A Colorful Yarn

By Michael Turton

Few shopkeepers would bomb their own business — at least not in broad daylight — but Sue Costigan did. On Friday (June 11), the owner of The Endless Skein in Cold Spring “bombed” her Main Street store with yarn to mark International Yarn Bombing Day, an annual homage to knitting that began in 2011.

Costigan said she first learned about the day in 2019 from Naomi Lawrence, a New York City fiber artist whom she met when Lawrence came into her shop. The two immediately began scheming to bomb The Endless Skein, but COVID-19 tangled their plan.

On Friday, Costigan unveiled a 12-foot-high, multicolored, climbing rose bush consisting of 300 knitted flowers and 200 knitted leaves. The sculpture also contains a ladybug, a bumblebee and a butterfly; more critters may be added over the summer.

(Continued on Page 10)

No Records from Putnam Climate Meetings

Montgomery urges county to get engaged

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

June 2019, the nine-member Putnam County Legislature unanimously voted to join the state’s Climate Smart Communities program, which rewards municipalities and counties with access to grants to fund environmentally friendly upgrades to fight global warming.

Two years later, the Legislature’s Economic Development and Energy Committee scheduled an update on the county’s Climate Smart initiative. But it was postponed when the task force coordinator, Lauri Taylor, could not make the June 8 meeting, held by audio connection. Instead, Legislator Nancy Montgomery, who represents Philipstown and part of Putnam Valley and serves on the committee, took the opportunity to urge the county (Continued on Page 7)

Renegades, Dutchess Reach 25-Year Stadium Agreement

Deal will keep team at ‘The Dutch’ until 2046

By Jeff Simms

Dutchess County plans to invest more than 20 percent of the $57 million it’s slated to receive over the next two years from the federal government’s American Rescue Plan in the further rehabilitation of Dutchess Stadium, just outside of Beacon.

The $12.5 million commitment cements a new, 25-year lease with the Hudson Valley Renegades, the minor league baseball team that has been the park’s tenant since it opened in 1994. The agreement, (Continued on Page 24)
50 FIVE QUESTIONS: KAREN VIRGADAMO

By Alison Rooney

Karen Virgadamo retired last month after 29 years as program administrator for the Philipstown Recreation Center.

How did you hear about the job?

We moved to Cold Spring when my oldest son (Anthony; twins Tom and Joe were both teachers at Haldane) was 2. I was working in Carmel at Guideposts. My friend, Donna Steltz, had the Rec job but was leaving and recommended me. It was good, because I was able to work closer to my children and attend all their events. Now it’s 29 years later. Donna and I are both recently retired and still friends.

How has the job changed?

I was hired to do registration, which was done with receipt books and a ledger. I had to add everything up with a calculator. People registered and paid in person, with checks. I didn’t know the computer. We started off in the small office upstairs in Town Hall, and our program spaces were at Haldane, the Garrison School and the Continental Village clubhouse.

When we were given our Garrison space (a facility once owned by the Capuchin Franciscans) it was so wonderful to have our own facility with such beautiful grounds. I miss the more personal registration. People still call to register but it’s mostly online.

On the other hand, we’re able to offer a lot more now — in regular years, anyway, not this one. Theater has evolved for the kids and we have more classes for adults and seniors. This year we had nine trips planned for the seniors and they all had to be postponed, which was hard. Our preschool sports programs have always been popular. And summer camp is a big hit, that’s for sure. When I started it was called “Fun and Games” and it was held in the Haldane cafeteria.

Do people get mad when they are shut out of popular programs?

Yes, they do! We try hard to get the word out. Amber [Stickle, the director] posts all over Facebook and emails everyone. But some still miss out. This year was especially difficult because we had to cut the registrations by half because of COVID.

Do you miss your job yet?

I do, especially all the directors, coaches, instructors and assistants, past and present, who have done so much for our program. I’ll always appreciate the help they’ve given me over the years. But I’m doing some things around the house, chores, now that I have more time. I’m getting used to it. My husband is retiring at the end of June — he works at a warehouse in Peekskill, so it’s nice to have this month by myself to get things done! I’m planning on doing some traveling: I’m going south on a trip. I’m also walking on different trails and catching up on lunches with my girlfriends. But most of all, I’ll be spending time with my grandchildren. We have seven grandchildren whom we love and enjoy: Four boys, three girls, ages 9 down to 2.

Why are the Rec programs important, do you think?

They bring the town together, from the senior luncheons and trips where everyone is so appreciative of everything we do for them, to the exercise programs that everyone can do, to the newcomers whose children wind up in the preschool. People aren’t always aware of us when they move in, but they find out quickly.
Cold Spring Chamber Names Award Winners

Drug World praised for vaccination response

By Michael Turton

Two of the winners at the annual Cold Spring Chamber of Commerce awards held on Tuesday (June 15) were honored for community service that would have been unimaginable two years ago.

Heidi and Mark Snyder, co-owners of Drug World, were given the Foundation Stone Award, which recognizes a longstanding business or organization that has served the community exceptionally well. Their exceptional service was vaccinating a large portion of Philipstown residents against COVID-19. To date, Drug World has administered more than 5,000 shots, which are now available without an appointment.

"There are not many independent pharmacies that can say they did what these two people have done for our community," said Fran Merando Fornorotto, the Chamber secretary, during the ceremony, which took place via Zoom.

Mark Snyder gave the credit to Heidi, his mom. "She spent every waking moment in [vaccine] webinars" beginning in September, he said, prompting representatives from chains such as CVS and Walgreens who were on conference calls to ask, “Who is Drug World, and why are they talking?”

Six other awards and a scholarship were presented. The Parnassus Award went to the Garrison Art Center for offering exceptional programming and community enrichment through the arts. Ed Currelley, who founded the Hudson Valley Frozen Fresh soup company last year, received the Kitchen Table Business Award, honoring an innovative startup or home-based business. Scenic Hudson was recognized with the Cobblestone Award, presented to an organization that helps support progressive community evolution by building social, historic, sustainable, ecological or physical structures.

The James G. Lovell Stewardship Award went to Richard Shea, who will soon step down after serving on the Philipstown Town Board for 20 years. The award is given to someone who has worked on many fronts to keep Philipstown strong, healthy, connected and positive.

The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival received the Keystone Award for “holding open the door for economic growth through hospitality and tourism.” The Sets a High Bar Standard Award went to Jacqueline Azria, who opened her coffee and clothing shop, Paulette, last year.

The annual Philip Baumgarten Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Alanna Moskowitz, a Haldane senior who volunteering open the door for economic growth through hospitality and tourism.” The

Metro-North to Add Trains

Four more trains at rush hours

Metro-North plans to restore four trains to the morning rush hour and four to the evening on the Hudson Line beginning Monday (June 21), including two additional round-trip trains between Poughkeepsie and Grand Central Station that will make stops at Beacon, Cold Spring and Garrison.

The changes will bring the commuter railroad to 67 percent of its pre-pandemic shutdown service levels. Plans to add more trains on Aug. 29 to bring service to 83 percent on weekdays and 70 percent on weekends.

The railroad has also extended the weekday hours of the Grand Central entrances on 46th, 47th and 48th streets to 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

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Garrison School Hires Teacher, Administrator

School fills science, tech positions

The Garrison school board approved two hires on Wednesday (June 16).

Rachel Arbor was named as the environmental education teacher, a newly created position, at the school, which has grades K-8. Most recently, she was a middle-school science teacher in Longmont, Colorado.

Michael Sammartano was hired as director of technology and innovation. A former middle-school earth sciences teacher, he has been an instructor and innovation coach in the Mamareneck school district since 2015. He is also the co-founder and director of technology for the STEM Leadership Center.

Real Estate

Market Report (May)

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Cold Spring parking

Everyone hates Cold Spring’s parking (“Cold Spring Reveals Parking Plan,” June 11). We finally have a plan that can work, if we give it a chance.

The Cold Spring Parking Committee has presented, with tact, transparency and humility, a solid proposal to improve parking. By relying on an app that visitors load to their phones, the proposal avoids the daunting capital expense of parking meters in the business district, while achieving the most important goal of meters, to make parking more available to everyone.

Using a provision in New York’s laws governing residential permit parking and setting aside one-fifth of spaces within the permit zone for visitors, the plan should put an end to the horrible weekend congestion on residential streets on either side of Main Street. Free spaces would be set aside for business employees. The committee identified new parking areas at the village highway garage site and Mayor’s Park to augment the physical space for parking, without paving over paradise.

There’s little financial risk. Relief could be here in a few weeks. Let’s give it a shot!

Michael Armstrong, Cold Spring

If I am reading this right, residents will have to pay for a permit? That should be included in their taxes. Visitors should be paying.

Maria Cofini, via Facebook

I’m looking forward to paying $10 per year for a resident’s permit. I feel like I’m living in New York City, circling the streets for a space.

