One of the most significant recent achievements to address food insecurity in the Hudson Valley is something that, on its surface, has nothing to do with food.

Last month, Poughkeepsie became the fourth New York municipality to pass a “good-cause eviction” law, which limits the amount that landlords can increase rent and stipulates that they must have a good cause for evicting tenants. Beacon is weighing whether to pass similar legislation.

What does that have to do with hunger? Everything, says Sarah Salem, who was elected on Nov. 2 to a third term on the Poughkeepsie Common Council and works for Dutchess Outreach, an organization that has been fighting food insecurity for nearly 50 years.

“This was something that our constituents told us they needed,” Salem said the day after the legislation was passed. “And we were able to give it to them. Those constituents are our clients at Dutchess Outreach. They said last night how great our food pantry was, and how it helps them achieve a sense of financial stability, but they need to be protected in their homes.”

It is hard to discuss food insecurity without examining what’s driving people to food banks and soup kitchens in the first place. The reasons are vast: Growing economic inequality, stagnant wages, gentrification, rising health care and housing costs are the most obvious. Maggie Dickinson, who lives in Beacon and is the author of Feeding the Crisis: Care and Abandonment in America’s Food Safety Net, argues that welfare, the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) and other government programs have been modified to be less about ending hunger and more about subsidizing low-wage workers.

“The pandemic, drought, forest fires and a supply chain mishap have thrown the Christmas tree business into turmoil this year in the Highlands. Prices are up. In some cases, supply is down. For the first time in 50 years, the Beacon Engine Co. No. 1 at 57 E. Main St. had no trees to sell for its annual fundraiser, said Frank Merritt, the president of the company. The cause was a supply-chain mishap with the supplier in Vermont. “He didn’t have enough trucks to make deliveries,” Merritt said.

At Vera’s Marketplace and Garden Center on Route 9 in Philipstown, co-owner Dominic Giordano said on Thursday (Dec. 9) that he received only 270 trees this year, at Vera’s Marketplace and Garden Center on Route 9 in Philipstown, co-owner Dominic Giordano said on Thursday (Dec. 9) that he received only 270 trees this year, (Continued on Page 25)
RICHARD KREITNER

By Chip Rowe

Richard Kreitner, of Beacon, is the author of Break It Up: Secession, Division and the Secret History of America’s Imperfect Union.

How did you come to the topic of secession?

I was the archivist for The Nation, which was founded in 1865 by abolitionists, so that got me interested in Reconstruction, which led to the Civil War, which led to the period right before the constitutional convention (in 1877), when it looked like the country was going to fall apart. There’s a reason it took 150 years for the colonists to form a union in the first place — they wanted nothing to do with one another. That a year ago you had so-called “nation-alists” storming the halls of the national legislature shows you how easily patriotism can turn into secessionism. Each side says: “You want to secede — that’s treason.” But when they lose the election, they want to pick up their ball and go home.

It hasn’t fallen apart, though. We have survived some perilous times.

That’s one takeaway. It’s not mine. It was said by several counties in Oregon to join Idaho — it would require the assent of governors form regional coalitions in the age of catastrophic climate change because of all these emergencies and say, over a century, the federal structure withers away.

A reader suggested in a letter to the editor that Philipstown secede from Putnam County. Could it be done?

At the state level — such as recent proposals by several counties in Oregon to join Idaho — it would require the assent of both state legislatures and also, I believe, Congress. At the local level, the Town Board and the Putnam and Dutchess legislatures would have to agree. If Putnam refused, Philipstown could sue for its freedom. Whichever the route, Philipstown voters would have to approve. None of the legal experts I consulted had ever heard of this being done, although in 1989 the Patterson supervisor did meet with the Dutchess executive to discuss leaving Putnam.

What caused the South to secede?

Certainly slavery was at the center of it. It was also an argument over states’ rights, but that doesn’t mean that Confederates were sincere believers, because just a few years earlier, with the Fugitive Slave Act, they were perfectly happy to trample on states’ rights in the north. I would argue that the anti-slavery movement was a major cause, because it riled up the South.

After the war, abolitionists were blamed for having started the war unnecessarily, but they should be credited for saying that either slavery survives or the union, one or the other. We should be proud that we fought a war to end slavery, but that begs the question: What are we tolerating today for the sake of union? Sticking together for fear of what might happen if we break apart is not my definition of a healthy marriage.

If it goes that way, which is the first state to secede?

You’d have to go with Texas, which was an independent country for a decade and has what it perceives to be just causes, and it has the guns. But it’s more likely the whole thing crumbles at once. You may have a federal power vacuum because of some crisis, or you might have two pretenders to the presidency and the states split behind them. The other possibility is that governors form regional coalitions in the age of catastrophic climate change because of all these emergencies and say, over a century, the federal structure withers away.

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“I have enjoyed the Zoom interviews, and, since I live on the other side of the county, the ‘Zoom’ part makes my participation possible.”
Danielle Greenberg, Cross River

Trustworthy, local journalism is the bedrock of democracy.

Challengers Arise in Cold Spring

Beacon Schools Plan to Sell Milkman Makes Last Delivery

Shipping for a Small Planet When Beacon Was King
Fatal crash

In light of the recent fatal crash, Beacon should move to install a leading pedestrian interval (LPI) at that intersection, as well as at other dangerous intersections (“Pedestrian Killed in Beacon,” Dec. 3). By giving pedestrians a head start to cross before turning traffic, LPIs have been shown to reduce conflicts by 60 percent, and can be implemented quickly and at minimal cost.

We should concede of tragic incidents like this not as unavoidable accidents, but as something we can prevent through a mix of better design, technology and enforcement.

Installing LPIs will mean that cars have to wait a bit longer at intersections. But Main Street is the beating, people-oriented heart of our city, and if pedestrians can’t feel safe simply crossing the street there, where will they ever feel safe?

Hayley Richardson, Beacon

It’s very sad to read that someone was killed walking across the street. One possible solution to make the intersection safer has been implemented in other places such as Rhinebeck (at the intersection of Market Street and Route 9), where they changed the traffic light to what is called an “exclusive pedestrian interval.”

This is a traffic signal that temporary stops all vehicle traffic, thereby allowing pedestrians to cross safely without cars being allowed to turn into the intersection with a green light. It has been implemented in cities where pedestrian traffic has increased. It is a nice feeling when crossing at that intersection; when the signal says it’s safe to walk, all cars are stopped.

This type of intersection might not be the answer, but a traffic investigation should be done to see if implementing this change would help prevent more accidents.

Christopher Cring, Poughkeepsie

Proper terms


Andrew Dade, Cold Spring

Reporter’s notebook

Mike Turton hits the nail on the head regarding the immense contributions Dave Merandy, Fran Murphy and Marie Early have made to the village (“Reporter’s Notebook: A Change of the Guard in Cold Spring,” Dec. 3). Thanks, Mike, for putting to words what I was thinking.

Donald MacDonald, Cold Spring

Mike’s column was very well-written.

Best wishes to all three of them. I couldn’t help but remember a former trustee who said, “Today I get sworn in and tomorrow I will be sworn at.”

Cheryl Allen, via Facebook

Culturally responsive

The “culturally responsive education” being implemented in the Beacon school district is disguised critical race theory (CRT) designed to indoctrinate and not educate (“A Shift in Thinking,” Dec. 3). Diversity can be a hindrance to social cohesion and unity in a nation.

I am a retired history teacher and the textbook we taught from had illustrations of the brutality of slavery and the economies that perpetuated it. I also had personal material since I had several courses in African history. It’s just CRT propaganda to say that slavery is not taught, that Jim Crow is not mentioned, that somehow Reconstruction and the Ku Klux Klan are whitewashed. The issues were more than contextualized.

Ann Fanizzi, via Facebook

Schools may be teaching about slavery but they aren’t teaching about the institution itself. What is being asked for is the whole history of enslavement, including struggles for freedom and fights for legislative change that shaped this country. The version of Reconstruction taught in public schools doesn’t talk about the history of what happened when Black people were emancipated and the actions taken afterward. CRT is a more complex analysis of the criminal justice system and how it disproportionately impacts communities of color.

We can’t contextualize an issue if we refuse to look at the context.

Rae Leiner, via Facebook

I’m a retired history teacher, and I taught everything I could about slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, segregation, racism and discrimination throughout our history, and I wasn’t an exception. People who claim our history is “whitewashed” have no clue what’s taught. We also teach about American colonization and the horrors of that.

I have researched the nonsense that the left is pushing and I find it abhorrent. It is racism in disguise, and it will divide our nation even more. Activist teachers are more concerned with politics than educating children, which is one reason our children do so poorly in school. Teach-
ers have an enormous amount of influence and power in the classroom; some use that influence and power in a corrupt way. “Culturally responsive curriculum” has been labeled, incorrectly, as CRT. But what is masquerading as CRT — diversity, inclusion, etc. — is an attempt to make white children feel guilty about being white, and children of color believe they are victims and can’t succeed in a “white man’s world.” The idea that white children should be made to feel responsible for the enslavement of Africans, under the guise of “real history,” is disgraceful.

Patricia Burrano, via Facebook

A culturally responsive framework isn’t a claim that no one is teaching slavery or Jim Crow. It’s an approach that aims to ensure all of our children see themselves, their history and their communities reflected in the educational materials. Black American history is not just slavery and Jim Crow, civil rights and Martin Luther King Jr. — it is much more than simply the horrible things white people have done to build this nation and the struggle of oppression, and even if we were only focused on atrocities and hardships, we are barely covering those.

When a dominant cultural group gets to place a fixed lens in front of history to focus on themselves, all else will be distorted and improperly understood. We are not a nation of only Black and white folks, either. It always seems to go that way in conversations but there are far more cultures represented in our classrooms. Culturally responsive means every student’s culture should be understood, respected and appreciated. That’s good for all our kids.

Bryanne Figlia, via Facebook

I am the parent of a child adopted from Guatemala who went through the Beacon school system. My child experienced racism, not only from classmates but also from teachers, especially in middle and high school. Beacon is going to have a difficult time including cultural sensitivity in their curriculum when they have teachers who are openly racist.

Kristen Rigney, via Facebook

Who is trying to make white children feel guilty for being white and why would they want to do that? The article explicitly stated that Beacon is not implementing CRT, which is a discipline appropriate at the college level. The goal for a culturally responsive curriculum framework is to give the teachers the tools they need to teach about a broad spectrum of perspectives. We live in America, the melting pot, the “give me your tired, your poor” country.

It’s not easy to be a country that houses so many perspectives. We are learning to do a better job of understanding those diverse perspectives. We are training teachers to teach these perspectives. That is the goal.

Anna Cory-Watson, via Facebook

This curriculum sounds excellent. I wish I had it, rather than the high school history textbook I had in New York City in the 1970s that said enslaved Africans were “happy” to be slaves. I didn’t learn there were enslaved people in New York until the New York Historical Society had an exhibit on it long into my adulthood.

Donna Minkowitz, via Facebook

Beacon is a diverse community, and administrators use data to determine the approaches that need to be taken to most effectively serve the students in our schools. This is one of several approaches. Among the 2,723 students in Beacon’s six public schools, the majority (55 percent) are nonwhite — seeing yourself and celebrating your culture and contribution is a big part of keeping students engaged.

I am of Irish heritage — years ago there was a great PBS series called The Irish in America. The more tragic parts of that story, such as indentured servitude, disposable labor and a forced famine creating a crisis that led to mass and dangerous immigration conditions/backlash, didn’t make me hate British people or Americans who were not welcoming. It helped me to know my history, celebrate that culture of origin and experience compassion for those whose plight is similar today.

