Oh, There’s the Snow!

Storm ends drought

By Leonard Sparks

Last week, The Current asked in a front-page headline, “Where’s All the Snow?”

This week, we had the answer.

The 6 inches that Mother Nature dropped overnight on Monday (Feb. 27) fell far short of the 2 feet that blanketed the Highlands during the first week of February 2021. But there were no complaints from the snow-starved residents of Beacon and Philipstown who massed on the frosted hills at Memorial Park in Beacon and Winter Hill in Garrison.

The area received its highest amount of snow this winter, enough to close every school in Beacon and Philipstown and end the season-long drought. In Beacon, snowfall totaled 0.6 inches in January, 3 inches in December and none in November, according to data from a weather station in the city.

As children, adolescents and teenagers

(Continued on Page 8)

Rombout Threat Creates Chaos

Call to Beacon police believed to be ‘swatting’

By Jeff Simms

Beth Janelle said that, at first, “it felt like such a normal morning.”

The mother of two had dropped off her 7-year-old daughter at Sargent Elementary School on Feb. 24 for a before-school math club. But as Janelle pulled out of the Sargent parking lot around 7:55 a.m., “all of the sudden I’m getting texts from my son telling me cops are in his school with big guns.”

Janelle’s 13-year-old, an eighth-grader at Rombout Middle School, had taken the bus that morning. Upon arrival, he would tell his mother, Beacon police officers were already on campus, responding to a threat they had received minutes earlier.

(Continued on Page 9)

Bill Would Ban River Discharge

Legislators seek to stop nuclear plant draining

By Brian PJ Cronin

Two state legislators have introduced a bill that, if passed, would prevent radioactive water from being released into the Hudson River from the former Indian Point nuclear plant.

Dana Levenberg, whose Assembly district includes Philipstown, and Pete Harckham, whose Senate district includes Peekskill, introduced the legislation, which would make it “unlawful for any person or entity, directly or indirectly, to throw, drain, run or otherwise discharge any radiological agent into the waters of the state.”

The bill was created in order to prevent Holtec International, the company decommissioning Indian Point, near Peekskill,

(Continued on Page 9)

Krivak Found Not Guilty

Putnam County likely faces second civil-rights lawsuit

By Chip Rowe

Andrew Krivak, who spent 24 years in prison after being convicted of the rape and murder of a 12-year-old Carmel girl, was acquitted on Monday (Feb. 27) in a retrial at the Putnam County courthouse.

Krivak had been convicted, along with Anthony DiPippo, in 1997 in the killing of Josette Wright. DiPippo, twice convicted and granted new trials, was acquitted in 2016 and later settled a federal civil-rights lawsuit with Putnam County for $12 million. The county now faces a similar payout to Krivak.

“The jury has rendered its decision and we must respect it,” District Attorney Robert Tendy, who tried the case, said on Tuesday. He declined further comment but told The Journal News that he still believes Krivak is guilty. Tendy also earlier criticized the county settlement with DiPippo, calling it “incomprehensible and indefensible.”

(Continued on Page 18)
By Joey Asher

Silvia Gaugler, who grew up in Rimini, Italy, and lives in Cold Spring, owns the Lucestella Studio in Beacon, where she makes Capri sandals by hand.

How did you start crafting handmade sandals?

During the pandemic, I decided to get back into the workforce after a long break to raise my children. I had never even held a hammer. In our house, my husband would do all that stuff. But to make shoes? I've always been drawn to colors and textures. Now I'm sanding and burnishing the leather and I've discovered I like it. It's like therapy. I started selling through Instagram [@lucestellastudio], mostly around New York.

Before I had my shop, I would go to customers' homes to get the right fit. I make about two pairs a day. They cost $175, more or less, depending on customization.

How did you learn?

I found a cobbler in Rome who was offering classes online. He said: “We have a pandemic, but let’s try.” He shipped me a box with the essential tools: the hammer and other tools, the nails, leather straps and soles. I logged on to FaceTime every morning at 7:30 and he taught me. We did that for six months.

How did you come up with the name for your shop?

Lucestella was my grandmother’s name. Luce in Italian means “light.” Stella means “star.” Her name was Lucestella Greco. To me, it’s so beautiful. My grandmother was a great person. She became widowed when she was young and had three small kids, so she had to go to work. While she had a hard life, she was always happy. Her house was always full of people. The doorbell rang all day long. People would stop by to say “Hi” because she was so loved and such a positive person. I spent all my summers in her house in Puglia. It’s the heel of the boot. When I grew up, the beaches were empty. Now there are so many tourists. That’s part of what inspired me. Sandals. Summer. The beach. It makes me happy to think about it.

What do people say they like about the sandals?

That they’re handmade in my shop and that they can choose the style. It’s fun, especially for girls. It’s like candy. They can pick the colors and put stars or other things on them. The choices are infinite. As long as the nails, leather straps and soles. I logged on to FaceTime every morning at 7:30 and he taught me. We did that for six months.

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Had you done anything like it before?

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Putnam Sheriff to Expand Use of Body Cameras
State grant will outfit jail personnel, specialized patrol officers

The Putnam County Sheriff’s Department is using a state grant to lease body cameras for jail personnel and “specialized patrol officers” with assignments such as providing security at county offices.

The Legislature’s Personnel and Audit committees voted last month to accept a $40,000 grant from the state Division of Criminal Justice Services that will fund the lease of 20 cameras, along with software and accessories.

Sheriff Kevin McConville said on Feb. 21 that the funding will cover one full year and part of the second year of a four-month contract. The county will be responsible for the remainder of the contract, which he said raises from $36,000 in the first year to $60,000 by the fourth.

Residents Cautioned About ‘Bold’ Coyotes
State warns about leaving food out

The Dutchess County Health Department noted that coyotes have been spotted in Poughkeepsie and Hyde Park exhibiting bold and aggressive behavior, and urged caution.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation says this behavior is consistent with coyotes being fed; residents should not leave food outside, including that left for pets or birds or in unsecured garbage, that could attract the animals.

January through March is breeding season for coyotes in New York state, and pup rearing extends into the summer. Coyotes are more territorial during these periods.

The state advises residents to be mindful of coyotes and pets while outdoors and not to let pets run free. If you see a coyote, stand tall and hold your arms up or out to look as large as possible. If a coyote lingers, make loud noises, wave your arms and throw sticks and stones.

The Dutchess Democratic Committee endorsed candidates for four positions on November ballot

The Dutchess Democratic Committee held its nominating convention on Feb. 23, with members endorsing Tommy Zurhellen for county executive, Anthony Parisi for district attorney, Kenya Gadsden for county clerk and James Rogers for family court judge.

Zurhellen, 53, who lives in Poughkeepsie, is a Navy veteran and English professor at Marist who, in 2019, walked from Portland, Oregon, to Poughkeepsie to raise money for Hudson River Housing’s VetZero project.

Parisi is chief of the Major Crimes Bureau at the district attorney’s office, where he has served 25 years. The Beekman resident is also a former public defender.

Gadsden has been employed at Lifespire, a nonprofit that works with developmentally disabled individuals, for 30 years. She lives in Fishkill and is a former member of the Town of Fishkill Board and the Beacon school board.

Rogers, who lives in Red Hook, is a former state deputy district attorney for social justice, and a former deputy commissioner for worker protection with the state Department of Labor. He is also a former president of the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys.

Tax Break for Putnam Fire, EMS Volunteers
Byrne signs law granting exemption of 10 percent

Volunteer ambulance workers and firefighters in Putnam County now qualify for a 10 percent property-tax exemption under a law signed by County Executive Kevin Byrne on Feb. 23.

Byrne signed the law, which the Legislature passed on Feb. 7, during a ceremony at the Beacon school board.

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Howland Library Seeking Trustee Candidates

The Howland Public Library in Beacon is seeking candidates for two 5-year vacancies on its board of trustees. The election will be held April 27.

Candidates must be U.S. citizens, at least 18 years old and residents of the Beacon school district for at least 30 days before the election. Petitions can be picked up at the library and must be returned, notarized and have the signatures of at least 25 people qualified to vote in school district elections, by 5 p.m. on March 27.

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To qualify, firefighters and EMS personnel must have at least five years of service and provide certificates from fire or ambulance companies certifying that they are eligible, enrolled members.

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Church project

As objections have been raised to the development of the former Reformed Church in Beacon, the projected use has changed from a hotel, nightclub, bar, event center and theater (“Beacon Council Seeks Feedback,” Feb. 24). What’s next? Noise, parking, trespassing, safety and other concerns have yet to be resolved. The city has chosen to keep the project alive despite hundreds of voices opposing the projected uses. So much for feedback.

