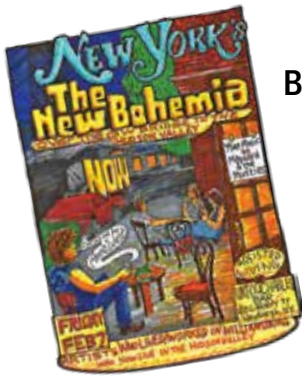


The HIGHLANDS
Current



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Riverkeeper
Voices Fjord Trail
Concerns

*Opposes trail structures
in the Hudson River*

By Michael Turton

At a Jan. 14 public hearing on the state environmental review of the proposed Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, the environmental group Riverkeeper shared concerns over the plans and suggested alternatives.

Mike Dulong, the watchdog’s legal program director, said the organization is concerned that the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) dismisses the impact of construction and shading that the trail could create and asked HHFT to avoid placing structures in or over the water.

The remote hearing, which drew 258

(Continued on Page 9)

PREPARING FOR I.C.E.

Law Enforcement

By Leonard Sparks

When U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested Neftali Caal-Chocoj in October 2023, the agency complained that Putnam County had released the undocumented Guatemalan because of “local laws,” rather than allow ICE officers to take custody at the county jail.

In fact, the Putnam County Sheriff’s Office notifies ICE when detainees sought by the agency are scheduled for release but will not hold them longer unless a federal judge signs a warrant, said Capt. Michael Grossi, speaking for the sheriff. He said that had been county policy for at least 10

(Continued on Page 17)

Schools

By Jeff Simms and Joey Asher

Officials at the Haldane, Garrison and Beacon school districts, like many across the country, are vowing to protect undocumented immigrant students from President Donald Trump’s push for mass deportations.

Concern about raids by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents at schools arose after the Trump administration on Jan. 21 reversed a policy enacted more than a decade ago barring raids in “sensitive locations,” such as schools and churches.

Allan Wernick, a Cold Spring resident who is an attorney and founder of Citizenship

(Continued on Page 17)

Bird Flu Reaches
Putnam County

*Scientists say no immediate
threat to humans*

By Brian PJ Cronin

The Putnam County Department of Health confirmed on Jan. 17 that the carcass of a wild goose found at Green Chimneys in Brewster last month tested positive for the highly pathogenic avian influenza, commonly known as bird flu.

On Thursday (Jan. 30), the state Department of Agriculture and Markets said five more birds — three wild and two domestic — had tested positive at Green Chimneys, which provides therapeutic services for children that focus on animals and nature. The staff is being monitored for symptoms of illness, although none have been tested for avian flu, the county health department said. Green Chimneys has paused its public programs.

The birds at Green Chimneys are among four confirmed cases of the disease statewide in the past two weeks: On Jan. 21, health officials on Long Island announced a positive case at a commercial poultry farm with over 100,000 birds. The facility, Crescent Duck Farm in Suffolk County, has been placed under quarantine while its staff is tested. Its entire stock will be destroyed.

On Wednesday (Jan. 29), the Ulster County Department of Health announced that all but two of about 50 chickens and ducks at an unnamed farm had died of avian influenza. The remaining birds were euthanized. “Human contact with the birds was limited to the owners and a veterinarian, who will remain under surveillance for symptoms over the next 10 days,” the department said in a statement.

On Thursday, the state said it had confirmed two cases in Romulus, in the Finger Lakes, with tests pending on birds found dead on Seneca Lake and Onondaga Lake near Syracuse.

Residents who encounter dead birds should avoid making contact. On Wednesday, on Perks Boulevard in Philipstown, Stephen Heath reported finding a dead hawk in his yard that did not appear to have injuries. He contacted the state Department of Environmental Conservation but was told that the agency isn’t collecting further samples for testing. It advised him to triple-bag the carcass while wearing gloves and a

(Continued on Page 8)



KEEP YOUR DISTANCE! — Fourth- and fifth-grade actors at Haldane Elementary School on Jan. 24 staged *The Jungle Book Kids*, a musical adapted from the Disney animated film and the book by Rudyard Kipling. The performance was directed by Sam Sauer and featured Jojo Moyer as the ferocious tiger Shere Khan. For more photos, see highlandscurrent.org.

Photo by Ross Corsair

5Q FIVE QUESTIONS: SEAN CAMILLIERI

By Joey Asher

Sean Camillieri, president of the Putnam Highlands Audubon Society, will be among the guides at the group's 10th annual eagle watch on Feb. 8 at Boscobel in Philipstown.

Why is Boscobel in winter a good spot to watch for eagles?

The Hudson River is a migratory corridor for birds and eagles, and Boscobel's elevation provides an excellent vantage point for the river, Constitution Marsh and Foundry Cove, where eagles nest. Eagles also like to congregate around open water in the winter for food availability, especially when there's ice. When you see ice floes going downriver in the Highlands, it means the river is frozen up north. That pushes the eagles toward us because we have more open water. Fish get caught in the open ice pockets, which is a good food source. Also, if injured animals like deer get caught on the ice, that is another scavenging opportunity. So we're hoping to see some eagles on Saturday, but I don't want to jinx it.

How is the bird population doing in these modern times?

We have annual bird counts, and the general trend is fewer birds. Human intervention removes habitat through agricul-



tural, industrial, housing and recreational development. We put in trails for our enjoyment, but it comes at a cost. One species that has been declining is the cerulean warbler, which is known for breeding in Philipstown at Little Stony Point, the Washburn Trail and the Washburn parking lot, of all places. They're found in Fahnestock State Park and at Dennings Point in Beacon. It's been designated as a bird of "special concern" by New York State, meaning it's vulnerable to becoming endangered.

Global warming also reduces the number of birds. Extreme weather like drought, wildfires and even too much rain can impact food availability and breeding success. Eagles and other waterfowls are an exception to the trend. They're increasing because of laws that protect wetlands and the banning of the pesticide DDT [in 1972].

How has technology impacted the hobby of bird-watching?

Connectivity has a big impact. A popular app is eBird, which is a global database that allows people to share sightings in real-time. I used to record my sightings on a

spreadsheet. People also have text groups and there's a New York state Discord group broken down by county for people to post about sightings. By the way, you don't need high-tech binoculars to enjoy bird-watching. Any binoculars will do fine. Mine are made by Swarovski.

What are your favorite birds?

The long-eared owl is always my favorite bird to encounter. They're super secretive and don't like to be bothered. They're about the size of a roll of paper towels. They're not as vocal as barred owls, screech owls or great horned owls. No one knows their prevalence in New York; they camouflage themselves nicely in trees or dense brush. You can walk right by and never know they're there.

Do bird feeders help, or are they just fun for humans?

Birds will always find food, but it certainly helps in the winter, especially when there's deep snow and they can't access the food on the ground. Come spring, the birds have other options, like insects. I take my feeders down in May.

ON THE SPOT

By Michael Turton

What's big on your February calendar?

Flying to Houston for my granddaughter Camilla's second birthday.



Ron Karabinos, Cold Spring

I want to go to Mexico!



Emma Fitzsimmons, Beacon

My sweetheart from China arrives on Valentine's Day.



Bruce Samaritan, Garrison



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The Highlands Choral Society is a nonprofit organization offering nondenominational services and community.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Boscobel Names Board Member*Also appoints deputy operations director*

Boscobel House and Gardens in Philipstown announced on Monday (Jan. 27) the appointment of Seamus Carroll to its board of directors.

The historic site also named Amber Stickle, its director of audience engagement and programming, as deputy director of operations and facilities.

Carroll is a retired technology executive who has served on the boards of the Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Guiding Eyes for the Blind, the Haldane School Foundation, Land to Learn and the Philipstown Garden Club. In October, he moderated the Meadows Matter seminar at Boscobel.

Stickle joined Boscobel in 2022 after 15 years as director of recreation and parks for the Town of Philipstown. She has a bachelor's degree in public administration and policy from SUNY Albany and a master's

degree in public administration from Marist University.

On Tuesday, Partners for Climate Action announced that Boscobel was one of two recipients in Philipstown of its third annual ecological restoration grants. Boscobel House received \$30,000 for its Native Meadow Project, while the Ecological Citizens Project was given \$38,400 for its Crystal Lake pollinator gardens in Newburgh.

Two-Alarm Fire in Beacon*Vehicle blaze reaches Rector Street house*

Beacon firefighters responded on Tuesday (Jan. 28) to a fire at 31 Rector St. that also damaged a car.

After arriving at the scene at 1:38 p.m., firefighters discovered that a vehicle fire had reached the home's first floor, and they transmitted a second alarm that brought the Village of Fishkill and Castle Point departments. There were no injuries.

AROUND THE REGION

Putnam Valley**Voters Reject School Spending**

Residents of the Putnam Valley Central School District on Tuesday (Jan. 28) rejected \$14 million in capital spending by a vote of 666-624, although it would not have increased taxes.

The district said that \$9.3 million would have been covered by state aid, \$2.5 million by savings and the remainder by retiring debt.

At the elementary school, the funds would have been used to renovate the library and circa 1972 nurse's suite, add playground equipment for K-2 students, complete the integration of geothermal heating and cooling and install new performing arts lights and controls.

At the middle school, the project included parking lot upgrades, small-group spaces, upgraded heat pumps and new performing arts lights and controls.

At the high school, the plans were to upgrade the parking lot, replace flat roofs installed in 2000, add solar panels to the Wellness Center roof, improve access to the courtyard and outdoor learning space and convert the weight room into a fitness center and dance studio.

Mount Kisco**Examiner Stops Publishing**

The Examiner News, a 17-year-old weekly newspaper with four editions, including for Putnam County, stopped publishing this week.

Publisher Adam Stone, who dismissed most of his staff, cited rising printing costs and declining advertising. He said he would try to keep the publication going at theexaminernews.com.

"Beyond the closure of our longtime affordable printer in November and the proposed 25 percent White House tariffs on Mexican and Canadian goods — most newsprint, including ours, comes from

Canada — we're grappling with a host of industry challenges, particularly in generating sufficient revenue from local ads," Stone wrote on Tuesday (Jan. 28).

Founded in 2007, *The Examiner News* covered Mount Kisco and Pleasantville before expanding into Putnam in 2009, Yorktown in 2010 and White Plains in 2011.

Kingston**From The Rock to The G.O.A.T.**

John Stote III, a Kingston native who in 1982 invented the basketball known as The Rock that was used by more than 70 colleges, has introduced a new ball called The G.O.A.T. (for Greatest of All Time) that is being used by local high schools.

The first shipment of 4,500 balls, made in China, has arrived at a warehouse in Kingston and Stote has a contract to provide balls to the Phenom Basketball camps. He said he sold 1,000 basketballs on Facebook in 10 days. See thegoatbasketball.com.

**Wappingers Falls****Man Charged After Fire**

Dutchess County Sheriff's deputies on Monday (Jan. 27) reported the arrest of a 34-year-old man on suspicion he set fire to a home where a couple was found dead.

Robert J. Buda was charged with felony arson in connection with the fire at 78 Marlerville Road. Firefighters responded to an alarm at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday and found the couple inside.

The sheriff identified the victims as Paul Hait, 63, and Jo Ann Hait, 65. News 12 reported that Buda is the couple's son-in-law. He was arrested in Hyde Park.

Buda was arraigned in the Town of Wappinger Court and sent to the Dutchess County jail on \$500,000 cash bail or \$1 million bond.

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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

Pardons

I am appalled and horrified that the president decided to free all the convicted felons from the Jan. 6 insurrection without examining them on a case-by-case basis as he said he would ("Trump Pardons Jan. 6 Rioters," Jan. 24). The consequences have yet to be seen, but every violent action taken by one of the insurrectionists is now on his head.
We need our congressman, Rep. Mike Lawler, to say loudly and forcefully that he does not support Trump's decision to pardon violent felons and that the safety and security of his constituents in District 17 is his only concern.

Judy Allen, *Putnam Valley*

What about 2016? Remember that? After Trump won? How soon we forget.

Laurie Gallio, *via Facebook*

Way too much foul play on the Democrats' side, even at the last minute — shameful. I'm sure they learned nothing.

