

BEACON FREE PRESS

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Rep. Ryan, local and county officials raise alarm on temporary closure of SSA Office in Poughkeepsie

Congressman Pat Ryan raised the alarm last week that the temporary closing of the Poughkeepsie Social Security Administration Office would cause significant disruptions for Hudson Valley seniors, and demanded the Social Security Administration (SSA) take action to ensure there was absolutely no reduction in services. In a letter to Acting SSA Commissioner Carolyn W. Colvin, Ryan also called for increased transparency, including a detailed timeline for the renovations, and a commitment to gathering community input to identify and implement measures that minimize disruption to those who rely on SSA services. Last year, Congressman Ryan introduced the landmark "Protecting Social Security Act," which, among other things, would ensure every county in NY-18 had its own SSA office.

"Closing yet another Social Security office in the Hudson Valley is outrageous and totally unacceptable. And it isn't just an issue for seniors in Dutchess. How are folks supposed to get their benefits if there's no Social Security Offices open in either Ulster or Dutchess?" said Ryan. "I get the need for renovations, but the solution simply cannot be 'limited' in-person services or making people travel all the way to Middletown. We need answers ASAP to ensure not a single Hudson Valley senior goes without the benefits they have earned."

"Our residents, especially our senior citizens and the disabled, rely on the Social Security Administration's downtown Poughkeepsie office for a host of services from a name change so one can update a driver license or passport to apply for earned income or medical benefits. With the Social Security Administration requiring in-person visits for most transactions, our residents shouldn't be forced to travel out of the County for assistance," said Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino. "I stand behind Congressman Ryan's demand for answers and full local services for our residents."

"Social Security is the financial life blood for many of our residents, and continued access to those services is essential. While I appreciate the administration making renovations and improvements to the facility, providing uninterrupted assistance during this time is paramount," said City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Yvonne Flowers. "Residents need clear guidelines to ensure they understand their options during construction and should be kept informed as to when these renovations will be completed."

"The Poughkeepsie Social Security Administration office and staff are a critical resource, and a disruption like this, temporary or not, causes real, tangible challenges for those who need timely access to support," said State Senator Rob Rolison. The SSA must

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Wappingers Falls Airman positively identified 80 years after WWII mission

By Christian J. Malerba
Project Recover staff

Project Recover staff The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), in partnership with Project Recover and other experts in the field, has announced that they have positively identified the remains of Staff Sergeant Eugene J. Darrigan who had been Missing In Action since World War II.

The 26-year-old soldier from Wappingers Falls served as radio operator in a B-24 bomber named "Heaven Can Wait" that was shot down over a remote bay in Papua, New Guinea on March 11, 1944.

"Project Recover is honored to welcome Staff Sergeant Darrigan home to a grateful nation," said Project Recover CEO Derek Abbey. "We honor his and his family's sacrifice and remain committed to continuing our search for his more than 80,000 comrades in arms who still remain missing in action. While it took eight decades to return him to his family, this solemn promise does not have an expiration date."

In 2017 the missing bomber was located underwater at a depth of over 200 feet by the partnership Project Recover, leading to a 2023 mission by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency to recover crew remains from the wreck site. At the time, this was the deepest underwater MIA recovery effort ever undertaken by the U.S. government.

The 11-man crew of "Heaven Can Wait" was part of the 320th squadron of the "Jolly Rogers" 90th Bombardment Group and was on a mission to bomb Japanese anti-aircraft batteries



It was announced recently that the remains of World War II Staff Sgt. Eugene Darrigan were positively identified.

-Courtesy photo

around Hansa Bay when their B-24 was shot down by enemy fire causing it to crash into the ocean.

Present-day Papua, New Guinea was the site of military action in the Pacific from January 1942 to the end of the war in August 1945, with significant losses of aircraft and servicemen.

Project Recover set its sights on finding "Heaven Can Wait" after being presented with four years of research on

circumstances of the crash, compiled by family members of one the B-24 crew members seeking closure for their lost relative. These data included historical eyewitness narratives from official military reports, mission documents, and diary entries from crew members on other aircraft in formation with the B-24 during its flight.

In October 2017, a team from Project Recover performed an archaeological survey of Hansa Bay using scanning sonars, high definition imagers, advanced diving, and unmanned aerial and underwater robotic technologies. After covering nearly 27 square kilometers of the sea floor over 11 days, Project Recover located the debris field of the B-24 bomber at a depth of 213 feet.

Project Recover formally communicated details of the crash site to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), and based on that site survey the DPAA sent a Navy diving expedition back to Hansa Bay in 2018 to confirm that the site contained the likely wreck of the "Heaven Can Wait" bomber.

In 2019, DPAA leadership started planning for a mission to recover crew remains from the wreck site. That effort would be delayed by the global COVID-19 pandemic, but in early 2023 the DPAA sent a mission team, including the Navy's Experimental Diving Unit to Hansa Bay for a multi-week recovery operation. This was the deepest underwater MIA recovery operation the U.S. government had ever undertaken.

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Fareground Welcome Table to begin serving meals

By Kristine Coulter

Beacon Community Kitchen (BCK), after approximately a decade, has closed. The good news – Fareground Welcome Table will be available to the community.

The first meals to be served will be from 5:30-7:30 p.m. The date is scheduled for Friday, Jan. 31 in the First Presbyterian Church of Beacon's fellowship hall, 50 Liberty St., in Beacon.

"It is bittersweet," said Candi Rivera, who led BCK. "We were more of a family. We were a family that came together." She said most of BCK's volunteers will continue to give of their time at Fareground Welcome Table.

Fareground Food + Community and the First Presbyterian Church will make "it bigger and better," remarked Rivera.

Katrina Ross, who is the coordinator of Fareground Welcome Table, said, "I think it's going to be really good for our community."

Ross remarked, "I think we need more places to gather and take care of each other."

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A check presentation by Beacon Community Kitchen (BCK) recently took place. The Fareground Welcome Table will now offer meals on Fridays at the First Presbyterian Church of Beacon, 50 Liberty St., in Beacon. Pictured are Candi Rivera, BCK, and Katrina Ross, organizer of Fareground Welcome Table.

-Photo by Kristine Coulter

Gov. Hochul unveils proposal to restrict smartphone use in schools

Governor Kathy Hochul launched her push to restrict smartphone use in K-12 schools statewide last week. The launch of this new effort follows the introduction of this legislative proposal as part of Governor Hochul's FY 2026 Executive Budget Proposal. Additionally, Governor Hochul today released a new report with recommendations gathered from her statewide listening tour this past year with students, parents and teachers regarding excessive smartphone use in schools. This effort continues Governor Hochul's commitment to protecting youth mental health and promoting student success in the digital age, following her action last year to secure and sign a first-in-the-nation law to restrict addictive social media feeds for minors.

"From parents and teachers, to social justice and law enforcement leaders, New Yorkers agree that our young people succeed when they're learning and growing, not clicking and scrolling," Governor Hochul said. "Using the insights from my statewide listening tour, this comprehensive proposal to restrict smartphone use in schools will ensure that New York's statewide standard for distraction-free learning delivers the best results for our kids and educators."

This new legislation covers requirements and details including:

- No unsanctioned use of smartphones and other internet-enabled personal devices on school grounds in K-12 schools for the entire school day, including classroom time and other settings like lunch and study hall periods.

- Allows schools to develop their own plans for storing smartphones during the day — giving administrators and teachers the flexibility to do what works best for their buildings and students.

- Proposes \$13.5 million in funding to be made available for schools that need assistance in purchasing storage solutions to help them go distraction-free.

- Requires schools to give parents a way to contact their kids during the day if needed.

The Governor's proposal also clarifies that students would still be authorized to have access to simple cell phones without internet capability, as well as internet-enabled devices officially provided by their school for classroom instruction, such as laptops or tablets used as part of lesson plans.

Additionally, the Governor's proposal includes several exemptions to smartphone restrictions, including for students who require access to an internet-enabled device to manage a medical condition, where required by a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), or for other academic purposes, such as translation.

This More Learning, Less Scrolling: Creating Distraction-Free Schools" includes:

Findings from the Governor's statewide



Gov. Kathy Hochul announced recently her proposal to have smartphone use restricted in schools.

-Courtesy photo by NYS Governor's Office

listening tour, including:

- Smartphones distract students and inhibit learning and creativity

- Phone-free environments do not compromise student safety

- Phone-free environments support the mental health of students and teachers

Recommendations for how schools can prepare to go distraction-free, including:

- Open communication and direct guidance for all stakeholders is key for successful implementation

- Schools must address any parent concerns about staying in contact with their children during the day

- An effective distraction-free policy must focus on the entire school day, rather than solely on time in the classroom

- Schools can strengthen their distraction-free environment by connecting more students with in-person engagement like clubs, sports, arts and other programming

An implementation guide for schools to consider throughout this process, with references to resources and best practices published by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Education Technology

Continues Governor's commitment to protecting youth mental health

In June 2024, Hochul signed the Safe for Kids Act after strongly advocating for and securing passage of the legislation. That law, the first of its kind to be signed in any state in the nation, requires social media companies to restrict addictive feeds on their platforms for users under 18. Unless parental consent is granted, users under 18 will not receive

addictive feeds. Governor Hochul also signed the New York Child Data Protection act, which prohibits online sites and connected devices from collecting, using, sharing or selling personal data of anyone under the age of 18, unless they receive informed consent or unless doing so is strictly necessary for the purpose of the website.

