

WISHING ALL HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

# BEACON FREE PRESS

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## Beacon's Grand Menorah Lighting set for Dec. 29



Beacon's Grand Menorah Lighting will take place at Polhill Park, off Route 9D, on December 29 in Beacon. Pictured is from last year's ceremony.

-Courtesy photo

By Kristine Coulter

Chabad of Beacon will be hosting Beacon's Grand Menorah Lighting on Sunday, Dec. 29 at 4 p.m. at Polhill Park in Beacon.

So, what can people expect if they attend the menorah lighting?

"People can expect a night of celebration focused on light. We'll light a 9-foot menorah, share messages of unity and hope, and, of course, enjoy delicious latkes and donuts—traditional Chanukah

treats!" said Rabbi Shaya Itkin, who is the executive director of Chabad of Beacon.

What do the rabbi hope people take away from the event?

"The message that light always triumphs over darkness. Even a little bit of light can dispel a lot of darkness," Itkin said.

Itkin noted, "The miracle of Chanukah was brought about by a small army defeating a much larger and more

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Children worldwide will receive shoeboxes filled with necessities, toys and school supplies as part of Operation Christmas Child by Samaritan's Purse. In some countries, the boxes get delivered by people traveling on elephants.

-Courtesy photo Operation Christmas Child

## Shoebox donations bring joy to children

By Kristine Coulter

Children around the world will be opening shoeboxes on Christmas morning. These boxes are not ordinary shoeboxes. Gifts were donated, collected and placed into these boxes. It is part of the annual Operation Christmas Child by Samaritan's Purse.

Sarah Cossette is the church relations chair and team leader for the site at

Vineyard Community Church on Route 82 in East Fishkill.

"This is the time of year we get together," said Cossette. Vineyard Community Church was a drop-off location last month. Cossette said there were "dedicated volunteers" that assisted this year.

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# Municipal leaders look back at 2024

By Kristine Coulter

Local leaders were asked by Beacon Free Press to look back on the accomplishments that occurred in their municipalities in 2024. Here are the highlights they offered about what was done this year, in alphabetical order of municipality.

Leaders tout accomplishments

City of Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou said, "The on-time on-budget completion of a new \$14.7 million central fire station after decades of studies and planning — an architectural gem at the gateway to Main Street, with state-of-the-art fire safety, all-electric with geothermal heat, and without a significant increase in prop-

erty tax," was the highlight for 2024.

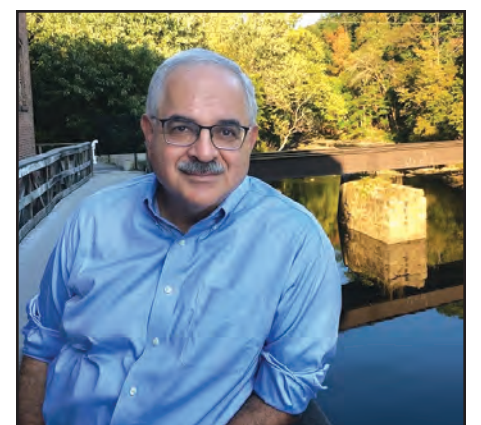
He mentioned as another accomplishment for 2024, "the launch of the \$10 million Fishkill and Teller Avenue Rehabilitation project after more than 20 years of planning, which is now roughly half complete and will be finished by mid-2025."

Town of East Fishkill Supervisor Nick D'Alessandro said "2024 was a good year for the East Fishkill community."

He noted several accomplishments.

D'Alessandro said, "[First] we began the planning for our new East Fishkill Veteran Memorial Park which will be located across

Continued on page 2



Village of Fishkill Mayor Kathy Martin and City of Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou are two of the municipal leaders that look back on the accomplishments in their municipalities during 2024.

-Courtesy photos

# Municipal leaders look back at 2024

Continued from cover

the street from Town Hall. [Second], like I always say, the Town Board's most important job and mine is to be stewards of Town finances and we have adopted yet again another great budget for the residents of East Fishkill for 2025. [This] includes NOT exceeding the NYS mandated tax cap; East Fishkill has NEVER exceeded the tax cap and I don't believe we ever will. For 2025 the average home in East Fishkill will see an increase of \$28 for the year. No services have been cut and we are looking to add another police officer to our police department for 2025."

Town of Fishkill Supervisor Ozzy Albra said, "We are on the verge of getting the Brinckerhoff and Merritt water districts off the Health Department's remedial list, after being at least 10 years on it. I inherited a \$5.6 million plan, reduced it to \$1 million and will use Federal funds to pay for it with no cost to the taxpayers." He continued, "I am also proud of implementing the Comprehensive Plan that the public participated in."

Albra noted there have been major investments in infrastructure.

"We repaired the recreation building roof after 16 years of leaking. We built a new highway garage in house, saving taxpayer money. This follows up on building a new salt shed and fueling station earlier in my term," said Albra.

Park improvements were also accomplished in 2024, including the addition of pickleball courts at Maurer Geering Park, off Geering Way, he said. Restoration of tennis and basketball courts, along with, for the first time, lights for Little League were also touted by Albra.

"In addition, we did drainage and paving to all parks, except Shephard Memorial Park (off of Route 82), which will also be done," he said.

Town of Poughkeepsie Supervisor Rebecca Edwards said her biggest focus this year was learning the job, as this was her first year as supervisor. She also highlighted her administration's "building better communications with town residents, by launching a regular e-newsletter, activating social media channels, and establishing a more transparent budget process and documents."

Edwards mentioned, "I'm also very proud of our new community policing unit, dedication of our opioid settlement funds to a contract with People USA for a mental health/substance use peer counselor to ride with the Police and bringing the Youth-Police Initiative to the Town of Poughkeepsie."

Town of Wappinger Supervisor Joseph Cavaccini was also in his first year of office in 2024. "When we took office in January, we set out on a mission to enhance and protect the quality of life of our neighbors here in the Town of Wappinger. Our promises made were promises kept as we took action to limit over-development in our Town by passing Local Law 1. We continue to look to preserve open space as we create conservation easements across hundreds of acres

while fostering innovative development in our vacant/abandoned properties. We are demonstrating that our Town can have both a thriving economy while protecting the character of our community," Cavaccini stated about his administration.

Cavaccini continued, "We have made significant strides when it comes to streamlining our government operations and restoring accountability to Town Hall. We have saved taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars by eliminating wasteful spending on government contractors, employing in-house resources to complete projects, and generated hundreds of thousands of dollars by diversifying Town funds into high-interest earning depositories. We successfully ended a two-year-long arbitration between the CSEA members of the Highway Department and the Town, launched "Quality-of-Life Task [F]orce" through our Code Enforcement Office with efforts focused on removing blighted abandoned buildings from our neighborhoods, and kept our families and community safe by restructuring the Wappinger Patrol by introducing new cycled targeted patrols in neighborhoods."

Cavaccini touted reinvestment and the town leaders committing millions to improve parks, infrastructure and facilities in the pars by launching the Wappinger Parkland Infrastructure Act. The Act allowed for the authorization of funding for improvements such as completing the Challenger Inspiration Field; enhancing amenities at Martz Field (such as the memorial for the late Major Daniel Martz, the first Dutchess County soldier to die in the Vietnam War); light towers at tennis/pickleball courts; activating the wellhead at Airport Park, 61 Airport Dr., to provide water for soccer for the first time in 30 years; paving Rockingham Park, Regency Dr.; funding the completion of the nearly decade-long Spook Hill Park project, Spook Hill Road; and reconstructing the Chelsea Boat Ramp, said Cavaccini.

"We instituted cost-saving measures, such as utilizing in-house labor for finishing the Highway Garage project and allowing for the Highway Superintendent to be his own project manager. By refurbishing the exterior of the buildings, replacing 20,000 sq ft of roof, and building a safe break room. [U]nder this new model, the Town saved over \$100,000 and exemplified our commitment to fiscal responsibility and prudent resource allocation. This year, the Wappinger Town Highway Department re-constructed and paved over a dozen roads in the Town, all of which are over 20 years old. All while keeping Wappinger one of the most affordable Towns in the region," said Cavaccini.

Village of Fishkill Mayor Kathy Martin said, "The two accomplishments I am most proud of are that the Board of Trustees and I were able to increase the income limits on both the Senior Citizen Exemption and the Veterans Exemption. This will allow our Village Seniors and Veterans to save more money on their real property taxes. I am so

happy to offer these additional savings for our community."

She said, "This has been a wonderful year. The Village of Fishkill celebrated our 125 Anniversary. It was an amazing opportunity to offer historical, cultural, and entertaining experiences for the community. I'd like to thank our Activities Committee for all of their hard work. It truly was a great year for the Village of Fishkill."

In the Village of Wappingers Falls, Mayor Kevin Huber said, "This year, the Village successfully executed a lake treatment program with three treatments to minimize sediment buildup and control weed growth. These efforts aim to make the lake more accessible and enjoyable for residents. Additional treatments are scheduled for next year, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to restoring this valuable community resource."

He also mentioned sustainability efforts. "In partnership with the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Village installed an electric vehicle charging station at the Mill Street Municipal Lot, funded entirely through a grant. This addition offers visitors a convenient spot to charge their cars while exploring local shops and eateries, further boosting downtown activity."

Regarding parks and recreation, Huber said, "We are proud to have secured grant funding for the installation of Bain Park at no cost to the Village, an inclusive space designed to welcome children of all abilities to learn, grow, and play. Additionally, the Village prioritized park improvements at the request of Parks Commissioner Charles Ferry, requesting the board to grant \$17,000 in enhancements, including lighting the Christmas tree at

Mesier Park and installing garbage pails and benches across various parks."

"The Village secured several grants for the Fire Department to acquire essential equipment, including turnout gear washing machines, thermal cameras, and gas meters. These tools enhance safety and efficiency during emergency responses. Plans are underway to improve parks further and install a new boat dock at Spring Street next year," said Huber.

### Finances in municipalities

When it comes to the financial situation of each municipality, what do the leaders say?

Regarding Beacon's finances, Kyriacou stated, "The Mayor's 2025 Budget continued to reduce the property tax rate and kept the dollar amount of tax increase to 3%, well below the State tax cap (City of Poughkeepsie and Kingston were both 9%). With smart fiscal management, we spend only for high priority items and maximize outside funding; the City has the best bond rating of any municipality in the county."