Jeff Phillips, *via Facebook*

Appalling. The Capitol attacked and police officers violently assaulted, all to overturn a free and fair election. I guess democracy and "back the blue" mean nothing anymore. It's embarrassing to the coun-

try and to the Hudson Valley, one of several cradles of democracy in this land.
Robert Culp, *via Facebook*

I found it interesting that no *Current* ink was used to comment on Mr. Biden's blanket pardon of his son, his family, J-6 Lawfare Commission members, Dr. Anthony Fauci, a myriad of convicted criminals and others — all after Mr. Biden lied to the American people about issuing pardons.

President Trump made it known during the campaign that pardons would be issued to the rioters. It's nice to know that the double standard is still alive and well in the country.

Don Gallo, *Beacon*

The editor responds: As a local paper, we only cover pardons given to people who live nearby.

Island boundaries

You referred to Bannerman as a "Beacon institution," but the island is in the Town of Fishkill ("The Castle and Crier," Jan. 24), as is Mount Beacon and Dutchess Stadium.

Ozzy Albra, *Fishkill*

Albra is the Town of Fishkill supervisor.

Actor living

Philipstown tackles the housing issues that really matter ("Shakespeare Housing

Approved," Jan. 24).
Michael Barone, *via Instagram*

Artist housing is a wonderful priority.
Rebeca Ramirez, *via Facebook*

The approval last month of the Phase Two site plan for artist lodging by the Philipstown Planning Board marked the conclusion of its five-year review of the project and is an important milestone for Hudson Valley Shakespeare.

We would like to thank Chairman Neal Zuckerman and the members of the Planning Board — along with the professional staff that supports their work, especially Cheryl Rockett, Steve Gaba and Ron Gainer — for the diligence, patience and dedication that they brought to the process. The job of balancing the rights of property owners with the rights of the community, as we've heard the chairman say often, is not always easy. These folks carry out that work each month with an unwavering commitment to transparency and fairness.

We still have a significant fundraising gap to close before we can begin construction for the artist lodging, but the construction of the Samuel H. Scripps Theater Center is underway for the 2026 season.

We would also like to extend our profound thanks to the community here in the Hudson Valley. HVS's collaboration with the Planning Board and members of the public has undoubtedly made our project better along the way. We are honored to be a part of a community where people care about their neighbors, and about their neighborhood, and we are grateful to have benefited from an approval process characterized by that same diligence and care.

Davis McCallum, *Philipstown*
McCallum is HSV's artistic director. This letter was also signed by Managing Director Kendra Ekelund.

Fjord Trail

I have tried to keep an open mind about the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail as it is proposed. Although I don't think much good will come from more visitors, I don't think more visitors would be all that transformational or problematic. Although I don't love the parking areas and would like to see more people on the train, getting cars off the shoulders of Route 9D is important to the well-being of hikers and first responders.

What makes me support the Fjord Trail is not the Fjord Trail at all. I keep circling back to what our town does not provide when it comes to recreational opportunities and how reliant residents are on the state

(Continued on Page 5)



Current Board Names Co-Chair

Expected to take over as chair in September

The board of directors of Highlands Current Inc., the nonprofit that publishes *The Highlands Current* and its website, has elected Todd Haskell as co-chair. He will share duties until September with Christine Bockelmann, a Philipstown resident who became chair in late 2014 after the death of the founder, Gordon Stewart. Haskell is then expected to take over as chair.

“Taking action now so that *The Current* has a robust future is ever more important, and bringing Todd into this leadership role will help to ensure that,” said Bockelmann, who will remain on the board.

Until his retirement in November, Haskell was the senior vice president and chief marketing officer at Hearst Magazines. Previously, he

served as chief revenue officer for digital at Hearst Magazines, as well as the group vice president and head of digital sales at *The New York Times*. He has lived in Beacon since 2016.

“After 35 years of helping global news and lifestyle brands adapt to the digital future, I’m thrilled to be able to devote my time to supporting *The Current* as it charts its own path to continued success,” Haskell said in a statement. “Local news is more important than ever, and I look forward to working with Chris and Editor Chip Rowe and his team in building a sustainable framework for high-quality journalism built on a self-sustaining business model supported by devoted members and local advertisers.”

The other members of the board are Damon Banks, Gwendolyn Bounds, David Duffy, Kyle Good, Nicholas Groombridge, Robert Lanier, Mel Laytner, Joseph Plummer, Frances Reilly and Jia Jia Ye.

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 4)

park system, private entities and the generosity of neighbors for these aspects of our quality of life. Perhaps, if the town invested more in recreational opportunities (bike paths, pool, fitness center, lighted, well-maintained courts and fields for adults and children, etc.), I would be less supportive of these sorts of state park development.

If residents in this town are supportive of the Fjord Trail, it may not be due to an enthusiasm for the project, per se. Instead, it might say more about what they aren’t getting from their town. Master plans and comprehensive plans already exist and have now for years. And yet, despite the efforts of many hard-working individuals, very little movement has occurred toward enacting change. Support for the Fjord Trail can be seen as an indictment of what we haven’t established for ourselves.

James Hoch, *Garrison*

If one thing makes Cold Spring truly special, it is the Highlands. These hills protected Washington’s troops and stopped the British. They awed Hudson River painters, enchanted Washington Irving and Pete Seeger, and gave birth to the modern environmental move-

ment. They attract thousands of visitors (some settling here, like me and my wife). No wonder everyone calls this landscape iconic.

That is what is so astonishing about the Fjord Trail plan. The “visionaries” of this massive construction are seeking to alter and improve what generations have known better to leave well enough alone. They plan to clear-cut many acres of trees, pour thousands of tons of concrete in the river, disfigure Breakneck Ridge and disturb the habitat of a dozen threatened species, from bats to sturgeon. All to install a fabulous Disney-style boardwalk, with lighting.

The irony is that Scenic Hudson — which was founded here 60 years ago to defend green spaces and protect rattlesnakes — has switched sides, with an oligarch donor seeming to dictate the grandiose design.

Their project will forever change our community, and not for the better. We should be grateful to our elected officials who have questioned the undertaking. I urge all residents who care about the river, the landscape and the village to comment on the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement before the March 4 deadline. You can send your comment to hhft.plan@parks.ny.gov.

Phil Weiss, *Philipstown*

Where Did Our Papers Go?

Last week, for the first time, every newspaper in our blue boxes on Main Street in Beacon had been removed by Monday at noon, except for a few copies left in one near the dummy light.

On Monday (Jan. 27), we refilled the nearly empty rack at Foodtown in Cold Spring with 300 papers. All had disappeared by the next day.

While *The Current* is undoubtedly popular, this is unprecedented, especially in January. We wanted to remind anyone who has a beef with the paper that, traditionally, people write letters to the editor.

In addition, state law prohibits the removal or destruction of newspapers, even if they are free (NY Gen Bus L § 396-X-2). Our policy is one per customer.



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Catching Up with the Howland Library Board

The Howland Public Library District is overseen by a nine-member elected board that meets on the second Tuesday of each month.

The trustees, who serve five-year terms, are Jessica Conway (president), Jeffrey Yang (vice president), David Lemon, Helen Lowery, Emily Murnane, Elizabeth Murphy, Emily Pullen, Brooke Simmons and Joe Vergolina.

Here are highlights from its 2024 and January 2025 meetings.

- Marcia Frahman and Vicki Blucher from the Friends of the Howland Public Library reported that the group raised \$15,964 in 2023 and donated vacuums, chairs, printers, computers and food for programs and art shows. (March)

- Five residents shared praise for recently departed youth librarians Stephanie Montecanto and Brian Sullivan, who both now work at the Newburgh Free Library. Kimberly Demetriou, the new head of youth services, and her staff began evaluating the collection for condition, breadth, diversity, accessibility, ease of use and necessity. (March)

- The youth staff developed a guide to local resources for teens, reviewed and refreshed the board book collection, began weeding the early reader and children's fiction sections and organized field trips to the library for kindergarten students, many of whom received their first library cards. (May)

- Two inmates from the Fishkill Correctional Facility on work release were able to access the library through Beacon Prison Rides. (May)

- A patron donated a \$50 gift card from Mr. V's to the Reference Department in appreciation of its assistance with an application for the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled program. (May)

- Director Gillian Murphy, who was hired in 2023 and earlier spent 21 years as director of the Butterfield Library in Cold Spring, stated that, despite a request to stop, a resident continued to create material that appeared to be from library personnel. She

said people seemed to understand that the library was not the source. (June)

- Murphy reported that sewing machines, a power washer, camping tents, cornhole, Giant Connect Four, Giant Jenga and lawn tools had been added to the Library of Things. (June)

- The board voted to sunset its ad-hoc Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which had been formed to create an EDI statement. According to a draft, the Howland's goals include the desire to "audit and amend existing and future board policies and communications to ensure that they are held to the highest standards of diversity, inclusion, accessibility, equity and justice." (June)

- A Rainbow Storytime with drag queen Katarina Mirage to celebrate Pride Month drew 35 children and adults. (June)

- Michelle Rivas, the adult services librarian, reported that Ross Corsair, a photographer for *The Current*, visited the monthly Craft-ernoon for Adults and quipped: "This is why women live longer, because they do things like this." She agreed that "the secret to long life can be found at the library." (June)

- Murphy noted that nearly 300 people registered for the Summer Reading Program, more than triple what was expected. For the first time, babies and toddlers could participate with their parents. (July)

- The library added a geocache at N 41° 30.328 W 073° 58.244 for adventurers who use the Global Positioning System (GPS) to find hidden containers. (July)

- Murphy said the draft EDI statement had been reviewed at no charge by Kawanna Bright, an assistant professor of library science at East Carolina University. She said Bright could be hired to audit the library's programs and collections for compliance. (July)

- The library added El Museo del Barrio in Manhattan to its museum pass collection. (July)

- The yellow walls of the children's library, young adult program room and a hallway were repainted light blue. Murphy said yellow can overstimulate people with sensory-processing issues. (August)

- The monthly adult field trip included visits with luthier John Vergara at Lord of the Strings and collodion photographer Oren Cohen at Beacon Tintype. The library hoped to lead trips to Hudson Beacon Glass, Other Worldly Waxes, Matcha Thomas and Hakan Chocolates. (August)

- The board combined its personnel and development committees and removed the Pledge of Allegiance as a requirement to start each meeting. The Policy Committee planned to review the procedures for patrons to challenge library materials, last updated in 2006. (August)

- According to library policy, a child must be at least 10 years old to visit without an adult. The board discussed whether the policy should instead mirror that of the school district for walking home alone, which is the third grade. (September)

- Architect Paul Mays reported that the roof was beyond repair and that an engineer needed to provide costs for extensive renovations or moving to a new location. He said adding stories was not an efficient use of space but that he could envision nooks and windows installed along one side of the building. Conway noted that at least the basement was dry. (October)

- Murphy stated she had called the police in a few instances because of unruly patrons but that a mental health professional who responds with officers during the day was helpful in de-escalating situations. (November)

- The board voted to increase Murphy's salary to \$94,000 annually. (November)

- The board adopted a new form for individuals and groups to request space at the library for programs, subject to staff approval. (November)

- A resident asked for permission to create his own display of "banned" books. Conway said the library does not allow such contributions. (December)

- Murphy reported that the library had hired two clerks fluent in Spanish and two with degrees in psychology and social work. (December)

- The Friends agreed to contribute \$9,000 to purchase a new microfilm reader. (December)

- The board approved adding limited privileges for people who don't live, work, attend school or pay property taxes within the Beacon City School District. For instance, Newburgh residents can now receive non-resident cards to access the on-site collection or pay \$25 annually to use digital resources. (December)

- The board approved a change to the Patron Code of Conduct to make it clearer what behavior will not be tolerated, including "the use of foul, offensive or threatening language and gestures, lewd or indecent behavior, physical or verbal harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, loudness, public drunkenness or drug usage, sale or exchange of alcohol or drugs, illegal gambling, loud talking and laughing, running, pushing and fighting," along with "bringing in weapons of any kind, theft or attempted theft of library or personal property and damaging or vandalizing property." In addition, "patrons may not interfere with the staff's performance of duties. This includes, but is not limited to, engaging in extended conversation or behavior that engages or forces the attention of staff for an inappropriate period of time, personal comments, sexual advances or physical and/or verbal harassment." (December)

- The board approved revisions to its Vulnerable Adult Policy to make clear that those asked to leave the library because of disruptive behavior can return if accompanied by a caregiver. (December)

- Murphy reported that the roof had been patched as a temporary measure against leaks and that the library was preparing to become a Passport Acceptance Facility. (January)

- Conway said she had received a letter from a patron complaining about the lack of Christmas decorations. (January)

- Murphy reported that a 5-year-old receiving his first library card thought he had to pay for the books and was thrilled to learn they are free. (January)

- Although there had been discussion about allowing the WeePlay Project to use the empty storefront next to Beacon Reads, the library decided to keep the space available for its own use. (January)



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Our View

Putnam Needs Change

By Erin Lee Crowley, Bill Gouldman, Nancy Montgomery and Laura Russo

In an era when trust in government feels more fragile than ever, we, four members of the Putnam County Legislature — three Republicans and a Democrat — stand united to confront a disturbing truth: Some within our ranks are failing the people they were elected to serve.