As part of the Governor's \$1 billion investment in mental health statewide, Governor Hochul has also significantly expanded access to mental health care and resources for students. Last year, the state made available \$20 million in start-up funding for more school-based mental health clinics and launched a rolling application, which made it easier for interested schools to establish these satellites than through the previously used state procurement process. Since that announcement in February 2024, the state has funded 71 new clinic satellites — including 40 in high-needs districts — adding to the more than 1,100 that now exist statewide.

Diverse and growing support for distraction-free schools

Hochul was joined at the launch of her push for distraction-free schools by NYSUT President Melinda Person, NYSPTA Vice President and parent Roberto Rijos, Farnsworth Middle School student Anika Bhupati, New York State Police Superintendent Steven James, NAACP New York City Chapter President Anthony Harmon, State Senator Patricia Fahy, and other stakeholders.

NYSUT President Melinda Person said, "Today marks a pivotal step in our push to create distraction-free learning environments, ensuring our schools are sanctuaries for learning, growth and genuine connection. This movement is growing larger and stronger every day, and has brought together parents, teachers, law enforcement, and local officials who all recognize the crucial importance of giving children a school day free from the pressures of social media and other distractions. I want to thank Gov. Hochul for keeping student mental health a top priority, and for her clear dedication to the success and well-being of the

next generation."

United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew stated, "The UFT supports a statewide cell phone ban, with safeguards, because educators see the negative impact of cell phones in their classroom every day. The safeguards include ways for parents to reach students; funding for school districts to implement a plan; uniform disciplinary policies; and plans that don't make educators the first and only line of enforcement. We believe Governor Hochul understands these concerns and we look forward to working with her and the legislature to make this happen."

NYS PTA Vice President and Parent from Yonkers Roberto Rijos remarked, "As a father of three, my wife and I fully understand the concerns regarding smartphone usage in classrooms and schools. Our classrooms and schools must remain places of learning, collaboration, and cooperation where our students continue to thrive — free from unnecessary distractions. We thank Governor Hochul for truly listening to parents, families, educators, students, NYS PTA and other stakeholders in drafting this legislation — which balances common sense limitations to support in-class learning and socialization, and includes allowances for necessary usage of devices in certain instances, all while ensuring local control and feedback in development of local policies. The health, wellness, and mental health of our children is of highest priority, and we stand ready to be a partner to Measure our Mission for Every Child, with One Voice."

Mothers Against Media Addiction (MAMA) Founder and Executive Director Julie Scelfo commented, "Many of us thought we could give our kids these tech products and teach them how to use them safely, but there is no 'safe' when they're designed to be addictive. Smartphones distract kids and make it harder for them to focus and learn, and also displace critical real-life experiences and interactions that are essential for healthy development. We applaud Governor Hochul's proposed legislation to provide consistent, statewide restrictions on smartphone use during the school day, safeguarding students and supporting authentic, distraction-free learning in our schools."

New York State Police Superintendent Steven G. James said, "The use of mobile phones by students during a quickly developing school emergency is a distraction that could compromise the safety of students and school staff. State Police and local law enforcement will support school districts as they implement new cell phone policies as part of their school safety plans."

NAACP New York State Conference Education Chair Christine Waters said, "The NAACP New York State Conference is supportive of Governor Hochul's initiative to restrict Smartphone use in schools statewide to remove distractions and create an optimal learning environment in our schools that puts New York's children in a position to succeed academically. We look forward to working collectively with parents, students, teachers and school administrators to develop consistently applied policies that follow a statewide standard utilizing Best Practice Models that encourage responsible use of technology and supports the needs of our students and teachers. We believe firmly that we must do so without adding to the Codes of Conduct any additional obstacles to the academic pursuits of students such as the inclusion of zero tolerance policies that would see them removed from the classroom for any amount of time."

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Wappingers Falls Airman positively identified 80 years after WWII mission

Continued from cover

Staff Sergeant Darrigan is the second member of the “Heaven Can Wait” crew to be positively identified by the DPAA; identification of the remains for navigator 2nd Lt. Thomas V. Kelly, Jr. was announced by DPAA on November 15, 2024.

For over 30 years, Project Recover has been the nation’s leading citizen-led, non-profit organization to search,

locate, document, recover, and repatriate the over 81,500 American service members missing in action and to bring recognition and closure to the estimated 5,000,000 MIA Gold Star family members. Project Recover is the only non-governmental organization (NGO) with full vertical capabilities in the POW/MIA recovery space, which includes operational missions in both underwater and land environments.



Staff Sergeant Eugene J. Darrigan, second from right in the top row, is pictured with the crew of the B-24 bomber “Heaven Can Wait” that flew during World War II. -Courtesy photo

Ryan, state county, local officials raise alarm on temporary closing of SSA Office in Poughkeepsie



The Social Security Administration Office in Poughkeepsie will be closed temporarily due to renovations beginning Jan. 30. -Courtesy photo Dutchess County Government

Continued from cover

provide better planning and clear communication on how the SSA will continue to offer services to residents during the office closure, ensuring everyone has access to their hard-earned benefits. The well-being of so many in the Hudson Valley depends on it.”

“It’s absurd to think that people from Poughkeepsie will travel to Middletown for help with their Social Security payments or Medicare,” said Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson. “Many do not have transportation. The Social Security Administration could easily find space in the library or other public spaces in Poughkeepsie.”

Ryan’s letter to Acting Social Security Administration Commissioner Frank Bisignano included four demands:

- **Immediate Establishment of a Temporary Full-Service Office:** The SSA must open a fully staffed temporary office in Poughkeepsie or a nearby location to ensure that residents have full access to services during the renovation period. A small contact station is entirely insufficient.

- **No Disruption in Service:** I request assurances that there will not be a single day of disruption in service for Dutchess County residents. The SSA must take whatever steps are necessary to guarantee uninterrupted access to critical services.

- **Full Transparency:** Please provide a detailed timeline for the renovations, including the projected reopening date of the Poughkeepsie office.

- **Community Input:** Commit to engaging with local stakeholders, including elected officials and community organizations, to identify and implement measures that minimize disruption to those who rely on SSA services.

In the Social Security Administrations email to Congressional offices informing them of the temporary closure, the SSA noted that:

“Beginning Thursday, January 30, 2025 the office located at 332 Main Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601, will be temporarily closed for renovations. During this time, individuals requiring in-person services may visit the Middletown office located at 85 Crystal Run Road Suite 100, Middletown, NY 10941.

Starting Monday, February 17, 2025 the Poughkeepsie office will open a small contact station at its current location, 332 Main Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601, offering limited in-person services throughout the renovation period.”

A copy of Rep. Ryan’s letter to Acting Social Security Administration Commissioner Frank Bisignano is available at <https://patryan.house.gov/media>.

into the

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By George Brant

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Town of Poughkeepsie launches twice monthly food pantry

Recognizing the urgent need to address food insecurity in the community, the Town of Poughkeepsie held its first food pantry early this morning at Town Hall, 1 Overocker Road. This will be an ongoing program through Dutchess Outreach's Farm Stand program, with funding provided by Assemblymember Didi Barrett.

"No New Yorker should ever have to decide between paying a bill or putting food on the table, so combating food insecurity here in the Hudson Valley has long been a passion and priority of mine," said Barrett. "I was very happy to partner with Dutchess Outreach to expand their Farm Stand initiative into the Town of Poughkeepsie. Dutchess Outreach has worked for decades to feed hungry Dutchess County residents, and this new initiative will allow more of our neighbors to access fresh,

locally sourced food."

Today's delivery brought 7,000 pounds of groceries from the Food Bank to Town Hall, including potatoes, onions, apples, yogurt, cheese, milk, fruit, juice, and greens among other fresh items. Volunteers from Dutchess Outreach were joined by twenty Town residents, including Supervisor Rebecca Edwards and Dutchess County Legislator Lisa Kaul (District 6), to unload and distribute the groceries.

"So many of our residents are hungry right now," said Supervisor Edwards. "The extreme cold strains household budgets and adds to the need for nutritious meals. I'm so grateful to the amazing team from Dutchess Outreach, our Town volunteers, and Assemblymember Barrett for making this possible."

Dutchess Outreach reports that in

Dutchess County approximately 26,130 individuals suffer from food insecurity, a number that represents roughly 8.8% of the population and includes 4,590 children. Of those, 41% of individuals are above the eligibility limit for SNAP and other Nutrition Programs.

"Today was our first farm stand in collaboration with the Town of Poughkeepsie at Town Hall. Rebecca Edwards, our Town Supervisor was super amazing and advocated for us to be able to have this farm stand here," said Nyhisha Gibbs, Director of Community Engagement for Dutchess Outreach. "We had a turnout of over 60 people, we had over 20 volunteers...people were so happy and grateful to receive all of the food that we gave them. Our volunteers were amazing and I am just all warm and fuzzy inside knowing that we were able

to be here in this space to be able to feed our community."

The Town Hall Farm Stand/Food Pantry will be open twice a month, on the second and fourth Thursdays, moving outside in warmer weather. The Town may experiment with other locations; information will be on the Town website. The next event will be Thursday, Feb. 13 starting at 9 a.m. until all the food is dispersed.

