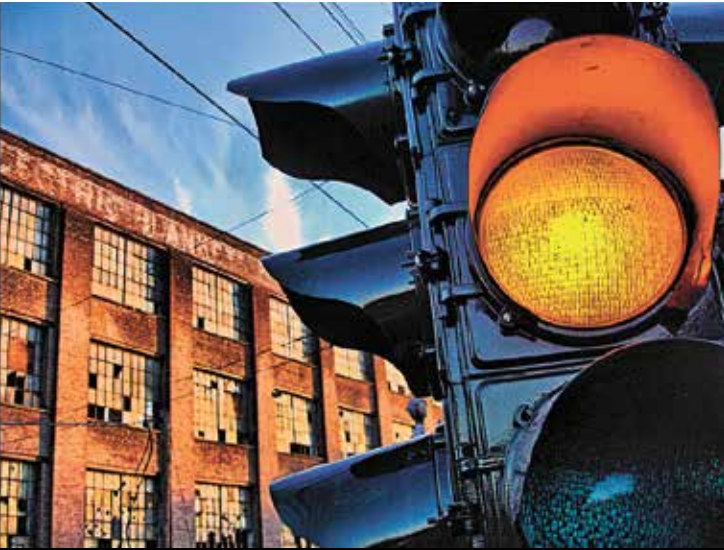


# The HIGHLANDS Current



Surprising Ceramics  
Page 13

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Part 1 of a series

## Beacon: Then, Now and How

*Twenty-five years ago, the city was falling apart.  
It has been revived. But at what price?*

By Jeff Simms

In the past quarter-century, Beacon has transformed itself from a city of boarded-up windows and crime to a vanguard of culture and environmental sustainability. But many residents feel the resurgence has come at a steep price, criticizing the pace and scale of development and

arguing that housing prices are robbing Beacon of its diversity and working-class character. In January 2001, when then-Mayor Clara Lou Gould gave her annual state of the city address, the *Poughkeepsie Journal* noted that Beacon was  
*(Continued on Page 8)*

Photo by Michael Bowman

## Judge Bars Migrants from Dutchess Hotels

*86 men allowed to stay at Red Roof Inn on Route 9*

By Leonard Sparks

A state judge temporarily ordered New York City to stop sending asylum-seekers to Dutchess and provide the county with the names of dozens of men the city is sheltering at a Red Roof Inn in the Town of Poughkeepsie.

Judge Maria Rosa issued her ruling on Tuesday (May 23), four days after Dutchess County sued New York City and the hotel's owner.

Rosa's decision does not affect 66 migrants who arrived at the Red Roof Inn  
*(Continued on Page 21)*



William F.X. O'Neil, the Dutchess County executive, speaks at a news conference on Tuesday (May 23). Putnam County Executive Kevin Byrne stands to his right.  
*Putnam County photo*



**RAIN DELAY** — About 70 Philipstown Little League players attended a Hudson Valley Renegades minor-league baseball game on May 20 at Heritage Financial Park (Dutchess Stadium) but were disappointed when the skies opened and the game was canceled. The players were invited to return next month.

Photo by Ross Corsair

## Can a Class Be Too Small?

*Haldane discusses optimal number of students*

By Joey Asher

Is reducing class size always the right thing to do? That's been a topic of discussion

for the Haldane school board this month, spurred by parents who lobbied for smaller classes for their rising first graders.

The district will have 38 first graders in 2023-24 and planned to divide them into two classes of 19, according to Superintendent Philip Benante. "Generally, 20 students [or  
*(Continued on Page 7)*

## Elementary Class Sizes

	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Haldane	13	15	18	18	20	20
Garrison	16	20	25	19	21	21
Beacon*	15	17	15	15	14	15

Source: Haldane and Garrison budgets, 2022-23;  
\*Beacon, 2020-21, data.nysed.gov



# 5Q FIVE QUESTIONS: FELIX SALMON

By Leonard Sparks

Felix Salmon, chief financial correspondent for Axios, is the author of *The Phoenix Economy: Work, Life and Money in the New Not Normal*. He lives in Garrison.

## What was your goal with the book?

We all went through something incredibly traumatic [with the pandemic]. I have no interest in reminding people about the trauma, but in telling people that the entire economy came to a screeching halt, we rebuilt something very new and very different, what I call the Phoenix Economy, rising from the ashes of the old one. I'm hoping to give people tools for understanding the strange new world we find ourselves in.

## How do you characterize that strange new world?

Much more volatility, much more unpredictability. For 70 years after World War II, we had relative peace and prosperity and predictability. From here on out, it doesn't work like that. You can't just know one thing and that one thing is always going to be true. You have to be able to change your mind and learn new things.

## One concept you discuss is the "great



Photo by Stefan Geens

## acceleration." What is that?

Imagine a world where Microsoft, the most lumbering company you can think of, can take super-fast and nimble overnight-success companies like Zoom and Slack and leave them in the dust [with Microsoft Teams]. The entire global banking system failed to collapse even though none of the banks' employees were able to go into their offices. We managed to invent new ways of doing things in a way that no one thought we would be able to. If you look at Moderna pre-pandemic, it was a tiny biotech company that had never really achieved anything. You know how long it took to develop their

[mRNA] vaccine? Forty-eight hours. The rest was just testing. The [economic] rebound has been extremely strong.

## You write that these disruptions created people who are happier and more productive at work. How so?

If you didn't like your job pre-pandemic, you would moan to your friends about how you hate your boss. If you didn't like your job in 2021 and 2022, you would just quit. That helped to recalibrate the power relationships between labor and capital, helped make people a lot happier and helped accelerate a massive wave of entrepreneurship. We have much more alignment between what people are doing and what they want to do.

## What makes you hopeful?

The thing that gives me hope — and this is an optimistic book — is that up until 2020, the overarching problem when it came to dealing with global climate change was that we had no precedent for the collective action needed to address it. In spring 2020, that's exactly what we did. We all stopped moving, at great personal and economic costs, so we could bend the curve and buy ourselves time to find therapeutics and the vaccines. We know that it is possible for everyone to join forces.

# ON THE SPOT

By Michael Turton

## What was your first real job?

I was a cashier at Babies 'R' Us.



Erena O'Brien, Beacon

I worked in a factory near Hollywood making audio- and videotape.



Jeff Edrich, Putnam Valley

I was a bridal consultant at Up To Date on Main Street in Poughkeepsie.



Fran Farnorotto, Cold Spring

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## NEWS BRIEFS

## Sheriff Makes Arrest in Haldane Incident

*Cold Spring man charged with criminal nuisance*

The Putnam County Sheriff's Department said on May 19 that it had arrested a Cold Spring man following an investigation into what a deputy thought could be gunshots near the Haldane campus.

The popping sounds just after noon on May 15 startled elementary students and staff on the playground and prompted administrators to put the campus on lockdown for about 90 minutes. It turned out to be firecrackers.

In addition to the Sheriff's Department, officers from the New York State Police, Cold Spring, Kent and Metro-North police departments responded.

After police arrived to investigate, a person said they had seen smoke at a nearby residence, the sheriff said in a news release. Police said they located what appeared to be freshly exploded fireworks in the yard at 34 Mountain Ave.

The sheriff said that because the occupants of the home were uncooperative, his office consulted with the district attorney and obtained a search warrant that was executed at about 7 p.m.

Following the search, Alexander Welsh, 28, was arrested and charged with felony criminal possession of cannabis in the second degree, misdemeanor criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree and misdemeanor criminal nuisance. He was issued an appearance ticket to answer the charges at the Town of Philipstown Court, the sheriff said.

## IDA Approves Mirbeau PILOT

*Board rejects tax breaks for Tompkins Terrace*

The board of the Dutchess County Industrial Development Agency on Tuesday (May 23) approved Mirbeau Inn & Spa's request for a 15-year payment-in-lieu-of-taxes, or PILOT, agreement at the Tioronda Estate in Beacon, where the company plans to open a luxury spa and hotel.



**STUCK TRUCK** — Some combos don't work, such as oil and water or long trucks and Cold Spring side streets. The driver of this beverage truck made a mistake on Wednesday (May 23) that he won't likely repeat, driving down Wall Street from Chestnut. When the rear of the truck wedged against the steep pavement, the vehicle was stuck until a tow truck arrived. Drivers on Kemble Avenue were forced to take Forge Gate. Photo by Michael Turton

Mirbeau's PILOT means it will pay 50 percent of the taxes on the property's increase in value for the first five years of the agreement. The percentage it pays will increase starting in the sixth year and continue rising before the property becomes fully taxable beginning with Year 16. Mirbeau will also receive breaks on mortgage and sales taxes.

At the same time, the IDA board rejected a preliminary agreement that would have saved Related Companies \$472,000 in sales taxes on the acquisition and interior and exterior costs totaling \$44 million at Tompkins Terrace, the 193-unit affordable housing complex in Beacon.

Dutchess County's Local Development Corp., which has the same board members as the IDA, tabled a separate resolution to issue \$25 million in bonds for the Tompkins Terrace project, whose renovations will total \$14.5 million.

## Clock Ticking in Cold Spring

*Code update faces June 30 deadline*

The public hearing on the update of three chapters of the village code that began on April 26 continued at the Wednesday (May 24) meeting of the Cold Spring Village Board. The hearing will remain open until at least June 7, when the board is next scheduled to meet.

The village faces a June 30 deadline for

completing the project from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, the agency that funded the update.

On Wednesday, Trustee Laura Bozzi, who is a member of the ad hoc committee that is revising the three chapters and the state Environmental Assessment Form based on feedback, said the group is still making revisions and that while some changes are simple, others are more complex.

As an example, Bozzi said that last week the Village Board voted to remove previously proposed form-based sections of the chapter

on zoning and will instead rely on Historic District Review Board design standards.

In addition, all Village Board responses to questions raised by the public must be reviewed by the village attorney before being added to the village website, she said. As of May 25, more than 50 responses to questions from the public and recommendations from the ad hoc committee had been posted.

## Electric Prices Expected to Fall

*State cites efficiency efforts*

The New York State Public Service Commission on May 18 said it expected the average price for electricity paid by residential customers over the summer to be lower than a year ago.

The statewide average supply costs for full-service residential customers from June to September is expected to be \$214.81, down 3 percent, the commission said.

The commission cited energy efficiency and system improvements for a forecasted drop in peak energy use in 2026 of about 2,000 megawatts compared to 2016. By 2033, the commission expects peak demand to fall by 6,289 megawatts.

According to the state, a 2,000 megawatt decrease in peak demand is the equivalent of the electricity generated by several power plants to supply 1.75 million average-sized homes.

# CYNTHIA McEVOY



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## LETTERS AND COMMENTS

### Fjord Trail

Since the onset of COVID-19, the surge in visitation to Hudson Highlands State Park has put unprecedented stress on Cold Spring, with no end in sight. Mitigation shouldn't fall solely on the shoulders of residents and local government; it's a shared problem requiring collaborative solutions.

The public-private partnership to create the Fjord Trail — conceived by local leaders over a decade ago to address hazards around Breakneck Ridge and related impacts on Cold Spring and the Route 9D corridor — is part of the solution. Such partnerships saved Olana, home of Hudson River School painter Frederic Church, and transformed a derelict railroad bridge into Walkway Over the Hudson. And Scenic Hudson is collaborating with the state to change a 520-acre former industrial site in Kingston into Sojourner Truth State Park, where nature is reclaiming the long-damaged lands.

The Fjord Trail includes several organizations — principally New York's Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail (HHFT). Other organizations play important complementary roles, e.g., the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference's Breakneck trail stewards provide hikers with invaluable safety advice.

Clarity in public understanding of these

key organizations' roles is essential to transparency and trust. The work around Breakneck — Fjord Trail's Phase 1 — offers an opportunity to advance understanding.

Last year, HHFT utilized a state grant to build fencing around Breakneck's Metro-North station, where one hiker was killed and another severely injured. With help from donors, HHFT built the Nimham Trail to provide a safer route down Breakneck and reduce emergency calls. With private funding, HHFT is managing improvements to Breakneck's lower trail to repair long-term damage from overuse and to provide a new shelter safely away from 9D for trail stewards to orient hikers.

In the meantime, design of the Breakneck Connector and the bridge over the railroad tracks continue to advance, with construction slated to start in 2024. Its new features — restrooms, organized parking and the "Connector" trail from train platform to trailhead — are necessary safety improvements to existing destinations in a New York State park preserve that is along a busy state highway and accessible from a railroad station. The bridge will also provide New York City's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with access to its aqueduct facility (which handles 40 percent of the city's drinking water supply) to perform a long-overdue upgrade and routine maintenance.

That's why we requested funding during the 2022 legislative session for a state share of this \$84-million undertaking. Scenic Hudson and HHFT staff initially proposed a \$35 million contribution. With board members and other project allies, we appealed to the governor and legislative leaders, ultimately securing \$20 million in the final budget.

As a result, the cost of building the bridge (for which OPRHP is responsible) is shared by the state (\$20 million), DEP (\$14 million) and HHFT (\$16 million). HHFT will build and pay for the balance of Phase 1 (\$34 million), including all Breakneck Connector improvements, with private funding. HHFT has created, and will continue to grow, a permanent operation fund to support related maintenance services — restrooms, garbage, parking, landscaping.

This partnership not only helps solve issues of longstanding concern to Cold Spring and area residents and all those who enjoy hiking in the Hudson Highlands, but will also save taxpayers money due to the sizable private investment. We are grateful to our state leaders and private partners for bringing to bear essential resources to address these longstanding challenges.

Completion of a traffic study and development of a visitor management system — with input from a committee of local officials, residents and an independent consultant — will be important next steps.

Ned Sullivan, *Poughkeepsie*  
*Sullivan is the president of Scenic Hudson.*

The state Department of Transportation may see Route 9D as a "traffic corridor." But to villagers, Route 9D is not a highway but two vibrant streets in the heart of the community that we use to reach the library, Tots Park, Haldane school and our neighbors' homes. They are Chestnut Street and Morris Avenue. Using these designated street names rather than "9D" will help us remember this and underscore the potential impact of the Fjord Trail on traffic through Cold Spring.

Roberta Shayo, *Cold Spring*

While I spent my youth in Cold Spring, I've had the great opportunity to travel throughout the U.S. and the world.

It is the sublime beauty of the Hudson Highlands, specifically as viewed from Dockside Park, that reminded me during all my travels that Cold Spring was forever my home, in my heart. Dockside Park — our little patch of grass and trees — stands humbly, yet majestically, with the great places I've visited.

While the recent "improvements" at Dockside leave much to be desired, it is still a park worthy of protecting, ensuring that future generations, from near and far, can experience what generations before them — from the Lenape people, to the Hudson

(Continued on Page 5)





## LETTERS AND COMMENTS

River School painters, to Pete Seeger — saw worthy of protecting.

The Dockside connector, as conceived, will ruin Dockside Park forever. Vegetation on the water's edge will be cleared. The boardwalk, the bridge and other portions of the Fjord Trail will be wired for lighting, forever blighting the twilight.