Don Gallo, Beacon

Tell us what you think

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

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

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Don Gallo, Beacon

Gas vs. electric

I urge Mayor Lee Kyriacou and the Beacon City Council to pass the strongest gas-free buildings bill possible.

It is hard to overstate how little time we have left. Americans have met so few climate goals that there is already no doubt that young people will have to live with heat waves, overwhelming hurricanes and floods, long droughts, wildfires, an insecure food and water supply and the continual threat of displacement.

It is our job to strengthen the next generation’s hand and give it a fighting chance. Scientists say that the only way to do this is by reducing greenhouse-gas emissions.

I am calling on the mayor and City Council to pass a law that bans burning fossil fuel indoors in all new buildings, including commercial, and all renovations that affect at least 75 percent of a building.

To me, gas-stove replacements are vital. There is a lot of lung disease in my family: Both of my parents, as well as my grandmother, died of lung diseases, and my sister, my wife and I all have asthma.

Yet I’ve only recently learned how badly gas stoves affect our breathing. In studies, the effects of living with a gas stove have been found to be the same as those from secondhand smoke. According to these studies, gas stoves dramatically increase the risk of cancer, asthma, and poor birth outcomes.

Donna Minkowitz, Beacon

As an energy analyst for the past 30-plus years, I have seen many crises and the reactions to them. Each incident has led to greater social awareness and the need for continuous conservation practices.

Any single-source solution tends to be at odds with the greater public good. Electric-only would lead us back to the pre-2000s monopolistic practices in the utility sector, which stifles innovation and drives up costs. The human quest for diversity amongst almost anything imaginable has nearly always led to greater life expectancy and improvements in medicine, innovation, competitiveness, etc.

Solar, wind, better batteries and moving away from coal are great examples of the differences we are making to mitigate climate change. Unfortunately, the buzzwords of the moment (“immediate climate change”) seem more aspirational than a matter of near-term reality. I understand the need to rein in the unbridled use of “dirty” energy. But achieving these objectives is not without costs and makes everyday life more expensive. For some, it can be overwhelming. Mandating these changes without some sort of financial relief seems overly repressive.

There is much we can do in our everyday lives to help achieve these goals along the way. It can be as simple as buying the more-efficient appliance the next time you need one or replacing that pesky 60-watt incandescent bulb with an LED version. However, allowing an all-electric solution to our lives reduces customer choice as we shrink the options to cook, heat and cool our homes.

I know from experience that utilities, the science and engineering communities, and researchers in a wide range of disciplines are working extremely hard and fast to meet this challenge. But let’s allow this community the time needed to make sensible changes we can all afford to implement.

(Continued on Page 5)
The Current's fine reporting on the looming disaster of the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail along the shoreline, I tried to do further online research. Going to the HHFT site, one is greeted with a lot of white space, no plans, no architectural renderings. The same is true for Scenic Hudson.

These developers (Scenic Hudson has long abandoned preserving the Hudson Valley in favor of developing it) are following the 21st-century political mantra of keeping the public in the dark except when it (a) serves their own purposes; or, (b) they can make good use of ill-intended, misleading and self-serving propaganda.

Having serendipitously met a state parks department official at Dockside one early Saturday morning, we discussed the project. His final remarks were, to the effect, this thing is not going to happen for years, if ever. This casual comment is the best news this reader has heard regarding this destructive project since it became the buzz of the villages.

If they continue on the path of making Dockside more accessible to outside areas, then the day will likely come when we may see Dockside, and likely the entire village, beset by migrations from the now-wide-open northern border and ease of access from the south. People move to our area to enjoy our unique and historic features, and we support these through our taxes and often volunteerism. Cold Spring, Nelsonville and Philipstown are unusual in that they still reflect something of a way of life that was, perhaps, more pleasant than that “enjoyed” elsewhere. To sell this out to developers seeking to create an unnatural amusement area of questionable — perhaps political — motivation is an unforgiveable travesty.

Steven Sohn, Cold Spring

The editor responds: There are a number of documents and renderings at the HHFT site, including a Master Plan and environmental scoping documents. See hhft.org/about-the-fjord-trail.

'n51 Ford

The windshield of the 1951 Ford F-1 pickup was flat and there was no provision for a hand crank. Dad bought one new and I drove the same (“Classic Wheels,” Feb. 24).

Carl Mayo, Rogers, Arizona

License-plate readers

There is no point to having these readers in such a small city (“Beacon Installs License-Plate Readers,” Feb. 17); they need to be sent back, or there should have been a referendum for something as important as this.

The current administration in Beacon has proven itself to be illegitimate. Three murders in two years. People are going hungry and can’t afford a dozen eggs or to heat their homes. Now the city is contact-tracing every vehicle that enters and leaves. It is a bully tactic and should be stopped.

Sue Clary, Beacon

Correction

In “Where’s All the Snow?” we stated that the high temperature had stayed above freezing during the first 21 days of February. In fact, the high temperature was below freezing on Feb. 3 and Feb. 4.

Cold Spring police

The rogue Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Community Policing is out of order (“Should Cold Spring Police Stay?” Feb. 17). It has no business insisting on a time-wasting referendum to defund the police or demanding our mayor and board conduct a special fiscal assessment.

According to its own survey, village residents are resoundingly satisfied with the performance of our police. We must question the credibility and motivations of the committee as beyond the pale of reason, as well as consider ignoring it altogether. I urge the committee to read its own report, and cease and desist its disruptive behavior.

Derek Graham, Cold Spring

Assessing municipal services is always an important exercise. It might make sense to increase investment in the Cold Spring Police Department, allowing for more traffic enforcement, which will make the village safer and increase revenues from tickets for speeding, moving violations, noise from loud mufflers, parking violations and vehicles without proper registrations or inspections. Add a traffic camera at the intersection of Chestnut Street and Route 9D.

Most of this stuff will impact the out-of-town folks and travelers passing through, as locals will “be in the know.” Increased enforcement should produce a significant amount of revenue to help fund improvements and result in a safer, more enjoyable village experience.

Rory Stark, Garrison

Annual expense for the Cold Spring police: around $500,000. Annual revenue from tickets: under $5,000. More officers do not lead to more revenue, and this has been the case for many years. If I misunderstood the budget, I hope someone corrects me.

Aaron Freimark, Cold Spring

You are so right. I will never understand why the good people of Cold Spring feel that they need three police departments. As it stands now, the village is patrolled by its own police, sheriff’s deputies and state troopers. There’s even a county substation on upper Main Street. Is there so much crime in Cold Spring?

After a virtual civil war, Putnam Valley got rid of our police department in the 1990s and never looked back. We have saved millions of dollars and the sheriff does an outstanding job. If more police protection is needed, contact your county and state elected representatives and demand they provide what you need. That’s their job. Good luck to Cold Spring.

Patty Villanova, Putnam Valley

Ask the residents of Brewster how it worked out when they abolished the village police force in the late 1970s. They wound up reinstating the department.

Tom Valentine, Newburgh

Cold Spring is not Brewster. Nothing like it. You can’t compare the two.

Patty Villanova

Putnam Valley is nothing like Cold Spring. Have you ever seen traffic problems at Oregon Corners because of tourists and mountain climbers? It is not a destination like Cold Spring.

Tom Valentine

Winning recipe

I made Celia Barbour’s chocolate-pecan granola bars and they were delicious! (“Month to Feed: My Chocolate Heart,” Feb. 17)

Derek Enos, via Instagram

Phone book

I am so glad to see the St. Mary’s vestry continued printing the Cold Spring-Garrison phone directory into the 1990s (“Reporter’s Notebook: The Book with Everyone’s Number,” Feb. 24). My father and grandfather were members of the vestry and printed them for years. I remember helping dad cut and paste names, addresses and ads on our dining-room table. My sister and I got to pick out the color for the cover! I wish I could find one from the 1950s or 1960s.

Nancy Jurka, via Facebook

Aw man — I had the same 1990s edition and regret I didn’t keep it.

Celia Jelley, via Facebook

And, of course, you always had to write important numbers on the cover.

Tim Lahey, via Facebook

I still have mine 18 years after moving out of Cold Spring — and I use it!

Denise Loatman-Owens, via Facebook

NOTICE

The Philipstown Conservation Board will hold their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 14th, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. in person at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516.

This meeting will also be livestreaming on youtube.com, search for Philipstown Conservation Board Meeting March 2023.

