made into a career. Pottery was a hobby until he and his fiancé, Todd Hulet, moved to California. There, Holbrook became a member of an artists' community called Muddy's Studio. Holbrook often used his pottery in his editorial and commercial photography assignments.

Holbrook and Hulet, who is a composer and theater teaching artist, launched an online store, largely in response to a steady stream of requests for the pottery when people saw it in Holbrook's photos, such as on recipe cards distributed by the Blue Apron meal-delivery service.

The couple moved to Beacon three years

(Continued on Page 20)

Beacon in Quarantine

Photos by Nancy LeVine

Photographer Nancy LeVine moved to Beacon from Seattle in 2019. During the early weeks of the shutdown in April and May, she drove around her new city to take portraits of residents from a socially safe distance outside their homes.

"At the time, New York was overwhelmed with thousands of people being stricken and many succumbing to the virus,"

she recalls. "Everything was unknown — exactly how the virus spreads, how contagious, what symptoms, treatment. There was lots of fear. I felt calmest when I was out creating these portraits.

"I loved meeting everyone and now I have a deeper feeling of community that often takes a long time to develop," she says. "Their responsibility at the time to Beacon and New York was to

stay home. I decided mine was to venture out in the safest way possible to take their portraits and find out what they were feeling."

LeVine photographed 80 households from April 14 to May 15, when the statewide shutdown was lifted. A selection is published here for the first time, along with comments LeVine collected from her subjects. For more, see highlandscurrent.org.

Steve and Sascha Mallon

Steve: I fell even more in love with my wife. I'm thankful for the home we have together and how we were all able to appreciate each other and also give each other space. We are still laughing late at night together!

Sascha: I am used to being home a lot. In the beginning I used the time to make colorful childrens' masks for underserved communities through Cope NYC, and I work remotely doing Zoom calls for art projects with oncology patients for The Creative Center NYC. Unfortunately, I am not sure if I can keep my job. I am so very thankful for my husband, my daughter, our dog and beautiful house. ■



Cabot and Melanie Parsons

Cabot: I'm lucky to still be teaching, remotely, acting for teens at a dance studio in Middletown. Three hours of Zoom meetings is exhausting and not fulfilling, but the kids are still engaged and that is what matters. All my spring performances of my short puppet piece in Boston and Baltimore are canceled. I rededicated my theater work to puppetry a few years ago while recuperating from several leg surgeries after our house burned. 2020 was going to be my year to become known in my field. My sleep cycle is wildly disrupted, and I am worried about our family members in Texas. I'm furious at our friends in Texas who aren't taking this seriously, knowing that they or people like them might bring the virus in contact with my 84-year-old diabetic dad. I'm angry a lot. I want to perform

again but that won't be happening soon. All my performer friends, from Broadway folk to puppeteers to fire acts, have had their whole lives wiped out for the foreseeable future. But sure, let's hurry and make certain people can get her hair done.

Melanie: I feel a sadness that doesn't seem to go away. Having lived in New York during 9/11 and the blackout, I remember seeing the very best of people and at moments the very worst. During this quarantine, I've been so disappointed in people and their responses and actions, mostly in regard to others. Before all of this, I would have said I was very optimistic and did try to see the best of any situation. I hope more than anything that I will be able to feel that way again. I am very lucky to be in this crazy time with my husband and dog; they have kept me sane and laughing as much as possible. ■





Greg Anderson and Sara Milonovich

Sara: On March 10, I played on Broadway, subbing the violin chair in *Come From Away*. On March 12, Broadway went dark. By that week-end every live performance I had scheduled through the spring had canceled. Summer festival cancellations began trickling in over the following weeks, each one sting-

ing like rubbing alcohol hitting the cracks in our hands.

We knew it was coming, but turns out knowing something intellectually and processing it emotionally are different. Our industry is frozen. We know it will come back, we just don't know when or how. We've been lucky so far to have remained healthy in spite of almost certain exposure. Some of our friends and colleagues have not fared so well. Every day feels like some exercise in grieving, whether a human life

or a human experience, which is what live music is.

Months later and arts workers are feeling forgotten by our elected officials and a portion of the general population, as well. I'm lonely. I'm sad. I'm homesick for the stage, the studio, the road. I miss my bandmates. I miss even the late nights and early mornings, when putting in contact lenses in the wee hours feels more like jamming a couple of Triscuits into my eyes. I miss the random moments of weirdness and beauty. ■



Amy Pilkington

Ordered to stay at home. At first, sleeping in seems like a luxury. Watching Netflix all day in my PJs seems like a great idea. Ordering pizza sounds delicious. I stay up late. Cocktails start early. I call my mom and dad every day to check on them. Everyone is saying there will be a rush on food and we will run out so I try to fill my house with non-perishables and root vegetables. And some chocolate Cadbury eggs left over from Easter. One big bag of white chocolate and one dark. I put the chocolate up high in a cupboard and try to not eat them all. This is futile. I pull over a chair and grab a little handful at a time. They go in four days — way too fast.

I feel lazy. I had two jobs I was working on. They were both put on hold due to my clients' financial uncertainty and a general feeling of not knowing if they should be doing something nice for themselves with all the death and pain around. Every day seems like a frantic search for information. Who do I spend time with? Can I see my neighbor? Yes, we will be corona buddies. We walk dogs together and shop for groceries together. We take turns cooking and enjoy cocktails and movies together.

I'm talking to my friends from out of town a lot more. The phone is always ringing and sounding

a text. We are all sharing videos and photos of people in quarantine doing funny things. We're all starting to feel fat. I suggest not wearing elastic-waisted pants. My mother admits to eating three Oreos for breakfast. She has been a health nut her whole life.

People in my apartment complex are gardening like crazy, desperate to be outside and make something beautiful. Safe distancing get-togethers outside in the garden area are common. No one shares drinks or bottles. Sit 6 feet apart. Wear masks. Then the masks come off as it is hard to drink through them.

One night we light a fire and it is magical to sit around the pit and watch the flames and feel the warmth. The building management team has disappeared. They left the premises to the virus and have not been wiping the doors or communal areas. This seems to be a major source of my complaining. I'm becoming grumpy. This could be a bad diet or frustration or loneliness. It's time I start trying to be creative and get myself inspired. Go to the studio. Turn off Netflix. Clean my kitchen. File for unemployment. Apply to grants. Speak to my mom and dad. They say they will help if I really need it but to exhaust every other option first.

I feel like a loser. I feel very flat. Nothing seems exciting or worthwhile. Thank goodness for my dog. She is an excellent cuddler. ■



Sharlene Stout

The music director of Spirit of Unity said she was disappointed not to see her family or watch her grand-

children play sports, but continued to attend Bible studies and Sunday School over the phone. ■

Robert Merino and Betsy Rivera with Robert Merino, 12, and Jennifer Velasquez, 15

Robert: I am Peruvian. I have worked at the Cardinal Health warehouse in Montgomery for 11 years. We supply medical materials for hospitals. Since March I have been working day and night. I disinfect myself before I get home. I know that soon the day will come where I will be home for a longer time so I can also hug my family without fearing I will contaminate them. [Translated from Spanish]

Betsy: I am from Puerto Rico and have lived in Beacon for 25 years. I'm a teacher and work with special children with autism and Down syndrome. They do not understand why we can't meet for class and why we have to be at home. I miss them so much. At home I help my children with their schoolwork and we prepare meals and desserts together and we make masks for the children to protect themselves. And we draw



positive pictures and put them on the windows for our neighbors. We have faith that everything will pass and we will be free. [Translated from Spanish]

Robert: It all started in school

like a normal day. It was a Friday. So I was ready for the weekend. Once Monday arrived, school was canceled. I didn't have a big reaction. I kind of predicted schools were going to close. Overall, quarantine isn't that bad. As long as

you stay home, wash your hands and stay active, you should be fine.

