

BEACON FREE PRESS

Volume 75, Number 01

January 7, 2026

Wallace Campus in Poughkeepsie awarded \$110 million from State

The Wallace Campus in Poughkeepsie, a 187-unit affordable and supportive housing development that includes the transformation of a former department store as well as new construction, has received a grant of \$110 million from New York State.

All units will be affordable to households earning up to 80 percent of the area median income. The project is being developed by Wallace Campus Housing.

The grant is part of nearly \$2 billion in housing bonds and subsidies that have been awarded to 24 housing developments located in communities across New York State that will create or preserve more than 6,600 affordable, supportive, sustainable, and modern homes. The awards are part of the Gov. Kathy Hochul's \$25 billion five-year Housing Plan, which is on track to create or preserve 100,000 affordable homes statewide.

"These investments reflect my commitment to creating quality, modern homes that enrich communities and are making New York more affordable for a wide array of households, including families and seniors," Hochul said. "By coupling State financing tools with private resources, we are generating more than \$3 billion in overall investment that will improve neighborhoods, reduce energy costs and provide thousands of affordable housing options across every region of the State."

Financing is allocated through New York State Homes and Community Renewal's recent bond issuances which provided \$865 million in housing bonds and \$990 million in subsidy. All awarded projects will achieve high levels of sustainability and carbon reduction, complementing New York's mission to address climate change by decreasing emissions 85 percent by 2050 across all sectors. When coupled with additional private funding and resources, the projects receiving funding are expected to generate \$3.5 billion in overall investment.

Latin Dancing Jan. 22 at Towne Crier

A Night of Latin Dancing will be presented by Beacon Dance Beat on Thursday, Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6 p.m. for dining and music), at the Towne Crier Café, 379 Main Street, in Beacon. Enjoy the wonderful sounds of Salsa, Merengue, Bachata, Reggaeton and much more, played by DJ Rhoda. Song requests are welcome.

Fine dining and bar service are available before and during the dance. Admission is \$15, which can be paid at the door. For reservations (not required), please call the Towne Crier at 845-831-5500.

For more information, call 845-765-0667 or email rhodaja@optonline.net.

School districts report 'bell-to-bell' law is effective

By Kristine Coulter & Kate Goldsmith

A year ago, Gov. Kathy Hochul announced the plan to ban cell phones (smartphones) in schools in New York State. The so-called "bell-to-bell" law prevents the unsanctioned use of smartphones and other internet-enabled personal devices on school grounds in K-12 schools for the entire school day (from "bell to bell"), including classroom time and other settings like lunch and study hall periods.

In a release at the time of the announcement, Hochul said, "From parents and teachers, to social justice and law enforcement leaders, New Yorkers agree that our young people succeed when they're learning and growing, not clicking and scrolling."

We contacted school districts in the region requesting their input on how the ban is working.

Students 'more attentive' in Beacon

Corey Dwyer is the principal at Beacon High School in the Beacon City School District. Dwyer remarked via email, "We have noticed that students are more attentive and focused in class. They are also more social during transitions and lunch periods. Our hallways are loud again! At the students' request, we even purchased a bunch of board games and outdoor games for lunch."

The cell phone ban has been working well, according to Dwyer.

"Students have been very cooperative. If they are seen with a cell phone at any point during the day, they are required to turn their phone into the office. The students have been very cooperative with this as well. The first day of school, we



Gov. Kathy Hochul, surrounded by students and educators, during her announcement about the bell-to-bell smartphone restrictions in January 2025.

-Archive photo

collected almost 30 cell phones. By the second day of school, the number was in the single digits," he noted.

What has the feedback been from parents, students and teachers?

"Our teachers were very much in support of the cell phone policy. They appreciate the schoolwide consistency and have noted that students are more engaged in class. We have received positive feedback from parents as well. While I wouldn't say that most students like the policy, a number of them have (quietly!) told us that they are more focused and

engaged in class."

'Positive impact' in Wappingers Central School District

Dr. Dwight Bonk, Wappingers Central School District Superintendent of Schools, said about the first portion of the school year without cell phones, "The new cell phone regulations enacted by NYS have had a positive impact on the teaching and learning environment throughout our schools."

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Local municipal leaders' plans to celebrate 250 years of America

By Kristine Coulter

Local leaders are planning ways to celebrate 250 years of the United States of America throughout 2026.

