DOWN THEY GO — After a federal judge denied a request from residents for a temporary restraining order, Homeland Towers and Verizon on Monday (March 28) began cutting down trees on a parcel off Rockledge Road in Nelsonville to make room for a 95-foot cell tower. Although litigation continues in state court, the firms had to begin cutting by March 31 before a seasonal ban goes into effect to protect a species of bats, or wait until November. “The devastation is pretty significant,” said Courtney Tarpley, who lives next door and who, with her husband, filed a lawsuit. “They don’t even have the go-ahead to build the tower.”

New York legalized marijuana on March 31 for recreational use.

Elected Officials in Highlands Must Decide on Pot Sales

State legalizes marijuana but allows local control

By Leonard Sparks

New York this week became the 16th state to legalize the recreational use of marijuana but left it up to local elected officials to decide whether to allow retail sales and on-site consumption. The legislation, which was enacted on Wednesday (March 31) by Gov. Andrew Cuomo and went into effect immediately, allows adults age 21 and older to possess up to 3 ounces; the opening of licensed retail shops where customers can buy and consume marijuana; and a sales tax that officials predict will raise as much as $350 million annually for schools, community grants and a drug treatment and public education fund.

Under the law, cities, towns and villages such as Beacon, Philipstown, Cold Spring must decide whether to allow retail sales and on-site consumption. The legislation does not allow home cultivation. The deadline to decide is March 31 for cities and April 1 for towns and villages.

Elected Officials in Highlands Must Decide on Pot Sales

With council approval, will relocate to DMV lot

By Jeff Simms

After several years of uncertainty, the Beacon Farmers’ Market appears close to securing a long-term location for its outdoor season, which begins May 2. The City Council will vote on Monday (April 5) on a proposal to move the Sunday market from Veterans Place, the block next to the post office and adjacent to Main Street, to the more spacious parking lot at the Dutchess County/Department of Motor Vehicles building at 223 Main St.

City Administrator Chris White said during a council workshop this week that the council will be asked to approve that amendment on Monday, as well as a two-year contract with three possible one-year extensions for the market.

The council seemed ready to relocate the market to the DMV lot two years ago when a number of residents, saying the move was abrupt and would confuse customers, asked it to reconsider.

Much has changed since then. Market officials say the move is critical because the added space will allow the return of more than a dozen vendors while following the state’s social distancing guidelines.

Sember Weinman, the executive director of Common Ground Farm, which has sponsored the market since 2016, said it would like to have a secure spot and noted that, when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, “we could have a really robust market” in the space.

Stable Home for Beacon Market?

With council approval, will relocate to DMV lot

By Jeff Simms

A s the “news desert” in the country expands, more than 200 counties in the U.S. no longer have a single local newspaper, and 1,449 have only one. So it’s highly unusual that Cold Spring, a village of barely 2,000 souls, has two weeklies, including the one you’re holding and The Putnam County News & Recorder, which was founded in 1866. But it isn’t unique. It’s just journalistic history repeating itself.

Reporters Notebook

Philipstown’s Lost Newspaper

The short life of The Times

By Michael Turton

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(Continued on Page 7)
50 FIVE QUESTIONS: DR. MARK HIRKO

By Leonard Sparks

Dr. Mark Hirko is a surgeon and president of the Putnam Hospital Center in Carmel.

What have you seen during the pandemic's waves?

During the late spring and early summer last year, we saw a younger population. But over the winter, you had the older population again, people with health risks. We saw only about 100 people in Putnam the first time around and double that during the second wave. At the peak in early January, more than 35 percent of our hospital beds were COVID cases.

There were far fewer deaths now, despite more cases. Why is that?

We found that people hospitalized with COVID don't need to be on a ventilator. If we use high-flow oxygen we can get the best effect, and when we prone people — put them on their bellies and keep flipping them around — they oxygenate better and it gets them over the hump. A ventilator actually damages your lung. If you had mild to moderate symptoms and you're a week out and you're over 55 years old, the monoclonal antibodies were brought out. We developed strategies to use steroids on patients who had certain risk factors and who came in at a certain point of having COVID-19. That helps reduce some of the inflammation in the lungs and the rest of the body, and the organs didn't shut down.

Has people’s behavior had an effect?

Yes. If they felt sick, they were checking their oxygen levels on their Apple watches. Recognizing some of the basic symptoms prevented people from waiting too long, because if you hit a certain stage where you're really sick, it's almost inevitable that you're going to have a bad complication. It's a matter of getting it early and quickly trying to blunt the effects of the virus.

What do you do when a hospital employee refuses to be vaccinated?

We can't mandate people do it; we suggest that they do it because there is no other cure out there. Not everybody wants it and that’s what’s causing some issues because the employees still keep coming down with it despite us having access to a vaccine.

How do you explain the recent rise in local cases?

We're not seeing the variants people were worried about. It's people being tired of being cooped up. But we have to be vigilant because it's going to take a while to immunize 300 million people. No matter how much vaccine is out there, it's still hard to get it into people's arms.

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I'm happiest and most productive between about 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.; it's been that way for years.

~ Mike Bennett, Beacon

I'm a morning person, but given the option, I'd prefer to sleep in.

~ Emily Shortell, Cold Spring

I can labor all day, but technical writing, conference calls — just three or four hours in the morning.

~ Aaron Sibenac, Cold Spring

ON THE SPOT

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Dutchess Public Transit Seeks Input

Launch survey of riders

Dutchess County has posted a survey online for residents to share information on their use of public and private transportation services. It is available through April 16 at bit.ly/dutchess-transit-survey.

The public transportation agency recently launched a Dutchess Tracker smartphone app, available at the Apple and Google app stores, that shows where buses are located. In Beacon, the agency operates the Free Loop bus as well as routes that connect to Poughkeepsie and Hopewell Junction.

Beacon Invites ‘Parklet’ Applications

Allows businesses to use street spaces

As it did last summer, Beacon said it will allow local businesses to expand operations into outdoor areas and parking spaces to accommodate social-distancing requirements imposed by the state in response to the pandemic. Businesses can apply at bit.ly/beacon-parklet. The “parklet” program will run from May 1 to Nov. 1. While the program was primarily used by restaurants in 2020, city officials said in 2021 it will be open to retailers, gyms and personal care services.

New York to ‘Re-Energize’ Stewart

New logo, plans for regional airport

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey said it plans to “re-energize” New York Stewart International Airport as flight volume returns to pre-pandemic levels.

The agency, which said it has invested $37 million at the airport since 2018, on Tuesday (March 30), announced an incentive program to encourage airlines to add new routes, launched a marketing campaign and completed a federal customs station that can process up to 400 arriving international passengers per hour.

The incentive program will waive fees and provide marketing support for airlines that begin nonstop service to new destinations, especially internationally. (The agency has entered into a joint venture with Groupe Aéroports de Paris, which operates the airports in the French capital.) American Airlines, which offers flights to Philadelphia, will this summer add service to Savannah, Georgia; and Destin, Florida. Allegiant offers nonstop flights from the New Windsor airport to Myrtle Beach and three cities in Florida.

The Port Authority said it also plans to work with nearby attractions such as the Storm King Art Center, Resorts World Catskills, Woodbury Common Premium Outlets and Legoland New York to draw visitors.

Counties to Collect Hazardous Waste

Registration open for May events

Putnam and Dutchess counties are planning household hazardous waste drop-offs in May for residents to dispose of products such as chemicals, cleaners, oil-based paints, pesticides and fluorescent light tubes.

Putnam County will collect waste on May 1 at Fahnestock State Park and Dutchess on May 8 at the Department of Public Works in Poughkeepsie. Dutchess also will accept electronics for recycling.

For a list of acceptable products, and to register, Putnam residents can visit putnamcountyny.com/green-putnam or call 845-808-1390, ext. 43150. Dutchess residents can find more information at bit.ly/Dutchess-dropoff or by calling 845-463-6020.

Cold Spring to Flush Hydrants

Village schedules for next week

Cold Spring plans to conduct a hydrant flush beginning Monday (April 5) and continuing throughout the week. It will occur during business hours and begin on the east end of the system at Fishkill and Healy Roads, continuing west toward the riverfront.

Residents may experience slight water discoloration and temporary reduction in pressure, the village said. Discoloration can be cleared by running cold water for a few minutes. Pressure should return to the usual level once the flush is complete.

What Members Are Saying

Karen Michel, Beacon

Local news is key. Thank you!

Karen Michel, Beacon

Membership Matters

As your independent nonprofit news source for Beacon and Phillipstown, The Highlands Current relies on you, our readers, to help support quality coverage of all that matters to you.