Learning to take in other perspectives expands a student’s humanity; it doesn’t diminish another. There is so much fear in the reaction to the article — fear that is based upon nothing that is actually happening within the three-year framework to improve learning and build level experience. It’s hard to know what to do about that — it mostly seems triggered by race because it seems to automatically get linked to CRT.

The article makes clear that the framework is about expanding the story and experience in the classroom for purposes of engagement and education, to include the broader narrative of the pluralistic society that is America — race, but also social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion or ability. Many of these overlap, and in those layers, struggles and accomplishments we learn more about our common humanity.

Kristan Flynn, via Facebook

Flynn is a member of the Beacon school board.

Dockside

This is a great thing for Cold Spring (“Dockside Shoreline to Get Major Rehаб,” Dec. 3). I’ve always admired Beacon’s waterfront and wished ours could be similar.

John Merante, via Facebook

What a waste of money.

Ralph Falloon, via Facebook

I think this is great. We made such a mess of the beautiful Hudson Valley with brickmaking, quarries for city buildings, iron for cannons and such, refineries, and power stations. We continue our abuse of our planet through what we dump into the air and water. It’s time we started to show some respect for the beauty we were born into.

Peter Callaway, via Facebook

Dockside is beautiful as is. Use the money where it is of more immediate need. Or maybe don’t spend it.

Maria Leiter, via Facebook

No one complains when Putnam County wastes our money on bogue horse farms and golf courses, but everyone complains when the state wants to give us our money back and use it to restore our eroded shoreline.

Andrea Hudson, via Facebook

Girl Scouts

I remember having my Brownies boil eggs and make egg salad for lunch and then crushing all the shells, gluing glitter on them and making stars for Christmas (“Longtime Beacon Scout House May Be Sold,” Dec. 3). We had a sleepover and in the morning discovered the mice ate up about half of them. I also had my Junior Scouts bring in leftover paint, wet brushes and splatter it all over the floor. That speckled floor was there for years. Such fun times.

Jean Haight, via Facebook
Dutchess Legislature Approves $533 Million Budget

Property tax rate will fall by 10 percent

By Leonard Sparks

The Dutchess County Legislature on Dec. 2 approved a $533 million budget for 2022 that contains a 10 percent reduction in the property tax rate and the elimination of taxes on up to $110 in spending on clothing and shoes. The county’s property tax rate will fall to $2.85 for each $1,000 of assessed value, from $3.13. An owner of a property valued at $300,000 will save $84 annually.

With an assist from the federal American Rescue Plan, enacted in March, the budget refills some of the positions temporarily eliminated or left vacant when 152 employees took early retirement or severance last year, saving the county about $11 million amid the pandemic shutdown.

Of the 96 positions, 18 were restored using some of the $57 million in funding Dutchess is receiving from the American Rescue Plan. Dutchess will use $1.8 million of the ARP funding to fill 21 positions over the next three years. An additional 38 of the eliminated positions would also be refilled in 2022, according to budget documents.

New positions include three crisis counselors for the county’s help line, an assistant district attorney, a senior assistant public defender, two alternatives-to-incarceration workers in the Public Defenders’ Office, two sheriff’s deputies and three park maintenance workers.

The budget also appropriates funding for three grant programs: $4.5 million for nonprofit infrastructure projects; $4 million for projects by municipalities and school, fire, sewer and water districts; and $1 million for nonprofit youth programs.

Valdes Smith Elected to Dutchess Legislature

Will represent Beacon Ward 4, part of Ward 3

By Chip Rowe

The Dutchess County Board of Elections said on Monday (Dec. 6) that it had completed counting absentee ballots and that Democrat Yvette Valdes Smith had maintained her Election Day lead to succeed Frits Zernike in the Dutchess County Legislature.

District 16 includes Ward 4 and part of Ward 3 in Beacon. The rest of Beacon is represented by Nick Page, a Democrat who ran unopposed to keep his seat.

The unofficial results, including 147 mail-in ballots, showed Valdes Smith defeating Ron Davis. Valdes Smith, who serves as secretary on the board of the Stony Kill Foundation, led by 117 votes on Election Day over Davis, who chairs the Fishkill Republican Committee, with 238 mail-in ballots outstanding.

Unofficial tally including absentees

Zernike, a Democrat, did not seek a third, 2-year term. The vote still must be certified by the Board of Elections.

Democrats lost two seats in the 25-member Legislature when incumbents Rebecca Edwards of Poughkeepsie, third, 2-year term. The vote still must be certified by the Board of Elections.

Democrat lost two seats in the 25-member Legislature when incumbents Rebecca Edwards of Poughkeepsie, the minority party leader, and Brendan Lawler of Hyde Park were defeated. The Legislature will now consist of 17 Republicans and eight Democrats.

Dutchess County

The Board of Elections said on Tuesday that, with all but 26 of 3,642 mail-in ballots counted, Robin Lois had won re-election as Dutchess County comptroller.

The Democrat led Republican challenger Ola Nesheiwat Hawatmeh by 1,546 votes when the polls closed on Nov. 2.

Unofficial tally including absentees

By Chip Rowe

The county’s property tax rate will fall by 10 percent

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By Leonard Sparks

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New Cold Spring Village Board Takes Office

Shifts meeting dates and times

By Michael Turton

The Cold Spring Village Board had a different look at its Tuesday (Dec. 7) meeting compared to a week earlier.

Before the meeting began, Mayor Kathleen Foley and Trustees Cathryn Fadde, Eliza Starbuck and Tweeps Phillips Woods were sworn in by Village Judge Camille Linson. Each was elected on Nov. 2.

As her first act in office, Foley appointed Joe Curto to fill the trustee seat she vacated to become mayor. Curto will serve the remaining year of the term. Woods will also serve a year to complete the term of Heidi Bender, who resigned in April. Foley, Fadde and Starbuck will serve 2-year terms.

The board includes both political veterans versed in village affairs and political newcomers. Foley was elected trustee in 2020 after serving on the Historic District Review Board. Fadde was a trustee in 2014-15. Curto is a former Haldane school board trustee.

The board’s first agenda included approval of more than 30 appointments, designations and policies, standard procedure when a new administration takes office. Woods was appointed as deputy mayor and Jack Goldstein as chair of the Planning Board, succeeding Matt Francisco, who continues as a member.

Francisco had been a candidate for trustee in the November election but ended his bid in June, along with Merandy and Trustee Marie Early, after Foley entered the race for mayor.

In a later interview, Foley emphasized Goldstein’s experience from over 20 years on the midtown Manhattan Community Board and his review of more than 1,000 varied land use applications. “He also led the landmark designation of the historic Broadway theaters; he’s well-versed in working in the context of historic community fabric,” she said.

She praised Francisco, saying he “brought professional rigor and deep content expertise” as its chair and that his continued membership on the board will be an “invaluable service.”

Committee chairs are appointed annually to one-year terms. Reappointed as chairs were Jeff Amato (Recreation); Al Zgolinski (Historic District Review Board); Eric Wirth (Zoning Board of Appeals); and Jennifer Zwarich (Tree Advisory Board).

“Tonight, we are truly reorganizing the village,” Foley said, noting that trustees had been assigned as liaisons to departments and boards but that department heads would now meet with her and the deputy mayor weekly. She said she hoped the move would “ensure clear lines of communication for goal-setting, project coordination and progress reporting.”

Foley said she asked the deputy mayor to make recommendations to “improve efficiencies, reduce bottlenecks and increase productivity,” at Village Hall based on Woods’ experience working for the New York City Mayor’s Office of Operations.

She implemented Woods’ recommendation to organize village management by work areas, such as finance, water, highways, tourism and recreation, with trustees acting as lead contacts on projects in each area and reporting to the mayor.

This approach, Foley said, “will help ensure knowledge is spread across the full board,” something she said is “important for organizational and institutional health and longevity.”

Foley said in a later interview that listening to department heads about priority issues “will be integral to formulating goals and objectives for the first six months of 2022.” She listed the garbage and recycling contract, plans for “long-delayed infrastructure projects” and completing the zoning code update as issues that need to be addressed soon.

Beginning in January, the board’s monthly business meeting and all workshops will shift from Tuesday to Wednesday. All meetings will begin at 7 p.m.

Garrison Fire Seeks OK to Borrow

Wants funds to purchase “mini-pumper”

By Michael Turton

Voters will go to the polls on Tuesday (Dec. 14) to consider a proposal by the Garrison Fire District to borrow funds to purchase a “mini-pumper” fire engine.

They will also be asked to elect a fire district commissioner on the five-person board, either incumbent Nat Prentice or challenger Kyle Irish. The term is five years.

The polls will be open from 5 to 9 p.m. at the firehouse at 1616 Route 9. There are no absentee ballots available.

The estimated cost of the pumper is $449,000. Voter approval is required for the district to borrow money, such as by issuing a bond. Prentice estimates the district will need to borrow 60 percent of the price, or about $270,000, with the remainder coming from savings. Most of the purchase price, he said, will not be due until 2023.

If the fire district had the full purchase price in savings, it could buy the pumper without voter approval. That was the case in 2019 when the district bought a second-hand ladder truck.

In a newsletter to residents in October, fire district officials said larger fire trucks have difficulty on Garrison’s narrow, hilly and winding roads.

The “mini-pumper” is built on a Ford F-550 chassis and is 5 to 6 feet shorter than the full-size engine it will replace. That vehicle, a 2007 Marion, would be sold.

The new engine would also have four-wheel drive, making it more effective in winter than two-wheel drive, full-size engines,” said Commissioner Fred Reich.

“It would serve multiple purposes, including fighting fires with water or foam, rescue and supporting off-road brush fire operations; and its Jaws of Life would be used at motor vehicle accidents.”

The Garrison Fire District serves 2,400 residents. The owner of a home valued at $500,000 paid about $1,000 in taxes through the Town of Philipstown for fire protection in 2021. It is estimated that amount will increase by about $12 in 2022.

The district’s proposed budget for 2022 is $787,350, a 1.5 percent increase over 2021.

The fire district, established in 2016, is administered by five elected commissioners. Besides Prentice and Reich, the others are Linda Lomonaco, Sandy Bohl and David Brower. The Garrison Volunteer Fire Co., founded in 1929, lists 17 active firefighters on its website, including Chief Jim Erickson.

Toys for Tots

Donate new, unwrapped toys

Former Cold Spring Mayor Anthony Phillips first brought the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program to the village in 1993 and it’s back again this year.

Toys for Tots helps out families in need, collecting and distributing donations of new, unwrapped toys.

Toys can be dropped off at Butterfield Library, Foodtown, Downey Oil, C&E Paint Supply, Drug World and Deb’s Hair Salon through Dec. 21. Toys will be distributed to local families at the Cold Spring Firehouse on Dec. 22 between 10 a.m. and noon.
Craig House Project Heads to Planning Board

Also, Beacon council approves 2022 budget

By Jeff Simms

The Beacon Planning Board next week will begin its review of a proposal to develop the historic Tioronda Estate, the home of the former Craig House psychiatric facility, with an inn and spa, restaurant and cottage rentals.

An investment group led by Michael Silberberg and Bernard Kohn, who also owns the 344 Main St. and 248 Tioronda projects in Beacon, purchased the 162-year-old estate in 2017 for $5.5 million.

The developers only submitted a handful of maps, with no narrative write-up of the proposal, to the Planning Board for its Dec. 14 meeting, but the project appears not to have changed significantly from a presentation made to the City Council in March 2020, during the early weeks of the pandemic shutdown.

Based on the maps, the project calls for the Craig House mansion, built in 1859, to be renovated, with hotel and spa additions built on either side and behind the building. “Entry” gardens would also be installed surrounding the structure, with a larger “Monet water garden” in the rear of the building.

Cottages and three other unidentified buildings are shown on the map just west of the water garden, with more than a dozen cottages farther south. The application for a special-use permit submitted to the board indicates that the project includes 100 “rental rooms.”

