2022, Updated

With 2023 fast approaching, our reporters caught up with and updated select stories from the past year

JANUARY

Missing crew member — On Jan. 3, while walking his dog at Dockside Park in Cold Spring, Seth Dinitz spotted a red backpack resting on rocks at the edge of the Hudson River. “It was clean on the exterior,” he said. “Inside, everything was waterlogged.” Its contents included two days’ worth of neatly folded clothing, a wallet, cellphone, work documents, a mechanical engineering diploma, family photos and a photocopied passport. It also contained $599 in cash and 8,500 kyats, the currency of Myanmar, worth less than $5. The documents belonged to Aung Phone San, 26, a Myanmar national and a cadet engineer aboard the M.V. Medini, a bulk carrier registered in Panama that had passed Cold Spring in mid-December. It was thought San went overboard to avoid returning to Myanmar because he had applied for asylum in the United States and a cadet engineer aboard the M.V. Medini, a bulk carrier registered in Panama that had passed Cold Spring in mid-December. It was thought San went overboard to avoid returning to Myanmar because he had applied for asylum in the United States.

Update: A body was found in the water in mid-July in Tompkins Cove near Bear Mountain Bridge. According to a friend of the family, San’s parents were informed by the shipping company that it was their son, based on its size and the fact that the deceased was wearing a uniform. The New York State Police have yet to confirm the identification.

Climate report — New York released the draft of a document that laid out what the state needs to do to receive 70 percent of its power from renewable sources by 2040 and achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Update: After taking the plan on the road for public input, the state’s Climate Action Council released the final version in mid-December. One key difference in the 433-page document is the Inflation Reduction Act, which Congress passed this year. Another difference: Although the draft was approved unanimously by the council, the three panel members representing the fossil fuel, power and utility industries voted against the final version. They said it was unrealistic and unnecessarily favors renewable electric energy over natural gas sources. The plan isn’t legally binding. It’s essentially a series of recommendations for Gov. Kathy Hochul and the state Legislature.

(Continued on Page 7)

State Bans ‘Puppy Mill’ Sales
Advocates say breeders harm pets, consumers
By Leonard Sparks

Caretakers at the Dutchess County chapter of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals have been eyewitnesses to the dangers of so-called “puppy mills,” or large-scale commercial breeders.

Six puppies infected with canine parvovirus, which causes abdominal pain, lethargy and loss of appetite, were brought to the shelter in Hyde Park last year, said Lynn Meloccaro, its executive director. They could barely move and five died, she said.

Such experiences top the reasons why Meloccaro and other animal-rights advocates are celebrating Gov. Kathy Hochul’s signature this month on legislation that prohibits retail pet stores from selling cats, dogs and rabbits, beginning in 2024.

State Sen. Sue Serino, whose district includes the Highlands, voted for the bill, as did the area’s two Assembly members: Sandy Galef, whose district includes Philipstown, and Jonathan Jacobson, who represents Beacon. It passed 57-5 in the Senate and 134-15 in the Assembly.

The law does not affect “backyard breeders” who are allowed under state law to raise up to 25 animals at their private residences, said Ken Ross, chief for the Putnam County SPCA in Carmel. With those operations, “at least you have the option of going to the breeder and looking at the conditions before you purchase,” he said.

Although opposed by the pet store industry, the bill is intended to protect animals from being raised in the unhealthy, unsanitary and inhumane conditions that characterize many commercial breeders and large-scale commercial breeders.

(Continued on Page 5)

Out There

This Deer World
By Brian PJ Cronin

It’s hard to believe that there was ever a time in the Northeast when deer were not common. But deforestation and the hunting of deer and the predators that eat them nearly wiped out the population in New York by the late 19th century. The only place that had healthy numbers were the remote Adirondacks — some states short on deer even imported animals from the Adirondacks to replenish their stocks.

However, those states did not import the few remaining wolves and mountain lions at the same time. Those predators soon vanished from the Northeast, while the surviving deer pushed into tapped-out land left behind by farmers who moved west. By the mid-1950s, New York State conservationists were noting that, in spite of being heavily hunted, deer were so abundant that they were interfering with agriculture and forestry.

That has continued. Add hunting and car accidents to the toll of Lyme disease and the docile deer is the deadliest animal (Continued on Page 18)
By Michael Turtons

Stephen Lewis, who lives in Beacon, is a computer scientist and inventor. He holds two patents for GlassMouse, a device that enables users to interact with a storefront window display by moving their hand.

Were you the type of kid who built your own radio and launched homemade rockets?

I took a lot of things apart. Once, I decided it would be a good idea to shoot a stream of hose water onto a lump of raw sodium. It exploded in a ball of fire, showering lye in all directions.

What careers led you to become an inventor?

I've had too many careers to remember! I have a bachelor's degree from Harvard and a master's degree in architecture from Columbia. I've produced *Sesame Street* short films, been a professional photographer, architect, teacher. I've designed software and hardware and toys. My favorite invention was AniMagic – the user doodles a figure, which comes to life as an animation. It's licensed to Mattel; in the contract, they reserved the right to use the software “throughout the universe.” The big one that got away was my invention of the touchpad in the 1980s. I filed a patent, but it never got through at the patent office. Getting the patents for GlassMouse took me three years. I have others from previous inventions, but it's a battle. There are about 10 million patents.

What inspired the GlassMouse?

Interactivity has invaded our lives, for better or worse. Our TVs, computers, phones, watches, even our heating systems and air conditioners, all want to talk to us, entertain us, engage with us. So, I thought, why are store windows still mute and unresponsive? GlassMouse creates a display that beckons you. You wave your hand to interact. In the age of COVID, it's a safe way to control interactive experiences in a window or at a mall or kiosk.

Have you done field tests?

I'm using Beacon and Cold Spring to get feedback. In Beacon it's installed at Darryl's, the Welcome Center, Banner Island Gallery and Daniel Aubry Realty. In Cold Spring it's installed at *The Current*. People can also experience it with a webcam at glassmouse.com. My company, Architectonics, is a startup.

What's the larger goal?

I want to engage a number of storefronts in a strip, to see what the collective effect would be. The vision is to create a “ribbon of information” on both Main Streets, as part of a larger experiment in the future of digital towns and cities.
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Tax breaks
I don’t approve of the veiled or suggested threat by Ed Kellogg, one of the owners of the firm developing the Craig House site, that, unless a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes agreement is approved, the project might go “on the back burner for a while” (“Beacon Schools Unsure About Craig House Tax Break,” Dec. 23). Dangling something like that above the heads of our community is immature, unprofessional and obviously self-serving. Yes, it is nice to know that the place will provide employment for 125 people, but will they be local or outsiders brought in who might have more operational experience? I think Kellogg needs to be a bit more cautious in his statements regarding this project.

Tim Sanker, Beacon

Mental health
Thank you for your article (“Therapy Prescribed for Mental Health System,” Dec. 23). I was, until the end of the summer, one of those therapists having to turn away prospective patients. However, a number of my patients were doing much better and terminated treatment, while there have been next to no new inquiries. I suspect the economy is a factor, despite my rates being lower than many I have seen, and I am not in-network with insurance because of the many problems with reimbursement. Many insurance companies do not recognize my license (licensed creative arts therapist) and others may have low rates or a slow response to claims.

Perhaps some of the difficulty is also in knowing where to look, or being willing or able to pay out of pocket. I try to keep my rates affordable, with a sliding scale for those reason, and have less overhead than some, so if anyone out there is in need, I have several openings for adults with mild to moderate anxiety and depression, life transitions and support.

Alexandria Devin, Beacon

Radioactive fuel
“Consent-based siting,” which is referenced in your story about moving the spent radioactive fuel away from Indian Point (“Rental Needed. Term: 300,000 Years,” Dec. 23), is a concept introduced by former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid’s hand-picked blueribbon panel to ensure that no site (such as Nye County in Nevada) is ever going to make it through as a “volunteer” willing to take it.

Beyond the distasteful ethics of dumping Indian Point’s nuclear waste on a low-income minority community elsewhere in the U.S. that is already overloaded with pollution, there is the folly of moving tens of thousands of canisters containing massive quantities of highly radioactive material over thousands of miles. What could go wrong?

Michel Lee, Scarsdale
Puppy Mill (from Page 1)

stop the resale of animals with congenital defects and diseases to pet owners unaware of those conditions.

