

Marist, DCC men's teams on historic runs

By Morgan E. Maier

There's a two-mile stretch in Poughkeepsie where visiting basketball teams can't seem to hit the rim. All season, the men's teams at Marist University and Dutchess Community College have made defense an effective offense. Now both programs are seeking to make history ahead of their respective conference tournaments.



Marist University's Josh Pascarelli scored a career-high 31 points against Canisius on Saturday. Photo by Ricky Torres

In 2024-25, Marist emerged atop the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC), clinching a top seed in the MAAC tournament. Marist leads the MAAC in the least points allowed, holding opponents to 40.3% from the field. Unrelenting until the final buzzer, this team will chase the ball and lock down each opposing player.

On another campus about five minutes away, the Dutchess Community College Falcons operate with a similar philosophy. In Week 3, Dutchess cracked the top 5 of the

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30th St. Patrick's Parade set March 1 with Margo Maher as Grand Marshal

By Morgan E. Maier

Spring marches in like a lion as the Village of Wappingers Falls awaits one of its largest annual celebrations. The 30th Annual Dutchess County St. Patrick's Parade is set to make its rounds on March 1.

Festivities begin with 9 a.m. Mass at St. Mary's Church, followed by a dedication to the parade's first Grand Marshal Fr. Charlie Coen. The parade lineup begins at noon, with a Shamrock Dash Fun Run sponsored by Fleet Feet at 12:45 p.m. Among step dancers, pipers, color guards, and community groups, dozens of floats and marchers will hand out beads and candy to parade-goers along the route. The parade will follow West Main Street to Route 9D, ending on East Main Street.

A shuttle will be available at the South Hills Mall and Wappingers Junior High School to transport people to the parade lineup and spots along the route. It will return passengers following the parade. Like 29 parades before it, this Dutchess County St. Patrick's Parade will be held rain or shine.

Since 1996 the Wappingers Falls parade marches through village streets as Dutchess County's first St. Patrick's celebration of the year. What began as a 30-minute fete has grown to hours of dancing, celebration, and community engage-

ment. The village attitude keeps this celebration alive alongside the parade committee because, as chairman Gene Noone said, "Everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day."

Nobody embodies the spirit more than Grand Marshal Margo Maher, in heritage and community involvement.

"In the past, we've recognized some pretty outstanding people," said Noone. "It's Margo's turn now."

Though Maher will wear her Grand Marshal title - and the accompanying sash - proudly, she'll admit she didn't want the accolades. Though Maher first refused, she said, she came out to be the committee's choice. As a charter member, she's marched many a route, a tradition that rings in fair weather and Irish spirit.

"We are the first [parade], so it reminds us, 'OK, spring is here, we're going to have a parade. It's all good,'" Maher said.

Maher hails from the Saint Margaret's countryside outside Dublin, Ireland. A wanderlust, she calls herself, Maher crossed the ocean in 1958. She has since laid roots in Wappingers Falls, and began her legacy as an involved community member. A former religious education teacher, Margo lends her voice to the church choir every week. She's a great-



Wappingers Falls resident Margo Maher is Grand Marshal of this year's Dutchess County St. Patrick's Parade, set Saturday, March 1. Courtesy photo

grandmother, in addition to community work like the St. Patrick's Parade Committee.

The parade has grown from 1,000 to 10,000 when the weather prevails, said Noone. Parade watchers should arrive early, to get the prime viewing spots between West Main Street and Mesier Park. Following the parade, celebrations will take place inside the local pubs, restaurants, and community centers.

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Officials aim to update state law on background checks for employees, owners of businesses serving minors

By Kate Goldsmith

Local county and state lawmakers have coalesced around an issue that was recently brought to light regarding a loophole in a state education law that requires background checks for employees and operators of businesses that serve minors. Current law does not require background checks for such businesses as martial arts academies, dance studios, tutoring centers and sports training facilities, leaving significant gaps in child protection.

The loophole was highlighted early this month: On Feb. 5, NYS Police in Poughkeepsie (SP Poughkeepsie) arrested Tyler G. Leclerc, 28, of Hyde Park, for criminal sexual act in the third degree, a Class E Felony; and two counts of endangering the welfare of a child, a Class A Misdemeanor. Leclerc formerly had been an instructor in his family's business, Leclerc's Martial Arts, which operated six locations in the Hudson Valley.

On Jan. 31, the Bureau of Criminal Investigation assigned to SP Poughkeepsie received a report of sexual abuse of a child. This investigation uncovered evidence that Leclerc had sexually abused multiple children over the course of several years, according to the release issued by NYS Police.

The release didn't indicate whether the children of the alleged abuse were students at the martial arts school.

The website and social media accounts for Leclerc's Martial Arts are not available, and the locations appear to be closed.

Some concerned parents and other community members mobilized to create a Facebook group, No Predators in Kids' Spaces (Reform NYSEL §5001), to call attention to the loophole in New York's Education Law, and to urge legislative action in Albany to amend the law. Members of the group participated in an awareness campaign on Feb. 22 across

from the Hyde Park Mall, where one of Leclerc's academies had operated.

Additionally, a petition (Reform NYSEL § 5001: No Predators in Kids' Spaces!) was created on change.org. The petition reads, in part:

"Our mission is to advocate for legislative changes to New York Education Law § 5001 and New York Social Services Law § 390 to ensure that all businesses serving minors have mandatory background checks and strict prohibitions against employing or being operated by convicted sex offenders.

"We are a community of parents, advocates, and concerned citizens committed to protecting children and ensuring safe environments in ALL youth-oriented spaces..."

Bipartisan push to close loophole

Dutchess County leadership was quick to respond, urging Gov. Kathy Hochul and local state representatives to amend

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Village elections set March 18 in Red Hook, Rhinebeck and Tivoli

By Kate Goldsmith

The villages of Red Hook, Rhinebeck and Tivoli will hold elections on Tuesday, March 18. Polls will be open from noon to 9 p.m.

The Village of Millbrook, which is also in the Northern Dutchess News readership area, holds its elections concurrent with the General Election, this year on Tuesday, Nov. 4.

RED HOOK

Two Trustee positions will be filled.

Both are four-year terms to fill the expired terms of Deputy Mayor Melkorka Kjarval and Trustee Charles Laing.

Kjarval will seek re-election; other candidates include Camille M. Norvell, Savannah Lucas Sanchez, Frances Uku and Jason Baker.

Elections will take place at Village Hall, at 7467 South Broadway, Red Hook.

RHINEBECK

The offices to be filled are Village

Mayor (two-year term); two Village Trustees (two-year terms), and Village Justice (four-year term).

Democratic incumbents Mayor Gary Bassett, Trustee Ric Lewit, and Trustee Lydia Slaby are all running for re-election. On the Republican ticket, Derrick Sinon is running for Village Trustee, and William Sanchez is running for re-election as Village Justice on Democratic and Republican lines.

Voting will take place at Village Hall, 76 East Market St., Rhinebeck.

TIVOLI

The terms of Mayor and two Trustees will be filled. Deputy Mayor Emily Majer is running for Mayor (a two-year term), and Trustees Bill Shilling and Peter Baldino are each running for another four-year term on the Board.

Longtime Mayor Joel Griffith will not seek a sixth term, concluding his 14 years on the Village Board, serving the last 10 as Mayor.

Elections will take place at the Tivoli Firehouse, 2 Tivoli Commons.

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Marist, DCC men's teams on historic runs

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Amadou Diallo of Dutchess Community College controls the ball in play during a recent game. DCC is the top defensive team in its division. *Courtesy photo*

National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division III men's rankings. By February 18, the top spot was theirs.

A year removed from reaching the national championship game, the Dutchess Falcons are now the country's No. 1 Division III junior college team. To coach Robert Piano, defense is the foundation of this team's success. DCC is the top defensive team in its division, tied for first in least points allowed, and top three in blocks and forced turnovers. "We had the same philosophy and ideology last year. We've taken it to more of a level due to the talent," said Piano.

The Falcons finished the regular season with a 23-1 record, undefeated in conference play. And they did it without Dutchess' top scorer Prince Kamate. Piano's deep roster stepped up big on both sides of the court all year. Between the example-leading actions of point guard Amadou Diallo and the positive presence of bench players, the Falcons are a two-way squad.

Down the road, this season brought Marist some milestones of its own, including an AP Top 25 nod here and an ESPN feature there. The Red Foxes netted an 800th program victory with a

come-from-behind win over Siena College on February 14. A week later, Josh Pascarelli became the first Red Fox to score 30 points in a game since 2022-23. On Saturday, Marist downed Canisius 89-81 and Pascarelli with a career-high 31 points was one of five Red Foxes who scored in double figures. Elijah Lewis had 13, Jaden Daughtry 11, Jadin Collins-Roberts with 10 and Jason Schofield with 10. Marist's 19th win was the most in a season since 2006-2007.

Marist's Cinderella MAAC run nearly won them a bid that season. As the last place tournament team, the Red Foxes managed three dazzling upsets before the eventual championship loss to Iona College. This type of regular season spark hasn't been seen since Marist's last March Madness appearance, in 1986-87.

Marist and Dutchess enter their conference tournaments as the #1 seeds. DCC's Region XV Tournament began February 25. The MAAC tournament takes place in Atlantic City, March 11-15. For all the work achieved as a team, a different journey brings every athlete to this spot. Across every division of college basketball, March means a little bit more to every coach, staff member and player.

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30th St. Patrick's Parade set March 1 with Margo Maher as Grand Marshal

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Businesses and residences are encouraged to participate in the St. Patrick's decorating contest, to be judged on Feb. 28 at 1 p.m. Displays and floats will be judged on five categories: originality, Irish heritage-related, eye appeal, in good taste, and visible from the street. Participation forms and contest criteria can be found on the Dutchess County St. Patrick's Parade Committee website (dcssppc.org).

The committee's year-round work is

about giving back to the community, said Emerald Ball chairperson Trish Costello. People will come far and wide to Wappingers on this day, and the view of neighbors, friends, and visitors gathered throughout the village makes every bit of planning worthwhile.

"The community is behind us to make it happen. I'm just so pleased that all the businesses benefit from the parade, because people come from so many areas," said Costello.

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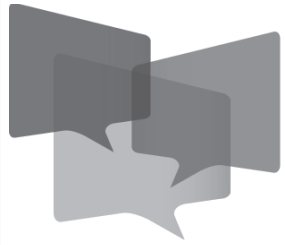
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Red Hook VFW Post 7765 launches 5-year campaign to support veterans and community

Since its founding in 1948, VFW Post 7765 has been a cornerstone of the Red Hook community, providing essential services to military veterans and their families, and engaging in numerous community events annually.

However, the Post now faces considerable challenges, including an aging facility in need of substantial renovations and a decline in membership, as the loss of older veterans outpaces the arrival of new ones.

To address these challenges and ensure the continued viability of its critical services, VFW Post 7765 is launching a 5-year capital campaign on Wednesday,

Feb. 26, with a financial goal of \$715,379. This campaign aims to gather support from the extended community, business owners, leaders, and influencers to secure the necessary funds for essential upgrades and renovations.

Here are the campaign projects and Funding Breakdown:

- Year One: \$126,875 - HVAC Phase One (Event Hall): \$42,500 and Electrical Upgrade: \$84,375
- Year Two: \$293,781 - Kitchen Upgrade: \$233,781, Propane Upgrade: \$34,000 and HVAC Phase Two (Canteen): \$26,000

- Year Three: \$57,250 - Roofing & Chimney: \$43,600 and HVAC Phase Three (Meeting Room): \$13,650
- Year Four: \$168,700 - Exterior Siding: \$43,700 and Parking Lot/Septic Rebuild: \$125,000
- Year Five: \$68,773 - Solar Installation* Cost after NYSERDA rebate and ITC Credit. Total Cost: \$96,105
- Total Campaign Financial Goal: \$715,379

VFW Post 7765 has a long history of supporting the community through

various initiatives, including organizing Memorial Day and Veterans Day events, providing a year-round medical equipment lending service, sponsoring local youth programs, and hosting community events such as blood drives, pancake breakfasts, and holiday celebrations.

The success of this campaign is crucial for the Post to continue its mission of supporting veterans and engaging with the community. Detailed donor flyers and pledge forms with multiple options are available via email and the VFW Post 7765 website, <https://vfwpost7765.org/>.

'THE BUNKER' GOLF SIMULATOR OPENS AT RED HOOK VFW POST

Members of the Red Hook VFW Post 7765 held a Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Wednesday, February 19 for "The Bunker," complete with serving light hors d'oeuvres and beverages for all guests.

"The Bunker" at Red Hook VFW Post is an indoor golf simulator center fitted with three fully upgraded About Golf Simulators, each loaded with over 85 courses around the world to choose from.

The facility is newly renovated and decorated and is open to the public and members daily 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. by reservation. Call 845-663-5300 for reservations and questions. The Bunker benefits VFW Post 7765 and helps our veterans. The VFW hall is located at 30 Elizabeth Street, Red Hook, NY 12571.

Website: www.vfw7765.com;
Facebook: www.facebook.com/thebunkerVFWPost7765/

Shown at the ribbon cutting sponsored by the Red Hook Chamber of Commerce are post members, officers and volunteers who worked on the renovations. From left are Don Tochtermann, Rick Christensen, Ross Fenn, Mary Clare McArthur, Chamber President, Jon Conroe, Post Commander, Samantha Coon, Post General Manager, Troy Haley, Ron Taylor, Tim Jardine and William Moore. *Courtesy photo*



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Renaissance Faire Garden Shows in progress at Adams Fairacre Farms

The 2024 Garden Show theme at Adams Fairacre Farms was such a hit in 2024 that they are doing it again in 2025 with a new theme.

Get ready to step into the enchanting world of the Renaissance Faire at the ongoing Garden Shows. Imagine strolling through displays of flowers, trees, and shrubs, surrounded by scenes that include a Town Square, a cozy Hobbit House, magnificent castles, rustic stockades, an Enchanted Forest, and a Royal Court.

Each area of the stores will feature Renaissance-inspired products, adding a touch of old-world charm to your shopping experience. Keep an eye out for our amazing staff who will transform into queens, kings, jesters, and more—adding

to the Renaissance magic. Come join the fun!

This year Adams is giving away five, \$100 gift cards, one per store. Poughkeepsie & Newburgh – February 21 – March 2. Winners will be selected March 3. Kingston, Wappinger, & Middletown – February 28 – March 9. Winners selected March 10.

Here are the dates of the shows.

- Poughkeepsie: February 21 – March 2
- Newburgh: February 21 – March 2
- Kingston: February 28 – March 9
- Middletown: February 28 – March 9
- Wappinger: Sorry, no show in the Wappinger store this year due to a storewide renovation.

Rhinebeck Village to hold info session on HV Community Power Program March 2

The Village of Rhinebeck is exploring participation in an upcoming bid for an electricity supply contract through the Hudson Valley Community Power program. Hudson Valley Community Power is a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) electricity supply program. CCA programs can provide eligible residents and small businesses with access to renewable electricity supply options at competitive rates, with no individual contracts for consumers. Benefits include support for renewable energy, competitive rates, and strong consumer protections.

Learn more about the program at a Public Meeting on Sunday, March 2. Residents can attend in person in Village Hall or online or by phone.

The details:
Sunday, March 2 at 3:30 p.m.
Attend in person: Village Hall, 76 East Market St., Rhinebeck

Join Zoom Meeting Online: www.bit.ly/vrh32

Or call: 1 929 205 6099 / Meeting ID: 833 7717 6229

This program has opt-out enrollment, which means that if the municipality moves forward and selects an electricity supplier, all eligible residents and small businesses will be notified by mail before the program launches and have the opportunity to review their new electricity supply options and opt-out if they choose to not participate.

The program can have a measurable positive environmental impact by giving residents a way to reduce their carbon footprint.

Learn more at www.hudsonvalleycommunitypower.com/events, or call the helpline at (845) 859-9099 or email info@hudsonvalleycommunitypower.com.



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NOTE: Letters to the Editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Northern Dutchess News. Letters must be e-mailed to be considered for publication. We cannot accept handwritten or faxed letters.

True Americans support Ukraine; What kind of leader supports Russia?