While we often differ on policy, we share an unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability and the respect every taxpayer deserves. Yet recent actions by certain legislators have shattered the public's trust, exposing a pattern of misconduct and self-interest that demands immediate attention. It's time to pull back the curtain on the dysfunction eroding the integrity of our legislature.

First, the decision by the Legislature's chair, Amy Sayegh, to exclude certain legislators from committee appointments reeks of the petty clique politics that have plagued this body for too long. Every legislator is elected to represent roughly the same number of constituents across Putnam County and denying them committee roles diminishes the voices of those voters. This is governance by exclusion, not collaboration. Sayegh must do better.

Then there's Vice Chair Greg Ellner, who has taken an even darker turn by threatening to sue a constituent for daring to criticize his voting record. This blatant attempt to silence legitimate public criticism is not just shocking — it's unacceptable. The public has every right to hold us accountable, and Ellner's actions reflect a hostility toward transparency and open discourse.

Ellner's hypocrisy doesn't end there. He campaigned against pay raises for politicians, but once elected, he voted in favor of them; for instance, in November, he voted to override the county executive's veto of 2.75 percent cost-of-living raises for the sheriff, county clerk and three coroners. Public service is not a means for self-service, yet Ellner's actions suggest otherwise. Now, instead of owning up to this broken promise, he's attacking a constituent for calling him out.



The Putnam County Legislature: Back row: Greg Ellner, Montgomery, Crowley, Russo. Front row: Dan Birmingham, Toni Addonizio, Chair Amy Sayegh, Gouldman, Paul Jonke

Putnam County photo

This pattern of self-serving behavior extends beyond Ellner. For years, some legislators actively blocked efforts to livestream public meetings, despite repeated calls from us and the public. It took relentless advocacy — four years of proposals by Legislator Montgomery and 20 months of pressure from County Executive Kevin Byrne — before even partial livestreaming was adopted. Still, the Legislature drags its feet on full transparency. If livestreaming had been implemented earlier, the public might have uncovered secretive dealings sooner — like a sitting legislator allegedly failing to disclose that her son-in-law was the buyer agreeing to purchase a county-owned property in Carmel; that over

\$400,000 in federal grant money was initially earmarked for a bar at the county-owned golf course; or that, in 2017 and 2018, a family member of then-Legislator Carl Albano was living rent-free at the county-owned Tilly Foster Farm. These examples highlight why transparency isn't just a buzzword — it's essential to rooting out corruption.

Sayegh must immediately implement full livestreaming of all public meetings or explain why she won't. If Putnam taxpayers were fully informed of this nonsense, they'd demand it.

Finally, earlier this month, a rushed and poorly conceived update to the legislative manual passed by just one vote. Among other changes, it gives Sayegh and commit-

tee chairs the power to require individuals speaking before the legislators to swear an oath before offering comments. This rule, championed by recently returned Legislator Dan Birmingham, is nothing more than an intimidation tactic designed to stifle public criticism. We believe it's unconstitutional, and when we raised these concerns at the Jan. 7 meeting, we were dismissed outright — further proof of the disdain some legislators have for differing perspectives, even from their colleagues.

This new rule only compounds an existing, deeply flawed policy: The public is allowed to comment on issues before the legislature only *after* a vote has already been taken. It's a rule we've tried to change because it effectively tells the public their input is irrelevant, and it defies common sense. Together, these policies reflect a disturbing disregard for transparency and disrespect for the very constituents the legislature is supposed to represent.

These actions are not just isolated incidents; they represent a pattern of self-dealing and disregard for public accountability that has no place in Putnam County government. As legislators from both the Republican and Democratic parties, we call on our colleagues to abandon these divisive, undemocratic practices and instead prioritize transparency, accountability and respect for the people we serve. Anything less is a betrayal of the public trust.

The authors are four of the nine elected members of the Putnam County Legislature. Crowley (Carmel/Mahopac), Gouldman (Putnam Valley/Lake Secor) and Russo (Patterson) are Republicans, and Montgomery (Philipstown/Putnam Valley) is a Democrat. Along with Sayegh (Mahopac/Mahopac Falls), Ellner (Carmel/Lake Carmel) and Birmingham (Mahopac/Brewster), the other members of the Legislature are Toni Addonizio (Kent) and Paul Jonke (Southeast).

Putnam Legal Spending Criticized

County executive lawsuit cost \$52,300

By Leonard Sparks

An aborted lawsuit filed by the Putnam County executive against the Legislature cost more than \$50,000 and accounted for one-third of a request by the Law Department for more money to pay outside law firms.

After Amy Sayegh, who chairs the Legislature and its Audit Committee, criticized the spending as excessive, the committee voted Monday (Jan. 27) to delay until February the department's \$150,000 request.

Michael Lewis, the finance commissioner, said the Law Department already received \$200,000 after exhausting its

\$300,000 budget in 2024 for outside counsel. He said a "good amount" of the billing was from Harris Beach, a firm defending the county in a lawsuit filed by the contractor hired to reconstruct the intersection of Oscawana Lake and Peekskill Hollow roads in Putnam Valley.

Another firm, Murtagh, Cossu, Venditti & Castro-Blanco, based in White Plains, billed the county \$52,300 for representing Kevin Byrne in his lawsuit against the Legislature. He sued over a law that amended the county charter so lawmakers can fire he county attorney at will and a resolution that allowed them to hire their own attorney without Law Department approval.

Byrne dropped the lawsuit on Dec. 18, citing its projected cost. "That's where the money's being spent," said Legislator Paul

Jonke (R-Southeast), on Monday. "That's where the money's being wasted."

Sales tax extension

The three legislators on the Audit Committee on Monday weighed Byrne's request to ask the state for authorization to renew a 1 percent sales tax increase that will otherwise expire on Nov. 30.

Putnam residents pay 8.375 percent on purchases — 4 percent in state tax, 4 percent to the county and 0.375 percent to the Metropolitan Commuter Transportation District. The Putnam tax has been 4 percent since 2007, when the state renewed a previous 0.5 percent increase and allowed the county to raise the rate by another 0.5 percent. A series of extensions, most recently in 2023, have kept the rate at 4 percent.

Legislator Dan Birmingham (R-Mahopac), who chaired the Legislature in 2007, said sales tax and other revenue were "tank-

ing" at the time while expenses rose. Today, he noted, the county has \$134 million in savings, including \$78 million that has not been budgeted.

Birmingham, who left the Legislature in 2012 but returned this month after winning a seat in November, suggested the Legislature ask the state for a 0.5 percent increase, which would lower the tax to 3.5 percent, to "return some of that fund balance directly back to the taxpayers."

In a memo addressed to legislators, Lewis advocated for 1 percent, which equates to about \$22 million annually, or 25 percent of the \$88 million collected in 2024. Those revenues allowed the Legislature to exempt sales tax on clothing and footwear under \$110 and reduce its property tax levy and cut tax rates, he said.

"All these accomplishments would be jeopardized if Putnam County failed to extend its existing rate," Lewis said.

Bird Flu (from Page 1)

mask before throwing it in the trash.

Suspected bird flu cases can be reported online at bit.ly/DECbirdflu, but an agency representative said there's not much that can be done for wild birds. People should assume any dead bird is infected and follow the guidelines at cdc.gov/bird-flu/prevention.

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is unusual for humans to be infected by avian influenza viruses and it typically occurs only because of close or lengthy unprotected contact (i.e., no gloves or respiratory or eye protection) with infected birds "or places that sick birds or their saliva, mucous and feces have touched." Infection can also occur through an intermediary animal, such as a cat or cow.

The CDC has confirmed 67 cases of bird flu in humans, nearly all attributed to close contact with sick cattle or poultry, and one death, announced on Jan. 6 — an older Louisiana resident who contracted avian influenza from backyard chickens.

There have been no reported human infections in New York state. The first bird flu viruses emerged in China in 1996 and Hong Kong in 1997, leading to 18 confirmed human infections. The first U.S. case was recorded in 2022.

Avian influenza showed up in Dutchess County in 2022. Over the past two years, the virus has been evolving and detected in over 40 mammalian species, said Dr. Nahid



A Philipstown resident found this hawk in his yard, although its death was not confirmed to be from bird flu. Photo provided

Bhadelia, an infectious diseases physician and founding director of Boston University's Center on Emerging Infectious Diseases.

"As of last spring, this virus has made a jump from birds into dairy cows, which has led to a scenario where many more humans may now come into contact with cows on dairy farms that are being infected," she said. "That has led to what we call 'sporadic infections,' where the infection is transmitted from an animal into humans. Thankfully, we do not see any evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission."

Because tens of millions of commercial chickens have been killed after exposure to the virus, it has caused egg prices to

jump more than 36 percent over the past 12 months, according to federal data.

At Titusville Farm in Poughkeepsie, Director Leon Vahaba said that avian influenza was a primary concern for him and other local farmers trying to avoid the fate of Crescent Duck Farm. "If you have one documented case, you have to kill your entire flock," he said, noting that small farms generally do not have crop insurance.

Migrating shorebirds such as ducks and geese are a leading cause of the flu in domesticated birds. Over the winter, Vahaba keeps the thousands of birds he raises inside, where they're warm and protected. But for the rest of the year, the birds are at pasture, which increases the risk of contamination.

"We're by the Hudson and Wappingers Creek, so a lot of wild birds are constantly flying back and forth [during migration] and stopping in the creek to chill out," he said. The east branch of the Croton River flows through Green Chimneys, where the infected goose was found.

Because some Titusville staff members raise chickens at home, Vahaba requires them to change clothes when they arrive and leave at the end of the day to reduce the chance of cross-contamination. The CDC maintains a website with advice for backyard chicken owners at cdc.gov/birdflu/caring.

Over 900 dairy herds have tested positive for avian influenza in 16 states since March, but it has not yet shown up in New York cows. The state Department of Agriculture and Markets began dairy testing

initiatives on Jan. 10 in collaboration with 27 other states. Raw milk permit holders must participate in the program because scientists have identified raw milk as a way for the virus to spread. In California, dozens of household cats have died after consuming raw pet food or raw milk.

"The good news is H5N1 [the strain detected in New York State] is much easier to kill as a virus than most other pathogens out there," said Bhadelia. "Pasteurization can render the virus inactive. If you drink pasteurized milk, you're safe."

While the virus cannot spread from one person to another, Bhadelia said it's vital to prevent people from being infected; the more people it infects, the better chance it has to develop the ability to spread.

"Our hope is that if we limit the spread of this virus between animals and humans, and then among humans, it will not get to a point where it potentially becomes the level of pandemic that we saw with COVID-19," she said.

Real Estate

Market Report (December)

	2023	2024
New Listings	12	5
Closed Sales	8	11
Days on Market	44	112
Median Price	\$480,000	\$475,000
% List Received	99.4	97.5
Inventory	38	22

	2023	2024
New Listings	1	0
Closed Sales	4	1
Days on Market	149	62
Median Price	\$452,500	\$191,000
% List Received	101.1	109.1
Inventory	11	7

	2023	2024
New Listings	2	1
Closed Sales	9	4
Days on Market	95	48
Median Price	\$647,400	\$834,250
% List Received	95.8	101.5
Inventory	26	25

Source: Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors (hgar.com). Philipstown includes Cold Spring, Garrison and Nelsonville.