Some breeders force female dogs to have “litter after litter,” sometimes mating them with their brothers and without veterinary care, said Meloccaro. Females who repeatedly give birth eventually contract pyometra, a uterine infection, and “are killed or thrown out into a ditch somewhere,” she said.

Buyers often are unaware of illnesses until after they “fall in love” and take pets home, said Ross. “Now they’re stuck with a dog that has some long-term medical problem that results in higher medical bills, and the dog doesn’t live that long.”

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals estimated in July that 43 percent of puppies shipped to New York were bred in Missouri, which, according to the organization, hosts more commercial breeders than any other state.

Advocates hope the legislation will also spur more adoptions from shelters. Pet shops will be allowed to provide space to animal-rescue organizations and shelters to offer pets for adoption.

“The main thing is to cut off the market for sick puppies and, hopefully, shut the puppy mills down,” said Meloccaro. “It’s not just that the consumer is buying a sick animal — that’s bad enough. But the conditions in which these animals are being bred are atrocious, just atrocious.”

In December 2021, the attorney general

Where to Adopt or Donate

Animal Rescue Foundation
54 Simmons Lane, Beacon
845-831-5161; arfbeacon.org

Beans Cat Cafe
325 Main St., Beacon
845-440-8243; beanscatcafe.com

Dutchess SPCA
636 Violet Ave., Hyde Park
845-452-7722, x420; dcspsca.org

Mid Hudson Animal Aid (cats)
54 Simmons Lane, Beacon
845-831-4321; midhudsonanimalaid.org

Putnam Humane Society
68 Old Route 6, Carmel
845-225-7777; puthumane.org

The state attorney general accused a Long Island pet store of selling this sick puppy. Photo provided

Need Help with Your Pet?

Officials at the Dutchess and Putnam SPCCAs say they have seen an uptick in abandoned pets as inflation squeezes people’s budgets.

The Putnam SPCC has “made a lot of arrests” for abandonment, which is a misdemeanor, said Ross. In some cases, animals are left tied to trees.

The Putnam Humane Society and Dutchess SPCA maintain pet food pantries for owners struggling financially and Dutchess offers veterinary care at-cost. The organization also boards animals free-of-charge for 30 days if pet owners temporarily lose housing or are hospitalized, said Lynn Meloccaro, the Dutchess director.

“We’ve managed to divert hundreds of animals from coming into the shelter — people that came in with a thought that they were going to surrender the animal and then they ended up keeping the animal,” she said.

Puppy Mill (from Page 1)

Governor signs round of bills passed by state legislators

By Chip Rowe

Through this week, Govs. Andrew Cuomo and Kathy Hochul had signed 1,540 bills passed during the 2023-22 legislative session, which ended in June. Another 194 await Hochul’s signature. One hundred fifty-eight have been vetoed.

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Below are summaries of select laws and the votes cast by Republican Sue Serino (whose Senate district includes the Highlands), Democrat Sandy Galef (whose Assembly district includes Philipstown) and Democrat Jonathan Jacobson (whose Assembly district includes Beacon).

The 2023-24 session begins Wednesday (Jan. 4). On Dec. 31, Galef will retire after 30 years in the Assembly, to be succeeded by Dana Levenberg, a fellow Democrat who won the seat in November. Serino’s district was redrawn but it does not include Beacon or Philipstown; instead, Rob Rolison, a Republican who is the mayor of Poughkeepsie, will represent the Highlands in the Senate. Jacobson ran unopposed for a third term.

Pay raise

On Dec. 22, legislators voted to raise their annual salaries by $13,000, to $142,000 annually as of Jan. 1. Their most recent pay raise was in December 2018, when they voted to increase their salaries from $79,500 annually to $110,000, followed by $10,000 increases in 2020 and 2021. The bill was delivered to the governor on Dec. 22 but she has not acted on it as of Thursday (Dec. 29).

Passed by Senate, 33-23
Serino ☑
Passed by Assembly, 81-52
Galef ☑ Jacobson ☑

Marriage officiants

On Dec. 28, Hochul signed a law sponsored in the Assembly by Galef that allows any adult to be designated as the officiant for a wedding. The designation is good for one day on a specific date.

Passed by Senate, 52-11
Serino ☑
Passed by Assembly, 129-15
Galef ☑ Jacobson ☑

Tax exemption

On Dec. 9, Hochul signed a law that allows municipalities, school districts and fire districts to offer a property tax exemption of up to 10 percent on the primary home of volunteer first responders who have been members of a fire department or ambulance service for at least two to five years. An earlier law allowed counties to offer the exemption, but only about half had done so (including Dutchess and Putnam, in 2002). That earlier law will be repealed on Dec. 9, 2025.

Passed by Senate, 63-0
Serino ☑
Passed by Assembly, 148-0
Galef ☑ Jacobson ☑

Domestic violence

On Oct. 18, Hochul enacted a series of laws designed to protect victims of domestic violence, including those that:

Require judges to order the seizure of firearms, including rifles and shotguns, when an abusive partner refuses to surrender them as required by an order of protection.

Passed by Senate, 46-15
Serino ☑
Passed by Assembly, 110-34
Galef ☑ Jacobson ☑

Require criminal and family court judges to ask whether an individual named in an order of protection possesses a firearm. While the earlier law requires these individuals to have their firearm licenses revoked or suspended, it did not require judges to ask this question.

Passed by Senate, 48-14
Serino ☑
Passed by Assembly, 113-31
Galef ☑ Jacobson ☑

(Continued on Page 6)
Voted (from Page 5)

Allows victims of sexual violence to apply to the state Board of Elections to have their voter registration information sealed. The previous law only applied to victims of domestic violence.
Passed by Senate, 63-0
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 145-0
Galef  Jacobson

Catalytic converters
On Oct. 17, Hochul signed legislation that requires new-car dealers to sell catalytic converters at cost to add serial numbers to catalytic converters so they can be traced if stolen. The converters are a target because of their high resale value. The law also requires dealers in secondhand parts to keep a record of who sells them converters.
Passed by Senate, 63-0
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 145-0
Galef  Jacobson

Student debt
On Oct. 13, Hochul repealed a state law that required the Civil Recoveries Bureau of the Attorney General’s Office to add a 22 percent fee to student loan debt that it collected. The fee was designed to allow the agency to recover its costs.
Passed by Senate, 96-7
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 107-37
Galef  Jacobson

Opioid overdose prevention
On Oct. 28, Hochul enacted a law that requires public colleges to keep a supply of opioid antidotes such as naloxone in student housing facilities. In addition, resident assistants at SUNY campuses will be trained to administer the medication, which reverses overdoses.
Passed by Senate, 63-0
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 143-1
Galef  Jacobson

Breastfeeding
On Dec. 9, Hochul enacted a law that requires employers to provide private breast-milk pumping spaces that include seating, running water, electricity and working space.
Passed by Senate, 62-1
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 147-0
Galef  Jacobson

Space heaters
On Dec. 8, Hochul signed legislation that bans the sale of electric space heaters that do not have thermostats and automatic shut-offs. The bill followed a fire in January in the Bronx that killed 19 people.
Passed by Senate, 62-0
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 149-0
Galef  Jacobson

Propane emergencies
On Dec. 8, Hochul enacted a law that allows homeowners who lease propane storage tanks to purchase fuel in emergencies such as severe weather from any supplier if their contract supplier cannot reach them within 24 hours. The measure takes effect April 8.
Passed by Senate, 48-15
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 112-33
Galef  Jacobson

Pay transparency
On Dec. 21, Hochul enacted legislation requiring employers to list salary ranges for any advertised job, including promotions.
Passed by Senate, 46-17
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 96-48
Galef  Jacobson

Land preservation
On Dec. 23, Hochul signed a law requiring state agencies to contribute to efforts to conserve at least 30 percent of U.S. land and water by 2030.
Passed by Senate, 58-3
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 137-8
Galef  Jacobson

Medical debt
On Nov. 23, Hochul signed legislation that bans medical providers from placing a lien on a person’s residence or garnishing wages to collect debts.
Passed by Senate, 47-15
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 106-41
Galef  Jacobson

Opioid copays
On Dec. 23, Hochul signed a law that prohibits insurers from charging a copay for each visit during opioid addiction treatment.
Passed by Senate, 57-4
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 143-1
Galef  Jacobson

