

The HIGHLANDS
Current

Beacon's
Drum Maker
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Reporter's Notebook

Don't Get Scammed

By Joey Asher



When internet scammers targeted Priscilla Goldfarb last month, she was horribly jet-lagged after traveling 22 hours to meet her son. The 81-year-old Cold Spring resident was in a hotel room in Singapore, getting ready for bed when she checked her phone.

"I had a message from my bank asking me to verify a transaction that I had made on PayPal," she said. "There was an intimation that there could be fraud. They wanted to make sure it was a valid transaction. I absolutely considered clicking on the link. I was halfway around the world. Who knew what could happen?"

But Goldfarb hesitated. "I know that I am more likely to be subjected to scam attempts because of my age," she said.

Rather than click on the email link, she called the customer service number listed on the back of her credit card. "They told me they had not sent me any fraud alerts," said Goldfarb.

Goldfarb was one of about 20 seniors who attended a presentation held Feb. 13 at the Desmond-Fish Public Library in Garrison on avoiding scams and identity theft. The program was organized by Philipstown Aging at Home and led by Ryan Biracree, the digital services librarian.

I attended at the insistence of my wife, who tells our children that I'm vulnerable to scams because I once responded to a robocall claiming to alert me to a problem with my Amazon account. I spoke with

(Continued on Page 10)

Beacon to Fjord Trail: 'Enthusiastic' Support

Many, but not all, in city favor proposal

By Jeff Simms

Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou was the first elected official to speak when the state Department of Environmental Conser-

vation held two virtual hearings last month on the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) for the proposed Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail. The hearings came after the state parks department's release in December of its 709-page review of Scenic Hudson's plans to construct a 7.5-mile linear park connecting

Beacon and Cold Spring. Ninety people spoke during the hearings; written comments are being accepted until March 4. Offering "enthusiastic, unqualified" support, Kyriacou's comments stood in contrast to the reception the project has received from some elected officials and

(Continued on Page 8)



The proposed route of the Fjord Trail to its terminus in Beacon is shown in orange. The dotted black line is the Metro-North tracks. HHFT

Four Beacon Council Members Leaving

Democrats endorse newcomers for seats

By Leonard Sparks

Four of the seven members of the Beacon City Council will not seek re-election in November, and the Beacon Democratic Committee has endorsed four newcomers to fill the seats.

Jeff Domanski (Ward 2) and Pam Wetherbee (Ward 3) will not seek re-election; Molly Rhodes (Ward 1) is leaving to run for the Dutchess County Legislature; and George Mansfield (Ward 4), appointed in January to fill a vacancy, is not running to keep the seat.

The Democrats have endorsed Lastar Gorton (Ward 1), Zach Smith (Ward 2), Sergei

Krasikov (Ward 3) and Carolyn Glauda (Ward 4), as well as incumbents Amber Grant and Paloma Wake for the two at-large seats.

The Democrats also endorsed Yvette Valdés Smith for District 16 on the Legislature, which includes Ward 4 in Beacon and parts of Fishkill, and Rhodes for District 18, which includes Wards 1 to 3. The latter is held by Nick Page, who will not seek a fifth term.

For the past two elections, Democratic candidates for the City Council have run unopposed.

Gorton is a life coach and author who was grand marshal of the 2024 Spirit of Beacon Day parade; Smith is a data scientist who serves on the Hudson Highlands

(Continued on Page 10)

Keeping Bird Flu at Bay

State agencies work to combat spread

By Brian PJ Cronin

A month ago, avian influenza, or bird flu, was found in a commercial duck farm on Long Island, leading to the deaths of over 100,000 birds. The discovery, coming shortly after the disease was found in birds in Putnam County, led to fears of widespread outbreaks.

While the disease has continued to kill wild birds, the outbreak at the Crescent

(Continued on Page 6)

Lender Sues Over Beacon Development

Eliza Street condominiums incomplete

By Jeff Simms

A lender filed a lawsuit in Dutchess County court this month demanding repayment of nearly \$4.63 million from the developer of an incomplete Beacon housing project.

The suit, filed Feb. 4 by Insula Capital Group, alleges that Qele "Charlie" Qelaj,

who is listed in a state database as the registered agent of Eliza Street LLC, failed to repay loans of \$747,000 and \$3,881,950 to construct The Mews at Beacon, a nine-unit condominium development at 53 Eliza St.

The project, which was approved by the Beacon Planning Board in 2019, would have loft-like condos in three buildings around a landscaped courtyard. A representative for the developer said in 2023 that construction was

(Continued on Page 6)



The Mews at Beacon Photo by J. Simms

5 FIVE QUESTIONS: SEAN SCULLEY

By Marc Ferris

Col. Sean Sculley, who lives in Beacon, is a history professor at West Point. He will discuss Beacon's role in the American Revolution at 7 p.m. on Saturday (Feb. 22) at Denning's Point Distillery.

What was your route to West Point?

I've been in the Army for 30 years; after serving in Iraq as an armor officer, I got a doctorate in history at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I'm an academy professor, which is someone on active duty. I teach in uniform. We account for 25 percent of the faculty. Half of the faculty earned master's degrees. They teach for three years while on active duty, then return to their Army duties. The final 25 percent are civilians who provide scholarly depth.

What will be your focus on Saturday?

The Revolution in the Hudson River Valley and, in particular, Fishkill Landing [now Beacon], which was of vital importance to the war effort. My goal is to inspire the community to get excited as we come up to the 250th anniversary of the "shot heard 'round the world" at Lexington and Concord on April 19. Beacon had a major role in protecting the Hudson from the British. They named the city and the moun-

tain for the signal fire system in 1913, but Mount Beacon used to be known as North Mountain, the northernmost signal point in a chain that stretched to New Jersey. The system would warn the entire area if the British made a move out of New York City.

Why was Fishkill Landing so important?

There were two prominent crossings of the Hudson River: King's Ferry between Westchester County and Stony Point, and Fishkill Landing to Newburgh. Fishkill Landing was the main distribution point for the Fishkill Supply Depot [at the intersection of Route 9 and Interstate 84], which had 2,000 soldiers, a hospital, warehouses and goods and traffic coming from New England.

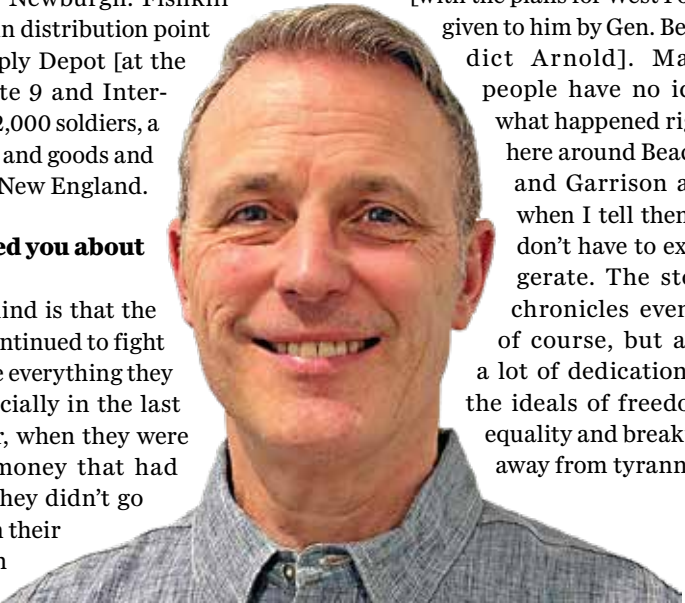
What has surprised you about the local history?

What blows my mind is that the American soldiers continued to fight and persevere despite everything they had to endure, especially in the last two years of the war, when they were barely paid, with money that had no real worth. But they didn't go home. They stayed in their units in Newburgh and drilled to

maintain our defenses and keep the British bottled up in New York City.

In 1976, the nation leaned into the bicentennial, perhaps as a balm for Vietnam. How do you think the 250th anniversary will be received?

I think it will be inspirational for a lot of people. There are many groups participating in the Hudson Valley, some of them focusing on their interests, like the birth of the Army, or the capture of Major Andre [with the plans for West Point given to him by Gen. Benedict Arnold]. Many people have no idea what happened right here around Beacon and Garrison and when I tell them, I don't have to exaggerate. The story chronicles events, of course, but also a lot of dedication to the ideals of freedom, equality and breaking away from tyranny.



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March 9 John Pielmeier
March 16 Priscilla Goldfarb

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

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ON THE SPOT

By Michael Turton

What movie role would you like to play?

"I'd love to be Marty McFly in Back to the Future."



Victoria Ambrose, Beacon

"I could be Rambo. My dad is a huge fan."



Cristian Mendez, Beacon

"Sanjuro Kuwabatake, the main character in Yojimbo."



Margaret Hayford, Cold Spring

NEWS BRIEFS

Two Candidates Seek Nelsonville Seats

Village election to be held March 18

Two candidates filed petitions to appear on the March 18 ballot for two open seats on the Nelsonville Village Board.

Maria Zhynovitch is seeking her third, 2-year term, while Alan Potts will run for the seat being vacated by Travis Biro. Potts served on the board from 2017 to 2019 and ran for a seat in 2019, 2021 and 2022. The other members of the board are Mayor Chris Winward, David Moroney and Douglas Anderson, whose seats will be on the ballot in 2026.

Applications for absentee or early-voting ballots can be obtained at Village Hall, 258 Main St., or nelsonvilleny.gov. They are due by March 11. Ballots must be received by Election Day to be counted.

At its Tuesday (Feb. 18) meeting, the Village Board also appointed Donna Steltz to the Zoning Board of Appeals, succeeding Judy Meyer. The other members of the board are William Rice, Harold Akselrad, Steve Merando and Steven Rummel.

Man Stabbed in Beacon

Officers find him bleeding in car

Beacon officers made an arrest on Monday (Feb. 17) after finding a man bleeding from a stab wound at 7:15 a.m. in a vehicle parked in the lot at police headquarters.

The victim said he had been assaulted near Fishkill Avenue and Main Street a few minutes earlier. He was taken to a hospital in stable condition.

Using the department's license-plate reader system, police identified a suspect and located his vehicle parked at the Tompkins Terrace apartments. They arrested Melvin A. Grant Jr., 26, of Beacon and obtained a search warrant for his apartment, where they seized a knife and clothing.

Grant was arraigned in Beacon City Court on charges of felony assault and misdemeanor criminal possession of a weapon and sent to the Dutchess County jail.

Overdose Deaths Fall in Putnam

Coroners report 88 percent fewer in 2024

Deaths from opioid overdoses in Putnam dropped from 22 in 2022 and 16 in 2023 to two in 2024, according to the Coroner's Office.

In 2024, far more people in Putnam died from accidental deaths (15) and suicides (12) than overdoses, the Coroner's Office told the Legislature on Feb. 13.

Dutchess County also saw a decrease. It recorded 38 deaths in 2024 through Sept. 30, which was 58 percent fewer than 2023 and 64 percent fewer than 2022, according to Jean-Marie Niebuhr, the county commissioner of mental health.

Nationally, the reported number of over-

dose deaths fell by 24 percent between September 2023 and September 2024, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. New York state had an even larger decrease, at 26 percent.

Studio @ Beacon to Close

Owners say sale fell through

The Studio @ Beacon will close next week after a seven-year run, with its final class on Monday (Feb. 24).

Laura Leigh Abby, who owns the fitness center with her wife, Samantha Abby, said the couple planned to sell the business at 201 Main St. as of March 1, when a new lease began. But she said the rent went up too much to make that viable.

Except for new owners, "nothing else about the business would have changed," they wrote in an email to clients. "We would have been here teaching your favorite classes and making your weekend smoothies." They said they would do their best to reimburse customers who prepaid for classes.

Lawyer Announces Run for Judge

Challenging Dutchess incumbent

Kara Gerry, a Dutchess public defender, announced on Feb. 11 that she plans to challenge Edward "Ned" McLoughlin for his seat as a county court judge.

Gerry grew up in East Fishkill and grad-

uated from Lourdes High School, Marist University and the Haub School of Law at Pace University. She began her career as a prosecutor in the Orange County District Attorney's Office and is bureau chief of the criminal unit for the Dutchess County Public Defender's Office.



Gerry

County Court judges serve 10-year terms. The other Dutchess judge, Jessica Segal, was elected in 2020, defeating Peter Forman, a Beacon resident.

Dutchess Launches Rides for Vets

Free transport offered to doctors, grocery

Dutchess County on Feb. 14 announced the launch of GoGo Veterans to provide free rides to military veterans who need transportation to medical appointments or for personal errands such as grocery store trips.

The program, which begins March 1, will allow veterans to request two free rides per month within the county to medical appointments, including VA hospitals and local providers, and one free ride per month to a grocery store, pharmacy or a personal visit.

To register, call the Office of Veterans Affairs at 845-486-2060. The county also has a GoGo service for seniors and in 2024 provided nearly 2,000 rides.



The Putnam Highlands Audubon Society Presents

Rattlesnakes & Reptiles of the Hudson Highlands

Their Natural History, Threats, and Conservation
Led by Lisa Masi, Wildlife Biologist

Learn about the histories, distributions, threats, and conservation efforts for timber rattlesnake, box turtle, fence lizard, and others, as well as actions folks can take to help these species.

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* New York News Publishers Association, 2017 - 23

Tell us what you think

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

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

Philipstown candidates

It seems there is some confusion about the meaning of the endorsements made by the Philipstown Democratic Committee for Ben Cheah and Ned Rauch for the Town Board and John Van Tassel for supervisor ("Democrats Endorse Philipstown Candidates," Feb. 7, and "Two More Candidates for Town Board," Feb. 14).