Joanne Murphy, via Facebook

Pride march

Thanks so much for your coverage of local LGBTQ pride and liberation marches, but I was misquoted in your article (“It’s Up to Us,” June 11). When I spoke about local business efforts, I was referring only to businesses that have signed the Beacon Human Rights Commission’s antidiscrimination pledge.

Further, I do not believe that business support is “absolutely essential” for LGBTQ liberation. In fact, businesses often try to cash in on Pride in a way that has nothing to do with liberation. As I told your reporter, I believe that anti-corporate, radical action is essential to our movement.

Donna Minkowitz, Beacon

The editor responds: The interview was “cut” and, according to our transcript, did not indicate she was referring only to businesses that signed a pledge.

The photos of the Pride march in Carmel on June 5 were a beautiful sight (“Proud Putnam,” June 11). As a kid growing up in Carmel, I never would have imagined something like this happening in my town. A big thanks and solidarity to Putnam Pride and Putnam for Black Lives.

Heather Candon, via Instagram

Climate Smart

Last week’s meeting of the Climate Smart Philipstown Task Force was held in person, a real treat after 15 months of Zoom. We are thrilled to see businesses returning to normal after the disruptions of COVID-19. We also miss eating on real dishes in restaurants.

Our community could quickly reduce the amount of trash and plastics that we are adding to the waste stream by returning to washable dishware where possible. The task force would like to ask restaurants using disposables for in-person dining to return to the use of reusable dishes and cutlery. Filling customers’ travel mugs helps too. Thank you for your consideration.

Tara Vamos, Cold Spring

Masks at school

In the 1980s, when I was a second-grader in Rhinebeck, I was struck with chickenpox. I loved second grade and hated the two weeks I spent at home in bed. When finally cleared by my doctor, I settled happily back at my desk, but not for long. About 15 minutes later, the nurse appeared: I was being sent back home.

I later learned that a girl in my class was battling leukemia, which made my recent chickenpox dangerous for her. To protect the life of an 8-year-old girl who was fighting for her life, my school sent me home for another week to heal completely. Sometimes we sacrifice our comfort and our happiness for the sake of others.

The girl is still alive; she beat the cancer and has a family of her own. Our children are vaccinated against chickenpox. But somehow our caring society has not survived. This is evident in the local anti-mask movement — those who want the mandate lifted for our unvaccinated children (“Mask Confusion,” June 11). We were discouraged when, with only a few weeks left in the school year, Haldane opted to lift the requirement outdoors — although the state did not require this, saying only that it was up to the district — and worried the superintendent had acquiesced to the vocal anti-mask sentiment.

After kids stopped wearing masks, the elementary school had to tell them they could no longer play Jackpot during recess.

(Continued on Page 5)

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

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.
Dear Mayor & Board of Trustees:

We recently discovered that the Village Board of Trustees ("VBOT") has continued to move forward with completing and possibly voting on a final version of Chapter 100 of the Village Code, pertaining to the regulation of Short Term Rentals ("STRs") within the Village of Cold Spring ("Proposed STR Rules"). As we understand the current status of matters after viewing a recording of a VBOT meeting held this past Thursday (June 10, 2021), the VBOT is retaining several portions of the Proposed STR Rules that were strongly objected to, not only by the members of our group of STR owners, but also by most of the Village residents and other participants who similarly expressed serious concerns at the May 6, 2021 Public Hearing. We are both surprised and indeed distressed to learn that the VBOT has adopted this course of action, which clearly conflicts with the critical mass of public sentiment voiced by your constituents who attended meeting, as well as those constituents who submitted more formal written commentary and objections in advance of that hearing, including our April 27, 2021 letter.

Among the provisions that were clearly objected to by many, which the VBOT has nonetheless decided to retain and push forward in the Proposed STR Rules are the following:

1. Imposing a cap of only 17 on the number of permitted Owner Occupied (Hosted) STR properties and 34 Non-Owner Occupied (Non-Hosted) STR properties and a complicated lottery system to determine how those permits will be awarded;
2. Capping the maximum number of available STR reservations to sixty (60) nights per calendar year;
3. Imposing a 2-night minimum stay per STR rental;
4. Prohibiting the use of an accessory building or separate/detached portion of a building as an STR on the same property;
5. Limiting the number of STR units per property to a single unit or group;
6. Imposing a minimum 3-year prior residence requirement and $2 million liability insurance coverage to qualify for an STR permit.

Further, we understand from the substance of recent VBOT meetings, enforcement of the above restrictions will be monitored through a mandated information disclosure requirement, such that each STR operator will be required to submit confidential STR records to the Village annually. Moreover, as we also understand the current status of enforcement measures, non-compliance (apparently including non-compliance with the information disclosure mandate and/or the above restrictions based on the content of such mandated disclosures), will result in the levying of graduated fines starting at $1,000 to a maximum of $5,000 and loss of an STR permit.

With particular regard to these latter disclosure and fine sanctions, there exist very serious legal ramifications should the VBOT nonetheless proceed on its current path. Viable legal claims challenging such STR rules have been recognized recently in at least two federal district courts in New York. In two cases decided recently, New York-based federal district courts have upheld claims challenging similar mandated disclosure and fine provisions as violations of the 4th Amendment right to privacy and protection against unlawful search and seizure. (Weisenberg v. Town Board of Shelter Island, 404 F.Supp.3d 720, 734-36 (EDNY 2019); Calvey v. Town Board of North Elba, 2021 WL 1146283, *8-9 (NDNY 2021).) Additionally in Calvey, the court allowed several other claims to proceed in that case, including alleged violations of the 14th Amendment equal protection clause and 5th Amendment government takings clause, against a 90-night per year rental cap on STRs, as constitutionally unlawful. Calvey at *6-7, *19-20. There is simply no equitable basis for the VBOT to deprive property owners from operating their businesses and renting to others on a short-term basis for an unlimited number of nights per year, as would any hotel, B&B or other rental property be allowed to do within the Village.

It is difficult to understand why the VBOT has adopted its recent course of action in the face of the public commentary at the May 6 hearing. Particularly disturbing is the VBOT’s dogged insistence in pushing forward with Proposed STR Rules that will, without question, negatively impact the livelihoods and economic futures of several of its constituents, while having little to no bearing on the preservation of public health and safety. Indeed, such rules and restrictions were directly rejected at the May 6 public hearing as unnecessary, overly complex, costly and burdensome for the Village to oversee and enforce.

We previously reached out to the VBOT to collaborate with our group to resolve these issues and avoid future conflicts and that offer still stands.

Sincerely,

Cold Spring Union of Hosted AirBNB Residents

John R. Lane | Aleksey Bushovich | Brantis Bushovich | Tara Caroli
Lara Demberg-Voloto | Peter Farrel | Denise Friedly | Phil Heffernan | David Marzollo
Melia Marzollo | Charlotte Palmer-Lane | Marianne Remy | Craig Roffman | Steve Voloto

Please submit comments and request further Public Hearings to: Village of Cold Spring, 85 Main Street, Cold Spring, NY 10516 or via the Village website at: www.coldspringny.gov/mayor-board-trustees. To join our Union contact us at: jblane@gmail.com

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

(Continued from Page 6)
NOTICE

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
Town of Philipstown, Town Hall
PO Box 155, 238 Main Street, Cold Spring, NY 10516

Separate sealed bids for the Highway Garage - Highway Garage Building Demolition will be received by the Town of Philipstown at the office of the Town Clerk, Philipstown Town Hall, PO Box 155, 238 Main Street, Cold Spring NY 10516 until 11:00 o'clock AM local prevailing time on Wednesday, June 30, 2021 and then at said office publicly opened and read aloud.

A prebid meeting will be held at 10:00 o'clock AM local prevailing time on Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at the Philipstown Highway Garage at 50 Fishkill Road, Cold Spring, NY.

The Information for Bidders, Form of Bid, Form of Contract, Plans, Specifications, and Forms of Bid Bond, Performance and Payment Bond, and other contract documents may be examined at the following location:
Office of the Town Clerk, Town Hall, PO Box 155, 238 Main Street, Cold Spring NY 10516

Copies may be obtained at the office of the Town Clerk located at Town Hall, 238 Main Street, Cold Spring NY upon payment of $25.00 for each set.

Any unsuccessful bidder or non-bidder shall be entitled to a refund of this payment in accordance with Section 102 of the General Municipal Law upon the return of such sets in good condition as determined by the Town.

Each bid shall be accompanied by acceptable form of Bid Guarantee in an amount equal to at least five (5) percent of the amount of the Bid payable to the Owner as a guarantee that if the Bid is accepted, the Bidder will execute the Contract and file acceptable Performance and Payment Bonds within ten (10) days after the award of the Contract.

OWNER RIGHTS RESERVED:
The Town of Philipstown hereinafter called the OWNER, reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive any informality or technicality in any Bid in the interest of the Owner.