Jennifer: I study and review alone to teach myself the lessons and prepare for tests. I've been home since March 14. It is very sad

and scary to watch the news to hear that many people are dying and not having hope since there is no medicine or cure. It seems so unreal to see everything closed. ■



Barbara Brickhouse, with her son, Turone; goddaughter, Tatyana, 14; Haeven, 17 months; and dog, Winston

I cannot see and spend time with my children. And I miss going to church to worship with my church family. ■



Steve Blamires and Jennifer Mackiewicz

Jennifer: I moved to Beacon 19 years ago from Nevada. I was working for the artist Michael Helzer and, after 11 years, it was time to get out of the desert. I became the senior administrator at Dia:Beacon. When I arrived, Main Street was boarded up and Beacon was not a destination. I got involved with the community, served on boards for a commu-

nity center gallery (now closed) and for BACA (now called Beacon Arts). And met so many wonderful people! But it wasn't until the towers fell that I felt like a New Yorker.

Steve, whose main income is as an historian on expedition cruise ships, lost all his contracts for the coming year. I have been underemployed or unemployed since 2008, so at the best of times, it's been a struggle. Just two days ago, Steve's unemployment came through, as did a pension from Scotland he didn't even know he had. So we are OK for now. ■



Melissa Haydt with Lucas, 5, and Maggie

I'm a registered nurse and have been working in one of the hardest-hit areas. I pray every day going to work that I will not bring this virus home to my family. I have trouble sleeping at night when I have to go to work. I feel that we are all realizing what we have always known: Family is the most important thing we have, and as long as we are all healthy and together, everything will be alright. ■

Patrick and Marian Fredericks

Patrick: We take drives to Fish-kill and Cold Spring. We have three children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. We have good neighbors. Nothing bothers me. My wife moved to Beacon when we were married, 60 years ago. I grew up here. The mountains protect us. ■



Eric Diehl and Sarah Capua, with Santino

Eric: I will always be grateful that I got to see our child learn to crawl, walk and begin to babble. Some days have been joyful, while others filled with anxiety and fear. I have been able to plan alternative means of making a living at my home studio. I know that I have friends and family out there to lend a hand, and it's comforting to know that millions of others are in the same boat or worse than us.

Sarah: My son teaches me how to focus on the moment at hand. Every morning we light a candle and remember we are connected to it all. ■

Carolyn and Leman Anderson

Carolyn: It's hard keeping your distance, and not having the privilege of eating out with friends. But we learned to adjust. It brought household members together; parents and their children began to bond. ■



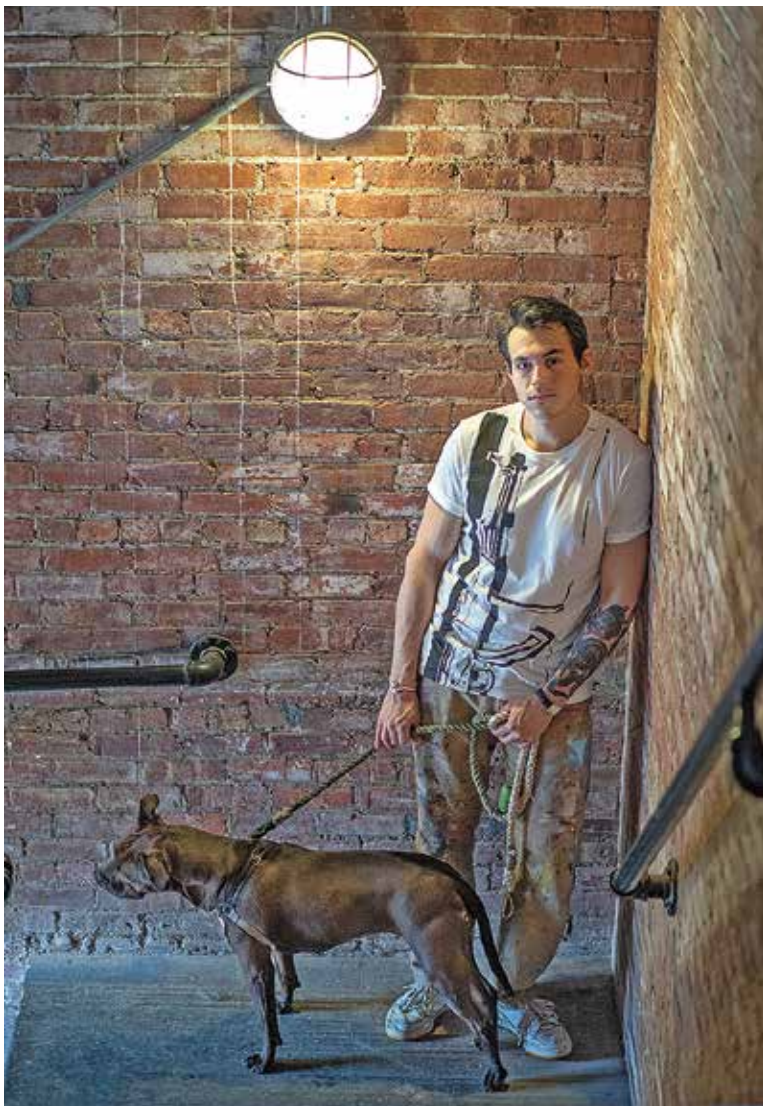


Allyn Peterson and Jennifer Meister with Naomi, 4, and Riley, 8

Jennifer: I miss family terribly. I used to see family in New York City about every other weekend, but now it's been about two months. One thing I've enjoyed is cooking more, gardening and riding bikes as a family. The thing I like least is not knowing when it will end.

Riley: I like homeschooling because whenever you want, you can take a break and rest.

Allyn: I'm a private person, so I think the isolation affects me less than others, generally. There is a sense of normalcy I certainly miss, but I also hope our remote connectivity keeps evolving. Not long ago, our ancestors "shut down" life during the winter because the cold proved too great a risk. We're learning a lot about essential services and adapting productivity. ■



Kolt Reagle

I spent a good amount of time feeling scared like everyone else. I would start painting and almost instantly stop before I picked up a brush and question why I was working. Who am I painting for

if the world was shut down? It was so much easier to feel negative and wallow in the uncertainty. But I would wake up every day and get excited about the stuff we were going to work on that didn't mean anything. It didn't matter if it was good or bad or just a silly idea. ■



Gail Wauford and Dimitri Archip

Gail: It's a challenge to fight the depression that comes from being out of work and isolated. When this is over, I'm going to give everyone I know the longest, most

heartfelt hug.