Rape kit tracking
On Dec. 22, Hochul enacted a law that creates an electronic tracking system for sexual-offense evidence collection kits, or rape kits. State law requires the Office of Victim Services to store kits for at least 20 years.
Passed by Senate, 63-0
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 144-0
Galef  Jacobson

Sexual conduct
On Dec. 22, Hochul expanded the definition of sexual conduct against a child to include insertion of a finger. A member of the state Assembly who sponsored the bill said he was contacted by a Hudson Valley resident whose 8-year-old daughter had been assaulted but learned during the prosecution that the penal code did not include fingers in the definition of “foreign object.”
Passed by Senate, 63-0
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 150-0
Galef  Jacobson

Putnam generators
On Dec. 2, Hochul signed a bill introduced in the Assembly by Galef that adds Putnam County to the “lower Mid-Hudson region” in a law that provides financial assistance to gas stations to buy backup generators to keep their pumps operational if major storms knock out power.
Passed by Senate, 61-0
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 146-0
Galef  Jacobson

Digital repairs
On Dec. 29, Hochul enacted the Digital Fair Repair Act, which requires “original equipment manufacturers” (e.g., Apple) to make diagnostic and repair information available to consumers and independent shops if the same information and parts are available to authorized partners.
Passed by Senate, 59-4
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 147-2
Galef  Jacobson

Organ donors
On Dec. 29, Hochul signed legislation to create a program to cover costs associated with organ donation, such as lost wages (up to $125,000 annually), child care and medical expenses, for New York residents who donate to a fellow New Yorker. There are 8,253 people on wait lists in New York, including 7,392 people waiting for a kidney. The bill’s sponsors noted that New York ranks 49th among states in organ-donor registration.
Passed by Senate, 61-0
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 150-0
Galef  Jacobson

Draft a bill into law that requires telemarketers to give customers the option to be added to the do-not-call list before the pitch. What often happens, according to the bill’s sponsors, is that a customer hangs up early in the call, allowing telemarketers to contact them repeatedly.
Passed by Senate, 61-0
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 149-0
Galef  Jacobson

Affidavit ballots
On Dec. 6, Hochul signed a bill into law that requires affidavit ballots to be paid for the use of their name, image or likeness without forfeiting their scholarships or eligibility.
Passed by Senate, 52-11
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 140-4
Galef  Jacobson

Telemarketers
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Passed by Senate, 61-0
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 102-42
Galef  Jacobson

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Serino
Passed by Assembly, 145-0
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Serino
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Galef  Jacobson

Pay transparency
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Serino
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Galef  Jacobson

Land preservation
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Passed by Senate, 58-3
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 137-8
Galef  Jacobson

More time
On Dec. 23, Hochul enacted legislation that reduces the time that a person must register to vote before an election from 25 to 10 days.
Passed by Senate, 44-19
Serino
Passed by Assembly, 102-42
Galef  Jacobson

Opioid copays
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Year in Review (from Page 1)

Nelsonville limits rentals — With a 3-2 vote on Jan. 18, the Nelsonville Village Board approved a law that limits operation of short-term rentals to 100 days annually — or, alternatively, to rentals of one week each — and requires owners to make the property their main residence. The vote ended several months of intermittent but intense debate over STRs booked through services such as Airbnb and VRBO. The law exempts units rented for periods of 30 days or longer. It also excludes traditional bed-and-breakfasts.

Update: The law takes effect on Sunday (Jan. 1).

Doing hard things — The Current profiled journalist Gwendolyn Bounds, a Garrison resident who recently competed in (three silver medals and a bronze). Bounds profiled journalist Gwendolyn Bounds, a Garrison resident who recently competed in the Spartan World Championships, an endurance race through obstacles held in the United Arab Emirates. On March 7, Good-cause eviction — A New York state court judge is seen by another court as precedent for the Nelsonville Village Board’s decision earlier this month by a state judge. The judge struck down Newburgh’s good-cause eviction regulation, saying it conflicted with state law. The Beacon City Council took action to allow the law to extend to renters through Legal Services of the Hudson Valley. This year, the nonprofit has helped 6,034 clients facing eviction in the lower Hudson Valley, including 71 in Beacon.

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Liquor exception — Sen. Sue Serino and Assembly Member Jonathan Jacobson, whose districts include Beacon, introduced legislation that would exempt the Beacon Falls Cafe, from a state ban on granting liquor licenses to establishments within 200 feet of a place of worship. The cafe is across Main Street from the Tabernacle of Christ Church. Owner Bob Nevelus said his application to the State Liquor Authority three years earlier was rejected because of the law.

Update: The measure passed the Assembly, 147-0, on May 9 and the Senate, 61-0, on May 18 and was signed into law by Gov. Kathy Hochul on June 30. Nevelus’ application to serve liquor on-site, filed Oct. 28, is pending.

Armed robbery — Putnam County Sheriff investigators used surveillance footage to identify and charge David Peres of the City of Newburgh with the armed robbery on Feb. 13 of $228 from the Gulf gas station on Route 9D in Garrison. Deputies turned Peres over to the custody of the U.S. Marshalls, who charged him with two federal crimes: Hobbs Act robbery and brandishing a firearm.

Update: Prosecutors are negotiating a plea deal with Peres but the process has been delayed because he is hospitalized for unspecified medical problems.

Fond farewells — On Feb. 26, Cold Spring showed its appreciation for two retiring mainstays of Main Street. Friends holding a party for Jeff Consaga, the owner of the Foundry Cafe for 26 years known for his French toast and generous portions, and a parade for Leonora Burton, the proprietor of The Country Goose for 37 years, who returned to her native U.K.

Update: Consaga says he misses many things but not the 4:30 a.m. wakeup calls. “No stress. No pressure,” he said. After fishing five times in the 26 years he ran the cafe, he has matched that in one summer. “I’m a happy camper,” he said. This year, he will gather with friends for another of his series of New Year’s bashes but will not be cooking.

On Tuesday (Dec. 27), Burton wrote from Putney, South London, where she lives with her sister. “I’m settling in and working on writing a book about Waffles, one of my favorite Cold Spring dogs. I’m also planning on visiting Cold Spring in February, as long as there is no airline strike. I miss the village, the store and the community spirit.” She helps her sister with a pet-walking business, which allows her to see her son, Robert, each morning when he drops off his dog.

Right-of-way — A New York state court judge on Feb. 23 stopped Homeland Towers from transforming a right of way it needs to reach a Nelsonville cell tower site and predicted opponents of the plans would prevail. The injunction against Homeland came less than 24 hours after then-Mayor Mike Bowman said the firm expected to start construction in June of a 95-foot tower disguised as a fir tree. Located off Rockledge Road, the 9.6-acre site overlooks Cold Spring Cemetery. It can only be accessed through a neighbor’s property.

Update: Homeland is fighting the order and, in September, a judge ordered the homeowner to post a $50,000 bond to keep it in place. A status conference is scheduled for Jan. 12.

MARCH

Good-cause eviction — On March 7, Beacon became the fifth municipality in New York state to enact “good-cause” eviction legislation. Among other provisions, it requires landlords to demonstrate “good cause” before a judge can begin eviction proceedings. Those causes could include nonpayment of rent; violation of the terms of tenancy; interference with other tenants’ comfort or safety; health-and-safety violations; use of the apartment for an illegal purpose; refusal to grant a landlord access for repairs; or a landlord’s need to use the property for a family member or personal residence. The law exempts landlords who own fewer than four apartments and live on-site. Landlords sued to invalidate similar laws in Newburgh and Albany.

Update: The law may be in danger if a decision earlier this month by a state judge is seen by another court as precedent. The judge struck down Newburgh’s good-cause eviction regulation, saying it conflicted with state law. The Beacon City Council took action to allow the law to extend to renters through Legal Services of the Hudson Valley. This year, the nonprofit has helped 6,034 clients facing eviction in the lower Hudson Valley, including 71 in Beacon.

Prison closes — The Downstate Correctional Facility near Beacon was one of six state prisons that closed as New York State evaluated the cost of keeping its facilities open while the number of inmates shrinks. Downstate, a maximum-security facility in Fishkill with 600 prisoners — just over half of its capacity — was the largest of the prisons. Gov. Kathy Hochul earlier said the moves would save $142 million annually.