To the editor:
What has become of the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave? In World War II, our troops restored peace and freedom by liberating the world step-by-step across Europe, and island-by-island in the Pacific, and in the decades since, America enshrined its great power by using its soft power, and our presidents rightly earned the moniker "Leader of the Free World" by creating allies and institutions built to stand against tyranny. And for generations, we understood that the Russians were the bad guys.

No longer! We have switched sides in the last week to join with Russia in what will become an all-out attempt to force Ukraine into capitulation. Our President had the audacity to call Ukrainian President Zelensky a dictator only to be schooled by Friday's NY Post, which deemed it necessary to remind the President that Putin is the dictator. Putin caused the war, not Ukraine. Not NATO. And Russians implement its horrors daily.

What has become of us? We've gone from leading the free world to attempting to extort minerals from beneath Ukraine's blood-soaked soil, even threatening to turn off the Starlink communications, which have powered Ukraine's defense; to withholding aid; to HANDING PUTIN THE VICTORY HE CANNOT WIN ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

Leaders lead. Mafia Bosses extort. Aiding Ukraine increases our nation's strength and abandoning her reduces us. Our Greatest Generation would shudder.

Here, in Northern Dutchess, this community - horrified by the barbarity of the invasion launched three years ago this week - has done great things for Ukraine with the Stanford Fire Company's collections and donations of emergency equipment and winter clothing and the various fundraisers for Ukraine held in the area.

I trust that your readers are similarly shocked by our abandonment of an ally and friend and that we all let our leaders know that it is not right and that true Americans support Ukraine.

Mark Lagus
Town of Northeast

Gillibrand expresses her concern over temporary closure

of 20-bed unit at Castle Point to VA Secretary Collins
Editor's note: The following is the full text of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's letter to Secretary of Veterans Affairs Doug Collins regarding the temporary closure of a 20-bed unit at the Castle Point VA Medical Center to re-evaluate staffing needs.

To Secretary Collins:
I write to express my concern regarding the recent closure of the 20-bed acute inpatient unit at Castle Point VA Medical Center (VAMC) in Dutchess County, New York. My office has

been informed that this critical medical unit was temporarily closed on February 1st as the Castle Point VAMC "re-evaluate[s] staffing needs" for 120 days. However, the abrupt closure of the acute inpatient unit will have devastating consequences for those veterans seeking detoxification and substance abuse care. Castle Point provides care to over 7,000 veterans who have served our country with bravery and honor. Losing this dedicated medical unit for Hudson Valley veterans risks worse health outcomes for some of our most at-risk veterans in need of specialized substance abuse care. I urge the VA to immediately re-open this medical unit to meet the acute needs of these veterans while continuing to conduct its 120-day review at the Castle Point VAMC.

I am deeply concerned by the VA's lack of communication and transparency regarding its decision to close the Castle Point VAMC's acute inpatient unit. It is my understanding that the VA not only closed the medical unit without warning, but also failed to provide adequate guidance or support to the local community. While I recognize the need to evaluate the efficiency of its resources and the quality of its services, the VA should have undertaken this assessment while continuing to offer these important services to veterans in the Hudson Valley. Therefore, I request a written response by February 28, 2025, to address the following questions, concerns, and recommendations:

1. Please provide a detailed explanation of the VA's decision to temporarily close the unit, as well as data on the usage rate of the Castle Point VAMC's acute inpatient unit.

2. Please provide details regarding your plan to distribute guidance and assistance to Hudson Valley veterans regarding how they can obtain comparable access to lifesaving care while the unit remains closed. Comprehensive information about alternative forms of care in the Hudson Valley through Community Care and other VA sites in New York State, as well as transportation logistics and travel pay reimbursement, should be shared with local veterans and their caregivers, municipal veteran service agencies, and veterans support and advocacy organizations.

3. Please reopen the acute inpatient unit at the Castle Point VAMC while the evaluation of staffing needs is ongoing.

4. Please provide the alternative options to closure being considered and your evaluation of those options, including the feasibility and advisability of adjusting the number of beds to meet the demonstrated need for medical detoxification and substance abuse care at the Castle Point VAMC.

5. Please ensure that future decisions regarding changes to healthcare service provision at VA facilities in New York are communicated publicly with advance notice and allow for community input.

Kirsten Gillibrand
U.S. Senator from NY

County launches 'Gogo Veterans' free transportation program

Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino and Dutchess County Veterans Affairs Director Adam Roche have announced the launch of "GoGo Veterans," a new transportation program providing free rides to veterans in need of reliable transportation for essential services.

Officially starting on March 1, this initiative underscores Dutchess County's unwavering commitment to those who have served our nation, ensuring they have access to the care and resources they deserve.

Through the "GoGo Veterans" program, eligible veterans can receive:

- Two free rides per month in Dutchess County to medical appointments, including VA hospitals and local healthcare providers.

- One free ride in Dutchess County per month to a grocery store, pharmacy, or personal visit, helping veterans maintain independence and quality of life.

"Our veterans should never have to worry about how they'll get to a doctor's appointment or pick up groceries," said Serino. "They answered the call to serve, and now it's our turn to serve them. 'GoGo Veterans' is about making life a little easier for those who have given so much, and I encourage every eligible veteran to take advantage of this program."

Roche said, "Transportation shouldn't

be a barrier to a veteran's health and well-being. Whether it's getting to a critical medical appointment or simply picking up necessities, this program will help veterans stay connected and cared for. We're proud to offer this support and make a meaningful difference in their lives."

Veterans interested in enrolling in the program can call the Dutchess County Office of Veterans Affairs at 845-486-2060 to register for the program. Instructions on how to schedule rides will then be provided to enrolled veterans.

Roche noted several veterans have already piloted the program and have been pleased with how convenient and flexible the service is. "We are thrilled to hear the great feedback from our veterans about how easy it is to use and look forward to serving many more veterans with this new service," said Roche.

For veterans who had a ride previously scheduled through VetZero for the month of February, those rides will continue as scheduled.

Dutchess County remains committed to expanding services that enhance the well-being of local veterans. To learn more about the GoGo Veterans program as well as other on available veteran programs and benefits, visit DutchessNY.gov/Veterans.

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AG announces 122-count indictment against 4 for alleged roles in drug trafficking network



Pictured are some of the alleged narcotics and firearms seized during the investigation, including cocaine, counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl, powder fentanyl, five handguns, four high-capacity magazines, and "kilo" presses. Photo from NYS Attorney General's Office

New York Attorney General Letitia James announced the takedown of a drug trafficking ring in the Hudson Valley that illegally sold cocaine, powder fentanyl, and counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl across Dutchess, Ulster, and Orange Counties. An investigation led by the Office of the Attorney General's (OAG) Organized Crime Task Force (OCTF) recovered two and a half kilograms of cocaine worth approximately \$45,000, thousands of counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl worth over \$500,000, and three and a half kilograms of powder fentanyl worth over \$200,000. Five illegal handguns, including two ghost guns, and four high-capacity magazines were also seized during the operation. A 122-count indictment charging four individuals for their roles in the drug trafficking network was unsealed in Dutchess County Court. The indictment charges Xavier Grant, Antawone West, Michael Jones, and Kenyi Torres with multiple felonies for narcotics and firearms offenses.

The takedown was the result of an eleven-month joint investigation led by OCTF and the New York State Police's (NYSP) Special Investigations Unit – Hudson Valley (SIU-HV) and Troop K – Violent Gang and Narcotics Enforcement Team (K-VGNET).

The investigation included hundreds of hours of physical and covert surveillance, analysis of voluminous electronic evidence, including cellphone communications, covert video and audio recordings, and other traditional investigative techniques. During their communications, the defendants frequently utilized coded and cryptic terminology in an attempt to disguise their illicit activities, such as referring to orders of counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl as "blues," "blueberries," or "perks," a nod to their legitimate, prescription medication counterparts.

The investigation revealed that Grant, West, Jones, and Torres allegedly obtained cocaine, powder fentanyl, and counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl for further distribution. Additionally, the investigation revealed that the four defendants worked together to store, supply, and distribute the narcotics in Dutchess, Orange, and Ulster Counties. The narcotics were stored in various stash locations in the residential areas of Poughkeepsie and often sold in parking lots. The investigation also allegedly seized five illegal handguns, four of which were loaded, and two of which were ghost guns, in addition to four illegal high-capacity magazines.

The investigation into this narcotics trafficking network led to the recovery of:

- Two and a half kilograms of cocaine;
- Thousands of counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl weighing over two and a half kilograms;
- Three and a half kilograms of powder fentanyl;
- Five illegal handguns, including two ghost guns and four high-capacity magazines;
- Drug paraphernalia, including scales, ziplock bags, glassine envelopes, and other

packaging materials used to package and measure narcotics;

- Two "kilo" presses; and
- Approximately \$255,000 in cash.

The 122-count indictment, unsealed in Dutchess County Court, includes counts for various felony narcotics offenses, including charges against Jones and West for Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree, respectively. Each carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. Additional charges include various counts of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance (class B felonies) and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance (class A-II and B felonies), as well as Conspiracy to commit those crimes.

Jones and West are also charged with firearms offenses including Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree, a class C violent felony, Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Third Degree, a class D felony, and Criminal Possession of a Firearm, a class E felony.

Grant and Torres are each charged with, among other things, multiple counts of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree, a class A-II felony, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison. They are also charged with Conspiracy to commit those crimes. The charges against the defendants are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Truitt announces bid for DC Comptroller



On Feb. 22, Dutchess County Legislator Will Truitt announced that he is running for the office of Dutchess County Comptroller. Courtesy photo

In front of a standing-room-only crowd of over 100 supporters on Saturday, Feb. 22, Dutchess County Legislature Chairman Will Truitt announced that he will run for Dutchess County Comptroller in the November election this year. A ten-year veteran of the Dutchess County Legislature, Truitt has served as the chairman since January of 2024.

"I am running for comptroller to return this office to the people and fight for their priorities" Truitt said. "Dutchess County needs a strong fiscal watchdog who will ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent efficiently. I have the right blend of public and private sector financial experience; and have built relationships with stakeholders across county government and in our community that will serve me well in this role."

Truitt is a graduate of Marist University, holding a degree in finance and accounting. In a professional capacity, he manages the finances for a local, family-owned construction business in Dutchess County. He has also previously

served as the chairman of the Dutchess County Legislature's influential Budget, Finance and Personnel Committee.

Introducing Truitt at the event Saturday was former Dutchess County Executive and U.S. Congressman Marc Molinaro. "I, more than anyone, have seen first-hand how Will has grown from an honest young man eager to serve his community into the knowledgeable and well-respected public servant that he is today. In his time in the legislature, he has helped deliver ten consecutive budgets that have cut the property tax rate while increasing investments in our seniors, veterans and youth. I know that he will take this spirit of service into his role as comptroller and will work tirelessly on behalf of Dutchess County taxpayers, said Molinaro.

"From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank everyone for all of their support" Truitt said. I am excited to hit the campaign trail and meet the voters of Dutchess County. I will work hard to earn your vote and demonstrate to you why I am the right person for this job."

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Officials aim to update state law on background checks for employees, owners of businesses serving minors

continued from cover

the law.

On Feb. 13, Will Truitt, chairman of the County Legislature, made his appeal in a letter “on behalf of concerned citizens to ask you [Hochul] and the state legislature to take immediate action” to prevent “those convicted of serious crimes, including sex offenses” of operating businesses that serve minors.

Also on Feb. 13, Assemblyman Anil Beephan (R, AD-105) issued a press release announcing proposed legislation to mandate background checks for all employees, volunteers, and independent contractors working at businesses serving children. The legislation would also prohibit individuals with certain criminal histories from owning or operating such businesses.

On Feb. 19, County Executive Sue Serino wrote to Hochul and local state lawmakers expressing her support of Beephan’s proposed legislation and urged their support, as well.

“This is not just about one business, but about the broader responsibility we have to safeguard our communities,” Serino wrote.

Three local state representatives have heeded the call to action. In a press release issued on Feb. 21, Sen. Michelle

Hinchey (D, SD-41), Assemblymember Didi Barrett (D, AD-106) and Beephan joined forces to announce new legislation (S.5257A / Assembly bill pending) to strengthen protections for children participating in extracurricular activities. The bill prevents registered sex offenders from owning, running or working at businesses that regularly provide instructional, recreational, or extracurricular activities to youth. The bill also requires background checks of state and federal sex offender registries before hiring or ownership, including those from any state where the person has lived.

Hinchey said, “Every parent should have the peace of mind that when they drop their child off at a local art class or sports facility, they’re entering a safe environment. This bill closes a loophole uncovered by a horrific situation in Dutchess County by barring registered sex offenders from working at youth-oriented businesses and requiring background checks before anyone can own or be hired at one. My heart breaks for the victims and families of this tragedy. When it comes to protecting our kids, these safeguards shouldn’t be optional – New York must make them law. I am committed, in partnership with

Assemblymembers Barrett and Beephan, to get this bill passed and signed into law by the Governor.”

“The tragic pattern of sexual abuse at a martial arts school in Dutchess County has revealed a loophole in our background check system that must be fixed,” said Barrett. “My heart goes out to the victims of this abuse. I am working in partnership with Senator Michelle Hinchey and Assemblymember Anil Beephan to pass bipartisan legislation to close this loophole and ensure that an incident like this doesn’t happen again. This common sense legislation will have employees of businesses that train minors be subject to mandatory background checks, protecting children and giving families peace of mind.”

Beephan said, “First and foremost, my heart goes out to the victims and their families who have been affected by this horrific situation. The safety of our children must always come first. It is unacceptable that loopholes in our laws have allowed registered sex offenders to work in or own businesses that provide youth services. This legislation is a necessary step to close that dangerous gap and ensure that every parent can have confidence that their child is safe when

participating in extracurricular activities. I am proud to stand with Senator Hinchey and Assemblymember Barrett in advancing this bipartisan effort to protect our kids and strengthen background check requirements for those working with minors.”

On Feb. 21, the Democratic Caucus of the Dutchess County Legislature announced its support of the bill, noting “The recent arrest of a martial arts instructor in Hyde Park has exposed a serious gap in background check requirements for after-school programs. ... This loophole has put children in Dutchess County at risk and closing it is a commonsense step to help protect children and give parents peace of mind.”

Minority Leader Yvette Valdés Smith (Beacon/Fishkill) stated, “Our caucus will work with our State representatives and local leaders to strengthen our laws. As a mother, teacher, and county legislator, I am committed to the safety of our communities - especially the safety of our children. We teachers undergo background checks before we are allowed to be in a classroom and it should be no different for anyone who works with our kids or any other vulnerable population.”

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Red Hook VFW Post sets Trivia Night Feb. 27

Red Hook VFW Post 7765 will host its February TRIVIA NIGHT on Thursday, Feb. 27, at 7 p.m., in the Post Canteen (Club Bar). Always fun and good times. Open to the public and members. Create teams of 1-4 people, 4 rounds with 8 questions per round. Special Trivia Bar menu available for your enjoyment. Location: 30 Elizabeth St., Red Hook, NY 12571. Info: (845) 663-5300. No reservations required.

Elmendorph sets Chili Night March 1

Chili Night at the Elmendorph Inn, Red Hook, will take place on Saturday, March 1, at 5 p.m. Join friends and neighbors for a cozy winter evening in the historic Elmendorph Inn enjoying homemade chili.

Reserve seats for a seating at 5:15 or 6:30 p.m. Reserved tickets are \$15/ a person, but tickets will be \$20/ a person at the door. Tickets include a bowl of chili along with salad, bread, and a non-alcoholic beverage.

Space is limited, so guarantee your seat by reserving tickets in advance at [https://www.historicredhook.org/upcoming-events/chili-night-](https://www.historicredhook.org/upcoming-events/chili-night-2025)

2025. You can also make a reservation by calling (845) 546-9668 or emailing reserve@historicredhook.org.

Program on Monarch butterflies set at Hyde Park church

The Hyde Park Visual Environment Committee (HPVEC) will sponsor an educational program on Monarch butterflies on Sunday, March 2, at 2 p.m., at St. James’ Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 4526 Albany Post Road (Route 9) in Hyde Park.

Guest speaker Maraleen Manos-Jones (a.k.a. “The Butterfly Lady”) will present “Saving the Monarch Butterflies,” sharing her recent experience of flying with the Monarch butterflies in Mexico.

