GIRL OVERBOARD — A pair of adventurers fit snugly into their sled at Winter Hill in Garrison on Jan. 20 for the trip down, but only one reached the bottom. Photos by Ross Corsair

No Committees for Montgomery

Putnam sidelines Legislature’s sole Democrat

By Leonard Sparks

Nancy Montgomery is not only the lone Democratic member of the Putnam County Legislature, she is now also the only legislator without a committee appointment.

Although the Legislature’s eight Republicans appointed Montgomery, who represents Philipstown and part of Putnam Valley, to several boards during an organizational meeting on Jan. 2, Chair Paul Jonke of Southeast

Governor’s Budget Would Ding Beacon, Garrison

If approved, spending proposal lowers school aid, although Haldane OK

By Joey Asher

Beacon and Garrison are among more than 300 school districts that will receive less state aid in 2024-25 under Gov. Kathy Hochul’s proposed budget, although Haldane in Cold Spring would see an increase.

The decreases are the result of a proposal by Hochul to change the formula used to calculate what is known as Foundation Aid, a portion of state education funding that considers factors such as a district’s relative wealth and the number of students it serves.

Hochul would like to eliminate a Foundation Aid provision that guarantees districts will receive at least the same amount of aid as the year before, with an adjustment for inflation. In addition, she has proposed reducing that cost-of-living increase to 2.4 percent, from 4.1 percent.

If the governor’s changes are approved by the Legislature — which is far from certain — Beacon would lose about 3 percent of its state aid, or $900,000, according to Ann Marie Quartironi, the district’s deputy superintendent. The district received $30.8 million in state aid for 2023-24, which

County Tax Sales in Limbo

Proceeds most now go to previous owners

By Leonard Sparks

The decades-old ability of New York counties to keep money from the auction of tax-delinquent properties is in limbo after a U.S. Supreme Court decision last year in a Minnesota case found that the previous owners are entitled to the proceeds.

Dutchess, Putnam and other counties are awaiting the fate of legislation proposed by Gov. Kathy Hochul in response to the Supreme Court’s unanimous ruling in May. The court found that, although Hennepin County had the right to sell for $40,000 a house it took title to for $15,000 in unpaid taxes, keeping the extra $25,000 violated the “takings” clause in the Fifth Amendment.

Hochul has proposed requiring that any proceeds remaining after overdue taxes are paid be turned over to the former owner and any lienholders.

According to the New York State Association of Counties, the legislation would give

Cold Spring Scores Funding Points

Among state leaders in clean-energy progress

By Michael Turton

Cold Spring is more than holding its own in a statewide race to secure grants for clean-energy initiatives.

At the Wednesday (Jan. 24) workshop of the Village Board, Trustee Laura Bozzi reported that the village is currently ninth among 838 municipalities based on points it has earned as part of a state clean-energy program that determines priority for public funding. The Highlands is doing well in general in the fight to mitigate the greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change; Beacon is
Laura Cosma, a 2020 Haldane graduate, is the reigning United States of America Pageant’s Miss New York.

Was this your first pageant?
Yes, but I had this dream since I was a little girl to participate in one. I had gone to a dance studio to have some fun and practice my salsa moves and met a woman who had been runner-up for Miss New York USA. She introduced me to my pageant coach, Megan Swanson, who told me about the United States of America Pageant.

It has fewer restrictions on who can participate than some of the bigger pageants, which is great for a first-time contestant. It’s more inclusive. It has preliminary competitions in some states, but not in New York, so I had an interview with the pageant director.

Did you grow up in Cold Spring?
I am originally from Romania. I moved to Cold Spring with my family when I was 8 years old. I attended BOCES during high school [for vocational training] and became a licensed cosmetologist. After I graduated, I took a year off to figure out what I wanted to do with my life and who I was. I was doing hairdressing but decided to go to Westchester Community College for marketing.

What do you like about pageants?
They’re a great way to develop your public speaking, build confidence and make friends. You need to work on yourself to compete. The interview is the most nerve-wracking part because you have to instantly deliver well-equipped responses. Pageants highlight a lot of the great things about women, especially with Miss USOA because there’s no restrictions on how somebody looks.

As Miss New York, what are your responsibilities?
You are a role model, so it’s making sure your brand reflects your values. People are watching you, especially young people. The sash and gown make you look so fancy, and people are going to pay attention. It’s important that you reflect values that you want to be shared with the world. I am a Christian, so those include helping your neighbor, being a good Samaritan, making sure that you are kind and understanding. Growing up, I felt pressured to be tomboyish because I thought I would be more accepted or respected or my opinion would matter more if I was less girly. Breaking away from that and finding myself and my girliness and my power was important. That’s the kind of a message that I would like to share to other people who may feel the same way.

Which charity are you working with?
The Hoving Home, a Christian organization centered around rebuilding the lives of women who are recovering from addiction, or have suffered from human trafficking and homelessness. [The Hoving Home has a campus in Garrison.] It’s about 12 months for program completion, followed by six months of living a successful life outside of the program. What’s great is that the majority of the staff are women who have completed the program. Given that it’s a small charity, it often has issues with funding. I also volunteer; and I will be speaking at chapel in March. I’m going to talk about rebuilding your confidence, which is something I had to do growing up because I was a little bit of an outcast. There are some skills that nobody really teaches you.
Bronx: Officer from Putnam Charged in Death

A New York City police officer from Mahopac was charged Tuesday (Jan. 23) with causing the death of a Bronx man by throwing a cooler as he fled an arrest on a motorized scooter.

Sgt. Erik Duran, 37, faces charges of second-degree manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide and first- and second-degree assault, all felonies, according to the state Attorney General’s Office, which investigates deaths involving police officers.

Duran was working undercover on Aug. 23 when officers attempted to arrest Eric Duprey. When Duprey fled, Duran allegedly grabbed a cooler from a table and threw it, striking Duprey in the head. Duprey sidestepped a tree and hit his head on a curb; he was pronounced dead at the scene.

Annandale: Bard to Honor Banned Authors

The Eleanor Roosevelt Center and the Fisher Center at Bard College will present the first Eleanor Roosevelt Awards for Bravery in Literature at the college on Feb. 17. The awards were created in response to a rise in book banning, according to the centers. The honorees will be Judy Blume for lifetime achievement; Maia Kobabe for Gender Queer; Alex Gino for Melissa; George Johnson for All Boys Aren’t Blue; Laurie Halse Anderson for SHOUT; Mike Curato for Flamer; and Jehani Memory for A Kids Book About Racism.

The Mid-Hudson Library System, whose 66 members include the libraries in Beacon, Cold Spring and Garrison, is a partner in the event. It said in a statement that any title appearing on the American Library Association’s annual most-challenged books list is available to cardholders.

Kingston: Committee Drops Cease-Fire Resolution

The Laws and Rules Committee of the Common Council on Jan. 17 failed to advance a proposed resolution calling for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza.

Majority Leader Reynolds Scott-Childress questioned if the Common Council should express a view of the conflict. “The process of voting on this resolution will become increasingly adversarial,” he said, according to the Daily Freeman. “We have already seen bitter acts of calling out others and taking sides and reducing an incredibly complex issue — reducing it to simple solutions.”

Newburgh: City Council Backs Cease-Fire

The Newburgh City Council voted 5-0, with two abstentions, on Monday (Jan. 22) to support a resolution calling for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza, according to the Mid Hudson News.

The City Council heard from 40 speakers, including residents of Beacon, before its vote. The resolution calls on President Joe Biden, New York’s senators, Rep. Pat Ryan, State Sen. Rob Rolison and Assembly Member Jonathan Jacobson to back a cease-fire.

New York City: Last of Newburgh Four Released

The last member of the “Newburgh Four,” each sentenced to 25 years in federal prison for allegedly plotting to shoot down military planes at Stewart Air National Guard Base, among other crimes, has been released.

James Cromitie was convicted, along with Laguerre Payen, David Williams and Onta Williams (who are not related), of terrorism charges in 2010. The latter three were released in July; a judge admonished the FBI for “inventing the conspiracy” while reducing their sentences to time served plus 90 days.

After Cromitie petitioned for “compassionate release,” the judge reduced his sentence to time served plus 90 days, as she had for the other three defendants. She did not reverse his conviction.

Peekskill: Cyber Criminal Avoids Prison

A federal judge in Virginia on Jan. 10 sentenced a Peekskill man accused of enabling the sale of stolen databases to two years of house arrest with GPS monitoring.

Conor Fitzpatrick, 21, will remain on supervised release for 18 more years, until he turns 41, according to the Peekskill Herald. In addition, he will not be allowed to access the internet for a year.

Federal prosecutors asked for a sentence of at least 15 years. Fitzpatrick was arrested in Peekskill in March 2023 and pleaded guilty in July to federal charges of offering stolen databases for sale on a site he created called BreakForums.