A developer plans to renovate the former Craig House estate in Beacon.  File photo

Accessory dwellings

All but one person who commented during a public hearing on Monday (Dec. 6) urged the City Council to balk on a proposal that would simplify the process for creating accessory dwelling unit (ADU) apartments in Beacon.

At least a dozen people spoke, either in person or by calling in to the council meeting. The council has discussed the ADU measure, which would allow the apartments to be built in all residential districts and the transitional district, as a way of encouraging homeowners to create smaller housing units that could be rented at affordable prices. But on Monday, the overwhelming majority urged the council instead to adopt a good-cause eviction law to protect renters who could be at risk when a statewide moratorium on pandemic-related evictions expires Jan. 15.

Others brought up additional issues. “This proposal is in opposition to the comprehensive plan goal to preserve the density and character of established neighborhoods,” said Elaine Ciaccio. “I have heard little evidence that this will lower rents but the thing it will do is raise prices on homes.”

Ciaccio added that she believes the cost of building an ADU, even with the ease of simplified municipal regulations, would make it hard for a homeowner to offer below-market-rate rent.

Kristan Flynn questioned the “expedient manner” of getting the proposal through discussion and to the public hearing stage. “It’s kind of astounding, given how long it takes anything to make it to the agenda,” she said. Flynn also said that city officials have argued that increasing Beacon’s housing stock would lead to lower prices, but “we’ve seen that play out in the opposite direction. There’s no reason to believe that this would yield a different result.”

The one caller in favor of the proposal, said that “we need it all. We need many different solutions” when it comes to affordability.

The council adjourned the public hearing until Jan. 18, by which time four new members will have taken seats. The council asked to discuss the enforcement of short-term rental regulations during an upcoming workshop, as several speakers on Monday suggested ADUs are more likely to be used as short-term rentals than affordable housing.

Budget approved

The council on Monday unanimously approved Beacon’s 2022 budget, which includes $23.4 million in general fund spending, along with a separate $4 million water fund and $5.2 million sewer fund.

Residential properties will see a slight decrease in their city tax bills while commercial and apartment properties will pay about a 3 percent increase.

The budget also includes $25,000 to create a program to assist residents facing eviction with legal aid and other resources; $10,000 to fund neighborhood-level community improvements; and a $20,000 fund that nonprofit agencies can apply to for “community investment” projects.

Weird, Wacky, Inappropriate and Touching

At last meeting, Philipstown supervisor hears tributes — and questions

By Liz Schvetchuk Armstrong

Presiding over his last formal monthly meeting on Dec. 2 as Philipstown supervisor, Richard Shea received tributes, standing ovations and a round of song.

He also repudiated a resident’s criticism of both the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival plans for a new home and town government oversight of that project.

In an email the next day, Shea summed up the evening as “one for the record books, by turns weird, wacky, inappropriate and touching.”

First elected supervisor in 2009 after eight years as a member of the five-person Town Board, Shea did not seek re-election this fall and will leave office Dec. 31. Board Member John Van Tassel, who ran unopposed in November, will succeed him.

During the meeting at Town Hall, Shea’s colleagues passed a resolution honoring him, prompting a standing ovation.

Sandy Galef, whose state Assembly district includes Philipstown, presented a proclamation declaring him “an exceptional individual”, an aide to Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, a Philipstown resident, brought similar recognition from Capitol Hill; and Putnam County Legislator Nancy Montgomery, whose district includes Philipstown and part of Putnam Valley, provided a statement attesting to her personal appreciation.

Van Tassel called Shea “a role model for me; a role model for this board. You’ve taught me to listen” to the public and sometimes change an intended course of action as a result, he told Shea.

Councilors Judy Farrell, Robert Flaherty and Jason Angell separately praised Shea and the board gave him an antique map of Putnam County. Fred Martin, a resident, led the audience in a round of “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow.”

Shea responded by expressing appreciation to fellow board members, who “make my life easier and make your life better”; to Galef and other elected officials; and to residents for taking an interest in town affairs.

“The great thing about local government is that we get to paint our future,” he said, before a second standing ovation. “You can have direct impact in your community.”

The board also saluted Judge Stephen Tomann for a quarter-century of service to the Philipstown Justice Court and awarded him a ceremonial gavel.

Tomann, who could not attend the meeting, “is just a super-steady person,” said Shea. “As a justice, that’s what you want, this impartial, objective individual. Good justices are very hard to come by.”

During the public comments that ended the meeting, Garrison resident Joe Regele challenged HVSF’s plans to develop the former golf course at The Garrison into a theater and arts campus. He noted that the festival has applied for a special-events permit from the Town Board to stage performances in a temporary tent in 2022 and 2023 while Planning Board scrutiny of HVSF’s proposed permanent facilities continues.

“What opportunity does the public have to address a special permit?” Regele asked, claiming that their application is “full of omissions, inaccuracies and misstatements.”

He urged that, “before a decision is made,” the Town Board explain how special-event permit approval relates to the review by the Planning Board, which, he said, has been “overwhelmed” by information from the applicant.

Shea acknowledged that he supports the HVSF project, but noted he will not be on the Town Board when the special-event permit application comes up. He said there would be a public forum on the review process and pointed out that Planning Board meetings are open to all. “That’s democracy: You show up and get informed,” he said.

As Regele returned to his seat, he flipped off Davis McCallum, the HVSF artistic director, who was sitting in the audience.
Hospitals Brace for Two Unwelcome Visitors

COVID-19 cases climb as the flu re-emerges

By Leonard Sparks

Two years ago it was a record-high flu season. Last year it was COVID-19. This winter, hospitals are facing a resurgence of both.

Fueled by the Delta variant of the coronavirus, cases, hospitalizations and deaths have been surging over the last four months in Dutchess and Putnam counties, and statewide.

Despite concerns about the newly identified Omicron variant, Delta is still the dominant strain, accounting for 99 percent of infections for the two-week period ending Dec. 4.

The coronavirus has company this winter. Nearly absent last winter because of mask-wearing, flu cases are rising again amid loosened pandemic restrictions and the jettisoning of face coverings by vaccinated residents.

The state Department of Health reported 3,698 flu cases through Nov. 27, a tally that will soon eclipse the 4,900 cases from last year with five months left in the season.

During the 2019-20 flu season, New York recorded 158,000 cases, a record for the state.

“As far as the sickest people, without a doubt it’s those patients who have never received vaccination,” said Begg.

Thirty-two upstate hospitals across the state were required, starting Thursday (Dec. 9), to limit non-essential procedures under a “surge-and-flex” plan to preserve capacity for COVID-19 patients.

Source: New York Department of Health, as of Dec. 7

Occupied Acute-Care Beds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>Dutchess</th>
<th>Putnam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NewYork-Presbyterian Cortlandt Manor</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vassar Brothers</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montefiore-St. Luke’s Newburgh</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putnam Hospital Center Carmel</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: New York Department of Health, as of Dec. 7

Daily Positives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dutchess</th>
<th>Putnam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JULY</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEC. 1-7</td>
<td>141</td>
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Hospitals have already seen their beds filling again with COVID-19 patients, starting in August, when Delta-fueled infections began increasing.

Vassar Brothers was treating 29 patients, including four on ventilators, on Tuesday (Dec. 7), nearly four times the number from a month earlier and nearly six times the five people hospitalized on the last day of July. Eleven patients had died at the hospital over the previous month.

Another eight COVID-19 patients were hospitalized at NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital in Cortlandt Manor on Tuesday, 25 at Montefiore St. Luke’s Hospital in Newburgh and seven at Putnam Hospital Center in Carmel.

While a small percentage of “breakthrough” infections have hit vaccinated residents, most of the cases in New York state reflect infections in people who are unvaccinated, as do most of the hospitalizations.

Percent positive: 3.6 (-0.1)

Percent vaccinated: 71.5

Number of deaths: 515 (+9)

Source: State and county health departments, as of Dec. 7, with change over previous two weeks in parentheses. Percent vaccinated reflects those ages 5 and older who have received at least one dose.
Hunger (from Page 1)

poverty,” she says. “The policy goal was to get women off welfare and into a job so that they would no longer be poor. What happened was that millions of women got pushed off the welfare rolls and they were still poor.

“Food stamps were seen as one of these ways to subsidize low wages without actually doing anything to challenge employers’ bottom lines,” she says. “Walmart could still pay you next to nothing, but you could get food stamps and the Earned Income Tax Credit to make ends meet. Wages have stagnated so much over the past 40 years. If the minimum wage was the same as it was in 1968, and inflation-adjusted, it would be around $24 an hour. We’re still trying to get $15 an hour passed.”

There’s space for food-insecurity programs to get involved in addressing long-term economic problems, such as Dutchess Outreach advocating good-cause eviction laws or, in Texas, the San Antonio Food Bank building an affordable, transitional housing unit with child care next to one of its distribution centers.

But for the immediate problem — making sure no one goes to bed hungry — the COVID-19 pandemic is providing the funding and momentum to change how the issue is addressed.

One of the allowable uses for funds from the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act passed by Congress earlier this year is addressing food insecurity. And nonprofits are questioning the necessity of barriers that in the past have prevented people from getting help, such as paperwork and income verification.

Over the past 18 months, volunteers and private funding have stepped up in the Highlands in such ventures as the formation of Beacon Mutual Aid and the $600,000 that the Town of Philipstown raised to buy grocery gift cards and fund emergency feeding programs.

With that in mind, in October the Philipstown Town Board considered what level of food insecurity would be acceptable.

“In a town like Philipstown, with our resources, we should have a goal of zero percent food insecurity,” says Jason Angell, a Garrison farmer who joined the board this year. “That’s doable.”

Mapping inequality

It takes more than a bag of groceries or a box of produce to address food insecurity. It also takes data. If you’re setting a goal for how many people are hungry.

Those questions led him to the newly formed Putnam County Food Systems Coalition, who was crunching numbers and interviewing residents in a search for answers. The coalition — whose members include the county Department of Health, Second Chance Foods, the Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Putnam County — recently published a food systems map based on its research (see bit.ly/putnam-map).

As Jen Lerner of CCE Putnam explained, 5 percent of residents in Putnam County live at or below the poverty line, compared to 13 percent nationwide. “That would say to you, ‘Oh, it’s not a problem here,’” she says. “But then you start looking at the comparison of the cost of living.”

According to the data, Putnam has the highest cost of living of any county in the state and the second-highest average cost per meal, behind Manhattan.

That leads to another stat known as ALICE. Developed by the United Way, it’s an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. These are the working poor, who make too much to qualify for food stamps or other government assistance but have trouble making basic ends meet. Nearly 30 percent of Putnam households meet that criteria, or about 1,000 households in Philipstown.

“They’re making decisions between paying bills and buying food,” Lerner says.

But are they food insecure? Angell says it’s best to think of ALICE households as intermittently food insecure as opposed to chronically hungry, because they may be able to afford enough groceries one month but not the next.

Working off the calculation that a third of ALICE households are food insecure at any given time — “That’s just an assumption because our data has limits,” allows Angell — and that 120 households in Philipstown are at or below the poverty line, leads to the rough estimate of 450 food-insecure households.

Based on the number of households being served by the Philipstown Food Pantry and the county senior center, about 25 percent of the food-insecure households in Philipstown are being fed. So what would it take to feed the other 75 percent?

Lerner says that while insufficient income is the leading cause of food insecurity in Putnam, lack of transportation is the second.

“Having reliable transportation is a great cost, between insurance, upkeep, car payments,” she says. “So people are dependent on public transportation, but there’s a lot of anxiety.”

If it takes an hour to get back home from the grocery store by bus, people will think twice about buying fresh produce, dairy or anything else that needs to be refrigerated for fear that it will spoil on the journey.

