

The HIGHLANDS Current



All Hail the Queen!
Page 11

AUGUST 2, 2024

NYPA Newspaper of the Year

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ON THE BUBBLE — Children enjoyed a bubbly bash on July 27 during Mr. Kurt's Children's Concert at Howland Public Library in Beacon. Kurt Gallagher also brought drums and maracas as he led children in music-making and dancing. Photo by Ross Corsair

Putnam Redirects Garrison Landing Funding

Water purchases deemed ineligible for fed program

By Leonard Sparks

A Putnam County legislative committee voted to reallocate \$370,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds Philipstown planned to use to buy water for the Garrison Landing Water District because the purchases have been deemed ineligible.

Legislators on the Audit and Administration Committee approved on Monday (July 29) a resolution to instead spend the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) money on a county Department of Public Works project in the town.

They also authorized replacing half of Philipstown's ARPA allocation with \$184,835 from Putnam County's General Fund that can be used to reimburse the town for Garrison Landing water purchases.

The Rules Committee also had to approve the change, which it did on July 11. A vote by the full Legislature is expected on Tuesday (Aug. 6).

Michael Lewis, Putnam's finance
(Continued on Page 9)

Beacon Church For Sale, Or Is It?

Funding also set aside for outreach efforts

By Jeff Simms

The 15 South Ave. campus of St. Andrew & St. Luke Episcopal Church in Beacon is unofficially for sale, although church leaders say a more realistic scenario has them holding onto the property and using it for community service.

The 124-year-old church building, along with an attached three-story carriage house and the adjacent rectory, have not been listed for sale but are being advertised on social media by Daniel Aubry, a Beacon real-estate agent. The half-acre site includes more than 10,000 square feet of existing construction.

There is no asking price; Aubry said Wednesday (July 31) that it would be determined if a serious buyer expresses interest. A theater group has inquired about the site, but only preliminarily, he said.

Church officials said in June that the



The St. Andrew & St. Luke church on South Avenue Photo by J. Simms

Episcopal Diocese of New York, which owns the property, might consider selling if a lawsuit it filed a year ago against the City of Beacon over access to a city-owned parking lot behind the church dragged on or did not end favorably. The church moved worship services for its 100 parishioners from South Avenue to its 850 Wolcott Ave. campus in April.

(Continued on Page 9)

Public Financing Boosts Candidates

Valdes Smith expects \$375K from new program

By Leonard Sparks

Advocates for the public financing of political campaigns hoped New York State's program would give more candidates without big-money backers a shot at public office and magnify the influence of people who donate small amounts.

Yvette Valdes Smith, a Democrat and Dutchess County legislator pursuing the District 39 state Senate seat whose boundaries include Beacon and Philipstown, believes the program is accomplishing that in its first year as it provides up to \$12 for each dollar of donations between \$5 and \$250.

Her campaign to unseat state Sen. Rob Rolison, a Republican, has qualified for more than \$341,000 in public funds from the program, which was approved by legis-

lators in 2019 and disbursed its inaugural payments to candidates in May.

Eligibility is limited to candidates for the four statewide offices — governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general and comptroller — and the state Senate and Assembly.

More than 300 candidates for the Senate and Assembly, the only state-level races on this year's ballot, have signed up for the program, according to the Public Campaign Finance Board, a seven-member body that is part of the state Board of Elections.

In addition to Valdes Smith, who represents part of Beacon and Fishkill on the Dutchess Legislature, state Sen. Pete Harckham and Assembly Member Matt Slater, whose districts include parts of Putnam County, are among the Hudson Valley candidates receiving public funds.

Dain Pascocello, the chief of staff for Rolison, said his campaign has also registered for public financing. But none of the money disbursed as of Tuesday (July 30) has gone to Rolison, who as of July 18 had

(Continued on Page 9)



Valdes Smith

5Q

FIVE QUESTIONS: RICK ZOLZER



By Michael Turton

Rick “The Zolz” Zolzer is moving to Pamal Broadcasting after 28 years as vice president and announcer for the Hudson Valley Renegades, the New York Yankees’ High-A minor league team.

When did your love affair with baseball begin?

Playing Little League as a 6-year-old in the Bronx. My first glove was a Mickey Mantle model. I once saw him hit two opposite-field home runs in the same game — one batting right, one batting left. I saw Joe DiMaggio hit a home run in an old-timers’ game in the mid 1960s. Everyone in the neighborhood loved the Yankees. I was a fan until the 1963 World Series. I bet my family all my money, \$10.47, at 10-1 odds that the Yankees would lose. They all laughed, but the Dodgers won. I also played Little League when we moved to Cold Spring. I pitched a no-hitter, hit a couple

guys, hit two home runs and lost, 3-2.

Was the game better then?

I’m not one of those guys who says baseball was so much better back in the day and that the athletes were better. Players today are bigger, stronger, faster, quicker. You’ve got guys throwing a 95 mph changeup. It’s ridiculous to think the game was better in 1962. I like the recent rule changes: the pitch clock, putting a runner on second in extra innings. Attendance has gone up because the games are shorter. I remember going to Shea Stadium, Koufax versus Seaver. The game was one hour, 57 minutes. They can make more changes to make the game quicker.

The only new rule I don’t like is requiring a pitcher to face at least three batters.

What do you like about High-A ball?

They’re the best players in everyone’s organization. They’ve survived rookie ball, instructional ball, the New York-Penn League and short-season Class A. If you’re still playing

by High-A, they think highly of you. The 2021 Renegades were the first team affiliated with the Yankees and 15 of those guys are already in the big leagues. Ben Rice was there last year and he’s now their starting first baseman.

Who’s the best player you’ve ever seen in the minors?

Josh Hamilton was the single best baseball player I’ve seen in my life, including the big leagues. Addiction prevented him from becoming something truly special.

What lies ahead for you at Pamal Broadcasting?

I don’t know. I think it will be like the minor leagues, where I wear a million hats. I may do sales for the new Pamal sports network or do sports on some of the other stations. I’ll do whatever they ask except wash windows. I still support the Renegades. After building that brand for 28 years, why would I tear it down? It’s still the best spot for a family to go and have fun.

ON THE SPOT

By Michael Turton

What’s the best way to cook corn on the cob?

“Boil no more than 30 seconds, add butter.”



Patrick Biesemans, Cold Spring

“Boil for 5 to 7 minutes with a bit of milk and sugar.”



Mary Paden, Fishkill

“Don’t cook it, or put it in an open fire, husks on, after my special rub.”



Dave Merandy, Cold Spring

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GRODY
&
MANDY
PATINKIN

Moderated by their son
Gideon Grody-Patinkin

She's an award-winning actress and writer.
And he's a star of TV, stage and film.

Together on social media,
KATHRYN GRODY and **MANDY PATINKIN**,
interviewed by their son Gideon, shared hilarious nuggets
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Tell us what you think

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



LETTERS AND COMMENTS

Stormwater damage

This gets complicated, but to clarify: Fair Street was originally identified as eligible damage by the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("Stormwater Challenges," July 26). However, in March, many months into a detailed review process, FEMA determined that Fair and Main streets are eligible for recovery funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), a fact not previously known by the village.

Eligibility for other relief funds disqualifies a municipality for FEMA funding at that location. Therefore, we had to start the review process afresh with the FHWA, quite late in the game. We expect at least 75 percent FHWA funding, but have not yet been given a determination. Nor do we yet know if FHWA will include the entire Fair Street damage area in its award, as FEMA would have done. We hope to have feedback in the coming weeks.

The other "damages" (FEMA parlance) from July 2023 to be determined eligible for FEMA reimbursement are the intersection of Mountain and Fishkill avenues, a portion of the Back Brook streambed between Garden and Church streets, a culvert near Fish Street, the Visitor Center plaza and a portion of the rail underpass tunnel (for which the village has responsibility, rather than Metro-North). Ironically, the Cedar Street culvert did not qualify for FEMA relief. The culvert failed in the storm but was not damaged. That is FEMA's bar.

Kathleen Foley, Cold Spring
Foley is the Cold Spring mayor.

Fjord Trail

Anyone interested in the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail discussion should pay

Correction

In the July 19 issue, we reported that the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) had provided funding to local municipalities to create climate action plans. In fact, ICLEI assists with the plans, including the software used to create them, but the funding comes from the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

attention to what's going on across the pond. Residents of many European travel destinations are pushing back against unchecked tourism. Florence, Barcelona, the Balearic Islands, the Cotswolds, Venice

— the list goes on. Reporting crowded sidewalks, environmental damage, littering, traffic jams, overburdened water utilities and the deleterious effects of short-term rentals, the members of these communities have made their voices heard.

Social media and cheap travel have fueled a global travel boom. The Fjord Trail, as envisaged, could be a magnet for this type of unmanageable "Instagram tourism" that has already proven detrimental elsewhere.