In East Fishkill, the financial situation, said D'Alessandro, is in "excellent shape."

"We just got upgraded by Moody's for our rating, which proves that we are in excellent financial shape and our strong economic development plans are starting to bear fruit and we are excited for the future here in East Fishkill. East Fishkill leads Dutchess County in economic development by far for the last 6 years."

For the Town of Fishkill, Albra remarked, "The town continues to be in great fiscal

Continued on page 6

## DAV members donate \$2,000 to Building with Grace



Members of Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Castle Point Chapter 144 recently donated \$2,000 to Building with Grace. Building with Grace is a charity that makes home improvements or repairs for Veterans who have cancer. The presentation took place at the Castle Point VA Medical Center on Dec. 17.

-Courtesy photo

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**IMPACT**  
PR & Communications

**Mill House Brewing Company continues to bring the heat, announces Embers by Mill House**







**See story, page 8**

# Aymar-Blair honored

**Ward 4 rep resigns; will be sworn in as Dutchess County Comptroller**

**By Kristine Coulter**

Dan Aymar-Blair, who was first elected to represent Ward 4 residents in 2019, resigned from the position. He was elected to the Dutchess County Comptroller position in November. He will be sworn in to that new office on Jan. 4, 2025. Aymar-Blair was honored for his service during the Beacon City Council meeting on Dec. 16.

"I just remember when you were first running. You worked incredibly hard," said Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou. He said he thought Aymar-Blair was "an outstanding" representative for Ward 4 residents.

"I just want to say thank you for all you do. We are looking forward to what you're going to do in your next position," said Kyriacou.

Aymar-Blair won the Dutchess County Comptroller's race against the current comptroller, Gregg Pulver.

Council member at-large Amber Grant said Aymar-Blair would be missed.

Council member for Ward 1 Molly Rhodes said she remembered a time she and Aymar-Blair disagreed, and the next day he reached out to her to make sure their relationship was still fine.

Council member for Ward 2 Jeff Domanski told Aymar-Blair he was "very generous" with his time.

Council member at-large Paloma Wake said, "I think, Dan, you're one of the first people I met when I moved to Beacon." Wake continued, "You have been a role model to me in many ways," noting he will be appreciated for the way he worked with his constituents.

Pam Wetherbee, who represents Ward 3, said, "I just want to say congratulations and I am so proud of you. The county is so lucky to have you as the comptroller."

She also said to Aymar-Blair, "I'm in awe of what you have done this year."

City of Beacon Administrator Chris White said some people have commented he and Aymar-Blair have had "some very spirited conversations at this side of the table." White continued, "What you haven't seen is Dan and I have developed one of the strongest working relationships and now a friendship."

"He is a great mix of retail politics and advocate for his ward," said White about Aymar-Blair.

Aymar-Blair was presented with a City of Beacon mug and plaque thanking him for his service on the council.

Aymar-Blair recalled, "When I first won, when I first got elected to office in 2019, I was really excited to get started on city council."

He said these five years have been



*Dan Aymar-Blair recently resigned from the Beacon City Council. He is being sworn-in as Dutchess County Comptroller on Jan. 4, 2025.*

*Aymar-Blair was first elected to the council in 2019.*

*-Courtesy photo Dan Aymar-Blair for Dutchess County Comptroller*

"very rewarding" and said he recently had his last day at his day job.

"I want to thank everybody, especially in Ward 4 my neighbors... and my wife and children," said Aymar-Blair.

# Honoring Beacon Welcome Center volunteers

**By Kristine Coulter**

Some of the volunteers from the Beacon Welcome Center, off Route 9D by Main St., were honored for giving their time to help visitors and residents alike with questions about the area.

Dutchess County helped retrain the staff said Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou during the Beacon City Council meeting on Dec. 16..

Melaine Rottkamp, President & CEO of Dutchess Tourism, Inc. , said, "We are here to recognize very, very important people tonight."

"These volunteers are incredibly important" to our economy, said Rottkamp.

She said tourists, if they have a good time, they want to come back to the area.

Rottkamp said, "We're so thrilled with the partnership that we have with you, Mayor."

"None of it would be done without the work of the volunteers," said Rottkamp.

The mayor presented each of the the honorees with a Certificate of Appreciation. They also received a token of appreciation from Dutchess Tourism.

"Come up and get your certificates and gifts," Rottkamp told those who were being honored.

"The Welcome Center is such a vital hub for the community and for the visitors," said Rottkamp.


For more information, visit [dutchess tourism.com](http://dutchess tourism.com).

# BCSD students win 5-foot stockings



*For the 44th year in a row, four students in the Beacon City School District were presented with the annual Firemen's Christmas Stockings. This year's winners, one from each of the four elementary schools in the district, each received a five-foot stocking filled with gifts including a smoke detector donated by the Beacon Professional Firefighters IAFF L-3490. The annual event is sponsored by the volunteer firefighters of Lewis Tompkins Hose Fire Co., Beacon Engine Co., Mase Hook & Ladder Co., Dutchess Junction Fire Co. and Slater Chemical Fire Co. This year's winners were, from left: Liam Heaton of South Ave. Elementary, Gianna Antunes of J.V. Forrestal Elementary, Justin Lax of Sargent Elementary and Gio Francis of Glenham Elementary. Posing with the children are Lewis Tompkins Hose members Dave Simmonds and Bob Simmonds, co-chairs of the annual event.*

*-Courtesy photo*





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# Viewpoints

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters may be edited for legal considerations, reader interest and length. Please include a telephone number and address for verification purposes. **Deadline for letters is Friday at noon.** Letters must be submitted by e-mail to be considered for publication. Letters can be e-mailed to [newsplace@aol.com](mailto:newsplace@aol.com), and the phrase "Letter to the Editor" should be included in the subject line of the e-mail.

### Policy on letters:

- Letters that contain statements that are libelous or slanderous will not be published.
- Letters that include personal attacks will not be published
- Letters written in response to other letter writers must address the issue at hand, rather than mentioning the writer by name and must refer to the headline and date the letter was published.
- Letters referring to news stories must mention the headline and date of publication.
- The Beacon Free Press will not be used as a vehicle to place misinformation.
- Information must be attributed to a specific individual or published item (ie-tell us where or from whom you obtained the information)
- 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.

### NOTICE OF EARLY DEADLINE

Due to a holiday press schedule for Jan. 1, 2025 issue, the Beacon Free Press has early deadline for that paper.

For the Jan. 1 issue: Editorial submissions must be received by Monday, Dec. 23. Advertising is due by Thursday, Dec. 26.

Please contact [cschmidt@sdutchessnews.com](mailto:cschmidt@sdutchessnews.com) for more information.

## Gould family, friends thankful to Beacon community for honoring late mayor

### To the Editor:

On behalf of the family of the late Mayor Clara Lou Gould, we thank the following City of Beacon officials for their courtesies in honoring the memory of Mayor Gould: Mayor Lee Kyriacou, City Administrator Chris White, Police Chief Thomas Figlia and Fire Chief Thomas Lucchesi.

Upon learning of her passing, Mayor Kyriacou immediately authorized the lowering of all flags to half-mast and scheduled the opening of the next City Council meeting with a moment of silence for Clara Lou. We then engaged in a brief discussion regarding some of the many accomplishments that she earned during her 18-year tenure as Mayor. Both Kyriacou and White served on the City Council with Mayor Gould.

In addition to Mayor Kyriacou and City Administrator White, former Mayors Steve Gold and Randy Casale attended her services, as did many past and present members of the City Council. The Police Department helped direct traffic during her wake and led the funeral procession (which included a fire truck!) past the Municipal Building and then down Main Street one last time.

For many in the funeral entourage, the sight of the uniformed firefighters standing at attention, saluting as her hearse passed our beautiful, re-dedicated Fire Station was a touching tribute. The Fire Station also displayed mourning bunting on the front of the headquarters out of respect for Mayor Gould.

We are also grateful for the wonderful stories filed by Beacon Free Press reporter/editor Kristine Coulter, which outlined Clara Lou's contributions to Beacon, both as a citizen and as Mayor. Kudos also to funeral director Patrick Halvey, who coordinated many of the details outlined above.

Even though Beacon's demographics have changed in many ways over the past 30 years, it is quite evident that we have not lost that close-knit feeling that living in a small town brings to its residents.

Peter Forman  
Pamela Barrack  
Beacon

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*Editor's note: The following letter was sent to federal officials from Wappingers Central School District Superintendent Dr. Dwight Bonk. He is specifically asking for federal funding to provide a School Resource Officer, assigned by local law enforcement agencies, in each of the District's 15 school buildings.*

## WCSD superintendent seeks federal funding for school resource officers

### To Federal Officials:

As Superintendent of Schools of the Wappingers Central School District (WCSD), the ninth-largest school district in New York State with over 10,500 students and 15 school buildings, I am compelled, once again, to urge that Federal funding be made available immediately to enhance the health, welfare, and safety of our students.

In order to ensure that our schools are as safe as possible, I am asking for Federal funding to provide a School Resource Officer, assigned by our local law enforcement agencies, in each of our 15 school buildings within our District. The addition of such federally-funded positions is vital, as our country continues to grapple with the violence and mental health issues that have plagued school districts, resulting in injuries and, tragically, the loss of life. Unfortunately, I have been made aware that another violent event occurred at a school in Wisconsin earlier today. The horrific events of school violence that have transpired in many schools throughout the nation continue to cause much anxiety for the families, students, and staff in my school district.

Clearly, much discussion has occurred, and hopefully will continue to occur, at the Federal level regarding the best ways to keep students and staff safe. An armed and trained uniformed School Resource Officer, who works at a State/County or local police department, would be one immediate step that could be taken to begin to address this major concern. These trained officers will have the opportunity to develop positive relationships with our students and proactively help to mitigate potential conflict—as well as respond to those incidents that impact the health, welfare, and safety of others. Mental health professionals will be able to serve similarly, by developing positive relationships with our students and responding immediately to student mental health issues; they can possibly resolve issues prior to escalation.

I personally have the utmost confidence in the seven municipal police departments within our school district, which include the New York State Police and the Dutchess County Sheriffs' Department, as well as the Dutchess County Department of Health as we have worked collaboratively with them in the areas of school safety, mental health and wellness, and violence prevention. The presence of these trained professionals in ALL of our schools, regardless of grade level or enrollment, will help foster a safe school culture and climate that will allow teachers and students to focus on teaching and learning.