MARCH 3 to MARCH 26, 2023
RECEPTION: FRIDAY, MARCH 3RD, 5PM-8:00PM
GALLERY HOURS: SAT | SUN 12PM - 5:00PM

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www.hudsonriverlinerealty.com

**Garrison School Expects to Avoid Override**

**Board anticipates 3.3 percent tax increase**

By Joey Asher

The Garrison school district superintendent on Wednesday (March 1) proposed a $12.65 million budget for the 2023-24 academic year, representing a 3.3 percent property tax increase. That will match the tax cap calculated by the state for Garrison in 2023-24, said Superintendent Carl Albano, meaning only a majority of district voters must approve the budget in May, rather than 60 percent. But he cautioned that an override of the cap will likely be needed for the 2024-25 budget.

Last year, the Garrison school board presented a budget with a 9.18 percent increase, far in excess of the cap, which was calculated by the state to be 2.2 percent. That budget failed to get 60 percent support and the district subsequently presented another budget with a 6.6 percent increase that passed with 69 percent approval.

Albano said that the district is staying at the cap only because it will spend savings, or reserve, funds. “Using reserves to close a budget gap is not a long-term strategy,” he said. “We’re running out of reserves.”

The budget will be presented to the public in a series of meetings and hearings over the next two months. The vote is scheduled for May 16.

A major goal of the board was to avoid another override. “I don’t think the community has the appetite for an override this year,” said Kent Schacht, who chairs the board’s finance committee.

To balance the budget, the district must address challenges with costs as well as revenues, said Joe Jimick, the district’s business administrator.

One key revenue challenge is the relative lack of funding from the state. Under the Foundation Aid Formula, the district next year will receive an increase of about 3 percent, or $17,244, said Jimick. By comparison, he said, other Putnam districts are receiving an average increase of 23 percent. Jimick pointed out that Brewster is expecting a 31.8 percent aid increase, amounting to $4.7 million in additional revenue.

Garrison receives less money because of its relatively high property values. “The state is saying, ‘You don’t need it,’” Jimick said.

Sarah Torney, the board president, said that the board has lobbied Dana Levenberg, whose district in the state Assembly includes Garrison, and state Sen. Rob Rolison, to get more funding.

To supplement revenue, the district plans to withdraw $662,220 from its savings, although an over-reliance on reserves is fiscally unwise, Jimick said. “It’s not good for the long-term health of the school district,” he said. “But we don’t see a choice.”

The primary factors driving up costs are debt service for capital projects ($119,756), a 5.5 percent increase in employee health insurance premiums ($75,422), electric costs for a new HVAC system ($69,000) and an 8 percent transportation cost increase ($58,567).

Even with a 3.3 percent increase, the Garrison property tax levy would still be the lowest in the county, by far. Its current levy is $9.75 per $1,000 of full value, meaning a $500,000 home is assessed $4,875 in annual taxes. Haldane’s tax rate is $16.97 per $1,000 and Carmel’s is $25.47.

**Notes from the Cold Spring Village Board**

**Budget process underway; few remaining STR issues**

By Michael Turton

The Cold Spring Village Board held its first discussion on the 2023-24 budget at its Wednesday (March 1) meeting. A wide-ranging conversation between the mayor, trustees and village accountant touched on virtually every area of spending, from staffing levels, body cameras for police officers and infrastructure needs to fuel costs, vehicle replacement, Bigbelly compacting trash bins and short-term rental software. A draft budget is expected to be ready by March 20.

The two-month budget process includes a mandatory public hearing, usually in April. An adopted budget must be submitted to the state comptroller by May 1 and the fiscal year begins June 1. The village tax levy was $1.82 million in 2022-23.

In other business...

- Work on the emergency connection to the Catskill Aqueduct at Fishkill Road and Main Street in Nelsonville is expected to begin within two to three weeks. Mayor Kathleen Foley said the project will take about three months, with minimal impact on traffic. The connection is needed to provide water to the village during repairs to Cold Spring’s reservoir dams.

- Jennifer Zwarich, chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Short-Term Rentals, reported that few issues remain regarding proposed revisions to Chapter 100 of the village code, such as aligning revisions to zoning law; off-street parking requirements for hosts; questions about shared driveways; and enforcement in worst-case violations. Public hearings will be held once the board approves all changes.

- The sale of a small strip of village-owned land at the rear of 37 Fair St. was approved at a price of $20,832. The former Impelli-ti ree Motors building is being converted to an artist’s studio and apartment.

- The board approved three bids for surveys to be undertaken as part of drainage improvement projects, for $1,250 to $2,900.

- The board approved resurfacing the basketball court at Mayor’s Park.

Support our nonprofit. Become a member!
Officials Bristle at Plan to Boost Housing

Concerns that state would bypass local control

By Joey Asher

Beacon and Philipstown would have to increase their housing stock by at least 3 percent in three years under a plan proposed by Gov. Kathy Hochul.

While local elected officials said they agree that the housing shortage must be addressed, several worried that Hochul’s proposal would compromise local autonomy.

Cold Spring Mayor Kathleen Foley said the governor’s “cookie-cutter approach isn’t going to work. We have to be flexible enough to respond to needs on the ground in real neighborhoods.”

Foley dismissed provisions that, under certain circumstances, would bypass local zoning laws. “Give us parameters and goals — most importantly, give us resources — but don’t override our local process completely,” she said. “It’s state overreach, clear and simple.”

In Beacon, Mayor Lee Kyriacou agreed that municipalities should retain control. “The details matter,” he said. “They have to leave enough local control for the local governments.”

Hochul’s proposal, announced in January, is a multi-pronged strategy aimed at increasing housing statewide by 800,000 units over the next decade. “Every community must do their part to encourage housing growth,” the governor said.

Among other things, her proposal would:

- Require downstate communities served by Metropolitan Transportation Authority agencies, such as Metro-North, to increase housing by 3 percent in the first three years of the program. The proposal includes multiple 3-year cycles.
- Allow affordable housing developers to bypass local zoning under certain circumstances if the community fails to meet housing quotas.
- Ease environmental review for developments around transit stations.

Justin Henry, a spokesman for the governor, said Beacon, Philipstown, Cold Spring and Nelsonville would each be subject to the 3 percent goal during the first three years. The goals are established by unit counts in the 2020 census.

Dana Levenberg, a Democrat who was elected in November to represent the state Assembly district that includes Philipstown, said something must be done about the housing shortage. “We have working people who are homeless and cycling through the shelter system,” she said.

But she added that local communities need flexibility. “One size fits all may not fit all,” she said.

Philipstown Supervisor John Van Tassel agreed that a blanket approach would make it difficult for the town to comply.

For example, he noted, Hochul’s proposal creates incentives to convert commercial buildings to residential. “We don’t have a lot of that,” he said. “We don’t have a lot of buildable property. There’s just not a lot here.”

Foley said the 12-acre former Marathon Battery property on Kemble Avenue could help the village comply with the proposal. “Our comprehensive plan calls for dense, mixed uses on that site, including diverse housing,” she said.

Kyriacou said Beacon has two projects under construction that are consistent with the governor’s proposal: Edgewater near the train station and 248 Tioronda.

Last month, Hochul offered aid specifically to the Hudson Valley through the creation of a $150 million Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund to help municipalities, including those in Putnam and Dutchess counties, build housing and infrastructure.

Funding Targets Housing Discrimination

Victims include disabled, renters with vouchers

By Leonard Sparks

A complaint filed by a nonprofit advocacy agency against a developer for alleged housing discrimination began with apartments in Dutchess County.

Beginning in 2019, Westchester Residential Opportunities (WRO) employed people to pose as prospective renters with federal housing vouchers hoping to rent at two complexes owned by Dawn Homes: Chelsea Ridge Apartments in Wappingers Falls and Village Parks Apartments in Pleasant Valley.

By May 2021, WRO felt it had enough evidence to notify the state Human Rights Commission of alleged discrimination against potential renters with vouchers from the low-income Section 8 program and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS. The complaint names seven properties comprising 2,000 apartments.

Now, the strategy of sending in “testers” with vouchers is getting a boost. Gov. Kathy Hochul announced on Feb. 24 that the state’s own testing program will receive a $2.2 million expansion and cover 46 counties, Long Island and New York City’s five boroughs. Six nonprofits will share the funding, including WRO, which says it conducts 500 to 1,000 tests a year, including some in Dutchess and Putnam counties.

A report from the organization, based on 923 tests conducted principally in Dutchess, Rockland and Westchester from June 2019 to May 2022, said it found unequal treatment or a violation of fair-housing laws in 18 percent of the cases.