County Legislator Lisa Kaul (District 6) said of today's pantry, "Times are tough, and people have to make difficult decisions about what they can afford. Often people will forgo a meal to pay the rent or pay for gas. Many thanks to Supervisor Edwards and Dutchess Outreach for recognizing this immense need in our community and for hosting a farm stand at Town Hall today. No one should have to go to bed hungry."

Donations of all blood types needed

New York Blood Center (NYBC) has declared a blood emergency due to a significant drop in blood donations following a holiday season of alarmingly low donor turnout. NYBC has seen a nearly 30% drop in donations in recent weeks which has resulted in 6,500 fewer donations and crippled the region's blood supply. Donations of all blood types are urgently needed – especially Types O- and B-, which are down to dangerously low 1-3-day supply.

Blood donations typically decrease

during the holiday season, but January poses additional challenges: inclement weather causing blood drive cancellations, flu, COVID, and RSV reducing donor eligibility, and schools and workplaces hosting fewer drives during holiday breaks. These factors have strained an already fragile blood supply, which is critical for surgeries, trauma care, cancer treatments, and managing chronic illnesses. Hospitals and patients depend on a steady stream of volunteer donors, yet the past few years have seen persistent,

nationwide blood shortages.

"The months following the holiday season are always a difficult time for the blood supply, with an increase in seasonal illness and inclement winter weather impacting donations," said Andrea Cefarelli, Senior Vice President at New York Blood Center. "The drop in donations serves as a critical reminder of the fragility of our nation's blood supply. We're urging all eligible New Yorkers to start the new year by saving lives – schedule a donation today and bring a friend to double the impact!"

"New York State is facing a critical blood shortage, and the need for donors has never been more urgent. A blood donation helps patients undergoing surgeries, trauma care and treatments for chronic illnesses," said New York State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald. "Please roll up your sleeve and help your community during this blood emergency—your donation can save lives."

"As the largest healthcare provider in the State of New York, Northwell

Health is deeply grateful to partner with New York Blood Center to support the urgent needs of the blood emergency," James Martone, Assistant Vice President, Clinical Laboratory Operations, Transfusion Medicine, Northwell Health Laboratories. "We thank and encourage all community blood donors to roll up their sleeves to meet our patients' transfusion needs now and throughout the year. Countless lives are saved thanks to the selfless generosity of these individuals."

Blood donors can give every 56 days, and platelet donors can give twice per month. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently lifted several blood donor eligibility restrictions. To view current eligibility guidelines, visit nybc.org or call 800-688-0900.

To make an appointment, donors can call 1-800-933-2566 or visit nybc.org. Can't donate blood? You can still make a lifesaving impact by supporting NYBC's mission through financial contributions or volunteering your time. Click here to learn more.

Council approves hiring of 2 new officers

The Beacon City Council approved the hiring of the two newest members of the City of Beacon Police Department. The hiring of Derek Sherman and Ryan Cross as police officers was approved during the Jan. 21 meeting. Both will be attending the upcoming Rockland County Police Academy.

City of Beacon Police Chief Thomas Figlia remarked that Sherman currently works as a police dispatcher for the Village of Monroe.

Figlia told the council that Cross works as a project manager. He has an associate's degree in criminal justice.

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Albert Osten, President

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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- All letters must contain a name, hometown and phone number for verification.
- Letters appearing on the Viewpoints page are the views of the writers alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Beacon Free Press.

Local fire company picks up the tab

The Union Vale Fire Company began collecting aluminum soda tabs at the end of October and within two months, and thanks to the eagerness and enthusiasm of the public, close to 30 pounds of aluminum tabs were collected for Ronald McDonald House Charities.

Recently, Public Information Officer Kathy Welsh of the Union Vale Fire District donated the first collection of tabs to members of the Eastern District Home Bureau of NYS Federation of Home Bureau Inc. which includes Home Bureau Eastern District Chairperson Alice Dickson, Dutchess County Home Bureau Chairperson Anne Christmas, and Eastern District/Dutchess County Home Bureau Community Service Chairperson Marie Elliott.

Local chapters of the Eastern District Home Bureau of NYS Federation of Home Bureau Inc. have been collecting aluminum tabs for Ronald McDonald House Charities for some time now. Welsh said, "When I heard the Home Bureau was collecting aluminum tabs for a worthy cause, I thought we could help out to collect even more aluminum tabs and invite the public for their support." And the public came through in flying colors! In just 10 weeks a little over 28 pounds of aluminum tabs were collected.

An individual from as far away as Monticello heard about our campaign through social media and donated several years' worth of tabs, noted Welsh. And emails and phone calls have been received wanting to support the campaign.

"These tabs will be given to the Ronald McDonald House in Albany to help with their heating expenses. We are very grateful to Kathy Welsh, the fire department, and the entire community for partnering with us and helping to support this project," said Community Service



From left: Kathy Welsh, Public Information Union Vale Fire District, recently presented over 28 pounds of aluminum soda tabs to Home Bureau Eastern District Chairperson Alice Dickson, Dutchess County Home Bureau Chairperson Anne Christmas, and Eastern District/Dutchess County Home Bureau Community Service Chairperson Marie Elliott for Ronald McDonald House Charities. Courtesy photo

Chairperson Marie Elliott.

Welsh said the fire company will be collecting aluminum tabs for an all-year campaign in 2025. As a courtesy, and for the public's convenience, there is a drop-off container at the Union Vale Town Hall, 249 Duncan Road, where the public can bring their aluminum tabs.

"We are very happy to help the Eastern

District Home Bureau of NYS collect and give the tabs from our very first campaign to ultimately help Ronald McDonald House Charities," said Welsh.

Dutchess County Home Bureau, part of the New York State Federation of Home Bureaus, is a women's organization centered around crafting with a focus on community service, fellowship, and fami-

ly life. Their local community service efforts focus on helping veterans, those in nursing care facilities, and babies born at Northern Dutchess Hospital and Albany Medical Center. To learn more about Dutchess County Home Bureau's Community Service efforts or to partner with them, contact Marie Elliott at marieelliott.fac89@gmail.com.

Fareground Welcome Table to begin serving meals



Some of the volunteers from Beacon Community Kitchen, and Fareground Welcome Table.

-Photo by Kristine Coulter

Continued from cover

Volunteer Tina Kelliher said, "I think it's fantastic. I am looking forward to working with them." As for volunteering with BCK, Kelliher noted, "It meant a lot at the time. I needed something and it provided me with hope." As for Rivera, Kelliher said, "I think she's fabulous."

Rivera said, "I think it's a great thing that is happening in the community now." She added, "We have a lot of good people."

Rev. Dr. Eileen Borduin Vanderzwan, with the Frist Presbyterian Church of Beacon, stated to the volunteers that were gathered, "We just got a new stove. It's

getting hooked up this week. We have a new refrigerator." The Reverend added, "We're ready to go. We feel like everything is falling into place."

A check of funds from a closed BCK account was presented by Rivera to Ross for the First Presbyterian Church to use towards the food for the meals.

Although the meals will be served one day a week, on Fridays from 5:30-7:30 p.m., it is hoped, said Ross, that the number of days meals will be served will be added.

Check Fareground and the church's websites and social media pages for any schedule changes and updates.

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Construction proceeds at new Upton Lake Christian School building

The new school building at Upton Lake Christian School in Clinton Corners is beginning to take shape.

Following the April 2024 groundbreaking, final permits were obtained, over 8,000 cubic yards of dirt and rock were moved, and construction was underway. Fortunately, beneficial weather in the latter part of the summer and beginning of fall allowed the construction to proceed at a good pace. Foundations were excavated and poured and the stone base was put in place. As we moved into the winter time, construction continued and the concrete first floor was poured on New Year's Eve. First floor framing has been underway with a break during the current Arctic frigid blast.

The new building will provide classroom and lab space for 7th-12th graders, music and art spaces for K-12, and will accommodate approximately 90 students. It will be two stories, with about 12,000 square feet under roof. Additional work includes landscaping, parking lot paving, exterior lighting, and area drainage.

Principal Elisa DeWitt is looking forward to moving into the new facility. She thanks



The first floor framing is in place at the new school building at Upton Lake Christian School in Clinton Corners.

-Courtesy photo

God for the many things that have come together to reach this point in the project. Current school board president Rich Evans has had the vision for the new building for over 20 years. He is excited to see it coming to fruition. All who have been involved with the project look forward to having the new

facility where a Christ-centered education will be provided. Students will be equipped to move in the direction of their career choices and equipped to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The project is being built by Bovee

Construction of Pleasant Valley. Owner Brian Bovee is excited to see the progress of the project and is targeting, as are many others, to see the doors open for teaching for the 2025-2026 school year.

17th annual Cookie Walk set for Feb. 8 in Poughkeepsie



The 17th annual Mid-Hudson Love INC Cookie Walk is set for Saturday, Feb. 8 at the Poughkeepsie United Methodist Church in Poughkeepsie. Pictured are a variety of cookie platters from 2023.

- Courtesy photos by Patty & Arnie Ten

The Annual Mid-Hudson Love INC Cookie Walk promises sweet treats and positive vibes. On Saturday, Feb. 8, cookie-lovers can select their favorites from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. (or as long as supplies last) at Poughkeepsie United Methodist Church, 2381 New Hackensack Road (Route 376) in Poughkeepsie. Based on last year's offering of more than 900 dozen cookies, a wide variety of gourmet homemade cookies are expected, including gluten free.

