Mark Snyder, the co-owner of Drug World in Cold Spring, prepares a swab on Tuesday (Dec. 28) for a customer getting tested for COVID-19. Photo by L. Sparks

Test-to-Stay is Here to Stay, For Now
Protocol allows students to avoid quarantine

By Jeff Simms

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and New York State have both endorsed a “test-to-stay” program that will be put into place when public schools reopen in January, after winter break.

The protocol allows students who have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 to take daily rapid-result tests. Students who test negative can stay in school and avoid the 10-day quarantine that had been the standard after exposure.

New York State has purchased millions of rapid tests that it said will be distributed to county health officials. A handful of counties, however, including Dutchess, began implementing test-to-stay in their schools earlier this fall.

Putnam County also announced on Dec. 23 that its school districts will have the opportunity to implement test-to-stay in the new year. Details are still being developed, the county said.

(Continued on Page 6)

Being Tested
Residents scramble for appointments, home kits

By Leonard Sparks

With hours to go before a Christmas Eve get-together with friends, Gregg Zuman parked himself in a long line of other people anxious to get rapid COVID-19 tests at a clinic near Penn Station in Manhattan.

It was the Beacon resident’s third attempt that day to get the negative test result he needed to attend that evening’s gathering and one with relatives in Massachusetts on Christmas Day. It was also his last hope after two days of searching for an appointment for a rapid test or a take-home kit.

While he waited in line after arriving at 3:30 p.m., a woman in a lab coat announced that the site would shut down at 4:15 p.m., said Zuman. “I’m looking in front of me and I’m like, ‘I’m not going to make this,’” he said. “Then, at 4:13 p.m., I actually got to the front of the line.”

Zuman’s under-the-wire experience is now the norm. A surge in demand for testing that began months ago, and accelerated with the rise of the Omicron variant of the virus, is outstripping the availability of home kits and putting pressure on the pharmacies and clinics that provide rapid tests and the more-rigorous polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests.

As of Dec. 25, an average of 2,600 people in Dutchess County were getting tested daily this month, nearly three times higher than in July, which began with COVID-19 having cratered and the state scaling back on testing in favor of promoting vaccinations. The daily average in Putnam County, 852, is more than double from July.

Hours before getting in line at Penn Station, Zuman had tried a clinic near Grand Central Station but gave up after the line he estimates was 50 feet long moved only a few feet in 90 minutes. That morning a clinic in Poughkeepsie showed an appointment at noon, but Zuman says he got a text message after registering online that said the clinic was booked.

The day before Christmas Eve, he stopped at Rite-Aid in Beacon and was told the store had sold its 150 home kits in an hour. On Dec. 22, he saw a social media post about home kits being distributed at the Drug World in Cold Spring used to

(Continued on Page 7)
FIVE QUESTIONS: IRENE O’GARDEN

By Alison Rooney

Poet and essayist Irene O’Garden, of Garrison, is the author of Glad to Be Human: Adventures in Optimism.

You refer to a time when “kindness was not yet popular.” Has the pandemic changed that?

Kindness is more popular, as is gratitude. We’re much more sensitive to kindness because when we see a great deal of unkindness it prompts, within us, kinder behavior. In my experience, the pandemic has made people a lot kinder, especially having been without connection for all those months. We can get by without a whole lot of stuff, but not without each other. Most human beings have been brought into this world with kindness and try to respond with kindness.

You advocate spontaneity. Why is that?

The variety of life, of emotional exploration, being attentive to opportunities, being in a place and time when you can give — that’s where spontaneity comes in. Spontaneity is about trust. It’s about saying, “What is coming through me is good and positive and an energy that is welcomed and needed in the world.”

Spontaneity is a profound energy. We are gifted with days — we don’t know how many; the number is not important. If our mind is wandering all over the place, it’s difficult to be in the present moment. The more we take a deep breath, get into the beauty of this physical world we live in and get back to the body, that is a beautiful place to nurture that spontaneity. Language is incredibly spontaneous. If we rely on screens, our brain waves aren’t connecting with our bodies. Pay attention to what’s around us that needs our attention. I’m looking right now at evergreens waving in the wind. They were once tiny things.

How do you define optimism?

It’s not about everything being perfect all the time. It’s about choosing to see something beautiful when something is broken. We don’t gloss over loss, but, for example, the pandemic, this grief-soaked time: Rather than looking around asking nervously, “Is this going to be another Great Depression?” we should be doing what is necessary to show compassion for people on this earth — globally, not just frontline. We should be acknowledging that what is abundant is the caring we have for each other. That’s how to look for the light in things.

If people feel like they are stagnating, how can they change that?

So often we have rutted thoughts; we think we have only one option. Instead, it’s good to understand that at any time we can change direction — jump the rails — if we’re finding it’s not helping us. Optimism is practical and in harmony with nature. Things grow anticipating that good will come of it. Whether we think this is a true direction, it’s better to want to live.

You use physical tokens to manifest a wish or goal. Can you explain?

I love symbols that make hope physical, such as charms. Everyone has the power to visualize and create the world we want to live in; we do this in every moment. We can see that we are creating the experience we have. Putting our desires out in a physical way sets the flow of energy and helps us appreciate what we receive in response, even though it might not be shaped exactly the way we thought it would be.

Spontaneity is about trust. It’s about saying, “What is coming through me is good and positive and an energy that is welcomed and needed in the world.”

Reflections for 2022

By Irene O’Garden

Glad to be human, glad to be provided for, glad to provide for myself in faith and effort. Fun to find shoes, fun to buy them, too.

Glad to know about some stars, glad the mystery is infinite, glad for the burst and silence.

Glad to be living in the heart, the human heart, time for whole days spent on relationships, for soothing, for expressing pain, for pleasure, contemplation. And time and ways and means for distant friends, living in differing places, to visit, to speak and the beauty of a letter sent received.

Glad for interiors and colors and pattern and balance and shape and movement and adornment. Glad of myriads of little helps, of zippers, paperclips, and cleverness.

Glad to choose, to help to nourish, to bless.

ON THE SPOT

By Michael Turton

Where would you love to be on New Year’s Eve?

Somewhere I’ve never been. A warm tropical island.

Sidney Kirk, Beacon

Edinburgh, Scotland, for Hogmanay.

Alan Vardy, Cold Spring

Not Times Square. Hawaii or anywhere warm.

Lori Lamando, Garrison

Tai Chi Ch’uan

Yang Style

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and a group of local community members dedicated
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WHAT MEMBERS ARE SAYING

“We love local newspapers!”
Liam Hackett-Zorzi, Eleonora Zorzi. Sean Hackett
and Isabella Hackett-Zorzi (l to r), Cold Spring

"A free press is essential
to democracy - and it’s
important for our town’s
residents to know and
understand news that
will affect their lives."
Wendy DeGiglio, Cold Spring
Tell us what you think

The Current welcomes letters to the editor on its coverage and local issues. Submissions are selected by the editor (including from comments posted to our social media pages) to provide a variety of opinions and voices, and all are subject to editing for accuracy, clarity and length, and to remove personal attacks. Letters may be emailed to editor@highlandscurrent.org, mailed to The Highlands Current, 142 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516. The writer’s full name, village or city, and email or phone number must be included, but only the name and village or city will be published. For our complete editorial policies, see highlandscurrent.org/editorial-standards.

Vaccine mandate

People should have the right to determine whether they or their children are vaccinated (“Putnam Legislators: Mandates ‘Totalitarian’ and ‘Travesty,’” Dec. 17). However, there should be consequences.

If you decide not to get vaccinated, your insurance rates should rise significantly because your choice, if you get infected, will likely land you in the hospital, thus taxing the health care system.

Another consequence should be that your child cannot attend school. The measles-mumps-rubella vaccine is required to attend school. This is no different. The argument that this came about too quickly is inaccurate; [the technology behind] this vaccine has been around for well over 20 years. Even a pet must be vaccinated before it is allowed to associate with other pets.

Another consequence is that you cannot enter a workplace. Why should you be allowed to infect others who chose to get the vaccine? We do not allow people to smoke in public because of the dangers of secondhand smoke. The same applies.

The only way to be released from this cycle is for the majority of the people in our country to get vaccinated — to achieve herd immunity — so the virus has no more hosts in which to grow and spread and change. Turn away from all of the disinformation, fear and lies so that one day soon we can all take off our masks and smile at one another again.

Jim Semmelman, Garrison

One in 500 Americans lost to COVID-19. The detailed impact of one of the first big recorded pandemics is terrifying to consider. It slashed through the country, killing rich and poor alike. No one knew why it was happening or how to fight it. Who rules, who plows? Who inherits? What of abandoned children? Who buries the dead? Where is God? Is there politics in death? Terrifying — no other word for it.

One is led to wonder at the resistance of anyone who passes on the opportunity for protection: the arrogance of ignorance.

Bill Harris, Cold Spring

As a public health professional and volunteer with the Putnam County Medical Reserve Corps who spent dozens of hours last year helping to vaccinate our county’s residents, this resolution from the Putnam Legislature opposing mandatory vaccinations is extremely disappointing.

Resolutions like this one undermine the hard work of the county Health Department, countless MRC volunteers and all of the health care providers in our county who have been working selflessly and tirelessly to prevent the spread of COVID-19, treat the sick and minimize deaths.