STATEMENT OF NON-COLLUSION:
Bidders on the Contracts are required to execute a non-collusion bidding certificate pursuant to Section 103d of the General Municipal Law of the State of New York.

The Town of Philipstown hereby notifies all Bidders that it will affirmatively insure that in regard to any Contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

Attention of bidders is particularly called to the requirements as to equal employment opportunity and all other Federal, New York State and local requirements.

Attention of bidders is called to the requirement that all employees engaging in work on the project under the subject contracts must be paid prevailing wages as recited in the proposed contract documents. Bidders are required to comply with minimum wage rates and legally required workplace conditions, and must comply with the provisions of Section 291-299 of the Executive Law of the State of New York.

As required by New York State Finance Law § 139-I, Bidders are required to submit the following statement subscribed by the Bidder and affixed by the Bidder as true under the penalty of perjury: “By submission of this Bid, the Bidder and each person signing on behalf of the Bidder certifies, and in the case of a joint bid each party thereto certifies as to its own organization, under penalty of perjury, that the Bidder has and has implemented a written policy addressing sexual harassment prevention in the workplace and provides annual sexual harassment prevention training to all of its employees. Such policy meets the minimum requirements of section two hundred one-g of the Labor Law.” If a Bidder cannot make the foregoing certification, such Bidder shall so state and shall furnish with the Bid a signed affidavit setting forth in detail the reasons therefor.

No Bidder may withdraw his bid within 45 days after the actual date of the opening thereof.

Date: 6/09/2021
BY Tara Percacciolo, Town Clerk
Putnam Climate (from Page 1)

to advance its climate change agenda. She also zeroed in on the composition of the county’s Climate Smart task force, appointed by County Executive MaryEllen Odell; the lack of minutes from its meetings; and the general secrecy surrounding its work.

In New York, each municipality aspiring to Climate Smart certification must establish a task force. According to the state, this committee “should consist of, at a minimum, community members and municipal representatives — staff and/or elected officials,” although communities “may want to invite representatives from relevant local boards, organizations and businesses,” as well.

Putnam’s task force lacks such breadth. Instead, it consists of the same members as Odell’s advisory Executive Capital Projects Committee, including Odell and her deputy; the planning commissioner; the highway and facilities commissioner and his deputy; the purchasing director; the assistant planning and design supervisor; the finance department director; the finance commissioner; and Legislator Carl Albano of Carmel, who chairs the Legislature’s Capital Projects Committee.

When the county needed to establish a Climate Smart task force in September 2019, Odell explained, she decided that her committee the Executive Capital Projects Committee. The first was created in 2013 to advise the county executive; in 2019 it got the additional responsibility of serving as the Climate Smart task force. The second committee, mandated by the county charter, consists of legislators who meet annually to budget for capital spending.

To avoid confusion, County Executive MaryEllen Odell in March renamed her committee the Executive Capital Projects Committee.

2 Committees, 1 Name = Confusion

After the June 8 committee meeting, Legislator Nancy Montgomery observed that until recently the county had two groups called the Capital Projects Committee. The first was created in 2013 to advise the county executive; in 2019 it got the additional responsibility of serving as the Climate Smart task force. The second committee, mandated by the county charter, consists of legislators who meet annually to budget for capital spending.

Initiatives called for by the Climate Smart Communities project.

In mid-March, Montgomery asked to see the task force minutes.

Odell responded in a memo that a list of the task force members and the organizations they represent, showing that the task force includes representatives from the local government and from the community, and provide “meeting minutes, including sign-in sheets or other records of attendance, from two task force meetings held within the past year.”

In its directives, the state suggests that its Committee on Open Government can address questions of whether task force meetings should be governed by the Open Meetings Law. On Wednesday (June 16), Kristin O’Neill, the Open Government Committee’s assistant director, said that a task force would likely not be considered a “public body” subject to the law because it has an advisory role and does not make final decisions.

Before the Economic Development Committee session, Montgomery again asked about the minutes. She told the committee that in addition to being denied minutes, she has not been allowed to attend the Climate Smart task force meetings.

Montgomery that state grants totaling $11 million are available in 2021 for communities pursuing Climate Smart goals. “We’re not going to receive any of these, again, because we don’t have a record of any minutes for the past two years,” she said.

She added that it appears, through various projects, Putnam has completed some of these, again, because we don’t have a record of any minutes for the past two years,” she said.

To avoid confusion, County Executive MaryEllen Odell in March renamed her committee the Executive Capital Projects Committee.

According to the state, applicants must submit “a list of the task force members and the organizations they represent, showing that the task force includes representatives from the local government and from the community,” and provide “meeting minutes, including sign-in sheets or other records of attendance, from two task force meetings held within the past year.”

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Weed Shops (from Page 1)

consumption. After that, municipalities can only pass laws lifting earlier bans or regulating the “time, place and manner of the operation” of licensed retailers.

Members of the Cold Spring and Nelsonville village boards have broached the topic of putting the question to voters. But Beacon council members said during a workshop on Monday (June 14) that they’re leaning toward not opting out.

“I have no desire to opt out of the sales or smoking bars,” said Council Member Jodi McCredo. “It should have been legal all along, and people should have the freedom to do that.”

If Beacon doesn’t opt out, the city would receive a 3 percent cut of a 13 percent sales tax that will take effect in April, with 1 percent going to Dutchess County and 9 percent to the state.

City Attorney Drew Gamils likened consumption sites to cigar lounges. “You can smoke cannabis on-site, but it’s kind of like a bar: You can’t walk out with an open beer;” she said.

People would have to be 21 to enter a retail shop or consumption site, and the facilities would have to be located at least 500 feet from schools and 200 feet from places of worship. The city could add other restrictions through its zoning code, such as a distance requirement from city parks, she said.

The state law also allows people to grow their own marijuana plants, regardless of whether the city opts out of retail sales. No more than six mature and six immature cannabis plants can be cultivated in or at a single residence, and an individual may have no more than three mature and three immature plants.

The law places additional restrictions on personal cultivation: It cannot take place in a community or backyard garden or in any other place where the plants would be accessible to people under 21. Personal cultivation won’t be allowed until 18 months after the first retail sale of adult-use cannabis products, which puts it at 2023 at the earliest, Gamils said.

Smoking marijuana would be prohibited in schools, workplaces and vehicles but would be allowed anywhere that it’s legal to smoke tobacco.

Beacon already has a law on its books prohibiting smoking on city trails. The council on Monday discussed extending it to parks and banning vaping there, as well. “Enforcement is probably only as necessary,” said City Administrator Chris White. If you’re way up in the woods and nobody is around, you’re not going to be watching every tree. However, if you’re at a soccer game and somebody’s smoking up and not being respectful, I’m sure they’ll be reminded that there’s a law.”

However, Council Member Air Rhodes said, if the city bans smoking in parks, enforcement should not disproportionately focus on people of color.

“People are absolutely already smoking in the parks,” Rhodes said. “If it’s not a problem now, I don’t necessarily see it increasing being a problem. I hesitate to create criminality” where it might not be necessary.

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Beacon Judge Candidates Square Off in Primary

Incumbent filed petitions to appear on four ballot lines

By Jeff Simms

D

emocrats and Working Families Party members in Beacon can vote on Tuesday (June 22) in primaries that will determine whether an incumbent City Court judge faces opposition in the November general election.

Beacon has one full-time justice who serves a 10-year term and a part-time justice who serves for six years. Incumbent Timothy Pagones is seeking a second 10-year term on the court, which handles misdemeanors, traffic infractions and various small claims. As a Republican, Pagones won six-year terms in 1999 and 2005 and a 10-year term, running unopposed, in 2011.

Pagones is now an independent and this year filed nominating petitions with the county Board of Elections to appear on the Republican, Conservative, Democratic and Working Families lines. That forced primaries with Greg Johnston, a public defender who filed for the Democratic and Working Families lines and received endorsements from both parties. If Pagones wins the lines, he will appear unopposed on the November ballot.

There is also a Working Families Party primary for Dutchess County Family Court Judge. Rachel Saunders, who lives in Beacon, is seeking the ballot line, as is the incumbent, Denise Watson. Saunders will already appear on the Democratic line in November, and Watson on the Republican line.

Early voting for the primaries began on June 12. Polls will be open today (June 18) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The closest site for Beacon voters is Fishkill Town Hall, at 807 Route 52. The standard polling locations in Beacon will be open on Tuesday from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The Current asked Johnston and Pagones three questions about the race. Their responses have been edited for brevity.

Why are you running?