Attendance is free, and registration is encouraged. Email hpvecboard@gmail.com to register.

Medical Reserve Corps to host Pet First Aid Training on March 5

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) of Dutchess County will offer its popular Pet First Aid Training on Wednesday, March 5, at 7 p.m., at Beacon VFW Memorial Hall, 413 Main Street. The training is free; however registration is

required at DutchessNY.gov/PetFirstAid or by emailing mrc@dutchessny.gov.

Training participants will learn possible life-saving skills for pets, including CPR; recognizing signs of heat stroke and hypothermia; identifying gastrointestinal issues, allergies, and poisonings; and treating injuries such as burns, eye issues, wound care and more. The training will be presented by Paul S. McNamara, DVM, Chief of Surgery at the Hudson Highlands Veterinary Medical Group.

PV Community Gardens to meet March 6

Ready for Spring? So are we! Join Pleasant Valley Community Gardens for its monthly meeting at 6 p.m. on Thursday, March 6 at the Pleasant Valley Library, 1584 Main St. (Route 9). No experience necessary, Pleasant Valley Community Gardens is a committed group of volunteers learning as they grow vegetables and flowers in their garden in Helen Aldrich Park on Route 115. Everything we grow is to benefit the Pleasant Valley Ecumenical Food Pantry. See our Facebook page and website at www.pleasantvalleycommunitygardens.com.

Rhinebeck Chamber sets business meeting March 6

The Rhinebeck Area Chamber of Commerce will hold its March business meeting on Thursday, March 6, from 5 to 7 p.m., at The Beekman Arms.

Business leaders Sarah Lee and Melaine Rottkamp will discuss the economic outlook for 2025 and beyond, as well as the impact of tourism on the small business community. Learn about business expansion and initiatives happening in Dutchess County.

Q&A session to follow. Mingle beforehand with community members and friends. Light appetizers provided. Cash bar.

The cost to members is \$25 per person, non-members \$30 per person. Advance registration is preferred at www.rhinebeckchamber.com.

Skilled Trades Fairs set

On Thursday, March 6, Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino and the Arlington Central School District will host a Skilled Trades Fair, designed to connect students and young adults with a wide range of career opportunities available in the Hudson Valley. This free event will bring together representatives from various trades to provide insights, answer questions, and share information about rewarding career paths in fields like construction, electrical work, plumbing, and more. It is open to the public and students from all Dutchess County school districts, taking place from 6 to 8 p.m. on March 6, at Arlington High School. No RSVP is required to attend.

Local businesses and trade organizations interested in showcasing their opportunities at the fair are encouraged to register online or contact the Dutchess County Executive’s Office at (845) 486-2000 or CountyExec@dutchessny.gov.

There is no fee to participate; however, space is limited, and spots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Register online at dutchessny.gov/TradesFair.

A second Skilled Trades Fair has been scheduled for Thursday, April 24, from 6 to 8 p.m., at Roy C. Ketcham High School in the Town of Wappinger in partnership with the Wappingers Central School District. Register to participate in this event online at dutchessny.gov/RCKTradesFair.

PV Repair Cafe set March 8

The next Pleasant Valley Repair Café is Saturday, March 8, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Pleasant Valley Town Hall on Route 44 in Pleasant Valley. Repair Cafes are a neighborhood initiative that promotes repair over landfills. Bring your broken items to be repaired by expert fixers who volunteer their time for this event. Neighbors helping neighbors, repairs not landfills, Donations are appreciated.

There will be a special Jewelry Repair Training Class at 11:30 a.m. This is a class to help those wanting to do simple jewelry repairs. The next Repair Cafe is May 10. See <http://www.repair-cafehvh.org> or <https://www.facebook.com/PVRepairCafe> for more information.

Pancake Breakfast set at Rhinecliff Firehouse

The Rhinecliff Volunteer Fire Company and Rescue Squad will host a Winter Pancake Breakfast from 8 to 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, March 9. Enjoy a pile-high of “Rhinecliff’s Best” pancakes, sausage, fruit, coffee and juice. It’s all-you-can-eat so bring your appetite and your friends. The cost is \$10 for adults, \$4 for children, and free for children age 5 and younger. Breakfasts will be served at the Rhinecliff Firehouse (corner of Shatzell & Orchard in Rhinecliff). Proceeds will support the Rhinecliff Volunteer Fire Co. For more information, call Cynthia at (845) 876-5738 or email: cscaniewski1@gmail.com

Vanderbilt Garden Association sets volunteer recruitment sessions

The Frederick W. Vanderbilt Garden Association (FWVGA) will hold information sessions for volunteer recruitment on Thursday, March 13; and Friday, March 14, from 2 to 4 p.m. each day, at the Hyde Park Library Reading Room, 2 Main St., Hyde Park.

All experience levels are welcome, and weeding help is always appreciated. Those who don’t wish to work in the gardens but are interested in history and community are invited to become garden greeters, who help answer questions visitors have about the garden. All materials and training are provided.

Contact Jo-Anne Gauthier (volunteers@vanderbiltgarden.org; 845.224.7093) if you need additional information or have any questions.

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Dutchess County Democrats endorse candidates

The Dutchess County Democratic Committee unanimously endorsed Dutchess County Comptroller Dan Aymar-Blair for re-election and Kara Gerry for Dutchess County Court Judge. The Dutchess Democrats also announced that they are fielding 20 candidates for 25 seats on the Dutchess County Legislature in this year's election, with time for additional candidates to join the slate. The endorsements mark a decisive step in the Dutchess County Democratic Committee's effort to ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability, fair and effective justice, and a county government that works for all residents.

"Our committee is proud to support such outstanding candidates as Dan Aymar-Blair and Kara Gerry, along with a strong slate of Democratic candidates for the County Legislature," said Michael Dupree, Chair of the Dutchess County Democratic Committee. "Dan has quickly proven himself as a tough and independent watchdog, and Kara's experience as both a prosecutor and public defender shows she has the dedication and knowledge to ensure we have fair and effective justice in the Hudson Valley. Dutchess County deserves leaders who will deliver the best governance and justice that protects and respects all."

Comptroller Aymar-Blair: Fighting for Fiscal Responsibility and Good Government

Comptroller Dan Aymar-Blair was elected in 2024 and began serving his first term in January 2025. As Comptroller, he has taken swift action to tighten controls on government spending in Dutchess County, strengthen oversight of contracts, and improve government efficiency and accountability.

"As your new Comptroller, I've been

working hard to protect our tax dollars and hold government accountable, and I need more than a year to get the job done. But some politicians in Dutchess want the Comptroller to be a lap dog, not a watchdog, so I immediately have a challenger. I was elected because people in Dutchess are sick of reckless government spending and inefficiency, and I will work everyday to improve our county government."

Before being elected Comptroller, Aymar-Blair served on the Beacon City Council and worked for New York City Public Schools for 15 years in finance and operations. He stepped down from both roles to dedicate himself fully to his responsibilities as Dutchess County Comptroller.

Gerry: Ensuring Fair and Effective Justice in Dutchess County

Kara Gerry, a seasoned attorney, is running for County Court Judge to bring fairness, strength, and integrity to the bench while prioritizing community safety and justice that protects and respects all. She began her legal career as a prosecutor in the Orange County District Attorney's Office, where she handled thousands of criminal cases and worked to ensure victims were protected and justice was served. She later joined the Dutchess County Public Defender's Office, where she currently serves as Bureau Chief of the Criminal Unit, supervising six attorneys while maintaining her own rigorous caseload. Gerry is a lifelong Hudson Valley resident. She grew up in East Fishkill and graduated from St. Denis-St. Columba School, Our Lady of Lourdes High School, and Marist College before earning her law degree from the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University.

Comptroller Aymar-Blair stated, "Kara



Above: Dan Aymar-Blair. Right: Kara Gerry. Courtesy photos



Gerry is an incredible attorney who will protect our community and constitutional rights. Dutchess County needs a judge who puts justice and public safety first, and I'm proud to support Kara Gerry for Dutchess County Court Judge."

Dutchess Dems Running 20 Candidates for County Legislature

In addition to backing Aymar-Blair and Gerry, the Dutchess County Democratic Committee is running a strong slate of 20 diverse and experienced candidates for the 25 seats on the County Legislature, reflecting the party's commitment to advocating for policies that prioritize affordability, infrastructure, and public safety.

- Trevor Redl (District 1)
- Emma Arnoff (District 2)
- David Siegel (District 3)
- Brendan Lawler (District 4)
- Anna Shah (District 5)
- Lisa Kaul (District 6)

- Trish Prunty (District 7)
- Craig Brendli (District 8)
- Barrington Atkins (District 9)
- Randy Johnson (District 10)
- Brennan Kearney (District 11)
- Keith Odums (District 13)
- Alix Winsby (District 14)
- Yvette Valdés Smith (District 16)
- Molly Rhodes (District 18)
- Chris Drago (District 19)
- Kristofer Munn (District 20)
- Eric Eckley (District 21)
- Heidi Tucci (District 22)
- Eric Alexander (District 25)

"Dutchess County is at a crossroads," added Dupree. "With this team, voters have the chance to elect leaders who truly work for the people. We are ready to fight, win, and deliver real results for Dutchess County."

For further information, contact Michael Dupree at secretary@dutchessdems.com.

City of Poughkeepsie seeks operator for concession stand services at Stitzel Field



Stitzel Field in Poughkeepsie is a high-use area featuring athletic fields where both youth and adults play baseball, football, soccer and a host of other sports. Courtesy photo

The City of Poughkeepsie is seeking a qualified operator for concession stand services at Stitzel Field adjacent to historic Eastman Park and across the street from Lincoln Field to create a new draw for residents and visitors alike.

The city has released a Request for Proposal for an operator, with a deadline of March 14.

The concession area is located on the southeast corner of the Stitzel Field Parking Lot and includes a full kitchen and public restrooms, to be maintained by the licensee.

"We continue to look for ways to bolster the amenities at parks and fields, and this is an ideal location for a concessionaire," said Mayor Yvonne Flowers. The mayor noted this is a high-use area featuring athletic fields where both youth and adults play baseball, football, soccer and a host of other sports.

The site is close to one of the city's major employers, Vassar Brothers Medical Center. The surrounding residential neighborhoods include historic single-family homes as well as Eastman Tower and Harriet Tubman Terrace Apartments, both of which feature affordable-housing units.

City officials said this development

should align with the sports-focused nature of the location and cater to the demographics of the surrounding neighborhood. Proposers are encouraged to consider different use scenarios for various times of the day or seasons, ensuring the facility remains family-friendly and neighborhood-compatible.

"The city received many great proposals for the occupancy of the former Ice House restaurant at Waryas Park in 2024. 'The Governess' restaurant owner Melanie Lemieux and her team have done wonderful things at that site," said City of Poughkeepsie City Administrator Joseph Donat. "Similarly, we are greatly looking forward to reviewing the proposals for the use of the concession stand at Stitzel Field."

This request for proposals is independent of any previous requests for proposals for the site, and all interested parties must submit proposals during this process to be considered for a potential lease of the site.

Questions should be submitted in writing via e-mail no later than 4 p.m. Feb. 28 to Development@cityofpoughkeepsie.com. For more information, contact Development@cityofpoughkeepsie.com.

Ukrainian Women's League sets 100th anniversary reception March 7

The Poughkeepsie/Kerhonksen Branch 95 of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA) is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the national organization all during 2025.

An opening reception of the Ukrainian Connections Exhibit is set for Friday, March 7 from 5-7 p.m. at the Cuneen Hackett Art Center at 9 Vassar Street in Poughkeepsie. The event is open to the public.

The exhibit highlights the work of four Ukrainian Artists connected by their deep ethnic roots. They include Vitalia

Deriabina, a resident artist from Kyiv, Ukraine and Ulana Salewycz, Marianna Crans and Cathy Gorham all of whom are Ukrainian American artists from the Hudson Valley.

This exhibit is also a tribute in memory of Ukrainian sister, Cathy Gorham.

The Victorian Gallery weekday hours are Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. This exhibit will run through March and April and is one of many events set during 2025.

For more information, call (845) 486-4571.

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GENERAC

Award-winning design: Eastdale Village earns prestigious honor from Urban Guild

Eastdale Village Town Center (Eastdale), located in the Town of Poughkeepsie, was recently lauded for its outstanding design and community impact.

Kirchhoff and Union Studios received a coveted 2024 Urban Guild Design Excellence Award from The Urban Guild for bringing the Eastdale vision to life. The award recognized Eastdale for its exemplary success integrating planning principals and the mission of The Urban Guild.

“Eastdale successfully combines timeless design with a vibrant live-work-play community that attracts residents and visitors alike,” said Joseph Kirchhoff, partner and founder of Kirchhoff. “It’s an honor to be in the company of people setting the standard for the future of urban architecture and design.

Kirchhoff Director of Architecture & Design Giovanni Palladino celebrated the accomplishment at the Eastdale Village Town Center.

Kirchhoff Director of Architecture & Design Giovanni Palladino is pictured with the honor from the Urban Guild at the Eastdale Village Town Center. *Courtesy photo*



Morton Library events

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Talent Show Art Opening
Friday, Feb. 28, 6-8 pm

Exhibition: Feb. 28-March 30

Join us for our art opening for the visual component of the Talent Show. The work will remain up for the month of March and will be in full display for the performance part of the Talent Show on Friday, March 7.

Please stop by to see the work created by our local artists and perhaps take home a piece to beautify your home, office, or as a gift to someone special.

Admission is free. Refreshments will be served.

Purchases benefit your local artists and Morton. Donations accepted.

Library open hours for exhibition.

Rhinebeck Town Board
Mingle and Q&A

Tuesday, March 4 @ 6 p.m.

The Rhinebeck Town Board invites the people of the town to meet the mem-

bers of the board, hear what all they do, and share your thoughts. This is open to the public and is a non-political event meant to be social and informative.

Knit 'n' Knatter

Wednesday, March 5 @ 3 p.m.

Come to knit, crochet, to do any needlework, or just for the confab. We will drop purls, collaborate on projects, and work on our own. We'll meet in Morton Hall where there is plenty of room to spread out. All are welcome.

Morton Community Talent Show

Friday, March 7, 2025

Show begins @ 6:30 p.m.

Doors open @ 6 p.m.

This is our 16th annual evening celebrating the talents of our community, our friends and family. What a show we have for you! Visual art, MC Richard, performances including but not limited to: singing, dancing, videos, performers with guitars, performers with saxophones, AND comedy!

So come one, come all to the greatest show around!

Refreshments courtesy of our culinarily talented friends!

Suggested: \$5 donation.

For more info, contact Sandy at [sandy\[at\]mortonrhinecliff.org](mailto:sandy[at]mortonrhinecliff.org).

Dirty Gaia Presents: Ask a Gardener
Saturday, March 8 @ 2 p.m.

The Gardeners' Roundtable is back! The topics this year include planning and growing a kitchen garden, landscaping with native plants, and growing fruit trees (emphasis on apples, pears and figs). Our three panelists will talk about their time-tested techniques for planting and growing, and share some of their favorite sources for seeds and plants.

Our 2025 panelists, Kiera Faulkner Jekos, Ashley Gamell and Mark Stonehill, specialize in distinct aspects of growing, but share a commitment to sustainable and regenerative practices. Each will give a presentation on their individual topic (see below), after which we'll open the discussion up to a Q + A.

Registration is required.

Rhinecliff Parking Proposal
Presentation

Tuesday, March 11 @ 6 p.m.

LaBella Associates will present their proposed plan for parking in Rhinecliff. All are welcome.

Oblong Books Presents:

Russell Shorto, "TAKING MANHATTAN: The Extraordinary Events That Created New York and Shaped America" with WAMC's Joe Donahue

Thursday, March 13 @ 6:30 p.m.

Taking Manhattan tells the riveting story of the birth of New York City as a center of capitalism and pluralism, a foundation from which America would rise. It also shows how the paradox of New York's origins-boundless opportunity coupled with subjugation and displacement-reflects America's promise

and failure to this day. Russell Shorto, whose work has been described as "astonishing" (New York Times) and "literary alchemy" (Chicago Tribune), has once again mined archival sources to offer a vibrant tale and a fresh and trenchant argument about American beginnings.