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A Murder Mystery! A Fundraiser to die for!
Entertainment by MurderCafe.net

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Feb 7 - LIT LIT
Feb 8 - THE ARTICHOKE PRESENTS: Gabe Mollica
Feb 22 - KAHILIL KWAME BELL Jazz musician
Feb 28 - Howland's Open Mic Nite

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HOWLAND CULTURAL CENTER



Listed on the NRHP – 477 Main Street, Beacon New York

Fjord Trail *(from Page 1)*

people over two sessions, was hosted by the state parks department, the lead agency for the environmental review.

Dulong said Riverkeeper, as a member of the HHFT Steering Committee, supported the Fjord Trail and its goals to increase public safety along Route 9D while providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, nature appreciation and education. He said many of the potential environmental impacts Riverkeeper identified could be avoided depending on the chosen route.

As proposed, the 7.5-mile Fjord Trail would link Cold Spring, Breakneck Ridge and Beacon. HHFT's preferred southern route would include two half-mile sections over the river, one running south from Breakneck and the other from Dockside Park in Cold Spring to Little Stony Point. According to the plans, the construction would include 149 piles and 1,920 cubic yards of fill, which Riverkeeper fears will endanger shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon.

Dulong said HHFT's assertion that the shoreline in those sections is not within the sturgeon's preferred habitat is incorrect. He said the DGEIS correctly states that the area from Denning's Point in Beacon to Little Stony Point is designated as a "significant coastal fish and wildlife habitat" for sturgeon, adding that the state Department of Environmental Conservation describes it as "critical habitat for most estuarine-dependent fisheries originating from the Hudson

River" because it "contributes directly to the production of in-river and ocean populations of food, game and forage fish species."

The two in-river trail sections would require about 18 months to construct, according to HHFT. The shading, hydrological impacts on the shoreline and impacts on the ecosystem would also indirectly impact sturgeon, Dulong said.

In its comments, Riverkeeper also called for making wetland protection a priority in the northern section, where HHFT is considering two routes. It advocated avoiding a route that would include a boardwalk over a freshwater wetland south of Fishkill Creek that provides habitat for threatened and endangered species such as the eastern box turtle, spotted turtle, eastern hognose snake and pied-billed grebe.

Dulong said the possible presence of the Atlantic Coast leopard frog, which he said the DEC may add to its list of endangered species, should be considered. The group prefers the other proposed route, which it said could leave freshwater wetlands largely intact, although it requires further study.

Riverkeeper also objected to plans to add 22 acres of impervious or semipervious areas along the trail route, arguing that stormwater runoff from surfaces such as parking lots could increase contaminants entering the river and wetlands. Riverkeeper said it wants to see "minimal or no new impervious surfaces."

The group also spoke against expanding the Washburn parking lot opposite Little

Stony Point, which it said is a potential habitat for the eastern fence lizard.

Dulong said Riverkeeper's comments at the public hearing were abridged, and its review of the DGEIS will continue.

The Open Space Institute also offered feedback at the hearing. Matt Decker, its land project manager, said OSI "is an enthusiastic supporter" of the Fjord Trail, which he said will provide ecological benefits too numerous to mention in the two minutes each speaker was allowed. In a later email to *The Current*, Decker wrote that OSI views the trail as a way to "protect vulnerable species, safeguard against flooding and conserve and revitalize degraded habitat."

OSI believes the trail will keep users away from sensitive, remote areas where hiking causes erosion and damages habitat. He also noted that the plans call for invasive plants along the route to be replaced by native species, including hundreds of trees and thousands of shrubs. The HHFT route will "avoid and protect habitat for wildlife including bald eagles, Indiana bats, fence lizards and sturgeon," he said, and provide wildlife crossings to reduce human-wildlife interaction.

In an email to *The Current*, HHFT Executive Director Amy Kacala said that while most speakers said they supported the Fjord Trail, "we also heard comments flagging questions and concerns. This is what the environmental review process is all about and will ultimately help us deliver the best project possible."

State parks compiled the hearing comments, and a video is online at dub.sh/state-parks

HHFT Steering Committee

Project Lead
Scenic Hudson

State Agencies
Environmental Conservation
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Transportation

Metro Area Agencies
Metro-North Railroad
NYC Environmental Protection

Nonprofits
Hudson Highlands Land Trust
Lenape Center
Open Space Institute
Riverkeeper
New York-New Jersey Trail Conference

Municipalities
Village of Cold Spring
Town of Philipstown
Town of Fishkill
City of Beacon
Village of Nelsonville

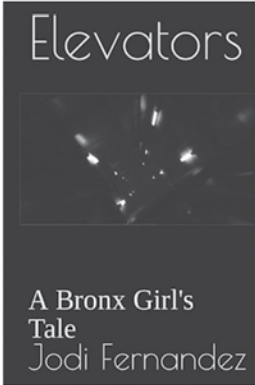

Community Nonprofits
Friends of Fahnestock & Hudson Highlands
State Parks
Little Stony Point Citizens Association
Town of Philipstown Greenway Committee

HHFT, along with the 709-page DGEIS. Comments can be submitted through March 4 to hhft.plan@parks.ny.gov or to Nancy Stoner, Environmental Analyst, NYS OPRHP, DESP, 625 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Albany, NY 12238.

Elevators: A Bronx Girl's Tale

A Conversation with Author Jodi Fernandez

Saturday February 1 2 p.m.



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AROUND TOWN



ROCK 'N' BREW —
Marsh King's Daughter performed its own music and covers of songs by The Talking Heads, Phish, The Grateful Dead and other groups on Jan. 25 at the Industrial Arts Brewing Co. in Beacon.

Photos by Ross Corsair



DIA PLAY — Each week, Dia Beacon offers a workshop for children that explores artwork at the museum. On Jan. 25, the focus was on sculptor Richard Serra (1938-2024), whose works at Dia include his “Torqued Ellipse” series. The children were asked to explore “positive” and “negative” space by using black and white pieces of paper to create optical illusions.

Photos by Ross Corsair



**THE PUBLIC
COMMENT
PERIOD ON
THE FJORD
TRAIL DGEIS IS
OPEN UNTIL
MARCH 4**

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

EMAIL your comment
to the Lead Agency,
New York State Parks at:
hhft.plan@parks.ny.gov

or

MAIL your comment
to Nancy Stoner, Environmental Analyst
NYS OPRHP, DESP
625 Broadway, 2nd Floor
Albany, NY 12238

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT AND THE DGEIS

qrco.de/ft_linktree



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QUICK LINKS



ft Hudson Highlands
Fjord Trail

The Calendar

BACK TO WILLIAMSBURG

Newburgh bar shares works by 'new Bohemian' artists

By Marc Ferris

Beginning Friday (Feb. 7), there will be reunions for the ages in Newburgh at a new gallery called Assisted Living. Artists who escaped from Williamsburg before it began to gentrify in 2000, moving to Beacon and other spots in the Hudson Valley, will exhibit a work completed in Brooklyn and a more recent piece.

The gallery is tucked in the back of the dive bar Untouchable, owned by Tom and Yukie Schmitz, who also own Quinn's on Main Street in Beacon. They moved across the river several years ago. "Beacon doesn't remind me of Brooklyn anymore," says Tom. "Newburgh reminds me of Brooklyn."

Anna West, who lived in Williamsburg from 1989 to 2004 before moving to Beacon, curated *The New Bohemia Now*, which includes works by 31 artists who live up and down the river, from Catskill to Hastings-on-Hudson. Besides West, the Beacon contributors include Ron Horning, Katherine Mahoney, George Mansfield, Sue Rossi and Laurel Shute.

After Soho gentrified in the 1970s and the galleries disappeared from the East Village in the 1980s, artists decamped to Williamsburg's cheap lofts. For a 1992 article in which *New York* magazine christened the working-class neighborhood as "the new Bohemia," a carefree West appeared on the cover with two friends at a cafe beneath the Williamsburg Bridge.

More media converged, attracting hipsters and investment bankers. "When someone built the first luxury building with no parking in the middle of a rough neighborhood, I knew the times were changing," says West. "That happened in Beacon, too, across from the post office" at 344 Main St.

After 2000, many Williamsburg artists dispersed upstate and to nearby Bushwick, where luxe buildings are popping up again, says West.

As Beacon experienced growing pains, especially for artists, the larger burgh across the river became a refuge. One slogan is "Don't Beacon Our Newburgh."

The Untouchable complex is located on

semi-chic Liberty Street at the far end of the commercial strip past Washington's Headquarters and a block from Big Mouth Coffee Roasters, a satellite of the flagship Beacon store.

Entering the bar is like stepping into a time machine. The smell of fresh-cut wood infuses the back room as Schmitz continues building panels and creating clever and practical interior designs to accommodate bands, artists and exhibitors. The backyard is huge.

As at Quinn's, Yukie handles the food. For now, the menu is a work in progress because the prep area is a nook off the bar. Tom takes care of the arts and events.

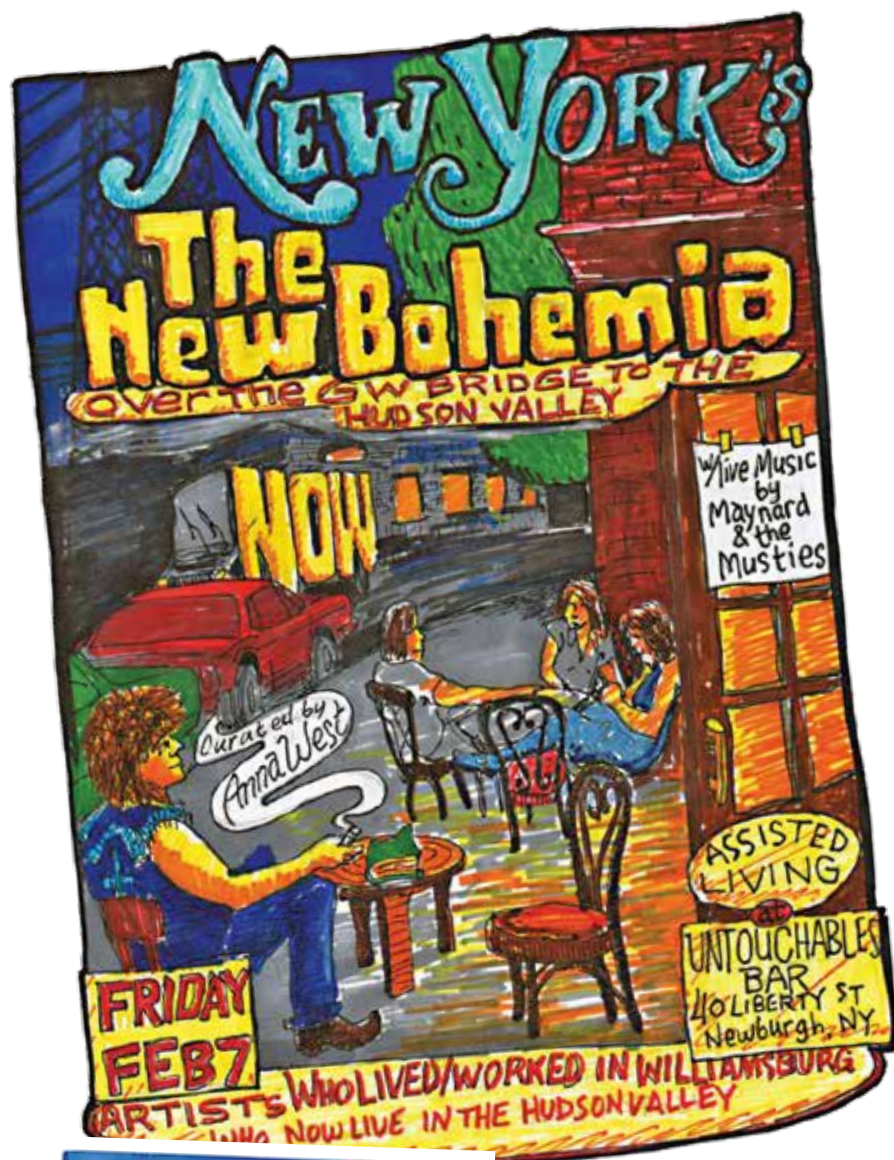
In 1991, he opened Earwax Records in Williamsburg (mentioned twice in the 1992 *New York* story) and promoted illicit and infamous warehouse parties. Eventually, he sold the business and the couple moved to Japan.