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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.

Vaccine reluctance

Can someone tell me why it was necessary to conduct a poll, and further to report that poll in The Current, saying that more than 4 in 10 Republicans would choose not to be vaccinated (“The Race to Herd Immunity,” March 26)? Isn’t this country divided enough? Gee, won’t someone’s nose get bent out of shape because the poll was based on female and male genders? Oh, and let’s step it up another level and see where we are along racial lines.

In the words of Clark Gable from a classic film that the “woke” citizenry would never watch: “Frankly, my dear, I don’t give a damn.”

Veronica Rivera, Cold Spring

Editor’s Note: The national poll we cited, which was conducted in early March by the Institute for Public Opinion at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, found that 25 percent of Black people and 28 percent of white people do not plan to get the vaccine. Thirty-four percent of men and 26 percent of women said the same.

Vaccine finder

I have been dismayed at the number of letters to the editor from people who are having trouble finding a vaccine once they are eligible to receive it.

I wanted to share the resource vaccinefinder.org — a partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Harvard Medical School, among others. It’s an easy site to use, and you can sort by which vaccine you are looking for, if that is important to you.

It’s not perfect. Sometimes a location is listed as having the vaccine but it has run out by the time you answer the screening questions. I signed up for a UPS account that I do not need, only to be told it was out of vaccine. However, it’s a great starting place to search, and I found an appointment for this week at CVS without too much trouble. I hope everyone gets their vaccines soon and we can enjoy our wonderful towns (and each other) again.

Kelly Tanner-Backenroth, Beacon

COVID vaccine, Part 2 — not. My wife drove me to Brooklyn on Tuesday (March 30) for my second Moderna shot. Two hours with traffic, then a wait in line at the Walgreens for half an hour. “Sorry,” they say. “We don’t have any Moderna, only Pfizer today.” I called various sources while driving home: systemwide, their spokesperson said; No Moderna available. So be aware. I feel disheartened.

John Benjamin, Garrison

Shakespeare plans

Before reading the FAQ at the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival website about its plans to move to the site of the Garrison Golf Course, as a reader suggested in a March 26 letter to the editor, let’s be icy clear on two facts.

First, HVSF plans to eradicate 80 acres of gorgeous Highlands open space — designated as such by Philipstown — and replace it with 25 buildings.

Second, the proposal perchés the primary performance tent (a permanent fixture, not up-in-summer, down-in-fall, such as at Boscobel) squarely atop the highest point of the golf course ridge. That siting eliminates for the community one of the most striking views in the Hudson Valley, and perhaps in the world — unless you have a ticket to that night’s performance.

If you’re OK with that setup, by all means visit the HVSF website. Also worth reading is the state-required Environmental Assessment Form that describes the project’s environmental implications. Past that, the newly revised Philipstown Comprehensive Plan places the project in context. HVSF’s proposal is profoundly at odds with the plan’s assessment of what makes Philipstown unique.

There are many more reasons to believe this project is terribly inappropriate. Through the long evaluative and public input process ahead, awareness will increase. In the meantime, when perusing the FAQ, apply the first rule of internet reading: consider the source.

Tim Nolan, Philipstown

A Philipstown resident, Joe Regele, shared a list of a dozen places other than the Garrison Golf Course where HVSF could settle in without increasing traffic dangers, extensive new construction, compromising the rural aspect of the neighborhood or emitting sound and lights to a much larger area than one would imagine possible. My favorite is the Philipstown Recreation Department property.

The popular idea of “open-air” entertainment is, “I love this place so much! Now let’s make some little changes!”

Betsy Calhoun, Garrison

I have been a resident in Cold Spring for 22 years. My relationship with HVSF, first as an audience member and later as a costume designer, spans almost as long. Since being involved with HVSF, I have seen the company develop in many sustainable and thoughtful ways, evolving from a two-show season to a slate of three to four shows and an expanded education program.

(Continued on Page 5)
I would like to talk about the community engagement aspect of HVSF from my perspective. We have loaned costumes to local schools and to The Philipstown Depot Theatre for their productions, sharing resources and fostering relationships which enhance the community. Each season the company employs many local high schoolers and college students as house staff and concessions servers. These relationships will continue to grow and expand once HVSF can have a permanent home in Philipstown.

As a freelance designer, working for many companies, HVSF is my favorite place to work. The atmosphere fostered between staff, production and visiting artists is truly special and something I cherish.

I have taken a great deal of time to check out the future plans and FAQ on HVSF’s website. It is very clearly and thoughtfully laid out, covering all aspects of the site plan. I welcome this amazing opportunity to have this center for the arts and the community here in the place I call home.

Charlotte Palmer-Lane, Cold Spring

What are they?
The stone chambers are not root cellars (“Out There: Ghost Dogs, Bloody Ponds and Lost Treasure,” March 26). I’ve been to more than 45 of them and they are in the most remote areas, far from farms or anything agriculture. Most are on slopes, hills and ravines and aligned with winter or summer solstices. Why build such an elaborate structure that’s corbeled, which is incredibly difficult to build, just to have as a root cellar? It makes no sense.

Tommy Kaye, via Facebook

Nelsonville tower
This is really sad and very bad that they will be able to start cutting trees on the proposed cell-tower site in Nelsonville (“Judge Denies Restraining Order,” March 26). I had so hoped that opponents would be successful in preventing this horrible tower.

Lillian Rosengarten, Cold Spring

Amazon warehouse
Amazon is promising to create “the equivalent” of 500 full-time employees at its recently approved East Fishkill warehouse (“Story Updates,” March 26). What does this mean? Is it 1,230 jobs at 20 hours per week or less? In the context of a vote on the unionization of its labor force in Virginia, Amazon stated that it gives admittedly excellent benefits to all its full-time workers from their first day on the job. It didn’t discuss the benefits, if any, available to “full-time equivalent” workers.

Camilla von Bergen, Beacon

In this case, 500 “full-time equivalent” jobs translate to about 1,450 part-time jobs. In November, an Amazon representative told the East Fishkill Town Board that the warehouse will have two shifts, each with 729 part-time employees. “They are not full-time jobs,” he said, according to the meeting minutes. Asked by a board member if they would be minimum-wage jobs ($12.50 per hour), the representative said only that they were “warehouse jobs.” Amazon earlier said that full-time supervisors will earn at least $15 an hour or $60,000 annually plus benefits.

Remembering Sheilah
I want to thank you for your beautiful obituary of my beloved wife, Sheilah Rechtschaf-fer (“Out There: Ghost Dogs, Bloody Ponds and Lost Treasure,” March 26). She was very dedicated to the community, especially to the cultural institutions that form its social fabric.

I am especially moved and grateful for the outpouring of support that you and many others have given to us over these past terrible months.

Bert Rechtschaffer, Garrison

Police review
Thank you for your coverage of the village’s police review plan (“Cold Spring Approves Police Review Plan,” March 26). I’d like to make a small correction. The Lexipol policy manual contains 157 separate policies, ranging in categories from patrol operations to personnel and administration. Not all of the policies will apply to a small agency like the Cold Spring Police Department, and some need to be modified to reflect the CSPD’s interagency cooperation with the Putnam County Sheriff’s Department and the New York State Police.

To date, the working group has reviewed 47 of those 157 and is preparing them for review by the village trustees and the public. The new policies will replace the existing, limited CSPD policies, drafted in 2013, and will reflect current state and federal laws, as well as best practices in modern, community policing. The manual incorporates state policing reforms adopted in 2019 and 2020.

Kathleen Foley, Cold Spring

Foley is a village trustee.

Corrections
In a profile of artist Hildreth Potts (March 26), we identified an influential sculptor in her life as the Molossian House. In fact, it is the Molossian Tower.

In a story in the March 26 issue, poet Margi Condyles cited a book by a Harvard professor on the effect of poetry on the brain. The professor is Charles Davey, not Roger Brown, and his book is Words in the Mind.

In a story in the March 26 issue on the Beacon school board deciding to sell the land it owns under Dutchess Stadium, we reported that county legislators had approved spending $1.43 on stadium improvements. In fact, it was $1.43 million.

To All of Our Community
Again, we wish to thank all of those who have helped the Philipstown Food Pantry during this past year. We have been able to help twice as many families compared to previous years. Because of all of you and many more we have been able to provide for all of those who come to the door.

