

The HIGHLANDS Current



JULY 4, 2025

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Beacon To Newburgh Ferry Scuttled

Low ridership, cost drive MTA decision

By Jeff Simms

Commuter ferry service between Newburgh and Beacon will not return after being suspended since January, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority said last week.

NY Waterway has operated the Beacon-to-Newburgh ferry under contract with

the MTA since 2005, but the company in March announced that its weekday rush-hour service was discontinued indefinitely due to damage at the Beacon dock.

On June 23, Evan Zucarelli, the MTA's acting senior vice president of operations, said during a Metro-North committee meeting that the initial suspension of service was triggered by "typical river icing." However, subsequent assessments "revealed signifi-

(Continued on Page 8)



AMAZING COLORS — The monthly family science night at Desmond-Fish Library on June 24 celebrated the science of color by allowing children and their families to participate in three experiments demonstrating how people see, shape and create hues.

Photo by Ross Corsair

Reporter's Notebook

The Highlands Current Turns 15

A lot has changed since July 4, 2010

By Michael Turton

Time is a quirky thing, and our perception of it can be puzzling at times. There are moments when

it feels not long ago that I hitchhiked to Montreal as a teenager, even though the calendar confirms that 56 years have passed.

Yet when I think of something as recent as June 2010, when Gordon Stewart approached me in the Foundry Cafe in Cold Spring and asked me to join his yet-to-be-

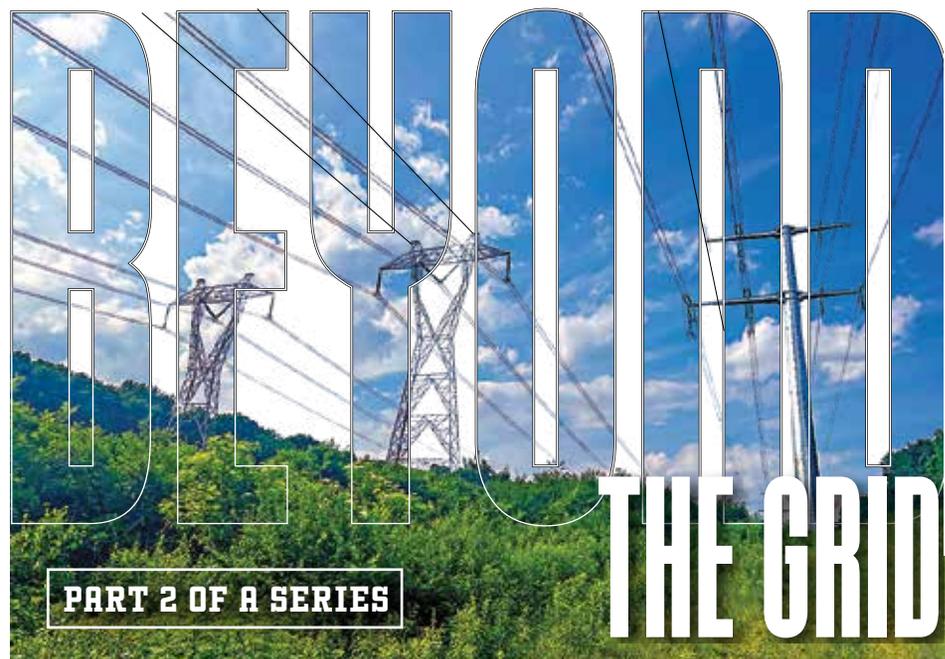


launched local news outlet as a reporter, it sometimes feels like the distant past. For the record, I was thrilled that he asked.

I had been reporting for the *Putnam County News & Recorder*, the local weekly established more than a century and a half ago. I loved the idea of contributing to something completely new, but had no idea I'd be joined by Alison Rooney, Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong, Michael Mell and Kevin Foley, colleagues at the *PCNR*.

I also had no idea that Gordon Stewart had been President Jimmy Carter's speechwriter. In our early story meetings Gordon would sometimes digress, captivating us

(Continued on Page 20)



Beyond the Grid

COST OVERLOAD

By Leonard Sparks

Their comments range from angry to anguished, some typed in all caps and punctuated with exclamation points.

An 80-year-old retiree who said his charges from Central Hudson are outpacing last year's 2.5 percent increase in his Social Security check is among the 182 people submitting comments in response to the utility's latest request to increase the rates it charges to deliver electricity to homes and businesses.

A single mother who said she lived with two children in a 700-square-foot house while earning \$1,400 a month bemoaned the surge in her monthly bill from \$100 to more than \$200. "If the rates keep going up, I will have to freeze to death together with my teenage sons," she wrote.

For the homeowners, renters and business owners who have been railing against Central Hudson's rising costs online and in public hearings before the state Public Service Commission, the frustration goes beyond the company's latest request to raise rates. Its pending three-year plan is lower than the company's original request but would still add \$18 per month during that period to the

average customer's bill.

Those customers, along with residents served by New York state's other utility companies, are paying the most in at least 25 years for electricity, according to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. Utility bills statewide averaged 25 cents per kilowatt-hour in March, compared to 19 cents in March 2015. Nationwide, energy bills are forecast to continue rising through next year, according to the federal Energy Information Administration.

"It's unbearable for customers," said Assembly Member Jonathan Jacobson, a Democrat whose district includes Beacon and other areas served by Central Hudson. "We get complaints all the time about their costs and their service."

Customers face costs on two fronts: the rate utilities bill for electricity supply, whose prices from power producers are determined through competitive bidding overseen by the New York Independent System Operator, the state's grid operator; and the separate delivery rate utilities charge

(Continued on Page 6)

5Q FIVE QUESTIONS: SCOTT ESHLEMAN

By Ben Leeds

Scott Eshleman, who lives in Beacon, is a structural bridge engineer who created drawings of the city's spans for a recent exhibit at the Beacon Historical Society.

Where did your interest in building structures begin?

Ever since I was a kid, I have always enjoyed being outdoors, climbing up things and learning how things work. I had an aptitude for math and art, and all those combined together. I was big into construction equipment in my little sandbox — building roads, tunnels and structures, and moving the earth around to make way for imaginary roadways and paths. I'd always build structures, and my mom would say, "I don't know how it's standing up, but it's standing up."

When did you decide to become an engineer?

The idea of bridges didn't really even hit me until my sophomore year of high school. I asked my mechanical drafting teacher, "What should I do? I'm good at art and I'm good at math." He said, "Well, you ought to be an engineer." I had no clue what an engineer was, so I thought, "OK, I'll try that."

Do you have a favorite project?

My favorite is a water distribution project in Honduras, even though it's not a technical bridge project because we engaged so much of the community. I worked with students from the University of Honduras; we had them involved in water testing. Once we were sure we had a pure and ample source of water, we started to design a distribution system that took us about five to six years to fully construct. But it was wonderful. That endeared us to the local village, which had never had a North American team come there before.

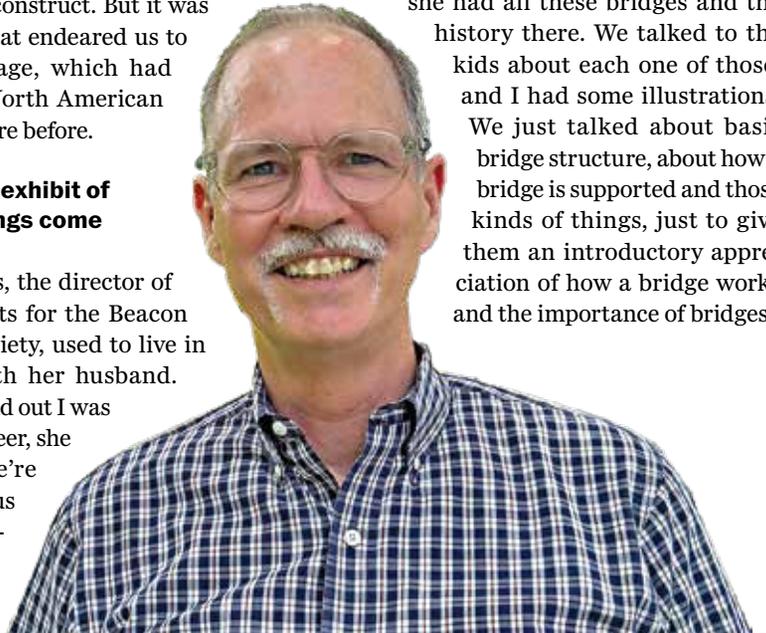
How did your exhibit of bridge drawings come about?

Diane Lapis, the director of special projects for the Beacon Historical Society, used to live in my house with her husband. When she found out I was a bridge engineer, she said, "Oh, we're doing this focus on historical Beacon bridges, you

have to be a part of it." I can't help but do that kind of stuff. I did one sketch of a bridge in this historic setting from photographs that led to a series of seven drawings. Then I had an exhibit there for the last two or three months. It was fun getting involved with that.

How about the presentation with Green Teen Beacon?

Diane and I brought them in together; she had all these bridges and the history there. We talked to the kids about each one of those, and I had some illustrations. We just talked about basic bridge structure, about how a bridge is supported and those kinds of things, just to give them an introductory appreciation of how a bridge works and the importance of bridges.



ON THE SPOT

By Michael Turton

What's the best beach you've been to?

“ Aruba: The water was so crystal-blue clear. ”



Chelsea Nauratan-Burgos, Cold Spring

“ Playa de Palma in Mallorca, Spain, when I was 11. ”



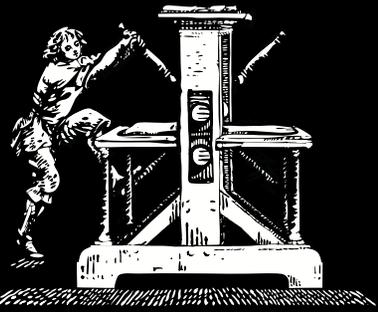
Sean Lynch, Beacon

“ We relocated from Hawaii, so I'd say Turtle Bay, Oahu. ”



Jessie Adams, Cold Spring

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NEWS BRIEFS

STAR Rebates Coming in August

State will send checks or issue credits

New York State plans to distribute \$489 million in property tax credits and rebates to 404,000 Hudson Valley residents later in the summer through its School Tax Relief (STAR) program.

While some recipients receive a tax exemption, others will receive checks or direct deposits to their bank accounts. Most homeowners eligible for a credit will receive \$350 to \$600. Most seniors who qualify for an enhanced credit will receive \$700 to \$1,500.

Checks and credits are expected in the Haldane, Garrison, Lakeland and Beacon school districts in late August to mid-September. See ny.gov/STAR to track delivery or enroll in direct deposit.

Town Board Candidate Withdraws

Had been slated as independent candidate

Ben Cheah, who had been set to appear on the November ballot for the Philipstown Town Board as an independent candidate, on June 27 asked the Putnam County Board of Elections to remove his name.

Cheah and Ned Rauch had been endorsed by the Philipstown Democratic Committee for two open seats on the board. But in a Democratic primary on June 24, Nat Prentice won one of the two lines in November and Rauch won the other.

Cheah and Rauch had filed by a May dead-

line to appear on an independent line (Philipstown Focus) in November, which would have put them on the ballot regardless of the outcome of the Democratic primary.

In a statement on Facebook, Cheah wrote that before the primary, “there was a lot of speculation that Ned and I would continue on to the November election on an independent line, regardless of the outcome. For me, that was never the plan.” He said he withdrew because it is “the healthiest choice for both the Philipstown Democratic Party and my own career” and endorsed Rauch and Prentice.

The Philipstown Democratic Committee will vote at its July meeting on whether to endorse Prentice.

Beacon School Board Makes Appointments

Superintendent’s agreement also extended

The Beacon school board made three administrative appointments during its annual organizational meeting on Tuesday (July 1). Mike Carofano was appointed as the district’s director of physical education, athletics, health and recreation, replacing John Giametta, who was named last month the executive director of human resources and operations. Carofano had been an assistant principal at Rombout Middle School for the last three years and a physical education teacher at Sargent Elementary before that.

Kate Tashman was appointed as the new assistant principal at Beacon High School.

Tashman, who begins Aug. 1, is currently an administrator at Green Chimneys School, a special education facility near Brewster.

Mike Adamcek, an 18-year employee in the Beacon district who had been the interim director of technology, was named the assistant director of technology.

The board also extended Superintendent Matt Landahl’s five-year contract through the 2029-30 school year. Landahl will earn \$231,875 in 2025-26, with his salary in subsequent years based on performance evaluations.

Finally, the board members re-elected Flora Stadler as president and Meredith Heuer as vice president.

Chemical Cleanup Sets Record

More than 222,000 pounds of waste collected

Hazardous waste collections in the lower Hudson Valley during the week of May 12 brought in 222,526 pounds of chemicals for disposal, New York State announced.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation said it collected a record amount of chemical waste from 179 participants in the annual CleanSweepNY at drop-off sites in Fishkill, Middletown, Kingston and Valhalla.

The collection included 108,671 pounds of pesticides; 63,174 pounds of paint; 199 devices containing mercury; and the equivalent of 14 miles of fluorescent tube lighting. The previous record, 219,869 pounds, was set in 2022 in New York City and Long Island.

DCC Offers Free Degrees

Program pays tuition for adults ages 25 to 55

Dutchess Community College is offering free tuition to adults ages 25 to 55 who pursue two-year degrees in any of 11 fields in which people with specialized training are in short supply.

Launched this year, SUNY Reconnect covers tuition, fees, books and supplies for adults who do not already have a college degree. See sunydutchess.edu/freeCC.

The degrees include architectural technology, aviation maintenance technician, clinical laboratory technician, computer information systems, computer science, construction technology management, electrical technology, emergency medical technician (paramedic), engineering science, mental health assistant and nursing.

Social Security Office Reopens

Poughkeepsie location had closed since January

After closing for renovations in January, the Poughkeepsie Social Security office reopened on Monday (June 30).

The entrance for the office, which will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays, is at 4 Academy St., around the corner from the former entrance on Main Street. Customers are encouraged to schedule advance appointments or use online services at ssa.gov.

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LETTERS AND COMMENTS

ICE raid

I live on North Elm, a few houses down from where the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents made the arrest ("ICE Conducts Raid in Beacon," June 27). I saw the raid happen. I believe the kid they took is one of our local bakers. We talk often. We say hello daily.

He walked to work and had a court date for a driving violation. ICE, the FBI and what appeared to be a police officer (not from the City of Beacon) staked out the house and parked at different locations along the street around 6 a.m., presumably to apprehend him on his morning commute.

By about 8 a.m., he apparently still hadn't emerged. I went outside because I heard an explosion — I don't know if they employed flash bangs to flush the person out or if a nearby transformer exploded from heat or humidity. By that time, he had exited the house and tried to run, but the road was blocked off in both directions by two unmarked SUVs and at least one sedan.

