Dutchess Budget Approved — With $25M for Stadium

The Dutchess County Legislature approved the county’s 2023 budget by an 18-7 vote on Dec. 8. County Executive Marc Molinaro, who will vacate office next month to represent the 19th District in the U.S. House of Representatives, signed the $587.7 million spending plan on Wednesday (Dec. 14).

Notably, the budget includes a 12 percent property tax rate decrease — the eighth straight rate reduction — and, at $99.45 million, the lowest property tax levy in 14 years. It also included a last-minute amendment, a $25 million allocation to fund continued upgrades at Dutchess Stadium, that rankled Democratic legislators, only one of whom voted for the budget.

In a statement on Thursday, the county executive said he was “disheartened” that seven Democratic legislators, including Yvette Valdes Smith and Nick Page, whose districts include parts of Beacon, voted against “such a beneficial spending plan.” Molinaro’s initial proposal included $15 million for the stadium, which is the home of the Hudson Valley Renegades, the High-A affiliate of the New York Yankees. However, legislators learned early in the week before the Dec. 8 meeting that the item had been pulled from the budget. In its place, Legislator Will Truitt, the Republican majority leader, introduced the $25 million amendment minutes before legislators were to vote on the budget, and after two opportunities for public comment had passed.

Valdes Smith, who is the minority leader in the Legislature, was quoted as saying, “It doesn’t seem fair to the taxpayers.”

Montgomery Blasts Attack on Wrongful-Death Reform

Putnam legislator cites personal experience with issue

Putnam County Legislator Nancy Montgomery, whose district includes Philipstown, last week rebuked the majority of her colleagues who oppose a revision of an 1847 state law that limits financial compensation to survivors in the wrongful deaths of loved ones.

She commented in Carmel at the Legislature’s Dec. 6 formal monthly meeting in regard to the Grieving Families Act, passed in June by the state Senate and Assembly with bipartisan support. It awaits action by Gov. Kathy Hochul.

Five members of the nine-person Putnam Legislature signed a Nov. 30 letter asking Hochul to veto the legislation, claiming its

Fjord Trail Shares Early Parking Report

Consultants recommend new lots, shuttle service

By Brian PJ Cronin

Nearly 500,000 people visit the Hudson Highlands State Park each year, which may feel like a lowball to anyone attempting to drive past or hike Breakneck Ridge on a sunny Saturday afternoon.

Managing and redirecting that sprawl is one of the goals of the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail project, a 7.5-mile linear park that will connect Cold Spring to Beacon along the Hudson River. Critics have raised concerns that the project could instead contribute to the problem, although trail officials insist it will alleviate the dangerous weekend glut of vehicles and pedestrians along Route 9D near Breakneck and Little Stony Point.

Construction on the Fjord Trail, which is

TRAIN SAFETY — Sen. Charles Schumer visited Garrison on Dec. 9 to advocate safer Metro-North crossings. The Manitou stop on the Hudson line is one of five in Putnam and Dutchess counties that will soon be upgraded at a cost of $4.4 million. The funding will come from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which includes $9 billion for rail safety. Schumers, who is the Senate majority leader, said he also is pushing for $45 million to enhance positive train control (PTC) technology to automatically slow engines in emergencies. Schumers was joined at a news conference at the Manitou Station by Putnam County Legislator Nancy Montgomery (right), whose husband, Jim Lovell, was killed in a 2013 crash that might have been prevented with PTC in place. Photo provided

The Renegades play at Dutchess Stadium on Route 9D outside of Beacon. HVR photo

(Continued on Page 3)
Bonny Carmicino, who lives in Cold Spring, is president of the Association of Sewing and Design Professionals.

Did you sew as a child? I learned when I was 4. I made my first dress when I was in kindergarten from fabric my mom had given to me to make a tablecloth. I grew up on a farm in Walla Walla, Washington; my parents said they would only pay for me to go to a local college, but I wanted out of Dodge. So I told them I wasn’t going to college. There was an announcement at school that the local congressman was looking to hire a page, so I applied. It turned out you had to be a rising senior, so I didn’t get it, but on the Monday after I graduated, his office called and offered me a job as a staff assistant. So I moved to Washington, D.C., to work for Rep. Tom Foley, who was the majority whip.

How did you end up at MIT? I was always good at math and science, and a person I worked with in D.C. suggested I apply. Do you know any philosophy on the concept of possible possibilities? Nobody from Walla Walla had ever gone to MIT. I had thrown away the brochure. I got in and I went. After a few years, I was tired of engineering, so I took a year off and worked in the fabric store, then came back and got my degree in philosophy. MIT put together resume books of graduating students organized by major and I had a tab all to myself. Morgan Stanley hired me for a program to train programmers who could communicate with their front-office people. After a while, I felt like I was just helping people make lots of money. I decided I wanted to study legal philosophy, so I went to NYU law. I was disappointed in that legal philosophers seemed to define themselves by being incomprehensible. At the same time, I was taking classes at the Fashion Institute of Technology on nights and weekends. The sewing kept me sane.

So now you’ve found balance between your left and right brains? Yes. So much of my life has been alternating between them. I knew what I wanted to do with my life when I was 7, and it haunted me when I didn’t do it. If you’ve lost your passion in life, consider what you liked to do when you were 7. My life’s work is creating a new method of pattern drafting — to work from body scans to create patterns that fit a particular body, not just the average body. I have a patent on a fit-prediction algorithm from my time at Ezaize earlier in my career. Unless you have custom garments, they are not going to fit perfectly — they’re not even going to fit great. People minimize the complexity. When I was working at Ezaize, they were using a German military size chart from World War II. I asked, “What if a woman has a size 8 waist and size 12 hips?” And this bunch of guys said, “Does that happen?” That’s why there are so many returns on mail-order clothes, especially with women’s clothes. Men’s clothes are designed to hang off the shoulders and the waist and camouflage their shape and there is room for alterations, whereas women’s clothes are designed to accentuate their shape. Women have more curves, and distinct curves. Designers are working with body scanners trying to recreate the experience of an experienced tailor taking topical measurements. The system that I’m coming up with embraces the three-dimensionality of the data.

Have you done any unusual sewing projects? Sure. Threads magazine has a challenge each year. I have a bit of a history here, trying to make the strangest possible entries. For instance, for the transformation challenge, I made an outfit that went from hiking to formal wear. The pants became an evening shrug. More recently, you had to upcycle a work outfit, so I put a call out for worn-out socks and sewed them — after washing them with Borax — into a wrap. I think it’s fabulous but the judges said they couldn’t imagine wearing it to work — fuddy duddy’s [laughs]. What I love — my specialty — is couture lace work, where you piece it together like a puzzle so you can’t see the seams. I like working with guipure lace, which has heavy threads in it. I volunteered to help with sewing merit badges. I was surprised to learn there isn’t a merit badge. Everyone should know how to sew on a button and hem pants. There has been a renewal of interest in sewing partly because of thrift culture. Younger people are not buying into fast fashion; they are more interested in sustainability and aware that it is much better for the planet.

Should sewing be a required course? Absolutely. When my boys were in Scouts, I volunteered to help with sewing merit badges. I was surprised to learn there isn’t one. It seems to me that the first merit badge you earn should be how to sew on your merit badge. Everyone should know how to sew on a button and hem pants. There has been a renewal of interest in sewing partly because of thrift culture. Younger people are not buying into fast fashion; they are more interested in sustainability and aware that it is much better for the planet.

Bonny Carmicino
Wrongful Death (from Page 1)

enactment could significantly raise medical practitioners’ insurance fees, award payments to families for concerns ranging far beyond economic loss, and increase the number of wrongful-death lawsuits because it extends the deadline for bringing them to 3½ years, from 2 years.

“What hubris” her colleagues displayed in assuming that they “are more informed about this issue, its benefits and its potential consequences, than nearly the entire New York State legislative body,” Montgomery said at the meeting, noting that Neal Sullivan of Carmel-Mahopac, who chairs the Legislature but will leave office Dec. 31 after losing his seat in the November election, asked her to sign the letter “on the eve of the anniversary of my husband’s wrongful death.”

