Christmas Decor Taken to the Max
Annual holiday setup in Cold Spring takes a week

By Michael Turton

Each Christmas, Leon Pralatowski honors the memory of his parents by continuing a yuletide tradition that began nearly 40 years ago, in 1984, when his mother started a Dickens village.

There were only seven houses that first year, recalls the Cold Spring resident. But once the holiday, she added structures made by Department 56, a Minnesota firm, and sold at Christmas Days, a shop in Arlington, Vermont, to which the family made an annual pilgrimage.

Although both his parents are now gone — his mother died in 1991 and his father in 2011 — Pralatowski keeps the tradition alive and then some. Each year, he takes a week off from work to retrieve the collection from storage and decorate his home on Craigside Drive, working six to eight hours a day.

This year there are 135 buildings in the village under his tree, including his mother’s original seven. “I have about 300, but I couldn’t possibly put them all out,” he said. (He doesn’t travel to Vermont but still orders from Christmas Days.)

The replicas of historic buildings such as Big Ben and Buckingham Palace are favorites, along with Charles Dickens’ home.

(Continued on Page 6)

Putnam Plans to Change Ambulance Service
Outcry over last-minute move from EMStar to Ambulnz

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

Plans by Putnam County to replace EMStar with Ambulnz as the provider of county-wide ambulance service as of Jan. 1 sparked an outcry at the county Legislature’s Protective Services Committee meeting on Dec. 15.

During a contentious session in Carmel, Putnam officials defended the move as economically prudent. According to Alessandro Mazzotta, the county purchasing director, for the first year of a five-year contract, Ambulnz bid $1,487,390 while EMStar bid $1,918,992. He said that no other services demonstrated interest.

Beacon likewise stated this month that it intends to hire Ambulnz for $150,000 in 2022 to provide advance life support (ALS), treatment by paramedics for heart attacks, strokes and similar medical emergencies. By comparison, other ambulance staff, typically emergency medical technicians, supply basic life support to stabilize patients until they can reach a hospital.

EMStar, based in Poughkeepsie, merged this year with Empress Ambulances, headquartered in Westchester County. Ambulnz, based in Poughkeepsie, merged this year with Empress Ambulances, headquartered in Westchester County. Ambulnz,

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No Vax, No Mask, No Service
Local businesses enforce new mandate

By Leonard Sparks

Jenny Zuko has had to remind several customers entering Zakko Joy, her gift shop at 177 Main St. in Beacon, about a new state-ordered mask requirement and watch them leave after telling her the mandate “isn’t real.”

She’s also had three customers call to request deliveries to their homes because they have COVID-19.

“We’re just asking everybody to wear a mask,” Zuko said on Tuesday (Dec. 21).

“People have been generally great.”

Thursday marked 10 days since businesses and venues, under state order that took effect on Dec. 13, had to begin ensuring that staff and customers wear masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status, or verify that everyone is fully vaccinated.

While the order, which will be re-evaluated on Jan. 15, is a response to a wave of infections and hospitalizations that is projected to worsen, it has drawn criticism from Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro and Putnam Executive MaryEllen Odell, both Republicans, who said their health departments would not enforce the

(Continued on Page 9)
FIVE QUESTIONS: TINA BROWN

By Zach Rodgers

Tina Brown of Beacon has been a foster parent to more than 100 children and teens. Her responses are excerpted from an interview for the podcast Beaconites.

What was your introduction to foster parenting?

I was 18 and a family member needed a placement. I became licensed and kept going from there. The first group we took in was six kids. My grandmother was a huge help. She taught me to cook — because I had no idea how — and how to manage a large group.

What's your go-to recipe for a large group?

Baked ziti. I always have homemade sauce ready. And when I buy ground beef, I fry it all and put it in 1-pound containers, so it’s always on hand. You throw in some sauce. Cook up some noodles and throw it all into a foil pan. Chop up some peppers and onions and fresh tomatoes. Add your seasonings, throw some cheese on top, bake it up and call it a day.

What’s the largest number of children you’ve had living with you at one time?

Eighteen, for 27 very long days. We do not separate siblings, if at all possible. So whatever they call us for, we open our home and we figure it out. We’ve had kids anywhere from a 24-hour emergency placement to 19 years. I have two biological children. They’re 5 and 11, and they’re very welcoming. They love when their siblings come. They’re a little sad when they leave, but a lot of the kids stay in contact.

I’m trying to picture what the holidays are like at your place.

We go big for everything. Our Easter egg hunt has between 4,000 and 5,000 eggs. We do every holiday, from Cinco de Mayo to Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Christmas, New Year’s, St. Patrick’s Day, Dr. Seuss Day, National Doughnut Day and National Sock Day. Kids are only young once and you have to build memories.

What does it take to become a foster parent?

You go through a background check, fingerprinting, home inspections, monthly fire drills. You go for 10 weeks of classes, and then ongoing classes if you have children with special needs. It sounds like a lot, but CPS (Child Protective Services) is very supportive. And when you see them smiling and graduating, it’s amazing. My kids get mad at me because I wear those corny “proud mom” shirts to every event. It will change you forever. You can tell somebody all day long about abuse or neglect. When a 6-year-old looks at you and says, “You took my nightmares away,” it’s all worth it.
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WHAT MEMBERS ARE SAYING

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Revenue

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Mask mandate

So, in order to get the approval of Trump and Fox News and a relatively small number of people who refuse to get vaccinated, Putnam County legislators are happily throwing the rest of us, who care enough about our families and our community to protect them by getting vaccinated and wearing masks, under the bus (“Dutchess, Putnam Will Not Enforce Mask Mandate,” Dec. 17).

They apparently don’t care that we all pay for the illness and deaths of those who get COVID-19 because they wouldn’t take care of themselves, and they also don’t care that hospitals are overloaded and health care workers are at the end of their rope. All just so they can be seen giving the finger to a Democratic governor. How disgusting petty. I wish them a miserable holiday and an uncomfortable new year.

David Limberg, Nelsonville

I was dismayed to see that our county executive has refused to protect residents of Putnam County with her decision to not enforce the state mask mandate.

Testing shows that the chance of spread goes down a lot if an infected person is masked. If an unmasked, unvaxed, infected person shares an indoor space with people who are masked and vaxed, the infection can spread.

So this is not a case where each of us can make a personal choice. The infected, unvaccinated person who decides to go maskless is making a decision for the community. People who do not want to be infected have no way to be safe because there is no way to prevent infected, unmasked people from showing up.

I was looking forward to shopping in Putnam County for holiday gifts and personal necessities once the mask mandate was enforced. If that’s not happening, I will have to continue going to Westchester and avoiding places in Putnam.

Judy Allen, Putnam Valley

Our county executive is willing to put the lives of children and seniors at risk just so she can stay on Team Trump’s Christmas card list? Shameful.

Sean Conway, Cold Spring

People have a choice. If you chose to be vaccinated, we were told we would no longer need to worry about getting a severe reaction to COVID-19. With that said, those who are vaccinated should not be required to mask up against some political mandate.

I choose to be vaccinated and choose not to wear a mask. If a person is worried (vaccinated or not), wear a mask, wear a hazmat suit or whatever you want, but leave the choice to the individual.

Many will say that scientists say masks are critical, but it’s basically taking some data and giving an opinion. Stop forcing people to do silly things against their beliefs. If you believe a mask is so important in your protection and blocks the virus, why are you so worried that me not wearing a mask will affect you?

Charlie Symon, Beacon

The Legislature’s response is such a joke. Thank goodness these elected officials weren’t alive during World War II rationing efforts — can you imagine the tantrums if they had to give up sugar for the greater good? Our Putnam County business has been enforcing masks since we reopened our doors. It’s not a hardship. It’s protecting our staff and our community.