After the country's 2011 earthquake, they came to Beacon at the behest of George Mansfield, a close friend who had relocated after 9/11. (Tom and George opened Dogwood on East Main Street, which they sold in 2023 and is now Cooper's.)

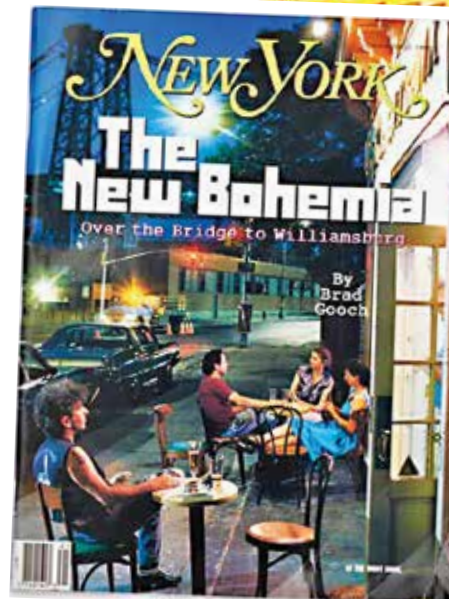
West, her curation complete, reminisces about those halcyon Brooklyn days of the early 1990s. "There were a zillion zines," she recalls. "With the open studios, you could see everyone else was doing something, not just sitting around. It wasn't a competition — it was more about inspiration because you wanted to be a part of the energy and excitement."

Then rents ballooned and new buildings along the East River blocked the views of the quaint four-story walkups. West and her husband could only afford Coney Island, an hour by subway from Manhattan, so the couple initiated a "one-hour policy," she says. After visiting Beacon on Metro-North in 2004, they put down roots.

Is it ironic for Beacon artists to participate in a show about a once-dicey locale revitalized by an artistic community that gentrified 25 years ago? "Everyone sees what's happening here," says West. "I'm glad I bought my house back in the day."



Joe Maynard created a poster for the show that mimics the 1992 *New York* magazine cover



Anna West, who curated a new show of former Williamsburg artists, appeared on the cover of *New York* in 1992 (in the blue dress).



"Gold Stream Wave," by Lauren Shute



"Bob's," by Anna West

Assisted Living is located inside the Untouchable Bar & Restaurant at 40 Liberty St. in Newburgh. *The New Bohemia Now* opens Feb. 7 from 6 to 8 p.m. with readings and live music by Maynard & the Musties; on Saturday (Feb. 8), the gallery will host a memorabilia night with zines and posters from 6 to 8 p.m. The show will also be open Feb. 13, 14 and 15 with performances.

THE WEEK AHEAD

COMMUNITY

SAT 1

Art Sale and Open House

COLD SPRING

1 – 5 p.m. 59 Chestnut St.
dub.sh/key-castle-2025

Paintings by Bill Papaleo, a Key to the Castle art workshop facilitator, will be on view and for sale. Snow date: SUN 2.

SAT 1

Hudson Valley Wingfest

POUGHKEEPSIE

5 – 8:30 p.m. MJN Center
14 Civic Center Plaza
famousfoodevents.ticketleap.com

The 18th annual festival will include food trucks, restaurants and caterers bringing their best wings. There will also be live music, entertainment and games. *Cost: \$39 (\$75 for 3:30 p.m. entry)*

THURS 6

Affordability Town Hall

7 p.m. Via Zoom
bit.ly/AD95VirtualTownHall2025

Assembly Member Dana Levenberg, whose district includes Philipstown, will host a discussion about the rising cost of living. Register online.

SAT 8

Lunar New Year Celebration

BEACON

2 p.m. St. Andrew & St. Luke
15 South Ave.
dub.sh/ beacon-lunar-2025

The cultural organization Asian Enough will host a Chinese Lion Dance and other activities. Food will be available for purchase. *Cost: \$10 (\$5 children)*

SUN 9

Lantern Making

BEACON

10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Beacon Farmers Market
223 Main St. | beaconspring.org

Beacon Spring will provide materials to make lanterns for the Celebration of Light parade scheduled for Feb. 22.

KIDS & FAMILY

SAT 1

Take Your Child to the Library Day

COLD SPRING

11 a.m. & 2 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org

A storytime with craft will be held at 11 a.m., followed at 2 p.m. by a bookmaking workshop.

TUES 4

Battle of the Books

COLD SPRING

2:30 & 3:15 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org

Students in grades 9 to 12 are invited to learn more about the library's team at the earlier session

and students in grades 5 to 8 in the later session. Registration required.

FRI 7

Origami Arts

COLD SPRING

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

Students in grades 5 and higher can make heart cards for friends and family.

VISUAL ART

SAT 1

Figure Draw-a-Thon

GARRISON

11 a.m. – 6 p.m. Garrison Art Center
23 Garrison's Landing | 845-424-3960
garrisonartcenter.org/figure-draw-a-thon

Drop in or stay all day at this fundraiser. Bring supplies. Ages 18 and older. *Cost: \$80 (\$50 ages 18-25)*



SAT 1

Black and White

COLD SPRING

3 – 5 p.m. Buster Levi Gallery
123 Main St. | busterlevigallery.com

The group show will showcase work by 15 artists using monochromatic colors. Through Feb. 23.

SAT 8

Greg Slick | Amy Cheng, Erik Schoonebeek & Zac Skinner

GARRISON

5 – 7 p.m. Garrison Art Center
23 Garrison's Landing | 845-424-3960
garrisonartcenter.org

Slick's paintings in *Depth Perception* bring together prehistoric forms in contemporary art. The group show, *Home Is Where the Heart Is*, showcases three artists' perspectives on the concept. Through March 9.

SECOND SATURDAY

SAT 8

BAU Open Winners

BEACON

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

Briana Babani, the winner of the BAU Open, will share her sculptures in Gallery 1 and the work of two other winners, Irja Bodén and Choro Leslie Meyers, will be displayed in Gallery 2. The Beacon Room will

have photos by Pamela Vlahakis and Sile Marrinan. Through March 2.

SAT 8

Currents of Love

BEACON

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

This group show will include work by Cappy Hotchkiss, Kaitlyn Niznikand and Jessica Bottalico. Through March 1.

SAT 8

The Evolution of Mark Making

BEACON

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

Kipton Hinsdale's multimedia abstract work explores the environments in his life, including the urban streets of Brooklyn and the woods of the Hudson Valley. Through April 5.

STAGE & SCREEN

SAT 1

Aida

POUGHKEEPSIE

12:30 p.m. Bardavon
35 Market St. | bardavon.org

Watch the Met HD livestream of Verdi's opera with soprano Angel Blue as the Ethiopian princess. *Cost: \$30 (\$28 members)*

SAT 1

Depot Cabaret: Ann Talman

GARRISON

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

For her cabaret show, *The Shadow of Her Smile*, Talman will share stories and songs about her long friendship with Elizabeth Taylor. *Cost: \$30*

SUN 2

Depot Cabaret: Lane Bradbury

GARRISON

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

In her cabaret show, Bradbury will talk about her role in the original production of *Gypsy* and other recollections. *Cost: \$30*

SAT 8

Wicked

COLD SPRING

1:30 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org

Watch the hit 2024 musical starring Cynthia Erivo (Elphaba) and Ariana Grande (Glinda). Registration required.

SAT 8

Cirque Zuma Zuma

PEEKSKILL

5 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039
paramounthudsonvalley.com

The African troupe performs dazzling acts with a live musical score. *Cost: \$27 to \$54*



BAU Open Winners, Feb. 8

SAT 8

John Fugelsang

GARRISON

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

The comedian, known for his interviews on *Tell Me Everything*, will do stand-up. *Cost: \$30*

SAT 8

Gabe Mollica

BEACON

8 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | artichokeshow.com

The Artichoke storytelling series will present the comedian's show, *Horse Lawyer*. *Cost: \$25*

NATURE & OUTDOORS

SAT 1

EagleFest

CROTON

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Croton Point Park
1 Croton Point Ave.
teatown.org/events/eaglefest

There will be bird shows, bird walks and opportunities to learn about eagles throughout the day. Snow date: SUN 2. *Cost: \$35 (\$20 children, \$30/\$17 members)*

SAT 8

From Sap to Syrup

WAPPINGERS FALLS

9 a.m. Stony Kill Farm
79 Farmstead Lane | stonykill.org/adulteducation

Learn tree-tapping techniques and how to turn sap into syrup. Ages 17 and older. Register online. *Cost: \$35*



Currents of Love, Feb. 8

SAT 8

Eagle Watch

GARRISON

10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Boscobel
1601 Route 9D | boscobel.org

Spotters from the Putnam Highlands Audubon Society will assist visitors in viewing eagles at this 10th annual event. See Page 2. *Cost: \$14 (\$12 seniors, \$7 ages 5 to 18, free for members)*

SAT 8

Maple Sugar Kick-Off Day

CORNWALL

11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Outdoor Discovery Center
120 Muser Drive | 845-534-5506
hnnaturecenter.org

Tours, which begin hourly until 3 p.m., include a short walk to Maple Lane or a mile hike to the Sugar Bush Shack. Weekends through March 9. *Cost: \$18 (\$15 members, free for ages 4 and younger)*

SAT 8
Winter Seed Sowing
COLD SPRING
2 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org
Prepare a planting container to germinate seeds from native plants.

TALKS & TOURS

SAT 1
Jodi Fernandez
GARRISON
2 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
Fernandez, who teaches at Peekskill High School, will read from her memoir, *Elevators: A Bronx Girl's Tale*, in which she describes growing up in housing projects during the crack epidemic.

THURS 6
How to Avoid Scams & Identity Theft
GARRISON
1 – 4 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | desmondfishlibrary.org
Philipstown Aging at Home and the library are hosting this program on the tricks and techniques scammers use.

FRI 7
Lit Lit
BEACON
7 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | howlandculturalcenter.org
Read original writing of any

genre for 5 minutes at this monthly literary open mic or just listen. Sign-up begins at 6:30 p.m. *Cost: \$5 donation*

SAT 8
Caroline Hagood | Lisa Marie Basile
BEACON
7 p.m. Stanza Books
508 Main St. | 845-440-3906
stanzabooks.com
The authors will read from their new books. Hagood's *Death and Other Speculative Fictions* takes place in stories as she mourns her father. Basile's *Saint Of* is a poetry collection.

MUSIC

SAT 1
DizzyFish and the Uptown Horns
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
Singer and guitarist Eric Herbst will celebrate his birthday at the show as the band plays the best of 1970s rock. *Cost: \$45 (\$50 door)*

SUN 2
Genticorum
BEACON
7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The folk band from Quebec performs traditional music. *Cost: \$25 (\$30 door)*

FRI 7
Last Minute Soulmates
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The local band plays originals and covers. *Cost: \$15 minimum purchase*

SAT 8
Regimental Brass Quintet
BEACON
2 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beaconlibrary.org
The quintet, part of the West Point Band, will perform.

SAT 8
Le Vent du Nord
BEACON
8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
This band from Quebec plays francophone folk. *Cost: \$40 (\$45 door)*

CIVIC

MON 3
City Council
BEACON
7 p.m. City Hall | 1 Municipal Plaza
845-838-5011 | beaconny.gov

TUES 4
School Board
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Middle School Library
15 Craigside Drive | 845-265-9254
haldaneschool.org



Genticorum, Feb. 2

TUES 4
Putnam Legislature
CARMEL
7 p.m. Historic Courthouse
44 Gleneida Ave. | 845-208-7800
putnamcountyny.com

WED 5
Village Board
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Village Hall | 85 Main St.
845-265-3611 | coldspringny.gov

THURS 6
Assembly Office Hours
GARRISON
1 – 4 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 NY-403 | desmondfishlibrary.org
Assembly Member Dana Levenberg's team will answer questions and help constituents access resources.

THURS 6
Town Board
COLD SPRING
7:30 p.m. Town Hall | 238 Main St.
845-265-5200 | philipstown.com

Week Ahead edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)
For a full listing of events, see highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

10th Annual

Eagle Watch

at Boscobel

Sat. February 8th 10am-2pm



Bundle up to search for wintering Bald Eagles from the scenic cliffs of Boscobel as experts from Putnam Highlands Audubon help you find and identify these majestic birds. Audubon will have scopes and some binoculars available.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED:
boscobel.org/events/eagle-viewing



GARRISON INSTITUTE

Father Thomas Keating

A daylong event to explore and celebrate the founder of the Centering Prayer movement.