Montgomery’s husband, Jim Lovell, died in the Dec. 1, 2013, derailment of a Metro-North train near New York City. She filed a wrongful-death lawsuit against the Metropolitan Transportation Authority that was settled out of court.

“While this legislation would not help me personally,” Montgomery said, she felt “truly traumatized” by Sullivan’s move and “equally disheartened” that Legislators Ginny Nacerino of Patterson, Carl Albano of Carmel, Amy Sayegh of Mahopac and Toni Addonizio of Kent, all Republicans like Sullivan, signed the letter.

Montgomery asserted that “the people of Putnam deserve better representation, not someone who is going to advocate for corporate America on the backs of those wrongfully taken from us.”

Three other Republicans, William Gouldman of Putnam Valley, Paul Jonke of Southeast and Joseph Castellano of Brewster, did not sign. Montgomery, whose district includes part of Putnam Valley, is the Legislature’s lone Democrat.

According to the New York Public Interest Research Group, a public-policy nonprofit, and two organizations of trial lawyers, the 1847 law needs revision because it reflects archaic concepts of a married adult male as a family’s sole wage-earner, fails to account for the unpaid labor of women in homes and excludes families that consist of domestic-partner couples, grandparents raising children and others in non-traditional arrangements.

The letter to Hochul from the five Putnam legislators says that, along with higher insurance costs, the Grieving Families Act “would have unintended consequences that damage medical care,” induce medical practitioners to leave the state, and “increase the financial strain on hospitals and medical practices,” likely forcing some to close. Similarly, it argues, the revised legislation would “allow the recovery of emotional damages against someone found liable for causing a death.”

“Well, my God, shouldn’t it?” Montgomery asked.

The letter further predicted that the legislation “will open the door to such non-economic damages as grief, sympathy and ‘loss of love, society, protection, comfort, companionship and consortium,’” instead of focusing on economics.

Yet these other losses remain real “every moment of every single day,” Montgomery said, “and they definitely affect the economic stability of any family.” Under the 1847 law, she added, monetary damages “merely pay for the insurance and expenses necessary to keep up with the unresolved consequences of losing a loved one.”

None of the five legislators who sent the letter replied to her. The matter was not on the agenda and Montgomery spoke during the period, just before adjournment, reserved for legislators’ comments on any subject.

When the bill was approved by the state Assembly in June, 147-2, it received “yes” votes from Sandy Galef and Jonathan Jacobson, Democrats whose districts include Philipstown and Beacon, respectively, as well as Republicans Kevin Byrne, who was elected in November as Putnam County executive, and Mike Lawler, who won election to the new U.S. House district that includes Philipstown.

In the state Senate, which passed the bill 57-6, Sue Serino, a Republican who represents Philipstown and Beacon, voted “yes.”
Heat pumps

Over the last two years we did the same as Krystal Ford: installed high-efficiency heat pumps in each room plus a hybrid water heater (“Living Green: The Wonders of Heat Pumps,” Dec. 2). After a winter test, this year we went all-in, removing the oil tank, boiler and radiators.

The system has no trouble heating and cooling our 1,300-square-foot house. Each unit has a sensor and adjusts to save energy when the room is empty. It recovers automatically after brief power outages. (The oil system relied on electrical components, too, so also wouldn’t have worked during an outage.) The heat pumps are super quiet, indoors and out. We’ve noticed the air is a bit drier, so we purchased small humidifiers for the bedrooms.

It cost us $28,000 for five units and the water heater (we used Mitsubishi installed by Rycor), so, even with rebates, this isn’t for everyone, yet. It isn’t clear that we save money — we have solar, and electric cars, so the costs are muddled up. But I expect electricity to be cheaper than oil in the long run, simply because electricity can be generated with a greater diversity of sources.

I like the extra space in the basement and in each room, and the relative simplicity of the new system. (No leaky pipes! No chimneys! No boiler to service!) Most of all, I love that, at least in part, I’m heating my house with the panels on my own roof, instead of with 300 gallons of diesel fuel shipped from far away.

Aaron Freimark, Cold Spring

We converted to heat pumps last year and it was $20,000 after all the rebates. That’s not realistic for many people. Our resources would be better focused toward rebuilding our failed electric co-op and working to address grid renewable energy sources and transmission. Make clean energy cheaper and more available, and the work will be done for us.

Regarding the Champlain Hudson Power Express (“Work Begins on New Power Line,” Dec. 9), there are 2,000- to 5,000-acre solar projects upstate (all of which met huge local resistance), but no way to get that energy to the parts of the state that need it. These transmission lines are incredibly important for the transition to renewable energy.

Tom Cerchiara, via Instagram
LETTERS AND COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 4)

argue about whether Beacon needs another events space, but there should be no argument that this is the wrong location for it.

Shelley Simmons-Bloom, via Instagram

Whatever goes into this building should be family- or youth-focused. Beacon has tons of event spaces already and fun places to go.

Emely Peña, via Instagram

The developer proposed the space could be used for art exhibits. There is no money in (most) art, so whenever I see “art” in variances, I am skeptical.

Lesly Canossi, via Instagram

A small boutique hotel/cafe with an accessory conference space, and reasonable operating hours, sufficient on-site parking and adequate staffing, would be an acceptable use of this beautiful space. An event venue operating 365 days per year from 8 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. with no way of adequately disbursing crowds is not the right fit.

Betty Wall, via Instagram

Why aren’t folks more upset at the developers behind River Ridge, West End Lofts, Highland Place and the projects going up near Fishkill Creek? These developments do little for the community other than provide more overpriced and poorly constructed housing for people trying to escape the city. Where is the affordable housing?

A transformed church would not be the next Madison Square Garden. If done right, it could be a great opportunity to create additional cultural events and spaces.

Wide Angle

Priced Out

By Stowe Boyd

I moved to Beacon in late 2010, and after renting for a year or so, my wife and I bought a four-bedroom home in the center of town, close to Main Street, at a now-inconceivably reasonable price.

Of course, it was reasonable because, at the time, every third storefront was boarded up. The city was willing to take almost any offer from developers as the region and country slowly climbed out of the Great Recession.

I recently had tea with a friend whose situation brought home just how much the housing market in the Highlands has changed. She lived in Beacon for decades but her home was too large for just one person and she planned to downsize. However, she was unable to find anything affordable to rent or buy, a roadblock many people have encountered.

She looked in Kingston, where the rental market was just as tight but there were options for sale. She was able to find a small house she could afford, although it came with one major downside — it’s not in Beacon.

What changed during the decade before my experience and hers?

There is a housing crisis in the U.S., a tangled tale of many parts. At the highest level, we are short as many as 5 million “units” (i.e., homes, apartments, condos, etc.). This is especially acute at the lower end of the market. It has been caused, principally, by developers following the money — they build newer, larger homes to sell to wealthier and older people. The National Association of Realtors says first-time buyers account for the smallest share of the market in the past 40 years.

As a result, no state, including New York, has enough “affordable” housing, which is defined roughly as costing no more than about a third of a person’s income for rent or a mortgage payment. At the same time, restrictive zoning in the most populous and popular regions, such as the New York City metro area, has blocked or slowed the development of lower-priced rentals.

By one estimate, New York state will need 500,000 to 1.2 million housing units over the next 10 years to meet demand. Gov. Kathy Hochul has proposed preserving or building 100,000 units over the next five years at a cost of $25 billion, which is inadequate by a factor of 10.

The pandemic and its aftereffects have created additional challenges, which you can see firsthand in Beacon and Philipstown. After white-collar workers were forced to work at home, many relocated to the periphery of “superstar cities” like New York, e.g., to the Highlands. The end of the commute doesn’t look like a fade: more companies are adjusting their real estate and personnel plans accordingly.