Update: On Dec. 22, the New York Prison Redevelopment Commission, a 15-member panel convened by Hochul earlier this year, released a 140-page report called Unlocking Opportunities with recommendations on what to do with Downstate and 11 other former prisons. Among its suggestions was that requests for proposals to solicit development bids for Downstate be prioritized in 2023 so that its buildings don’t deteriorate. Its general recommendations included a marketing campaign, website and Prison Redevelopment Fund; prioritizing housing plans; and dividing larger sites into smaller parcels (Downstate, with 80 acres, is the fourth-smallest of the 12).

APRIL

Capitol defendants — Robert Ballesteros, 28, of Mahopac, pleaded guilty to. On April 28 to 36 months of probation. The next day, Anthony Vukasnik, also of Mahopac, pleaded guilty to the same charge and was sentenced to three years of probation that included three imprisonment terms of 14 days each and three months of home confinement. In May, Robert Chapman of Carmel pleaded guilty and received 18 months of probation. They are among nine men from the area arrested following the attack.

Update: The trial of Roberto Minuta, who owns a Newburgh tattoo parlor, resumes on Jan. 3; Will Pepe of Beacon, Gregory (Continued on Page 8)
Dutchess Mall by building an industrial complex in Newburgh to revive the south end of the long-abandoned Putnam County Hospital. South Brett and Main streets on Christmas Eve were stabbing victims near the intersection of Maple and 8th Street. Nearly five months earlier, officers responded at 6:50 p.m. to a report that a man had been shot in a parking lot in Newburgh of the Putnam County line. If approved by the Dutchess County Planning Board, the project will include what developers called a "contemporary design" and will feature six charging stations for electric vehicles. During a public hearing, there was a question about drilling for underground stormwater tanks and whether the digging would disturb historic artifacts but development officials said their plans only call for drilling in already-disturbed areas. The state Department of Environmental Conservation has said the site could include timber rattlesnake habitat. A freshwater wetlands permit from the DEC will also be required. Mayor Supervisors Ozy and Albra said this week that entering the project to receive preliminary approval from the town in February. He called the redevelopment of the site "a great addition to our tax base" that will not add any children to local schools.

Watchtower project — The Jehovah's Witnesses applied to construct a complex just north of Beacon. The church would like to build a 47,000-square-foot office building, 15,000-square-foot maintenance building and renovate a 14,500-square-foot warehouse for storage and exercise use and add an accessory park with athletic fields and meditation areas. Update: Although the project has not been approved, the Fishkill Planning Board gave the Watchtower Society the OK earlier this month to clear 150 trees by Dec. 31 after the state Department of Environmental Conservation noted that bald eagles could build nests if the developer waits until next year.

STR enforcement — The Beacon City Council on June 6 approved spending $1,500 to hire Granicus, a digital communications and records management firm, to monitor compliance with the city's law regulating short-term rentals. A Dutchess County grant covered the other $5,000 of the cost. Under a 2020 law, homeowners and tenants are permitted to rent or sublet homes or apartments for up to 100 days per year and 30 days at a time. The rental spaces must be owner-occupied, which means that they must be the owner or renter's primary residence, not an investment property. An inspection and $150 permit is required. The city had issued 11 permits in the past two years, but Granicus told the council it had identified 170 Beacon properties listed on Airbnb or other platforms. Update: City Administrator Chris White said during the council's Dec. 19 meeting that the city mailed a first set of letters this month to unlicensed property owners who are advertising rentals in Beacon. White said there are about 85 unlicensed STRs in the city, which is down from the summer.

JULY

Barber shop fire — Not much was left following an afternoon fire on July 6 that destroyed the interior of the barber shop at 209 Main St. in Beacon. Alvin Bell had occupied for more than 30 years. Bell said he worked until 3 p.m. and the woman who braids hair in the space locked up around 4 p.m. A half-hour later, he said, someone told him that a fire had broken out. Chief Gary Van Voorhis said that Beacon firefighters were on the scene within 60 seconds of the 4:04 p.m. alarm. Fighting heavy smoke, they found the blaze in the rear portion of the barbershop and were able to confine it to the first floor of the building. Update: Bell, 88, said this week that he has decided to retire rather than rebuild his business, which he called "a museum and a barbershop." Bell said he returned $10,200 raised through GoFundMe, although the outpouring of community support was heartwarming. "I've never seen so much love in one town in my life," he said.

MONKEYPOX — The Dutchess health department on July 21 confirmed the first case in the county of monkeypox, part of a national outbreak. The virus is similar to smallpox, but milder and rarely fatal. There were 670 cases in New York state, mostly in New York City. Putnam County would report its first case on Aug. 11.

AUGUST

Pot farmers — As Alex Keenan and Ryan McGrath oversaw the harvesting of Hudson River Hemp's first-ever marijuana crop for the state's recreational market, the Hopewell Junction farmers worried that a slow rollout of retail dispensaries would also delay a return on their investment in plants, equipment and labor. Update: They have reason to worry. The state's first dispensary opened on Thursday (Dec. 29) in Manhattan, but a federal judge on Nov. 10 ordered a temporary ban on retail licenses in the Mid-Hudson area and four other regions. The judge is hearing a lawsuit in which an applicant accuses the New York State Office of Temporary Aid on the Needs of Families of being against the state companies. The state filed an appeal Dec. 12. Four days later, Keenan and McGrath told NBC New York that they are storing 2,000 pounds of marijuana ready for sale. "By the time we put our next plants in, by May — if we're still sitting on what we have, we've got a massive problem," said Keenan. "And it's not just us, it's all the farms."
Year in Review (from Page 8)

SEPTEMBER

Pedestrian death — A Beacon woman who struck and killed a pedestrian was found guilty by a city judge, who ruled that she had not exercised “due care” when she turned off Main Street onto Teller Avenue. Jacqueline Milohnic was driving a 2019 Jeep Wrangler on Dec. 1, 2021, when she struck Carla Giuffrida, 75, of Beacon. Milohnic’s lawyer on Sept. 22 called Judge Greg Johnston’s decision “a legal injustice” and said that her client planned to appeal after sentencing.

Update: Milohnic’s driver’s license was revoked for six months on Oct. 28 in Beacon City Court. She was also ordered to pay a $750 fine and complete a driver’s safety course. The prosecution did not seek jail time.

Stream protections — On Sept. 6, the Putnam County Legislature voted 6-1 to pass a resolution urging Gov. Kathy Hochul to veto a bill that would provide additional protections for waterways suitable for fishing but that do not provide drinking water. The bill would require state permits for projects that disturb the banks and beds of “Class C” streams. The county legislators who opposed the bill said it would unduly slow projects as a result of the Department of Environmental Conservation being understaffed from cuts enacted during the 2008 financial crisis.

Update: Hochul vetoed the bill on Dec. 9, citing “significant regulatory impacts on related projects” and “substantial costs to the state, as well as to local governments and to the communities.” She added that “the legislation would be more appropriate to address in the state’s budget process.”

NOVEMBER

Fare increases — The CEO of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority warned on Nov. 30 that the agency faced an “existential” financial crisis and needed to raise fares and tolls for the first time since 2019 to offset lower ridership.

Update: Those hikes went into effect Dec. 21. The MTA’s $19.2 billion budget and financial plan approved by its board restored biannual fare and toll hikes that had been suspended during the pandemic, starting with an initial 5.5 percent increase sometime next year. The increase will yield an estimated $1.3 billion over four years from Metro-North and Long Island Rail Road riders, and travelers using the MTA’s buses, subways, bridges and tunnels. It is one of several strategies aimed at narrowing deficits projected to reach $3 billion by 2026, a period when ridership is projected to trail pre-pandemic levels.

DECEMBER

COVID deaths — By Dec. 28, more than 60,000 people in New York state had died of complications of COVID-19 since early 2020, including 140 in Putnam County and 727 in Dutchess. Three people died each month in 2022 in Putnam, on average, and 16 each month in Dutchess.

Reporting by Liz Schevchuk Armstrong, Brian PJ Cronin, Chip Rowe, Jeff Simms, Leonard Sparks and Michael Turton

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**COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUTNAM</th>
<th>DUTCHESS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary vaccination:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Phillipstown/CS: 87.7%</td>
<td>Beacon: 68.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garrison: 82.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Boosted:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Phillipstown/CS: 27.1%</td>
<td>Beacon: 16.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garrison: 21.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Positive tests, 7-day average:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>↑ 9.5%</td>
<td>↑ 11.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of deaths:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>140 (+2)</td>
<td>727 (+6)</td>
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</table>

Source: Weekly update per state health department, as of Dec. 28. Boosted is the percentage of people eligible for additional shots who are up to date.