By a vote of 10 to 5, Philipstown Democrats declined to endorse John Maasik, primarily because he had been, by his own admission, an active Republican until late December 2024. In fact, at the time he interviewed with us in early December, he was still a Republican but neglected to tell the full committee. There were three other candidates vying for Town Board — Cheah, Rauch and Nat Prentice — who are longtime Democrats. Van Tassel was unanimously endorsed to return as supervisor.

Endorsing candidates has been a standing tradition in Philipstown, and some of the people online claiming it is "undemocratic" have benefited from that tradition. Nancy Montgomery, Judy Farrell and all Democratic members of the Town Board, dating back many years, have sought and received endorsements separately and as part of slates. The 15 members of Philip-

stown Dems debated the choices and each of us was given a chance to make our case. The five who wanted Mr. Maasik had the same opportunity.

Their candidate lost. Many of us have a candidate who didn't get endorsed. But to seek an endorsement and, upon losing it, call the process undemocratic seems a bit hypocritical. I ask those supporting Mr. Maasik to please refrain from that rhetoric. As Democrats, we reject the notion of minority rule.

There will be a primary in June. Nobody on the committee is trying to prevent that. We are encouraging Democrats to sign the nominating petitions of John Van Tassel, Ben Cheah and Ned Rauch.

Grace Kennedy, *Philipstown*
Kennedy is the secretary of Philipstown Democrats.

As Democrats, we do reject the notion of minority rule. Keeping that in mind, when there are four excellent candidates for two seats on the Philipstown board, it does not make sense that the Democratic committee decides who the next board members will be. Let the registered Democrats of Philipstown decide in a primary this June. All four candidates need to get on the primary ballot. As the former chair of the Philipstown

Democrats, I am encouraging party members to sign petitions for any two candidates. I am carrying petitions for all the candidates. I support John Maasik because of his exceptional civic service to Philipstown over many years. Nat Prentice is also an excellent candidate and one of the few people in Philipstown who regularly attend the monthly Town Board meetings. Welcome to the Democratic Party, John Maasik! We are a lively, opinionated and action-oriented bunch of people dedicated to good government and a strong democracy.

Janice Hogan, *Philipstown*

Are the endorsed Democrats actual Democrats or just DINOs [Democrats in Name Only], like the ones on the current board?

Anthony Lise, *via Facebook*

The Democratic Committee has endorsed John Van Tassel, Ben Cheah and Ned Rauch after thoughtful discussion and an extensive vetting process. Mr. Maasik's membership in the Republican Party until just a few months ago disqualified him from my support for public office.

I work hard to get candidates into office who have a proven track record of dedication to Democratic Party values and who work hard for other Democrats. Mr. Maasik, whatever his other salient qualities, does not have a track record of working for and publicly supporting Democrats.

Linda Tafapolsky, *Garrison*

I would hope the Philipstown Democratic Party would welcome and encourage everyone, especially thoughtful, proven community leaders like John Maasik, to join the big-tent Democratic Party and help build a better community for all residents. Instead, it tries to smear his good character because he was a Republican and switched parties. Or is there something else? What were the qualifications of all the candidates?

I've known both John and Nat Prentice for over 20 years, and have seen firsthand their caring, strong leadership, extensive service and dedication to community, regardless of party affiliation. These gentlemen of Philipstown are assets to our community and are more than qualified to serve on the Town Board.

Peter Farrell, *Cold Spring*

Beacon development

The City of Beacon has a major issue: It is a small city with bigger city issues and a smaller brain trust to listen, manage and execute attainable actions ("Healey Asks City to Let Dunkin' Proceed," Feb. 14). Citizen committees are great, but the

(Continued on Page 5)



LETTERS AND COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 4)

ones I've experienced in the last 10 years end up doing the bidding of the City Council. Committees should not have chairs appointed; the committee can select its own chair. And if people want to form a committee, it should be a simple process to be recognized by the council. A small city with bigger issues that only sometimes get heard is not a democracy; it's a bad musical.

Ron Donofrio, *Beacon*

I agree with the Healey family. The city rolls the red carpet out for luxury developments, accompanied by tax breaks, but wants to throw a wrench in a place for everyday people.

Howie Dewitt, *Facebook*

We can't have pedestrians and a drive-thru on Fishkill Avenue? There are no sidewalks on that side of Route 52. Every other drive-thru has managed to do it — why is it not feasible here?

Laurie Gallio, *via Facebook*

Electric buses

The real question is why so little of the Beacon population gets school bus service ("Educators Question Electric-Bus Mandate," Feb. 14). The city is a few miles wide with three elementary schools, and so few of us are eligible [because we live too close]. This is why you have 4,000 cars waiting to drop kids off.

Matthew Robinson, *via Instagram*

The city doesn't have enough safe sidewalks or safe crosswalks, let alone speed bumps or enforcement of speed limits. Maybe if the city cared more about pedestrian and bicycle safety than it did about caving to developers or catering to weekenders, walking to school would be a better option, even for young kids.

Harper Sanchez, *via Instagram*

Friendship Center

Ellen does an amazing job with seniors at the Beacon Friendship Center ("5 Questions: Ellen Pearson Gersh," Feb. 14). I see her once a week when I deliver meals and she is so caring with each of them, always doing something fun, putting meals together, directing volunteers and answering the phone — usually all at the same time. They are lucky to have such a kind, thoughtful person with them daily.

Maureen Mullaney, *via highlandscurrent.org*

Village priorities

While I don't agree with Cold Spring Mayor Kathleen Foley's perspective and approach of addressing the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail plans, I appreciate her taking the time to sharing her priorities for the village ("Small Village, Big Issues," Feb. 14). The more transparency the better, especially in our current political climate.

Larry Wiesler, *Philipstown*

First responders

It takes a big man and brave leader to lead by example concerning mental health

in the fire service ("First Responders Sound Alarm," Feb. 14). Beacon firefighter David Brewer's leadership will save lives and make a difference.

Jeff Rhoades, *The Villages, Florida*

Thank you, Dave Brewer, and all the selfless volunteers. You make this world a better place.

Lesley Robertson, *Cold Spring*

Putnam taxes

Two of my priorities as county executive are fiscal responsibility and listening to our residents. With this transparency in mind, I would like to present the results of a community tax survey launched earlier this month.

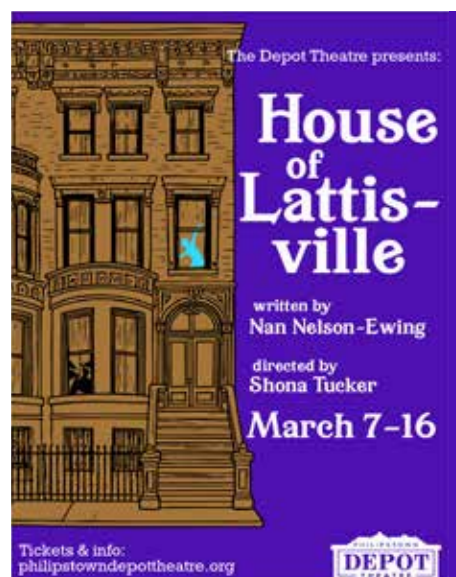
The questions concerned county tax policy, including revenue sources as well as my proposed property-tax cut — which, if enacted, would be the largest in Putnam's history. Poll respondents were asked questions about their knowledge of the issue and preferences in county taxes. We use this unvarnished data to help us determine policy and serve you better, because I firmly believe that public engagement makes better public policy.

When asked to choose a priority for county leaders to tackle, Putnam residents overwhelmingly (72 percent) selected a reduction in their property-tax rate. The runner-up was distributing a portion of sales-tax revenues with all six towns (19 percent).

I appreciate this important feedback, and I look forward to working with our Legislature to address these priorities. To view the results, visit putnamcountyny.gov/salestaxsurvey.

Kevin Byrne, *Carmel*

Editor's note: The survey, which had 828 responses, asked residents to indicate whether they would prefer a property tax cut, giving a portion of sales-tax revenue to towns and villages, reduction of the sales tax by 1 percent (6 percent) or making a sales-tax exemption on clothing and footwear below \$110 permanent (4 percent).



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What's Online at Highlands Current.org

These resources can be accessed through the pulldown menu on the top of each page under "Reader Guide."

Local Officials

This is a list of elected and appointed officials at the local, state and federal level and how to contact them with your praise or protests.

Local Government Video Guide

OK, it's not Netflix, but here's a list of sites where you can watch videos of local and county public meetings.

How They Voted (Congress)

Summaries of consequential and newsworthy legislation in the U.S. House and how Rep. Mike Lawler (Philipstown) and Rep. Pat Ryan (Beacon) voted. Updated weekly when Congress is in session.

Storm Updates and Resources

Storm-watcher resources and contacts for when the power goes out.

Community Directory

This is a continually updated guide to local businesses and cultural sites, with addresses, phone numbers and web links.

Editorial Standards

This document explains our policies, including for corrections and legal issues.

Community Calendar

This is the full Monty — we only have room for the highlights in print.

Real-Estate Data

Browse properties for sale in Philipstown, Beacon and Putnam Valley as part of a partnership with Koto Homes, or cast a wider net by location name or ZIP code.

Back Issues

This is an archive of our past issues, in PDF format, from June 2012 to date, except for the latest issue, which is emailed to *Current* members on Friday morning.

Podcast Archives

Here are links to all the episodes of our podcast, for easy listening. The three most popular downloads so far have been interviews with a barefoot Ironman competitor; Dinky Romilly of Philipstown, who discussed her civil rights work and her famous mother; and the author of a book about stone walls.

Obituaries

We don't have room to publish most obits in print, but we seek out and post them online.

Beacon Housing *(from Page 1)*

70 percent complete and Qelaj was getting new financing. Last year the representative said Qelaj had approached a new lender.

Insula said in its complaint that Qelaj requested three extensions on the \$747,000 loan, which was taken out in 2021. According to the legal filing, in 2022 Qelaj consolidated two other loans totaling \$3.9 million.

In January 2023, the Zoning Board of Appeals granted the project a one-year extension of a variance to construct multi-family units in an area zoned for single-family homes. It also provided an extension on a variance to construct nine units on a parcel that was allowed only six. At that time, the project's attorney wrote in materials submitted to the ZBA that the three buildings had been constructed and would be "completely finished" within 10 months, notwithstanding complications presented by the pandemic.

Insula asked the court to force the sale of the development to pay the debts, plus interest and fees.



416-420 Main St.

The City Council on Tuesday (Feb. 18) approved a second six-month extension of the special-use permit approved in 2021 for the four-story building at 416-420 Main St.

The project merged two lots and will include retail on the ground floor, office space on the second and third and a single apartment on a recessed fourth floor, as well as an outdoor plaza open to the public. Construction had been delayed by "long lead times required to finish interior spaces," according to a memo from the city attorney, but is expected to be complete within six months.



Bird Flu *(from Page 1)*

Duck Farm has so far been the only case of the disease at a large bird farm in New York. And in the weeks since the Putnam and Long Island cases were discovered, there's only been two others confirmed in smaller backyard flocks: one with 50 birds in Ulster County, and a flock of 15 ducks and geese near Syracuse.

H5N1 — the avian influenza strain being found in the U.S. — was also discovered during testing at live bird markets in New York City's outer boroughs earlier this month. Those markets were temporarily shut down by the state.

Elizabeth Wolters, a deputy commissioner of the state Department of Agriculture and Markets, noted that farms routinely test for diseases such as avian influenza. In New York City, "we were able to get in, quarantine the market, shut it down, get it cleaned up."

It's not unexpected that bird flu has ramped up across the nation over the past few months, said Kevin Hynes, the wildlife health program leader for the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Colder weather favors the transmission of the virus, much like it does for human influenza.

This is also the time of year when migratory waterfowl are moving through New York. With the country having lost half of its wetlands over the past 20 years, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, migrating birds have less secluded places to land and end up resting closer to poultry farms and commercial flocks.

Waterfowl can be infected but not get sick, Hynes said. "They're flying around infected; they're shedding the virus

through their saliva and their feces, and it goes into the water," he said. "Other birds are exposed to it that way, either other wild birds or domestic poultry that might be in your backyard or at a free-range poultry operation."

The disease's relatively low impact on local commercial poultry can be credited to the departments of Environmental Conservation, Agriculture and Health working together, said Wolters. There has been concern at the national level after the Trump administration fired officials who were working on bird flu and accusations that research about the disease has been withheld by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, but Wolters said her contact with federal agencies has been smooth.

"We haven't seen any changes to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's response," she said. "To date, all the information on the detections continues to be posted on its website. It's the same with the genetic sequencing" the agency has been sharing with researchers.

As of Feb 20, there have been no confirmed human cases of bird flu in New York, nor have any dairy cows been affected. There has been only one confirmed death, in Louisiana, and many people infected have responded well to antiviral drugs such as Tamiflu. The symptoms of avian influenza are similar to those of seasonal influenza, although many people infected with avian influenza also get pink eye.

Another reason for cautious optimism: Although H5N1 has been detected in New York state in mammals such as bobcats, raccoons, foxes and possums, it hasn't been detected in pigs. That's significant because pigs are genetically similar to humans, said Hynes. "Pigs can be infected with human seasonal influenza viruses," he said. "If they're already infected with that, and they get a new infection at the same time of avian influenza, that could change the viruses' genetic material, and you could end up with a new strain that could potentially be very virulent to people and spread to people in an airborne fashion."