Mr. & Mrs. Joe Maloney
Sam
Cathy Smelter
Santa Warren
Clare Staples
St. Philip's Episcopal Church
Our Lady of Loretto Catholic Church
Knights of Columbus #536
Dillan Horan
Andrea
Second Chance Foods
Amelia & Lydia Barr
Linda Hoffman and Family
Putnam County Humane Society
Peter Mell
Ginny Pidala and John Merante
for the Cold Spring Lions Club
Elliott Hammond
Lisa O'Rourke & Family
Crystal
Leslie Nowinski
Marilyn Schlosser
A very special “Thank You” to Bob Hayes who helped secure a new freezer for the food pantry and set it up with the help of four young men from the Haldane Football team. Thanks to Bob, John Dwyer, Alex Ferdico, Will Etta and Dom Lyons-Davis.

Glynwood Farms
Sean & Abigail McRall
Myfihn Glover
Sylvia Meehan
Krys Schaetzel
David McHugh
Haldane Faculty Assoc. & Students of Haldane Central School
Daniel & Allison Walsh
Beacon Elks Lodge #1493

Kathleen Foley, Cold Spring

Foley is a village trustee.

~ The Volunteers of the Philipstown Food Pantry
Cold Spring Seeks ‘Responsible Tourism’

Also, summer film series plans return

By Michael Turton

The Village of Cold Spring, the Chamber of Commerce and Putnam County are collaborating on a “responsible tourism” campaign as the busy visitor season approaches.

Chamber President Eliza Starbuck and Putnam Tourism Director Tracey Walsh discussed the effort with the Village Board at its Tuesday (March 30) meeting.

Starbuck later wrote in an email that the goal is to address issues that have arisen during the pandemic shutdown, such as crowded sidewalks, meals being eaten on Main Street benches due to restrictions placed on indoor dining, overflowing trash and recycling bins and inconsistent adherence to mask and social-distancing guidelines.

She said the campaign hopes to provide “subtle nudges” for better behavior through signs along Main Street and village walkways, in shop windows and on trash and recycling bins. They will encourage picnics in village parks, the use of trash and recycling bins and adherence to COVID-19 safety guidelines.

The Chamber and Putnam County Tourism are sharing the cost of the campaign, she said.

Also at the March 30 meeting, Jennifer Zwarich outlined plans to relaunch the Cold Spring Film Society’s free outdoor summer series in July and August. The series did not take place in 2020 because of pandemic restrictions.

“Our 10th anniversary season will be a welcome opportunity for the village to relax together outdoors, in a safe way,” said Zwarich, who is the society’s president.

She said the 2021 season will include four films rather than six and that reservations, masks and social distancing will be required.

She also reported that the society plans to replace its DIY handmade screen, which has so much wear and tear it can’t be reassembled, with a durable, slightly larger commercial screen that will cost $34,000. The nonprofit is seeking donations as part of a capital campaign.

The village co-sponsors the film series. The board was supportive of the plan but Mayor Dave Merandy cautioned that it was “keeping our eye on what’s going on in Putnam County” with the rate of COVID-19 infections. “If something does go south, we might have to cancel. There’s no guarantee.”

Visit highlandscurrent.org for news updates and latest information.

Volunteer Fire Service FACT SHEET

New Yorkers save more than $3 billion each year due to the services provided by the State’s volunteer fire services.

New York has nearly 100,000 volunteer firefighters
New York State’s nearly 100,000 volunteer firefighters save taxpayers $3.87 billion annually in salary and benefits, and potential debt service.

If NYS switched to all-paid fire service:
• An additional 30,822 firefighters would need to be hired and more than 1,300 stations would have to be built new or reconstructed.
• There would be one-time cost of $5.95 billion to acquire existing structures, vehicles and equipment.
• Property taxes across the state would rise on average 26.5% to cover the added cost.

Volunteers comprise 67% of firefighters in the United States.

Of the total estimated 1,115,000 firefighters across the country, 745,000 are volunteers.

Communities served by volunteer firefighters depend on them to be their first line of defense for many types of emergencies.

Volunteer firefighters are summoned to a wide array of emergencies across the county every day including fires, emergency medical incidents, terrorist events, natural disasters, hazardous materials incidents, water rescue emergencies, high-angle and confined space emergencies, and other general public service calls. The public relies on the volunteer emergency services to be their first line of defense in these emergencies. Volunteers spend an enormous amount of time training to prepare for these emergencies.

The majority of fire departments in the United States are volunteers.

Of the total 29,705 fire departments in the country, 19,112 are all volunteer; 5,206 are mostly volunteer; 2,568 are mostly career; and 3,009 are all career.

The time donated by volunteer firefighters saves localities across the country an estimated $46.9 billion per year.

The cost savings provided by fire service volunteers is tremendous. For many communities, switching to a career staffing model is not feasible.
The Times (from Page 1)

John Jesek, an avid reader of The Current, recently lent me his copy of the Dec. 16, 1948, issue of The Philipstown Times, a weekly that was published every Thursday at 59 Main St., an address that apparently no longer exists.

The Times’ history is murky. Based on the volume and issue number, the first issue was published in October 1947 by editor Joseph F. Jones. His grandson, Ray Jones, who lives in Cold Spring, told me he remembers watching the press removed from the Main Street shop in either 1949 or 1950, when he was 5 or 6 years old.

When Joseph Jones established The Times, the PCNR had already been around for 81 years. I can’t help but wonder what prompted him to start a paper. The eight-page issue I perused doesn’t yield any clues but does provide a fascinating snapshot of a week in the village in the years immediately after the end of World War II.

The lead story on the front page describes the dedication of a monument to honor the 54 Nelsonville residents who served in the war, including two who were killed, Martin Nelsonville residents who served in the war, including two who were killed, Martin Adams and Arthur Warren. Joe Etta, who died last year at age 102, led the squad of veterans at the ceremony.

The ads say as much about life in the village as the news coverage. In this edition, Jones lamented that automobiles driven by gawkers were getting in the way of Cold Spring’s firefighters. He noted “many complaints about motorists who cannot refrain from driving on the fires ahead of the firetruck.”

Another incident, reported in excruciating detail, must have caused many a gasp. At the corner of Main and Kemble, “a patent-medicine salesman endeavored to give a demonstration of how good his wares were, stating it would cure a burn immediately and placed a hot soldering iron on his tongue and removed practically all the skin from that delicate organ,” the paper reported. “He had forgotten to dip the iron in a solution that would prevent such an accident.”

For more information on The Philipstown Times you can phone 368, though you may have to leave a message. A single issue will cost you a nickel. An annual subscription is a much better buy at $2.

The Holy Name Society of Our Lady of Loretto announced it would hold “another boxing smoker on Feb. 8.” A year earlier the society had hosted 10 bouts with sandwich and refreshments. The Holy Name boxing team trained at Loretto Hall three times a week. Hopefully, they didn’t turn the other cheek.

In addition to the Nelsonville war monument, other front-page news included an account of a dinner hosted by Cold Spring Drug and Buggie Corp at Scalzo’s Restaurant, with “the girls of the minstrel troupe” as guests of honor.

The Philipstown Planning Board for the Town of Philipstown, New York, will hold a public hearing on Thursday, April 15th 2021 starting at 7:30 p.m. via zoom to hear the following appeal. If you would like to attend, please email crockett@philipstown.com to request login information before 7:00 pm on April 15th, 2021.

Mark Conn, 242 Route 403, Garrison, NY TM#71-2-10

(Applicant is seeking a new single-family residence of approx. 2300 SF on approved building lot with associated well, septic system and driveway. All site features implement strategies to work with existing landscape features and restore natural habitats. House floor elevations are established to disturb as little natural grade as possible. Landscape design utilizes native plantings and works with existing drainage as much as possible.)

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, March 18th, 2021
Coronavirus Update

State health officials said that, as of Wednesday (March 31), 9,563 people had tested positive for COVID-19 in Putnam County; 26,230 in Dutchess; 120,316 in Westchester; 43,718 in Rockland; 12,058 in Ulster; and 43,483 in Orange. Statewide, there have been 1,867,320 positives, including 836,581 in New York City. Statewide, 40,570 people had died.

Beacon had 58 active cases as of March 30, nearly double the number reported on March 12. Putnam had 193 active cases as of March 25, including 11 in Phillipstown, 79 in Carmel, 26 in Kent, 13 in Patterson, 22 in Putnam Valley and 42 in Southeast. Eleven people were hospitalized at Putnam Hospital in Carmel.

As of Thursday (April 1), 31 percent of state residents had received at least one dose of the vaccine and 18.5 percent had been fully vaccinated, according to the state’s COVID-19 tracker.

In response to a judge’s order, New York on March 30 began vaccinating all prisoners in state facilities and inmates in local jails.

As of April 1, travelers entering New York from other states or from U.S. territories are no longer required to quarantine, although the state health department still recommends it. The quarantine requirement remains in place for international travelers.