This is the 17th year for the Mid-Hudson Love In the Name of Christ Cookie Walk, which is always held the Saturday before Valentine's Day, and again this year falls the day before the Big Game. The event showcases the recipes and decorating skills of over 100 volunteer bakers who donate their best baked goods. Shoppers receive gloves and a bakery box and walk

through the cookie display selecting the items they want. The filled bakery boxes are weighed, and shoppers take their treats home for a suggested donation of \$10 per pound.

Proceeds benefit the ministry work of local churches through Mid-Hudson Love In the Name of Christ. Mid-Hudson Love INC is a partnership of churches that helps local families experiencing poverty by providing personal attention, skill-building classes, mentoring, and tangible goods such as personal care items, linens, and furniture.

Pick up some treats for your sweetheart, your family, your Super Bowl party, a neighbor, or a friend, and know that your financial donation offers a helping hand to someone in need. For further information about Mid-Hudson Love INC, visit www.mid-hudsonloveinc.org or call 845-471-0102.



Applications being accepted for Powerhouse Theater 2025 Training Program

Vassar College will present its annual Powerhouse Theater season from June 20 to July 27. As in previous years, the Powerhouse Theater Training Program will be offered for students who seek a unique opportunity to dive headfirst into a conservatory-like intensive on the Vassar College campus. Actors, directors, and writers hone their respective crafts through both class work and practical experiences.

By engaging with professional theater companies and artists who are in residence each summer, students deepen their understanding of the art and the industry. A summer at Powerhouse exposes students to new theater making

possibilities through a process of self-discovery.

A Powerhouse Day includes morning and early afternoon classes, led by some of the country's leading theater practitioners and instructors. The core classes for all disciplines are acting, movement, and Soundpainting. Powerhouse afternoons and evenings consist of rehearsals, masterclasses, performances, talkbacks, and much more.

Applications will be accepted through April 1. Apply at <https://app.getacceptd.com/powerhousetheater>. Call 845-437-5907 or email powerhouse@vassar.edu for more information.

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Hope to hear from you! Thanks!

HV Renegades field, support staffs announced

The New York Yankees announced their minor league field and support staffs for the 2025 season on Friday. James Cooper will take over as the manager of the Hudson Valley Renegades, the Yankees' High-A affiliate.

Cooper becomes the 20th manager in team history, and the fifth in five years during the Yankees era. He replaces Nick Ortiz, who guided the Renegades to a franchise record 73 wins and an appearance in the South Atlantic League Championship Series in 2024. Under his tutelage the Renegades had their 12th consecutive winning season, and 15th in the last 16 seasons. Since the beginning of the 2012 season, the Renegades have the best winning percentage (.573) in Minor League Baseball.

He is joined on the all-new field staff by Pitching Coach Demetre Kokoris (1st season), Hitting Coach Tom DeAngelis (1st season), Defensive Coaches Caleb Hamilton (1st season) and Teuris Olivares (1st season). The support staff features four returners in Clubhouse Manager Ryan Shute (5th season), Athletic Trainer Adaric Kelly (2nd season), Strength & Conditioning Coach Dylan Lidge (2nd season), and Advance Scouting Analyst Devin Clementi (2nd season). Video & Tech Assistant Dominic Cox (1st season), joins the Renegades as the lone newcomer on the support staff.

"I'm honored to join the Renegades family and to lead this incredible team to a special season. The Renegades have a proud tradition of excellence and an amazing fan base," said Cooper. "I can't wait to get to work with our talented players and staff as we build a season to remember. I'm looking forward to developing our players and seeing all the fans go crazy as we make them proud at Heritage Financial Park."

James Cooper

Cooper, 42, begins his first season as the manager of the Renegades in 2025, and his third season overall as a minor league manager in the Yankees organization. He spent the 2024 season as the skipper for the Single-A Tampa Tarpons of the Florida State League, and managed the FCL Yankees in 2023, where he was named Florida Complex League Manager of the Year. Under his guidance, the Tarpons led the FSL in Stolen Bases (242) ranked second in AVG (.239), Hits (982) and Doubles (204), and fourth in OPS (.701). That came on the heels of his FCL team pacing its league in runs, hits, triples, RBIs, AVG, OBP, SLG and OPS in 2023.

Before managing in the Yankees system he was a defensive coach for one season

with the FCL Yankees, where he won the FCL Championship in 2022 as part of a coaching staff that featured 2023 Renegades manager Sergio Santos, current Yankees assistant pitching coach Preston Claiborne, and 2024 Renegades hitting coach Rick Guarno.

Demetre Kokoris

Kokoris begins his first year as the Renegades pitching coach and first in the Yankees organization. He previously coached for three seasons each in the Texas Rangers (2022-24) and Toronto Blue Jays (2019-21) organizations. Kokoris spent the 2023 and 2024 seasons as the Bullpen Coach for the Triple-A Round Rock Express, and was the pitching coach for the Single-A Down East Wood Ducks in 2022, where he led the staff to a 3.84 ERA, the second-best in the Carolina League.

Tom DeAngelis

DeAngelis begins his first season as the Renegades hitting coach and third year in the Yankees organization. He previously served as the hitting coach with Single-A Tampa in 2024 and with the FCL Yankees in 2023, working with Cooper at each stop. Under his guidance, the Tarpons ranked second in the Florida State League in AVG (.239), hits (982) and doubles (204), and fourth in OPS (.701), a strong performance after the 2023 FCL Yankees led its league in runs, hits, triples, RBIs, AVG, OBP, SLG and OPS.

Caleb Hamilton

Hamilton begins his first year as a Renegades defensive coach and first year in the Yankees organization. Recently retired after a 10-year playing career which saw him appear in 26 games across two seasons in the Major Leagues with the Minnesota Twins in 2022 and Boston Red Sox in 2023, Hamilton embarks on his first season as a professional coach in 2025. During the 2024 season, Hamilton played in 39 games with the Rocket City Trash Pandas, the Double-A affiliate of the Los Angeles Angels. He was drafted by Minnesota in the 23rd round of the 2016 First-Year Player Draft out of Oregon State University, where he was an All-Pac-12 performer for the Beavers. Despite not catching in college, Hamilton made 323 of his 574 professional appearances as a catcher, and he played at least one game at all nine positions.

Teuris Olivares

A long-time and well-respected coach in the Yankees organization, Olivares embarks on his first season as a Renegades defensive coach and his 15th season as a coach in the Yankees system. He served as a coach at the Rookie and Short-Season A



James Cooper

-Courtesy photo HV Renegades

level for the Yankees since 2011, with stops in the DSL (2011-14; 21-24), Staten Island (2015-17, 20), and Pulaski (2018-19), where Olivares has mentored many of the homegrown Yankees players of the past decade and a half.

Ryan Shute

Shute begins his fifth year as the Renegades Home Clubhouse Manager and seventh in the Yankees organization, previously working for the Short-Season A Staten Island Yankees in 2019 and Rookie-level Pulaski in 2018. Before joining the Yankees, Shute was the Visiting Clubhouse Manager for the Carolina Mudcats during the 2017 season. A native of the Hudson Valley and 2011 graduate of Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Shute spent four summers as a Stadium Operations and Groundskeeping Assistant for the Renegades from 2012-15.

Adaric Kelly

Kelly begins his second season as the Renegades Athletic Trainer, and his third season in the Yankees organization, having spent the 2023 season as an Athletic Trainer for the FCL Yankees. Born in San Nicolas, Aruba, Kelly attended Trinity Christian Academy in Lake Worth, Florida, and was drafted in the 28th round of the 2010 First-Year Player Draft by the Toronto Blue Jays as a right-handed pitcher. He played four seasons in the Blue Jays organization, reaching Single-A Lansing in 2014 and appearing in 73 career games.

Dylan Lidge

Lidge begins his second season with the Renegades and third in the Yankees organization as a strength and conditioning coach in 2024. He spent the 2023 season as the strength and conditioning coach for the Single-A Tampa Tarpons. Before joining the Yankees, Lidge served as a strength and conditioning coach at Cressey Sports Performance, a high-performance training facility for athletes located in Florida. He also spent time as an assistant baseball coach at Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois in 2020 and worked as an instructor at Fattfro Zone Baseball, Playball USA and GrandeFit in the Chicagoland area.

Devin Clementi

Begins his second season as an Advance Scouting Analyst with the Renegades, and fourth season in the Yankees organization after serving in the same role with Single-A Tampa in 2023 and spending the 2022 season as an Associate in the Yankees' Quantitative Analysis department. Prior to joining the Yankees, Clementi served as a Video & Data Analyst with USA Baseball in 2021. He earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Fordham University and his master's degree in applied analytics from Columbia University.

Dominic Cox

Cox begins his first year as the Video and Tech Assistant for the Renegades and his third in the Yankees organization after serving in the same role with Single-A Tampa in 2024 and the FCL Yankees in 2023. Cox began working for the Yankees after playing four years of college baseball – three years at Rice University and one at Prairie View A&M University. He graduated from Rice in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in Sport and Fitness Administration/Management, and earned his M.B.A. from Prairie View A&M in 2023. On the diamond, Cox hit .286/.394/.538 in his lone season with the Panthers, finishing second on the team in OPS (.932). He was also teammate at Rice with former Renegades infielder Ford Proctor in 2018.