Alternative routes connecting Cold Spring to Little Stony Point via Fair Street and Route 9D, created by improving and augmenting existing infrastructure, should be strongly considered.

Since I attended the 2015 Chalet meeting, I have been generally enthusiastic about a bike/pedestrian trail between Cold Spring and Beacon. I recommend all interested parties look at the historic documents, which are well collated on the resources page at the Protect the Highlands website (regardless of your level of support of the organization). You will see a bike/ped trail balloon into its current overwrought and overbuilt state. HHFT is hijacking past support for a modest trail to imply support for its current design.

Ethan Timm, *Nelsonville*

At the recent public session on the Fjord Trail ("15 Questions," May 12), I was encouraged to see the turnout. I share the concerns of community members who have reservations about more visitation. I don't disagree that the trail is likely to initially bring more visitors as was the case with the Walkway Over the Hudson. There was a peak of interest that has since fallen and leveled off. The fact remains that the people are already here; ignoring that is not a viable option.

The Fjord Trail offers solutions to many of the long-recognized issues. The proposed visitor center at Dutchess Manor, with plenty of parking, food options and restrooms, will be an alternative to Cold Spring. This is a short walk from the Breakneck train station. People looking to hike the trail at Breakneck will be directed to this location as a starting point.

The trail creates the opportunity to disperse people over its 7.5-mile length with multiple entry points in three communities and two counties. Traffic and pedestrian studies are in progress. Once complete, they will be independently reviewed by a consultant chosen by local municipalities. New York State will further review them as part of the State Environmental Quality Review Act.

There are solutions to help disperse crowds. Currently very few of them are being employed. The Fjord Trail has the potential to better manage traffic and hikers, and create a better environment in the Village of Cold Spring.

Ideas of all sorts are shared during open discussions. Not all of them are appropriate, but that is what the process is for, to share ideas, vet them and either move forward or put them aside. If people are afraid to offer suggestions because the blowback is so intense, the process is the lesser for it.

Peak pricing for parking, wayfinding that directs people away from the village and making Dutchess Manor the hub with the largest parking area can all be a part of the solution.

Over 70 percent of the trail will be a gravel surface that will accommodate people of all abilities. Serious road cyclists

are not likely to be cruising the trail on a weekend as they know that it will be a slow ride. I have ridden thousands of miles on various rail trails and never seen an issue.

Certain areas will require wooden walkways and raised shoreline sections. These are not the majority of the trail. This shoreline trail segment is also an opportunity to develop resilience measures for both submerged vegetation and to harden the rail line against sea level rise while creating access to the river.

There are also plans to restore landscapes that were disturbed in the past. The creation of better habitats for birds, mammals and reptiles by closing social trails, repairing erosion and re-establishing native plants is all part of the planned trail — all funded and maintained in perpetuity without taxpayer money.

The issues that we face are complicated and deserve the attention of all, including the best consultants, experts at state parks and all of us. I ask that people pay attention to the process and realize that there is still plenty of time to be heard.

Richard Shea, *Philipstown*  
*Shea, the former town supervisor, is a board member of HHFT Inc.*

The original idea of a Cold Spring-to-Beacon trail, with safe parking and access in order to alleviate congestion along Route 9D, holds some merit. However, the ridiculous, theme-park-like attraction that Scenic Hudson is madly pursuing has alienated the good graces of our community.

Clearly, the Fjord Trail committee has given no real thought to the unintended consequences of a project of this scale. For instance, the currents and tides off Little Stony Point are incredibly powerful and variable. Unless we bring in the Army Corps of Engineers for construction, any riverfront infrastructure will be smashed to pieces by the winter ice flows and high-tide log jams.

Further, the idea of a swimming structure at Little Stony Point is not only absurd, it is incredibly dangerous. Also, a project of the scale proposed would permanently disrupt critical habitat for endangered species, including the bald eagle, in addition to the overcrowding and loss of quality of life that it would impose upon the village.

My family and I live on the Philipsbrook in Garrison, and my son and I have been delighted to discover small populations of native brook trout (the state fish of New York) hanging on in the deeper pools. However, each year the deep pools are choked out more and more by the constant silty runoff from the dirt roads upstream. Some of the key players behind the Fjord Trail have also fought tooth and nail to keep the dirt roads such as Old Albany Post Road, despite the tons of silted runoff that cascades into our waterways with each big storm.

They are not considering the downstream consequences of their projects. I like the dirt roads and I like the idea of a trail along the Hudson, but it's high time the Fjord Trail committee honestly and soberly assesses the footprint of its proposal and the strong local resistance to this plan, or the unintended consequence will be that we shut the whole project down.

Brad Teasdale, *Garrison*

## Cold Spring zoning

The Cold Spring Village Board seeks to repeal and replace the entire zoning code through a deeply flawed, secretive process ("Cold Spring Continues Code Update," May 19). The board released the proposed 130-page law — which is achingly complex and would change the zoning requirements for most of the village — just two days before initially discussing it in April. The board is rushing the process apparently because it seeks to meet a grant funding deadline, which is certainly no reason to short-circuit the democratic process and enact a law that would likely create more problems than it purports to solve.

From September to April, the board conducted the process in secret, which is a stark departure from at least 16 years of precedent. The mayor appointed an "ad hoc zoning committee on the code update" that continues to meet privately without issuing agendas or reports.

After receiving a Freedom of Information Law request for the committee's minutes, the board provided a set of documents that mostly lack any meaningful information about committee discussions, and broke its promise to post them on the village website. The board's excuse — that the committee is advisory and need not comply with the Open Meetings Law — is risible. Good public policy requires transparency, as many have argued (rightfully so) in the context of the Fjord Trail saga.

One of the most troubling elements of the proposed new zoning law is its plan for the Marathon site, which would allow the construction of at least 63 (and perhaps up to 77) homes in an area with severe access problems and continuing vapor intrusion issues. The comprehensive plan, with which zoning must comply, states that the village should make "appropriate access to and from the [Marathon] area a prerequisite for any development there, ensuring that development does not create traffic problems that will unreasonably adversely affect current residents."

Yet the board fails to recognize the reality that 60 or more homes would bring significant traffic problems, dismissing this as a "design question." Worse, to advocate for the board's proposed law, the village's consultant — paid by taxpayer dollars — devised a wildly erroneous buildout analysis for the Marathon site in which he ignored current zoning law, appellate court decisions, existing tax parcels and the village's formula retail business ban, stoking fears that 52 homes and/or a Home Depot could be built at Marathon.

After numerous residents (including myself) noted the consultant's manifest errors, he revised his analysis to state that only 11 homes could be built at Marathon but injected irrelevant and confusing information and doubled down on his specious argument that massive retail, school and office structures could be built there.

Additionally, the proposed new zoning law is permeated by vogueish "form-based zoning" concepts, replete with pretty pictures that replicate historic district requirements, inject subjectivity into the building permit process,

(Continued on Page 6)

More Awards for *The Current*

Reporters for *The Current* recently received regional and national awards.

Brian PJ Cronin won the Rollin M. "Pete" McCommons Award for Distinguished Community Journalism given annually by the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia for his 2021 series, *Hunger in the Highlands*. He traveled to Athens, Georgia, to accept the award.

The New York City chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists named Cronin's series, *The Challenge for Churches*, as the best reporting in 2022 by a newspaper with a circulation under 100,000. Cronin was also a finalist for his series, *Trails (Too) Well Traveled*.

Leonard Sparks was among the 12 winners of a Golden Quill award for editorial writing given annually by the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors for his *Reporter's Notebook*, "The COVID Shrug," published in May 2022.



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LETTERS AND COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 5)

and are likely to cause confusion. As but one example, proposed 134-7(E)(4) (building placement in residential districts) states: “Residential structures shall be located according to the following illustrations, some of which may conflict with the Dimensional Requirements of Table 6B or with each other on a particular site, in which case, the Planning Board may use its discretion to resolve such conflicts.”

In other words, the law would throw a Hail Mary pass to the Planning Board, hoping it would figure it out. How would that lessen burdens on property owners?

Finally, although everyone is concerned about housing affordability, neither the board, its committee, nor its consultant has even attempted to quantify whether the proposed new zoning law would actually make the Village of Cold Spring more affordable. All we have are bromides. As this is a local election year, it’s likely that some candidates will invoke improvements in “affordability” as a slogan, but, as we saw in Oz, behind the curtain it’s just a lot of hot air.

Michael Reisman, *Cold Spring*

**Garrison path**

As a Garrison resident living on Route 9D, this is great to see (“Price of Cold Spring-Garrison Path: \$8.1 Million,” May 12). It would present a significant reduction of hurdles and a more direct process to work with the state Department of Transportation and have sidewalk/bike lanes added to 9D from Philipstown Recreation to Cold Spring to Little Stony Point. Either way, a low-key trail would be excellent to enhance the movement in our community.

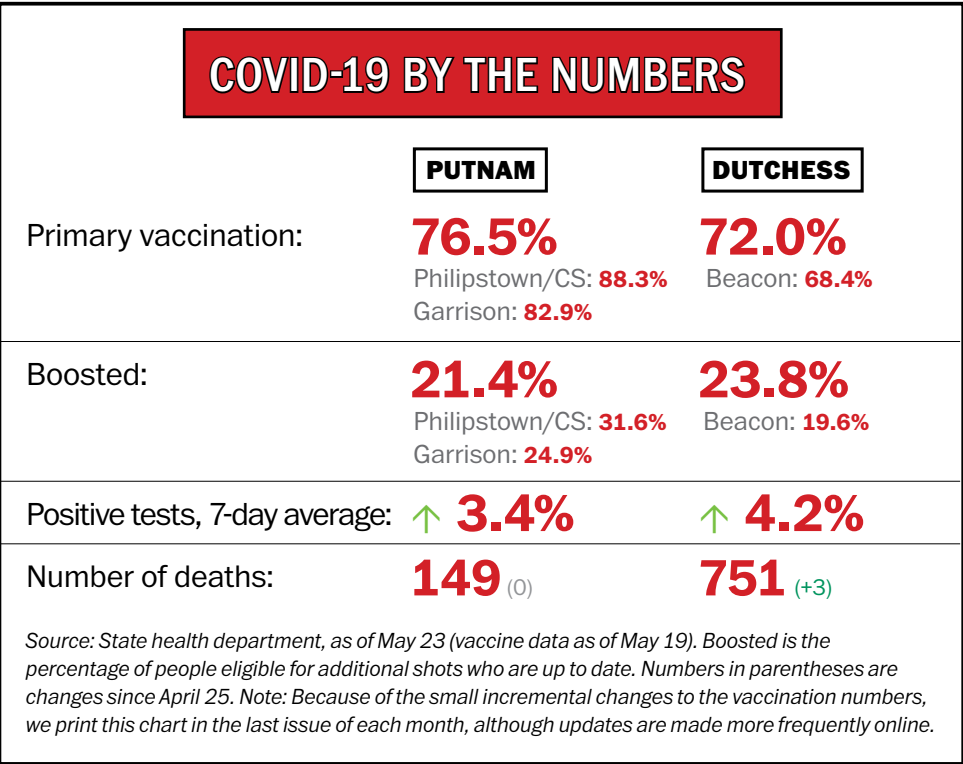
Rory Stark, *Garrison*

**Nuts in Nelsonville**

I believe your article misstates the reasons for the so-called NUTmobile’s appearance in Nelsonville last weekend (“No Nuts in Nelsonville,” May 19). Planters was one of the sponsors of the trail-running event [at the Nelsonville Woods], and the rendezvous was very much of a commercial nature.

Somehow the organizers decided that it was beneath them to alert the village of their plans to host dozens of trail runners and set up shop in the tiny parking lot at the Pearl Street entrance. That area can hardly accommodate five to seven cars, so the 26-foot vehicle could not fit and had to circle the streets, ultimately causing an accident. Had the village been let aware of the event, we would have worked with the organizers and sponsors to find the most suitable location for the truck.

I support Mayor Chris Winward’s actions and her request for the event to cease, and can hardly fathom that a similar reaction by Cold Spring or Philipstown officials



in response to an unauthorized event on village property would garner such a write-up from *The Highlands Current*.

Maria Zhynovitch, *Nelsonville*  
*Zhynovitch is a member of the Village Board.*

How inappropriate was Nelsonville’s response? Considering the ramifications of the “unauthorized” trail event on Nelsonville, does the village throw the book at Mr. Peanut? Maybe let the organizers know they need to retroactively request a permit and offer to help shepherd the event to completion.

What city ordinance requires that a promotional vehicle representing a treasured American commercial icon get a permit to park on a village street? How uptight do you have to be to tell Mr. Peanut that he has to move along?

I live in Beacon and I’d like to think Mr. Peanut would be welcome to park anywhere here with his nuts for anyone who comes by. We’re just that kind of city!

Bill Sciambi, *Beacon*

I have a peanut allergy in my family, yet I’d welcome the NUTmobile to Philipstown. Do we need to politicize everything?

Karen Phillips, *via Facebook*

No nuts in Nelsonville? I beg to differ!

Lloyd DesBrisay, *Nelsonville*

**Veteran banners**

I would like to thank Cindy Trimble for all her hard work to make this happen (“Military Service Banners Coming to Philipstown,” May 19). I look forward to the kickoff and seeing my late husband’s banner flying high. A huge thank you to all of our veterans.

Cheryl Allen, *Philipstown*

These banners are a wonderful reminder of the importance that places such as Beacon, Fishkill and Putnam and Dutchess counties played in the defense of this nation and the free world.

Virgil Capollari, *via Instagram*  
*Capollari is chair of the Dutchess County Veterans Affairs Committee.*

**Misinformation at school**

One of my children had Laurie Malin as a teacher during the peak of COVID, when there was still a lot of uncertainty, confusion and alarm over the disease (“Confusion the Classroom,” May 12).

This science teacher was not encouraging or modeling rigorous research or sound scientific methods for the 11- and 12-year-olds she was teaching on a daily basis. She was offering personal opinions that were vastly out of step with the majority of mainstream and respected scientists and doctors, without offering her own evidence to support her claims.

In my opinion, based on my child’s experience with her, she did not carry out her professional role in an educational or responsible way.

Kristen Holt Browning, *via Instagram*

**Power line**

We’ve been told over and over that things were safe — I believe they will say anything to have their project developed (“Builder Says Power Line Safe for River,” May 12). Please give me some reasons why this is beneficial to us? Why does New York City get electricity from Canada?

Paul Yeaple, *via Instagram*

Transmission of renewable energy into the places that need it is a major issue. Interconnection backlogs are long for solar and wind projects. This line will help supply hydro and wind energy where needed.

This is just one of multiple projects underway right now in our region. There are environmental impacts. If we want enough renewable energy to supply major cities, we need to get it there.

Tom Cerchiara, *via Instagram*

What about the effects of the electricity running through those lines on marine life?