Johnston: I have practiced for 17 years as a public defender and believe my experience would bring a unique and vital perspective to City Court. The vast majority of judges are former prosecutors, while former public defenders are underrepresented. The system works best when it reflects all aspects and experiences of the legal community. I have represented thousands of low-income New Yorkers, accused of a wide range of offenses, in front of hundreds of judges. I have witnessed the profound impact the system has on both the accused and victims. Judges must respect all people who appear before them. That respect is rooted in considering not only the person but the road that led them to that place.

Pagones: I want to continue serving and helping the people who appear in my court. Along with presiding over traffic tickets, landlord and tenant matters, civil cases, small claims and criminal cases, I created the drug treatment court, domestic violence court, opioid recovery court and mental health court. The programs help people avoid convictions and even arrests. I have spent my career doing my best to help people better themselves. I want to expand my programs to help more people.

What makes this position important?

Johnston: City Court touches many aspects of Beacon residents’ lives. The judge handles traffic court, decides whether someone is evicted and determines if someone must post cash bail or is released without it. Most important, the judge can steer a resident needing mental health or substance abuse assistance to treatment. I’ve knocked on the doors of hundreds of my neighbors and heard many personal stories about their experiences in City Court. I believe Beacon can do better. I would like to expand the number of “problem-solving” courts that connect defendants with services that address the root causes of crime rather than focusing on punishment. For instance, Beacon would benefit from a youth court where young adults accused of crimes could get assistance to overcome the challenges they are facing.

Pagones: City Court deals with the community through traffic tickets, landlord and tenant cases, small claims, civil cases and criminal cases. These are things that affect everyday people. The court is basically the people’s court because it deals with issues that impact the lives of many people. Whether someone loses their license, gets evicted or potentially goes to jail is up to the judge. That’s why it’s important to have the most qualified and experienced person in the position. With more than 20 years’ experience presiding over these issues, I am the person to continue doing the job.

This race has gotten a lot of attention. Why do you think that is?

Johnston: I’m a little surprised by it. The tragic passing of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg highlighted the important role that judges play in our society. While Beacon City Court obviously does not wield a fraction of the power of the Supreme Court, whoever sits on its bench can profoundly affect quality of life not just for anyone who appears before the judge, but for anyone who lives in Beacon. Residents here understand that an engaged, empathetic and experienced attorney as judge can have a positive impact. Beacon only gets a chance to pick its judge every 10 years, so it’s inspiring to me to see so much interest and debate.

Pagones: The race has gotten attention because a position which should be based on experience and qualifications is being based on political affiliations. I was told by members of the Beacon Democratic Committee that, even though I am the most qualified candidate, I could not be endorsed because I’m unaffiliated and that my opponent would be because he is a registered Democrat. The race has also gathered attention because of the personal attacks and lies in letters to the editor by the Beacon Democratic Party chair and the mailings by my opponent because I gathered enough signatures to primary him for the Democratic and Working Families lines. With more than 30 years of experience as a prosecutor, defense attorney, assistant judge and full-time judge, I’m the most qualified person for the position. That is what should matter.
Vaccines Enable Return to Office

But some employers stick with remote work

By Leonard Sparks

Daniel Aubry is breathing a lot easier. Wearing a mask for much of the past year was a “real strain,” he said. But becoming vaccinated against the virus that causes COVID-19, along with others on the staff of his eponymous real estate company on Main Street in Beacon, has allowed him to shed face coverings while in the office.

The atmosphere is “much more relaxed,” he said, adding that “before, the greeting was, ‘How are you?’ Now, it’s, ‘Are you vaccinated?’”

The pace of COVID-19 vaccinations has been waning, but enough people are inoculated in New York state — 67.9 percent of adults had received at least one dose as of Wednesday (June 16) — to fuel a precipitous drop in new infections and a migration back to the office by employees who, in many cases, have spent more than a year working remotely.

The game-changing impact of the vaccines was underscored in Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s announcement on Tuesday that the state was lifting capacity limits, social-distancing mandates and other restrictions placed on businesses and social gatherings at the dawn of the pandemic shutdown in March 2020.

The repeal came two weeks to the day after River Architects reopened its eight-employee office on Main Street in Cold Spring after its staff had all been vaccinated. Co-owner Juhee Lee-Hartford said interacting with employees remotely “worked to a certain degree,” but it required more planning and was absent some of the conveniences of being in the office, like being able to walk a few feet to speak with a colleague.

Today (June 18) she and her staff will be going out to celebrate employee birthdays, Lee-Hartford said. “I’m quite happy to have everybody back in person,” she said.

Public employees have also been returning. After a year with a “significant number” of Dutchess County employees working remotely, many have returned to the office and nearly all will return by July, said Colleen Pillus, a representative for the county. Dutchess reached a milestone on Monday (June 14) when 50 percent of its 293,718 residents became fully vaccinated.

Putnam County announced last month that fully vaccinated employees would be allowed to work without masks. Nearly 54 percent of Putnam’s 98,892 residents were fully vaccinated as of Monday.

Others remain cautious.

At Clearwater in Beacon, the office is being staffed by one person on weekdays, said Steve Stanne, its interim executive director, on June 9. When or if the 10 staff members who are usually in the office will return is “still in flux,” but he expects the organization to employ a combination of in-person and remote scheduling.

Boscobel House & Gardens in Garrison, which had up to a dozen employees working in its offices before the shutdown, will also adopt a hybrid schedule, said Lauren Daisley, its director of communications, on June 9. The organization is “not so focused that everyone is physically there,” she said. “We’ve discovered that sometimes, working from home is extremely productive; and we have a close-knit team, so we still collaborate well.”

Restrictions Repealed

What changed with the state’s Tuesday announcement that most COVID-19 health and safety restrictions had been lifted?

■ Unvaccinated people must continue to wear masks.

■ Social distancing, capacity restrictions and cleaning and disinfection and other guidelines are now optional for businesses. However, restrictions remain in place for indoor event spaces with capacities of 5,000 or more, preschools and schools with grades K-12, public transit, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, nursing homes, and health care settings.

■ Large indoor venues that require proof of vaccination can eliminate social distancing and mask requirements. People who are not vaccinated or whose status is not known must present proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test and wear a mask. Children under age 4 are exempt.

COVID-19 by the Numbers

PUTNAM COUNTY

Number of confirmed cases: 10,616 (+14)

Active Cases in Philipstown: 0

Tests administered: 237,738 (+2,710)

Percent positive: 4.5 (0)

Percent vaccinated: 60.6

Number of deaths: 92 (0)

DUTCHESS COUNTY

Number of confirmed cases: 29,475 (+15)

Active Cases in Beacon: ≤5

Tests administered: 779,045 (+8,583)

Percent positive: 3.8 (0)

Percent vaccinated: 56.7

Number of deaths: 445 (0)

Source: State and county health departments, as of June 16, with weekly change in parentheses. Active cases in Philipstown as of June 11. Percent vaccinated reflects at least one dose.
Lawrence, who was there on Friday to help, said she did her first yarn bomb in 2012, in the dead of night. “It was around a lamppost, in Cambridge, England,” she said. She works primarily with acrylic yarn, creating 7-foot flowers, and made some of the larger flowers in the Cold Spring piece. Customers and staff knitted most of the component parts.

“This is fiber art, but public art, as well,” Lawrence explained. “We want people to be able to see it from across the street and come across to explore, touch and ask questions.”

Costigan said she would like to keep the sculpture hanging through the fall before moving it inside for the winter. “We’ll see how it weathered,” she said.

Her shop is back in full swing after closing its doors at the start of the pandemic shutdown. “A loyal base called in and we shipped them things or they picked up at curbside,” Costigan said. “It paid the bills for those two months.”

There might even have been a silver lining. “We taught a ton of learn-to-knit and crochet classes” during the shutdown, she said. “Everything was one-on-one, with masks.”

The revelry carried into Saturday, with customers and staff sitting outside, happily knitting, to mark Worldwide Knit in Public Day.

Knitting Day (from Page 1)

Tom Costigan secures the sculpture at The Endless Skein.

Sue Costigan and her husband, Tom, pose with part of the yarn sculpture.

Naomi Lawrence and Jackie Muller take part in Worldwide Knit in Public Day on Saturday (June 12).

Photos by Amy Kubik

A close-up of the climbing knit roses

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The Calendar

Locals Abound in Freedom Project

Third edition has mostly homegrown actors
By Alison Rooney

The first two editions of Then Is Now, a play-reading series produced by three Putnam County arts organizations, were largely populated by guest actors. Homegrown actors are front and center for the third installment, which will be streamed from Thursday (June 24) through Sunday (June 27).

In keeping with the first two presentations, a vintage work — in this case, Above Suspicion, by Sherwood Anderson — will be coupled with a new piece — More Beautiful, by Craig Lucas — inspired by the earlier work. Donald Kimmel, who will direct Above Suspicion, says it’s “about how people who live in societies that don’t have freedom from police persecution can be changed by the fear and paranoia. It’s amazing how resonant these plays are, how disturbing.”