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**Calling All Singers**

Carmel, NY—The Putnam Chorale is inviting new singers to join its 45-person community chorus. Directed by Dr. Douglas Anderson, the Chorale draws performers from Putnam, Westchester, Dutchess counties in NY and Fairfield County in CT. The spring 2023 program will present a concert of two Masses, including:

- Missa Sancti Bernardi von Offida (Heilige Mass), composed by Joseph Haydn and
- Missa Solemnis B-Minor, written by Anton Bruckner

The Chorale will begin rehearsals on Monday, January 9, 2023 at 6:45p.m. Tuition is $125 for the fall semester, with music provided for an additional fee. A rehearsal location will be announced shortly.

Singers in the Chorale come from different backgrounds and levels of experience. One of our singers relates how he came to join the group. “In 2014 I was carpooling to the train station with a soprano with the Chorale. I told her that in college I had sung with the Glee Club and performed in the musical “Carousel”. I could read music and play the piano a bit and I owned a tuxedo that still fit. Her immediate response was, “You’re in!” I went to the first rehearsal and sang for the first time in 50 years! Although I was looking for the exit at first, with encouragement, I stayed with it and the Chorale has brought so much more to my life.”

There is a special need for singers for the tenor and bass sections, but all singers are welcome. While there is no audition requirement, it is expected that the participants have some music background, or prior experience in singing in a choral/choir group. Questions are welcome and can be directed to: contactus@putnamchorale.org. If you are interested, you may also call 845.279.5099 for more information.

The Putnam Chorale is the sole community chorus in Putnam County, NY. It has been audiences since 1984 by providing high quality choral and orchestral music and academic commentary. The two-fold mission of the Chorale is to provide amateur and aspiring professional singers an opportunity for choral singing and to provide the community with compelling performance experiences unrivaled outside the major city venues.
SNOW PATROL — Eight highway crew members from the Dutchess County Department of Public Works left Poughkeepsie for Buffalo on Tuesday (Dec. 27) with front-end loaders and dump trucks to help dig out from a series of blizzards that have buried Erie County. Four county public safety dispatchers also headed to Buffalo on Thursday to assist.

PHOTO PROVIDED

STILL GIVING — Two older Beacon residents volunteer weekly at the food pantry run by St. Andrew & St. Luke’s Church. Kitty Stager, who turned 90 this month and is always coiffed and nicely dressed, packs groceries on Fridays. Tom “Skip” Skipworth, a lifelong resident who turns 91 in February and was known in his younger days for his baseball prowess, comes by on Saturdays to assist with distribution. To join them, call 845-831-1369. The pantry is open from 10 to 11 a.m. on Saturdays at 15 South Ave.

Photos by Allen Alter
A photo by Jon Arnold of a carpet shop in Essaouira, Morocco, is accompanied in Why We Travel by a quote from Joyce Meyer: "Patience is not the ability to wait, but the ability to keep a good attitude while waiting."

**Patricia Schultz**

Photo provided

By Alison Rooney

As a well-known travel maven, Patricia Schultz, the author of the best-selling*1,000 Places to See Before You Die*, has been asked every logistical question you can think of about the “where and there.” But there is one she says no one ever asked.

“Why do you travel?”

As it did for many people, the pandemic shutdown prompted the Beacon native to consider her response to that question. She found herself outlining an idea for a book quite different from her previous ones in which “people hopefully will be reminded of how they feel about travel, how it enriches our lives, makes us better people, opens up horizons,” she says. “Your head, your heart, your eyes open up.”

Her longtime publisher, Workman, suggested she create a book that she describes as “for people to give as a gift to travelers deprived of travel for so long. We think we’re too busy: taking care of parents, jobs, worried about the cost of travel. Many of these reasons are solid and valid, but some are justification. Really, do you need a new car every year? Do you need to keep going to Disney World?”

Schultz cites Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., the late Supreme Court justice: “A mind that is stretched by new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.”

“My publisher asked, ‘What gets you off the sofa?’” recalls Schultz, who has sofas in New York City and Beacon. She started considering how best to communicate her invertebrate love of travel.

“Visually the book is a total departure,” she says. “My other books have postage stamp-sized photos.” *Why We Travel: 100 Reasons to See the World*, on the other hand, is a coffee-table book with sumptuous images by a variety of photographers meshed with essays and anecdotes focused on what makes travel such a rewarding experience for Schultz. It also includes quotes from luminaries from all walks of life for Schultz. It also includes essays and anecdotes focused on what makes travel such a rewarding experience for Schultz. It also includes quotes from luminaries from all walks of life for Schultz.

“The book is about places that deserve to be seen and about discovering things you never go back to its old dimensions.”

“It’s not all about exotic journeys. ‘It doesn’t need to be,’” Schultz says, noting that she went to the Adirondacks during a pandemic autumn, and found it “so stunningly beautiful. I saw an autumn I had never seen before: magnificent. People think I’m talking about things they can’t do financially or timewise, but that’s not true. See something not familiar to you. It impacts you in ways that are subtle and seemingly insignificant, or that turn your life around, or everything in between.”

Schultz was first exposed to travel as a student at Mount Saint Mary High School for Girls in Newburgh, which no longer exists. “There were a notable number of girls from Spanish-speaking countries there, and they were everything exotic and ‘un-Beacon’ to me,” she recalls.

“When I was 15, one of the girls invited me to visit her in the Dominican Republic,” Schultz says. “I trace a lot of my wanderlust to that eye-opening experience. I remember it all vividly. I understood right away that Beacon would always be special to me as a home base, but it would not be my only base.”

Attending Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., proved another eye-opener for Schultz. “It was like a League of Nations, with so many embassies,” she says. Schultz spent her junior year in Madrid, “which helped me understand what my future would be,” she says. Later, she spent five years in Florence. All the while, she acknowledged the role her parents played in facilitating this, while leading far different lives in Beacon.

“My parents never had passports,” she says. “They had a modest but comfortable house. I always felt attached to Beacon, although I was one of many who wanted to kick open the gates. My family still lives there — my sister, cousins — so it’s not a dream sentiment for me of what home used to be. I was solidly planted and value the familiar, sentimental and emotional ways of enjoying my hometown, along with the world.”

“Travel is a win-win,” says Schultz, who also writes for *The Wall Street Journal, Condé Nast Traveler* and *Travel Weekly*. “An incredible experience opens up your head and your horizons, and you go home, and home is even better. Beacon was even more important to me after traveling. I came home with a newfound appreciation for it and respect for the lifestyle. Many travel friends now have no home base, living out of a suitcase for years. They have no home and are fine with it. But everything I’m privileged to be able to experience abroad has led to an enduring appreciation of all things home.”

**WHY TRAVEL?**

**Inspired by the shutdown, Beacon author explores why we explore**

**The Calendar**

**WHY TRAVEL?**

*Inspired by the shutdown, Beacon author explores why we explore*

By Alison Rooney

A photo by Jon Arnold of a carpet shop in Essaouira, Morocco, is accompanied in Why We Travel by a quote from Joyce Meyer: “Patience is not the ability to wait, but the ability to keep a good attitude while waiting.”

**Travel Plans**

**Where haven’t you been?**

“The universe is going to conspire to get me to New Zealand. I have no reason not to have been there.”

**Where are you going next?**

“West Africa. There’s a big voodoo festival in Benin in January.”
THE WEEK AHEAD
Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)
For a complete listing of events, see highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

COMMUNITY

SUN 1
First-Day Hike
COLD SPRING
11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Little Stony Point
3011 Route 9D
facebook.com/littlestonypoint
Take a 1- or 3-mile naturalist-led hike and enjoy live music and refreshments. Hikes begin at 11:30 a.m.

SUN 1
First-Day Hike
WAPPINGERS FALLS
1 – 3 p.m. Stony Kill Farm
79 Farmstead Lane | stonykill.org
Meet at the Woodland trailhead for a 2-mile moderate hike that will include views of Mount Beacon.

SUN 1
First-Day Hike
POUGHKEEPSIE
11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Walkway Over the Hudson
61 Parker Ave. | walkway.org
Enjoy the views from 1,200 feet over the river on the 1.3-mile pedestrian bridge.

MON 2
Audubon Christmas Bird Count
PUTNAM
Midnight to Noon
facebook.com/putnamhighland-saudubon
Email Charlie Roberto at chasrob26@gmail.com to volunteer to inventory sightings during this annual event.