I wish The Current would have talked to some small-business owners to get our perspective. I doubt the county executives or state Sen. Sue Serino got many perspectives before claiming to care about the effects on small businesses. Guess what hurts small businesses the most? Our staff and our customers getting COVID-19.

After over a year and half of wearing masks, I wish people would stop whining and learn to be as mature as our 2-year-old, who wears her mask in stores and knows she needs to go outside when she’s ready to take it off.

Heidi Bender, Cold Spring

Bender co-owns Split Rock Books.

People have realized the folly of their personal choice when on a ventilator, lungs flooded and gasping for breath. A friend’s brother is in just such a state, begging for a miracle.

Ann Fanizzi, Carmel

Wearing a mask is not my personal choice, it is a choice for the community. I do not feel limited in my freedom when I wear a mask; I feel that it is the least I can do to keep my fellow community members safe. It is, however, an expression of my personal freedom to prefer shops that enforce a mask mandate for my holiday shopping.

Bettina Utz, Cold Spring

(Continued on Page 5)
As yet another surge of infection is taking place, Odell has the audacity to call the wearing of masks "unrealistic." Since she and her co-conspirators seem unable, I will say that I am embarrassed for them.

Gregory Bochow, Cold Spring

I am so grateful that we have at least one voice of reason in the Putnam Legislature in Nancy Montgomery, who represents Philipstown. Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida had said that lockdowns and mask mandates in Australia were because of its communist authoritarian government. That description came as a surprise to me, being Australian.

Florida and Australia have similar populations, although Floridians on average are a bit older (42 years) than Australians (37 years) and so more susceptible to COVID-19. In this pandemic there have been 2,164 deaths in Australia, and 62,264 in Florida.

Much of the discussion has been about the right to choose. The discussion should be about how do we save lives. Is your right not to be vaccinated or not to wear a mask more important than your right not to catch COVID-19 by going to the store?

The scientific evidence is clear-cut; lives can be saved and we can return to normal more quickly by adopting simple and easy measures that it would divert resources from vaccination and testing efforts is implausible since both counties are clearly able to walk and chew gum at the same time.

Even more ridiculous is their claim that mask and vaccine mandates would impose onerous burdens on small businesses. We believe businesses — particularly bars and restaurants — requiring masks and proof of vaccine would make customers more comfortable patronizing them. For every customer who does not go to a business because it is complying with the state mandate, there will probably be at least two who do. The overall issue is more than 800,000 Americans have been killed by the COVID-19 virus, and measures such as mask and vaccine mandates are not “totalitarian,” they save lives. Why are these “leaders” against that?

Matt Bloom and Shelley Simmon-Bloom, Beacon

No shirt, no shoes, no service ... no problem. No shirt, no shoes, no mask, no service ... Oh my God, the sky is falling! This is the logic of MaryE llen Odell.

Store management and employees routinely refuse to serve those not wearing a shirt or shoes — and post signs saying so. Nobody gets bent out of shape. In the face of the most highly contagious variant of COVID-19, with infections on a fast rise, Gov. Kathy Hochul has wisely called for a mask mandate in indoor public places.

Obviously, this is aspirational. Obviously, there will be no “enforcers” in every indoor public space. The governor is sending the responsible message that this is what we must do to stay safe. With more than 100,000 infections per day nationwide, it is incumbent upon government to do the responsible thing.

If everyone were vaccinated, the virus would be rendered of little consequence and we could get back to building our economy. Since we have vaccine refuseniks, we have no choice but to all wear masks. Unfortunately, we have some Chicken Littles like Odell who, for political reasons, assume a posture that appeals to the fuzzy thought of ill-informed people. In dealing with the pandemic, Trump exploited a certain infantilism residing in the American psyche for his own political ends. This Trumpism has trickled down to the local level.

Nick Kuvach, Putnam Valley

Thanks to (most) Putnam legislators for actually believing that adults who live in the county can listen to the science and make a common-sense decision for themselves and their children without the nanny state interfering.

Eileen Anderson, via Facebook

This is just a case of Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro using our lives to campaign for Congress. First it was the financial future of the county with his endless promises since announcing his run, and now this. How does a man who lost his own father to COVID-19 not want to protect other people from experiencing that tragedy?

John Gorman, via Facebook

No one is opposing the mask mandate. They just won’t enforce it because they can’t. Putnam wants to set up additional testing sites so people can get tested before gathering for the holidays. They aren’t going to use those resources to see if they can catch someone not wearing a mask! Let’s make sure the state police the businesses.

Patricia Burrano, via Facebook

Free vaccination, or $100,000 hospital stay.

Shelley Gilbert, via Facebook

Wearing a mask isn’t being outlawed. Putnam has done quite an excellent job on getting vaccine and booster clinics set up and letting the public know about them. Maybe if the governor feels so strongly about her mandate, she should direct state resources to enforce it. Or perhaps our state Legislature could pass a law.

Christopher Harrigan, via Facebook

Un. Real. It’s easy to check vaccination status — been to New York City lately? It’s ubiquitous — and it’s also one of the only ways we’ll get through this pandemic without further major loss of life. Let’s make sure none of these people gets re-elected.

Yvonne Caruthers, via Instagram

THE LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of this local law toopt the Village of Nelsonville out of permitting retail cannabis dispensaries and/or on-site cannabis consumption establishments within the Village of Nelsonville.

BE IT ENACTED by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Nelsonville, County of Putnam and State of New York ("Village") as follows:

SECTION 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

This local law is adopted pursuant to Cannabis Law §131 opting out of licensing and establishing retail cannabis dispensaries and/or on-site cannabis consumption establishments within its boundaries.

SECTION 2. AUTHORITY

This local law is adopted pursuant to Cannabis Law §131, which expressly authorizes villages to not permit retail cannabis dispensaries and on-site cannabis consumption establishments to locate and operate within a municipality, and is subject to a permissive referendum.

SECTION 3. LOCAL CANNABIS RETAIL DISPENSARY AND ON-SITE CONSUMPTION OPT-OUT

The Board of Trustees of the Village hereby opts-out of permitting the licensing, establishment and operation of cannabis retail dispensaries and cannabis on-site consumption establishments within its boundaries.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This local law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State. Pursuant to Cannabis Law §131 this local law is subject to a permissive referendum and thus may not be filed with the Secretary of State until the applicable time period has elapsed for a petition to be filed for a referendum by the requisite number of registered voters.
Leon Pralatowski owns about 300 Dickens village buildings but only has room to display 135. For more photos, see highlandscurrent.org.

Collection (from Page 1)
the Marley Counting House and Ebenezer Scrooge's house from A Christmas Carol.
The streets of his miniature community are alive with pedestrians and horse-drawn vehicles. When asked for its population, Pralatowski laughed and admitted, "That I do not know!"

Then there is the Santa Claus collection, which includes 24 created since 1987 by Lynn Haney, a high school art teacher in Lubbock, Texas. His most recent depicts a version of Saint Nick from Germany's Black Forest region. Stuffed animals from the Vermont Teddy Bear Co. are also part of the visual array.

It wouldn’t be Christmas without the centerpiece, an artificial conifer festooned with ornaments purchased from Vermont over four decades. One of the newer decorations pays homage to Downton Abbey. Pralatowski said the decorations will stay up until mid-January, when the collection will be boxed and returned to a large, walk-in closet.

Deep Roots
The Pralatowski family has been celebrating holidays in Cold Spring for more than a century. "I think I’m the seventh Leon Pralatowski, though I haven’t traced it that far back," he said.

Leon’s father, who built the family home on Craigside Drive, was an engineer with the New York City Board of Education. His mother, Winifred, was a telephone operator who began work at age 15 during the Depression.