Scott Cutten, *via Facebook*

**Leaf blowers**

The Beacon City Council should stop worrying about nonsense and regulating every little thing we do (“Leaf Blowers Create a Stir,” May 19). When the mower blows grass on the sidewalk or street, I’ll leave the mess where it is: less work. If there aren’t any complaints, why is this even an issue?

J.W. Shepherd, *via Facebook*

Soon all of these restrictions and laws are going to drive people who value their freedoms out of Beacon and all those condos and houses selling for a fortune are going to be empty. We’ll be back to the Beacon we had 10 years ago.

Brandy Capolino, *via Facebook*

Keep government out of everyone’s personal life. If you’re going to go after leaf blowers, you should also go after the trains, cars, planes, dwellings of all types, phones, street lights, firetrucks, ambulances, sirens, buses, humans, power lines and so on.

Chris Ungaro, *via Facebook*

**Continental Commons**

Last month, the last undeveloped 10 acres of the Fishkill Supply Depot along Route 9 in Fishkill were clear-cut by the developer to make way for his vision of progress.

Dominic Broccoli was given approval for his plan to build a strip mall, Continental Commons, on the site by the Town of Fishkill, but that does not mean that he should build it. He was not given permission to uproot or disturb the land. This recent clear-cut exposed the rock walls from the original Fishkill Supply Depot. These last undisturbed acres have a story to tell the world. The soldiers who served and died at the Fishkill Supply Depot sacrificed for the creation of the United States of America. Nearly 250 years later, these ruins remain as a visible reminder of the strength of a nation. We the people cannot let this hallowed ground be paved over.

Over the past 15 years, supporters of the Friends of the Fishkill Supply Depot have been on a mission to educate people about the role that the Fishkill Supply Depot played in the cause of liberty. We continue to wait for the legal outcome of an Article 78 appeal [of the approval], but the Friends of the Fishkill Supply Depot have already won public support from across the nation.

Now we are going to focus our efforts on convincing the developer to conduct a full archeological survey out of respect for this country’s history and the memory of the soldiers who served and died at the Fishkill Supply Depot.

We are planning a demonstration at 10 a.m. on Memorial Day at the Van Wyck Homestead to pay our respects for the service of Continental soldiers at the Fishkill Supply Depot.

Keith Reilly, *Cold Spring*  
*Reilly is co-president of Friends of the Fishkill Supply Depot.*

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Class Size *(from Page 1)*

less] is considered a low class size,” he said.

However, at Haldane that would be a significant increase for the first graders. This year there were three kindergarten classes, each with no more than 13 students.

The parents argued that this particular group needed smaller classes because of what the children missed in preschool due to the pandemic shutdown.

“These are kids who need as much opportunity as possible for early intervention,” said Liesel Vink, a parent who lobbied the board. “How can a quality teacher give their best to an elementary classroom of over 20 students who are still navigating their social and emotional needs?”

Benante relented last week, saying that he planned to add a teacher to the elementary staff. He said the plan was to keep the three first-grade teachers and shuffle other teachers to cover growth in the fifth grade, which is expected to rise from 40 to 60 students. Without a third teacher at that level, he said, the fifth grade would have 30 students per class.

He said that Haldane anticipates, based on past experience, that four new first-grade students will enroll over the summer, which would give the district 42 students in that class and require three teachers to keep class sizes at 20 or less. (If that occurs, each class will have 14 students.)

Benante agreed that the youngest children were uniquely impacted by the pandemic. “Those are the students that were potentially at greatest risk of not meeting certain developmental milestones, especially as it relates to speech and language,” he said.

But the decision to add a third class came only after two board meetings where trustees and Benante discussed the pros and cons of reducing class sizes and how to pay for an additional teacher.

Do smaller classes matter?

Benante said there are studies that suggest smaller class sizes contribute to student achievement, “but typically that is geared toward lower-income communities,” which Haldane is not.

“What matters most is the quality of the teacher,” he added. “Just having low class sizes does not ensure that quality instruction is occurring.”

Peggy Clements, one of the five members of the Haldane school board, wondered if classes could get too small. Developing social and emotional skills might be more likely in a class of 20 than a smaller one, she said, as long as it was “well managed by a skilled teacher.”

Maggie Valentine, another school board

member, said she was concerned about class sizes that were consistently lower than the de facto standard of 20. “Are we setting a precedent of class sizes of 14 and 15?” she asked.

Benante said splitting the first grade next year into three classes would not set a precedent. He said the recent discussion had

prompted the administration, after discussions with faculty, to establish guidelines for the elementary school of 18 to 20 for K-2 and 20 to 22 for grades 3-5.

Is there an optimal size?

Leonie Haimson, the founder of Class Size Matters, a New York City-based advocacy group, says there is no ideal class size, although smaller is usually better.

“Every teacher is more effective with a smaller class,” she said. “Most elite private schools have class sizes of 15.”

Haimson, among others, lobbied for a state law enacted last year that will lower class sizes in New York City to 20 students for K-3, 23 students for 4-8 and 25 students for high school. The new sizes must be in place by 2028. Current class sizes in New York City often exceed 30 students, Haimson said.

Across the U.S., elementary schools average 19 students per class, according to the most recent data, and New York state averages 17. The highest elementary average in the U.S. is California, with 23, and the lowest is Maine, with 14.

Local schools align with these averages.

In Beacon, elementary classes average 18 students, Superintendent Matt Landahl said during a recent budget presentation. In higher grades, most classes range from 15 to 20, although some reach 22, according to the most recent data provided by the district to the state Department of Education.

In Garrison, elementary classes this year ranged from 16 students in the first grade to 25 in the second grade, according to the district.

Finding the money

Benante said he expected to fund the \$95,000 elementary teaching position with small budget cuts and adjustments. He also said the district would rely on new revenue from an additional tuition-paying student.

In addition to the budget impact, hiring a teacher for one class can impact the district’s long-term planning. “I can’t make that teacher a psychologist if you feel like we need a psychologist five years from now,” Benante said.

In addition, the new elementary teacher will need to be certified in special education or reading instruction. “There is a high likelihood that the new staff member is going to be redeployed to one of those two areas,” Benante said.

High and Low

California	23
New York	17
Maine	14

Elementary Class Sizes

Australia	15
Canada	16
Colombia	24
Denmark	10
France	18
Germany	15
Greece	8
Ireland	15
Italy	11
Japan	16
Mexico	24
Poland	10
U.K.	20
U.S.	15

Source: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022



Markers on the lawn at St. Mary's Church in Cold Spring honor those who served.

File photo by Ross Corsair

In Memoriam

The men remembered here died during their wartime service, either in combat or from disease or accidents.

Beacon

World War I

John Bump  
Thomas B. Carroll  
Frank Cramade  
H. Gordon Deicke  
George Delahay  
George E. Deveson  
Frank D. Fairclough  
Frederick A. Garrison  
Frederick Harris  
Francis J. Murphy  
Austin T. Robinson  
Pasquale Salese  
Jesse E. Slater  
George Stafford  
James J. Tomlins  
Frank H. VanHouten Jr.  
William Wilson

World War II

Arthur J. Baxter  
John H. Beattie  
Robert A. Bennett  
Luigi F. Bettina  
William J. Brennan  
John W. Briggs  
Frederick H. Brewer  
Thomas B. Carroll  
Calvin Clensay  
John Collins  
Nicholas T. Coppola  
Raymond W. Detweiler  
Andrew B. Eichorn  
George J. Eichorn

Paul L. Facteau  
Robert M. Faris  
Ralph L. Fleming  
David Fontaine  
George P. Frederick  
Saul Gerlich  
Alexander J. Grudzina  
Michael J. Groza  
Joseph Halbosky  
Gordon E. Hughes  
Henry I. Idema  
Edwin J. Johnson  
John Keto  
Albert A. Knight  
Orville Kranz  
Ernest H. LaChance  
George LaChance  
Arnold E. Lasko  
Robinson C. Lent  
Walter M. Lewis  
Judah H. Lewittes  
James J. Lockwood  
Michael E. Maskewicz  
Joseph McGaughan  
Peter Menger  
Howard G. Mitchell  
John F. Mignault  
George S. Mitchell  
William T. Morrison  
Patrick J. O'Brien  
Francis G. Peattie  
Guy D. Pendleton  
George Perrault  
Kenneth G. Perry

Dominick J. Phillipo  
Carmen A. Ramputi  
Robert V. Resek  
Lester F. Roberts  
Peter J. Seranto  
Francis T. Splain Jr.  
Burton Stevens  
Stuart F. Stripple  
Richard E. Sutton  
William J. Tallman  
Rody J. Tighe  
Francis J. Toth  
George P. Turiga  
Andrew Urbanak  
Joseph C. Usifer  
Rosco L. Vaughn Jr.  
James J. Walker  
John P. Wasnorowicz  
Louis J. Westerhuis  
Rene Zahner

Korea

Anthony N. Scalzo

Vietnam

John J. Bennett  
Thomas E. Devine  
Everett Foster  
Philip R. Mattracion  
Terrence E. O'Neil  
William R. Phillips  
James S. Pittman  
Emilio Rivera  
Joseph T. Slinsky

Philipstown

World War I

Percy W. Arnold  
Edward J. Burns  
George A. Casey  
Charles N. Clainos  
Walter H. Croft  
Charles DeRham Jr.  
John R. Fischer  
Clarence Fahnestock  
James Harvey Hustis  
J. Paulding Murdock

World War II

Martin E. Adams  
H. Ellis Bowden  
Edward Budney  
Gerald Dale  
Warren Eitner  
W. Russel Farrell  
Ralph Fleming  
Arthur Gilman  
Walter Glanville  
Thomas Lutz

Stanley Matthews  
Anthony Nastasi  
Allen W. Olsen  
Joseph V. Richardson  
Lester B. Roberts  
Arthur Warren

Vietnam

Aldon Asherman  
John Bennett  
Keith Livermore



**Beacon:  
Then, Now and How**  
*(from Page 1)*

known in the 1990s for its “empty storefronts, dilapidated buildings, inconsistent code enforcement and poor infrastructure such as sidewalks and roads, especially on the east end.”

Gould spearheaded a revitalization, expressing surprise at the pace of building rehabs and business investment. The arrival of the Dia Center for the Arts provided an “extra spurt”; the Dia Foundation in 2003 opened a 292,000-square-foot gallery in a former Nabisco box factory on the shores of the Hudson.

Situated between the river and

Mount Beacon, the highest peak of the Highlands, Beacon has since the early 2000s attracted a steady stream of new homeowners and visitors eager to shop its bustling, mile-long Main Street. Many retreated more recently from New York City during the pandemic shutdown, purchasing homes and moving into condo developments on Main Street and the riverfront.

Who has benefited most from this transformation? Who has been left behind? In this series, we’ll talk to people who live and work in the city and attempt to address these questions, as well as document changes over the past 25 years in housing and demographics, the arts, politics and activism.

**Has Beacon Followed  
its Own Blueprint?**

Before the pandemic, development was *the* issue in Beacon.

Who could forget the printout of a Facebook post and the hundreds of comments it generated attached to the temporary fencing around 344 Main St. when a support wall extended several feet into the sidewalk, out of alignment with the neighboring Beacon Natural Market? (Within weeks, the wall was removed and realigned.)

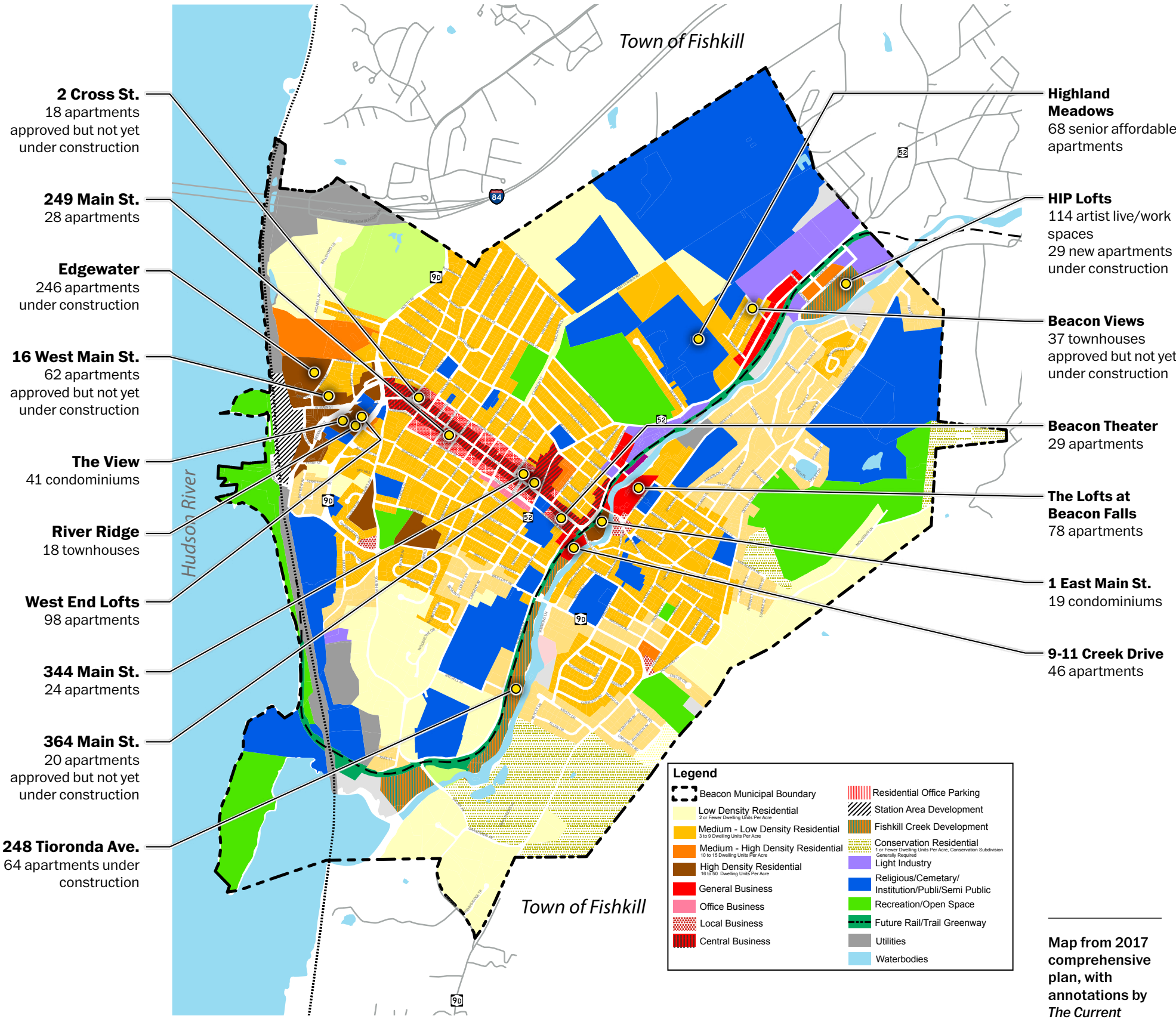
The subsequent formation of the People’s Committee on Development, led in part by

Dan Aymar-Blair, now a City Council member. Two building moratoriums passed by the council, both driven by concerns about water.