Port Jervis: First Black Council Member Sworn In

This city in western Orange County on Jan. 1 swore in its first nonwhite council member, reported the Mid Hudson News. Jacqueline Dennison, 63, a lifelong resident who is Black, is a teaching assistant in the Middletown school district. A Democrat, she said she may have been the first nonwhite person to run for a seat.

She expressed hope that Port Jervis would someday elect its first female mayor; Elizabeth Miller was defeated in November.

Ryan Launches Valentines for Vets

Cards must be postmarked by Feb. 7

Rep. Pat Ryan, whose U.S. House district includes Beacon, has launched his second annual Valentines for Vets program.

Supporters should mail or bring Valentine’s Day cards to his office at 605 Broadway, Newburgh, NY 12550 to be distributed to veterans. They must be postmarked by Feb. 7. Packets with multiple cards should include a sheet of paper indicating how many are enclosed.

Former Garrison Resident Charged With Assault

Allegedly attempted to escape from custody

Julie E. Marcinak, 28, a former Garrison resident, has been charged with assaulting two Dutchess County jail guards during what the Sheriff’s Office says was an attempted escape on Dec. 7.

The sheriff said Marcinak attacked the guards at Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital, where she had been taken for treatment. She was charged with assault, attempted assault and attempted escape, all felonies.

Marcinak, who lives in Highland Falls, was arrested in Newburgh on Dec. 4 in connection with two armed robberies in the Town of Poughkeepsie.

Open Space Names CEO

State parks commissioner accepts job

The Open Space Institute has named Erik Kullesed, a Garrison native who is commissioner of New York State Parks, as its new president and CEO.

Kullesed earlier spent eight years at the land conservation nonprofit, which since 1974 has preserved more than 2.4 million acres in the eastern U.S. and Canada.

He succeeds Christopher “Kim” Elliman, who retired after serving as president and CEO since 2004. Kullesed was the deputy commissioner for open space protection at New York State Parks before being named commissioner in 2019.

Red Hook: Church Campus Sells for $14 Million

A 260-acre property that was once a seminary for the Unification Church founded by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon has been purchased by Bard College for $14 million, according to the Mid Hudson News.

Moon was a messianic leader from Korea who said that Jesus appeared to him when he was 16 to anoint him to complete his work. Moon founded the church in Seoul in 1954; the seminary opened in 1975 and closed in 2019, when it relocated to New York City.

Carmel: Kent Man Convicted After Overdose Death

A 47-year-old Kent resident was convicted by a jury on Jan. 17 of selling heroin and fentanyl after being tied to a fatal overdose in Southeast.

According to the Putnam County district attorney, investigators connected drugs sold by William E. Mancusi III to the death, which occurred in November 2021. Undercover officers then purchased a potent mix of heroin, fentanyl and xylazine from Mancusi.

Mancusi will be sentenced on March 5. He faces up to 24 years in prison. According to the DA, Mancusi was convicted in 2014 of driving while impaired by drugs and in 2008 of operating a motor vehicle while impaired by drugs following a collision in which he killed a bicyclist in Dutchess County.
Tell us what you think

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

Correction

In an article in the Jan. 19 issue, we reported that Keith Hersherberger had produced plays in Rochester, Michigan. In fact, it was Rochester, New York. In addition, the full name of the honor he won in 1983 for The Watched Pot was the Jane Chambers Memorial International Gay Playwrights Award.

Civic Volunteers

**Village of Cold Spring**

**Zoning Board of Appeals**
Erik Wirth (chair)
John F. Martin
Marianne Remy
Heath Salt
Vacancy

**Historic District Review Board**
Al Zgolinski (chair)
Sean Conway
Tod Seekircher
Kate Van Voorhees
Laura Wells Hall

**Planning Board**
Jessie St. Charles (chair)
Ben Cheah
Henry Feldman
Hilary Hart
Kevin McGorry

**Recreation Commission**
Jeff Arnott Jr. (chair)
James Curley-Egan
Matt DeGraff
Leslie Hoelger Leonard
Alexandra Laurino

**Tree Advisory Board**
Jennifer Zwarich (chair)
Tony Bardez
Taro Itaka
Kory Riesterer
Charles Day (tree nursery manager)

**Philipsburg**

**Planning Board**
Neal Zuckerman (chair)
Joseph Burden
Dennis Gagnon
Peter Lewis
Laurie O’Connell
Neal Tomann
Heidi Wendel

**Conservation Board**
Andy Galler (chair)
Tony Bardes
Lew Kingsley
Maj Martin
Madeleine Ray
Bob Repetto
Scott Silver
Max Garfinkle (natural resource officer/wetlands inspector)

**Zoning Board of Appeals**
Robert Dee (chair)
Vincent Cestone
Mary Kate Ephraim
Granite Friesenda
Janice Hogan

**Recreation Commission**
Joel Conybear (chair)
Ben Cheah
Lauren Gretna
Aric Kupper
John Maasik
Claudio Marzollo
William Mazzuca

**Board of Assessment Review**
Gordon Casement (chair)
Melissa Carlton
Robert Percacciolo
Katharine Tomann
Vacancy

**Beacon**

**Planning Board**
John Gunn (chair)
Kevin Byrne
Donna Francis
David Jensen
Karen Quilana
Len Warner
J. Randall Williams

**Zoning Board of Appeals**
Jordan Haug (chair)
Stowe Boyd
Elaine Ciaccio
Judith Smith
Montos Vakirtzis

**Board of Assessment Review**
John Stella (chair)
John Berry
Ron Donofrio
Robert Palisi
Michele Rios

**Greenway Trail Committee**
Thomas Wright (chair)
Andrew Bell
Matt Harle
Amy Kacala
Matt Kierstead
James Korn

**Traffic Safety Committee**
Matt Dubetsky (chair)
Carolyn Bennett Glauda
Michael Manzi (highway)
Jill Reynolds
Lt. Jason Walden (police)

**Recreation Committee**
Sarah Dryer-Shick
James Eve
Heidi Kittas
Justin Lynch
Hayley Richardson
Christina Ricottilli

**Conservation Advisory Committee**
Sergei Krasikov (police)
Justine Blienkowski
James Burton
Esther Jackson
Marisa Lomonaco
Eleanor Peck
May Sheriff
Phillip Stamatis
Thomas Wright

**Tree Committee**
Pete Bailey (chair)
Andrew Bell
Paul Markwalter
Vicki Raabin
Ethan Skuches

**Village of Nelsonville**

**Planning Board**
Dove Fedoskey (chair)
Doug Anderson
David Herman
Dennis Meekins
Ethan Tinn

**Zoning Board of Appeals**
William Rice (chair)
Harold Akseled
Steve Merando
Judy Meyer
Steven Rummel
Nelsonville Gets Sewer Options

Feasibility study outlines funding challenges

By Leonard Sparks

A consultant is recommending that Nelsonville pursue a $6.5 million sewer system in which grinder pumps installed at 171 properties would pipe waste to a pressurized main feeding into Cold Spring’s wastewater system.

LaBella Associates’ finalized sewer feasibility study for Nelsonville, released last month, concluded that a traditional gravity-fed system costing $7.5 million was not feasible because of the hilly terrain such a system would have to traverse to connect to Cold Spring.

The firm estimated that the pumps, which would grind up solid waste collected in an underground tank on each property and pipe it to a central main, would cost $7,000 each.

Their installation, and the removal of each property’s existing system, would be covered by the initial funding, but owners would be responsible for maintaining and replacing the pumps, which concerns Village Board members during a discussion of the study on Jan. 17.

A third option combining gravity-fed pipes with two pumping stations—one near Main Street and Billy’s Way, the other near Bank Street and Peekskill Road—would compensate for the hilly terrain but cost $9.1 million, making it the most expensive option.

Choosing to go with pumping stations would also require buying land from “agreeable” property owners, said Mayor Chris Winward. “That in itself is not impossible, but time-consuming potentially,” she said.

Each option would replace the privately owned cesspools, leach fields and septic tanks that village residents use for waste.

Because Nelsonville is located in a valley with poor stormwater drainage, those methods, if not maintained, can contaminate nearby surface and groundwater sources, according to LaBella.

Preventing that by connecting to Cold Spring’s system would send an estimated 80,000 additional gallons of wastewater each day to the village’s treatment plant, which has a capacity of 500,000 gallons and treats an average of 290,000 daily. Cold Spring already supplies the 171 Nelsonville properties with drinking water.

“This is a time bomb out here — all these cesspools,” said Thomas Campanile, a member of Nelsonville’s Village Board. “We’ve got to do something.”

LaBella’s 39-page report, available at bit.ly/nelsonville-sewer-study, also outlines the challenges Nelsonville faces in qualifying for grants to subsidize all or part of the costs.