The Renegades managerial job has become a launching pad in the five years under the New York Yankees affiliation, with Cooper following Ortiz (2024), Santos (2023), Tyson Blaser (2022) and Dan Fiorito (2021) in the post. Ortiz, Blaser and Fiorito have all moved up in player development into coordinator roles, and Santos was recently named the manager of the Triple-A Charlotte Knights in the Chicago White Sox system after guiding the Double-A Birmingham Barons to a Southern League Championship in 2024.

Last round of Youth Wellness Support Microgrants announced

Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino has announced grants totaling \$105,924 which have been awarded through the final round of the County's Youth Wellness Support Microgrants program. These grants will support six local organizations that build strong well-being and deter young people from developing substance use issues and other destructive behaviors, setting them up for successful, healthy futures as adults.

Serino said, "As County Executive, I'm proud to collaborate with programs that give our young people the tools they need to succeed and reach their full potential, while supporting their mental health and well-being. These grants are an important investment in their future, funding initiatives that encourage positive growth and help them navigate challenges with confidence. We're fortunate to have strong partnerships with local organizations that share our commitment to the well-being of Dutchess County's youth, and together, we're building a brighter future for our community."

Projects funded through the third round of the Youth Wellness Support Microgrants program include:

The Art Effect, City of Poughkeepsie, \$19,000 – Support the mental health and social literacy training seminar for Spark Studios youth and the creation of a youth-produced animated public service announcement on social media use and mental health.

Lucky Orphans Horse Rescue, Dover, \$19,000 – Will offer a unique opportunity for students in need of

emotional assistance, mindfulness, self-regulation and wellness; program will provide 16 equine assisted sessions (32 hours total) for groups of select Dover High School students, focusing on ground work with horses while developing wellness tools.

Beatrice Farrand Garden Association, Hyde Park, \$19,000 – Organize a 10-week curriculum, reaching 100 young adults, for classes on garden design and African drumming, as well as framework to continue this program.

Dutchess County Pride Center, City of Poughkeepsie, \$18,761 – Purchase craft supplies; compensate staff; and provide educational materials that promote healthy coping strategies for managing depression and anxiety, emphasizing alternatives to substance use and the benefits of creative outlets.

Dover Plains Library Association, Dover, \$19,000 – Collaborate with Dover Elementary School to host four school assemblies and additional evening programs for parents at the library to foster a sense of connection for students and give parents tools for self-reflection and engagement with their children.

Hidden Hollow Farm Riding, Red Hook, \$14,924 – Launch, in collaboration with program partners, a specialized program that offers a new cohort of 15 at-risk youth accessible equine-assisted therapy, including incorporating journaling as a method for social and emotional learning as well as to capture participants'

experiences and perceived benefits.

Announced in July 2024, the Youth Wellness Support Microgrants program, funded through opioid settlement funds obtained as a result of litigation against the pharmaceutical industry, funded a total of more than \$200,000 in projects from 13 nonprofit organizations, munic-

ipalities and grassroots organizations that offer specific programs benefiting youth, with evidence-based wellness activities that help reduce the risk of substance use for children and young adults under age 25.

The first and second rounds of Youth Wellness Support Microgrants were announced in 2024.

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get growing!

by mark adams



Three easy veggies

Growing tomatoes, peppers and onions in home gardens

These three vegetables are easy to grow in the garden or in containers:

Tomatoes – The most popular home garden vegetable. Tomato transplants should be set into the garden or container after the danger of frost has passed, around May 20 in the Hudson Valley. Frost happens on clear nights when the temperature dips to 32 degrees. Tender garden plants can be set out in early May if they are protected with covers on frosty nights.

Start tomatoes indoors from seed in late February. Be sure the young seedlings get plenty of light so they don't stretch. My favorite tomato variety is the hybrid "Big Beef." It's fairly early, disease-resistant and loaded with six-inch diameter fruit. "Jet Star" is another good one. Heirloom varieties like "Brandywine" and "Black Krim" are flavorful but don't produce much fruit. Since they are open-pollinated, passed down for generations, heirloom seed can be saved for the following year. "Sun Gold" is an incredibly delicious cherry tomato, easy to grow and super productive.

Plant tomato seedlings in the sunniest location possible, three feet apart in the garden or one plant per five-gallon bucket (with drainage holes). Tomatoes prefer slightly acidic soil, which is common in the Hudson Valley. Be sure to fertilize the growing plants, especially in containers. Use cages or stakes as the plants grow, to keep the fruit off the ground. The only pest I've seen on tomatoes is the horn worm, which is more of a curiosity than a serious pest. The fungus called blight is common around here, caus-



Hot peppers in a container.

-Photo by Sue Adams

ing the bottom leaves to turn brown, and working its way up to the top. Fungicides with copper – some are organic – can prevent blight. I plant a second crop, setting out the transplants in late June, to have a healthy crop just as the earlier plants are falling victim to blight.

Fresh local tomatoes, if you can find them at farmers markets, can cost \$5 dollars a pound. Grow your own, for a super fresh tasty treat all summer long.

Peppers – Not as easy to grow as tomatoes, but worthwhile, once you get the hang of it. Peppers work great in containers, since



Heirloom tomatoes, Pineapple and Brandywine.

-Photo by Mark Adams

the plants are fairly compact. The best part of growing your own peppers is the incredible selection of available varieties, from bell shape (Ace, Lady Bell, Red Knight) to frying types (Cubanelle, Gypsy) to an array of hot peppers ("Pepper X" is this year's pick as the 'hottest, closely followed by "Trinidad Scorpion").

Like tomatoes, pepper transplants are set into the garden after the last frost, May 20. Unlike tomatoes, the seeds are harder to germinate. They take a long time to come up, especially when the temperature is below 75 degrees. Start them indoors in February.

In the garden, peppers need warm sunshine. Cool nights, even in July, can cause blind spots where the fruits were supposed to appear. This has to do with the variety, and should correct itself in August. Also, too much fertilizer can cause the plants to stay

green, producing foliage instead of fruit. Use a low-nitrogen plant food. Pests and diseases are rarely an issue with peppers, although the fruits can get sun scald if exposed to direct sun in August. When Becky Adams won Grand Champion at the Dutchess County Fair, she had erected a shade canopy over her pepper patch in early August.

Onions – Although onions cost only a dollar per pound, they are essential to the home garden for one reason – onions stay fresh in the ground or container all summer and into the fall, saving you a trip to the grocery store if you happen to need an onion for a particular recipe. And they're so easy to grow, from seed, transplants or "sets," which are tiny onions that cost about 5 cents each. Onions can tolerate cold temperatures, so plant them in April and are rarely bothered by pests or diseases. "Long day" varieties like Sweet Spanish and Walla Walla grow best in the Hudson Valley. The famous Vidalia sweet onion, a "short day" variety produced in Georgia or Texas, will grow here, but with smaller and later maturing bulbs.

These three veggies are easy to grow in the ground or in containers. I could add a dozen more, including lettuce, beets and potatoes, but where would it stop?

Mark Adams is an agricultural advisor to the Dutchess County Executive, Dutchess County B.O.C.E.S. and Cornell University.

Astor Services unveils Intensive Outpatient Clinic



Pictured above, from left are Dr. Michele Conner, Director, Mental Health Outpatient Treatment & Rehabilitative Services/Budget Performance Specialist at Astor Services; Dr. Todd Karlin, Astor's Chief Program Officer; City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Yvonne Flowers; Jim Raimo, Astor Board Member; Danielle Maiorano, Intensive Outpatient Program Director at Astor; and Megan York, Hudson Valley Regional Director of Outpatient Clinics at Astor.

-Courtesy photo

Astor Services officially unveiled its Intensive Outpatient Clinic in Poughkeepsie on Wednesday, Jan 22 with a ribbon cutting and tour of the facility located at 46 Lincoln Avenue in Poughkeepsie.

The program provides a safe space for children 6-12 showing significant impairment in school or home to explore their emotions, thoughts and behaviors with a therapist, develop healthy coping mechanisms, and ideally to prevent residential treatment.

City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Yvonne Flowers was on hand to help mark the opening of this important program, designed to help youth who are at risk of out of home placement.

About Astor Services

For over 70 years, since 1953, Astor Services has provided essential supports, tools and high quality, comprehensive behavioral health and educational services to engage, empower and strengthen children, adults and families in all communities. Astor serves more than 9,000 children and families annually in more than 70 locations in Hudson Valley and the Bronx.

Astor's range of services includes early childhood programs, community-based behavioral health and prevention services. Astor has also recently opened a new Trauma Recovery Center in its Bronx location. To learn more about Astor's programs and services, visit, www.astorservices.org or follow Astor on Facebook and Instagram.



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love to cook

by vicki frank day



Taco casserole

Tasty and easy to customize

Taco Tuesday is a thing for good reason. Who can resist the combination of fresh vegetables, spiced meat and cheese in a soft tortilla or crunchy corn shell? Not me, that's who! And heck yeah! I could eat them every week! I don't know anyone who doesn't love a good taco. Sure, you could order out, but they're easy to make and easily customizable. You can add them to your weekly lineup whenever you want to entice everyone to the table and set everything out so they can assemble their own. Or...