People are burdening our health care system and dying needlessly because they are not vaccinated. The Putnam County executive and Legislature have the power to prevent some of these deaths by encouraging vaccination and depoliticizing it. Sadly, they have chosen to do the opposite.

Marianne Sullivan, Garrison

In September, Haldane Superintendent Phil Benante said the school district was in the process of implementing a testing process for unvaccinated faculty and staff. Why are there still faculty and staff who are unvaccinated? Shouldn’t there be a mandate for small schools such as Haldane?

Joanne Kenna, Cold Spring

Mask mandate

The Putnam and Dutchess county executives represent an ignorant and tribalistic minority of the populations of these counties (“Dutchess, Putnam Will Not Enforce Mask Mandate,” Dec. 17). Their refusal to implement critical state-mandated public health measures in the midst of a health crisis is disgraceful, and will lead to far more illness and death. It is grounds for their removal from office.

Steve Laifer, Cold Spring

As a career Carmel educator, I was buoyed by the wonderful Carmel High School varsity football team state championship. It was the result of a group of young people dedicating themselves to mutual respect, sacrifice, courtesy, caring and a number of other emotional declarations that build a foundation for much of our society.

At the same time, I am dismayed by the societal disregard displayed by Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell in her dismissal of Gov. Kathy Hochul’s issue of a mask mandate in the face of the exploding COVID-19 variants. The governor is the coach and Ms. Odell does not want to follow the coach’s edict. Do you think the CHS football team would have had such success with this type of attitude?

Odell is playing politics, taking her cues from the distorted Republican playbook. She cites business concerns, so profits-over-county fits in nicely with party-over-county, which has been the guiding light for the county’s governmental leadership.

We exist in a distorted reality where politics takes over from common decency for (Continued on Page 5)
Let us know your views by sending a letter to the editor, via email to editor@highlandscurrent.org, or by regular mail to The Highlands Current, 6 High Street, Cold Spring, NY 10516.

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 4)

Oh great, so now we have to enforce the state law as small-business owners? (“No Vax, No Mask, No Service,” Dec. 24). That’s just peachy.

Phil Bayer, Carmel

With COVID-19 infections rising in every state, the county executive chooses to announce that Putnam will not enforce a mask mandate — not that it matters that much. Everywhere I go people are masked up. They don’t want to take a chance.

At the same time, Odell announced that the Health Department is creating a testing site in Carmel that will be open six days a week. Public health officials understand the gravity of the situation. Why, then, pass a resolution that opposes their own state government, does not have the right to order people to wear masks. This is empty political grandstanding — this does not save lives!

Frank Bugg

Frank was a good friend when we worked at Focus:HOPE in Detroit. He encouraged me to become re-involved in social justice and that’s how I ended up at Focus:HOPE. I still continue to support its values. Thanks, man — you will not be forgotten.

Mark Sayers, Birmingham, Michigan

White Christmas

In the Dec. 24 issue, you printed my response in On the Spot in which I said that my favorite past Christmas present was snow on Christmas Eve. And then, on Christmas Eve 2021, we had snow! I didn’t realize that the power of print really existed until now. Thank you, Highlands Current.

Kay Corkrum, Garrison

Frank was a good friend when we worked at Focus:HOPE in Detroit. He encouraged me to become re-involved in social justice and that’s how I ended up at Focus:HOPE. I still continue to support its values. Thanks, man — you will not be forgotten.

John Rembert, Beacon

Oh great, so now we have to enforce the state law as small-business owners? (“No Vax, No Mask, No Service,” Dec. 24). That’s just peachy.

Phyllis Hoenig, Mahopac

From its first publication on June 1, 2012, to today’s issue, The Highlands Current has worked diligently to bring our readers the news and views of our communities of Philipstown and Beacon. We applaud our current journalists for all they do to keep our readers informed, inspired and involved.

OUR STAFF

Chip Rowe .................................... Editor
Leonard Sparks ............................... Senior Editor
Jeff Simms ................................. Beacon Editor
Alison Rooney ................................ Arts Editor
Pierce Strudler .............................. Layout Designer
Michele Gedney ......................... Advertising Director

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Ross Corsair ................................. Photographer
Emily Haro ........................................ Membership
Teresa Lagerman Community Engagement

A special thanks to former editor Kevin Foley, who oversaw publication of the paper from 2012 to 2016.
**COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number of cases:</th>
<th>Tests administered:</th>
<th>Percent positive:</th>
<th>Percent vaccinated:</th>
<th>Number of deaths:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUTNAM COUNTY</td>
<td>15,124 (+595)</td>
<td>352,789 (+4,456)</td>
<td>4.3 (+0.1)</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>106 (+2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUTCHESS COUNTY</td>
<td>43,436 (+2,061)</td>
<td>1,126,019 (+17,274)</td>
<td>3.9 (+0.2)</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>531 (+4)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: State and county health departments, as of Dec. 27, with change over the previous week in parentheses. Percent vaccinated reflects those ages 5 and older who have received at least one dose.

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**Naysayers**

The Beacon school board continues to hear from two teachers who vehemently oppose the COVID-19 vaccine. Joy Bonneau, a special education teacher at Glenham Elementary, has appeared at nearly every board meeting in the last four months. Laurie Malin, a science teacher at Rombout Middle School, has also appeared at meetings to denounce the vaccines.

On Dec. 13, Bonneau accused board members of ignoring her. “Do I make you feel uncomfortable with the information that I share?” she asked. Bonneau asked the district to stop holding vaccine clinics, saying that people in other communities have committed suicide after being “injured” by vaccines. “I am very, very saddened by this district rushing into using this vaccine that is new, different” and was approved using data from clinical trials that “have just been blown through.”

Bonneau said she had verified her claims through the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, or VAERS, a website that compiles unverified self-reports of side effects. Numerous health experts have debunked the site as a source of misinformation, but Jasmine Johnson, a board member, said she agreed with Bonneau.

“Working in a pharmacy, I do know about statistics and numbers, and there are side effects to everything,” Johnson said. Vaccines “might work for some people and they might not work for other people. That is a real thing. I don’t disagree with anything that she’s saying.”

Board President Meredith Heuer said she didn’t “necessarily agree with the sources that [Bonneau] is using or her opinion,” but respected her right to voice it.

“We all saw the negative impact [remote learning had] on the growth of children in terms of their educational development, but also emotionally what this did to everybody from kindergartners up to high school kids,” she said.

When students return next month “there’ll be tests waiting for them, that they can take them home in their backpack,” the governor said.

The Beacon school district began test-to-stay during the second week of December using kits provided by Dutchess County. It has partnered with Village Apothecary, a Woodstock pharmacy that has also facilitated its vaccine clinics, to run the program from 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. each day at Beacon High School.

Superintendent Matt Landahl told the Beacon school board during its Dec. 13 meeting that 10 to 15 students were being tested each morning. On Tuesday (Dec. 28) he said that number had risen to 30 to 40 every day.

“It’s a common-sense way of keeping kids in school,” Landahl said. With the highly transmissible Omicron variant circulating, “we imagine that we’re going to have this for quite some time.”

The Beacon program differs from what Hochul described in that a school nurse notifies the parents or guardians of students who have been exposed to an infected person. With permission, the students can test at school in the morning. A negative result allows the student to stay in school but does not apply to sports or other extracurricular activities. According to state guidelines, exposed students must still sit out after-school activities for 10 days. Landahl said he hopes to expand the program in January so that students who are exposed outside of school can make an appointment for a rapid test. “The district believes it will receive enough test kits to provide the service for the school year,” he said.

Beacon parent Elizabeth Greenblatt, whose daughter attends South Avenue Elementary, said her family had a COVID exposure over the weekend after Thanksgiving, before the test-to-stay program had been implemented, that forced her daughter to quarantine at home. But after a second exposure this month, “it made a huge difference to be able to test and go to school,” she said in an interview. “We’re very grateful for the program.”
Covid Tests (from Page 1)

have one appointment every 13 minutes for its rapid tests, which show results in 30 minutes to an hour. Now the pharmacy has four in the same time period, co-owner Heidi Snyder said on Tuesday (Dec. 28).

“Never, ever have we been booked like this,” she said.

On Dec. 20, Drug World sold its 200 at-home tests within 45 minutes and the phones are “ringing nonstop” with people looking for more, said Snyder. The federal government has been buying up available at-home kits to fulfill President Joe Biden’s vow to distribute 500 million of the tests for free, starting in January, making the kits “almost impossible to get” for Drug World, she said.

“It makes me very sad because we should have what we need in our community,” said Snyder.

Faced with the overwhelming demand for tests, New York State has been expanding its number of testing sites. Gov. Kathy Hochul’s administration also said on Monday that it was distributing 5 million at-home kits this week to school districts, with 2 million to New York City.

Jackie Bray, commissioner for the state Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, said there will be “rolling deliveries every week, every other week, to all of our counties, both to our school districts, but also to communities.”

where to get tested

**DUTCHESS COUNTY**

Philipstown Recreation Center
Route 9D, Garrison
10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily
6 a.m. to 9 a.m. weekdays, children only
Beginning Monday (Jan. 3)
No appointment required.