As of now, avian influenza has not spread person-to-person. But every time a person — or, according to Hynes, a pig also infected with human seasonal influenza — gets infected, it gives the virus another opportunity to mutate into a strain that would have that capability. "That would be a very serious problem if it was a version of the virus that had a high mortality rate," he said. In fact, that is how COVID-19 developed: It first spread between animals, then to humans, and then mutated to spread between people.



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Former Counsel Sues Putnam

Attorney challenges end of Legislature contract

By Leonard Sparks

A lawyer who counseled the Putnam Legislature for nearly seven years is suing the county executive, county attorney and two other officials over the termination of a contract that lawmakers had twice voted to renew.

In a petition filed Feb. 11 in state Supreme Court, Robert Firriolo asked a judge to uphold his reappointment by the Legislature, which has been embroiled in a dispute with County Executive Kevin Byrne and County Attorney Compton Spain over its power to unilaterally hire attorneys.

Firriolo's lawsuit also named John Tully, the commissioner of general services, and Michael Lewis, the finance commissioner.

The county code allows the Legislature to

contract for legal services with the approval of its chair and the county attorney. Seven of its nine members voted Dec. 3 to reappoint Firriolo, who had represented the Legislature since 2017 and whose most recent contract ran through Dec. 31. (Legislator Nancy Montgomery, a Democrat representing Philipstown and part of Putnam Valley, and Erin Crowley, a Republican representing Carmel, voted against hiring Firriolo.)

About two weeks later, Tully emailed Firriolo to say the county was terminating his contract. In response, legislators voted again, on Dec. 30, to reappoint him. They also voted to rehire a Mount Kisco law firm that had represented the Legislature when Byrne sued in November over its power to hire an attorney of its choosing.

Although Byrne dropped the lawsuit, the Legislature said it was retaining the firm "in anticipation of a similar challenge."

Firriolo, who was invited by legislators to take the counsel's seat during a meeting on Jan. 7, said he did not learn until Jan. 24 that Spain had declared both resolutions adopted by the Legislature on Dec. 30 to be "unlawful."

In a Jan. 27 letter to Amy Sayegh, chair of the Legislature, and Dan Birmingham, chair of the Rules Committee, Firriolo said he was, "out of an abundance of caution," suspending his services. He invoiced the county for his work through Jan. 24 and is asking the judge to compel the county to pay.

In response to Firriolo's letter, Spain warned him on Feb. 3 to "cease and desist" from communicating with "our client" (the Legislature), which Spain described as a violation of the state's ethics rules for attorneys. On Monday (Feb. 17), Putnam County

asked the judge to dismiss the lawsuit.

The ongoing conflict between the Legislature and the county Law Department includes an ethics complaint in which Spain accuses Legislator Toni Addonizio, a Republican who represents Kent, of failing to disclose that the person seeking to buy a county-owned property in Carmel was her son-in-law.

Firriolo defended Addonizio in a letter sent to the county ethics board. He also accused Spain of failing to disclose, when asked on his employment application about criminal convictions, that he was found guilty in 1993 of contempt of court. Spain was convicted under state Judiciary Law, but because the penalty can include jail time, Firriolo argued it is equivalent to a criminal misdemeanor.

Seven of its nine members voted Dec. 3 to reappoint Firriolo, who had represented the Legislature since 2017.

PUTNAM BRIEFS

Putnam to Reclassify Health Commissioner

Committee approves new health director

The Putnam County Legislature's Personnel Committee on Feb. 13 approved resolutions reclassifying the health commissioner position to public health director and naming an executive at a managed care organization to fill the role.

Paul Eldridge, Putnam's personnel officer, said a public health director led the health department before Dr. Sherita Amler became the first health commissioner in 2004. Finding a replacement for Dr. Michael Neisheiwat, who announced in February 2023 that he planned to retire as commissioner, has been difficult, said Eldridge.

"We had a very good candidate, but unfortunately the person decided to back out," he said on Feb. 13.

The committee approved hiring Rian Rodriguez, a Brewster resident and director of clinical quality for Healthfirst, as public health director, a position that does not require a medical degree. Rodriguez has a master's degree in public health in epidemiology from the New York Medical College and a bachelor's degree in history and sociology from Stony Brook University.

His confirmation will be voted on by the full Legislature as early as its next meeting

on March 4. Neisheiwat will remain as a medical consultant, a position required by the state so counties with a public health director can issue orders requiring a physician's signature, said Eldridge.

Putnam and CSEA Reach Agreement

County contracts with union through 2028

Putnam County announced on Feb. 13 that it has reached a five-year agreement with the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), the last of four collective bargaining agreements with the county's four major unions.

CSEA membership overwhelmingly approved the contract in a vote, the county said. The agreement is retroactive to January 2024 and expires in December 2028.

"It may have taken longer than we all wanted, but we have an agreement that reflects our commitment to supporting the dedicated public servants who keep Putnam County running while also being fiscally responsible to our taxpayers," County Executive Kevin Byrne said in a statement.

"We appreciate the county's willingness to engage in meaningful negotiations, and we are pleased to have a contract that protects our workforce and recognizes their

dedication," said CSEA President Linda Amicucci in the same statement.

The contract must be approved by the county Legislature. The county previously reached agreements with the Putnam County Sheriff's Office PBA, the Putnam County Sheriff's Employees Association

and the Putnam Management Association.

"Upon taking office, we inherited four contracts that were either expiring or expired, and in two years we resolved them all," Byrne said. "Our county employees are now fully under contract, providing a sense of certainty and fairness for our workforce."

NEWS BRIEFS

What is the State of the County?

Executives to give annual addresses

The executives in Putnam and Dutchess will deliver their annual state of the county addresses in early March.

In Putnam, Kevin Byrne will speak at 6:30 p.m. on March 3 at the Ace Endico Headquarters at 80 International Boulevard in Brewster. Topics will include tax relief, infra-

structure improvements, public safety initiatives, economic development and government ethics. To reserve a seat, register by Friday (Feb. 28) at putnamcountyny.gov/sotc2025.

In Dutchess, Sue Serino will make her address at 5:30 p.m. on March 11 at John Jay High School, 2012 Route 52, in Hopewell Junction. To reserve a seat, register by March 7 at dutchessny.gov/RSVP, or call 845-486-2000.



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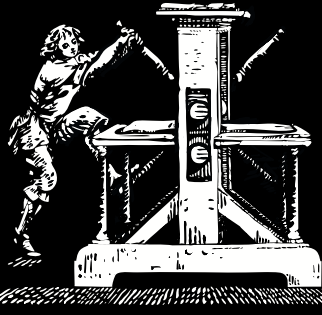
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In the section of the trail closest to Beacon, HHFT plans to create elevated paths through the marshlands of Fishkill Creek, with connections to Dennings Point, the Klara Sauer Trail and Long Dock Park.

HHFT

Beacon Fjord (from Page 1)

residents in Cold Spring and Philipstown.

“There will be greater access, not only to the Hudson Highlands, but for the first time to large sections of the Hudson River that previously were inaccessible due to the railroad tracks,” he said during the Jan. 14 hearing. “Along the Hudson will be flat trail sections, broadening access to those who cannot easily do mountain hikes — including seniors, persons with disabilities, cyclists, runners and those simply wanting less strenuous options.”

In addition, he said, the north end of the trail, which would begin at Beacon’s Long Dock Park — a former junkyard transformed over 15 years by Scenic Hudson — will link many open spaces: Dennings Point State Park, Madam Brett Park, Seeger Riverfront Park, the Klara Sauer Trail and the city’s Fishkill Creek Greenway & Heritage Trail, which is being created in segments around Beacon’s perimeter.

Then there’s the biggest connection of all: If Dutchess County commits to constructing a trail along 13 miles of dormant railroad from Beacon to Hopewell Junction, the Fjord Trail would connect to the Dutchess Rail Trail, Walkway Over the Hudson and the 750-mile Empire State Trail.

While Fjord Trail opponents in Cold Spring have bristled at the number of tourists they say the project will bring to the village, Kyriacou said he welcomes more visitors to Beacon’s mile-long Main Street. “The Fjord Trail helps Beacon far more than any ancillary problems that it may create, and that we will manage,” he said.

The mayor has worn his support for HHFT for months, donning gear with the organization’s logo during City Council meetings. Given the mixed reception the proposal has received elsewhere, he has suggested many times that construction in Beacon begin sooner rather than later.

Kyriacou isn’t alone. In 2023, Dan Aymar-Blair and Justice McCray, both members at the time of Beacon’s City Council, hosted an information session that filled the gymna-



Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou showed his support for the project with HHFT swag.

Photo by J. Simms

sium at the city’s Recreation Center. And City Administrator Chris White said he expects to bring a proposal to the council later this year to place an HHFT maintenance facility at the transfer station on Dennings Avenue.

“The majority of people I have spoken to are really excited,” said Amber Grant, a council member who serves on the HHFT Visitation Data Committee. It released a report last fall projecting that the Fjord Trail will add 268,700 visits annually throughout the corridor from people who would not typically come to the connected parks and trails.

“Our living space in Beacon is a little more removed from the river than it is in Cold Spring,” Grant noted. “What the trail will add is, I think, manageable for Beacon. We can handle that volume around our trails.”

Not everyone in Beacon agrees, of course. Mary Fris, a retired Main Street business owner who lives near the foot of Mount Beacon, has been vocal in her opposition to the Fjord Trail.

Fris said the idea of a simple riverside trail connecting the two municipalities appealed to her when she first heard of it, “but it didn’t turn out that way. It’s turned into this big boondoggle” with plans calling for hundreds of underwater pilings to create an elevated boardwalk near Little Stony Point. In recent years, Fris said she has started bringing

Turn Lane Weighed for Dutchess Manor

Would serve cars at Fjord Trail center

A lane for vehicles turning left from northbound Route 9D into the former Dutchess Manor site is being analyzed as part of the proposal to remake the property as a visitors center for the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail.

In a memorandum submitted to the Fishkill Planning Board for its meeting on Feb. 13, planning consultant AKRF said anticipated traffic volumes during Saturday and Sunday midday and late-afternoon peak hours exceeded the threshold for a left-turn lane for drivers turning into the property.

Aaron Werner, AKRF’s senior technical director, said during the meeting that HHFT has “started conversations” with the state Department of Transportation, which has jurisdiction over Route 9D, while engineers for the project examine the feasibility of adding a lane.

Exceeding the threshold “does not automatically mean that turn lanes are required, as other factors, such as impacts to drainage or right-of-way constraints, should be considered,” said AKRF.

HHFT’s plans for the property include demolishing three additions to the original structure built between 1947 and 2007, restoring a slate roof and adding a parking area with 181 spaces, upstairs offices, bathrooms and an area where shuttles and buses can drop off and load visitors to the Fjord Trail.

garbage bags to pick up litter when she hikes Mount Beacon, and she’s afraid the HHFT will bring more careless visitors while disturbing sensitive wildlife habitat.

“I’m aghast at what people do,” she said. “Scenic Hudson is pretty much in the business now of building parks, and I fear this will be the same thing all over again. I think there are a lot more people in Beacon who are against it than they’re saying.”

But Andy Bell, a member of Beacon’s Greenway Trail and Tree Advisory committees, says he was “shocked” when he heard of opposition to the Fjord Trail. “We’ve all driven down [Route] 9D and we see how dangerous that is,” he said. “This is what people asked for.”

Bell points to the 23-acre Long Dock property, an “absolute gem” that Scenic Hudson opened in 2011, as the reason he’s confident the Fjord Trail will be environmentally sustainable. “We know how hard it is to get funding for things like this, and here’s a trail that’s going to be funded and maintained and given to the community,” he said. “How could you not support that?”

Amy Kacala, HHFT’s executive director, appreciates Beacon’s enthusiasm for the project, calling the Walk & Talk information session held last year at Long Dock, as well as the organization’s appearances at the Howland Public Library and Farmers

Supervisor: Fishkill ‘Favorable’ to Trail

Although the proposed 7.5-mile Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail would run between Cold Spring and Beacon, much of it — about 3.5 miles, from Dutchess Junction to the Putnam County line — would be in the Town of Fishkill. (Of the remainder, about 2 miles would be in Beacon, 1.75 miles in Philipstown and a quarter-mile in Cold Spring.)

On Wednesday (Feb. 19), the Fishkill Town Board voted unanimously to submit written comments to the state parks department on the DGEIS for the trail. Its three-page letter highlights concerns about increased traffic on Route 9D, insufficient emergency services, trespassing on private property, destruction of wildlife habitat and impacts around the Notch Trailhead, where HHFT has proposed constructing an 80-space parking lot with a restroom building.

The letter asks HHFT to consider mitigating measures, such as a reduced speed limit on 9D, and to conduct a fiscal impact study with proposals for providing increased funding for emergency services. It also asks the organization to better study long-term impacts on the environment and to consider installing a “pedestrian-friendly” traffic light at the Notch Trail.

Despite those concerns, Supervisor Ozzy Albra said this week that Fishkill residents are generally “very favorable” to the project. He noted that Fishkill is one of the only municipalities in Dutchess County without direct access to the Hudson River, “and we want to get waterfront access.”

Market, “uplifting and energizing.”

The first phase of the Fjord Trail, the Breakneck Connector and Bridge, has been approved by the state, with the bulk of its construction to begin this year and conclude in 2026. According to the DGEIS, Phase 2, scheduled for 2026 to 2029, would take the trail to the Notch Trailhead outside of Beacon, but Kacala acknowledged she has heard Kyriacou’s requests to jump ahead to the city.

As construction continues this year, she said the organization will soon turn its attention to designing the next phase, “and we’ll be looking north for that.”

How to Comment

The Fjord Trail DGEIS is online at dub.sh/state-parks-HHFT. 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.