Tom Stephens, Cold Spring

Fresh produce

Thanks for the story about the Graymoor farmers' market in Philipstown ("Harvesting Lives," July 26). We'd gone to buy produce there before the pandemic but had forgotten to go back.

Kendra Parker, via Facebook

NOTICE

The Philipstown Conservation Board **will not** meet in the Month of August.

The next meeting will be **September 10th, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.** at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516

NOTICE

The Philipstown Planning Board **will not** meet in the Month of August.

The next meeting will be **September 19th, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.** at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516

Reporter's Notebook

In Praise of Cemeteries

By Michael Turton



Cemeteries get a bad rap. Too often they are thought of only in terms of death and loss. They should also be about living.

Full disclosure: My views have been shaped by having grown up in a cemetery in Ontario, Canada. Our red brick home in a corner of Greenlawn Memorial Gardens had once been the cemetery manager's residence until it was offered for sale and my parents bought it.

There was no fence between Greenlawn and our house. We viewed it every evening at supper simply by looking out the dining-room window.

The men who worked in "the park," as they called it, were our closest neighbors. If our pump broke, the cemetery supplied our water; we returned the favor at times. When my dad needed a tractor, he borrowed the cemetery's. My mom baked pies I delivered to the workers to enjoy under big shade trees at lunch. I got to stay and listen to their stories.

I spent much of the summer of my 12th year shadowing Mark Nemeth, a young worker tasked with edging around each of the thousands of grave markers. Ten years later, as a summer worker, I did the same job and was amazed how many names I remembered, in part because Mark and I created an all-star baseball lineup using surnames on gravestones like Mantle, Robinson, Ruth, Cobb and Williams.

My siblings and I learned to ride a bike and drive a car in the cemetery. As a 7-year-old, I was taught how to steer, clutch and shift gears on the small Ford tractor while sitting on Bert Dufour's lap.

As teens, my brother and I were paid a dollar a week to lock the cemetery gate and mausoleum.

My family's relationship with our neighbor cemetery was unique. We couldn't understand why friends and cousins were nervous when they visited. Even the adults.

The discomfort some feel around cemeteries is learned. I was lucky to learn differently. Literally living in one helped me develop a healthier attitude toward cemeteries, funerals and even death itself.

In some communities, cemeteries have been positive, active aspects of life for centuries.

While many modern cemeteries are monotonous in layout and appearance, the "garden" cemeteries established as part of a 19th-century movement drew visitors not just for funerals, but to appreciate their design, beautiful landscapes and noteworthy memorials.

In Richmond, Virginia, the 135-acre Hollywood Cemetery, established in 1847, is still fully operational. Noted for its hills and valleys, it is a registered arboretum with more than 2,000 trees older than the cemetery itself. It offers self-guided and virtual tours along with five guided tours, by foot and four types of transportation.

Toronto's 205-acre Mount Pleasant Cemetery was named a National Historic Site in 2000 and is also a significant arboretum. With floral gardens, wildlife, sculptures and artist-made memorials, its paths and trails are open to the public for walking and cycling.

Mount Hope municipal cemetery in Rochester has a "friends of" organization and has been called a time capsule of local history. The city website describes it as "a peaceful park, a wildlife sanctuary and an outdoor museum" that offers tours, includ-



As the final resting place for many notable residents, the Cold Spring Cemetery is a walking history lesson.

Photo by L. Sparks

ing school field trips.

Can local cemeteries take anything from their counterparts?

Some, such as the Cold Spring Cemetery, Fishkill Rural Cemetery, Beacon's Old St. Joachim Cemetery and the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery were established in the mid to late 1800s, an era when new cemeteries were not just places to bury the dead but designed to be appreciated for their beauty, nature and history.

A walk through Cold Spring Cemetery really is a local history lesson. Notables buried there include James Harvey Bennett, a Spanish-American War Medal of Honor recipient; Gouverneur Kemble, founder of the West Point Foundry; Robert Parker Parrott, inventor of the Parrott gun; Julia Butterfield, for whom the local library and hospital were named; and Emily Warren Roebling, who oversaw construction of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Not to mention early settlers with surnames such as Jaycox, Warren and Davenport. The landscape is beautiful and the trees spectacular.

Some people feel that using cemeteries

even for quiet walking or cycling is disrespectful. It is not inherently disrespectful. Properly managed, it can be just the opposite. What better way to honor those who have built and contributed to our communities than to explore their cemeteries, enjoying passive recreation to keep us physically and mentally healthy, while learning about local history and native tree species in the process?

Local cemeteries can do more to provide such benefits to residents.

Could there be vandalism? Yes. But if every element of our communities susceptible to vandalism were to close, nothing would be open.

Is there a need for strict rules? Absolutely. Limited hours. No pets. No speeding. No noise. No entry during funerals. Those are just a few.

Rural and garden cemeteries are a 19th-century idea that deserves to be revisited. We can use cemeteries more, in reasonable ways, for the public good. Take a walk. Ride a bike. Follow a self-guided tour.

Newer cemeteries should also learn from what old cemeteries have taught us — that they can be about much more than death and loss.



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NEWS BRIEFS

Beacon Police Investigate Multiple Stabbings

Teens involved in altercation near South Avenue Park

At least three teenagers were stabbed in a fight near South Avenue Park in Beacon this week, police said.

Officers responded to a 911 call at 12:17 a.m. on Wednesday (July 31) indicating that there had been an incident at Looper's Plaza, the shopping center at the intersection of South and Wolcott avenues.

Once on the scene, police located a group of individuals walking toward West Center Street. One of them, a 16-year-old male who was bleeding, said he had been in a fight and was stabbed. He was transported to Montefiore St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital in Newburgh for a non-life-threatening laceration to the head.

While officers were interviewing him at the hospital, two other individuals believed to be associated with the incident, a 17-year-

old female and an 18-year-old male, entered the emergency room also suffering from non-life-threatening lacerations.

Beacon police urge anyone who witnessed the incident or who has further information to call 845-831-4111 and ask to speak to a detective.

Beacon Project Awarded \$1 Million

GarageWORKS to build artists' studios

The state has awarded \$1 million to GarageWORKS, a project combining artist studios with a gallery at 3-5 Henry St. in Beacon.

Gov. Kathy Hochul on Tuesday (July 30) announced more than \$64 million in awards to 43 projects through the state's Restore New York Communities Initiative.

Property owner Michael Braden plans to convert the one-time Studebaker showroom on Henry Street into a carbon-neutral, solar-powered studio for himself

and three other artists. GarageWORKS will also feature space for community programming and public art installations.

The project earlier received a \$2 million grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

Restore New York supports municipal revitalization efforts to reduce blight, reinvigorate communities and generate new residential and economic opportunities. In addition to GarageWORKS, five other Mid-Hudson projects were awarded a combined \$5 million from the program.

Hudson River Power Line Install to Begin

Project will carry electricity from Canada to NYC

On Aug. 9, ships will begin burying a power line from Canada that will run 68 miles under the Hudson River between Greene and Rockland counties, representatives for the project said on Monday (July 29).

The \$6 billion, 339-mile Champlain Hudson Power Express, whose construction began in November 2022, will pass by Dutchess, Putnam and seven other counties to its destination in Astoria.

Two 5-inch cables with a capacity of 400 kilovolts will be buried 7 feet below the riverbed during most of the route, according to a construction and environmen-

tal-management plan filed with the state Department of Public Service.

The completed line, which begins at a hydroelectric facility in Quebec, is supposed to supply 1,250 megawatts of renewable electricity to ConEd, enough to power more than 1 million homes when it goes online in spring 2026 and reduce carbon emissions statewide by 37 million metric tons.

State Announces 9D Lane Closure

One lane at Breakneck Tunnel through Nov. 14

The state Department of Transportation on Monday (July 29) closed one lane on Route 9D at Breakneck Tunnel through Nov. 14. A temporary signal is regulating northbound and southbound traffic. The agency said the closure is part of a \$2.4 million project to replace the tunnel lighting and concrete lining; resurface the travel lanes and shoulders; and widen the shoulders for pedestrians.

Slots Open at Camp For Children of Overdose Victims

Free overnight program set for September in Fishkill

A free overnight camp in Fishkill for children who have lost a parent, caregiver, sibling or friend to an overdose is accepting registrations.

Children between ages 7 and 17 (or 18 if still in high school) are eligible for the Comfort Zone Camp, which is being held Sept. 13 to 15 at the Fresh Air Fund's Sharpe Reservation.

The program includes a separate free program for parents and guardians, and limited scholarships to cover travel expenses. In addition to arts and crafts, games and swimming, the activities include a Healing Circle led by mental health professionals.

Applicants can register and find more information at bit.ly/comfort-camp.

Dutchess County Honored for Accessibility

Verified travel destination for people with disabilities

Wheel the World, an organization that helps people with disabilities book accessible travel, has recognized Dutchess County for providing accurate accessibility information for hotels, activities and restaurants.

Fifty sites, including three in Beacon, were evaluated on features ranging from obstacle-free areas to bed heights to signage in order to accommodate guests with mobility, vision, hearing, sensory and other needs.