New York has launched an app that allows residents to store their vaccination card or test results on the digital wallet on their smartphone to display at entrances to venues like stadiums and theaters or to enter events that are required by state guidelines to verify the status of attendees. See covid-19vaccine.health.ny.gov/excelsior-pass.

The number of people with COVID-19 who are hospitalized in New York state as of March 31 stood at 4,604; the number in intensive care was 894; and the number of intubations was 545. In the Mid-Hudson Valley, 43 percent of hospital beds were available and 44 percent of ICU beds.

The state said that colleges will be able to resume allowing spectators at sports events as of today (April 2), with capacity limited to 10 percent at indoor venues holding 1,500 or more and 20 percent at outdoor venues holding 2,500 or more. Attendees will have to provide proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test or full vaccination. Smaller venues used for intercollegiate, intramural or club sports will be limited to two fans per player, 100 people indoors or 200 outdoors, but can expand to 150 indoors or 500 outdoors if attendees give proof of a negative test or vaccination.

As of March 26, according to the State COVID Report Card, Haldane had reported 31 students and 14 teachers/staff who had tested positive; Garrison reported seven students and seven teachers/staff; and Beacon reported 85 students and 43 teachers/staff.

Hudson Beach Glass

We are reopening April 10th
Come see* all the new glass we’ve been making

*All of our staff will be fully vaccinated
All Covid-19 protocols will remain in effect

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COVID-19 by the Numbers

PUTNAM COUNTY
Number of confirmed cases: 9,563 (+345)
Active Cases in Philipstown: 11
Tests administered: 191,607 (+6,353)
Percent positive: 5.0 (0)
Percent vaccinated: 34.0
Number of deaths: 90 (+1)

DUTCHESS COUNTY
Number of confirmed cases: 26,230 (+948)
Active Cases in Beacon: 58
Tests administered: 623,607 (+21,651)
Percent positive: 4.2 (0)
Percent vaccinated: 31.9
Number of deaths: 425 (+3)

Source: State and county health departments, as of March 31, with weekly change in parentheses. Active cases in Philipstown as of March 25. Percent vaccinated reflects at least one dose.

WANTED

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Hudson Beach Glass in Beacon plans to re-open on April 10 with safety measures in place, while Mid Hudson Animal Aid in Beacon re-opened March 24 for adoptions and volunteers. Two Beacon businesses also closed temporarily because of COVID-19 exposures: Beacon Veterinary Associates re-opened on March 30 and Glazed Over Donuts on April 1.

Nursing homes can allow visitors at any time except for unvaccinated residents in areas with a high number of cases and low vaccination rates, or for residents who are infected or in isolation or quarantine, the state announced on March 25.
Guns and Treadmills

Putnam committee approves sheriff purchases

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

A Putnam County legislative committee on Monday (March 29) approved the Sheriff’s Department plans to buy new weapons for its deputies and treadmills for its inmates.

The vote by the three-member Audit Committee sent the gun proposal to the full Legislature for a vote, perhaps at its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday (April 6), but allowed the sheriff to buy the exercise equipment, which needed only committee approval.

The committee also unanimously approved — over protests from Legislator Nancy Montgomery, whose district includes Philipstown — a plan to increase the money paid to a public-relations consultant who assists the county executive.

Sheriff purchases

The Sheriff’s Department told the Legislature it intends to spend $95,190 to purchase 190 Glock handguns — 170 of the standard G17 model and 20 of the smaller G19 — at $500 each to replace the sidearms carried by deputies and corrections officers, although trade-ins could reduce that figure by half.

The agency told county officials that the department would use “T-Commission Funds,” which Finance Commissioner William Carlin explained is revenue collected through fees charged to inmates for such things as making phone calls.

Under a pending agreement with a Rochester gun dealer, the Sheriff’s Department will receive a $250 trade-in credit for each of its current G22- and G23-model guns, or up to $47,500. The Glock models are sold only to police, first responders and the military.

Legislator Neal Sullivan of Carmel-Mahopac said that the gun buy “was probably well-known” when the county’s 2021 budget was being drafted last fall and chided the Sheriff’s Department for not mentioning it instead of asking legislators for the OK now. Nonetheless, he supported the purchase, saying that “if they need these items, certainly we don’t want to say they can’t get them.”

Legislator Ginny Nacerino of Patterson pointed out that the purchase has no impact on county finances. “It really is at the discretion of the sheriff to use these funds as he deems fit,” she said.

Carlin told legislators that the $13,683 spent on four commercial treadmills for inmates also would have no fiscal impact because the funds will come from revenue earned by the jail commissary on the sale of toothpaste and similar items to prisoners. Those funds can only be used for purposes such as inmate recreation. Sheriff Robert Langley Jr. said the treadmills would augment weightlifting equipment already in place.

Legislator Joseph Castellano of Brewster, who chairs the Audit Committee, said that he found it a good use of the funds, because “exercise is good for all people.”

Public relations

Castellano and fellow committee members Bill Gouldman of Putnam Valley and Carl Albano of Carmel backed a proposal from County Executive MaryEllen Odell to increase payments to East Branch Consulting of Brewster for public relations.

The firm, run by Debra West, was hired in December 2019 and enlisted in early 2020 to help Odell with publicizing the county’s COVID-19 response.

According to records shared with The Current, West billed the county about $6,500 (at $125 per hour) in March and April 2020. The 2021 contract, signed on Dec. 15, provides a flat rate of $2,500 monthly, or $30,000 for the year.

In a March 8 memo, Odell said East Branch and Putnam had exceeded the monthly billable amount because of “the increasing numbers of hours” required by the COVID-19 response. Odell recommended the county resume paying West by the hour, up to a maximum of $50,000 annually.

Odell said the county may be able to get reimbursed through federal pandemic aid and proposed that the Legislature move $20,000 from the contingency fund to cover the added expense in the meantime.

Montgomery objected, asking why the county needed more assistance with public relations for COVID-19 when the pandemic appears to be slowly receding.

Castellano replied that “there’s a lot of hurdles that we still need to get through before life returns to normal. It’s for the benefit of Putnam taxpayers, to get information out to them. As we all know, the No. 1 question is COVID-19: ‘How do I get my shots and when can I get rid of my mask?’”

Montgomery countered that the firm was being paid to watch videos of Gov. Andrew Cuomo and, it seemed, to post Twitter and Facebook updates, although she said she had seen only four, all in January.

She acknowledged that East Branch had written news releases, including one that focused not on a county vaccination site but on a clinic in January organized by Drug World of Cold Spring. That release “actually included, obviously, a pitch for the county executive’s choices for political candidates,” Montgomery said. “We’re using government funds for campaign purposes, it appears.”

(The Jan. 18 release mentioned that the volunteers at the clinic included Kevin McConville, a Republican who will challenge Sheriff Langley in November; and Barbara Scuccimarra, a Republican and former legislator who plans to oppose Montgomery. It did not mention their campaigns, which had not yet been announced.)

Montgomery argued the money earmarked for East Branch would be better spent on a mobile vaccination clinic or other urgent need. She also said that since Odell’s office has four full-time employees, “I’m not understanding why memos and press releases can’t be produced with the staff she has.”

West, who listed no contact information on the invoices or contracts obtained by The Current, and whose firm appears not to have a website or Facebook page, could not immediately be reached for comment.
The Village of Cold Spring gave Brownie Girl Scout Troop 1091 the OK to clean up Tots’ Park on March 25 in anticipation of its reopening. “They wiped down all the equipment, pulled out weeds and cleared the brush,” said Nancy Bowden. “These girls are very hardworking. I am so proud of them.”

On Saturday (March 27), Micheal Faison brightened the day of passersby on Main Street in Beacon. Stephanie Dignan, who posted a video of his performance, wrote: “I turned my car around to go back and give him a tip. He was killing it! I couldn’t help but dance with him.”

Less than a year after opening an outpost at Vera’s market in Phillipstown, The Parcel Flower Co. has expanded with a move to 3052 Route 9.

Beacon’s Tiniest Gallery has opened at Happy Valley Beacon on Main Street. The art is free but must be replaced with another piece. Mathew Ambrosini, Darya Golubina, Evan Samuelson and Lukas Milanak modeled the initiative after Stacy Milrany’s Free Little Art Library in Seattle. They recommend “keeping your imagination wild but your art to 8 inches tall.”
When Pat Schories envisions an idea for a book, she says the first step is “sketch the whole thing out, do a couple of sample finishes and put together a dummy book — a mock-up.”

She did the same thing, more or less, in second grade.