Consultant Critical of Fjord Trail Report

Concerns include community character, funding

By Michael Turton

The Cold Spring Village Board on Wednesday (Feb. 19) received a report from a consultant it hired to examine how the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) for the Hudson Highland Fjord Trail addresses potential impacts on the village.

Ted Fink of Greenplan, who attended via Zoom, reviewed his 42-page analysis with the board and went over what he considers shortcomings, including:

■ New York State Parks, the lead agency for the DGEIS, chose the generic approach to assessing the Fjord Trail, rather than a Site-Specific Environmental Impact Statement. A more detailed analysis may be required in certain areas, such as the proposed route from Dockside to Little Stony Point, he said. “The Little Stony Point to Dockside stretch is a perfect place for a site-specific deep dive,” Mayor Kathleen Foley said in response. “Drill down at a level of specificity that the village, our waterfront and our community deserve. Once you build in the river, there’s no going back.”

■ The assessment of HHFT’s impact on village character is inadequate, Fink said. The DGEIS relies on a consultant’s assessment of regional impacts rather than Cold Spring’s vision of itself. State courts have stated that defining community character is the municipality’s prerogative, he said.

■ The relevance of Cold Spring’s Comprehensive Plan, Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy and local zoning law assessments is not adequately considered, said Fink. DGEIS statements of “no impacts” are not substantiated and the assessment of zoning laws fails to address impacts on residential areas, he said.

■ New revenues are needed to offset village HHFT-related expenses, he said, despite the DGEIS conclusion that HHFT will have no impact on community services funded by the village. Details regarding a required HHFT endowment have not been made available for public review as part of the review process, he said.

■ The report understates HHFT’s potential impact on emergency services, he said. Village police and other first responders have expressed concern in particular about Dockside Park, which has only one road in and out.

Fink was asked to condense his findings and provide an executive summary that highlights the major concerns. The board will review the update at its Wednesday (Feb. 26) meeting.

In other business ...

■ After closing a public hearing, the board granted a 10 percent property-tax exemption to volunteer first responders with two years of service. Putnam County, Philip-

stown, Nelsonville and the Haldane and Garrison school districts have enacted similar legislation.

■ The board on Feb. 12 voted 3-2 to hire traffic engineer John Canning for \$3,500 to review and comment on the traffic sections of the DGEIS. Trustees Eliza Starbuck and Aaron Freimark voted against the motion.

■ The Planning Board recently held two workshops to discuss the DGEIS. Chair Jesse St. Charles said the workshops, which included public comment, helped the board form “deeper opinions and consensus.” The Planning Board will release its comments by the end of the month.

■ Foley said on Feb. 12 that letters from a collection agency that some residents have received for unpaid parking tickets are legitimate and should be dealt with through the agency. She encouraged those who receive parking or other violation tickets to respond within the required 30 days by either disputing the ticket or paying the fine. After 60 and 90 days, fines increase and can be paid directly to the village but after 120 days the agency takes over collection.

■ The Historic District Review Board on Jan. 21 approved an application by Our Lady of Loretto to replace the rectory’s slate roof with asphalt architectural shingles. The approval was conditional upon keeping slate shingles that are removed but in good condition for future repairs.

■ The Cold Spring Police Department responded to 80 calls in January, including 10 medical assists, six traffic stops, three motor vehicle crashes and four assists to fire departments and other agencies.

■ The police department is working with Haldane High School and the Putnam County Youth Corps to establish an internship program for seniors interested in law enforcement. Officer-in-Charge Matt Jackson said the tentative plan calls for one student to spend 20 hours a week for three weeks with the department. The intern will not ride along on calls but will learn about radio and computer systems and the administrative duties that officers perform. The intern also will learn the basics of the local court system.

■ The board on Feb. 12 approved a contract renewal with Royal Carting for trash and recycling pickup. The current agreement expires Feb. 28 but Royal said it would not raise prices before May 31 while the village prepares its 2025-26 budget.

■ The board approved sending 16 unpaid property tax bills to Putnam County for collection.

■ Trustee Laura Bozzi reported that the lid to the food scrap container on Kemble Avenue was broken, making it awkward to use. While it is being repaired, residents can use the drop-off station on Lane Gate Road on Saturday mornings.

By the Numbers: Household Income Growth

	Municipality	County	Median income	↑ 5 years
1	Tuxedo	Orange	\$183,807	21%
2	Forestburgh	Sullivan	\$181,111	90%
3	Pittsford	Monroe	\$176,649	26%
4	Wawayanda	Orange	\$174,250	57%
5	Austerlitz	Columbia	\$172,500	126%
6	Mendon	Monroe	\$168,165	40%
7	Philipstown	Putnam	\$163,036	25%
8	Niskayuna	Schenectady	\$162,813	27%
9	Chester	Orange	\$159,671	47%
10	Clarence	Erie	\$157,636	34%
11	Putnam Valley	Putnam	\$156,333	28%
12	Clifton Park	Saratoga	\$155,954	27%
13	Bethlehem	Albany	\$153,547	18%
14	Pawling	Dutchess	\$152,500	35%
19	Goshen	Orange	\$146,182	22%
22	Carmel	Putnam	\$145,260	20%
23	East Fishkill	Dutchess	\$145,098	20%
32	Southeast	Putnam	\$141,431	15%
37	Beekman	Dutchess	\$140,227	26%
38	Kent	Putnam	\$139,575	25%
48	Rhinebeck	Dutchess	\$135,625	33%
68	Fishkill	Dutchess	\$129,500	28%
112	Wappinger	Dutchess	\$120,801	25%
125	Town of Poughkeepsie	Dutchess	\$119,000	18%
130	Town of Newburgh	Orange	\$118,356	24%
132	City of Beacon	Dutchess	\$118,159	22%
797	City of Poughkeepsie	Dutchess	\$72,796	40%
903	City of Newburgh	Orange	\$62,575	44%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 rankings of 953 New York towns, cities and reservations

Price at the Pump

	United States	New York	Local
Current	316 ⁵ / ₁₀	317 ⁷ / ₁₀	318 ³ / ₁₀
Month ago	312 ⁵ / ₁₀	316 ⁶ / ₁₀	315 ¹ / ₁₀
Year ago	327 ⁶ / ₁₀	330 ⁷ / ₁₀	330 ⁸ / ₁₀

Source: gasprices.aaa.com, as of Feb. 20. Prices are average per gallon for regular.



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Learn more

Central Hudson Faces Audit

State to probe executive pay at 13 utilities

By Leonard Sparks

Gov. Kathy Hochul announced on Feb. 13 that New York State will review the salaries and compensation of non-union management employees at 13 utilities, including Central Hudson, which serves the Highlands, “to protect New Yorkers from unfair rate hikes.”

Under a rate increase proposed in August, customers in Beacon, Philipstown and other parts of the Hudson Valley would see delivery costs for electricity and gas each rise by \$9 a month beginning July 1. The request is being reviewed by the state Public Service Commission (PSC), which regulates utilities.

The request includes \$1.3 million in “incentive pay” for executives and \$4 million for lower-level managers, according to PSC staff at the Department of Public Service. An earlier audit of Central Hudson concluded in 2023 that the company “set reliability and service-quality metrics at a bare minimum” for employees to qualify for bonuses, according to Hochul.

Central Hudson proposed the rate hike

two weeks after the PSC approved, for the year ending June 30, 2025, increases that raised the average monthly residential bill by \$12.65 for electricity and \$12.25 for gas. That was lower than Central Hudson’s initial request, which would have raised average monthly costs by \$30.

If the PSC approves the latest request as proposed, it will boost Central Hudson’s revenues by \$62 million annually, which the company said it would spend to replace aging power lines and upgrade other infrastructure. The utility also said it would increase capacity by 449 megawatts to accommodate solar systems, electric-vehicle chargers and heat pumps, and hire 24 employees to protect against cyberattacks.

Joe Jenkins, a Central Hudson representative, said the company “agrees with the governor that New Yorkers deserve fair and transparent rates” and will cooperate with the audit.

Wages and benefits for the company’s 600 non-union employees “make up only 5 percent of the typical customer bill,” he said. “We strive to work with our regulators to hold us accountable, and our lawmakers to enact common-sense policy that doesn’t needlessly raise energy costs.”

NEWS BRIEFS

Guards Protest at Prisons

Crowd gathers outside Fishkill facility

Gov. Kathy Hochul said on Wednesday (Feb. 19) she would call in the New York National Guard if wildcat strikes by state prison guards continue.

At the Fishkill Correctional Facility, on the town’s border with Beacon, protestors gathered on Tuesday to highlight the concerns of guards who have walked out, according to News12. The state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision says guards are protesting or on strike at 25 prisons. State law prohibits public employees from going on strike, and the union that represents state correctional officers said it had not authorized the walk-out.

Protestors demanded that the state repeal a law that limits long-term solitary confinement, mandate body scans for visitors, scan mail sent to inmates, offer a \$5,000 bonus to new employees and limit shifts with overtime to 16 hours. As of Wednesday, visitation has been canceled at many prisons, not including Fishkill.

Dutchess Launches Vet Program

Residents can honor late veterans

Dutchess County has launched a program, Honor a Veteran, that allows families and friends to nominate deceased veterans to be remembered for their service.

A ceremony will be held at 9 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month from April to November at the Dutchess County Office Building in Poughkeepsie or the town, city

or village hall of the municipality where the veteran resided.

To be eligible, veterans must have received an honorable discharge, be listed as missing in action or died while in the service. The individual who submits the application, or their designee, will receive a U.S. flag that has been flown outside the county Office Building for 30 days. See dutchessny.gov/HonorAVeteran.

Graymoor Named ‘Jubilee’ Pilgrimage Site

Thousands expected during observance

The Archdiocese of New York has chosen Graymoor in Philipstown as one of eight pilgrimage sites for the Catholic Church’s Jubilee Year of Hope, which Pope Francis declared from Dec. 24, 2024, to Jan. 6, 2026.

Father Jim Gardiner, director of special projects at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America, said that the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement are preparing packages for the groups and individuals expected to visit to renew their faith through services, prayer, retreats and events.

Visitation will be “at full tilt” when temperatures warm, and thousands of visitors are expected throughout the year, he said. The Archdiocese also named Graymoor a pilgrimage site for the last jubilee year, in 2000.

“When I was a kid in the Bronx, my parish had a bus ride here,” said Gardiner. “We had Mass, we had lunch, we walked around the grounds and we talked to people, and I credit that as being the impetus for my vocation.”

Scammers (from Page 1)

a lovely woman with a foreign accent for 10 minutes before my wife said, “Who are you talking to?” and made me hang up. For the record, I did not share any personal information.

“You may think that you’re too smart to fall for something,” Goldfarb told me. “But anybody can fall for something. It’s that sense of urgency [the scammer creates], that you could be in jeopardy.”

Online scams are a growing business. In 2023, they cost U.S. residents an estimated \$12.5 billion, almost four times the losses in 2019, according to FBI data. That’s a conservative estimate because only 20 percent of cybercrime is reported. New York ranks fourth in losses, with over \$700 million. Californians lost three times that.

The scams vary. There are phishing emails or robocalls that claim to be from your bank, Amazon, your health insurer, the IRS or the Social Security Administration, where scammers ask for personal information to help clear up a “problem with your account.” There are also phony job offers, phony investment opportunities, romance scams where suitors seek your money and phony medical cures for everything from erectile dysfunction to poor eyesight.

There are computer security scams: You get an email or call allegedly from Apple or Google telling you that you need to click a link to fix a computer problem. “Apple will never call you,” said Biracree. “Google will never call you. Microsoft will never call you. They couldn’t care less if you have a virus on your computer.”

Several people at the library event, including myself, reported being targeted by the “E-Z Pass Scam,” where you get a text message saying that you have an unpaid toll and you should click on a link. Just this week, Gov. Kathy Hochul noted that “E-Z Pass or Tolls by Mail will never send a text or email requesting personal, sensitive information.”

There are many tips on how to avoid online scams, including: (1) Don’t answer unsolicited phone calls, (2) Don’t click on links in unsolicited messages, (3) Offer to call back, (4) Ask for information to be sent to you by mail and (5) Never agree to pay with gift cards.

“No one is going to ask you to pay for something legitimately with a gift card,” said Biracree. “If it seems like it’s too good to be true, it is.”

Beacon Council (from Page 1)

Fjord Trail Visitation Data Committee; Krasikov chairs the city Conservation Advisory Committee and co-chairs the Fishkill Creek Watershed Alliance; and Glauda is programs and outreach manager for the Southeastern New York Library Resources Council and a member of the city’s Traffic Safety Committee.

In an email, Mansfield, who previously served seven terms before returning to the council this year, said Thursday that “there

Protect Yourself

- Scammers often pretend to be from an organization you know, like the IRS, Amazon, Medicare or your local utility. They create a sense of urgency and demand payment. If you get this kind of call, hang up and call the organization directly.
- Scammers claim there is an urgent problem, such as a family member with an emergency. Don’t act immediately. Tell them that you’ll call them back. Or ask them a question that only the family member would know.
- Scammers claim you have a computer virus. Hang up on anyone you don’t know. If you get a popup warning on your screen, don’t call the number.
- Scammers say you won a prize but you have to pay a fee to collect.
- Scammers will pressure you to act immediately. Resist.
- Scammers tell you to pay with cryptocurrency, a wire transfer, a payment app or gift cards.
- Block unwanted calls and text messages.
- Don’t use customer-service numbers you found through a Google search. Start by visiting the merchant’s website.
- Don’t give your personal or financial information in response to a request that you didn’t expect.
- If you get an email or text message from a company you do business with and you think it’s real, it’s still prudent not to click on any links. Instead, contact them using a website you know is trustworthy.
- Before acting, talk to someone you trust.