Russell Shorto is the best-selling author of eight books, including Smalltime, Revolution Song, Amsterdam, and The Island at the Center of the World. He is the director of the New Amsterdam Project at the New York Historical and senior scholar at the New Netherland Institute.

Joe Donahue talks to people on the radio for a living. In addition to countless impressive human "gets" - he has talked to a lot of Muppets. Joe grew up in Philadelphia, has been on the area airwaves for more than 25 years and currently lives in Washington County, NY with his wife, Kelly, and their dog, Brady. And yes, he reads every single book.

Tickets are free. Registration is required.

Oblong will have books available for purchase.

Jasperoo Concert

Album release party, with very special guests

Friday March 14 @ 7 p.m.

(Doors open at 6:30 p.m.)

John and Mary Beth formed post-punk group The Mutuals, part of the late-1970s Minneapolis scene. After a wide-ranging musical journey they are now Jasperoo, playing old-time and original music on 4- & 5-string banjo and 6- & 12-string guitar.

This year they'll do 60 performances in New York's Hudson Valley and beyond.

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President's Players reel in 'Big Fish' for spring musical

The FDR High School President's Players invite you to join them for "Big Fish," a humorous and heartfelt experience that is richer, funnier and bigger than life itself. The show will run on Friday, March 7 and Saturday, March 8 with performances at 7 p.m.; and on Sunday, March 9, at 2 p.m. in the FDR auditorium at 156 South Cross Road in Staatsburg. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors and can be purchased at <https://fdrhs.booktix.com/>

Based on the 1988 Daniel Wallace novel, the musical focuses on Edward Bloom (played by senior Thomas Iorio), a charismatic traveling salesman who shares his extraordinary stories that thrill everyone around him. However, his son Will is determined to know the real man behind the myths.

"It's this really beautiful piece of art about a father and a son coming back together and the relationships that you see between a parent and their kid," Iorio said. "I'm loving this show so far."

Iorio is relishing the chance to play Bloom as he relates to character's love of adventure, as well as his kindness towards others. He hopes the audience

takes this message of acceptance to heart.

"He's very accepting of people that are different than him and I've always believed in that message," Iorio said of the character. "Those types of people inspire me because that's the way I want to live my life."

Junior Charlie Knickerbocker is portraying The Witch, a mysterious character who predicts Bloom's future. It was the mystery surrounding the character that Knickerbocker was drawn to the most.

"There's so many levels to her because you never actually learn who she is" Knickerbocker said. "Yet, she's so crucial to the story just because of the things she teaches Edward."

Knickerbocker has not read the original book or viewed the Tim Burton directed film adaptation before taking on the role. She noted that this worked in her favor as she had no preconceived notions of the character allowing her more freedom in her portrayal.

"It benefited me in some ways because I was able to make the role my own," Knickerbocker said. "I want to finish out my time with this role, keep it my own and then look at other interpretations of it."



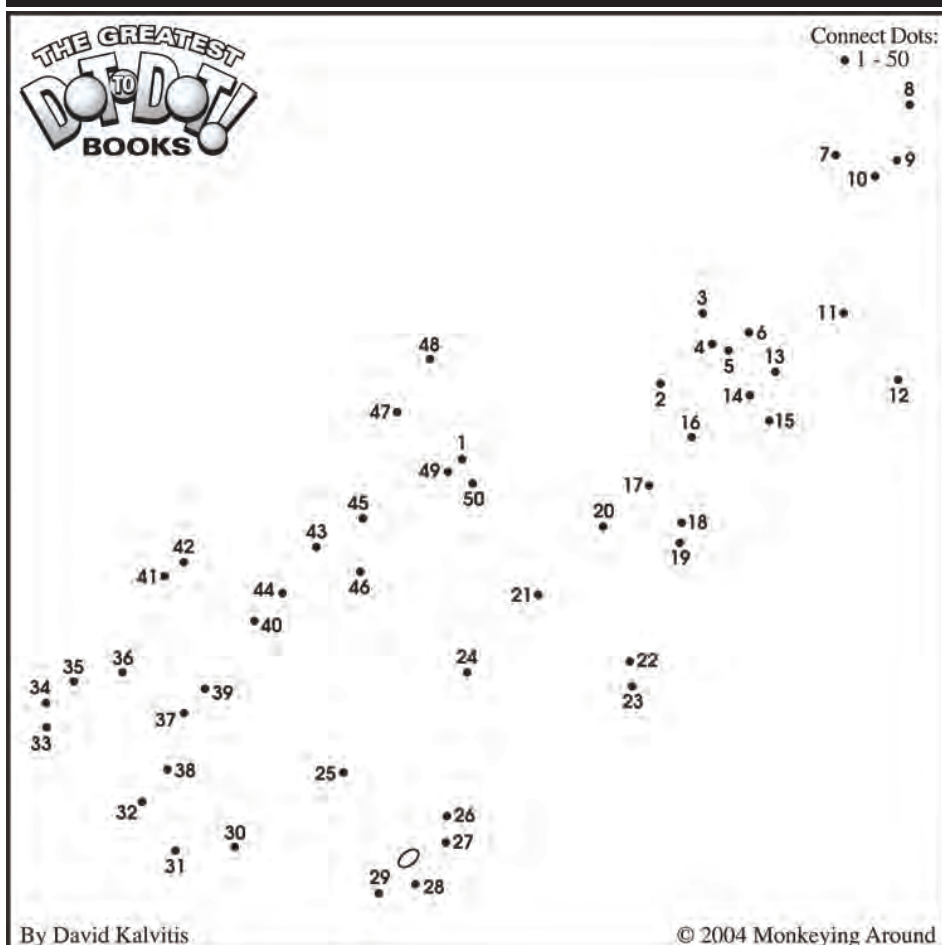
Charlie Knickerbocker and Thomas Iorio are featured in the President's Players' production of "Big Fish," playing March 7-9 at the Franklin D. Roosevelt High School auditorium in Staatsburg. *Courtesy photo*

what's happening?

creativeliving@sdutchessnews.com

DOT-TO-DOT PUZZLE

See page 15 for finished puzzle (no peeking!)



ND Symphony to present children's concert for local schools

Northern Dutchess Symphony Orchestra (NDSO) recently announced its second year offering a children's concert to local school districts. "Sound Waves" is scheduled for Tuesday, March 11, with two performances for more than 1,200 students and chaperones. This event is hosted by the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) and will take place in the Marriott Pavilion on the CIA's campus, offering an immersive multimedia experience for students from Hyde Park, Spackenkill, Red Hook, Rhinebeck, Poughkeepsie and Haldane districts, and Holy Trinity Elementary School.

Tickets for this performance are limited to participating school districts and are not available to the general public.

The water-themed concert will feature classics including Handel's "Water Music" and familiar favorites from Pirates of the Caribbean and "Part of Your World" from Disney's "The Little Mermaid." Student-created artwork for the piece "The Moldeau" will be projected on the big screen. There will be a call

and response for excerpts from Strauss's "Blue Danube Waltz."

This year's student soloist will be Timothy He playing "The Swan" by Camille Saint-Saëns. Timothy is a seventh grader at Orville A. Todd Middle School. Timothy has a strong love and passion for the cello, which he started playing when he was 7 years old. He also plays the piano and the string bass. He currently studies with Nanette Koch and has studied with Dana White Marks. In addition to the school orchestra, Timothy attends the Stringendo program, and he enjoys performing in concerts in the Hudson Valley.

Now in its 19th season, NDSO offers the best possible live performances of classical music at affordable family prices. Since the beginning, the orchestra has been under the dedicated leadership of Kathleen Beckmann, who serves as both conductor and artistic director. Learn more about its upcoming programs at www.ndsorchestra.org.

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Hope to hear from you! Thanks!



Pleasant Valley Community Gardens

Boundless enthusiasm and hopes for another bountiful year

“There is nothing more exciting than watching seeds germinate.” When Janice Novet, co-president with Sandra Larkin of Pleasant Valley Community Gardens (PVCG) told me this, I wasn’t sure whether to feel sorry for her, or to admire her boundless enthusiasm. After all we were at the PVCG monthly meeting. Janice really is one of the most enthusiastic people I’ve ever met.

Pleasant Valley Community Gardens is in its third season at the Helen Aldrich Park in Salt Point. In its first two years, the all-volunteer garden team (currently 20 active members) donated 3,300 pounds of vegetables to local food banks, including the Pleasant Valley Ecumenical Food Pantry.

The February 11 meeting at the Pleasant Valley Library included a tutorial on seed starting by member Bill Fischer, which no doubt precipitated Janice’s burst of enthusiasm. Bill brought his equipment and a supply of seeds to pass out to the group, all of whom are real gardeners, priding themselves on raising the garden plants directly from seed.

Here’s how Bill does it:

1. Fill a shallow tray with potting mix. Pro-mix or Miracle Gro, for example.
2. Make depressions only where seed will go.
3. Plant the seeds and label. Note: lettuce seed should be sown on top, since

it needs light to germinate.

4. Water until moist.
5. Place a clear plastic humidity dome over the tray.
6. Remove the dome after seeds have come up.
7. Keep the seedlings well-lighted and don’t allow them to dry out.
8. Fertilize after they have grown with water soluble fertilizer.

Bill recommends moving the trays of seedlings outside for a few hours on warm days, to toughen them up, until it’s time to plant them in the garden. Someone asked about heat mats that are made for starting seeds. The consensus among the members was that they are not absolutely necessary, except maybe for peppers, which need extra warmth to germinate.

The garden covers 8,300 square feet (approximately 80 x 100), fenced in for protection from deer. Irrigation is a challenge, since there is no well or electricity on site. The town provides water that is pumped into a collection of big tubs scattered around the garden. Volunteer Dave Talbot has engineered a drip system to siphon the water to each individual plant. Not a perfect solution, because there’s not much pressure, but it is ingenious.

More volunteers are always welcome. The PVCG website <https://pleasantvalleycommunitygardens.com/> invites potential volunteers or interested visitors to attend the Wednesday or Saturday morning activities at the garden starting, probably, in late March, weather permitting. Or stop in at the organizational meetings the first Thursday of the month at the Pleasant Valley Library.

Don’t miss the PVCG winter gala, 7-9 p.m. on Saturday, March 29, at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Pleasant Valley. Music by Bob Arthurs and Steve LaMattina. \$15 admission gets you some light refreshments and permission to bring your own wine.

Speaking of Galas, save the date for the 17th annual Beatrix Farrand Garden Bellefield Design Lecture, Sunday, June

A volunteer works in the gardens, which last year donated 3,300 pounds of vegetables to local food banks. *Courtesy photo*



At a recent meeting of the Pleasant Valley Community Gardens, Bill Fischer demonstrated how to start seeds. *Photo by Mark Adams*

1, at 2 p.m., at the Wallace Center, FDR National Historic Site in Hyde Park. This year’s speaker is Jonathan Kavalier, director of Gardens and Grounds at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington D.C.

I will give out more details in a separate article closer to the date. Stay tuned.

And speaking of wine, I was a member of a three-person team that visited legislators in Albany last week to advocate for farmer-friendly legislation. The other members were fruit grower Jim Bittner and Sam Filler, the executive director of the N.Y. Wine and Grape Foundation. We understand that international trade is a federal, not a state issue, but nevertheless,

Filler was dismayed at the prospect of a trade war with Canada. In 2024, \$700 million of U.S. Wine went to Canada, including a big chunk of New York’s production. According to Filler, a wildcat boycott is already under way, with the same Canadians who are booing our national anthem refusing to buy our wine. At the very least, our state legislators, along with N.Y. Commissioner of Agriculture Richard Ball, need to make their voices heard in Washington.

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



Volunteer Dave Talbot has engineered a drip system to siphon the water to each individual plant. *Courtesy photo*



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Hot Milk Cake

This sweet treat harkens back to another time.

Bitter cold days always bring out my nesting instinct and I get sentimental and nostalgic, especially when I start looking through old photos, ephemera and recipes, each one a memory and part of my story. It's good to go through my binders, books and boxes of recipes, remembering where each one came from, who inspired them and the times I made them for those I love.

But of all the ones I have come up with and collected, the ones that strike the strongest chord are those in my vintage recipe boxes. I have two sweet metal ones filled mostly with favorites and go-tos on handwritten cards – my own, my mother's and some from friends – but I didn't just buy them for the charming boxes themselves. They hold special treasures, as well. The boxes were picked up at yard sales on different occasions, both owned by women whose names and faces I'll never know; and yet I can picture them, sitting at the kitchen table with their coffee, clipping from newspapers and magazines those recipes they wanted to try. I see them donning their aprons, getting their ingredients all in a row and setting to work making something scrumptious for their families. If the recipe was a keeper, they'd tuck it inside their boxes alongside their own recipes to pull out another day. It's these recipes that came with the boxes – often with hand-scrawled notes in the margins – that really get to me, and so I had to leave them where they were so carefully put. They just bring such vivid pictures to mind, and I wish I could reach back through time and give those women a hug, then sit with them over coffee in their kitchen and maybe sample their latest cake, warm from the oven, as we chat about recipes to try.

Who even does that today? (I swear I was born in the wrong era!) Now most people look online for recipes and nobody visits anymore. I have fond memories of our neighbor, Mrs. Dickenson, walking to our house to have coffee with my mother on many a morning. I don't know if they talked about recipes, but I know she could cook and shared some of her recipes with us. Thinking about it now, I realize she contributed to my love of cooking, and I wish I could tell her that. She would have been tickled to hear it.

As for clipping recipes, that, too, may be a thing of the past. As a writer, I guess I hope it isn't, and that just maybe some of my recipes are out there, tucked away in some book or box, handwritten comments in the margins. It's bold to hope that I could be part of that kind of legacy, but that would be the highest compliment, and I'd consider myself in excellent company if I were among the many women in their communities, names lost to time, who helped keep their neighbors informed and well fed.

But for all my appreciation of recipes past, there's one I've been hoping to find a clipping of, and I'm ever on the search for it. While doing extensive research on vintage recipes many years ago, Hot Milk Cake kept popping up, and I was intrigued. I don't remember it from my childhood, but many out there seem to. It was clearly a staple for housewives across America once, and I'd love someone's original copy of the recipe to add to my collection. It seems like one that's handed down through families, homey and comforting and practical, being made with ingredients everyone had on hand.

Until I find one, this version is now handwritten on a card in my box. It's taken from several I found online.

HOT MILK CAKE

As the name implies, hot (scalded) milk is a key ingredient, adding flavor and moist texture, helping the cake rise and complementing the other flavors. The ingredients aren't anything special (you probably have them already), but the way they're put together is, so don't be tempted to follow the order of other cake recipes. Don't worry – it's just about the easiest cake you'll ever make. For the perfect airy, melt-in-your-mouth texture, use room temperature eggs and whip them up well until they're thick and fluffy. No need to frost this buttery cake (though you can if you want to) – just dust with confectioner's sugar or serve with a dollop of whipped cream and fresh berries.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup whole milk
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 4 eggs, room temperature
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Confectioner's sugar (for dusting)

METHOD

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease a 9x13 baking pan and set aside.

Scald the milk: Place milk and butter in a saucepan over medium heat, cooking until edges start to bubble, about 8-9 minutes. Don't let it come to a full boil. Remove from heat, add vanilla and stir until mixed and butter is completely melted. (Don't worry if the butter separates a bit as it sits).

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, beat eggs and sugar together until pale yellow, thick and fluffy, and about doubled in volume, about 3 minutes. Sift flour and baking powder (I added it half at a time) into the egg mixture. Add salt and beat just to combine, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Batter will be thick.

Slowly add hot milk a little at a time to the batter, mixing as you do, just until combined and smooth. Batter will be quite loose at this point.

Pour into prepared pan and bake until golden on top and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 40-45 minutes (check after 40). Place pan on a wire rack to cool.

Dust top with confectioner's sugar (or use your favorite frosting or whipped cream). Cut into squares and serve.