People with disabilities and those with low-income vouchers were the most-frequent victims, according to WRO. Last year, the organization sued a real-estate agent, alleging a brokerage for discriminating against Section 8 recipients. It also won a $60,000 award against a broker.

In another case from 2022, the state Attorney General’s Office relied on testers to investigate a Manhattan brokerage accused of refusing rental applications from people with Section 8 vouchers. The company agreed in November to waive fees for the first 25 applicants with Section 8 vouchers and to train employees and post signs saying that it accepts vouchers.

Dutchess County identified the same barrier in its 2022 housing-needs assessment, which highlighted “concerns about active discrimination by landlords toward Section 8 tenants” as higher-paying tenants from New York City drive up rents.

For people awarded hard-to-come-by housing vouchers, “there’s just fewer and fewer places they can rent,” said Andrew Smith, deputy executive director for WRO. “If on top of that you get discrimination, it’s super challenging. It happens every day and it is tragic.”

Federal, state and county laws prohibit discrimination against a range of “protected classes,” including disability, gender, race, sexual orientation and source of income. People with disabilities can also ask for reasonable accommodations, such as the installation of ramps or keeping emotional-support animals where pets are not allowed.

Before the federal government and states instituted laws, housing providers and real-estate agents could openly discriminate. Today, landlords and agents are subtler, said Smith.

“Nobody says, ‘We’re not going to rent to you,’” he said. “But they’ll say, ‘We don’t have anything available,’ or ‘This doesn’t work for you’.”
There’s Snow! (from Page 1)

barreled down the hill at Memorial Park, Regan Thompson stood at its crest. She had grown up in Texas, but after more than two decades in the North, she knew the importance of a snow day.

Watching her daughter romp up and down the park’s snow-covered hill marked the return of a daylong ritual: sleeping late, pancakes, television, hot chocolate, playing in the snow, dinner, more hot chocolate. “We are very excited that we actually have a snow day this winter,” she said.

Zachary Schetter enjoyed what the last day of February brought. Lugging a snow sled, he lined up with other Beacon High School teenagers waiting to race downhill toward a pile of snow shaped into a ramp for jumping. Some teens flopped and others achieved liftoff. “This is the most-fun thing to do,” he said.

By Tuesday afternoon, dozens of people had made the pilgrimage to Winter Hill in Garrison. They included Bryan Morvay, whose two daughters, Cecilia and Mia, had been looking forward to snow all winter. Valerie Scanga brought Piper and Olive, the two Haldane Elementary students she babysat. The children started playing in the snow before 8 a.m. and after lunch, joined the scrum at Winter Hill.

The snowfall also drew Meghan Auten and her two children. Auten said her daughter woke at 6:30 a.m., ready to head out as soon as Philipstown highway crews plowed the roads. “It’s fun to be out with the community, and with our neighbors and friends, and sledding together,” she said.

Experiencing Snow Present

Last week, we shared photos of snows past. Here are shots from this week. For more, see highlandscurrent.org.
Indian Point (from Page 1)

from emptying the spent fuel cooling pools into the river. Although the discharge would be filtered, it would still contain tritium, a radioactive material that is extremely difficult to remove. Holtec has not announced how much water would be released or how much tritium it could contain.

If passed, the bill would also apply to New York’s three remaining active nuclear plants on the southern shore of Lake Ontario. When it was operational, Indian Point discharged radioactive materials into the Hudson. In 2009, Entergy, which owned the plant at the time, emptied the cooling pool at Indian Point 1, which had closed in 1974, into the river. But Harckham said that does not justify any future release.

“We’ve got to stop treating our waterways like industrial dumping grounds,” said Harckham, who chairs the Senate’s Environmental Conservation Committee.

“This is not the late 1800s or early 1900s, where we’d locate our factories alongside rivers so we can just dump whatever sludge and say goodbye to it. We know better now. “The Hudson River Valley estuary is an incredibly sensitive ecosystem, it’s an incredibly sensitive economic driver of our region, and we need to think twice before we just, as rote practice, allow the dumping of tritium into the water.”

In a statement, Levenberg added that “too much is still unknown about the possible impacts of discharging radioactive waste into our waterways. We wouldn’t want people to feel inhibited in their recreation or in moving to our communities because of the stigma of radioactive wastewater. And ultimately, the State of New York should have control over what is released into our waterways.”

Violations of the proposed law would trigger fines of $25,000 per day, $50,000 per day for a second violation and $150,000 per day for additional violations.

Harckham said that because legislators in Albany are focused on negotiations for the 2024 budget, which must be completed by April 1, he doesn’t expect much immediate movement on the bill. But once the budget is complete, “we intend to push it,” he said. Holtec plans to discharge the water by September, so the bill would need to pass in both chambers before the legislative session ends on June 8.

If adopted, the bill would almost certainly face legal challenges. The Atomic Energy Act gives the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) responsibility for overseeing radioactive releases from commercial nuclear plants.

Further, any releases must first pass NRC and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements, which state that radioactive levels must be as low as “reasonably possible. At the most recent meeting of the Indian Point Decommissioning Task Force, several members said that only federal entities could stop the planned discharge.

But Harckham noted that Massachusetts has a state law barring radiological discharges and that the EPA has put a hold there on a Holtec plan to discharge radioactive water from the shuttered Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant into Cape Cod Bay until a third-party can verify that the release would be safe.

“We feel like we have a shot at this,” said Harckham. “If it comes down to the courts deciding, then the courts will decide, but I don’t think that it’s absolutely a federal issue. We have an obligation and the ability to protect the waterways of our state.”

A NRC representative declined comment on the proposed legislation.

Rombout (from Page 1)

Police Chief Sands Frost said a call came into the Beacon Police Department at 7:46 a.m. He could not discuss details of the investigation, which is being assisted by the FBI’s Hudson Valley Safe Streets Task Force, but said that the caller made a “false threat” targeting the middle school.

Officers responded immediately, ushering students and teachers into classrooms. Frost said the officers were quickly able to determine that Rombout was safe; from there, Beacon and Fishkill police went to the other five schools in the district (Glennam Elementary is in Fishkill) and confirmed that each was also safe.

The initial investigation revealed that the threat was consistent with other false warnings that have been called in to schools and other institutions around the country, police said. However, officers were stationed at each of the schools for the remainder of the day.

Police said the threat was likely an example of “swatting” — a tactic in which someone claims to have a target’s residence or workplace. Threats that have been called in to schools and other institutions have raised anxiety in the community.

Frost said the call to police on Friday was getting picked up. Then she returned to the investigation, which is being assisted by the Beacon Police Department at the request of the district.

Janelle said her son texted her that morning, “I feel like they’re in a target area, and I don’t want them to be there.” She noted “a huge police presence” outside the school, which meant students were safe in the building for the rest of the day in “lockout” mode, but police were still called to each of the other five schools in the district.

The superintendent also said that a threat at Rombout in January that police determined to be unsubstantiated was unrelated.

Janelle said on Wednesday that the situation led her family to designate a safe meeting place for emergencies. When picking up her children on the day of the threat, she said she worried she might be overreacting, but “with the world we’re living in, I don’t think there’s such a thing as being too alarmist.”

The kids were just really scared. Really scared,” she said. When Janelle asked her son if he felt safe at school, the boy replied, “I want to feel safe, but I don’t.”

Counselors were available to speak with students this week, and the district also circulated a Google form for Rombout students to sign up privately, Landahl said. He said administrators will meet with Altaris, a security firm the district hired in 2018, to discuss the emergency response, including how to keep parents informed as quickly as possible.

The superintendent also said that a threat at Beacon in January that police determined to be unsubstantiated was unrelated.

Janelle said that because legislators in Albany are focused on negotiations for the 2024 budget, which must be completed by April 1, he doesn’t expect much immediate movement on the bill. But once the budget is complete, “we intend to push it,” he said. Holtec plans to discharge the water by September, so the bill would need to pass in both chambers before the legislative session ends on June 8.

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A NRC representative declined comment on the proposed legislation.
AROUND TOWN

CELEBRATING IN COLD SPRING
20 YEARS

On March 3, 2003, Drug World opened our doors here in Cold Spring, NY. We are so appreciative to be a part of such an amazing community and to have the opportunity to take care of so many families over the last 20 years!

To thank the community, we will be running a 20% OFF STOREWIDE SALE on Friday, March 3rd.

Please stop in on Friday for additional giveaway and prizes!

Mark & Heidi Snyder
Drug World

Does not include prescriptions, gift cards or promotions.

STORIES IN PAINT — Anna West (left), a Beacon artist whose work is on display at the Garrison Art Center through March 19, helped participants at a workshop there on Feb. 25 tell stories in paint and access both the intuitive and logical parts of their brains.