Dutchess Tourism contracted Wheel the World to provide on-site assessments highlighting positive areas of accessibility standards as well as areas for improvement. Online training was provided on how to offer inclusive service for people with accessibility needs.

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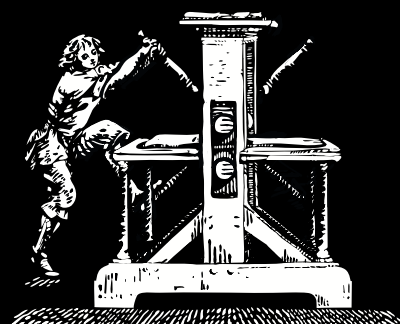
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Beacon Schools Dialing Up Cellphone Rules

Statewide mandate may soon follow

By Jeff Simms

Superintendent Matt Landahl will share the Beacon City School District's proposed new cellphone policy with the community before the school board's next meeting on Aug. 19, when it will be discussed.

The board will hold a public hearing the following week, on Aug. 26, on related changes to the student code of conduct. Its members could vote on the phone policy that night.

At minimum, the new rule is expected to ban phones from classrooms at Rombout Middle School and Beacon High School, and altogether from the district's four elementary schools.

The existing policy, adopted in 2021, allows phones during "non-instructional time" if students follow the code of conduct and the acceptable-use policy. According to the code, teachers and administrators can confiscate phones if students violate the policy.

While members of the school board's policy committee have worked behind the scenes drafting new regulations, the Aug. 19 meeting will be the first discussion among the full, nine-member board on a proposal. If a policy is adopted on Aug. 26, it is expected to go into effect on Sept. 4, the first day of school for students.

At the same time, Gov. Kathy Hochul on July 15 kicked off a statewide listening tour on phone usage in schools. The governor, who noted that a poll released by the Pew Research Center in June indicates that 72 percent of high school teachers nationwide consider cellphone distractions a major problem, held a roundtable at Guiderland High School in Albany County.

Hochul has said she would propose a statewide policy later this year. After the discussion at Guiderland, she said that a "piecemeal approach," in which individual school districts enforce their own policies, would not be how she tackles the issue.

Hochul's office said that additional roundtable discussions will be held in the coming months, but dates and locations have not been announced.

District parents have asked the Beacon school board to restrict access to phones at school several times in recent months. At its last meeting, on July 22, Jean Huang, a past president of the parent-teacher-student organization at J.V. Forrestal Elementary, requested full-day pouching, using something like the locking pouches made by Yondr.

"Any half-measures, where the kids are still allowed to have phones at recess and lunch will not really solve the problems of bullying and self-harm and all the horrible things that go along with social media and smartphone usage," she said.

However, another parent, Greta Byrum, a broadband and digital equity professional, cautioned the board about banning sources of information or getting into a "situation where we have to monitor what's on the bodies of our children."

"Any half-measures, where the kids are still allowed to have phones at recess and lunch will not really solve the problems of bullying and self-harm and all the horrible things that go along with social media and smartphone usage."

~ Jean Huang

J.V. Forrestal parent

She said the district should consider how children would get to their phones in "scary incidents, including school intruders, where I would want to be in contact with my child."

Landahl said during the meeting that the district's new policy is being driven by teacher feedback.

"They've asked for something to be done in the classroom," he said. "Our teachers

want to be able to do their job and teach, and they don't want to have to be telling kids to put their phone away 10 times a class."

Landahl also said that changes to the code of conduct, which will likely involve enforcement of the cellphone policy, would address students disregarding the policy to the extent that "it becomes an issue" but would not include "searching kids for their phones every day."

Board members spent considerable time discussing a trickier element of the cellphone issue: educating students and parents about responsible usage outside of school. Kristan Flynn and Flora Stadler, the board president, both spoke about situations in which their children felt targeted by classmates.

"I've heard it since I've been on the board — that a lot of stuff that happens outside of school, mostly on phones, shows up in school," Flynn said. She advocated holding digital literacy education sessions for students at all grade levels.

"That's how smoking cessation happened, by educating kids in school about smoking," she said.

Stadler pointed out the board's goals of having district graduates exhibit empathy, self-regulation and good citizenship, among other attributes. "No matter what we do with this tool, it's in their lives forever," she said. "This is our time to teach them how to be responsible."

Landahl said this week that administrators are working on an educational component but aren't ready to share details.



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What is HHFT planning for the Fjord Trail?

Scenic Hudson and their subsidiary, Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail (HHFT), want to build a major tourist attraction they say will be “the epicenter of tourism in the Hudson Valley” and have “national prominence.”[§]

HHFT is planning for up to 654 paid parking spaces along Route 9D – 179% more than current capacity.*

On July 9, HHFT disclosed a new parking plan for the Fjord Trail, revising the number of planned parking spaces from 599, which they reported in March, to upwards of 654. HHFT is also planning to make use of 350 planned new parking spaces at Boscobel and, on weekends, the parking lots at the Cold Spring and Beacon Metro-North train stations – with all lots connected by shuttle buses. HHFT’s plan for paid parking at priority lots will limit access to only those who can afford it and draw more traffic into congested residential areas.

Up to 1 million visitors are projected annually, with most arriving by car.

This level of visitation would be roughly double the number HHFT initially projected. Philipstown and Beacon are already feeling the effects of over-tourism and new development, and were not built or designed to accommodate this extreme level of tourism.

Two roundabouts are planned for Route 9D – one at Little Stony Point and another at Dutchess Manor.[‡]

Route 9D is the only through road with access to the Fjord Trail. The new and expanded parking lots that HHFT wants to build will create bottlenecks, leading to backups. Traffic ruins experiences for visitors, complicates weekend routines for residents, and slows response times for emergency police, fire, and ambulance services.

The Fjord Trail is not a done deal. Learn more and get involved before it’s too late.



ProtectTheHighlands.org

[§] Email from Ned Sullivan (President of Scenic Hudson) to Erik Kulleseid (then-Commissioner of NYS Parks), 1/13/22, received via FOIL.
^{*} HHFT, "Request for Proposals: Parking Lot and Shuttle Bus Operation," 7/9/24.
[‡] Email between HHFT consultants and NYS DOT, 2/1/24, received via FOIL.



Financing *(from Page 1)*

\$21,000 in his campaign account compared to \$313,000 for Valdes Smith.

"I think it's great, not just because it helps smaller campaigns like mine — gives us more of a shot," said Valdes Smith. "But it's involving more of our voters, and everyday people, in the entire process of the campaign."

After years of lobbying by advocates for campaign-finance reform, the program officially took effect on Nov. 9, 2022, a day after that year's general election.

Candidates have to opt into the program and meet criteria that include having an opponent and meet limits on the amount of personal funds donated to their campaigns.

Assembly Member Jonathan Jacobson, whose district includes Beacon, is running unopposed. Assembly Member Dana Levenberg, whose district includes Philipstown, has not received any public financing, according to payment reports. Her campaign did not return an email about her registration status.

They also have to reach minimum thresholds for overall donations and the number of people in their district who have given between \$5 and \$250, the amounts considered small-dollar and eligible for matching.

Candidates for governor must raise a minimum of \$500,000 and collect small-dollar donations from at least 5,000 people, and people running for the other three statewide offices have thresholds of \$100,000 and 1,000 donors.

For Valdes Smith's challenge to Rolison, she needed to meet the requirements for state Senate: at least \$12,000 raised and eligible donations from at least 150 residents in District 39. (The minimums for the state Assembly are \$6,000 and 75 donors.)

Meeting the requirements opens the door to a generous benefit: a \$6 match for

every \$1 raised by candidates for the four statewide offices and, for state Senate and Assembly campaigns, matching that starts at \$12 per dollar for the first \$50 donated before decreasing to \$9 for the next \$100 and \$8 for the final \$100.

"I think it's great, not just because it helps smaller campaigns like mine — gives us more of a shot. But it's involving more of our voters."

~ Yvette Valdes Smith

state Senate candidate

About 400 residents from District 39 have donated eligible amounts to her campaign, said Valdes Smith. Her campaign has submitted enough contributions to the PCFB to qualify for the maximum funding, \$375,000, established for state Senate candidates, she said.

"You're on the ground, you're talking to people, you're calling voters, you're meeting them where they're at to ask for them to invest their hard-earned money in your campaign," she said.

Many of those donors feel empowered when told that a \$50 donation can yield \$600 in matching funds, and are more interested in the election, said Valdes Smith. The system also ensures that candidates "of all backgrounds" have the money to compete, she said.

"I'm a Latina and a former public school teacher," said Valdes Smith. "I am not from a big-money background, with donors with big pockets."

The Legislature approved spending from the pool in July 2022, with Philipstown receiving \$740,000, initially to connect the Garrison Institute to the water district. (Cold Spring received \$203,000 and Nelsonville, \$64,000.)