In the absence of Federal funding, many school districts may be forced to pay for such needed safety through their own school budget. As the safety and security of our staff and students is our top priority, I am hopeful that Federal funding will be made available for these most important positions in the 2025 budget year; the ability to provide these necessary services should not be based on whether each local school district has the financial means to do so. It is my belief that we can all agree that everyone, regardless of the wealth or the ability of their school districts to fund these services, deserves the safest-possible school environment: one that promotes teaching and learning and provides students with opportunities to achieve their highest academic, social, and emotional potential. Thank you very much for taking the time to review this correspondence and I am hopeful this request will receive very strong consideration!

Dwight Bonk  
Superintendent, Wappingers Central School District

## Deputies injured during incident at homeless shelter

The Dutchess County Sheriff's Office reports the arrest of Isaiah E. Lodge, age 27, at approximately 6:30 a.m. on Dec. 12, 2024 during an incident at the homeless shelter on North Hamilton Street in the City of Poughkeepsie.

On the above date and time, Deputies responded to the shelter, located adjacent to the Dutchess County Justice and Transition Center, for a report of a disorderly subject causing a disturbance and threatening staff. Upon arrival, Mr. Lodge was located at the scene and became violent when approached by Deputies. At that time numerous Deputies and City of Poughkeepsie Police Officers responded to the scene, at which time Mr. Lodge was finally subdued and taken into custody.

At this time Mr. Lodge is accused of injuring two Deputies during the above altercation; he is charged with biting both of them and putting one in a chokehold. As a result, the Deputies and Mr. Lodge were all transported to Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital for the treatment of non-life threatening injuries.

Lodge has been charged with Assault 2nd degree (Felony), Criminal Obstruction of Breathing (Misdemeanor), Obstructing Governmental Administration (Misdemeanor), Resisting Arrest (Misdemeanor), Trespass

(violation), and Disorderly Conduct (violation). After being processed he was arraigned before the City of Poughkeepsie Court and remanded to the Dutchess County Justice and Transition Center in lieu of \$100,000 cash bail or \$200,000 bond. The charges described above are merely accusations and Mr. Lodge is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

The Sheriff's Office and City Police routinely respond to the homeless shelter for various types of incidents, many of which involve potentially dangerous individuals and unstable circumstances. Sheriff Imperati is extremely grateful to all members of law enforcement that continue to respond and is very thankful that the injuries to the Deputies weren't more serious, saying that "As always the Deputies and City Officers responded quickly and appropriately to this dangerous situation, and I am extremely thankful that we didn't see even worse injuries. Many of the situations that we encounter at the shelter can be unpredictable and difficult to deal with, but law enforcement continues to respond and I am very proud of each and every one of them for the job that they do – not only in this instance, but every single day."

## Lit Lit set for Jan. 3 in Beacon

Time for Lit Lit, the popular open mic for literary works. Lit Lit is set for Friday, Jan. 3, 7 p.m. Lit Lit is about welcoming writers from every walk of life and genre to share their writing of up to 5 minutes. Donna Minkowitz is

the host. Organizers ask for a \$5 donation. Refreshments are available. Get in by 6:30 p.m. to sign up if one wants to read.

Lit Lit takes place at the Howland Cultural Center, 477 Main St., in Beacon.

### Elks donate clothes to Castle Point pantry



The Beacon Elks Lodge #1493 donated winter coats, socks, underwear, hats and gloves valued at \$1400 to the Clothing Pantry at Castle Point VA and to the Veterans living at the facility. The donation was provided through the Elks National Foundation (ENF) Spotlight Grant.

Pictured are Scott Birkler, ENF Grant Coordinator, Nicole Embry, VA Chief of Volunteer Service, Carl Oken, PDDGER (Past District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler)/Veterans Committee, Robert Haight, US Navy Veteran/Veterans Committee and Duane Kronk US Army/Veterans Committee.

-Courtesy photo Beacon Elks

### Club makes 9th annual donation to VA Women's Veterans Program



Members of the Dutchess County Chapter of the International Renegade Pigs Motorcycle Club, from left, Gary Simmonds, Mike DeRosa, Bob Simmonds, Mark Thomas and Tim Pagonos with Nicole Embry from Voluntary Service and Rebeca Delgado of the Women's Veterans Program for VA Hudson Valley Health Care System, at the Castle Point campus. Club members, along with the Lewis Tompkins Hose Fire Dept., donated thirty \$25 gift cards to be used at a local department store.

The VA Women's Veterans Program serves women of all ages, ranks and levels of authority in every branch of service who have served in the military. Women have served in the military since the Revolutionary War and have made significant contributions.

For more about how to claim benefits or learn more about the program, visit <http://www.benefits.va.gov/PERSONA/veteran-women.asp>.

-Courtesy photo International Renegade Pigs Motorcycle Club

### Three incarcerated individuals charged with violating court orders

The Dutchess County Sheriff's Office reports the arrests of the below individuals in connection with separate incidents at the Dutchess County Justice and Transition Center.

All three were incarcerated at the time of the incidents and arrests, and remain there at the time of this writing.

Nykiem McLean, 26, of Rhinebeck  
Jose Cruz, 23, of Poughkeepsie  
Heather Peck, 43, of Poughkeepsie

All three are accused of violating orders of

protection by calling protected parties and were charged with Aggravated Family Offense (felony) and Criminal Contempt 2nd degree (Misd), with McLean additionally charged with Obstructing Governmental Administration (misd). They were arrested on Dec. 13 and are due to appear before the City of Poughkeepsie Court for arraignment on Jan. 6, 2025.

As with any criminal case the charges described above are merely accusations, and all three defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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# Serino announces Fly Car Grant Awards recipients

Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino announced on Dec. 9 the recipients of the County's new Fly Car Grant Awards, which provide critical funding for life-saving equipment to fire departments, rescue squads, and ambulance corps for their 'fly car' vehicles.

"Fly cars are an essential component of our EMS system, providing rapid care when every second matters," said Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino. "These vehicles are often the first on the scene, equipped with the tools and expertise needed to stabilize patients in life-threatening situations. By supporting our first responders with these grants, we're not only enhancing emergency response capabilities but also reinforcing our commitment to the health and safety of Dutchess County residents."

The following organizations have been awarded up to \$20,000 in funding for life-saving equipment for their fly car vehicles:

Arlington Fire District - \$20,000 for a LUCAS 3.1 Chest Compression System by Physio-Control;

Beacon Volunteer Ambulance Corp - \$15,688 for a Lifeline ARM Chest Compression System;

Beekman Fire District - \$20,000 for a Stryker LUCAS device;

Fairview Fire District - \$19,980 for equipment to enhance critical response efficiency;

Hughsonville Fire Department - \$20,000 for equipment to enhance basic life support capabilities;

Hyde Park Fire Department - \$12,000 to replace defibrillators and other equipment;

J.H. Ketcham Hose Co., Inc. - \$7,172

to provide automated external defibrillators and Trauma/O2 Backpacks;

LaGrange Fire District - \$5,700 to purchase an automated external defibrillator;

New Hamburg Fire District - \$19,981 to purchase an automatic chest compression device; and

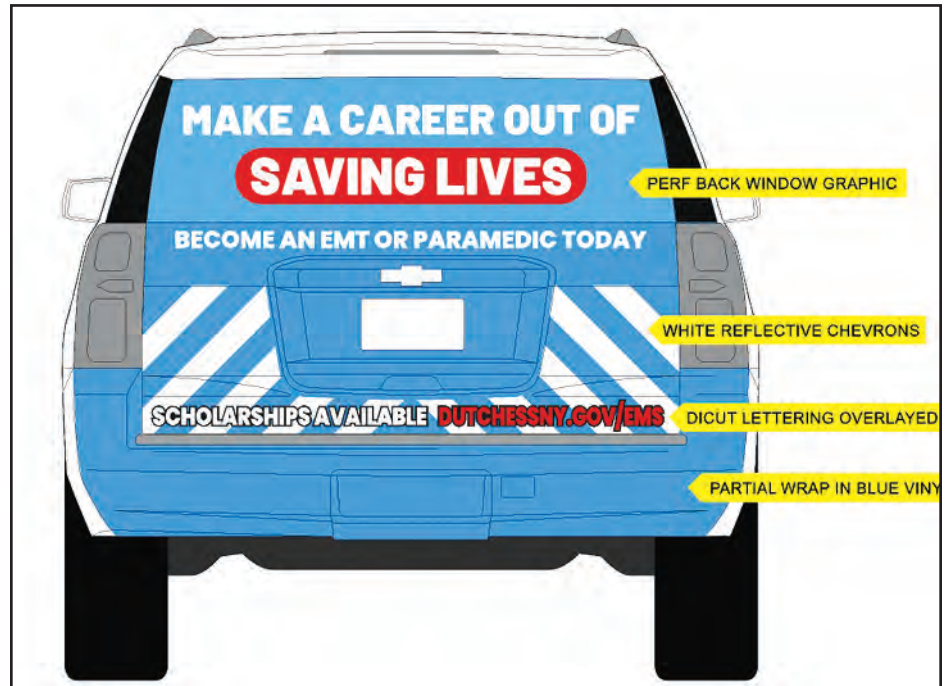
Union Vale Fire Department - \$20,000 for resources to restructure response of a rescue squad.

As part of the program, the fly cars will display branded, unified recruitment messaging encouraging residents to explore career and volunteer opportunities in EMS. The messaging will direct individuals to a centralized web address that provides information on EMS opportunities, including details about local paramedic programs.

Dutchess County Legislature Chairman Will Truitt said, "The health and safety of the people we represent must remain a top priority for Dutchess County. This grant program is an essential piece to ensuring that those that we ask to confront the challenging landscape of emergency response are properly equipped when they arrive on scene."

Paul Rogers, Jr., Chief of the Hughsonville Fire Department, said, "This Fly Car grant provides life-saving equipment to help us provide critical, immediate help at the scene of an emergency. We are grateful to County Executive Serino for her support in tackling the challenges we face with EMS and we look forward to working together with Dutchess County on this initiative and other endeavors."