The village’s relative wealth ($113,333 annual median household income) and the health of Foundry Brook affect how high it would score on applications for grant programs that prioritize communities that have lower incomes or have waterways that are threatened by wastewater contamination.

LaBella recommended that Nelsonville apply for funding through the state’s Water Infrastructure Improvement Act, which provides grants for drinking water and wastewater projects and awarded $378 million in December.

Winward said that the funding landscape outlined by LaBella, which also suggests the village consider short- and long-term loans, “was not as rosy as we were first told it might be.”

“I would guess, we wouldn’t be at a place of deciding what to do for a year and a half to two years,” she said. “Without knowing what the financing will look like, we couldn’t bring a final decision to the residents.”

PHILIPSTOWN AGING AT HOME

2024 Winter Programs

Phlipstown Aging at Home announces its new season of programs aimed at creating community among seniors. Whether it’s for shared interests like reading or crafting or whether it’s just getting together to talk over concerns, we can all benefit by getting out of our houses and being with friends — old and new.

PAAH is an all-volunteer organization driven by the shared benefit of neighbors helping neighbors. We invite you to join us. Email us at info@paah.net, tell us what you’re interested in and any questions you might have. Our programs are led both by practiced professionals and by fellow seniors with a passion to share. In all cases, the emphasis is on fun, connection and a sense of accomplishment.

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Beacon Debates Parking Standards

Also, city administrator criticized over reaction to Gaza protest

By Jeff Sims

The Beacon City Council heard from about a dozen residents during a public hearing on Monday (Jan. 22) on a proposal to eliminate minimum parking requirements for new developments.

Their feedback was split. The proposed law would not apply to single- or two-family homes or accessory dwelling units (ADUs), which make up about 80 percent of the city. But on Main Street and in other commercial areas, it would end the requirement that new developments or substantially rebuilt sites provide a minimum number of parking spaces.

Instead, the Planning Board would have flexibility to determine the number of spaces required based on conditions such as comparable uses, location, walkable access to public transit and the size of the parcel. Single- and two-family houses would still need to provide at least one space per dwelling unit, down from two in the current code.

The requirement for ADUs of one space per unit would not change.

The hearing was adjourned until Feb. 20, but council members said they plan to discuss the legislation during a workshop before then.

The move is being considered as the city tries to encourage walkability and reduce the environmental impacts of vehicles. More than 200 municipalities nationwide, including Hudson and Kingston in the Hudson Valley, have dropped minimum parking requirements. Some housing advocates believe that rents will decrease if the expense of acquiring or constructing spaces is removed.

Elaine Ciaccio, a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, told the Beacon council that she believed the change would push more parked cars into adjoining residential neighborhoods. She also said that decisions about parking supply should not be left to developers and the Planning Board without guidelines in place.

“Why are we giving benefits to developers without some return?” she asked, noting that “maybe you can get by without a car, but it’s really difficult.”

Kevin Byrne, a Planning Board member, suggested that the law, if adopted, would become “a practical impediment” toward having the city’s interests defended in the planning process. In the absence of minimums, he said that a developer could hire a consultant to provide documentation for the amount of parking the developer wants to provide.

If that happens, the Planning Board would not be “in a position to make a counterproposal or start doing urban planning studies,” he said. Byrne predicted that developers would build more units if they did not have to set aside land for parking.

“Putting hands on other people, destroying their property, keeping them from speaking their piece — those are behaviors I wouldn’t allow in my fifth-grade classroom.”

~ Chiara DiLello

Steven Higashide, director of the Clean Transportation Program for the Union of Concerned Scientists, countered that “the evidence is actually very strong that ending parking minimums helps us chip away at the affordable housing crisis.” Higashide said that parking adds 17 percent to the average apartment rent and cited an American Planning Association report that said studio apartments in Minneapolis, which began eliminating parking requirements in 2015, had fallen by 2018 from $1,200 per month to less than $1,000.

Parking standards are a “blunt tool rooted in a limited set of old data that mostly has been collected in places that are much more suburban than Beacon,” he said.

Hayley Richardson, who works for TransitCenter, a foundation that supports public transportation, agreed, calling parking minimums “outdated policies from last century” that the evidence shows are “truly outdated.”

She said that parking “is a blunt tool.”

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Haldane Moves Forward with $28.4 Million Plan

If approved by voters, taxes would increase 8%

By Joey Asher

The Haldane school district is moving forward with a proposed $28.4 million capital project that, if approved by voters, would raise school taxes by 7.97 percent over three years.

Phase I of the plan includes a 17,300-square-foot addition to the high school and extensive infrastructure and safety projects, including new science labs, hallways for the classroom buildings, roof repairs, electrical system improvements, traffic circulation upgrades, faculty bathrooms, upgraded fire alarms, additional Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and the replacement of public-address systems, clocks and security cameras.

Superintendent Philip Benante said that the district is planning to put the project before voters in the fall. At the Tuesday (Jan. 23) meeting of the school board, he received informal approval to finalize costs. The five-member board must vote to put the project before voters at least 45 days before a referendum, Benante said.

At the meeting, board members acknowledged the challenge of getting the public to approve a tax increase.

“We have our work cut out for us to communicate as effectively as we can about why we believe a project of this scope and size is critical at this point,” said Peggy Clements, the president.

“I do acknowledge the challenge,” said Trustee Sean McNall. “I’m confident and feel this is the right thing for us to do.”

Audit: Garrison School Needs Tighter Digital Security

By Joey Asher

The Garrison school district has made several upgrades to its information technology systems in response to a routine cybersecurity audit conducted by the Office of the New York State Comptroller, according to Carl Albano, the interim superintendent.

The comptroller issued a report on Jan. 19 in which it determined that “district officials did not adequately secure the district’s network user accounts, establish physical controls, maintain complete and accurate inventory records for IT equipment or develop an IT contingency plan.”

The comptroller conducts IT audits at a sampling of districts each year. Albano said that the district was audited in 2019-20 (after which 74 dormant user accounts were deleted) and Putnam Valley in 2022. In addition, the agency audited the Beacon and Haldane district websites in 2018-19.

The Garrison audit, which covered July 2021 to January 2023, concluded that staff did not have sufficient documentation or guidance to respond to an unexpected IT disruption or disaster. It also found that 40 of the 115 enabled non-student user accounts, or 35 percent, were no longer needed, and that 10 assets, including nine laptops and a printer, were not properly recorded in an inventory.

Albano said the district found the audit helpful in identifying ways to improve digital security. They pointed out a few things that we were not aware of,” he said.

“But 90 percent of the things they pointed out we expected.”

Albano said that the district has addressed key issues identified by the comptroller and is now using two-step authentication for logins. It also moved much of its data off-site to a more secure facility in White Plains operated by the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

“Today we believe we’re in very, very good shape,” he said.
Montgomery (from Page 1) kept her off the seven Legislature committees whose rosters are filled by appointments. Nearly all resolutions that reach the Legislature must first be approved by at least one of the three-person standing committees. While each Republican legislator received assignments to two or three committees, Montgomery will sit in 2024 only on the Budget and Finance Committee, which includes every legislator.

“I’m not the legislator that’s going to be shut out of committee assignments,” said Montgomery, who is urging supporters to speak up at the Legislature’s next meeting on Feb. 6.

In a letter to Montgomery dated Thursday (Jan. 25) that Jonke shared with The Current, he said he had not assigned her to any committees because of what he claimed was her “inability to work collaboratively, and to act professionally and collegially.”

He accused Montgomery of eight violations, including “flagrantly disregarding the rules of order,” “failing to confine your comments to the merits of the question,” “failing to maintain a courteous tone,” “injecting personal notes into debate, including personal attacks;” and “speaking more than once on a subject before every other legislator choosing to be heard on the subject has spoken without having received the permission of the chair to do so.”

Further, he said, Montgomery had disregarded past actions by the Legislature and engaged in unspecified activities that “disturbed meetings or that hampered the transaction of business.”

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He also accused Montgomery of impugning the integrity of the Republican legislators by “accusing them of acting solely for political reasons, when it is glaringly obvious that so many of your actions are entirely political.”

Citing the fact that the eight Republican members meet in caucus outside of public meetings, he said Montgomery had been guilty of wrongly accusing the majority of “improper conduct even after you have been provided with conclusive authority that such discussions are entirely proper, ethical and protected by state law.”

Jonke concluded that Montgomery’s “continued experience were outweighed by your lack of professionalism” and that she was “unfit” for any standing committee.

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Montgomery nominated herself to replace Nacerino as Jonke’s nominee to represent the Legislature on the Putnam County Fire Advisory Board, with Legislators Erin Crowley and Laurie B. Allen.