LIGHT THE NIGHT — The second annual Celebration of Light took place on Feb. 25 in Beacon, with lanterns paraded down Main Street accompanied by the Street Beat Brass Band. At the end of the procession, tea was served, fire pits were lit and the larger lanterns were set aside for display.

MUSIC AT THE CRIER — Raquel Vidal, a longtime resident of Philipstown, performed with Jillian Matundan at the Towne Crier Cafe in Beacon on Feb. 24.

Hudson Beach Glass
Fine art gallery located on second floor

SPRING AHEAD
with handmade Clocks by Leonie Lacouette
Mar 11 to Apr 2, 2023
Reception 2nd Saturday, Mar 11, 5-7pm

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MARCH 3, 2023

Thank YOU!

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To thank the community, we will be running a 20% OFF STOREWIDE SALE on Friday, March 3rd.

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Mark & Heidi Snyder
Drug World

Photos by Ross Corsair
As a branding designer, Michelle Silver has carved out a professional path for herself. But painting satisfies a different part of her entirely. “Branding is about how I can represent my client’s vision, but my paintings are incredibly personal,” explains the Philipstown resident.

“In a perfect world I’d be painting every day,” says Silver, who has two young sons with her husband, Bradley, a tattoo artist. “When I do have the time, I explode onto the canvas.

“My paintings are sensitive depictions of personal struggle and growth: the desire to feel loved and accepted, the plague of self-doubt, the struggle to establish identity and the fear of loss,” says Silver, who posts examples of her work at michellesilverart.com. “I use the intimacy and vulnerability of my own lived experiences as a platform to connect larger themes of politics, femininity, desire and fear with a personal anecdote or individual moment.

“I paint emotional landscapes that are as vast as they are lonely; a simultaneous sense of freedom and feeling trapped. What does it mean to be a parent during a global pandemic? How do we escape our bad habits and thoughts during isolation, and what example do we set? Now, I look at my work as a place of understanding of what’s going on inside of me.”

At Boston University, Silver majored in advertising and minored in art but aspired to be a graphic designer. Her pre-parenthood paintings focused on the intricacies of the human figure. “Sessions lasted for hours because I had lots of time,” she says. “After my first son was born, my painting shifted pretty significantly. The rendering is looser and it’s much less realistic. It’s more about colors and textures, and how the textures reveal light and darkness.”

Silver spent the early part of her career as a graphic designer for two restaurant groups in New York City, Patina and David Burke. Over her five-plus years with the latter, she honed an interest in textiles and began developing what she calls “a strong mission, which merges my love of fine art with my design.”

Today, her branding clients at michellesilverdesign.com include Main Street businesses in the Highlands, such as Understory Market and Love Letter in Cold Spring. “I’m not just looking at things visually,” she says. “I want to know the brand’s goals, to align with their values.” Other local projects include work in Beacon for Campbell & Campbell and Wyld Birth & Postpartum.

One misconception about branding, says Silver, “is the idea that ‘anybody can do it; it just needs to look cool.’ But so much work has gone into brands that resonate with people. Visual appearance is not enough; strategy is key. Thinking about what you want to do and who you want to speak to should be considered before popping something out.”

No matter the size of the business, Silver says, “people often have a hard time conceptualizing what their brand will look like. Over the last few years I’ve honed in on a design style that is fun, illustrative and sometimes quite funky. It’s about taking the story and creating a personality that gets it to speak to someone. You bring things to life in a way they might not have imagined.”
THE WEEK AHEAD
Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)
For a complete listing of events, see highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

COMMUNITY

SAT 4
Dutchess County Parade
WAPPINGERS FALLS
1 p.m. West Main Street
dcppc.org
The annual parade will begin at West Main and North streets and continue on Route 9D toward Elm Street, then east to South Mesier Avenue and finish at Mesier Park. The grand marshal is William Holohan Beale, who has been the parade’s master of ceremonies for the past 25 years.

SAT 11
Maple Sugar Celebration
PHILIPSTOWN
8:30 & 10:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.
Taconic Outdoor Education Center
75 Mountain Laurel Lane
bit.ly/taconic-events
Reserve a slot for breakfast, and see how maple syrup is made. Cost: $15 ($10 children, ages 5 and younger free)

KIDS & FAMILY

TUES 7
Dino Digs
BEACON
4 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beaconlibrary.org
Children ages 4 through the fifth grade can use a chisel and brush to dig up eggs and find out what is inside. Registration required.

TUES 7
Women’s History Month Story
COLD SPRING
4 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org
Mayor Kathleen Foley will read a book celebrating women’s history for children ages 3 to 7 and their families.

WED 8
Nature Arts for Kids
COLD SPRING
3:30 p.m. Supplies for Creative Living
143 Main St.
suppliesforcreativeliving.com
Children ages 8 to 12 will learn how to use natural materials to make art, tools and crafts in this 11-week course. Cost: $55

WED 8
Escape Room
BEACON
3:45 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beaconlibrary.org
Teams of students in grades 6 to 12 will work together to solve a mystery in a timed session. Registration required.

ST. PATRICK’S DAY

SAT 4
4 Penny Benefit for ARF
BEACON
1 – 3 p.m. VFW Hall | 413 Main St.
arbeacon.org
This benefit for the Animal Rescue Foundation will include prize drawings.

SAT 11
4-H Beekeeping
PUTNAM VALLEY
9 a.m. Putnam Valley Grange
128 Mill St.
putnam.cce.cornell.edu/events
This is the first session of a 12-week course for students ages 11 to 15 that will cover all aspects of beekeeping. Later sessions will be held at Tilly Foster Farm in Brewster. Registration required. Cost: $70

TALKS & TOURS

SAT 4
Maple Sugar Tours
CORNWALL
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Outdoor Discovery Center
120 Muser Drive | 845-534-5506
hhnm.org
Visitors can choose a sugar-bush tour at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. or 2 p.m. that includes a moderate 1-mile hike, or a maple-lane tour at noon or 3 p.m., which is a short walk. Also SUN 5.

SUN 12
Alexander Harris
PUTNAM VALLEY
11 a.m. Tompkins Corners Cultural Center
729 Peekskill Hollow Road
tompkinscorners.org
The nature photographer will share and discuss his work. Donations welcome. Free

STAGE & SCREEN

SAT 11
Rios Group | Riili Boogie
BEACON
6 – 9 p.m. Clutter Gallery
139 Main St. | clutter.co
Rios Group will feature the artist’s paintings of florals that explore common truths of humanity. Through April 1.

SAT 11
Evans Samuelson
BEACON
6 – 9 p.m. Super Secret Projects
484 Main St. | supersecretprojects.com
One Taste will feature the artist’s paintings of florals that explore common truths of humanity. Through April 1.

VISUAL ARTS

SAT 11
Funding Home Energy Improvements
GARRISON
2 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
Joe Montouri of Sustainable Putnam will discuss how to access the benefits of the federal Inflation Reduction Act, which includes tax credits and rebates for energy-efficiency projects.

SAT 11
Jill Shofflet | Eliana Szabo | Group Show
PUTNAM VALLEY
6 – 8 p.m. BAU Gallery
506 Main St.
845-440-7584 | baugallery.org
Shofflet’s paintings, “Sell the Collection” and “Move On,” capture fantastical Southern landscapes. Szabo’s A Confrontation of Absence will include prints of transitional spaces. The group show, Gravity Adjacent, will include works by Nicholas Betts, Colette Robbins, Sophia Sobers, Kate Steciw and Gail Watson. Through April 2.
MUSIC

SAT 4
Uncontaminated Sound: Reflections
BEACON
7 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
howlandculturalcenter.org
Jeffrey Lewis and others will present an evening of music, comedy and dance to open an exhibit of Robert Lundberg’s photographic series of contemporary performers. Cost: $30 ($40 door)

SAT 4
Best of the ’70s
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St. | 845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The band’s set will include hits from dozens of artists. Cost: $30 ($35 door)

SUN 5
Cajun Jam and Potluck
PUTNAM VALLEY
1 p.m. Tompkins Corners Cultural Center
729 Peeksskill Hollow Road
tompkinscorners.org
Bring an instrument and join a celebration of Cajun and Creole music. Jambalaya will be provided and side dishes are welcome. Free

SUN 5
Gabriela Martinez
BEACON
4 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | howlandmusic.org
In a program titled Resonances, the pianist will perform works by Missy Mazzoli, Reinaldo Hahn, Caroline Shaw, Adam Schoenberg, Viet Cuong, Sarah Kirkland Snider and Heitor Villa-Lobos. The concert is part of the Howland Chamber Music Circle series. Cost: $33 ($10 students ages 25 and younger)

THURS 9
Noga & Jake Bernz
BEACON
8 p.m. Dogwood
47 E. Main St. | dogwoodbeacon.com
The multi-instrumentalists will play music from their collaborative projects. Cost: $20

FRI 10
Sugar Mountain
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St. | 845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The band will play hits from Neil Young’s five-decade span of music. Cost: $20 ($25 door)

SAT 11
Tom Chapin & Friends
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St. | 845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
To celebrate his birthday, the three-time Grammy winner will play songs from his repertoire and be joined by other folk musicians. Cost: $30 ($35 door)

SAT 11
Nick Gianni
BEACON
9 p.m. Quinn’s
330 Main St. | quinnsinbeacon.com
The improvisational saxophonist will perform.