Dimitri: As stressful as the lockdown was, I feel fortunate to be living in Beacon, where the popu-

lation is not as dense as it is in Brooklyn, where we used to live. Of all the people I've known in my life, I am lucky to have been quarantined with Gail. She has been my North Star. ■

THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)

For a complete listing of events, see
highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

COMMUNITY

SAT 7

Upcycled Clothing Pop-Up

COLD SPRING

10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Summer Set
59 Chestnut St. | shopsummer.com

Local designer Maisy Curto's reimagined styles are on view and for sale.

SAT 7

Mount Beacon Memorial

FISHKILL

10:30 a.m. Fishkill Veterans Park
793 Route 52

This ceremony will pay tribute to the pilots lost on the 75th and 85th anniversaries of two Navy plane crashes on the mountain.

SAT 7

Virtual Gala

COLD SPRING

6 p.m. Putnam History Museum
putnamhistorymuseum.org

This online benefit will honor Tara and James Carroll with the Trailblazers Award. Enjoy live performances and a silent auction. *Cost: \$60 (\$50 members)*

WED 11

Veterans' Day Ceremony

BEACON

11 a.m. Memorial Building
413 Main St., Beacon

Hosted by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 666

WED 11

Veterans' Day Ceremony

COLD SPRING

11 a.m. St. Mary's Lawn
Chestnut and Main

Hosted by VFW Post 2362 and American Legion Post 275

WED 11

Blood Drive

COLD SPRING

1 – 7 p.m. Our Lady of Loretto | 24 Fair St.
800-933-2566 | nybc.org/donate

Blood banks are reporting

shortages due to the pandemic. Appointments preferred.

STAGE & SCREEN

SAT 7

An Afternoon of Poetry

GARRISON

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

Isabel Sobral Campos, Ellen Devlin and Alison Stone will read their work via Zoom.

SAT 14

The Artichoke

BEACON

8 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
845-831-4988 | artichokeshow.com

Drew Prochaska will host this livestream of the storytelling series with John Blesso, Kambri Crews, Christian Finnegan, Jim O'Grady, Michele Carlo and Martin Dockery. See Page 11. *Cost: \$15*

SUN 15

Sunday Stroll: Bear Necessities

CORNWALL

10 a.m. Outdoor Discovery Center
120 Muser Drive | 845-534-5506 x204
hnm.org

Learn about hibernation, what bears eat and their other habits during this guided hike. *Cost: \$8 to \$10 (\$6 to \$8 for members)*

KIDS & FAMILY

SAT 7

Family Nature Exploration

PHILIPSTOWN

11 a.m. Hubbard Lodge
2880 Route 9
putnamhighlandsaudubon.org

Environmental educator Pete Salmansohn will lead classic nature games and look for signs of birds and other animals. Families can safely participate in their own small group. Masks required. For ages 6 and older.

SAT 14

Teen Mandala Workshop

COLD SPRING

1 p.m. Butterfield Library
845-265-3040 | butterfieldlibrary.org

Pick up paint and tools after registering and learn how to make a mandala using rocks.

TALKS

SUN 8

David Hollander

COLD SPRING

4 p.m. Chapel Restoration
45 Market St.
845-265-5537 | chapelrestoration.org

The author will read from his latest novel, *Anthropica*.

MON 9

New Trustees Q&A

COLD SPRING

7 p.m. Via Zoom
highlandscurrent.org/current-conversations

A *Current Conversation* with Kathleen Foley and Heidi Bender, who were elected on Nov. 3 as Cold Spring Village Board trustees. Register online.

TUES 10

Book Club

BEACON

1:30 p.m. Memorial Park
198 Robert Cahill Drive
beaconlibrary.org

The Howland Library group will meet in the park to discuss *The Night Tiger*, by Yangsze Choo. The rain date is WED 11.

TUES 10

Creating a More Just Future

GARRISON

4 p.m. Garrison Institute
garrisoninstitute.org

Caroline Voldstad Daniell and Columbia Law School professor Elizabeth Emens will discuss how mindfulness training can help young people evolve social justice.

TUES 10

The Zero Carbon Home

PHILIPSTOWN

7 p.m. Ecological Citizen's Project
bit.ly/367xJjd

Physicist David Green, who created a carbon-free home, will talk about how people can lower their footprint in this event organized with the Philipstown Garden Club.

THURS 12

Dekila Chungyalpa

GARRISON

2 p.m. Garrison Institute
garrisoninstitute.org

As part of the Pathways for



Transposed, Nov. 14

Planetary Health Series, institute co-founder Jonathan F.P. Rose will speak over Zoom with the founder of the Loka Initiative about her work on implementing global conservation strategies.

SAT 14

Make Your Own Grapevine Wreath

BREWSTER

10 a.m. – Noon.
Cornell Cooperative Extension
putnam.cce.cornell.edu/events

Register to pick up materials and join a Zoom workshop. *Cost: \$10 to \$30*

SUN 15

History Talk: Revolutionary Tarrytown

2 p.m. Warner Library
RW250.org/events

Erik Weisberg, the historian for Revolutionary Westchester 250, will discuss "traitors, spies, patriots, allies, British boats and Hessian ghosts" via Zoom.

SUN 15

Bountiful

GARRISON

4 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
845-424-3020 | desmondfishlibrary.org
bit.ly/CharityShumway

Charity Shumway of Garrison will discuss her new novel with Melissa Inouye over Zoom.

MUSIC

SAT 7

The Valley Hour

BEACON

8 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
howlandculturalcenter.org

Analyse & Ryan bring together performers for a monthly livestream series. Cindy Cashdollar and Upstate are the guests. *Cost: \$12*

SUN 15

Jesse Mills and Rieko Aizawa

BEACON

8 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
howlandmusic.org

As part of the AliveMusica series, the violinist and pianist will present a livestreamed program that includes Messiaen's *Theme and Variations*, Beethoven's *Sonata No. 10*, Chihara's *Storm* and Ravel's *Violin Sonata No. 2*. *Cost: \$20 donation*

VISUAL ART

WED 11

Chairs Re-Created

GARRISON

10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Garrison Art Center
23 Garrison's Landing
garrisonartcenter.org

Chairs donated by supporters and re-created by 44 artists as a fundraiser for the art center will be on exhibit through SAT 14.

SAT 14

Transposed

BEACON

Noon – 8 p.m. BAU Gallery | 506 Main St.
845-440-7584 | baugallery.org

Pamela Zaremba's photographs, created during the pandemic, explore domesticity.