“I wanted to make books, so I made one,” says the children’s book illustrator, a former longtime Philipstown resident who now lives in Hopedale Junction. “I hand-lettered it, stitched the pages together and made end papers. I was involved more with process, more than the content.”

When she was growing up in New Rochelle, her mother read to her frequently, often from anthologies such as *Grimm’s Fairy Tales* that “had no pictures except the initial capital letters which started the story,” Schories recalls. “She also read me a lot of Golden Books.” By the fifth grade, Schories was “inhaling” books on her own. The family moved to Ohio, and, when she finished college, Schories longed to work as an illustrator. She was fortunate, she says, because there was a push at the time for children’s books, but it was difficult to get work with New York publishers while living in Ohio. After saving $500, she packed her car and drove to the loft apartment of “a friend of a friend” in Soho. She quickly found freelance graphic design work and an affordable apartment in Croton. “From there I discovered Cold Spring, and I never did move into the city,” she says.

Initially, Schories specialized in botanicals and gardening books, in which the drawings were scientific and precise, unlike the illustrations she wanted to create that would appeal to children. She continued with her freelance graphic work by day but, by night, did her preferred illustrations.

“I was overly busy for about 20 years,” she says. “It wasn’t until the 1980s that I got my own first book published. I was ecstatic but it was still quite a few years before I could quit my day job.”

After the initial Biscuit manuscript, written by Alyssa Satin Capucilli, was purchased by HarperCollins, the publisher began to look for an illustrator. Schories and others were asked to submit sketches, “and one of the art directors picked up my Biscuit series. “He was more devilish, loved to rip toilet paper and would rather get into trouble than sit on your lap” — and Spike was the model for Biscuit. “He was very affectionate and wanted to please me at all times,” she says.

“I was given a lot of room, and I was so happy about that. It works best for the author and illustrator if they are kept separate. Editors have told me that one of the most creative things they do is to make the pairing.”

In fact, Schories did not meet Capucilli until soon after the book was published. While she was attending an author’s group in Westchester, an attendee across the table read one of her poems, which Schories found beautiful. When the woman introduced herself to the group as “Alyssa,” Schories realized who she was.

*Biscuit* was not envisioned as a series, but it sold well. There are now more than 80 titles, including those marketed as *I Can Read* books and digital versions.

Schories says she does all her color painting by hand but sketches using an electronic drawing tablet. “It’s amazing to be able to swap things, make revisions, line things up, do layers,” she says. “I’m still exploring, but I’m stunned by how much I like it. When I’m all done with my sketches, I pull them together in a PDF and send them to my editor — it’s easy.”

Because she works alone at home, Schories says her routines haven’t been disrupted much by the pandemic. “The work I do is time-consuming, and I have deadlines,” she says. “But this year it’s been delightfully slow for me. I’ve spent time socializing, walking with friends, hiking, doing embroidery. I still feel busy, but the pressure seems to be gone, although I’m in my studio every day.”

She says she has never stopped learning from children’s responses to her work. “What a little kid likes is not necessarily what a trained artist likes, but there’s a happy medium,” she says. “My desire to draw perfectly is gone. I now try to find something that children will want to look at.”
THE WEEK AHEAD
Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)
For a complete listing of events, see highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

COMMUNITY
SAT 3 Open Barn
WAPPINGERS FALLS
11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Stony Kill Farm
stonykill.org/programs/open-barn
Visit the chickens, cows, pigs, turkeys and sheep. Register online for a ticket slot. Also, SAT 10.

SAT 10 Beauty, Health & Wellness Expo
WAPPINGERS FALLS
11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Dutchess Stadium
1500 Route 9D | bit.ly/dutchess-expo
Local artisans and practitioners will display their wares and services. Register online for a time slot to visit. Free

SUN 11 Maple Syrup Day
COLD SPRING
10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Little Stony Point
3011 Route 9D
facebook.com/littlestonypoint
Maple syrup snacks will take the place of pancakes this year. Enjoy music and guided hikes. Free

STAGE & SCREEN
FRI 9 Aery One-Act Festival
GARRISON
7 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre
10 Garrison’s Landing
The audience will be asked to judge six one-act plays as in-person events return to the Depot. Also SAT 10, SUN 11. Cost: $15

FRI 9 Dragonfly Story Hour
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Butterfield Library
845-265-3040 | butterfieldlibrary.org
Karen Kapoor will host this virtual story slam for adults.

VISUAL ARTS
SAT 3 Collaborations with Women
PHILIPSTOWN
Noon. Magazzino Italian Art
magazzino.it
In the second of four livestreamed lectures in the Arte Povera: Art of Collaboration series, Sharon Heckler, a scholar and curator in Milan, will discuss the photographs, videos and letters of Luciano Fabro as they relate to his relationships with women in his art.

Friends Show
BEACON
1 – 5 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | howlandculturalcenter.org
This annual exhibit will feature works by Friends of the Howland. Through May 1. Includes works by Anna Sirota, Melissa Scholholm, Caitlin Ramsden, Elise Ketura and Kerry Soeller.

THURS 8 Richard Serra
BEACON
Noon, Dia Beacon
845-231-0811 | diart.org
Dia educators will discuss the sculptor’s work.

THURS 8 Eric Lindbloom
POUGHKEEPSIE
7 p.m. Vassar
vclibrary.vassarcollege.edu/workprints
The photographer’s son and other artists who worked with him will give a presentation to complement an online exhibit of his work.

SAT 10 Plague / By Us
BEACON
Noon – 6 p.m. BAU Gallery | 506 Main St.
845-440-7584 | baugallery.org
Faith Adams’ ceramics will be on view in Gallery 1. By Us is a group show of photographs by and for women curated by Adams that includes works by Anna Sirota, Melissa Scholholm, Caitlin Ramsden, Elise Ketura and Kerry Soeller.

KIDS & FAMILY
SAT 3 Garden Prep
COLD SPRING
12:30 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | butterfieldlibrary.org
Volunteers of all ages are invited to help prepare the library’s new garden.

SAT 3 Spring Egg Hunt
COLD SPRING
3 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | butterfieldlibrary.org
Search for eggs in the library’s Reading Garden and take home a spring craft.

THURS 8 Your Name is a Song
GARRISON
4 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
desmondfishlibrary.org
Jamila Thompson will host a virtual book club for children’s books virtual for students in kindergarten through third grade.

THURS 8 College Application Prep
BEACON
6 p.m. Howland Public Library
beaconlibrary.org
Receive advice and assistance to find a college or university and to write an admissions application.

FRI 9 Writing Workshop
BEACON
3:30 p.m. Howland Public Library
845-431-1134 | beaconlibrary.org
Julie Chibbaro will instruct middle and high school students on how to create characters, plot stories and tell a great tale.

CIVIC
MON 5 City Council
BEACON
7 p.m. Via Zoom | beaconny.gov

TUES 6 Board of Trustees
COLD SPRING
7:30 p.m. Via Zoom | coldspringny.gov

TUES 6 Putnam Legislative
CARLTON
7 p.m. Via audiocast
putnamcountyny.com

TUES 6 School Board
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Haldane School
15 Craigside Drive | haldaneschool.org

WED 7 School Board
GARRISON
6 p.m. Via Zoom | gufs.org

MUSIC
FRI 9 Cornish Estate Hike
PHILIPSTOWN
1 p.m. Hudson Highlands State Park
3206 Route 9D | bit.ly/cornishhike
Thom Johnson will lead this Putnam History Museum hike focused on the history of the ruins. Meet in the parking lot. Limited to 15 participants. Cost: $10 ($8 members)

FRI 9 Son Little
KATONAH
8 p.m. Caramoor | caramoor.org
In this livestream, the Grammy-winning R&B artist will perform songs from his latest release, Aloha. Cost: $15 to $45

SAT 10 Doansburg Chamber Ensemble
COLD SPRING
4 p.m. St. Mary’s Church
doansburgchamberensemble.org
Flutist Christine Smith and harpist Joy Paisted will perform works by Bach, Rutter, Mozart and Mancini in this livestream.

SUN 11 Thalea String Quartet
KATONAH
3 p.m. Caramoor | caramoor.org
In this livestream, the quartet will premiere Paola Prestini’s The Red Book, a work commissioned by Caramoor, and music by other contemporary composers. Cost: $15 to $45

FRI 9 Lark Thurber Duo
BEACON
8 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
alivemusica.org
AliveMusica presents violinist Tessa Lark and composer and bassist Michael Thurber in a livestream that will include original compositions plus selections by Bach. Cost: $20 donation or free

SUN 11 Kiosk
COLD SPRING
1 p.m. Hudson Highlands State Park
3206 Route 9D | bit.ly/cornishhike

FRI 9 Fighting White Supremacy
BEACON
7 p.m. Via Zoom | bit.ly/SueANazi
To mark Holocaust Remembrance Day, Amy Spitalnick, executive director of Integrity First for America; Taneisha Means, a professor at Vassar College; Rabbi Brent Spodek of the Beacon Hebrew Alliance; and Justice McCray of Beacon for Black Lives will discuss how to hold violent extremists accountable. Singer-songwriter Dar Williams will also perform. Register online.