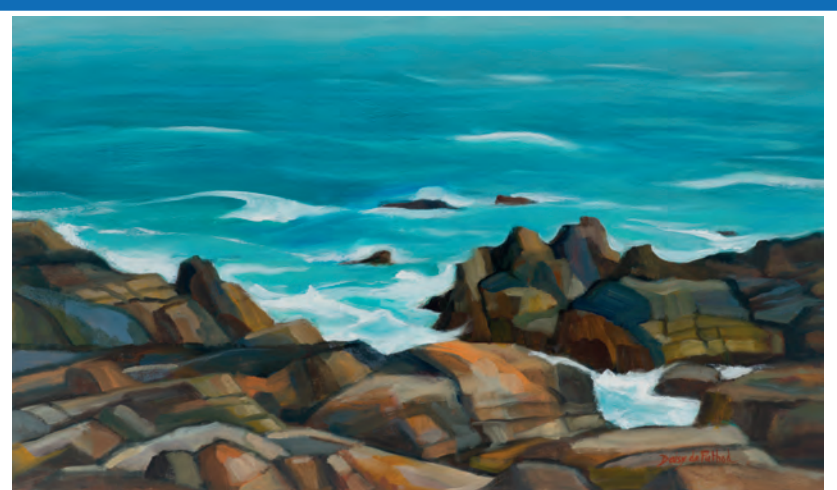
Sure, cooking shows and the internet are valuable sources for recipes, but I will always want a physical copy of special ones to hold and refer to. Maybe someday I'll find an authentic copy of Hot Milk Cake to add to my collection, one I can brush flour off and carefully wipe away the vanilla I spilled before I put it back in its place. For now, the one I wrote up will do just fine, nestled in among my other favorites. Give me a good, old-fashioned recipe box filled with love and promise any day! It's more than a collection of recipes – it's a time capsule, a memory album, the story of a life. Or many lives. I can only hope that some of my recipes survive and will one day be found by someone who will use and cherish them, adding them to their stories. That's a tradition worth passing on and a dream to treasure!



Hot Milk Cake, tea and a box full of treasured recipes. Photo by Vicki Frank Day

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.



Daisy de Puthod

About Water



Jean-Marie Martin

Daisy de Puthod & Jean-Marie Martin

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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

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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: THE 1960s

ACROSS

- Unit of electrical capacity F
- Knicks' org.
- Herring's cousin
- City in Belgium
- *The Beatles hit "Drive My ____"
- Monument to Buddha
- Like beer at a kegger (2 words)
- Affirmative to captain
- Like a beaver?
- *Che's last name
- *Stonewall riots location
- Division of time
- West African country
- Refuse to comply
- *The Jackson 5 co-founder
- *Don ____ of Barney Fife fame
- Soon, to a bard
- Hyperbolic tangent
- Sunlight's interference
- *Apollo Moon Landing org.
- Operatic solos
- Alexander Hamilton/Aaron Burr incident
- Deposit the ashes
- Related to ear
- Meat in a can
- Transport onward, as in letter (2 words)
- Not written
- Pilot's estimate, acr.
- Ill-mannered one
- Hawaiian welcome wreath
- *Ford's pony car
- *Assassinated president
- "____ death do us part"
- Down Under runner
- Hindu caste
- Moonshine maker
- *Spock's was pointy
- Comforter stuffing
- Ruptured
- Ground cover
- Coach-and-four

DOWN

- Use a cat o' nine tails
- Hokkaido language
- Network of nerves
- Mojave plant
- Go away
- March Madness org.
- * ____ of Pigs, failed military operation
- Madison Square Garden, e.g.
- Command to Fido
- Designer Boss
- Copycat
- Sinister side in "Star Wars"
- Garment-making
- Yogurt-based dip
- Benevolent one
- Hall order keeper
- *Joplin of "Summertime" fame
- Foolish
- Same as boatswain
- Tropical tuber
- Auto pioneer
- Brownish gray
- Something yummy
- *Certain march starting point
- Backgammon predecessor
- *Place for a flower
- Part of mermaid's tale
- Cricket umpire's call (2 words)
- Not, prefix
- Optical devices
- S-shaped moldings
- Arctic people
- Necessary thing
- Archaic preposition
- *Bob Marley's hit " ____ It Up"
- Fresco piece
- Kurdistan native
- Cocoyam
- Fortune-telling coffee remnants
- Ready and eager
- *Zedong of Cultural Revolution

CROSSWORD

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The solutions to both the Sudoku & Crossword puzzles can be found on page 19

The Center presents new season of family programs

The Center for Performing Arts at Rhinebeck presents its Winter/Spring Saturday Morning Family Series. Families can look forward to an array of performances Saturdays at 11 a.m., with tickets priced at \$10. With shows lasting between 45 minutes to an hour, this series is designed specifically for children and their families.

The Saturday Morning Family Series is a perfect introduction for young families to the world of theatre. The relaxed, non-judgmental environment allows children to learn theatre etiquette, connect with other local families, and enjoy diverse forms of entertainment. We invite you to explore what The Center has to offer, whether it's attending mainstage and black box shows, signing up for workshops and dance classes, or getting involved as a volunteer or member.

This season's lineup features a mix of returning favorites and fresh new performances, including:

Cinderella's Fairy Godmother
Saturday, March 1

Join Kit's Interactive Theatre, Cinderella, her fairy godmother, and other fairy tale characters as they frolic through Storyland to solve a riddle and beware the Giant!

Castaway Show
Saturday, March 8

The audience will help our lost Nutty Scientist get food, water, and signal for rescue. Along the way, they'll find rocks, make slime, shoot smoke rings, and see amazing electrical demonstrations

with a Van De Graaff generator!

Celtic Heels Irish Dance
Saturday, March 15

Joan McGrenaghan, Meghan Craft, and their Celtic Heels Performance Troupe as they return to The CENTER's stage for their 40th Anniversary show! Shows at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Rip Van Winkle
Saturday, March 22

Experience an interactive retelling of Washington Irving's classic story presented by Center Players on Tour. After sleeping for 20 years, Rip Van Winkle awakens to a different world. Will he be able to rejoin his family?

Hansel and Gretel
Saturday, March 29

The masterful Tanglewood Marionettes' return with their production of Hansel and Gretel, which is based on the classic fairy tale by Brothers Grimm and features melodies from the Humperdinck opera.

Skyhunters in Flight
Saturday, April 5

Learn how birds of prey live and survive with an indoor falconry lecture and presentation, followed by an exciting outdoor flight demonstration (weather permitting). Featuring Brian Bradley.

For tickets and more information, visit centerforperformingarts.org/saturday-morning-family-series.

Dine Out for History adds a night



Main Street in Millerton at the turn of the 20th Century. Taro's Pizzeria is now located where the building at the right of this photo used to be. Photo courtesy of North East Historical Society

Dine Out for History, the collaboration between the North East Historical Society and Millerton restaurants, has added an additional night on Thursday, March 27. Bad weather had kept attendance low when Taro's Pizzeria, 18 Main Street, had been scheduled early in February. Owner Tomas Sierra requested an additional date, now set for March 27 from 5 to 9 p.m.

"We are so grateful for his support," said Edward Downey, president of the North East Historical Society. During Dine Out for History, Millerton restaurants host a night where 10 percent of the proceeds from all patrons will be donated to the historical society to support its research and the digitization of its collection to make it more accessible to the public.

Upcoming events include: Willa at 52 Main Street on Thursday, Feb. 27 (reservations requested); Round III, 5523

Route 22, on Monday, March 10; the Golden Wok at Railroad Plaza, 2 Main St., on Wednesday, March 19 (takeout only); and now Taro's on Thursday, March 27. Successful nights have already occurred at The Millerton Inn and Oakhurst Diner.

Diners can go whenever they want at dinnertime on the designated nights, but they are encouraged to mention Dine Out for History to the hosting restaurant.

To get a reminder, please sign up for the North East Historical Society newsletter by contacting Ed Downey at eddowney12@gmail.com.

The North East Historical Society is on the second floor of the NorthEast-Millerton Library, 75 Main St., Millerton. Its hours are 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Fridays or by appointment. For more information, contact Ed Downey at eddowney12@gmail.com.

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County Players announces 2025-26 schedule

County Players, one of the longest running community theatre companies in the area is proud and excited to announce their 68th Season for 2025-2026. Season membership subscriptions are now available.

Season 68 Main Stage Season-County Players presents five full productions beginning with July 2025 the comedy "Lips Together, Teeth Apart" by Terrance McNally, directed by Kit Colbourn; in September 2025 is the detective comedy "Bullshot Crummond" by Ron House, Diz White, Alan Sherman, John Neville-Andrews, and Derek Cunningham, directed by Jeffery Battersby; November 2025 is the Pulitzer Prize winning charming comedy "The Dining Room" by A.R. Gurney, directed by Christine Crawfis; February 2026 is the sizzling courtroom drama "A Few Good Men" by Aaron Sorkin, directed by Michael J. Frohnhoefer; and in May 2026

the musical comedy "Something Rotten" with book by Karey Kirkpatrick and John O'Farrell, music & lyrics by Karey Fitzpatrick and Wayne Kirkpatrick, directed by Jeff Wilson.

CP2 Readers Theatre Mini-Festival Series: In this well-received program there are no costumes, no sets, no props, and the actors perform with scripts in hand. The three mini-festivals of two readings are scheduled:

Mini-Festival #1 – October 2025: "Misery" by William Goldman, based on the novel by Stephen King, directed by Jeffery Battersby; "Dracula" by Stephen Dietz, based on the novel by Bram Stoker, directed by David J. Ringwood

Mini-Festival #2 – December 2025: "Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley" by Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon, directed by Kit Colbourn; "The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley" by Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon,

directed by Michael J. Frohnhoefer

Mini-Festival #3 – March 2026: "Dear Jack, Dear Louise" by Ken Ludwig, directed by Cynthia Topps; "Camping with Henry and Tom" by Mark St. Germain, directed by Matt Andrews.

For information regarding all of the Main Stage productions and CP2 Series of Readers Theatre visit countyplayers.org/season-68/. Season subscriptions are available.

Group Sales: County Players offers group discounts to performances that can be used as fundraising events for your business or organization - for information, visit countyplayers.org/group-sales/

Auditions: Dates for auditions for all upcoming Main Stage shows and CP2 readings will be announced, and all County Players audition information may be found at countyplayers.org/shows/

auditions or go to CountyPlayers.org and look for "Auditions."

Performance rights – "Lips together, Teeth Apart," "Misery," "Dracula," "The Dining Room," "Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley," and "The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley" are presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC, servicing the Dramatists Play Service collection. dramatists.com; "Bullshot Crummond," "A Few Good Men," "Dear Jack, Dear Louise," and "Camping with Henry and Tom" are presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. concordtheatricals.com; "Something Rotten" is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI, New York, NY. MTIShows.com.



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A & E CALENDAR

Feb. 26-March 2: The Two Of Us Productions' Auditions, Claverack Library's Marilyn & Bob Laurie Gallery, 629 NY-23B, Claverack. Auditions for "Girl With A Camera" by Byron Nilsson. Wed., Feb. 26, 7 p.m.; Fri., Feb. 28, at 7 p.m. Audition & Callbacks: Sun., March 2, 2 p.m. Performances are May 9-18, 2025 at the Claverack Library. Sides will be provided at the audition. For more information or to get the sides in advance, please write the director at StephenSanbornPhD@gmail.com.

Feb. 27: "Butterfly in the Sky," virtual screening of a heartwarming documentary celebrating the legacy of PBS's beloved "Reading Rainbow," just in time for the end of National Library Lovers' Month, 6 p.m. Open to all. Register for this virtual program through your local library. Sponsored by Dutchess County Library Association.

Feb. 28: Comedy Night featuring Matt Pena & Gabe Mollica, Coppola's of Hyde Park, Rte. 9, Hyde Park. Hyde Park Rotary will present a family-friendly comedy fundraiser to benefit Rotary projects. Featured performers are Matt Pena (stand-up comedian, producer and storyteller) and Gabe Mollica (comedian, writer, and star of the Off-Broadway hit "Solo: A Show About Friendship," featured on "This American Life"). Dinner (cash bar) and show are at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$68 per person at the door. Checks should be made to Hyde Park Rotary Foundation, Inc. Snow date: Sat., March 1. More info: Hydeparkrotary@gmail.com

Feb. 28-March 2: "Signs, Games & Messages" Festival, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson. Three-day festival celebrating the music and legacy of renowned Hungarian composer György Kurtág. The festival, which is free and open to the public. Curated by acclaimed pianist and conductor Benjamin Hochman, a lecturer at Bard College Berlin, this year's festival offers four unique programs showcasing the range of Kurtág's work. More info at bard.edu/conservatory.

Feb. 28-March 2: "The Mousetrap," The Center for Performing Arts at Rhinebeck, 661 Rte. 308, Rhinebeck. Up In One Productions, in collaboration with The Center, presents the iconic murder mystery play by Agatha Christie. As a snowstorm traps guests at a newly opened countryside inn, an unsettling message arrives: a murderer is on the loose, and the killer may be among them. Tensions rise, secrets unravel, alliances shift, and danger closes in as Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap" keeps audiences on the edge of their seats until the jaw-dropping final twist. In this thrilling tale of deception and intrigue, "The Mousetrap" challenges the audience to put on their detective hats, solve the mystery, and, as always, keep the secret of the killer's identity once the curtain falls. Performances: Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat., March 1, 3 p.m.; Sun., 3 p.m. Tickets \$25. (845) 876-3080 or www.centerforperformingarts.org

March 1: Historical Program, "Gilded Age in a Glass," Little Nine Partners Historical Society at the Stissing House, Pine Plains. The Gilded Age gave us some of our most famous drinks - the Martini, the Daiquiri, the Old Fashioned, and others. Cocktails - their ingredients, their stories, their pageantry - can reveal more than expected about American society at the time. This presentation by Zachary Veith, Historic Site Asst. at Staatsburgh State Historic Site, will explore technological

innovations, social scandals, women's suffrage, American imperialism, and the familiar haunts of New York's elites behind the popular mixed drinks of yesterday and today. Talk is from 4-5 p.m. followed by 1 hour of complimentary snacks and punch bowls featuring some of the cocktails from the program. Cash bar available. Tickets: \$30 available on Eventbrite. <https://gildedageinaglass.eventbrite.com>

March 1: Coffeehouse Performance & Open Mic, Stepping Stone, 320 Sawkill Rd., Kingston. The Kingston Chapter of the Hudson Valley Folk Guild continues its Coffeehouse Series, consisting of an open mic and a featured performer, this month Louise Adams. It starts at 7 p.m. and ends at 9:45 p.m. Doors open with Open Mic sign-up at 6:30 p.m. Admission is \$7 (\$6 for Folk Guild members and senior citizens). More info: HVFGKingston@hudsonvalleyfolkguild.org.

March 1: Piano Festival Concert, Dave Burrell, St. Andrew & St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 15 South Ave., Beacon. Elysium Furnace Works launches its Piano Festival with acclaimed virtuoso Dave Burrell, who came to prominence as an influential innovator in New York's free jazz scene in the 1960s, subsequently playing alongside such trailblazing musicians as saxophonists Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp, Marion Brown and David Murray. Concert begins at 8 p.m. Advance tickets at <https://daveburrell.eventbrite.com>

March 1: Play Reading, Merritt Bookstore, 57 Front St., Millbrook. Neil LaBute, renowned playwright, screenwriter and director, will present a reading of his play SOME GIRL(S) with a full cast of special guests, 4 p.m. Seating is first-come, first-served and will begin at 3:50 p.m. The event space is up one flight of stairs, the play running time is 100 minutes, and Q+A will follow. (845) 677-5857 or www.merrittbookstore.com

March 1: Saturday Morning Family Series, The Center for Performing Arts at Rhinebeck, 661 Rte. 308, Rhinebeck. "Cinderella's Fairy Godmother," 11 a.m. Join Kit's Interactive Theatre, Cinderella, her fairy godmother, and other fairy tale characters as they frolic through Storyland to solve a riddle and beware the Giant. Tickets \$10. (845) 876-3080 or www.centerforperformingarts.org

March 2: Howland Chamber Music Circle Piano Festival: Shai Wosner, Howland Cultural Center, 477 Main St., Beacon. Concert begins at 4 p.m. Afterward, audience members can meet the musician and enjoy complementary refreshments. All ticket holders are invited to the reception. To purchase a ticket, visit howlandmusic.org.

March 5: Embroidery Lecture: "In the Archives of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation," Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church, 1168 Rte. 55, Lagrangeville. Christy and Erin of Relics in Situ will join Skyllkill, a local chapter of the Embroiderer's Guild of America, to present a lecture on the Archives. They will take into the Bruton Heights Education Center to view rarely seen treasures from an embroiderer's point of view. Join other needleworkers for fun and learning beginning at 10 a.m. or come for this program only beginning at 12:30 p.m. For more information visit www.facebook.com/SkylkillIEGA or email EGASKyllkill@gmail.com.