Source: Federal Trade Commission

were so many good, qualified people stepping up to run that I decided these new voices and perspectives would serve the city well.”

The Democrats also endorsed Dan Aymar-Blair, a former council member who was elected in November as Dutchess County comptroller. He is serving the final year of a four-year term held by Robin Lois, who resigned to take a state job, and will run in November for a full term. He may face Will Truitt, the Republican chair of the Legislature, who filed to run for the position.



Zac Skinner Photo by M. Ferris

The Calendar

'A HOPEFUL DARK'

Beacon artist depicts Earth under siege

By Marc Ferris

Zac Skinner walks the talk. Concerned about environmental degradation, he takes his young sons to remove trash along the banks of the Hudson River and donates a portion of his art sales to the nonprofit Earthjustice.

No surprise then, that his symbolic paintings are saturated with stark reminders that the Earth is under siege. In two of them, oil pipelines guide the eye. In "Pop-up Farm with Vortex," a maelstrom threatens a ziggurat.

"I'm going for post-industrial landscape," Skinner says. "They can be dark, but I intend them to be a hopeful dark."

Skinner, 43, is one of three artists featured in a group show, *Home is Where the Heart Is*, on display at the Garrison Art Center through March 9. He will also participate in an artist talk with Amy Cheng, Erik Schoonebeck and Greg Slick at the art center at 2 p.m. on Saturday (Feb. 22).

A practicing Buddhist whose work reflects his travels in Asia, Skinner enjoys camping and many of his pictures depict structures in the wilderness, like a pyramid, temple, monastery or wooden meditation hut.

"For the smaller ones, I like to feature a prominent entryway to make them more inviting and inhabitable," he says. "They provide a sense of hope and a safe space as shelter from the storm."

Hailing from the Syracuse area, Skinner earned an MFA from The School at the Art Institute of Chicago. Since moving to Beacon in 2014, he's used the area as a launch pad to show works in Texas, California and Korea.

In addition to exhibiting in group shows at Kube Art Center and the former Theo Ganz Studio, he has mounted solo shows at the BAU Gallery and the now-closed Matteawan Gallery, all in Beacon, as well as the Garrison Art Center.

A solo show at No. 3 Reading Room in Beacon led to a limited-edition book, *Atlas Trap*, published by Traffic Street Press. Owner Paulette Myers-Rich paired Skinner's relief

prints of endangered species with poetry by Greg Delanty in a 40-copy print run.

As a painter, Skinner works with many media, including tempera, egg-based paints used widely until the Renaissance. Some of the bleaker works are created with special charcoal, like "Cliff Shelter No. 1 with Storm Clouds," on view at Garrison Art Center.

His approach also hops around. "The alchemist in me likes to experiment with materials and depictions," he says. "I don't have a style, really, I just keep inventing my way through the images."

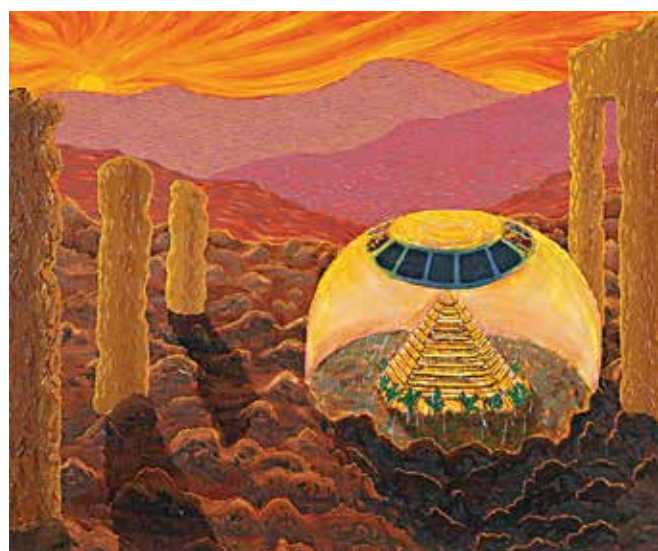
Some pieces feature charred landscapes, barren trees and lots of stumps. Clouds

are often ominous. The ones gathering in "Abandoned Hut by Dried Stream Edge" (on view in Garrison) and "Survival Camp with Water Collectors, Kale and Oil Pipeline," evoke Van Gogh's swirling brush style.

The large dabs that make up the majestic purple mountains in "Atmosphere Bubble and Ruins in a Dead Landscape," which hangs in his studio at Kube, also channel the Dutch master. The painting's pillars could represent Stonehenge or the detritus of an abandoned highway overpass.

"The goal with the overt message is to prevent indifference over time," he says. "I am compelled to represent myself, and my convictions, to inspire inner strength."

The Garrison Art Center, at 23 Garrison's Landing, is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., except Monday.



"Atmosphere Bubble and Ruins in a Dead Landscape"



"Survival Camp with Water Collectors, Kale and Oil Pipeline"

THE WEEK AHEAD

COMMUNITY

SAT 22
Walking the Labyrinth
PHILIPSTOWN
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Graymoor
40 Franciscan Way | atonementfriars.org
Lynn Brown will guide participants in the meditative practice during this retreat. Register online.

SAT 22
Maple Sugar Tours
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. Also SUN 23 and weekends through March 9. *Cost: \$18 (\$15 members, free for ages 4 and younger)*

SAT 22
Celebration of Light
BEACON
5:30 p.m. Polhill Park
Main and South | beaconspring.org
Bring a homemade lantern and join a parade to spread cheer and light for the Lunar New Year and the coming of spring. The parade will end at The Yard for music and tea.

SAT 1
Maple Sugar Celebration
PHILIPSTOWN
8:30 & 11:30 a.m.
Taconic Outdoor Education Center
75 Mountain Laurel Lane
eventbrite.com/o/taconic-outdoor-education-center
Enjoy a breakfast buffet and learn how maple syrup is made. Register in advance. *Cost: \$15 (\$10 ages 5 to 16, free for ages 5 and younger)*

VISUAL ART

SAT 22
Baggage Claim
BEACON
Noon – 6 p.m. The Yard
4 Hanna Lane | beaconopenstudios.com
The group exhibit, organized by Beacon Open Studios, includes work by local artists. Also SUN 23.

SAT 22
Artist Talk
GARRISON
2 p.m. Garrison Art Center
23 Garrison's Landing
845-424-3960 | garrisonartcenter.org
Greg Slick, Amy Cheng, Erik Schoonebeck and Zac Skinner will discuss their work, which is on display in two shows. See Page 11.

SAT 1
Realism on the Hudson
BEACON
1 – 3 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
howlandculturalcenter.org
Small works by members of the

American Artists Professional League will be on view through April 5.

KIDS & FAMILY

SAT 22
Cooking Club
COLD SPRING
1 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org
Students in grades 5 to 12 can join this new monthly gathering. This month's theme is chocolate. Registration required.

TUES 25
Parents & Kids Activity Group
COLD SPRING
5 p.m. Philipstown Behavioral Health Hub
5 Stone St. | 845-809-5050
philipstownhub.org
The Hub and CoveCare host this monthly gathering for bonding.

TUES 25
Owl Pellets
GARRISON
6 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
Discover during Family Science Night what you can learn by examining owl poop. Registration required.

FRI 28
Teen After Hours
BEACON
6 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beaconlibrary.org
Students in grades 5 to 12 are invited to play Nerf games. Registration required.

SAT 1
Read to a Teen
COLD SPRING
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org
Beginner readers can practice with a teen volunteer. Sign up to be matched and schedule a time slot.

SAT 1
So You Want to Adopt a Guinea Pig?
GARRISON
11 a.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
Children ages 3 to 10 can learn about what guinea pigs need and how to care for them. Registration required.



TALKS & TOURS

SAT 22
Ambiguity is the Answer
GARRISON
2 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
Kyle Crawford will discuss his book on “timeless strategies for creating change.”

SAT 22
Sam Rebelein & Clay McLeod Chapman
BEACON
7 p.m. Stanza Books | 508 Main St.
845-440-3906 | stanzabooks.com
The horror authors will discuss their new books. Rebelein's *The Poorly Made and Other Things* is a collection of connected stories. Chapman's *Wake Up and Open Your Eyes* is a novel about families tearing each other apart.

SAT 22
Cannons & Cocktails
BEACON
7 p.m. Denning's Point Distillery
10 N. Chestnut St. | beaconhistorical.org
In this program hosted by the Beacon Historical Society, military historian Sean Sculley will discuss Beacon's revolutionary past. Donations welcome. See Page 2. *Free*

THURS 27
Dominican Republic
COLD SPRING
Noon. Butterfield Library | 10 Morris Ave.
845-265-3040 | butterfieldlibrary.org
Get insider tips for a visit during this Armchair Travel Escape.

FRI 28
Historical Horticulture
COLD SPRING
7 p.m. Putnam History Museum
63 Chestnut St. | 845-265-4010
putnamhistorymuseum.org
Matthew Weigman will discuss local and national trends and people who influenced the expansion of gardens in the 19th century. Attend in person or via Zoom. *Cost: \$10*

SAT 1
Jive Poetic
BEACON
2 p.m. Dia Beacon | 3 Beekman St.
845-231-0811 | diaart.org
The DJ and educator will

perform from his memoir, *Skip Tracer*. *Cost: \$20 (\$18 seniors, \$12 students and disabled visitors, \$5 ages 5 to 11, free for ages 5 and younger and Beacon residents)*

SAT 1
Twilight of the Gods
BEACON
7 p.m. Stanza Books | 508 Main St.
845-440-3906 | stanzabooks.com
Kurt Baumeister will share his latest novel about the gods, told from the perspective of Loki.

SUN 2
Rattlesnakes and Reptiles of the Highlands
GARRISON
2 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
In this program hosted with the Putnam Highlands Audubon Society, a wildlife biologist from the state Department of Environmental Conservation will discuss the history of local reptiles and threats they face.

SUN 2
Let's Talk Monsters
BEACON
6 p.m. Stanza Books | 508 Main St.
845-440-3906 | stanzabooks.com
Dennis Mahoney (*Our Winter Monster*) and Robert Ottone (*Nocturnal Creatures*) will read from their new novels.

STAGE & SCREEN

SUN 23
Black Sheep & Scapegoats
NEWBURGH
7 p.m. Lobby at The Ritz | 107 Broadway
safe-harbors.org/the-ritz-theater
The Emotions Physical Theatre will stage a dance about Black self-love choreographed by Shawn Rawls. *Free*

THURS 27
The Peekskill Riots
BEACON
6 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beaconlibrary.org
Watch Episode 4 of a documentary about the 1949 race riot in Peekskill, when spectators at a Paul Robeson concert were attacked. Filmmaker Jon Bennett will answers questions after the screening.

FRI 28
Becky Robinson
PEEKSKILL
8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039
paramounthudsonvalley.com
The comedian, best known as her “entitled housewife” and other characters, will do stand-up. *Cost: \$37 to \$53*



SAT 1
Wicked
GARRISON
5 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
Watch the 2024 blockbuster starring Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba and Arianna Grande as Glinda. Registration required.

SUN 2
The Cher Show
WEST POINT
5 p.m. Ike Hall Theatre | 655 Pitcher Road
845-938-4159 | ikehall.com
This musical includes 35 of the diva's hits — and lots of sequins. *Cost: \$39 to \$89*



MUSIC

SAT 22
A Night of Broadway
BEACON
7:30 p.m. Beacon High School
101 Matteawan Road
hudsonvalleysymphony.org
The Hudson Valley Symphony Orchestra will be joined by singer Hugh Panaro (*Phantom of the Opera*) and saxophonist Jerry Vivino for a night of showtunes. *Cost: \$55 to \$68 (\$38 seniors, students \$15, free for ages 5 and younger)*

SAT 22

Gratefully Yours

BEACON

8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

This Grateful Dead tribute band will play set lists submitted by the audience. *Cost: \$20 (\$25 door)*

SAT 22

Kahlil Kwame Bell

BEACON

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

The percussionist and composer has played with jazz greats and contributed to more than 150 albums. *Cost: \$20 (\$25 door)*

SUN 23

Open Mic Invitational

BEACON

6 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

Top talent from past open mics will perform. *Cost: \$10*

WED 26

Creative Conversations

COLD SPRING

6:30 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org

In this program about Shakespeare and music, composer and pianist Daniel Kelly will be joined by singer Sofia Kelly and Sean McNall, an actor. Rescheduled from Feb. 12. *Cost: \$15*

FRI 28

Ray Bonneville

BEACON

8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

The blues artist will be joined by the Robert Hill Band and Rae Simone. *Cost: \$25 (\$30 door)*

SAT 1

Winter Music Festival

MONTGOMERY

11:30 a.m. – 10:45 p.m. City Winery
23 Factory St.

Bands from the School of Rock in Beacon will perform, including those focused on hard rock, indie rock, class R&B and hits from the 1970s and '80s. *Cost: \$16*

SAT 1

Breakneck Boys

BEACON

8 p.m. Industrial Arts Brewing
511 Fishkill Ave.
industrialartsbrewing.com

The roots Americana band will perform.