His grandfather was the village postmaster. His grandmother, Ellen, volunteered for the Red Cross at Hotel Manteo (now J. Murphy’s restaurant) when it was a makeshift hospital during the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic.

His great-grandfather owned a tailor shop on the north side of Main Street at the intersection with Depot Square, where he made uniforms for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. His maternal great-grandfather, an Irishman named Patrick Scullion, worked at the West Point Foundry.

NEWS BRIEFS
Everyone in Philipstown should be able to afford to take climate action.
This holiday season, donate to the Philipstown Climate Fund to help a neighbor transition away from fossil fuels or reduce their carbon emissions.
Visit philipstownfightsdirty.org to donate and learn more about how you can take climate action, too.

Snake Hill Road Culvert to Be Replaced
State awards $1 million in funding
Putnam County will receive $1 million in state funding to replace the culvert that carries Snake Hill Road over a tributary of Philipse Brook in Garrison.
The funding, announced by Gov. Kathy Hochul on Dec. 15, is part of $236.2 million allocated to rehab and replace bridges and culverts through New York’s BRIDGE NY program.

Putnam County is receiving another $1 million to replace a culvert that carries Peekskill Hollow Road over Wiccopee Brook in Putnam Valley.

Researchers Recatch Fish 26 Years Later
Shortnose sturgeon in Hudson was tagged in 1995
Researchers studying the shortnose sturgeon in the Hudson River caught a specimen near Staatsburg on Nov. 19 that had been tagged 26 years ago.

When caught in 1995, it was 25½ inches long and about 15 years old, said the ecologists, who are based at Cornell University. By 2021, at about age 40, it had grown to 33½ inches. The researchers said it was not unusual to recapture fish, but rarely a quarter-century later.

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Dutchess Conducting Speed Tests
Hopes to identify gaps in internet service

Dutchess County is conducting a survey as the first step in a plan to expand access to high-speed internet.

Because Dutchess is served by multiple providers, the county said it has been difficult to identify gaps in service. The survey at dutchessny.gov/highspeedinternet asks residents to complete a speed test of their connected device.

Those with limited or no internet access can complete a paper survey available by calling 845-486-2080, which is important to "give us an accurate and comprehensive map," explained County Executive Marc Molinaro. The survey results will be used to create a strategic plan next year; the county plans to spend $1 million of its American Rescue Plan Act funds to broaden digital access.
Philipstown to Handle Village Snow Removal

Town seeks answers before paying $15,000 for county job

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

The Philipstown Town Board last week agreed to cover Cold Spring snow removal during a pandemic-related personnel shortage; began considering COVID-19 vaccination rules for town staff, and delayed paying Putnam County for a senior citizen outreach job that remained vacant all year.

The five-member board acted at its year-end meeting on Dec. 16 at Town Hall.

Councillor John Van Tassel and Cold Spring Mayor Kathleen Foley proposed that the town Highway Department handle snow-plowing and similar chores in the immediate future for its village counterpart, which Foley said is short-staffed because one worker went into COVID-19 quarantine while others were absent for various reasons.

“Cold Spring has a big problem,” said Van Tassel, deputy supervisor. “If there were a snowstorm in the next month, they’d have nobody to cover.”

He said the village is expected to reimburse the town for expenses. Van Tassel, who was elected in November to succeed Supervisor Richard Shea, also recommended that the municipalities adopt a reciprocity pact, so that “if we’re in a situation where we can’t staff” the town Highway Department, “the village could assist us.” He said the village and town lawyers would confer in preparing an agreement.

Foley said that “we can imagine a scenario where this could very easily happen again, with multiple folks going out, whether vaccinated or not,” because the Omicron variant “is just crashing through even vaccinated folks.”

On a related matter, Van Tassel reported that he asked the town attorney to draft a policy, forceful “to the limit of the law,” instructing town employees to get vaccinated against COVID-19 or wear masks and undergo testing.

“I don’t want to fool around with this,” he said. “There’s no reason we shouldn’t be 100 percent vaccinated.

He said the town Recreation Department, including part-time employees, is vaccinated, along with employees in Town Hall. The Building-Code Enforcement Department, in an adjacent office, is also apparently 100 percent vaccinated, according to Van Tassel and Clerk Tura Pesciello. However, Highway Superintendent Carl Friisenida estimates that the Highway Department vaccination rate is 70 to 75 percent, Van Tassel said.

He observed that on Dec. 15 he attended a Putnam County legislative committee meeting at which about 40 people packed the compact conference room. Only five — all from Philipstown (including Cold Spring) — wore masks, he said. “I’m proud of Philipstown.”

“The fact that this thing has become a political ideology, when it’s a health issue, just confounds me,” said Shea.

Senior aide

In other business, the board voted unanimously to delay payment of $15,000 for the town’s half of the salary of a senior citizen program aide based at the county-run Philipstown senior citizen in Cold Spring. The position is vacant.

Councillor Jason Angell said that Michael Cunningham, the county Office for Senior Resources director, told him that three Philipstown candidates turned down the job and “they’ve had no luck” otherwise filling it.

According to the county, Angell said, other Putnam employees have carried the extra load, so that, despite the empty office, Philipstown’s $15,000 payment for 2021 “was absorbed.”

“We need some accounting” on that, Shea said. “Specifically, where did the money go?”

Also, Mayor Bowman says he won’t run again

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

After months of deliberation and public input, the Nelsonville Village Board on Monday (Dec. 20) voted 4-0 to ban marijuana shops and lounges.

New York legalized recreational use of marijuana for adults but left it up to municipalities to decide whether to allow cannabis stores or smoking lounges. Municipalities must vote to decide whether to allow cannabis stores or lounges but rejected on-site consumption; and Beacon opted in if their views change. Philipstown by Dec. 31 to prohibit pot enterprises but can later opt in if their views change. Philipstown candidates turned down the job and declined against COVID-19 or wear masks and undergo testing.

“In the past three years I’m proud of every single decision,” — the Village Board has wrestled with rentals booked through sites such as Airbnb: rooms, houses and apartments provided to paying guests as vacation or weekend accommodations.

The board convened public hearings on a draft law in February and October. Board members have disagreed, as well. On Monday, Chris Winward and Dave Moroney voted against holding a hearing in January while Bowman and Trustees have continued to propose a hearing in January — and opponents have continued to propose a hearing in January.

Bowman not running

Bowman announced that he would not seek re-election as mayor in village elections scheduled for March 15. His seat, along with those held by Winward and Moroney, will be on the ballot. Each is for a two-year term.

Bowman cited increased employment responsibilities and the fact that “my son is 1½ and acutely aware when his daddy is not home, out dealing with village issues, or distracted by phone calls or texts. I want to be there for him and Donna [his wife], as much as I possibly can.”

Elected as a trustee in 2018, Bowman became mayor in 2019 when the board appointed him to succeed Chris Caccamise, who had resigned two months into his term. The following year, Bowman was elected to a full term.

“Throughout 2020, my son was not here during COVID to making the really hard decisions to protect the village’s future, even when those decisions weren’t the most popular,” he said. “I’m most proud of the respect and dignity that you [Village Board members] have shown residents: patiently letting meetings run a little bit longer to let everyone have their say — sometimes saying it more than once, twice or three times. The greatest testament to you all is that I can make this decision without hesitation, because I know that the village is in good hands going forward.”

Chimney fires

Building Inspector Bill Bujarski noted that since early December in the Hudson Valley, “there has been an abundance of chimney fires” that “are not enough to burn through the chimneys.” He urged residents to get their chimneys and dryer vents cleaned. Bowman added that oil burners needcheckups, as well.

North Highlands Fire Results

In a Philipstown North Highlands Fire District vote held on Dec. 14, Josephine Rupp was re-elected to a five-year term as a commissioner, defeating challenger Patrick Scherer, 66-36. Christopher Lyons was also elected, running unopposed, to finish the three years remaining on the term of Tom Knapp, who retired last year.