Montgomery said that she was “not confident” that Nacerino had the emergency-management qualifications to represent the Legislature on the board, but no other legislator seconded her motion and Nacerino’s nomination was approved.

Tax Sales (from Page 1) counties six months to turn over the proceeds of foreclosed properties sold between May 25, 2023 (when the Supreme Court issued its decision) and the effective date of the new rules. For sales made before the ruling, a county would only be liable if a property owner had sued for the proceeds within four months.

Protecting counties from claims by owners from previous sales is justified because they were “upholding state laws at the time,” said Mark LaVigne, the deputy director for NYSAC. Hochul’s proposal is “checking all the boxes in terms of meeting the requirements set forth in the Supreme Court decision,” he said.

“We’re trying to make sure that all parties who are negotiating the final terms of this budget understand the process and understand the county impact because, inevitably, no matter what, there will be a county impact,” said LaVigne.

Under existing law, counties relieve school districts, towns and villages of the shortfalls from uncollected taxes by paying them the amounts that delinquent properties owe. If the owners of those properties fail to repay counties, counties can petition the state court to grant them title. Many sell these properties at annual auctions.

Dutchess, which made $950,000 from its last auction in November 2022, did not hold one last year because of the Supreme Court ruling, and may also forgo one this year as it waits to see what the Legislature passes, said Heidi Seelbach, the county finance commissioner.

Absolute Auctions and Realty facilitated the 2022 auction, which included 46 vacant properties and six single-family homes. One home, a four-bedroom, 2½-bath residence on 2 acres in Beekman with $5,550 in unpaid school taxes, sold for $165,000, less than half its market value. A Cape Cod in East Fishkill with four bedrooms and one bath sold for $161,000 after being foreclosed on for $3,072 in unpaid school taxes. Putnam has not held an auction since 2020 in the wake of a pandemic-inspired moratorium on foreclosures that lasted until January 2022, and now the Supreme Court’s ruling, said Christopher Formisano, a county representative.

Michael Lewis, Putnam’s finance commissioner, is seeking title to 38 properties the county began foreclosure proceedings against in April 2023, a month before the Supreme Court ruling. None of those properties is in Philipstown, but the county acquired title in August to six vacant properties in the town.

Beacon, which makes its school district whole, usually reaches repayment agreements with property owners who owe taxes, said City Administrator Chris White. The city forecloses on a small number of properties, he said.

Most of Dutchess’s counties either suspend foreclosures last year, like Dutchess, or, if they sold properties, held the surplus funds in escrow in anticipation of a change in the law, said LaVigne.

“How many of them were in the process already of doing a foreclosure, so they just completed the foreclosure,” he said.

Committee Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dutchess County Legislature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nick Page</strong> (D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Beacon Ward 1, 2, 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Environment</td>
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<th>Putnam County Legislature</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nancy Montgomery</strong> (D)</td>
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<td>(Philipstown/Putnam Valley)</td>
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<th>State Senate</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rob Rolison</strong> (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Highlands)</td>
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<td>• Aging</td>
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<td>• Cities 2</td>
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<td>• (upstate/smaller)</td>
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<td>• Crime Victims</td>
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<td>• Crime and Correction</td>
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<th>U.S. Congress</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mike Lawler</strong> (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(District 17, including Philipstown)</td>
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<td>• Financial Services</td>
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<td>• Foreign Affairs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Pat Ryan (D) |
| District 18, including Beacon |
| • Armed Services |

| Transportation and Infrastructure |

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I realized I could no longer put off writing about Cold Spring’s unsolved mysteries when someone stole the pole used to lower and raise the awning at The Current office. The morning sun is brutal; I can’t even see the computer screen without the awning down.

I first suspected Doug of Doug’s Pretty Good Pub because his eatery has an awning. But he had no motive: His awning is not retractable.

Next, I called Louis, the proprietor of Xtra Change, a pawnshop in Mahopac. He could only laugh when I asked if anyone had recently collected poles, awning or otherwise. But he had no motive: His awning is not retractable.

I can’t offer a reward for solving any of the mysteries that follow, but lunch is on Change, a pawnshop in Mahopac. He could only laugh when I asked if anyone had recently collected poles, awning or otherwise. I can’t offer a reward for solving any of the mysteries that follow, but lunch is on me if the pole is returned.

Seriously, who steals an awning pole?

Let’s pretend

In 2012, during a time of tension between Roger Ailes’ Putnam County News and Recorder and Gordon Stewart’s Philipstown.info and The Paper (later renamed The Highlands Current), a third local paper appeared on the scene. The Pretend Putnam County News and Recorder was published online by an anonymous satirist at ppcnr.com. It poked fun at The PCNR’s claim to be “the only real newspaper” in Philipstown by promising to be the area’s “only real pretend newspaper.”

Debate raged at our staff meetings: Who was behind the Pretend PCNR? Could it have been Gordon? Someone else on the staff? Or any number of progressive residents, unhappy with The PCNR? The site has disappeared (be forewarned, the address now redirects to a Japanese porn portal), but the mystery remains.

Disco anyone?

Mystery surrounds another theft here in the village years ago that impacted my family. Local celebrations to usher in the year 2000 included a disco ball installed at the riverfront bandstand. My son, Drew, and two of his friends, visiting from Windsor, Ontario, preferred the larger party at Times Square. They returned to Cold Spring by train around 3 a.m. and were immediately met and interrogated by police. The disco ball was missing and glitter on the Canadians’ shoes resembled a trail of glitter that led to the platform.

Highly indignant for being considered a suspect, Drew has returned to Cold Spring, but never for New Year’s Eve. The disco ball heist remains unsolved.

Sorry, wrong number

Technology is great when it works. Then there’s real life. I’ve had interesting phone calls during my working life, including a 20-minute chat with an intoxicated long-distance operator, back when speaking to a human being at Ma Bell was a rotary dial away. I had an hour-long call from Ken Dryden, one of my hockey heroes and president of the Toronto Maple Leafs, responding to a letter that I thought would not garner a response from the Zamboni driver, let alone the big boss.

How did B Street get its name, and why is there no A or C street?

Those calls were fun and unexpected. What’s not fun and now expected is the barrage of wrong numbers that find my desk. It’s not people dialing The Current by mistake. It’s people calling completely different numbers who somehow end up with me.

I can hear heads being scratched when I tell callers that we’re a newspaper, not the skating rink, pizza shop, funeral home, law office, flower shop, car dealer, state park, massage therapist, sculpture park or psychic. I tried being the psychic; that did not pan out well. The wrong numbers mystery must be solved sooner than a new awning pole and even sooner than finding the disco ball. Any leads are welcome but please include your real name.

VILLAGE OF COLD SPRING ANNOUNCEMENT

RESIDENT PARKING PROGRAM BEGINS MARCH 1

Resident Parking Permits Now Available

Timeline

- Resident Parking Permits are now available for purchase at Village Hall by residents of certain streets.
- Signage for the Resident Permit Parking will be installed over the next several weeks.
- Enforcement will begin March 1.
- Main Street parking meters will be installed in the Spring at a later stage.

Permits

Households on eligible streets may purchase up to 2 permits each. For a list of eligible streets and the permit process, please visit coldspringny.gov.
AROUND TOWN

KNIGHTED — Nancy Olinick (left), co-founder of Magazzino Italian Art in Philipstown, was awarded the Cavaliere Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana (Insignia of Knight of the Italian Republic) at the Italian consulate in New York City on Jan. 11. Olinick received the honor from Ambassador Mariangela Zappia (right) for “merit acquired by the nation.” Magazzino is the only museum in the U.S. devoted to postwar and contemporary Italian art.

ESSAY WINNER — Davia Kelleher (center), a seventh grader at Rombout Middle School in Beacon, was one of five middle-school students in the U.S. who received honorable mentions in the annual Hispanic Heritage Month essay contest sponsored by Optimum and TelevisaUnivision. She is shown with, from left, Assistant Principal Amanda Pucino, teachers Erica Hughes and Karen DeCandia, Jay Keel from Optimum and Principal Brian Soltish.

CLASSIC JAZZ — The Westchester Jazz Alliance Quartet, including the Rev. Stan Fortuna on bass and Charley Krachy of Garrison on tenor sax, performed Jan. 13 at the Howland Cultural Center. The other band members are Dave Frank on piano and T-kash Inoue on drums. Fortuna, a Catholic priest since 1990, was mentored by jazz pianist Lenny Tristano, as were Krachy and Frank.

CAUGHT WITH THE CURRENT — The Mayor, during a visit to the Bank Square Coffeehouse in Beacon, was unhappy with the amount of poultry news in the latest edition of The Current and planned to peck out a letter to the editor.

HONOR GUARD — On Jan. 20, somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, Chief Logistics Spc. Shache Cox (right) of Beacon was among the Navy sailors who rendered honors during a burial-at-sea ceremony aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln.