More than a dozen public hearings for the Edgewater apartment complex proposal, the largest ever in Beacon, residents packed so closely that some began to shout from the lobby of City Hall. At several hearings, dueling attorneys argued over formulas for estimating the project’s impacts on the school district.

*(Continued on Page 9)*

**Beacon Housing Developments of More Than 10 Units, 2012-2023**





*(Continued from Page 8)*

Since 2012, nearly 800 apartments and other housing units have been built in Beacon. At Edgewater and 248 Tioronda Ave., among a handful of others, there are more than 300 units still under construction because of pandemic delays.

Maps of projected land use in the 2017 update to Beacon's comprehensive plan — a blueprint revised by the city about every 10 years to guide growth — indicate that the most-dense development should occur in four locations: (1) on the east side of the Metro-North station; (2) in the waterfront-to-Main "linkage" district; (3) on Main Street, in the central business zone; and (4) in spots along the Fishkill Creek corridor.

Most of the remaining land — which makes up 80 percent to 90 percent of the city — is zoned for low- to medium-density housing, such as single-family homes.

An overlay of major construction projects in the last decade shows that each occurred within one of the zones designated for high density. In addition, the city's zoning code was amended several times after the 2017 moratorium to temper the impacts of incoming development.

In late 2017, the City Council adopted changes in the Fishkill Creek zone limiting new buildings to three stories totaling no more than 40 feet. New projects there must also include at least 25 percent commercial uses, and a parcel's density is based on buildable (rather than gross) acreage to account for topographic features such as steep slopes.

Five months later, the council extended the "steep-slopes" measure to the largest residential districts, reducing the Edgewater project from 307 units to 246. In the creekside zone, the change downsized the 248 Tioronda development from 100 to 64 apartments.

In 2020, the city tightened its Main Street zoning by requiring four-story proposals to include one or more "public benefits," such as increased parking, affordable housing units, green building features or public spaces.

City officials say that, dating to the 1990s, Beacon's zoning has been corrected to funnel foot traffic toward businesses on Main Street.

"For Main Street to recover and thrive



**Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou and developer Rodney Weber broke ground in July 2022 at the Edgewater site.**

*File photo by J. Simms*

requires more nearby residents to support its businesses," said Mayor Lee Kyriacou. "The appropriate places for additional residences are on and around Main, near the train station as a public-transit hub and on abandoned or former industrial sites along Fishkill Creek."

Not everyone agrees. One resident, Theresa Kraft, has attended and spoken at virtually every public meeting in Beacon during its building boom. Earlier this month, she argued before the City Council that housing and development in Beacon are "in crisis mode."

"Sadly, it's the upheaval of what this city has allowed to be destroyed directly on our historic Main Street and the side streets abutting it," she said. "So many of these projects are either poorly designed, out of character with the neighborhood or have seriously infringed on our protected viewsheds. This rampant building spree is spreading like wildfire, and it's got to be stopped."

Beacon's approach is similar to the one

adopted in Somerville, Massachusetts, a city of 80,000 that undertook an urban revitalization initiative over the last decade. There, planners directed growth toward the city's downtown core, around two public transit stations, which are "naturally places where you want to focus your development," according to Michael Rodriguez, an urban planner with the Smart Growth America organization.

Rodriguez noted the benefits of other recommendations in Beacon's comp plan, such as creating what is known as "transit-oriented development" (TOD) near public transportation.

"You're sitting on this gift, a multi-billion-dollar infrastructure asset, that gives you a nice commute if you want it, or a recreational trip to the city," he said. "Yet very few people can use that infrastructure without getting into a car."

In 2007, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) announced plans to create

a TOD at the Beacon Metro-North station. A citizen group, Beacon Deserves Better, opposed the plan over a number of issues, including potential environmental impacts and the effect it would have had on the city's Main Street, which had yet to fully rebound from the neglect and crime of the 1990s.

In addition, the MTA plan, which the agency put on hold in 2010, called for a major expansion of the Metro-North parking lot and, in a second phase, construction of a 1,000-car parking garage.

If approached differently, and with community input, Rodriguez suggested a TOD could create "hubs" of activity. "Now you become more of a job center," he said. (Beacon's comprehensive plan recommends development intended to guide people from the train to Main Street, but also reflects community feedback and proposes that land west of the train station remain open space that would be fed by improved connections between Riverfront Park, Long Dock Park and the proposed Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail.)

In economic terms, it's hard to argue that Beacon as a whole hasn't benefited from development. "When we add new assessed value through new construction, nobody else's taxes go up, but we receive added revenue," said Chris White, the city administrator.

Beacon in 2021 hired Ambulnz, a private company, for \$150,000 to provide 24/7 advanced life support emergency services, while also sending \$50,000 to the nonprofit Beacon Volunteer Ambulance Corps, which has served the city for 65 years and provides basic life support service.

"All that was added as a new service with no impact on current taxpayers," White said, adding that Beacon now has the ability to fund (and borrow for) projects such as its \$14.7 million centralized fire station, and to make "generational" investments in its water and wastewater systems.

He pointed, also, to the addition of a mental health worker in the Police Department, a full-time human resources director and the city's Climate Smart coordinator.

"We have the latitude to do that without creating an undue tax burden because we've had a trend of growth over the last 10 years," White said. ■

## Was Enough Done to Keep It Affordable?

**W**hile Beacon's comprehensive plan shows — in zoning districts colored brown, red and orange — that residential development has followed guidelines approved by the City Council, it's harder to say whether the city has made the right moves regarding affordability.

In 2017, the council upped its "inclusionary zoning" policy by requiring that new developments of 10 units or more set aside 10 percent as part of the city's workforce affordable program. By last year, of the more than 2,200 apartments in Beacon, 851 were "affordable" [see box on Page 10] — most of them either subsidized through federal programs (commonly called Section 8), a state-funded program or part of the

workforce program. The latter gives priority to applicants who are volunteer emergency responders, followed by municipal and school district employees.

The number accounts for more than 19 percent of the affordable housing stock in Dutchess County, although the city makes up only 5 percent of the county's population. (At 60 percent combined, only the City and Town of Poughkeepsie have a greater share of the county's affordable housing.)

At the same time, a Dutchess housing assessment released last year described a "series of long-simmering trends" that have created a significant shortage for the most vulnerable residents. Countywide, there are 2,155 more households that rent and earn

less than \$50,000 per year than there are affordable units available to them.

The Beacon council last year amended its zoning code to simplify the process for creating "accessory dwelling unit" (ADU) apartments, a strategy promoted by the federal government. Over the last two months, the council has discussed additional measures but has failed to reach consensus on how to move forward.

John Clarke, a city planning consultant, suggested revising a little-used overlay district that would remove zoning restrictions for developers who build housing for seniors. He also recommended that the city facilitate developments on public land that have higher percentages of affordable apartments

— similar to when the council in 2016 sold land next to City Hall to a developer to create the West End Lofts apartment complex.

Clarke suggested a partnership with Dutchess County on an infill project at the DMV building at 223 Main St., a proposal that's recommended in Beacon's comprehensive plan. The Beacon Farmers Market, which uses the parking lot on Sundays, could be integrated into the design, along with a three-story, mixed-use building and a transit-linked public park on Main Street, with an expanded rear parking lot, he said.

The Metro-North northern parking lot was also identified in the 2017 comp plan as an excellent spot for housing, Clarke

*(Continued on Page 10)*



**Affordable** (from Page 9)

noted. The site is within easy walking distance of the station and a structure would have low “view impacts.”

There’s also the 39-acre former Beacon Correctional Facility site (“Camp Beacon”), which is owned by New York State, and is more isolated than the DMV or Metro-North lots. In 2019, state officials selected a New York City company to create a “bike farm” with a hotel and track-and-field venue at the site, but there’s been no movement there since.

In a council workshop last month, Clarke said he does not recommend a further increase in the “set aside” of affordable units required of developers. With no offsetting benefits such as tax abatements or assessment reductions, “you’re essentially asking a private developer to subsidize affordable housing on their own dime, without any advantages for them, other than they can get their project approved,” he said.

Upriver, Kingston residents and officials are engaged in a citywide rezoning effort that is set to increase the availability of affordable housing, Mayor Steve Noble said. The city is holding a “Say Yes to ADUs!” design competition and is using \$1 million of its federal American Rescue Plan Act funding to incentivize the construction of affordable housing.

It is also creating a “tiny homes community” to provide emergency housing and services to people who risk becoming homeless. Any rent would be in line with

affordability guidelines established by Ulster County.

Kingston may extend its 10 percent set-aside to apply to new developments of seven units or more while requiring 15 percent or 20 percent for larger developments, Noble said. It also may offer bonuses, such as allowing construction of taller buildings, in exchange for affordable housing.

The hope with the rezoning project, which also includes environmental, mental health and downtown business initiatives, is that “you end up building a city that is reflective of the core values of your community,” he said.

In Beacon, Paloma Wake, an at-large member of the City Council, said she would like to see Beacon work on “integrated” affordability. “There’s value in having integrated housing, and I want to make sure whatever solutions we push forward have that vision,” she said. “If we just build a building with 100 units, that isn’t a win. That’s segregated.”

Although Beacon’s affordable numbers are relatively high, Wake and Wren Longno, who represents Ward 3 on the council, have argued that the city must address the shortage of housing for households earning \$50,000 annually or less.

“We want to do better than the minimum,” Longno said. If a project is providing housing for lower-income residents, “many of us would be quite happy to see more density. If it’s not that, we’d rather just see the meadow stay the meadow.” ■

**What is ‘Affordable’?**

When elected officials, planners and developers talk about “affordable” housing, it is usually a reference to how much household income a renter or homeowner must commit. The assumption is that housing costs, including property taxes, should not consume more than 30 percent of household income.

“Affordable” is sometimes based on the median household income of an area. For example, the fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in 2022 was \$1,412 in Dutchess County and \$2,340 in Putnam, according to figures compiled by the National Low Income Housing Coalition. The affordable rent for a household earning 50 percent of the area median income in Dutchess (\$115,700) would be \$1,446 per month, according to the coalition. In Putnam, where the AMI is \$94,500, the affordable rent for a household earning 50 percent of the AMI would be \$1,181 per month.

**Is There Room for Lower Incomes?**

Lastar Gorton says she feels invisible. Born and raised in Beacon, the 38-year-old Tompkins Terrace resident says that as the city has grown, the people she grew up with have been left behind — either priced out and forced to move elsewhere or left to live in unsafe conditions because it’s all they can afford.

Indeed, much has changed in the city. No longer are there boarded-up storefronts dotting the mile-long Main Street. Nearly 800 condominiums, townhouses and apartments have been built in the last decade, with more than 300 more under construction now.

The city’s population has changed over the past two decades, according to U.S. Census data. The overall population has fallen by 14 percent, to 13,769, including a 36 percent drop in Black residents. Beacon today is 62 percent white, 19 percent Hispanic and 13 percent Black; in 2000, it was 68 percent white, 20 percent Black and 17 percent Hispanic.

There also have been huge economic changes. The city’s median household

(Continued on Page 11)

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Lastar Gorton

Photo by Valerie Shively

(Continued from Page 10)

income has risen to \$93,000 annually, with about 30 percent of households earning less than \$50,000. Twenty years ago, in 2000, the median income, adjusted for inflation, was \$80,000 but about 75 percent of households earned less than \$50,000.

“Beacon used to be a very, very diverse place to live,” Gorton says. While growing up, she had “every type of friend” at Sargent Elementary School. “Everyone was family. Everyone looked out for everyone,” she says. “But I no longer feel that. Walking down Main Street, I feel like a stranger.”

“Everyone was family. Everyone looked out for everyone. But I no longer feel that. Walking down Main Street, I feel like a stranger.”

~ Lastar Gorton

Gorton lived in Tompkins Terrace, a low-income apartment complex on the city’s west side, until she was 5. Her family then moved to Forrestal Heights, another low-income development managed by the Beacon Housing Authority.

She and her two sons moved back to Tompkins in 2020 but, by then, Gorton says the development — which is slated for a \$14.5 million renovation beginning this year — had changed.

“I call the police at least every other week,” she says. “I don’t let my younger son go outside without me.”

The City of Beacon in recent years has made efforts to increase its affordable housing stock. New developments of 10 units or more must set aside 10 percent of those units for Beacon’s “workforce” affordability program, which, for renters, is available for households making between 70 percent and 80 percent of Dutchess County’s area median income (AMI), or \$80,990 to \$92,560 for a household of four. It gives priority to appli-

cants who are volunteer emergency responders, municipal employees or school district employees.

In 2016, the City Council sold a 3.14-acre parcel to a developer at less than market value on the condition that he build affordable units there. The complex, the West End Lofts, includes 72 affordable apartments, 50 of them live/work spaces for artists.

But Gorton, and many others who have spoken up in public meetings in recent years, feel that isn’t enough. The city’s workforce program and the West End Lofts both have conditions that Gorton, who works for a nonprofit agency, doesn’t meet.

The workforce program, she says, isn’t affordable for truly low-income people. Tompkins Terrace, meanwhile, restricts 38 of its 193 apartments to households earning 50 percent or less of the AMI, which, in Beacon, is equal to a four-person household earning up to \$56,200. The remaining 155 apartments may be rented to households earning 60 percent or less of the AMI, or \$67,440 for a household of four.

“It’s affordable to live here, but it’s not safe,” Gorton says. Referring to the West End Lofts, she says, “not everybody is an artist.”

She wants to see the city hold developers accountable to create more affordable housing for a wider range of residents — so much so that she’s considering a run later this year for City Council.

Gorton recalls diverse community gatherings such as the Fourth of July fireworks celebration at Memorial Park, or the free afternoon and summer programs at the Martin Luther King Cultural Center or the Beacon Community Center.

“People with morals, respect and dignity is who I want in this community,” she says. “I love that Beacon is thriving, but I wish the city would give back to the community. That’s the way it has always been in Beacon.” ■

NEXT WEEK:

The arts helped fuel Beacon’s resurgence. What happens when high rents push artists and galleries elsewhere?

Recent History



- 2001

In her annual state of the city address, Mayor Clara Lou Gould said that, after a decade of stagnation, the city was returning to life. She cited renovations at the Dia Center for the Arts, waterfront development and the hiring of a third building inspector.
- 2003

Dia:Beacon opens a contemporary art museum in what had been a Nabisco factory on the banks of the Hudson River.
- 2007

The City Council adopts a comprehensive land-use plan, Beacon’s first since 1973... The Metropolitan Transportation Authority announces plans to develop 18 acres at the Metro-North station, but a grassroots group, Beacon Deserves Better, forms to oppose the plan.
- 2009

After scrapping plans for a hotel and conference center, Scenic Hudson opens Long Dock Park, a 19-acre site designed for passive recreation and climate resilience.
- 2010

The MTA puts its plans to develop at the train station on hold.
- 2012

The Roundhouse opens in restored factory buildings adjacent to the waterfall at the east end of Main Street.
- 2013

After requesting proposals, the city sells its parcels at 344 Main St. to a developer for \$5,000. Three years later, the construction of a four-story, mixed-use building (at right) on the site sparks calls to rein in development.
- 2017

The City Council updates the 2007 comprehensive plan and enacts a six-month building moratorium because of concerns about the water supply. (The council approved a second moratorium in 2019.)
- 2018

After more than a dozen public hearings over 18 months, the 246-unit Edgewater, the largest residential development in the city’s history, is approved. The project was downsized by the developer after the City Council adopted a law reducing the number of units that can be built on sites with steep slopes.
- 2019

The Beacon Theater opens, bringing first-run movies to Main Street for the first time since the 1980s.
- 2020

The City Council adopts a law requiring developers to provide a “public benefit” to build four-story buildings on Main Street.