A request by Philipstown to reallocate the sales-tax portion of the funding, \$370,000, to instead connect a new well to recharge the district's fading water supply won approval from the Legislature in June.

"We are close to getting the well hooked up," said Van Tassel. "We finally got all the approvals that we needed."

The well is expected to eliminate the need to purchase water for Garrison Landing. Created in 1998, the water district formerly drew from three wells, but they more recently have been unable to meet demand.

According to the town, trucking in water costs \$25,000 to \$30,000 a month. Fees collected from the water district's customers for operations and maintenance are capped by state law at \$20,000 annually, leaving Philipstown to spend town funds to cover the remainder.

In its search for a new source, Philipstown considered spending \$800,000 to run a mile-long connection from its water tank at the Recreation Center. The town also drilled a 960-foot well that did not turn out to have sufficient water.

Beacon Church *(from Page 1)*

The Rev. John Williams, the rector at St. Andrew, said this week that the Diocese would entertain offers on the South Avenue property, but "we're not intending to sell right now." Instead, he said, the decision has been made to sell two pictorial Tiffany windows from the South Avenue church (a third will go to the Wolcott Avenue campus) and 12 to 14 geometric glass Tiffany windows, all dating to 1900, when the sanctuary was built.

In addition, the church has put aside funding to operate the South Avenue campus as an outreach center for nonprofit agencies serving the community, Williams said. Space could eventually be available for rental, or the church could reach a short-term agreement to give space to an organization that needs it but cannot afford rent, he said.

"We'll explore working with other agencies to see if we want to keep that [site] as an outreach center permanently," Williams said.

It is currently inhabited by the church's food pantry and the Rise Up Project that recently helped produce the *Lines of Demarcation: Memories from Beacon's Black Communities of the 20th Century* documentary. Several Narcotics Anonymous groups also hold meetings there.

The lawsuit, filed by St. Andrew after construction began on the new Beacon

fire station, is in its 14th month. In June 2023, Beacon officials erected a fence around the gravel lot behind the church to store equipment and materials for the fire station. The church argued that the city could not restrict parishioners' access to the lot because a 1987 agreement between St. Andrew and the Lewis Tompkins Hose Co., the former owner of the lot, guaranteed that both could use it.

The city purchased the lot and opened it for public parking in 2020.

Beacon attorneys on July 12 filed their opposition to a church request made in February for summary judgment, or a decision by Dutchess County Judge Thomas Davis without a trial or witness testimony. The request, made Feb. 17, seeks to "hastily obtain a judicial declaration" without sufficient evidence, city attorneys Nick Ward-Willis and Robert Zitt wrote.

The attorneys called the 1987 pact an "agreement to agree" to negotiate an easement over the parcel but said it is not an enforceable commitment obligating the city to anything.

Church attorney David Chen filed a response six days later, arguing that the "clear, unambiguous language of the 1987 agreement gives the church a right to park in the parking lot co-equal to that of the city." Chen also said that Davis should disregard as opinion the affidavit of a title search expert used by the city.

Water District *(from Page 1)*

commissioner, wrote in a memo that despite "valiant efforts" by the county and Philipstown, "the expenses would likely not be eligible for ARPA and/or not be in compliance with rules for procurement using ARPA funds."

John Van Tassel, Philipstown's supervisor, said the town was "misled" by its ARPA consultant into believing any expenses associated with providing drinking water to the Garrison Landing Water District's residents and businesses would be eligible.

The town discovered that the guidelines prohibited spending ARPA funds on the water that Philipstown has been buying for the district's 84 users as it connects a new well to the system, said Van Tassel.

"Everything provided with trucking water is covered, except the water itself," he said. "I could have purchased a truck to truck the water, built the road, put the piping in, but I can't buy the product that we need with the ARPA funds."

Putnam County received \$19 million from ARPA, a \$1.9 trillion COVID-relief spending plan enacted in 2021 by President Joe Biden. Putnam combined \$5 million of its share with an equal amount in sales-tax revenue to create a \$10 million pool to share with towns and villages based on their populations.



Free Argentine Tango at Long Dock Park

**Every Tues. Aug 6 thru Sept 24
5:30 PM to Dusk**

Argentine Tango at Long Dock Park
FREE - Lessons at 5:30 PM

Fri. Aug 2 - 7 PM

LIT LIT - Literary Open Mic

Sign-up start 6:30 - Readings at 7:00

Sat + Sun. Aug 3 + 4 - 1-5 PM

WIND - BREATH - WATER - Exhibit

Sound & Vision by Artist of Chinese Decent
Don't miss the Final Weekend

Sat. Aug 10 - 1-5 PM

PINK & BLUE Art Show

Celebrates the environmental movement
beginning in the HIV and spreading around the world
Join us for the OPENING RECEPTION 1-3 PM
Featuring singing, stories and special guest

Sun. Aug 11 - 3 PM

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PINOT & AUGUSTINE**

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MYSTERY WRITERS – Members of the New York chapter of the Mystery Writers of America attended the July 28 performance of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* at the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival and took a picture with Kurt Rhoads, who stars as a certain mustachioed Belgian detective.

Photo by Ross Corsair



POLLINATING – Joan Deneher of Philipstown used her iPhone on July 27 to capture a bee’s embrace of one of the marigolds growing on her deck to deter pests and attract pollinators. “The bee flew from flower to flower for about two hours,” she said.



POPPINS JR. – The Depot Theatre youth program presented from July 25 to 27 its production of *Mary Poppins Jr.*, a musical based on P.L. Travers’ books about the flying nanny.

Photo by Ross Corsair

The Calendar



Nance Williamson (left), Sarin Monae West and Malika Samuel star in *By the Queen*.

All Hail the Queen!

Shakespeare's Margaret takes center stage

By Marc Ferris

Whitney White's trajectory from MFA to CAA happened fast.

After earning a Master of Fine Arts from Brown University in 2015, she is now represented by Creative Artists Agency, a talent juggernaut in the entertainment world.

Her degree is in acting, but directing earned her a Tony Award nomination in April for *Jaja's African Hair Braiding*. Now, her play *By the Queen* is in rotation at the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival through Aug. 31, under the direction of Shana Cooper.

By the Queen, subtitled "A Survivor's Tale," contains plenty of the Bard's lines

and scenes, which White uses to craft a sophisticated psychological study of Queen Margaret of Anjou, captured on the same battlefield as Joan of Arc. She is also one of the only characters to appear in multiple Shakespeare plays.

"Shakespeare isn't the Bible," says White, so it's adaptable and applicable to today. To punctuate the point, she immediately pierces the fourth wall as the main character struts toward the audience and says, "Hi there. Oh, don't be shocked. I can see you and I know that you see me."

Margaret, for whom Shakespeare coined the term "she-wolf of France," gets airtime in four of his so-called history plays: *Henry VI*, in three parts, and *Richard III*, which White's script calls "one of the most epic — badass — stories ever written."

This queen is also Shakespeare's only female character to age chronologically.

The script presents just about all of Margaret's mentions, utterances and scenes from the original plays, shifting gears from old prose to modern English and back without hitting any speed bumps.

White divides her life into three roles: Margaret 1 (Malika Samuel), age 16 to her "dirty thirties," according to the character description; Margaret 2 (Sarin Monae West), who makes dire decisions and suffers terrible consequences; and Margaret 3 (Nance Williamson), the only character in *Richard III* to confront the immoral king.

The play is framed as Margaret 3's flashback during her final exile in France, where she enjoys wine and mulls her fourth and final act. She and the other Margarets are onstage together almost the entire time as they interact, question motives and revel in her/their ability to survive this tragical

(Continued on Page 15)



Leah Valentine

Photo by Callie Boehm

Magic, Grief and Rhyme

A glimpse into the circus of Leah Valentine

By Ava Fisherman

When Leah Valentine performs, you sense that she is sharing something with you — something personal, vulnerable and valuable.

In her most recent single, "Mother's Day," she sings with a blend of irony and truth: "I just ate a cheese Danish at your gravestone / Wished there was somewhere to sit / Feels kind of awkward just standing / But I like the plot we picked."

Valentine, 24, who is based in Beacon, has a monthly gig at Yobo in Newburgh. Often wearing a pair of bloomers straight out of the Victorian era, she is not your average singer-songwriter. "How's everyone's food going?" she asked at a recent show. "Yum!" and "So good!" came the responses from spectators. "Good, good," Valentine replied. "Good, good, good. I'm going to make you cry in it."

The singer credits the offbeat poet Shel Silverstein and her late mother for inspiration in life and music. "There was something genuine and special about her — she was very authentic," Valentine says of her mother, who died in 2020. "That's something I've wanted to embody in my creative life, and just life, as itself."

We met at Big Mouth Coffee Roasters in Beacon. Valentine's responses have been edited for brevity.

When did you start writing songs?

I've always had a singing thing going on, always written songs, always had a fascination with poetry. I love that the order you put words in — how they rhyme or complement each other, or choosing a specific word that could mean the same thing but

(Continued on Page 15)



Travis Raeburn and West face off.