Because it's winter and I've been craving hot, cheesy, satisfying one-dish meals, you could be like me and make a taco casserole instead. I threw one together the other night (I do so pretty often) and it was just what I wanted. Big fat bonus: the leftovers were great warmed up and served over chips nacho-style! It's the kind of meal that would be perfect for a hungry crowd. Like one watching a game or something.

And just like tacos, it's easy to customize. You can use ground beef or turkey, or go meatless. You can use black beans, refried or kidney beans or just leave 'em out. Use nacho cheese flavored chips instead of plain and crumble some on top as well as on the bottom. And use whatever cheese you like best (I went with sharp Cheddar and Colby Jack). You can set out a variety of toppings so your crowd can do it their way. Just bake up the casserole and set it on the table hot and bubbly with

chopped jalapenos, scallions and onions, guacamole, chopped tomatoes, shaved lettuce (made tastier mixed with chopped cilantro and a squeeze of fresh lime juice), sliced black olives, lime wedges, sour cream and a big bowl of tortilla chips. It comes together quickly (about 40 minutes from prep to table), can easily be doubled for a crowd and can be assembled a day ahead and baked just when you want to serve it. It also freezes well. Just thaw in the fridge before popping in the oven.

Taco Tuesday Casserole

No, you don't have to save this for Tuesdays. It's just, like I said, "a thing." But, yes, you do have to try it. As in the notes above, it's easy to tailor it to your taste. This is just a starting point for you to play with and make your own. Sometimes I add corn (if using canned, be sure to drain it first) and chopped bell pepper; and once I tried it with a layer of sour cream under the cheesy topping. Do what you want! It's your taco night!

Ingredients

- Tortilla chips (plain or nacho cheese)
- Olive oil (about 1 tablespoon)
- 1/2 an onion, chopped
- 1lb ground beef (or turkey)
- 1 package taco seasoning OR 1 tablespoon chili powder and 1/2 teaspoon each garlic powder, salt and ground cumin
- 1 (14.5oz) can black beans (drained and rinsed)



Taco Casserole: It's not just for 'Taco Tuesdays.'

-Photo by Vicki Frank Day

- 1 cup salsa
- 1 (14.5oz) can diced tomatoes (juice and all)
- 2 cups shredded cheese (Cheddar, Monterey Jack or a mix), divided
- Toppings: chopped fresh tomatoes, scallions, jalapenos, onions and/or cilantro, sliced black olives, shredded lettuce, guacamole or sliced avocado, sour cream, tortilla chips

Method

Crumble enough tortilla chips into a greased 9x13 baking dish to cover the bottom. Set aside. Preheat oven to 350 degrees with rack in the middle position.

In a large skillet, heat olive oil. Add onion and cook over medium-high heat until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add meat and cook, stirring, until browned and crumbly, 8-10 minutes. Add seasoning, stir and continue cooking another 2-3 minutes. Spoon out excess fat.

Stir in beans, salsa, diced tomatoes and half of the cheese. Mix well. Spoon evenly over the tortilla chips and top with remaining cheese. (I sprinkled some sliced olives on top). Bake until bubbly and the cheese is melted, 25-30 minutes. Sprinkle with chopped scallions and tomatoes. Serve with toppings on the side. Makes 8 servings.

I just love recipes I can go to anytime and change to suit my mood! But I also love the guilty pleasure of having a designated night for a favorite food, because it means one night I don't have to think up something to make for dinner. This casserole fits both categories and because you can change it up, it won't get old. So, viva la taco night and enjoy!

Vicki Frank Day's background includes over two decades in various aspects of the food service industry. In addition, she has over 27 years' experience in marketing, graphic design, copy writing, food styling and research. She believes cooking should be a fun adventure, that food should be an experience and that every day can be a special occasion. Email her at vickiloves2cook@gmail.com.

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Obituaries

Norton 'Chino' Segarra



BEACON - Norton "Chino" Segarra, a longtime resident of Beacon, passed away on January 17, 2025 from injuries sustained in a car accident. He was 74 years old.

Chino was born in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico on February 26, 1950, the son of the late Leonardo E. Segarra and Carmen Luisa Matos. On March 8, 1969, he married the former Aida Santana. Mrs. Segarra survives at home.

Chino proudly served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War from 1968 until his honorable discharge in 1970. He had retired from Metro-North Railroad. He had a CDL license and had previously worked as a truck driver for Texaco Research Center in Glenham. He enjoyed playing bingo with his wife and riding bikes. Chino was also an avid softball player in Beacon.

In addition to his wife, Chino is survived

by his children, Eric Segarra and his wife, Kendall and their children, Ezra and Asher; his daughter, Nichol Segarra and her son, Jalen Reilly; his daughter, Zandra Quinones and her children, Sharina Barnes, Sha-Man Irvin and Brice Banks; his great grandchildren; his brothers, Ismael Perez, Miguel Perez and Richard Perez; his sister, Lilly Perez; many nieces and nephews and extended family.

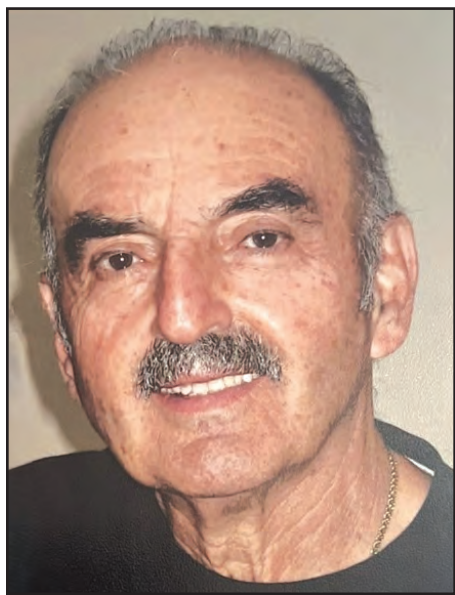
In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his brother, Pedro Segarra and his sister, Nancy Rivera.

Family and friends gathered on Tuesday, January 28 at Riverview Funeral Home by Halvey, 2 Beekman Street, Beacon. A funeral service will be held on Wednesday, January 29 at 11 a.m. at the funeral home. Burial with military honors will follow at St. Joachim Cemetery, Beacon.

To send a personal condolence please visit www.riverviewbyhalvey.com.

Funeral arrangements are under the care of Patrick J. Halvey of Riverview Funeral Home by Halvey, LLC.

Michael C. Rende



FISHKILL - Michael C. Rende passed away in his home on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. He was born on July 15, 1941 to Carmine and Lena Rende. Mike worked all his life in carpentry beginning in the Carpenter's Union Local 323 in Beacon, NY, also working for the family business Anel Builders. Mike built his own home in 1966 where he stayed for 59 years. In 1969 he was very proud to have worked on the film Hello Dolly and even met Barbra Streisand and Gene Kelly. He went on to own his own business, Rencio Builders with his cousin Phil Cicio, where they built many homes in the Fishkill area. Mike loved his family more than anything in the world and had a heart of gold. Nothing brought him more joy than spending time with his children and grandchildren. His quick wit and sarcastic sense of humor always kept everyone laughing. Mike's love for music stems

over decades right up until his last days. He was an amazing artist, no matter if it was a quick pencil drawing on a scrap paper or a painting on canvas. He will forever be missed on Super Bowl Sunday by his daughter Dawn and son in law Todd. Mike was known as "The Mayor" of Paesano's Bakery in Fishkill, you could find him there every morning. He and Eileen enjoyed taking road trips to many different destinations. Mike loved working with his son Justen on many construction jobs and it made him proud that his son followed in his footsteps.

Mike is survived by his wife Eileen. His children, Dawn (Todd) Perri, Michael Rende, Jeffrey (Jennifer) Rende, Justen (Elizabeth) Rende, Lauren (Vinny) Rende, stepchildren Michael (Judy) Corigliano, Daniel (Lisa) Corigliano, Rosemary (Paul) Corigliano. His 14 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. His siblings, Carmine (Claire) Rende and Rosalie (Ricky) Van Steenburgh. He was predeceased by his parents.

Calling hours will be held on Wednesday, January 29, 2025 from 2-4 pm and 6-8pm at the McHoul Funeral Home of Fishkill, Inc., 1089 Main Street, Fishkill, NY. A Mass of Christian Burial will be offered on Thursday, January 30, 2025 at 10 am at St. Mary, Mother of the Church, 108 Jackson Street, Fishkill followed by burial at Fishkill Rural Cemetery.

The family would like to thank Hudson Valley Hospice for their amazing and caring service during this difficult time. Donations can be made in his memory to Hudson Valley Hospice.

Alfredo Quintana Ingles

BEACON - Alfredo Quintana Ingles, a longtime resident of Beacon, passed away at home on January 19, 2025. He was 77 years old.

Alfredo was born on April 1, 1947, in Añasco, Puerto Rico, the son of the late Francisco Quintana and Emilia Ingles. Alfredo had worked at several manufacturing factories in Beacon before retirement. He was well known in the community for riding his bike around town.

Alfredo is survived by his siblings, Patricia Ortiz and her husband, Rafael, Ana Gonzalez, Luz Maria Quintana Martinez and her husband, Miguel, Felicita Quintana and Nerito Quintana and his wife, Marisol; his numerous nieces and nephews and extended family.