By comparison, More Beautiful “exposes how we, as a society, are fractured by our suspicion of each other,” says its director, Alice Jankell. “Perhaps, as a species, we always have been, but now it’s eating us up where we live. We’re so suspicious of anyone who may think differently from ourselves that we lose sight of when we need to be the grown-ups in the room.”

Above Suspicion will be performed by an all-Philipstown cast, most of whom have appeared in previous productions at the Philipstown Depot Theatre, including Bill Coelius, Maia Guest, Colin Hopkins, Harper Lee Andrews, Tyler Mell and 11-year-old Elsa Minkin. Guest also appears in More Beautiful, alongside her son, Charlie Plummer, and Sasha Lee Andrews and Rich Topol.

Kimmel says he enjoys working with a mix of amateur and professional actors. “The magic has something to do with people having the sense of community but also wanting to shine individually as members of that community,” he said. “It’s that mix of being, say, 5 years old and onstage for the first time, or 75 years old and coming back to it, or being 75 and getting onstage for the first time.”

Jankell notes that “working in smaller theaters embedded in a close community breeds an intimacy and trust that make it easy for artists to do their best work. And that familiarity and coziness spreads. It’s seductive to outside actors, writers and directors, as well. We rely on connection and vulnerability to tell honest stories, so we create and recreate ‘families’ in theater all the time.”

The plays will be streamed through the website of the Tompkins Corners Cultural Center (the other member of the alliance is Arts on the Lake). Tickets are $15 ($10 for students) at bit.ly/freedom-project-3.

Film Society Returns

Announces summer season
By Alison Rooney

As it prepared to implement COVID-19 protocols, including requiring reservations to limit attendance, the society was pleasantly surprised when New York State on Tuesday (June 15) lifted social-distancing restrictions. The society said it will change its requirements for spectators before the July 10 opening as needed; see its website at coldspringfilm.org for updates.

“We couldn’t ask for a better gift for our 10th anniversary,” said Jennifer Zwarich, who is a member of the operating committee of the nonprofit. “Our community stepped up in a big way and helped us replace our old screen, and then Gov. Cuomo lifted most COVID-19 restrictions. We are looking at the real possibility of a fairly normal summer film season, and all of us could use a little bit of normal.”

To recap a decade of movies by the river at Dockside Park, the society is bringing back perennial favorites: The Princess Bride (1987) on July 10, Casablanca (1942) on July 24, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969) on Aug. 7, and North by Northwest (1959) on Aug. 21. It also will present Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937) on Sept. 17 at the Boscobel House & Gardens in Garrison.
THE WEEK AHEAD
Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)
For a complete listing of events, see highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

TALKS & TOURS

SAT 19

History Hike
COLD SPRING
11 a.m. West Point Foundry Preserve
80 Kemble Ave.
putnamhistorymuseum.org
Mark Forlow, the co-author of a book about the West Point Foundry, will lead a hike and discuss the site’s significance and past.

SAT 19

History Crawl
COLD SPRING
Noon – 4 p.m. Putnam History Museum
63 Chestnut St.
putnamhistorymuseum.org
Pick up a map at the museum for a self-guided tour. Best for ages 8 and older. Also SUN 20.

WED 23

Danskammer and the Community
POUGHKEEPSIE
6 p.m. Scenic Hudson
bit.ly/june23roundtable
The environmental group will host this webinar about the proposed expansion of a power plant in Newburgh and its potential impact on the region.

COMMUNITY

SAT 19

Walk to Fight Hunger
RINEBECK
9 a.m. Dutchess Fairgrounds
6550 Spring Brook Ave.
foodbankofhudsonvalley.org
This fundraiser will support food banks in six counties.

SAT 20

Philipstown Fights Dirty
GARRISON
10 a.m. St. Philip’s Church
1101 Route 9D | stphilipshighlands.org
Jocelyn Apicello and Jason Angell will speak during the worship service about the campaign to reach net-zero carbon emissions in Philipstown and what actions households can take.

WED 23

Drive-Thru Senior Picnic
BEACON
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Memorial Park
198 Robert Cahill Drive
845-486-2550 | dutchessny.gov
If you are a Dutchess senior age 60 or older, call to reserve a spot and enter from Fishkill Avenue.

SAT 26

Family Pride in the Park
PEEKSKILL
1 – 5 p.m. Pugsley Park
1036 Main St. | peeksskillpride.org
At this free event, families can enjoy a drag queen story hour, music, a pet photo contest and craft activities.

SUN 27

Open Sunday
PHILIPSTOWN
10 a.m. & 12:30 & 3 p.m.
Stonecrop Gardens
81 Stonecrop Lane
845-265-2000 | stonecrop.org
Register for a two-hour visit; tea and cake will be available for purchase. The gardens are also open Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday through October. Cost: $10 ($5 seniors, children; under 3 free)

MUSIC

SAT 19

Clearwater Great Hudson River Revival
BEACON
11 a.m. – 11 p.m. | clearwaterfestival.org
The 2021 festival — featuring musicians, storytellers and activists who share Pete Seeger’s vision of environmental and social justice — will be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube. Tom Chapin, Guy Davis, Jacob and David Bernz, John Hall, Tiokasin Ghosthorse, Diana Jones, Reggie Harris, the Blind Boys of Alabama, Betty & the Baby Boomers, Emma’s Revolution and the Trouble Sisters are among the scheduled performers. There will also be an online auction.

SUN 20

Angela Bruno
BEACON
12:30 p.m. Beacon Farmers Market
223 Main St. (DMV parking lot)
The singer will perform a variety of popular American, Italian and Latino songs. Sponsored by The Highlands Current.

TUES 22

The Fabric of Our Lives
BEACON
8 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
howlandculturalcenter.org
Singer and songwriter Tara O’Grady will perform with Sasha Papernik and Justin Poindexter and interview Gertie Hirsch, a vintage clothing designer, at this livestreamed event. Cost: $15

FRIDAY

Songs in the Attic
MAHOPAC
6:30 p.m. Putnam County Golf Course
187 Hill St. | 845-808-1880
putnamcountygolfcourse.com
David Clark and his band will perform the hits of Billy Joel. Admission includes a barbecue buffet. Bring blankets and chairs. Cost: $30 ($50 door)

SAT 26

Cuarteto Guataca
PEEKSKILL
8 p.m. Beacon Yoga Center
464 Main St. | deaddiec.bpt.me
The Feel Good Music Series continues with bassist Josh Levine (New York City), percussionist Jairo Botiata (San Juan), flautist Jeremy Bosch (Puerto Rico) and tres player Irai Krias (Tel Aviv), who will perform sala and Són Monuno classics.

SAT 26

Stefan Wainwright
BEACON
7:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The singer and songwriter, who is a member of an acclaimed family of artists — brother Loudon Wainwright, sister-in-law Kate McGarrigle, nephew Rufus Wainwright and nieces Martha Wainwright and Lucy Wainwright Roche — will perform while you dine. Reservations required.

SUN 27

Marianne Osiel
BEACON
1 p.m. Beacon Farmers Market
223 Main St. (DMV parking lot)
The singer and songwriter plays the oboe and blues guitar. Sponsored by The Highlands Current.

KIDS & FAMILY

SUN 20

Story Walk
COLD SPRING
Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave.
845-265-3040 | butterfieldlibrary.org
Celebrate Father’s Day with a themed book on the library’s path.

MON 21

Summer Reading Kick-off Party
COLD SPRING
2 & 3 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org
Sign up for the library’s summer program and win prizes when you keep track of your books. Grades 6 to 8 register at 2 p.m. and grades kindergarten to 5 at 3 p.m.

TUES 22

Battle of the Books
BEACON
5 p.m. Beacon Recreation Center
23 W. Center St. | beaconlibrary.org
Students entering grades 9 to 12
(Continued on Page 13)
**TUES 22**
**Putnam Performs**
**PHILIPSTOWN**
bit.ly/PutnamPerforms-Philipstown

Today is the deadline to register online for this countywide competition in which students and young adults from ages 11 to 19 will share their talents in videos of dancing, singing, playing an instrument, drawing, comedy, visual art, spoken word, making/creating something, yoga poses, TikTok dances or tricks, etc. Community members will vote on whom should advance.

**FRI 25**
**Madagascar**
**COLD SPRING**
8 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave, 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org

The 2005 animated film will be screened outdoors.