CIVIC

MON 9

City Council

BEACON

7 p.m. City Hall
845-838-5011 | cityofbeacon.org

MON 9

School Board

BEACON

7 p.m. Beacon High School
845-838-6900 | beaconk12.org

MON 9

Dutchess Legislature

POUGHKEEPSIE

7 p.m. Via livestream | bit.ly/34XJCZv

TUES 10

Dutchess Budget Town Hall

POUGHKEEPSIE

Noon. Via Facebook
facebook.com/DutchessCoGov

TUES 10

Board of Trustees

COLD SPRING

7:30 p.m. Village Hall
845-265-3611 | coldspringny.gov

WED 11

Village Board

NELSONVILLE

7 p.m. Village Hall
845-265-2500 | nelsonvilleny.gov

THURS 12

Town Board

PHILIPSTOWN

7:30 p.m. Philipstown Community Center
845-265-5200 | philipstown.com



Veterans Day Nov. 11



CHAIRS

re-created

Garrison Art Center

garrisonartcenter.org

Online Auction Benefit
Bidding through Nov.14, 5pm
Live viewing Nov.11-14, 10-5
Garrison Art Center Galleries

53 chairs donated by arts supporters were re-created by 44 artists as a gift to the Art Center. We hope their generosity inspires yours.

Use phone camera here to see auction



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Morphicism
Beacon
Paulette's
Cold Spring
Raven Rose
Beacon
Split Rock Books
Cold Spring
**Support local
business**

Beacon Shops *(from Page 11)*

ago because they missed the East Coast but did not want to live in a large city. “We love the support for artists here,” Hulet says. They closed the online store because Holbrook was focusing on producing custom orders for photo shoots for marketing campaigns and magazines.

But Holbrook missed having his work accessible to the general public, and he and Hulet decided that Beacon needed a Main Street pottery studio. “I had always wanted a store, but never had time,” Holbrook says. “We’d been talking about it for eight years, discussing what it would look like. As soon as we moved to Beacon, it was like ‘Oh, this is a town where this could happen.’”

Because of the pandemic shutdown, Holbrook was receiving fewer photography assignments, and Hulet was working at the Poughkeepsie Day School, which closed. Interest rates were also at record lows, allowing them to create a business plan “that actually works,” says Hulet, who is handling the legal and business ends of the shop. They rented the space formerly occupied by Catalyst Gallery.

Holbrook’s designs are focused on function, he says, with three sizes for most plates and bowls, tumblers for water and wine, bud vases, planters and home decor items that also work on a table.

“It’s about introducing something handmade into people’s lives, but not making it complicated,” Holbrook says. “It’s easily cleaned and can go in the microwave. We



Inside Afton Road

Photo by Rick Holbrook

do a lot of custom work, too. You can come in and look, and we can make whatever you see, in the color you’re interested in.”

All the works are thrown in the shop and fired, glazed and fired again at Holbrook and Hulet’s home nearby. “We created our own propriety colors, not replicable, to create our brand,” Holbrook says. “In the shop, we’ve grouped segments of color by themselves, but the idea is to pair, mixing the collections together.”

Customers are invited to move pieces



The centerpiece table at Berte

Photo by Jennifer Young

around a center table. There is also a small selection of linens, table-runners, napkins and plants, and Holbrook hosts pottery workshops for adults and families.

Afton Road is open Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., or by appointment. See aftonroad.com or call 845-745-0521.

Berte

500 Main St.

The Berte boutique, built around calm

and delight, couldn’t be better timed, although the coronavirus did quash any plans for a grand opening.

“How do you do a grand opening during a pandemic?” asks owner Aimée deSimone. “It’s like, ‘Come one, come all, but only six at a time.’”

The shop welcomed its first customers on Oct. 24 to browse its collection of home-made goods.

DeSimone was a television and film

(Continued on Page 21)

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Tel: 845-469-6006

WARWICK

11 First Street
Warwick, NY 10990
Tel: 845-544-7944

(Continued from Page 20)

producer for a decade but said the travel burned her out. She had wanted to own a shop since her early 20s and found that recently she was “gravitating to things which could bring me joy: human-to-human interaction — so exciting and thrilling.”

Feeling she had “reached the crescendo” of her production career, deSimone enrolled in a business entrepreneurial course through the Women’s Enterprise Development Center, which has offices in White Plains and Poughkeepsie.

“It was a 60-hour course over four or five months and it helped me paint the picture of what Berte [pronounced Ber-tie] would be and what the mission and feel of the shop would be: A place that allows you to settle, to rest, to have goods to help you live in the moment more,” she says. “This is something I struggled with. That mission was the foundation for how I hand-picked so many of the makers. ‘Curated’ shops sound like they could all be the same, but whoever is in charge — it’s their collection.”

She developed Berte online before expanding to Brooklyn Flea, Phoenicia Flea and FAD Market. “You need to do the markets so you get a sense of people” and what products they respond to, she explains. “I started to mold the business, make it more clear.” All the while, deSimone was still working full time in production. “It was an intense side hustle,” she says.

In February 2019, she and her husband moved to Beacon. “We knew there was a next



Aimé deSimone at Berte

Photo by Jennifer Young

chapter after living in the New York City for 10 years, and we’d been hiking in the area for five or six years and looking for places to have a brew and burger afterward.”

After the move, deSimone says she “started connecting with little businesses here. I was set on finding my people. I left

my job in June 2019 and started committing to the shop full time, on the lookout for a storefront. At the beginning of this year I thought, ‘It’s finally going to happen this spring.’ Then COVID happened.”

In April, her father-in-law died of COVID. His death motivated her to stop “pushing

this dream forward. This is something I had been talking about for three years and now nothing was going to get in the way. This determined COVID doesn’t define us. I need to make this positive imprint on this year.”

She found her space in what had formerly been Loopy Mango, a yarn shop. Her store is stocked with brands and objects she has discovered at markets, on Instagram and at trade shows. The four main categories are home decor, accessories, apothecary and stationery. Most of the makers are women, and close to 20 percent are BIPOC [Black, Indigenous and people of color] makers, plus everything is “sustainable, useful and fun.”

She chose the name Berte because she “wanted the shop to have a personable, friendly, approachable feel, not expensive and out-of-reach. I was looking at baby names and thought the spelling was fun and different, and it sounded nice. People are pronouncing it in lots of different ways, and the mispronunciations tell me about the person.” Bowie, the shop corgi, also adds fun.

The atmosphere is intentional, says deSimone. “There’s an exploration element to it. It’s not super-cluttered, it’s clean, with great colors but a minimalist feel. The people who enjoy themselves here get down on their knees and find what’s on the floor. There’s always new stuff to find.”

Berte is open Thursday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday, 12 to 5 p.m. See shopberte.com.

(Continued on Page 22)



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Alaina James at Blend's New Windsor store

Photo by Andy Kropa/Pursuit

Beacon Shops (from Page 21)

Blend Smoothie and Salad Bar 135 Main St.

Six years ago, Alaina James and José Medina were looking for a healthy, quick restaurant in New Windsor without luck.

"There was nowhere in the area that you could grab an all-natural protein shake, a real fresh-pressed juice, or create your own salad — besides a supermarket," James says.

So they created their own in New Windsor, followed by branches in Middletown, Mohegan Lake, Monroe and, most recently, Beacon.

Although opening the takeout shop during the pandemic has been challenging, "we felt the community needed healthy, immune-boosting food now more than ever," she says. "Blend and Beacon fit hand-in-hand, from the health-conscious community to the outgoing personalities that make up such a small great city."

Blend's stock includes chopped salads,

wraps, protein shakes, fresh-pressed juices, acai bowls, energy bits and fruit carvings.