EXHIBITIONS

Art Gallery 71, 71 E. Market St., Rhinebeck. Through March 2: "Primordial," a collection of oil paintings by this month's featured artist, KP Devlin. Drawing inspiration from his dreams and meditation visions, as well as imagery from artists such as Hieronymus Bosch, Remedios Varo and David Lynch, Devlin's paintings weave humorous and horrifying images into hallucinogenic landscapes, oozing with saturated primary colors and gradated earthtones. www.artgallery71.com

Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, 124 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie. Through Aug. 17: "Great Green Hope for the Urban Blues," exhibition that explores the art and myths of the Hudson Valley. The exhibition is part of a legacy that began 200 years ago as landscape painter Thomas Cole traveled up the Hudson River to paint the Catskill Mountains: a voyage that marked the mythical origin of the so-called Hudson River School of American landscape painting. Also on view: "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Black Space-Making from Harlem to the Hudson Valley," installation related to "Great Green Hope" by Vassar student Harrison Brisbon-McKinnon '26; and the second, "Water/Bodies: Sa'dia Rehman." (845) 437-5632 or <https://www.vassar.edu/theloeb>

Pictured: Caleb Stein (British, active USA, born 1994), "Sanjay & Shakira. The Watering Hole," from the series, "Down by the Hudson," 2020, Gelatin silver print. Gift of the artist, class of 2017, in memory of Andrew Tallon and the class of 2017, 2021.47.5 © Caleb Stein



Millbrook Arts Project, Millbrook Library, 3 Friendly Lane, Millbrook. Through March 1: "Ann Ledy: Circle + Square," an exhibition in 2- and 3-dimensions. (845) 677-3611 or www.millbrooklibrary.org

Morton Memorial Library, 82 Kelly St., Rhinecliff. Feb. 28-March 30: Talent Show Art Exhibition, the visual component of Morton's annual Talent Show. Art Opening: Fri., Feb. 28, 6-8 p.m. Admission is free. Refreshments will be served. Purchases benefit local artists and Morton Library. Donations accepted. (845) 876-2903

Rhinebeck Bank, 6414 Montgomery St., Rhinebeck. Through April 4: Artwork exhibit by Michael Mandia of Wappingers Falls, whose primary artistic medium acrylic paint, but he also uses pen, ink, colored pencil and pastel. More info at <https://www.michaelmandiaart.com/>

Tivoli Artists Gallery, 60 Broadway, Tivoli. Through March 2: "Winter Blues," an uplifting take on winter in all its glory. This captivating exhibit delves into the artists' interpretations of winter's beauty and majesty. (845) 757-2667 or www.tivoliartistsgallery.com

Dutchess County Chamber sets Soiree March 1

The Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce will hold its annual Copacabana Soiree on Saturday, March 1, at 5:30 p.m., at The Grandview in Poughkeepsie.

The Chamber hosts this formal affair to celebrate leaders of its business community. Walk the red carpet in your finest attire; enjoy delicious cuisine, decadent cocktails, and delightful company. Dance the night away while celebrating some of the best in local business. The evening features an extended cocktail hour, a full three-course dinner, a premium open bar, and live music by Jungle Love.

2025 Honorees include:

Community Service Award: Staci Cussick, Comparion Insurance Agency;

Community Spirit Award: The Curry Sisters, Cathleen, Dawn, Jenny, Jill, Karen, and Prish, The Curry Estate;

Industry Award: Lawrence & Angela Holzapfel, Quality Environmental Solutions & Technologies, Inc.;

Leadership Award: Brian Altmann, DBS Remodel;

Next Generation Award: Jacob Reckess, PAZ Management & The Arlington of Poughkeepsie.

Get tickets and more information at <https://www.dccoc.org/gala>.



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Red Hook High School celebrates graduation rate

Ninety-five percent of Red Hook High School students who began in fall 2020 graduated on time last summer, and nearly half of them earned a diploma with an advanced designation.

Red Hook finished the 2023-24 academic year tied for the second-highest four-year graduation rate among Dutchess County public schools, according to state Education Department data. The 95% represents an improvement of eight percentage points over the previous year.

The cohort thrived despite being the first students to begin at the high school after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We’re very excited,” High School Principal Kyle Roddey said. “We’re really proud of that growth, proud of our faculty and proud of our students for the resilience they’re showing.”

Sixty-three of the 128 graduates earned a Regents diploma with an advanced designation, which includes additional foreign language, science and math requirements. The school in recent years has placed an emphasis on in-depth educational opportunities, such as its International Baccalaureate (IB) program; 12 earned full IB diplomas last June.

Statewide, the graduation rate for 2023-24 was 86%. In Dutchess, Spackenkill High School had a graduation rate of 98% and Millbrook also graduated 95%. When looking at district-wide data, which includes students within the district but who may not take part in the traditional high school program, Red Hook’s graduation rate of 94% was second in the county, behind Spackenkill.

Data included not only those who graduated in June but anyone else who completed their diploma by the end of August.

Roddey attributed the graduation rate increase largely to Red Hook’s Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, or MTSS, committee. The group, composed of school administrators, counselors, social workers, psychologist, a nurse and a teacher, and led by Assistant Principal Colleen Lynch, works to identify students early on who may need additional support and provide help through an action plan to ensure they do not fall through the cracks.

Both Roddey and Lynch said while the improvement is exciting, the goal is always to improve graduation rates and reach 100%.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Janet Warden called the graduation rate “a collective effort” that can be celebrated by all members of the district.

“From teachers to cafeteria and custodial staff to counselors – everyone works each day to support student achievement,” Dr. Warden said. “We’re so lucky to have a community that supports public education.”

The superintendent also credited Roddey: “He’s very detailed. He focuses in on every single kid to meet their individual needs to thrive.”

Red Hook has routinely enjoyed graduation rates topping 90% in recent years. Still, the 2023-24 class’ outcome represents the district’s second-highest percentage in more than a decade, even as it navigated the challenges of the pandemic and the increased social-emotional factors tied in with the rise of social media and smartphone use.

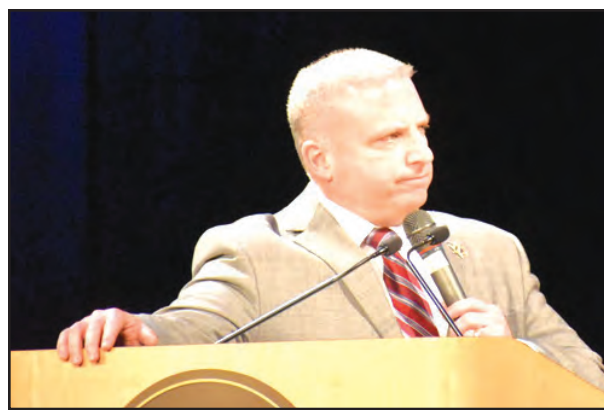
“We’re starting to see our cohorts emerging from that storm who have built resiliency and stick-to-itiveness,” Roddey said, “and I think being more focused on their own success.”

18 recruits graduate from 28th class of Dutchess County Law Enforcement Academy

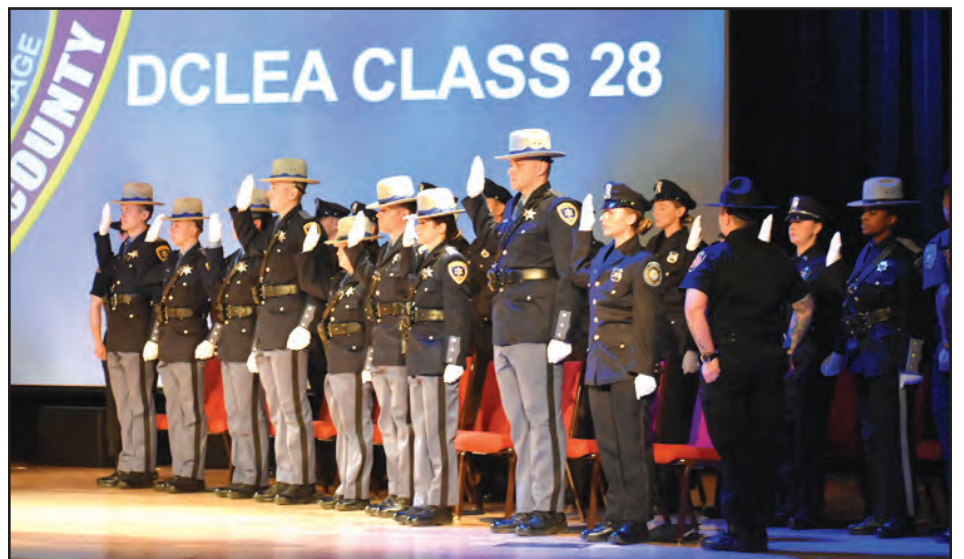


County and local leaders congratulated the 18 recruits who graduated from the 28th class of the Dutchess County Law Enforcement Academy (DCLEA). The ceremony was held at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park on Feb. 6.

Recruits will now move on to complete field training with their various agencies, including the Dutchess County and Putnam County Sheriff’s Offices, the City and Town of Poughkeepsie Police, the City of Beacon Police, and the Town of Lloyd Police.



Top: Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino makes remarks during the graduation ceremony. Left: Dutchess County Sheriff Kirk Imperati addresses the recruits and their guests. Below: Members of the 28th class of the DCLEA. Photos courtesy of Dutchess County Government



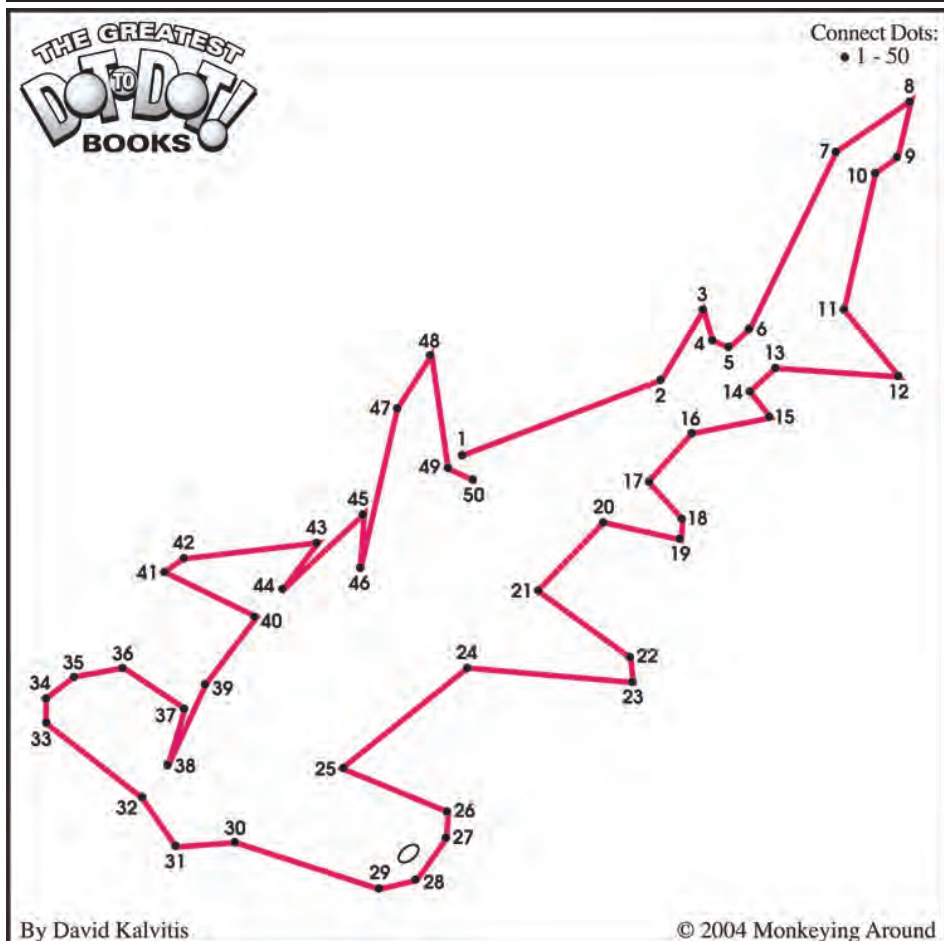
988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE IS LIVE

The first nationwide three-digit mental health crisis hotline is up and running. It is designed to be as easy to remember as 911, but when you dial 988, a dispatcher will connect callers with trained mental health counselors.

Dialing 988:

- Is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible support for anyone experiencing mental health related distress.
- Provides support: People may dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.
- Help for VETERANS: Veterans can press “1” after dialing 988 and be connected directly to the Veterans Crisis Lifeline.

Answer to this week’s Dot to Dot (puzzle on page 9)



Children’s Home announces launch of AnchorPoint Crisis Residence program

As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting children in psychiatric crises, the Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the well-being of children and families, has announced the upcoming launch of AnchorPoint, a Children’s Crisis Residence Program. The facility, located at 316 Violet Avenue in Hyde Park, is set to open in late spring or early summer. AnchorPoint will be the first and only Children’s Crisis Residence Program in the region.

AnchorPoint aims to provide round-the-clock support to youth between the ages of 7 and 21 who are experiencing a psychiatric crisis. This vital program will assist young individuals in transitioning back into their homes or community-based services with necessary resources and support. In addition to intensive crisis care and treatment, the program will work closely with families and caregivers to ensure the youth’s success.

Youth may require this level of care if

they have been diverted from inpatient hospitalization or have received care from other emergency services. Additionally, children in the community who have required mobile crisis intervention or other local behavioral health services may benefit from support through AnchorPoint, until they are able to return home or to the community.

“AnchorPoint is not just a crisis residence, it’s a pathway to healing and recovery for children in our community,” said Walter J. Joseph, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie. “Through this program, we are creating a bridge for children to return to their lives equipped with tools they need to thrive and avoid future crises.”

To stay updated on the AnchorPoint program follow the Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie on Facebook and Instagram and bookmark the website (childrenshome.us) for details on the opening.

OBITUARIES

Joan M. Brower

Joan M. Brower, 94, passed away Tuesday, February 11, 2025 in Rhinebeck NY with her family by her side. She was born October 23, 1930 in Poughkeepsie NY to Owen J. Rogan and Katherine Gordon.

Joan, an only child, grew up in various parts of Poughkeepsie and Arlington. She knew those areas like the back of her hand, from childhood to teen years—playing, roller skating, exploring and working. A graduate of Arlington High School Class of 1948, Joan was a gifted athlete and excelled in all sports but especially basketball and soccer. During those high school years, she worked at several jobs including cleaning rooms at Vassar College, a “soda-jerk” at Luke’s Pharmacy on Main St. and Fountain Square, and a telephone operator for New York Telephone Company. She attended Vassar Brothers School of Nursing and during that time also worked in the hospital, as nursing students were utilized to staff shifts. After graduating in 1951, Joan was accepted at University of Pennsylvania, The Graduate Hospital at Philadelphia for a 4 month course in Operating Room Technique and Management. Upon completion, she worked full time at Vassar Hospital in various nursing departments and then primarily in the Operating Room as Asst. Head Nurse/Clinical Instructor, eventually transitioning to part-time when starting her family. Joan held many nursing positions throughout her wonderful career: office nurse for Dr. Way and Dr. Montgomery, OB-GYN; Assistant Director of Nursing/ Inservice coordinator at Victory Lake Nursing Home; 1970’s- Director of Nursing /Assistant Administrator at Hyde Park Nursing Home, instrumental in developing and creating the nursing structure, nursing policies and procedures, upon inception of the facility; DON-Hudson Valley Nursing Center, Highland & Lovely Hill Nursing Home, Pawling. In the early 1980’s, she ran private home care in her own home, for several clients and also cared for her aging mom and aunt. Joan was a professional, well-respected, devoted and caring nurse and carried those qualities with her well after retirement. She was much sought after for her nursing advice in her retirement communities and would help anyone who needed care. After her retirement from nursing, while living in Haines Falls, Joan worked in the Haines Falls Library as well as for the Town of Hunter.