Photo by Ross Corsair

Photos provided

Photo by Clayton Wren/U.S. Navy
A Test Case for Abuse Law

Author to discuss memoir of sister’s prosecution for killing partner

By Alison Rooney

I n September 2017, a Town of Poughkeepsie woman, Nicole “Nikki” Addimando, caught her partner, Christopher Grover, with another woman. After Addimando told police during a traffic stop that she had killed him, authorities found the 29-year-old dead on a couch. Addimando and Grover had met in 2008 when both were gymnastics coaches. They began living together in 2012 after Addimando told police during a traffic stop that she had killed Grover. After Addimando began her sentence, Horton rearranged her life to care for her niece and nephew and began a campaign to get her mother out of prison.

At 2 p.m. on Feb. 3, at the Garrison Institute, Horton will discuss her book, Dear Sister: A Memoir of Secrets, Survival and Unbreakable Bonds, which will be published on Tuesday (Jan. 30) and is as much a memoir of a bond between sisters as it is an indictment of the criminal justice system. The event will be hosted by Robyn Moreno, a Cold Spring author, and co-sponsored by the Desmond-Fish Public Library. Horton says that nothing about writing the book was easy, describing it as “akin to secondary trauma. But even in the darkest situation, there’s levity, resilience and deep hope.”

“If I can move the needle showing my own experience from a different perspective, and not just telling people why this was such an injustice, I can show that our experience is not that unique,” Horton says. “What happened in the court system is indicative of most survivors who end up in the system.”

When her sister was arrested, “I was in the mom-blogging world,” Horton says. “But by the time of the sentencing, when everything went wrong, I needed to tell the story and our experiences, because my sister’s case has been so exploited. I wanted to add to the narrative out there, reclaim it for myself.” (Continued on Page 14)

The Writer Next Door

Celia Reissig

By Alison Rooney

C elia Reissig is pleased that Stanza Books in Beacon stocks her 2020 collection of poems and a one-act play, Huella/Traces.

Where to shelve it might prove challenging because the paperback has Reissig’s poems in Spanish, English and Spanglish, with no translations. They reflect her voyages from country to country, language to language, form to form. (Also on hand is a 2016 anthology, Home: An Imagined Landscape, which includes a creative nonfiction piece by Reissig, “Where Oblivion Shall Not Dwell”.)

Reissig describes herself as a “cultural smuggler” who explores links between cultures and languages, and the personal and the social.

Her parents moved often. She should have been born in Argentina, where her father taught molecular biology. But a dictatorship in place at the time impeded his work, and the couple left.

Her parents had been married in Edinburgh, where her father began his career as a scientist. “He moved on to another scientific lab in Denver, then engaged throughout the world,” she says. “When I was 3, we went to Paris for a few months, then returned to Argentina, where I spent my childhood. Spanish was my first language.”

“I found refuge in art. A horrific car accident caused her to jettison her burgeoning dance career as a young woman and prompted an abrupt professional shift. “I switched to French, studied at the Sorbonne for a junior year abroad, then transferred to New York University to study Spanish and French language and literature,” she says. “That’s where I discovered my passion: languages. I’m driven to bringing together linguistic communities.”

After graduating, Reissig moved to Port Chester, in Westchester County, and stayed for 25 years. “There was a wonderful bookstore there, Panacea, which started using my work at readings,” she says. “I formed a Spanish-language book club with other Latina women, and there was a multicultural arts center offering dance, music, visual arts and writing. I was able to use art to heal and to become part of the community.”

Reissig taught Spanish and French at two high schools before earning a master’s degree in Latin American Studies, another in comparative literature, and a doctorate from Fordham that took 14 years while she worked full-time and raised two children.

For the past 30 years, Reissig has been an associate professor of English and Spanish and chair of the Department of Literature and Language at Mercy University (formerly Mercy College). She is the author of two collections of poetry: Talking to Myself (1977) and Reflections/Reflexiones (2000). (Continued on Page 14)
TALKS & TOURS
SAT 27
Beacon’s West End Story
BEACON
1 – 3 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beacononlibrary.org
This will be the closing reception for the project, which portrays the neighborhood before it was altered by urban renewal.

SAT 27
Jenny Howe
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Split Rock
97 Main St. | splitrockbkds.com
In a talk with Virginia Sole-Smith, Howe will discuss her romance novel, On the Plus Side, about a woman who gets picked for a makeover show and finds love. RSVP requested.

SAT 28
Art After War
PHILIPSTOWN
12:30 p.m. Magazzino
2700 Route 9A | magazzino.art
For this International Holocaust Remembrance Day program, Alessandro Cassin and Davide Spagnolo will discuss the lives of sisters Paola and Lorenzo Mazzetti, whose art was shaped by the murder of their adoptive Jewish family in 1944. Cost: $20 ($10 seniors and students, $5 regional residents)

TUES 30
Desbloquea Tu Éxito
BEACON
6 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beacononlibrary.org
The Women’s Enterprise Development Center will lead, in Spanish, this workshop on a winning mentality for entrepreneurs. Registration required. Free

WED 31
Crappy Craft Club for Adults
COLD SPRING
1 p.m. Butterfield Library
14 Civic Center Plaza | 845-265-3638
ButterfieldLibrary.org
Sam Recce (below), author of Shitty Craft Club: A Club for Gluing and Glueing, will join the first session of this new monthly gathering by Zoom. Registration required.

COMMUNITY
SUN 28
Year of the Dragon Lantern-Making
BEACON
1 – 3 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beacononlibrary.org
Prepare for the Year of the Dragon by making lanterns for the Celebration of Light Parade. Registration required. Also SUN 4.

FRI 2
Blood Drive
BEACON
9:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. Recreation Center
23 W. Hurley St. | 845-437-6450
hhnm.org
The Red Cross is seeing the fewest number of people giving blood, platelets or AB Elite plasma in 20 years. Donate in February and receive a $20 Amazon gift card.

SAT 3
Makerspace Open House
COLD SPRING
Non – 2 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org
Find out about all the projects you can make in the library’s creator lab. Registration required.

SAT 27
The Artichoke
BEACON
8 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
howlandculturalcenter.org
This month’s storytellers are Tina McKenna, Ivy Eisenberg, Michaela Murphy, Gastor Almonte, Sean O’Brien and Jamie Brickhouse. Cost: $20

SAT 27
Met HD: Carmen
POUGHKEEPSIE
1 p.m. Bardavon
35 Market St. | bardavon.org
The opera, staged in the present day and presented in a high-definition simulcast, stars Aigul Akhmetshina in the lead and Fiorenzta Bocchino as Carmen’s lover. Cost: $30 ($28 members, $23 ages 12 and younger)

SAT 27
The Watched Pot
GARRISON
7:30 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre
313 Main St. | 845-831-4988
philipstowndepottheatre.org
This play by Keith Hershberger is about two unconventional women who look back on their lives as one lays dying. Also SUN 28, FRI 2, SAT 3, SUN 4. Cost: $25

SAT 28
Hairspray
WEST POINT
5 p.m. Ike Hall | 655 Pitcher Road
845-938-4159 | ikehall.com
In this Tony-award winning musical set in the 1960s, Tracy Turnblad is determined to appear on a television dance show. Cost: $48

SAT 28
Citizen Kane
POUGHKEEPSIE
7:30 p.m. Bardavon | 35 Market St.
845-473-2072 | bardavon.org
The screening of this 1941 classic is the first in a series of “game-changer” films that represent new approaches and stories in cinema. Directed by and starring Orson Welles, it chronicled the rise and fall of a newspaper tycoon. Free

THURS 1
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The screening of this 1941 classic is the first in a series of “game-changer” films that represent new approaches and stories in cinema. Directed by and starring Orson Welles, it chronicled the rise and fall of a newspaper tycoon. Free

KIDS & FAMILY
SAT 27
Dear Sister
GARRISON
2 p.m. Garrison Institute
10 Garrison’s Landing | 845-424-3900
garrisoninstitute.org
This will be the closing reception for the project, which portrays the neighborhood before it was altered by urban renewal.
WED 31
Understanding the Cloud
GARRISON
3 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
Learn about how to use virtual space as a tool for organizing data and files and find out how to keep it safe. Registration required.

WED 31
Resolution to Reality
BEACON
3 p.m. The View
30 Beekman St. | bit.ly/rizkallah
Lena Rizkallah, a financial advisor, will lead this workshop on investing, saving and managing debt. Free

THURS 1
A Brutal Design
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Split Rock
97 Main St. | splitrockcks.com
Zachary Solomon will discuss his debut novel with Erin Somers.

SAT 3
The Benefits of Mindfulness and Meditation on Cognition
COLD SPRING
Noon. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org
Lourdes Laifer will explain how to reduce stress and think more clearly. Registration required.