Another piece of the puzzle is that farmers in Putnam have the capacity to donate more

(Continued on Page 11)
food to Philipstown than they already do, but there's nowhere to store it. Vendors at the Cold Spring Farmers Market have expressed an eagerness to give food leftover at the end of the Saturday market to the Philipstown Food Pantry, but the pantry is closed for the week by the time the market closes, and doesn't have enough refrigeration to accept it anyway.

The answer appears to be a refrigerated truck or van that can pick up produce, dairy and meat donations, store them safely and deliver them to families with transportation problems. The necessity of Second Chance Foods, which transforms excess produce into freezeable meals, becomes clearer when considering the food map.

Much as I like to think, as a farmer, that just giving people bunches of kale and collard greens is going to solve their issues, a lot of people need food that they can consume right away,” says Angell. “They may be homebound elders who can’t turn a bunch of kohlrabi into an immediately nutritious meal. So we source the surplus food, have a place to store it until it can be distributed or turned into easily consumable foods like Second Chance Foods does, and then bring it to places that we’ve identified as having food insecurity needs.”

As a model, Angell points to the Westchester Food Bank’s mobile food pantry, which lays its wares out like a farmers market but gives away the food to anyone who comes by. “They don’t ask for income data,” says Angell. “They’re trying to not stigmatize the fact that people need food, especially when there’s a growing number of people in economic crisis.”

“What it keeps coming down to is: storage and distribution,” says Lerner. “You talk to everybody who works in food insecurity and the question is: How can we store it in a way that we can distribute when it’s needed, when it all comes in at once?”

Angell and Lerner are working on a proposal to present to the Philipstown Town Board on how to use some of the $700,000 it expects to receive through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to address local hunger.

Part of the proposal will probably involve a mobile refrigerated unit, as well as more refrigerated sites to handle excess produce donations and allow food pantries to have more stock on hand. But part will include human infrastructure: someone to oversee it all.

Most food insecurity groups start out as volunteer networks and quickly run out of capacity because no one has time to expand the organization. Second Chance Foods hired an executive director a few years ago, and Fareground in Beacon recently did the same after operating on volunteer power for six years.

Angell hopes that a part-time coordinator, paid in part or entirely with ARPA money, could oversee senior care and food insecurity while also identifying other sources of funding for the position, as happened with the nonprofit Philipstown Behavioral Health Hub, which provides mental health services. As he sees it, nonprofits, religious groups and local governments have to team up to tackle hunger, or no one else will.

“Who has the incentive to take the food from that waste stream and refrigerate it and turn it into usable food items that can be consumed easily by the general American public and distribute it?” he asks. “I don’t see how the capitalist market moves into that space and finds a way to profit by giving food away.”

Dutchess Outreach

A lot has changed in the 47 years that Dutchess Outreach, based in Poughkeepsie, has been fighting hunger. Initially, with most food pantries, it handed out food based on a model provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture: bags with protein such as beans, a dairy item, a fat, canned vegetables and canned fruits.

“That’s not according to dietary guidelines, and it wasn’t according to cultural preferences,” says Sarah Salem. The stereotypical view of “beggars can’t be choosers” sometimes persists when it comes to routing donations to food banks, resulting in donations that don’t take into account the health of the person receiving the food, or even what they will eat.

Dickinson, the author of *Feeding the Crisis*, spent the early months of the pandemic assisting a group that was handing out donated food in Manhattan’s Chinatown. One of the donated foods the volunteers kept receiving was cheese.

The members of the largely immigrant population who needed food told the volunteers that “this is not something we ever consume.” Says Dickinson: “Honestly, they’re kind of grossed out by it. It’s really culturally inappropriate.”

For Salem, the proof that the old model wasn’t working was in the streets. After handing out food, volunteers would find discarded cans on the ground outside. “We were contributing to waste,” Salem says. “We’ve switched to the ‘choice’ model.”

Today, clients at Dutchess Outreach grab a shopping cart and take what they want from food that has been laid out. Salem says that since the model was adopted, the organization is giving away less food because people are only taking what they know they’re going to eat. The model is also in use at the Philipstown Food Pantry — volunteer Amy Richter refers to it as “shopping.”

As in Cold Spring and elsewhere, Dutchess Outreach asks for little information from clients, who expressed fear of visiting after the Trump Administration in 2019 revealed a proposal to deny green cards and citizenship to immigrants who legally availed themselves of public services such as food stamps.

“We do need to collect some data for grants and reporting purposes, but we don’t need that much, and we definitely don’t need to stop someone and get an entire analysis of their financial history or their background,” Salem says. “We want to make it as easy and shameless as possible.”

Salem also helped found the Hudson Valley Food Systems Coalition, a working group of farmers, food producers, legislators, health officials and culinary professionals hoping to figure out how to address local hunger.

Dickinson says that’s a good instinct, citing Nourish New York, a recently passed law in which the state pays farmers and food producers to supply food to food pantries and other emergency food providers.

That type of program “strengthens the connection between people who need food, and people who are growing food but are doing it with a lot of risk and a lot of economic challenge,” she explains. “Rebuilding food systems may not seem like an obvious solution, but it’s an important piece.”

Not every service that Dutchess Outreach offers is free. It also runs a farmers market where the produce and other items are about half the typical cost.

“It gives people the opportunity to test at the level they’re able to purchase food and build a more sustainable food system for themselves but also — and this is key — feel like they’re participating in the local food movement,” says Salem. “They feel like they have a seat at the table.”

Next Week: *Feeding the hungry is an agricultural act*

For Parts 1 and 2, see highlandscurrent.org/hunger.
MEET THE MATRIARCH — Lucy Steele (played by Elaine Llewellyn) reacts to a puppet representing her future mother-in-law during a performance of Sense and Sensibility by Haldane Drama on Dec. 4. The puppet is wielded by Fanny Dashwood (Helen Hutchinson) while Elinor Dashwood (Maya Gelber) looks on. Photo by Ross Corsair

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~ The Early Family

PURPLE HEART COINS — In a news conference on Dec. 4 in Wappingers Falls, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney unveiled designs for three commemorative coins that will be released in 2022. Maloney, whose district includes the Highlands, introduced a bill that allowed the U.S. Mint at West Point to create them. The series will include $5 gold, $1 silver and half-dollar clad coins; proceeds will benefit the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor. The Purple Heart is awarded to service members who are wounded or killed by enemy action.

BEATLES VERSUS STONES — Kelly Maloney and Richard Schunk of Cold Spring show their loyalties before a performance on Dec. 4 by Beatles and Rolling Stones tribute bands at the Paramount Hudson Valley Theater in Peekskill. They and four other couples scored free tickets in a drawing held for members of The Current.

Photos provided
“W e bought it for the river.” That’s what James Murray says about the “wreck” he and his wife purchased 33 years ago in Fort Montgomery that today, after a renovation that transformed it, houses materials for his sculptures.

“I have a tendency to scavenge, then disassemble, cut them up, then weld them back together,” he explains. His raw material comes mostly from demolition projects far and wide, or objects washed up on the banks of the Hudson.

“I am always on the hunt for materials, harvesting them as an urban archaeologist,” he says. “I find the pieces the contractors don’t want, some hit by lightning, or bees got to it, or a squirrel made a nest in it. I don’t like things that are neatly cut and cleaned. Instead I love things, for example, with curves from the original sawmills. I become a partner with the material and add to it.”

Murray, who has taught sculpture at the Garrison Art Center for 12 years, is himself a contractor — he owns Murray Craft Builders. “There’s always a due date,” he says. “I put art aside and focus on that due date. Through that side of things, I work with a lot of great designers. I’ve done a lot of unique interiors, published in lots of design magazines. I move art around a lot at my house and studio, because you forget to see it clearly. It’s how to see, or when to see.”

He’s also a 100-ton master for power and sail vessels courtesy of a Merchant Marine operator’s license. In that capacity, he brings boats back and forth from New York to Florida and the Antilles. He’s even operated a small ferry at Martha’s Vineyard.

“I’m a sailor, really,” Murray says with a smile. “Sailing and living on the river gives easy access to collecting an abundance of materials. I’ve been lucky to have art and work mix.”

That luck began with a “wonderful art teacher” in Brooklyn, where Murray grew up. “On his own time, he would take us to dig up clay and stones, and taught us stone carving; I painted back then, too. In addition, my father started me out wood carving as a young teenager, so I had good guidance and I was comfortable with hand tools. By the time I graduated, I knew I wanted to become a sculptor.”

As part of the first graduating class of the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, Murray wanted to become a sculptor. “On his own time, he would take us up. “On his own time, he would take us...”

By Alison Rooney

James Murray

Nellybombs to perform benefit for A-Y company

By Alison Rooney

Offstage, she is Nelly; Onstage, she is one-half of Nellybombs — “confident, comfortable, brighter.”

Singer and songwriter Nelly Llano and guitarist Francisco Mena perform together nearly every weekend at wineries, wine bars and private parties in the Hudson Valley. On Wednesday (Dec. 15), they will take the stage at the Howland Cultural Center for Holiday Dance Dance Dance, a benefit to support the third season of A-Y/Dancers, the Beacon-based modern dance company.

“I’ve known A-Y co-founder Claire Dean to be a phenomenal dancer,” says Llano. “I always knew the time would be right to collaborate together. I’m so excited because Christmas songs are so well-written and often have a jazz flavor.”

Llano, the daughter of an Italian mother and Cuban father, has lived all over: Wappingers, Albany, Newburgh, Montgomery, Walden. Her father worked in the music industry and discouraged her from heading in that direction.

“I went to college to please my parents, but I knew music was what I wanted to pursue,” she recalls. “At age 25 I started jamming out with friends and someone suggested we go to a Newburgh open mic. It was there, five years ago, that I met Francisco. We understood each other musically in a way that I had never experienced.

“We began thinking, ‘Maybe we should book some bar gigs.’ Fran had been playing in a band at bars in Beacon; he had equipment,” Llano says. “That started this crazy journey where we’d play any restaurant or bar for whatever money they wanted to pay us. We’d play dive bars we hated, but eventually we started making enough money for me to drop my day job. I never thought that could happen.”

(Continued on Page 18)
The Elders of Philipstown

Annette Solakoglu, a Garrison-based photographer and filmmaker, conceived of Faces|Graces, which continues through Jan. 9 at the Garrison Art Center, and photographed its subjects. Solakoglu spoke to Alison Rooney recently about the project. Her remarks have been edited for brevity:

I got the idea and started about two-and-a-half years ago. Over the years of raising my children in Philipstown, I’ve seen the older generation pass away. I felt this urge to pick up my camera and pay homage to what they created, such as seemingly small institutions like the Philipstown Depot Theatre and the Garrison Art Center, which mean so much to people living here. They’ve also worked to protect our local environment. 

Some I knew, and others were referred to me. No one turned me down. Of course, they are only a small sample of the people who have contributed to and grace our community.

When I spoke to my subjects while making their portraits, some said, “I have nothing to offer.” I’d say, “But you do, and it’s not just about being on this board or another, but simply being community-oriented.” It was an honor to bring to light their quiet devotion to community-building. I was impressed with how relaxed and open they were — completely unconcerned with their looks. They couldn’t care less.

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MARGARET (MARIT) KULLESEID

BORN: 1937, La Crosse, Wisconsin
ARRIVED: 1964
CO-FOUNDER: Garrison Art Center
CO-FOUNDER & FOUNDING PRESIDENT: Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival
EARLY MEMBER: Highlands Choral Society

Entrepreneur, weaver, knitter, mentor

After we first moved up here from Brooklyn, I sometimes thought, “Why did we move so far from people?” But a wonderful neighbor, Nancy Sayles Evarts, took me under her wing and introduced me to all kinds of people. Then, once our children started school, we had that community. And I felt that if I were going to complain about the school, I sure as heck had better get myself involved, so I got on the school board.