This initiative is part of Dutchess County's continued investment in addressing the EMS crisis through inno-



*As part of County Executive Sue Serino's fly car grant award program, grant recipient departments' fly cars will display branded, unified recruitment messaging encouraging residents to explore career and volunteer opportunities in EMS. This is a rendering for the County's Dept. of Emergency Response EMS Coordinator vehicle. Individual departments' vehicles will be modified based on vehicle type, and in accordance with NYS DOH standards.*

*-Courtesy photo*

vative programs and partnerships. Serino previously announced a \$2 million historic investment in EMS in her 2025 Executive Budget Proposal, which includes the launch of supplemental ambulance coverage, as well as workforce development initiatives and a public edu-

cation campaign. The Dutchess County Legislature is scheduled to vote on the 2025 Budget at their Board Meeting on Monday, December 9th, 2024, with the full 2025 Budget process to be completed by Dec. 18th, with the adoption of the tax levy.

## Municipal leaders look back at 2024

*Continued from page 2*

shape. However, we did spend a lot on improving our Highway and Parks resulting in a fund balance around 5%. We should be over 10%." He said his 2026 budget will need to pay for the new Highway and PBA labor contracts, along with the new attorneys hired to prepare for the former Downstate Correctional Facility negotiations "to protect the town's interests." Earlier this year, Gov. Kathy Hochul announced a development plan for the former Downstate Correctional Facility in the town, off Route 52 and Route 9D, on Red Schoolhouse Road.

Edwards noted that in the Town of Poughkeepsie, "We stayed below the tax cap this year and will continue to focus on fiscal health."

"After many months of crafting and careful deliberation, we are pleased to present the Final Wappinger Town Budget for fiscal year 2025, a sound and balanced financial plan for the 150th year of the Town of Wappinger, that will be under the Tax Levy Cap with a Tax Rate decrease. As announced in the 2024 State of the Town Address, this administration has strengthened this Town's commitment to fiscal responsibility, as we undertook a comprehensive review of our financials, diligently drilling down to uncover true expenses and discrepancies. I am proud to report that the Town of Wappinger is in excellent overall financial shape, now doubled with the strong new internal policies and procedures that have been implemented throughout 2024 that allowed us to develop a realistic understanding of our expenses and revenues," said Cavaccini.

Cavaccini noted that the Wappinger 2025 Budget reduces Town taxes through a tax rate decrease and staying under the NYS Tax Levy Cap at 1.86%. "Taxpayers will find that the newly forecasted Town-Outside Village Homestead rate of \$1.59 per thousand of assessed value from \$1.70 per thousand of assessed value and the Village portion of the Homestead rate will be \$0.65 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Non-Homestead rates are \$2.94 per thousand of assessed value for Town-Outside and \$1.20 per thousand of assessed value for Town-Inside Village. All forecasts are decreases in the tax rate. In being more realistic in Town revenues, such as sales tax, interest, State aid, etc., the 2025 Final Budget alleviates a significant potential burden on taxpayers by only levying \$9,051,946 of our total \$20,725,588 budget on property taxpayers," said Cavaccini.

"This budget not only meets all our contractual obligations and anticipated increases but also allows us to expand our Parks & Recreation Department programming to include two Summer Camps and expanded Senior Citizen enrichment services, increase our aggressive targeted traffic enforcement of the Wappinger Patrol, expanding our efforts when it comes to applying for grant funding, enhance our parks and facilities infrastructure, invest in significant capital improvements for our Town's water and sewer systems and reconstruct 8 miles of Town roadway infrastructure – the most in recent history," said Cavaccini. "This is in addition to continuing our commitment to creating a safer work environment for our Buildings and Grounds

Department, among many other initiatives. Additionally, we are excited to allocate resources to celebrate our Town's sesquicentennial through the Wappinger150 initiative, that will highlight a year's worth of events and programs for families of all ages to enjoy!"

In the Village of Fishkill, Martin said, "Our finances are strong."

Regarding finances in the Village of Wappingers Falls, Huber said, "The Village Board made it a top priority to address findings from a State Comptroller's Office audit conducted from 2017-2022. We prepared a detailed response and corrective action plan to honor the audit's recommendations, as the Treasurer has implemented new procedures and revised policies to establish a solid financial foundation. These measures have significantly improved our fiscal stability, and we are optimistic about re-establishing the Village's bond rating in 2025."

Huber added: "The Board proudly approved a comprehensive Capital Infrastructure Plan created by our Treasurer. This plan outlines short- and long-term priorities, ensuring the Village's infrastructure remains strong and reliable. Key components include paving numerous roads in 2024, with additional roads scheduled for 2025. We are also exploring options to address PFAS (per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances) and iron regulations, ensuring clean and affordable drinking water for residents."

### Officials 'thankful' for the opportunity to lead community

"As always, I personally would like to highlight and thank our dedicated

City workforce, who keep our community safe, provide critical services, and continue to improve our quality of life. I'm grateful that we can attract and work with such a skilled and professional group of public servants," said Kyriacou.

D'Alessandro stated, "We in East Fishkill are truly blessed to have a community made up of so many caring and thoughtful residents. Any time we [have an] issue or some resident is in need, the outpouring of support that I get is really remarkable. I am very proud to be the Town Supervisor, and we have accomplished so much since I began as Town Supervisor and I only want the best for our residents and businesses. This time of year, we should all think about all that we are thankful for, and I am thankful for our wonderful community."

Albra said, "Fishkill is on the verge of completing all of its major capital projects. We have a superior Town Hall, Highway Garage, Recreation Center, Police Department and Sewer Treatment plant. In a few years, all of the town roads will be repaved. There is no need to build anything else and going forward we will only be talking about minor upgrades to our buildings. We are looking at a solid 10 years of only dealing with budgeting for pay raises and equipment/vehicles for Highway and Police. In addition, we have around \$300 million in new taxable development coming in the next 5 years. We are in excellent shape, and I thank you for allowing me to serve as your Town Supervisor, it's a great honor and I look forward to continue working for you."

get growing!

by mark adams



# Keep America Great

Something to ponder as the new year approaches

“My legs felt like rubber,” Rosa remembered. She was waiting in line to cross the border from Tijuana to San Diego, holding a fake passport. Her children, one and two years old, had been carried across by a total stranger, a “coyote,” days earlier. Hopefully, they had been passed into the arms of Rosa’s aunt, who was waiting on the U.S. side and had paid \$2,000 to get the three of them over.

The year was 1985, one year before President Ronald Reagan signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act, which would eventually lead to citizenship for Rosa, Paco and Ramiro. What had led Rosa to abandon her home in Guadalajara, Mexico to face an uncertain future? I couldn’t imagine, especially since I live a few hundred yards from where I was born.

Over a lunch of quesadillas at La Hacienda de Mexico in Arlington, I heard the whole story.

Rosa Rojo was born in Guadalajara in 1964, on the poor side of town. She remembers that her grandmother, who was “elegant,” would not even visit her family’s house when she came to town. They had to meet her at her hotel. As the Mexican economy fell into a deep recession in 1982, jobs disappeared. People started heading north, among them Rosa’s next door neighbor Ramiro. Ramiro arrived in Poughkeepsie, finding work at the Eveready Diner. He lived in a house with 15 other immigrants. On a trip home, Rosa and Ramiro fell in love and got married. Back in Poughkeepsie, Ramiro eventually saved enough money to send for his wife and their two children.

So Rosa’s aunt, who was in the U.S. on a visa, traveled south to arrange the clandestine journey.

A bus brought them to a “safe house” in Tijuana, where Rosa hid for days until a fake passport was created. She had to memorize the false name and birth dates, in case she was questioned at the border. But she made it, and was reunited with

her sons and husband in Poughkeepsie.

Forty years ago, Rosa remembers, it was unusual to see a Hispanic person around town.

Reagan’s amnesty program came as a surprise. It included a path to citizenship, with a lot of paperwork, a requirement to learn to read and write English, and a 100 question test. The questions and answers were provided, but had to be memorized. Rosa tripped up when asked the name of the national anthem (oh, yeah, it’s “The Star Spangled Banner”) but she passed. I attended her citizenship ceremony in 2000.

Now Rosa and Ramiro own their own home. Rosa works as production manager at a wholesale nursery. Paco is a loan officer at a bank. Ramiro Jr. works at Merrill Lynch. Rosa’s daughter, who was born in Poughkeepsie, is also a loan officer, and her youngest son Joseph is a police detective.

There was a flip side to Reagan’s “amnesty” act. It became illegal for an employer to “knowingly” hire an undocumented worker. The idea was to discourage illegal entry.

Employers are required to fill out an “I9” form so that all employees pay taxes and social security. If an undocumented person presents a phony social security card, that person still pays social security and income tax. I am amazed at the number of people I meet who think that undocumented workers get a “free ride” without paying taxes. The vast majority of the – what is it – 11 million or 18 million – undocumented people in this country, in my experience, pay taxes.

Come on, folks – sending them all home on “day one” would not only create a humanitarian crisis. It would wreck the economy. We need people like Paco, Ramiro, Jennifer and Joseph to Keep America Great.

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



Rosa on the right with her family.

-Courtesy photo



Rosa at La Hacienda de Mexico.

-Photo by Mark Adams



Rosa on the left as a child in Mexico.

-Courtesy photos

## Shoebox donations bring joy to children

Continued from cover

“It’s a team effort. It’s a church effort. It’s a volunteer effort,” said Cossette.

National Collection Week was Nov. 18-25. That is the week when volunteers collected and packed the shoeboxes. The locations in Dutchess County where the items were collected and packed were Vassar Road Baptist Church in Poughkeepsie, Living Water Church in Poughkeepsie, and Reach Out Church in Hyde Park. There were more than 4,700 drop-off locations nationwide, according to information from Operation Christmas Child. Children will receive boxes throughout the year, it was stated.

Participants had the opportunity to donate \$10 per shoebox gift through “Follow Your Box” online. This allowed them the chance to receive a tracking label and find out where their package

was delivered.

“Children need hope, and they need to know that they are not alone, and God loves them,” said Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan’s Purse, in a statement. “Gift-filled shoeboxes open the door for us to share the hope of the Gospel with boys and girls around the world. Please pray that these simple gifts have an eternal impact.”

Cossette recalled hearing stories from individuals who had received shoeboxes and the impact they made on their lives.

She told of one child who had prayed for school supplies and in the shoebox that year were school supplies.

Oksana, who was in a Russian orphanage, received a box one year, said Cossette. “The box was the first time she had anything to call her own,” said Cossette. Oksana prayed she would get adopted and a year later, she did. Cossette said the box gave Oksana hope while she

was waiting to be adopted.