The other commissioners are Amy Locitzer, Eamon Shanahan and Charles Nolen.
The State of Highlands Bridges

Inspections give generally solid marks to local spans

By Leonard Sparks

Putnam County is in the process of replacing a bridge, at a cost of $1.6 million, that carries Sprout Brook Road over Canopus Creek. When last inspected on March 17, the 86-year-old span received the lowest score — 3, reflecting “considerable deterioration” — on a scale of 1 to 7 among bridges in the Highlands, according to a state program that requires inspections every two years.

Here’s a look at the ratings for other local bridges. A score of 1 indicates that “partial or total collapse is imminent,” while 7 is assigned to each newly constructed bridge. Local bridges received scores from 4 (“moderate deterioration”) to 6 (“minor deterioration”).

### Bridge Inspections

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<td><strong>EAST MOUNTAIN SOUTH</strong></td>
<td>Clove Creek</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>4/9/20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROUTE 9D</strong></td>
<td>Indian Brook</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>11/13/19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UPPER GARRISON</strong></td>
<td>Metro-North tracks</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>10/2/19</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ROUTE 9</strong></td>
<td>Clove Creek</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>6/1/21</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HORTON</strong></td>
<td>Clove Creek</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>3/18/21</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ROUTE 9D</strong></td>
<td>Philipse Brook</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>12/23/20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROUTE 301</strong></td>
<td>Clove Creek</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>5/20/20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LUNN TERRACE</strong></td>
<td>Metro-North tracks</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>10/2/19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Ambulnz (from Page 1)**

which has a New York City office, operates in 26 states and the U.K.

Chris Tobin, president of the Philipstown Volunteer Ambulance Corps (PVAC), told legislators that the $431,602 that Putnam would save in 2022 by contracting with Ambulnz “is not worth it. You just put a price tag on life, and it’s bad. If there’s any way that you can reconsider this contract, you should” do so.

Nicholas Falcone, PVAC captain, charged that some Ambulnz personnel appear to be the same individuals dismissed by other ambulance services whose crews “are the ones who may determine whether you live or die. I’m pretty offended by the awarding of a contract without discussion” in a deal that “wasn’t done in public,” she said.

Objecting that even lawmakers “have never seen this contract,” Nancy Montgomery, who represents Philipstown and part of Putnam Valley on the Legislature, observed that they are still supposed to approve a $40,467 fund transfer to help pay for it.

Legislator Ginny Nacerino of Patterson, who chairs the Protective Services Committee, replied that “the county executive takes care of the contract” and picking an ambulance service “is not for us to decide.” Moreover, “it would have complicated the integrity of the contract” to let legislators see it, she asserted.

Mazzotta similarly said that until a vendor signs a contract, the agreement is under negotiation. He said that Ambulnz had signed the Putnam contract earlier that day.

Montgomery noted that the legislators routinely review other draft contracts. “I don’t agree that we should not be able to see” this one, she said. “This is checks and balances.” She also recalled that in early 2016, when the ALS provider failed financially and “it looked like Putnam County was going to be without ambulance service, EMSStar came in and pretty much saved the day and bailed us out.” Getting rid of it may save money, she conceded, “but to what end?”

Tobin raised concerns about the effect on ALS services in towns. He explained that local ambulance corporations pay the countywide service — up until now EMSStar — to supply ALS. The timing of Putnam’s deal with Ambulnz left PVAC and others no chance to bargain over Ambulnz’s charges, which could be quite high, he said. If so, he warned, “it will bankrupt the ambulance corps. How is that OK?”

Falcone suggested that Ambulnz came in low (in bidding) because they’re going to put the costs on the towns, trying to recoup from the towns, which pay local ambulance corps.

Larry Burke, who is the officer-in-charge of the Cold Spring Police Department but identified himself as a North Highlands fire department member, advised the committee that “you cannot in good conscience go with this contract. There’s just too many questions.”

Numerous other audience members, from towns and ambulance corps across Putnam, made similar points. After about two hours, Nacerino said that she hoped that Odell, who had not yet signed the contract, would listen to the recording of the meeting before proceeding. “Let’s make sure we walk into this contract with our eyes wide open,” she urged.

Although Mazzotta said that Ambulnz signed the contract on Dec. 15, DocGo issued a news release on Nov. 3 stating that Ambulnz would provide advanced life support paramedic services in Putnam starting Jan. 1, becoming the first to utilize a new 911 system created by a firm called Motion Acquisition Corp., which is merging with DocGo. The county posted the release on its website.

The news release quoted Odell as saying that “the health of our community is a top priority and we are thrilled to partner with Ambulnz’ and “to be the first county to work on” Motion’s 911 system.

On Monday (Dec. 20), Montgomery sent Odell a memo asking for all versions of the Ambulnz contract and for any related correspondence.
Haldane Student Wins Vaccination Scholarship

Award covers tuition, room, board at SUNY or CUNY schools

By Leonard Sparks

Vaccine shots for COVID-19 have allowed Zade Matthews to return to class at Haldane Elementary School. They are also sending him to college for free.

A fully vaccinated Matthews rejoined his fourth-grade classmates on Dec. 13, attending in-person classes for the first time since Haldane’s school year started in September, when Dutchess and Putnam counties were facing a new wave of COVID-19 cases fueled by the Delta variant of the virus that causes the illness.

Besides once again sharing a cafeteria meal with friends, the 9-year-old Nelsonville resident had something else to celebrate that day: news that he won a full scholarship to a two- or four-year State University of New York (SUNY) or City University of New York (CUNY) college when he graduates from high school.

The award came via the state’s Vaccine, Educate, Graduate program, which was launched in November to encourage parents and guardians to vaccinate children between 5 and 11 years old. Children receiving their first vaccine dose by Dec. 19 could enter a drawing to receive one of 50 scholarships covering tuition, room and board at a SUNY or CUNY school. The state began announcing winners each week on Nov. 27.

Eliza Matthews, Zade’s mother, initially thought the email she received on Dec. 13 from the state’s Higher Education Services Corp., notifying her that her son’s name had been selected in the fourth round, was a scam. Zade, who is the first winner from Dutchess or Putnam counties, was equally skeptical. He thought “she was messing with me,” he said.

The cost of attending a four-year SUNY school, including housing, is about $27,000 annually, and a CUNY school, about $32,000. For Zade and other winners, the scholarships also will cover books and supplies and transportation costs if they commute.

Eliza Matthews said she felt an “immediate lightness” when she realized the email was authentic. “It’s just like this huge burden lifted.”

The federal Food and Drug Administration first authorized the two-dose Pfizer vaccine for children between 5 and 11 on Oct. 29. Since then, Zade is one of nearly 400,000 New York residents in that age range who had received at least one dose and among 230,000 who were fully vaccinated as of Monday (Dec. 20).

In Putnam County, 21 percent of children between 5 and 11 had received at least one dose as of Monday, and in Dutchess, 22 percent.

Eliza Matthews said she had been awaiting federal approval of vaccines for children younger than 12 and booked an appointment for Zade within days of their availability. Her daughter, 13, is also vaccinated.

“We have people in our family who are vulnerable, so it meant a lot to us to be protected and protect them,” she said, adding: “I want them [children] back in school; I want them to have a normal life.”

Visit highlandscurrent.org for news updates and latest information.

Haldane Student Wins Vaccination Scholarship (from Page 1)

Order. Violations carry fines of up to $1,000.

In a statement issued Dec. 12, Odell said businesses cannot be expected “to implement this unrealistic order” and that Putnam’s Health Department is “working overtime” to vaccinate residents while preparing to open a six-day-a-week testing center at the county’s office complex in Carmel. The department is not a “policing agency,” she said.