Stephen Michael Spencer, Luis Quintero, Malika Samuel and Raeburn

THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)

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

COMMUNITY

SAT 3

Mid-Hudson Comic Con

POUGHKEEPSIE

10 a.m. – 6 p.m. MJN Center
14 Civic Center Plaza
midhudsonciviccenter.org

The event will include a cosplay contest, more than 100 exhibitors, panel discussions and games. Also SUN 4. *Cost: \$34 (\$26 children)*

SAT 3

Clearwater Folk Picnic

BEACON

Noon – 4 p.m. University Settlement
724 Wolcott Ave.
facebook.com/sloopclearwater

The lineup of performers will feature musicians who played with and carry on Pete Seeger's legacy, including Laurie Siegel, the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus and the Beacon School of Rock. There will be activities for children and a food truck. Donations welcome. *Free*

FRI 9

Blood Drive

BEACON

11:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Beacon Recreation Center
23 W. Center St. | redcrossblood.org
Make an appointment or walk in to donate blood.

FRI 9

Star Party

COLD SPRING

8:30 p.m.
Canopus Lake Beach Parking Lot
facebook.com/littlestonypoint

Take a look at the stars with telescopes and guides. Register in advance. In case it's cloudy, the event will be held on SAT 10.

SAT 10

Modern Makers Market

COLD SPRING

11 a.m. – 5 p.m. St. Mary's
1 Chestnut St. | hopsonthehudson.com
More than 50 makers and artists will be selling their creations, including woodworkers, potters, candlemakers, jewelers and glassmakers. Rain or shine.

SUN 11

Corn Festival

BEACON

Noon – 5 p.m.
Pete & Toshi Seeger Riverfront Park
beaconsloopclub.org

Celebrate the harvest with Hudson Valley sweet corn, lemonade, hot dogs and more. There will be music on two stages, children's activities and sails on the Beacon Sloop Club's boat, the Woody Guthrie.



Alec Halstead, Aug. 10

VISUAL ART

SAT 3

Blind Dates Recursive 08

BEACON

2 p.m. Dia Beacon | 3 Beekman St.
845-231-0811 | diaart.org

Artist and writer Laurel Schwulst will lead the series finale with the question: "When, where and how are we?" Included with museum admission.

SECOND SATURDAY

SAT 10

Pink and Blue Art Show

BEACON

1 – 3 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
howlandculturalcenter.org

The exhibit celebrates the environmental movement in the Hudson Valley and around the world with photography by Ross Corsair, Zinnia Gutowski, Jim Richards, Ian Hutton, Mene Liondos and Alfons Rodriguez, and paintings by Selva Ozelli, Semine Hazar, Fatma Kadir, Ilhan Sayin and Mehmet Kuran. Through Sept. 29.

SAT 10

Alec Halstead

BEACON

4 – 6 p.m. Bannerman Island Gallery
150 Main St. | 845-831-6346
bannermancastle.org

The Navy and Air Force veteran will exhibit photographs of the Hudson Valley and New York City. Through Sept. 8.

SAT 10

Betso | Snack Rabbit

BEACON

5 – 9 p.m. Clutter Gallery
139 Main St. | clutter.co

There will be figures and multiples from the artists. Through Sept. 6.

SAT 10

The Alchemy of Water

BEACON

5 – 7 p.m. Hudson Beach Glass
162 Main St.
hudsonbeachglassshop.com

Ronnie Farley's photo series will be on view through Sept. 2.

SAT 10

Solastagia

BEACON

6 – 9 p.m. Super Secret Projects
484 Main St. | supersecretprojects.com

Kohar Minassian's images created with sunlight and without a camera explore the feeling of anxiety about the environment and homesickness. Through Sept. 8.

SAT 10

The Shape of Things

BEACON

6 – 8 p.m. BAU Gallery | 506 Main St.
845-440-7584 | baugallery.org

Mikiko Ino curated the juried group show and winners will be awarded exhibitions in 2025. Through Sept. 8.

SAT 10

Memor

BEACON

7 – 9:30 p.m. Distortion Society
155 Main St. | distortionsociety.com

Frances Segismundo's abstract paintings seem to be composed as aerial photographs and explore her emotions through observations of the natural world. Through Oct. 5.

NATURE & OUTDOORS

SAT 3

Garden Tours

BEACON

11 a.m. & 1 p.m. Mount Gulian
145 Sterling St. | mountgulian.org

Take a guided tour of the grounds and learn about James Brown, a formerly enslaved man who became a master gardener. Also SUN 4. *Cost: \$14 (\$12 seniors, \$8 ages 6 to 18, free for ages 6 and younger and members)*

WED 7

Insect Safari

WAPPINGERS FALLS

5:30 p.m. Stony Kill Farm
79 Farmstead Lane | stonykill.org
Meet at the Sierra Trailhead and take a guided walk to appreciate insects as part of Butterflies and Blooms week programming. *Cost: \$5*

SAT 10

Cicadas

BEACON

8 p.m. Stanza Books | 508 Main St.
845-440-3906 | stanzabooks.com

David Rothenberg, a musician and writer, and Edwin Torres, a poet, will share their experience of the convergence of the I7- and 13-year cicada broods, which happens once every 221 years.

SAT 10

Evening Moth Walk

WAPPINGERS FALLS

8 p.m. Stony Kill Farm
79 Farmstead Lane | stonykill.org
Bring a flashlight for an after-hours guided walk to look at moths. *Cost: \$5*

TALKS & TOURS

WED 7

Exercise for Better Balance

BEACON

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

Elizabeth Castanga will lead the class in movement sequences designed to support balance and coordination. Registration required.

THURS 8

Lotus Lantern Workshop

BEACON

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

Teens and adults can learn about Korean culture while making a spirit object.

SUN 11

Grant Peeples

PUTNAM VALLEY

3 p.m. Tompkins Corners Cultural Center
729 Peekskill Hollow Road
tompkinscorners.org

The poet, author and singer-

songwriter will read from his work, followed by a poetry open mic. *Cost: \$10*

KIDS & FAMILY

SAT 3

The Wizard of Oz

GARRISON

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

Watch the 1939 classic about Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tinman and the Cowardly Lion following the Yellow Brick Road to Oz to meet the wizard.

SAT 3

Once Upon a Mattress

GARRISON

7 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre
10 Garrison's Landing | 845-424-3900
philipstowndepottheatre.org

The Depot Teens cast will perform the Broadway hit about a kingdom where no one can marry until the prince finds a wife who must first pass the queen's test. Also SUN 4. *Cost: \$15*

THURS 8

Page Rangers with Jess & Ness

COLD SPRING

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

There will be an outdoor book club meeting at the Little Stony Point beach. Registration required.

SAT 10

Summer Reading Finale

GARRISON

1 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
477 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org

Enjoy Homestyle's ice cream and meet animals from the Two by Two Animal Haven to celebrate your summer reading.

SUN 11

Pinot & Augustine

BEACON

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

Happenstance Theater performers will put on a circus-inspired show with physical comedy and music. *Cost: \$10 (\$15 door, ages 12 and younger free)*

STAGE & SCREEN

SAT 3

Always ... Patsy Cline

BEACON

6 & 7 p.m. Boats leave dock
845-831-6346 | bannermancastle.org

Jessica Welch will play the country singer in a show on Bannerman Island that includes 27 of Cline's songs. *Cost: \$75 or \$80*

SAT 3

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd

PHILIPSTOWN

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

This adaptation of an Agatha Christie novel features Kurt Rhoads

and Nance Williamson in lead roles. Also MON 5, WED 7, FRI 9. Through Sept. 1. *Cost: \$10 to \$100*

SAT 3
Girls Night: The Musical
PEEKSKILL
8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039
paramounthudsonvalley.com
Catch the touring company of this off-Broadway show that follows a group of friends. *Cost: \$45 to \$60*

SUN 4
Medea: Re-Versed
PHILIPSTOWN
7:30 p.m.
Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival
2015 Route 9 | 845-265-9575
hvshakespeare.org
This is a hip-hop version of Euripides's play with Sarin Monae West in the lead. Also SUN 11. Through Sept. 2. *Cost: \$10 to \$100*

WED 7
Jumanji Double Feature
COLD SPRING
3 p.m. & 6 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org
Watch the 1995 film starring Robin Williams as a character who is released when children play a game and cause trouble that can only be stopped if they finish it. Then watch the 2017 film as teens are trapped in a magical video game that they have to finish to be released.