**SUN 26**
**Fairy House Hunt**
**POUGHKEEPSIE**
10:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Locust Grove
2683 South Road
eventbrite.com/e/fairy-house-hunt-
tickets

Search for elusive fairy houses on the estate grounds. Cost: $10

**STAGE & SCREEN**
**SAT 19**
**Indiana Jones & The Last Crusade**
**BEACON**
8:30 p.m. Story Screen Drive-In
724 Wolcott Ave. | 845-440-7706
storyscreendrivein.square.site

Harrison Ford starred as the iconic adventurer in this 1989 film. Also SUN 20. Cost: $10 ($8 children, seniors, military)

**WED 23**
**Pee-Wee’s Big Adventure**
**BEACON**
8:30 p.m. Story Screen Drive-In
724 Wolcott Ave. | 845-440-7706
storyscreendrivein.square.site

Paul Reubens plays the lead in this 1985 family comedy about a lost bike. Cost: $10 ($8 children, seniors, military)

**FRI 25**
**Miss Juneteenth**
**GARRISON**
7 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
845-424-3020 | desmondfishlibrary.org

The documentary by Domenico Palma features interviews with the artists whose work was exhibited in Magazzino’s 2020 exhibit, telling the story of creativity during the global pandemic. Cost: $10 ($5 students, seniors)

**SAT 26**
**Homemade**
**PHILIPSTOWN**
8 p.m. Magazzino Italian Art
2700 Route 9
magazzino.eventbrite.com

The 2020 film, with Nicole Beharie, Kendrick Sampson and Alexis Chikaeze, follows a single mom and former beauty queen who enters her daughter in the same pageant she won. Shown via Kanopy. Register at bit.ly/film6-25.

**SUN 27**
**Sulle Tracce di Maria Lai**
**PHILIPSTOWN**
8 p.m. Magazzino Italian Art
2700 Route 9
magazzino.eventbrite.com

Maddalena Bregani directed this exploration of the artistic practice of Sardinian artist, Maria Lai, and her place in 20th-century events. Cost: $30 ($5 students, seniors)

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Everett Companile
Alexander John Carone
Carlo Cofini
Arden Conybear
Douglas Donaghy
John Dwye

Alex Ferdico
Shannon Ferri
Luke Flager
Essex Florke
Sophia E. Giunti
Ashlee P. Griffin
Dylan Gunther

Owen Hall
Steven C. Herring
Walter Hoess
Ashley Hotaling
Maxim V. Hutz
Desirea Hyatt
Rachel Iavicoli

Emily Jones
Jack Jordan
Lucas Langer
Sasha Levy
Nicholas Marino
Benjamin McEwen
Graeme McGrath
Not pictured: Autumn Hartman, Alanna Moskowitz, Kyra Moskowitz, Samuel Pappas, Joseph E. Schels-Felcyes, Calvin Shuk

O'NEILL HIGH SCHOOL
Amy "Lily" Albertson, Garrison
Kyle Mayo, Garrison
Neo Wastin, Garrison
Luke Wimer, Garrison

KENNEDY CATHOLIC (SOMERS)
Michael Piotrowski, Beacon

MILLBROOK SCHOOL
Sophie Stark, Garrison

Zaire Mickell-Foggie-Smith
Shiga Minori
Victor Mollino
Elizabeth Nelson
Alison Nichols
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James Phillips
Joshua Reyes
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  - Maja Maxwell, Cold Spring
  - Julian Van Domele, Cold Spring
- **Business**
  - Andre Davis II, Beacon
  - Myles Harvey, Beacon
  - Jazmyn O’Dell, Cold Spring
  - Sonya Van Valkenburg, Cold Spring
- **Business – Paralegal**
  - Arielle Milam, Beacon
- **Communications and Media Arts**
  - Beth Fisher, Beacon
  - Robert Vasquez Melendez Jr., Beacon
- **Computer Information Systems**
  - Andrew Lukan, Beacon
- **Computer Science**
  - Christopher Moschetti, Beacon
- **Criminal Justice**
  - Samuel Soto, Beacon
  - Cevon Taylor, Beacon
- **Fire Science**
  - Dylan Meaney, Garrison
- **General Studies**
  - Jordan Acevedo, Beacon
  - Selena Ayala, Cold Spring
  - Claire Emmett, Beacon
  - Zhandra Innocenti, Beacon
  - Julia Lahey, Beacon
  - Nicole Mazzarella, Beacon
  - Steven Smith, Beacon
  - Brianna Virtuoso, Beacon
  - Elizabeth Wassweiler, Beacon
- **Human Services**
  - Richard Cannon Jr., Beacon
  - Melinda Cuello, Beacon
  - Destiny Kearney, Beacon
- **Liberal Arts & Sciences – Education**
  - Anisa Atzate, Beacon
  - Kristina Ban, Beacon
  - Zoe Lyons-Davis, Cold Spring
- **Liberal Arts & Sciences – Humanities**
  - Jamie Brown, Beacon
  - Sydney Cottrell, Garrison
  - Christian Farley, Beacon
  - Angelina Finateri, Beacon
  - Emma Henderson, Beacon
  - Alexander Nivel, Beacon
  - Sahil Sharma, Beacon
  - Sabrina Tutasi, Beacon
  - Lilybeth Velasquez, Beacon
- **Nursing**
  - Heather Courtney, Beacon

**EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY (PENNSYLVANIA)**
- Ryan Koval, Cold Spring

**GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**
- Gregory Trautman, Beacon

**MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY (PENNSYLVANIA)**
- Derek O’Dell, Beacon

**MOUNT SAINT MARY COLLEGE**
- Cesar A. Olivares, Beacon
- Nickeya Allen, Beacon
- Sierra Rose Caban, Beacon
- Justin D. Maldonado, Cold Spring
- Jessica Belle Musacchio, Beacon
- Alexandra Lynn Osborne, Cold Spring
- Catherine L. Owens, Beacon
- Bianca Resendiz, Beacon
- Channelle K. Walker, Beacon
- Derek Sanderson, Beacon
- Richard Valentine, Cold Spring

**MOUNT SAINT MARY COLLEGE**
- Sara Abril, Beacon
- Colin Battersby, Beacon
- Caroline Casparian, Cold Spring
- Ana Maria Farina, Beacon
- Zanyell Garmon, Beacon
- Jessica Gdoviak, Cold Spring
- Alexa Glusker, Beacon
- Clarissa Molina, Beacon
- Evan Poholchuk, Cold Spring
- Justin Santana, Beacon
- Emma Schiffer, Beacon
- Melissa Segovia, Beacon
- Hayley Squires, Garrison
- Stephanie Varricchio, Beacon
- Jesus Velasquez, Beacon

**SUNY NEW PALTZ**
- Sarah Abdo, Beacon
- Colín Battersby, Beacon
- Caroline Casparian, Cold Spring
- Ana Maria Farina, Beacon
- Zanyell Garmon, Beacon
- Jessica Gdoviak, Cold Spring
- Alexa Glusker, Beacon
- Clarissa Molina, Beacon
- Evan Poholchuk, Cold Spring
- Justin Santana, Beacon
- Emma Schiffer, Beacon
- Melissa Segovia, Beacon
- Hayley Squires, Garrison
- Stephanie Varricchio, Beacon
- Jesus Velasquez, Beacon

**UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON**
- Sean Gannon, Garrison

**UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA**
- Andrew Platt, Cold Spring

**UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT**
- Emma Parks, Garrison

**WILKES UNIVERSITY**
- Frances Reilly, Beacon

**{ Did we miss anyone? Email editor@highlandscurrent.org **
Former St. Philip’s Members Start New Service

Music director, most of choir leaves Garrison church

By Leonard Sparks

After the reading from the Book of Mark of a parable about the growth of a mustard seed into a tree, it was not the voice of a minister who broke the silence in a tiny 132-year-old church on Snake Hill Road in Garrison.

Instead, Carolyn Doggett-Smith walked to a podium in a corner of the nave on Sunday (June 13) and recited her difficulties over the past year: confined to home because of COVID-19; being unable to sing with the St. Philip’s Episcopal Church choir; seeing the church splintered by the resignation of its longtime music director; and a subsequent exodus of members.

Then, using words like “rebirth” and “renewal,” she spoke of performing and worshipping each Sunday again in a new home, a barely used sanctuary across the road from The Garrison golf course.

“This is yet another resurrection; not only for me, but for all of us,” she said.

The building, the former South Highland United Methodist Church, is filled again with worshippers, singing and music each week, a change born of conflict.

Durward “Woody” Entrekin Jr., who was the music director at St. Philip’s for 21 years, resigned in November over what he says was a shift in a church many joined for its inclusiveness. His decision triggered a revolt by other longtime St. Philip’s members, including nearly every member of the choir.

Seven months later, the former St. Philip’s choir members are holding a nonde-nominational service each Sunday morning in the former Methodist church, having named themselves the Highlands Choral Society and referring to the building as The Highlands Chapel.

Entrekin, a Yale-educated organist and professor of music at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, is again leading the choir. Friedrike Merck, who joined the choir at St. Philip’s five years ago, is the society’s president.