This influx of wealthier buyers drives prices up and availability down, leading to an outflow of lower-income residents, such as my friend. Hochul and other elected officials will have to shift their attention to this in-migration at the edge of this “donut effect,” as economists call it, with city centers as the hole.

There is a third factor: more older residents live in larger homes, and more of them are living alone. Like my friend, they benefit financially from the strong market, but there’s nowhere to go once they sell.

Because the margins are lower, developers don’t target this demographic or younger couples looking for starter homes.

In my next column, I’ll look at some solutions that could be applied locally.

Stowe Boyd is a Beacon resident who specializes in the economics and ecology of work and the “anthropology of the future.” His column focuses on the local impacts of larger trends.
Parking Plan

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(1) Observed in July and October / (2) Under construction or discussion
Source: Creighton Manning, via HNF

Fjord Trail (from Page 1)

being funded by New York State and private donations, is scheduled to begin soon for completion by 2028. The first phase includes new parking and a pedestrian bridge over the Metro-North tracks. The project operates under the wing of the nonprofit Scenic Hudson, based in Poughkeepsie.

At a webinar on Dec. 6, consultants hired by the Fjord Trail shared the preliminary findings of a study that examined how the project could relieve congestion.

Dan Berkowsky, a senior transit engineer with Creighton Manning Engineering, said the researchers found that, at peak times, parking was 10 percent to 25 percent above capacity along the state highway near Breakneck.

“One park in very interesting ways — not necessarily safe,” he said. “There’s no one actually enforcing the parking rules, keeping people where they’re supposed to park. People just park where they can.”

An obvious solution is to increase the number of legal spaces, said Stephen Falbel, president of Steadman Hill Consulting, although “that’s not to say we want to provide a parking space for everyone who might drive there. But we don’t want people cruising around streets and parking and neighborhoods, creating traffic problems and safety problems.”

“We want an adequate supply of parking, but we also want a shuttle system that will improve mobility and to encourage people to use the train,” he said. The study found that 66 percent of park visitors arrived in vehicles and 29 percent by train.

The researchers suggested adding 387 spaces, for a capacity of 620. The number could change because it includes 100 spots at Boscobel in Garrison that have not been finalized, but most would be located in new lots at Breakneck, the Notch Trail and Dutchess Manor, which will become the headquarters for the Fjord Trail.

Some parking would be allowed along Route 9D north of the Breakneck Tunnel, but 46 spots would be removed, to lower capacity to 112, and parking south of the tunnel would be eliminated. The Fjord Trail would like to have the state Department of Transportation lower the speed limit near Breakneck from 55 mph to 40 mph, and the researchers said roadside parking will help justify that change.

The new parking lots would require a fee, although how much it would be and how it would be collected (via an app, kiosk, EZ-Pass or a staffed booth) has not been determined. It’s possible that residents would receive discounts. The challenge, the planners said, is to set a fee that’s just high enough to get people to take the shuttle.

Electric shuttle vans would be either free or next to nothing, although planners are leaning toward the former. “If we want to maximize the number of people taking transit, charging a fare is not the way to do that,” said Falbel. The vans would be able to carry bikes, and some would accommodate wheelchairs.

The proposed shuttle route would include the Beacon train station, the Notch trailhead just south of Beacon, Dutchess Manor, Breakneck, Little Stony Point and possibly Mount Beacon. The southernmost stop could be the Cold Spring train station or Boscobel. Having a stop in the village would eliminate foot traffic there but would increase parking at the station and traffic if the shuttles stopped on Main Street.

Adding Boscobel would keep vehicles out of the village and make it easier to access the historic estate without a car. However, it would make the route longer, which could make it more difficult to keep the shuttles on schedule.

The Fjord Trail plans to hold a workshop in Cold Spring in January and issue a final parking and shuttle report in February.

New Antenna Will Track Birds

Constitution Marsh installs device

The Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary in Garrison last month installed an antenna to track migratory birds that pass nearby.

The device picks up signals from birds that pass within a few miles of the center and carry a tiny radio tag installed by scientists. The data is then uploaded to motus.org, a global network that helps researchers better understand how and where birds migrate.

New York State funded the receiver, along with three others that will be installed elsewhere in the state, including at the Ramshorn-Livingston Audubon Sanctuary in the Catskills.

The new bird tracking antenna at Constitution Marsh

Beacon Group Gives Educator Grants

Foundation distributes $7,000

The Foundation for Beacon Schools announced a series of grants to benefit educators in the school district.

The projects funded include a visit to the Norwalk Aquarium by earth science students at Beacon High School; a Creative Strings Little Learners pilot project at J.V. Forrestal Elementary; an engineering program at Legoland and a visit to the Hudson River Museum and Planetarium for Sargent Elementary; and Jump Rope Across America!, seining the Hudson River scientific research and a visit to Common Ground Farm and a classroom chef for South Avenue Elementary.

In addition, the foundation awarded a RoseMarie Mastrocola grant for special education, named for the late grandmother of two Beacon elementary school students who was a special education teacher. The grant will be used to create communication boards, which are tools to help nonverbal and neuro-diverse students to communicate with friends, at all four elementary schools.
Farewell, Mi Pueblo Acogedor

By Violeta Edwards Salas

The Spanish word acogedor means “welcoming,” and can be used to describe an environment that is considered comfortable and warm. That is what Cold Spring is to me. It means safety, both physically and emotionally. There is nothing that can bring me out of a bad or hazy mood more than walking on Main Street.

I was 8 years old when my family came here in 2015 from Santiago, Chile — I am the eldest of three girls. We came for my father to attend college, and for medical treatment for myself. I still remember gripping my bright-pink suitcase with shaking hands after we landed at JFK.

The minute we stepped foot in Cold Spring, we fell in love with it. But it was not an easy transition. At school, I remember being embarrassed because I could only count to nine in English. I had a hard time making friends because of the language barrier.

Moving is always hard, but moving to a different country where you don’t speak the language or have the same culture is especially difficult. It turns mundane tasks into challenges that leave you exhausted by the end of the day.

Quickly, I became the best English speaker in the family. This meant that for a while I was the only one who could represent who we were. There was a responsibility in that I bet all older siblings feel at one point.

One of the first times I could introduce myself to my classmates and the village was at the Haldane Elementary School talent show. I sang a song from Violetta, a Hispanic TV show. Although my singing voice is not one of my strengths, I remember that, for weeks following the show, many people came up to me, remembering me as the girl who sang in Spanish. I was so proud of that.

Nothing rivets the feeling when I visited the library and knew enough English to be able to read the titles of the books. I remember reading The Sisters Grimm by Michael Buckley in school and falling so deeply in love with books. After that, it was a given that I would spend hours in the library, both Desmond-Fish and Butterfield.

Even though we live in a fairytale village, I don’t want to sugarcoat. Being an immigrant can be scary. I felt that fear as an 8-year-old newcomer and still feel it sometimes at age 16. There is so much uncertainty, so much fear that one day someone will knock on your door, telling you that you have to leave because you have lost your visa privileges.

One of the scariest moments occurred in the sixth grade, when newspapers printed headlines like “Immigrant kids in cages!” along with horrible things that people were saying about immigrants. Being so young, I thought they were holding children like me in little dog cages.

There are countless people in this community who have changed my life, too many to thank. The community has taught me empathy, generosity and courageous-ness. I will always be fiercely protective of its people for making me feel safe enough that I could be anyone of my liking.

My family is moving back to Chile this month. I am looking forward to seeing where the world takes me, but I will never forget Cold Spring. It has been a privilege. This is not the last time we see each other so, as of now, farewell.

Edwards Salas, a sophomore at Haldane High School, is a member of The Current’s Student Journalists Program and our first correspondent in Santiago.

State Considers Fine for Central Hudson

Report says employees warned of ‘major’ billing issues

By Leonard Sparks

New York’s utility regulator is considering a civil penalty against Central Hudson in the wake of a six-month investigation into an $88 million upgrade of the company’s billing system that caused widespread errors for customers.