THURS 8
By the Queen
PHILIPSTOWN
7:30 p.m.
Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival
2015 Route 9 | 845-265-9575
hvshakespeare.org
Shakespeare's story of the War of the Roses is retold through the perspective of Queen Margaret. Also SAT 10. Through Aug. 31. See Page 11. *Cost: \$10 to \$100*

FRI 9
Friday Night Live
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Move Cold Spring
34 Chestnut St. | ticketbud.com/events
Cold Spring Comedy will present comedians Gina Ginsberg, Andrew Steiner, Mikey Scott, Alex Kollar and a drop-in guest. *Cost: \$20*

FRI 9
Plunder Quest
BEACON
7 p.m. Bannerman Island
845-831-6346 | bannermancastle.org
The 2022 film shot at the island chronicles an adventure to recover Prohibition-era whiskey. *Cost: \$40*

FRI 9
My Garden of a Thousand Bees
WAPPINGERS FALLS
8 p.m. Stony Kill Farm
79 Farmstead Lane | stonykill.org
Gather outdoors to watch the PBS documentary about a wildlife

photographer who sets out to explore the insects in his yard during the pandemic lockdown.

SAT 10
Unforgiven
COLD SPRING
8:30 p.m. Dockside Park
coldspringfilm.org
The Cold Spring Film Society will show the 1992 film starring Clint Eastwood as a retired gunslinger who takes one last job. Bring chairs, blankets and insect repellent. Concessions will be available.

MUSIC
SAT 3
Barnaby!
BEACON
7 p.m. Kube | 211 Fishkill Ave.
barnaby.band
The Beacon-based punk band, led by Mimi Sun Longo, will perform. Watson opens. Follow the signs.

SAT 3
Frye & Harris
PUTNAM VALLEY
7:30 p.m. Tompkins Corners C.C.
729 Peekskill Hollow Road
tompkinscorners.org
Bob Frye (keyboards, synthesizers) and Alexander Harris (saxophone and synthesizers) improvise and create jazz, electronic and funk fusions. *Cost: \$20*

SAT 3
Cuboricua
BEACON
8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The band's music draws from Cuban and Puerto Rican sounds of the Caribbean. *Cost: \$20 (\$25 door)*

SUN 4
Eliza Neals
BEACON
7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The blues-rock singer and pianist will be joined by openers Jason Domico and the New Blue. *Cost: \$25 (\$30 door)*

FRI 9
Alison Brown
BEACON
8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The Grammy-winning banjoist will be joined by members of her quintet, John Ragusa (flute), Mason Embry (piano), Garry West (bass) and Bryan Brock (drums). *Cost: \$35 (\$40 door)*



SAT 10
A Summer Night's Dream
WEST POINT
7:30 p.m. Trophy Point Amphitheater
westpointband.com
The concert band's program will include music from *West Side Story* and Franz von Suppé's *Summer Night's Dream*.

SAT 10
Christine Lavin
BEACON
8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
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MON 5
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845-838-5011 | beaconnyny.gov

TUES 6
County Legislature
CARMEL
7 p.m. Historic Courthouse
44 Gleneida Ave. | 845-208-7800
putnamcountynyny.com

WED 7
Village Board
COLD SPRING
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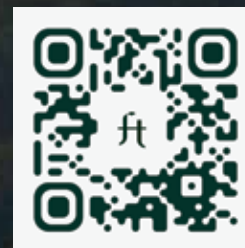
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Shakespeare *(from Page 11)*

history tour through the War of the Roses in the 1400s.

White denotes the presence of “a lot of men. Too many men” in the four plays and dismisses their injurious affairs with comic effect: “blah blah blah politics, blah blah blah land, blah blah blah power.”

During battle scenes, the principals and minimalist ensemble (Bobby Moreno, Luis Quintero, Travis Raeburn, Stephen Michael Spencer) scream “waaarrrr!” and engage in madcap play-fighting antics as light and sound play along.

The script probes more than it preaches. Samuel’s note-perfect Margaret 1 almost hijacks the show based on her performance, not necessarily the lines. The character debuts as naive comic relief and ultimately evolves into a moral compass as Margaret 2 murders rivals, becomes a widow, watches her son get killed and is served her lover’s severed head on a platter, “medium rare.”

Yet the play never condescends into an anti-male screed and calls Shakespeare the “greatest writer who ever lived,” even as White subjects his words to inquiry, marshaling line after misogynistic line hurled at Margaret to examine his perspective onstage in real time.

This approach could easily devolve into dull academic deconstruction, but White handles these sections with nimble effect. Employing a hilarious herald (Jacob Ming-Trent) to condense the action and serve as a “purist,” she zeroes in on the pivotal characters and distills the four plays so well that minimal prior knowledge is required to follow along.

As Margaret 3, Williamson conveys the older queen with confidence as she inexplicably returns from banishment in France to confront Richard III. Otherwise, Williamson as narrator is the bemused, resigned, “resplendent elder” called for in the character description.

Margaret “is often portrayed as a crazy bag lady,” says Williamson, a troupe member since 1998 and a Garrison resident. “People ignored her because older women aren’t seen as valuable, but Shakespeare called her a prophetess and Whitney restores her dignity.”

Beyond intellectual entertainment, *By the Queen* is a call to action and an homage to White’s deceased grandmother, Mother Esther, mentioned in the play: “When was the last time you sought the wisdom of an elder?”

After Margaret 2 says that “any woman you see over the age of 45 has seen some [stuff] — okay?” the older iteration replies: “Women over the age of 60 ... should be paid.”

Though White conveys a distinctive point of view, audience members must make their own conclusions about Margaret of Anjou and determine if they plan on reaching out to the female survivors in their lives.

Performances of By the Queen will be held at 7:30 p.m. today (Aug. 2), Thursday (Aug. 8) and Aug. 10. Through Aug. 31. Tickets range from \$10 to \$100 and are available at hvshakespeare.org.

Leah Valentine *(from Page 11)*

sounds prettier — can make a huge difference. I’ve started thinking of it recently in a more nuanced way, probably because I’m diving into music as my life.

Do you write songs for yourself or because you have something to share?

It changes. It’s always a reflection of the process that I’m going through, and right now that is authenticity and humanness. That’s why I post my breakdowns on social media. We have to be in that space sometimes, as low as we can get, to realize, “Something’s not working, let’s reassess.”

What ideas inspire you?

I’m inspired by life, and where I’m at in mine — digging deep, facing different parts of myself. My songs usually start out as poems or stream-of-consciousness. Sometimes a melody will come along. I get bored easily and so it’s important, if I’m going to listen to it over and over, that it stimulates my brain and can potentially stimulate other people’s brains. I still feel very much at the beginning of my recording journey and this whole journey.

Your songs are reflective but also goofy. Why is that?

I’ve always just enjoyed the ha-ha’s. My mother’s illness started when I was 12 or 13, and she passed when I was 20. That was such a hard time. My first few songs were me meekly saying, “Help! I can’t ... but I need to ... but I can’t.” There was an element of playfulness in them, which was my way of getting through it. I’ve been connecting with a circus-y vibe these days because it incorporates tragedy and humor. It’s making fun of life. We put meaning on things and we don’t always have to.

What do you like about performing?

It’s good practice for accepting myself. I love having a collective experience with the audience. There have been shows where I finish and get down on myself. That’s just the artist’s experience. I have to be like, “If I choose to live this artist’s life, I’m going to go through that experience.”

You talk openly about your grief, which is unusual.

I’m happy to talk about hard stuff in



Leah Valentine

Photo by Callie Boehm

general. It feels right to me. We humans feel uncomfortable so much of the time that breaking that ice can make you feel seen. We’re all going through stuff, so if someone can flat out say it you’re like, “Oh, we can say that? We’re allowed to go there?” I’m weirdly grateful for the experience with my mom. Of course, I wish it didn’t happen and I can’t change it, but I know now what hard life looks like. And I got through it. I can now see, while acknowledging the heart-

break and grief and ugliness, the beauty in that experience. Coming out on the other side is empowering.

Yobo is located at 1297 Route 300 in Newburgh. See yoborestaurant.com or call 845-564-3848. Valentine’s next performance is scheduled for Aug. 16. Her songs can be streamed on Spotify (bit.ly/leah-valentine) and updates are posted at instagram.com/lady Leah Valentine.

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The Growth Director will work approximately 4 days a week or equivalent hours.



For details, see
highlandscurrent.org/current-jobs.

NOTICE

The Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals will hold their regular monthly meeting on **Monday, August 12th, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY.**

If you are unable to join in person but would like to watch, the meeting will be livestreaming on youtube.com, search for Philipstown Zoning Board August 2024.

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Reporter's Notebook:

Converting A Pickleball 'Snob'

By Joey Asher

"Joe is a pickleball snob."

Those were the words of my friend and tennis doubles partner Bobby Clark, whom I met at Taconic Sport & Racquet in Hopewell Junction, when I turned down yet another invitation to play pickleball.

Bobby, who, like many tennis players, also plays pickleball, was right.

I'm 62 and have been playing tennis



since I was 8. And I have always scoffed at pickleball. To me, the game always seemed less of a sport than an "activity," like horseshoes, lawn darts or cornhole.

Rick Reilly, the great sportswriter, captured my feelings in his anti-pickleball screed: "Any game that you can take up after breakfast and be pretty good at by lunch is not a sport."