He was predeceased by his parents and his siblings, Santa Sanchez, Milagros Quintana, Carmen Lydia Quintana, Fernando Quintana, Antonio Quintana and Luis Quintana.

Family and friends gathered on Tuesday, January 28 at Riverview Funeral Home by Halvey, 2 Beekman Street, Beacon. A prayer service was held. Burial followed at Wappingers Rural Cemetery.

To send a personal condolence please visit www.riverviewbyhalvey.com.

Funeral arrangements are under the care of Patrick J. Halvey of Riverview Funeral Home by Halvey, LLC.

Grant W. McCabe



Grant W. McCabe, a local area resident, entrepreneur and business owner, passed away on January 16, 2025. He was 43 years old.

Grant was born on January 14, 1982 in Joliet, Illinois, the son of Debra Dorich McCabe and the late William McCabe who predeceased him on October 18, 2020. Grant grew up in Illinois and was a professional motocross racer there.

Grant was a hardworking entrepreneur, was a former owner of The Leaf in Beacon, and currently owned Smokers Mecca in Beacon, multiple online stores, stores in Florida, a Distribution business in New Windsor and an ATM business covering the Tri-State area. He had begun his working career as a salesman in the car business and continued his excellence in sales into all of his

businesses. Grant also was a very caring and giving person who helped many people down on their luck over the years.

Grant met his fiancé Darcy Wang and called it love at first sight. He said there was no way he would let her go and spent 4 wonderful years together.

Grant is survived by his mother, Debra McCabe; his fiancé, Darcy Wang, and numerous cousins, aunts and uncles; his many friends and loving employees; his 2 dogs, Nugget and Uki.

Family and friends gathered on Saturday, January 25 and on Sunday, January 26 at Riverview Funeral Home by Halvey, 2 Beekman Street, Beacon. A funeral service was held on Sunday, January 26 at the funeral home. Private cremation followed.

To send a personal condolence please visit www.riverviewbyhalvey.com.

Funeral arrangements are under the care of Patrick J. Halvey of Riverview Funeral Home by Halvey, LLC.

Maureen Lynch Pozo



WAPPINGERS FALLS - Maureen Lynch Pozo, age 76, passed away at home on January 19, 2025 surrounded by her loving family. Born in Yonkers, NY on December 21, 1948, she was the daughter of the late John and Jean (Organ) Lynch. On October 14, 1977, Maureen married her loving husband John Pozo. He survives at home.

Maureen was an avid reader who loved to learn. She was talkative and strong minded. She enjoyed playing cards, online poker, and especially taking care of her many plants that she had around the house.

She was kind and generous and was a person you could depend on for helpful advice. She was a loving wife, mother, and nanny who's love you always felt.

In addition to her husband John, she is

survived by her children: John Kubasek and his wife Suzy, Jeannine Lanzetta, and Steven Malley and his wife Tina; her grandchildren: Dion Lanzetta, Brandi Lanzetta, Andrew Grove, Reagan Malley, and Preston Malley; and her siblings: Patrick Lynch and Mary Vaccarino.

She was predeceased by her siblings: Eugene Lynch, James Lynch, Kathleen Hinchcliffe, and Timothy Lynch.

Calling hours were held on Saturday, January 25, 2025, at the McHoul Funeral Home, Inc. 895 Route 82 Hopewell Junction, NY. A Funeral Service was offered.

Please consider a donation in Maureen's memory to Hudson Valley Hospice www.hvhospice.org.

Please visit her Book of Memories at www.mchoulfuneralhome.com.

Marie A. Falcone



Marie A. Falcone passed away unexpectedly on January 19, 2025 at Vassar Brothers Medical Center, Poughkeepsie. She was 71 years old.

Marie was born in Manhattan on June 13, 1953 to the late Joseph and Josephine Gallo Mignano. On February 23, 1985 she married Robert Falcone. They would have celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary this year.

Marie retired as an office manager for Hudson River Hand Rehab in Fishkill. She had previously worked at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York City.

Marie is survived by her husband, Robert Falcone; her children, Eva Di Palma and her fiancé Tony Zeolla, Simona Di Palma and her late husband Johnny Zeolla and Nicholas Falcone and his wife, Shonna; her step-sons, Robert Falcone and Richard Falcone; her grand-

children, Alessio Zeolla, Luca Zeolla, Gabriella Falcone and Sofia Falcone; her step-grandchildren, RJ Falcone and Brian Falcone; her many nieces and nephews, cousins and large extended family in Italy.

In addition to her parents, Marie was predeceased by her former husband, Giacinto Di Palma.

Funeral arrangements will be private for the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in memory of Marie may be made to the ASPCA to honor her love of dogs.

To send a personal condolence please visit www.riverviewbyhalvey.com.

Funeral arrangements are under the care of Patrick J. Halvey of Riverview Funeral Home by Halvey, LLC.

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Three awarded Bacile Scholarship from the Italian Center



The Italian Center, in Wappingers Falls, recently held an awards luncheon to honor three recipients of the Center's Bacile Scholarships.

Brianna Fasolino, daughter of Pat and Julie Fasolino, who attends Cortland University and graduated from Arlington High School, was honored at the event.

Austin Mora, who is the son of Frank M. Mora, attends Mount Saint Mary College

and graduated from Queen of Heaven Academy also received a scholarship.

Elena Waldbillig, who attends Marist College, is the daughter of Paul and Brenda Wildbillig, and graduated from Arlington High School, was the third scholarship recipient.

Since inception, the Fund has awarded 129 scholarships at a value of more than \$170,000.

Pictured, from left, are Elena Waldbillig, Dr. John Sabia, Fund President, Bob Dillullo, Fund Treasurer, Brianna Fasolino and Austin Mora.

-Courtesy photo from Italian Center

Putnam Symphony seeks musicians for spring concert

Putnam Symphony Orchestra has openings for all qualified musicians to join them in their Spring Concert featuring the music of

American women composers on May 4. Rehearsals are Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Brewster High School.

There are no auditions and no fee to join. For more information, visit [\[symphonyorchestra.org\]\(http://symphonyorchestra.org\); \[facebook.com/putnamsymphony\]\(https://facebook.com/putnamsymphony\); email at \[putnamsymphony@verizon.net\]\(mailto:putnamsymphony@verizon.net\) or call 845-228-4167.](http://putnam</p>
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Winners announced in annual MLK Jr. essay contest

The following excerpts from Beacon City School District students were announced as the winners of the 2025 MLK Jr. Essay Contest.

**Gavin Berry
Ms. Fisher
J.V. Forrestal Elementary School
Grade 5**

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream to end racism in the U.S. We can keep his dream alive by being kind to one another and remembering what he did. We can also keep his dream alive by treating everyone the same with kindness and respect. Also, you can treat everybody the

way you want be treated. Dr. King impacted many lives.

This is the day to honor and recognize all he did.

**Edith Lieberman
Ms. Keogh
J.V. Forrestal Elementary School
Grade 4**

Dr. King's words still ring true today. In fact, they are more necessary than ever. The kids of my generation face many injustices and issues, including gun violence, climate change, and the loss of women's rights. Racial inequality remains a big problem.

There is still a lot of work to be done, and we are all responsible for doing it.

Even though I am just a kid, I know I can make an impact on the world, just like Dr. King did.

**Kendra Young
Grade 2**

I try to be like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by always being nice to others. Look at my friends. We all are different colors and Dr. King taught us no matter what race or differences we have, we all can get along.

**Amelia Scott
Ms. Gall**

**J.V. Forrestal Elementary School
Grade 2**

Martin Luther King's dream was that people would not be judged by the color of their skin, but by their character. We keep his dream alive by treating people equally every day. For example, let everyone play in your game and don't exclude people because of their skin color. You should be kind to one another no matter what they look like.

**Alice Courtney
Ms. Fisher**

**J.V. Forrestal Elementary School
Grade 5**

One way to keep Dr. Martin Luther King's dream alive is to stand up to unfair treatment. If you come across someone being treated unfairly, you can stand up for them! It doesn't matter how old you are. As they say, "one good deed always sparks another." If you see something unfair or wrong, one voice will lead to more!

Another way to keep King's dream alive is to volunteer to help people who are less fortunate. For example, volunteering at a food pantry can help get food

to those in need.

No matter how young or old you are, there are ways to make a difference!

**Atlas C. Baltz
Beacon High School
Grade 10**

Every person has a dream, whether it be on a small scale or large scale. Many people dream of things such as fame or love, but society's forward thinkers dream of one thing: progress. Martin Luther King's time was uncertain, with rampant racial tension and segregation. Racism was commonplace and often government supported.

In addition to being able to recognize problems, a civically-aware citizen must be able to engage in critical thought surrounding the issue and reach different conclusions and/or come up with propositions to address the problem.

It is the duty of humanity to fight for freedom, unity, and hope. It is the duty of humanity to stick together for the common good. It is the duty of humanity to keep the dream of Dr. King alive until it is completed.

Evelyn Moreno

Beacon High School, Grade 12

Growing up with people of different backgrounds, ethnicities, and cultures taught me how to accept my own, and fuel it with the gasoline that is my voice. With my own my Hispanic background, I plan to keep Martin Luther King's dream alive.

I have never given hatred permission to stop me. I still find a bit of light through the dark tunnel. By keeping King's dream alive, we can find more of that glint of prosperity. All it takes is kindness.