On June 20, 1953 Joan married Robert Brower at St. Peter’s Church and eventually settled and raised their daughters, Patricia and Roberta in Hyde Park NY. During the early years, vacations were spent camping, mostly at North Lake, but also Sunset Park, Lake Taghkanic, Lake Champlain and Montreal. In the early 1970’s, she also enjoyed leading a Girl Scout troop. Joan was a passionate gardener and no matter where she lived, gardening was integral to her life. With amazing talent, she could grow anything on any type of soil, in any climate. Perhaps her most cherished activity was genealogy. Her dedicated work spanned years of research and travel to various cemeteries. Joan not only spent years researching and documenting both sides of our family ancestry, but also for the Haines family in Haines Falls NY. Much of her work has been donated to Haines Falls Library and Mountain Top Historical Society. Our entire family is in receipt of our histories documented tirelessly by her. They are cherished works that are a testament to her skill and devotion. She was a member of the Detroit Society for Genealogical Research, The Townsend Society of America, the Mountain Top Historical Society and Ancestry. In the late 80’s and early 90’s, Joan and Bob moved several times and lived in Red Hook, Haines Falls and became snowbirds traveling to Clearwater, Florida where they eventually settled permanently in the mid 2000’s, fully enjoying the years there.

After Bob’s death, Joan eventually relocated to North Carolina and then back to NY, specifically Rhinebeck. In 2011, at age 81, Joan made the trip of a lifetime to Ireland, finally able to meet her beloved Irish family, visit in the family home where her father Owen was born and visit the family gravesites of her aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. That trip was one of the most special occasions of her life. As she aged, Joan lost most of her sight and was legally blind, yet was able to lead an independent life despite that enormous challenge.

She is survived by her daughters and spouses: Patricia Siegel (Michael), Roberta McLaughlin (Sean); grandchildren - Monica Weinstein (Jayson), Kate Hiegel (Jared), Alex Siegel (Anuradha), Aidan McLaughlin (Jovanny); great-grandchildren- Parker and Olivia, Emma and Eli, Gabriel and Daniella; Laly Anchorena and the Anchorena family; brother-in-law Jack Brower; sister-in-law Laurie Brower; nephews- John Brower(Donna), Todd Brower, Jeff Brower, Rory France (Julia), Michael Brower, Scott Brower (deceased) and 8 great nieces and families; cousin Betty Hellard and family; In Ireland- cousins Michael, Mary, Margaret, Maureen and deceased cousin Lily and their families; “adopted” son Jerry Whitworth. Joan was predeceased by her husband, Robert in 2016.

We send our deepest thanks and gratitude to Archcare Ferncliff for their devoted, excellent and

compassionate care of mom- including Dr. Antoine, Samantha, Aaron, Angela, Valarie, Jayda, Brittany, Xaria, Chantal, PT/OT and all the rest of the team that cared for her.

Joan chose to be cremated with no calling hours/services. A Celebration of Life will be held per Joan’s wishes, at a later date. She will be interred at Haines Falls Cemetery, also at a later date. Donations can be made in her memory to Mountain Top Historical Society, PO Box 263, Haines Falls, NY 12436; or Walkway Over the Hudson State Park via walkway.org or PO Box 889, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602.

Arrangements are under the care of Burnett & White Funeral Homes, Red Hook, NY.

Elinor E. Haverkamp

Elinor E. Haverkamp, 95, of Poughkeepsie, NY passed away with her family by her side on Friday, February 14, 2025 at Hudson Valley Hospice House in Hyde Park. She was born on October 12, 1929 in Poughkeepsie, NY, the daughter of Otto and Eugenie Brodbeck Frank, Sr.

Elinor graduated from Arlington High School and then attended Edgewood Park in Briarcliff Manor. On Christmas day 1950, she married the love of her life, John G. Haverkamp, Sr., at the First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Poughkeepsie. He predeceased her on December 20, 2018.

She was employed as a bookkeeper at the family business, Frank Brother Farms. She was a member of Sweet Adelines, Eastern Star and Germania. Enjoying giving back to her community, Elinor volunteered at St. Francis Hospital and the Vassar Warner Home where she was also a board member and sat on the Church Council at First Lutheran Church.

Elinor enjoyed calligraphy, knitting, playing piano and spending time with children. She also played Carillon for Church.

Surviving are her sons, John G. (Patricia) Haverkamp, Jr. of Poughkeepsie, NY, Frank (Angela) Haverkamp of Poughkeepsie, NY, daughters Lori (Leo) Herbst of Stillwater, NY and Kathleen Haverkamp and significant other Mark Serrett of Geneva, NY.

Also surviving are her brother Otto Frank, Jr. of Poughkeepsie, NY, grandchildren Tyler, Kalli, Emma, and Lily, great-grandchildren Theo, Vienna and Madison and several nieces and nephews. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Visitation was held on Friday, February 21, 2025 at the Wm. G. Miller & Son FH, Inc., Poughkeepsie, NY. A Funeral service was held on Saturday, February 22, 2025 in the Funeral Home. Burial followed in the family plot at Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.

The family wishes to thank all who cared for their mother during this difficult time.

The family request memorial donations to be made in Elinor’s name to Hudson Valley Hospice, www.hvhospice.org/ donate-now or First Evangelical Lutheran Church, www.firstlutheran-pok.org. Arrangements are under the direction of the Wm. G. Miller & Son FH, Inc. To send an online condolence, please visit www.wmgmiller-funeralhome.com

Deborah L. Kebsch

Deborah L. Kebsch, 70, of Hyde Park passed away on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at at Northeast Center for Rehabilitation in Lake Katrine, NY.

Born on October 9th, 1954 in Poughkeepsie, NY Deborah was the daughter to the parents of the late Vincent Killmer and Carole Malone.

Deborah spent much of her time devoted to her children, caring and loving them as they grew up and made families of their own. As the family grew, Deborah would take such pride cooking, and hosting for her family and friends. Additionally, Deborah was a member of the Nine Partners Lions Club and the Germania Dance Club.

Deborah is survived by her children, CristiLee (Vincent) Stelmach of Red Hook, NY; Deanna (Jeff) Chandler of Red Hook, NY, and Robert Holden of Hyde Park, NY; her grandchildren Joshua Holden, Tucker Stelmach, Reilly Chandler; and her sister Kelli Gonzales of Hyde Park, NY; as well as many nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, Deborah is predeceased by her husband, Bruce Kebsch and her brother, Kevin Killmer

Family and friends were received on Monday, February 17, 2025 at Burnett and White Funeral Homes in Red Hook, NY. Memorials donations may be made in Deborah’s honor to the Dutchess County SPCA as she had a love for all animals. Funeral arrangements were trusted to Burnett & White Funeral Homes - Red Hook.

Alice M. Morse

With a heavy heart, we announce the passing of Alice M. Morse, 91, a lifelong resident of the area. Alice passed peacefully at home with family around her on Thursday, February 13th.

Born April 6th 1933 in Nevis, NY, she was the daughter of the late Thomas and Eva (Bathrick) Donerly. Alice graduated from Red Hook High School in 1951. In 1958, she married Earl S. Morse Sr, and later went on to become a CNA at Ferncliff Nursing Home where she worked from 1974 to 1998.

She was predeceased by her husband, Earl S. Morse Sr., two children; Earl S. Morse Jr., and Melinda Morse, as well as her sisters, Mary Coon,

Sylvia Ellis, and Irene Sweet. She is survived by her remaining children; Roxanne (Richard) Bacon, Richard (Sheri) Morse, Steven Morse, Robin Fraher and her partner Dante Martin, Debra Morse, and Amy (James) Kent, as well as many beloved grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Calling hours were held Friday, Feb. 21, at Burnett & White Funeral Home, Red Hook, NY. Services & interment followed at St. John’s Reformed Dutch Church Cemetery, Red Hook. Arrangements under the care of Burnett & White Funeral Homes, Red Hook. To sign our online guestbook, please visit www.burnett-white.com.

Michael Osterhoudt

Michael R. Osterhoudt, 68, lifelong resident of Red Hook, NY, passed away peacefully on February 16, 2025, at Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie, NY. He was born on December 7, 1956, in Rhinebeck, NY, to Mary Jane (Kilmer) Osterhoudt of Red Hook, NY, and the late Wallace E. Osterhoudt, Sr.

Michael grew up in a little hamlet of Red Hook (Rock City) to which he graduated from Red Hook High School in 1976. Michael worked for many years as a draftsman and office manager for B&R Specialties, Staatsburg, NY. Michael later found his calling on the road, first as a long-haul truck driver for Roe Movers, Poughkeepsie, NY, and then as a Machine Equipment Operator with the Dutchess County Highway Department. His dedication and work ethic were as much a part of him as his warm smile and hearty laugh.

The most significant chapter of his life began when he married Karen A. Studer on September 30, 1989, in Poughkeepsie, NY. Their marriage was a testament to true partnership, and enduring love. Karen remains in Red Hook, cherishing the memories that they created together over a span of almost 39 years.

Michael’s heart was always the fullest when he was surrounded by family. He is survived by his mother, Mary Jane Osterhoudt; his wife of 35 and half years, Karen; his daughters, Julia (Zachary) Ferris of Pleasant Valley, NY, Alexandria Osterhoudt of Poughkeepsie, NY, and Jessica (Robert) Osterhoudt of Red Hook, NY; his beloved grandchildren, Ava Rae Ferris and Chase Joseph Osterhoudt; his sister, Jocelyn Coon of Red Hook, NY; his brother, David (Kim) Osterhoudt of Farmington, NH; his nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, as well as extended family and friends who will miss him dearly. His brother, Wallace Osterhoudt, Jr. predeceased him.

Michael had the kindest and loving heart. He loved telling stories, jokes, and singing goofy songs with his girls. He loved family vacations to Old Orchard Beach, ME. It was his “Happy Place” to which he shared with his family and friends whenever he could. Teaching them how to dig up clams at low tide, catching crabs off the pier, deep sea fishing, and just enjoying the ocean. His family was everything to him. He was so proud of each of his three daughters, their significant others, as well as becoming a grandfather (B-Pop). Michael loved his long lasting friendships, especially the ones made within the class of ‘76 along with members of the DC Highway Department. Some of which he even considered his brothers and sisters.

Beyond his family, Michael’s jovial spirit found its most famous expression when he transformed into Santa Claus each holiday season. For almost 17 years, Michael, along with his wife, Karen, visited the three nursing homes in Rhinebeck as Mr. and Mrs. Claus. He was also the highlight of numerous parades, tree lightings in Pine Plains and Rhinebeck, as well as every weekend at Battenfeld Tree Farm, Milan, NY. He was the essence of Christmas spirit. His portrayal brought merriment and magic to many generations.

As an avid outdoorsman, Michael was also a member and past president of the Red Hook Rod & Gun Club. He cherished the tranquility of nature, and the camaraderie of his fellow enthusiasts. His love for the outdoors was only matched by his love for his community, where he left an indelible mark through his kindness and service.

Friends and family gathered in remembrance of Michael’s life on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at Burnett and White Funeral Home in Red Hook, NY. A funeral service to celebrate his legacy will be held on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 11:00 AM at the same location. Interment will follow at Rock City Memorial Cemetery in Rhinebeck, NY, where Michael will be laid to rest.

Funeral arrangements are entrusted to Burnett & White Funeral Homes, 7461 South Broadway, Red Hook, NY 12571. To sign the online guest book, please visit www.Burnett-White.com

Mary Lee Shanahan

Mary Lee Shanahan, 66, a longtime resident of Amenia, NY, passed away peacefully on Sunday, February 16, 2025 at home surrounded by her family. Mrs. Shanahan was a school teacher at Mizzenport Day School in Pawling, NY for the past 25 years.

Born on February 2, 1959 in Huntington, NY, she was the daughter of the late Enda Patrick Shanahan and Mary Grace (Pillucere) Shanahan. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from the State University of New York at New Paltz with a B.A. in Education. On August 1, 1985 in Centerport,

NY, she married Robert L. Powell who survives at home.

Mrs. Shanahan was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

Besides her husband, she is survived by two sons; Maxwell and Luke Powell, both of Millerton, NY, posthumously Anthony Powell, and her brother, Gerry Shanahan (Linda) of Hicksville, NY.

Calling hours were held on Friday, February 21, 2025 at Hufcut Funeral Home, Dover Plains, NY. Funeral services followed at the funeral home. To send the family an online condolence, please visit www.hufcutfuneralhome.com.

Jill Van Etten

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Jill Van Etten, a loving wife, devoted mother, and cherished grandmother, who left this world on February 15, 2025. For over 30 years, Jill battled Multiple Sclerosis with a quiet strength that was nothing short of remarkable. She never once let the disease define her. Instead, she chose to live with grace, resilience, and an unbreakable spirit.

Born June 16, 1956, in Jamaica Queens NY, Jill’s family eventually left Long Island and settled in Red Hook. She touched many lives from working at Foster’s or the Golden Hill Nursing Home to participating in a variety of craft groups.

Jill was the most generous person. She was funny, optimistic, and a joy to be around. Her greatest joy in life was her family—especially her two sons, Chad and Casey, whom she adored. Being their mother was her greatest honor and joy. When grandchildren came into her life, her heart only grew bigger. Jill’s kindness, strength, and warmth left a lasting impact on everyone who knew her.

She had a passion for cooking and crafting, whether it was making jewelry, knitting, or creating something special for those she loved. Her many projects like necklaces, bracelets, pottery and stained glass will serve as a proud reminder of her.

Jill leaves behind a legacy of love, strength, creativity, and kindness. She is survived by her devoted husband of over 30 years, Peter Van Etten, her beloved sons Chad Martin (Andrea) and Casey Martin (Sarah), her cherished grandchildren, Tessa, Jameson and Abigail, her siblings Jay Lieske (Donna), Shelley Sakellariou (Christos), Tammy Fimbach (Karl) and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her father John Lieske, mother Bernice Starkie, loving step father Richard Starkie Jr, and brother Richard Starkie III.

Her family is also deeply grateful to all of her health aides, especially Jen, whose care and companionship meant so much in her later years.

Friends and family called on Sunday, February 23rd, at Dapson-Chestney Funeral Home, Rhinebeck N.Y. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Jill’s name to the National MS Society in honor of her enduring strength and compassion.

To send an online condolence, please visit www.dapsonchestney.com

Cleland J. Wynkoop

Cleland J. Wynkoop, 80, of Stuyvesant passed away on Saturday, February 15, at Columbia Memorial Hospital after a brief illness. Born in West Haven, CT, he was the son of the late Cleland M. and Dorothy B. (Wasko) Wynkoop. Cle grew up in Clinton Corners, NY, where he was a member of the East Clinton Fire Department. He worked for many years as a computer programmer for IBM in Poughkeepsie and was employed by Columbia Tractor as a salesman. Cle was an outdoorsman who enjoyed riding his motorcycle and cherished his time spent hiking, camping and spending time at the Clove Valley Rod and Gun Club. He was also a sports enthusiast and loved playing volleyball at the Poughkeepsie Country Club as well as playing softball for various teams and bowling leagues. Cle was an animal lover who especially loved his dogs. Cle was known for his sense of humor, always able to make everyone smile and laugh. Above all else he was a family man who had strong faith and an enormous love for God and his family.

Cle is survived by his loving wife Alice K. (Falke) Wynkoop; son C. Michael (Erin) Wynkoop; daughter Dawn (Jason) Ferdula; stepchildren Kyung (Daniel Young) Masella and Jeslyn Masella; siblings Theresa (Robert) Pick, John Wynkoop, Mary (Donald Scofield) Henschel and Elizabeth (Brian) Hicks. He is also survived by his loving grandchildren, Joe DiGregorio, Olivia Wynkoop, Wyatt Wynkoop, Kenzie Ferdula and Morgan Pietruszka. He will be missed by his faithful canine companion Abby.

A memorial service was held on Saturday, February 22, at the Albany Church of Christ, Colonie, NY.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to either Camp Hunt or the Albany Church of Christ Benevolent Fund. Please send all donations to the Albany Church of Christ, 30 Russell Road, Colonie, NY 12205. In the memo line, please include “In Memory of Cle Wynkoop” and to which fund you wish to contribute to.