With the exception of a sermon given on June 6 by a Presbyterian minister, each service features a “reflection” read by a member of the congregation or the community and music combining traditional hymns with selections by Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and other composers. The services are steeped in informality, with Sunday’s readings including lyrics by Bob Dylan and the guest minister quoting Yoda, the Jedi Master from Star Wars, in his sermon. Sharing the pews are Christians and Jews, along with atheists, agnostics and Buddhists.

“We knew we wanted to sing and we knew we wanted to be together in a spiritual way,” said Merck.

Leaving St. Philip’s was “incredibly difficult,” said Entrekin, who was married at the church. Judy Dunstan, who joined St. Philip’s after moving to Garrison in 1981, also found the decision to leave tough. Her two children were married by the Rev. Frank Geer, who led St. Philip’s as rector for 30 years before retiring in 2018. Dunstan said two of her grandchildren were baptized at the church.

“When this group reached out to me, that they were starting, I was thrilled to come and try something different because it’s still all people who I’ve known for years,” she said.

Entrekin said the “joy of working at St. Philip’s had gone,” and he echoed a charge lobbed by others who have left that St. Philip’s felt more doctrinal and less inclusive than when they first joined. The Rev. Amanda Elman, who became St. Philip’s rector in January 2020, succeeding Geer, said the church is “very saddened” that anyone would feel that way.

“St. Philip’s continues to worship in the Episcopal tradition as we have for 250 years, and remains blessed to have the opportunity to welcome all people to worship with us and be part of our community, no matter who we are or where we are on our journey of faith,” she said.

Merk said she and other choir members who left St. Philip’s began talking in February about reconstituting themselves, with Entrekin as music director. Their search for a building led to South Highland United Methodist, whose members voted in 2017 to merge with the Cold Spring United Methodist Church. Built in 1889, the church was only being used for special services.

The Highlands Choral Society signed an agreement to lease the building and scheduled its first service for April 4, which was Easter Sunday. The choice of that date for the inaugural service was intentional, said Merck.

“Easter and spring and renewal — they defined what we were going through,” she said.

Because of pandemic restrictions in place at that time, only a soloist performed. Then the choir began rehearsing and now performs as a group, without masks, the first time they have done so since the pandemic shutdown.

The first time they sang together “was incredibly moving,” said Merck.

“It wasn’t just the choir coming back, it was us as people, some of us who live alone and who had been incredibly isolated for over a year,” she said.

Attendance averages about 50 people, according to Merck, who expects the reading of reflections to continue, with occasional sermons by guest ministers and the giving of communion. The Highlands Choral Society, now registered as a nonprofit, is also considering buying an electronic organ, said Entrekin.

After each service, attendees walk down to the basement to talk and share coffee and snacks.

Christopher Radko, standing in the basement after the June 6 service, said he has “never seen people so happy” to go to church on Sunday. “If St. Francis was here, he would say, ‘I’m down with this,’” he said.
Resistance Through Food

Restaurateur offers support for Palestinians
By Arvind Dilawar

On May 15, Ziatün is typically closed. The Palestinian proprietors of the Middle Eastern restaurant on Main Street in Beacon observe the anniversary of the Nakba — Arabic for “the catastrophe,” a reference to the displacement of Palestinians from what is now Israel — in resistance, by closing their doors.

This year, May 15 fell amid an 11-day bombardment of the Gaza Strip, a Palestinian territory on the Mediterranean Sea, by the Israeli Defense Forces, which killed 256 people. Rockets fired from Gaza by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad into Israel killed 12 people.

“Usually we prefer to close the business on that day,” says Kamel Jamal, the owner of Ziatün, whose parents belong to the first generation of Palestinian refugees that were displaced by the founding of Israel in 1948.

“My way of showing resistance is through food,” said Jamal. “We have to show our identity and who we are as a people, as a nation, as a people with a land, and that’s our way of showing it.”

Jamal was born in a refugee camp outside of Amman; his family moved to the U.S. in the late 1970s. His childhood followed the Hudson River as the family — including his six sisters and brother — moved from Manhattan to Yonkers to Yorktown. Family life revolved around the kitchen table.

During high school he found work at a Yorktown restaurant, where “the chef promised to teach me how to cook if I got the dishes done on time,” Jamal recalled, with a laugh. “I’m still the best dishwasher my company has!”

In 2007, Jamal and his wife, Lena, traveled further up the Hudson to Cold Spring to open an Italian restaurant, Angelina’s, which they have since sold. The quiet village weekends sent the couple to bustling Beacon, where they launched Tito Santana Taqueria in 2011, Beacon Bread Co. in 2014 and Ziatün in 2016.

“Opportunity finds you, you don’t find opportunity,” says Jamal. “I got tired of my friends and colleagues telling me to do something I was good at, so I opened a Middle Eastern restaurant.”

Ziatün serves staples such as kebabs, falafel and mujaddara, as well as Palestinian specialties such as imported olives. His latest venture, W.T.F., next to Beacon Bread Co., opened in 2020; the name reflects, he quipped, his reaction to the pandemic, although officially it stands for Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.

“My way of showing resistance is through food. We have to show our identity and who we are as a people, as a nation, as a people with a land, and that’s our way of showing it.”

Kamel Jamal

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Looking Back in Beacon

By Chip Rowe

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

150 Years Ago (June 1871)

The day after William Van Wagener, the police justice of Fishkill Landing, complained of “cholera morbus” [acute gastroenteritis that occurs in the summer or fall], he was found dead in bed.

Louis Guiseppe Contarini was arrested in Poughkeepsie on charges of bigamy. “The first that had been known of him” locally, according to a news account, was in 1870, when he launched a weekly newspaper, The Matteawan Review, that soon failed. That same year, he married Mary Diston of Poughkeepsie. When he disappeared soon after the wedding, his wife and her father swore out a warrant for his arrest, suspecting he had another spouse in Brooklyn. The warrant was withdrawn when Contarini reappeared with a gold watch and chain for his wife, telling her that he and his three sisters had inherited $75,000 from a relative in the old country. Suspicious, Mary’s father traveled to Brooklyn, where he found Louise Ercke, whom Contarini had married and impregnated in 1861, when she was 14. Accused of stealing from Louise’s father, Contarini had fled to Richmond, Virginia, where he married a woman named Virginia Saunders (who had since died) and fought (he said) for the Confederacy but was captured. [Two months later, in August 1871, a woman came to Poughkeepsie from Boston, claiming that she was Contarini’s spouse, giving him at least four wives, with three living.]

125 Years Ago (June 1896)

Three bicyclists who left Albany at 6:30 a.m., headed for Brooklyn, reached Fishkill Landing by supper, a distance of 93 miles over poor roads. They took rooms at the Holland House and left the next day at 6 a.m. in a downpour. The men had to walk their bikes over the hills from Nelsonville to Peekskill, where they stopped for dinner before completing their ride.

Edward Taylor, 44, died of a heart attack at his home on Fishkill Avenue. The New Jersey native had been employed for 25 years as the foreman of the finishing room at the Matteawan Manufacturing Co.

The DeGarmo Institute held commencement for its nine graduates at the Peattie Opera House in Matteawan. At the same time, the Matteawan Union School held commencement for its five graduates at the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Dr. Watson’s Electrical Sanitarium had so many patients, he opened a branch in Newburgh.

Let’s Keep Politics Out and Judge Pagones In

Vote Primary Day June 22nd

Paid for by Friends to Re-Elect Judge Pagones
(Continued from Page 20)

William Lewis, 25, a “gentleman bootlegger” who was described as wearing a straw hat, a new suit and polished shoes. Witnesses said Lewis had gotten off the train earlier that day at Beacon with the suitcase.

A New York City woman survived an attempt to end her life by leaping from a southbound train because, when she jumped, the train had slowed to 15 mph as it approached the Beacon station.

A juror had to be awakened while hearing a lawsuit by Highland Hospital against William Ray over an outstanding bill for $162. Ray said he had offset the bill by driving the ambulance, putting up patient screens and cutting the grass.

Some 300 people, mostly members of the Poughkeepsie chapter of the Kiwanis, crowded a Beacon courtroom when one of their members, Martin Ryan, appeared on a charge of speeding. Ryan had been leading an 11-car caravan of Kiwanians returning home and said he was not going more than 17 mph. The Beacon officer who made the arrest agreed to drop the charge.

75 Years Ago (June 1946)

An 84-year-old man died of a heart attack during a service at the Nazarine church on Fishkill Avenue.

Some 300 people, mostly members of the Poughkeepsie chapter of the Kiwanis, crowded a Beacon courtroom when one of their members, Martin Ryan, appeared on a charge of speeding. Ryan had been leading an 11-car caravan of Kiwanians returning home and said he was not going more than 17 mph. The Beacon officer who made the arrest agreed to drop the charge.

50 Years Ago (June 1971)

A director of the Dutchess County Taxpayers Association complained that while it cost $1,128 to educate each child in the Beacon school district, the Urban Development Corp. would only be paying $156.25 for each of its 192 newly constructed units on Tompkins Avenue. Mayor Robert Cahill responded that the nearly all the children who would be living in the subsidized apartments already attended Beacon schools.