**Drug World**

55 Chestnut St., Cold Spring
Schedule at myrx.io.

**Paladin Center**

39 Seminary Hill Road, Carmel
10 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily
6 a.m. – 9 a.m. weekdays, children only
No appointment required.

**Sun River Health**

6 Henry St., Beacon
845-831-0400
8 a.m. – 8 p.m. Monday and Tuesday
8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Saturday

**Excel Urgent Care**

992 Main St., Fishkill
845-765-2240
8 a.m. – 8 p.m. weekdays
9 a.m. – 4 p.m. weekends

**CareMount**

60 Merritt Blvd., Fishkill
845-765-4990
8 a.m. – 5 p.m. weekdays

**Pulse-MD**

900 Route 376, Suite H, Wappingers Falls
845-204-9260

Dutchess County Health Department

Poughkeepsie Galleria
2001 South Road, Poughkeepsie
Former JCPenney store on 2nd floor
Schedule at bit.ly/dutchess-testing.

**CareMount**

30 Columbia St., Poughkeepsie
845-231-5600
9 a.m. – 6:45 p.m. weekdays
8 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. weekends

**Pulse-MD**

696 Dutchess Turnpike, Poughkeepsie
845-243-7100

For information about tests, visit bit.ly/fda-test-basics.

% Fully Vaccinated

**PUTNAM COUNTY**

Cold Spring  79.6
Garrison  74.2
Putnam Valley  73.9
Brewster  73.2
Carmel  71.2
Patterson  70.5
Mahopac  66.8
Lake Peekskill  64.1

**DUTCHESS COUNTY**

Rhinebeck  82.8
Wappingers Falls  72.7
Pawling  71.5
Hopewell Junction  68.9
Fishkill  67.0
Hyde Park  64.3
Beacon  62.5
Lagrangeville  60.7
Stormville  46.8

Source: New York State, as of Dec. 27

true,” said Mary Basset, the state’s acting health commissioner.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a recommendation on Dec. 27 shortening to 5 days from 10 days the amount of time people who test positive for COVID-19 need to isolate, as long as they are asymptomatic. After isolating, people should still wear a mask for 5 days when around others, according to the CDC.

- Low- and moderate-income homeowners who fell behind on payments during the pandemic shutdown can begin applying on Jan. 3 for repayment assistance and funding for up to six months from a $539 million state Homeowner Assistance Fund. It will assist homeowners who are behind on mortgage payments, property taxes or water or sewer bills; co-op or condo owners behind on maintenance fees; and manufactured homeowners behind on chattel loans or retail installment contracts. See nyhomeownerfund.org.

- The January Regents examinations for high school students have been canceled, the state Department of Education announced Dec. 21. The agency also said it would ask the Board of Regents to modify the assessment requirements students must meet to earn a diploma. It said it has not made a decision about the exams scheduled for June and August.

- Gov. Kathy Hochul on Dec. 22 enacted legislation that made it a Class A misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail to falsify vaccination cards or digital vaccine passports, such as the state’s Excelsior Pass (epass.ny.gov). A doctor who falsifies vaccination records can be charged with a Class E felony, which carries a potential sentence of four years in prison. The bill passed the Senate, 48-15 (Sue Serino, a Republican whose district includes the Highlands, voted against it) and the Assembly, 105-43 (Democrats Sandy Galef, whose district includes Philipstown, and Jonathan Jacobson, whose district includes Beacon, voted for it).

- In anticipation of more students receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, the governor also on Dec. 22 signed legislation to allow school districts to download data from the New York State Immunization Information System. Before the law was enacted, school nurses had only “read-only” access, meaning they had to search for each record individually and re-enter it into their own databases. The legislation passed 60-3 in the Senate and 145-0 in the Assembly: all three local legislators supported it.

**Average COVID-19 Tests per Day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JULY</th>
<th>AUG.</th>
<th>SEPT.</th>
<th>OCT.</th>
<th>NOV.</th>
<th>DEC.</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1,929</td>
<td>2,134</td>
<td>1,955</td>
<td>2,613</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUTNAM</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>852</td>
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<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>78,770</td>
<td>132,082</td>
<td>168,564</td>
<td>178,283</td>
<td>161,055</td>
<td>243,291</td>
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</table>

Source: New York State Department of Health, as of Dec. 27

Eric Vathke of Cold Spring is hoping he can get a PCR test in time for a family trip on Thursday (Jan. 6) to St. Thomas. He needs a negative test within five days of leaving, but is concerned about a delay in processing tests when around others, according to the CDC. After isolating, people who test positive for COVID-19 need to isolate, as long as they are asymptomatic. When around others, according to the CDC.

For information about tests, visit bit.ly/fda-test-basics.
The Philipstown Food Pantry would like to thank all those listed below for their unwavering support through this past challenging year. You have helped us continue to serve all those in need – We wish you all a Happy New Year.

Mr. & Mrs. Joe Maloney
Peter Mell
South Highlands Chapel
Abbie Carrie
Karen Tangen
Fire Bread Co.
Glywood Farms
Hazel Berkley
Andrea
Laura Kissack
Marilyn Schlosser
James Hustis
American Legion
Thomas & Erica Kivel
Daniel & Sheila Donnelly
Clare Staples
Second Chance Farms
Dr. Susan Stewart
Pat Angerami
Mark Menting
George Casey Post #275
James Harver Hustis Post #2362 VFW
Maryann Robinson
Tom Goodrich
Linda Hoffman
Matthew and his daughter
 Derrick & Heather Hopkins
 David May
 Friedrike Menck
 Adam Kravetz
 Chia-Jung Dion
 Michael Cavanaugh
 Rosemary Boyle Lasher
 David Long
 Nadine Topalian
 Heidi Shira Bender
 Judith Farrell
 Susan Wallach
 Mary Wyatt
 Lisa Quarlin
 Black Dash Studio
 Understory Market
 Laura Wilson
 Garrison Yacht Club
 Barbara Macedo
 Sandra Scott
 Barry Rosen
 Kathy Smelter
 Manitou School
 Desmond Fish Library
 Joan Crouch
 Zhshawn Sullivan
 Marie Early
 Theresa Desario-Monck
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 Paula Calimano
 Geraldine & Chickie
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 Glennon and Abigail Watson
 Robert & Arnette Flaherty
 Ralph & Robin Arditi
 Karen Kapoor
 Girl Scouts of the Highlands,
 Garrison & Cold Spring
 Garrison Union Free School
 Lisa Brown
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 Cold Spring Chamber of Commerce

**AROUND TOWN**

- **REMEMBERING KOREA** — On Dec. 6, members of Project Soldier KWV interviewed Hank Barker (shown at left) and Willie Reed, both veterans of the Korean War, at the Memorial Building in Beacon. A documentary filmmaker, Rami Huyn, has visited 37 U.S. cities and photographed more than 1,200 veterans of the war, fought from 1950 to 1953.

- **A LOT OF FIXES** — Anthony Stronconi, a maintenance worker for the Haldane school district, retired after 51½ years (he was hired in June 1970). He is shown with Superintendent Philip Benante.

- **NEW FACES AT TILLY FOSTER** — Nancy Olmick and Giorgio Spanu of Garrison, who own Magazzino Italian Art, recently donated two Sardinian donkeys, Darius and Dante, to the Tilly Foster Farm and Educational Institute, which is operated in Brewster by Putnam County. (The rest of the herd resides at the Philipstown museum on Route 9.) The farm also has two Percheron draft horses on loan from a Brewster family and three pygmy goats donated by Muscoot Farm in Somers as part of an animal-care program for high school students. The donkeys are “vocal animals” that are “known to protect other animals,” said Chris Ruthven of the county parks department, in a statement. “I suspect they will be looking out for the pygmy goats.” The farm, located on Route 312, is open daily.

Photos provided
Haldane’s tech crew began in 2010 with a folding table and a lighting board. Since that bare-bones beginning, the crew has been strengthened with the addition of a professional-grade audio system, upgraded lighting and the installation of a tech booth, said McDonald.

Aside from the tech crew, there are many community members who helped out behind the scenes.

Jeffery Sniffen and Matt Koch, both parents of students with roles in Sense and Sensibility, worked on sets — building the background, laying the floor and helping create props. For a month, Sniffen — who is also a teacher at Haldane Middle School — worked from 3 to 6 p.m. on weekdays, and then he and Koch alternated shifts from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends.

“All we can do is try to provide the actors an environment that helps the show come to life,” said Sniffen.

Shawna Chandler, a board member for the Haldane School Foundation, and I oversaw the costumes. We rented outfits from the Theater Development Fund, a Queens organization whose collection of $5,000 donated costumes is available for theater, film and television productions. Chandler and I spent hours hemming, repairing rips and helping the actors fit into their outfits.

Students Ivy Heydt-Benjamin and Robert Freimark served as stage managers. During every rehearsal, they carefully wrote notes and made sure everything ran smoothly. Jim Mechalakos, a physicist and musician from Cold Spring, creates music for many of Haldane’s plays and photographs the actors. Christine Bokhour volunteered as the choreographer, and longtime Haldane Drama director Martha Mechalakos, high school teacher Andrea McCue and cast member Rose LaBarbera arrived hours before each rehearsal and the four shows to volunteer as hair and makeup artists.