(There has been a white SUV driving around Beacon the last day or two that looks like a county police car with its markings covered by a paint roller. I couldn't say whether it was from Dutchess, but I

Clarification

In a letter published in the June 27 issue, a writer referred to "elephant-watching." We should have been made clear that this was a reference to an earlier letter in which a writer referred to the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail as an "elephant."

presume the white SUV present this morning was the same.)

I can say this much: Exploding noises and truckloads of armed federal agents in body armor surrounding a house on your street to apprehend a skinny, gregarious goofball who makes cookies is a disorienting way to kick off a Friday.

Andrew Canaday, *Beacon*

I am scared living near Beacon. During the Biden administration, a relative of mine was raped in Texas by an illegal. This is the Democrats' fault; they have blood on their hands and should be held accountable. Go ICE, and God bless President Trump.

Kelly Hadley, *Wappingers Falls*

So many "assume" — not enough speak truth. These young people may have been here from very young, grade-school age. To be held and deported back to a country they are not familiar with or have been raised in is a crime in itself. Every American should read and understand the immigration process. It's filled with fees and months and years of waiting.

Donna Adams, *Beacon*

You can't be critical of those who "assume" but in the next sentence assume that the subject "may have been here from very young, grade-school age." If he is here illegally, he committed a federal crime when he crossed the border. Those who made the effort to enter legally and assimilate despise illegals.

Ralph Pettorossi, *Fishkill*

It is not a felony to cross the border without documentation. By law, it's a misdemeanor equivalent to driving a car with an expired registration. Giving a warrant to the intended recipient is the only action required. Showing up as a stakeout with multiple vehicles, groups of people in body armor and covered faces, firearms, handcuffs and zip-ties to kidnap people is a flagrant misuse of public resources. It's grossly disproportionate to the reality of crime perpetrated by undocumented immigrants.

These are Gestapo tactics, only without the documentation that sealed the fate of those tried at Nuremberg. The only targets of these raids are people with brown skin. Despite all efforts, I can't seem to find any reports of ICE raids in Brighton Beach or Monsey.

Lynn Miller, *Cold Spring*

The mayor says that Beacon avoids "any policies which engender fear among law-abiding families." Many families may fear people among us who daily violate federal law by their presence. Almost all of them are criminals, as well, having crossed the U.S. border illegally. (And that's not even to touch on the illegal aliens who have committed additional crimes, here and elsewhere.)

Our nation maintains and enforces immigration laws to protect and respect law-abiding people and manage and document the flow of immigrants. A certain administration recently chose treason and aided and abetted millions of criminals to enter illegally. Sadly, too many citizens tolerated this. Fellow citizens voted out the slow-motion insurrectionists last year from D.C.; today, ICE and many other government agencies clean up the expensive mess left behind.

Gregg Zuman, *Beacon*



(Continued on Page 5)

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 4)

People question the arrests by ICE. Keep in mind you may view some of their crimes as minor but those may only be the crimes you're aware of. What about the crimes they committed that we don't know about? I have no problem with people coming to our great country as long as I know who they are.

Veronia Rivera, *Cold Spring*

Town Board

Congratulations to all the Democratic candidates on a thoughtful and hard-fought campaign, and to Nat Prentice and Ned Rauch on their primary win ("Prentice, Rauch Win Democratic Lines for Town Board," June 27). Our town is fortunate to have passionate people willing to step up and serve.

The community deserved to have an opportunity to see all four candidates at one forum to better understand our similarities and differences, and I wish we could have made that happen. I'm proud that the non-endorsed candidates combined for the majority of the overall votes and gave the town a choice in this election.

While the outcome wasn't what we hoped for, our campaign was rooted in integrity, ideas and a deep commitment to Philipstown's future. Meeting neighbors across the town and hearing the wide scope of your hopes and concerns reminded me why this work matters so much. Thank you to everyone who supported me, shared their stories and believed in the possibilities ahead. I look forward to continuing my volunteerism and public service to our community.

John Maasik, *Philipstown*

This was Philipstown's first Democratic primary in memory and the runaway winner was Nat Prentice, a candidate not endorsed by the Philipstown Democratic Committee. On a much-smaller scale than the New York City mayoral election, Prentice "beat the machine;" he and the other "outsider" candidate, John Maasik, together won 53 percent of votes cast.

Margery Bobb, *Philipstown*

Nat Prentice would have had the endorsement from the Philipstown Democratic Committee if [Putnam County Legislator] Nancy Montgomery or [Town Board Member] Judy Farrell, two of his supporters after the fact, voted to endorse him.

Grace Kennedy, *Philipstown*

Kennedy is a co-chair of the Philipstown Democratic Committee.

The Philipstown Democrats worked hard and, with Ned and Ben [Cheah], ran a positive and professional campaign that reflects the best of Philipstown.

Nat Prentice, *Philipstown*

When the co-chair of the local Democratic Party starts slinging mud at her own party's elected officials, the party is in a sorry place. I hope the Philipstown Democrats co-chairs follow those who have unified around the candidates the voters

selected in this election and past elections. Otherwise, they must step down.

Aaron Freimark, *Cold Spring*

Little dam

Leave the little dam alone ("Hoving Home Seeks Dam Removal," June 20). Everyone swam there. That's what happens when people move here and destroy the whole lower Philipstown area. So sad.

Timothy Hynes, *Cold Spring*

Food truck

I am not in favor of allowing a food truck near Dockside ("Cold Spring May Regulate Food Trucks," June 27). It would only add to congestion, the overflowing garbage pails and noise. Next there will be picnic tables on the promenade. If the Village Board is serious about quality of life and congestion, it will keep the trucks out of the lower village.

Derek Graham, *Cold Spring*

Several regulations in Chapter 71 of the Village Code address outdoor peddling and vending, such as food trucks and other seasonal businesses. It states: "The following locations are not available for the activities licensed under this chapter: West Street, both sides, entire street." It also states that peddlers cannot sell "within a radius of 200 feet of any public market or store engaged in the business of selling the same or similar goods" or "upon the grounds or in and about the facilities of any

public recreation center or park."

There is no need for a public hearing unless the Village Board wants to go through the process of amending code to address one licensing request and change a provision that's been on the books for 30 years.

Lynn Miller, *Cold Spring*

I mentioned to the mayor, when we began discussing this, that there is code that covers food trucks, citing the permits the village discussed and issued when Lynn Miller was a member of the Village Board. Thank you for the citations; perhaps we can use this instead of rewriting it every time we receive a rare and unusual request.

Eliza Starbuck, *Cold Spring*

Starbuck is a member of the Village Board.

Animal art

I love the gorgeous and engagingly subtle ceramic animals that Bob Barry makes ("Wild Lines," June 20). They're like meditation pieces.

Jarret Yoshida, *New York City*

Vegan pizza

I'm not vegan but honestly haven't found a tastier pizza than Trixie's anywhere close to Beacon ("Pizza Around Back," June 27). They're usually hard to get, but the dedicated space will hopefully make it easier. Good luck to Trixie's!

Richard Luther, *Beacon*

More Graduates

Here are Philipstown residents who graduated with Valedictorian Tova Jean-Louis from Walter Panas High School but were not included in the June 20 issue.

Alexander Barter
Angela Del Pozzo
Francisco Gomes
Alyssa Granieri
Eva Hatfield
Emily Healy
Brooke McLoughlin
Hayden Murray
Joshua Nachmann
Kimberly Ramnauth
Emmanuel Rivera
Bailey Rodriguez
Scarlett Spagna
Joseph Spina
Joshua Wrubel
Ania Zych

Photos of Beacon High School's 2025 graduates also have been posted at highlandscurrent.org.

Electricity

Count everything you have plugged in at your home ("Beyond the Grid: Peak Power," June 27). You will be amazed.

Robert McCarroll, *via Facebook*



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with Reporter
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Extreme Weather Powers Demand

Cooling, heating rises as aid disappears

The spikes in energy bills come as Americans feel the increasing effects of climate change, including more frequent “heat dome” events like the Highlands experienced last week when temperatures reached into the high 90s.

Those events spur even greater electricity usage as residents crank up air conditioners and fans to sustain themselves.

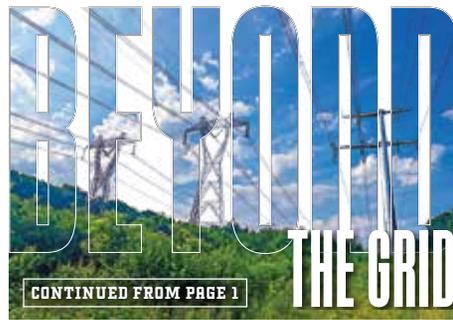
Don’t expect a trade-off from warmer winters, however. Climate change is also manipulating the polar jet stream, pulling colder air from Canada south in the winter. This past winter, those polar-vortex events allowed freezing temperatures to blanket the Highlands, adding higher heating bills to the higher cooling costs residents faced during the summer.

These bills aren’t just a source of frustration and anxiety anymore. They’re literally a matter of life and death. Between 1999 and 2023, 21,518 deaths recorded in the U.S. were attributed to heat as the underlying or a contributing factor, according to a study published in Aug. 2024 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

The total number of deaths nationwide doubled from 1,069 in 1999 to 2,325 in 2023, according to the study. In New York state, extreme heat is the leading cause of weather-related deaths, said the state Department of Environmental Conservation in a report published in June 2024.

Shortly after taking office, the Trump administration fired the entire federal staff responsible for the Low Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which helps more than 6 million families avoid utility shut-offs. A representative from New York’s Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance said that the state had already received its LIHEAP funding for the year, but next year is in doubt.

Part of this year’s funding is going toward the state’s Cooling Assistance Program, which will help approximately 18,000 households purchase either an air conditioner or a fan. The application window for the program is closed, but New Yorkers who suffer from asthma may still be eligible. See <https://dub.sh/cooling-help> for more information.



to fund operations and maintenance, and reward shareholders.

Although supply prices are volatile, spending to produce electricity fell 24 percent from 2003 to 2023, mainly due to lower fuel costs, according to the EIA. Further relief could come from New York State’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, which sets energy goals of 70 percent renewables by 2030 and 100 percent by 2040. The costs for solar and wind power have plummeted, making them competitive with power produced by natural gas and other fossil fuels.

Less certain is any relief from the fixed rate utilities charge for delivering electricity. Those rates are approved by the state Public Service Commission (PSC), which says its mandate is not solely protecting customers, but also ensuring utilities have enough revenue to keep their systems operating.

Spending on transmission systems more than tripled nationally between 2003 and 2023, according to the EIA. Central Hudson’s delivery rate for residential customers has more than doubled since 2013 — from 5 cents per kilowatt-hour to nearly 13 cents — since 2013. Customers now routinely pay more for electricity delivery than for supply.

“We need to support the ratepayer because this has been very challenging for them,” said state Sen. Rob Rolison, a Republican whose district includes Beacon and Philipstown. “No one’s told me that rates are not going to continue to increase.”

A faulty prediction

Falling costs were predicted in the late-1990s when New York State, under then-Gov. George Pataki, a Garrison resident, began deregulating the state’s utilities, who not only owned the transmission and distribution lines that carried electricity to homes and businesses, but also the facilities that generated power.

Breaking up those monopolies fell to the PSC. Established in June 1907 to replace New York’s Railroad Commission and its Commission on Gas and Electricity with a single regulator, the seven-member commission’s primary mission is “to ensure affordable, safe, secure and reliable” service by utility companies “at just and reasonable rates” for residents and businesses, while protecting the environment.

Undergirding its deregulation effort was the idea that open competition from independent power companies would beget lower prices for customers. A new system emerged, with utilities having to sell their power plants, NYISO procuring energy for them at “spot market” prices and custom-

ers able to choose to get supply from state-approved “energy service companies” (ESCOs), instead of their utility.

As part of the restructuring, Central Hudson divested from two power plants in the Town of Newburgh: the 500-megawatt Danskammer, which it owned outright, and the 1,200-megawatt Roseton power plant, which it co-owned with Con Edison and the Niagara Mohawk Power Corp.

Within the first few years of the new system, delivery costs were falling but supply rates were increasing, according to a 2002 report from the Public Utility Law Project. Founded in 1981, PULP is a consumer-advocacy organization that represents ratepayers when the PSC reviews requests from utilities to raise prices.

“At best, customer rates have been frozen at what were relatively high levels even during a period of relatively low fuel costs,” PULP said in its report. “At worst, rates increased dramatically.”

Independent and dependent

Today, New York has “the most energy-efficient state economy in the nation” and consumes less energy per capita than all states but Rhode Island, according to the Energy Information Administration. But the state also imports 85 percent of the energy it needs, according to the EIA. As of March, the average cost of residential electricity, 25 cents per kilowatt-hour, stood as the eighth-highest among states and well above the national average of 17 cents.

Demand is expected to increase as part of the state’s transition away from fossil fuels. Beginning next year, electric appliances and heating systems will be required in new residential buildings up to seven stories, and for new large commercial structures. The mandate expands to all new buildings in 2029.

New York is also encouraging people to replace older gas-powered appliances and heating systems with electric ones, and the expansion of personal and public chargers for electric vehicles will contribute to heightened demand for electricity.

Climate change is also fueling hotter days and a greater use of air conditioning. On both June 24 and 25, Gov. Kathy Hochul urged residents downstate and in New York City to conserve energy during a heat wave because the grid approached peak capacity.

It is a grid still dependent on volatile fossil fuel prices. Electricity supplied through Central Hudson averaged 8.3 cents per kilowatt-hour each month in 2024 compared to 5.1 cents per kilowatt-hour in 2020, but had fallen from 2022, when the utility’s prices averaged 11.2 cents. Through June 11, the price has averaged 9.8 cents.

Delivery rates soar

While supply costs ebb and flow, the charges for delivery ascend. Those costs include a flat-rate service charge (\$21.50 per month for Central Hudson customers), a state-mandated “system benefits charge” to fund assistance for low-income users,



A Central Hudson crew works on a power line on Main Street in Cold Spring.

Photo by L. Sparks

Central Hudson Monthly Residential Electric Bills

	Delivery	Supply	Surcharges	Total
2015	\$56.06	\$46.02	\$5.98	\$108.06
2016	\$59.03	\$38.34	\$5.69	\$103.06
2017	\$59.83	\$37.16	\$6.13	\$103.12
2018	\$67.95	\$42.60	\$4.90	\$115.45
2019	\$67.46	\$32.90	\$3.69	\$104.05
2020	\$73.55	\$31.19	\$3.88	\$108.62
2021	\$72.95	\$41.12	\$3.99	\$118.06
2022	\$77.24	\$70.88	\$3.90	\$152.02
2023	\$85.73	\$58.46	\$3.94	\$148.13
2024	\$98.50	\$49.07	\$5.31	\$152.88

Source: Central Hudson average based on 600 kilowatt-hour usage

energy-efficiency programs and other initiatives, along with other surcharges.