“We are really supposed to stop them from running essential vaccine clinics and redirect them to checking whether the unvaccinated are entering buildings unmasked?” asked Odell.

Molinaro wrote in a Facebook post on Dec. 12 that the requirement is “unenforceable” and “will become confrontational.” The county will not “escalate tension or conflict or further burden our local small businesses.”

Their opposition has not deterred many local business owners and municipalities, including in Beacon, whose total of 97 cases as of Sunday (Dec. 19) was nearly four times higher than Nov. 3. Story Screen Beacon Theater and its adjacent Wonderbar now require proof of vaccination, as do Dogwood and the Towne Crier.

Members of Beahive, who pay a monthly fee for access to coworking spaces and private offices at 201 Main St., had already been providing their vaccination status in order to work without masks, said owner Scott Tillett. With the state’s order, people who want a day pass will also have to show proof of vaccination, he said.

“Some members expressed concern about having to wear a mask all day, even while seated at their desks,” said Tillett. “That’s why we made that decision.”

Beacon’s government is not only mandating masks for employees and visitors to its buildings but turned several office suites into “vaccine-mandate areas,” said City Administrator Chris White. Staff and visitors who want to use the areas must prove they are vaccinated, he said.

Before Gov. Kathy Hochul’s order, Yali Lewis had already reinstated a mask mandate for shoppers entering Lewis & Pine, her jewelry and skin-care products shop at 133 Main St. The decision, said Lewis, was driven by the emergence of the fast-spreading and highly transmissible Omicron variant.

The strain has replaced the Delta variant as the primary source of infections.

Some businesses have been “thanking us for doing it because they feel more comfortable coming in,” said Lewis. “Seems like this is a moment for everybody to do their part.”

Lindsay Jean Fastiggi, the owner of Spice Revolution in Cold Spring, does not allow customers to enter her shop without masks. “The confrontation and stress is on me and my workers in trying to keep a safe and healthy space for people and children to shop,” she wrote he week on Instagram. “That’s not helpful. If it’s mandated, it should be enforced or it’s pointless.

“If you’ve ever seen or heard a mask confrontation in a shop, you know it’s painful,” she wrote. “I do not want that pain, stress and anxiety for anyone who works here or for my customers.”

With New York setting, for the third straight day, a pandemic-high for new infections, Hochul said on Monday (Dec. 26) that the state is allowing counties that enforce the mandate to apply for funding to cover costs of staffing and administering vaccines. Most counties will receive up to $1 million, and larger ones up to $2 million, from a $65 million pool, said Hochul, who is a Democrat.

Nancy Montgomery, a Democrat who represents Philipstown and part of Putnam Valley on the Putnam County Legislature, cited that funding in a memo she sent on Tuesday to Odell. She asked the county executive to retract her statement opposing the mask mandate and replace it with one promising to enforce the order.

“Will you remove the previous press release from the website and replace it with a statement that you will now be enforcing the mask mandate?” Montgomery asked.

“Will county efforts now turn to distribution of at-home test kits, amping up testing and vaccine distribution?”

Visit highlandscurrent.org for news updates and latest information.

Virus Surge (from Page 1)
HOLIDAY SURPRISE — Inspired by a post on Facebook, a group of Philipstown teachers this month started a tradition of “Shock-n-Clause.” Everyone in the party contributed $100 to tip their server — in this case, Nicole Jones at Hudson Hill’s in Cold Spring, who shared the $700 with co-workers.

WINNING LIGHTS — An elf from the North Pole emailed The Current on Dec. 19 to announce the winners of the first Nelsonville Christmas Display Awards. “The competition was a secret and no one knew they would be rewarded for spreading Christmas cheer,” the elf wrote. “Nutcracker statues were discreetly left for the winners to find.” This home won for “most magical”; see highlandscurrent.org for the merriest lawn, most traditional and most festive.

PANTRY VOWS — Lea Aftimos and Bruce Wilson (right) of Brooklyn were married at the Beacon Pantry on Dec. 18 — two-and-a-half years after they ate there during their first “out-of-the-city” date to visit Dia:Beacon. “Never has a more touching and joyful event taken place at the Beacon Pantry,” owner Stacey Penlon posted to Instagram; as a gift, she presented the couple with one of her signature butter flights. A friend (left) was ordained for the occasion.

GIFTS FOR VETS — Mike DeRosa, Tim Pagones, Gary Simmonds, Mark Thomas and Bob Simmonds of the Dutchess County chapter of the International Renegade Pigs Motorcycle Club visited Castle Point VA on Dec. 14 to present Dorothy Trimmer, the women’s veteran program manager for the VA Hudson Valley Health Care System, with 32 department store gift cards to distribute. Members of the Lewis Tompkins Hose Co. assisted.

FIREFIGHTER HONORED — Travis Fyfe (right) was named the Cold Spring Fire Co. Firefighter of the Year in a ceremony on Dec. 7. He is the 40th recipient of the award. For the full list, as well as other 2021 honorees, see highlandscurrent.org.

Wishing you and yours a happy holiday!

The Gate House Team | COMPASS

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We are so thankful to be a part of this community.
To help fight food insecurity in the Hudson Valley we are collecting donations for local charity Fareground. Please drop off non-perishable food items at our office during business hours (Mon-Fri 9-5, Sat-Sun 9-4) or donate online via the QR code.
The Calendar

New Cold Spring store offers motorcycle fashion
By Alison Rooney

One of Michael Hardman’s four motorcycles has taken up permanent residence inside his new shop, Cold Starts, at 165 Main St. in Cold Spring. There, it has found good company in the store’s motorcycle-related apparel, vintage “petroliana” and other accessories.

Hardman, who has lived in the village with his family since 2014, is making his first foray into retail after spending 25 years as a creative director in Manhattan. “It came down to finding the right space, then tailoring the business model to the space we found,” King says.

Baldwin adds: “We loved the history of this space. I believe it was a post office for the town, and also a place where ships were built. The square footage and the separation of the rooms was perfect; we felt we could accomplish everything we wanted to do.”

Baldwin is a creative director with expertise in fashion advertising, branding, design and packaging. He manages Little King’s design wares and says the concept for the store was developed on trips to Scandinavia, particularly Finland. “That opened up my eyes,” he says. “Why not have things you keep forever and pass down? It’s about being proud of the things you own, timeless pieces as well as fun stuff. It’s about elevating your space at home. The pandemic has made many people appreciate the small things, like having nice towels that won’t fall apart.”

Besides Finnish home and drinkware, the shop stocks textiles — including typically bold designs from Marimekko — bath accessories and skin-care products from Japan, along with toys and cookbooks.

(Continued on Page 12)
Biker Style (from Page 11)

There’s a cheesy saying that nevertheless holds weight: “You don’t see motorcycles outside a shrink’s office.”

Hardman grew up in Westchester with a family of die-hard riders. “They were riding them and fixing them, from dirt bikes to Harleys. Motorcycles were part of my life, but never part of my livelihood. I saw this store as my moment to bring these two things together. There’s inherent risk in doing something like this as opposed to 9-to-5, well paid, but it’s a now-or-never moment for me.”

The lure Cold Spring holds for motorcyclists is related to its geography. “The Hudson Valley and Lower Catskills are wonderful places to ride, and Cold Spring in particular is so accessible from New York City,” he says. “I lived in Brooklyn for a long time, but this is where I rode. Plus, Perkins Drive and Harriman State Park are big draws and Cold Spring becomes the spot to have lunch or coffee. It’s a congregation point, which creates more focus and more community.”

After considering places where riders could hang out, such as a coffee shop or garage, Hardman settled on men’s clothing and rugged, even though riding a motorcycle isn’t practical at all.”