“Anyone who helps in any way contributes,” said Martha Mechalakos. “And we need that; we need a little more than that.”

Edwards Salas is a freshman at Haldane High School and a member of The Current’s Student Journalists Program.

Creating Costumes

Shawna Chandler, who lives in Cold Spring, creates costumes for Haldane Drama.

How did you get involved with Haldane Drama?

I was teaching an after-school sewing class, and I think someone whispered my name to [director] Martha [Mechalakos]. I've been helping ever since.

What shows have you worked on?

The first was Les Miserables. It was a crazy show with so many costumes. Then I did The Importance of Being Earnest, Romeo and Juliet, Cabaret. Whenever you do a period show, it's always a beast.

What do you like most about costumes?

Seeing the kids and all their hard work, and the problem-solving aspect to it. You look around and you get paper plates, a little fabric and you have to make it all come together to make whatever. That's fun for me. I also loved working with all the costumes from TDF [the Theater Development Fund, an organization that rents costumes to drama productions].

How do you think costumes benefit plays?

It helps transport people into that time or that world. It makes it more believable. And you can see it when the kids put the costumes on and have their first rehearsal; it helps them put on the character as well.

What do you think of the Haldane Drama community?

There is so much that happens in the months leading up to the show. For Sense and Sensibility, there were three weeks when we were in that gym. All the kids work so hard, and you can see they love it.

How does the behind-the-scenes work build the play?

There is so much going on that people can’t see. For example, Ivy [Heydt-Benjamin] and Robert [Freimark], the prop people, were huge. They have to be so organized and have everything exactly where it is supposed to be. If everything behind the scenes works perfectly, then everything onstage can work perfectly. As long as we are all supporting each other, it can go really well.
More than two decades after meeting as second-graders at South Avenue Elementary in Beacon, Corey Ellis and Tiana Wilkins celebrated their wedding at the school with their daughter, who is now a student there. (Jan. 23)

Actor Woody Harrelson stopped by local vegan eateries in Beacon while in town filming an HBO miniseries about the Watergate “plumbers.” (May 23)

Marijuana sales were officially approved in Cold Spring after 80 absentee ballots were counted following the Nov. 2 election. (Nov. 18)

Matcha Thomas, a teahouse about more than tea, opened its doors on Main Street. The Beacon shop is a distillation of 20-year-old Haile Thomas’ activism and the recipes from her cookbook, Living Lively. (June 26)

Beacon resident Mark Trecka is the co-founder of the Prison Books Project, which funds and sends books to local inmates who request them. (Aug. 17)

MILESTONES

A few of our issues from over the years, on the table where each of the first 500 has been copy-edited and proofread: (1) Rare prototype; (2) Issue 1 (6/1/12); (3) Issue 50; (4) Issue 100; (5) Issue 150; (6) Issue 200; (7) Issue 250; (8) Issue 300; (9) Issue 350; (10) Issue 400; (11) Issue 450; (12) Fighting Back: The Opioid Crisis (9/22/17); (13) Living on the Edge (7/19/19); (14) Climate Change in the Highlands (5/4/18); (15) COVID 2021 (10/30/20); (16) Sundown at Indian Point (4/30/21). Browse back issues at highlandscurrent.org/archives.
By Chip Rowe

You're holding an issue of a fully baked idea. It wasn't completely half-baked when Gordon Stewart decided nearly 10 years ago to turn his online publication, Philipstown.info, into a printed one, but the idea of starting a print publication in 2012 was a little soft in the center. Newspapers were not being created; they were collapsing like once-bright stars, and at a rapid pace. (Since 2005, some 2,200 local newspapers in the U.S. — a quarter of the total — have disappeared.)

Like many of his Philipstown neighbors, Gordon, a corporate executive and theater producer, thought his adopted hometown needed a quality news source. This was in large part because Roger Alles, then the chair of Fox News, had moved to town and upset the apple cart by purchasing its 142-year-old mainstay, the Putnam County News & Recorder. This origin story has since been recounted in The New Yorker, books, documentaries and TV dramas, but people reading The Current these many years later probably had no idea. It seems like a long time ago.

Philipstown.info was not even two years old when Gordon became convinced that digital needed to expand to print, a notion that many might view as a step back in time. What's next — papyrus scrolls? But the staff launched The Paper, so named to be a sly dig by Gordon at the PCNR (which everyone called “the paper”) but which led to many Abbott and Costello-like routines: “Where did you see it?” “In the paper.” “In The Paper?” “That's what I said. The paper.” (“First base!”)

The premiere issue appeared on June 1, 2012. Gordon decided that, like the website, it would be free, a service to the community, with advertising revenue finally offsetting the hundreds of thousands of dollars he was paying out of pocket to keep the enterprise going. Perhaps surprisingly, given the rigors of four-seasons Main Street retailing and an extended pandemic shutdown, only three advertisers from that first issue are no longer here — Art to Wear Too, Frozenberry Cafe and Go-Go Pops. The other advertisers in that issue included Hudson HI's, the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, Angelina's, Antipodean Books, the Manitou School, Foundry Cafe, Grey Printing and Houlihan Lawrence.

Gordon, of course, would be pleased to see this issue. He died in November 2014 at age 75, just before we published Issue 131. We changed the name to The Highlands Current in 2015 — as it happens, at Issue 200 — to better reflect our expanding coverage of Beacon.

You can browse Issues 1 to 499 at highlandscurrent.org/archives. A few issues are photographed at left. Five names on the first print masthead are still there, on Page 4: Joe Dizney, Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong, Michael Turton, Alison Rooney and Michele Rubin (now Gedney). The print issues are collected in bound volumes at the office, as well, and despite rather embarrassing pleadings from the Smithsonian, we are not ready to part with them. The question at hand, of course, besides what the headlines will be in Issue 1,000 on Aug. 1, 2031 (“Mask Up for Mo”), is “What has The Current done for me lately?” A fair inquiry. We are always striving to improve our coverage, our questions, the variety of stories and subjects and people you see in our pages. And next month, we are excited to say, we will venture into a new medium with The Highlands Current podcast, with the goal of two episodes per month.

The podcasts, created with assistance from Zach Rodgers, who hosts Beaconites, will include conversations with newsmakers, artists and other local people of interest. We're working on theme music and I'm practicing my radio voice. The idea came in part from overhearing reporters interviewing people in the office for stories and this podcast might be interested in hearing these conversations, too.

In the meantime, and going forward, you can listen to our stories online as streaming audio, read by a synthesized voice (he goes by Matthew) that isn't half bad. He even puts inflections in the right spots. To that feed we will add podcast episodes. See highlandscurrent.org for buttons to subscribe.

What else? Well, as you may know, the paper is a nonprofit that relies on its members for support, and we are always looking for innovative ways for you to give us money. The latest is this: If you happen to be a Bitcoin millionaire and are not sure how to spend your digital earnings, search for “Highlands Current” at cryptoforcharity.io. Let's be pioneers — together.

Your contributions fund not only coverage of civics, sports and the arts but “deep-dive” reports such as those we've published on the opioid overdose epidemic, climate change, the future of farming, people who are employed but living on the edge, microplastics pollution, the closing of Indian Point, local infrastructure priorities and, most recently, hunger in the Highlands.

In 2022 we hope to tackle the challenges churches face to get people in the pews; the overlooked history of Black people in Beacon and Philipstown; the overcrowding of our natural resources; and what would appear to be the uncertain future of high school football, given widespread concern about concussions.

Many local papers have died, many watchdogs have been sidelined — but not all. We have reached Issue 500, and we are grateful to everyone who helped make it happen.

R INSTAGRAM, 2021

Sixty-one art spaces, museums, galleries, barns and other facilities opened to the public for Upstate Art Weekend. (Aug. 24)

Kamel Jamal, owner of Ziatun in Beacon, donated proceeds to help Palestinian refugees. “My way of showing resistance is through food,” he said. (June 22)

The Current’s Halloween Costume Contest was an impressive show of creativity. The Spencer family took home the Best Costume award with their ode to the Cold Spring Farmers’ Market. (Nov. 8)

These Hudson River sunsets never get old ... (July 10)

A storm that dumped nearly 2 feet of snow on the region prompted the governor to declare a state of emergency in the Hudson Valley. (Feb. 1)

Follow us @highlandscurrent
THE WEEK AHEAD
Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)
For a complete listing of events, see highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

COMMUNITY

SAT 1
Cold Spring Farmers’ Market
GARRISON
10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Boscobel 1601 Route 90 | csfarmmarket.org
Check the website for a list of weekly vendors.

SAT 2
First Day Hike
YORKTOWN HEIGHTS
10:30 a.m. Franklin D. Roosevelt Park 2957 Crompton Road
Ramble through the park with your guides Walt and Jane Daniels. Easy 3-mile hike. No pets. Meet at the north end of the pool parking lot.

SAT 2
First Day Hike
COLD SPRING
11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Little Stony Point 3011 Route 90 | littletostonypoint.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.

SAT 3
First Day Hike
POMONA/KEEPSIE
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.

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 chaskrob26@gmail.com.

SUN 2
Farmers’ Market
BEACON
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. DMV Lot | 223 Main St. beaconfarmersmarket.org
Check the website for participating weekly vendors.