That’s also when the Art Center got its start. A group of us were interested in art, so we hung good reproductions around the school. In order to raise money to enlarge that collection, we hosted an art show; there were lots of really gifted artists in the community. Afterward, we realized we’d raised enough money to rent the old post office at Garrison’s Landing. We would hold art classes, and some of us could teach. We weren’t fancy, that’s for sure; the building was pretty rickety and parts of it didn’t have heat. But it just caught on. Later it absorbed the building next door, which had been Forson’s Store.

Another of my great loves was Hudson Valley Shakespeare. By God, that first summer it was just a group of young actors in Manitoga’s field, with flashlights and ladders and sneakers. And it took off like a bird in flight! Local people were interested, and if you asked them to do something, like host visiting actors, they said yes. I became the first HVSP president. It grew so fast it’s hard to fathom. When people get together and channel their energy into something they believe in, and it works, it’s simply fabulous.

JOHN BENJAMIN

BORN: 1946, Butterfield Hospital, Cold Spring
RETURNED: 1995
FOUNDING BOARD MEMBER: Hudson Highlands Land Trust
PRESENT OR FORMER BOARD MEMBER: Putnam Highlands Audubon Society, Constitution Island Association, Garrison Station Plaza

Activist, farmer, stonemason, gardener, pond hockey player

When I was growing up, virtually all of the area from Upper Station to Lower Station roads was Benjamin land or Fish land. I have 24 first cousins, and there was a wonderful knot of us running around just wild there. My grandmother’s house was the first in Garrison to have a swimming pool. Around Memorial Day, we’d clean it out, send the water flushing down into the Hudson. Having sat all winter, it would be full of dead frogs and leaves and ooey-gooey litter. And if you helped, you could swim there, so everybody came. It was great fun.

I learned nothing until I got out of college. I went to Colorado for two years to be a ski bum, came back 30 years later having learned stonework and farming and mushrooming. I’ve done quite a bit of stonework around Philipstown — formal entries, pillars and gardens. One day in Cold Spring, a delivery truck’s brakes gave way; it went screaming down Main Street, right through the wall and onto the train tracks. So I fixed that wall; it’s still there.

I built an oval garden at St. Philip’s parish after Ruth Anderson died. Everybody went to Saunders’ farm, picked out stones, and I built it from them.

Stone is surprisingly subtle and sculptural, and I like that it doesn’t rot.

Over the years, I’ve contributed a little bit to the education of a few, mainly children. I coached lacrosse and ice hockey. While youth-coaching at West Point, I arranged to bring the team up to Earl’s Pond. It was one of those classic February black-ice days. The kids had never skated on anything but a rink. At first they were tentative, but then they got into the wonder of it. I still play every winter. It’s a highlight.
about looking in the mirror. That’s the beauty of age. It charmed me, because usually when you photograph people it’s preceded by, “How do I look?”

Originally, the idea was simply to photograph them. With documentary filmmaking, there’s this idea that when you aim a camera at someone, you open them up. It’s a psychological tool. During the photo shoots they were telling me all these stories. I wound up typing away after they left, thinking this needs to be part of it. Celia [Barbour] interviewed everyone and then with enormous skill and warmth she edited each down to around 250 words. She drew some quotes from these which captured their spirit, their humor, and these will go under the portraits.

The photos are faces on a white background to communicate a sense of abstraction, timelessness. I’m hanging them so you can stand and observe their faces. The Art Center invited the elders to come on opening night an hour early for a private moment with their portraits. I’m interested in that intimate moment when you stand in front of the portrait and look at these beautiful wrinkles. I’m honored to have been allowed to take their portraits.

Photographer Annette Solakoglu, in a self-portrait

HENRY LEWIS (LEW) KINGSLEY

BORN: 1940, Roe Park, New York
ARRIVED: 1967
FOUNDER: Kingsley Tree Care
CO-FOUNDER: New Leaf Restoration
FOUNDING BOARD MEMBER: Riverkeeper; Hudson Highlands Land Trust; Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary; Putnam Highlands Audubon Society
BOARD MEMBER: Philipstown Conservation Committee (Wetlands)

Arborist, environmentalist, birder, caretaker of Philipstown’s grandest old trees

I was climbing trees as soon as I could grab a branch. Oh, man, we used to play tree tag in those wooded areas before they were developed — we’d shimmy up one of those little skinny birches, bend it over, go to the next one, bend it over, go to the next. And when a huge tree would fall in a storm, we’d play tag on the crown of that, running from branch to branch.

When I was 17, I went to work for a tree company. We cleared farmland so I learned how to run power saws. Then I worked for this tree guy who didn’t know one tree from another. So I made it my job — I got the good manuals and books, and I studied trees, learned the species. I was one of the first people to become a certified arborist.

My business grew by word of mouth. Now people wait a year and a half to have me come and do their trees. Some of these people, they want everything polished: not one leaf on the yard, perfect trees, all that stuff. It’s not even healthy.

Yeah, there’s some rat trees, but most trees, there’s a reason why they’re there. Many trees I refused to cut down. Because if it was a beautiful tree, what’s wrong with it? “Well, it’s shading this or that.” That’s what it’s there for! Next thing I know, somebody else would have taken it down. That’s OK. It’s their loss. And the tree’s loss.

Absolutely. Sometimes like trees better than people. They don’t give you any back talk.

Look where I live: I am between two mountain ranges. And a mountain stream comes right through me. It never stops. My wife’s here — her ashes are on the property. I’ll never leave.

The Subjects

John Benjamin  Margaret Kulleeid
Robert Bickford  Claudia Marzollo
Gilman Burke  Anne Todd Osborn
Leonora Burton  Frederick H. Osborn III
Brigitte Freed  Sandy Saunders
Henry Lewis  Kingsley
Polly Townsend

POLLY TOWNSEND

BORN: 1949, Butterfield Hospital, Cold Spring
AWARDS: Alice Curtis Desmond Award
PRESENT OR FORMER BOARD MEMBER: Philipstown Garden Club, Manitoga, Putnam Highlands Audubon Society, Garrison Children’s Education Fund; Garrison School Forest Committee

Journalist, teacher, riding instructor, gardener, quilter, Desmond-Fish Public Library’s “Miss Polly”

My happiest form of transportation is horseback, and my second is driving a tractor.

My father died when I was 14, and we didn’t sell Wintergreen Farm until I was 21. In between, I took care of 60 acres all by myself. I still cut the field now; my husband, Perry, always walks in front of the tractor because the box turtles who live there can’t run away fast enough.

According to my mother, my favorite phrase as a child was “I can do it myself.” In those days, Philipstown was a do-it-yourself community. We were resourceful. You went to the dump yourself, mowed your own lawn, baked your own bread and knew everything about gardening.

I began working at Desmond-Fish in 1995. I’m amazed that not everybody uses libraries. Some people actually buy their books! I’m not cheap. I believe in supporting the book industry, but that’s a lot of books to have in your house when you read as much as I do.

Reading for children is wonderful. I always made it interactive, because 4-year-olds don’t necessarily want to sit still. I’d say, “What do you think is going to happen?” You let them absorb the pictures and make up their own story.

I started a story garden outside the children’s room, and a butterfly garden with Sandra Nice. We’d read to the kids about gardens and animals, and plant something every year.

Gardens are important. They take you from one generation to the next. My father planted daffodils in the woods around where my house is. He died in 1963, and they still bloom every year. And butterfly weed — the seeds fly around, and every year there’s a new patch: Look where it is now! That just makes me really happy.
THE WEEK AHEAD
Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)
For a complete listing of events, see highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

COMMUNITY
FRI 17

Holiday Caroling
GARRISON
5 p.m. Philipsipin Depot Theatre
10 Garrison’s Landing
Pick up lyric sheets and hot chocolate at the theater.

SAT 18

Rummage Sale
COLD SPRING
1 – 5 p.m. Mary’s Church
1 Chestnut St.
This sale of gently used men’s and women’s clothing will benefit the church and Philipstown Fights Dirty. To donate items, email darsnowlen68@gmail.com for drop-off spots.

SAT 18

Winter Wonderland
GARRISON
4 – 6 p.m. Philipstown Recreation Center
107 Glenclyffe
facebook.com/philipstownrecreation
This outdoor family event will include carnival games, crafts and karaoke karoling. Register online.

STAGE & SCREEN
SAT 11

Storm Lake
COLD SPRING
Via Film Platform
highlandscurrent.org/storm-lake
In this 2021 documentary, the residents of Storm Lake, Iowa, confront a changing community as global forces threaten their precarious existence. Enter the family-run Storm Lake Times, which delivers local news and editing to a shoestring budget for its 3,000 readers. Sponsored by The Highlands Current. Register online to watch anytime. Also SUN 12. Free

SAT 11

Northern Lights
PEEKSKILL
8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
1000 N. Division St.
peekskillclaystudios.com
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. The Yard
4 Hanna Lane | bit.ly/the-yard-market
More than 30 Hudson Valley-based artisans will showcase their art and crafts with food available from Eat Church, live music and drinks.

SAT 11

Palmera Holiday Pop-Up
COLD SPRING
11 a.m. – 6 p.m. Bijou Showcase
50 Main St.
Find handcrafted ornaments. Mexican textiles, clothing, artisanal gifts, accessories and housewares. Daily except Tuesdays through December.

HOLIDAY MARKETS
SAT 12

Holiday Artisan Market
BEACON
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. The Yard
4 Hanna Lane | bit.ly/the-yard-market
Children can enjoy the Kid’s Club while the grown-ups shop for local and handmade gifts.

SAT 11

Holiday Market
PATTERSON
10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Camp Herrich
101 Deacon Smith Hill Road
camp herrich.org

SAT 11

Holiday Small Gift Show
BEACON
5 – 10 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
howlandculturalcenter.org
In this annual show, artisan and handmade crafts, prints, jewelry, ceramics, candles and toys will be available for purchase. Also SUN 12, FRI 12, SUN 19.

KIDS & FAMILY
SAT 11

Santa Claus Visit
GARRISON
10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Boscobel
1601 Route 9D | 845-265-3638
boscobel.org
Santa will visit with children in the Orangery. Storyteller Jonathan Kruk will perform at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Also SAT 18. Cost: $12 ($10 seniors, $6 ages 5 to 18; members, health care workers, ages 5 and younger free)

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SAT 11
Tinkergarten Lantern Walk
GARRISON
4 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org

Jackie Grant will lead this traditional walk for families and children ages 2 to 8 to welcome the darkness and embrace natural change.

SUN 12
Family Story Time
COLD SPRING
11 a.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org

Get into the holiday spirit with stories.

FRI 17
Holiday Party
COLD SPRING
3:30 – 4:30 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org

Children ages 1 to 10 are invited to enjoy a piñata, games and a candy hunt. Registration required.

MUSIC
SAT 11
All is Bright
NEWBURGH
4 p.m. Newburgh Free Academy
201 Fullerton Ave. | 845-913-7157
newburghsymphony.org

The Greater Newburgh Symphony Orchestra will perform a holiday concert in two parts. The first will feature the string section playing Christmas music across the centuries. The second will feature singers and classics. Cost: $35 to $50 ($25 seniors, students free)

SAT 11
Sloan Wainwright
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

Wainwright will perform her 21st holiday show.