Presenters
Sabina Alkire
Cynthia Bourgeault
Adam Bucko
Cyprian Consiglio
David Frenette
Peter C. Jones
Tenzin Priyadarshi
Colleen Thomas

March 7
9 am-6 pm
14 Mary's Way
Garrison, NY
garrisoninstitute.org





The Hudson Highlands Pipe Band

BURNS NIGHT

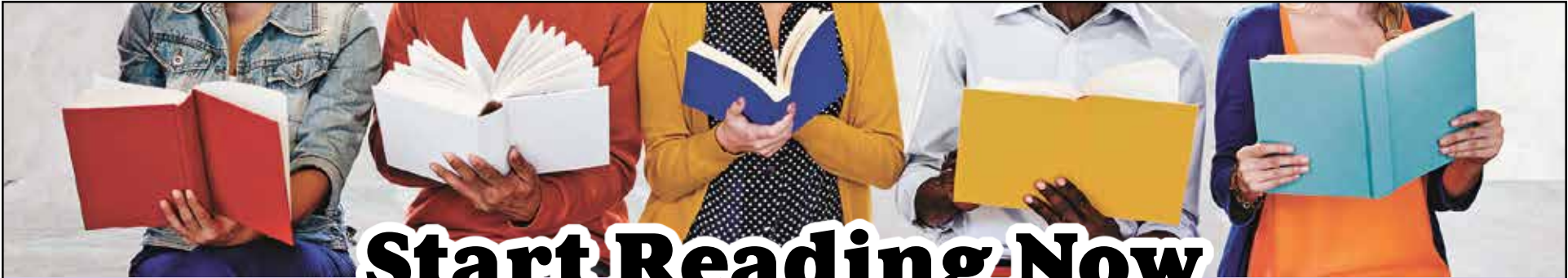
February 1st, 2025 | The Garrison Inn

Join the Hudson Highlands Pipe band in a celebration of Scottish music, poetry, good cheer and Haggis at The Garrison Inn in Cold Spring

Tickets are on sale at eventbrite.com
Or scan the QR code



All other inquiries can be made via HHPBinfo@gmail.com



Start Reading Now

February Book Club Selections

Nonfiction Nature Book Club
MON 3, 6:30 P.M.
The Backyard Bird Chronicles, by Amy Tan
Butterfield Library, Cold Spring
Register at butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar.

Lit Book Club
TUES 4, 7 P.M.
The Safekeep, by Yael Van der Wouden
Stanza Books, Beacon
Register at stanzabooks.com/book-clubs.

Abe Lincoln/Civil War Book Club
THURS 6, 7 P.M.
Ways and Means: Lincoln and His Cabinet and the Financing of the Civil War, by Roger Lowenstein
Lincoln Depot Museum,
10 S. Water St., Peekskill
Email LincolnDepotFDN@gmail.com.

History Book Club
THURS 6, 7 P.M.
Debt: The First 5,000 Years, by David Graeber
Split Rock Books, Cold Spring
Register at splitrockbks.com/event.

Graphic Novel Book Club (Adults)
MON 10, 3:30 P.M.
Ms. Davis: A Graphic Biography, by Sybille Titeux de la Croix
Sabrina, by Nick Drnaso
Desmond-Fish Library, Garrison
Register at desmondfishlibrary.org/events.

Middle School Book Club (Grades 5-8)
TUES 11, 3:15 P.M.
Charlie Thorne and the Lost City, by Stuart Gibbs
Butterfield Library, Cold Spring
Register at butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar.

Early Reader Book Club (Ages 5-7)
TUES 11, 4 P.M.
Hotel Balzaar, by Kate DiCamillo
Split Rock Books, Cold Spring
RSVP to heidi@splitrockbks.com.

Fantasy Book Club
TUES 11, 7 P.M.
Gods of Jade and Yellow, by Silvia Moreno-Garcia
Stanza Books, Beacon
Register at stanzabooks.com/book-clubs.

Queer Book Club
TUES 11, 7 P.M.
The Proposal, by Sonora Reyes
Split Rock Books, Cold Spring
Register at splitrockbks.com/event.

Fiction Book Club
TUES 18, 7 P.M.
Lolly Willowes, by Sylvia Townsend Warner
Split Rock Books, Cold Spring
Register at splitrockbks.com/event.

Sci-Fi Book Club
TUES 18, 7 P.M.
Too Like the Lightning, by Ada Palmer
Stanza Books, Beacon
Register at stanzabooks.com/book-clubs.

Wednesday Book Club
WED 19, 2 P.M.
The Three Mothers, by Anna Malaika Tubbs
Howland Library, Beacon
Register at beaconlibrary.org/calendar.

In Comparison Book Club
WED 19, 7 P.M.
Autobiography of Red, by Anne Carson
Grendel, by John Gardner
Stanza Books, Beacon
Register at stanzabooks.com/book-clubs.

Page-to-Screen Book Club
THURS 20, 3 P.M.
The Sun is Also a Star, by Nicola Yoon
Desmond-Fish Library, Garrison
Register at desmondfishlibrary.org/events.

DFPL Community Read
MON 24, 2 P.M.
James, by Percival Everett
Desmond-Fish Library, Garrison
Register at desmondfishlibrary.org/events.

Butterfield Book Club
MON 24, 7 P.M.
The Sweetness of Water, by Nathan Harris
Butterfield Library, Cold Spring
Register at butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar.

Middle School Book Club (Grades 5-8)
TUES 25, 3:15 P.M.
Anne of Green Gables: A Graphic Novel, by Mariah Marsden
Butterfield Library, Cold Spring
Register at butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar.

Graphic Novel Book Club (Grades 3-6)
TUES 25, 6:30 P.M.
Stuntboy, in the Meantime, by Jason Reynolds
Howland Library, Beacon
Register at beaconlibrary.org/calendar.

Mystery Book Club
TUES 25, 7 P.M.
The Day of the Owl, by Leonardo Sciascia
Split Rock Books, Cold Spring
Register at splitrockbks.com/event.

Mystery Book Club
WED 26, 7 P.M.
Scorched Grace, by Margot Douaihy
Stanza Books, Beacon
Register at stanzabooks.com/book-clubs.

Beacon Book Club
THURS 27, 7:15 P.M.
The Safekeep, by Yael Van der Wouden
Location TBD
Register at meetup.com/beacon-bookclub.

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Got Secrets?

Beacon show will set you free

By Marc Ferris

At *True Confessions*, a show staged in September at Denning's Point Distillery in Beacon, three people admitted to not wearing underwear. Someone claimed they dated Jeffrey Epstein's brother and another copped to urinating in a neighbor's yard on multiple occasions.

Audience members made those admissions, their veracity unverified, on Post-it notes affixed to a whiteboard during the performance. On Saturday (Feb. 1), a similar event will pivot to a new theme: exposing and exploring family secrets.

"There was a blog in the 1990s where you could share a confession by sending a postcard, and the person would post it online," says Susan Johnson, who owns Denning's Point Distillery. "Some were cute, funny or touching, but I recall one where a guy claimed that he put a spider in his sister's bed as a joke and it bit her and killed her."

The show format is simple. People submitted stories of up to 600 words by email, snail mail or by dropping them into a box at the distillery. Johnson and literary agent Linda Pratt whittled the 20 entries to eight. Actors Twinkle Burke, Laura DeJesus, Alexander Florez and Marjorie Lewit will read them aloud.



The producers and performers from *True Confessions*: Susan Johnson, Eli Walker, Linda Pratt, John Blesso, Stella Hlad and Brian Donnelly

Photos provided

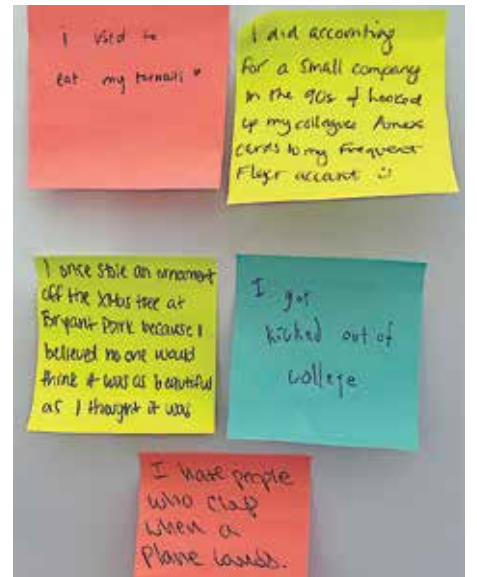
To elevate the experience, a fifth actor with a comedic flair delivers witty responses to the predicaments of each story. For *True Confessions*, John Blesso played The Redeemer and "sounded like the voice of God," says Pratt, "He even created a scroll and delivered wry, witty, funny commentary, but never mean — only soft landings."

For *Family Secrets*, Lena Rizkallah will be Your Glamorous Judgy Auntie and plans to "do my best playing myself," she says. "Everyone has family secrets, and almost everyone has a kooky, fun, judgmental, maybe rich, maybe drunk auntie in the family. Who better to dish than the person who has seen it all and is not surprised by anything, even those shocking 23andMe results?"

Pratt, who lives in Beacon, runs events called *Twice Told* in Wappingers Falls that pair writers and artists. "I use the term 'producer' loosely," she says of her role orchestrating shows. "I'm just doing this dog-and-pony thing where we come to town, put up tent poles and establish parameters. What happens under the tent that night is a fun thing: People get excited, and then it's gone."

She met Johnson about a year ago, and they hatched the idea. "Susan wanted people to stand behind a screen or something and tell their stories, but we figured it would be hard to remain anonymous because there are no trapdoors or escape hatches," says Pratt.

Adds Johnson: "The secrets and regrets we all carry with us can be burdensome and



Audience members were invited to write confessions on Post-it notes.

uncomfortable, but I figured that sharing with curious people in a live event would be interesting, so I recruited Linda to pull it off."

The only improvisational component will be Judgy Auntie's reaction to eight Post-it notes created by audience members at the show. "The stories speak for themselves," says Pratt. "Some of the family secrets are just, wow. And we have a banger for an ending — it's such a crazy situation."

Denning's Point Distillery is located at 10 N. Chestnut St. in Beacon. The show begins at 7 p.m.



Photo by Christopher Grau

BOSCOBEL
HOUSE AND GARDENS

EAGLE WATCH
Saturday, February 8th
10AM-2PM

In partnership with The Putnam Highlands
Audubon Society and Constitution Marsh
Audubon Center & Sanctuary

Scan for registration
& more info



Roots and Shoots

Testing Seeds, Finding Purpose

By Pamela Doan



Writing a gardening column in winter should be straightforward. There are timely bits about seed sowing, garden planning and seasonal preparation that could be covered. And yet, with the firehose of chaos coming from the federal government, it doesn't seem straightforward. I've been thinking about how the changes in our country impact both journalism and tending to the natural spaces around us.

This week the groups I follow covering scientific research, conservation, climate change and environmental issues are panicked about funding, employment and the impact of suppression, denial and the manipulation of information. Meanwhile, I'm worried about my chickens and bird flu, too.

Most of all, I want to work within this community to find reasons for hope and ways to find solace in tending plants. I've been interested in plants and gardening since I was in college and started learning about organic farming and environmental issues related to raising animals for food. I stopped eating meat and revived my parents'

vegetable garden one summer. As I worked long hours after college as a union organizer, I found stress relief while learning about the ferns growing in the yard of my rented house in Seattle and checking every day to see their fronds unfurl in the spring.

At every stage of my adult life, I've gardened through the highs and lows and expanded my knowledge base through research, classes and experience. Soil, water, sun, plants, trees — a constant practice that has changed my understanding of the world at every stage of my life and what I value.

For now, all I have sorted out is that I'm writing for all of you who feel the same and who want to find an outlet for expression and connection with the non-human world. Loving nature can be hard. It's struggling, and maybe it's easier to look away and avoid the grief of wildfires, dead birds and a forest of barberry where you know other plants should be. Let's work on this together and find ways to balance the grief and celebrate the many miracles that occur each day.

Now to the basics. After a couple of years of not focusing on the vegetable garden, our family is ready to return to it. I miss the taste, the variety and the happiness of fresh food right there in my yard. As we saw



Sort seed packets and get ready for the growing season by testing germination rates.