SUN 12
Derek Warfield and the Young Wolfe Tones
BEACON
7 p.m. City Hall | 1 Municipal Plaza
The Irish group will play music from its latest release, Let the Free Birds Fly. Cost: $30 ($35 door)

CIVIC

MON 6
Putnam Legislature
CARMEL
7 p.m. Putnam County Government Center
44 Gleneida Ave. | putnamcounnty.com
Putnam County Executive William F.X. O’Neil will give a presentation at the Marriott Pavilion. Register by MON 6.

WED 8
State of the County
HYDE PARK
5:30 p.m. Culinary Institute of America
1946 Campus Drive | dutchessny.gov/RSV
Dutchess County Executive William F.X. O’Neil will give a presentation at the Marriott Pavilion. Register by MON 6.

WED 8
Village Board
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Village Hall | 15 Main St. | 845-265-3611 | coldspringny.gov

THURS 9
Tues 7
City Council
BEACON
8 p.m. City Hall | 1 Municipal Plaza
Putnam County Executive Kevin Byrne will give a presentation. Attend in person or watch at putnamcounnty.com/50TC29.

Patricia G. Cummings
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845-809-5347 x226
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By Celia Barbour

Bread and stewed greens. Just the smell of it triggered an onslaught of very un-mindful impulses in me, including a compulsion to walk calmly but exceedingly quickly to the front of the buffet line before everyone else arrived.

The cooks offered up the recipe, and yesterday I tried scaling it down for our family before the kids get here. The result was every bit as good as I’d hoped. Perhaps I will have it waiting on the stove when they descend on our house in 10 days. The next day, my mom will drive up from Sleepy Hollow to join us for lunch or dinner. And no matter what time she arrives, I guarantee you this: She will bring with her a warm pot of Finnish meatballs, updated for her new menu. However, I can’t rely solely on nostalgia to help me come up with a new special-occasion repertoire, rather than turning to the comfort of old friends.

Barbecued Tempeh
Adapted from the Insight Meditation Society recipe book

Serves 4

Note: You can simplify this recipe by skipping the sauce and mixing the marinated, baked tempeh with your favorite bottled barbecue sauce, warmed on the stove.

FOR THE MARINADE

- ½ cup mild oil, such as canola or safflower, plus more for sautéing onion
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1 pound tempeh, cut into 1-inch square pieces

FOR THE BBQ SAUCE

- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup tomato puree
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ¼ cup molasses
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 2 teaspoons red pepper flakes
- 2 teaspoons tamari
- ⅓ cup mild oil, such as canola or safflower
- 1 teaspoon liquid smoke flavoring
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 2 teaspoons liquid smoke flavoring
- 2 teaspoons cider vinegar

Combread and sauteed greens, for serving

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Whisk together the marinade ingredients, minus the tempeh. Add the cut tempeh and allow to marinate 45 minutes to 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

2. Meanwhile, heat ½ cup oil in a skillet. Add the onion and sauté until quite soft and beginning to turn golden, about 12 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for 2 minutes. Add all the remaining ingredients, except the tamari and vinegar. Simmer for 1 hour over low heat, stirring regularly, and adding more water if it begins to look dry.

3. Spread the marinated tempeh on a baking sheet lined with parchment or a nonstick mat. Transfer to the oven and bake 30 minutes, flipping the tempeh over and rotating the pan once or twice during baking. Remove from oven and transfer to the skilet with the barbecue sauce. Add the tamari and vinegar and stir to combine. Serve hot, with combread and sauteed greens on the side.

PHILIPSTOWN ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
Public Hearing - March 13th, 2023

The Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals for the Town of Philipstown, New York will hold a continuation of a public hearing from Monday, February 13th, 2023 on Monday, March 13th, 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 10516.

Brendan Yi-Fu Tay & Sierra Schoening, 15 Peacock Way, Garrison, NY 10524

Applicant is seeking a variance to build a 2,124 square foot accessory structure (barn). 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 Planning Board at the Building Department, 2 Cedar Street, Cold Spring, New York.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Dated February 13th, 2023

PHILIPSTOWN PLANNING BOARD
Public Hearing - March 16th, 2023

The Planning Board of the Town of Philipstown, New York will hold a public hearing on Thursday, March 16th, 2023 starting at 7:30 p.m. at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516 to consider the following application:

Stepping Stones, 25 Lady Blue Devils Way, Cold Spring, NY 10516

Applicant is proposing to expand an existing daycare facility with the addition of an 1,820 sq. ft. detached building, relocating an existing playground and some additional parking spaces.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Dated at Philipstown, New York, this 16th day of February, 2023.

Robert Dee, Chair of the Town of Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals

Neal Zuckerman, Chair
Beacon Theater, Story Screen Split

Reopened venue brought cinema back to the city

By Jeff Simms

The Beacon Theater and Story Screen, the brand attached to the renovated theater since its reopening in 2019, have announced they are parting ways. Moving forward, the theater will be known as The Beacon.

That’s what the building at 445 Main St. was called in 1934, when it opened as a 1,200-seat venue to show “photo plays.” (An opera house built in 1886 was torn down to make way for the theater.) The theater closed in 1968 but was purchased and rehabilitated in the mid-1990s by the Everlasting Covenant Church. A theater company, 4th Wall Productions, bought the building in 2010 with plans to create an 800-seat performance space.

After 4th Wall fell behind on its mortgage payments, Brendan McAlpine, a Beacon resident whose development group also restored The Roundhouse, bought the theater in 2015.

Soon after, he connected with Mike Burdge, the founder of Story Screen, who had been showing free “pop-up” films around Beacon and, in 2015, organized a horror movie marathon at several venues. McAlpine and Burdge, along with two other partners, reopened the theater after extensive renovations, bringing first-run movies back to Main Street for the first time in decades.

Burdge announced this week that he is leaving the theater, which he managed, for personal reasons. Through his Story Screen brand, he had been responsible for such events there as the Beacon HorrorShow, trivia nights, an annual Oscars celebration and a monthly VHS Pasta Night.

“The staff, which McAlpine called a dedicated crew of ‘cinephiles at heart,’” will remain, as will Wonderbar, the adjacent cafe, which was restored and opened a year after the theater.

The Beacon continues to rebound after the pandemic, which saw it shutter for nearly a year, just as it was gaining steam after reopening. “The pandemic was a killer for a lot of businesses,” McAlpine said, noting that theaters, despite ample seating space and air-circulation systems, “were perceived as not safe.”

“We do see people coming back now, and it’s getting better, pretty much every week,” he said. “It’s been a success overall, though we took a detour there.”
Roots and Shoots
How to Kill a Lawn
By Pamela Doan

Our yards are not good for the planet. Loss of habitat compounds problems for wildlife and insects because lawns don’t offer ecological benefits. The way we maintain lawns with gas-powered equipment contributes to global warming through the release of carbon emissions.

The synthetic fertilizers we use to make lawns green run off into waterways and the nitrogen creates harmful algae blooms. The herbicides and pesticides we use to maintain monocultures of turf grass poison everything in their path, including beneficial insects, pollinators and native plants. The water we use on landscapes sucks up 8 billion gallons a day from groundwater and reservoirs, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

So if you’re ready, spring is a good time to get rid of grass. Every method, from herbicides to sod removal to smothering, has its advantages and disadvantages.

Dan Jaffe Wilder, director of applied ecology at the Norcross Wildlife Foundation in Massachusetts, is an admitted lawn killer. (Large numbers of people making small changes makes a big impact, he says.) His preferred method is smothering. This involves using organic materials to cover the area to block photosynthesis.

Start by cutting the grass as short as possible with a mower or string trimmer. Then cover it with cardboard or newspaper and wood chips on top to create a planting medium.