TUES 4
COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic
GARRISON
1 – 3:30 p.m. Phlipstovn Rec 107 Glencliffle putnamcounty.ny.gov/health/ covid19/#vaccine Register online; no walk-ins. Moderna boosters for ages 18 and older; Pfizer boosters for 16 and older; first and second Pfizer doses for ages 5 to 11. Bring your vaccine card.

TUES 5
So You Want to Be a Beekeeper
BREWSTER
7 p.m. Tilly Foster Farm | 100 Route 312 putnam.cce.cornell.edu/events
Find out what is needed to take care of bees. Register online. Free

MUSIC

FRI 7
Lit Lit
BEACON
7 p.m. Howland Cultural Center 477 Main St. | 845-831-4988 howlandculturalcenter.org
This monthly series brings together writers of all genres to share their work in 5-minute readings.

FRI 31
The Amazing Sensational
BEACON
9:30 p.m. Dogwood Hudson Valley | 47 E. Main St.
This Bruce Springsteen tribute band has opened for and played with “the Boss.” Cost: $20, $25, $35

FRI 31
The B-Street Band
PEEKSKILL
8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley 1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039 paramounthudsonvalley.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. Proof of vaccination required. Cost: $85 ($35 door)

TALKS AND TOURS

FRI 7
Unstung Heroes
BREWSTER
7 p.m. Via Zoom putnam.cce.cornell.edu/events
Timothy Stanley, founder of Native Bee Inc., will discuss the 400 species of bees that are native to New York. $5-

WED 5
So You Want to Be a Beekeeper
BREWSTER
7 p.m. Tilly Foster Farm | 100 Route 312 putnam.cce.cornell.edu/events
Find out what is needed to take care of bees. Register online. Free

WED 6
The Suitcase Junket
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
This jazz band will play the music of Rick Danko from The Band.

THURS 6
Town Board
COLD SPRING
7:30 a.m. Town Hall | 238 Main St.
845-265-5200 | philipstown.com

SAT 8
Professor Louie & The Crowntax
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The Woodstock Horns will join the band to perform music by Rick Danko from The Band.

SAT 8
Corcel Mágico
BEACON
8 p.m. Reserva Wine Bar 173 Main St. | reservabeacon.com
The trio of Brazilian musicians will perform.

SAT 8
Neckscars
BEACON
9 p.m. Quinn’s | 330 Main St.
facebook.com/quinnsbeacon
The punk rock band will follow opener Hudson.

SUN 9
Dominic Cheli
BEACON
4 p.m. Howland Cultural Center 477 Main St. | howlandmusic.org
The Howland Chamber Music Circle will present its annual piano festival with a program by Cheli that includes Schulhoff, Liszt, Schumann, Brahms, Adams and Mussorgsky. Cost: $40 ($10 student)

SUN 9
Sharkey and the Sparks
BEACON
7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
Sharkey McEwen of the Slambovian Circus of Dreams will perform covers of songs from the 1960s and ’70s and some originals with his son, Ben. Cost: $15 ($20 door)

CUVIC

MON 3
City Council
BEACON
7 p.m. City Hall | 1 Municipal Plaza 845-838-5011 | cityofbeacon.org

TUES 4
School Board
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Haldane | 15 Craigside Drive 845-265-9254 | haldoneschool.org

TUES 4
Putnam Legislature
CARME
7 p.m. Historic Courthouse 44 Gileade Ave. | 845-208-7800 putnamcountyny.com

WeD 5
Board of Trustees
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Village Hall | 85 Main St.
845-265-3611 | coldspringny.gov

COVID-19
Check the event websites or highlandscurrent.org/calendar for any last-minute changes because of pandemic restrictions.
Journey to Bottom of the Earth

Local meteorologist visits Antarctica in pursuit of total eclipse

By Michael Turton

Antarctica may be the most remote and inhospitable environment on Earth. But on Dec. 4, it was also the best place to view a total eclipse.

The eclipse coincided with a journey to the Antarctic offered by the French cruise line Compagnie du Ponant. When Putnam Valley resident Joe Rao was asked to be part of it, he quickly responded, “I’m in!”

Rao was the chief meteorologist and science reporter for News12 Westchester for 21 years. Since 1986 he also has served as an associate and guest lecturer at the American Museum of Natural History and its Rose Center for Earth and Space and Hayden Planetarium.

He was recruited for the Antarctic trip by the American Astronomical Society because of his knowledge of astronomy and eclipses and his ability to help the captain determine the best location for observing the rare solar event.

Le Commandant Charcot, Ponant’s 492-foot icebreaking cruise ship, left Punta Arenas, Chile, at the southern tip of South America, on Nov. 30. With 200 passengers, it sailed 1,800 miles east through the Southern Ocean, headed for a rendezvous with Antarctica.

“Many passengers were outside on the ship’s bow” to watch, Rao recalled. “But the only effect was that the overcast sky darkened, much like turning down a dimmer switch.”

The eclipse lasted just 97 seconds. Then the sky brightened again.

“It was interesting,” Rao said. “Not awe-inspiring, but interesting.”

Rao said of 17 cruise ships aligned along the path of the eclipse, “only one found itself under a fortuitous rift in the clouds and saw the eclipsed sun and solar corona.”

After seven days at sea, Le Commandant Charcot made Antarctic landfall at Paulet Island in the Weddell Sea. It was the first of four days that passengers would spend on the world’s southernmost continent.

“When we first set foot on Paulet Island, we saw thousands upon thousands of Adélie penguins,” Rao said.

At other times, the captain pointed out orca whales as they breached the surface of the ocean, spouting water through their blowholes. “We also were treated to views of sea lions and seals,” Rao said.

Antarctica was approaching its summer, and while April through October had produced record-cold temperatures averaging minus 77.6 degrees, by early December the weather had moderated by more than 100 degrees.

The days were generally sunny and breezy. “Temperatures at midday were 40 to 45 degrees, and one day reached the lower 50s.”

The end of fall also meant a lot of daylight.

“On many days the sun rose around 2:30 a.m. and didn’t set until well past 11 p.m.,” he said. “While we didn’t have a midnight sun effect, twilight was still very bright at midnight.”

Because of the increased daylight, no stars were visible during the two-week voyage. Rao said adjusting to the longer daylight hours was not difficult; double curtains kept state rooms dark for sleeping at night.

A few times when he awoke, though, he said it was a shock to peak through the curtains to see the sun shining brightly at 3 a.m.

Climate change was a common topic of conversation. A naturalist onboard who has visited Antarctica for years commented that early December three decades ago saw far fewer openings in the ice, an increasingly noticeable change since the 1990s.

“My thoughts on climate change were reinforced,” Rao said. “I was prepared for frigid conditions, but most every day, temperatures were well above freezing.”

The trip didn’t include visiting any of the abandoned or active research stations located inland. However, the group did experience what is considered “hallowed ground.”

In 1903, the ship Antarctic was crushed by ice and sank off Paulet Island during a Swedish Antarctic expedition. Twenty crew members were rescued 11 months later after enduring the winter. They survived in part by killing more than 1,000 penguins.

Le Commandant Charcot’s passengers visited the remnants of a stone hut built by the survivors, which, along with the grave of an expedition member and a cairn built to alert rescuers, was declared a historic site and monument in 1972.

“I came away with great admiration and respect for all those explorers who traveled to that strange, icy wasteland during the 19th and early 20th centuries,” Rao said.

“I can’t even imagine what they must have done simply to stay alive.”

Asked what impressed him most about the 16,000-mile Antarctic journey he and his wife Renate had experienced, Rao said “being in such a strange and wonderous environment, and cavorting with creatures we don’t see in our everyday life.”

On Paulet Island, he said, “penguins walk up to you in much the same manner as pigeons in Central Park!”

You can follow Rao on Facebook at JoeRaoWeather and on Twitter at @JoeRaoweather. He also has a YouTube channel, JoeRaoweather.

At left, French science writer and photographer Serge Brunier, Capt. Etienne Garcia and Joe Rao on the ship’s bridge

Photos provided

Inflatable boats provided a closer look at the environment.

POSITION AVAILABLE

The Town of Philipstown is seeking candidates interested in a position on the Conservation Board. If interested please send resume to:
Tara Percacciolo, Town Clerk
P.O. Box 155
238 Main Street
Cold Spring, New York 10516
or email
townclerk@philipstown.com
Out There

Season of Mists
By Brian PJ Cronin

He may only be 10 years old, but my son knows a historical anomaly when he sees one. “It’s almost January and there should be snow,” he says, angrily pointing outside to the green grass covered in encroaching waves of warm fog.

He’s right. The Mid-Hudson Valley usually gets between 5 and 6½ inches in December. But aside from a dusting on Christmas Eve morning (aesthetically pleasing) and a few nighttime blasts of freezing rain (pleasing to no one), December has been another month of warmer-than-usual weather. As it demonstrated with its wet, hot American October, climate change has subverted our natural and cultural transitions.

The popular Christmas songs of the 20th century are starting to seem like myths, with their magical kingdoms of sleigh rides and marshmallow worlds — although Bing Crosby sounds eerily prescient, singing about the white Christmases he used to know. There’s a joke from a 25-year-old episode of The Simpsons in which Homer mentions loving a cold beer on a hot Christmas morning. It was 63 degrees in the Highlands on Christmas Day in 2020. The joke isn’t funny anymore.