Each box also contains a letter.

“I just really hope that they know they are loved. That they know there is someone on the other side of the box that cares for them,” said Cossette about what she hopes the children who receive a shoebox know when they open the box.

Frank Szenher, a Fishkill resident, has been a volunteer with Operation Christmas Child for 10 years. He helps transport the items.

“It’s a lot of fun. I get to go shopping. We shop at the thrift store and pick up items,” remarked Szenher.

Daneen Weatherup, with Girl Scout Troop 10475, has a packing party with

members of Girl Scout Troop. She said the girls are “always surprised at what little other kids have.”

“We pray over the boxes and the children and that the children love the boxes,” said Deborah Yerks. Yerks is on the prayer team with her husband, Ray.

Vineyard Community Church Pastor Ray Weickel said, “I’m amazed what they guys do here. They’re so devoted.”

Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has been collecting and delivering gift-filled shoeboxes to children. Operation Christmas Child’s goal, according to its website, was to reach approximately 12 million children this year.

## Grand Beacon Menorah Lighting set for Dec. 29

Continued from cover

advanced one. Sometimes we may feel outnumbered by the darkness around us, but we must remember that light will always triumph—no matter how big the darkness seems.”

There’s so much going on in the world right now, said Itkin, and it can feel overwhelming and even scary at times.

“But we are not powerless. Each of us has the ability to be a beacon of light. A simple smile or a good deed can brighten the world around us. If we all do our part, the world will feel a whole lot less scary,” the rabbi added.

The event is open to everyone.

If one needs candles, they will have candles at the event for attendees to light.

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# Mill House Brewing Company continues to bring the heat, announces Embers by Mill House

On the heels of Mill House Brewing Company's recent announcement around its new restaurant venture, The Ridge by Mill House, co-owners, Daniel Crocco and Jamie Bishop, have announced the acquisition of Embers Wood-Fired Oven, a full-service mobile catering business, to be rebranded as Embers by Mill House. The elevated food truck, which will serve Dutchess County and the surrounding areas, is now accepting bookings for spring 2025 for private events.

"I've always dreamed of owning and operating a food truck, so Embers by Mill House marks a really exciting new chapter for us," said Crocco. "When we met and spoke with John and Jen, the former owners of Embers, and experienced the charm of the vintage truck, it sealed the deal. We're excited to introduce elevated catering options for every type of celebration, making each event more memorable."

The refurbished 1963 Boyertown GMC Step-Van, which boasts a custom-built Forza Forni wood-fired pizza oven, enables Mill House Brewing Company to take its pizza, pints and top-notch experi-

ence on the road, effectively bringing 'Mill House to Your House'. With a vintage charm and modern appeal, the truck will seamlessly fit into any event with new offerings that build upon the existing business's wood-fired eats, such as hand-crafted sausages, beer-steamed mussels, wood-fired paella and pasta, and more. Truly a one-stop shop, Embers will also offer a full bar with an array of Mill House beers and cocktails, eliminating the need for patrons to obtain a temporary liquor license, purchase alcohol themselves or hire an additional catering service.

"This mobile catering truck enables us to bring a new level of creativity and convenience to guests for special occasions," said Bishop. "You can expect to see Embers pop up at our new restaurant, The Ridge, when it opens next year, and anticipate that this is just the beginning of our food truck endeavors. We're excited about the possibilities and have no plans of slowing down anytime soon."

"We've worked hard to build a community around Embers for the last five seasons and have always known that we would need to pass it on to people with



Restaurant Partners Daniel Crocco and Jamie Bishop have acquired Embers Wood-Fired Oven Truck and are expanding mobile catering offerings with new packages.

-Courtesy photo from Mill House Brewing Company

the same mission and love of food," said Jen Mac Kay, the former partner of Embers, who will continue to serve as the events coordinator for Embers by Mill House. "I can't think of a better team to lead Embers into its next chapter."

To learn more about Embers by Mill House, or to reserve it for an event, visit [www.millhousebrewing.com/embers](http://www.millhousebrewing.com/embers). For updates on the truck's offerings and availability, follow @EmbersbyMillHouse on Facebook and Instagram.

## that's italian!



# by luigi coppola Mom's Bread

### A simple recipe with a message of love

Mom had a drawer next to the sink on the right-hand side of the kitchen. It was between the sink and the washing machine and it was right by the kitchen door. In that drawer she would store plastic bags from the grocery store that she would reuse, matches and hard-crust bread that she would bake every week. I know it sounds funny that bread, plastic bags, and matches were in the same drawer, but for some reason it made sense. Invariably that bread would sometimes turn a little stale, but because it was so crusty it would be fine for the week.

I can remember coming home from school, hopping off the school bus with my brother Vinny and running up the driveway and into the house through the kitchen door like a maniac, starving of course, because well, school lunches were school lunches. Mom would tell us to change out of our school clothes and put our things away. While we did that she would take out a piece of the hard crusty bread from her drawer next to the sink and washing machine. A hunk for each of us. She would then run it under hot, hot water, to soften the crust, drizzle some olive oil over the top and sprinkle a little salt and pepper. We'd come out our room, and on the kitchen table would sit these bowls with our steaming bread in

them. That would be our after-school snack. That week-old bread was the best. Vinny and I ate it like we hadn't eaten in weeks. The memory of that flavor and the smell of warm olive oil lingers to this day. You see, Mom had a knack of taking things and making them into something awesome. She was Mom and that's what Mom did.

That's how it was with her five boys. Mom was so very proud of us boys. Especially when we would go to church. All five of us, from the oldest to the youngest, lined up in the church pew. Mom would look down the pew at us, the proud mother hen looking at her chicks; or, rather, the proud baker looking at her loaves of bread.

Mom baked a mean loaf of bread. She mixed and kneaded her dough. She would let it rise and then she would knead it again. She would bake it till it was crusty and only take it out of the oven when it was perfect. You see, Mom baked 5 loaves of bread. Even though we were a little crusty and stale, she still made us into something special. She made us into men.

Thank you, Mom.

#### Mom's Bread Ingredients

3.25 cups all-purpose flour, plus a little bit more for dusting

- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1 1/2 cups warm water
- 2 tsp active dry yeast

#### Instructions

In a large mixing bowl or a counter mixer, add the flour, salt and yeast. Use a spatula or the paddle attachment and mix to combine well.

Pour in the warm water and keep mixing until everything is incorporated, and a soft dough has formed. It will still stick to the bottom of the bowl and that is OK.

Cover the bowl with some plastic wrap, loosely, and a tea towel. Allow the dough to rise at room temperature for 2 to 3 hours until doubled in size.

Sprinkle some flour on your kitchen counter and dump the bread dough on it. Flour your hands to help it out of the bowl, as it will be sticky.

With floured hands, fold the dough onto itself, forming it into a round ball. Do not knead it, do not handle it anymore than you need to. Use a sharp knife and lightly carve an X in the top of the loaf or just make a few cuts across.

Place the bread dough on top of a lightly floured parchment paper pan and allow it to rest while your oven is heating up.

Preheat your oven to 450 degrees F. Fill an oven-proof bowl with 2 inches of water and place it on the bottom rack. This will create the steam that will cause the crust to become crispy as it bakes.

Once your oven is heated to temperature, place the bread in the oven. Bake the bread for about 30 to 45 minutes until golden brown all over and cooked through.

Turn off the oven, open the oven door slightly and allow the bread to cool. This will allow the crust to get a little thicker.

Luigi Coppola is one of five brothers born to Francesca and Antonio Coppola. The Coppola family came to America from Naples, Italy in 1954. Antonio and his brothers opened their first restaurant in Poughkeepsie in 1961. Luigi and his brothers Nick, John, Antonio and Vincent have carried on the family tradition in the way their parents taught them, using classic recipes taught to them at their apron strings. Visit their website at [www.coppolas.net](http://www.coppolas.net).

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# The flavor of the holidays, a mighty molecule: Vanillin

I use holiday gatherings as opportunities to try new dishes, and one thing I've found is that vanilla flavoring is used in a myriad of recipes. Certainly the spice is present in baked goods. But vanilla flavoring goes beyond confections. You might be surprised by its applications.

Vanilla is a component of drugs that treat bipolar disorder, intestinal gas, motion sickness, and vertigo; the perfume Lancôme Idôle; and savory foods in cream sauces! Due to its bouquet, it can be used as a masking agent to cover bitter or harsh notes. As one of the most universally liked scents, it is associated with positive emotions and comfort. Vanilla's aromatic compounds are long-lasting, and a hallmark of luxury perfumes.

Vanilla flavoring heightens our perception of sweetness in desserts, which makes for a warmer mouth sensation. It's easy to taste in sugary goodies. But, much like salt brings out the best of umami deliciousness, vanilla flavor can also enhance meats and balance the acidity of fruits.

### Vanilla orchids

Vanillin is the molecule that gives vanilla its distinct smell and taste. However, there are hundreds of other compounds which contribute to the natural flavor of the pure extract. That complexity is unique to the origin of the *Vanilla planifolia* plant, the soil in which it grows, and how its pods (incorrectly called beans) are harvested.

Though a tapestry of tastes on your tongue is delish, there are many complications to obtaining pure vanilla. The flowers require a pollinator, since the male and female parts of *Vanilla planifolia* are separated by a membrane. There is only a 1% chance of natural pollination because the only known pollinator is endangered.

The vining orchid is commercially grown in Madagascar, Reunion Island, the Comoro Islands, Indonesia, and Mexico. But the farmed plants lack of genetic diversity due to clonal propagation. They are vulnerable to pests, disease, and climate change. Vanilla orchids are sensitive to temperature and light, and, therefore require delicate care. The flowers last but one day, requiring precise timing of human pollination to fruit.

Once the pods reach maturity, in about nine months, they require hand-picking. Then they are cured for several months, after

which, they may be ground up as vanilla powder or paste, or soaked in alcohol to form extract. To become flavorful, extracts need months to age. Those processes all contribute to the high prices of *Vanilla planifolia* products, as evidenced by a gallon of pure extract selling for \$258 on Amazon! As an alternative, vanillin has been synthetically produced since 1858.