TUES 3
School Board
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Auditorium
15 Craigside Drive | 845-265-9254
haldaneschool.org

TUES 3
Putnam Legislature
CARMEL
7 p.m. Historic Courthouse
44 Gleneida Ave. | 845-208-7800
putnamcountyny.com

WED 4
Village Board
COLD SPRING
7:30 p.m. Town Hall
238 Main St. | 845-265-5200
philipstown.com

THURS 5
Poetry Club
COLD SPRING
2:30 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org
Students in grades 5 and up are invited to practice writing poetry, with the goal of developing original pieces and ideas.

MUSIC

SAT 31
Almost Queen
BEACON
9:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The band will perform music from its latest release, 7 Minutes Late. The Dan Brother Band opens.
Cost: $50 ($135 with dinner)

FRI 6
Black Magic
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
Led by guitarist Dan Garcia, the band will pay tribute to the music of Santana.
Cost: $20 ($25 door)

SAT 7
Sharkey & The Sparks
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
Sharkey McEwen and his band will play music from the 1960s and ’70s.
Cost: $20 ($25 door)

SUN 8
Open Mic Finals
BEACON
5:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
This is the invitational round of the long-running open mic series hosted by Chihoe Hahn.

TALKS & TOURS

SAT 7
Eagle Walk
OSSINING
9 a.m. Croton boat ramp
1000 Spring Valley Road
teatown.org
Charlie Roberto will lead this walk to watch eagles along the Hudson River.

SAT 7
Organizing as Anti-Colonialism
NEWBURGH
2 – 5 p.m. Safe Harbors of the Hudson
111 Broadway | forgeproject.com
Panelists will discuss solutions for activists connecting gentrification and colonialism. The series is organized by Forge Project, a Native-led education initiative focused on arts and de-colonial education.

CIVIC

SAT 7
Putnam Legislature
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Historic Courthouse
44 Gleneida Ave. | 845-208-7800
putnamcountyny.com

WED 4
Village Board
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Village Hall
85 Main St. | 845-265-3611
coldspringny.gov

THURS 5
School Board
GARRISON
7 p.m. Garrison School
1100 Route 9D | 845-424-3689
gufs.org

THURS 5
Town Board
PHILIPSTOWN
7:30 p.m. Town Hall
238 Main St. | 845-265-5200
philipstown.com

9 Vassar St. | 845-454-3222
artsmidhudson.org
This annual calligraphy workshop will teach Japanese “First Writing of the Year” for resolutions and hopes in a ritualized way using kanji. There will two sessions for groups of 20 participants. Registration required.

Almost Queen, Dec. 31

The Highlands Current
December 30, 2022
Support our nonprofit. Become a member!
Pre-plan with Libby Funeral Home

- Your family can focus on their grief and the lovely memories

Make sure your family has the best team to comfort them in their grief when the time comes.

CALL TODAY TO LEARN MORE:
(845) 831-0179

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LibbyFuneralHome.com

NEW YEAR’S EVE
12 pm - 8 pm

New Year’s Day
12 pm - 8 pm

845-265-4778  Riverdining.com
45 FAIR STREET COLD SPRING

DOUBLE YOUR DONATION!
This Giving Season, a generous donor will match all donations to the Hub, up to $10,000!
This means your donation of $100 becomes $200!
Please support the Hub with your gift before December 31st, 2022 and help us meet this match!

Your annual support for Philipstown Behavioral Health Hub funds free programs, events, support, and mental health and addictions education, available to all Philipstown residents.

To continue providing these services to our community, please make a tax-deductible donation to the Hub today!

Venmo or Paypal @PhilipstownHub
Local recipients include the Garrison Art Center ($30,000), Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival ($40,000), Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art in Peekskill ($25,000), Manitoba ($30,000), Paramount Hudson Valley in Peekskill ($59,500), Philipstown Depot Theatre ($40,000), Putnam Arts Council ($37,750) and Storm King Art Center in New Windsor ($49,500).

Shakespeare Announces 2023 Season

Three plays include Love's Labor's Lost, Henry V

The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival has announced its lineup for the 2023 season. Tickets go on sale in March. The two plays from June to September will be Love's Labor's Lost, directed by Amanda Dehnert with an original score, and Henry V starring Emily Ota and directed by Davis McCallum.

In addition, Eva Steinmetz will direct the world premiere in September of Penelope, a reimagining of The Odyssey with music and lyrics by Alex Bechtel and the book by Bechtel, Steinmetz and Grace McLean.

Nominations Open for Poet

Dutchess to name laureate for 2023

Nominations are open for Dutchess County’s 2023 poet laureate. The volunteer poet laureate will ‘shape the position in their own way,’ according to the county, but “duties typically include public activities with schools, community groups and the press during the year and contact with writers and readers by mail, email and/or through a website.” The poet laureate will also share poetry at the State of the County address.

The poet will succeed Lucia Cericu, who served in 2021 and 2022. The deadline is Jan. 20. See tinyurl.com/2023dcpoetlaureate.
The Artist Next Door

CHRIS SANDERS

By Alison Rooney

A sked to define her career, which includes artistic zombie creation and forensic sculpting, Chris Sanders hones it down to this succinct description: “I make a living with paint, in one way or another.”

A look at the Beacon resident’s website at agoutistudios.com (named for a gene that controls mammal pigmentation) reveals a complexity of avocations, but first among them is costume work. Sanders is one of the few people in the New York film industry who is both a textile artist and tailor.

“I do a lot of fabric and garment dyeing, matching colors for the camera,” Sanders says. “It involves a knowledge of color theory, natural and manmade fibers, pigments, binders and solvents.”

As a tailor, she will find herself in the fitting room with the performers and designers as they develop the characters. As a textile artist, Sanders spends her time on tasks such as creating bullet holes and making garments for actors portraying homeless people.

“It’s a grim comment on the state of popular entertainment,” she says. “Both are techniques with which I have a lot of experience. Clothes that are brand new at 8 a.m. can be made to look so foul by 6 p.m. that my colleagues are reluctant touch them. But it’s only paint.”

Generally, Sanders “takes things that are new and, within the parameters of the story line, working with the costume designer, we make a story. We ask ourselves, ‘Who is this person? What are they wearing?’ We try things out: ‘This is interesting; shadows and unexpected things are happening.’ That can trigger dramatic foreshadowing, i.e., the character has something not quite right. I fill in the frame around what they’re saying. Those cobwebs got there somehow.”

Raised and educated in California, Sanders made her way east, first finding work at a regional theater in New Jersey, then cross-country to Parsons-Meares, a Broadway costume shop. Working as a costumer for the original Broadway production of Les Misérables, Sanders was sent around the country for three years to help set up tours. “I would sit in the house and watch the tech rehearsals and would look at how the lighting [at each theater] went with the costumes.”

In 2007, she moved from New York City to Long Island but felt with climate change, “sea level was not a place to live.” In the Hudson Valley, she found “much more community involvement, which is what I wanted.” Much more production work was also moving to the region. “At golden hour, just before sunset, I look out and am floored that the Hudson Valley School of Art wasn’t making it up,” she says. “It’s wall-to-wall inspiration.”

Sanders has cultivated other fields, most rooted in anatomy and anthropology. These include forensic sculpture, which until DNA matching made it somewhat obsolete, was a method of identifying remains from accidents or crimes by reconstructing a face on a skull. “In creating a sculpture you’re holding somebody in your hands,” she says. “It must be approached with a great deal of respect.”

Other pastimes include a serial graphic novel, Treasures of the Hudson Highlands. She has published the first chapter and promises a yarn with “physics jokes, a sea monster in the river and petroglyphs. It writes itself. There’s no grand denouement, as it just keeps going on its own. I look up 30 days later and I have pages taped all over. To turn this into an animated series would be ridiculous fun.”

Then there’s Sanders’s Sunday night Instagram story, “My Cat Bob, Special Agent” (@specialagentbobcat), in which her pet gets a star vehicle. “He’s my chill, philosophical muse,” she says.

Sanders is also a natural science illustrator. Introduced to the field by a friend who gave her a catalog, Sanders quickly was hooked. The work is usually done in collaboration with research scientists, with introductions made through the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators, she says. “I can put in a question, and in under an hour I have the answer, provided by the world expert. I can be working with people who spend 30 years looking at ferns!”