But most of the cost for delivering electricity comes from the rate Central Hudson and other utilities charge for each kilowatt-hour of usage. Between 2015 and 2024, a Central Hudson customer using 600 kilowatt-hours of energy monthly has seen their cost for delivery rise from \$56 to \$99.

The PSC and its Department of Public Service staff have staked out a middle position in negotiations over rate requests. Its members routinely approve a lower rate hike than initially requested by the utilities, but the result still leaves customers paying more.

Central Hudson, in its current proposal, initially requested a one-year rate increase for electricity that would yield \$47.2 million in new revenue. Under a compromise three-year proposal reached with the Department of Public Service (the PSC’s staff arm) and other parties, the company would raise \$95.8 million in additional electricity revenues from July 1 to June 30, 2028. The proposal also raises rates for the 90,000 customers who receive gas service from Central Hudson.

(Continued on Page 7)

(Continued from Page 6)

James Denn, a spokesman for the PSC, said the compromise is a “balanced proposed settlement that serves the public’s interests by limiting Central Hudson’s expenses to those necessary for providing safe and reliable service.”

More than half the revenue (55 percent) from the delivery hikes will fund replacements for “aging and obsolete” infrastructure and 48 percent of the gas revenue will be used “to remove certain pipes that are more prone to leaks, gas distribution improvements and transmission gas line maintenance,” said Denn.

“The joint proposal will now be issued for public comment,” he said. “The PSC will consider the joint proposal, along with the comments, when it comes time for a decision.”

Joe Jenkins, Central Hudson’s director of media relations, said that replacing aging infrastructure and upgrading the company’s distribution system in response to the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act are the main drivers of the rate increases. To accommodate the new energy generated by renewable sources such as solar and wind, the utility is rebuilding transmission lines, upgrading substations and replacing circuitry,” he said.

In June 2024, Central Hudson began soliciting bids for energy storage projects totaling at least 10 megawatts combined, with the preferred location at its substation in Saugerties. It is also using funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law signed by former President Joe Biden to upgrade its Dashville Hydroelectric facility in Ulster County. The company owns two other hydroelectric facilities in Ulster: High Falls and Sturgeon Pool.

Central Hudson is also finishing the replacement of 23.6 miles of lines between Kingston in Ulster County and North Catskill in Greene County. Budgeted at \$34 million, the project will boost the capacity of the lines from 69,000 volts to 115,000.

Along with rebuilding transmission lines, the company plans to upgrade substations and replace circuitry as it focuses on projects that will “maintain reliability and unlock additional capacity on our system,” said Jenkins. The cost, about \$37 million per year, will allow Central Hudson to distribute an additional 500 megawatts of electricity, he said.

“It will also provide some of the headroom needed to help us transition building heating and transportation away from their traditional fossil fuels and onto the electric grid,” said Jenkins.

Growing arrears

But it comes at a cost. As rates have increased, so have the number of people with arrears greater than 60 days. More than 55,000 of Central Hudson’s residential customers (20 percent) had \$134 million in charges older than two months in December 2024, a significant increase from the 21,493 (8 percent of customers) owing \$8.7 million reported in December 2019, according to state Department of Public Service data.

At the same time, more than twice as many

Your Bill Explained

Electric Delivery Charges:

Central Hudson’s costs for delivering electricity to homes and businesses, operating and maintaining power lines and its infrastructure, and for customer services.

a. Basic Service Charge:

Maintenance of electric lines, meter reading and other costs.

b. Delivery Service Charge:

The cost to deliver electricity to customers, whether purchased from Central Hudson or another supplier.

c. Merchant Function Charge (MFC):

The cost incurred when independent marketers bill through Central Hudson’s system. Customers receiving a separate bill avoid this charge.

d. Transition Adjustment:

Recovers revenues lost when customers purchase energy from independent suppliers.

e. System Benefits Charge (SBC):

State-mandated charge to fund energy-efficiency programs, assistance for low-income customers, energy research and development and other initiatives.

f. Revenue Decoupling Mechanism (RDM):

Intended to minimize the impact to Central Hudson resulting from reduced energy consumption as efficiency programs are implemented.

g. Total Delivery Charges: The total cost to deliver electricity.

Electricity Supply Charges:

Central Hudson’s costs for electricity purchased on behalf of its customers on the wholesale market. Central Hudson does not mark up supply charges.

1. Miscellaneous Charges:

Credits and charges related to transactions with the state’s grid operator, or for other programs.

2. Market Price:

The average wholesale price of all energy needed to supply customers.

3. Market Price Adjustment:

An adjustment, up or down, of the previous month’s market price to reflect differences caused by the timing of billing and collection.

customers were repaying Central Hudson in installments at the end of last year and fewer were receiving termination notices.

When the pandemic shutdown began in March 2020, Central Hudson stopped suspending service and assessing late fees, keeping the policy in place until the fall of 2024, said Jenkins. The amount of uncollected payments grew during the pause, he said, so the company “is actively working with customers to help them bring their accounts into good standing” through financial-assis-

Electric Service Charges 282 kWh at a cost of \$63.40

Average Daily Cost for Electric \$2.1862

Amount of Electricity Used

Aug 07, 2019	Present Reading (actual)	12870
Jul 09, 2019	Previous Reading (estimated)	12588

Electricity Used (kWh) 282

Cost for Electricity Used (for 1.0 months)

ENERGY DELIVERY CHARGES:

a — Basic Service Charge	1.0 Mos @	20.00	20.00
Delivery Svc Chg — b	282 kWh @	0.08349	23.54
c — MFC Admin Chg	282 kWh @	0.00183	0.52
Transition Adj — d	282 kWh @	0.00018	0.05
Bill Credit	282 kWh @	-0.00307	-0.87
e — SBC/RPS Chgs	282 kWh @	0.00599	1.69
Misc. Charges — 1	282 kWh @	0.00379	1.07
RDM Chg — f	282 kWh @	-0.00294	-0.83
g — Total Delivery Chrgs			45.17

ENERGY SUPPLY CHARGES:

(You may choose another supplier for this part of your service)

MFC Supply Chg	282 kWh @	0.00330	0.93
Market Price — 2	282 kWh @	0.05113	14.42
3 — Market Price Adj	282 kWh @	0.00449	1.27
Total Supply Chrgs			16.62
* — NYS & Local Taxes			1.61

TOTAL ELECTRICITY COST \$63.40

— For this billing period, the average cost of energy we purchased for you was \$0.05892 per kWh (excluding taxes). You can use this number to compare our price to other suppliers’ prices.

tance and repayment programs, he said.

New York’s utilities are also being pushed to expand their outreach to low-income customers who may be eligible for their energy affordability programs, which provides credits that lower monthly bills to people receiving benefits through a number of programs, such as Home Energy Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (aka food stamps), Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income.

The Public Utility Law Project estimates that as many as 1.1 million people are eligible for the discount but not enrolled. Central Hudson had 13,598 customers enrolled in its EAP program as of April 30, and is promising as part of its pending rate hike to increase enrollment to 15,500.

Relief from Renewables

Some ratepayers may eventually see relief from the CLCPA. Primarily undertaken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, the shift toward solar and wind power could lead to lower supply prices.

Driven by such factors as economies of scale, global supply chains and advances in technology, the average cost of solar power dropped by over 90 percent between 2010 and 2023, and for onshore and offshore wind by 73 percent and 65 percent, respectively, said Gang He, an energy policy expert from CUNY Baruch College.

Building and maintaining renewable systems has become so much cheaper that the costs for power plants relying on natural gas and other fossil fuels is projected to be higher, according to a 2023 report from the Energy

Information Administration that studied projects expected to come online by 2028.

“Solar is the lowest cost electricity source in the world,” said Noah Ginsburg, executive director of the New York Solar Energy Industries Association.

Although solar power derived from utility-scale facilities — those capable of generating more than 5 megawatts — have the lowest-cost, they require large pieces of land. Most of the state’s solar capacity, 93 percent, is through “distributed” projects — private rooftop systems and commercial-scale solar farms whose power can be purchased by homeowners and businesses.

On April 17, Central Hudson said nearly 17,400 solar systems with a capacity of 334 megawatts were connected to its grid and powering more than 27,000 homes.

Those and other projects have helped New York exceed its goal for total solar capacity a year ahead of schedule, and the state is “making rapid progress toward our expanded goal of 10 gigawatts by 2030,” said Ginsburg.

Headwinds threaten those gains, however, said Gang He. The drop in costs for installing solar and wind projects has “recently slowed, or even reversed in some cases” due to rising material and labor costs, trade restrictions and tariffs, he said. Despite the increases, renewables “remain the cheapest source of new electricity generation” in many areas of the U.S., he said.

Legislative relief

Hochul and state lawmakers are pursuing other remedies.

(Continued on Page 8)

BEYOND THE GRID (Continued from Page 7)

In September 2024, the governor signed legislation requiring that the PSC include in public information about rate increases an explanation of why the utility is requesting higher prices and a summary of how the new revenue will be spent. In February, she called on the PSC to reject Con Edison's latest request to increase rates and directed the Department of Public Service to audit utility salaries and compensation, which it began doing in February.

An audit of Central Hudson prompted by the widespread bill problems that began when it switched to a new customer-information system concluded that the company's use of incentive pay skewed toward increasing financial performance rather than improving performance to benefit customers.

At Hochul's direction, the Department of Public Service "is scrutinizing all rate cases to prioritize affordability," said Denn.

Critics of the rate increases also accuse the utilities of inflating their rate requests with higher-than-needed returns on equity. A February report from the nonprofit RMI, which studies energy markets, estimated that 50 percent of an average ratepayer's bill covers operating costs and 16.7 percent represents profits. Central Hudson's current proposal, which the PSC has yet to vote on, includes a 9.5 percent return on equity.

"I would like to see a change in how a reasonable rate of return is calculated," said Jacobson, who introduced in April legislation that would cap profits for utility companies at 4 percent.

Legislators passed this spring a bill he introduced in the Assembly mandating that capital expenses embedded in proposed rate increases "be described by the utility, include the purpose, cost and benefits to the rate-payers" and be posted to the PSC's website. Michelle Hinchey shepherded passage in the Senate, and the bill received support from Rolison and Dana Levenberg, whose Assembly district includes Philipstown.

The goal of the legislation, which still needs to be signed by Hochul, is to be able to scrutinize whether those capital expenses are "just and reasonable and beneficial to ratepayers," said Jacobson.

"They just can't say, 'We need \$10 million for capital expenditures,'" said Jacobson. "We want them to put in exactly what each project is."

Rolison is pushing legislation mandating that the PSC hold public hearings on proposed rate increases at least 90 days before voting, and allow people attending to ask questions of the commission and the utility. While the PSC generally holds public hearings on rate proposals, state law only says the commission "shall have the power" to hold those hearings.

"It takes so much time for the PSC to do what they need to do," said Rolison. "For the ratepayer, both business and residential, this is a burden — not knowing when they're going to go up, how they're going to go up."

Some people are not waiting, instead pursuing conservation. Next week, we examine passive houses.

Ferry Service (from Page 1)

cant damage" to the floating ferry dock the MTA attaches to Beacon's pier, "requiring long-term solutions," he said.

After reviewing ridership, which had been "steadily declining" prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the \$2.1 million annual cost of the service, the ferry will not return, Zucarelli said. An average of 62 riders used the ferry each day in 2024, down from "approaching 250" per day at its peak in 2008, said Andrew Buder, Metro-North's director of government and community relations. Ridership usually doubles over the summer, but last fall did not rebound to match its numbers from a year earlier, Buder said.

"Even with that, we don't see a drop in ridership on the [Metro-North] train correlating to the drop in ridership on the ferry," he said. "If those people are still using the train, they're just choosing to get there a different way."

Bus service costing \$1.75 per ride will continue ferrying commuters between the two cities on weekday mornings and afternoons for the rest of the year, after which it will become free. The MTA has been working with New York State to expand the frequency and coverage area of the service, Zucarelli said. When pressed by an MTA board member, he said the agency would consider implementing free bus service before 2026.

Another factor in the decision, Zucarelli said, is that Beacon is "actively developing plans to activate its dock area for tourism," while in Newburgh, where the MTA had been using a temporary dock, city officials are preparing for similar growth in 2027 with the opening of the \$14.3 million Newburgh Landing Pier.

The MTA's license to attach its ferry dock in Beacon expired June 30, and the agency notified the city that it did not intend to renew the agreement, City Administrator Chris White said.

Neal Zuckerman, a Philipstown resident who represents Putnam County on the MTA board, pushed back against the plans during the June 23 meeting. "It is counterintuitive to me that, at the same time you've mentioned that both Newburgh and Beacon are enhancing their waterfront, that we are finding that use of the waterfront is not valuable," he said.



Ferry service between Beacon and Newburgh has been shut down since January due to damage to the MTA's floating dock.

Photo by J. Simms

Zuckerman said that what's happening on the Newburgh waterfront is "shockingly nice," while Beacon is a "TOD [transit-oriented development] dream, because it was once a moribund, empty area." Then, when Dia Beacon arrived in 2003, "it created an extraordinary resurgence" in a community that, because of the MTA, was "an easy one to get to."

Whether ferry service returns or not, restricted access to the dock has hindered the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, which

would typically dock in Beacon for at least six weeks out of its April-to-November sailing season.

Clearwater has had to reschedule school sails aboard the sloop to depart from either Cold Spring or Poughkeepsie, while some fee-based sails for private groups and pay-what-you-can community sails, which draw about 45 people per outing, have been canceled, said David Toman, the organization's executive director.

"Our core — the idea of getting people out on the sloop, out on the water — provides a unique impact that you can't get otherwise," he said. "It is critically important to be in Beacon and be able to serve the community from that access point."

Steve Chanks, an art director who lives in Newburgh, often works remotely but goes into his SoHo office three or four times a month. Out of 40 neighbors who met this week to discuss the ferry closure, he said about a dozen rely on the service to get to Beacon and commute to New York City regularly.

"It's unfair to have that access cut off," he said, especially as the MTA implements congestion pricing in hopes of reducing traffic coming into New York City. While the agency has made bus service available, the 10-minute ferry "offers the residents of Newburgh and neighboring areas a fast, reliable and scenic commute to the Beacon Metro-North station that doesn't add to or suffer from traffic patterns," he said. "I would think they would want to support this."