"When different fruits and vegetables come in season we incorporate them into the menu," James says. "From apple butternut squash soup to watermelon, when an ingredient is at its peak, you will be sure to find it at Blend."

Blend is open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. See blendsmoothiebar.com or call 845-440-8918.



Karen Donahue

Photo provided

Echo Closes

Beacon toy store/clothing shop shuts

By Alison Rooney

Karen Donahue, who operated Echo, a dual storefront with toys and women's clothing and accessories, ended her 20-year run in Beacon on Oct. 30.

She said the pandemic shutdown had hurt business, but that she also has been dealing with chronic health issues. "I'm looking forward to better health and new ventures," she wrote online. "Stay tuned."

Echo began as an art gallery displaying her mother's hand-painted tables and wind-up toys, Donahue said in an interview in June. She moved twice as her inventory expanded.

Donahue said the mandated closure of businesses by the state had hurt Echo particularly because "this store is very much an experience — you come in and you touch everything — so it didn't feel good to allow people to continue doing that. And if the perception was that I was putting people in danger by staying open, that could affect sales."

Echo partially re-opened in June but was struggling. "We can keep limping along," she said at the time. "But if this is the forever plan — wearing masks and staying 6 feet apart — my business is personal. It's a lot of 'What do you recommend for a 5-year-old?' We'll try our best and wait and see."

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Planning Board**

Site Visit – November 15th, 2020

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Mouths to Feed

Unripeness is All

By Celia Barbour

Ask around for advice on what to do with an abundance of green tomatoes, and chances are you'll be told to fry them, Southern style.



It's not a terrible suggestion. You slice up a couple of firm, tart tomatoes, dredge each slice in seasoned flour, dip it in egg and cornmeal, and fry it in oil. And great, yum: 20 minutes later, you have a crispy, hot treat you can eat in small quantities before reaching utter satiety, an oil-and-batter-spattered stove and seven pounds of green tomatoes still waiting to be cooked. Or at least that's how things looked in my kitchen last week.

It's a bit like asking for advice on how to get rid of all the fallen leaves in your yard and being told to make a leaf-print placemat: Nice idea, but it doesn't get to the heart of the problem.

As with many things, the first signs I was heading toward a tomato crisis appeared gradually: a tomato here, a tomato there. Then the frost arrived, and I found myself in possession of such a great quantity of green tomatoes that, having filled a baking sheet and breakfast tray, they spilled over to occupy the bench in our mudroom.

2020 has offered us many occasions to think about how we each, as individuals, can find right-sized solutions to monumental problems. One thing seems clear: our personal contributions, however trivial they might sometimes appear, matter as part of a collective effort. Small gestures — voting, wearing a mask — can have a big impact.

But kitchen wisdom doesn't always extrapolate neatly onto global issues, and vice versa. I fried up two green tomatoes,

which my family couldn't even finish, and spent half an hour scrubbing the stove.

Meanwhile, those tomatoes were continuing to ripen. As it happens, that's a good thing, since it reduces their bitterness along with certain alkaloids that have a reputation for being toxic. Are they? I decided to look it up, half-hoping to find an excuse to compost my remaining harvest.

No such luck. According to food scientist and writer Harold McGee, "There's scant evidence for tomato toxicity in the medical and veterinary literature." Indeed, in a 2009 article in *The New York Times*, McGee quotes a Food and Drug Administration research chemist who's found that the alkaloids in green tomatoes are not only "relatively benign" but reduce cholesterol in animals and can inhibit the growth of human cancer cells.

Nudged to carry on, I probed my memory for inspiration. And there it was: I would roast my green tormentors — er, tomatoes. Several decades ago, I went through a phase of slow-roasting regular tomatoes by the dozens. Sprinkled with a little salt and sugar, they'd turn rich and a little chewy, and were amazing on sandwiches, or added to grain dishes and salads. Unlike fresh tomatoes, they also kept well in the freezer.

It took a while to chop and roast up the entire collection. But the resulting nuggets were dense and flavorful, and I decided they'd make a fine addition to corn bread or biscuits, the latter of which I often make for Thanksgiving. I whipped up a batch of cheddar-jalapeno-green-tomato biscuits and was thrilled with the result. So were the half-dozen people I forced to try them (I like to do my research on actual humans, scientist-style). The rest went into the freezer, to await better days.

Seen from one perspective, cooking is all about precision: measuring cups, baking times, temperatures, rules. But it's also about improvisation, adaptation and persistence. Maybe, then, there's a life lesson in here after all: Stay loose and keep trying. Things might just turn out OK after all.

“As with many things, the first signs I was heading toward a tomato crisis appeared gradually: a tomato here, a tomato there.”



Jalapeno-Cheddar-Green Tomato Biscuits

Makes 10 to 12, depending on the size of your biscuit cutter

If you don't have buttermilk, mix ¼ teaspoon vinegar (cider or white) into ½ cup whole milk, and stir.

- 1 batch roasted green tomatoes (see below), cooled
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese (about 2 ounces)
- 1 jalapeno, minced
- 2 cups plus 1½ tablespoons all-purpose flour, plus more for countertop
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- Black pepper
- 1 stick butter, cut into pieces, plus 2 tablespoons melted
- ½ cup buttermilk (see headnote)
- 1 large egg

Heat the oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment. Combine the roasted tomatoes, cheddar, and jalapeno in a medium bowl, and toss with 1½ tablespoons flour to coat thoroughly. Set aside

Place all the dry ingredients into the bowl of a food processor, and pulse to combine. Add the butter pieces, and pulse until the mixture has the texture of coarse meal. Whisk together the buttermilk and egg, and add to the flour mixture, pulsing briefly. Add the tomato-cheddar mixture, and pulse again, just until the dough comes together.

Turn the dough out onto a flour-dusted surface and pat into a rough rectangle. Fold the rectangle in half, turn it clockwise 90 degrees, pat, and fold again. Press into a 1-inch high rectangle. Cut into rounds using a biscuit cutter, or use a knife to make square biscuits. Brush the tops with melted butter. Bake until lightly browned, about 15 minutes.

Roasted Green Tomatoes

Makes 1 recipe

- 1½ cups green tomatoes (about 8 ounces), cut into a half-inch dice
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Place the cut tomatoes in a sieve and allow to drain, tossing occasionally. Line a baking sheet with parchment. Spread the tomatoes evenly, sprinkle with the sugar and salt, and roast, 25 to 30 minutes, or until just starting to brown, turning the pan halfway through.

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Roots & Shoots

The November Garden

By Pamela Doan

As I listened to the leaf blowers run for hours to get my neighbor's lawn as empty as a concert hall



in 2020, I pondered for the 37th year of my life why people care about leaves on lawns so much.

I don't have the answer and Pennsylvania doesn't have a ballot count yet as I write this. But maybe there is something in that connection that has to do with controlling the outdoors and making things feel controlled when they're not.

A yard I pass frequently has never had a flower, shrub, tree or weed growing in its unbroken acre of lawn. I have made the same joke about how the people who live there must have had a traumatic incident with a daffodil so many times that my husband doesn't even hear it anymore. It is tidy, a smooth expanse of green, weekly mown regardless of growth, and imparts a lockdown on flora and fauna.