SUN 11 Maple Syrup Day
COLD SPRING
10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Little Stony Point
3011 Route 9D
facebook.com/littlestonypoint
Maple syrup snacks will take the place of pancakes this year. Enjoy music and guided hikes. Free
(Small) Crowd Pleasers

Depot Theatre planning for live performances

By Alison Rooney

D espite lingering restrictions on indoor performances because of the ongoing pandemic, the Philipstown Depot Theatre is going to make an attempt to stage live performances in April, May and June.

On Garrison’s Landing, the Depot Theatre will again stage performances in the patio space behind the former railroad building. Seats will be distanced, masks required and the audience limited, and there will be a limit of two tickets per person, said Ned Rauch, a representative for the theater.

The Depot is “paying close attention to the changing guidelines set by the governor’s office, and shifting accordingly,” he says. “It’s quite a lovely performance space, with the stage tucked into the long side of the theater, and the chairs arrayed around it — it’s rather festive, especially with the patio lights on.”

The first event will be the Aery Theater Co.’s annual one-act play festival on Friday (April 9) and through the weekend. This year’s theme is “So Over COVID.” The plays were selected during earlier elimination rounds performed virtually; three of the six finalists will be performed on Friday, three on Saturday and the finalists in encore performances on Sunday, with one crowned the winner. Tickets are $15 at philipstowntheatre.org.

On April 24, at 3 p.m., students from the Ballet Arts Dutchess Dance Co. in Beacon will perform Shaker, a ballet work choreographed by Jennifer Fuchs, and (Just Like) Starting Over, a theater dance work choreographed by Katie Bissinger.

The performers also will discuss their experiences with dance during the pandemic and invite members of the audience to learn movements from the pieces.

Next up will be a reading of a new musical comedy-fantasy, The Scream, in which a reclusive couple steals the Munch masterpiece only to find the image haunting them. Written by Raymond Bokhour, Simon Grey and David Bridel, and directed by Christine Bokhour, it will be presented on April 30 and May 1.

In May, the Putnam Theatre Alliance will debut a series, The Freedom Project, that pairs thematically connected historic and new plays. The Night Train storytelling series returns on May 22 and May 29, hosted by Joe Charnitski and featuring Debbie Goddard, Kalista Parrish and Ron Sopyla, along with live music.

On June 5, Goldee Greene and Tom McCoy of Philipstown are scheduled to perform a program of cabaret songs, and on June 11 and 12, short plays by Gabrielle Fox, Samuel Harps and K. Lorrel Manning — collectively titled Tales from the Other Pandemic — will be onstage.

Howland Center Retools in April

If the website of the Howland Cultural Center in Beacon has been looking a little threadbare, it’s because, aside from the virtual performance by the Lack Thurber Duo on April 11 and an episode of The Valley Hour on April 22, the venue will spend this month upgrading its streaming technology in anticipation of hosting live events with small audiences in May that are also broadcast online.

The storytelling series The Artichoke is scheduled to resume production on May 8 and on May 15, Elysium Furnace Works hopes to host bassist, bandleader and composer William Parker, the subject of a new biography by Cisco Bradley, Universal Tonality: The Life and Music of William Parker.

On May 29, a singer-songwriter circle concert is planned with Lydia Adams Davis and Rob Daniels.

Beginning this month, the cultural center also hopes to resume recurring gatherings such as its bridge club, garden club and Poets’ Night, with protocols in place.

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8 WEEKS OF CAMP FUN!

SPORTS CAMPS
THEATRE CAMPS
DAY CAMPS

Programs for all ages - 3 through teens
Registration opens April 5th for residents
Registration will be online or by phone only. No in-person registration will be accepted this year.
Full details at www.philipstownrecreation.com or call 845-424-4618 for more information

All department of health and CDC covid guidelines will be in effect at the time of camp.
Joel Goss (1955-2021)

Joel F. Goss died peacefully in his sleep on March 23, 2021, from heart failure. He was at the home of good friends and adopted family Brianis and Aleksy Bushovich when he passed, with his canine sidekick Betsy by his side.

He is survived by sisters Suzanne Goss and M’Lou Gillespie, and brother Richard Goss. A wonderful and devoted father, he is now united with his beloved son, Keaton Guthrie-Goss, who preceded him in death in 2018.

Born in Pawnee, Oklahoma, November 15, 1955, he was raised in Chattanooga, TN, and moved to New York City in his early 20s. In 1992, he married his beloved ex-wife, Cat Guthrie. They met when he helped to write and she performed in Spectacular Days of Radio, a successful long running Atlantic City production.

In 1993 they moved to Garrison, NY to raise Keaton. Twenty-five years later Joel moved to Beacon, where he became a well-known local character, some even called him “the mayor of Beacon.”

Among Joel’s many accomplishments, he managed The Original Improv in the 1970s and worked with a number of notable comedians. He received three Emmys and a Peabody as a writer on the BBC documentary, Buster Keaton: A Hard Act to Follow. He wrote for Dark Horse Comics and his The Shadow series has become a collectible. Locally, Joel directed several shows at The Depot Theater in Garrison, and gave freely and generously of his time to many local school productions.

Joel was an original, living a colorful and varied life. Joel stood out. He dressed like he walked off a movie set. He pursued his own path, and often took the road less traveled. Joel was widely read and liked nothing better than a well turned phrase, witty repartee, and obscure references.

Joel deeply cared for those he loved. He saw the potential in everyone, but especially in children’s electronic devices. He pursued his own interests — he as a writer and illustrator, while getting assignments to cover some of the decisions and being a part of the process even though they can’t vote yet.”

With that, Cherry shifted her focus about 12 years ago from books — including two bestselling picture books, The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest, which was re-issued last year to mark its 30th anniversary, and A River Ran Wild: An Environmental History — to producing and directing short films for a series called Young Voices for the Planet.

The films, which aired on PBS for five years, document young people sharing their concerns about environmental issues and proposing solutions. Stories have covered the banning of disposable plastic bags, the planting of millions of trees and renewable energy sources (see sidebar at right).

An example is Jasya Hunter-Mellers, who, at 10, testified before the City Council in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and was instrumental in getting a coal-fired power plant shut down. Her story is documented in a film called Words Have Power. Now 15, Hunter-Mellers continues to fight what she describes as “environmental racism.” Cherry notes that “these kids grow up, and they continue” as activists.

Cherry says she was fixated on nature during her upbringing in Pennsylvania, “sitting in the forest in my backyard with my sketchbook, recording what animals lived in which holes, collecting leaves. I knew the names of all the birds. I had an interest in life — I didn’t call it science — and I drew things.” But, she says, “I was also always interested in the [scientific] research that went along with it.”

After obtaining a teaching degree, she wrote a draft of what would become KAPOH, which is set in the rain forest. Tom Lovejoy, a friend who worked at the World Wildlife Fund, arranged for her to travel to a study site in Brazil, where she learned about the ecology and biology of the area and spoke with experts. “One of the wonderful things about being an author is you enter all these worlds,” she says.

Cherry illustrated but did not write her first 10 books, which were all published by E.P. Dutton. On a visit to a printer to oversee color production, she fell in love with Princeton, New Jersey, and was awarded a residency at the university’s Center for Environmental Studies. She later moved to Connecticut and, after auditing a few courses at Yale, went on to earn a master’s degree in history. Through the years, artist residencies have taken her to Costa Rica to research the wood thrush and to the ornithology lab at Cornell University.

In 2008, Cherry and Gary Braasch (who died in 2016) founded the nonprofit Young Voices on Climate Change. They had met while getting assignments to cover some of the same things — she as a writer and illustrator and he as a photojournalist.

“We started doing research together, which was fun especially because he was on expense accounts!” Cherry recalls. “We found stories from young people who were really concerned about climate change. These kids are powerful and are getting the word out — creating the prepared mind. It’s all about laying bricks. It takes a match to light the fuse, but you have to have the system there, ready to take off.”

We Sing Out!
The Rivertown Kids Chorus, including Elyse Fox of Beacon, sings with folk icon Pete Seeger about civil rights, social justice, cleaning up the Hudson River, global warming and the power of one person to create community and make great changes in the world.