The state budget included $2.3 million to begin work on a $50 million, two-lane span up to Fishkill, 3 miles away.

A 23-year-old resident of Verplanck was arrested on charges he abandoned his wife and five children.

Pruning is an art

If you are looking for a “natural finish” and do not want to see your ornamentals cut back severely to dead wood, choose artful pruning.

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Beacon Fire Tower Turns 90

By Brian PJ Cronin

On July 13, 1931, The New York Times published a brief notice that work had begun on a 60-foot steel observatory atop Mount Beacon that would allow rangers to watch for forest fires from a glass room.

With the aid of powerful telescopes, the observers, on a clear day, will be able to obtain a view of the countryside within a radius of 70 miles or more,” it reported.

That was the birth of the Beacon Fire Tower, although it was not the birth of rangers watching for fires from the summit. From April 1922 to June 1924, Ray Hustis of Cold Spring served as the lookout, for which he was paid $90.20 a month. After Hustis, there wasn’t another ranger regularly at the summit until the tower was erected in 1931 and George Lamoree of Beacon took over for $300 a month. A cabin was also built on the Route 9 side of the ridge for the observers to live in.

The tower had six more observers — George Ketchum was the longest serving, from 1940 to 1971 — before the last in 1972. After that, the tower was kept in stand-by mode until it was decommissioned by the state and fell into disrepair.

David Rocco, after volunteering for years to get the decommissioned elevated railway line in Poughkeepsie turned into the Walkway Over the Hudson, organized an effort in the 2000s to restore and re-open the tower. Aided by relatives of two of the original observers, and with the blessings of Scenic Hudson and the state parks department to use Jeeps to bring materials to the summit, the volunteers spent several years restoring the landmark.

Rocco convinced the workers dismantling the train tracks at the Walkway to give him the grates for the tower. In 2013, at a re-opening ceremony, Pete Seeger led the crowd in “Amazing Grace.”

Maintenance work has continued since. And with the tower’s 90th birthday approaching next month, new volunteers have climbed the summit for a round of repairs. Graffiti has been a constant problem, but Brett’s True Value Hardware in Beacon donated the kind of paint used on subway cars, which allows graffiti to be wiped off with a sponge. The concrete bases that hold the tower in place on the rock face have begun showing cracks, so repairs were done there, as well.

“I still can’t believe people go to all that trouble to bring spray cans up there,” Rocco said of those who vandalize the tower. “But I’ve seen worse.” In April 2020, shortly before the trails were closed due to the pandemic, Rocco noticed bullet holes in the walls.

“It’s utterly stupid,” he said. “The bullets are obviously going through it and landing somewhere else. Thank God no one on the trails below got hit.”

As with the last round of repairs, Rocco again has received permission from the state to allow Jeeps on the summit. “I can’t say enough good things about the Hudson Valley 4 Wheelers,” he said. “They help us bring up the materials, and when we get there, they get out and help.”

The next round of repairs, and a ceremony marking the tower’s 90th anniversary, are planned for June 26 and 27. (Anyone interested in volunteering can email coyoteroe@verizon.net.) Rocco would also like to put up more safety railings and reinforce the fencing but has abandoned the idea of rebuilding the observer’s cabin at its original site down the ridge. “It’s so far out of the way, and no one would be there” to monitor it, he said. “Shit could go down.”

Out There

Beacon Fire Tower Turns 90

By Brian PJ Cronin

On July 13, 1931, The New York Times published a brief notice that work had begun on a 60-foot steel observatory atop Mount Beacon that would allow rangers to watch for forest fires from a glass room.

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Puzzles

**CROSSCURRENT**

**ACROSS**
1. Egyptian deity
5. Piercing tool
8. Probability
12. Lion’s share
13. Hot tub
14. Stench
15. Unoriginal one
16. Home to the Buccaneers
18. Pizza topping
20. Wine container
21. Off-white
23. Dict. info
24. Spoofs
28. Pharmaceutical
31. Playwright Levin
32. Leg bone
34. Mentalist’s gift
35. Rhett’s last word
37. Mildew cause
39. Scratch
41. Valentine flower
42. Molds
45. Foliage
49. Marshmallow toaster
51. Carousel, for one
52. “I cannot tell —”
53. Pair
54. Aspiring atty.’s exam
55. Fork setting

**DOWN**
1. Apple computer
2. Former frosh
3. “Got it”
4. Meryl of film
5. Space rock
6. New Deal agcy.
7. Gentle soul
8. Gave a speech
9. Owing nothing
10. Transaction
11. Terrier type
12. Lion’s share
13. Hot tub
14. Stench
15. Unoriginal one
16. Home to the Buccaneers
18. Pizza topping
20. Wine container
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53. Pair
54. Aspiring atty.’s exam
55. Fork setting

56. Still, in verse
57. Orange veggies

**SOLUTIONS**

1. Egyptian deity
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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. one assigned a beat (8)
2. mysterious graffiti artist (6)
3. a watched pot won’t do (4)
4. openhandedness (10)
5. “wool coat” (6)
6. bridge supported by arches (7)
7. child actress Lexi (9)

**SOLUTIONS**

RE  TY  KSY  RT  IL
BAN  VI  OOD  FLE  UND
ECE  UCT  NER  BO  ER
GE  ERW  PO  AD  OSI

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**SUDOCURRENT**

Answers for June 11 Puzzles

1. TOTS, 2. PULITZERS, 3. NUMERATOR, 4. FIREBRAND, 5. COUNTENNACE, 6. VERTEBRATES, 7. CHIPMUNKS

Answers will be published next week. See highlandscurrent.org/puzzle for interactive sudoku.
Renegades (from Page 1)

announced by the county last week, keeps the Renegades in Dutchess through at least 2046 and, according to County Executive Marc Molinaro, should more than pay for itself through savings and revenue expected over the life of the contract.

Molinaro touted the deal, saying that “Dutchess Stadium remains an economic engine for our county, employing our neighbors, attracting thousands of visitors from throughout the region and adding revenue which offsets taxes for county residents and businesses.”

The county also recently agreed to purchase 33 acres of land beneath and around the stadium from the Beacon City School District for $627,000, a sale that was approved by voters in May. Dutchess will now save what it had paid in rent to the school district (roughly $29,000 annually under its most recent contract) and anticipates increased attendance after the Renegades, as part of Major League Baseball’s restructuring of its minor leagues, dropped their affiliation with the Tampa Bay Rays to become a High-A farm team of the New York Yankees.

The new cash flow will enable the county to establish a reserve account for maintenance or capital projects at county parks, Molinaro said.

“Investing some of the one-time American Rescue Plan funding into these stadium improvements will create a multyear benefit,” he said. “Establishing a reserve for our county parks will help to make ongoing improvements for our facilities, which our residents and visitors truly value.”

Effective next year, the Renegades will pay the county $309,000 annually in rent, an increase of $50,000 over the previous rate. Rent will increase $10,000 every five years, topping out at $348,000 per year. In addition, Dutchess will profit from other events held at the stadium and could sell the stadium’s naming rights. The net benefit is expected to be $600,000 annually, or $15 million over 25 years.

The agreement with the Renegades still must be approved by Major League Baseball. The Dutchess Legislature on Monday (June 14) approved the deal and the purchase of the school land, although all 10 Democratic legislators, including Nick Page and Pfts Zernike, who represent Beacon, voted against the contract with the Renegades, saying it does not reflect the spirit of the $1.9 trillion Rescue Plan, which President Joe Biden signed into law in March. The remainder of the first federal infusion will be spent on a countywide broadband survey ($350,000); an airport project supporting Dutchess Community College’s new aviation training program ($350,000); and $3.1 million in grants for children and youth programs, primarily through libraries, parks, and after-school programs.

The $12.5 million will allow the county to make what Molinaro called “transformative” changes to the ballpark by constructing a new clubhouse for the team and building pitching and batting areas, as well as a new seating area and enclosed event space — improvements Dutchess says are required by Major League Baseball now that the Renegades will play 60 or more games at home, about twice what they played as a lower-level Tampa Bay affiliate.

By utilizing stimulus funding, the county can “transform” the ballpark with a .306 batting average, 20 RBI and 16 stolen bases before he moved earlier this month to the Somerset Patriots, the Yankee’s Double-A affiliate.

The Renegades will celebrate the re-opening of the stadium (June 18) with a 100 percent capacity doubleheader against the BlueClaws, followed by fireworks to thank essential workers, health care providers and emergency responders.

The first game begins at 5:05 p.m., with the second game (separate admission) 30 minutes after its conclusion. The Saturday game starts at 6:05 p.m. and the Sunday game at 4:35 p.m. Call 845-838-0094 or visit hvrenegades.com for tickets.