In a report released on Thursday (Dec. 15), the Public Service Commission (PSC) said Central Hudson’s quest to improve its customer information and billing system to “handle complex billing scenarios” instead caused nightmares for customers and apparent violations of commission orders and state laws.

Ensuring customer bills are accurate is the singular responsibility of the utility,” said Rory Christian, the PSC chair. “Given the scope and seriousness of the utility billing problems at Central Hudson, the department will now determine the level of commission action required to address these issues.”

Joe Jenkins, a representative for Central Hudson, said in January that the company had more than doubled its customer service staff and expanded operating hours to reduce the time account holders spent on hold as problems surged.

He said on Thursday that Central Hudson has “fully cooperated” with the PSC and will “continue to dedicate significant resources” to fixing problems.

“Technical challenges associated with the implementation of this system have caused undue stress and confusion to some of our customers,” said Jenkins. “For that, we are deeply apologetic.”

Central Hudson has 30 days to show why the PSC should not penalize the company and investigate its spending on the systems upgrade. The PSC also said it ordered the company to create a plan for eliminating bimonthly billing estimates.

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A Christmas Carol Panto

December 16

Central Hudson is a key player in the state’s electricity and natural gas industries, serving more than 68,000 customers in the Hudson Valley.

The problems, including programming errors, caused delays in issuing statements that lasted more than three months for some customers and overcharges that affected more than 8,000 customers, many of whom began filing complaints with the PSC and airing their frustrations on social media and to reporters.

With the system erroneously blocking bills from being sent for prolonged periods, the company began sending out invoices based on estimates, in violation of approved procedures for using them instead of actual meter reads, said the report.

Some of the billing errors were enormous. One customer who typically paid $50 a month had two bank accounts debited by Central Hudson for $12,107.52 and $16,212.74. The company eventually refunded the money. A customer with automatic billing had a bank account debited for $30,534.27, according to the PSC.

In addition to a civil penalty, the state intends to investigate the propriety of Central Hudson’s expenditures for the system, the PSC said on Thursday. A day earlier J.D. Power rated Central Hudson next to last among midsize companies in its annual customer-satisfaction study of utility companies in the East Region.

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December 16

Central Hudson is a key player in the state’s electricity and natural gas industries, serving more than 68,000 customers in the Hudson Valley.

The problems, including programming errors, caused delays in issuing statements that lasted more than three months for some customers and overcharges that affected more than 8,000 customers, many of whom began filing complaints with the PSC and airing their frustrations on social media and to reporters.

With the system erroneously blocking bills from being sent for prolonged periods, the company began sending out invoices based on estimates, in violation of approved procedures for using them instead of actual meter reads, said the report.

Some of the billing errors were enormous. One customer who typically paid $50 a month had two bank accounts debited by Central Hudson for $12,107.52 and $16,212.74. The company eventually refunded the money. A customer with automatic billing had a bank account debited for $30,534.27, according to the PSC.

In addition to a civil penalty, the state intends to investigate the propriety of Central Hudson’s expenditures for the system, the PSC said on Thursday. A day earlier J.D. Power rated Central Hudson next to last among midsize companies in its annual customer-satisfaction study of utility companies in the East Region.

“Ensuring customer bills are accurate is the singular responsibility of the utility,” said Rory Christian, the PSC chair. “Given the scope and seriousness of the utility billing problems at Central Hudson, the department will now determine the level of commission action required to address these issues.”

Joe Jenkins, a representative for Central Hudson, said in January that the company had more than doubled its customer service staff and expanded operating hours to reduce the time account holders spent on hold as problems surged.

He said on Thursday that Central Hudson has “fully cooperated” with the PSC and will “continue to dedicate significant resources” to fixing problems.

“Technical challenges associated with the implementation of this system have caused undue stress and confusion to some of our customers,” said Jenkins. “For that, we are deeply apologetic.”

Central Hudson has 30 days to show why the PSC should not penalize the company and investigate its spending on the systems upgrade. The PSC also said it ordered the company to create a plan for eliminating bimonthly billing estimates.

A Christmas Carol Panto

December 16, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Reservations at philipstowndepottheatre.org
STAY CURRENT AND CONNECTED

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- Become a monthly member — and get a bonus!
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HELP US REACH 1,000 MEMBERS BY THE END OF DECEMBER!
Beds Refill at Local Hospitals

COVID, flu spike follows Thanksgiving

By Leonard Sparks

As Thanksgiving approached, health officials warned about the infection risks posed by traveling to gatherings with families and friends.

Three weeks later, medical personnel at area hospitals say they are seeing the impact of those gatherings — a rise in the number of patients sick with COVID-19, most of them elderly, that is again shrinking inpatient capacity as people infected with the flu also compete for beds.

On the day before Thanksgiving, the state Department of Health reported 2,823 people hospitalized with COVID, including 273 patients in intensive care. By Tuesday (Nov. 13), hospitals were treating 3,571 COVID patients, an increase of 26 percent, with 342 in the ICU.

On an average day this month, Putnam hospitals were treating 3,571 COVID patients, including 273 hospitalized with COVID, including 273 that month, compared to November and Hudson Valley hospitals were treating 3,571 COVID patients, an increase of 26 percent, with 342 in the ICU.

In Newburgh, Montefiore St. Luke’s Cornwall Hospital is averaging seven more COVID inpatients a day this month compared to November and Hudson Valley Hospital, five, according to data that hospitals report to the state.

On an average day this month, Putnam Hospital Center was caring for more than twice as many COVID patients than in November, and has come close to reaching its limit on staffed beds.

“Last week, we had almost 25 percent of our inpatient-occupied beds filled with COVID-19 patients,” said Marcela Rojas, a representative for the hospital. “Most people are coming in with respiratory/flu symptoms and end up having both COVID and flu.”

That also has been the case at NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital near Peekskill, a representative said. Shortly after Thanksgiving, its emergency department began seeing an increase in people with both COVID and the flu.

The state health department, in its most recent weekly flu update, reported that cases for the week ending Dec. 3 rose 64 percent from the previous week, driving hospitalizations up by 58 percent to 2,465. That total included 584 flu cases in Dutchess County and 393 in Putnam.

Nearly 1,100 people in Dutchess County and just over 700 in Putnam have tested positive for the flu through Dec. 3, which marks the first nine weeks of the season. Both counties are on pace to easily exceed the 2021-22 flu season.

As during the height of the pandemic, most people who are hospitalized or die from COVID are older. On Monday (Dec. 12), 17 of St. Luke’s 22 COVID patients were 65 or older, mirroring the demographics of patients at Hudson Valley Hospital, Putnam Hospital Center and other facilities.

Deaths from COVID have risen this month in New York and Dutchess County. The state said on Wednesday that 38 people had died from COVID on Tuesday, compared to 26 on Dec. 1.

Six Dutchess County residents have died from COVID in the first 13 days of December, three more than in all of November and one more than October. No one has died in Putnam County since Nov. 22. Three county residents died that month, compared to four in October.

Residents age 60 and older have accounted for 87 percent of the state’s 59,867 COVID fatalities, as of Tuesday.

### COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUTNAM</th>
<th>DUTCHESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary vaccination:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philipstown/CS: 87.6%</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrison: 82.5%</td>
<td>Beacon: 68.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boostered:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philipstown/CS: 25.4%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrison: 20.0%</td>
<td>Beacon: 15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive tests, 7-day average:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up: 8.6%</td>
<td>Down: 8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number hospitalized:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up: 10</td>
<td>Down: 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of deaths:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138 (0)</td>
<td>719 (+2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: County and state health departments as of Dec. 14.

### Average Daily COVID Patients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Montefiore St. Luke’s %</th>
<th>NYP Hudson Valley %</th>
<th>Putnam Hospital %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECEMBER</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percent Staffed Beds Occupied

- **JUNE 1**: 70%
- **AUG. 1**: 62%
- **OCT. 3**: 68%
- **DEC. 12**: 84%

### Animal Hospital of Cold Spring

**Animal Hospital of Cold Spring will be moving to a new location.**

We will close on **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17TH** and plan to reopen beginning of the new year.