Online condolences may be offered at mooneyfuneralhome.com

Legal Notices

LEGAL NOTICE FOR APPLICATION OF FRANCHISE RENEWAL PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Spectrum Northeast, LLC, an indirect subsidiary of Charter Communications, has filed an application for Renewal of its Cable Television Franchise in the Town of Pleasant Valley, Dutchess County, New York. The application and all comments filed relative thereto are available for public inspection at the Town of Pleasant Valley office during normal business hours. Interested persons may file comments on the application with the Town of Pleasant Valley clerk and with the New York State Public Service Commission within 10 days of publication. Comments may be addressed to Hon. Michelle L. Phillips, Secretary, New York State Public Service Commission, 3 Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223

NOTICE OF SALE SUPREME COURT - COUNTY OF DUTCHESS. THE BANK OF NEW YORK MELLON F/K/A THE BANK OF NEW YORK, AS TRUSTEE FOR THE CERTIFICATE-HOLDERS OF THE CWMBS INC., CHL MORTGAGE PASS-THROUGH TRUST 2005-HYB6, MORTGAGE PASS THROUGH CERTIFICATES, SERIES 2005-HYB6, Plaintiff against MICHAEL SEDGWICK, et al Defendant(s). Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale dated January 7, 2025, I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the rear lobby located at the Dutchess County Courthouse, 10 Market Street, Poughkeepsie, NY on March 18, 2025 at 2:30 p.m. premises situate, lying and being in the Town of Washington, County of Dutchess and State of New York, known and designated as Section 6664 Block 00 Lot 667504. Said premises known as 354 SOUTH ROAD, MILLBROOK, NY 12545. Approximate amount of lien \$831,708.87 plus interest & costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment and Terms of Sale. Index Number 53474/2023. ANTHONY TIRONE, ESQ., Referee DRUCKMAN LAW GROUP PLLC Attorney(s) for Plaintiff 242 Drexel Avenue,

Legal Notices

Westbury, NY 11590 For sale information, please visit www.Auction.com or call (800) 280-2832. DLG#39461{*Northern Dutchess*}

NOTICE TO BIDDERS-RFB-DCH-2025-04 PROJECT: Replacement of Bridge N-5 (BIN 3343370) CR-62 (Rudd Pond Rd) Over the Webatuck Creek and Culvert N-21 CR-63 (Boston Corners Rd) Over an Unnamed Creek, Town of North East. Project Description: This project involves the removal and replacement of an existing bridge that consists of a two-span concrete box with a single span 3-sided precast concrete box support on piles on CR-62 and involves the removal and replacement of a concrete box culvert founded on earth on CR-63 Town of North East. Also, ancillary work including excavations support, paving and guide rail. The County of Dutchess official bid documents for this project are obtained from the Empire State Purchasing Group's Regional Bid Notification System at www.bidnetdirect.com/new-york/county-of-dutchess. Copies of bidding documents obtained from any other source are not considered official copies. It is incumbent upon all potential bidders to view all posted addenda prior to the bid close date. You may obtain an official copy by registering on the Empire State Regional Bid Notification System at www.bidnetdirect.com/new-york/county-of-dutchess or by using the link provided at www.dutchessny.gov, selecting "Government" then selecting "Bidding and RFP Opportunities." For those without Internet access, you may obtain an electronic copy of bidding documents by contacting the Dutchess County Department of Public Works at dpwcontracts@dutchessny.gov, or in person, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4 pm: Dutchess County DPW, Business Office, 1st Floor, 626 Dutchess Turnpike, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. Upon request, all interested parties may review the hard copy of the Bid Specifications and Drawings by visiting the above referenced address. All Addenda will be posted on BidNet Direct (aka Empire State Purchasing Group) site. Bids due on or before 11:00am, March 19, 2025, and

Legal Notices

at that time opened and read aloud. Bids received after that time will not be accepted. Bids for the above project will be received by: Diane McKenna, Contract Specialist, Dutchess County Department of Public Works (DPW) 626 Dutchess Turnpike-1st Floor, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. The bid opening for this solicitation may also be attended through Microsoft Teams Audio Conferencing. Anyone who wishes to hear bids read aloud via Teams, will need to call into the phone number listed below. We ask that you call in at least three minutes prior to bid due/time to ensure you are connected properly. All call-ins will be asked to identify themselves by name and organization. Join Microsoft Teams Meeting +1 516-268-4602 United States, Hempstead (Toll) Conference ID: 327 446 395#. Each bid shall be submitted as one paper original and one electronic flash drive copy and be accompanied by Bid Security (bid bond, certified check, official bank check) or a Letter of Credit (in a form agreeable to Dutchess County) in the amount of 10% of the bid amount. Bidders' security will be retained until the successful bidder has signed the Owner-Contractor Agreement and the County has finalized the Agreement. Each bid with Bid Security shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope bearing the name of the Project, Name of the Bidder, and the date and hour of the bid opening, which must be visible upon delivery. Questions will be accepted by the close of business March 11, 2025 & emailed to [Diane McKenna dpwcontracts@dutchessny.gov](mailto:Diane.McKenna@dpwcontracts@dutchessny.gov) and cc'dmckenna@dutchessny.gov with the County's response published in Addenda prior to 48 hours before the bid opening date. The anticipated start of construction is March 2025; the anticipated substantial completion date is October 31, 2025 with the anticipated completion date, including all punch list work is November 14, 2025, respectively. Failure to meet these dates may result in liquidated damages. This project may be subject to NYS Department of Labor Prevailing Wage Rates PRC #: 2025001369. Starting

Legal Notices

December 30, 2024: NYS DOL Contractor and Subcontractor registry requirements. View Bid Specifications regarding APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, if applicable. The County reserves the right to waive irregularities in bids and in bidding and to reject any or all proposals.

LEGAL NOTICE OF ESTOPPEL

The bond resolution, a summary of which is published herewith, has been adopted on August 21, 2023, and the validity of the obligations authorized by such resolution may be hereafter contested only if such obligations were authorized for an object or purpose for which the Town of Pleasant Valley, Dutchess County, New York, is not authorized to expend money, or if the provisions of law which should have been complied with as of the date of publication of this notice were not substantially complied with, and an action, suit or proceeding contesting such validity is commenced within twenty days after the date of publication of this notice, or such obligations were authorized in violation of the provisions of the Constitution. Such resolution was subject to permissive referendum. The period of time has elapsed for the submission and filing of a petition for a permissive referendum, and a valid petition has not been submitted and filed in connection with such resolution. A complete copy of the resolution summarized herewith is available for public inspection during regular business hours at the Office of the Town Clerk for a period of twenty days from the date of publication of this Notice. Dated: Pleasant Valley, New York, February 20, 2025. /s/ Mary Beth Muir Town Clerk BOND RESOLUTION DATED AUGUST 21, 2023. A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING, SUBJECT TO PERMISSIVE REFERENDUM, THE ISSUANCE OF \$4,632,247 BONDS OF THE TOWN OF PLEASANT VALLEY, DUTCHESS COUNTY, NEW YORK, TO PAY THE COST OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF IMPROVEMENTS TO AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE TOWN OWNED BUILDING LOCATED AT 1903 ROUTE 44 IN PLEASANT VALLEY NEW YORK, IN AND FOR

Legal Notices

SAID TOWN. **Specific object or purpose:** Construction of improvements to and reconstruction of the Town owned building located at 1903 Route 44 in Pleasant Valley New York, including original furnishings, equipment, machinery, apparatus, appurtenances, site improvements, and incidental improvements and expenses in connection therewith for conversion to a new Town Hall **Period of probable usefulness:** 25 years **Maximum estimated cost:** \$6,500,000 **Amount of obligations to be issued:** \$4,632,247 serial bonds **Other monies:** \$1,867,753 **SEQRA status:** Unlisted Action - Negative Declaration. SEQRA compliance materials on file in office of Town Clerk where they may be inspected upon request.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS-RFB-DCB-01-25 NAME OF PROJECT: Multiple Roof Replacement Projects at Various Dutchess County Locations **Multiple Prime Bids** shall be received for the following classes of work: **General Construction, Mechanical, Plumbing, & Electrical. Project Description:** Roof Replacement Projects at the following locations: Beacon Center, 223 Main Street, Beacon, NY; Eastern Dutchess Government Center (EDGC) 131 County House Road, Millbrook, NY; Rhinebeck Outpost, 1055 Route 308, Rhinebeck, NY. The County of Dutchess official bid documents for this project are obtained from the Empire State Purchasing Group's Regional Bid Notification System at www.bidnetdirect.com/new-york/county-of-dutchess. Copies of bidding documents obtained from any other source are not considered official copies. It is incumbent upon all potential bidders to view all posted addenda prior to the bid close date. You may obtain an official copy by registering on the Empire State Regional Bid Notification System at www.bidnetdirect.com/new-york/county-of-dutchess or by using the link provided at www.dutchessny.gov, selecting "Government" then selecting "Bidding and RFP Opportunities." For those without Internet

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access, you may obtain an electronic copy of bidding documents by contacting the Dutchess County Department of Public Works at dpwcontracts@dutchessny.gov, or in person, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4 pm: Dutchess County DPW, Business Office, 1st Floor, 626 Dutchess Turnpike, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. Upon request, all interested parties may review the hard copy of the Bid Specifications and Drawings by visiting the above referenced address. **All Addenda will be posted on BidNet Direct (aka Empire State Purchasing Group) site.** Bids due on or before 11:00 AM, Friday, March 21, 2025, and at that time publicly opened and read aloud. Bids received after that time will not be accepted. **Bids for the above project will be received by:** Caroline A. Miller, Contract Specialist, Dutchess County Department of Public Works (DPW), 626 Dutchess Turnpike, 1st Floor Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. All interested parties are invited to attend. The bid opening for this solicitation may also be attended through Microsoft Teams Audio Conferencing. Anyone who wishes to hear bids read aloud via Teams, will need to call into the phone number listed below. We ask that you call in at least three minutes prior to bid due/time to ensure you are connected properly. All call-ins will be asked to identify themselves by name and organization. Join Microsoft Teams Meeting +1 516-268-4602 United States, Hempstead (Toll) **Conference ID: 733 982 487#.** Each bid shall be submitted as one paper original and one electronic flash drive copy and be accompanied by Bid Security (bid bond, certified check, official bank check) or a Letter of Credit (in a

Legal Notices

form agreeable to Dutchess County) in the amount of 10% of the bid amount. Bidders' security will be retained until the successful bidder has signed the Owner-Contractor Agreement and the County has finalized the Agreement. Each bid with Bid Security shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope bearing the name of the Project, Name of the Bidder, and the date and hour of the bid opening, which must be visible upon delivery. **Questions** will be accepted by the close of business Friday, March 14, 2025 and emailed to [Caroline Miller at dpwcontracts@dutchessny.gov](mailto:Caroline.Miller@dutchessny.gov) with the County's response published in Addenda prior to 48 hours before the bid opening date. **All Bidders are encouraged to attend the Walk-Thru in order to submit Bids for the RFB. Vendors MUST Pre-Register by 4:00 PM, Thursday, March 6, 2025.** The Walk-Thru scheduled for Friday, March 7, 2025, at 10:00 am starting at the Rhinebeck Outpost, 1055 Route 308, Rhinebeck, NY; proceeding to the Eastern Dutchess Government Center (EDGC) 131 County House Road, Millbrook, NY and concluding with the ; Beacon Center, 223 Main Street, Beacon, NY. This RFB may be subject to NYS Department of Labor Prevailing Wage Rates PRC #2025002126. **IMPORTANT: Starting December 30, 2024: NYS DOL Contractor and Sub-Contractor Registry Requirements.** View Bid Specifications regarding the APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, if applicable. The County reserves the right to waive irregularities in bids and in bidding and to reject any or all proposals.

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155 Personal
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SUDOKU
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7	5	1	9	2	8	4	3	6
5	4	7	8	9	6	3	2	1
1	6	3	4	7	2	5	8	9
8	2	9	3	5	1	7	6	4

Answers to this week's diversions

(puzzles on page 12)

DC Emergency Response accredited for emergency management proficiency and planning

First county in the Mid-Hudson Valley region to be accredited

Dutchess County's Department of Emergency Response (DCER) has been recognized for its high-quality emergency management program and disaster recovery planning, earning accreditation through New York State's Local Emergency Management Accreditation Program by the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES).

Dutchess County Emergency Response is the first county between New York City and Albany to earn this notable accreditation.

Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino said, "Dutchess County's commitment to emergency preparedness continues to be one of our highest priorities, and we are always working to ensure our residents' health and safety is protected. This New York State accreditation recognizes our Department of Emergency Response's dedication and expertise in preparedness planning efforts. Our residents can take pride in knowing that the professional team at Emergency Response is working every day to continue to exceed the highest standards for emergency preparedness. We are truly grateful to every member of our DCER team and congratulate them on this well-deserved achievement."

The accreditation process is an arduous one. DCER was evaluated on variety of emergency management standards based on several factors including national Emergency Management Accreditation Program standards, relevant State laws, and emergency management best practices. DCER also engaged community stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental partners, regarding emergency planning efforts, such as the County-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Access & Functional Needs Registry. Dutchess is now among the more than 20 counties across the state to achieve accreditation since the program was launched in 2017.

Dutchess County's Acting Commissioner of Emergency Response William H. Beale said, "I am incredibly proud of my team of emergency management and public health emergency preparedness professionals, who spent hundreds of hours on this project over a period of 18 months. It is an honor to be the first county in the Hudson Valley region, between New York City and Albany, to reach this standard of excellence."

The accreditation is valid for five years, followed by a re-accreditation process.

To learn more about the Dutchess County Department of Emergency Response, visit www.dutchessny.gov/emergency. Be prepared and stay informed by downloading the "Ready Dutchess" mobile app, available on the App Store and Google Play.



Dutchess County Emergency Response was recognized for its emergency management proficiency and planning, becoming an accredited agency by New York State Emergency Management. DCER received formal recognition of the accreditation last week at the New York State Emergency Management Association conference in Syracuse. From left to right: Matt Franklin, Director, NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) Office of Emergency Management; William Beale, Acting Commissioner, Dutchess County Emergency Response; Patricia DePaolo Munk, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Dutchess County Emergency Response/Health; Chris Baker, President, New York State Emergency Management Association (NYSEMA) and Nadine Macura, Regional Coordinator, NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) Office of Emergency Management – Region 2. Courtesy photo

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NY Association for Rural Health gains \$100K for mental health services

The New York State Association for Rural Health (NYSARH) has announced that it has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from the New York Health Foundation (NYHealth) as part of its Building Resiliency Among New York's Rural Health Organizations initiative. This funding will equip community partners with the tools and resources they need to respond to pressing health challenges, with a particular focus on improving mental health access in rural communities.

Through this initiative, NYSARH will lead efforts to assess and address gaps in mental health services across New York's rural regions. The project includes a comprehensive Rural Health Needs Assessment synthesizing mental health data from 44 rural counties to provide insights into existing needs, assets, and disparities and collaboration with up to 12 rural health networks and community-based organizations to gather feedback, inform a shared action plan, and develop advocacy strategies to improve rural mental health care.

"This grant is a catalyst for real change in rural mental health," said Alison Coates, MS, MBA, PhD(c), President, Board of Directors, NYSARH. "With the support of NYHealth, we will develop actionable solutions to bridge gaps in mental health access, build stronger community partnerships, and advocate for policy changes that ensure every rural New Yorker has the care they need when they need it."

"Rural health organizations are essential to the wellbeing of many communities throughout New York State, yet they often operate with limited resources," said David Sandman, PhD, President and CEO of NYHealth. "NYHealth is proud to support NYSARH in its efforts to strengthen mental health services and rural health infrastructure to make health care more accessible to New Yorkers."

Addressing Critical Gaps in Rural Mental Health

Forty-four of New York State's 62 counties are classified as fully or partially rural, and these communities face unique health challenges, including:

- Limited access to behavioral health providers due to workforce shortages.
- Long distances to care facilities and a lack of transportation options.
- Stagnant state reimbursement rates and funding eligibility restrictions that hinder the expansion of mental health services.
- Increased hospital closures and consolidation of health services, further straining access to care.

Despite these challenges, rural health networks play a crucial role in coordinating local resources, addressing workforce needs, and advocating for better health policies. However, these networks are often underfunded and affected by staff shortages and leadership transitions. This initiative aims to provide them with the necessary support to drive impactful, community-led solutions.