There are some details that are important to consider based on your site conditions, timing during the season and what you plan to grow in place of lawn. Soil is key to healthy plants and they have different needs. A vegetable garden requires more organic matter and nutrients than a native plant flowerbed, for example.

Wilder uses the example of replacing a patch of lawn with native grasses such as little bluestem (Schizachyrium scoparium). This plant prefers thin, less-rich soils and wouldn’t grow well with the additional organic matter and nutrients from compost and wood chips.

Wilder uses a topsoil and sand mix on the cardboard to establish little bluestem.

For an eco-lawn seed mix like the ones available from High Country Gardens, Wildflower Farms, Prairie Nursery and other online retailers, Wilder cautions that it is best to follow the grower’s instructions. They have trialed and developed the seed and know what works.

Wood chips alone in a 12- to 18-inch thick layer can kill vegetation and in normal conditions will decompose over a few months for planting. Pull the chips back to allow the native grass to grow well with the additional organic matter and nutrients from compost and wood chips.

Here are some other methods, and their drawbacks.

Sod removal
It’s a lot of hard work and, when the living grass is cut out, it takes a layer of topsoil with it. A 3- to 5-inch section of soil has a lot of nutrients and microorganisms that plants need. It also exposes a seedbed of weeds that will start growing immediately. You’ll need a second step of weed control before planting anything new.

Herbicides
Synthetic, broad-spectrum herbicides will get the job done with one or two applications. Wilder notes, however, that “we simply don’t know a lot about the effects or understand how it breaks down in the soil.” Organic herbicides such as horticultural-grade vinegar or clove oil can be toxic to the person applying them and should be handled with care, training and protective equipment.

Solarizing
In regions with longer seasons of hot days and higher temperatures, clear plastic can be fastened to the ground to overheat the grass. But Wilder and another horticulturist who specializes in turf grass told me it won’t be effective in the Hudson Valley.

Wilder mentioned a plant that I wasn’t familiar with, common selfheal (Prunella vulgaris), a low-growing member of the mint family with purple flowers, edible leaves and medicinal properties that can be encouraged or planted in a lawn alternative. He also likes wild strawberry, sedge and clove. All have big appeal for bees.

Preparation a yard with cardboard and wood chips for planting meadow-style

PHILIPSTOWN ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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Garrison Station Plaza, 19 Garrison Landing, Garrison, NY 10524 TM#60371-1-9

Applicant is seeking a variance for a north side setback to construct a 10’ x 24’ deck on an existing structure currently under renovation.

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.

Robert Dee, Chair of the Town of Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals

Dated February 13th, 2023
Margaret Garnot (1926-2023)

Margaret Josephine Garnot, 96, a Beacon native and longtime resident of Wappingers Falls, died on Feb. 20 with family members at her side. She was born in Beacon on July 8, 1926, to Peter and Josephine (DiCamillo) Sylvester. She attended Beacon schools and was employed as a seamstress at Aero Leather, where she made bomber jackets for the U.S. Air Corps. She also worked as a seamstress for Krakower Fabrics.

On June 15, 1947, Margaret married Nicholas Garnot. They were wed for 60 years until his death. The couple raised their three children in a home in Wappingers Falls that he built.

Margaret enjoyed cooking, baking Christmas cookies, sewing and crocheting (especially doilies), shopping with her sister and taking her grandchildren on “just the girls” shopping sprees, playing Lotto and the daily numbers, and watching the Yankees.

She is survived by her children, Vincent Garnot, Bernadette Diorazio (Phil) and David Garnot (Alison), as well as her grandchildren (Eric, Kara, Justin, Nicole, Briana and Steven) and nine great-grandchildren.

A prayer service was offered Feb. 25 at the Delehanty Funeral Home in Wappingers Falls, followed by interment at St. Mary’s Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to Hudson Valley Hospice (hvhospice.org) or The Grand at Pawling (thegrandatpawling.org).

Pocahontas Jackson (1922-2023)
Pocahontas Mona Jackson, 100, died Feb. 20.

She was born April 8, 1922, in Brooklyn, the daughter of William Johnson, a police officer, and Maud Morris, a dancer at the Cotton Club in New York City. She was named to honor her great-grandmother’s Native American ancestry.

After both of her parents died early in her life, Pocahontas and her two older sisters, Sylvia and Gloria, moved to Hopewell Junction, where they were raised by their grand-parents on a farm on Route 82. She also had an older brother, John Turner. (For more on her childhood, see a profile published in The Current in April 2022.)

After attending the Little Red Schoolhouse and Beacon High School, Pocahontas worked at Bobrich and Chempreme, from which she retired in 1990. She ended her career as a school bus monitor for the Beacon City School District from 1992 to 207, and generations of Beacon schoolchildren will recall beginning and ending their days with “Miss Pokey.”

Pocahontas will be remembered by friends and family for her laugh, love of song, and dedication to watching her “stories.” She will be missed by the congregation of St. Andrew Episcopal Church in Beacon, where she was a faithful member for nearly 70 years. Beacon, as a whole, will be a less vibrant place without her color and, on Sundays, collection of matching hats, her family said.

She is survived by her children, Barbara, Douglas Jr. (Michele) and Kim, along with eight grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren. Her husband of 69 years, Douglas Jackson Sr., died in 2018. Two of her children, Robert Pulliam and Gloria Reed, and her great-grandson, Roman Haffley, also died before her.

A Celebration of Life will be held Monday (March 6) at 1 p.m. at St. Andrew Episcopal Church, 15 South Ave., in Beacon. Floral and colorful clothing is encouraged. Donations for memorial plants for the spring may be sent to Douglas Jackson, 5 Lamplight St., Beacon, NY 12508.

Cheryl Timmons (1952-2023)

Cheryl Timmons, 70, of Nelsonville, died Feb. 21 at Phelps Memorial Hospital in Sleepy Hollow.

She was born Oct. 13, 1952, the daughter of Berline and Grace DiRocco. Cheryl worked for the Town of Ossining assessor’s office for more than 35 years. She enjoyed animals and spending time with her family.

Cheryl is survived by her husband of 51 years, James Timmons; her sons, James Timmons and William Timmons; her grandchildren, James, Theresa, William, Dylan and Amanda Timmons and Allen and Johnny Jones; and her sister, Laurel Conklin.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Feb. 28 at Our Lady of Loretto in Sleepy Hollow. A Celebration of Life will be held Monday at 7:30 p.m. at 5 Lamplight St., Beacon, NY 12508.

Cheryl is survived by her children, Barbara, Douglas Jr. (Michele) and Kim, along with eight grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren. Her husband of 69 years, Douglas Jackson Sr., died in 2018. Two of her children, Robert Pulliam and Gloria Reed, and her great-grandson, Roman Haffley, also died before her.

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OBITUARIES

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Ryan Calls on CSX to Improve Safety
After Ohio derailment, says industry must make changes
By Chip Rowe

Rep. Pat Ryan, whose district includes Beacon, this week called on CSX to adopt safety measures he said could prevent accidents in the Hudson Valley similar to the Feb. 3 accident in East Palestine, Ohio, in which a Norfolk Southern freight train carrying hazardous material derailed and caught fire.

CSX operates tracks along the western shore of the Hudson River through the Highlands that Ryan said can see as many as 20 freight trains per day, including as many as five carrying Bakken crude oil.

In a statement, Ryan, who is a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said he had written CSX President and CEO Joseph Hinrichs about his concerns. Ryan also called for a congressional hearing on rail safety.

“We’ve seen a disturbing pattern of CSX consistently putting profit over safety, creating serious risk that what happened in Ohio could repeat itself right here in the Hudson Valley,” Ryan alleged. “Just like the accident of 17-year-old Robin Murphy from a Carmel shopping center on Route 52, where Gombert worked at a coin-operated laundry, Montana and ending regular rail safety audits.”

Torrance Harvey, the mayor of Newburgh, noted that a CSX derailment in 2017 caused by a man lift that stalled on the tracks, spilled 4,600 tons of diesel fuel. “I am worried a future derailment could cause even more damage,” he said in a statement. “CSX cannot stand by while communities of color like mine sit on what feels like a ticking time bomb.”

Gary Bassett, the mayor of Rhinebeck who heads a group of seven municipalities in Dutchess and Ulster counties (not including Beacon) that take their drinking water from the river, said the group notified CSX in 2021 of its concern about potential bridge failures that might lead to spills into the Hudson.

Ryan called for Congress to increase the fines for rail safety violations from the current maximum of $225,455; expand regulation of hazardous shipments; increase the use of electronically controlled pneumatic brakes; speed up the phase-in of new tank cars for hazardous materials, which now extends to 2029; and increase funding for hazardous-materials training for first responders.