SAT 3
Secret Sounds of Ponds
BEACON
8 a.m. Starzsa Books
508 Main St.
David Rothenberg will discuss his latest book, which is filled with links and QR codes that take readers to the musician’s pond recordings. See Page 15.

MUSIC
SAT 27
Songs for the Ancestors
NEWBURGH
7 p.m. From the Ground Up
104 Ann St. | annstreetgallery.org
Gwen Lastor (violet), Damon Banks (bass), Patrick Jones (guitar and vocals) and Todd Isler (percussion) will perform songs from the Black American diaspora to honor those buried in the one-time “colored” cemetery in Newburgh. Free

FRI 2
Joanna Nova York
BEACON
7 p.m. Reserva Wine Bar
173 Main St. | reservabeacon.com
The singer will perform jazz favorites and Brazilian bossanova. Free

SAT 3
American Pink Floyd: The Wall
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The tribute band’s show will include lasers, projections and costumes to recreate the experience. Cost: $30 ($35 door)

SUN 4
The Cat and the Canary
COLD SPRING
3 p.m. Chapel Restoration
45 Market St. | chapelrestoration.org
Local musicians, including Tom McCoy, Lisa Sabin and Rachel Evans and her students, will perform baroque gems from Geminiani, Telemann, Rossini and others to support children’s programming at the Chapel. Donations welcome.

SUN 4
Faded Rose
BEACON
5:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The alternative band will play songs from its upcoming album. Natalie Austin will open. Cost: $20 ($25 door)

VISUAL ARTS
SAT 27
What the Flock
BEACON
5 – 9 p.m. Clutter Gallery | 139 Main St.
212-255-2505 | clutter.co
The group show will feature works depicting birds by more than 30 artists. Through Feb. 2.

SAT 27
Inner Landscapes
NEWBURGH
7 - 9 p.m. Bank Arts Center
94 Broadway | thebank.art
Savaggi Gallery will mount its first exhibit at the Bank Arts Center -- a collection of sculptures by Kate Raudenbush that continues through May 11. A fundraiser reception with live ambient music begins at 5 p.m.; tickets are $45 or $109.

CIVIC
MON 29
City Council
BEACON
7 p.m. City Hall | 1 Municipal Plaza
845-838-5011 | beaconny.gov

THURS 1
Town Board
PHILIPSTOWN
7:30 p.m. Town Hall | 238 Main St.
845-265-5200 | philipstown.com
The group show will feature works depicting birds by more than 30 artists. Through Feb. 2.
Dear Sister (from Page 11)

She says her book “takes a hard look at the reality of the courts and the prisons,” and “the cost and harm that is perpetuated by the system, which is determined not to change. “I also would like people to know that grassroots advocacy is still very active and needs people to contribute, support and offer solidarity,” she adds. “Domestic violence is an epidemic. We can’t (easily) make systemic changes, but the little ways people helped me added up. We used anger and sadness to fuel and help in a positive way.”

The memoir also describes the strength of their relationship. “My sister is a powerful writer, and I could have used just the letters she sent me,” she says. “But it was important for me to start the book when the police came to my door and end with the sentencing, because it reinforces that no matter what you do, if you take a plea, it ends in prison.”

Horton says her sister contributed to the book. “She truly has been the biggest supporter. I wrote it from 2020 to 2022, and sometimes it was hard to get drafts to her, but I was able to read some things to her over the phone.”

That her sister’s release and the book’s release are happening within weeks of each other is “a very happy accident,” Horton says.

The Garrison Institute is located at 14 Mary’s Way, near the Philipstown Recreation Center. To register for the free event, visit bit.ly/horton-book-2024.

Writer Next Door (from Page 11)

In addition, she has led creative-writing classes for Spanish speakers at the Hudson Valley Writers Center in Sleepy Hollow and worked on writing with Ecuadorian migrants whose first language was Quechua, while their children attended a Head Start outreach program. “We wrote everything from poetry to journal entries to creative nonfiction,” Reissig recalls.

“Ten years ago, with her children grown, Reissig’s “second or third or fourth journey” ended in Cold Spring (she has since moved to Beacon). Upon the move Reissig participated in a Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival production of Rip Van Winkle, part of its Radically Participatory Theater series. “I had a tiny part, four lines plus lifting stuff and being in a make-believe boat,” she says. “I met a whole bunch of people who worked together quite feverishly rehearsing.”

She later submitted a short play to HVSF’s annual Bake-Off competition and was named one of seven winners. That play, A Dog Named Wolf, was modeled on her immigrant experience as a young girl and her relationship with her father.

Recently she collaborated with visual artists at the BAU Gallery in Beacon, doing improv with a musician. “I read poems of mine and he came in with his guitar — a back and forth. We all crave not just living inside ourselves.”

Page-to-Screen Book Club

THURS 15, 3 P.M.
The Hate U Give, by Angie Thomas
Desmond-Fish Public Library, Garrison
Register at desmondfishlibrary.org.

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SKATE HARD, SKATE FREE

Skateboard shop opens in Beacon

By Marc Ferris

Premium Roots NY sells equipment for serious skateboarders but stocks lifestyle products such as T-shirts, books, hats, beanies, candles, sneakers and a skincare line. Boards with trucks and wheels attached run about $125.

The blue discs resembling hockey pucks are skate wax, rubbed on curbs or other surfaces to add skidding power. It’s also used to avoid “wheel bite,” which occurs when a wheel hits the underside of the board. The wax keeps the wheel spinning — if it locks up, the rider will tumble.

An old soul, Acevedo, 35, sells DVDs and VHS tapes at the shop. He also has published two issues of Gripp magazine, which refers both to his day job and grip tape, which is sandpaper with an adhesive backing that covers the top of the deck.

During the 1960s, skateboarding became popular with surfers in Southern California who added roller-skate wheels to boards. It became more mainstream after the creation of rubber wheels in the early 1970s. Some bright minds got the idea to skate in empty pools, which evolved into using huge half-pipes to propel themselves into the air and execute tricks. Tony Hawk, the Birdman, attracted attention in the late 1980s and skating intersected with fashion, hip-hop, tattoo and weed culture.

For freestylers (a term shared with rap), the goal is to defy physics, typically by jumping with the board, scraping across a surface, maybe flipping it for style points and sticking a landing while in motion. The skill level can be remarkable.

Scanning the urban landscape, freestylers size up the infrastructure for skateability. Curbs, benches, cellar doors and angled corners are alluring. Acevedo points out a long, narrow strip of concrete about 2 inches high and 10 feet long that rises from the sidewalk around the corner from his shop and provides inspiration.

“We’re always trying to use what we have and be creative with our moves,” he says. Other skaters like to bomb downhill at 60 mph, or just get around town, but they’re all tough crowds: Helmets are frowned upon.

“What I love the most about skating is that we represent all ages, all colors, all walks of life,” he says. Proving his point, Ophir Ariel, a filmmaker and the father of three girls, stopped by the store.

Ariel says his 10-year-old discovered his board, his 8-year-old wants to emulate big sister and the 5-year-old is also paying attention. He plans to provide them with the proper gear, which will include protective padding.

After Ariel left, Acevedo beamed. “You can go anywhere in the world and make a friend just because you share the love of skating,” he says.

Premium Roots NY, at 496 Main St. in Beacon, is open from noon to 6 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. See premiumrootsnewyork.com.
Classic Wheels

1926 Ford Model T Runabout

By Michael Turton

W hen it comes to making cars, the classic of all classics is the Ford Model T, the first mass-produced and mass-affordable automobile. More than 15 million were sold between 1908 and 1927, a record that stood until the early 1970s, when 23 million Volkswagen Beetles were sold worldwide. Henry Ford road-tested the first Model T on a hunting trip to northern Michigan; the first unit was shipped to a customer in October 1908. Sales likely got a boost from stunts used to promote the T, such as driving it up Pikes Peak in Colorado and up the steps of the Tennessee State Capitol.

The Ford assembly lines cut the time needed to build the car from 12 hours to 93 minutes; mass production also reduced the cost from $825 in 1909 (about $28,000 today) to $260 in 1925 ($4,500).

The Model T pioneered innovations, such as placing the steering wheel on the left side; casting the engine block and crankcase as a single unit; and using a removable cylinder head for easier maintenance. Early models came with a tool kit and windshields as an option. The engine had to be cranked to start.

Until 1914 and after 1925, Model Ts were available in black, green, gray, blue and red. Between 1914 and 1925 everyone got black. Brown had his Runabout repainted black.