Our phone lines will remain open. We will be available to dispense medication but will not be able to access the prescription foods.

Contact us at:

Ph # (845) 265 - 4366 or # (845) 265 - PETS (7387)

email 265PETS@gmail.com

---

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AROUND TOWN

BOTTLING WINTER — Gabrielle Esposito, a librarian at the Howland Public Library in Beacon, led a workshop on Dec. 8 to make snow globes. Glitter, paint, snowmen, trees, decorations and globes were provided. Here, participants pose with their creations.

GOT YOUR BACK — Be A Friend, an anti-bullying organization based in Cold Spring, on Dec. 2 presented Charlotte, a 7-year-old from New York City, with 1,100 letters and gifts at the Topfield Equestrian Center. When a parent or teacher identifies a young person who is being severely bullied, Be A Friend mobilizes a letter-writing campaign to offer encouragement and support.

SINGING FLOR — Originally from Peru, singer Flor Bromley visited the Desmond-Fish Public Library in Garrison on Dec. 10 to perform songs from North, South and Central America.
LotusWorks, an arts and community center that opened in Beacon two years ago, has launched a weekend Local Artists Series that will continue into February.

The solo exhibitions will spotlight emerging artists working in a range of disciplines, including digital media and installation art, along with painting and photography.

“We selected seven artists — three are from Beacon, while the others are from New Paltz, Poughkeepsie, Newburgh and Marlboro,” says Aaron Loray Sanders, who co-owns the gallery with his wife, Skyla Schreter. In addition to the featured artists, the couple chose works by eight others from the Hudson Valley for two group shows in February.

“We were just so impressed with the abundant talent, and our goal is to be able to uplift and support our creative community as much as we can,” Sanders said.

Since it opened in October 2020, the LotusWorks space has also served as a production studio which offers live performance and production and digital media services under the banner of LW Productions. It addition, it is home to LW at Home, an interior design firm.

Along with the gallery, there is space for artists to work, and for classes.

Since establishing themselves in Beacon, Sanders and Schreter have collaborated with other arts groups. Most recently, they performed an improvisatory “First Date Conversation” as part of the Beacon Bonfire festival, tied to an exhibit then on view in the gallery called Love is an Action. For the performance, Schreter danced in front of a large canvas on which Sanders painted.

LotusWorks came out of a lunch break in Beacon during a Hudson Valley road trip. The couple spotted a “For Rent” sign and peered inside. Within a few weeks, they had signed a lease and Sanders began renovations.

“Video Portal,” by a Beacon resident, known as Rooster, opened the Local Artists Series from Dec. 9 to 11.

“Flame,” a digital drawing by Alex Marsh

“Life Hangs On,” by Tina Bernstein

LotusWorks is located at 261 Main St. Its hours this weekend (Dec. 16 to 18) are 4 to 8 p.m. today and 2 to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. For specifics, visit lotusworksgallery.com or call 845-583-0400.
**THE WEEK AHEAD**

Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)

For a complete listing of events, see highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

---

**HANUKKAH**

**TUES 20**

**Menorah Lighting**

COLD SPRING

5 p.m. Main Street

putnamchabad.org

The service will take place near the visitor's information booth.

---

**SUN 18**

**Visit Santa**

GARRISON

10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Boscoobel

1601 Route 9D | 845-265-3638

boscoobel.org

Meet Santa in the Winter Garden and take photos. Timed tickets required. Cost: $24 ($22 seniors, $4 ages 4 to 18; free for children younger than 4; health care workers and members)

---

**KIDS & FAMILY**

**SAT 17**

**Gift Show & Sale**

BEACON

Noon – 5 p.m. Howland Cultural Center

477 Main St. | howlandculturalcenter.org

Browse crafts, jewelry, art, ceramics and household goods at this annual event. Also FR 23.

---

**WED 21**

**Winter Village Craft**

BEACON

4 p.m. Howland Public Library

477 Main St. | 845-831-4988

Decorate a wooden house to celebrate the first day of winter. Registration required.

---

**COMMUNITY**

**SAT 17**

**Wreath Laying Ceremony**

FISHKILL

2 p.m. Fishkill Rural Cemetery

801 Route 9 | 845-831-0179

During this Wreaths Across America event, volunteers will place 400 wreaths on veterans’ graves.

---

**SUN 25**

**Christmas Eve Mass**

SUN 25

11 a.m. Highlands Chapel

3006 Seven Lakes Drive

trailsidezoo.org

Make treats for the bears at 10:30 a.m., then watch them explore and enjoy them at 11 a.m. Parking is $10. Cost: $1

---

**COMMUNITY**

**SAT 17**

**Santa Run**

PHILIPSTOWN

Noon – 3 p.m. Various

highlandscurrent.org/santa-run

Santa will be accompanied by members of the North Highlands Engine Co. See the schedule of stops online.

---

**SUN 25**

**Christmas Eve Service**

COLD SPRING

6 p.m. St. Mary’s | 1 Chestnut St.

stmaryscoldspring.org

The service will take place near the visitor’s information booth.

---

**CHRISTMAS**

**SAT 17**

**Jazz Nativity**

COLD SPRING

5:30 p.m. First Presbyterian

10 Academy St.

presbychurchcoldspring.org

---

**SAT 17**

**Gift Show & Sale**

BEACON

Noon – 5 p.m. Howland Cultural Center

477 Main St. | howlandculturalcenter.org

Browse crafts, jewelry, art, ceramics and household goods at this annual event. Also FR 23.

---

**SUN 18**

**Live Nativty**

COLD SPRING

6 p.m. Faith Church

245 Main St. | faithchurch.cc

---

**SUN 25**

**Christmas Eve Service**

COLD SPRING

7 p.m. First Presbyterian

10 Academy St.

presbychurchcoldspring.org

---

**SAT 24**

**Christmas Eve Service**

GARRISON

10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Boscoobel

1601 Route 9D | 845-265-3638

Meet Santa in the Winter Garden and take photos. Timed tickets required. Cost: $24 ($22 seniors, $4 ages 4 to 18; free for children younger than 4; health care workers and members)

---

**KIDS & FAMILY**

**SAT 17**

**Beary Merry Holiday Party**

BEAR MOUNTAIN

10:30 a.m. Trailside Zoo

3006 Seven Lakes Drive

trailsidezoo.org

Make treats for the bears at 10:30 a.m., then watch them explore and enjoy them at 11 a.m. Parking is $10. Cost: $1

---

**SUN 25**

**Christmas Eve Service**

BEACON

5 p.m. United Methodist

216 Main St.

facebook.com/csshumc

---

**TALKS & TOURS**

**SAT 17**

**Beacon’s Memory Keeper**

BEACON

9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Bob’s Corner Store

790 Woelcott Ave.

beaconhistorical.org

Denise Van Buren will be signing the latest history book. She will share her experience with the study of history and how it affects the present. Cost: Free

---

**TALKS & TOURS**

**SAT 17**

**G-U-M: Kids’ Holiday Play**

COLD SPRING

10 a.m. County Park

245 Main St. | faithchurch.cc

Join in for fun activities, followed by a performance of the Broadway musical, ‘‘Urinetown.” Cost: $15 per family

---

**SAT 17**

**Holiday Storytime**

BEACON

11 a.m. Bandstand

801 Route 9 | 845-831-0179

beaconvac.org

Children ages 3 and older can make a delicious craft to take home.