SAT 1

Dave Burrell

BEACON

8 p.m. St. Andrew & St. Luke
15 South Ave. | daveburrell.eventbrite.com

This is the first of five solo piano concerts in March hosted by Elysium Furnace Works. Burrell is a free jazz performer who has recorded over 40 albums. *Cost: \$20*



Dave Burrell, March 1

SAT 1

Feast of Friends

BEACON

8 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

The Doors tribute band will perform the hits and cuts. *Cost: \$25 (\$30 door)*

SAT 1

Michael Wolff Trio

BEACON

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

The jazz pianist will perform with Andy McKee (bass) and Victor Jones (drums). *Cost: \$20*

SUN 2

Shai Wosner

BEACON

4 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | howlandmusic.org

Wosner's program is part of the Howland Chamber Music Circle's annual piano festival. *Cost: \$35 (\$10 students)*



CIVIC

MON 24

City Council

BEACON

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

MON 24

School Board

BEACON

7 p.m. Beacon High School
101 Matteawan Road
845-838-6900 | beaconn12.org

TUES 25

School Board

COLD SPRING

7 p.m. Middle School | 15 Craigside Drive
845-265-9254 | haldaneschool.org

WED 26

Village Board

COLD SPRING

7 p.m. Village Hall | 85 Main St.
845-265-3611 | coldspringny.gov

SAT 1

Assembly Town Hall

GARRISON

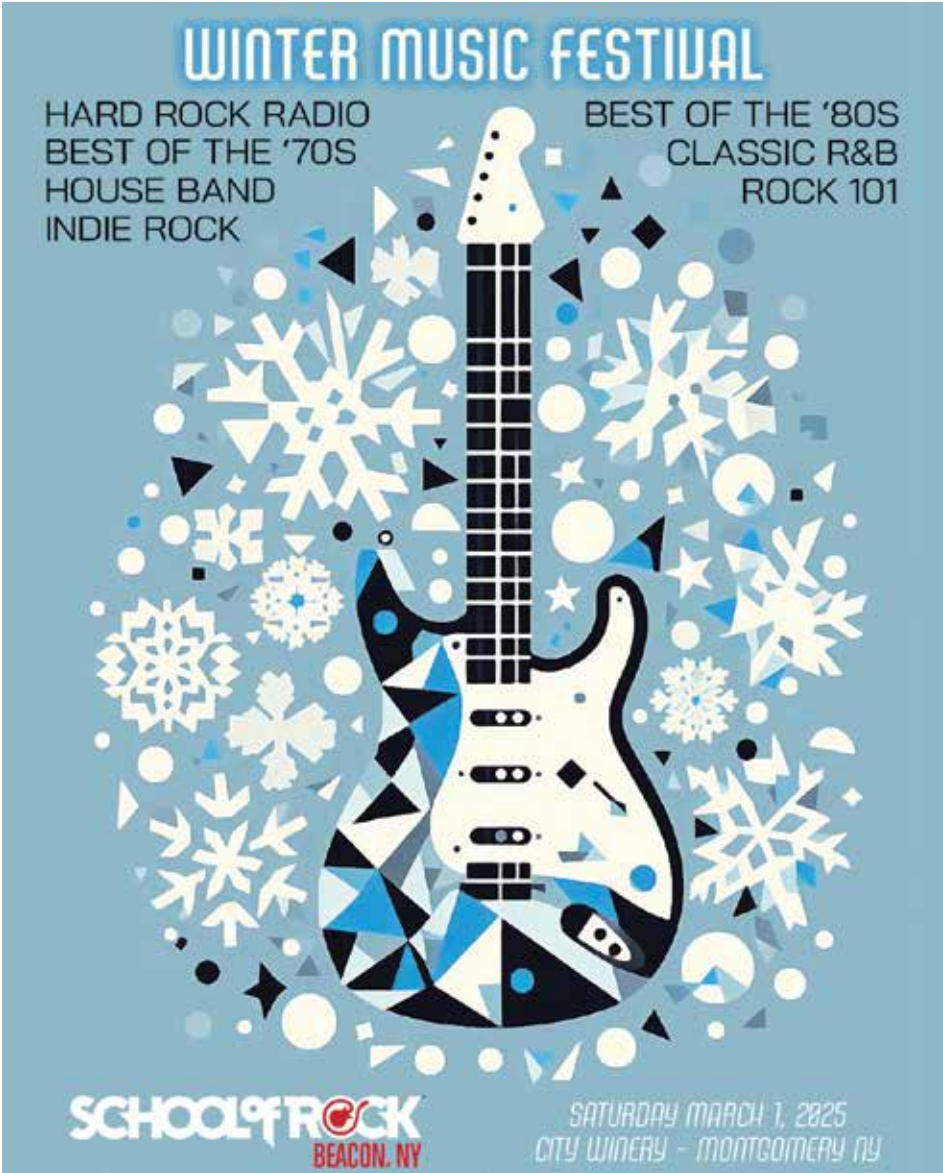
2 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org

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

WINTER MUSIC FESTIVAL

HARD ROCK RADIO
BEST OF THE '70S
HOUSE BAND
INDIE ROCK

BEST OF THE '80S
CLASSIC R&B
ROCK 101



SCHOOL OF ROCK
BEACON, NY

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Small, Good Things

Always For
Pleasure, Always
on Monday

By Joe Dizney



In nearly every culture — Indian, Asian, African, Hispanic — beans and rice constitute “a complete currency,” says Brigid Washington, author of *Caribbean Flavors for Every Season*. The combination is indisputably nutritious, supplying much of the same or better nourishment than you would get from meat or dairy, at a much lower cost to both the wallet and the environment.

But “beans” is a broad grouping that we first must put into two categories: Old World (e.g., favas, chickpeas, black-eyed peas) and New World, like the red kidney bean featured here. A variety of *Phaseolus vulgaris*, it is a Peruvian native noted for its color, size and shape. Judging from its geographic spread, it also is a perfect accompaniment to rice.

Lolis Eric Elie, author of *Treme: Stories and Recipes from the Heart of New Orleans*, has identified Haiti, Cuba and New Orleans as three cultures where the dish is emblematic, and explains this as a consequence of the Haitian Revolution, when Haitians of all colors and social standing fled to Cuba and New Orleans.

A friend of Haitian extraction, Phil Gornail, tells me of a recipe for red kidney beans and rice his mother makes called *diri kole ak pwa wouj*, which translates

from the Haitian Creole tongue as “rice stuck with — or glued to — beans.” New Orleans, where I come from, has been called “the northernmost Caribbean city” and, again no surprise, the dish is ubiquitous and just as dearly loved. That judgment could easily be extended to pretty much the rest of south Louisiana.

But food is about taste, and specific culture, and a soupcon of collective memory. A single, 1-pound bag of Camellia Red Kidney Beans (from a fourth-generation, family-owned New Orleans supplier) emphatically says one (make that two) things: 1) red beans and rice and 2) dinner on Monday.

Even within this ubiquity, the actual preparation of Louisiana red beans and rice is anything but agreed upon. A cherished moment occurs in Les Blank’s documentary *Always for Pleasure*, a loving look at Mardi Gras traditions. A New Orleans native, Irma Thomas, one of the city’s finest soul singers, divulges her secret for

red beans and rice: “First, you need a large pot,” which, besides the red kidney beans and long grain white rice, is one of few ingredients common to most any recipe. Onions, for sure. Better yet, “the trinity” — onions, celery and bell pepper. Garlic for me, some folks maybe. Spices will vary (see the recipe note). Tomatoes? Tomato paste? Bacon, ham or sausage? I like using andouille sausage as it removes the need for spices beyond a couple of bay leaves. It all depends on who you ask, *cher*...

Back to that Monday date stamp: Even in tonier NOLA restaurants you’ll find many a lunch special built around the dish. The accepted myth is that on Monday (laundry day), a big ole pot of beans slow-cooked on the stovetop didn’t require a lot of minding and would provide a warm, filling meal for the family once chores were done.

Makes for a good story, but does it matter? Signing off (as New Orleans’s own Louis Armstrong did): “Red Beans and Ricely Yours.”



Red Beans & Rice

Makes about 2 quarts

Extra-virgin olive oil

1 pound red kidney beans, soaked, refrigerated overnight

1 pound andouille sausage (substitute kielbasa*) sliced into ¼-inch coins

2 large yellow onions, diced

2 to 3 ribs celery, sliced

1 large green bell pepper, cored, seeded and diced

6 to 8 cloves garlic, minced

2 tablespoons tomato paste

3 bay leaves

Salt and pepper

Cooked long grain white rice, for serving

Green onions, sliced for garnish at table

Louisiana hot sauce (Tabasco or Crystal preferred)

1. In a large heavy pot, heat oil over medium heat. Brown sliced andouille; stir regularly to render fat. When browned, remove pot from heat; remove sausage with a slotted spoon, reserving it to a bowl.

2. Return pot to medium-high heat, adding more oil as needed. Add onions and sauté until soft. Add garlic and cook 3 to 5 minutes until fragrant. Add celery and bell pepper; cook stirring for another 3 minutes. Add tomato paste and stir to incorporate. Add bay leaves (and if using kielbasa, add additional seasoning as per note below); continue cooking for another 2 to 3 minutes.

3. Add beans and their soaking water and additional hot water as necessary to cover by 1½ inches. Bring to a medium boil for 10 to 15 minutes; lower heat to a simmer. Return sausage to the pot and cook, stirring occasionally, checking the beans every 15 to 20 minutes. When beans are just beginning to get tender, season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook another 30 to 45 minutes until done. This is a perfect time to cook the rice. (Total cooking time is about 1 to 1½ hours.)

4. When beans are tender, remove 1 to 1½ cups of the cooked beans with some of the cooking liquid and mash with a potato masher or puree in a blender. Add back to the pot to thicken the broth. Keep warm. Serve individually over a mound of rice and garnish with sliced green onions. Season to personal taste with hot sauce. A simple green salad is a perfect accompaniment.

* **Note:** If substituting kielbasa, you’ll want to add the spices that andouille usually supplies: a mix of cayenne pepper, paprika, garlic and onion powder, and maybe some oregano and/or thyme. Recipes can be found online for Cajun or New Orleans Creole spice blends, and if you have a Louisiana connection, the Tony Chachere or Paul Prud’homme commercial brands will do. One to two teaspoons will do the trick.

BEACON'S BEAT MAKER

*He just wants to work
on the drums all day*



By Marc Ferris

To commemorate four centuries in business, the Zildjian cymbal company commissioned Aaron Latos to build 400 snare drums from the same alloy that goes into their rides, crashes and high hats — staple elements of a jazz or rock drum set.

Recipients include Sheila E., drummer's drummer Steve Gadd (Paul Simon's "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover") and tattooed celebrity Travis Barker of Blink 182 (who survived a plane crash and dated Kim Kardashian).

The anniversary passed in 2023 and Latos, who moved last year to Beacon with his wife and two young children, is 10 units shy of fulfilling the order. In the meantime, he's trying to perfect the manufacturing process for his own line of snares, tom-toms and bass drums crafted from nickel silver, which he assembles nearly from scratch in his Newburgh shop. Only the washers and tension rods clamping down the hoops that tune and tighten the drumheads are machined off-premises.

By year's end, he plans to move the lathes, drills and rollers to a space in Beacon

double the size of his current spot.

Latos, 36, hails from West Virginia and made a living drumming in recording sessions and touring with country singer Margo Price. He performs around town with the Stephen Clair Band and takes on select students and studio projects.

Drummers are notoriously picky about their gear and setup. Drum and cymbal angles must hit every time. Some prefer wood over metal snares. Others argue over tuning techniques. Every cymbal sounds different and comes in myriad shapes and sizes.

Latos is so detail-oriented that he patented a snare drum throw-off system, the mechanism that lifts and holds down the coiled snare wires that add snap to the two and four beat of nearly every pop and rock song. His patent for the butt plate, which anchors the snares, is pending.

"I'd have more patents, but they're expensive," he says.

As far as he knows, Latos is the first to make nickel steel drums. He digs the sound, but the manufacturing process is like wrestling an alligator and presents "the most annoying and frustrating fabrication charac-

teristics" that are "difficult to cut and work."

The raw material arrives in long, flat sheets, like the plies of wood used in most drums. Labor consists of rolling, shearing and brazing them together. His loud, hefty snare drums pay homage to models used by big band jazz drummers in the 1920s and '30s designed to cut through 17-piece outfits in the days before specialized microphones.

Weighty shells for his floor and rack toms are capped by silvery stainless steel and solid brass copper-colored hoops. Bass drums come with brown wood hoops. The end results are so striking that each piece looks like a sculpture.

A basic snare costs \$2,000 and a full drum kit starts at \$10,000. Customers range from doctors and lawyers to pros, including Bob Meyer, a jazz cat and early adopter, Jeremiah Green of Modest Mouse (who died in 2023) and Harvey Sorgen, who has played with Hot Tuna, Derek Trucks and Paul Simon.

Latos' workshop is relatively tidy, although gold and silver shavings litter the floor, including the rug in the cozy corner with a couch, turntable and pile of vinyl records capped by Mel Torme, Chuck Mangione and Haitian group Bossa Combo discs.

"Every 22 minutes or so, I come over and flip the record," he says. "It helps me focus on what I am doing and what I should be doing."



Latos is so detail-oriented that he patented a snare drum throw-off system, the mechanism that lifts and holds down the coiled snare wires that add snap to the two and four beat of nearly every pop and rock song

Latos Drums is located at 11 Spring St. in Newburgh and at latosdrums.com.

Photos by John Fell



Matthew Bowen (1965-2025)

Matthew David Bowen, age 59, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025, in Danbury, Connecticut, holding the hand of a dear friend at the West Haven VA Medical Center.

Matt was born on Feb. 19, 1965, in Omaha, Nebraska, and lived in Illinois and Texas before moving to California with his mother. He graduated from Redondo Union High School and went on to serve in the U.S. Navy as an Electronics Warfare Petty Officer aboard the USS Mount Hood.