In Maine, Brown decided to restore, rather than customize, his Tin Lizzie. The car was disassembled and every part cleaned, sandblasted and painted. Rusted panels were replaced with parts from a supplier in Texas. While most of the car is original, Brown replaced the radiator, hood and running boards, the latter found at a swap meet. The engine block and crankcase as a single unit; and using a removable cylinder head for easier maintenance. Early models came with a tool kit and windshields as an option. The engine had to be cranked to start.

Until 1914 and after 1925, Model Ts were available in black, green, gray, blue and red. Between 1914 and 1925 everyone got black. Brown had his Runabout repainted black.

It was capable of reaching 45 miles per hour, but Brown said he wouldn’t drive it that fast. “I’ve had it up to a little over 35 mph,” he said. The throttle is located on the steering column but the car has no speedometer, so Brown used an app on his smartphone to determine speed. He estimates the gas mileage is less than 20 mpg.

The car has two speeds, low and high. Shifting is done with foot pedals. Asked if that’s easy, Brown said, “No.” After the Browns sold their property in Maine, the Runabout was shipped to Garrison. Will said he enjoys taking it for a spin to Garrison’s Landing during the warm-weather months.
Out There

Pond Rock

By Brian PJ Cronin

In the 1990s, artists such as Aphex Twin, Oval and Autechre made waves by taking electronic music to squelchy new places. Their music lurched from rhythmic to arrhythmic to ambient, often in the same song, punctuated with pops and squawks.

As it turns out, artists had been making that music for millions of years. But, until recently, no one was listening.

“You can find things in your own backyard that no one’s paying attention to,” says David Rothenberg on a warm December day behind Haldane High School in Cold Spring. The day before, a rainstorm had flooded parks, shut down roads and swollen the pond we were standing in front of. At our feet, a wireless speaker was broadcasting a concert that could have been recorded in the chill-out tent at the Glastonbury Festival, circa 1995.

The music was coming from a microphone that resembled a hockey puck that Rothenberg had thrown into the water. Some of the rhythmic clicks were the sound of microscopic bubbles being released as plants photosynthesized sunlight into food. Some of the irregular pops were from insects. But the origins of about 90 percent of the sounds are a mystery, even to scientists.

“It’s humbling,” says Rothenberg. “You can still go to the woods behind your house and hear things that no one can identify.”

Tracking down the music of the natural world isn’t a recent hobby for Rothenberg, who lives in Philipstown. A jazz clarinetist, he has written several books that document his global travels to study the music of birds, bugs and whales.

When the pandemic struck, Rothenberg’s thoughts returned to an anthology he co-edited, The Book of Music & Nature. In one essay, David Dunn, a composer and sound artist, described recordings he had made of vernal ponds.

“I have finally reconciled myself to the gut feeling that these sounds are an emergent property of the pond: something that speaks as a collective voice for a mind that is beyond my grasp,” Dunn wrote. “Now when I see a pond, I think of the water’s surface as a membrane enclosing something deep in thought.”

Intrigued, Rothenberg began tossing his microphones into ponds but heard nothing. The artist Zach Poff revealed the answer: Rothenberg was using mics designed to hear whales at a distance. Poff offered to build him a close-contact mic.

What happened next is the subject of Rothenberg’s book, Secret Sounds of Ponds, published this month. It is filled with links and QR codes that take readers to pond recordings and an online store to order underwater mics for pond explorations.

Rothenberg knows, thanks to European researchers, that the loudest sounds in local ponds are made by the males of an insect called a lesser water boatman. It’s not clear how the bugs can be so relatively loud, or why they’re making sounds in the first place. Rothenberg notes that if you fish them out of the pond, they instantly fall silent, which may be a clue. Scientists do know how they’re generating the sound: By rubbing their penises against their bodies.

As unusual as the lesser water boatmen may be, their calling card has been identified. In a recording made at Lost Pond at Manitou, there’s a flourish of clicks every 40 seconds that sounds like a woodpecker using echolocation. At Savoy Mountain State Forest in Massachusetts, a dense rhythmic thrum slowly increases in intensity and speed over the course of a few minutes, like a DJ dialing up the beats.

When Rothenberg sent the recordings to scientists for help, they essentially shrugged. First, there aren’t many scientists studying freshwater bioacoustics. Second, those in the field focus less on individual sounds and more on the cornucopia. Can we identify whether an ecosystem is flourishing or struggling by listening to it? Does pollution or disease have a sonic signature?

On that December day, the sonic signature of James Pond behind Haldane was leaning toward minimalism, in part because of the cold. Hoping to find a busier groove, Rothenberg reeled in his mic, only to find a confused newt clinging to it. As it happens, newts eat lesser water boatmen. Perhaps the musicians had been devoured.

After throwing the mic into deeper water, Rothenberg connected an iPad to a second speaker. He recorded what the mic was picking up, chopped it up and broadcast it toward the pond in loops. Slowly, the sounds began to swell. More clicks and thrums joined in. New sounds, louder and stranger, joined the chorus.

What was it? Was the pond jamming with Rothenberg, speaking to him or something else? Rothenberg’s work demonstrates that while we know why some animals make certain sounds, the reasons behind most animal songs are unknown. Because only male humpback whales sing, the assumption is that they must be attracting mates. But there’s no indication that female whales respond. Maybe whales, and ponds, like people, just like to sing.

In 1970, the album Songs of the Humpback Whale was released. The haunting recordings spawned New Age movements, a Star Trek movie and a global effort to save the whales. Fifty years later, Rothenberg and Dunn are part of a growing “pondcore” scene that includes artists such as Leah Barclay, Action Pyramid and Jack Greenhalgh. It’s possible this movement could inspire people in the same way as the humpback songs.

Early in his book, Rothenberg recalls attending a 2019 conference at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where scientists discussed using artificial intelligence to “translate” the language of dolphins, perhaps enabling interspecies communication. The room broke into applause. But when Rothenberg wandered into the lobby he ran into a skeptical Peter Gabriel, who suggested that “speaking” with animals shouldn’t be the goal. The music should be enough.

“With music, people dance, fall in love, sing along,” the musician told Rothenberg. “With words on a page, you make enemies. People turn their back on you and get ready to argue.”

Rothenberg will speak about Secret Sounds of Ponds at 8 p.m. on Feb. 3 at Stanza Books, 508 Main St., in Beacon. Listen to his pond recordings at on.soundcloud.com/iYWBu.

Photo by B. Cronin

By BPN

Go to highlandscurrent.org/join

The Highlands Current

January 26, 2024

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A MANNESBORO CERTIFIED STUDIO
I can focus its energy on leafing out and blooming trees and some shrubs; when growth begins, attention elsewhere. If you’re feeling the same as the snow melts (again) with visions of peas and pansies dancing in my head, it’s not just the retail industry pushing Christmas décor for sale in stores at Halloween, I now get seed catalogs in November. It creeps up and up. I confess that it’s not just the retail industry pushing things along. I am wandering the yard with the dog as the snow melts (again) with visions of peas and pansies dancing in my head. While I’m stocked with seeds, I fantasize my way through the catalogs anyway. It’s a tempting but I remain strong and focus my attention elsewhere. If you’re feeling the same way, here are some ideas for what to tackle.

Dormancy pruning is best for deciduous trees and some shrubs; when growth begins in spring as the tree breaks open its buds, it can focus its energy on leafing out and blooming. The cuts will heal as the season goes on. Some tree issues can be controlled through pruning. Signs of disease could include branches where the bark has detached and fungal knots. If you can’t make a precise diagnosis, consult an arborist.

Dead branches can be a hazard and should be removed if they are near structures or paths. Tree limbs die for environmental reasons, as well as from pests and pathogens. This is another situation where a professional consultation can determine if there are underlying causes that need to be addressed. Many broken and dead limbs result from heavy, wet snow and wind, and that can be noted.

I prune shrubs more often than trees for aesthetic purposes — to influence their shape and, less frequently, their size. Because a woody plant’s branching structure is more intricate and dense, it’s easier to see what you’re doing without foliage. Choose carefully and make sure you understand the shrub’s bloom-setting process, or risk a season without flowers.

Shrubs fall into two categories: They either set blooms on last season’s growth (called “old wood”) or blooms develop on new growth (“new wood”). Lilacs, for example, bloom on old wood and pruning in winter will cut away the branches that would bloom in June. Forsythia is the same. Both can be pruned without harm, but expect fewer or no flowers.

Hydrangeas are tricky because some bloom on old wood and some on new wood. You need to know the species or observe its patterns. Hydrangea macrophylla, a mohapel, will set blooms on old wood. If you’re confident in identifying plant parts, you could check the hydrangea and notice if there are buds. An exception to deciduous tree pruning is the oak family. Because oak-wilt disease, a fungus detected in New York about 15 years ago, can spread more easily to trees that have open wounds, pruning is not advised during spring and summer, according to the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Michigan, where oak wilt has been spreading for much longer, has even more detailed guidelines, advising that all pruning on oaks should be delayed until early October.