NOTICE

The Philipstown Planning Board will hold their regular monthly meeting on **Thursday, July 17th, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.** at the **Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY.**

If you are unable to join in person but would like to watch, the meeting will be livestreaming on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com), search for Philipstown Planning Board July 2025.

NOTICE

PHILIPSTOWN ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Public Hearing - July 14th, 2025

The Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals for the Town of Philipstown, New York will hold a public hearing on Monday, July 14th, 2025 starting at 7:30 p.m. to hear the following appeal. The meeting will be held in person at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY.

John Halebian, 47 Mill Rd., Cold Spring, NY 10516, TM#16.12-1-12

Applicant is seeking a variance to build a 24' x 30' Garage providing a 25' front yard setback where 50' is required.

At said hearing all persons will have the right to be heard. Copies of the application, plat map, and other related materials may be seen in the Office of the Building Department, 2 Cedar Street, Cold Spring, New York or by visiting the following link on the Town of Philipstown website.

<https://sites.google.com/philipstown.com/townofphilipstown/june>

Dated June 9th, 2025

Robert Dee, Chair of the Town of Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals

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Lawler Holds Final Town Hall

Faces continued backlash from voters

By Ben Leeds

Rep. Mike Lawler hosted his fourth and final town hall on June 28 at John Jay High School in Hopewell Junction, capping off a series of rowdy sessions filled with voters critical of President Trump and congressional Republicans.

Lawler, a Republican whose 17th Congressional District includes Philipstown, fielded questions on a variety of subjects during the 1 ½-hour forum, including about the Big Beautiful Bill Act. The pending legislation would extend tax cuts approved by Trump in 2017 while increasing the national debt and costing millions of people to lose health care, food assistance and other benefits.

He also faced questions about raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement on homes and workplaces, the bombing of Iranian nuclear sites and questions regarding his support for President Trump and willingness to confront the president.

"It's important to actually understand the totality of what's in the bill," said

Lawler, who voted for the Big Beautiful Bill (BBB) when it narrowly passed the House by a 215-214 vote on May 22. Those 12 words were the only ones he managed to get out before the audience cut him off with groans of disappointment.

Lawler highlighted increases to border security and military funding, but most of the crowd voiced displeasure when he brought up Medicaid changes. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that Medicaid provisions in the version of the BBB passed by the House would increase by 7.8 million the number of people without health insurance.

About 4.8 million people would lose coverage because of new work requirements for childless adults between the ages of 19 and 64; 1.4 million would be undocumented immigrants losing Medicaid benefits in New York and other states; and 2.2 million would become uninsured because of other provisions, including one requiring Medicaid recipients to recertify their eligibility every six months instead of once a year, according to the CBO.

Lawler claimed eligibility verification will only affect people who are ineligible for the program, but health care advocates



caption

predict the twice-yearly requirement will mostly harm people who are eligible but fail to recertify in time. When he began talking about citizenship verification, the audience once again interjected, prompting Lawler to ask: "How many of you believe illegal immigrants should collect Medicaid?"

The audience then became the loudest it would be all night, with many shouting "no immigrant is illegal" and "stop treating people like aliens" at Lawler as he continued to speak about the BBB's effect on Medicaid. By the time the moderator, East Fishkill

Supervisor Nicholas D'Alessandro, moved to the next question, some people had exited.

At each of his town halls — including the first three in West Nyack, Somers and Mahopac — Lawler faced the kind of backlash to Trump administration policies that earlier this year spurred Republican leaders to urge its elected officials to avoid public forums.

"I'm happy to do these," said Lawler as the town hall came to a close. "This is part of the process. And ultimately, we will have another election, and you'll all be able to have your voice heard in the process."

Residents Brace for Health Cuts

Millions expected to lose coverage

By Leonard Sparks

In addition to love, health insurance pushed Catherine Lisotta and her husband to marry.

The Garrison resident's job in the magazine industry offered coverage after he lost his job. When Lisotta got laid off, the couple turned to New York's health exchange, an insurance marketplace where people without access to coverage from employers, and incomes too high for public insurance, can enroll in a private plan using tax credits that lower premium costs.

She never considered going without health coverage. "It would worry me too much," said Lisotta, whose insurance is covering a recent hip replacement that would have cost her over \$20,000. "It would be like tempting God."

Lisotta and other people using exchanges in New York and other states are now facing proposed changes to health care that are estimated to raise the number of uninsured people by 12 million. Those proposals, embedded in U.S. House and Senate versions of the Big Beautiful Bill, will cost 7.8 million people coverage through Medicaid, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

As of Wednesday (July 2), the House was voting on changes made by the Senate as both chambers tried to meet President Trump's deadline of today (July 4) for signing the legislation.

New York State predicts that 1.5 million of its Medicaid recipients will be affected, including 38,400 in the 18th Congressional

District that includes Beacon and 31,200 in the 17th District that includes Philipstown. Rep. Mike Lawler, a Republican who represents the 17th District, voted for the House version of the legislation while Rep. Pat Ryan, a Democrat representing the 18th District, voted against the measure.

Its provisions would affect the health care exchanges in New York and other states which were established when President Barack Obama signed the Affordable Care Act in 2010. The House version would shrink the open enrollment period by a month and both its version and the Senate's would require more information from enrollees when verifying eligibility.

There is also concern that Congress will not extend the more-robust tax credits, and expanded eligibility, approved under the administration of President Joe Biden and expiring at the end of the year. Letting them expire would cost 4.2 million people insurance, according to the CBO. Premiums could more than double in both Lawler and Ryan's districts without the extension, according to KFF, a health policy organization.

Christine Ortiz, who owns Oh! Designs Interiors in Cold Spring, is among the insured who has been receiving text messages from the state warning that "federal rules may change your health insurance." She not only uses the exchange, but so do her two children. One of them is also self-employed.

"The only reason that we can be self-employed is because of health care," she said. "I have a studio in the village, trying to build my business, and having to not have to worry about health insurance has



Catherine Lisotta of Garrison is insured through the state's health marketplace.

Photo by L. Sparks

been such a blessing."

Sun River Health, whose 40 locations include one in Beacon, estimates that 20,000 of its patients will lose Medicaid, said Ernest Klepeis, its chief of government affairs and advocacy.

As the BBB has worked its way through Congress, Klepeis has been urging senators and representatives to reject the Medicaid cuts, which include stronger work requirements for childless adults between 19 and 64, and a new requirement that recipients recertify their eligibility every six months instead of yearly.

While Republicans say that the changes will only impact people who refuse to work, advocates say that most of the people who

lost coverage from more stringent work requirements imposed in Alabama and Georgia were actually eligible for Medicaid.

"Specifically for work requirements or recertification requirements, you are putting up red tape and barriers for patients who are otherwise eligible to access these services," said Klepeis.

One of Sun River's patients is Perry Iannaconi Jr., a Beacon resident diagnosed with HIV in 1983. Iannaconi is sure he would be dead without Medicaid coverage.

"It's helped me survive all these years," he said. "It's given me the opportunity to have interactions with my doctor and my therapist, and it has given me access to prescription drugs and dental care."

The health exchanges have also been a lifeline, especially for local business owners, consultants and freelancers. KFF estimated last year that the extra tax credits cut monthly premiums through state health exchanges by 44 percent.

Alka Bhatt, a Beacon resident, started a freelance healthcare consulting business four years ago and had previously purchased coverage through the exchange in West Virginia before moving to New York state.

"I grew up with a childhood chronic illness, so I like to have health insurance I can actually use," she said. "It's not just access to providers, but also affordability, as much as you can manage that in today's day and age."

In addition to the expiration of the beefier tax credits, Bhatt is concerned about the proposed changes to the open enrollment period and expanded documentation requirements.

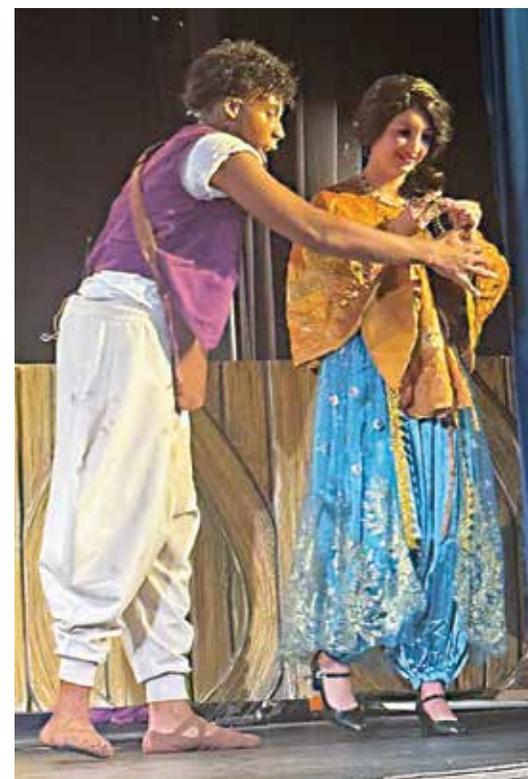
"I worry that those hurdles are going to become inhibitors to even getting the insurance," she said.

AROUND TOWN



◀ **FIRST GRADUATION** – Hudson Hills Academy in Beacon held kindergarten graduation on June 20.

Photo provided



▶ **MAGIC ACT** – Students from Hudson Hills Academy in Beacon performed *Aladdin Jr.* on June 18 at The Storm King School.

Photo provided



◀ **FOOLING AROUND** – Pocket Moxie, a troupe with Gwen Grastorf, Mark Jaster, Sabrina Mandell, Sarah Olmstead Thomas and Alex Vernon, paid homage on June 21 at the Howland Cultural Center in Beacon to vaudeville. The genre flourished from about 1890 until 1930, when it succumbed to radio and film.

Photo by Ross Corsair



◀ **LOCAL CONNECTION** – Eleanor Mercurio of Garrison, whom we profiled in the June 20 issue, is shown on June 27 with Garrison Smith, one of her rowing coaches in Tennessee. As it happens, Smith is a descendant through his mother of Harry Garrison, who in 1821 founded the Garrison and West Point Ferry Co.

Photo by Jennifer Mercurio

LIGENZA MOORE GALLERY & SCULPTURE GARDENS

DESTINATION EARTH
May 24 — July 27

THIS WEEKEND

ARTIST TALK W/ GARRY NICHOLS
Sunday, July 6
2 PM

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Saturdays & Sundays 12-5pm

Katherine Bradford, Marieken Cochius, Meg Hitchcock, Simeon Lagodich, Cal Lane, Chris Martin, Tony Moore, Garry Nichols, Helen O'Leary, Judy Pfaff, David Provan, Jeff Shapiro, Greg Slick, Kurt Steger and Don Voisine.

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Rachael Sage & The Sequins

Sun. July 20, 6 PM
RACHAEL SAGE & THE SEQUINS
"Sage has created an eclectic body of work that's witty, graceful, and powerfully intimate" – NPR Music
Tickets: bit.ly/RachaelSage-HCC

Sat. July 5 + Sun. July 6, 1-5 PM
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WORK IN DECAY a joint BHS & HCC EXHIBIT
PATRICK PROSSER'S 1982 PHOTO COLLECTION
Experience the gritty city through Prosser's lens and uncover the significant transformations captured by four of today's local contemporaries
M.S. Goldfarb | W.A. Loeb | P. Johnston | T. Cenicola

July 7, 9, 12 - LYRA Music Festival
July 11 - LIT LIT
July 18 - NERD NITE Hudson Valley
July 23 - STANZA Campers
July 26 - Laureates & Friends
July 27 - JAKE XERXES FUSSELL
Aug 2 - STANZA Children's Book Fest

Donate - Portico Restoration Project!
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Visit; website, social media for more events, info, tickets

HOWLAND CULTURAL CENTER

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ELECTRIC HOUSE PARTIES

Cold Spring
July 13th & 20th

Meet and talk with neighbors about - and see - their home efficiency and electrification improvements and plans. An Energy Coach will be present at both events to answer your individual questions, and snacks and beverages will be provided. What you will see:

Sunday, July 13th, 4 - 5pm

- ducted air-source heat pump
- ductless air-source heat pump
- solar panels
- heat pump hot water heater
- insulation
- induction stove
- EV charger

Sunday, July 20th, 4 - 5pm

- ducted ground-source heat pump ("geothermal")
- heat pump hot water heater
- induction stove
- insulation
- EV charger

Registration required: to sign up, use the QR code above for each event or go to climatesmartphilipstown.org

The Calendar



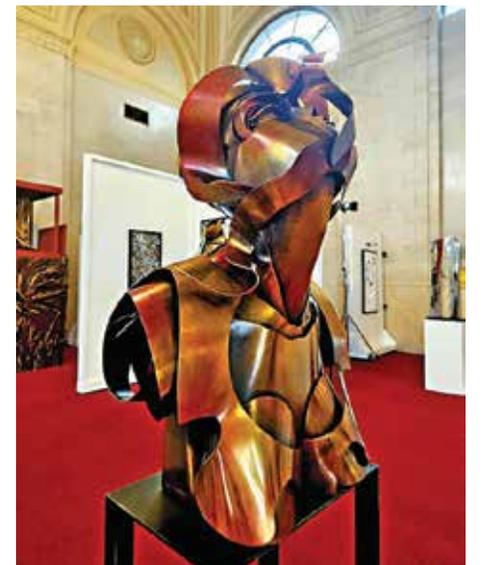
ART ON DEPOSIT

Noto at the Bank Art Gallery in Newburgh

Photos provided



Artwork by Rhea Marmentini



Artwork by Alex Kveton

Gallery opens inside former Newburgh bank

By Marc Ferris

Late last year, Beacon artist Allison Walker figured she would have to find a new space: The Newburgh building housing her studio had been sold.

Then she learned philanthropist Ted Doering had purchased the building, the 101-year-old former Newburgh Savings Bank, to maintain the status quo and buttress the artistic community.

The former bank, at 94 Broadway, has a soaring 30-foot ceiling and ornamented marble. In September, the Gerald A. Doering Foundation turned it into the Bank Art Gallery.

At the June 12 opening for the exhibit *A Collector's Vision*, the gallery director, Shirley Giler Noto, showed off a raw, 7,000-square-foot labyrinth of basement rooms she calls the Collector's Vault.

On the main floor, it turns out that weighty doors with iron bars, a wall of safe deposit boxes and a jumble of semi-claustrophobic passageways add edge to the showing of contemporary art. Before this iteration, the building housed the Salvaggi Gallery, but that project ran out of steam.

"We figured out what to put in here and know that art is the foundation for any city to thrive," says Noto. "Look at Beacon."

Noto, who is also the Doering foundation's director and owns an Italian deli in town, decided to take a crack at the art

world: She has never curated before and lacks experience running a gallery.