The four-story building at 344 Main St., shown here in 2021, prompted changes in Beacon's zoning code.

File photo by J. Simms



A rendering of the Craig House rehab

- 2022

The Planning Board approves the first phase of redevelopment plans for the 64-acre Tioronda Estate site on Route 9D. Mirbeau, which bought the property for \$10 million, plans to convert the former Craig House into a luxury hotel and spa.





# The Real Estate Market is Booming!

Contact these top local agents to see the latest listings, or to sell your home



**Abbie Carey**  
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AROUND TOWN



◀ **FULL HOUSE** — A group of women, including Jade Mason, at left, performed *The Vagina Monologues*, at the Howland Cultural Center in Beacon on May 19 as an encore to a sold-out March show. Directed by Marjorie Lewit, the performance also included Lisa Andretta, Erica Hauser, Annie Lanzillotto, Shane Killoran, Najah Muhammed, Carole Penner, Pam Prtizker-Ridley, KerryAnne Wolfe and Gracelyn Woods.



◀ **WATCHED POTS** — The Cold Spring/ South Highland United Methodist Church hosted a Mother's Day tea service on May 20.



▲ **DOG RUN** — The Animal Rescue Foundation hosted its annual 5K run and walk in Beacon on May 21, attracting 166 humans and 64 dogs.



▲ **NATURE AT PLAY** — Jackie Grant led sessions of Tinkergarten on May 19 and 20 at the Desmond-Fish Public Library in Garrison for children ages 2 to 6. The sensory program “combines early learning science with timeless wisdom about nature and childhood,” says Grant, who will lead sessions today (May 26) at 3:30 p.m. and Saturday at 10:30 a.m.





Jolie Ngo



Katherine Choy



Stephanie Shih



Jade Snow Wong

## The Calendar

# Ceramics Like You've Never Seen

## Manitoga exhibit features four innovative artists

By Alison Rooney

For the past decade, the stewards of Manitoga, the Garrison home, studio and landscape designed by the late industrial designer Russel Wright with his wife, Mary, have hosted an artistic residency in fields as varied as music, dance and sound. The artists spend time on the historic property to create works inspired

by its aesthetic and atmosphere.

The 2023 program showcases the work of four ceramicists, all women of Asian heritage, in an installation called *The Art + Design of Ceramics: Layered Voices*. Two worked in the mid-20th century and two are contemporary.

The creations of Jade Snow Wong (1922-2006) and Katherine Choy (1927-1958) will be on display from Saturday (June 3) through Aug. 21 in the house, known as Dragon Rock, and studio. The two women combined their artistry with an entrepreneurial drive

directed at getting their work seen and sold.

"They succeeded in a time they were not encouraged to" writes James Zemaitis in his exhibit notes; he curated the installation with Allison Cross, Manitoga's executive director.

The work of Jolie Ngo and Stephanie Shih will be shown from Aug. 26 to Nov. 13. Cross notes that their pieces "resist traditional definition. They explore the interplay of handcraft, technology and machine production."

Ngo, who studied at Alfred University, uses 3D printers and incorporates digital

imaging. Shih, like Russel Wright, did not formally study art. Her pieces, many of which are playful, relate to manufactured food and are being shown in the kitchen and dining room. The rooms were restored over the past two years, including the installation of a functioning 1960s fridge.

Manitoga had four times the number of visitors last summer than in the previous year, Cross said, many inspired to visit by landscape photos they saw on Instagram. The opening of the design gallery and a collaboration with Magazzino Italian Art in Philipstown also shifted the focus to objects. (Manitoga will collaborate in 2024, both inside and out, with the Noguchi Museum of Queens.)

Cross hopes to build on the increase in visitors, diversifying beyond the more typical, older guest who is making stops at historic Hudson Valley homes. To that end, it will add special-interest tours and social gatherings as it figures out how to create "smaller, more in-depth, intimate experiences," she said.

*Manitoga/The Russel Wright Design Center is located at 584 Route 9D in Garrison. Access to the house, studio and gallery is by reservation only, and tours range from \$30 to \$100 per person. Children must be at least 10 years old to visit. See [visit-manitoga.org](https://visit-manitoga.org). The Woodlands Trails are open daily during daylight hours.*



"Fruit Bowl" (1962) by Jade Snow Wong



Artwork by Jolie Ngo



Assorted works by Stephanie Shih

Photos provided



Multi-spout pitcher (circa 1957), by Katherine Choy

## A Transformative Gift

Earlier this year, Manitoga trustee Gary Maurer and his wife, Laura Levy Maurer, donated \$1 million to the site's collections endowment fund. The gift also included more than 75 items designed by the Wrights in the 1930s, early in their careers. A required annual draw from the endowment will support a newly opened design gallery.

The gift "helps by allowing us to put the design collection forward: to care for it, to display it, into the future," said Allison Cross, Manitoga's executive director. "It's a signal that the institution takes this collection seriously."

The fiscal foundation has, Cross says, "opened up the gate a bit to be design-focused, and to take some risks, while also always being in concert with the story of a family who lived there at a particular time, and moving it forward."



# THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)

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

## COMMUNITY

SAT 27

### CCA Info Session

PHILIPSTOWN

1 p.m. Via Zoom  
tinyurl.com/HVCPMay27

Representatives from Hudson Valley Community Power will explain Community Choice Aggregation, through which Philipstown residents will be opted in to a program to purchase electricity.

SAT 27

### Community Plant Swap

COLD SPRING

2 – 3:30 p.m. Butterfield Library  
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040  
butterfieldlibrary.org

Bring seeds or vegetable plants to trade.

WED 31

### Raising of Pride Flag

BEACON

6:30 p.m. City Hall | 1 Municipal Plaza  
facebook.com/BeaconLGBTQ

The Progressive Pride flag will celebrate LGBTQ+ residents.

SAT 3

### Food Crawl

BEACON

3 – 7 p.m. Various  
bit.ly/eat-drink-beacon

Sample food and drinks from

more than 20 restaurants and shops on Main Street. *Cost: \$45*

SUN 4

### Reptile Expo

POUGHKEEPSIE

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. MJN Center  
14 Civic Center Plaza  
midhudsonciviccenter.org

There will be thousands of reptiles and amphibians on view.

SUN 4

### Butterfly Release and Memorial Service

BEACON

2 p.m. Elks Lodge | 900 Wolcott Ave.  
845-831-0179

The Libby Funeral Home organizes this annual event; call to honor a loved one.

SUN 4

### Library Cocktail Party

GARRISON

5:30 p.m. Highlands Country Club  
955 Route 9D | 845-424-3020  
desmondfishlibrary.org

Michael Schulman will discuss his book, *Oscar Wars: A History of Hollywood in Blood, Sweat and Tears*, at this annual fundraiser for the Desmond-Fish Public Library. *Cost: \$175+*

## KIDS & FAMILY

SUN 28

### An Invitation for Next Time

NEW WINDSOR

Noon – 3 p.m. Storm King Art Center  
1 Museum Road | 845-534-3115  
stormking.org

Children are invited to make a craft to take home and invite someone to join them on their next visit.

MON 29

### The First Movement

BEACON

3 p.m. Riverfront Park  
2 Red Flynn Drive | howlandmusic.org

In this Classics for Kids program sponsored by the Howland Chamber Music Circle, Chelsea Acree, Aaron Loux and Laurel Lynch will teach simple choreography and improvisational dancing with music by the Beacon String Quartet. The rain date is SAT 3. *Free*

TUES 30

### Animal Adventure

GARRISON

6 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library  
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020  
desmondfishlibrary.org

Learn about animals by experiencing their abilities and lives. Registration required.

WED 31

### Storytime: Ollie

GARRISON

3:45 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library  
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020  
desmondfishlibrary.org

Author Nicole Vitale and illustrator Sarah Monck will share their book about a magical fish bowl. Registration required.



## MEMORIAL DAY

MON 29

### Parade and Ceremony

COLD SPRING

9 a.m. Main Street

Veterans and others will march from lower Main to the Cold Spring Cemetery on Peekskill Road to remember those who lost their lives in service to the nation.

MON 29

### Ceremony

BEACON

11 a.m. Memorial Building  
413 Main St. | dutchessny.gov

Veterans and others will hold a ceremony to honor those who lost their lives in service to the nation.

WED 31

### Spring Clay Circuits

BEACON

4 p.m. Howland Public Library  
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134  
beaconlibrary.org

Students in grades 1 to 5 will learn how to use conductor dough, LED lights and a battery pack to make a light.

## VISUAL ARTS

SAT 27

### NBNY Art Seen: Art Walk

NEWBURGH

1 – 5 p.m. Various  
newburghart.org/nbny-artseen

The Newburgh Arts & Cultural Commission sponsors this walk on the last Saturday of each month through October. See the website for a map with participating galleries.

SAT 3

### Open Studios

PEEKSKILL

Noon – 5 p.m. Various  
peekskillartsalliance.org

See work by more than 100 artists at 30 studios, galleries and exhibition

spaces at this 24th annual event. Also SUN 4. See website for listings.

SAT 3

### Charles Ruppmann

COLD SPRING

2 – 5 p.m. Butterfield Library  
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040  
butterfieldlibrary.org

The *New York Daily News* photographer, who lives in Peekskill, will exhibit rarely seen work from the 1970s.

## STAGE & SCREEN

WED 31

### Henry V

GARRISON

7:30 p.m. Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival  
2015 Route 9 | 845-265-9575  
hvshakespeare.org

The HVSF season opens with the first of four previews of the epic tale of King Henry at war to seize the French crown. Emily Ota plays the lead. Opening night is SUN 4. Through July 1. *Cost: \$10 to \$60*

FRI 2

### Lit Lit

BEACON

7 p.m. Howland Cultural Center  
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988  
howlandculturalcenter.org

Ruth Danon will share her poems, followed by an open mic. Email [litlitseries@gmail.com](mailto:litlitseries@gmail.com) to sign up.

SAT 3

### Global Inspirations

POUGHKEEPSIE

2 & 6:30 p.m. Bardavon  
35 Market St.  
845-473-2072 | bardavon.org

Dancers from Ballet Arts Studio, based in Beacon, will celebrate the music of the world, including from Iceland, Benin, Peru, Japan, Norway and Niger. *Cost: \$15 (\$12 seniors, children)*

## TALKS & TOURS

WED 31

### Citizen Preparedness

COLD SPRING

5 p.m. Butterfield Library  
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040  
butterfieldlibrary.org

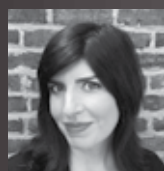
This training will cover how



Charles Ruppmann, June 3

## JOIN US June 4, 2023 5:30pm for the Desmond-Fish Public Library's Tales and Cocktails with Special Guest Michael Schulman

Author of *Oscar Wars* and staff writer for *The New Yorker*



### Introduced by Jane Spencer

Deputy Editor and Head of Strategy, Guardian US

The Highlands Country Club, Garrison  
Catering by Riverview

Tickets at [desmondfishlibrary.org/talesandcocktails](https://desmondfishlibrary.org/talesandcocktails) or scan code





to create a family emergency plan, stocking up and being ready for extreme weather events. Registration required.

#### THURS 1 Watercolor Workshop

**BEACON**  
5 p.m. Howland Public Library  
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134  
[beaconlibrary.org](http://beaconlibrary.org)

Judith Campanaro will instruct artists of all experience levels in this four-class series. Registration required.

#### FRI 2 Ancient Stories, Great Floods and the Future of Earth's Climate

**MILLBROOK**  
7 p.m. Via Zoom | [caryinstitute.org](http://caryinstitute.org)  
Ben Strauss of Climate Central will discuss what ancient texts and Indigenous people's stories reveal about extreme weather events, what to expect and what to do about it. Hosted by the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies.

#### SAT 3 Recollections of a Time Gone By

**BEACON**  
3:30 & 4:30 p.m. Boat leaves Beacon  
845-831-6346 | [bannermancastle.org](http://bannermancastle.org)  
Neil Caplan and Barbara and Wes Gottlock will sign their new history of Bannerman Island while visitors take self-guided tours. *Cost: \$75*

#### SUN 4 Gelli Plate Printing

**GARRISON**  
10:30 a.m. Garrison Art Center  
23 Garrison's Landing | 845-424-3960  
[garrisonartcenter.org](http://garrisonartcenter.org)  
Learn how to use a gelatin plate to press or print an image on paper. *Cost: \$75*

#### SUN 4 Artists Who Make Change Work

**GARRISON**  
2 p.m. Garrison Art Center  
23 Garrison's Landing | 845-424-3960  
[garrisonartcenter.org](http://garrisonartcenter.org)  
Naomi Vladeck, author of the forthcoming book, *Braving Creativity: Artists that Turn the Scary, Thrilling, Messy Path of Change into Courageous Transformation*, will lead an interactive presentation about the artistic journey. *Cost: \$30*



#### MUSIC

##### SAT 27 Judith Tulloch

**BEACON**  
7:30 p.m. Reserva  
173 Main St. | [reservabeacon.com](mailto:reservabeacon.com)  
Tulloch and her band play pop, rock and world music. *Free*

##### SAT 27 Black Magic

**BEACON**  
8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.  
845-855-1300 | [townecrier.com](http://townecrier.com)  
The Santana tribute band will recreate a live concert experience. *Cost: \$20 (\$25 door)*

##### SUN 28 Bob Dylan Birthday Bash

**BEACON**  
7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.  
845-855-1300 | [townecrier.com](http://townecrier.com)  
A tribute band, Old Bob, will play classics and newer songs from the singer and songwriter's expansive repertoire. *Cost: \$20 (\$25 door)*

##### FRI 2 The Prezence

**BEACON**  
8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.  
845-855-1300 | [townecrier.com](http://townecrier.com)  
The Led Zeppelin tribute band will play the hits. *Cost: \$30 (\$35 door)*

##### SAT 3 The Costellos

**BEACON**  
7 p.m. Elks Lodge  
900 Wolcott Ave. | 845-765-0667  
[facebook.com/TheCostellosMaverickPop](https://facebook.com/TheCostellosMaverickPop)  
The pop band will play with guests Chihoe Hahn and Scott Ramsey.