There’s also a line of Hardman-designed T-shirts and sweatshirts, one displays the number 301, for those in the know.

Cold Starts, at 165 Main St., in Cold Spring, is open Thursday to Monday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Hardman says he will extend his hours during riding season, which is pretty much any time when there’s no ice, salt and sand on the roads. See instagram.com/coldstarts moto.

Food + Design (from Page 11)

As for the food, that’s the responsibility of King, who oversaw the construction and first year of Rose Bakery in Los Angeles and worked for many years in the kitchens of farm-to-table restaurants such as Marlow & Sons, Diner and Saltie in New York City.

“I took a lot of time to design the menu, so that I could do it all by myself,” he explains. “It’s grounded in baking, with sweet and savory items which have elements of pastry. I make a sausage roll wrapped in housemade puff pastry. I also make Eccles cakes which include spiced, currant-filled puff pastry.

For lunch, there are focaccia sandwiches. We make every element of the sandwich, composing it like a dish, with great condiments: pickles are the star. There’s also an olive oil cake that people know and love already; it’s a fun item to show off my pastry background. We also take special orders for cakes. I’m adapting and growing it, learning from experience. The breakfast offerings have roots in where I went to culinary school, in London.”

Baldwin says it’s been fun to meet customers. “I talk to everyone — I’m always curious,” he explains. “We want to become more involved in the community; we’ve met people running some amazing businesses. We also connected with an artist, Gemma Bailey, who had not shown before. She liked our aesthetic, and we liked hers.”

Little King was one they chanced upon and came back to. “It’s abstract and has a good balance of refined and playful: that’s us,” says Baldwin.

Little King is located at 199 Main St. in Beacon. The cafe is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. from Thursday to Sunday and the retail shop from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. See instag ram.com/littleking.online for daily food specials and littleking.online to shop online.

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Christmas Week Schedule

Wednesday, December 22:
6:00 PM - Longest Night service
A service to mark the longest night of the year, the pain of loss and struggle, and the return of the light and the coming of Christ in our lives.

Friday, December 24, Christmas Eve:
3:00 PM - Holy Eucharist Rite II with Christmas carols
5:00 PM - Annual Christmas Pageant and carols
10:00 PM - Holy Eucharist Rite II
(Christmas carol sing begins at 9:30)

Saturday, December 25, Christmas Day:
10:00 AM - Holy Eucharist Rite II with hymns

Sunday, December 26, Christmas I:
8:00 AM - Holy Eucharist Rite II with hymns
10:00 AM - Holy Eucharist Rite II with hymns

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December 24, 2021
The Highlands Current
COMMUNITY

SAT 1  
Cold Spring Farmers’ Market  
GARRISON  
10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Boscobel  
1601 Route 9D | csfarmmarket.org

SUN 2  
Audubon Christmas Bird Count  
PUTNAM COUNTY  
Various locations  
Starting in 1955, birders have tallied all the species they could see in this annual count. To participate, email Charlie Roberto at chasrob26@gmail.com.

SUN 2  
Farmers’ Market  
BEACON  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. DMV Lot  
223 Main St. | beaconfarmersmarket.org

MUSIC

FRI 31  
The B-Street Band  
PEEKSKILL  
8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley  
1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039 | paramounthudsonvalley.com  
This Bruce Springsteen tribute band has opened for and played with “the Boss.” Cost: $20, $25, $35

FRI 31  
The Amazing Sensational  
BEACON  
9:30 p.m. Dogwood  
47 E. Main St. | 845-202-7500 | dogwoodbeacon.com  
Says the band: “We want people to dance sometimes, head bang other times, but all around have a good time.”

FRI 31  
Back to the Garden 1969  
BEACON  
9:30 p.m. Towne Crier  
379 Main St. | 845-855-1300 | townecrier.com  
This tribute band will play the best music from the Woodstock era to ring in the New Year. Robert Tellefsen, who is known for his Ritchie Havens tribute, will open. Cost: $35 ($135 with dinner and champagne)

SAT 1  
First Day Hike  
POUGHKEEPSIE  
2 p.m. Walkway Over the Hudson  
61 Parker Ave. | walkway.org  
Both entrances will be open for 1- to 3-mile hikes across the bridge.

SAT 1  
First Day Hike  
YORKTOWN HEIGHTS  
10:30 a.m. Franklin D. Roosevelt Park  
2957 Crompond Road  
Ramble through the park with your guides Walt and Jane Daniels. Easy 2-mile hike. No pets. Meet at the north end of the pool parking lot.

SAT 1  
First Day Hike  
COLD SPRING  
11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Little Stony Point  
3011 Route 9D | littlestonypoint.org  
There will be free hot cocoa, coffee, snacks, music and short naturalist-led hikes around Little Stony Point (1 mile), or to nearby historic Cornish Estate (3 miles) that begin at 11:30 a.m.

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Last-Minute Giving Guide

While charitable donations will help keep critically important community resources in operation year-round, you have until Dec. 31 to contribute to your favorite nonprofits and receive a deduction on your 2021 taxes.

By one estimate, 30 percent of donations in the U.S. are made in December, and 10 percent in the last 48 hours of the year. The deadline for 2021 is 5 p.m. on Friday if you are mailing a check or midnight if you use a credit card.

For a clickable guide to these organizations, see highlandscurrent.org/giving-guide
Looking Back in Beacon

By Chip Rowe

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

150 Years Ago (December 1871)

According to a newspaper account, the 10-year-old son of a wealthy resident of Fishkill went to the owner of a Newburgh livery and, with tears in his eyes, said his father was dying and he needed a horse and buggy to alert his uncle. When the boy did not return, the stable keeper raised the alarm and the boy was located at a hotel 30 miles away. It turned out there was no uncle, and the father was in good health. The boy had been trying to sell the horse and buggy to raise money to go to California.

The steamer Water Lily sank off Fishkill Landing but its crew was rescued.

A brakeman on the Hudson River railroad was knocked from a freight car into the river at Fishkill Landing on a Saturday night when the train came to a bridge he had not expected. He swam to shore and signaled the next train for New York.

The Newburgh police chief put a distressed teenager, Flora Brown, on the train to the owner of a Newburgh livery and, with tears in his eyes, said his father was dying and he needed a horse and buggy to alert his uncle. When the boy did not return, the stable keeper raised the alarm and the boy was located at a hotel 30 miles away. It turned out there was no uncle, and the father was in good health. The boy had been trying to sell the horse and buggy to raise money to go to California.

125 Years Ago (December 1896)

John Philip Sousa gave one of his grand concerts on Dec. 28 at Peattie’s Academy of Music in Fishkill Landing. Reserved seats could be ordered by mail. [Known as “the march king,” the composer and bandmaster toured with his Sousa Band from 1892 to 1931 and performed at 15,623 concerts.]

Frank Sutton, who had been acquitted two years earlier on charges he shot a night watchman while burglarizing the post office in Matteawan, was convicted in Troy of robbing a jewelry store. He was described by the New York Sun as a dapper man and clever convict; after he was transferred from the Poughkeepsie jail to Dannemora [the Clinton Correctional Facility], jailers found nine saws, two door keys, three handcuff keys and three metal files behind tin sheeting in the sink room. Earlier, a search of Sutton’s cell had turned up a piece of soap in which he had made impressions of the guard’s keys.

Edwin Gould of the Continental Match Co. bought the carpet mills near Matteawan. With a contract in hand to supply Austria with matches, he planned to train the Glenshaw girls who made carpets how to turn out matches.