My personality as displayed by my yard to passersby must look like disorder and underachieving. But overly ambitious can be mistaken for underachieving when it's misunderstood. Everything has a purpose; it's just that you don't see it unless you see an ecosystem instead of a yard. That's what happens with overly ambitious gardening. I quit my illusions of controlling nature. My role is facilitator and nurturer. I am here



Leaves on the lawn are beautiful, too.

Photo by P. Doan

to help the landscape thrive, with diversity and justice for all.

Leaves are one of nature's ways of showing us we aren't in control. They fall off our trees year after year and don't care where they land or what you do with them. I've read a statistic that an acre of trees drops up to 2 tons of leaves each year. Even well-intentioned gardeners understandably have dilemmas about what to do with them all. Here's a breakdown of different approaches.

Leave the leaves

This is a public awareness campaign and approach to the landscape that strives to reduce the noise and environmental pollution of gas-powered tools like leaf blowers and

preserve habitat for overwintering insects and amphibians. Research shows that fallen leaves in home landscapes play an important role in the survival of many pollinators, such as butterflies and moths. The mites, spiders and other insects that hide out in there are also food for birds and other wildlife. More than 40 million acres of clean-swept lawns in America contribute to their losses.

Grass won't die during the winter if leaves cover it. It's dormant. Studies show that leaf cover can actually improve lawns. Mulch leaves into the lawn by running a lawn mower over it and leaving the shredded pieces to decompose or leave the leaves where they land on the lawn.

Where ticks are a concern, make paths

through the yard to walk and pass through with less risk. You can also leave a border or other area of the yard that isn't frequented as often with leaf cover if you aren't comfortable with the entire yard being leaf-strewn.

Leaf mulch

Shredded leaves make great mulch in flowerbeds. They will decompose and add organic matter to the soil over time and protect the soil and plant roots from the heave and thaw cycle during winter. The key here is "shredded." Whole leaves break down slower but can still be left in flowerbeds and pulled back in late winter. Think of plants in a forest. They sprout every season without help from humans with leaf blowers or rakes. Perennials will find their way.

Leafpiles

Leaves can be pulled into an area of the yard and left to decompose. In a year or so, they will break down into a rich source of carbon for your compost, garden or flowerbeds. Apply directly in the spring or fall.

This leaf mold is a rich source of calcium and magnesium. Mixing leaves with a nitrogen source will speed up the process. A pile doesn't need to be covered but that will also break it down faster.

Where to clear

Get up on the roof and clean the gutters. Sweep or rake leaves from paths or other hard surfaces where they can be slippery. Keep window wells and home exhausts clear. Leaves collected on wood surfaces hold moisture and can contribute to rot. The commonality here is all things not part of nature need to be maintained.

Enjoy your messy yard and remember: it's not underachieving, it's overly ambitious.

Putnam Budget *(from Page 8)*

we are making this move."

Some legislators described the marine unit as an unnecessary expense.

The Hudson "is not in this county. I believe it's next to this county," Legislator Carl Albano of Carmel said. "We don't go out of our county in any other direction to police. I don't see the justification" for a patrol on the river, which is "a state waterway" and therefore "should be policed very well by the state."

Montgomery replied that county jurisdiction extends into the Hudson.

Legislator Ginny Nacerino of Patterson said the marine unit relies solely on overtime funding and is "a redundancy" because of the state and Coast Guard presence. "It's not a matter of defunding. It's a matter of looking for efficiencies."

Castellano, Gouldman and Jonke joined Montgomery to oppose scuttling the marine unit.

The majority similarly rejected transferring \$65,000 for road-patrol overtime, although Jonke explained it reflected a 12.5 percent raise given deputies under their union

contract. Langley had suggested a road patrol budget of \$716,000 for 2021; Odell pared that to \$520,000; Jonke's failed compromise would have increased it to \$585,000.

Questions resurfaced on Wednesday (Nov. 4) when the Legislature voted 5-4 to postpone action on three Sheriff's Department requests to address overtime needs by transferring \$28,320 from accounts at the jail, which has fewer inmates than in the past. Legislator Neal Sullivan of Carmel-Mahopac recommended holding back "until we have more information from the sheriff." In recent weeks, he said, "we've asked for more complete justification, the reasons why overtime is required." Moreover, he added, "we have \$81,000 left in the [2020] budget for road patrol overtime."

In memos to the Legislature, Sheriff's Department officials attributed the overtime demands, dating from July through September, to such developments as street protests, absences of deputies on military leave, COVID-19 and contract obligations.

"Overtime has been a major issue" for a decade, "even with the last sheriff," Langley's Republican predecessor, Albano said on Oct. 29. He said concerns include potentially

high future pension outlays based on deputies' pay and overtime today. He said the county wants consultants to review Sheriff's Department policies and to sequester the money meanwhile. "It's a goal to lower overtime if feasible, if it can be done in a safe way and proper manner," he said.

"I don't want to set money aside for consultants to come in and take it," Montgomery responded.

Nacerino said sequestered funds remain in county coffers for eventual use. For now, she said, "is it not incumbent on this Legislature to see how we could save money? Do we just continue down an unsustainable path?"

Montgomery advocated another approach: "Hire more deputies."

Despite sidelining the marine and road patrol funds, the legislators voted unanimously to approve other Sheriff's Department appropriations, including \$58,845 in salary increases for captains and lieutenants.

"Not one member of this Legislature wants to defund the police" and any such allegation "is a complete lie. It's garbage," Sullivan emphasized.

Addonizio said that at \$30.8 million, even

with cuts, the Sheriff's Department and jail together represent about 20 percent of the budget.

Nacerino said she believes "wholeheartedly that all my colleagues support the Sheriff's Department and back the blue. I feel it's unfortunate that our allegiance" is considered synonymous with "approving everything that comes before us. It's my hope and expectation that respect is reciprocal."

In an Oct. 22 letter to legislators, Langley wrote that he learned of the likely marine unit cuts and other reductions 15 minutes before the draft budget went to the Legislature in early October and that he never was allowed to discuss the matter with Odell.

After the budget public hearing on Oct. 26, he thanked the public for "recognizing the shortcomings of this budget and the hard and diligent work that is done" by the Sheriff's Department "to keep our community a safe place to live in, work in and visit, given the hurdles we must overcome on a daily basis." He also pledged to "continue to serve the people of Putnam County faithfully as a dedicated law enforcement professional, not a politician."

SPORTS

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Section 1 Announces Fall Playoff Plan

Haldane and Beacon will compete with nearby schools

By Skip Pearlman

The officials who oversee high school sports in Section 1, which includes 82 schools in Putnam, Dutchess, Rockland and Westchester counties, released their plan on Oct. 26 for the fall state tournament that will begin on Nov. 16 and be completed before Thanksgiving.

The New York State Public High School Athletic Association earlier announced there would be no regional or state tournaments in 2020. The sectional plan is to hold a single-elimination tournament with a division for small schools and another for larger schools.