##### SAT 3 Out To Lunch

**PUTNAM VALLEY**  
7:30 p.m.  
Tompkins Corners Cultural Center  
729 Peekskill Hollow Road  
[tompkinscorners.org](http://tompkinscorners.org)  
Howie Bujese, Larry Cohen, Wayne Fugate, Susan Sassano, Michael Sassano and Joe Selly will perform bluegrass, jazz and Celtic music. *Cost: \$20*

##### SAT 3 Joe Louis Walker

**BEACON**  
8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.  
845-855-1300 | [townecrier.com](http://townecrier.com)  
The guitarist, singer and songwriter will play music from his latest release, *Blues Comin' On*, with his band. *Cost: \$30 (\$35 door)*

##### SUN 4 Anthony McGill and Gloria Chien

**BEACON**  
4 p.m. Howland Cultural Center  
477 Main St. | [howlandmusic.org](http://howlandmusic.org)  
McGill (clarinet) and Chien

(piano) will present a program that includes works by Telemann, Jessie Montgomery, Brahms, James Lee III and von Weber. *Cost: \$10 to \$35*



##### SUN 4 Charming Disaster

**BEACON**  
7 p.m. Dogwood  
47 E. Main St. | [dogwoodbeacon.com](http://dogwoodbeacon.com)  
The Goth-folk duo will play music from their new release, *Super Natural History*.

#### CIVIC

##### TUES 30 Village Board

**NELSONVILLE**  
Noon. Via Zoom  
845-265-2500 | [nelsonvilleny.gov](http://nelsonvilleny.gov)  
In this virtual meeting, the board will close out the fiscal year.

##### THURS 1 Town Board

**PHILIPSTOWN**  
7:30 p.m. Town Hall | 238 Main St.  
845-265-5200 | [philipstown.com](http://philipstown.com)

**BALLET ARTS STUDIO**

**GLOBAL INSPIRATIONS**

**Saturday, June 3, 2023**

**2pm and 6:30pm**

**Bardavon 1869 Opera House, Poughkeepsie, NY**

Tickets: \$15 for adults, \$12 for children under 12 and seniors  
Bardavon Box Office: [bardavon.org](http://bardavon.org) or 845-473-2072  
[BalletArtsStudio.com](http://BalletArtsStudio.com)    [info@BalletArtsStudio.com](mailto:info@BalletArtsStudio.com)

**ORGANIC HEIRLOOM VEGETABLE SEEDLING SALE**

We will be at the Cold Spring Farmer's Market this Saturday, May 27th.

**Tomatoes:** Black Krim, Brandywine, Cherokee Purple, Glacier, Green Zebra, Paul Robeson, Striped German and more.

**Cherry Tomatoes:** Black Cherry, Peacevine, Sungold (Hybrid) and more.

**Paste Tomatoes:** Amish Paste, Blue Beech, San Marzano and more.

**Also:** Sweet Peppers, Hot Peppers, Kale, Greens, Cucumbers, Swiss Chard, Basil, Summer and Winter Squash and more.

**[fourwindsfarmny.com](http://fourwindsfarmny.com)**



# Boscobel Has More Stories to Tell

## Historic site revamping tours, exhibits

By Alison Rooney

**B**oscobel House and Gardens, the historic site on Route 9D in Garrison with jaw-dropping views, is “seeking more flexibility in the stories we’re telling,” says its executive director, Jennifer Carlquist.

In the six decades since it opened, the 68-acre property, presided over by a Neoclassical mansion that was relocated to Garrison, has been celebrated for its Federal period decorative arts collection.

The home, built between 1804 and 1808 for the Dyckman family, is the centerpiece of the riverine setting, along with its gardens, orchards and woodland trail.

Anticipating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in 2026, Carlquist says the site is seeking a more comprehensive understanding of the people who lived in the home.

“It’s time to raise the flag but also to ask questions and listen to other perspectives,” she says. “With the history here at what was a Loyalist property [Elizabeth and States Dyckman supported the Crown during the American Revolution], we get to tell both sides. This is fitting, as the Hudson Valley as a whole was a very mixed-allegiance region.”

There are many other matters and mores to consider. “There’s this history of slavery in the Hudson Valley; we’re learning more about Boscobel’s connection to it,” she says. “There are layers of women’s history. Consider that when Boscobel opened, no one in the household could vote. The men were away, the boys weren’t old enough and the

slaves and women didn’t have the right to.

“Boscobel survived because of choices made. As woodlands became farmland, there were landscape decisions made in what was then an entirely chosen environment. We’re trying to be a little more transparent in the choices we made and make.”

The site has changed the way it trains guides, and how they lead tours. “There’s no more ‘We talk to you for 45 minutes, then we’re done,’” Carlquist says. “Guests are participants. We don’t give our guides a script, we give them a bibliography. They go through many months of training. Much of

it is about presenting more than just one perspective. They

learn to share facts in a transparent way and to be open to challenges.

“There’s no ‘one tour’ here,” she adds.

“In many ways, Boscobel can be a window or a mirror; we’re looking for diversity within our guides, and also making a point to ask questions of our guests, particularly as to what they want from their visit.”

**A royal oaks snuff box on display in the Carriage House at Boscobel**

Photo provided



Other upgrades include a wheelchair lift on the exterior of the home and a series of panels in the Carriage House Visitor Center that replaced a timeline of the property.

Called *Presents from the Past*, the rotating narratives were designed by Philipstown resident Randi Schlesinger and focus on storytelling through objects.

Boscobel’s current exhibit includes a royal oaks snuff box that symbolizes the Dyckman’s loyalty to the Crown and a silver tankard that symbolizes the family’s break with their family in England that led them to emigrate: A Dyckman great-grandfather wanted to continue prospering from the slave trade, while the family who stayed in the U.K. became prominent abolitionists.

Butter stamps convey the complicated relationship the Dyckmans had with their cook, Sil, a former slave. Their transatlantic letters reflect affection for her. States Dyckman requested that “Sil’s butter” be sent to him in England so he could give it out as gifts to people he was trying to impress.

Along with the creation of a native meadow on site, Boscobel has introduced a weekly “Hands on History” table at the Cold Spring Farmers’ Market each Saturday morning at which educators share objects and pertinent news. “It’s about meeting people where they are,” Carlquist says.

Boscobel, now in its second year without the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, a tenant on its lawn for more than 30 summers (the festival moved in 2022 to a new home at the former Garrison golf course), will continue traditions such as the annual Greater Newburgh Symphony Orchestra concert (this year on July 1) and the second annual Hudson Valley Chamber Music Festival, with accompanying exhibits of music-related objects and imagery in the Boscobel collection.

One popular program, now in its third year, is the Boscobel Artist Free Pass, which attracted more than 900 applicants for 150 spots. Those selected will be allowed access to the grounds and house to paint, draw, photograph, dance or take part in other disciplines — there’s even a sound artist. The program is sponsored by the Putnam Arts Council; typically a few dozen participants will show up on nice days, Carlquist said.

Barbara Chitkara is a Thursday regular. Spotted recently on a pathway to the herb garden/orangery, laden with easel, she was focused on the design of the entryway and concerned about the overly soft condition of her pastels in the summerlike heat of a perfect May day.

A Peekskill resident and member of a plein air painting group, Chitkara pronounced the artist-free days “an incredible opportunity. To have these gardens opened up is just unreal.”



An herb garden at Boscobel Photo by Julie McCue



Boscobel's polinator garden

Photo by Annika Sorenson

*Boscobel is located at 1601 Route 9D in Garrison. The grounds and gardens are open to the public from 9 a.m. to sunset from Friday to Monday. Guided house tours are offered Monday, Friday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission starts at \$12 for adults and \$7 for children, or free for members. See [boscobel.org](http://boscobel.org).*

## HELP WANTED

**FARM STORE ASSISTANT** — Glynwood seeks a farm store assistant to staff the Glynwood Farm Store on weekends from June 3 to Aug. 27. Responsibilities includes setting up and restocking inventory, assisting customers, making sales of Glynwood meat, produce and third-party products, and helping facilitate CSA pickup and customers in the pick-your-own field. For a full job description visit [glynwood.org/about/job-opportunities.html](http://glynwood.org/about/job-opportunities.html). To apply, send your resume and cover letter to [jobs@glynwood.org](mailto:jobs@glynwood.org).

**LIFEGUARDS/POOL MANAGER** — River Pool at Beacon seeking lifeguards and pool manager for upcoming season. Good pay, easy work. Riverpool is a small floating pool in the Hudson River in Beacon. Email [nrosa9@aol.com](mailto:nrosa9@aol.com).

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## Mouths to Feed

## Smart Food

By Celia Barbour



It's the season to celebrate educational milestones; to pop a cork for the learners among us. Which may be why I find myself obsessing over the things I never seem to learn, the life lessons that play on continuous loop, tripping me up again and again.

For example: Many years ago, I brought a rhubarb dessert to a memorial service for a man who, it turned out, had hated rhubarb all his life. I remained ignorant of his aversion through the prayers, hymns and potluck feast; through the lingering of the solemn guests and their eventual goodbyes. Finally, in the shadowy kitchen, his widow told me with a wistful laugh that her dead husband had loathed rhubarb so intensely that, every spring, he would go on a long, vituperative rant against the astringent stalks. I was mortified.

I was also, at that point, still in possession of nine-tenths of the dessert, which had barely been touched.

And yet, I am at this very moment planning to bring a rhubarb dessert to a large gathering of people. In this case, the get-together is a post-graduation party for our middle son, and the dessert is a ginger-snap-crusted cheesecake with caramelized rhubarb on top. Moreover, I know that at least one of the honorees — that son — doesn't loathe rhubarb.

But as for the dozens of other people who will be at the party, I must confess that I am engaging in rampant projection: I like rhubarb, so surely they will, too. Freud (he was very smart!) first labeled my syndrome, which, according to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, goes something like this: "In projection, what is internal is seen as external. People cannot get inside the minds of others; to understand someone else's mental life, one must project one's own experience."

Exactly what I'm doing with rhubarb! I feel much sharper now that I've inserted Freud into my story.

I also take comfort in the fact that, in the 30-odd years since that memorial service, America's collective palates have grown

## Caramelized Rhubarb Cheesecake with Gingersnap Crust

Note: Make this at least half a day before serving, to allow the cheesecake to chill. The recipe is based on the wonderful "Three Cities of Spain Classic Cheesecake" in *The Gourmet Cookbook*.

## Equipment

One 9- or 9½-inch springform pan

## For the crust

1½ cups (about 6 ounces) finely ground gingersnaps  
5 tablespoons butter, melted  
¼ cup sugar  
Pinch salt

Butter the bottom and sides of the pan. In a medium bowl, stir together all the ingredients. Press onto the bottom and at least one inch up the sides of the pan. Set aside until ready to fill.

## For the cheesecake

3 8-ounce packages cream cheese, at room temperature  
4 large eggs  
1 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar, divided  
½ teaspoon ground ginger  
2 teaspoons vanilla, divided  
16 ounces sour cream

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese with an electric mixer until soft and fluffy. With the mixer running at low speed, add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition, and scraping down the sides and bottom of the bowl frequently. Add 1 cup of sugar, 1 teaspoon vanilla and the ginger and mix well.

Set the crust in the springform pan on a baking sheet to catch drips (some of the



butter will likely melt and ooze out). Pour the cream cheese mixture into the crust. Bake until the cake is set at the edges but the very center is still a little wobbly, about 45 minutes. Remove from the oven, leaving the oven on.

Mix the sour cream with the remaining tablespoon of sugar and teaspoon of vanilla. Scrape the sour cream mixture onto the cake, and spread gently and evenly over the surface. Return to the oven and bake 15 minutes more.

Run a thin knife around the edges of the cake to loosen, then cool the cheesecake in the pan. Transfer to the refrigerator and chill for 6 hours or overnight.

## For the topping

8 ounces fresh or frozen strawberries, plus more for serving  
1 cup sugar  
¼ cup water  
2 pounds rhubarb stalks, cut into ¾- to 1-inch pieces  
1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger

Juice and zest of 1 lime

Whirr the strawberries in a blender to create a smooth puree. In a medium saucepan, heat the sugar and water over medium until the sugar dissolves. Raise the heat and cook without stirring until the sugar turns a deep gold; you can swirl the pan from time to time to ensure even caramelization.

Remove from heat and add the cut rhubarb (carefully, as the sugar may spatter). Don't stir, or the sugar will stick to the spoon! Cover the pan tightly and simmer over low heat until the rhubarb is just beginning to soften, about 7 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove the rhubarb and transfer to a strainer set over a bowl. Continue cooking the caramel and rhubarb juices, uncovered, over medium-low, adding to the pan any juices that collect in the bowl, until the mixture is thick and syrupy, about 5 minutes. Add the strawberry puree and rhubarb pieces and transfer to the refrigerator to chill.

Just before serving, top the cheesecake with the caramelized rhubarb puree.

both more adventuresome and more tolerant of unexpected flavors.

Besides, I am just so excited about this dish. The idea for it crept into my mind shortly after I acquired my first rhubarb stalks of 2023. As they rested quietly in the fridge, my brain got noisy wondering why there aren't more good things to make with rhubarb, and then trying to come up with one. When I remembered that rhubarb goes well with

ginger, I found myself quoting the brilliant mathematician Archimedes: *Eureka!*

Of course, every genius knows that failures and mistakes are the lifeblood of true brilliance. The fact that this notion has been wrongly attributed to such luminaries as Albert Einstein, Benjamin Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt makes it no less true. Failure may not look good on a report card or transcript, but it's the key to an engag-

ing, incandescent life.

In the end, some good even came of my bygone gaffe. Every spring, when rhubarb appears in backyard gardens and at farmers' markets, I think of that couple: the gruff, good-hearted husband and the sweet, forbearing wife. Sometimes, I even send her a card: Happy Rhubarb Season, dear Joan.

And Happy Commencement to us all — now and every day.

# Fit tourism to the town, Not the town to tourism.

Our tiny village of 2,000 people is at risk of being ruined by mass tourism, impossible traffic, and the destruction of wildlife habitat. During the DOT hearing on 7/27/22, Amy Kacala, Executive Director of the HHFT, projected 600,000 visitors in the first year and those numbers will only go up.

Speak up and tell its backers that we need solutions, not attractions. Cold Spring refuses to be "collateral damage." Please demand a significant scaling back of the Fjord Trail.



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## Q&A: Mike Pennacchio

By Jason Derasmo

**M**ike Pennacchio recently marked his 40th year as a custodian for the Beacon City School District. The 1982 Beacon High School graduate has spent most of his career at Rombout Middle School.



**Q: Back when you went to school here, in what ways was Beacon different?**

**A:** There were a lot more buildings back then and different stores. There was a clothing store, a shoe store, a jewelry store. We don't have those anymore.

**Q: How have the students changed?**

**A:** There are more now; there is also a larger population in Beacon and more buildings, as well.

**Q: How did the pandemic affect your job?**

**A:** We still had to maintain the building. We had a rotating schedule and only had to come in on certain days but it didn't affect us that much.