But she has good taste, a background in marketing and puts in the work: from 5 to 7 a.m., just about every day, she scours Instagram searching for local, regional, national and international artists to represent.

Her featured creator, Rhea Marmentini, is "a worldwide superstar" who recently moved from Spain to Brooklyn and Catskill. Her paintings and sculptures are shown in the gallery's funky underbelly.

Noto also offered space to Piper Grant, 24, a recent MFA graduate at the New York Academy of Art, who depicts futuristic, robotic dogs from outer space. Another painter, Sheila Schwid, is 92.

Standouts in the exhibit include driftwood sculptures by Andres San Millan, who renders hands and feet in exquisite detail. Franc Palaia's photos of graffiti mounted on polystyrene look like chunks of plastered walls, although they weigh only about 4 pounds.

R.A. Pesce, represented by Studio Tashtego in Cold Spring, contributed a dozen pieces of glazed white stoneware that resemble bronze and other dense material. The finish on the piece "BRRRKO!" glitters gold with tints of contrasting greens and other colors.

Many of Alex Kveton's stunning sculptures turn heavy metals into an Art Deco take on



Shirley Giler Noto

ancient armor and statuary. A couple of his stainless-steel works, which feature two columns in proximity, include a strip of color that creates funhouse mirror reflections.

Walker contributed three painted monotype prints, including one representing a scene in *The Aeneid* with two rings around a fire. The other textured works, "Sex" and "Prophecy," are also programmatic. "The style, the strokes, the colors; there's something about these beautiful pieces that make me feel warm," says Noto.

Plans are to open the 13,000-square-foot fourth floor in March 2026 so that the entire building will be devoted to art. That would likely make it the Hudson Valley's largest gallery, says Noto.

"The goal is to turn this into an auction house," she says. "We're not going anywhere. We're here for the long haul."

Bank Art Gallery, at 94 Broadway in Newburgh, is open 4 to 8 p.m. on Friday and noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. See bankartgallery.com. *A Collector's Vision* continues through Aug. 3.



Artwork by Andres San Millan



Artwork by R.A. Pesce

THE WEEK AHEAD

COMMUNITY

SAT 5

Fireworks

BEACON

8:30 p.m. Memorial Park
Robert Cahill Drive | beaconny.gov

Come early and enjoy food and entertainment before the fireworks at dusk.

WED 9

Happy, Healthy Hobbies

CORTLANDT

9:30 a.m. Cortlandt Town Hall
1 Heady St. | 914-941-1111

Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg, NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital and other community partners offer this as part of the Sustaining Our Seniors series. The program includes breakfast and giveaways. RSVPs encouraged.

THURS 10

Houseplant Swap

BEACON

4 - 7 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beaconlibrary.org

Bring a labeled plant you are ready to give away and go home with something new.

SUN 13

Civil Disobedience Workshop

BEACON

11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Beahive
6 Eliza St. | 845-418-3731
beahivebeacon.spaces.nexusdus.com/events

Alexis Danzig, a co-founder of Rise and Resist, will lead this training on using nonviolent pressure to create change.

SUN 13

Electric House Party

COLD SPRING

4 p.m. Private home
climatesmartphilipstown.org

Climate Smart Philipstown hosts this meet-and-greet with local homeowners who have made energy-efficient upgrades, including heat pumps, an induction stove and rooftop solar. The location will be shared after registering.

SECOND SATURDAY

SAT 12

Allegra Jordan

BEACON

4 - 7 p.m. Super Secret Projects
484 Main St. | supersecretprojects.com

For her solo show *Desire Melt*, Jordan uses painting and sculpture to explore the intersection of desire and fate. Through Aug. 2.

SAT 12

Margaret Inga Urías | Soli Pierce

BEACON

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

In Gallery 1, see a group show,

Ephemeral. Urias' drawings and etched glass are on view in *Vanishing Hour* in Gallery 2. Soli Pierce's exploration, *Chasing Light*, is in the Beacon Room. Through Aug. 3.

TALKS & TOURS

TUES 8

Fraud Prevention Workshop

BEACON

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

Scams and frauds cost consumers and businesses billions of dollars a year. Learn about tools and resources that can prevent it.

FRI 11

Lit Lit

BEACON

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

At the monthly literary open mic, read any genre of original work or come to enjoy good stories.

FRI 11

Charlie Rauh and David Rothenberg

BEACON

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

Rauh, composer and author of *Simply, Patiently, Quietly*, will read and discuss music and stories with Rothenberg, musician and author of *Why Birds Sing and Bug Music*.

SUN 13

Catherine Gonick

PUTNAM VALLEY

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

The poet will read from her latest collection, *Split Daughter of Eve*, and an open mic will follow. *Cost: \$10*

KIDS & FAMILY

SAT 5

Sonic the Hedgehog 3

GARRISON

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

Watch the 2024 animated film as Sonic, Knuckles and Tails take on a new villain.



TUES 8

Jester Jim

BEACON

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

The entertainer's performance includes juggling, beatboxing and hijinks for all ages.



Lips Together, Teeth Apart, July 11

WED 9

Edible Storytime (Ages 6+)

COLD SPRING

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

WED 9

Tie-Dye Teddy Bear Workshop

GARRISON

3:30 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org

Create your own bear by stuffing it and then decorating it with paint. For ages 4 to 12. Registration required.

THURS 10

Toy Theater

BEACON

6:30 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beaconlibrary.org

Kids ages 3 to 12 can make paper puppet characters and stage their own plays. Registration required.

FRI 11

Embellished Photo Portraits

GARRISON

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

Teens can use one of their own black-and-white photos, or one provided by the library, and make it come alive with the provided materials.

FRI 11

Arts & Crafts

BEACON

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

In this after-hours event, teens and tweens can take inspiration



Allegra Jordan, July 12

from the show *Nailed It!* to make their own masterpieces.

SAT 12

Harold Sings His Way Home

GARRISON

11 a.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org

Nancy Hershatter, a performer and music specialist, will lead kids as they help get Harold (from *Harold and the Purple Crayon*) to his home. For ages 3 to 7.

STAGE & SCREEN

SAT 5

Coco

BEACON

6:30 & 7:30 p.m. Boats leave dock
845-831-6346 | bannermancastle.org

Ride to Bannerman Island to watch the 2017 Disney film about a boy who journeys through the Land of the Dead to learn more about his ancestor, a legendary singer. *Cost: \$45 (\$35 for ages 8-11)*

SAT 5

The Comedy of Errors

PHILIPSTOWN

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

Shakespeare's comedy includes two sets of twins separated at birth and searching for soulmates. Also MON 7, WED 9, FRI 11 and SUN 13. *Cost: \$10 to \$100*

SUN 6

The Matchmaker

PHILIPSTOWN

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

Nance Williamson stars as Dolly Levi in the Thornton Wilder play that inspired the 1969 film *Hello, Dolly!* Also THURS 10 and SAT 12. *Cost: \$10 to \$100*

FRI 11

Friday Night Live Comedy Show

COLD SPRING

7 p.m. Move Cold Spring
34 Chestnut St. | movecoldspring.com

Host David Beckles Jr. will present comedians Susanna Spies, Jeff Burstein, Charity Shumway, Tim Deery and Amy Foster. *Cost: \$20*

FRI 11

Lips Together, Teeth Apart

WAPPINGERS FALLS

8 p.m. County Players
2681 W. Main St. | 845-298-1491
countyplayers.org

Watch the Terrence McNally comedy set in 1990 at Fire Island about two couples sharing a house over the July 4th weekend. Continues weekends through July 26. *Cost: \$26 (\$24 seniors, military, and students)*

SAT 12
Paddington In Peru
POUGHKEEPSIE

8 p.m. Upper Landing Park
83 N. Water St.
facebook.com/MoviesUnderTheWalkway
Watch the 2024 animated film about the beloved bear on a big adventure. *Free*

VISUAL ART

SUN 6
Garry Nichols
COLD SPRING
2 p.m. Ligenza Moore Gallery
78 Trout Brook Road
ligenzamooregallery.com

The painter will discuss his work on view in the *Destination Earth* show.

SAT 12
Lauren Versel
COLD SPRING

4 - 6 p.m. Buster Levi Gallery
121 Main St. | busterlevigallery.com
The artist's solo show, *AI Dating*, will include her abstract paintings. Through July 27.

NATURE & OUTDOORS

SUN 13
Mead Farm History Hike
CARMEL
9 a.m. & 1 p.m. Putnam History Museum
1090 Route 52
putnamhistorymuseum.org
Susan Allport, author of *Sermons in Stone: The Stone Walls of New*

England and New York, will lead a tour and discuss the area. Meet at the Dunkin' parking lot. *Cost: \$12 (\$15 non-members, \$10 virtual)*

MUSIC

SAT 5
KJ Denhart & The NY Unit
BEACON
8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

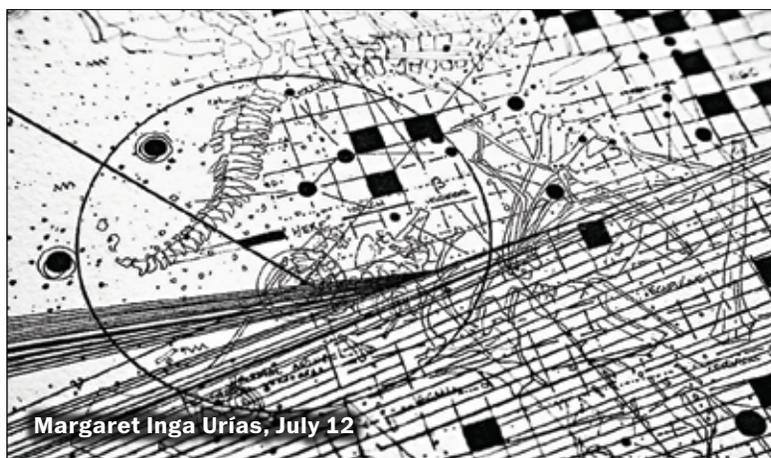
The band will be joined by The Whispering Tree and songwriter Debbi Deane as part of its *All About the Song* series. *Cost: \$25 (\$30 door)*

MON 7
Lyra Music Faculty Artist Concert
BEACON

7 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
lyramusic.org
Avery Morris (violin), Mafalda Santos (cello), Amadi Azikiwe (viola) and Diyi Tang (piano) will play a program that includes Beethoven, Chopin, Dvorak and Faure. *Cost: \$25*

FRI 11
Family Game Night
BEACON

8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
Led by Matt The Electrician and based on his weekly song game, the set up in the round will include stories and songs by Erin McKeown, Natalia Zukerman and Stephen Clair. *Cost: \$25*



Margaret Inga Urias, July 12

SAT 12
Lyra Music Guest Artists
BEACON

2 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
lyramusic.org
Amy Schroeder (violin), Julia Yang (cello) and Michael Stephen Brown (piano) will play works by Beethoven, Haydn, Kodaly and Smetana. *Cost: \$30*

SAT 12
Swing du Jour Quintet
PUTNAM VALLEY

6 p.m. Tompkins Corners Cultural Center
729 Peekskill Hollow Road
tompkinscorners.org
The gypsy jazz band includes Howie Carlough (violin), Norman Plankey (rhythm guitar), Danny Elias (clarinet), Jamie Doris (upright bass) and Luke Hendon (guitar). *Cost: \$25*

SAT 12
Last Minute Soulmates
BEACON

7:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The band will be joined by the Robert Hill Band with Simone Rae and Jonathan Frith. *\$20 minimum in food and drink*

SUN 13
SIRSY with Annalyse & Ryan
BEACON

7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com
The rock and soul duo will be joined by the local Americana duo Annalyse and Ryan. *Cost: \$25*

CIVIC

MON 7
City Council
BEACON

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

TUES 8
County Executive Kevin Byrne
GARRISON

Noon. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
Join the Putnam County leader for a community forum.

WED 9
Village Board
COLD SPRING

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

WED 9
School Board
GARRISON

7 p.m. Garrison School | 1100 Route 9D
845-424-3689 | gufs.org

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

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Nate Allen has become a go-to bassist for local bands and musicians.

Photo provided

Beacon's Ace of Bass

Versatility leads to high demand

By Marc Ferris

Ten years ago, Nate Allen moved to Beacon and began hustling around town for freelance bass gigs. No matter the style of music, he almost always said yes. Now, he's a local ace of bass, playing with myriad ensembles and collaborators.

"I've had a lot of experiences walking musical tightropes," he says.

The ability to read music on the fly helps, but Allen can play and feel almost every genre. On June 28 at The Yard, he performed with Illari, an act led by Peruvian percussionist Angel Lau that stirs in some African-style rhythms. The band had never rehearsed all together, and to complicate matters, their drummer broke his wrist a week before the gig.

"I was worried about that one, but it worked out well," says Allen. Indeed, the group elicited howls of approval after their final song.

He also received kudos for a short solo that opened the song "Rosa." Plucking the strings like a finger-style guitarist, he drew a "woo" from someone in the back and a rowdy round of applause for his more exuberant and extended solo in "Motema."

"Bass players are usually in the background so we're not used to that," he says. "It's not an instrument for someone with an ego."

For most of the show, his five-string electric bass drove the bus as he threw down repetitive, mesmerizing grooves that let the percussion parts percolate around a sonic structure and provided solid ground for the trumpet and keyboard to soar.

But he also understood when to be a passenger. One tune required him to hold down repetitive bass lines, which he embellished with a few quick notes during pauses. The approach for "Ncancer" called for minimalist accompaniment, yet on occasion, he plunked funky little fills, then fell silent.

Adam Cabo, half of the rising Beacon jazz duo Zohar and Adam, filled in for the band's

injured drummer. Allen will be sitting in with them at Joe's Pub in Greenwich Village on July 31 and also taking a mini-tour through the Pacific Northwest in August, with a stopover at the San Jose Jazz Festival.

When not traveling, he's teaching at Beacon Music Factory and anchoring the low end for local guitarist Tony DePaolo, pop/country duo Annalyse and Ryan, progressive bluegrass group Bees in the Barn and Lotus, which plays the music of Santana. He also takes on numerous one-offs around town, like a recent show with Saint Rita, which specializes in the music of Kurt Weill.

"Bass players are usually in the background so we're not used to that. It's not an instrument for someone with an ego."

~ Nate Allen

Sometimes Allen searches for situations; other times he answers the phone after someone recommends him. Budgets are usually thin for most original musical projects, so he also plays weddings and corporate gigs.

Being able to sight-read music he has never seen or heard before gets him into the recording studio. One hurdle is that "virtual instruments sound so realistic these days, there's no need to hire a human anymore," he says. "Lucky for me, upright bass is hard to emulate realistically. For now."

Robots are unlikely to replace live musicians in the near future. "Whatever I'm doing, I try to put some feeling into it, whether it's energized and excited, or sad and teary."