THURS 16
Of a Winter’s Night
BEACON
7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

Tony Trischka will perform music from his 2015 acoustic release with a warm take on seasonal music. Cost: $20 ($25 door)

FRI 17
Dylan Doyle
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

The guitarist and his band will perform his signature style of roots, rock and jazz. Cost: $15 ($20 door)

SUN 12
The McKrell’s Holiday Show
BEACON
7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

Kevin McKrell and Brian Melick will channel the Marx brothers in an interpretation of ‘Twas the Night Before Christmas. Cost: $30 ($25 door)

SAT 18
Handel’s Messiah
POUGHKEEPSIE
2 p.m. Bardavon | 35 Market St.
845-473-2072 | bardavon.org

Guest conductor Christine Howlett will lead the Hudson Valley Philharmonic with soloists Amy Justman, Emily Lipschutz, Morgan Mastrangelo and Kenneth Overton. Cost: $35 ($20 members and seniors, $12 ages 12 and younger)

SAT 18
A Very Slambovian Christmas
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

The Slambovian Circus of Dreams will perform its energetic holiday show. Cost: $35 ($40 door)

SAT 18
A Very Merry Country Christmas
BEACON
6 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039
paramounthudsonvalley.com

Jessica Lynn’s annual holiday show will feature dancers, marching bands, Santa and choirs performing holiday songs. Cost: $25 and $35

SAT 19
The Costello’s Christmas Show
BEACON
5:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

Lynn and Bob Costello will be joined by Scott Ramsey, Dimitri Archip and Chihoe Hahn for their annual holiday show. Cost: $35 ($20 door)

SAT 19
Holiday Hoot at Cafe Sizzle
BEACON
6 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
howlandculturalcenter.org

Goldene Greene and The Shades will lead this cabaret style show celebrating yuletide along with the Lubvugs, Sizzling X-tremes and Kiki and Willia’s Kwanzaa Korner. Pianist Lacy Galliher will play for the singalong finale. Cost: $17.50 ($20 door)

VISUAL ART
SAT 11
Gift Wrapped
BEACON
6 – 9 p.m. Clutter Gallery
163 Main St. | 212-255-2505
clutter.co

In this ninth annual show, work by more than 100 artists costing less than $200 will be available for unique gifts.

MON 13
City Council
BEACON
7 p.m. City Hall | 1 Municipal Plaza
845-838-5011 | beaconny.gov

MON 13
School Board
BEACON
7 p.m. Beacon High School
101 Matteawan Road | 845-838-6900
beaconk12.org

MON 13
Dutchess Legislature
POUGHKEEPSIE
7 p.m. County Office Building
22 Market St. | 845-486-2100
dutchessny.gov

TUES 14
Board of Trustees
COLD SPRING
7:30 p.m. Village Hall | 85 Main St.
845-265-3611 | coldspringny.gov

TUES 14
Fire District Vote
GARRISON
5 – 9 p.m. Firehouse
1616 Route 9 | garrisonfd.org

On the ballot: two candidates for a 5-year commissioner seat and a proposal to borrow money to purchase a mini pumper. See Page 7.

WED 15
School Board
GARRISON
7 p.m. Garrison School | 1100 Route 9D
845-424-3689 | gufsd.org

The Highlands Current
The duo play their original songs plus a mix of “older Motown, blues, jazz and soul, covering artists like Etta James, Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder, plus some ’90s R&B at bars with younger people,” she says. Llano grew up listening to gospel, soul and Donna Summer.

Three years ago, they released their first single, “755,” which was “the name of the voice memo I used to write the song,” Llano explains. But soon after, Llano went through a breakup and stopped writing and singing. “Fran was like, ‘You need to just write about this,’” she recalls. That turned into Dana Avenue, their second EP. “The songs are the emotions you go through during a breakup, in chronological order: sadness to ‘I hate you,’ to ‘I still love you,’ ‘I’m over you,’ ‘I love myself,’ ‘I’m moving on.’”

She worked on her most recent single, “On My Own,” in Los Angeles with the producer Smile High, part of The Main Squeeze, traveling there every other month. The song addresses the mental health issues she has suffered during the pandemic. “I felt stuck in a room, unable to perform,” she says. “It’s me being the realest I could be about what’s going on in my head.

“Still, I struggle. I have panic attacks, not knowing if the momentum will fizzle. I’ve had to buckle down, relearn how to be OK with myself, by myself. I want to help other people who are maybe too scared to talk to someone about their issues.”

Llano says that writing the song, getting it produced and doing a music video was therapeutic. “It’s like, OK, I think I can do this, I can be an artist. Now I can take my emotions and make them into art. I still think I have a long way to go, but I can see the progression of getting better and that makes me want to learn more, sing more, keep pushing.”

Nellybombs (from Page 13)

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The Howland Cultural Center is located at 477 Main St. in Beacon. Nellybombs will perform on Dec. 15 from 6 to 9 p.m.; tickets are $25, $50 or $100 through aydancers.com. Proof of vaccination required. Nellybombs will also play at 8:30 p.m. today (Dec. 10) at the Reserva Wine Bar, 173 Main St., in Beacon.

Anticipated Opening –
2 Teacher Aide positions (part-time)
$15.33/hour not to exceed 5 hours per day

You may download and mail/email a Non-Certified application from the Haldane web site, www.haldaneschool.org (click the District tab, District Resources, and Employment.)

Please mail/email the completed application to, Ms. Christine Jamin, ES Principal (cjamin@haldaneschool.org) no later than December 23, 2021. A fingerprinting/criminal background check clearance is required.
Mouths to Feed

Bar None

By Celia Barbour

“D

on’t you think the early 2000s seem so far away?”

This line, from Lorde’s new song, “Mood Ring,” has been stuck in my head for days, ever since my friend Stephen told me at a dinner party that “streamers” won’t consume history content that predates the turn of the millennium.

It’s like being sucked out to sea on a riptide, such news. The shore blurs, and suddenly history is indistinguishable from “history content.” Streamers aren’t party decorations — they’re people, and for them the year 2000 disappears over the crest of the horizon.

Experts agree that when you’re caught in a riptide, the best thing to do is stay calm, float and wait for the current to shift. For but many of us, including Stephen, an exceptional documentary filmmaker, such waiting feels treacherous.

Though he’d been a conscientious objector, boat-builder, surveyor, teacher, author and wild-foods bon vivant, Gibbons suddenly became known primarily as the butt of late-night monologues and comedy routines. He didn’t care; he must have known how to float.

I was reminded of him during a recent walk in the woods with my son, Dosi. The forest floor all around us was layered with a remarkable variety of oak leaves and acorns, and acorn flour, and wondering whether other parts of the oak tree might also be edible.

Had I spent less of my life drifting about on glowing e-currents, I might know the answer to this question. As it is, I was stuck Googling oak trees and reminiscing about an era when “crunchy granola” was used as a personal insult for people who shunned neckties, authority and processed foods.

“Do you know the phrase ‘crunchy granola?’” I asked Dosi.

He said he’s heard of people being referred to as either “crunchy” or “granola,” but not both at once.

Yet despite what the epithet suggests, granola was not actually invented by the back-to-the-land hippies of the 1960s. It started as “granula,” a breakfast dish invented at a health spa here in New York state in 1863. The name was a reference to the granules of overbaked, crushed graham flour that comprised it. C.W. Post, a patient at the spa, evolved it into Grape-Nuts, whose success prompted Dr. John Kellogg to create a competing product, the oat-based “granola.”

Granola fell out of favor when cornflakes came on the scene, then re-emerged in the 1980s when the hippies began making it from scratch. Soon, corporations like General Mills and Quaker saw gold, and granola has grown steadily in popularity and market share ever since.

Dosi ranks among the 40 percent of Americans who feel that the main problem with granola and other cereals is that they’re not portable enough. Before noon, he’s an eat-on-the-go type of guy. It is for his sake that I’ve spent some portion of the 21st century foraging through cookbooks for a first-rate homemade granola bar. I think I’ve finally found it: a bar rich with oats, seeds and lore, if not with Gen-Z-consumable history content.

Dosi’s Granola Bars

You should start these bars at least 4 hours before baking, and up to a day ahead. You can substitute any moist dried fruit, such as apricots or cherries, for the dates.

1 1/4 cup rolled oats
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 cup mixed seeds (I used equal parts sesame, flax, sunflower and pepitas)
2 medjool dates, finely chopped
1/4 cup dark chocolate chips (optional)
1/4 cup almond butter
3 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 extra-large or jumbo egg
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Butter a brownie pan and line the bottom with parchment, allowing the paper to drape up over two sides.

2. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the almond butter, butter and brown sugar on medium speed until smooth and light, about 4 minutes. Add the egg and vanilla and mix until well-combined. Reduce the mixer to low speed and gradually sprinkle in the dry ingredients. Mix in the chocolate chips, if using.

3. Pat the mixture into the prepared pan, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight; this allows the oats and seeds to hydrate.

4. Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Bake the bars 25 to 30 minutes, or until the top is golden-brown. Cool completely on a baking rack before slicing into bars.

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SANTA VISIT

The Cold Spring Fire Department brought Kris Kringle to the waterfront on Saturday (Dec. 4), where Hudson House provided cookies and warm drinks. Santa collected letters from the children in attendance.

Photos by Michael Turton
As part of Cold Spring Aglow, which takes place today (Dec. 10) from 5 to 9 p.m., residents lit up Main Street with candles and tributes, some of which are shared here.

For Hudson House River Inn

In loving memory of Stephen Rutkowski

For Mark Trotiner, from Susan

Honoring Geraldine & Harry Fadde

To Monkey, from Liesel Vink

For Warner Rush, from Joseph Laurino

For Rozzy & Felix Panasci, from Eri Panasci

Grandma Kay Andersen, we love you – Hannah Salit

To Clara and Jack, from Wendy Sanderson

For Gloria Richardson, from Eliza Starbuck

For Sweet Harvest and Hudson River Healing and Wellness

Welcome to the world Anthony Stefan - we love you! – Sara O’Leary

In memory of Richie Stanulwich. Always the light of my life. Love, Kimmie

In loving memory of John Bishop; beloved husband, father and friend

For our much loved and dearly missed Grandad, from Heather Purvis

In honor of Dave Merandy, Marie Early, and Fran Murphy, for their service to the village – Jennifer Zwarich

To my grandmother, Paddy Stericker. We love and miss you dearly – Julian Cornwell

For Sara Katz, keep shining, my friend – Pamela Doan

Para mi abuelo, Victoriano, que nos ilumina desde arriba – Teresa Lagerman

Jim Farnorotto, Joseph & Josephine Merando, Bobby Merando, Rich Lucchesi, George Tompkins – Fran Farnorotto

Thank you Fareground, Beacon4BlackLives, and Binnacle Books for feeding our community through your Tiny Food Pantry! – Sara O’Leary

Merry Christmas in heaven, Mom & Dad. I so wish you could have been at Matthew’s wedding, but I know you were sending your love to us from above. Love, Angela Ghiozzi

We honor our grandmother, Maxine Freiheit. We are grateful for her life of faith, love and service. Her loving grandchildren: Jeff, Heather, Scott and Kari Jo
Encouraging Competition

By Pamela Doan

I’ve been taking a class where the presenter, a landscape designer, talks about “exploiting the differences” as a strategy for helping desirable plants thrive and get a competitive edge over undesirable plants.

The idea is to know a lot of details about the plants in question and figure out how to give one a way to thrive over the other. It could be that your garden has more black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia hirta) and you’d like the butterflyweed (Asclepias tuberosa) to spread out instead, because you love seeing monarch butterflies.

First you’ll want to learn as much as possible about the plants through observation and research. One difference to note is that black-eyed Susan has a biennial life cycle and butterflyweed has a perennial life cycle. (Important: Rudbeckia spp. includes annuals and perennial varieties and the common name “black-eyed Susan” doesn’t distinguish between them.)

Biennial plants complete their lives in the garden in two years. In the first year, the plant will only grow leaves. In Year 2, the plant will shoot up leaves, a stalk and a yellow, daisy-like flower with a dark center. After flowering, it will turn brown and the flower will look dry and drop seeds.