**Q: If you could travel to anywhere in the world, where would you go?**

**A:** Florida.

**Q: Why Florida?**

**A:** It's warmer there.

**Q: That's true. What is the best part of your job?**

**A:** It's great working with kids. I always try to do more work, like helping them on the bus. I just like to help people.

*Jason Derasmo is a senior at Beacon High School and a member of The Current's Student Journalists Program. The photo is by Una Hoppe, who is also a member of the Student Journalists Program.*

## Students Embrace Test-Optional

*Fewer taking SAT, ACT exams since pandemic*

By Lily Zuckerman

**L**ast year, as the deadline to submit college applications quickly approached, Maia Keller felt relieved that her top choice was test-optional.

Though the majority of colleges had transitioned to not requiring applicants to submit ACT or SAT test scores, the Cold Spring resident began studying for the ACT in the summer before her junior year at The Masters School in Dobbs Ferry.

After completing many practice tests and putting in hours of work, she decided to stop studying for the ACT in June of her junior year.

"I realized that the scores I was getting did not measure my academic success," said Keller, who did not submit test scores to George Washington University in Washington, D.C., where she just finished her freshman year.

"I knew that the amount of work and time I was putting into studying could be used toward something else in my application, like my grades," she said.

Even before the pandemic, test-optional and test-blind college admissions (meaning scores will not be used in an admissions decision) had started to expand widely. For example, George Washington University has been test-optional since 2015, according to the school.

But the number of colleges dropping



their mandate for ACT and SAT scores accelerated during the pandemic, when, beginning in March 2020, COVID-19 disrupted the ability of students to safely prepare for and take the tests.

About 1,870 colleges were test-optional or test-free for the 2023 application year, according to the National Center for Fair and Open Testing, or FairTest. The College Board, which administers the SAT, reported that 1.7 million high school students took the test in 2022, an increase of 200,000 over the year before but still 500,000 fewer than 2019, before the pandemic.

In New York state, 122,170 high school students took the SAT in 2022, compared to 162,179 in 2019, according to the College Board. The same trend holds for the ACT, which was administered to 1.35 million students in 2022 compared to nearly 1.8 million in 2019.

The spike in colleges that no longer mandate test scores means the demand for test tutors is also less than before

the pandemic, said David Ticker, a math teacher at Lakeland High School who has been tutoring students for the SAT and ACT for 14 years. The pandemic also harmed the finances of many families, he said.

"I'd say that there's a split between people at this point — the ones who think studying for the test is important and they want to and know they have to submit their scores," said Ticker. "Then there are people who are like, 'I'll focus on the test-optional piece of it.'"

Lorelei McCarthy, a Garrison resident who is a senior at The Masters School, is not an advocate for standardized tests. She believes the tests do not accurately measure what students know, but their ability to "memorize facts for a short period of time."

McCarthy took the ACT, and after receiving a score that was in the range for the schools to which she was going to apply, decided to not take it again. She submitted that score with each application.

For the SAT, she took a practice exam in February of her sophomore year, focused on her Advanced Placement (AP) classes during her junior year and did not study much for the SAT that she took in April of her junior year.

"I decided that I was proud of the score," she said. "Maybe I could have studied and gotten it up a point or two, but at the end of the day, I decided I would rather focus my time on my Common App essays."

*Lily Zuckerman, who lives in Garrison and is a junior at The Masters School in Dobbs Ferry, is a member of The Current's Student Journalists Program.*

## Braving Route 301

*Speeding cars imperil pedestrians*

By Eamon Wall

**O**n hot, unforgiving sunny days, I often walk to Homestyle Creamery in Nelsonville to listen to a podcast and buy my favorite ice cream, soft-serve swirl.

Getting there, however, isn't fun. I am faced with a deadly obstacle: Route 301.

To walk to Homestyle, I follow the south sidewalk on 301, from my house on Pearl Street. The sidewalk mysteriously ends at Peekskill Road, forcing me to the north side of the street as I make my way northeast to Homestyle.

Once I get close to Homestyle, I must deal with a big problem: crossing 301 (aka Main Street), a high-volume road with speeding cars descending a hill as they head toward Cold Spring.

Drivers on Fishkill Road make this even more difficult because, when they merge onto 301, they are mostly focused on the oncoming traffic rather than pedestrians. Because of this, I usually have to wait a minute or two for a break in the traffic and then run across the street. I have had one or two close calls when



Although the north side of Route 301 near Homestyle has a sidewalk (left), none exists on the opposite side where the businesses are located.

*File photo*

crossing the street, and I'm not the only one.

Many other people are faced with this challenge, especially people who live on 301. Scout Thakur deBeer, a seventh grader at Haldane Middle School who lives across from Billy's Way, crosses 301 every afternoon because her 9-year-old brother gets dropped off on the other side of the street by the bus.

She finds it "terrifying that someone's just going to round the corner at 60 miles per hour and mow us both over." She is not alone in this fear. Many school-age students live near Homestyle, some neighbors of deBeer and others on Billy's Way.

Unfortunately, in March, New York State turned down Nelsonville's request to reduce the 40 mph speed limit on state Route 301 at the eastern edge of the village to make it safer for pedestrians and bicy-

clists. The state said that its research showed that no crashes occurred in that stretch in a six-year period.

The state Department of Transportation should add a crosswalk connecting Homestyle to the community, but a crosswalk is not enough. There should be better enforcement of the speed limit, which drops from 40 to 30 mph, and better signage for pedestrians and drivers.

With temperatures warming and ice cream season approaching, it is time to think about improved safety. Cold Spring and Nelsonville were built to be walkable communities. We must fight for that.

*Eamon Wall, a seventh grader at Haldane, is a member of The Current's Student Journalists Program.*



**DEPOT DOCS:**  
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## Roots and Shoots

## Gardening in Weird Weather

By Pamela Doan

It's been an eventful growing season already and summer is still a month away. I'm hearing a lot of questions from gardeners about how to manage different weather conditions. "Is it dead?" has come up repeatedly, too. The impacts of last year's drought are still being felt as landscape plants and trees are not growing or leafing out.

When I talked with growers with decades of experience last fall about what to expect for native plants' survival during the drought, there was hope but also a collective sense of being in uncharted territory. The combination of record-breaking heat and lack of rain was more extreme than in past droughts. Our warming planet is creating stressors that we haven't seen before and the answer to questions about plant health has become, "That depends..."

It depends on the microclimate and whether the plant has other stressors from being planted in the wrong type of soil or sun. It can also depend on when the plant was put in the ground.

Newer plantings with less root structure might suffer more than mature plants. It depends on the plant and its tolerance for extreme conditions like high heat; or extended drought; or heavy rainfall; or a mild winter; or a few days of unusually cold temperatures; or a late, late frost; or cooler than usual evenings that will affect soil temperature for vegetables that we usually plant in mid-May. It's a confusing time to be a gardener.

It depends on how well the plant can handle an April heat wave like the one we had last month, and where it was in its growth cycle at that time. If it's trying to bloom, that takes a lot of energy. If the plant is still mostly dormant, it won't mind as much. When gardeners asked if they should be watering plants in April — not typically a time when established perennials would need it — I could only say, "Maybe."

My advice was to observe the plant. Is it wilting? Has growth stopped? Are leaves discolored or faded? Should it be blooming? Is the soil dry a couple of inches down? If the answers were yes, then it would benefit from a good soak.

Trees and woody plants could be showing signs of drought damage more than they did last year. While trees dropped leaves and went dormant earlier than usual, it wasn't easy to diagnose what was happening. Water is essential to plant life, as much as it is to human life. Trees experience metabolic, hormonal and physiological changes during drought that make them weaker and more susceptible to disease, pests and winter damage.

To help landscape trees and woody plants recover, follow some best practices that can also help them handle the weird weather we're experiencing:



The colors of fall foliage were affected by drought and heat last fall. Photo by P. Doan

■ Remove weeds and lawn from the base. Grass takes up water quickly and more efficiently than a tree and will compete with the tree. Create a circle of bare soil, then cover it with coarse mulch, meaning wood chips that are not a uniform shape. Fine mulches can actually prevent water from soaking in, so avoid those.

■ Make sure mulch doesn't touch the trunk. This can lead to rot, cultivate pathogens and make a cover for voles and other animals to damage the tree unobserved.

■ Landscape trees and plants need an inch of water per week during the growing season. If running a sprinkler or irrigation system, put a tuna can in the ground near plants that are being watered and stop when that can is full. Substitute at your convenience with any 1-inch-deep container.

■ I read a good tip for measuring water in a Washington state guide. It advises 10 gallons of water per inch of tree caliper. For example, a 2-inch trunk needs 20 gallons during a watering session when there isn't precipitation. Newly planted trees may need supplemental water for up to 2 seasons to recover from being transplanted and to establish a deep root system.

■ Generally, smaller, less-mature trees and woody plants will need supplemental water during a drought more frequently than an established tree. Check the soil to determine dryness, but a guideline could be to water smaller woody plants every two weeks, medium-sized every three weeks and large trees once a month, according to the Washington state guide. That makes sense, since larger trees will have the deepest roots and can access ground water sources that smaller shrubs cannot.

Hang in there, gardeners. We can do this.

## Start Reading Now

### June book club selections

#### Abe Lincoln/Civil War Book Club

THURS 1, 7 P.M.

*Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner's Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause*, by Ty Seidule

Lincoln Depot Museum,  
10 S. Water St., Peekskill  
Email [LincolnDepotFDN@gmail.com](mailto:LincolnDepotFDN@gmail.com).

#### Helen Savoit Book Club

TUES 13, 1:30 P.M.

*The Witches of New York*, by Ami McKay  
Howland Public Library, Beacon  
Register at [beaconlibrary.org/calendar](http://beaconlibrary.org/calendar).

#### Elementary Book Club (Grades 2-4)

TUES 13, 3:15 P.M.

*The BFG*, by Roald Dahl  
Butterfield Library, Cold Spring  
Register at [butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar](http://butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar).

#### Beacon Book Club

THURS 15, 7 P.M.

*Saturnalia*, by Stephanie Feldman  
Melzingah Tap House, Beacon  
Register at [meetup.com/Beacon-BookClub](http://meetup.com/Beacon-BookClub).

#### Cafe con Libros

SAT 17, 1 P.M.

*El Principito*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupery  
Howland Public Library, Beacon  
Register at [beaconlibrary.org/calendar](http://beaconlibrary.org/calendar).

#### History Book Club

THURS 22, 7 P.M.

*The Shattering: America in the 1960s*, by Kevin Boyle  
Split Rock Books, Cold Spring  
Register at [splitrockbks.com](http://splitrockbks.com).

#### Butterfield Book Club

MON 26, 7 P.M.

*The Price of Salt*, by Claire Morgan  
Butterfield Library, Cold Spring  
Register at [butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar](http://butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar).

#### Trophy Life Book Club

THURS 29, 1 P.M.

*The Rabbit Hutch*, by Tess Gunty  
Winner of 2022 National Book Award  
Howland Public Library, Beacon  
Register at [beaconlibrary.org/calendar](http://beaconlibrary.org/calendar).

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# Philipstown Food Pantry

## Needs your help to fill our cabinets

We currently are providing nutritious food for approximately 66 households in Philipstown.

**We need community support in Our Mission to Fight Hunger.**

***For the month of June we will be outside FoodTown from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm or drop off at the First Presybyterian Church, 10 Academy St. from 8:00 am – 1:00 pm.***

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

**Grains**

Cereal with less than 6 grams of sugar per serving  
Pancake Mix  
White or Brown Rice 1lb or 2lb bags  
Quinoa  
Whole grain pasta, crackers and cornmeal

**Protein**

Canned Tuna or Chicken in water  
Peanut butter/nut butter  
Unsalted nuts  
Canned Beans - Low sodium or no salt

**Everyday household items**

Dish Soap  
Paper towels  
Tissues  
Laundry Detergent

**Vegetables & Fruits**

Canned Vegetables - Low sodium or no salt  
Pasta Sauce - small or large bottles or cans  
Canned Fruit in juice or water  
100% Fruit or Vegetable Juice

**Calcium Rich Foods**

Sardines  
Canned Salmon  
Evaporated milk

**Everyday Toiletries**

Toothpaste/Mouthwash  
Body Wash/Bar Soap  
Shampoo  
Toilet paper

**Specialty Items: Gluten Free, Sugar Free, Organic & Vegan is also needed**

***Please note that we are UNABLE accept: expired products, severely dented cans, rusty cans, opened or partially used items, food without labels and Home-prepared foods***



***Thank you for your continued support of Our Mission***

For additional ways to donate please contact ***ptfp2481f@gmail.com***.





The Red Roof Inn on Route 9 is lodging 86 asylum-seekers from New York City.

Photo by L. Sparks

## Asylum-Seekers (from Page 1)

on Sunday (May 21), including 40 who were temporarily housed in Sullivan County, and 20 more who arrived on Monday. But it does ban any more migrants from being sent to Dutchess County and requires that New York City continue paying the expenses of those already housed at the Red Roof Inn.

Her ruling also allows officials to inspect the Red Roof Inn, as well as a Holiday Inn on Route 9 that has the same owner but is not housing migrants.

The order is effective through June 20 while Rosa considers Dutchess' request for a permanent injunction. At a news conference on Tuesday outside the Fishkill Town Hall, William F.X. O'Neil, the Republican county executive, castigated the city, New York State and the federal government; he earlier issued a statement calling the Democratic administration of President Joe Biden "incompetent and ineffective."

"The worst will be if these asylum-seeking migrants end up staying in Dutchess County, and the government that is now financing them pulls financing, and they have to find they have to fend for themselves," said O'Neil on Tuesday. He was joined at the news conference by Putnam County Executive Kevin Byrne, a Republican, and Fishkill Supervisor Ozzy Albra, a Democrat.

"We are not prepared for the housing needs that they have," O'Neil said.

More than 70,000 migrants have recently arrived in New York City, and 42,000 are being sheltered there, Mayor Eric Adams said Sunday on *Face the Nation*. During a news conference the next day with Gov. Kathy Hochul, Adams said that 5,800 migrants arrived in New York City last week and 4,200 the week before.

Along with Dutchess, two other counties, Orange and Rockland, have filed lawsuits to prevent New York City from sending asylum-seekers to local hotels for up to four months. Orange County won a restraining order against two hotels in the Town of Newburgh that are housing 186 migrants.

On the day Dutchess sued, O'Neil declared a state of emergency, citing an "imminent peril to the public health and safety." He also threatened to sue hotels, motels and short-

term lodging businesses whose property is used for "an emergency shelter, homeless shelter or long-term overnight dormitory."

Byrne declared his own state of emergency in Putnam on Monday and issued three executive orders, including one that directs hotels, motels and people with temporary residency permits "not to accept migrants and asylum-seekers from NYC, essentially transforming them into homeless shelters, absent a shared-services agreement with Putnam County."

Another declared Putnam to be a "rule-of-law" county and not a "sanctuary" county. He said a rule-of-law county is distinguished by the fact it does not house asylum seekers.