Turning down work with lowball offers can be difficult, but "there's always someone willing to do it for less," Allen says. "I once told a colleague about a pitiful situation and he said, 'Really? Can you give me the guy's number?'"

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OTHERWORLDLY CAFE

Goth space comes to KuBe

By Marc Ferris

Radical change has transformed Changolife Gallery at the KuBe Art Center. Curator Frank Mesa still represents Cuban artists, but now, a nondescript classroom in the old Beacon High School is painted mostly black, including the ceiling. Blood red enlivens the walls.

The gallery is sharing space with Moon, Serpent and Bone, a cafe and salon specializing in curios, the dark side and spirituality. "It's a space for people in this community to come together in a casual setting, which is something that's missing," says Mesa.

Amy Wilson, his next-door neighbor at Other Worldly Waxes, conducted the make-over. The namesake for the new endeavor is the same as her DIY production company, which hosts a series of pop-up makers markets around the valley.

The opening came closer to July 4 than Halloween because 13 other creepy happenings have emerged to oversaturate the market since October, Wilson says: "Our world isn't all that big, so this is a pivot. At our shows, we noticed that a lot of people come to just hang out and socialize."

"Our world isn't all that big, so this is a pivot. At our shows, we noticed that a lot of people come to just hang out and socialize."

~Amy Wilson

But she continues with the tried and true. Other brand offshoots include the monthly Full Moon Magickal Market at the intersection of Chestnut and Church streets. The Fire and Brimstone Night Market will come to Beacon on Oct. 24.

The new gathering space's retail component offers ritual scents and goods with skull and snake motifs. Along one wall, a creepy old doll rests in a vintage pram. The four-seat serving counter is illuminated by three overhead lights that cast a golden glow. Wilson's menu offers baked goods and more substantial fare.

But the main goal is to host events, some of them free, including seances, tea parties, tarot readings, horror-writing workshops, avant-garde musical performances, movie screenings on Sunday afternoons and spirit readings with medium Nicole Nightfall.

And Mesa's gallery still sells art. A handful of Wilson's paintings hang on the walls, including a colorful flapper portrait. But Mesa's main find, Sheyla, vibes with the



Amy Wilson and Frank Mesa collaborated to open Moon, Serpent and Bone, a new cafe in the KuBe Art Center in Beacon.

Photo provided

space's new guise. The artist often imposes her own face onto the works, like the horned creature in "Resurrection" sticking out its tongue.

"She has her demons," he says.

Sheyla's grotesque neo-Gothic style portrays an exaggerated sense of drama, and perspectives can be askew: In the pen-and-oil on canvas "Horus Without Limits," a wan human figure appears to hug itself.

At the cafes opening last month, dozens of visitors circulated through the room and the rest of the building. Tattoos and black leather served as popular means of expression. Angeliqve McGue's outfit ranged from a large-brimmed hat to boots with 6-inch heels.

Her style also includes a pierced lip and seven tiny star tats on each cheekbone — "spider bites," she calls them. "I've been Goth since high school and dress like this all the time," she says.

Mesa credits Wilson with everything. "We went for a nostalgic groove, like the old Limelight," he said, referring to a defunct Manhattan nightclub once housed in a church. "She turned this whole place into a work of art. If I had to put my money on anyone, it's her."

Moon, Serpent and Bone is open Saturdays, noon to 6 p.m., and Sundays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 211 Fishkill Road, Room 308.



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Start Reading Now

July book club selections

Fantasy Book Club

TUES 8, 7 P.M.

The Dead Cat Tail Assassins, by P. Djeli Clark
Stanza Books, Beacon
Register at stanzabooks.com/book-clubs.

Abe Lincoln/Civil War Book Club

THURS 10, 7 P.M.

Seward: Lincoln's Indispensable Man, by Walter Stahr
Lincoln Depot Museum, Peekskill
Email LincolnDepotFDN@gmail.com.

Sci-Fi Book Club

TUES 15, 7 P.M.

Hyperion, by Dan Simmons
Stanza Books, Beacon
Register at stanzabooks.com/book-clubs.

Page-to-Screen Book Club

THURS 17, 3 P.M.

The Hundred-Foot Journey, by Richard Morais
Desmond-Fish Library, Garrison
Register at desmondfishlibrary.org/events.

Wednesday Book Club

WED 23, 2 P.M.

Lady Tan's Circle of Women, by Lisa See
Howland Library, Beacon
Register at beaconlibrary.org/calendar.

Beacon Book Club

THURS 24, 7:15 P.M.

A Widow for One Year, by John Irving
Location TBD
Register at meetup.com/beacon-bookclub.

Elementary Book Club (Ages 7-10)

SAT 26, 10:30 A.M.

Happy Times in Noisy Village, by Astrid Lindgren
Butterfield Library, Cold Spring
Register at butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar.

Butterfield Book Club

MON 28, 7 P.M.

Sandwich, by Catherine Newman
Butterfield Library, Cold Spring
Register at butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar.

Bizzz Book and Podcast Club

WED 30, 4 P.M.

Unreasonable Hospitality: The Remarkable Power of Giving People More Than They Expect, by Will Guidara
Beahive, Beacon
Register at bit.ly/hivebookclub_7-25.

Marking 15 Years: One Vision Now Shared by Many

The story of *The Highlands Current* begins with the vision of one man. He crafted it, funded it refined it and enlisted a committed group of men and women to carry it forward. Thousands now read the paper that vision informed.

When Gordon Stewart introduced the website Philipstown.info — the predecessor to *The Current* — 15 years ago today he did so to establish a free and objective news source for the town's citizens after the longtime local newspaper turned ideological. In his official greeting, he encouraged



Gordon Stewart, founder

readers: "If there's something Philipstown and beyond needs to know, let everyone in on it." Most critically, he added: "One thing we will not impose are political views. No editorials. The only opinion pieces in Philipstown.info will be yours. As to our news policy, we believe it has never been stated better than this: without fear or favor."

Two years later, Stewart added a print paper, bucking the journalism trend in which newspapers were adding, or even being replaced by, digital news. Creating *The Paper* served a community used to newsprint and bolstered the business, adding advertising revenue to the support Stewart himself had been solely providing.

How to further ensure the future of the news operation? Stewart saw community-funded news as a model to sustain local journalism, so he applied for and, in 2013, received nonprofit status for the organization.

He wasn't alone in seeing a promising future in nonprofit journalism: As Stewart was assembling his nonprofit's board of directors in 2014, journalism's Investigative News Network re-established itself as the Institute for Nonprofit News to support a growing network of independent news organizations that were "nonprofit, nonpartisan and dedicated to public service." The new INN had about 100 members; today it has 500. *The Highlands Current* has been a member for 10 years.

The board Stewart established in 2014 picked up his vision after he died in November that year, and readers rallied to the paper's mission to provide a vital forum for their news and views. Seeing value to readers,

supporters and advertisers in expanding its reach, *The Paper* added the northern adjacent City of Beacon to its coverage in April 2016. *The Paper* then became *The Highlands Current*, and Philipstown.info became highlandscurrent.org.

With a public service mission and a goal of building a self-sustaining business, *The Current* made several strategic moves:

- As a more effective way to raise funds, it adopted a membership system in 2019 with benefits that engaged its supporters. Starting with fewer than 450 donors that year, *The Current* now has nearly 1,200 members. It continues to seek members from the many who pick up nearly every copy of the 4,000 papers printed every week or who read its stories online.

- *The Current* dedicated itself to covering not only the all-important local news and events but also the ways national issues play out locally on topics such as the opioid crisis, climate change and food insecurity. The special projects helped earn *The Current* the title "Newspaper of the Year" from the New York Press Association three recent years in a row. A new special project is in the paper this week, helping readers to understand the delivery, pricing and challenges of electricity.

- Believing in the importance of nurturing future journalists, *The Current* began the Student Journalists Program, which has attracted significant targeted support and helped to inspire the revival of student newspapers at both the Beacon and Cold Spring high schools.

- *The Current* has diversified its revenue stream, expanding its advertising products, identifying valuable grant opportunities and presenting fundraising events that last year included edifying conversations with *New York Times* columnist Nicholas D. Kristof and with actors Kathryn Grody and Mandy Patinkin and their son Gideon Grody-Patinkin.

The board continues to look for ways to sustain *The Current* as journalism broadly experiences pressure from changes in the information ecosystem that include declines in print advertising, disruptions



Putnam County congratulates *The Highlands Current* "on 15 incredible years of service to our community."

caused by artificial intelligence and the displacement of traditional news sources by social media. The latest report on the state of local journalism by the Medill School of Journalism Local News Initiative at Northwestern University, in October 2024, found that more than 3,200 print newspapers have vanished since 2005; that newspapers are disappearing at a rate of more than two per week; and that there are 206 counties across the country without any news source, making them "news deserts."

But *The Current* remains vigilant and has embarked on a strategic process to position itself for the future. While committed to the weekly print product, the paper aspires to be a more consistent presence in the lives of its

readers via digital channels. This will include improving the highlandscurrent.org website; publishing breaking news and original content throughout the week; providing readers with customizable email products; and leveraging social media distribution opportunities.

As it evolves, *The Current* remains dedicated to the vision that inspired the news startup in 2010: to be a fair and open-minded source of information for the communities it serves.

Chris Bockelmann and Todd Haskell
Co-Chairs, Board of Directors

Chip Rowe
Editor

The Highlands Current



From left: Philipstown.info debuted at 69 Main St. in Cold Spring on July 4, 2010. Renamed *The Highlands Current* on April 1, 2016, the newspaper moved to 161 Main St. Today *The Current* covers Philipstown and Beacon from its office in Cold Spring at 142 Main St.

Thank You to Our Members

Dear Members,

Thank you. Those two words carry the weight of 15 years of dedicated journalism and community connection that is the vibrant lifeblood of our Hudson Highlands. Because of members like you — the nearly 1,200 individuals who believe in the power of local news — *The Highlands Current* is not just celebrating 15 years since its founding on July 4, 2010, but is poised to embark on our next chapter more ambitious than ever.

Your support has been the constant force behind this journey. It is why our nonprofit newsroom can delve deeply into the news of our local governments, schools and businesses and highlight the rich tapestry of our arts and culture. And it allows us to examine the local impact of serious national issues.

Your support also has a broader impact, as our journalism helps to:

- **Connect our community:** *The Current* fosters a sense of community by sharing the diverse stories that make our area special and by hosting events that engage us as neighbors.
- **Keep all informed:** We are committed to providing in-depth reporting to all in our communities on the local issues that truly matter to you.
- **Strengthen our local democracy:** An informed public is powerful. Your contribution helps us hold our elected officials accountable and gives our communities a voice.

We thank you very specifically for making our recent **15th Anniversary appeal** a success. It exceeded a match challenge of \$15,000, adding more than \$30,000 in support to our newsroom. We also thank you once again for our year-end annual appeal in which we exceeded a \$75,000 match challenge, meaning more than \$150,000 for our newsroom.

Membership is our nonprofit newsroom's primary means of support and is therefore the reason we can provide you and all in our communities of Philipstown and Beacon and readers beyond with the news and views that make a difference.

With gratitude for your unwavering support,

Lauren Cook
Growth Director

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT OUR FUNDRAISING

Details here:

dub.sh/HC-fundraising

Friends (\$24-\$119)

Anonymous - 48
Genie Abrams
Cara Adams
Lori Adams
Kari Addington
Sam Adels
Ertan and Terri Akbas
Alice Akin
Harold E. and January Akselrad
Amanda Amadei and Nora Matz
Tammy Amsalem
Jan and Ron Anderson
Denise and Gregory Angelo
Sarah Banker
Damon Banks and Gwen Laster
Patricia Barber
Elaine Barker
Kathleen Barnes
Gary and Pamela Barrack
The Barrett/Tomaino Family
Richard Barth
Sarah Bartlett
Dr. Joanna Batstone Suits
Dr. Philip Bayer
Donald Baylis
John Beale
Kristen and John Beck
Ariel Behr
Melissa Bekisz
Andrew Bell
Carla Bellamy
Philip Bender
Robert Bernstein
Joanna Bersin
Charles Bezousek
Robert S. Blair
John Blesso
Holly Bogdanffy
Lea Bourdages
Geraldine and Bill Brennan
Jay Brenner
Izak Breslauer
Regina Britt
Hannah Brooks
Sally Jo Bronner
Oscar Buchanan
Ginny Buechele
Joe Bugenis
Greg and Jan Buhler
Helen Butler
Lin Butler and Jennifer Howse
Kevin Byrne
Vincent Calabro
Peter and Martha Callaway
Patrick Callum
John Capman
Kiera Caponi
Liliana Cappello
Adam Caraher
Joe and Anne Carbone
Abbie Carey
Aubrey Carter
Michael Casale
Tom Cassel & Tara Roscoe
Olivia Cea
Richard and Mary Cerny
Ira Chavis
Chestnut Oak Dental
Diane Chillig
John Paul Christy
Jen Clapp and Dan Fisherman
Emily and Matt Clifton
Gerard Coffey
Cynthia Cohen

Ilene Cohen
Lauri Cohen and Manuel Molina
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Ellen Collins
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Douglas Comeau
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Howard and Patricia Copeland
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Jackie Corley
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Vivienne Courtney
Benjamin Cox
Cathy Croft
James Cross
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Chris Cunningham and Ali Verdicchio
Patty and Phil D'Amato
Christy Dailey
Caroline Danford
Deborah Daughtry
Deb Davidovits
Susan Davidson
Christopher Davis
Michelle de Savigny
Jay and Janice Dean
Wendy DeGiglio
Harold and Anne Delamater
Jane D'Emic
Gerry Dempsey and Ann Marie Carley
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Bonnie Detweiler
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Deborah Dichter
Wendy Diller
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Matt and Linda Donachie
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Kathleen Duffett
Stuart Duncan
Marie Early
Susan Early
Ruth and David D. Eisenhower
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Larry Epstein
Noela Evans
Denise Eve
Ellen Fabian
Andrew Fairbanks
Johanna Fallert
Julia Famularo
Eliza Farrell
Wilma Feliciano, Ph.D, and Jack Foster
Dana Ferine
William Field
Ginny Figlia
Ann Finney
Kirsten & Ken Fisher
Annette and Robert Flaherty
Joann Flaherty
Lawrence Fleischer
Irmela Florig-Rowland
Peter and Anne Forman
Karen Freede
Alex Freeman