The cross-country competition will be held at the Hudson Valley Superdome in Milton on Nov. 21 and 22, while boys' and girls' soccer will be staged at the field of each higher seed. Girls' tennis will be held Nov. 8 and 14 at a regional host that has yet to be determined.

The final day for regular-season games will be Nov. 14. A meeting to seed teams will be held on Nov. 15.

Haldane and North Salem, both Class C schools (determined by student enrollment), will compete in the Putnam-Northern Westchester small-school division with Class A schools Lakeland, Peekskill, Walter Panas, Hendrick Hudson and Byram Hills, and Class B schools Putnam Valley, Briarcliff and Croton Harmon.

Beacon and Our Lady of Lourdes, both in Class A, will compete in the Dutchess division with Class AA schools Arlington, John Jay of East Fishkill and Ketcham.

Ahmed Dwidar, who coaches the

Haldane boys' soccer team, voiced what most Section 1 coaches and athletes seem to be thinking. "We are so lucky to be playing, and we're so glad to have another opportunity to pick up a game in which our seniors might be able to get a win," he said.

Section 1 officials also announced they would realign the leagues for basketball, baseball and softball to minimize team travel during the pandemic and authorized teams to hold offseason workouts. Winter sports are scheduled to begin on Nov. 20, although officials said they were waiting for guidance from the state on whether basketball, hockey and wrestling could take place.

Haldane Roundup

By Skip Pearlman

Boys' Soccer

The Blue Devils had their opportunities at Arlington High School on Wednesday (Nov. 4), but the Admirals secured a 4-1 victory.

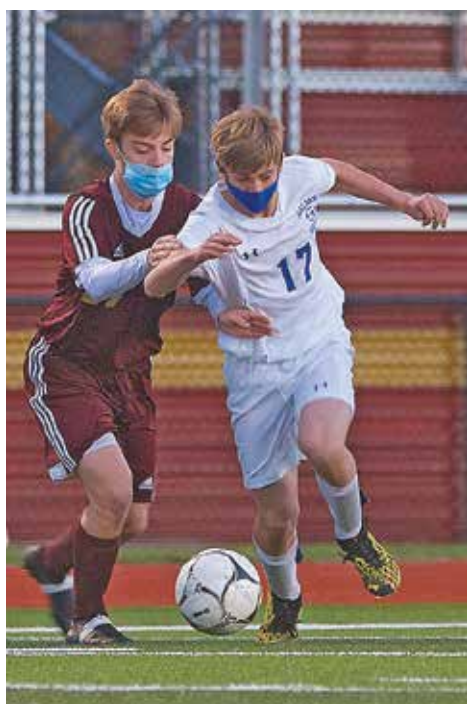
Haldane's goal came early in the second half when freshman Emilio Schweizer finished a pass from Clement Grossman, another freshman. Keeper Ronin Kiter stopped eight shots.

"I'm so proud of the boys, to hang with a big school like that," said Coach Ahmed Dwidar. "You watch and you learn from mistakes. Remember, we're a young team with eight freshmen, but we'll be dangerous in the future."

Defensively, John Dwyer and Matt Silhavy both had strong games, he said.

A day earlier, the Blue Devils were shut out at North Salem, 3-0. Kiter made six saves in the loss.

The game was played on a grass field and "our team is not used to that," Dwidar said. "We also have some key injuries, and North Salem is a tough matchup. They have some big players, and we're a small team. We did have a lot of good opportunities, including a missed penalty kick."



Matt Silhavy (17) battles for possession against Arlington. Photo by S. Pearlman

The Blue Devils are 3-7, but Dwidar said he is not disappointed in the record. "We're rebuilding," he said. "We already have one more win than last year, and we're playing a good style of soccer, improving all the time. We've been right there in several of our losses, so I don't believe our record is indicative of the way the team has played."

Haldane is scheduled to travel to Poughkeepsie to face Lourdes on Saturday (Nov. 7).



Mazzie Maxwell controls the ball at midfield against Croton-Harmon. Photo by Scott Warren

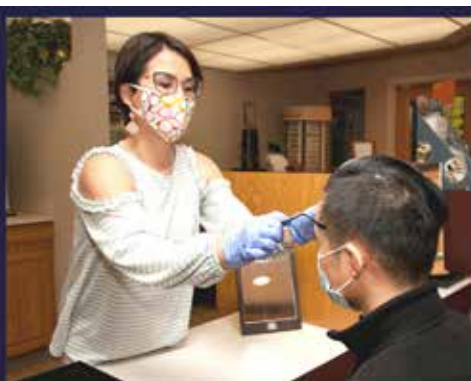
Girls' Soccer

Despite a number of offensive opportunities on Tuesday (Nov. 3) afternoon, Haldane wasn't able to find the back of the net in a 2-0 loss to visiting Croton-Harmon.

Ruby Poses had 11 saves in goal for the Blue Devils.

"We played a pretty good first half but just couldn't cash in," said Coach Steve

(Continued on Page 26)



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SPORTS

Roundup *(from Page 25)*

Schweikhart. "Croton had an energetic start for the second half, and they burned us on a couple of through balls that led to breakaway goals."

"Bianca Harmancin and Chloe Rowe had strong games on the wings," he said. "They were dangerous all day. Essie Florke and Ella Ashburn did a solid job defensively; Mazzie Maxwell did a great job in the middle, especially in the first half; and Finola Kiter was a force all afternoon."

Haldane (0-1-6) will finish its season with four road games. The team is scheduled to visit Arlington today (Nov. 6), Beacon on Tuesday (Nov. 10), Lourdes on Wednesday (Nov. 11) and North Salem on Nov. 14.

Girls' Tennis

The Blue Devils fell to Croton Harmon, 5-0, last week before sweeping a double-header against Valhalla and edging North Salem, 3-2.

Defeating rival North Salem was "a big step toward next year," said Coach Simon Dudar. "They're a talented and strong team. We've been playing our best tennis lately and gaining confidence in our talent and ability."

Haldane got singles wins from Mairead O'Hara (8-1) and Caroline Nelson (8-3), and a doubles win from Emilia Osborn and Fiona Shanahan (8-3). Amanda Johanson lost at singles (8-4) and Ellen O'Hara and Betsy McBride fell in doubles play (8-4).

In its sweep over Valhalla, the Blue Devils got wins from O'Hara (8-1, 8-2), Nelson (8-1, 8-1), Johanson (8-4, 8-5), Osborn and Shanahan (8-3, 8-5), O'Hara and Isabella Crofts (8-3) and Crofts and Julie Shields (8-5).

"Our captains, Mairead, Caroline and Amanda, have begun embracing their lead-



Haldane's Everett Campanile, Walter Hoess and Luke Parella compete in the league championship race. Photo provided

ership roles," Dudar said. "They've been critical in pushing us toward competing for a team sectional championship."

Haldane was scheduled to face Beacon today (Nov. 6), and O'Hara and Nelson will be competing in a regional postseason tournament next week.

Cross-country

Running against North Salem and Croton, the boys' and girls' teams each won league titles on Saturday (Oct. 31) at the Section 1, Conference 3 championships in Milton.