At the invitation of Superintendent H.E. Allison, the Dutchess County Board of Supervisors visited the Matteawan state asylum for insane criminals for supper and a tour. At the time, the facility housed prominent inmates such as train bandit Oliver Curtis Perry; Lizzie Halliday, who had murdered her family; the boy firebug Howard Mosher; and George Appo, a Chinese-Irish-American swindler, pickpocket and opium addict who had been convicted of stabbing a newspaper reporter in the thigh. His father, Quimbo Appo, had been imprisoned at Matteawan since killing a man in 1876 over a game of checkers.

According to a newspaper account, Melissa Hunt, a 15-year-old girl from Fishkill Landing, had a startling aptitude for hunting, a brakeman on the New York and New England Railroad, narrowly escaped death at Hopewell Junction. He was standing on the bumper of the next-to-last car and pulled the coupling pin so a “flying switch” could be made with the last car. But he lost his footing and fell to the track in front of the rolling, castaway car. He positioned himself parallel to the rails and the car passed over him.

Dan Brotchers, a noted baseball player, bet Dennis Hedges a bundle of Newburgh livery that he could walk the 7 miles from Fishkill Landing to Wappingers Falls before they could get there on bicycles if they gave him an hour’s head start.

Two girls from Fishkill Landing were charged with vandalism after they cut down a pair of 10-foot evergreens in the Methodist Episcopal cemetery for Christmas.

100 Years Ago (December 1921)

The state Highway Department completed its third Dutchess County highway, connecting Red Hook and Millerton. The first, in 1915, connected Poughkeepsie and American Legion headquarters with a playfield and war memorial for the city offices and hospital; the second, in 1917, ran from Matteawan to Fishkill Landing, had a startling aptitude for hunting.

The College of Our Lady and St. Vincent at Beacon held its annual Christmas party in the college gym. At the invitation of Superintendent H.E. Allison, the Dutchess County Board of Supervisors visited the Matteawan state asylum for insane criminals for supper and a tour.

At the time, the facility housed prominent inmates such as train bandit Oliver Curtis Perry; Lizzie Halliday, who had murdered her family; the boy firebug Howard Mosher; and George Appo, a Chinese-Irish-American swindler, pickpocket and opium addict who had been convicted of stabbing a newspaper reporter in the thigh. His father, Quimbo Appo, had been imprisoned at Matteawan since killing a man in 1876 over a game of checkers.

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Two girls from Fishkill Landing were charged with vandalism after they cut down a pair of 10-foot evergreens in the Methodist Episcopal cemetery for Christmas.

(Continued on Page 17)
Looking Back (from Page 16)

he tried to run. A search of his rented room uncovered other stolen freight: felt for piano hammers, paint and groceries. The suspect and another man were later charged with selling cocaine to workers at the Belle Isle brickyard.

For reasons not explained, attorney John Mack had three nuns in his Packard when it was hit by another car at the corner of Main and Teller. One sister was thrown from the vehicle but suffered only minor injuries.

Frank Kiert, a former city judge and Beacon’s oldest lawyer, and Anna Sherman, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, both 73, were married at the First Methodist Church. The attendants were his daughter and 13-year-old grandson.

The Poughkeepsie Eagle-News, noting that Beacon “has a reputation of being a very accommodating city,” reported that a well-dressed stranger had approached a shopkeeper on a Wednesday evening, asking where he could find cigarettes and a shopkeeper on a Wednesday evening, asking where he could find cigarettes and a minister. When a pastor was found, he was hit by another car at the corner of Main and Teller. One sister was thrown from the vehicle but suffered only minor injuries.

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Beacon Council to Hand Off Eviction Debate
Four new members will join panel on Jan. 1

By Jeff Simms

The year ended on Monday (Dec. 20) for the Beacon City Council much like the last several months have gone: with a flurry of public comments on affordable housing, particularly a potential good-cause eviction law.

The meeting was the final appearance for four of the six council members — Amber Grant, Jodi McCredo, Terry Nelson and Air Rhodes — none of whom sought re-election. Newcomers Wren Longno, Justice McCray, Molly Rhoades and Paloma Wake, who all ran unopposed, will be sworn in on Jan. 1, the council and mayor will hold an organizational meeting on Jan. 3. Dan Aymar-Blair (Ward 4) and George Mansfield (At-Large) also ran unopposed for re-election.

The city has been inundated with requests since the fall to adopt a good-cause law, which, according to a September draft, would prevent landlords from arbitrarily deciding not to renew leases and intimidating tenants through tactics such as discontinuing utilities, refusing to make repairs or imposing “unreasonable rent increases” without proper notice.

But on Monday, for the first time, landlords and other residents offered a contrarian view.

Graham Lawlor rents out three units in the four-family building that he owns. He told the council on Monday that he’s never raised the rent or evicted a tenant in the five years since he bought the building.

“That decision is looking very shortsighted in light of this proposal, maybe catastrophically shortsighted,” he said, citing “dire and probably unintended consequences” for his tenants, “who make more money than I do.”

Lawlor said he’s done all the work himself to slowly bring the 1870 building toward code compliance. At times, for projects such as removing asbestos or adding insulation, he needs apartments to be vacant, but he gives his tenants — who pay far below market-rate — plenty of notice when that happens.

A good-cause law, however, would make that arrangement illegal. “I can’t afford to go to court,” he said. “It’s far from a sure thing that I will win and I can’t afford it anyhow.”

Good-cause laws have been adopted by a number of municipalities this year, including Hudson, Albany, Newburgh and Poughkeepsie, after a bill stalled at the state level in 2020. Beacon’s discussions have been on and off since City Attorney Nick Ward-Willis told the council in October that he believes state tenant protections enacted in 2019 prevent the city from adopting additional regulations on the local level.

The city has asked Attorney General Letitia James for her opinion. While she supports a statewide good-cause measure after announcing her candidacy for governor in October (she has since dropped out of the race), James has yet to weigh in on local authority.

On Monday, another resident, Scott Lerman, said that “good intentions don’t automatically lead to good laws.” Lerman said the city should hone its own approach to affordability, rather than relying on “untested” laws adopted by neighboring municipalities.

Lerman suggested that Beacon enforce the state’s tenant protections by offering free legal aid, enforcing penalties for illegal short-term rentals and adopting “good-cause” rent subsidies “to people that need them, rather than provide rent control for wealthy people.”

Most importantly, he said, the council should increase the supply of affordable housing through “substantial new construction projects” and other initiatives, such as low-cost accessory dwelling units.

A good-cause law would force landlords to raise rents as much as allowed every year “as a hedge” against potential legal costs, repairs and insurance. “That’s what’s traditionally happened with rent controls,” he said.

Housing advocates fear that renters will be vulnerable to predatory and retaliatory measures after a statewide moratorium on pandemic-related evictions ends on Jan. 15. Without a good-cause law, there’s a “huge imbalance” in the law that favors landlords, said another resident, Erin Ashoka. “This is because property owners have the power to take away a person’s shelter — a fundamental condition to being able to survive,” she said.

Mansfield asked city attorneys on Dec. 13 to prepare a summary of the potential impacts a good-cause law could have on tenants and landlords, especially smaller ones, as well as scenarios in which rent increases would be permissible, to inform the four incoming council members when the panel again takes up the discussion in the new year.

NOTICE

The Beacon City School District is soliciting proposals from qualified individuals and accounting firms to perform the Internal Audit Function for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022 with an option to renew for the 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 fiscal years. The internal audit function will be performed to ensure that the operating procedures including internal controls are being followed, and that all expenditures of School District funds are in accordance with laws, regulations, and District policy. The Beacon City School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Proposals must be submitted to the Deputy Superintendent on or before 2:00 pm on Friday January 14, 2022. For further information or a copy of the Request for Proposal (RFP) contact Ann Marie Quartironi at 845-838-6900 ext. 2032 or via email at quartironi.a@beaconk12.org.