A few weeks ago, right before the latest COVID-19 wave, friends from down south came to visit. I had hoped there would be snow for them. Instead, as we walked along the marshes of the Hudson, there was only fog obscuring most of the river, and a cold rain. It felt more like March, but with Christmas decorations. I have no language for this, so I turn to the denizens of the other Highlands, the Scots, who know a thing or two about this type of weather. They had a word for cold, dull, misty days: dreich. There’s also the Celtic term mi-chàilear, which the writer Robert MacFarlane defines as “more dreich than dreich.”

We have now reached the holidays between Winter Solstice and New Year’s, the darkest time of the year. Traditionally, this is a time to fight the darkness with lights and festivities and gatherings around the hearth. But I’m not sure that’s appropriate in Dreich-Center. For one thing, it’s too warm to stand next to a roaring fire. Also, I would imagine that many of us are feeling less like the fire and more like the ashes. It can be exhausting to be expected to shine all the time.

I would also imagine that many of you found your holidays turning into something completely different at the last minute. My original plans involved cooking a massive meal at home for family and loved ones, followed by a trip south to see my parents. One case of COVID later in a relative, the holidays instead consisted of my son and I holed up by ourselves for a week with a 6-pound pork shoulder and 22 hours of movies starring hobbits. I know of at least a few local people who spent Christmas quarantined in the basement after a positive COVID test, with their family upstairs — not a scene ever captured by Currier & Ives.

Instead of a season of lights and clarity, we may need to get comfortable with the dark and the mist, fewer jingle bells and more silent nights. Mist and fog usually have sinister connotations, but there are exceptions. The Irish have fíth fiada, a magical mist that envelops the Tuatha Dé Danann, the ancient magical folk of the emerald isle, rendering them invisible to mortals.

Legends tell of this power passing to the mystical druids, and then to Saint Patrick, who used it to hide himself and his traveling companion from those who wished to harm them. When the high king’s troops came upon the two men in the woods, they saw only a deer and a fawn, peering back at them from behind a veil of mist.

This may be the greatest gift of our strange new season, the ability to vanish into darkness and fog, in order to protect ourselves.

The Highlands Current
December 31, 2021
highlandscurrent.org
Albano Files to Run for County Executive
Will face state legislator for Republican line
By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

Nearly a year before the 2022 general election, the race for Putnam County executive heated up this month when County Legislator Carl Albano filed for the job, setting up a clash with another Republican, state Assembly Member Kevin Byrne.

Albano registered his candidacy with the New York State Board of Elections on Dec. 3, three weeks after Byrne, who represents parts of eastern Putnam and northern Westchester in Albany.

Along with serving in the county Legislature, Albano operates the Albano Agency Insurance & Real Estate firm, based in Mahopac. He has represented District 5, which includes much of the Carmel area, on the Legislature since 2011.

Incumbent County Executive MaryEllen Odell, who has worked closely with Albano and other Republican legislators, cannot run in November because of county term limits.

As of Tuesday (Dec. 28), no Democrat had filed to run.

In a phone interview on Tuesday, Albano said he plans to launch his campaign in January, describing it as “a good guy,” and that in competing against each other for Republican support “we’ll just have to go where we go” on the issues. He cited his deep involvement in Putnam, with 11 years as a legislator and decades in business.

“I have a good handle on what’s going on and where to go,” he said.

Albano elaborated in an email on Wednesday (Dec. 29), explaining that he wants to keep “moving Putnam forward on the path that the [Odell] administration and Legislature created over the last few years.” During his time in office, he said, “we eliminated short-term debt and the county total debt has been drastically reduced. My goal is to continue in this direction with the intention of lowering taxes and possibly providing more services.” Because sales tax “is essential to offset residential property taxes” he said he will “continue to support controlled quality commercial growth in Putnam and look for every opportunity to attract the right mix.”

Albano suggested that “what sets me apart from Kevin is that I have been a self-employed business owner for over 44 years” and that “my life experience, being a self-employed business owner, raising a family with five children and working for Putnam County gives me a clear understanding of what direction we should take in the future.”

Putnam Passes Resolution Against Mandatory Vaccines
County continues push for Ambulnz Service
By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

Putnam legislators last week dealt with two issues with potentially deep implications for their constituents, passing a resolution opposing mandatory COVID-19 vaccines and moving ahead on a fund transfer required to switch county-wide ambulance coverage.

In consecutive meetings on Dec. 22 in Carmel, the Legislature’s Audit Committee voted 2-1 to approve transferring $40,467 from a contingency account to help fund a contract with Ambulnz, an ambulance service hired to provide advanced life support services as of Jan. 1. It will replace EmStar/Empress.

Later, the full Legislature, in its year-end meeting, voted 9-3 to ratify a resolution opposing any government demands for COVID-19 vaccinations or regular testing of employees at major businesses or students returning to schools.

The latter resolution, which had earlier been endorsed by the Health Committee, declares “that medical treatment and preventative measures are an individual choice” and that “no COVID-19 vaccine should be mandated by law.”

It further expresses opposition to COVID-19 vaccine mandates “at any level” that affect “parents’ rights to make health care decisions in the best interests of their children.” It encourages citizens “to receive vaccines, or, if choosing non-vaccination, to heed federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advice to avoid infection. As evidence of public support for the resolution, Legislator Toni Addonizio of Kent, who chairs the Legislature, referred to petitions with more than 300 signatures, plus about 100 emails, denouncing mandatory vaccines.

“The people have spoken,” she said. “They’re very concerned and scared for their children,” she said, adding, “I am not anti-vaccine” or opposed to the vaccines required before children can enter school, “I am anti-mandate.”

The Legislature’s resolution, “a statement of public policy, which is the proper role of this Legislature,” likewise “is not in any way anti-vaccine,” she asserted.

Seven of the Legislature’s eight Republicans supported her. The eighth, Amy Sayegh of Mahopac, missed the meeting.

The single “no” vote came from Nancy Montgomery, the lone Democrat, who represents Philipstown and part of Putnam Valley.

“I believe it’s people’s free will to do whatever they want,” said Legislator Neal Sullivan of Carmel-Mahopac. “It’s not that we don’t want you to get a vaccine or wear a mask. But it’s your choice to do what you want. It’s not government’s role.”

Legislator Paul Jonke of Southeast added that “we shut the country down and the [COVID-19] rates are still increasing. Government has got nothing right. I don’t need medical advice to tell me this vaccine mandate is wrong.”

Legislator Carl Alano of Carmel, a candidate for county executive, agreed. “There’s really no clear evidence of what government says,” he said, describing COVID-19 as a “normal thing that’s going to happen, apparently, over the years,” until the U.S. population builds up sufficient immunity to deter it. For now, he said, “especially when it applies to my children, I don’t want anyone telling me what I do.”

It’s not that we don’t want you to get a vaccine or wear a mask. But it’s your choice to do what you want. It’s not government’s role.

~ Legislator Neal Sullivan

Montgomery disagreed. When she asked whether Putnam residents wanted unvaccinated people caring for their elderly parents or young children, a round of “yes” rose from audience members opposed to vaccine mandates. She also pointed out that the federal initiatives are not in fact mandates because they allow frequent testing, in place of vaccines, and that the emails she saw from anti-mandate residents were form letters, as an orchestrated campaign.

“This is just grandstanding,” she said of the resolution, “purely political grandstanding.”

Ambulance services
In the Audit Committee session, which preceded the year-end meeting, further debate ensued over County Executive MaryEllen Odell’s decision to switch the provider of county-wide ambulance services. Protests over the change also arose Dec. 15 at a Protective Services Committee session.

Michael Witkowski, chief of operations for Ambulnz, refuted suspicions voiced by local ambulance corps members and residents that the company kept its winning bid artificially low to lure Putnam officials, while in turn being able to charge local ambulance corps and towns high fees and that its ranks might be too thin for adequate coverage.

“But we did not underbid this,” he maintained. “We are not looking to fleece anybody.” He added: “We are always open to working with the towns, the ambulance corps and whoever is the end-payer, getting to something reasonable and affordable.” Moreover, he said, Ambulnz informed Odell in writing that “we would honor the things [fee arrangements] already in place, provided that they are legal.”

But Nicholas Falcone, captain of the Philipstown Volunteer Ambulance Corps, again expressed concern. Even if Ambulnz holds the line on its charges for 2022, he said, “what’s to say these rates will not change in the future?” He also observed that as of Dec. 22, Ambulnz had not reached any agreements with town governments that financially support local volunteer ambulance corps.

“Towns are still left to fend for ourselves.”

Falcone also questioned Ambulnz personnel levels. Witkowski replied that of the 176 staff members in the service region, which includes Beacon, 54 would cover Putnam.

Montgomery repeated her objection that legislators never received a copy of the Ambulnz contract. “I just think it’s really odd to ask us for funding for a contract we don’t see,” she said.

Legislator Ginny Nacerino of Patterson responded that the legislators’ sole function is approving the $40,467 fund transfer because “the contract is executed by the county executive.”