An infected red oak species can die in a matter of weeks. The white oaks tend to last longer. Following the guidelines is an easy way to prevent problems.

Winter is also an excellent time for landscape planning. The first day of spring is eight weeks away. (The ladybug on my windowsill seems to know that.)

There’s an advantage to working with the bare canvas of a landscape without foliage. If your goal is to install something new, in winter you’re working with the contours and flow of the land, shapes that can be built up or revised.

Planning the vegetable garden is a similar exercise in vision and fantasy. All that bare soil could be sprouting seedlings soon. There are useful timetables on many seed retailer sites that help with calculating when to start growing seeds indoors. It’s a science based on soil and surface air temperatures, the number of days a plant needs to produce its harvest and the area’s last average frost date.

For the Highlands, the last frost date is May 15. While the season is warming earlier and planting dates can shift, the weather is more erratic and in 2023 there was a hard frost a week after May 15. Prepare for everything, and if you plant early, include row covers with your seed order.

**Roots and Shoots**

**Gardening 365**

By Pamela Doan

Is it me or does the gardening season seem to be year-round now? Just as I noticed Christmas décor for sale in stores at Halloween, I now get seed catalogs in November. It creeps up and up. I confess that it’s not just the retail industry pushing things along. I am wandering the yard with the dog as the snow melts (again) with visions of peas and pansies dancing in my head.

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**Sports (from Page 20)**

pounds, all by falls. The team travels to Monticello on Wednesday (Jan. 31).

**BOYS’ SWIMMING** — Beacon lost on Jan. 20 at Cornwall, 90-76, but won three golds: Ronnie Anzovino was first in the 100-meter freestyle in 57.01 and the team won the 200- and 400-meter freestyle relays in 1:47.53 and 4:47.35.

On Wednesday (Jan. 24), the Bulldogs traveled to Warwick Valley, losing 118-65, to drop to 2-6. They are next scheduled to swim at the Section IX championship that begins Feb. 15.

**WINTER TRACK** — The Bulldogs competed at the 18-team Section IX championships at West Point on Jan. 20.

For the boys, Damani DeLoach won the long jump at 20-1 and the triple jump at 44-6.5. Jayden Mihalchik won the pole vault at 10-0; Henry Reinke was second in the 1,000 meters in 2:46.35; and Rubio Castagna-Torres was second in the 55-meter hurdles in 8.77. For the girls, Isabella Migliore was fourth in the 600 meters in 1:52.95, followed by Stella Reine in fifth place in 1:57.20.

The teams will compete in the Section IX Invitational on Sunday (Jan. 28) at The Armory.
Puzzles

CrossCurrent

ACROSS
1. Hot tub
4. Pack (down)
8. Honeycomb division
12. Joke
13. Teen fave
14. Celestial bear
15. Capote nickname
16. Difficult problem
18. Celery unit
20. Pantheon member
21. Morays
24. Twilight, poetically
28. "Bravo!"
32. Wry Bombeck
33. Raw rock
34. Begets
36. Melody
37. Actress Meg
39. Maintains
41. Wheel connectors
43. Bake sale orgs.
44. — Victor
46. Digout seating
50. Sociable and lively
55. "Caught ya!"
56. Medicinal plant
57. Vogue rival
58. Singer Phair
59. Reporter’s quest
60. Workout count
61. Mimic

DOWN
1. Siddhartha author
2. Stoned
3. Make ____ (do business on eBay)
4. Autumnal colors
5. "Tell Me You Love Me" singer Lovato
6. Calendar abbr.
7. Blunder
8. Get cozy (with)
9. Hud actress Patricia
31. Faxed
35. Equine homes
38. Butterflies
40. Language suffix
42. High school subj.
45. Declare
47. The Lion King lion
48. Intel product
49. Visibility hindrance
50. Fire
51. Flamenco cheer
52. At once
53. — -de-France
54. Jungfrau, for one

SudoCurrent

WordLadder
Can you go from PEACE to LUNCH in 6 words? Change one letter for each rung in the ladder.

PEACE

LUNCH

MicroCrossWord

ACROSS
1. Stockpile, as toilet paper
6. Happen next
7. Sudden contraction
8. Chicago Symphony conductor Georg
9. Summers abroad?

DOWN
1. Siddhartha author
2. Stoned
3. Make ____ (do business on eBay)
4. Autumnal colors
5. "Tell Me You Love Me" singer Lovato

Answers for Jan. 19 Puzzles

© 2024 King Features
BOYS’ BASKETBALL — Haldane lost its first game in over a month on Jan. 18, falling at Putnam Valley, 48-45. It was the lowest number of points scored this season by the Blue Devils this season, and senior Matt Nachamkin accounted for half, finishing with 23.

Two days later, the team had an easier time at Arlington High School against Greenburgh-North Castle in the Coaches vs. Cancer Showcase, winning 83-56, their highest point total of the season.

With Michael Murray replacing Evan Gaichinta in the starting lineup — Coach Joe Virgadamo said that he “wanted to change it up a little bit” — the Blue Devils opened the game with a 15-2 run and were up by 20 at the end of the first quarter and by 18 at halftime. Nachamkin led the scoring with 18 points, while Fallou Faye had 15 and was named the game MVP.

The Blue Devils were home again on Monday (Jan. 22) against Leffell, winning 55-48, after falling behind by nine points in the third quarter. Nachamkin scored 17 points, followed by Faye (15), Ross Esposito (13) and Murray (10).

On Wednesday, Haldane traveled to Croton-Harmon, returning with a 74-40 victory. The Tigers were down by only a point at the end of the first quarter but Haldane broke the game open in the second quarter and led by 24 at the half. Luke Bozsik, who started the season on junior varsity, scored 14 points off the bench, while Nachamkin had 17 and Faye had 15. Virgadamo said the team still needs work on its rebounding.

The Blue Devils, who finished the 2022-23 season in the state title game, were ranked the third-best Class C team in the state by the New York State Sportswriters Association.

On Saturday (Jan. 27), Haldane (11-2) travels to Beacon for the annual Battle of the Tunnel, and on Tuesday visits North Salem.

GIRLS’ BASKETBALL — The Blue Devils hosted Putnam Valley on Jan. 14. The visiting Tigers began the game with a 13-0 run and never looked back, winning 61-31, although Haldane kept it even in the third quarter. Marisa Peters led the team with 14 points.

It didn’t get much easier on Jan. 20 when Beacon came to the village for the annual Battle of the Tunnel. The Bulldogs at the time had lost only one game this season and handled the Blue Devils easily, 60-23, to keep the trophy, which they won with a 46-27 victory last year at Haldane.

Reilly Landisi led Beacon with 20 points, followed by Daveya Rodriguez with 18. For Haldane, Kayla Ruggiero scored 11 and Camilla McDaniel and Marisa Peters each had six.

Haldane lost at North Salem, 55-42, on Monday (Jan. 22), despite an 8-0 run to start the second half that put them up by one behind two free throws by Ruggiero and back-to-back three-pointers from McDaniel, who finished the game with 100 for her career.

That would be their last lead of the game, however, as North Salem reasserted control. “We’ve done a better job in recent weeks of cutting back on our turnovers, but we need to be more aggressive going to the basket,” said Haldane Coach Charles Martinez.

On Wednesday, the Blue Devils visited Croton-Harmon for the Coaches vs. Cancer Awareness Game, falling 42-26, for their fifth consecutive loss. The teams together raised nearly $700 for cancer research.

Haldane (6-10) will be at Peekskill today (Jan. 26) and hosts North Salem on Tuesday at 6:15 p.m.

WINTER TRACK — Haldane competed on Jan. 22 in the sectional league championships at The Armory in New York City.

For the girls, Aine Duggan finished second in the 1,500-meter race walk in 12:46.16; Samantha Thomas was second in the 55-meter dash in 8.18 and fifth in the 4x200 relay team won in 1:38.55.

The Blue Devils return to The Armory on Feb. 3 for an invitational hosted by Warwick Valley.

BOYS’ BASKETBALL — It was a busy week for Beacon, with four games and three wins. After defeating Haldane on Jan. 20 in the Battle of the Tunnel, the Bulldogs won at home over O’Neill, 53-21, on Monday (Jan. 22) behind 27 points from Reilly Landisi. The Bulldogs fell at Middletown on Wednesday, 51-41 (Landisi again scored 27), and hosted Port Jervis on Thursday. Beacon (11-2) will travel to Chester on Tuesday (Jan. 30) and host Millbrook at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

WRESTLING — Beacon lost at Pine Bush on Wednesday (Jan. 24), 42-30, with Avery Davis winning at 170 pounds, Nixon Salinas at 190 pounds and Owen Lynch at 215 (Continued on Page 18)