---

**SAT 17**

**Hanukkah Family Festival & Youth Theatre**

GARRISON

3 – 7 p.m. Philipstown Recreation

107 Glenclyffe Drive | 845-424-4618

philipstownrecreation.com

Watch a performance of ‘‘Twas the Night Before Christmas at 3 p.m., followed by holiday games, crafts, karaoke and a pasta dinner with dessert. Cost: $15 per family

---

**STAGE & SCREEN**

**SAT 17**

**A Christmas Carol**

BEACON

8 p.m. Howland Cultural Center

477 Main St. | 845-831-9898

howlandculturalcenter.org

Local performers and singers — Dimitri Archip, Kevin Bohl, Twinkle Burke, Bob and Lynn Costello, Ryan Dunn, Stella Hlad, Annaliese Mccoy, Elizabeth Murphy, Gail Wanford and Frits Zernike — will stage Charles Dickens’s classic tale of redemption. Cost: $20 ($25 door)

---

**SUN 18**

**The Nutcracker, Short and Sweet**

PEEKSKILL

3 – 3:30 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley

1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039

paramounthudsonvalley.com

This hour-long performance is designed for children ages 3 and older. Cost: $20

---

**MUSIC**

**SAT 17**

**Handel’s Messiah**

POUGHKEEPSIE

2 p.m. Bardavon | 35 Market St.

845-473-2072 | bardavon.org

Conductor Christine Howlett will lead the Hudson Valley Philharmonic in its eighth annual performance of the masterwork with soloists Lauren Frey, Allison Gish, Marc Molomot and Shavon Lloyd. The snow date is SUN 18. Cost: $40 to $60 ($35 ages 12 and younger)
A Very Merry Country Christmas, Dec. 17

SAT 17
A Very Merry Country Christmas
PEEKSKILL
8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039
paramounthudsonvalley.com
Jessica Lynn’s annual holiday show will feature dancers, marching bands, choirs and an appearance by Santa Claus. Call for tickets.

SUN 18
Holiday Hoot at Cafe Sizzle
BEACON
6 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
howlandculturalcenter.org
Goldee Greene & the Shades will lead this celebration of Hamukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa that will include Cantor Ellen Gersh, the Lavbugs, Kwanzaa poetry, a Hamukkah puppet show, a gospel choir and a sing-a-long. Cost: $20 ($25 door; $10 children)

SUN 18
The Costellos
BEACON
7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
Lynn and Bob Costello and their band will perform their annual Christmas show with guests Scott Ramsey, Dimitri Archip and Chihoe Hahn. Cost: $15 ($20 door)

CIVIC
MON 19
City Council
BEACON
7 p.m. City Hall | 1 Municipal Plaza
845-838-5011 | beaconny.gov
On the agenda: the campus master plan update.

WED 21
Village Board
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Village Hall | 85 Main St.
845-265-3611 | coldspringny.gov

SAT 17
Songs of the Season
PUTNAM VALLEY
3 p.m. Tompkins Corners Cultural Center
729 Peekskill Hollow Road
tompkinscorners.org
The Putnam Chorale will perform a concert of 18th-century holiday music. Cost: $20

SUN 18
The Costellos
BEACON
7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
Lynn and Bob Costello and their band will perform their annual Christmas show with guests Scott Ramsey, Dimitri Archip and Chihoe Hahn. Cost: $15 ($20 door)

SUN 18
Premik Russell Tubbs
BEACON
8:30 p.m. Quinn’s
330 Main St. | 845-202-7447
facebook.com/QuinnsBeacon
Steve Sandberg and Michael O’Brien will host the weekly jazz session.

MON 19
Village Board
NELSONVILLE
7 p.m. Village Hall | 258 Main St.
845-265-2500 | nelsonvilleny.gov

TUES 20
School Board
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Haldane High School (Rm 211)
15 Craigside Drive | 845-265-9254
haldaneschool.org

SUN 18
Saturday, December 17:
1 2:00 PM - Wreaths Across America
Please join members of the congregation as well as local veterans for a short ceremony followed by the laying of wreaths on the gravesites of those who served in our nation’s Armed Forces.

Sunday, December 18:
4:00 PM - Ecumenical Evensong
A community event featuring the Children’s and Adult Choirs, followed by a reception in the parish house.

Wednesday, December 21:
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.

Saturday, December 24, Christmas Eve:
4:00 PM - Annual Christmas Pageant
Held in the St. Philip’s Churchyard, we’ll have singing, candles, a star and a stable, and even some live animals!

Sunday, December 25, Christmas Day:
10:00 AM - Holy Eucharist Rite II with choir and carols

ST. PHILIP’S CHURCH
IN THE HIGHLANDS
1101 Route 9D, Garrison, NY 10524
845-424-3371  stphilipshighlands.org
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH WELCOMES YOU
From Broadway to Middle School
Pandemic redirects jazz guitarist to Garrison
By Joey Asher

As with many professional musicians, the pandemic sidelined Jeff Barone. But three years later, the jazz guitarist says he’s happy about where he ended up: at the Garrison school district.

His final gig before the shutdown was with the Jeff Barone Trio at The Bar Next Door in New York City, one of many jazz clubs where he performed to packed houses. One of his first at Garrison Middle School will be directing the student band for a performance at 7 p.m. on Wednesday (Dec. 21), its first live holiday concert since 2019.

The Garrison school district hired Barone last year to lead the music and theater department, which includes the band. Before the pandemic, Barone’s typical holiday schedule, in addition to performing in all of Manhattan’s major jazz clubs, included conducting the Big Apple Circus band at Lincoln Center and playing in orchestras for Broadway shows, as well as with many professional musicians, the pandemic sidelined Jeff Barone. But three years later, the jazz guitarist says he’s happy about where he ended up: at the Garrison school district.

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“Both are rewarding, but in different ways.”

When he took over as director, he needed musicians. Many students had stopped practicing their instruments during the pandemic. “I went around to all the classrooms and asked, ‘Who plays an instrument?’” he recalls.

Barone recruited 15 students but found their skill levels varied so widely, he had to write several versions of each song. For example, for the spring concert in May, students pleaded with him to include “We Don’t Talk About Bruno,” the hit from the film Encanto. But Barone thought it was too hard. “It’s Latin,” he said. “It’s syncopated. They’ll never be able to do this.”

His students insisted, so Barone wrote a version they would be able to perform. “Duke Ellington wrote for his band,” he said. “I write for the kids. I arranged 12 bars and strategically gave certain parts to certain people.”

He said he did the same for next week’s concert. His students loved the lilting version of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” by the Hawaiian musician known as Iz. For the Garrison students, Barone transformed it into reggae.

Once a student masters a version of a song written for him or her, Barone rewrites it to make it tougher. “I push them to the next level,” he says.

Sometimes his students surprise him. Ames Jannetta, 13, plays piano in the band. Barone saw Jannetta playing in a music class and asked him to join the band. “He kind of recruited me,” says the teenager.

Barone also learned that Ames wrote songs, including one called “Band Kid Beat.” He told Ames: “If you can develop that, maybe we’ll do it in the concert.” He did, and the students performed the song at the spring concert.

“I’ve only seen a small handful of music teachers who work this way,” said Carl Albano, the Garrison superintendent.

Barone, 52, who lives in Peekskill, grew up in Syracuse. Knowing her 7-year-old son loved Elvis, his mother gave him a guitar for Christmas. He took lessons from his cousin, Joe Stagnitta, who owned a local music store.

By age 13, Barone had a summer job performing three times a day in the Syracuse Parks and Recreation All-Star Band. By 16, he was gigging at taverns and clubs, including the Three Rivers Inn, which attracted the likes of Bobby Darin, Nat King Cole and Tony Bennett. One of Barone’s early gigs was with Al Martino, an old-style crooner who portrayed the singer Johnny Fontaine in The Godfather.

Barone earned a bachelor’s degree in instrumental music education and a master’s degree in jazz guitar. He taught a bit but eventually built a career as a jazz guitarist, appearing in clubs and on Broadway, and touring in the U.S. and Canada with Patti LuPone, Linda Lavin, Bobby Caldwell, Kathleen Turner and other performers.

He recorded two albums, Crazy Talk and Open Up, and is included in The Great Jazz Guitarists: The Ultimate Guide, by Scott Yanow. Barone also has appeared on the cover of Just Jazz Guitar magazine.