Two of the three Audit Committee members opposed transferring the funds. They demanded sending it to the full Legislature for action on Tuesday (Jan. 4). Legislator Bill Gouldman of Putnam Valley voted “no,” saying that local ambulance corps and elected officials had advised him that “the new contract will not be the best move” for Putnam’s towns.

**NOTICE**

TOWN OF PHILIPSTOWN TAX COLLECTION LEGAL NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT I, Tara K. Percacciolo, the undersigned Collector of Taxes of the Town of Philipstown, County of Putnam and State of New York, have duly received the tax roll and warrant for the collection of taxes within the Town of Philipstown for the year 2022 and that I will receive the same at the 238 Main Street, Cold Spring, New York from January 1, 2022 through July 31, 2022 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Taxes will be collected without penalty if paid on or before January 31, 2022. On all taxes paid after January 31, 2022 an additional 1% penalty will be assessed for each month or fraction thereof thereafter until such taxes are paid or until the return of unpaid taxes to the County Treasurer pursuant to law. Partial tax payment (50% of total tax) will ONLY be accepted during the month of January 2022. The second partial payment will be assessed a 1% penalty charge each month until July 31, 2022 when all unpaid second partial payments will be turned over to the County Treasurer. Full payment of taxes will be accepted without penalty during the month of January 2022. After the month of January, a 1% interest penalty will be assessed each month until May 1, 2022 when all “fully unpaid” taxes will be turned over to the County Treasurer for collection.

DATED: December 29, 2022

Tara K. Percacciolo, Tax Collector, Town of Philipstown
Brewster Officer Accused of Protecting Sex Traffickers

Prosecutors allege he was bribed with sex
By Leonard Sparks

Federal prosecutors have charged a Brewster police officer with demanding sex in exchange for protecting two organizations accused of luring women and girls from Mexico to New York for prostitution.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York alleges that Officer Wayne Peiffer provided protection from arrest and advanced warning of police operations to Queens-based sex traffickers for more than eight years.

Since May 2002, prosecutors said one ring promised girls and women in Mexico “a better life,” and then used threats of force, fraud and coercion to traffic them for sex, according to a 14-count indictment unsealed on Dec. 14.

Another ring drove girls and women to Queens to assigned routes in Brewster and other places to meet clients, according to court documents.

In exchange for protection, prosecutors allege that members of the rings brought women to Peiffer for sex, including at the Brewster police station. In text messages filed with court documents, Peiffer appeared to discuss the physical appearances of the women.

Peiffer, 48, was charged with extortion, promoting prostitution and bribery. He pleaded not guilty on Dec. 14 in federal court in Brooklyn and was released after posting $300,000 bond.

In a statement on Dec. 15, Brewster Mayor James Schoenig said Peiffer has been suspended without pay and that the village “is cooperating fully with the investigation.”

The Putnam County Sheriff’s Department and other agencies assisted the FBI in the case. In addition to Peiffer, five Queens residents were charged: Luz Elvira Cardona, Roberto Cesar Cid Dominguez, Cristian Noe Godinez, Blanca Hernandez Morales and Jose Facundo Zarate Morales.

Boy Scouts to Sell Dutchess Camp

Hudson Valley council must pay into victim trust fund
By Chip Rowe

The board of the Greater Hudson Valley Council of the Boy Scouts of America announced on Dec. 4 that it will sell the 90-year-old Camp Nooteeming in Dutchess County to pay its share of claims made against the national organization by former scouts who say they were sexually abused.

The council had placed three of its four camps on the market, including the 1,385-acre Durland Scout Reservation in Putnam Valley and the 313-acre Camp Bullowa in Stony Point. Only Camp Read, in the Adirondacks, was not listed.

In a letter posted on its website, four council executives said that while the decision to sell the 272-acre Salt Point campground was “heart-wrenching,” it was necessary to ensure that scouting survives in the Hudson Valley.

Facing a barrage of federal lawsuits, the national Boy Scouts of America declared bankruptcy in February 2020. By a November 2020 deadline, more than 82,000 claims had been filed to participate in a potential settlement.

In July, the Boy Scouts offered a settlement of $850 million, including $600 million collected from regional councils across the country.

The Greater Hudson Valley Council said in August its share had been calculated at $6.37 million, based on about 550 claims from the region beginning in the 1950s. “The majority of the cases took place prior to the 1990s,” the council said in a statement at the time. “We take our obligation to the victims seriously as even a single case of abuse is one too many.”

For most councils, campgrounds are their most valuable assets. Together, the 15 councils in New York state operate 28 camps covering more than 30,000 acres.

“The majority of the cases took place prior to the 1990s,” the council said in a statement at the time. “We take our obligation to the victims seriously as even a single case of abuse is one too many.”

For most councils, campgrounds are their most valuable assets. Together, the 15 councils in New York state operate 28 camps covering more than 30,000 acres.

“Three council properties were placed on the market earlier this year to assess each property’s value,” the Greater Hudson Valley executives said in their Dec. 4 letter. “The market information gathered, along with analyzing past budgets, endowment reports and future expenses, led the bankruptcy task force to recommend the plan that was approved” to sell Camp Nooteeming and “put the bankruptcy behind us without incurring burdensome debt.”

The executives said the council staff and board “are committed to helping the traditional scouting programs that were hosted at Camp Nooteeming find a new location.”

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 e-mail at 1presbyterian@gmail.com.
Residents of Putnam and Dutchess counties voted early, on Election Day, by absentee and by affidavit, and each county’s board of elections certified their results on Dec. 6.

### Campaign Finance

The numbers below include money raised and spent by candidates and committees from Jan. 1 to Nov. 29, when the most recent disclosures were due at the state Board of Elections.

#### PUTNAM COUNTY

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#### PUTNAM SHERIFF

- Robert Langley Jr. (D): $53,075
- Kevin McConville (R): $82,962

#### PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE

- Nancy Montgomery (D): $23,000
- Barbara Scuccimarra (R): $4,975

### STATEWIDE

#### Proposition No. 1 (Cannabis retail)

- Yes: $23,692
- No: $20,894

#### Proposition No. 2 (Cannabis on-site)

- Yes: $21,946
- No: $11,324

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<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>Sept. 27</td>
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### PUTNAM COUNTY SUPREME COURT

- Thomas Davis (DEM/REP): $2,000
- Robert Martin (DEM/REP): $3,000
- James Hendry (REP): $4,000
- Mark Starkweather (REP): $5,000
- Richard Guerin (REP/CON): $6,000

### PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

<table>
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<th>Board Member</th>
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### PUTNAM COUNTY BOROUGH COURT

- Timothy Pagones (REP/CON/WOR): $1,000
- No vote cast | $2,000 | $1,000 | $3,000 | Sept. 27 |

Note: Candidates may have had a balance on Jan. 1. In some cases, the filing dates are for amended returns.

### PUTNAM COUNTY EXECUTIVE

- Patsy M. Burke: $50,000

### PUTNAM COUNTY SHERIFF

- Robert Langley Jr. (D): $53,075
- Kevin McConville (R): $82,962

### PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE

- Nancy Montgomery (D): $23,000
- Barbara Scuccimarra (R): $4,975

### PUTNAM COUNTY SUPREME COURT

- Thomas Davis (DEM/REP): $2,000
- Robert Martin (DEM/REP): $3,000
- James Hendry (REP): $4,000
- Mark Starkweather (REP): $5,000
- Richard Guerin (REP/CON): $6,000

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### PUTNAM COUNTY BOROUGH COURT

- Timothy Pagones (REP/CON/WOR): $1,000
- No vote cast | $2,000 | $1,000 | $3,000 | Sept. 27 |

Note: Candidates may have had a balance on Jan. 1. In some cases, the filing dates are for amended returns.
**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Ban On Foam Containers To Begin Jan. 1**

*Law also covers trays, lids, cups*

Local restaurants, delis, grocery stores, and other establishments selling prepared foods and drinks will be prohibited from using foam containers made from “expanded” polystyrene under a state law that takes effect on Saturday (Jan. 1).

The law, adopted in 2020, also prohibits retailers and manufacturers from selling disposable polystyrene food containers, including cups, lids and trays, and loose-fill packaging commonly known as packing peanuts.

Exemptions include packaging for raw meats and fish and containers made from polystyrene resin that has not been “expanded, extruded or foamed.” Food programs operated by nonprofits or government agencies may apply for hardship waivers.

**Putnam Lawsuit Upgraded to Wrongful Death**

*Family alleges man died from injuries caused by deputies*

The family of a Brewster man who died two years after an encounter with Putnam County Sheriff’s Department deputies outside his home has added wrongful death to their list of claims in a $50 million federal lawsuit against the county.

In an amended complaint filed Dec. 24, the family of George Taranto alleges that his death on Aug. 25 of this year resulted from a brain injury suffered when he was tackled by deputies on July 8, 2019.

Taranto, then 75, was carrying a licensed and loaded Colt Mustang .380 pistol when he came outside after hearing noises and seeing flashlights. According to the lawsuit, he encountered deputies investigating a report of a stolen car at a neighboring property.

The family said Taranto complied when deputies, with their weapons drawn, began screaming at him to drop the gun, raise his hands and walk toward them. Along with the county, the lawsuit names as defendants outgoing Sheriff Robert Langley Jr., three deputies, a sergeant and an investigator.