Her illustrations have been included in shows at Yale’s Peabody Museum of Natural History, the Greenwich Audubon Center and the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. “That was a big deal,” she says.
Haldane Honor Roll
Students recognized for first-quarter grades

Grade 12
Principal’s List
Amelia Alayon, Domenica Awananach, Dahlia Beck, Dustin Berkley, Alexandria Cairns, Judine Cox, Violeta Edwards Salas, Marc Firpo, Josephine Foley-Heldland, Robert Freimark, Scotland Hartford, Leif Heydt-Benjamin, Frederick Hohenberger, Helen Hutchison, Micaeli Morales, Gabriela Perilli, Oliver Peterson, Brandt Robbins, Julian Schwarz, Brendan Shanahan, Keira Shanahan, Matthew Silhavy, Caroline Sniffen, Ashley Sousa, Dana Spiegell, Nate Stickley

Grade 10
Principal’s List
Amelia Alayon, Domenica Awananach, Dahlia Beck, Dustin Berkley, Alexandria Cairns, Judine Cox, Violeta Edwards Salas, Marc Firpo, Josephine Foley-Heldland, Robert Freimark, Scotland Hartford, Leif Heydt-Benjamin, Frederick Hohenberger, Helen Hutchison, Micaeli Morales, Gabriela Perilli, Oliver Peterson, Brandt Robbins, Julian Schwarz, Brendan Shanahan, Keira Shanahan, Matthew Silhavy, Caroline Sniffen, Ashley Sousa, Dana Spiegell, Nate Stickley

Honour Roll
Catherine Clarke, Harley Sporbert, Iain Starr, Jesse Tippett, Olivia Knox, John Mangan, Peter Ruggiero, Fiona Shanahan, Roy Smith, Will Sniffen, Aidan Sullivan-Hoch, Jackson Twoguns, Liv Villella, Jillian Weinpalb, Conrad White

Grade 9
Principal’s List

Grade 8
Principal’s List
Francess Donahue, Tress Herford, Nicholas LeMon, Plum Severs

High Honor Roll

Grade 7
Principal’s List
Frances Donahue, Tess Herford, Nicolas LeMon, Plum Severs

Honour Roll
Amelia Alayon, Nicholas Arciello, Harry Bailey, Oscar Cheah, Lainey Donaghy, Lukas Elliss, Vannia Poleth Gonzalez, Sam Pose, Charlie Robohm, Maxwell Robohm, Thomas Sexton, Ella Sizemore

Putnam Executive Announces Team
Byrne succeeds Odell next month

Kevin Byrne, the state Assembly member who ran unopposed for Putnam County executive, on Dec. 23 announced appointments for his incoming administration.

The appointments include:
• Compton Spain as county attorney. He will resign, as of Jan. 1, as a partner in Spain & Spain, his family law firm, and step down as secretary of the Putnam County Conservative Party.
• Thomas Feighery, the deputy county executive, as acting commissioner of the Department of Highway and Facilities. He has supervised commercial, residential, and tunnel construction for 30 years in Manhattan with the Local 147 Sandhogs.
• John Tully, the deputy commissioner for Highway and Facilities, will become director of purchasing.
• Robert Lipton, the deputy commissioner of the Bureau of Emergency Services since 2013, will become its interim commissioner.

In addition, Byrne has asked a number of commissioners and directors to continue in their roles, including Bill Carlin (finance), Dr. Michael Neisheiwat (health), Alex Roehner (emergency medical services), John O’Conner (emergency management), Michael Cunningham (senior resources), John Osterhout (probation), Tracey Walsh (tourism) and Karl Rohde (veterans’ services).

Byrne said the evaluation process began in October and included “hundreds of hours” spent “interviewing candidates, reviewing department operations and evaluating existing programs.”

Cold Spring to Redirect Dam Spending
Funds will be used to replace filters at water plant

Cold Spring will use $203,342 in federal American Rescue Plan aid and surplus sales tax funding to replace the filters at its water treatment plant instead of repairing its upper reservoir dam.

The Putnam Legislature, which in July agreed to let municipalities share $5 million of the county’s $39 million in ARP funds and the same amount in sales tax revenue, on Dec. 20 approved the village’s request to change projects. In a Dec. 8 letter, Mayor Kathleen Foley said the filter replacement better fits the county’s emphasis on “shovel-ready projects” that could be fully or nearly fully funded” with the allocation.

Repairing the dam is a multimillion-dollar project that requires additional engineering work and will likely need multiple sources of funding, said Foley.
First Cannabis Retail Outlet Opens

No stores yet in Hudson Valley

The first legal cannabis store in the state opened Thursday (Dec. 29) in Manhattan, although retail in the Hudson Valley has been delayed by a lawsuit.

The dispensary is operated by Housing Works, a nonprofit that provides support for people living with HIV and has been barred from offering retail cannabis by the court. The dispensary is the second location operated by Housing Works, which already has a non-profit medical dispensary in New York City.

In the Beacon area, the grantees were the Putnam Valley Town Community Services Fund and the Putnam Valley Central School District’s Smoke and Fire Prevention Program. The district was awarded $150,000 for its Fire Prevention Program and $150,000 for its Fire Prevention Program.

In the Hudson Valley, the grantees were the Putnam Valley Central School District, the Putnam Valley Central School District’s Smoke and Fire Prevention Program, and the Putnam Valley Central School District’s Smoke and Fire Prevention Program.

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Chemicals found in well that supplies elementary school

By Leonard Sparks

The Putnam Valley Central School District is suing nearly two dozen companies over the contamination of the well that supplies drinking water to students, faculty and staff at its elementary school.

The lawsuit, filed on Dec. 21 in Putnam County Supreme Court, names 3M, DuPont and other firms that manufactured products containing perfluoroalkyl substances. This class of chemicals is used in nonstick and stain- and water-resistant coatings, and in foams used by firefighters to suppress blazes caused by liquids like jet fuel.

Their use has been associated with illnesses such as kidney and testicular cancer, ulcerative colitis and high cholesterol. The manufacturers have been accused of hiding the health risks.

School officials discovered the contamination in December 2020, when quarterly tests of the well revealed elevated levels of two of the most widely used chemicals, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS).

The results were 23.3 parts per trillion for PFOA and 38.3 ppt for PFOS, well above the state’s drinking-water standard of 10 ppt for both chemicals. Fortunately, at the time of the results, students and staff were using bottled water instead of faucets because of the pandemic.

The lawsuit, filed by Napoli Shkolnik, a New York City firm, traces the source of the contamination to the use of firefighting foams at the Putnam Valley Fire Department’s firehouses — one 4,600 feet from the school’s property on Oscawana Lake Road and the other 4.6 miles away.

The school district, which in October approved an agreement to become a third high school option for Garrison School graduates, is seeking punitive damages and compensation for the costs of remediating the contamination and monitoring its drinking water supply.

Putnam School District Sues over Pollution

In order to ensure that it can continue to provide clean and safe water to its students, faculty and staff, Plaintiff will have to take action.

~ Putnam Valley school district

Foundation Awards $130K

Group serves Dutchess, Putnam

The Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley announced it has awarded more than $130,000 to nonprofits in Dutchess, Putnam and Ulster counties.

In the Beacon area, the grantees were Common Ground Farm, Fareground Community Kitchen and the Howland Chamber Music Circle. In Philipstown, they were the Ecological Citizen’s Project, Garrison Art Center, Manitoga, Philipstown Behavioral Health Hub and Putnam History Museum.

Library Seeks Input

Desmond-Fish conducting survey

The Desmond-Fish Public Library in Garrison is asking Philipstown residents and visitors to share ideas for how the library can help make Philipstown better.

To gather input, the library has posted a survey at bit.ly/DesmondFishSurvey, or paper copies can be completed at the library. Its questions cover the collections, building and property, and programming and events. The deadline is Jan. 15.

PHILIPSTOWN ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Public Hearing – January 9th, 2023

The Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals for the Town of Philipstown, New York will hold a public hearing on Monday, January 9th, 2023 starting at 7:30 p.m. to hear the following appeal. The meeting will be held in person at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY.

Villetto, 24 Hickory Ridge, Garrison, NY 10524 TM#60-2-50

Applicant is seeking a variance to build 2,520 square foot (42’x60’) garage.