Ann Marie Quartironi, Deputy Superintendent

POSITION AVAILABLE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PHILIPSTOWN

FOOD PANTRY COORDINATOR

The First Presbyterian Church of Philipstown is looking to hire a part-time food pantry coordinator for the Philipstown Food Pantry.

The duties primarily involve administrative tasks, coordination of volunteers, and communication with volunteers, clients, and the local community. Seeking an organized, reliable person with good interpersonal and computer skills. Approximately 20-25 hours per month with an hourly salary based on experience.

If interested please contact the church office administrator at 845 265 3220 (feel free to leave a message) or by e-mail at 1presbyterian@gmail.com.
Puzzles

CROSS Current

ACROSS
1. Earring site
5. Smack
8. Blog entry
12. Regrettably
13. Fuss
14. “May It Be” singer
15. Dealer’s foe
16. Moving-day rental
17. Aviation prefix
18. Energetic person
20. Galley supply
22. Strikers’ queue
26. Manhandled
29. Chemical suffix
30. Hobbyist’s abbr.
31. Rue the run
32. German conjunction
33. Lavish party
34. — Paulo
35. Fuel stat
36. Devil’s domain
37. Playgoer’s souvenir
40. Writer Quindlen
41. Short jacket
45. Gambling game
47. Jay follower
49. San —, Italy
50. Help a crook
51. Hosp. sections
52. Author Sheehy

DOWN
1. Crow’s-nest cry
2. Skin care brand
3. Hoedown site
4. Jailbreak participant
5. Mayhem
6. Greek mountain
7. Ad nauseam
8. Oyster’s prize
9. Biased
10. Aleppo’s land (Abbr.)
11. Eastern “way”
12. Central
21. Consumed
23. Monarchs
24. Evening, in an ad
25. Peepers
26. Bygone days
27. Exotic berry
28. “So what?”
30. Hobbyist’s abbr.
31. Rue the run
32. German conjunction
33. Lavish party
34. — Paulo
35. Fuel stat
36. Devil’s domain
37. Playgoer’s souvenir
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Answers for Dec. 17 Puzzles

1. PILLED, 2. PRECISION, 3. PINIONS, 4. CREAKED, 5. CONNORS, 6. CROSSPIECE, 7. HILLIER

7 Little Words

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUES</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 transmitting data (9)</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cusps and incisors (5)</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 footnote indicator (8)</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Vermont’s time zone (7)</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 focus in English class (7)</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 “basic” medical specialty (8)</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 hot spring that ejects water (6)</td>
<td>__________</td>
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</tbody>
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**Sudo Current**

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

After winning one game last season, and starting this season with two losses, Beacon has now won three straight following a 64-62 victory Tuesday (Dec. 21) at Washingtonville.

With the game tied with eight seconds remaining, Leo Gecaj delivered what turned out to be the game-winning basket. The Bulldogs, who finished 1-11 last season, are 3-2, and Coach Scott Timpano said his team likes the feeling.

“That was an incredible team win,” he said after the game. “We felt like we were in control at halftime, but then they changed up their defense, came back and took a lead. But we battled, and got great contributions from several kids who have had to be patient and wait for their opportunity.”

Included in that group are Simmy Mann, who scored a game-high 16 points. Adrian Beato added 12, Jason Komisar had 11, Darien Gills had nine and Gecaj finished with eight. “Jason had a lot of rebounds and some big blocks for us and Leo had some great defensive stops,” Timpano said.

Beacon is scheduled to compete in a tournament at Ketcham High School next week. Physical play and strong man-to-man defense fueled the Haldane boys last week in a 57-53 win over Briarcliff and again during a 57-53 win over Peekskill.

Against Peekskill, Haldane trailed 39-36 at halftime and fell behind by as many as nine points in the third quarter. But the Blue Devils picked up their defensive intensity and went on a 21-7 run in the fourth quarter.

Ryan Irwin led the scoring with 20 points, while Rob Viggiano added 18 and Matteo Cervone had 16.

“Peekskill is a good team, very athletic, and they surpassed our intensity,” said Coach Joe Virgadamo. “That’s where we got in a jam. But in the third we got a sense of urgency.”

Against Briarcliff, Soren Holmbo led the scoring with 15 points, followed by Cervone (11), Viggiano (10), Tristen Reid (8) and Irwin (6).

Haldane (5-1) is scheduled to host Chester on Thursday (Dec. 30) at 2:45 p.m. The game will be streamed at events.locallive.tv/school/haldane-hs.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Beacon improved its record to 3-2 with a 49-41 victory on Monday (Dec. 20) over visiting Washingtonville.

Reilly Landisi scored a career-high 25 points, and Lila Burke also had a career high with 14.

“We were able to control the game offensively with timely, big-time shots,” said Coach Christina Dahl. “Defensively, Devyn Kelly stepped up for us, along with Daveya Rodriguez. And Rory LaDue gave us valuable minutes on the defensive end.”

Beacon is scheduled to host Cornwall Central on Jan. 4.

The first quarter that the Haldane girls played at Carmel High School on Dec. 16 was one Coach Jessica Perrone and her players would like to forget. They showed little energy as the Rams took a 12-2 lead on the way to a 51-42 win.

The Blue Devils trailed 34-15 at halftime and made a 14-2 run in the third to pull within seven, 36-29.

“We had no energy in the first quarter and dug ourselves a hole,” Perrone said. “The girls got mad — we saw Carmel celebrating a bit at halftime — and in the third quarter our shots started falling. I feel like we missed an opportunity.”

Haldane was playing without starters Ruby Poes and Maisread O’Hara. In their absence, Camilla McDaniel scored a career-high 21 points (including five 3-pointers), Marisa Scanga added nine and Molly Siegel had seven points and 11 rebounds. Betsy Cates had seven rebounds.

We should be 4-2 instead of 2-4,” Perrone said. “We have a habit of starting out slow, then fighting back from a deficit. We want to play every game like it’s our last one, because we have no idea about schools shutting down” because of a surge in COVID-19 cases. “We’re hoping for the best, with a full season and playoffs.”

Haldane lost 47-39 when it visited Peekskill on Wednesday (Dec. 22). The Blue Devils will play Croton at home on Jan. 5 and travel to North Salem on Jan. 7.

INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

At the 45-team Coach Saint Invitational on Dec. 17 at The Armory in New York City, Beacon’s Evan LaBelle won the 1,000 meters in 2:42 and the 4x800 relay team (Sal Migliore/Henry Reinke/Rubio Castagna/Evan LaBelle) was first in 8:41.

In other top finishes, Kyla Richardson was fifth in the 55-meter dash in 7.79, Eddie Manente took fifth in the 300 meters in 38.28, and the Bulldogs swept the top three spots in the 500 meters: Reinke (1:08.51), Migliore (1:09.02) and Castagna (1:12.50).

“We’ve been able to get in some great workouts and practice sessions on the track in the past two weeks,” said Coach Jim Henry. “That’s sometimes difficult considering the questionable weather of December, but it’s starting to pay dividends.”

Beacon will compete in the Pearl River Invite on Monday (Dec. 27) at Rockland Community College in Suffern.

Haldane took part in the 82-team Energize Coaches Hall of Fame Invitational at The Armory on Dec. 18, with top finishes in the girls’ mile by Celia Drury (14th in 6:48.11) and Helen Nicholls (15th in 7:30.44); in the boys’ mile by Luke Parrella (12th in 4:49.97) and in the girls’ 4x200 relay (11th in 2:12.17). The Blue Devils will also compete on Dec. 27 in the Pearl River Invite.

BOWLING

The Beacon boys defeated Goshen, 7-0, on Dec. 16 but lost to Newburgh Free Academy, 5-2, on Tuesday (Dec. 21) to fall to 3-3. The girls defeated Goshen, 5-2, and lost to Newburgh, 7-0, to fall to 2-4.

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