Save Tomorrow
Three 9-year-old girls testify for a town law to allow solar panels on public buildings and also work to save their local woods.

Plant for the Planet
Inspired by Kenyan social activist, author and Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai, a 9-year-old boy in Germany, Felix Finkbeiner, founded Plant for the Planet, a viral campaign that has led to the planting of more than 1 billion trees worldwide.

Dreaming in Green
After learning the economic costs of climate change for coastal cities, four middle-school students in Miami conducted an energy audit that saved their school $53,000.

Olivia’s Birds and the Oil Spill
An 11-year-old named Olivia Bouler, who has a deep connection to the Gulf of Mexico and a love of birds, raised $200,000 for Audubon rescue efforts and lobbied elected officials to support clean renewable energy.
A Time to Celebrate
By Celia Barbour

In what may be the most Midwestern thing I’ve ever done, I once brought Jell-O to an elegant Easter gathering.

This was about a dozen years ago, and to be fair, it was not actually Jell-O but rather supremed slices of tangerine and blood orange gently suspended in a sunrise-hued mixture of Sauternes, citrus juice and plain Knox gelatin.

The recipe was inspired by Alfred Portale, a top chef from an era when a person’s primary qualification for that moniker was actual top-tier cheffing rather than trumpeting one’s cheffy opinions on TV. In Alfred Portale’s 12 Seasons Cookbook, he calls this dish a “terrine,” describes it as “a stunning dessert” and includes it in a holiday menu that also features lobster, salmon and morels. It was he, in other words, who gave me the courage to present something that I’ve never served — a gelled terrine.

I might equally have sought resolve from Alice B. Toklas and Gertrude Stein, for whom gelled treats featured in the “gastro-orgies” they consumed while touring California in the 1930s. Or from the young Sicilian prince in Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa’s novel, The Leopard, who gazes fervently at a gelled tower studded with cherries and pistachios, into whose “transparent and quivering flanks a spoon plunged with astounding ease.”

To the guests gathered at my aunt’s Easter table, however, my dish looked like Jell-O. For that, I blame Orator Woodward, the man who in 1902 marketed a blend of sugar, gelatin, adipic acid, disodium phosphate, fumaric acid, artificial color, natural flavor, butylated hydroxyanisole and artificial flavor so effectively that his product has remained synonymous with gelatin dishes ever since.

You didn’t have to look hard for evidence of Woodward’s success in 1970s Richmond, Indiana, where I grew up. Jell-O was so popular it often appeared under two rubrics on restaurant and cafeteria menus. (Upscale cafeterias were themselves a legit way to go out for a nice dinner back then, but that’s another story.) First, it was offered as salad, not because it contained any legitimizing vegetables or fruits, mind you, but because it was colorful and could be made to sit prim and proper like a frog on a wilted iceberg leaf. Then, you’d jump ahead two courses and find the same Jell-O offered as dessert, this time cubed and stacked in a parfait glass with whipped cream plopped on top.

At the time I was unable to admire the ingenuity represented by this semantic both/and maneuver. These days, however, one reason I don’t often serve gelled terrines is that I’m not sure where they belong in a meal. They are not rich enough (or chocolate enough) to function as dessert for most people who hanker for that course. Nor do they qualify as salad by any honest stretch of the imagination. Where a gelled fruit terrine really shines is as a palate cleanser, and the best occasion for that is a big feast — one featuring a roast ham or lamb, say, or brisket. Which brings me back to that spring feast. My offering might have looked for all the world like it belonged at a church basement potluck. But those who tasted it had seconds. Better yet, by popular demand, I brought it again the next year — and the one after that, and the one after that, and so on — proving, to me at least, that the time has come for gelatin desserts to shake off a century of commercial ignominy, rise up and take a brave and wobbly stand.
## The Poet Next Door

**Ruth Danon**

Ruth Danon of Beacon, the former director of the creative and expository writing program at New York University’s School of Professional Studies, is the author of three collections of poetry. With National Poetry Month upon us, she spoke with Jeff Simms about her work and teaching.

**What was the program you ran at NYU?**

The standard for writing programs was the workshop method in which everybody sits around and exchanges poems and then people talk about them. My model was different. I created constraints, which means rules or games involving experience, formal structure and language, and then I asked people to write. I don’t think it’s my business to tell people what to write about. I ran the program for 23 years until NYU became more interested in vocational subjects and it was discontinued. I retired and moved to Beacon and started a new life here.

**Do you still teach writing?**

In 2018 I started teaching what I call “live writing,” which is for the reading, writing and performance of poetry. With teaching, if you do it right, eventually your students don’t need you anymore.

**Has your writing changed since you left New York City?**

In ways being in exile from where I had been for so long had an impact. But the surrounding landscape has changed me in certain ways. Since the pandemic started, I’ve been writing an awful lot, not “about a pandemic,” but more about what it means to live through a time like this. I’m pretty comfortable. I have good work, I have a nice place to live. Yet, there is unspeakable tragedy around us.

**What is your assessment of the poetry scene in Beacon?**

It’s rich but it’s also a little hidden. There are some major writers who live here, such as Jeffrey Yang and Edwin Torres. There’s also Terry Hummer in Garrison. Mary Newill just did a beautiful anthology of environmental poetry. And Jimmy Eve, one of the founders of Calling All Poets. And some of my students—I don’t even like to call them students. What I do more is like instigating, and some of my instigates have started to publish.

**Do you see value in having National Poetry Month?**

I’m of two minds about any of the “XYZ” months. As I see it, poetry is part of life, because it’s a way of fostering an inner life. The idea that you have one month a year in which you have an inner life seems not a great idea. On the other hand, it’s good to honor poetry, which, in this country, has had a huge resurgence in the last number of years. To be a poet is not to take on a career, it’s a way of life. It’s a way that you live in the world with a certain porosity, a certain willingness to absorb sensation and experience, and to translate it into a form that might speak to other people. That kind of life is an antidote to social media and television and the violence of this culture.

**Made not Born**

To compose to gather oneself to calm down after turmoil a turn or a swerve a look up and out the window see that bird carrying a bare twig in its mouth landing on the drastic porch light attempting a nest this too a form of composure

**The “as if” problem**

Do you remember the past? It had a beauty in it. Do you think About the future, Don’t. It’s too Hard, demands too much of you.

Today, a deer walked past The window and stopped, As if posing. And then Another came, and stopped

And bent its legs, as if Praying. It’s the “as if” I need to pay attention to. Because I am asking the Sweet animal, with its White tail and fragile legs, To take on what I cannot.

The future is hard. It’s Hard to bend one’s knees.

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The city’s police reform is not going to end with this council.

~ Council Member Terry Nelson

Police reform

The City Council on Monday adopted Beacon’s Police Reform and Modernization Collaborative Report, satisfying Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s executive order that all municipalities review law enforcement policies and practices by April 1.

The vote to approve the plan was unanimous, although Council Member Dan Aymar-Blair said he did not agree with its recommendation of increased police training in de-escalating crisis situations involving people struggling with addiction or mental illness.

Instead, “getting into the mindset where community solutions and alternative solu-

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Pot Legalization (from Page 1)

and Nelsonville have until Dec. 31 to "opt out" by passing a law that bans retailers from selling pot or allowing on-site consumption. After Dec. 31, municipalities can only pass laws lifting earlier bans or regulating the "time, place and manner of the operation" of licensed retailers.

A local sales tax of 4 percent will be split, with the municipality receiving 75 percent and the county receiving the balance. If a retailer is in a village (such as Cold Spring or Nelsonville) that is within a town that also opts in (such as Philipstown), the municipalities will divide the 75 percent.

Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou, who said he was only speaking for himself because the City Council has yet to discuss the issue, said he sees "no inherent initial objection that would make me want to opt out." He said the additional tax revenue "might help support our community's quality of life."

Cold Spring Mayor Dave Merandy said he did not know when the Village Board might discuss the legislation (it next meets on Tuesday) and other elected officials in the Highlands did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Grant McCabe, the owner of The Leaf in Beacon, which stocks soaps, pain relievers and other products made with hemp oil, said the relationships he has with growers, processors and distributors makes the transition to legal marijuana a relatively easy one for his business.

Jacobson pointed to a provision of the law that will clear from a person's record convictions for possession of marijuana in amounts that are now legal. Legislation passed in 2019 decriminalized the possession of up to 2 ounces of marijuana for personal use.

"That will do a lot of good and help people when they apply for jobs," he said. In addition, part of the tax revenue will fund grants for "communities that have been impacted greatly" by the former criminal laws, he noted.

