

Brush fire under control



On Wednesday, March 11 the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation said in a Twitter message that the brush fire at Hudson Highlands State Park is under control. It also noted that “the Wilkinson Memorial, Breakneck Ridge, Breakneck Bypass and the Undercliff trails remain closed until further notice as crews continue to clean up any hazardous debris.”

A brush fire began on the afternoon of Monday, March 9. Cars were damaged. All hikers made it down safely from the mountain, according to officials.

Photos are from the New York State Police Unmanned Aerial System which helped to monitor the fire, damage, and assisted those on the ground and in the air, fight the fire.

-Courtesy photos New York State Police

Spring high school sports season in jeopardy?

By Rich Thomaselli

The spring high school sports season, which began practices on March 9 and was scheduled to begin playing official games next week, is in jeopardy.

Virtually all Dutchess County high schools have postponed spring sports through April 30 due to the spread of the coronavirus. There are four who have questioned the validity of a six-week postponement, including John Jay and Beacon. The decision was made during a conference call by all Dutchess County school district superintendents and the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health.

Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro declared a State of Emergency in the county on March 14 and closed all schools for a minimum of two weeks, with a tentative return date of students to the classroom on March 30.

The news came just one day after the New York State Public High School Athletic Association canceled state championship play in ice hockey, bowling, boys basketball and girls basketball, despite the fact that the tournaments in

hockey and basketball were already underway. The state cited the growing spread of the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19.

The decision to postpone spring sports until April 30 was made in agreement by the superintendent of each Dutchess County school district, said Arlington Central School District Supt. Dr. Brendan Lyons, who sent a detailed, three-page letter home to parents and guardians outlining Arlington’s response to the coronavirus.

“In support of efforts towards community containment of the COVID-19 virus, and based on the recommendation of the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health, effective Friday, March 13, 2020, we are cancelling or postponing the following activities and events through Thursday, April 30, 2020,” the letter read.

It then ticked off a series of activities ranging from adult and continuing education classes to school trips to athletic contests.

“We will re-evaluate this determination based on continued information and guid-

ance from the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health and other federal, state and local agencies,” the letter concluded.

No teams are allowed to practice during the two weeks that schools are out until March 30. Teams and players will be allowed to practice beginning April 1, but not allowed to participate in games until May 1.

Four Dutchess County high schools – John Jay, Our Lady of Lourdes, Beacon and Poughkeepsie – said they are unsure if they will comply with not playing games during the entire month of April and will re-evaluate the situation at the end of March.

The month-long hiatus has many coaches worried.

“The writing is on the wall. You’ll end up seeing the whole season cancelled,” said one Dutchess County high school baseball coach. “I mean, I don’t want to alarm my players but people above us haven’t even discussed with us yet the parameters of what happens if we do start playing on May 1.”

That includes questions like how many games will each team play? How does league play shake out? How will teams qualify for sectionals?

Complicating matters is that several Dutchess County high schools – Red Hook, Rhinebeck, Pine Plains, Dover, Millbrook, Roosevelt, Webutuck and Spackenkill – all play in the Mid-Hudson Athletic League and Section 9 with Ulster County-based schools. A state of emergency also exists in Ulster, but beyond the two weeks off from face-to-face classroom instruction, Ulster has not postponed its spring sports season at all.

But not even Section 9 executive director Greg Ransom has any answers as to how this will play out.

“To my knowledge, as of this point, schools in Ulster, Orange and Sullivan counties have not postponed spring sports, so mostly this affects the Mid-Hudson Athletic League,” Ransom said. “So right now, I can’t give you an answer as to what will happen if half my league is not playing. Once we know for sure, the section is going to have to sit down and figure it out.”

Boys & Girls Clubs of Newburgh/Poughkeepsie announce candidates for Youth of the Year

High school seniors Zakiyah Helm, Tiara Smith, and Leilani Sanchez and high school junior Jordan Cordero will compete to become the Boys & Girls Clubs of Newburgh/Poughkeepsie Youth of the Year. The Youth of the Year title is a prestigious honor bestowed upon an exemplary young person in recognition of their leadership, service, academic excellence and dedication to living a healthy lifestyle. Now in its 73rd year, the Youth of the Year program honors our nation’s most awe-inspiring young people on their path to great futures. One of these candidates will go on to contend for the New

York State Youth of the Year title and a \$2,500 college scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

“Being a Youth of the Year candidate takes courage and hard work. Each year the candidates do a fantastic job of telling their stories and inspiring other youth,” said Kevin White, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Newburgh.

The Youth of the Year Gala also honors four members of the community who have enriched the Hudson Valley through Service, Education, Arts and Athletics. This year’s Honorees are: Lisa Silverstone, Executive Director of Safe

Harbors of the Hudson Valley – Glenn E. Hines Award for Outstanding Service to the Community; Lt. Col. Glendon Fraser, Ret., President of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.; Major General Irene Trowel Harris Chapter – Excellence in Education; Aquanetta Wright, President, Ferry Godmother Productions, Inc. – Excellence in the Arts and William “Bill” Bianco, Head Varsity Football Coach, Newburgh Free Academy – Excellence in Athletics.

The 2020 Youth of the Year Gala will be held on Saturday, March 14, at 6:30 p.m. at Anthony’s Pier 9 in New Windsor,

Orange County.

For more information about the Youth of the Year Program, Gala sponsorships and tickets, visit bgcnny.org.

The Youth of the Year program is supported by Toyota. As a Signature Sponsor of Youth of the Year, Toyota is committed to partnering with Boys & Girls Clubs of America to ensure local Clubs provide life enhancing opportunities for kids and teens to explore, develop and apply the essential skills they need to be successful in life and work. Youth of the Year representatives are the workforce leaders, innovators and problem-solvers of tomorrow.