His reputation brought him many opportunities to perform. “I was on a conveyor belt that was out of control,” he says. But the conveyor belt came to a sudden halt when the pandemic hit in early 2020.

To earn a little money, Barone became a substitute teacher at Garrison. But when Albano offered to hire Barone as the music teacher, he hesitated. The students were still learning remotely, and the idea of teaching band that way seemed far-fetched. “I didn’t know if I could be effective,” Barone said.

But by all accounts, he has been highly effective. The music program at the small school now has 39 students. In fact, about half of the middle school is in the band, said Albano. “I’ve worked with many music teachers over my 30-year career and he is one of the best I’ve ever worked with.”

Barone still performs in Manhattan and around the country and says he loves both of his jobs. “That feeling I get playing to a packed house in the city is the same feeling I get after a student performance in Garrison,” he said. “I’m hoping they’re trying their best. And I’m hoping I’m doing my best, as well.”

Jeff Barone at age 7 with Elvis, and his first guitar

Barone the Garrison School

Support our nonprofit. Become a member!
Fred Astaire Cold Spring
3182 Route 9 Cold Spring, NY 10516
(845) 424-6353 | www.fredastaire.com/cold-spring

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119 Main Street Cold Spring, NY
845.265.3992
“Many years since, before my acquaintance [Pawling] in Dutchess County. He explained: a bequest for Mary Aiken of Quaker Hill.

A train that arrived at 2:06 a.m. on, the man jumped aboard a southbound bills. However, as the puzzled driver looked reached Poughkeepsie at 1 a.m. and the man at Fishkill Landing at 2:18 a.m. The carriage to Montreal, although the same train stopped be taken to Poughkeepsie to catch the train overcoat and fur cap who hired him at 11 p.m.

A Fishkill hack recounted a curious encounter with a young man in a heavy black 150 Years Ago (December 1872)

A swindler who said his name was William O’Leary came through Beacon and Fishkill, leaving behind a string of bogus checks. The stranger opened an account at the Fishkill National Bank with a $23,000 check drawn on a Montana bank and immediately began negotiations to buy Hillcrest Farm. To close the deal, he presented a $4,000 check drawn on his new account, but when the Fishkill bank finally was able to reach the institution that issued O’Leary’s $23,000 check, they were told he had no account there. By that time, O’Leary had hired a Beacon cab to drive him to Albany. The driver later learned that his employers had cashed a $50 check from O’Leary, which is how he got the cash to pay for the fare and a generous tip.

(Continued on Page 17)
An appeals court upheld a $1,300 judgment awarded to James Torrey, who sued the Matteawan Hat Manufacturing Co. claiming that the little finger of his right hand had been poisoned by dye. Torrey’s job had been to untie the bundles of hats when they came in from the vats; he said a blister became infected.

A Hudson Valley council of Improved Order of Red Men chapters was organized in the wigwam of the Mahwenaugasig Tribe in Beacon. W.A. Povole of Newburgh was elected chief of the fraternal order and John Shaw of Beacon named Keeper of Wampum (treasurer).

Taxpayers, for the third time, voted down a proposal to spend $140,000 to build an addition to the high school with a gymnasium and auditorium. The vote was 245-236. The building was so crowded that students could only attend part-time. The state Education Department, which had ordered Beacon to construct the addition, said it would likely reduce the district’s aid by $10,000 annually to force the issue.

A Poughkeepsie woman who left her pocketbook in the train station restroom lost $30 by $10,000 annually to force the issue.

At the Wednesday (Dec. 14) meeting of the Cold Spring Village Board, a group of residents asked the board for its support for a public education campaign to encourage people to get up to date with their COVID boosters. “People have been lulled into a certain comfort level; they think they are protected,” said one resident, Marianne Sutton. Deputy Mayor Tweeps Phillips Woods, who chaired the meeting, said “we should certainly put out information regarding where people can get vaccinated; as a board we’d be happy to do that.” She said adding the village seal to ads and posters could be considered once campaign materials are developed.

The board voted to end mandatory water conservation measures after Matt Kroog, the superintendent of water and sewer, reported that recent precipitation has increased village reservoirs to nearly 80 percent of capacity.

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A Metro-North police officer came to the rescue with a teddy bear to coax a 2-year-old to unlock the door of the car in which she had accidently been trapped. The girl’s mother was retrieving something from her trunk at the station when she realized she had locked herself out. Fortunately, the toddler knew how to unbuckle her car seat, and mom then used a bear retrieved by the officer from his squad car — it was on hand to calm children involved in traumatic events — to coax her daughter into the driver’s seat and to push the button to open the electronic locks. There was a brief delay while the girl played “race car” with the steering wheel.

St. Francis Hospital announced that it planned to expand and build a 160-bed nursing home in Beacon in partnership with the Wingate Development Corp. Lorraine MacAulay, a member of the Beacon chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, created a gingerbread version of the Madam Brett Homestead with 30 windows made of melted sugar on parchment paper.

Five Year Ago (December 1997)

The board voted to end mandatory water conservation measures after Matt Kroog, the superintendent of water and sewer, reported that recent precipitation has increased village reservoirs to nearly 80 percent of capacity.

The Beacon City Council said it would move money around to avoid an increase in property taxes, which were $12.62 per $1,000 of assessed valuation for residential homes and $20.99 per $1,000 for businesses. The city administrator said much of the $200,000 increase in spending in the 1998 budget was because of salary hikes for firefighters and police officers.

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Notes from the Cold Spring Village Board

By Michael Turton

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Village Board (from Page 17)
that a slope between the Highway Department
maintenance area and 37 Fair St. does not
require a retaining wall as a condition for
the village to sell a small piece of property
there. The former car dealership site is
being converted into an artist’s live-work
space and gallery.
- Sean Conway, the vice chair of the
Historic District Review Board, reported
that it plans to create an inventory of
unapproved signs.
- The Cold Spring Police Department
responded to 50 calls for service in
November. Officers issued 19 traffic tick-
ets (including seven for speeding) and 65
car parking tickets. There were no arrests.
- The Cold Spring Fire Co. answered
six calls last month, including two motor
vehicle accidents involving injuries, two
mutual aid calls and an investigation of
a gas odor at a residence.
- Improvements to the baseball field
at Mayor’s Park will begin this month,
funded by the Haldane school district
and private donations.
- The board authorized the mayor
to sell a small piece of village-owned
property to the owners of the Riverview
Restaurant at 45 Fair St.
- Two seats on the Recreation Commis-
sion are vacant. Residents interested in
volunteering should contact the village
clerk.

Dutchess Budget (from Page 1)
This was hardly the first time the 4,494-seat
stadium has been at the center of controversy.
In 2018, the county committed $2.4
million to improving the stadium, a request
that legislators approved but said was
hurried. In 2021, Dutchess agreed to spend
$12.5 million in federal American Rescue
Plan (ARP) funds on additional improve-
ments while announcing a new, 25-year
lease with the Renegades, who have played
at the park since it opened in 1994.
While announcing the lease, Molinaro
said he expected the county to net $15
million through increased rent and other
opportunities over the life of the agreement.
After backlash, Molinaro, a Republican,
said earlier this year that the county would
redirect $9.5 million of the ARP funding to
tackle affordable housing and homelessness.
Dutchess Comptroller Robin Lois, a Demo-
ocrat who has been critical of spending on
the stadium, sent an email to the 25 legisla-
tors before the Dec. 8 meeting, asking the
lawmakers to wait a month before approv-
ing the latest expenditure. The $25 million,
which is to come from the county’s fund
balancing, will still be available in January,
and the delay would allow for public comment
on the proposal, Lois said.
“This last-minute amendment will be
perceived poorly as an effort to avoid proper
public oversight on an already contentious
project,” she wrote. “This is a perception I would like to avoid for our
government.”