In 1993, Matt began working with computers, developing a passion for technology that would define his career. In 2009, he founded Hudson Valley Technician, a business he proudly operated until just before his passing. Matt worked with integrity and care, treating his clients like family.

Matt had an adventurous spirit, a deep love for nature, and a heart that found joy in helping others. Locally, he was an active member of the Beacon Sloop Club, passionate about community and environmental stewardship. He also played a key role in organizing the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Parade, a cause close to his heart.

Above all else, Matt deeply loved his daughter, Charlotte, and cherished his nieces, nephew, and their children.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Beth Swanson, and father, John "Jack" Bowen. He is survived by his beloved daughter Charlotte; ex-wife Erica; brothers Robert Bowen (Julie) and Randy Lightfoot (Judy); nieces Amber Simonic (Randy) and Angela Boyce (Ryan, Nicholas, Jonathan); nephew Bradley Bowen (Trisha, Jack); and countless close friends who will forever hold his memory dear.

Matt will be cremated and laid to rest with full Navy military honors at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Illinois this spring. Private celebrations of life will be held in New York and Illinois.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in his memory to AIDS Walk New York 2025 (aidswalkny.org). May those who knew Matt carry forward his curiosity, courage, and unwavering enthusiasm for life.

PAID NOTICE

LOOKING BACK IN BEACON

By Chip Rowe

Editor's note: Beacon was created in 1913 from Matteawan and Fishkill Landing.

150 Years Ago (February 1875)

A three-card monte man charged with cheating young men at the ferry dock was ordered to refund their money and pay \$4 [about \$115 today] in court fees.

A kerosene lamp exploded at about 9 p.m. inside Jared Webb's home, setting fire to the lampstand, carpet and baseboard. No one was injured.

After a drunken hack [taxi driver] hit a woman at Fishkill Landing, he was severely thrashed with his riding whip by one of her friends.

Eddy Winans, 14, while coasting down Glory Hill, went over the railroad tracks and cut his chin on the ice. After having it harnessed with stitching plaster, he returned to the run.

Smith Sherman, the principal of the Glenham school, resigned to become a farmer.

A bill to merge the villages of Fishkill Landing and Matteawan into the City of Matteawan died in the state Legislature in

favor of a competing bill to create the Town of Wappinger from the northern portion of Fishkill. There had been an effort to create three towns — Wappinger, Fishkill and Matteawan/Fishkill Landing — but the City of Matteawan proposal complicated matters to the point that Assembly Member James Mackin, who represented Dutchess County, withdrew his support. [Three months later, the governor signed the bill to create the Town of Wappinger.]

John Noble, a freight conductor on the Dutchess & Columbia Railroad, was killed near Matteawan when his head struck a bridge.

About 3,000 people skated on a Saturday afternoon on Newburgh Bay and Alfred Moshier of Breakneck won \$9.50 [\$275] from a purse raised for an impromptu series of races — best of three over a 3½-mile course.

The Rev. Philip Germond of the Methodist Church in Fishkill Landing was surprised to find under his dinner plate a gift from his congregation of \$150 [\$4,300]. "Since then, his family never touches a piece of crockery but they look under it," said *The Daily Freeman*.

The Fishkill Journal began using a steam-powered press.

As the night express train passed through the station at 30 mph, its conductor tossed the mail bags destined for Newburgh toward the platform. A southbound freight was passing at the same time, and the bags fell between its wheels. Early the next morning two station employees collected about 80 letters and a mangled \$250 check from along the tracks.

Fishkill Landing had 45 widows who paid property taxes.

Some Matteawan residents called for a night patrol to discourage arsonists.

According to a news account, two weeks after a well-dressed woman named Mary Palmer, who said she was from Fishkill, began work at a Newburgh saloon, she surprised her employer by giving birth. Mother and infant were sent to the poorhouse. Palmer refused to reveal her true identity but apparently had fled New York City. "She is in deep distress over her sad fate and weeps almost continually," the newspaper said.

125 Years Ago (February 1900)

Lemuy Lin Chung, 45, a native of China who lived in Vermont, died aboard a train just after it passed Fishkill Landing. He had been traveling with \$350 [\$17,000] to New York City for treatment of consumption [tuberculosis]. His body was removed at Peekskill.

The Fishkill Local Union of Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor held its quarterly meeting at the Presbyterian Church.

About two weeks after he arrived at Sing Sing to serve a 14-year sentence for kidnapping a toddler in Central Park for ransom, George Beauregard Barrow became so violent he was put in a straitjacket in a padded cell, then transferred to the state asylum at Matteawan.

While butchering a cow, a farmer found six nails and a harmonica in its stomach.

A fisherman at Fishkill Landing reported watching a man wearing ice skates float by in the Hudson River on a cake of ice, going from one side to the other crying for help. A New York Central conductor said he too had seen the man about a mile south, waving his hat. His fate went unreported.

John V. Storm, a native of Stormville and the oldest man in Dutchess County, died in Fishkill at age 99 years and two months.

100 Years Ago (February 1925)

The city agreed to take over the Memorial Building from the American Legion. The annual maintenance was expected to be \$2,730 [\$49,000].

Two public health nurses drove as far as they could — stopping to dig through snow drifts — before trekking to a home in the Fishkill mountains where a woman had given birth a few days earlier.

The Beacon Outing Club hosted a fox hunt at the Haight Farm in Glenham overseen by a representative from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The first of the 28 hounds to finish the 1½-mile route was Foley, owned by John McFarland of Beacon, but it failed to go to the box holding the fox and was overtaken by Kentucky Fred from Wappingers Falls.

The family of Isadore Wise, a partner in the Wise Straw Hat Works who had disappeared while bringing \$1,200 [\$22,000] from New York City to Beacon, received a letter suggesting he had been robbed and killed. It read: "We had been waiting for the payroll for the past three weeks. The dam fool put up a fight and we had to throw him in the river."

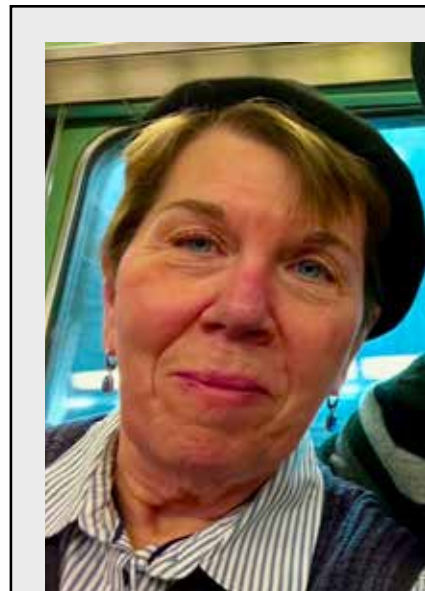
Central Hudson asked the Public Service Commission for approval to purchase and absorb three Beacon firms — one that ran the streetcar service and two that provided gas and electric.

The Duffney Brick Co. of Mechanicsville purchased the 226-acre Belle Isle Brick Yard from the Verplanck family, which had owned the property for centuries.

After Stanley Angelo was arrested for stealing coal from railroad cars, police searched his home and found a still in his cellar.

The Kiwanis Club hosted a forum to discuss changing Beacon's commissioner form of government to a city manager plan. [This would happen in 1989.]

(Continued on Page 17)



It has been one month since our beloved wife and mother Carol passed. She was a special person who touched many lives and we appreciate the thoughts and prayers.

Her Memorial Service will be held **Saturday, April 12, 11:00AM** at the **Cold Spring United Methodist Church**.

~ Ken & Carly Filmanski

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Q: Was That an Electric Car?

When I was a young man, in the late 1930s or early 1940s, I was with my father on Main Street in Beacon when we saw a black, boxy car driven by an old lady. At the time, my father told me it was an electric car, driven by one of the Lamont sisters, who lived in an apartment in the Holland Hotel. Have you come across anything that would explain this?

- Ian MacDonald, *Poughkeepsie*

A: Electric vehicles, popular between about 1910 and 1930, were marketed to women because they didn't require a crank start like gas-powered motors. Once the electric starter became standard, they fell out of favor because gas cars had better range. But for many years, there were still early electrics on the streets.



(Continued from Page 16)

The state Assembly passed a bill to fund a highway from Beacon to the new Bear Mountain Bridge.

75 Years Ago (February 1950)

Lowell Thomas Jr., 26, spoke at Beacon High School about his journey in 1949 to Tibet. He and his famous father were among the few foreigners permitted to enter.

University Settlement celebrated its 64th anniversary with a \$100-a-plate [\$1,300] dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria to raise \$100,000 [\$1.3 million] for its 225-acre summer camp at Mount Beacon for 700 underprivileged children.

A 22-year-old Wolcott Avenue man was killed when his car left the road at 3 a.m. on a curve on South Road in Poughkeepsie where the highway narrowed from four to three lanes.

Police said someone lit a bundle of kerosene-soaked paper outside a woman's back door on Fishkill Avenue that scorched the wood but burned out.

Oliver Nerrie, 64, a firefighter and father-in-law of District Attorney W. Vincent Grady, had a fatal heart attack while backing his car out of his Orchard Place driveway, accelerated and hit a telephone pole.

50 Years Ago (February 1975)

William Guilbault, who began washing cars at Ketcham Motors in 1955 after graduating from Beacon High School, had risen to be the fifth-best salesman among 2,878 Fiat dealers nationwide.

Sandy Cochrane, a junior at Beacon High School, was crowned the Queen of Hearts at the 12th annual Heart Ball at the Poughkeepsie Elks Club. The queen acted as an ambassador for the Dutchess County chapter of the American Heart Association.

A 24-year-old mother of four was found guilty of dealing heroin and cocaine; her public defender argued she had been entrapped by a police informant.

Glenn Houghtalin (R-Beacon), chair of the county Legislature, called for a study on whether to dismantle the executive branch and create the first full-time county Legislature in the state. He said that, in the seven years since Dutchess replaced its Board of Supervisors with executive and legislative branches, spending had increased by 400 percent.

The union for City of Poughkeepsie police officers said that while they "do more work and make more arrests" than other departments, their salaries maxed out at \$11,000 [\$64,500] annually, compared to \$13,000



Sandy Cochrane of Beacon High School was crowned Queen of Hearts 50 years ago, in 1975.

Poughkeepsie Journal

in Beacon [\$76,200].

The Family Cinema at 383 Main St. was showing *Airport 1975*.

The mayor appointed John Lamoree, past president of the Beacon Jaycees, as chair of the city's American Revolution Bicentennial Committee.

The City Council approved 13 priorities for \$2.7 million in federal community development funds, including redevelopment in the blighted Bank Square area; development of a riverfront park; a feasibility study for a community center; a parking lot in the Cliff Street area; a minibus public transit system; turning a junkyard on Churchill Street into a park; and adding a fountain to Fountain Square.

Charles Trongone, 25, who escaped from the Fishkill Correctional Facility inside a canvas bag in a laundry truck, was arrested

33 hours later in Brooklyn.

A 14-year-old girl died during an early morning fire in Glenham. Her older brother, twin brother and father suffered burns.

Forty Beacon High School students held a walk-a-thon, each covering about 15 miles, and raised \$801.75 [\$4,700] for the SPCA.

25 Years Ago (February 2000)

A Beacon man pleaded guilty to entering an apartment at 129 Main St. while fleeing from police and holding the occupant at knifepoint.

A Peekskill man was charged for the fourth time with driving while intoxicated after leading police on a chase through Beacon. He was arrested after he struck a police car blocking the entrance to Interstate 84.

Jack Dexter, one of two Beacon representatives on the county Legislature, said he

might join the Democratic caucus to break a 5-5 split over leadership positions. Dexter was a registered Democrat but won his seat without the party endorsement.

The Planning Board withheld approval for the proposed Dia Beacon, saying it had concerns about the entrances, exits and parking.

The Beacon High School boys' bowling team won the sectional title, edging Hendrick Hudson by seven pins.

A 30-year-old Newburgh man convicted of arranging for a 16-year-old girl to bring a half-pound of cocaine from New York City to Beacon on Metro-North was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

About 50 union members picketed on Matteawan Road to demand the district pay at least \$30 [\$55] an hour and benefits to laborers hired to build the new high school.

The Beacon High School girls' basketball team qualified for the Section I, Class B tournament for the first time in 11 seasons. The Bulldogs defeated Pelham before losing to No. 1 Pearl River.

Theresa McFaull, 23, of Beacon, became the third woman to roll a perfect game at Southern Dutchess Bowl. During her final frames, the bowling alley fell silent as nearly everyone came to the lane to watch. "I knew there was a crowd behind me, but I wouldn't look," she said.

The former president of Beacon Junior League Baseball admitted to stealing \$8,148 of its funds. A judge said he could avoid jail time by returning the money within 60 days.

Devine Campbell, a junior at Beacon High School, won the Section I wrestling title at 103 pounds. He had lost in the finals the previous two seasons.

Police arrested a 30-year-old Beacon man on charges that he carjacked a vehicle at gunpoint on Main Street near North Elm at noon on a Tuesday.

Metro-North said it would begin offering free bus service from its parking lot next to Dutchess Stadium to the Beacon train station to resolve a parking crunch. It said the station had 948 spots for 1,200 commuters.

The Hudson Valley Housing Development Fund asked the City Council to rezone a parcel across the street from the site of the new high school so it could build a federally subsidized 66-unit complex called Meadow Ridge. It said the target household income of tenants would be \$28,000 to \$45,000 [\$51,000 to \$82,000] annually; the median in Beacon was \$34,000 [\$62,000]. A two-bedroom unit would rent for \$690 [\$1,300].