### All roads lead to the same Vanillin molecule

Synthetic vanillin is made using by-products of the paper industry, which are also molecules that are naturally occurring in trees and other plants. The raw materials undergo laboratory processes involving chemical reactions and changes in pH. The final product, vanillin, is a safe food additive approved by the FDA. A gallon of imitation vanilla sells for \$20 on Amazon.

Vanillin can also be derived using natural chemical reactions. Ferulic acid is a substance found in many plants, including grains. Specific microbes "eat" the ferulic acid and produce vanillin as a byproduct. Produced in this way, vanillin can be labeled "natural" because it results from a natural chemical reaction – fermentation. I have only seen this product available as an ingredient in commercial food production. It is more expensive than synthetic vanillin, but the price point is less than pure vanilla extract.

A much-beloved spice, vanilla flavor was popularized by Queen Elizabeth. Experts agree that it is among the natural flavors in Coca-Cola's trade-secreted recipe. But how we satisfy our desire for this mighty molecule needs to be countered against confounding factors like the diminishing natural habitat of *Vanilla planifolia*. The demand for vanillin far exceeds the supply that can be obtained from vanilla orchids. A sustainable solution will allow me to enjoy my Kris Kringle Creamy Cookies with my Hanukkah Hot Chocolate.

Chemically, there is no difference between vanillin derived from vanilla plants and vanillin prepared through synthetic or fermentation methods. It is true, however, that pure vanilla extract may possess a more complex flavor and is made up of just three ingredients. I made some, but I'll need to wait till December 2025 to try it. If you are



DIY vanilla extract.



Coke & Lancôme Idôle Eau de Parfum both have Vanilla-1.

interested in a kitchen, chemistry, or holiday deep-dive into vanilla, check out Vanillin: A Mighty Molecule at <https://www.teachers-payteachers.com/Product/Vanillin-A-Mighty-Molecule-Enrichment-Cross-Curricular-Ecology-Genetics-12631665>

Francine Wizner is a native of the Hudson Valley. She grew up in the Catskills of

Greene County and spent over 3 decades teaching in Ulster County. She creates science-themed instructional materials and books, as well as being a Citizen Scientist in the management of her current home in an enchanted woodland of Dutchess County. Find her at <https://medium.com/@wiznerf>, <https://substack.com/@gkatzchronicle>, and <https://www.pleasantvalleymaplelodging.com/>.



Store DIY vanilla extract in a cool, dark, dry place for 6-12 months.

-Photos by Francine Wizner

## Hope comes in many forms

**What does hope look like for you?**

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# Obituaries

## Brian McElhoney



FORMERLY OF BEACON - Brian McElhoney, born on October 8, 1951, passed away peacefully at his residence in West Palm Beach, Florida, on December 6, 2024, at the age of 73.

Brian grew up in Bronx, New York, and later became a longtime resident of Beacon, New York, before settling in West Palm Beach in 2009. A proud Navy veteran, Brian dedicated his professional life to serving others as a funeral director and retired as the Vice President of the Local Teamsters Union 813. Known for his witty sense of humor and sharp memory, Brian brought warmth and laughter to those fortunate enough to know him.

An avid sports fan, reader and movie watcher with a soft spot for animals and a love of sweets, Brian found joy in life's simple pleasures. He was a

natural extrovert who formed lifelong friendships throughout his career and retirement years. Above all, he was a devoted father who cherished time spent with his three sons.

Brian is survived by his wife, Terri-Ann McElhoney; his sons Kyle McElhoney, Joseph McElhoney and his fiancée Wanna Sribunnak, and Spenser McElhoney and his fiancée Martyann Chromik. He is also survived by his sister Patricia Scibelli, her husband Chris, and his brother Michael McElhoney. Brian is also survived by multiple nieces and nephews, as well as many other close friends and extended family members.

Preceding Brian in heaven are his parents, James and Kathleen McElhoney and his sister Kathleen Wilday.

Brian's legacy is one of love, humor, and connection. His memory will live on in the hearts of his family and friends. May he rest in peace.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date and time. If interested in attending, please send along contact information to the family at [kjsmcelhoney@gmail.com](mailto:kjsmcelhoney@gmail.com). In lieu of flowers, Brian's sons ask that you do something with a loved one/ones and think of him.

## Suzanne Hannon McElduff

BEACON - Suzanne Hannon McElduff, a lifetime resident of Beacon, passed away peacefully at home on December 7, 2024 at the age of 88. Suzanne was well known and loved most especially for her steadfast devotion to her family, her friends and her community.

Suzanne was born on November 10, 1936 in Beacon, NY; the daughter of the late Susan Hayden Hannon and Patrick J. Hannon. A graduate of St. Joachim Parochial School and Mount Saint Mary's High School, she continued her education at the Katharine Gibbs School in New York City. Upon completing her training, Suzanne held positions with various firms in New York City and used her professional skills for many years to support her family and community.

On April 19, 1958 she married her beloved husband, John F. McElduff, who predeceased her on January 1, 2023.

Suzanne committed a lifetime to the growth and development of her seven children through childhood and well into adulthood, lovingly training and tutoring each through their school and music lessons, supporting them all in their extra-curricular activities and advocating for them in ways that earned the respect and cooperation of all. The most important lessons she taught were focused on training her children and others to be the best parents they could be and stressing that there is no more important task.

Suzanne was the owner and proprietor of The Card Shop in Beacon. She shared her husband John's passion for restoring Main Street in Beacon, and together, they saw it through to reality. She never wavered in her belief that there was no better place than Beacon to raise a family and live a happy life.

Suzanne held many community volunteer positions, which included serving St. Joachim - St. John the Evangelist church and school, the Beacon City School District and the Howland Public Library. Most notably, she was a parent advocate for children with special education needs in the Beacon City School District. She also served as a Trustee on the board of the Howland Public Library, always advocating for more and better resources for the families of Beacon.

Suzanne is survived by her children, Jeanne Scoba, Judy McAndrew and husband, Bob, Ellen Versprille and husband, Hank, John McElduff and wife, Carole, Patrick McElduff and wife, Heather, and Luke McElduff; her 19 grandchildren (and spouses), Kate, Patrick, Eliza and husband, Will, Molly, Sam, Anne, Megan and husband, Nick, Jake, Deirdre, Nora, Marta and husband, A.J., Claire, Jack, Sheila, Gracie, Colleen, Rory, Hayden and Erin; her great-granddaughter Bree Hannon; her sisters, Margaret Capozzi and Judy Keating and her husband, Bill; her many nieces and nephews; and extended family and friends.

In addition to her parents and her husband, Suzanne was predeceased by her brothers, Patrick and Michael; her sister and brother-in-law, Mary and Bill Tully; her brother-in-law, Dan Capozzi and her son-in-law, Peter Scoba.

The family is forever grateful to Hudson Valley Hospice, her caregivers, especially Millie, Charlene, Ann Marie, Angela, Wanda, Izzy, Sharol, Stephanie, Gingi, Paulette, Debbie and the clergy and eucharistic ministers of our parish, especially Rose.

Family and friends gathered on Friday, December 20 at Riverview Funeral Home by Halvey, 2 Beekman Street, Beacon. A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Saturday, December 21 at St. John the Evangelist Church, 35 Willow Street, Beacon. Burial followed at St. Joachim Cemetery, Beacon.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in memory of Suzanne may be made to Howland Public Library or Hudson Valley Hospice, 374 Violet Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

To send a personal condolence, please visit [www.riverviewbyhalvey.com](http://www.riverviewbyhalvey.com).

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

## Joseph F. Heady



BEACON - Joseph F. Heady, a life-long Beacon resident, passed away peacefully at his home in Beacon on December 15, 2024; at the age of 63. He was born on August 2, 1961 in Beacon, NY, son of Stella (Knapp) Heady and the late Richard W. Heady Sr.. He attended Beacon City Schools.

On July 16, 1994 he married Kathy J. Grove, who survives him at home.

Joe enjoyed life; he enjoyed being outdoors and the company of his friends & family. He will be greatly missed.

Along with his mother Stella Heady and his wife of 30-years Kathy Heady, Joe is survived by his daughter Krystle (Shawn) Heady-Brady and his son James Browne. Sadly he was predeceased by his son Corey Pike on May 15, 2004. He is also survived by his 8 grandchildren: Corey, Kaydence, Rowan, Austin, Ashton, Amber, Sierra and Ella; his brother William 'Billy' Heady, and

several nieces, nephews & friends.

Along with his father and son, Joe was predeceased by his sister Stella Thomas and his brother Richard W. Heady Jr..

His Family received Friends on Saturday, December 21, 2024 at the LIBBY FUNERAL HOME, 55 Teller Avenue, Beacon, New York. Cremation followed, and a private interment will be at a later date in the Spring of 2025 at the Fairview Cemetery, 375 Washington Avenue, Beacon, New York.

Arrangements were entrusted to the care of Joseph J. Schuka of the LIBBY FUNERAL HOME, 55 Teller Avenue, Beacon, New York 12508. To offer a message of condolence or share a fond memory, please visit: [www.LibbyFuneralHome.com](http://www.LibbyFuneralHome.com).

## Brian J. Robinson



WAPPINGERS FALLS - Brian J. Robinson, born on May 10, 1963, passed away on December 9, 2024, at the age of 61.

Brian was predeceased by his parents John and Phyllis Robinson. He is survived by his daughter Sarah M. Robinson of Wappingers Falls, N.Y. and son Alex B. Robinson of Lagrangeville, N.Y.; and grandchildren Kameron Robinson, and Kaedyn and Khloe Whyte. He is also survived by his sisters Debra Garlock (Daniel), Michele Giewat and Kimberly Griggs (Christopher); and nephews Karter, Carsen and Kolten Griggs.

Brian was a devoted collector, always on the hunt for unique treasures at flea markets. He cherished family dinners every Sunday and worked as a manager for 7 Eleven for many years. Brian's

warm and generous spirit left an indelible mark on everyone he met. His enthusiasm for life and dedication to his family were evident in everything he did. Whether he was sharing stories over Sunday dinners or finding the perfect item at a flea market, Brian's presence brought joy and comfort to those around him. His memory will live in the hearts of his family and friends, and he will be remembered for the love and laughter he brought into their lives.

Please join his visitation was on Sunday, December 15, 2024, at Straub, Catalano & Halvey Funeral Home, 55 East Main Street, Wappingers Falls, N.Y. 12590.