But on Wednesday (Dec. 14), Gregg
Pulver, a Republican who is the chair
of the Legislature, argued that the project has
been discussed since June 2021, when
the new agreement with the Renegades was
announced. “The merits and functions of the
project have been in the public domain
for over a year,” he said. “The amount,
which changed due to inflation and the
Renegades contributing $4 million, was
the only piece we needed to re-discuss.”
Pulver said that the decision to move the
funds into the budget through an amend-
ment, instead of bonding for the initial
$15 million in the 2023 plan, would save
taxpayers $11 million in interest.
Legislators added around a dozen other
amendments to the budget using the fund
balance. Other than the stadium, the most
expensive was $1 million for nonprofit
infrastructure grants.
An amendment proposed by Valdes
Smith, for $517,911 to pay for economi-
cally disadvantaged high school students
to receive college credit for classes taken
through Dutchess Community College
(DCC) during the 2023-24 academic year,
was voted down by the Legislature along
party lines.
Pulver said he believes the amendment
didn’t make it because DCC has not begun
to charge full enrollment tuition yet. (The
plan to charge $64 per credit hour, or a third
of its standard tuition rate for state residents,
is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2023.)
“If the college isn’t charging students or
asking for the money, why would we appro-
priate money to cover this not-existent
expense?” Pulver asked. “Further, charg-
ing high school students was a policy that
every legislator voted in favor of when the
Legislature adopted the DCC budget in
July. Why were those legislators then to
protest this change?”
Valdes Smith’s proposal would have
covered tuition for students who are
eligible for free or reduced-price lunch —
according to the college, about a third of
the more than 3,000 students who use the
dual enrollment program.
Matt Landahl, the superintendent of the
Beacon City School District, said during
the school board’s meeting on Dec. 12 that
he and other area superintendents would
reach out again to the Legislature to try to
find funding for those students.
“The last thing we want is a student
making a decision not to take one of these
classes because they feel like they can’t
afford it,” he said.

Current Classifieds

EVENTS
LIVING NATIVITY — Faith Church Cold Spring
at 245 Main St. in Cold Spring will be having its
annual Christmas Living Nativity on Sunday,
Dec. 18 at 6 p.m. Join us. We will be singing
Christmas carols and reading the Christmas
story. In the end, there will be free hot cocoa
and cookies for everyone. Also join us on
Friday, Dec. 23, 7 p.m. for our candlelight
service. All are welcome. For more information,
call Pastor Luis at 845-203-0400.

SERVICES
STUDENTS NEED A CONFIDENCE BOOST?
— Coaching adds zip to writing and study
skills. Local expert writing and study-skills
coach — NYU MA, editor, writer, educator —
offers a simple but effective 3-Step System for
School Success. From middle-school through
grad school, it works! Remote or in-person,
flexible schedule. Email coach10516@gmail.
com or call 914-443-4723.

WANTED
LOOM — 24 inches or wider. 4, 8 or 16
cylinders. Prefer table loom, will consider
a floor loom. Harris preferred; will consider
others. Must be in good working condition.
Email Bill.617.899.3443@gmail.com.

CLOCK REPAIR — Seek an experienced
clock specialist to repair an early 19th
century Silas Hoadley grandfather clock and
service three smaller French 18th and 19th
century clocks. Email Robert at calderossi@
ny.com or call 917-318-6882.

TAG SALE? Car for sale? Space for rent? Help wanted?
Place your ad here for $4.95. See
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Puzzles

**CrossCurrent**

| | 34. 褐色的, 作为 | 35. 首都 | 36. 熟的 | 37. 拉丁 | 38. 霍恩鲍尔 | 39. 牲畜群 | 40. 优雅的鸟 | 41. 婚姻 | 42. 溜的鱼 | 43. 看得好在 | 44. 部分的 |
| | 45. 头, to Henri | 46. — tizzy | 47. 瓶子上的 | 48. 51. Backgrounds | 49. 柜台上的 | 50. Turner or Fey | 51. 比赛者 | 52. 比赛者 | 53. 糕点的 |
| | 54. 头, to Henri | 55. 貌似 | 56. 热的 | 57. 48. 花的项链 | 58. 49. 花的项链 | 59. 50. Turner or Fey | 60. 51. Billboards | 61. 52. Evergreens | 62. 53. Crisp cookie |


**SudoCurrent**

```
9 7 6 1
4 1 6 8
2 3 8 7
1 3 9 5
```

**7 Little Words**

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

**CLUES**

1. ceremonial retinue (7)
2. made a witty remark (7)
3. wide awake (9)
4. teen years (11)
5. French singer Piaf (5)
6. confidant (7)
7. all over (10)

**Solutions**

- CO
- EDI
- SLE
- EGE
- LESS
- PED
- VI
- LACE
- TH
- ER
- AD
- EV
- LESC
- EP
- QUIP
- ADO
- YP
- RT
- SOR
- ENCE

**Answers for Dec. 9 Puzzles**

```
LYLE MGM CAPS TEALEONI AVEC RAVENOUS RENO VIN SEURAT SPIEL LIDS SOON RAVIOLI TUT TENET CAPB RAVINES CLAY EFIS SHADE TARIFF ETA OMEM RAVISHER OBIE EVERMORE KIND EEEN SEAN
```

| 1. JACKPOT, 2. PLOTTER, 3. WESTERN, 4. DEMI, 5. FIREBRAND, 6. SUPPLIES, 7. SUMPTUOUSITY |

For interactive sudoku and crossword answers, see highlandscurrent.org/puzzles.

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BOYS’ BASKETBALL

After opening the season with wins over Marlboro and Blind Brook, Haldane dropped its third straight game on Tuesday (Dec. 13) against Byram Hills.

Haldane led 13-10 after the first quarter against Byram Hills but managed just five points in the second and trailed 22-18 at halftime. Matteo Cervone led the Blue Devils with 18 points and eight rebounds. Ben Boszik added 11 points and Will Bradley had eight.

Against Valhalla, the Blue Devils had their hands full with the bigger and quicker visitors.

The Eagles led 16-10 after one, but Haldane found a way to hang around and trailed by only one point at halftime and three points at the end of the third quarter.

In the fourth, the Eagles’ smothering defense resulted in turnovers and easy transition baskets. Valhalla opened with a 12-2 run in the first two minutes that put the Eagles up 54-41, and the lead ballooned to 17 with just under a minute left.

“I take some blame on our fast break,” said junior Matt Nachamkin. “I made some mistakes that led to turnovers.”

“But we’re a good team, and a close-knit group,” he said. “We showed a lot of moments where we were doing well, pushing up the court, and in our half-court offense. So hopefully we can continue that.”

Haldane (1-2) is scheduled to visit Westlake on Wednesday (Dec. 21) at 4:30 p.m.

WRESTLING

Beacon dropped a 37-30 decision to Red Hook on Wednesday (Dec. 14) at home.

Jayden Calloway remains undefeated for the Bulldogs at 13-0, and Avery Davis (172 pounds), Jude Betancourt (138), Ronan Moran (189) and Will Flynn (110) all won by pin.

For mail delivery, see highlandscurrent.org/delivery

WINTER TRACK

At the Section IX Kickoff Meet on Dec. 10 at West Point, Beacon’s Damani Deloatch won the long jump (20-7) and the triple jump (43-8), while Henry Reinike was first in the 600 in 1:29 and Bella Migliore took fourth in the 600 in 1:51.

“Henry’s victorious 600 was a great start to the season coming off his trip to states in cross-country,” said Coach Jim Henry. “And I was very happy with Damani’s season-opener. He set up to be the best jumper in the region, and could be one of the top five in the state by the end of his junior season.”

FREE-THROW CONTEST

The Knights of Columbus will host its annual free-throw competition for boys and girls ages 9 to 14 on Jan. 14 at the Philipstown Recreation Center in Garrison.

The Philipstown contest is organized by Loretto Council No. 536. Age eligibility is determined by the entrant’s age as of Jan. 1, 2023, and a birth certificate or other proof of age must be provided, along with written parental consent. There is no cost.

An entry form can be downloaded at bit.ly/36free-throw. For more information, call Dan Dillon at 845-265-3802.