Yet in recent years, it feels like I've been pursued by a passionate pickleball posse, determined to capture the last outlaw and force him to play.

The game's growth is relentless, driven largely by the fact that it's easy to learn and, supposedly, fun. More than 13 million people play pickleball, according to the Sport and Fitness Industry Association.

The game is alleged to have grown by more than 200 percent since the onset of the pandemic, when it was deemed a safe

"socially distanced" activity. Pickleball is also notorious for its injuries. As Reilly declares, "Remember, kids: Every time you see a new pickleball court open, an orthopedist gets a new boat."

Locally, pickleball courts are sprouting like invasive species. My club, Taconic Sport & Racquet, added eight courts this year. There are eight (and only two tennis courts) at Martz Field in Wappingers. Beacon has two pickleball courts at South Avenue Park and two at Green Street Park. Cold Spring is adding one at Mayor's Park.

Many people install courts in their driveway, right where they used to erect impromptu badminton nets.

I was invited to play at the home of Debbi Milner, the founder of the Pickleball Ladies, a group of about 60 local women who play each day. I was trapped. I wanted a story and Debbi is one of those people

who is hard to resist.

So I showed up in my tennis clothes and became one of the few men ever to play with the group. It took a while for me to understand the rules and "the kitchen," the off-limits area in front of the net. I also discovered a unique way of holding an extra pickleball — under your bra strap. As far as I can tell, the Pickleball Ladies invented that.

I still don't get pickleball scoring. And I'm unashamed to report that my partner and I lost. One of my opponents told me: "I'm 79 and proud of it."

But the world didn't stop spinning. And I had fun, though it would be hard not to have fun with this dynamic community of charming women.

Ah, what the hell. Maybe I'll head over to Walmart and grab a paddle. I'm told you can find the pickleball gear near the horseshoes and bocce sets.



Debbi Milner (left), who founded the Pickleball Ladies, enjoys a game with Margaret Hayford and Maureen Tompkins.



Anne Gonsalves concentrates as she returns a shot.

Photos by Ross Corsair

'Girl Golf'

Highlands women bond over pickleball

By Joey Asher

They call themselves the Pickleball Ladies.

Most weekdays for the last two years, a community of about 60 local women have networked and bonded over pickleball — first at two backyard courts that the group's founder, Debbi Milner, created from her home's tennis court on Jaycox Road in Philipstown, and now at the town park.

In addition to exercise and fun, the gatherings provide a place where "we talk about everything, from the birth of a grandchild to the death of a family member," said Maria Helbock, coordinator for the Philipstown Food Pantry at First Presbyterian Church in Cold Spring.

It's "girl golf," said Dana Levenberg, a player and state Assembly member whose district includes Philipstown. "The men are doing their business on the golf course.

Women are doing their business around the pickleball court."

Milner said she founded the group partly to help her cope with a separation from her husband of more than four decades. The group became a forum to "discuss options," she said.

The Pickleball Ladies are organized into two groups: the "Relish," for beginners and less competitive players, and the "Chips" for players with more experience.

A wide range of Highlands women have joined the group. "Humans crave connectivity," said Rebecca Pearsall, the chair of the Philipstown Behavioral Health Hub. The Pickleball Ladies have "everything to do with uplifting women," she said.

Margaret Hayford, who does freelance motion graphics for ad agencies, joined about a year ago after moving to Cold Spring from Queens. Barrie Overend, a yoga instructor, said she had been looking "to get involved in this community" when the group connected her with Helbock.

Overend began volunteering at the Philipstown Food Pantry and became one of the Pickleball Ladies' earliest members. She helped teach others after getting lessons at Taconic Sport & Racquet in Hopewell Junction.

Maureen Tompkins, an investment advisor, was an experienced pickleball player when she moved last year from Sag Harbor to Cold Spring to be near her children and grandchildren. Rebeca Ramirez, community and visitor relations manager for the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, told her about the group, said Tompkins.

"The men are doing their business on the golf course. Women are doing their business around the pickleball court."

~ Dana Levenberg

"We just laugh and laugh and laugh," she said.

The Pickleball Ladies have entered a new phase. Milner and her husband just sold their home and its pickleball courts, and are moving to Ormond Beach, Florida, a 75-minute drive from her beloved Disney World. She credits the Pickleball Ladies

with giving her "the strength to come back to myself and to learn to love myself."

With her relocation, the games have moved to Philipstown Park on Route 9D, said Helbock, who now coordinates the group, along with Judy Farrell, a member of the town council.

They also plan to play at a new court being built at Mayor's Park in Cold Spring. Lines for the court will be drawn on the basketball court in the next few weeks, said Jeff Amato, chair of the Cold Spring Recreation Commission. He said the village already has a portable net.

Helbock said she hopes to continue the games five days a week from 8 to 10 a.m. For now, the group doesn't plan to create competitive leagues or tournaments. But that could change, she said.

What probably won't change is that the Pickleball Ladies will remain, well, for ladies, said Helbock. Men "would take it to a different level," she said. "They would make it more competitive. They wouldn't want the mushy love stuff."

Anyone interested in learning about the Pickleball Ladies can email Maria Helbock at ThePBL230@gmail.com.



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TEACHER ASSISTANTS — The Community Nursery School and Learning Center (10 Academy St., Cold Spring) is hiring teacher assistants and substitutes for the upcoming school year. School hours are mornings beginning mid-September. All interested parties are asked to reach out by email to communitynurseryschoolcs50@gmail.com.

GROUNDKEEPER — The First Presbyterian Church of Philipstown is looking for a part-time groundskeeper. The position requires weekly cleaning of the church interior and outside maintenance of the building and grounds. 15 hours per week at \$20 per hour. Interested parties are requested to email 1presbyterian@gmail.com or call the church office at 845-265-3220.

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EVENTS

BEACON JAZZ LUNCH — Mo Morgen (aka "Miami Mo"), a South Florida Jazz Hall of Fame inductee, performs on keys/vocals/sax at Carter's Restaurant, 424 Main St., Mondays through Fridays from noon to 2:30 p.m. through October. Spontaneous jazz, vocal standards, Brazilian/Latin, Flamenco, classical. "Mo is wonderful," wrote Tony Bennett (1998). Free street parking. Carter's is famed for its pub menu. Google the menu and great reviews. Casual, no reservations.

MODERN MAKERS MART — Over 60 designers, makers, artisans and artists will be displaying and selling their amazing work in Cold Spring on Saturday, Aug. 10, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free admission! Live music, food trucks and all happening on the beautiful grounds of St. Mary's Episcopal Church. 1 Chestnut St. You can take the train to this event. Just a short walk through Cold Spring. Dog friendly and rain or shine. For more info, go to HopsontheHudson.com and click on Modern Makers Market.

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Puzzles

CROSSCURRENT

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16			17				
18					19				20			
			21				22					
23	24	25				26				27	28	29
30					31				32			
33			34	35				36	37			
			38				39					
40	41	42				43				44	45	46
47					48				49			
50					51				52			
53					54				55			

- ACROSS
1. Swear

5. Understood

8. Six-pack units

12. Slightly

13. French assent

14. October birthstone

15. Sultry Horne

16. Annoying

18. Michelangelo works

20. Pumped (up)

21. Medit. nation

22. “— Blue?”

23. Cook in the oven

26. Sun spot

30. Take courses?

31. Pie — mode

32. Felon’s flight

33. Fake ally

36. Cavorts

38. Mel of baseball

39. UFO crew

40. Top floor

43. Cargo

47. First-termers

49. Contrite one

50. Staffer

51. Brit. record label

52. Actress Fisher

53. Colonial flag maker

54. “Norma — ”

55. Harbor arrival
- DOWN
1. Baby elephant

2. Cab alternative

3. Trig function

4. Equilibrium

5. Really dig

6. Belonging to us

7. Dead heat

8. Universal

9. Per person

10. Handle

11. Santa’s ride

17. Docile

19. Chicago winter hrs.

22. Altar in the sky

23. Ump

24. Rowing need

25. Packed away

26. Aviate

27. Carrier to Amsterdam

28. Napkin’s place

29. Ambulance initials

31. Invoice fig.

34. Loud sounds

35. Engrave

36. GPS suggestion

37. Egyptian deity

39. Golfer Els

40. Miles away

41. Half a sextet

42. Turner and Danson

43. Disaster aid org.

44. Get overemotional

45. Prefix with pad or port

46. Snare

48. Mal de —

SUDOCURRENT

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

WORDLADDER

Can you go from SUAVE to SHAKE in 6 words?
Change one letter for each rung in the ladder.