Although New York City has not requested lodging in Putnam, "it's clearly at our doorstep," Byrne said on Tuesday. "It's important to take that preemptive action to ensure that we protect our communities."

Like O'Neil, Byrne blamed Biden. "The president's refusal to take ownership of this crisis and take corrective actions to secure our nation's southern border and fix the asylum-seeking process leaves New York City and its surrounding communities in a mess," he said in a statement.

In their responses to Dutchess' lawsuit, New York City and Route 9 Hotel LLC criticized the claims of harm as "speculative." They also argued that an emergency order Hochul issued on May 9 in response to the influx of asylum-seekers preempted the county ban on migrants.

Part of Hochul's order is meant to "facilitate the occupancy by asylum refugees of temporary housing, specifically including hotels, across the state," said Route 9 Hotel LLC in its filing.

In addition, the company submitted guidance from the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, which says that although New York City should employ temporary housing outside its boundaries as a "last resort," the city does not need permission to do so.

According to New York City: "There is simply no concrete basis to suggest that the health or safety of any Dutchess County resident would be placed at risk by the City of New York providing services to the individuals that would be temporarily located" at hotels.

# Fallout from Displaced Veterans Hoax

*Rolison apologizes for believing phony story*

By Leonard Sparks

State Sen. Rob Rolison's nomination of the head of a veterans' organization as a "woman of distinction" is being rescinded as the fallout continues from her false claim that a Town of Newburgh hotel kicked out homeless veterans to make room for migrants bused from New York City.

In a letter to Rolison, a Republican whose district includes Beacon, state Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins said on Tuesday (May 23) that his nomination of Sharon Toney-Finch is being rescinded because "it is imperative that we maintain the integrity of this prestigious accolade."

Toney-Finch, a veteran and the CEO of the Yerik Israel Toney Foundation (YIT), was among dozens of nominees statewide for the Senate's Women of Distinction award when she claimed in a *New York Post* story on May 12 that the Crossroads Hotel in Newburgh evicted 15 veterans placed there by YIT.

The story broke as New York City ignited a furor with plans to move nearly 200 asylum-seekers to the Crossroads and a Ramada in the Town of Newburgh. She is also accused of recruiting more than a dozen homeless people from Dutchess County's shelter in Poughkeepsie to pose as the displaced veterans, promising them \$100 each.

Before the *Mid-Hudson News* and *Albany Times Union* debunked the story days later, Rolison joined a number of Hudson Valley elected officials who embraced the claim as fact, denouncing New York City and the hotels. Cousins, in her letter, said the story "led to death threats and harassment against hotel employees."

In a statement, Rolison said, "I sincerely apologize for repeating a statement our office, and others, believed to be true based on media reports."

"Our office, like other elected officials, responded to media reports describing homeless veterans evicted from a local hotel with a mixture of alarm and compassion," he said. "We wanted to help."

According to the *Times Union*, the state attorney general's office has launched an investigation of YIT.

Jonathan Jacobson, whose state Assembly district includes Beacon, on May 19 issued a statement that criticized Rolison and two other state lawmakers — Assembly Member Brian Maher of Orange County and state Sen. Bill Weber of Rockland County.

He said they "moved to fan the flames of xenophobia by recklessly amplifying Toney-Finch's falsehoods on Fox News and a range of other media outlets."



Rolison

"Adding to the demagoguery, Toney-Finch's actions compounded an already volatile situation and put both the asylum-seekers and the staff at the Crossroads Hotel at risk," said Jacobson.

Toney-Smith said on Thursday (May 25) that she would not comment on her claims, and that her attorney was preparing a cease-and-desist order to prevent further reporting on YIT.

Until the attorney general's investigation is complete, Mental Health America of Dutchess County, which offers veterans services and operates the county's homeless shelter in Poughkeepsie during the day, will suspend its collaboration with YIT, said Andrew O'Grady, its CEO.

After seeing the story in the *New York Post*, O'Grady said that he and MHA's staff began mobilizing to help the allegedly displaced veterans, who Toney-Finch claimed had been moved to the Wingate by Wyndham Hotel in Fishkill.

She failed to respond to multiple requests for the veterans' names and then said they had been moved from Fishkill to a hotel in Danbury, Connecticut, said O'Grady. "That was a successful lie, frankly, because what it did was it stopped us from asking any more questions because now they're not in Dutchess County," he said.

On May 17, three rented vehicles arrived at the homeless shelter and Toney-Finch recruited 15 men "under the guise of going to Connecticut to talk to a politician about homelessness" in exchange for \$100, said O'Grady.

The men were taken to a diner, plied with food and drinks and then told they were instead going to the Orange County Chamber of Commerce in New Windsor, which had asked to meet with Toney-Finch, he said. The men were asked to pretend to be veterans kicked out of the Crossroads Hotel, said O'Grady.

They returned to the shelter angry and upset because Toney-Finch did not pay them. O'Grady said a security guard at the shelter called him about the men's complaints.

"If they got paid \$100, they might have talked about it because it was a very weird situation for them to be in, but I don't think the security guard would have called me," he said.



# Two Schools, One Team

*Two Haldane softball players competed with Putnam Valley*

By Lily Zuckerman

For the second season in a row, Haldane lacked enough players to field a varsity softball team. So, for the second season in a row, Haldane players suited up for Putnam Valley.

Senior Mary Mikalsen and sophomore Callie Sniffen were key contributors for the 2023 team, which doubled its win total from last year and made a run at the Section I, Class B title.

Mikalsen, a shortstop who will play next season for Siena College, was named to the All-Section section team as a junior. Sniffen, who played on Haldane's junior varsity last year, said she was nervous about meeting her new teammates at the beginning of this season. But "we clicked right away," said Sniffen, who plays first base.

Putnam Valley lost on Sunday (May 22) to Albertus Magnus, 7-2, in the quarterfinals to finish at 15-7. The team had seven wins in 2022 and two in 2021.

In the first round of the playoffs on May 19, Sniffen hit her 11th and 12th home runs of the season and Mikalsen was 3-for-4 with two RBIs in a 6-5 win over Pleasantville.

Haldane is not alone in finding it a chal-

lenge to field a softball team. Although the Blue Devils won six Section I, Class C titles in 10 years (most recently in 2019), participation has been falling across the state. Haldane also added a girls' lacrosse team last year that plays in the spring.

Rena Finsmith, who has coached the Putnam Valley team for 11 seasons, credits her relationship with Nick Lisikatos, Haldane's former softball coach, for the merger. She said her Putnam Valley players "opened their arms when Mary came to play with us last year. To see their progression as friends, not just teammates, has been something special."

Katelyn Flanagan, a Putnam Valley player, said the girls from both schools are "one big family. Even if we make mistakes, we never get mad at each other."

For Sniffen, playing on the merged team meant lugging three bags to Haldane, changing clothes after classes and traveling 30 minutes to Putnam Valley for practices and games (except one, which was played on May 13 at the Haldane field so Mikalsen could be honored for Senior Night). Finsmith and her teachers were accommodating when she needed to stay after school for tutoring and was late for practice, said Sniffen.

"The commute takes a lot of time off my day, but it's worth it," said Sniffen, who usually arrived home after 6 p.m. on practice days and later on game days.



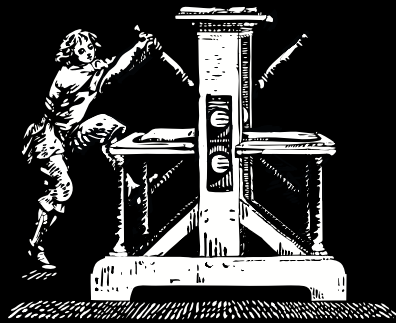
Haldane sophomore Callie Sniffen (left) and senior Mary Mikalsen played this season for Putnam Valley. Photo by Chip Rowe

Finsmith called Mikalsen a "generational-type player" who brought intensity to the team and "helped raise the bar" with her work ethic and hustle.

"I couldn't be any happier than to have those two kids," said Finsmith. "It's been a great experience for me and for them, as well as the other kids."

*Lily Zuckerman is a junior at The Masters School in Dobbs Ferry and a member of The Current's Student Journalists Program.*

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Puzzles

CROSSCURRENT

ACROSS

1. Beer ingredient

5. Adj. modifier

8. Taverns

12. *The Middle* actress Heaton

14. Denny's rival

15. Susan of *Dead Man Walking*

16. Donated

17. Business mag

18. Rose and fell on the sea

20. Chicago cagers

23. Seethe

24. God of war

25. Adirondack lake

28. Martini ingredient

29. *Star Wars* baddie

30. Pirate's chart

32. Arabian nomad

34. Minus

35. Melodies

36. Blitzzen's boss

37. Two-piece suit

40. Jazzy style

41. Greek vowels

42. Revolutionary War battle

47. Hamlet, e.g.

48. Stumble on

49. Winter coaster

50. Thanksgiving veggie

51. Section

DOWN

1. AWOL pursuers

2. Bond rating

3. USPS delivery

4. Nature walks

5. Outlet letters

6. God, in Roma

7. Eighth U.S. president

8. London landmark

9. Melville captain

10. Peregrinate

11. Raced

13. Hostels

19. Sharif of *Funny Girl*

20. Purse

21. *Topaz* author

22. Sultry Horne

23. Loses color

25. Clerics' robing room

26. "So be it"

27. Group of actors

29. Futile

31. Unpaid TV ad

33. Elevated

34. Portable PC

36. Daytime drama

37. Hotel furniture

38. Slanted type (Abbr.)

39. Welles role

40. Edge

43. Coach Parseghian

44. Eggs

45. Berlin's country (Abbr.)

46. Museum display

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Answers for May 19 Puzzles

A	L	E	C		R	A	M	A		D	S	L	
S	O	L	O		O	N	U	S		I	W	O	
A	R	L	O		B	T	U	S		V	A	N	
P	E	A	K		I	S	M		R	A	G	E	
				I	I	N		U	S	O			
C	H	E	E	R	S		U	T	O	P	I	A	
N	I	N	J	A				A	K	R	O	N	
N	E	G	A	T	E		S	C	I	O	N	S	
					R	E	P		E	K	E		
T	O	W	S		O	A	R		Y	E	T	I	
A	P	E			A	N	T	E		E	R	O	S
R	E	B			L	Y	O	N		A	G	E	E
O	N	S			E	M	M	A		R	O	S	E

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

1. NETS, 2. CUPCAKES, 3. HEINZ, 4. SUBSIDIARY, 5. CURTAIN, 6. ATTENDANT, 7. FIANCEES

For interactive sudoku and crossword answers, see [highlandscurrent.org/puzzles](http://highlandscurrent.org/puzzles).

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 in a chemical-free way (11)

2 artistic patchwork (7)

3 sure spot for a beach (5)

4 hybrid outer layer (7)

5 one sitting on the sidelines (11)

6 home of Ipanema Beach (6)

7 it's history (4)

SOLUTIONS

OR

BEN

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SHAC

GE

LLY

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PA

GAN

BR

KET

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SUDOCURRENT

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

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## SPORTS



Follow us at [twitter.com/hcurrentsports](https://twitter.com/hcurrentsports)



Coach Simon Dudar talks to pitcher Jake Hotaling.

Dan Nakabayashi looks toward first base after making a play at second against Tuckahoe. For more photos, see [highlandscurrent.org](http://highlandscurrent.org).

*Photos by S. Pearlman*

## VARSITY ROUNDUP

By Skip Pearlman

### BASEBALL

After pulling off a stunning comeback in the Section I, Class C semifinals to upset top-ranked Leffell, Haldane fell in two games to Tuckahoe this week in the championship series, ending its season at 9-13-1.

On Monday (May 25), the Blue Devils, who were the No. 4 seed, were behind 3-1 against No. 2 Tuckahoe at the end of three innings. But after scoring on a wild pitch in the fourth to make it 3-2, the Blue Devils rallied.

Ryan Eng-Wong led off with a single, and Roy Smith reached on an error. Eng-Wong scored the tying run on another Tuckahoe error before Trajan McCarthy beat out an infield single to score Smith.

Haldane's 4-3 lead didn't last long, however, as Tuckahoe responded with four runs in the bottom of the frame against a number of Haldane relievers. John Kisslinger took the loss in relief of starter Jake Hotaling.

"We struck out 11 times; you won't win a lot of games that way," said Coach Simon Dudar. "We didn't put the ball in play enough, and they also had six errors, so we should've been up more to begin with."

"We had beaten Tuckahoe 10-5 during the season, so maybe the guys anticipated an easier game," he said. "Now we have a tough road ahead, but our whole season has been one obstacle in front of another."

On Thursday, Tuckahoe won, 14-4, ending the three-game series and advancing



Jake Hotaling, shown here at bat against Tuckahoe, crushed a two-out, seventh-inning, three-run homer against Leffell on May 20 to put Haldane into the title series.

ing to play the Section IX champ next week.

On May 19, in the deciding game of the series against Leffell, Haldane trailed 3-0 at the end of six innings before the Blue Devil offense came alive to plate four runs for a 4-3 win. Hotaling, the series MVP, capped the rally with a two-out, three-run home run. Julian Ambrose picked up the win on the mound.

After upsetting New Paltz on Monday, Beacon had a bad inning and fell, 17-2, to No. 1 Wallkill in Wednesday night's Section

IX, Class B semifinal. Walkill clinched it with 11 runs in the second.

Ronnie Anzovino and Jack Antalek each had an RBI for the Bulldogs, who finished 15-7. Ryan Landisi took the loss on the mound.

"It's tough to finish like that, but we had a great season," said Coach Robert Atwell. "We'll miss our seniors," Joey Vollaro, Julian Brown and Mateo Alvarado.

Earlier in the week, Beacon, the No. 5 seed, upset No. 4 New Paltz, 3-2, on a sixth-inning run scored by Mikey Fontaine on a

Derrick Heaton sacrifice fly. Fontaine had hit a double and advanced to third on a wild pitch. Heaton threw a complete game, striking out five.

### TRACK & FIELD

Henry Reinke and Javan Verdile had big days for Beacon at the regional championships in Goshen on May 20. Reinke set a school record in the 800 meters in 1:55.49 and came back a few hours later to win the 400 meters in 49:68.

Despite competing in a downpour, Verdile cleared 5-11 in the high jump and was the only competitor left at 6-1.

"We tell our kids that poor weather is either a challenge to overcome or an excuse," said Coach Jim Henry. "Both Henry and Javan overcame sub-optimal conditions to do something special."

Next up for Beacon is the Section IX, Class B championships at Goshen on Saturday (May 27). That same day, Haldane will compete in the Section I, Class C championships at Valhalla.

### BOYS' LACROSSE

Haldane, the No. 2 seed in the Section I, Class D tournament, defeated No. 10 Irvington, 15-8, on Tuesday (May 23) to advance to the semifinals. The Blue Devils (13-4) will host No. 6 Briarcliff (8-10) at 4:45 p.m. today (May 26), with the winner advancing to the title game on Wednesday at Yorktown High School.