"There's a general attitude toward adult use of marijuana that it should be legal and also that the way is was enforced in prior years was not really fair and that too many communities of color were targeted," he said.

Galef said that while she is supportive of medical marijuana, which was legalized in New York State in 2014, she is wary of legalization because she has heard concerns about marijuana being a "gateway" drug that leads to the use of opioids. Galef said she has spoken with both parents who lost children to narcotic overdoses and doctors who have treated young people whose lungs have been damaged by smoking marijuana with vaping pipes.

"I just kept coming back to, would legalizing marijuana make the health and well-being of New Yorkers better?" she said. "Health-wise, I couldn't figure out a 'yes' vote, so I voted 'no.'"

The legislation does not affect laws against driving under the influence and the operation of licensed retailers not to have immediate competition. The limit will be three mature plants and three immature plants for adults age 21 and older and six mature plants and six immature plants per household.

Residents will be allowed to store up to 5 pounds of marijuana at home.

Employers are prohibited from discriminating against an employee because of their use of marijuana away from work.

The legislation establishes a goal of having 50 percent of retail licenses issued to "social equity applicants," including those from communities with a high number of marijuana arrests, and applicants who are low-income, minorities, women and/or veterans.

Penalties for possession begin at 3 ounces of marijuana flower or 24 grams of cannabis concentrate outside their homes, and on April 1, 2023, the newly created Office of Cannabis Management will begin issuing licenses for retail dispensaries and consumption sites.

The state will tax sales at dispensaries at 9 percent. After deducting administrative expenses, it must apportion 40 percent of the remaining revenue to education, 40 percent to a community reinvestment fund and 20 percent to mental health services, youth drug prevention, treatment and other programs.

The law also expands the medical marijuana program by adding new qualifying illnesses, including Alzheimer's, autism and rheumatoid arthritis.

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More Details
- New York State also tax the content of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical in cannabis responsible for the high, at 0.5 cents per milligram in flowers, 0.8 cents per milligram for concentrated cannabis and 3 cents per milligram for edibles.
- Residents will be able to legally grow their own plants beginning in 2023, or 18 months after retail sales begin, a delay designed to allow retailers not to have immediate competition. The limit will be three mature plants and three immature plants for adults age 21 and older and six mature plants and six immature plants per household.
- Residents will be allowed to store up to 5 pounds of marijuana at home.
- Employers are prohibited from discriminating against an employee because of their use of marijuana away from work.
- The legislation establishes a goal of having 50 percent of retail licenses issued to "social equity applicants," including those from communities with a high number of marijuana arrests, and applicants who are low-income, minorities, women and/or veterans.
- Penalties for possession begin at 3 ounces of marijuana flower or 24 grams of concentrated cannabis and rise to a felony for more than 10 pounds of plant or 4 pounds of concentrate.
- Penalties for unlicensed sale range from a violation to a felony for more than 100 pounds of flower or concentrated cannabis.
Puzzles

CROSS CURRENT

ACROSS
1. Tub session
5. Petrol
8. Microwaves
12. Jai —
13. Dadaist artist
14. Vicinity
15. Home to the Buccaneers
17. Fish feature
18. Evening hrs.
19. Whirl
21. Jazz genre
24. Crossword hint
25. Former mates
26. Turquoise-like color
30. Mimic
31. Rib
32. Ltr. holder
33. Pentagon VIPs
35. Broad
36. The Eternal City
37. Golfer’s wear
38. Calms
41. Actor Holbrook
42. Canal zone
43. Dorm room sleepers
48. Curved molding
49. Corn spike
50. Pakistani language
51. Office plant

DOWN
1. Cudgel
2. Pie — mode
3. Highland hat
4. Zoo heavyweights
5. Yaks
6. Coach Parseghian
7. Small telescope
8. Capital of Croatia
9. Operatic solo
10. Hide
11. Auction
16. Sound booster
20. Year-end celebration
21. Tempo
22. Big fair, for short
23. Payer sound
24. Stop
25. Former mates
26. Trucker in a union
27. Floral rings
28. Nullify
29. Always
31. Helen’s home
34. Impudent
35. Orville’s brother
36. Moving day rental
38. Starting
39. Olympic sled
40. Lusty look
41. Employ
44. Path
45. Epoch
46. License to drill?
47. Dine

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

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 give a boost (6)
2 Dolly Parton’s home state (9)
3 young rooster (8)
4 “Crocodile Dundee” star Paul (5)
5 WFH pants, perhaps (8)
6 science of projectiles (10)
7 underlines (10)

SUDOCURRENT

Answers for March 26 Puzzles

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

Haldane High School lost a heartbreaker on Saturday (March 27) at Albertus Magnus in Rockland County, rallying for 12 points in the final minute but falling short, 13-12.

The Falcons had a 13-0 lead with a minute to play in the game when Darrin Santos, playing quarterback in place of his brother, Dan, who was out with a toe injury, scored on a 3-yard run. A 2-point conversion attempt failed, leaving the Blue Devils down 13-6.

On Magnus’ first offensive play, Haldane’s Jake Mason forced a fumble that was recovered by Santos at midfield. With 19 seconds left, Santos connected with Soren Holmbo for 37 yards and rushing for 135 yards on 25 carries. Holmbo had four receptions for 37 yards and Doug Donaghy had an interception.

“Darrin was outstanding,” McConville said. “Freshman Evan Giachinta also did well in his first varsity appearance at quarterback. And Dylan Rucker, another freshman, did a nice job at lineman.”

Haldane (0-2) is scheduled to host Woodlands on Saturday (April 3) at 1:30 p.m.

Beacon’s tough season continued when it found itself on the short end of a 39-0 decision on Friday (March 26) at home against Tappan Zee. To add insult to injury, it was later announced that both teams would have to quarantine for 10 days because of a COVID-19 exposure. Beacon’s game at Mahopac on April 1 was canceled; the Bulldogs (0-2) are scheduled to host Class A power Somers (2-0) on Friday (April 9) at 7 p.m.

Against Tappan Zee, “we managed to cause a couple of turnovers and played solid defense — some of the time,” said Coach Jim Phelan. “But we also had four interceptions against us,” including two returned for touchdowns.

Phelan noted that Tyler Haydt had a fumble recovery and forced two fumbles. “We have seen a lot of improvement from the young guys,” Phelan said. “Liebinson Perez Novas, a sophomore inside linebacker, had a strong game defensively and two catches on offense.

“We’re looking to find something that works,” Phelan said. “The kids are doing well, but it’s a young group.”

VOLLEYBALL

The Haldane squad (7-1) picked up a win over Pawling and split two matches against Croton.

Against Pawling, Meghan Tomann had 14 digs, Barry had eight kills and Weinpahl each had six.

In the win over Croton, Tomann had 21 digs, Barry and Tomann each had six. Barry and Tom had four kills each and Jill Wein had four kills and Jill Wein had four kills.

“We played pretty well for being without our libero,” Megan Farrell, said Coach Kristina Roling. “She’s a huge anchor for us in the back. Rachel was aggressive and Maria Barry and Jill adjusted to the libero position and rose to the challenge. Kate Jordan showed her talent and potential with some amazing blocks and kills.”

Haldane defeated Croton, 3-0, at home on Saturday (March 27) but fell on the road on Monday by the same score. “They just got in our heads and beat us with their serving,” Roling said of the Monday match.

In the win over Croton, Tomann had 21 assists, Barry and Tom each had 25 digs, Barry had eight kills and Wein had Tom each had six.

Beacon opened its season by defeating league rival Woodlands, 140-77, on March 18, 109-59, before defeating Peekskill, 108-56, and Putnam Valley-Mahopac, 96-74, last week.

The Bulldogs (3-1) were scheduled to take on Poughkeepsie on Wednesday (April 7) and Haldane today before hosting John Jay of East Fishkill. The Bulldogs were scheduled to travel to Poughkeepsie on April 1 and Haldane today before hosting Poughkeepsie and Lourdes next week.

After playing Beacon, Haldane will host Pawling on Tuesday (April 6) and Putnam Valley on Thursday.

GIRLS’ SWIMMING

Beacon opened its season by defeating league rival Woodlands, 140-77, on March 16 behind personal bests from Bella Haydt, Meara Kumar, Isabel Bunker and Lilly Magurno. The Bulldogs fell to Arlington on March 18, 109-59, before defeating Peekskill, 108-56, and Putnam Valley-Mahopac, 96-74, last week.

The Bulldogs (3-1) were scheduled to take on Poughkeepsie on Thursday (April 1), followed by meets against Mount Vernon and Ketcham next week.