Ryan also called on the freight rail industry to join a program that allows employees to confidentially report safety concerns and to provide notice to emergency response teams when hazardous tank cars will travel through their state.

Krivak (from Page 1)

In a response at the time, then-County Executive MaryEllen Odell dismissed Tendy’s reaction as “an emotional response in a case where two prior district attorneys obtained convictions but he was unable to do so.” The settlement cost the county $200,000, with the remainder covered by insurance.

The most recent exoneration is “obviously a vindication of Andrew’s innocence, which we’ve been saying for a lot of years,” said Oscar Michelen, who represented Krivak. “It’s also a statement on the complete lack of evidence in this case. We had seven weeks of trial and the jury took less than six hours to deliberate.”

Michelen said lawsuits were likely under the state’s Unjust Conviction Act and federal civil rights law, but that “the next step is just to decide what Andrew wants to do with his life. He’s been under house arrest for a couple of years, and then before that he was incarcerated for over 20 of the most formative years of his life. He now has this off his head.”

Michelen said Tendy’s decision to prosecute the case after Krivak’s conviction was overturned was “disturbing. It seemed to be very personal, almost a vendetta. He didn’t care what the evidence was, he was going to plow ahead.”

DiPippo and Krivak were convicted of second-degree murder in separate trials for their alleged participation in the 1994 rape and murder of Josette. Her remains were discovered in Patterson in November 1995, more than a year after she disappeared.

A key difference between the two prosecutions is that Krivak provided a statement that the defense contended was a false confession coerced by Putnam County sheriff investigators.

The primary witness for the state was Denise Rose, a former friend of both men who testified that, while sitting in Krivak’s van, she watched Krivak and DiPippo rape and suffocate Josette before carrying her body into the woods. The defense contended Rose was a compulsive liar who used information fed to her by the sheriff’s investigators because they threatened her with prosecution.

DiPippo’s conviction was overturned in 2011 when an appellate court determined that his lawyer failed to disclose that he had previously represented Howard Gombert Jr., a sex offender who was later put forth with Gombert in Connecticut and who said Gombert had implicated himself. DiPippo was re-tried in 2012 and again found guilty, but that conviction was overturned in 2016 when an appeals court ruled that DiPippo’s lawyer should have been allowed to present testimony from a former Carmel resident who was imprisoned with Gombert in Connecticut and who said Gombert had implicated himself.

During the second retrial, DiPippo’s attorneys questioned the tactics of Putnam sheriff investigator Patrick Castaldo, now retired, and other deputies when they took statements from alleged witnesses to the crime.

During DiPippo’s third trial, in 2016, which lasted for three weeks, the jury deliberated for a day before finding him not guilty.

Leonard Sparks contributed reporting.
Puzzles

CROSS CURRENT

ACROSS
1. Pirate’s chart
2. “Shark Tank” network
3. Cirench
4. Misfortunes
5. Monk’s title
6. Jeans maker
7. Grabbed
8. Soft shoes, for short
9. Eggy quaff
10. Limo alternative
11. Orange variety
12. Online auction site
13. "Kapow!"
14. Traditional tales
15. Winter woes
16. Lauded
17. Balloon filler
18. Little rascal
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SOLUTIONS

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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. sound of a rusty hinge (5)
2. sundae toppers (6)
3. Mariners great Ichiro (6)
4. stamp seller (4)
5. French good-byes (6)
6. Covey wrote about seven (6)
7. Alabama’s “Mockingbird” town (11)

SOLUTIONS

1. Knock
2. Crazed
3. California’s Big — (4)
4. Mr. Stravinsky
5. Apollo 13 org.
6. Panache
7. Last (Abbr.)

SUDO CURRENT

Answers for Feb. 24 Puzzles

For interactive sudoku and crossword answers, see highlandscurrent.org/puzzles.
Haldane Boys, in Double Overtime, Advance to Finals

Three other local hoops teams fall short in tournament

By Skip Pearlman

In a game in which baskets were hard to find early and late, the Haldane boys’ basketball team saved its best for overtime and survived a Section I, Class C semifinal matchup on Wednesday (March 1) over Alexander Hamilton, 51-46.

It was Coach Joe Virgadamo’s 200th career victory at Haldane, in 17 seasons.

A Hamilton three-pointer with six seconds remaining in the first overtime at the Westchester County Center in White Plains sent the game into another frame tied at 40-40.

But the Blue Devils found their rhythm in the second OT, putting six points on the board. No. 1 Tuckahoe's scores. Matteo Cervone delivered a spinning layup with 2:30 remaining, and Ben Bozsik followed with a basket that gave Haldane a 46-40 lead with 1:38 left. Bozsik then hit another shot and sealed the win with free throws. He finished with 19 points.

Both teams showed nerves early, and the score was only 17-14 in favor of Haldane at halftime. The Blue Devils led 25-23 going into the fourth quarter. “They had a little too much fire — that’s what we wanted.”

Virgadamo said his team turned up the volume, but we played hard, and that’s all we can ask for.”

HALDANE GIRLS

Finding points has been the challenge all season for the Haldane girls’ basketball team, and while the No. 4 seed Blue Devils stayed close early in the Section I, Class C semifinal on Wednesday at the county center, No. 1 Tuckahoe eventually pulled away for a 49-25 victory.

Tuckahoe led 10-0 before Haldane got on the board, but the Blue Devils came back, and the first quarter ended with the Tigers up, 13-9. But Haldane didn’t score in the second quarter, allowing Tuckahoe to build a 24-9 cushion by the half. It was 40-20 at the end of three quarters.

Mairead O’Hara led Haldane, which finished 3-18, with eight points, followed by Camila McDaniel (5) and Moretta Pezzullo (3) and Kayla Ruggerio (3).

“It’s been a tough go this season,” Coach Ed Crowe said. “We played a tough schedule, but we played hard, and that’s all we can ask for.”

BEACON BOYS

After losing to Goshen twice in the regular season — once by 20 points — the Beacon boys’ basketball team knew it had to do better to advance to the Section IX, Class A title game.

But the top-seeded Gladiators (21-1) were too much for No. 4 Beacon for a third time on Wednesday, defeating the visiting Bulldogs, 66-60.

Joe Battle led Beacon, which finished 15-7, with 21 points, while Danny Mercado added 16 and Darien Gillins had eight.

The Bulldogs trailed by 10 points after the first quarter but cut the deficit to five points at halftime and at the end the third quarter. “They had a little too much fire-power for us from three,” said Coach Patrick Schetter. “We had it close, but we missed some key shots late, and they didn’t.”

The Bulldogs reached the semifinal thanks to a 56-44 win over No. 5 Wallkill, on Monday (Feb. 27) behind Battle’s 18 points. Mercado added 10 points and Adrian Beato and Gillins each had nine. Beacon led comfortably for most of the game, although the Panthers came within six points in the third quarter.

BEACON GIRLS

After earning a bye in the quarterfinal round, the No. 1 seed Beacon girls’ basketball team was upset by No. 5 Franklin Roosevelt, 49-30, in a Section IX, Class A semifinal on Wednesday at Beacon High School.

Reilly Landisi led Beacon with 10 points and Daveya Rodriguez added nine, but the Bulldogs never got into an offensive rhythm.

“We lost to a very talented FDR team,” said Coach Christina Dahl. “With their size and length, they made it tough for us to get going offensively.”

But, she added, “one game doesn’t define our season. Although it did not end the way we wanted it to, we were still 15-5 over all and league champs. We have a great group of girls and are proud to be their coaches. We’re lucky to return everyone next season.”

WINTER TRACK

Henry Reinke and Damani Deloatch of Beacon each qualified for the indoor state championships, which will be held on Saturday (March 4) on Staten Island.

Reinke ran a 1:21.91 in the 600 meters to finish first in Section IX and bump his state ranking from No. 22 to No. 4. The time is the second-fastest 600 in Beacon High School history, behind Alex Shapiro’s 2010 mark of 1:21.6.

“This makes Henry a serious contender to medal at states,” Coach Jim Henry said.

Deloatch qualified in the triple jump with a personal best of 44-6¼, ranking him the 10th best triple-jumper at states. It was his second consecutive time qualifying for the triple jump at indoor states.

“February has always been a great month of improvement in Beacon track, and this year was no different,” Henry said. “After the team championships conclude, there are several weeks to focus on the top individuals and tailor practices specifically to their needs. Henry and Damani have both put that work in, and it’s exciting to see it pay off.”

Both athletes plan to compete at the nationals in Boston the following weekend.

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