At said hearing all persons will have the right to be heard. Copies of the application, plat map, and other related materials may be seen in the Office of the Building Department, 2 Cedar Street, Cold Spring, New York.

Dated November 14th, 2022

Robert Dee, Chair of the Town of Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals
Deer, like people, enjoy a good run now and then.

Out There (from Page 1)

in the U.S. by a wide margin. (Bees, wasps and other stinging insects are second, followed by dogs, then horses and cows. Bears, mountain lions, sharks, wolves and snakes are much further down the list.) New York’s deer population is estimated to be 1.2 million, and I’m sure there have been times when you thought they were all in your garden.

Not this year. For the past three summers, the Mid-Hudson Valley has had outbreaks of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD), a virus that is fatal to white-tailed deer. The virus is spread by midges, biting insects commonly referred to as “no-see-ums.” The virus, which does not affect humans, is usually only found in the South, where deer have built up a resistance.

Scientists believe the midges may have hitched rides north on the winds of hurricanes and tropical storms. Nearly all of the Hudson Valley outbreaks have occurred a few weeks after a storm hit the Highlands, although an outbreak early in the summer of 2022 appears to be an exception. Testing showed that the virus had not changed from 2021, suggesting it can survive our increasingly mild winters, says Brendan Quirion of the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

But the 2022 outbreak was smaller and more isolated, he noted, suggesting our deer may be building resistance.

In deer, EHD acts like a superhot fever, (from Page 2) which is why dead deer are often found near sources of water or observed with their tongues out as they try to cool down. They also suffer from cracked and deformed hooves, Quirion says, which may be caused by swelling.

Conducting a deer census isn’t practical (it’s hard to get them all to stand still), so the DEC uses hunter harvests and extrapolates. Those numbers are much lower than usual in the Mid-Hudson Valley, although farther north, where Quirion hunts, the numbers were stable. That’s probably not news to any local hunters, and it helps explain the lush understory in Fahnestock State Park late in the fall when I went foraging for mushrooms for an earlier column.

Deer are selective browsers: They munch the most nutritious vegetation first (trilliums, orchards, whatever’s in your garden), which tend to also be species of plants that can’t tolerate a lot of browsing. They then browse woody vegetation, which can be harmful when a forest is regenerating.

New York would like to reduce the deer population in some parts of the state to allow forests to regenerate. But it prefers to do that in the long term through hunting, not a virus. (Densely populated areas such as Staten Island, where hunting isn’t practical, have been experimenting with sterilization.)

There are, of course, still deer here. I saw two this morning, staring silently from the woods as I ran past. But for a few years, pre-EHD, I used to see herds at Long Dock, Madam Brett Park and on Tioronda Avenue. It was a bit unnerving. I started keeping a journal of sorts — tracking the deer I encountered, sometimes seeing every day came out into the road to observe. Although I’ve been there more times than I can count, I always find something going on that I was not aware of.

Helen Savoit Book Club
TUES 10, 1:30 P.M.
En Busca de Emma, by Armando Lucas Correa
Discussion conducted in Spanish.
Howland Public Library, Beacon
Register at beaconlibrary.org/calendar.

Percy Jackson Book Club (Grades 5+)
TUES 10, 3:15 P.M.
The Son of Neptune, by Rick Riordan
Hudson Valley Library, Cold Spring
Register at beaconlibrary.org/calendar.

Trophy Life Book Club
THURS 10, 6 P.M.
The Night Watchman, by Louise Erdrich
Howland Public Library, Beacon
Register at beaconlibrary.org/calendar.

Every Drop of Blood
THURS 5, 7 P.M.
Every Drop of Blood, by Edward Achorn
Lincoln Depot Museum, 10 S. Water St., Peekskill
Email LincolnDepotFDN@gmail.com.

Beekeeping 101
TUES 10, 1:30 P.M.
Abe Lincoln/Civil War Book Club
THURS 5, 7 P.M.
Helen Savoit Book Club
TUES 10, 1:30 P.M.
Café con Libros
TUES 10, 10:30 A.M.
Butterfield Book Club
MOR 9, 7 P.M.
Fancy socks, by Benjamin Black
Hudson Valley Library, Cold Spring
Register at beaconlibrary.org/calendar.

T fred Book Club (Grades 2–4)
THURS 5, 7 P.M.
Every Drop of Blood, by Edward Achorn
Lincoln Depot Museum, 10 S. Water St., Peekskill
Email LincolnDepotFDN@gmail.com.

Debates and extended arguments can be as compelling as any other form of entertainment. The avid reader and scholar will find in this book a wealth of information on the subject. The author has drawn upon extensive research and personal experience to create a work that is both informative and engaging. This book is highly recommended for anyone interested in the subject.

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Puzzles

CrossCurrent

Across
1. Dallas cager, for short
4. Reindeer herder
8. Persian leader
12. Hit CBS series
13. Vicinity
14. Roof overhang
15. Like some salad dressings
17. Frat letters
18. Duo
19. Sikhs’ headwear
21. Enjoy, as fine food
24. Luau bowful
25. Guitar’s kin
26. Yule quaff
28. Desert flora
32. Simple
34. Drench
36. Lunch hour
37. Pesto herb
39. Super Bowl VIP
41. P followers
42. Joke
44. Learned one
46. Sanes
50. Lucy of “Elementary”
51. Coup d’ —
52. “Deathtrap” playwright
56. Impetuous
57. Toy block name
58. Here, to Henri
59. BPOE members

Down
1. Roman 1105
2. “— was saying...”
3. Wine producers
4. Snorkeling site
5. Altar constellation
6. Impudent
7. Settle a debt
8. Belgrade native

SudokuCurrent

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7 Little Words

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

Clues
1. come near (8)
2. ones getting their first job (9)
3. inspiring awe (8)
4. microphone holders, often (7)
5. like a sloth or a slug (9)
6. largest city in Bosnia (8)
7. “touchy” (7)

Solutions

APP  LE  RS  TE  NDRO
AGE  SA  LE  THA  TA
RGIC  VO  SIN  WO  EN
US  CTI  OACH  RAJE  GERS

Answers for Dec. 23 Puzzles

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

By Skip Pearlman

GIRLS’ BASKETBALL

Haldane’s offense had a hard time finding points on Wednesday (Dec. 28) in the first half of a Carmel tournament matinee against a solid Brewster squad, and the Blue Devils ended up falling to the Bears, 61-31. But the girls came back the next day to defeat Carmel, 50-38, in the consolation round.

“That was a tough matchup,” Coach Ed Crowe said of Brewster. “We had played them earlier in the season [a 56-27 loss], so we knew what they could do. We broke their press well, but we just couldn’t convert.”

Haldane trailed 27-10 at halftime, and 44-17 after three quarters.

Ninth-grader Kayla Ruggiero scored 11 points to lead Haldane, juniors Camilla McDaniel and Ruby Poses each had seven, senior Mairead O’Hara had four, and seniors Chloe Rowe and Amanda Johan-son each had two.

“Kayla played very well,” Crowe said. “Mairead gave us a great effort, as well — she started to find something in the second half. Marisa Peters and Ruby have both been showing improvement and giving us great effort on the court. We try to play for 32 minutes with a lot of intensity and effort.”

The Blue Devils (2-4) are scheduled to host North Salem on Wednesday (Jan. 4) before hosting Pearl River at 6:15 p.m. on Friday.

WINTER TRACK

Damani Deloatch topped 20 feet (20-2) for Beacon to win the long jump at the Pearl River Invitational at Rockland Community College in Suffern on Tuesday (Dec. 27), while Jonah Mensch was fourth in the 55-meter hurdles and sixth in the 300.

“Jonah has continued to improve each year, and he’s now our top hurdler,” said Coach Jim Henry. “He’ll be important in our relays as we head toward championship season.”

Beacon is scheduled to participate in a meet on Staten Island on Jan. 7.

Haldane also competed at the Pearl River meet, with Jake Thomas finishing second in the 55-meter dash for freshmen and sophomores in 7.32 seconds, and the boys’ 200-meter freshmen/sophomore relay team of Alex Noormae, Milo Pearsall, Merrick Williams and Jake Thomas taking third in 4:17.79.

“They’re the best relay team we’ve had in years,” said Coach Eric Richter. “And being ninth- and 10th-graders, they have real potential. In fact, this is one of the best winter track teams we’ve had in some time.”

Haldane will return to Rockland Community College on Wednesday (Jan. 4) for a 17-team meet.