Funeral services and inurnment took place on Tuesday, December 17, 2024, at Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery, 342 South Road, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

For directions or to send a personal condolence, please visit [www.StraubCatalanoHalvey.com](http://www.StraubCatalanoHalvey.com).

## Arlene Joyce Birch



WAPPINGERS FALLS - Arlene Joyce Birch, a 56-year resident of Wappingers Falls and formerly of Walkkill, entered into rest November 19, 2024 at home. She was 93.

Daughter of the late Bernard and Louise Edwards, she was born on December 4, 1930 in Forestburg, NY. She married Harry LeRoy Birch on September 17, 1950 at Shawangunk Mountain Church; he predeceased her in 1995.

Arlene worked as a teller at Wallkill Bank and was a church organist for 40 years. She played for Shawangunk Mountain Church and later Hughsonville Presbyterian Church, where she worshipped God and Jesus Christ. She enjoyed her years making a warm and loving home for her husband and two sons. Arlene loved butterflies, sunshine and black-eyed Susans.

Roy and Arlene had two sons, Wayne

and Kevin Birch; Wayne predeceased her. Kevin has been Arlene's caregiver, as well as caregiver to his wife, for the past 12 years. His wife, Donna Birch, died February 17, 2021 at the age of 52. May all of the family rest in peace! God bless the lives we all had and God bless you all.

A Celebration of Life service will be held on Saturday, December 28, 2024 at 11 am at Harvest Church, 2368 Route 9D in Wappingers Falls.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made in Arlene's name to EWTN, [www.ewtn.com](http://www.ewtn.com).

Arrangements are under the direction of Straub, Catalano & Halvey Funeral Home, 55 E. Main Street, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590.

To send a personal condolence, please visit [www.StraubCatalanoHalvey.com](http://www.StraubCatalanoHalvey.com).

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## Beacon Elks recognize WJHS Students of the Month

Beacon Elks Lodge #1493 recognized the Wappingers Junior High School Students of the Month (October 2024) in the Wappingers Central School District during a November certificate ceremony.

Students, teachers, and Elks representatives pictured are, from left, Cathy Oken, Youth Activities Chair, Jesse Carano, teacher, Alyssa Venditto (8th Grade), Gianna Agosto (7th Grade), Jesus Secas, teacher, Jasmine Schinella, teacher, and Sharon Haviland, Esteemed Loyal Knight.

Students of the Month recipients receive a Certificate of Achievement and a gift certificate to a local business. The Teachers of the Month received a certificate. Thank you to Giacomo's Pizza Café for sponsoring these Students of the Month.

-Courtesy photo Beacon Elks



# love to cook

by vicki frank day



# Snacks in a snap

### Easy nibbles for the busy holiday season

Well, my friends, this has never happened before. In the last week I've started four different articles but here we are on the fifth, because those just didn't pan out. I have struggled a time or two before when coming up with ideas of what to write, but never have I made so many failed attempts in one go. It might surprise you to hear that I didn't get overly frustrated, but I suppose that just comes with writing these articles for so long. If this is the first time, I've been this stumped in 18 years, I hardly think that's something to complain about!

So, this being the fifth and final try, I did what I always do when facing writer's block and stepped away for a few minutes, got myself another cup of coffee and am now snuggled back in my chair with my dachshund (very aptly named Pip) in the hope that something will come to me. And just like that, it has!

I think part of the reason ideas and productivity sometimes don't flow is that we all get stuck from time to time. It doesn't really matter what it is we're trying to do; life just has a way of gumming up the creative works. We can get overwhelmed or distracted when there's too much going on and not enough time for it all, like we tend to this time of year especially, which is actually what ended up inspiring this article in the end. As part of my mind was trying to decide on an article topic and part was also trying to plan this year's Christmas menu while worrying about countless other things, it occurred to me that all I really wanted to do was fix myself a snack, curl up and savor a little peaceful me time. That's when jingle bells and angel trumpets sounded to let me know I'd just found what to write about, because I'm not the only one feeling that way.

I realize we're all busy and many of us have things to worry about, which can certainly leave us feeling less than festive. So maybe I can give you some simple ideas to help you skate through any rough patches so we can all set stress aside and enjoy what the season's really about. A few easy but delicious recipes to indulge in over the next few weeks might go a long way toward easing our burdens and slowing us down enough to savor the holidays. Sounds good to me anyway, and I feel better already!

Any time of year and for any (or no) occasion, making a meal of appetizers is my favorite way to eat, and it's even more so when shared with people I love. If, like me, you've grown a little weary of the beloved charcuterie board, allow me to share some fun, festive, tried-and-true recipes you can use from now until the New Year and beyond to take its place. They're all easy nibbles, some are super quick to make, some can be made ahead, most are reasonable and a fair few you may already have the ingredients for or can keep on hand for when you need to whip something up. Make one or more to enjoy while you decorate, wrap presents or watch a movie or combine several and throw yourself a party. Invite some friends over or break them out for visiting family, or just fix yourself a little plate and curl up on the couch. Breathe deep, nibble, repeat.

#### QUICK & EASY

Let's start things off with some things you just need to assemble, that are pretty to look at and have a nice contrast of flavors.

**CAPRESE SKEWERS** – A practically bite-sized take on the classic salad that just

happens to be red and green. Thread appetizer or cocktail skewers with a grape tomato, bocconcini (mini mozzarella ball) or cube of fresh mozzarella and a fresh basil leaf. Arrange on a platter and drizzle with olive oil and balsamic glaze. For company, place them in a circle for a wreath effect and a little fancier than a crudite platter.

**PEPPER JELLY APPETIZER** – So easy and so good! Place a room temperature block of cream cheese on a platter, top with pepper jelly, garnish with some seasonal greens and serve with Ritz crackers and a spreader. Spicy-sweet and creamy with the salty-buttery goodness of the crackers = pure joy!

**WHIPPED RICOTTA** – This one isn't quite a straight-up assembly since you alter the ricotta, but it only takes about 10 minutes to make. Start by putting 1lb of whole milk ricotta in a large bowl with 1 tablespoon of honey and about 1 teaspoon of salt (no more than that). Beat until smooth with a hand mixer or food processor, then pour in 2 tablespoons of a good quality olive oil and continue mixing until combined. Transfer to a shallow serving bowl, drizzle with a little olive oil, add freshly cracked pepper and a pinch of flaky salt and serve with pita wedges, lightly toasted baguette slices or crackers. You can also top it with chopped green olives and roasted red peppers.

#### UPDATED CLASSICS

These are familiar throwbacks but with little upgrades to dress them up for company.

**PIGS IN BLANKETS** – Adapted from a Food & Wine recipe. Sure, they may seem a little dated, but they're classic for a reason and still a favorite for many. My family's made them part of our Christmas Eve for as long as I can remember! Cocktail franks seem harder to find every year, so just use your favorite hot dogs or even chicken sausage. Your wiener of choice gets a delicious flavorful glaze, and I've swapped out the usual pre-made crescent dough for puff pastry 'cause I'm so fancy! Assemble these (in about 20 minutes) up to a day ahead and make sure they're chilled before baking so they puff up and make you proud.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/2 cup Dijon mustard
- 2 sheets thawed (in the fridge) frozen puff pastry
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 8 hot dogs, cut into thirds
- 1 egg
- Coarse or flaky sea salt

#### METHOD

Line 1-2 baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

For the glaze, place butter, brown sugar and honey in a medium saucepan and cook

over medium heat until melted, whisking to blend. Remove from heat and stir in mustard, whisking until smooth. Set aside.

Unfold one sheet of puff pastry on a lightly floured surface and roll it into a (12-inch) square. It will be about 1/8-inch thick. Cut in half, then cut each half into 6 equal pieces (I prefer triangles because they hold the meat more securely). Brush the dough with the honey mustard glaze not quite to the edges, sprinkle evenly with pepper and place hot dog pieces on the end of each piece of dough (the wider end if cut into triangles) and roll them up. Place them seam-side down on baking sheet, about 1-inch apart. (If making ahead, stop here, cover with plastic wrap or foil and refrigerate).

Make an egg wash by mixing the egg with 1 tablespoon of water. Brush tops of pastry rolls and sprinkle with coarse salt. Repeat with second pastry sheet. Refrigerate at least 15 minutes before baking.

Bake 30-40 minutes until puffed up and golden brown. Check after 30 minutes to make sure they don't burn. Serve immediately. You don't need dipping sauce but you may want to break out the bubbly.

Makes 24 snuggled in pigs.

**PUFF PASTRY PIZZA BITES** – If you're getting the idea that puff pastry is your best friend, you're right. I keep some in the freezer at all times for all things sweet and savory. Here it glams up humble pizza. Using one sheet makes 28-32 2-inch bites. You should figure on 5 puffs per person, so double it for a crowd. Use store-bought sauce and pre-shredded mozzarella and this is done, start to finish, in about 30 minutes.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 sheet thawed frozen puff pastry
- Pizza sauce (for topping and dipping)
- About 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- Dried oregano, salt and pepper to taste

#### METHOD

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Unfold puff pastry on a lightly floured work surface and roll slightly to eliminate creases. Cut into 2-inch squares (you should be able to get 4x7 from one sheet of pastry). Transfer squares to baking sheet. Alternatively, you can try to carefully cut the pastry right on the parchment and transfer to the baking sheet.

Spread a spoonful of sauce in the center of each square. Top with mozzarella and sprinkle with oregano, salt and pepper.

Bake until puffed and golden and cheese is melted, 15-18 minutes (check after 15). Serve immediately with a side of pizza sauce in case anyone wants to dip.

Makes 28-32.

While this hasn't been among my best articles, I hope it serves as a little gift from me to you and that you will add these recipes to your repertoire for times when you need to satisfy a craving, feed family or company or have yourself a little celebration. Holidays give us a lot to celebrate but can also be stressful so let's make time for a little bit of decadence and savor the good life whenever we can. There's so much to celebrate and be thankful for and a bright New Year ahead. I wish you all the love in the world, peace, joy and the happiest of holidays. Cheers!

*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.*

### Legal Notices

#### REQUEST FOR BIDS NOTICE

The Purchasing Agent, County of Dutchess, Poughkeepsie, New York, hereby invites the submission of sealed bids for: Bid #RFB-DCP-06-25 Supplemental Bid for Auto Body Repair Services for County Owned Vehicles Bids will be received until 2:00 p.m. on the 7th day of January

### Legal Notices

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.