Photo by P. Doan

during the pandemic, I expect there will be much interest in growing your own food again this season. During periods of instability, it's nice to know we can have a bit of control over this essential source of life.

There is a drawer in my house that is full of seed packets. Many are still organized by planting order, with index cards separating them by date. Others are just shoved in. It's aspirational for sure, like any project drawer that had bigger ambitions than the

time allowed. As I'm sorting, the biggest question is how many can still be used and which have expired. The worst outcome is to go through the work of sowing seeds that can't germinate and lose that window during the growing season.

In general, vegetable seeds can be stored for three to five years. Information on seed packets varies, but most don't list expiration dates because their usefulness depends on how the seeds are stored. Dry, cool sites without sunlight or variable temperatures are the most stable.

To find out how old the seeds are, check the seed packet. My Fedco seed packets list the year they were packed. The High Mowing packets include a "packed for" year and then a "sell by" date; some were packed in 2018 and sold by 2021, which is probably too old.

Test germination rates by sprouting seeds first. Sprinkle 10 to 20 seeds on a damp, but not soaked, paper towel and cover it with another paper towel. If you're testing multiple varieties, label and record dates for each one to keep track. Keep the paper towels consistently moist and follow the germination range on the seed packet.

As an example, my peas should sprout in seven to 14 days. If none has sprouted or less than 50 percent have sprouted after two weeks, I need new seeds. If at least 50 percent sprout, I can use them but will probably overseed. I'd rather have too many plants and thin them than not have enough.



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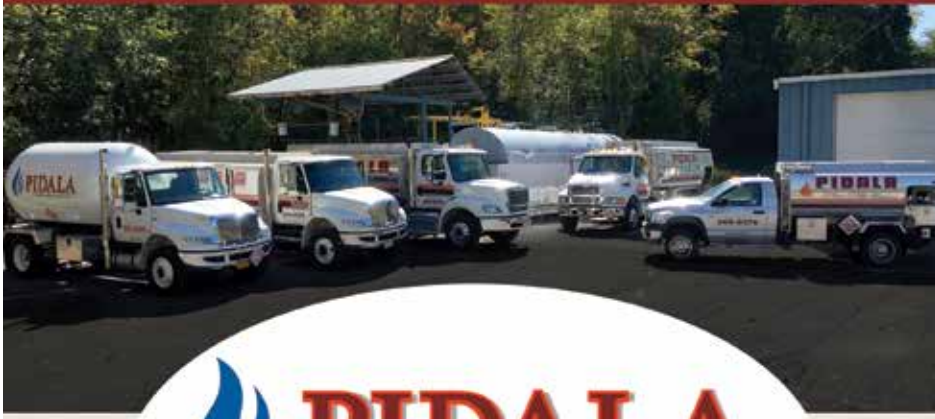
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PREPARING FOR I.C.E.

Law Enforcement *(from Page 1)*

years, and under two previous sheriffs.

The county practice largely tracks with guidance issued Jan. 22 by the state Attorney General's Office in response to President Donald Trump's vow to arrest and deport millions of undocumented immigrants.

Attorney General Letitia James released her guidance a day after Emil Bove, the acting deputy attorney general in Washington, D.C., asserted in a memo to Justice Department staff that federal law prohibits state and local governments "from resisting, obstructing and otherwise failing to comply with lawful immigration-related commands."

Bove warned that the Justice Department would investigate "incidents involving any such misconduct for potential prosecution, including for obstructing federal functions," and "identify state and local laws, policies, and activities that are inconsistent" with Trump's immigration initiatives and "take legal action" against those laws.

According to James, county jails are not legally obligated to notify ICE that a prisoner will be released from custody or to honor its requests, known as "detainers," to hold inmates for 48 hours beyond their scheduled release. Detainer requests are often accompanied by an administrative warrant issued by immigration authorities to arrest an undocumented immigrant for deportation, but James recommended that local officers

How Many Undocumented?

An estimated 850,000 undocumented immigrants — meaning they do not have work permits or green cards — live in New York state, mostly in New York City, according to the Migration Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. How many live in the Highlands is not known, but if immigration court data is indicative, the numbers have risen dramatically over the past 20 years. As of August, there were nearly 400 new immigration cases involving Putnam County residents, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University (TRAC). In 2004, there were 34 cases filed during the entire year.

The numbers for Dutchess are similar. As of August, there were 779 immigration cases. In 2004, there were 33. About 75 percent of those cases involve immigrants from Central and South America, according to TRAC.

only honor detainers when authorities have a warrant signed by a federal judge.

"We have laws that protect immigrants and limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement efforts," she wrote in

her guidance. "Those laws should continue to be followed by all New York law enforcement and officials."

According to the Center for Immigration Studies, which describes itself as a "pro-immigrant, low-immigration" think tank, Dutchess is among the New York counties that do not notify ICE before a detainee's release or allow "adequate hold time" for ICE to arrest someone.

The Dutchess County Sheriff's Office did not respond to an email asking to clarify its position on detainer requests, but Capt. John Watterson, a representative, said on Jan. 7 that "immigration laws fall under the jurisdiction of federal authorities, and at this time we are not aware of any plans to have the Sheriff's Office become involved in their enforcement."

New York law also bars local and state law enforcement from detaining people for civil immigration violations, according to the Attorney General's Office. People can only be arrested for violating civil immigration laws when police "have probable cause to believe that an individual has committed a crime or offense" or when a federal judge has issued a warrant, according to its guidance.

In practical terms, according to the guidance, local officials cannot keep someone in jail without a federal court order or detain the occupants of a car following a traffic stop to give ICE time to question or arrest them.

In addition, although U.S. law requires that state and local governments share data on citizenship and immigration status with

federal agencies, nothing mandates that they collect it. Further, nothing requires state and local governments to release non-public information such as the date of an inmate's release or court appearances or a home address, said the Attorney General's Office.

In Beacon, the City Council adopted a policy in 2017, during Trump's first term, that city employees, including police officers, will not "stop, question, interrogate, investigate or arrest an individual based solely on actual or suspected immigration or citizenship status." The resolution also proclaimed that the city will not "inquire about the immigration status of an individual, including a crime victim, a witness, or a person who calls or approaches the police seeking assistance, unless necessary to investigate criminal activity by that individual."

Philipstown does not have a police force but in 2017, by a 3-2 vote, forbade its employees from assisting ICE "unless such investigation or inquiry is required by state or federal law or by court order."

In Peekskill, where 46 percent of residents are Latino, the police department "is not going to be working with ICE unless it is a criminal and there is a court warrant," said Mayor Vivian McKenzie, according to *The Peekskill Herald*.

In Newburgh, where 51 percent of residents are Latino, a 2017 resolution largely precludes police and city employees from cooperating with ICE.

Schools *(from Page 1)*

Now! at The City University of New York, said he believes ICE raids on workplaces are more likely than those on schools. "I wouldn't be too concerned that they're going to come to some [local] school" to detain students, he said. "It's not a very good use of resources."

Superintendents at the three local districts said this week that federal agents would not be permitted on school grounds without a court order. "Law enforcement agencies can't just come in and request to see a student, talk to a student, interrogate a student or detain a student," said Gregory Stowell, superintendent of the Garrison district.

Stowell said the district would consult its attorney before proceeding if ICE agents show up with a court order or warrant. Haldane Superintendent Carl Albano and Beacon Superintendent Matt Landahl each said the same. The superintendents emphasized that state and federal laws do not require districts to record the immigration status of students.

During a Beacon school board meeting on Monday (Jan. 27), a retired schoolteacher, Vicki Fox, urged district officials to hold "know your rights" workshops and to encourage immigrant families to create preparedness plans. Parents should also understand the difference between a search warrant signed by a judge and "something just signed by an ICE official, which does not go along with the Fourth Amendment

for searches," Fox said.

Landahl said Beacon administrators planned to meet soon with the district's attorneys and that bilingual staff members have been helping immigrant families prepare. "We're working as an administrative group to make sure we're as well-informed as possible," he said. "I think that's the only thing we can do right now."

Guidelines issued earlier this month by New York State reinforce that all children ages 5 to 21 who have not received a high school diploma are entitled to a free public education. Districts may not refuse enrollment based on national origin, immigration status, race or language proficiency, among other grounds. In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1982 that students may not be denied a free public education based on their immigration status or that of their parents or guardians.

The state guidelines also instruct schools not to release students' personal information, including immigration status, citizenship or national origin.

Landahl said in an email to community members on Jan. 22 that the Beacon district's code of conduct limits law enforcement access to students during the school day. "I should also note that we have a very collaborative relationship with local law enforcement, and they are in our buildings frequently for drills, school walk-throughs and athletic and other events, and we welcome that," he wrote.

Governor Proposes 2% Increase in School Aid

Also says state should ban student cellphone use

Gov. Kathy Hochul's state budget proposal, released Jan. 21, recommends that nearly every school district in New York, including Haldane, Garrison and Beacon, receive 2 percent increases in unrestricted foundation aid for 2025-26.

That differs from her proposal last year, which would have cut the aid sent to Beacon and Garrison, although much was restored in the final spending plan adopted by the Legislature in April. The 2025-26 budget is expected to be finalized by April 1, although legislators have missed that deadline before.

For 2025-26, Hochul proposed that Beacon receive \$21.7 million in foundation aid (up from \$21.3 million this year) and \$31.5 million in total aid, an increase of 1.83 percent. Superintendent Matt Landahl on Monday (Jan. 27) thanked community members for advocating increased funding. "It may not make a difference in the moment, but over time it does," he said.

Haldane is expected to receive \$3 million in foundation aid, an increase of

\$58,000. Hochul proposed sending the district a total of \$4.6 million in state aid, an increase of 3.5 percent. Garrison is expected to receive \$600,000 in foundation aid, an increase of \$12,000, and \$1.2 million overall, an increase of 5.24 percent.

The governor's proposal also includes \$340 million to provide free breakfast and lunch for every public school student in New York. Beacon has provided free meals since December 2023 while Haldane has a cafeteria where students can buy prepared food.

Garrison would need to spend about \$100,000 to renovate its kitchen to serve meals, said Superintendent Gregory Stowell. "Now that there's a potential revenue source for the school lunch program, we're certainly going to take a hard look at it," he said.

In addition, Hochul proposed a "bell-to-bell" restriction on cellphone use by students, a plan that Landahl said he expects will become law. The budget proposal includes funding to help schools pay for storage units for student phones. All three local districts have restrictions on student cellphone use during class.

Current Classifieds

SERVICES

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Place your ad here for \$9.95. See
highlandscurrent.org/classifieds.

Hockey (from Page 20)

15, he was a Rebels’ modified team member last year before moving this season to the varsity. The team practices at Bear Mountain State Park and plays its home games at the Brewster Ice Arena.

A defenseman, Philippi lists strong backward skating as one of his skills, “but I have many things to work on, including my slap shot,” he said.

Roundup (from Page 20)

points. He finished with 19 and Del Pozo had 18. “The energy level, the speed and the execution were the complete opposite of Saturday,” said Virgadamo.

Haldane will host North Salem today (Jan. 31) at 6:45 p.m. and honor its seniors: Faye, Nate Stickle and Andalou Frezza. On Sunday at 4:15 p.m., the Blue Devils play Spackenkill in the 11th annual Officials vs. Cancer Tournament at Dutchess Community College in Poughkeepsie. On Thursday they travel to Croton-Harmon and at 5:30 p.m. on Friday host Beacon for the annual Battle of the Tunnel.

GIRLS’ BASKETBALL — The Blue Devils (3-10) lost their sixth consecutive game, falling at Putnam Valley, 38-23. They travel to North Salem today (Jan. 31) and Dobbs Ferry on Monday before hosting Keio Academy at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday while honoring the squad’s lone senior, Martha McBride. On Thursday, Haldane will host Croton-Harmon at 6:15 p.m.

WINTER TRACK — Haldane traveled to The Armory in New York City on Jan. 26 to compete in the 21-team Section I Rockland/Northern County Championship. For the girls, Clara Schmitt placed sixth in the 55-meter hurdles in 10.92; Anna Nelson was sixth in the 55-meter dash in 8 seconds; Liv Holmbo (3-9) and Plum Severs (3-6) finished fourth and fifth in the long jump; Ashley Sousa was fourth in the 1,500 in 5:25.30; and Shayla

Sports

He likes hockey’s nonstop action. “You’re always doing something,” he said.