Lee Frego
Ben Freiman
Julian Friedman
Sarah From and Rusty Stahl
David Fultz
Ann Marie Furey
Sandy Galef
Paul Gallay and Tracey Jordan
Rich and Adie Garefein
Francesca Gentile-Laygo
Sezelle Gereau
Susie Giannoni
Kenneth Giedd
Suzie Gilbert
Timothy Gilbert
Sophie Gilden
Elizabeth Gillespie
Nancy and Mark Giordano
Peter and Corinne Giunta
Peter Gleszer
Annie Godfrey Larmon
Barry and Chris Goggin
Steve Gold
Amy Goldberg
Max Goldberg
Simone Goldenberg
Danny Goodman
Barbara Gosda
Brendan Gover
Derek Graham
The Green Family
John Greener
Karin Greenfield-Sanders
Chris Grippo
Gareth and Pat Guest
Ken Guice
Michael Guillorn and Megan Shea
Margot and Phil Haber
John Haines and Margaret Yonco-Haines
Gayle Hamilton
Joyce Hanson
Megan Harding
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Lorraine Hartin-Gelardi
Joe Hautzenroder
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June Heller
Keith Hershberger
Bryan Hickey and Corinne Chateau
Michele Hilmes and Bruce Croushore
Kimberly Hiss
Stella Hlad
Kelly Holiday
The Holmbo Family
Kristen Holt-Browning and Sam Browning
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Leslie Horan Simon
Julie Hornberger
Lindsey Horner
Howard Howell
B&D Howes
Jean Huang
Nancy Hull
John Humbach
Pascale Hutz
Mary Iannarelli
Sue Infante
Maria Irizarry-Lopez
Esther Jackson & Clark Frankel

Lyn Jacobson
Lillian Jagendorf and Dan Shannon
Roberta Jamin
Peggy and Todd Janus
Judith Jesek
Amanda Jones
Daniel C. Jones Jr.
Donald Jordan
Ethan Jordan
Christopher Joslyn
Theresa Joyce
Kathy Kahng
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Loretta and Thomas Kavalier
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Randi Keim
Brad Kendall
Elena Kennedy
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Ethan Kerr and Stephanie Diamond
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Kelly Kingman-Joslyn
John Kinnaird
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Hanan Knauer-Nassau
Tore Knos
Kathleen Koch
James Korn
Caroline Korth
Theresa Kraft
Alice Krakauer
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Noel Kropf
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Maria Lambach
Timothy Lamorte
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Irene Lewis
Stephen Lewis
Marjorie Lewit
Catherine Lim
David Limburg
Vivian Linares
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Claire Lofrese
Kim Logan-Stivale
Bettyann Lopate
Rose Lorenz
Sanne Lutley
Elizabeth Lynch
Donald MacDonald
Susan MacKenzie
Paul and Roberta MacLean
Sue MacLean
Judith Maher
Brian Mahoney
Jared Mance

(Continued on Page 18)

Thank You to Our Members

(Continued from Page 17)

Jessica Mandy
Sandra Manley
Simone Margulies
Michal Mart
Barbara Martire
Claudio Marzollo
Kori Mascheck
Linda and John Matthews
Karen Mayer
Davis McCallum
John and Renee McCann
Courtney and Gerard McCarthy
David McCarthy and Danielle Pack McCarthy
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Christine Ortiz
Loretto Padilla
John and Patricia Pagano
Cheryl Panek
Jenn Partlow
Linda Patterson
The Pattersons
John Pavlik
Connie Perdreaux
Diane Perea
Marieta Pergl
Anne Persico

Wynne Phillips
Virginia Piazza
Linda Piermarini
Joan Pirie
Ellen Pitegoff
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Elizabeth Poole and James Challenger
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Ronald Richley
Eric and Amy Richter
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Jackaline Ring
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Patti Shealy
Donna Shelley-Baumler
Noah Shepherd
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Toby Shimin
Katrina Shindledecker
Christine Shostack
RitaSue Siegel and Dardo Lucero
Kwan-Ngee Sharon Sim
Malina Slavik
Gail Small

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Evan Spark-DePass
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Steve Spitzer
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Cary and Joanne Ziter
Andrew Ziv
Ronald Zorrilla
Lily Zuckerman
Sheila Zukowsky
Gregg and Helen Zuman

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Sebastian Abbot and Elizabeth Radin
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Sven Allebrand
Judy and John Allen
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Steve and Vasso Anderson
Raymond and Laurel Andrews
Jason Angell and Jocelyn Apicello
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Susan Anspach and Daniel Nobel
Alison Anthoine
Artem
Veekas and Erin Ashoka
Susan Atkins and Eben Shapiro
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Sylvia Beckerman
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Dana Bourland
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May Brawley Hill
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Lynn Brown
Micah Brown
Will and Emily Brown
Alan and Patty Brownstein
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Lori Bukiewicz
Bernard and Tracy Bunye
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Jay Cassano

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Andree Christman
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Jennifer Clair
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Peter Conway and Diana Polack
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Brian and Aaron Cookstra
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Jeffrey Cronin
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Jeff Cunningham
Alyia Cutler
Robert Cutler
Jessica Czechowski
Sean Dague
Brett and Stephanie Daigle
Maura & Andrew Dansker
Darhansoffs
Raquel Bicalho de Azevedo
Deb's Hair Design
The DesBrisay & Beckstead Family
Marie Digirolamo
Dan Doniger
Sarah Donovan
The Doyles
Sara Dulaney
Tracey Durner
James Dye and Tyler Issacson
Gretchen Dykstra
Andrew Dylag
Webb Eaken
Jim Early
Shari and Ken Eberts
Zachary Edelson
Amanda Egolf
Kendra Ekelund
Kelly Ellenwood
Michael Emerson
David and Maeve Eng-Wong
Eric Erickson
Joel Erickson
Cory Ethridge
Rachel Evans
Holly Evarts
Deirdre Farabaugh
Martha Fateman
Kate and Michael Feder
Henry and Nadine Feldman
Steve Feyl and Sarah Burns Feyl
Kenneth Filmanski
Jim Finnigan
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Marcia Frahman
Patrick Freeman
Aaron Freimark
Debra Friedman
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Laney Gahagan
Janet Gain
Mark Galezo
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James and Carol Geist
Kyoko and David Gelber
Diana and Bruce Geller

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Stacey Gibson
Erin and John Giunta
The Glauda Family
Joe and Carson Gleberman
Jinny and Robert Goff
Laurey and Steven Goldberg
Flavia Golden
Janet Goodman
Tom Goodrich
David and Maggie Gordon
Cali and Roger Gorevic
Ainslie D Grannis
Amber Grant
Jacqueline Grant and Chris Nowak
Danielle Greenberg
Marion Groetch
Maia Guest and John Plummer
The Hackett-Zorzis
Josh and Jackie Hadden
Gail Greet Hannah
Matthew Hart
David Hart
Juliet Harvey and Luc Stampleman
Thomas Hellmann
Raymond Herbst
Eric and Patricia Hine
Elizabeth Hires
Jonny and Britt Hittman
Elizabeth Hoffman
Katy Hope and Alexander Cohen
Jan Hopkins
Carol Hopper
Beth Hordines
Laura Horwitz
Pearly Huang and Scott Thompson
Hudson Design
Hudson River Line Realty
The Illian Family
Michael Jacobs
Bob and Anita Jacobson
Steven Jaffe
Neil Janovic and Cathy Hull
Jennifer & Luc Jansen
Eileen Jarrett
Victoria and Robert Jauernig
Mindy and John Jeseck
Krissi Jimroglou
Jezabel Johns
Dean Johnston and MaryJo Mullan
Nancy Johnston
Nicole Jones and Jess Reaves
Ann and Jonathan Kanter
Delmar and Irene Karlen
Eric Kater
Glenn Kaufman
Shannon Keegan
Mark Keierleber
Liz Campbell Kelly
Thomas Kenny
Heidi Kitlas and Jeff Simms
JoAnn and Ed Kitlas
Walt Klietz
Trevor Knight
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Peter and Mhairi Koepke
Sara Kozak
Leland Krumenacker
Gary Kuehnlenz
Marit Kulleseid
Michelle Kupper
Judith Kurz and David V. Foster
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Teresa and Brent Lagerman
Douglas Land
Linda Lange and Rich Franco
The Lange/Balogh Family
Diane and Peter Lapis
Lazlo & Esmeralda
Matthew Leber
Larry Lebow
John and Elaine Leinung
Nancy Leo
Martina Leonard
Dana Levenberg
Frances Levenson

(Continued on Page 19)

15 YEARS AND 682 ISSUES



100TH ISSUE

April 25, 2014



200TH ISSUE

April 1, 2016



300TH ISSUE

March 2, 2018



400TH ISSUE

Jan. 31, 2020



500TH ISSUE

Dec. 31, 2021



600TH ISSUE

Dec. 8, 2023

(Continued from Page 18)

Buster Levi
Cynthia Ligenza, MD
Cathy and David Lilburne
Daniel Lincoln
Elizabeth Lindy
Kate and Michael Lombardi
Nancy Longersbeam
James Lott
Stan Lovenworth
Haylin Low
Mark H. Luedeman
Jesse Lunin-Pack
Ian G. MacDonald
Kelly Maloney and Richard Schunk
Peter Maloney
Jo Mango
Jake Marchman
Anna & J Marcus
Carol Marquand and Stan Freilich
Grace and Michael Martin
Christa Martino
Betsy Matos
Alice Matthews and Perrin Ferris
Dan Mausner
Thomas Maxson
Matthew Maye and Lynn Freehill-Maye
Jen McCreery
Damian and Nanci McDonald
Ed McFarland
Jean McGee
Kevin McGovern
Ed McGowan and Panni Gergely
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John McLaughlin
Lydia and Matt McMahon
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Sean and Jennifer Melendez
Michael Mell and Kate Dayton
Jacqueline Merrill & Frederick Matzner
Melissa Meyers and Wilbur Foster
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The Minkin-Mennes Family
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Virginia Montgomery
Joseph Montuori and Suzanne Walsh
Christina Moon
Peg Moran and Jim Bopp
Juliet Moser
Michael and Melinda Moyer
Myra McIntosh Mullgrav

Elizabeth Murphy
Matt Murphy and Edward Graham
Kay Murray and Ben Yarmolinsky
Paulette Myers-Rich and David Rich
Sherrie and Nikolai Nachamkin
David Nakano
Maureen Neary
Suellen Nelson
Elizabeth Neubauer
Ed Neumeister
Belle and Blake Newton
Jeff Nishball
Harry Norman
Leslie Nowinski and Joe Perry
Irene O'Garden and John Pielmeier
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The O'Leary Family
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Dennis O'Toole
Sue Onishenko
Anne and Fred Osborn III
Eric Osborne-Christenson
Marilyn Palefsky
Charlotte Palmer-Lane and John Lane
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Stephanie Paul
Thomas and Martha Pearson
Eleanor Peck
Perry Pendleton
Thomas Pendleton
Mary Perrine
Heather Persico
Taylor Phillips & Sean Malahy
Penelope and Xavier Pi-Sunyer
The Pieza Family
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Gail Pitts
Janet Plucknett
Janis and Bob Polastre
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Pasquale Porpora
Prue Posner
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Ajay Salhotra
Heath and Hannah Salit
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Amy Sandler
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Kent and Courtney Schacht
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Reporter's Notebook *(from Page 1)*

with his firsthand accounts of President Carter, the White House, Camp David, Air Force One and Middle East peace talks.

A lot has happened since Gordon's digital newspaper, *Philipstown.info*, first hit computer screens on Friday, July 4, 2010. One of our first stories detailed how Wachovia Bank (Wells Fargo now occupies the site) closed for a day due to a noxious odor. It seemed like breaking news at the time!

Two years later, with many newspapers cutting costs by abandoning print in favor of online-only, Gordon did just the opposite. On June 1, 2012, the first edition of *Philipstown.info's The Paper* rolled off the presses.

Front-page stories included traffic snarls on Route 9D at Indian Brook Bridge, Democratic congressional hopefuls, including Sean Patrick Maloney, vying to oust Republican Rep. Nan Hayworth, and the Haldane Blue Devils defeating Tuckahoe to win the sectional baseball championship.

At that time, both our print and digital editions focused solely on life in Cold Spring, Nelsonville, Garrison and greater Philipstown.

I was at my son Drew's wedding in Costa Rica in November 2014 when I learned of Gordon's death at age 75. I don't mind saying I cried. For Gordon, Philipstown wasn't just a municipality. It was his community, and *The Paper* contributed significantly to its well-being by keeping residents informed.

Our office, then at 69 Main St. in Cold Spring (now Barber & Brew), hosted election forums, local musicians, dramatic readings and displays on Philipstown life. An online radio station even operated on weekends in the front window. Less than a year before his death, on Sunday, Dec. 22, 2013, the community packed St. Mary-in-the-Highlands Episcopal Church as Gordon conducted an emotionally charged performance of Handel's *Messiah*.

By 2015, *The Paper* had expanded to



Highlands Current founder Gordon Stewart (right) receives in 2013 a Business Person of the Year Award from Vinny Tamagna, president of the Cold Spring Chamber of Commerce.

File photo

include news from Beacon, and we became *The Highlands Current* to better reflect our coverage area.

Today we cover two villages, a town, a city, three school districts, two county governments and the Highlands' representatives in the New York State Legislature and the U.S. Congress. Add to that high school sports, the arts and columns dealing with food, gardening, the outdoors and the environment.

We've done in-depth reports on subjects ranging from the opioid crisis, climate change and hunger and poverty to COVID-19, Black history and immigration. Reporting is always through the lens of life in the Highlands, including how national and even international issues affect local residents. Very few local weekly papers do that.

Just as *The Current's* coverage has expanded over the years, my journalistic horizons have also broadened considerably since that unsolved odor at Wachovia Bank. My most remarkable interview to date was

with Tomiko Morimoto West, a Japanese-American who survived the bombing of Hiroshima as a 12-year-old.

I chronicled 10 Highlands residents who attended the iconic Woodstock Music Festi-

val in 1969. During the peak of the COVID-19 outbreak, I was able to speak live via Zoom with a retired industrialist in China, the epicenter of the global pandemic. I told the heartbreaking story of a young Warren Eitner, a Haldane graduate and true World War II hero killed in action when his B-17 bomber was shot down over Germany. And I got to interview Pete Seeger.

I think Gordon Stewart would be pleased with how *Philipstown.info* evolved to become *The Highlands Current*. He must have smiled broadly when as a team we earned three consecutive New York Press Association Newspaper of the Year awards. But I think what would please him most is that we remain a community newspaper. The geographic boundaries have expanded but the mission is unchanged: report on local life and what matters most to residents.

We can ask two things of you, our readers. Be our critics; tell us when we get it right and hold our feet to the fire when we don't. And please contribute financially. Across the U.S. more than 3,200 print newspapers have ceased to exist since 2005. Your contribution will help us continue to report on the Hudson Highlands. So many important stories remain to be told.