The deadline for Legals is every Monday @ 12 noon for a Wednesday Publication\* \*When a public holiday falls on a Monday the deadline becomes Friday at noon.

## this week's puzzle solutions

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

This week's answer  
**SUDOKU**

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

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

Sudoku solution

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

© StatePoint Media

Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Suguru

		<b>3</b>		<b>4</b>	
	<b>5</b>				
	<b>3</b>				<b>2</b>
<b>5</b>				<b>3</b>	
			<b>5</b>		

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The heavy lines indicate areas, called cages, from one to five squares in size. Fill each cage with unique digits, counting up from 1. So for example a 2-square cage contains the numbers 1 and 2; and a 5-square cage contains the numbers from 1 to 5. Adjacent (touching) squares, even ones that touch diagonally, may never contain the same number.

**THEME: YEAR-IN-REVIEW**

**ACROSS**

1. Cerberus' domain
6. Chop
9. Mama's husband
13. Unsuitable
14. Adam's partner
15. Echo sounder
16. Sunny prefix
17. Armed conflict
18. In a heated manner
19. \*Highest grossing movie based on Broadway musical
21. \*Time's 100 World's Most Influential People cover model in 2024 (2 words)
23. "\_\_\_\_ and the City"
24. Not exciting
25. Accident
28. Rani's dress
30. Talking points
35. Aflame
37. Spanish sparkling wine
39. Slang for money
40. Velum, pl.
41. \*November 5th 2024 winner
43. Short for "and elsewhere" (2 words)
44. Met's offering
46. River in Bohemia
47. Queen of Hearts' pastry
48. \*Super Bowl winners in 2024
50. Visi\_\_\_\_ or Ostro\_\_\_\_
52. The Alan Parsons Project's "Eye in the \_\_\_\_"
53. \_\_\_\_ of passage
55. \*Milton's center
57. \*Miley Cyrus' Grammy-winning Record of the Year in 2024
61. \*2024 Summer Olympic Games host
64. Cat's nine
65. Lowest or highest card
67. Accustom
69. E-wallet content
70. Backstabber
71. N in RN
72. Whipping mark
73. R&R spot
74. Support person

**DOWN**

1. "Say what?"
2. All over again
3. \*MV \_\_\_\_, cause of 2024 Baltimore bridge collapse
4. Long stories
5. Tends a fire
6. Obscene
7. Spermatozoa counterpart
8. Lost, in Paris
9. \*Olympic Gold winner Katie Ledecky's "court"
10. Dead against
11. Explore by touch
12. Maisie Williams' "Game of Thrones" character
15. Hello, in Haifa
20. Dead-on
22. Last month
24. Disclose
25. Wrecked state
26. Bet's predecessor
27. Pileus, pl.
29. Like steak order
31. Maya Angelou, e.g.
32. Itsy-bitsy bits
33. \*Caitlin of college basketball
34. Gin and grapefruit juice cocktail, a.k.a. \_\_\_\_ dog
36. Scarlet O'Hara's home
38. Speaking platform
42. Dinklage or Townshend, e.g.
45. Again but differently
49. Elton John's title
51. Shenzi of "The Lion King"
54. Russian rulers, pre-1917
56. Tedium
57. "One \_\_\_\_ Over the Cuckoo's Nest"
58. Classroom pests
59. Elliptical
60. Sunset location
61. Sheep's milk cheese
62. Little Miss Muffet's morsel
63. Gaelic tongue
66. Upper limit
68. Poetic "always"

**CROSSWORD**

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13						14				15				
16						17				18				
	19				20			21	22					
			23				24							
25	26	27		28		29			30		31	32	33	34
35			36		37			38		39				
40					41				42		43			
44				45		46					47			
48					49		50			51		52		
					53		54			55		56		
57	58	59	60					61				62	63	
64						65	66			67				68
69							70			71				
72							73			74				

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The solutions to the Sudoku, Crossword puzzle and Suguru can be found on the previous page.

## Beacon Elks recognizes RMS Students of the Month



Beacon Elks Lodge #1493 recognized the Rombout Middle School Students and Teachers of the Month (September & October 2024) during a November 21 certificate ceremony.

Students and teachers recognized, and Elks representatives, pictured are, from left, Jeanine McAuley, Esteemed Leading Knight; September Students, Maddie Westlake (6th grade), TJ VanDemark (7th grade), and Connor Coldrick (8th grade); October Students, Ariya Valverde (6th grade), Troy Burch (7th grade), and Kylie Ebeling (8th grade); and Cathy Oken, Youth Activities Chair. In the back row are Ms. Trapp and Ms. Devall.

Students that are recognized as Elks Students of the Month are nominated by their teachers based on their commitment, participation, kindness, initiative, and being supportive. The teachers were chosen by the students for their teaching style, humor and for making Math fun.

“Our Student of the Month program recognizes hard work and dedication by the student, with the overall goal of encouraging students to continue their great work,” said Michael Zanzarella, Exalted Ruler, Beacon Elks Lodge #1493.

Student of the Month recipients receive a Certificate of Achievement and a gift certificate to a local business. The Teachers of the Month received a certificate. Thanks to Glazed Over Donuts for sponsoring this month’s students.

-Courtesy photo Beacon Elks

## ‘Fresh Start,’ ‘In Dialogue with Wood’ at BAU Gallery in Beacon

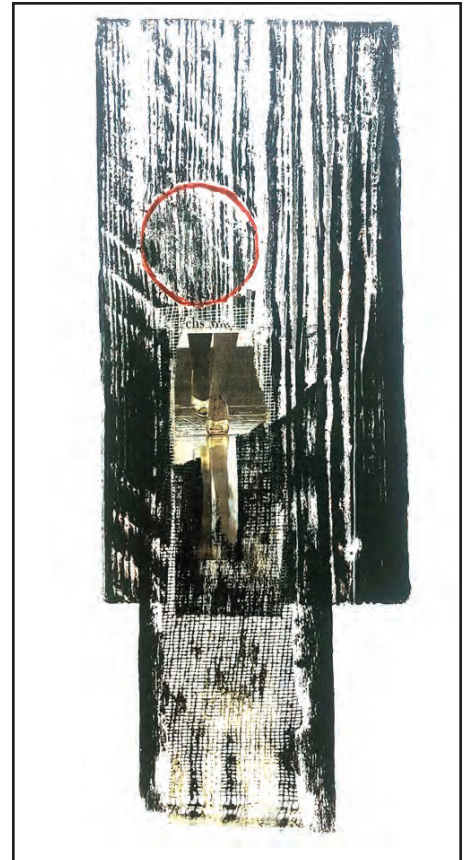
BAU Gallery presents in Galleries 1 + 2 “Fresh Start, Member Artists Group Exhibition” and in the Beacon Room “In Dialogue With Wood: Woodcuts, Ilse Schreiber-Noll.” The Opening Reception will be held on the Second Saturday, January 11, 2025 from noon-6 p.m., with an artists’ reception from 6-8 p.m. The exhibitions end on Sunday, February 2, at 506 Main Street, Beacon. One can see the works on Saturdays and Sundays from noon-6 p.m. or by appointment.

In a world where change is the only constant, “Fresh Start” invites viewers to explore the transformative promise of beginnings. This exhibition brings together a diverse group of artists who grapple with themes of renewal, hope, and the cyclical nature of life. Each work reflects a unique journey—whether through personal experiences, cultural narratives, or environmental shifts — inviting us to contemplate our own paths toward reinvention.

The pieces on display echo the sentiment of starting anew, exploring identity, resilience, and the beauty that can emerge from moments of uncertainty. The artists invite us to embrace vulnerability and recognize that fresh starts, while often daunting, can lead to unexpected growth and discovery.

Current gallery artists in this exhibition are: Bob Barry, Daniel Berlin, Eileen Sackman, Ilse Schreiber-Noll, Joan Harmon, Joel Brown, Karen Allen, Kelly M O’Brien, Linda Lauro-Lazin, Nansi Lent, Nataliya Hines, Pamela Zaremba, Robin Adler, and Soli Pierce. BAU artists are all working professional artists who exhibit their work regionally, nationally, and internationally.

In the Beacon Room is “In Dialogue with Wood,” by Ilse Schreiber-Noll. “Wood has always been more than just a medium to me. It is a living connection to nature, history, and craft. Each piece of wood has a story to tell written in the rings, patterns shaped by seasons, and textures formed over years. Working with wood is an intimate dialogue, where I am both artist and collaborator, guided by the natural grain and contours. As I carve, I find both resistance and softness, a dynamic push and pull that reveals the essence of each block. The process of creating a woodcut is both meditative and challenging, demanding precision,



“The Secret Life of Trees,” by Ilse Schreiber-Noll.

-Courtesy image

patience, and respect for the material,” the artist remarked. “This exhibition is a celebration of my love for wood and its unique ability to hold and transform human expression. My hope is that as you view these works, you feel the organic pulse of the material itself—its rawness, resilience, and beauty—and that you, too, sense the connection to the natural world that wood brings into each piece.”

Schreiber-Noll was born in Germany. After coming to the United States, she received her MFA at Purchase College SUNY. She studied and taught with the late Uruguayan American visual artist, Antonio Frasconi, renowned for his politically charged woodcuts.

For more information, visit [www.baugallery.org](http://www.baugallery.org).

## Adam Ezra Group to perform at Towne Crier Dec. 27



Adam Ezra Group.

-Courtesy photo

Adam Ezra Group, led by Boston native Adam Ezra, is celebrating a groundbreaking year filled with musical achievements, philanthropic impact, and exciting collaborations with an end-of-year tour which comes to the Towne Crier Cafe in Beacon on Friday, Dec. 27, at 8 p.m.

Known for their grassroots approach and a unique blend of music and activism, the band is carving a path as one of the most independent folk bands in the country.

At the heart of their mission is Ezra’s nonprofit organization, RallySound, which empowers communities through

music. This year, RallySound hosted its annual festival, The Ramble, raising over \$151,000 for homeless veterans in New England. EAs the year winds down, Adam Ezra Group is gearing up for their annual “Dysfunctional Family Gathering Holiday Tour,” which includes Dec. 27 show at Towne Crier. Joined by their friends Sirsy as the opening act, the band promises an unforgettable night of music and community spirit.

For tickets and information, visit [www.townecrier.com](http://www.townecrier.com). Towne Crier Cafe is at 379 Main St., Beacon.

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