If undisturbed, many of those seeds will germinate and the cycle will begin again in Year 3. If the gardener wanted more plants, seeding them in Year 1 would be the way to get continual black-eyed Susan flowers in Year 3, and so on.

Is there a difference that can be exploited between perennials, which will return year after year unless something prevents them, and biennials? In this case, to get more butterflyweed, deadhead the black-eyed Susan to prevent it from going to seed. Or if you want some, but not as many plants as will grow from seed, leave a few seed heads to disperse. By simply cutting off the seed heads, black-eyed Susan could be controlled to a two-year cycle.

Butterflyweed, however, will need a second intervention in this strategy to help it spread and get a competitive edge over the black-eyed Susan.

Because it’s part of the native milkweed family, most people will be familiar with the feathery, white seed heads that come when the pods crack open. Light and airy, these seeds are designed to float on the wind. The seeds also need to be cold-stratified, meaning they have to be exposed to freezing temperatures during the winter to germinate in spring. These are not meant to sit in a packet all winter. Considering their dispersal method, it’s an efficient way for it to spread.

To encourage the butterflyweed, you’ll need to tuck those seeds onto the soil where you want them instead of letting them fly away. Try not to bury them, though. Small and delicate seeds will have difficulty germinating if covered with too much soil. Assuming the garden beds haven’t been cleared to bare soil, just let the butterflyweed seeds rest among the foliage while touching bare ground. Weather and nature will do the rest.

When it comes to low-effort ways to encourage certain plants, other factors to consider are bloom season, height, sunlight requirements and preferences for the warm (summer) or cool season (fall) when it comes to grasses. For example, spring-blooming plants that will die back in summer can be planted next to fall-blooming plants that will have their biggest growth spurt during the summer.

Some of our worst plant enemies like Japanese barberry, an invasive species, thrive and become so prolific because they have many competitive advantages in their home away from home. Barberry leaves emerge before the leaves of native foliage and they can shade the ground to prevent anything else from growing up around them. Their seeds are well protected and can last for up to seven years on the ground and germinate when an opportunity opens up. Their thorny branches protect them from being trampled, eaten, or used in any way by wildlife.

Since they didn’t co-evolve with our white-tailed deer, the main herbivores of the forest understory, they aren’t eaten. This would be a case where it is difficult to find a way to exploit a difference with a native species to find success.
William Blacknall (1945-2021)

William Henry Blacknall, 76, a longtime Beacon resident, died Nov. 24 at Sapphire Nursing Center in Newburgh. He was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, on July 11, 1945, the son of Ruth Blacknall, and raised by his grandparents, Hillard and May Blacknall.

William attended schools in Henderson, North Carolina. After high school he relocated to the Hudson Valley, where he became well known for his many talents as aiker, car racer and softball hitter. He retired from the state Department of Transportation.

He was “Mr. Duster” during his car days, “Shotgun” during his motorcycle days, “Hicks” to many of his friends and “Bill” to many others.

William was inducted in 1999 into the Beacon Softball Hall of Fame. He loved cooking for his family (especially fried turkeys), friends and strangers in need.

William is survived by his wife, Johnie Mae Blacknall, and his children: Damon Blacknall, Annette Hendrickson (Chris) of Killeen, Texas; Sherita Williams (Jeff) of Philadelphia; Chantely Skipwith (John) of Henderson; Crystal Morrison of Henderson; Fry (William) Blacknall II; and stepson, Jessie Williams (Kathleen) of Beacon.

Frank Bugg (1942-2021)

James Francis Bugg, 78, of Beacon, died Nov. 15 at the Renaissance Rehabilitation and Nursing Care Center in Strausburg. Frank was born on Dec. 12, 1942, in Montclair, New Jersey, the son of David and Agnes (Walker) Bugg. Following his graduation from Beacon High School in 1961, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He went on to study at Temple University School in 1961, he enlisted in the U.S. Army.

He was a Montessori and fiber arts teacher in Sullivan County for nearly 30 years until her retirement in 2006. Growing up, Carla and her family split time between a home in Malibu Canyon that was built by her father, and summers living on their boat, usually docked at Catalina Island. They were very much in touch with their belief that life is better on or near the sea, they spent most of their free time sailing or cruising in Southern California.

She attended high school and college in the San Fernando Valley and met her future husband, Mauro Giuffrida, at Cal State Northridge. They were married on Sept. 9, 1967, and soon after moved to Brooklyn, where Mauro pursued his master of fine arts degree at Pratt Institute and Carla opened Couter Studios, a yarn-and-knitting boutique in midtown Manhattan.

Carla was selfless, compassionate and a dear friend and inspiration to all she knew, her family said. A self-taught master fiber artist, she was happiest when knitting or weaving, producing the most breathtaking pieces of art.

After retirement, Carla continued to share her passion with friends and strangers, hosting weekly knitting circles and coming up with projects and learning tools for her grandchildren at each visit.

She is survived by her son, Mauro Giuffrida, her daughter, Lindsay Giuffrida, and her grandchildren: Natasha, Isabella, Liviana, Owen, Eliza and Massimo.

A celebration of life will be held at Harrodsburg Cremation Funeral Home in Rowayton from 1 to 3 p.m. on Dec. 29, followed by internment next to her husband in the couple’s adopted hometown of Eldred. Memorial donations may be made to the Delaware Riverkeeper Network (delaware-riverkeeper.org) or Planned Parenthood (plannedparenthood.org).

Louis Pataki Jr. (1941-2021)

Louis Peter Pataki Jr., 80, the older brother of former Gov. George Pataki, died Nov. 29 at Norwalk Hospital in Connecticut.

Born Nov. 2, 1941, in Peekskill, he was the son of Louis and Margaret (Lagana) Pataki. As a teenager, he received the rank of Eagle Scout and went on to be a scoutmaster for Troop 2 in Rowayton, Connecticut, where he and his wife, the former Jane Smith, resided and raised their family.

Louis received his undergraduate and doctorate degrees from Yale University and a law degree from Indiana University. He taught astronomy at Indiana University, practiced law in New York and for the past 21 years was an astronomy professor at New York University.

He volunteered for the Rowayton Fire Department in Norwalk and enjoyed stamp collecting, orienteering and celebrating his Hungarian, Italian and Irish heritage.

In addition to his wife of 55 years, Louis is survived by his children, Jonathan Pataki and Daisy Pataki; his grandchildren, Kaitlyn, Maggie, Milo and Juliana; his brother, George Pataki (Libby) of Garrison; and seven nieces and nephews.

A funeral service was held Dec. 6 in Rowayton, with interment following at Rowayton Union Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to the Rowayton Fire Department (rowaytonfire.com).

Other Recent Deaths

Philippotw

Beacon

Harold Conley, 65
Lucreca Cooper, 93
Vincent Nenni, 87
Gina Guida, 66
Beacon

Jerry Rodriguez, 69
Paulie Putorti, 84
Rowayton Union Cemetery. Memorial

Vincent Nenni, 87
Jerry Rodriguez, 69
Paulie Putorti, 84
Rowayton Union Cemetery. Memorial

Vincent Nenni, 87
Jerry Rodriguez, 69
Paulie Putorti, 84
Rowayton Union Cemetery. Memorial

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Rowayton Union Cemetery. Memorial

Vincent Nenni, 87
Jerry Rodriguez, 69
Paulie Putorti, 84
Rowayton Union Cemetery. Memorial
Putnam Approves Pay Raises for 2022

Also backs settlement of alleged wrongful arrest case

By Liz Schetethylh Armstrong

Putnam County legislators on Tuesday (Dec. 7) approved 2.4 percent raises for the county executive, county clerk, the sheriff and themselves. Legislators Montgomery, a Democrat whose district covers Philipstown and part of Putnam Valley, cast the lone “no” vote.

County Executive MaryEllen Odell will receive $170,070 annually beginning Jan. 1 while County Clerk Michael Bartolotti gets $139,462. Eight legislators will earn $42,802 each for their part-time jobs and whoever chairs the Legislature will draw $53,503. The incoming sheriff, Kevin McConville, will take home $160,209.

Montgomery joined her eight Republican colleagues in unanimously adopting another measure that set salaries for various employees and increases the salary of the Legislature’s clerk to $104,794 annually and the two Board of Election commissioners to $98,235 each.

The salary increases passed without debate. However, in October, before the Legislature adopted the county’s $167.1 million budget for 2022, Montgomery opposed raising the pay for Odell and other top officials while increasing property taxes even as Putnam anticipates $62 million in 2022 in sales tax revenue.

The lawmakers last gave themselves a raise in November 2020, when they voted 5-4 to raise their salaries and those of top officials and department heads by 2.4 percent. Also on Tuesday, legislators unanimously agreed to settle, for $125,000, a lawsuit filed by a Poughkeepsie man who claimed sheriff’s deputies had been motivated by racial prejudice when they arrested and allegedly assaulted him during a 2019 traffic stop on the Taconic State Parkway. In November, the legislative Rules Committee consented to the settlement, sending it on to a vote by the full Legislature.

“We wrestled with this case” but concluded that “it’s in the best interests of taxpayers that we move this forward and settle,” said legislator Neal Sullivan of Carmel-Mahopac, who chairs the Rules Committee. If the county lost in court, “the potential negative effect on taxpayers and the amount of dollars could be significant,” he said. “In no way do we think the behavior in this case is acceptable. We look forward to next year and the future with our new sheriff and having a real strong approach toward making sure that these things do not happen.”

Montgomery objected that Sullivan seemed to suggest that the present sheriff, Robert Langley Jr., a Democrat who lost to McConville, a Republican, in the November election, “was responsible for the behavior of these two officers” and that they did not receive adequate training. “That’s inappropriate. It’s wrong,” she said.

Legislator Amy Sayegh of Mahopac emphasized that “these were alleged actions” by the deputies but said that while she didn’t “want to throw any officers under the bus,” she also didn’t condone misbehavior.

“There needs to be some kind of culpability to prevent these kinds of cases,” added legislator Ginny Nacerino of Patterson. “That’s not a reflection on any one person or the sheriff, but there has to be some culpability and some understanding of accountability. I’d like to see that culture change.”

Legislature meetings end with members’ ad hoc comments and Montgomery and legislators of Putnam Valley used theirs to recognize Supervisors Richard Shea of Philipstown and Sam Oliveiro of Putnam Valley, who both leave office this month. Oliverio served on the county Legislature and Putnam Valley Town Board before becoming supervisor.

In other business, the Legislature unanimously approved compensation of up to $84,000 in 2022 for Robert Firriolo, its lawyer; signed off on a fund transfer of $302,500 (ended last month by the Rules Committee) so the county Law Department can pay bills before Dec. 31; and reappointed Andrew Pidala of Philipstown to the county Board of Electrical Examiners.

Christmas Trees (from Page 1)

Compared to 370 in the past, although he didn’t blame COVID-19 or the supply chain. He said his Canadian supplier under-planted several years ago.

However, as in 2020, demand is higher because of the pandemic — “Everyone was home and they had to have something to do,” so they bought Christmas trees, said Giordano. In addition, he said, prices are up 30 to 40 percent for cut trees, mostly due to increased shipping costs.

Sean Giles, owner of Sunny Garden Greenhouses in Wappingers Falls, said on Wednesday that he had only 15 trees left. He said his wholesaler was the victim of a drought several years ago, which has lowered stock since.

He said that higher labor and freight costs on cut trees have driven up his prices this season by 10 percent to 20 percent. He’s charging up to $79 for a 7- to 8-foot Balsam fir and up to $120 for a Fraser fir.