**Metro-North Extends Lower Fares**

*Will also add discounts in March*

Metro-North has extended its discounted fares through at least February.

To encourage ridership during the pandemic shutdown, the commuter rail-road has been charging off-peak fares on all trains. It said the lower fares would continue until at least Feb. 28.

Metro-North said it plans in March to offer 20-trip tickets at 20 percent off one-way peak fares when purchased through eTix. In addition, it will lower the price of monthly tickets — currently discounted 48 percent to 61 percent below one-way fares — by another 10 percent. Both discounts will be in effect for at least four months, it said.

The number of passengers across Metro-North lines remains 30 to 60 percent below the same days in 2019.

**Dutchess Awards $1.5 Million in Grants**

*Dutchess County on Tuesday (Dec. 28) announced that it would distribute $1.5 million to 34 nonprofits as part of its Agency Partner Grant program. The recipients include $23,650 to the Dutchess County Pride Center in Hopewell Junction for a teen drop-in program; $31,827 to Friends of Seniors of Dutchess County Corp. for its medical transportation program; and $50,000 to Land to Learn for SproutEd, a nutrition program for Beacon elementary school students.

The grants also included $44,801 to Hudson River Housing for financial workshops; $32,501 for its housing navigator program; and $56,080 for its homeless outreach programs in Beacon and Poughkeepsie.**

**SERVICE DIRECTORY**

---

**Answers for Dec. 24 Puzzles**

1. STREAMING, 2. TEETH, 3. ASTERISK, 4. EASTERN, 5. GRAMMAR, 6. PODIATRY, 7. GEYSER

---

**GREY ZEIEN**

*The Comix*

**December 4th - January 2, 2022**

The gallery will be closed on Dec. 29, 2021, Jan 1, 2022.

**Buster Levy Gallery**

374 Albany Post Rd, Ossining, NY 10562
914-737-0823

**MrCheapeeInc**

37A Albany Post Rd. Ossining, NY 10562
914-737-0823

**Alleys**

(646) 772-2673

allens-dumpster-service.business.site
Puzzles

**CrossCurrent**

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

**ACROSS**

1. Store
2. 5. Opposite of STOP
7. Edifice like St. Mary’s or St. Luke’s
9. Twin to duh
10. Lower than 1
11. Ancient Mesopotamian city
12. Basic singular verb
14. Wallop
15. NY neighbor
16. In ___ (memo term)
17. Sound of relief
18. Another form of 12-across
19. NY neighbor
20. Breakfast cereal component
21. Highway abbreviation
22. Parts of shoes
23. Opposite of poor
26. Paradise
29. A lake in Italy
30. 11th U.S. president
31. Omaha state, Abbr.
32. Alphabet kick-off
33. Canine
34. Stumble over (2 words)
35. 11th U.S. president
36. News media
37. Element No. 92
38. Element No. 92
39. A very long time
40. State adjacent to WA
41. City across Hudson from Beacon
42. Knightly term
43. Puzzle number, in ancient Rome
44. Parts of shoes
45. Abbr. for “you”
46. Like a saw or comb
47. Opposite of “begin”
48. Alpha and Omega, in brief
49. “Got it,” in military parlance
50. Opposite of “begin”
51. Think something over
52. Opposite of “begin”
53. Letter for a thousand
54. “__ is for ___pple”
55. Take a chair
56. Exist
57. What a guy in Beacon had in his car in 1921
58. Element No. 15
59. For example, Abbr.
60. State next to CO
61. Not new
62. Like like
63. Poet Eliot
64. Blood factor
65. 1/10 of D in ancient Rome

**DOWN**

1. Rippers
2. Et ___ Brute?
3. Neither-nor; either- ___
4. Loo, Abbr.
5. Stomach
6. Common exclamation
7. Surname of this newspaper
8. First name of this newspaper
9. Male pronoun
10. What elected officials swear
11. Supervisor before Van Tassel
12. Holds
13. Wolf group
14. With 18-Down, elementally No. 14
15. See preceding clue
16. Slick fuel
17. For instance, Abbr.
18. “___ how a rose ere…” (Xmas carol word)
20. Breakfast cereal component
21. Highway abbreviation
22. Parts of shoes
23. Opposite of poor
26. Paradise
29. A lake in Italy
30. 11th U.S. president
31. Omaha state, Abbr.
32. Alphabet kick-off
33. Canine
34. Stumble over (2 words)
35. 11th U.S. president
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61. Not new
62. Like like
63. Poet Eliot
64. Blood factor
65. 1/10 of D in ancient Rome

**7 LittleWords**

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

**CLUES**

1 trying to have it both ways (7)
2 person who brings a suit (9)
3 resided (7)
4 obfuscating (8)
5 selling off of assets (11)
6 trash crushers (10)
7 arithmetic skills (8)

**SOLUTIONS**

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**SudokuCurrent**

Puzzle Page Sponsored by

Country Goose
115 Main St.
Cold Spring, NY 10516
845-265-2122
**VARSITY ROUNDUP**

**INDOOR TRACK**

Beacon High School's indoor track and field team got strong performances from its sophomores at the 31-team Pearl River Holiday Invitational at Rockland Community College on Monday (Dec. 27). For the boys, Damani DeLoatch won the long jump with a 18-10.25 effort, including a personal best on his final jump; Henry Reinke won the 1,600-meters in 4:48.24; and Rubio Castagna-Torres was second in the 800 meters in 2:17.30.

For the girls, Chelsea Derboghossian won the 55-meters in 7.70; Kyla Richardson took second in the high jump at 4-6 in her first competition in the event; Isabela Migliore was third in the 800 in 2:37.89; and the 4x200 relay team of Derboghossian, Migliore, Richardson and freshman Christine Robinson won in 1:41.80.

The senior boys also did well. Evan Labelle won the 1,600 meters in 4:46.52; Andre Stackasaki was second in the high jump at 5-3 after a tiebreaker; senior Edward Manente was second in the 300 in 38.78; and Sal Migliore was second in the 600 in 1:29.08.

“There is a fair amount of talent amongst the seniors, but it’s exciting at a meet like this to see where you are.” said Timpano.

**BOYS’ BASKETBALL**

Beacon had its three-game winning streak snapped on Monday (Dec. 27) at a tournament hosted by Ketcham High School in Wappingers Falls, falling to the host, 61-31, in the first round.

The Bulldogs came back Tuesday with a strong effort and defeated Franklin D. Roosevelt, 73-59. “We were down one at halftime, and we weren’t playing bad,” Coach Scott Timpano said of the FDR game. “But offensively we weren’t playing bad,” Coach Scott Timpano said. “There is a fair amount of talent amongst the seniors, but it’s exciting at a meet like this to see where you are.”

**GIRLS’ BASKETBALL**

At Peekskill on Dec. 22, Haldane showed more of the consistent intensity their coach has been looking for but came up short, 47-39.

“Peekskill has some standout players,” including freshman Bethany Overly, who finished with 19 points, said Haldane Coach Jessica Perrone. “She will be phenomenal, she’s tall, can handle the ball and can shoot and drive.”

Perrone said her team needs to tighten up its defense and avoid unforced turnovers. Nevertheless, she said, “I feel like this is the first game we’ve played hard all game, without a hull.”

Haldane Chiera led the Blue Devils with 10 points, while Amanda Johanson and Marisa Scanga each had nine and Mairread O’Hara scored seven and four steals.

“Johanson and Scanga have been giving us 3-pointers, and that’s big because it drops the pressure on some of our other shooters,” Perrone said.

Haldane (2-5) is scheduled to host Croton on Wednesday (Jan. 5) at 6:15 p.m.

The Beacon girls (3-2) were scheduled to play at Highland on Dec. 30 and will host Cornwall on Jan. 4 at 4:30 p.m., travel to Goshen on Jan. 6, and host Spackenkill on Jan. 7.

**WRESTLING**

A contingent of Beacon wrestlers competed at the Mid-Hudson Tournament held Monday (Dec. 27) and Tuesday at Arlington High School.

Senior Lou Del Bianco took second place at 215 pounds after losing in the finals to a wrestler from Xavier, Long Island. Del Bianco went 4-0 on Monday, then won the finals, where he fell by a 4-3 decision. Del Bianco improved his season mark to 14-1.

“Lou has been wrestling well,” said Coach Ron Tompkins. “He’s had a good day on Monday,” Tompkins said. “On Tuesday they faced stiffer competition. But this is a good tournament, with good competition, and a good way to see where you are.”

Alex Khalil, at 189 pounds, was 3-1 on Monday but lost both of his matches on Tuesday. “He was [competitive] in all of his matches on Tuesday; they just didn’t go his way,” said Tompkins.

The Bulldogs are scheduled to visit Cornwall on Jan. 7.

**HOW TO WATCH**

Most Haldane junior varsity and varsity home games are livestreamed at LocalLive (bit.ly/haldane-stream). Many of Haldane’s opponents also broadcast via the site when they host the Blue Devils.

Many Beacon home games are livestreamed via HUDL through links at beaconk12.org/athletics. Many of Beacon’s opponents also broadcast via the NFHS Network (bit.ly/beacon-stream) when they host the Bulldogs.

**SPORTS**

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