SUAVE

SHAKE

WORDSEARCH

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

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A	H	A	B		I	B	M		C	B	E	R
R	O	B	O		D	E	M		O	R	C	A
C	L	O	Y		O	L	D		G	L	O	R
S	E	X	I	S	M				C	A	U	C
					S	H	E	A		G	M	C
O	L	D	H	A	N	D	S		N	O	S	H
N	E	A		M	E	D	I	A		L	I	E
O	A	F	S		O	L	D	I	R	I	S	H
			F	U	R		E	E	R	O		
D	I	O	N	N	E		S	E	U	R	A	T
O	L	D	H	A	B	I	T		T	U	N	A
A	S	I	A		A	C	E		E	G	A	D
S	A	L	T		Y	I	P		S	S	T	S

Answers for July 26 Puzzles

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

GRAIL, GRAIN, BRAIN,
BRAID, BRAND, BLAND

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

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

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Small, Good Things

Good & Plenty, Nice & Easy

By Joe Dizney



You'd have to be crazy not to love this time of year. Even with climate change (yes, it IS a thing, and we are complicit), the worst of the heat, at least locally, is undeniably more pleasurable than the average icy February day.

For instance, say, what's your favorite summer song? It's so hard to choose; there are just so many, no matter what your personal *jam* is. Now try to come up with a winter favorite. "The Song of Winter?" That's not even a *thing*.

"Summertime, and the living is easy." George Gershwin wrote that, channeling a universal truth, whether you fancy that particular tune or not.

The absolute best thing about this particular time of year is the produce. Markets and farm stands are overloaded with the freshest local offerings and infinite varieties of fruits, vegetables and herbs lined up for "their moment" in the sun. It's hard not to overindulge and easy to forget that this bounty needs to be processed. But admit it: Who wants to cook when there are so many other pleasant diversions?

Regarding cooking and this current conundrum, consider basil. Undeniably plentiful this time of year, it's the zucchini of the herb world. Pesto is a universal go-to recipe for processing lots of it, and everyone you know undoubtedly has their favorite recipe, so don't think this column will offer yet another.

Warm pasta dishes and cold pasta or bean salads are just a few ways to use up lots of pesto, and you've probably got a few others of your own to that end. But I recently found myself with half of a good-sized tub of it and thought it might be put to use as a marinade for vegetables or meat, in this case chicken.

Also on hand was a pint of local heirloom cherry tomatoes and some perfect green beans, all begging to be consumed. Blanching the green beans (for tenderness), and adding them to the

tomatoes and some sliced shallots, marinating the chicken in pesto, thinned out with a bit more extra-virgin olive oil, was truly a no-brainer, and if I'm being honest hardly a recipe at all.

Prep time is roughly 20 minutes, especially if you've got the pesto on hand.* And working from the sheet pan cooking playbook, it's all roasted together — first for 20 minutes, chicken skin-side down, then for another 20 minutes, skin-side up, to crisp. An additional couple of minutes under the broiler adds a little char and color if you like, plus it's a lot less effort and a lot quicker setup and cleaning than grilling.

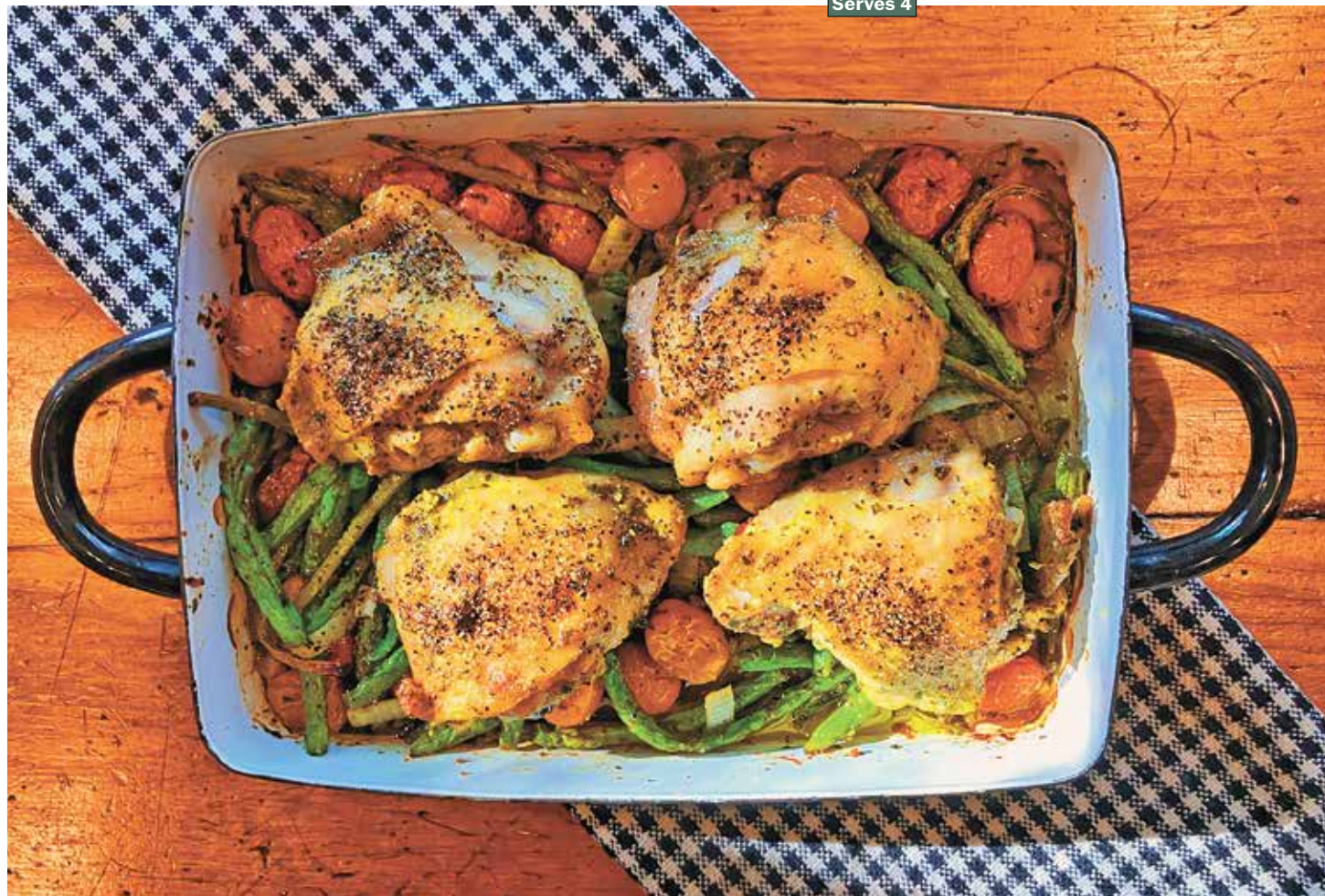
You can definitely repurpose this formula for whatever vegetables appeal to you in the moment. Substitute blanched wedges of fennel, slices of eggplant or zucchini. No pesto? No problem. Almost any flavorful vinaigrette will substitute nicely, or even just a simple emulsion of olive oil, lots of lemon juice and a grated clove of garlic.

Have no fear vegetarians: The same process can be used for firm tofu, tempeh, seitan or any other favored protein analog, with a bit of adjustment in roasting time.

Salt and pepper to taste, then finish it off with a handful of fresh-chopped herbs (tarragon, oregano, mint) when serving. As advertised: nice and easy.

Pesto Roasted Chicken and Summer Vegetables

Serves 4



12-16 oz. green or wax beans (or a combination of the two)

½ cup basil pesto*

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 large clove garlic, grated

4 large bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

1 pint (or more) heirloom cherry tomatoes

4-6 medium shallots, peeled and cut into ¼-inch to ½-inch wedges

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

(Baby spinach or crusty bread, or both, for serving)

1. Bring a large pot of water to a medium boil and salt it generously. Add the beans and cook for 3 to 4 minutes. Drain and chill in an ice bath or under cold, running water. Drain the beans and get rid of as much water as possible. Trim to 3- to 4-inch lengths and reserve to a large mixing bowl.

2. In a small bowl or measuring cup, mix the pesto, ¼ cup olive oil and grated garlic until relatively smooth. In a medium bowl, coat the chicken in half of the pesto mixture and let it marinate for about 30 minutes.

3. While the chicken marinates, preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Oil a casserole or baking pan large enough to hold the chicken and vegetables. To the bowl of beans, add the cherry tomatoes, shallot wedges and pesto, stirring gently to coat all. Add the

vegetables to the prepared casserole or pan. Salt and pepper all to taste.

4. Once the chicken has marinated, lay the pieces, skin-side down, on top of the vegetables, reserving whatever pesto is left. Salt and pepper the chicken to taste and roast in the middle of the preheated oven for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and using tongs (not a fork), flip the pieces skin-side up. Return to the oven and roast for another 20 minutes. (You may want to finish off the cooking with a few minutes under the broiler to crisp the skin.)

5. Serve with a drizzle of the remaining pesto sauce and some crusty bread to soak up the plentiful juices. Or, if you like, serve it on top of fresh baby spinach (you can never have enough dark green leaves) and let the warm chicken, vegetables and their juices wilt the greens.

* You can certainly make your own pesto, basil being as plentiful as the recipes for it. But a container of a good-quality, locally made product will do just fine.