After last season, the Rebels moved to a more competitive level and have struggled, with 13 losses and a tie.

Though he had never played hockey before last season, Tomizawa, 15, grew up skating on a backyard pond. “Hockey came pretty naturally,” he said. “I’ve been watching it my whole life.” He was a goalie on the modified team, a position he described as

“scary.” This season, he is playing wing. “There’s a lot of skill involved,” he said. “It’s pretty physical, pretty intense.”

He and Philippi said they plan to stick with hockey at least through high school, although Tomizawa conceded his true passion is baseball.

The next Rebels game is at 7 p.m. on Saturday (Feb. 1) at the Brewster Ice Arena against Clarkston. They host Byram Hills at 6:15 p.m. on Friday (Feb. 7).

Beacon’s Soccer Hall of Famer

The Eastern New York Youth Soccer Association on Jan. 25 inducted Rhey Cader of Beacon into its Hall of Fame.

Cader, who grew up in Zimbabwe, played for Arcadia United and Prince Edward Academy and the Zimbabwe Youth National Team before emigrating to New York in 1998. After coaching his eldest son’s intramural team in the Beacon Soccer Club, he moved it to a travel league and eventually won a State Cup championship.

After three decades of coaching, his most recent squad is a boys’ under-10 team. He stepped in to keep the group from disbanding.

Cader has been president of the Beacon Soccer Club, which has about 700 players, for 15 years. He created an Angel Fund to provide financial assistance and started volunteer recognition



Rhey Cader (right) with Richard Christiano, president of the ENYYSA
Photo provided

awards and a Hall of Fame. In 2019, he was inducted into the Hudson Valley Youth Soccer League Hall of Fame.

Ochoa finished third in the long jump (14-4). The 4x200 relay team was also third in 1:56.47.

For the boys, the relay team won the 4x200 meters in 1:35; Jake Thomas was second in shotput (36-10); Milo Pearsall finished third in the long jump (19-5.5); Rhys Williams was

fifth in the 55-meter dash (6.83); James Frommer was fourth in the 600 meters (1:30.77); and Owen Powers finished third in the 3,200 meters (9:58.06). The Blue Devils return to The Armory on Saturday (Feb. 1) for the Purple Champions Invitational.

NOTICE

Philipstown Zoning Board

The Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals will hold their regular monthly meeting on **Monday, February 10th, 2025 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 February 2025.

NOTICE

Philipstown Planning Board

**Site Visit-
Sunday, February 9th, 2025**

The Philipstown Planning Board will meet on Sunday, February 9th, 2025 at 9:30am to inspect the following site:

**Fergus/Chen, 236 Old Albany Post Rd., Garrison, NY
TM#72.18-1-12.1**

NOTICE

Philipstown Conservation Board

The Philipstown Conservation Board will hold their regular monthly meeting on **Tuesday, February 11h, 2025 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 Conservation Board February 2025.

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		

- ACROSS
1. Dime portrait

4. “Phooey!”

8. Chow

12. Singer Reed

13. Aachen article

14. Russo of *The Intern*

15. Top floor cooler

17. Roman poet

18. Farm fraction

19. Corrodes

20. Monk’s home

22. Raw minerals

24. Paint layer

25. Skillet with low sides

29. Gearwheel tooth

30. Prefix with “logical”

31. Bathroom, to a Londoner

32. Refuse holder

34. Lacking slack

35. New Mexico resort

36. Desert flora

37. Passe
40. Achy

41. Breakfast chain

42. Village People classic

46. Air-show stunt

47. Sneeze syllable

48. Latin 101 word

49. Singer Lovett

50. Tools with teeth

51. Label
- DOWN
1. Ga. neighbor

2. Speck

3. Yellow turnip

4. Belittle

5. Teeming

6. Political strategist Navarro

7. Hamilton bill

8. Complain

9. Guns the engine

10. One

11. Hotel furniture

16. “Cold As Ever” rapper
19. Seized vehicle

20. Bank statement no.

21. Rude dude

22. Killer whales

23. Check

25. Designer Chanel

26. Table protector

27. Summer month in Paris

28. Terse denial

30. Roe provider

33. Treeless tract

34. Poi base

36. Some Pacific salmon

37. Pickling herb

38. “Hi, sailor!”

39. Implement

40. Garbage barge

42. Roast VIPs

43. “Caught ya!”

44. “I – Rock”

45. Eggy quaff

SUDOCURRENT

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

WORDLADDER

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

SLAKE

PRANK

WORDSEARCH

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

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JARS

OREO

BEEF

SAFARI

BACKTOWORK

TVSET

REED

IRA

BACKTOBACK

RICO

ABET

LIST

ITTY

OAF

PTA

TAJ

BACKTOWORK

EAT

CBS

ERA

TOBACK

CHIMPS

NUT

ENE

DID

TGIF

HOSE

ROTE

IPOD

WORK

MAI

VETS

SINES

S

IMPLE

LOW

SOTS

Answers for Jan. 24 Puzzles

B

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G

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TRADE, TRACE, TRACT,
TRAIT, TRAIN, DRAIN

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

PHILIPSTOWN

DEPOT

THEATRE

Depot Cabaret

Feb. 1 at 7pm

Ann Talman presents

Shadow of her Smile

Songs and stories honoring Liz Taylor

Depot Cabaret

Broadway legend Lane Bradbury

Feb. 2 at 3pm

Comedian John Fugelsang

Feb 8 at 7pm

www.philipstowndepottheatre.org

Sports



Aisling Stathos (5) moves the puck up ice for the North Avalanche.

Photo provided

HALDANE'S HOCKEY HAT TRICK

*Three students play
for other schools*

By Michael Turton

Aisling Stathos, Caden Philippi and Kiyoshi Tomizawa agree on why they love hockey: "Because it's so fast!"

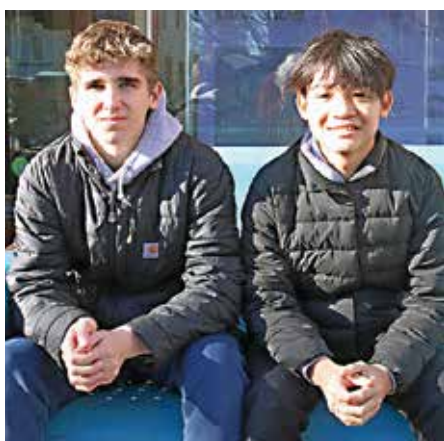
Because there are not enough players at Haldane High School to form teams, they all play for other schools. Philippi and Tomizawa, both sophomores, skate for the Cortlandt Rebels, which also has players from Lakeland, Walter Panas and Putnam Valley high schools, while Stathos, a ninth grader, plays for the North Avalanche, which includes girls from 14 schools in Westchester and Putnam counties.

After two years of skating lessons, Stathos followed her older brother into hockey at age 6. "I was little, playing with boys four years older than me," she says. "It was a bit rough to start." Things got better after she joined a girls' team in Brewster.

Stathos, 14, who plays center, is impressed by how difficult hockey is. "Anyone can run and throw a football," she said. "Not many people can skate and shoot a puck." She also enjoys chess, which she said helps her think strategically on the ice, although she can have "a little bit too much chess brain. I need to just go for the puck!"

When she joined the Avalanche, which plays teams from Mamaroneck, Rye, Rockland County and Connecticut, she knew nearly all her teammates. "The girls' hockey community is pretty small," she said.

Stathos also plays on an elite-level team for girls up to age 19. Because she is among



Caden Philippi and Kiyoshi Tomizawa, sophomores at Haldane, play hockey for the Cortlandt Rebels.

Photo by M. Turton

the younger players, she sometimes "feels like a little kid" but is inspired by Colin Bedard of the Chicago Blackhawks, who reached the NHL at age 18.

It was easy for her to select a highlight from the high school season. "I got on the ice for my first shift but wasn't playing my usual position," she said. "But a chance is a chance: My shot wasn't great, but it went in!"

The Avalanche defeated the East Green Wave, 3-0, on Jan. 26 and Rye Country Day, 2-1, on Tuesday (Jan. 28) to complete its regular season.

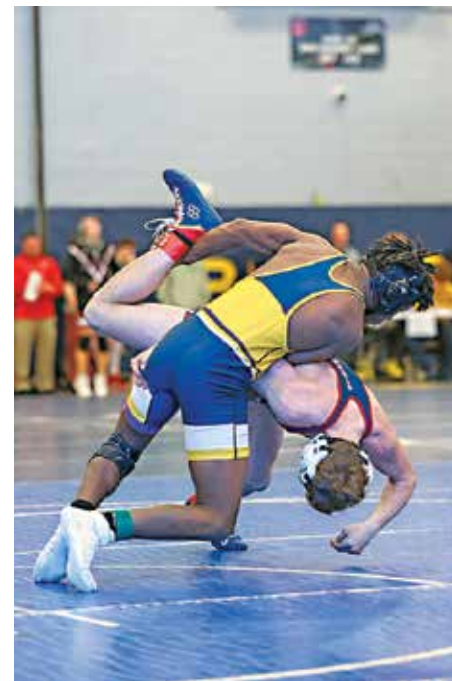
Stathos isn't sure how far she'll pursue the game. "I put academics before hockey," she said, although she is aware that 15 Division 1 colleges have women's teams.

Philippi got into hockey after playing in a Junior Rangers program at age 11. Now

(Continued on Page 18)



Brody Timm



Caleb Smith

Photos by Cadence Heeter

VARSITY ROUNDUP

BEACON

By Nick Robbins

WRESTLING — Beacon hosted 15 schools for its annual tournament on Jan. 25, with Kingston taking team honors just ahead of the Bulldogs. Beacon's Jude Betancourt was the tournament champion at 152 pounds, while Jaiera Newton (138) and Brody Timm (190) finished second. Avery Davis was third at 170 pounds and Mark Aakjar (108) and Caleb Smith (145) finished fifth.

BOYS' BASKETBALL — Beacon (11-4) traveled to league rival Fallsburg on Thursday (Jan. 30) and will play Saugerties at 6 p.m. on Sunday (Feb. 2) in the Officials vs. Cancer Tournament at Dutchess Community College in Poughkeepsie. The team visits Port Jervis on Tuesday and treks down Route 9D to Haldane for the annual Battle of the Tunnel at 5:30 p.m. on Friday.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL — Beacon moved to 7-5 after two wins. The Bulldogs downed Newburgh, 54-46, at home on Jan. 23 behind 24 points by Reilly Landisi. She scored 20 points on Tuesday (Jan. 28) to lead the team to another home win over Tri-Valley, 48-20. The Bulldogs, who have won four in a row, travel to Cornwall today (Jan. 31), host league rival Port Jervis (8-3) at 6:30 p.m. on Monday and travel to Pine Bush (12-0) on Wednesday. A home game scheduled for Thursday against Fallsburg (0-10) has been canceled because of a forfeit and will be recorded as a win.

HALDANE

By Jacob Aframian

BOYS' BASKETBALL — The Blue Devils won their fifth straight with a 62-50 victory at home on Jan. 23 over Pawling. "Guys are stepping up — sophomores, juniors, seniors, it doesn't matter," said Coach Joe Virgadamo.

Haldane led by 10 points with just under five minutes left in the third quarter when the Tigers went on an 11-3 run. The Blue Devil lead grew to five before the fourth when Luke Bozsik caught an inbound pass and hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

Pawling again cut the Haldane lead to two points with 6:53 left in the game, but the Blue Devils went on a 15-5 run behind Fallou Faye to close it out. Faye finished with 14 points and Bozsik with 20.

"Today was Fallou's turn and Luke and Zane [Del Pozo] did so many good things, finding his teammates' shots, and he's attacking the rim well," said Virgadamo.

On Jan. 25, Haldane fell to Tuckahoe, 50-31, at the Coaches vs. Cancer Tournament at Mahopac High School but returned home on Monday (Jan. 27) for a 61-48 win over Putnam Valley. The game was close during the first half; whenever Haldane pulled ahead, Putnam Valley answered with 3-pointers.

The Tigers took the lead in the third quarter but, in the fourth, Bozsik hit back-to-back threes that put Haldane up by 14

(Continued on Page 18)