NOTICE

PHILIPSTOWN ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Public Hearing – July 14th, 2025

The Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals for the Town of Philipstown, New York will hold a public hearing on Monday, July 14th, 2025 starting at 7:30 p.m. to hear the following appeal. The meeting will be held in person at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY.

Suzanne Giachinta, 10 Pond Rd., Cold Spring, NY 10516, TM#38.-3-55

Applicant is seeking a variance to build a 32' X 23.5' addition to existing barn.

At said hearing all persons will have the right to be heard. Copies of the application, plat map, and other related materials may be seen in the Office of the Building Department, 2 Cedar Street, Cold Spring, New York or by visiting the following link on the Town of Philipstown website.

<https://sites.google.com/philipstown.com/townofphilipstown/june>

Dated June 9th, 2025

Robert Dee, Chair of the Town of Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals

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Roots and Shoots

15 Years Later...

By Pamela Doan



When I met Kevin Foley, the former editor of *Phil-iptstown.info*, handing out *The Paper* at the village farmer's market in 2012, my family had lived in Cold Spring for two years and I was still early in my gardening life here.

It was unexpected and interesting to live in a small town with not one community newspaper, but two: *The Paper*, which was the precursor to *The Highlands Current*; and the *Putnam County News & Recorder*, then owned by the late Roger Ailes, the CEO of the Fox News Channel.

As I came to know the reasons for dueling papers and to see the differences between them, it reminded me of that scene from *It's a Wonderful Life* when George Bailey's angel, Clarence, takes him to see what the town would have been like if Mr. Potter's greed and cruelty would have been able to dominate without an opposing force for good.

What would the Hudson Highlands be if Roger Ailes' news was the only force shaping our community? Fortunately, we didn't have to find out.

I approached Kevin in 2013, fresh out of the Cornell Cooperative Extension

master gardener program, eager to put my expanding bank of knowledge, my sense of urgency about climate change and my MFA in creative writing to use. Although I had some gardening experience prior to moving to Cold Spring, nothing prepared me for the challenges of stewarding 10 acres of forest.

I wanted to learn and needed to do it quickly. *Roots and Shoots* became one of my channels for research and for interviewing scientists and experts in pursuit of information I needed and could spread.

This hyperlocal endeavor means I share your woes; it isn't an abstract connection with gardening. I get the same rainfall, snow, heat and pests. That's what I truly appreciate about community journalism. Even after all these words, thoughts and hard lessons, it's my fascination and deep respect for plants and nature that make me feel like I've got more to learn and share.

As a new landowner in 2010, I didn't know a maple from an oak. The hostas, lilies and peonies left by the previous owners were recognizable, but I didn't yet understand their lack of value for the forest ecosystem around them.

At the time, CCE offered a home-visit program in Putnam County, and I signed up. The resource educator, Jennifer Lerner, and a master gardener spent time with us and walked the property. We had a million questions; afterward, they sent a summary that became our guide in making decisions. That experience became the gold standard



One of my first flower beds included Heuchera, rudbeckia, obedient plant and coreopsis with a pinch of Culver's root.

Photo by P. Doan

for me, and I now offer something similar as a garden coach. It's what I hope *Roots and Shoots* can provide in print.

Gardeners can get stuck with a sense of failure when plants don't thrive. Why doesn't it look like that photo of the DIY yard on the internet? What am I doing wrong? In so many cases where a person feels anxious or critical, I can find a dozen bright spots. Whether it's an early-stage planting that isn't meeting expectations or a mature planting that feels overwhelming, I can pick out ways that planting is filling an ecological need that is greater than our Instagram feed.

My daughter is currently listening to the *Hamilton* soundtrack on repeat, which primed me to pick up a used copy of *Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature and the Shaping of the American Nation* by Andrea Wulf. With Independence Day celebra-

tions happening, it seems appropriate.

The opening chapter recounts George Washington's curiosity and passion for learning about the landscape around him. Even while leading troops during the Revolutionary War he focused on the forests and, in his letters, mused over the trees he experienced. He viewed planting native trees and plants at Mount Vernon as an act of patriotism and rejected the fashion of glorifying plants and trees from England and other countries. He saw farming as a path to freedom and independence.

I found resonance with our current moment in history. As our government's policies devastate sustainability and ethical land stewardship efforts in favor of development, worsen our climate crisis and threaten gains made in clean-air and clean-water standards, gardening is again an act of rebellion.

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NOTICE

The Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals will hold their regular monthly meeting on **Monday, July 14th, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY.**

If you are unable to join in person but would like to watch, the meeting will be livestreaming on youtube.com, search for Philipstown Zoning Board July 2025.

Out There

Slug Life

Exploring “forest euphoria”

By Brian PJ Cronin

Pity the poor banana slug, just trying to live its life and munch moss, but instead catching strays from the President of the United States of America.

In May, President Trump signed an executive order aimed at “ending the taxpayer subsidization of biased media,” by which he means ending all federal funding to PBS and NPR. A fact sheet released by the White House to show the president’s justification for labeling public media as “left-wing propaganda” highlighted an NPR segment mentioning that “banana slugs are hermaphrodites.”

Here’s the thing, though. Banana slugs *are* hermaphrodites. They have both male and female reproductive organs, can mate as either males or females, and even fertilize themselves. Is it left-wing propaganda if it’s something that happens in the woods every day?

I began to worry that, as an environmental journalist who writes about asexual eels and cicadas whose butts fall off after extended hallucinogenic orgies, I was destroying America. So I called Patricia Ononiwu Kaishian, a Putnam Valley native who’s currently the curator of mycology at the New York State Museum in Albany.

She’s also the author of the extraordinary new book *Forest Euphoria: The Abundant Queerness of Nature*. The book is part memoir, detailing Kaishian’s days exploring the abundant nature of the Hudson Highlands, and part an examination of the ways in which the natural world resists simple categorizations. Previously, she taught a class on queer ecology at Bard. On the first day of each class, she and the students would work out a definition of what queer ecology is.

On one level it’s about the species that defy binary definitions of sexuality. Slipper snails are all born as males. But as Kaishian explains in *Forest Euphoria*, sometimes a group of snails will pile on top of one another to form a writhing mound. During this process, some snails will then transition to females.

Clonal raider ants are all female. Their society has no queens or males. They reproduce by developing embryos inside themselves without fertilization, a process known as *parthenogenesis*, a combination of the Greek words for “virgin” and “creation.”

Then there’s those slippery eels, who for most of their lives have no sexual organs. Speaking of the Greeks, the asexual nature of eels drove poor Aristotle crazy; he eventually declared that they must spontaneously reproduce from mud. Aristotle was in good company, as young Sigmund Freud was also flummoxed by eels and spent an entire fruitless summer in his youth flaying hundreds of eels in an attempt to discover the elusive eel



Patricia Ononiwu Kaishian

Photo provided

testes. (Freud’s obsession with phallic symbols makes a lot more sense now, doesn’t it?)

We now know that eels’ sexual organs only develop in the final stage of their lives as they race back to the Sargasso Sea to spawn and die, their stomachs shrivelling up to make room for the new testes or ovaries.

But there’s another level to queer ecology, bound up in the word “queer.” When I was growing up, it was an insult. But as Kaishian told me, the word was reclaimed by the gay community in the 1980s and ‘90s in the face of widespread government indifference to the AIDS crisis and homophobia.

“Queerness is about the collective, understanding power and understanding how unity is necessary in combating oppression.”

~ Patricia Ononiwu Kaishian

“It was a way of galvanizing a collective to act against government neglect and oppression,” she said. “Queerness is about the collective, understanding power and understanding how unity is necessary in combating oppression.”

In queer ecology, one is invited to think about what gets labeled normal, and what gets labeled abnormal. “Why do we think this way as a society?” asked Kaishian. “How is science influenced by cultural forces, and how has that, in some cases, inhibited our knowledge?” A familiar attack on the LGBTQ+ community is that their lives are “unnatural,” but as Kaishian explains, queerness is literally “natural,” with thousands and thousands of examples spread across the Tree of Life.

Through this lens, the attacks on public media, scientific knowledge and the trans

community aren’t separate issues but part of a broader pattern.

“All these things are related,” she said. “Climate change, as much as it is a technical, scientific problem, it’s also a social and a political problem. It’s not just about finding scientific salvation from carbon in the atmosphere. It’s also about confronting our very relationship to Earth, our very relationship to consumption and the other species that we share a planet with. The total destruction of the planet is also linked to the hierarchies that humans create. If you can create a hierarchy between people, it’s very easy to then also extend that into the natural world.”

Queer ecology, then, is not about putting politics into science but about taking politics out of it, about looking at the world as it actually is without cultural biases getting in the way. When we do that, we discover wondrous things that were previously neglected.

The first exhibit that Kaishian curated at the museum lifts up work that was, for cultural reasons, ignored. *Outcasts*, which runs through Jan. 4, displays the vibrant watercolors of fungi painted by the 19th-century mycologist Mary Elizabeth Banning. Because of her gender, her work was never taken seriously in her lifetime. She died penniless and destitute, but not before mailing her life’s work to a sympathetic researcher in Albany.

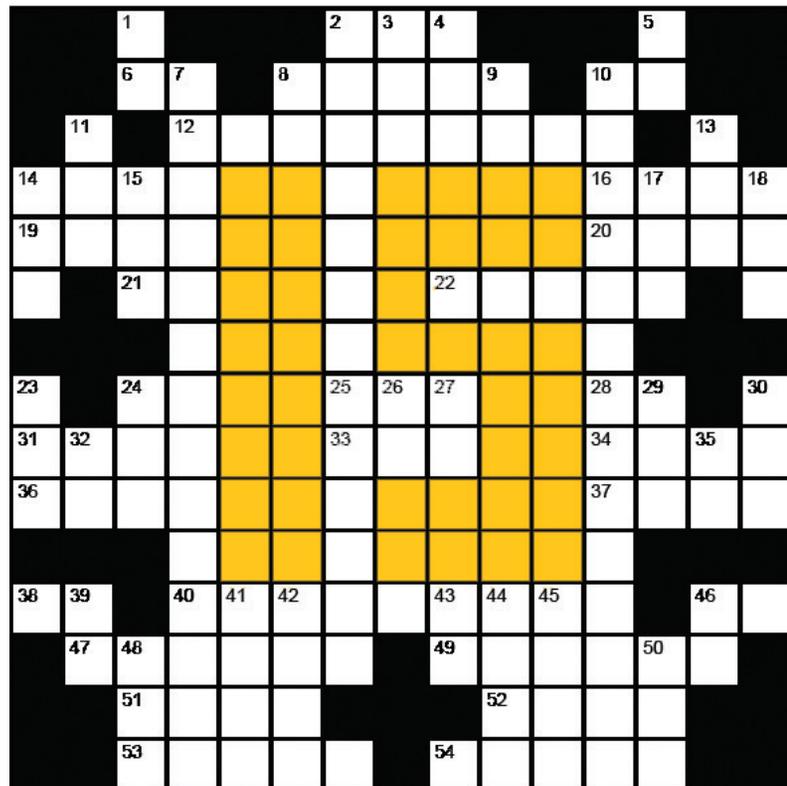
Her work sat in a drawer for almost a hundred years, where the darkness ironically helped preserve the painting’s vibrant colors. With the new exhibit, her work has been brought out into the light and is being given its due. Princeton University Press will now publish Banning’s book in the future.

“It’s really exciting to see young girls come to the exhibit,” said Kaishian. “I’ve done a couple of children’s events educating kids about mushrooms and their biology — but also explaining that there was a time when women were told they couldn’t be scientists. And now we can be. Think about how important that is.”

Puzzles

CROSSCURRENT

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong



ACROSS

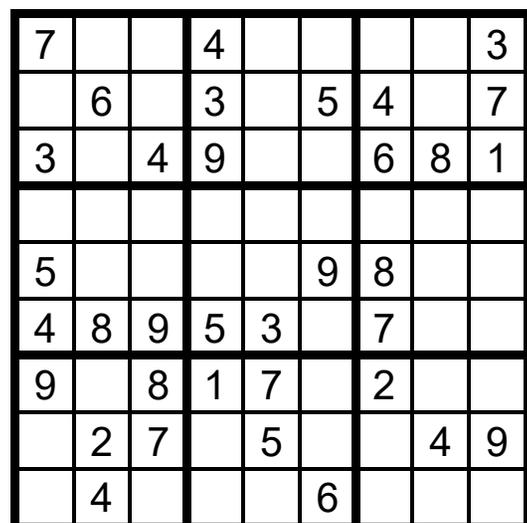
- 2. Obtain
- 6. Present
- 8. Meeting
- 10. Greek letter
- 12. Go too far
- 14. One-fifth of a score
- 16. Last part of this news outlet's name, 2010
- 19. Prickly fruit casing
- 20. Existence
- 21. Kan. neighbor
- 22. Showery month
- 24. "___ tu Brute?"
- 25. Water source
- 28. Spanish affirmative
- 31. First name in denim
- 33. Historic period
- 34. Thick book
- 36. Concept
- 37. A single time
- 38. Preface meaning 2
- 40. Navy hooch portion

- 46. Opposite of 13 down
- 47. Pot, cups, saucers
- 49. Over there
- 51. Food/eating plan
- 52. Lighting element
- 53. Opposite of over
- 54. Speediness

DOWN

- 1. German affirmative
- 2. Name of this news outlet's founder
- 3. Make a mistake
- 4. Day after Mon
- 5. State above IN
- 7. Heavy downpour
- 8. Iron, elementally
- 9. State next to NY
- 10. 1st parts of this news outlet's name, 2010
- 11. 2nd person pronoun
- 13. Opposite of 46 across
- 14. Kash Patel's org.
- 15. Big coffee container
- 17. Zilch, nada
- 18. Old poet preposition
- 23. Yale student
- 24. Early Bible woman
- 26. State above LA
- 27. Ma's partner
- 29. Charged atom
- 30. Tax or tariff
- 32. Talking TV horse
- 35. Show host, abbrev.
- 39. That thing
- 41. Previously utilized
- 42. Dispense; dole out
- 43. 1960s actor Hardin
- 44. Island in Hudson or off coast of Scotland
- 45. Lower than twos
- 46. Either's partner
- 48. College e-mail ender
- 50. Opposite of WSW

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WORDSEARCH

THEME: Fourth

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

FIVE SPOT

Solve each row by replacing one letter from the answer above or below and scrambling to make a new word. When complete, the top and bottom words will have no letters in common.

S	M	O	K	E

- Cure, in a way
- Undercover agents
- Alabama city
- Iconic hardwood
- Asian country
- Factory

Answers for June 27

GHOST, SHORT, OTHER, EARTH, RATED, DREAM

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

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