Out There

Plastics on the Brain

By Brian PJ Cronin

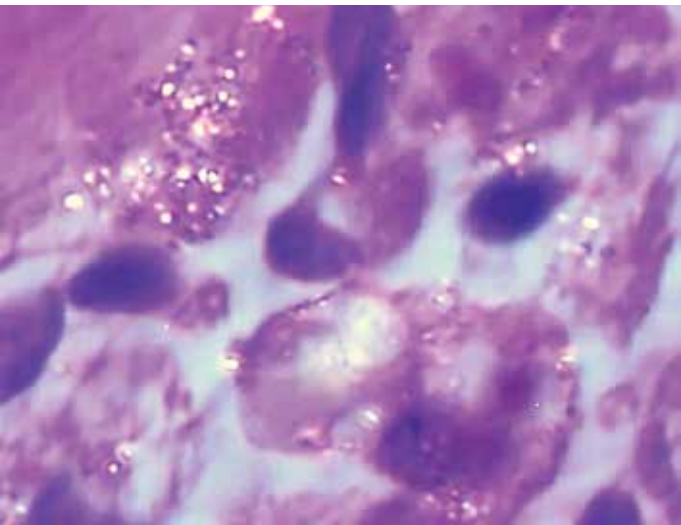
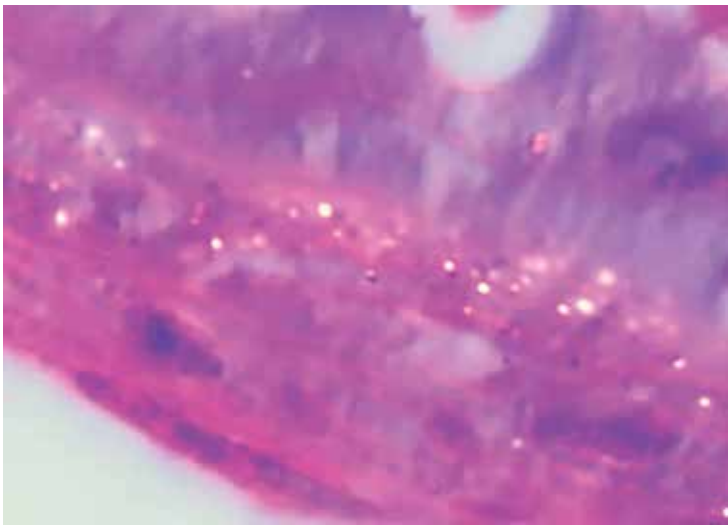
The news has been overwhelming this past month. Much of it you’ve already forgotten. But I bet most of you will not be able to forget about the plastic spoon in your brain.

Earlier this month, a team of researchers led by scientists at the University of New Mexico published a paper about the apparently increasing amount of microplastics being found in the human body, particularly in the brain. The researchers found that brains from people who died in 2024 contained about 50 percent more microplastics than brains from 2016. The age of the deceased didn’t matter.

How much plastic? The 2024 brains averaged around 7 grams, or about the same weight as a plastic spoon. Some caveats: The researchers only studied 52 brains, and while that might seem like a lot of brains, it’s relatively few for a scientific study. Also, all 52 brains came from New Mexico. Perhaps New York brains have fewer microplastics, although it seems more likely we have more.

The situation in New York was already pretty bad when I wrote about it for *The Current* in 2019. But as Shannon Roback of Riverkeeper pointed out, it’s hard to say if it’s getting worse without more data. Microplastics in the Hudson River have been measured over the years, but never consistently and never in the same places.

That could soon change. Later this year, Riverkeeper will roll out a more robust version of its public monitoring program at more than 200 locations in the river and its tributaries. The organization already



The white specs in these images are microplastics from the brains of people with dementia.

Nature Medicine (2)

tests regularly at over 100 locations for fecal bacteria, temperature, salinity and chlorophyll. The new system will allow it to sample phosphorus and nitrate, as well, and although Riverkeeper itself doesn’t have the capacity to test for microplastics, Roback is hoping that the system can be used by state and federal agencies that do.

California is in the process of setting limits on how much microplastics are allowed in drinking water. To calculate those limits, scientists are trying to determine what microplastics do to us. It’s known that plastics act as endocrine disruptors, which affect the body’s hormonal and reproductive systems. Low sperm count has been linked to microplastics because — I’m so sorry to tell you this so soon after telling you about the plastic spoon — they’re in testicles, as well.

Until we have more data on which plastics in our daily lives are making their way to our brains and nether regions, it’s hard to know what actions could be most beneficial. Roback said that while municipal water systems filter out most microplastics, using a charcoal-activated filter at home, such as a Brita pitcher, might add an addi-

tional layer of defense.

In the meantime, the surest way to reduce the plastics getting into us is to reduce the plastics being made. One bill floating around Albany, the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act, would require companies to lower the amount of single-use plastic packaging by 50 percent over the next 12 years, ban the use of 15 so-called “forever chemicals” used to create them and make companies responsible for the costs of disposing of what can’t be recycled.

When I spoke to state Sen. Pete Harcham about the bill last year, he was optimistic that it had been revised enough in previous sessions to make it to Gov. Kathy Hochul’s desk. Although the bill did pass in the Senate, 37-24 (Sen. Rob Rolison, whose district includes the Highlands, voted no), it got lost in the chaotic shuffle of the session’s final days when Hochul announced a last-minute pause on congestion pricing.

But momentum appears to be growing. New Jersey has announced its own version of the bill. If both New Jersey and New York pass plastic-reduction legislation in 2025, it could spur national changes. According to Jeremy Cherson of Riverkeeper, the fact



Microplastics

Stock photo

that the bill has been kicking around the New York Legislature for years has given global companies like Coca-Cola and Pepsi more time to water it down through lobbying and political donations — the 50 percent reduction goal is now 30 percent. “The longer a bill is left out in the wilderness, the more carrion get to pick away at it until there’s just skin and bones,” he said.

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Puzzles

CROSSCURRENT

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

- ACROSS
1. Actress Hatcher
5. Slender
9. Venomous viper
12. — Bator
13. Director Wertmuller
14. Cutesy- —
15. Beau
17. Nova aier
18. Oodles
19. Media mogul Winfrey
21. Brother of Moses
24. Concerning
25. Large amount
26. Novelty dance at a wedding
30. Pampering, for short
31. Sri —
32. Tokyo’s historic name
33. Quarantines
35. L-Q bridge
36. Baseball legend Willie
37. Mission man
38. Arizona city
40. Pants part
42. Flamenco cheer
43. Exceed
48. — -Manuel Miranda
49. Clump of grass
50. Locks
51. Young bloke
52. Summers in Paris
53. Sciences’ partner
- DOWN
1. Vat
2. “Xanadu” band
3. Comic Romano
4. Cash received
5. Skirt feature
6. Fibs
7. Hostel
8. “Vogue” singer
9. Collar, as a suspect
10. Japanese noodles
11. Ritzy
16. Director Howard

20. Snoop
21. Sparkling Italian wine
22. Shakespeare title starter
23. Advise
24. Pen fluids
26. Cave creatures
27. French article
28. Air freshener target
29. Vatican VIP
31. Infant’s outfit
34. Napkin’s perch
35. Green tea variety
37. — de deux
38. Bridge fee
39. Director Kazan
40. Ump’s ruling
41. Tolkien creatures
44. Trench
45. Oft-pierced body part
46. Petty peeve
47. ER workers

SUDOCURRENT

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

WORDLADDER

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

BRACE

GRAPE

WORDSEARCH

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

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

Answers for Feb. 14 Puzzles

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

CHILL, CHILE, WHILE,
WHITE, WRITE, WROTE

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

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Sports

VARSITY ROUNDUP

HALDANE

By Jacob Aframian

BOYS' BASKETBALL — The Blue Devils ground out a 48-40 comeback win at Croton-Harmon on Feb. 14 to win the league title for the seventh season in a row, although this year they share it with Putnam Valley.

Haldane scored only seven points in the first quarter, but Fallou Faye kept them in the game, scoring 15 of the team's 18 first-half points. In the third quarter, Luke Bozsik attacked the basket with force and the Blue Devils trailed by three points going into the fourth.

Bozsik gave Haldane the lead, 34-33, with 7:07 left, and he and Faye scored 16 of the team's final 18 points. Faye finished with 23, a career high, and Bozsik had 17, including 14 in the second half. "Fallou won the game for us tonight," said Coach Joe Virgadamo. The game would not have been as close if Haldane had hit more free throws; the team finished 11 for 21.

The Blue Devils, who finished at 13-7 (7-1 league), are seeded No. 6 in the 10-team field for the Section I, Class B tournament. They travel to No. 3 Briarcliff (12-8) on Wednesday (Feb. 26); the Bears defeated Haldane earlier this season, 48-43. The winner advances to the semifinals on March 2 at the Westchester County Center in White Plains.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL — The Blue Devils fell to visiting Croton-Harmon on Feb. 13, 43-27. Kayla Ruggiero hit a 3-pointer with 6:49 left in the game to cut the Tigers' lead to five, but that was as close as Haldane could get.

On Feb. 15, Haldane closed out its season with a loss at home to Blind Brook, 50-31. Marisa Peters scored 10 points, Ruggiero had 8 and Miley Pena-Rider added 6. The Blue Devils (4-16) are idle until March 3, when they will travel to the Westchester County Center for the Section I, Class C tournament. Seeded No. 3 in the four-team field, Haldane will face No. 2 North Salem (4-16), who defeated the Blue Devils twice this season. The winner advances to play No. 1 Tuckahoe (13-7) or No. 4 Keio Academy (0-18) for the title on March 8.

WINTER TRACK — Haldane competed on Feb. 16 in the Section I, Class C championships at The Armory in New York City. For the boys, Milo Pearsall won the long jump



Beacon's Elijah Hughes launches a 3-pointer against the Westchester Knicks on Feb. 7 in Cleveland. He finished with 26 points.

Cleveland Charge

(19-10.75) and was second in the 55-meter dash (6.78); Owen Powers won the 1,600 meter (4:32.28); Merrick Williams was second in the high jump (5-8); James Frommer was fourth in the 600 meters (1:30.53); and Jack Illian was fourth in the 3,200 meters (10:33.30). Haldane also won the 4x200 relay (1:35.12) and was second in the 4x800 relay (8:59.54).

For the girls, Ashley Sousa was eighth in the 1,500 meters (5:46.50); Clara Schmitt was sixth in the 55-meter hurdles (10.52); and Shayla Ochoa was seventh in the long jump (13-10.75). The Blue Devils return to The Armory on Sunday (Feb. 23) for the Section I state qualifier.

170 pounds, defeated the No. 5 seed from Wallkill, 2-0, before being pinned by No. 1 P.J. Duke from Minisink Valley. Brody Timm (21-3), the fifth seed at 190 pounds, was pinned by an opponent from Washingtonville, and Connor Murphy (16-15), seeded No. 7 at 160 pounds, also did not advance.

WINTER TRACK — Beacon sent seven runners on Feb. 14 to The Armory in New York City for the North Shore Pre-National Invitational. Jayden Mihalchik placed sixth in the weight throw (51-5.75) and ninth in the pole vault (10-0), while Zachary Schetter was ninth in the long jump (20-1.5) and Caellum Tripaldi was 33rd in the mile (4:41.40). For the girls, Mikaela Sanchez placed 51st in the 400-meter dash (1:05.15), Christine Robinson was 54th in the 55-meter dash (8.10) and Bethany Rudolph took 16th in the weight throw (28-2). Beacon will return to The Armory today (Feb. 21) for the Garden State Open.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL — Beacon secured its third straight league title on Wednesday (Feb. 19) by dominating Liberty at home, 67-10. Rayana Taylor led the team with 13 points, Lila Burke had 11 and Samiha Golden scored 10, a career high. Viviana Bailey also scored her first points, finishing with four. Beacon (14-5) closed the regular season hosting Wallkill on Thursday (Feb. 20) and awaits its seeding and an opponent in the Section IX, Class A tournament, which begins March 1.

MEN'S BASKETBALL — Joseph Battle, a 2023 Beacon graduate, is a member of the undefeated Dutchess Community College team, which is ranked No. 1 in the National Junior College Athletic Association Division III. Battle, a sophomore, is averaging 6.7 points and 3.3 rebounds. The Falcons (22-0) played their final regular season game on Feb. 20 and will begin the post-season at home in Poughkeepsie on Tuesday (Feb. 25) against Suffolk County Community College (3-17). The goal is to reach the 12-team national championship that begins March 11 in Herkimer, New York.

Elijah Hughes, 26, a Beacon native who was selected in the second round of the 2020 NBA draft, is playing this season for the G-League affiliate of the Cleveland Cavaliers. The former Syracuse University star is averaging 14.1 points, 3.9 rebounds and 1.6 assists for the Charge (9-11). On Feb. 7, he scored 26 points against the Westchester Knicks, including a running shot from beyond halfcourt at the buzzer to send the game into overtime.

BEACON

By Nick Robbins

WRESTLING — Beacon sent four wrestlers to the 16-team Section IX tournament hosted by Monroe-Woodbury on Feb. 14 and 15. Jude Betancourt (33-2) punched his ticket to the state tournament by placing second at 152 pounds. Seeded No. 2, he defeated the No. 7 seed from Minisink Valley, 4-1, and the No. 3 seed from Wallkill, 14-3, before falling to No. 1 seed Anthony Tresch from Minisink Valley, 18-1. The state tournament begins Feb. 28 in Albany.

Avery Davis (17-4), seeded fourth at