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2	9	7	5	1	4	8	3	6	2	1
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This week's answer
SUDOKU

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

Suguru solution

3	2	5	4	5	3
1	4	3	2	1	2
2	5	1	4	3	4
1	3	2	5	2	1
4	5	1	4	3	5
1	3	2	5	1	4

Latin Dancing at Towne Crier on February 20

A Night of Latin Dancing will be presented by Beacon Dance Beat on Thursday, Feb. 20 at 7.m. (doors open at 6 p.m. for dining and music), located at the Towne Crier Café, 379 Main Street in Beacon. Full menu and bar service are available before and during the dance. Admission is \$10 which can be paid at the door. Or, for reservations (not required), please call the Towne Crier at 845-831-5500.

For further information about the music, or for a special song request, please contact Rhoda at: 845-765-0667 or rhodaja@optonline.net.

Legal Notices

The Organizational Meeting for the establishment for the 2025 Dutchess County Board of Elections will take place on January 31, 2025 at 10:30am at 112 Delafield St Suite 200, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NOTICE

The Purchasing Agent, County of Dutchess, Poughkeepsie, New York, hereby invites the submission of proposals for: Bid #RFP-DCP-07-25

BUS INSPECTION SERVICES FOR DUTCHESS COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT Proposals must be

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submitted electronically through the Empire State Purchasing Group's Regional Bid Notification System (BidNet Direct) Portal on or before 2:00p.m., February 19, 2025. Specifications, proposal forms and submittal instructions may be obtained by visiting our website <http://www.dutchessny.gov>, selecting "Government", then selecting "Bidding and RFP Opportunities". For additional information, call 845-486-3613.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NOTICE

The Purchasing Agent, County of Dutchess, Poughkeepsie, New York,

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hereby invites the submission of proposals for: Bid #RFP-DCP-01-25

Dutchess County Transportation Council

Public Engagement Services for Metropolitan Transportation Plan Proposals must be submitted electronically through the Empire State Purchasing Group's Regional Bid Notification System (BidNet Direct) Portal on or before 2:00p.m., February 13, 2025. Specifications, proposal forms and submittal instructions may be obtained by visiting our website <http://www.dutchessny.gov>, selecting "Government", then selecting "Bidding and RFP Opportuni-

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ties". For additional information, call 845-486-3613.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NOTICE

The Purchasing Agent, County of Dutchess, Poughkeepsie, New York, hereby invites the submission of proposals for: Bid #RFP-DCP-09-25

POLICY CONSULTANT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES Proposals must be submitted electronically through the Empire State Purchasing Group's Regional Bid Notification System (BidNet Direct) Portal on or before 2:00p.m., February 13, 2025. Specifications, proposal forms and sub-

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mittal instructions may be obtained by visiting our website <http://www.dutchessny.gov>, selecting "Government", then selecting "Bidding and RFP Opportunities". For additional information, call 845-486-3613.

REQUEST FOR BIDS NOTICE

The Purchasing Agent, County of Dutchess, Poughkeepsie, New York, hereby invites the submission of sealed bids for: Bid #RFB-DCP-03-25

Preventive Maintenance and As Needed Pest Control Bids will be received until 2:00 p.m. on the 13th day of February

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2025 at the Dutchess County Division of Central Services, 378 Violet Avenue, Suite 2, Poughkeepsie, New York 12601. Specifications and bid forms may be obtained by visiting our website <http://www.dutchessny.gov>, selecting "Government", then selecting "Bidding and RFP Opportunities". For additional information, call 845-486-3613.

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST NOTICE

The Purchasing Agent, County of Dutchess, Poughkeepsie, New York, hereby invites the submission of re-

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sponses for: #RFEODCP-04-25

Facility Operator for Camp Nooteming, Town of Pleasant Valley, New York

Responses must be submitted electronically through the Empire State Purchasing Group's Regional Bid Notification System (BidNet Direct) Portal on or before 2:00p.m., February 6, 2025. Specifications, RFEOD forms and submittal instructions may be obtained by visiting our website <http://www.dutchessny.gov>, selecting "Government", then selecting "Bidding and RFP Opportunities". For additional information, call 845-486-3613.

Marist Women's Basketball to host Pink Game honoring Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation

On Saturday, Feb. 15, the Marist College Athletics Department and Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation will present the 15th Annual Pink Game, celebrating breast cancer awareness and honoring those impacted by breast cancer right here in the Hudson Valley. The game will start at 4 p.m. at the McCann Arena, Marist College, Poughkeepsie. Come watch the Marist women's basketball team take on Merrimack.

Proceeds from a 50-50 raffle will support the Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation, and donations will

be accepted.

At halftime, the Marist Athletics Department and Miles of Hope will recognize breast cancer survivors with a special on-court ceremony. Survivors interested in taking part in the event should contact Assistant Athletics Director for External Affairs - Harrison Baker.

Fans are encouraged to wear pink to support the Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation and to help raise awareness for breast cancer.

Visit www.milesofhope.org for more information.

Right: At a previous Marist College Pink Game, Marist Athletics Department and Miles of Hope recognize breast cancer survivors with a special on-court ceremony at half time. This year's event on Saturday, Feb. 15, will continue this tradition.

-Courtesy photo



County Players to present 'Into the Breeches'

Comedy scheduled for Feb. 7-22

County Players, one of the longest-running community theatre companies in the area, will present the Comedy "Into the Breeches" by George Brant. This Main Stage production is directed by Christine Crawfis and opens Friday, Feb. 7 with performances scheduled for Fridays & Saturdays Feb. 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22 at 8 p.m., with matinees on Sunday, Feb. 16 and Saturday, Feb. 22 at 2 p.m. at 2681 W. Main Street in the Village of Wappingers Falls.

That time-honored adage, "The Show Must Go On," takes on new meaning in this endearing and moving comedy set at a small theater in Wappingers Falls,

NY in 1942. With the actors and director off at war, a group of passionate women face the daunting challenge of preserving the theatre's reputation for mounting outstanding Shakespearean productions. Crammed with laughs and an abundance of visual humor, their fierce determination and unbridled enthusiasm will have audiences cheering as they prove that art and community triumph, even in times of peril.

The production features the local talents of Madison Anthony, Deborah Coconis, Kit Colbourn, Paul Coleman, Dylan Parkin, Kiara Marie Melendez Jemmott, Janet Nurre, and Steavie Reed.

Of this production, director Crawfis said, "Great theatre takes us on a journey of reflection and provocation, while embracing the value of entertainment. "Into the Breeches" has all these elements. It's a clever, touching play celebrating women. George Brant has triangulated a theatrical celebration, a paean to women, and an ode to inclusivity, and casts them against the backdrop of the Second World War."

Individual tickets are available online in advance of the performance dates at countyplayers.org. Adult: \$26, Senior 60+, Military, Students (with ID at the door), and Children under 12: \$24. The

box office is open for in-person ticket sales one hour before performance time.

Hudson Valley Credit Union sponsors County Players' 67th Season. This production of "Into The Breeches" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. concordtheatricals.com

Accessibility: If you require wheelchair accessibility, please contact our Box Office at 845-298-1491.

Find County Players on social media at countyplayers.org/perfect-arrangement-opens-on-november-8/ twitter.com/countypayers, [instagram.com/countypayers/](https://www.instagram.com/countypayers/), [facebook.com/countypayers](https://www.facebook.com/countypayers).

Needlework presentation set Feb. 5

On Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 12:30 p.m., the Skyllkill chapter of the Embroiderer's Guild of America will present "Loose Ends" at the Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church, 1168 Route 55, Lagrangeville. Jennifer Simonic and Masey Kaplan, the co-founders of Loose Ends, will share how the organization connects volunteer finishers to unfinished projects left behind by deceased or infirmed crafters.

Loose Ends is a registered nonprofit

established in May 2023. Come and learn more about this wide-reaching organization. Their motto speaks volumes: "Started with love by them, finished with care by us."

Join other needleworkers for fun and learning beginning at 10 a.m., or come for this program only beginning at 12:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/SkyllkillEGA or email to EGASkyllkill@gmail.com.

Art of Manifestation class on Zoom

Art of Manifestation virtual Zoom class. Overcome limiting beliefs. Learn practical techniques to align with your goals in the New Year. Saturday, Feb. 8, from 1-3 p.m. cost is \$35.

Includes guided journey, workbook and take-home audio.

For tickets, visit: <https://www.gerlach-hypnotherapy.com/classes> or call 845-789-1027 for more information.

S'more Fest set for Jan. 31 at Schlathaus Park

Due to cold weather last week, S'more Fest was rescheduled to Friday, Jan. 31. S'more Fest kicks off Wappinger's 150th Celebration with a family event from 6-8 p.m. at Schlathaus Park. One won't want to miss this deliciously unique event experience!

At the park, the Wappinger Parks & Recreation Department will provide a Unique S'More Bar, bonfire, individual fire pits, a hot chocolate bar, popcorn, music, and games for all to enjoy.

S'more Menu is as follows:

The Original

Graham crackers, milk chocolate bar, marshmallow

The Nutty Buddy

Graham cracker, peanut butter cup, marshmallow

The Oreo

Graham cracker, cookies 'n' cream bar, marshmallow

The Grasshopper

Graham cracker, Peppermint Patty, marshmallow

Death by Chocolate

Chocolate graham cracker, milk chocolate bar, marshmallow.

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