He said he believes the pandemic had an indirect effect on demand because of the influx of first-time tree buyers who moved to the area from New York City. “They now have room for a tree,” he said.

Joe Cardella, owner of BJ’s Christmas Tree Farm in LaGrange, has also seen high demand and expects to sell out early. “I certainly will not be open for the entire season,” he said.

Josh Maddocks and Sean Barton, who operate Cockburn Farm in Garrison, where customers cut down their purchases, also said sales have been strong, which Barton attributed in part to the pandemic, which “brought back family values.”

“We had a strong opening week, even with the rain,” Maddocks said of the Route 9 farm, which has 1,500 trees ranging from $150 to $750.

Gene Knudsen, president of the Christmas Tree Farmers Association of New York

“High demand and expectations of being able to prevent these kinds of cases,” added legislator Ginny Nacerino of Patterson.

They and the owner of Balsam Ridge Christmas Trees in Ulster County, said there doesn’t appear to be any acute shortage statewide, especially for cut trees that can be trucked in from elsewhere.

His own sales have been on track with last year, he said, which he remembered as “exceptional.” But he said forest fires in the Pacific Northwest have had a ripple effect nationally on supplies.

Back at Cockburn Farm in Garrison, Brittney Tomasesi, 30, of White Plains was making sure to buy early. She visited last week with her friend Ariz Carpinteyro, 31, of the Bronx, and her dog, Baxter. “I look forward to this every year,” she said. “I wanted to uphold the tradition.”

She and Carpinteyro settled on a 5½-foot Fraser and cut it down with a saw provided by the farm. “I like a smaller tree,” said Tomasesi. The cost? $225.

Deputies Seize Arsenal in Carmel

Sheriff: Only one firearm had serial number

Putnam County sheriff’s deputies seized an arsenal of weapons from a home in the Town of Carmel during a raid on Dec. 2, according to a news release.

The agency’s Narcotic Enforcement Unit executed a search warrant at a residence following what it said was a month-long investigation into the manufacture and sale of illegal firearms in the Mahopac area.

Inside the home, officers said they found 10 pistols, an assault rifle, 67 large-capacity ammunition-feeding devices and the tools and parts to make more than 20 firearms. Only one of the firearms had a serial number, they said.

David Goldberg, Jr., 23, was arrested and charged with 15 counts of possession or sale of illegal weapons and one count of criminal possession of a controlled substance. He was arraigned and sent to the Putnam County jail on $15,000 cash bail or $30,000 bond.

Legislature Asked to Restrict Judicial Candidates

Bill would prevent primary ‘raids’

A state senator from the Rochester area introduced a bill on Dec. 1 that would restrict judicial candidates from running in primaries for parties that haven’t endorsed them. It is identical to a bill introduced in the Assembly over the summer by Jonathan Jacobson, a Democrat whose district includes Beacon.

Both bills have been referred to committee. Jacobson’s bill is co-sponsored by Sandy Galef, a Democrat whose district includes Philipstown.

The Assembly bill was inspired in part by this year’s campaign for Beacon city judge. The incumbent, Tim Pagones, who appeared on the Republican and Conservative lines, gathered enough signatures to force Democratic and Working Families primary candidates “should be required to do what the primary of a party with which they are not aligned,” Jacobson said in a statement. Judicial candidates “should be required to do what every other candidate for public office does — get the authorization of that party to run.”

Metro-North Train Kills Man

Struck on tracks near Beacon station

A southbound Metro-North train struck and killed a man at about 1 p.m. on Tuesday (Dec. 7) near the Beacon station, according to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

A representative for the commuter rail said it was investigating why the man was on the tracks.

NEWS BRIEFS
Roundup (from Page 28)

... and we didn’t do that,” said Coach Scott Timpano. “We kept our foot on the pedal. We had all 12 players score. They need to see what winning feels like.”

Darien Gillins led the Bulldogs with 13 points, while Adrian Beato had 10 and Jason Komisar and Jack Antalek each added nine.

“Adrian Beato gave us some great minutes,” Timpano said. “We also got great defense from Gavin LaDue, and Janel Sellers-Blackwell came up strong with five rebounds and two steals.”

The Bulldogs fell last week at Pine Bush, 61-53. Chase Green and Jack Philipbar each scored 13 points, Gillins had 12, Sellers-Blackwell had seven and Komisar had 11 rebounds.

“We came back from 16 points down and got their lead down to two points in the fourth quarter, but then they hit two 3-pointers,” Timpano said. Nevertheless, “we saw some good things against a good team.”

Beacon (1-2) is scheduled to host Port Jervis on Wednesday (Dec. 15) at 6:30 p.m.

WINTER TRACK

In the 15-team, Section I Kickoff meet on Dec. 5 at The Armory Track & Field Center in New York City, Haldane’s Luke Parrella set a personal record in the 300 meters at 44.30.

Ronnie Anzovino won the 100 freestyle race against Minisink in 1:02.62 and Fionn Fehilly won the 500 freestyle in 7:08.85; Aleksander Noormae (26th in the 55 meters in 7.84) and Brendan Shannahahn (31st in the 600 meters in 2:02.60).

“That was a good start to the season for our freshmen and sophomores,” said Coach AJ McConville.

BOWLING

The Beacon boys’ and girls’ bowling teams each lost to Kingston, 7-0, on Tuesday (Dec. 7) following wins last week over Roosevelt. Against FDR, the Bulldogs were led by Daniel Gilleo and William Hockler, and the girls by Cadence Heeter and Vanessa Campanelli. The Bulldogs were scheduled to compete against FDR again on Thursday (Dec. 9), Saugerties on Dec. 14 and Goshen on Dec. 16.

BOYS’ SWIMMING

The Beacon boys’ swim team (0-3-1) fell to Minisink Valley, 79-79, on Monday (Dec. 6); and to Lourdes, 79-79, on Tuesday (Dec. 7). The Bulldogs were also scheduled to host Port Jervis on Thursday (Dec. 16).

BOYS’ BASKETBALL

Haldane (2-1) is scheduled to play in a tournament at Croton-Harmon this weekend, followed by a visit to Carmel on Thursday (Dec. 16).

Basketball (from Page 28)

with a new mindset. We have a lot of depth on the bench and guards who can handle the ball.”

The Blue Devils opened their season with a 58-24 home loss to Westlake (McDaniel had eight points and Chiera seven) but rebounded this week with a 53-46 victory at Yonkers Montessori Academy and a 62-26 home win over Hamilton.

“It was our third game, and I felt like we needed to get out quick,” said Perrone. “We were faster in transition. We also needed points in the paint and we got 26.”

Chiera led Haldane with 13 points, six rebounds, five assists and four steals. Cates added eight points, 12 rebounds and two blocked shots. Poses had seven points, eight steals, five assists and four rebounds, and Johanson and Siegel scored eight.

Against YMA, Chiera had 18 points, McDaniel had 10 and Siegel had eight. At one point, Haldane trailed by seven points but fought back with a strong third quarter.

Perrone said attention to detail will be key in getting the team where it wants to go. “We have the talent to contend,” she said. “But it’s also a matter of the small things that can become big in games, such as boxing out” for rebounds.

Haldane (2-1) is scheduled to play in a tournament at Croton-Harmon this weekend, followed by a visit to Carmel on Thursday (Dec. 16).
Puzzles

CROSSCurrent

ACROSS
1. Alum
5. Spell-off
8. Pit
12. Taylor of Mystic Pizza
13. Approves
14. Satan's forte
15. Leading man?
16. Landlocked Mideast territory
18. Disney’s Ariel, for one
20. Van Gogh venue
21. CBS logo
22. “Mimic
23. Wedding VIP
26. I’m No Angel actress
30. ’60s chic
31. Green shade
32. Cattle call
33. The Great Gatsby setting
36. Self-reproach
38. Stop — dime
39. “— voyage!”
40. Skater Ohno
43. Within earshot
47. Oater setting
49. Author Bellow
50. Within (Pref.)
51. “Shoo!”
52. Exile isle
53. Beheld

DOWN
1. Glitz partner
2. Carousel, for one
3. Winged
4. Darkened
5. “Let’s Dance” singer
6. Scratched (out)
7. Curved letter
8. Semitic language
54. Sugary suffix
55. Marvel superheroes
9. Cameo shape
10. Queue
11. BPOE members
12. Carton sealer
13. Nay undoer
15. Upscale auto
16. Freshener scent
17. Shoppe
18. Egos’ counterparts
19. “Let’s Dance” singer
20. Jo’s sister
21. Brit. record label
22. Freshener scent
23. Jo’s sister
24. Freshener scent
25. Jo’s sister
26. Freshener scent
27. Jo’s sister
28. Freshener scent
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50. Jo’s sister
51. Jo’s sister

SUDOCurrent

Answers for Dec. 3 Puzzles

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

By Skip Pearlman

**BEACON BULLDOGS**

You can’t get much younger than the roster of the Beacon High School girls’ basketball team, which finished 4-9 last season. The team has no juniors or seniors. Its three returning starters are sophomore Devyn Kelly and freshmen Reilly Landisi and Daveya Rodriguez, and other returning players include freshmen Lila Burke and Rory LaDue. New to the team are sophomores Kiarra Rodriguez, Shadaya Fryar, Alex McCollum and Shyanne Kush and freshman Rayana Taylor.

Coach Christina Dahl said that the lineup, of course, presents “the potential to grow, with focus and hard work.” She said she didn’t expect any one player to take over a game “but we expect our leaders to spread the ball around, to get others involved.”

The Bulldogs are competing for the first time this year in Section IX, after the district moved its athletic programs from Section I. “We hope to get contributions from all 10 players, to make the sectional tournament, and make some noise,” Dahl said.

Beacon fell in its first two games of the season last week to Roosevelt High School (Landisi scored 13 and Rodriguez added six) and Pine Bush (Landisi had 10). The Bulldogs (0-2) are scheduled to visit Port Jervis on Tuesday (Dec. 14) and host Washingtonville on Dec. 20.

**HALDANE BLUE DEVILS**

Haldane returns all five starters, four of whom are seniors: Ella Ashburn, Maddie Chiera, Marissa Scanga and Molly Siegel. They are joined by sophomore Ruby Poses. Also returning are juniors Betsy Cates, Amanda Johanson, Mairead O’Hara, Moretta Pezzullo, Chloe Rowe and Camilla McDaniel. Newcomers are senior Jenna Irwin and junior Madeleine Gardephe.

Haldane won its first game of the season on Dec. 2 behind 18 points from Matteo Cervone and 16 from Tristan Reid, edging Alexander Hamilton on the road, 67-64. “It was an up-tempo, intense game,” said Coach Joe Virgadamo. “It was a loud crowd, a fun atmosphere, and the win gave the team some confidence.”

Soren Holmbo added 11 points, Ryan Irwin had 10 and Rob Viggiano finished with seven. “Holmbo and Irwin were both impressive,” Virgadamo said. “The football guys came in late from their season, but they’re playing well.”

Two days later at Washingtonville, the Blue Devils came up short, 87-65. Cervone and Will Bradley each scored 25 points and Holmbo added nine.

Haldane was up by three points after the first quarter but Washingtonville pulled away. The closest the Blue Devils got in the second half was nine points, Washingtonville shot 58 percent from three-point range.

Haldane (1-1) is scheduled to host Marlboro for Senior Night today (Dec. 10) at 5:30 p.m. It has home games next week against Hastings on Tuesday (Dec. 14) and Briarcliff (Dec. 16) that start at 6:15 p.m.

**BOYS’ BASKETBALL**

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At Beacon High School, the Bulldogs had a lopsided, 75-34, home win on Tuesday (Dec. 7) over Valley Central. After going 1-11 last season, it was just the second win for the team in two seasons.

“Sometimes you play down to an oppo-
(Continued on Page 26)