Walter Hoess won in 19:09, followed by Everett Campanile (19:10) and Luke Parella (19:27). Conrad White took fifth (20:38), Rowan Kuzminski was eighth (20:54), John Kisslinger was 10th (20:58) and Julian

Ambrose was 11th (21:13).

Other finishers were Ben Strol (22:31), Sam Bates (24:54) and Roy Smith (25:02).

"What a fantastic effort," said Coach Tom Locascio. "Everyone exceeded expectations. I'm so happy for the boys. The feeling of accomplishment was magnified as a result of earning it through hard work."

For the girls, Shannon Ferri was second at 21:57, Caroline Cates took fourth in 24:13 and Celia Drury was sixth at 25:22. Other finishers were Helen Nichols (29:54), Elizabeth Nelson (30:35) and Alison Nichols (31:34).

"Caroline and Celia ran their best races of the year," Locascio said. "They both held off strong individual performances from North Salem and Croton runners."

The Blue Devils teams will compete in the Section 1 championships on Nov. 14 at Milton.

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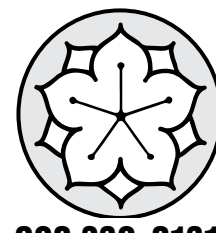
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Puzzles

CROSS CURRENT

ACROSS

1. Coagulate

5. Chooses

9. Evil

12. Staffer

13. Father of Japheth

14. Time of your life?

15. Battle zone, often

17. Member of a pride

18. Unsophisticated

19. Creates

21. Yon bloke

22. Use

24. Cage components

27. Cattle call

28. Glasgow gal

31. Retirement plan acronym

32. Museum fill

33. Agt.

34. Quarter-bushel

36. Where — at

37. Crucial time

38. Fate

40. Circle ratio

41. Alamo combatant

43. More considerate

47. — -Locka, Fla.

48. Half a golf course

51. Prohibit

52. Green land

53. Sportscaster Andrews

54. On in years

55. Judicial garment

11. Society newcomers

16. Definite article

20. Completely

22. Heart line?

23. Cookware

24. Rend

25. Anger

26. Contrarily

27. Cripple

29. Vast expanse

30. Bond, for one

35. Chiang — -shek

37. Main meal

39. Allude (to)

40. Orchestra's location

41. Newsom of baseball lore

42. October birthstone

43. Dandling site

44. Tragic

45. Oklahoma city

46. Former attorney general

49. Carnival city

50. Sphere

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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 yellow and legal (4)

2 noisy confrontations (7)

3 Ukraine's most populous city (4)

4 like elephants and rhinos (11)

5 "Burn" singer Ellie (8)

6 omitting (8)

7 respect-free quip (4)

SOLUTIONS

PA

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SUDO CURRENT

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

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Answers for Oct. 30 Puzzles

P	A	T	E		H	A	M		A	S	T	A
E	L	A	N		A	G	O		S	N	I	P
C	O	L	D	S	N	A	P		H	A	N	S
S	E	C	O	N	D		E	L	A	P	S	E
			F	O	B		D	U	M	B		
A	F	B		W	A	Y		G	E	E	S	E
D	I	E	S		G	A	G		D	A	U	B
O	B	A	M	A		M	O	M		N	E	B
		N	E	W	T		R	I	P			
I	M	P	A	L	A		I	C	E	A	G	E
B	O	O	R		P	O	L	E	S	T	A	R
I	D	L	E		I	L	L		T	O	G	O
S	E	E	D		R	D	A		S	P	A	S

1. STONE, 2. CONCORD, 3. SURFACE, 4. DETAILS, 5. BEEKEEPER, 6. RAISED, 7. REPHRASE

SPORTS



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DOWNHILL SPRINT

Haldane junior is mountain bike champ

By Michael Turton

Evan Tighe learned to ride a bicycle when he was 3. Fast forward 13 years: On Oct. 25, the Haldane junior won the 2020 Eastern States Cup downhill mountain bike season championship for amateur males ages 15 to 18.

Tighe, 16, began competitive cycling two years ago as part of the Peekskill-based Blue Mountain Split Rocks team, but his first cross-country race left him underwhelmed.

"It's more stamina-based, flat and up and down but not hard, no difficult terrain," he said. "It didn't give me any sort of amazing feeling."

That changed in 2019 when he entered his first Eastern States Cup downhill race, the last of the season, in Plattekill, competing against other 13- to 15-year-olds.

"It was difficult, with big drops into muddy, rocky landings, super sketchy

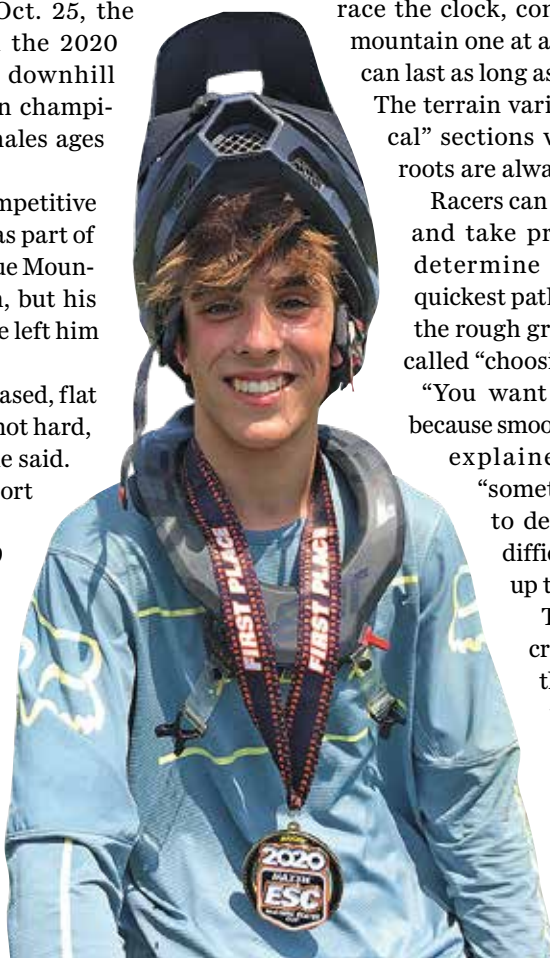
and slippery," he recalled. "I finished ninth of 11 racers but I got the adrenaline rush, and I needed more!"

In downhill mountain biking, riders race the clock, coming down the mountain one at a time. The dash can last as long as three minutes. The terrain varies, but "technical" sections with rocks and roots are always a challenge.

Racers can walk the course and take practice runs to determine the best and quickest path for navigating the rough ground, a process called "choosing your line."

"You want to be smooth because smooth is fast," Tighe explained. However, "sometimes you have to descend a rough, difficult line to make up time."

That can lead to crashes. "I go over the bars so many times," Tighe said. "Before the final, I crashed probably five times during practice."



EVAN'S 2020 SEASON

JULY 19

Blue Mountain, Pennsylvania: **First place**

AUG. 29

Blue Mountain: **First place**

AUG. 30

Blue Mountain: **Second place**

SEPT. 13

Powder Ridge, Connecticut: **Third place**

SEPT. 27

Powder Ridge: **First place**

OCT. 25

Mountain Creek, New Jersey:
Second place



Photos by Jimmy O'Donnell