City of Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou said, "The City has begun meeting with the Beacon Historical Society, veteran groups and others, and is considering a number of America 250 activities in Beacon, such as reenactments, historical displays and other events — plus our

4th of July fireworks."

Town of Fishkill Supervisor Ozzy Albra said the rededication of the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) Monument was part of the celebration that occurred in the town in Oct. 2025.

There was also the start of Gen. George Washington's sword, which will be dedicated once it is completed. Fishkill is home of the site where Washington's battle sword was cast by cutler John Bailey.

The Town of Fishkill will also have "passports." They will show historical locations in the town, and if one completes a certain number of locations visited, one will receive a commemorative pin. The town, said Albra, is also working with Heritage Financial Field for a night of recognizing the Declaration of Independence.

Continued on page 8



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School districts report ‘bell-to-bell’ law is effective



Continued from cover

He noted, “Students have adjusted well to the protocols, as the elimination of these devices, which had led to both distractions and ongoing communication among students during class, foster and support a greater emphasis on the focus necessary for teaching and learning to reach the highest potential.”

Ban is ‘working well’ in Arlington
Phil Benante, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools in the Arlington Central School District, said he feels that the ban is working well.
“Generally, I notice that our students are more engaged with each other and our staff throughout the school day, particularly in less structured settings like the cafeteria and hallways.”
Dr. Benante added, “I know that our teachers appreciate the change – the phones were a consistent distraction in the classroom. Our student leadership has also expressed a support for the restriction as they have realized that it has led to a more socially engaging environment for them. Similarly, parents had concerns at first, particularly out of concern for their ability to reach their children in the event of [an] emergency. I think our procedures have reinforced that parents and children will always be able to get in touch with each other – in our case, we ask them to do so through their house offices in our high school.”
Asked if there has there been improve-

ment in students’ grades as a result of the ban, Benante said, “I have not researched this.”

Impact evident ‘in cafeteria and senior lounge’ in Red Hook
Mike Benischek, Public Information Officer of the Red Hook Central School District, noted, “The impact of the bell-to-bell policy has been most evident in our cafeterias and senior lounge. While our students had already responsibly followed our previous policy banning phone use during class time, many were on their devices during free periods and lunch. This year we’ve seen an increase in face-to-face interaction and interpersonal recreation.”
Benischek added, “The ban has been effective and the students have been largely responsible complying with it. Early in the year, our ex officio student members of the Board of Education provided a report to the board indicating our high school students were adapting immediately. Some students began bringing in old-fashioned iPods to listen to music and digital cameras.”
Benischek said one of those students, senior Maddie Clements, shared, “There was a dance competition in the senior lounge one day. Just, super cool stuff has been going on that would not have been happening last year or the last couple of years.”
He noted, “Our students on the middle school’s principal’s council also shared they feel the ban has been an improvement in the school community.”
As in all districts, some parents initially had concerns about how they would get

School administrators in the Wappingers Central School District and Beacon City School District commented that the “bell-to-bell” ban on cellphones is having a positive impact.

-Courtesy images



One of the cellphone pouches used at the beginning of the school year in the Wappingers Central School District.

-Archive photo

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in touch with their children during the day, but Benischek noted “Since September, though, those concerns have largely disappeared. The majority of students, I think, have accepted and adapted to this policy as simply the new normal within the school, and the teachers, of course, were always in favor of this change.”
Because Red Hook CSD already had a policy preventing phone use within classroom, except when allowed by a teacher, Benischek said, “we did not anticipate the ... policy having a significant impact on students’ grades, and it would be too early to analyze that impact at this point in the year. However, as we have seen an increase in conversation and group interaction, we can say there has been a positive impact on the climate and culture within the secondary buildings, and that – we would expect – could not have a negative impact on student performance.”

Pleasant Valley Community Garden members continue to support PV Ecumenical Food Pantry

Members of the Pleasant Valley Community Garden presented an aerial photograph of the garden to Steve Gessner, director of the Pleasant Valley Ecumenical Food Pantry on Dec. 17 at the pantry at 92 Martin Road in Pleasant Valley. From left are Paulette Thomas, Gwen Davis, Mark Davis, Dave Talbot, Steve Gessner of the Food Pantry and Janice Novet. The aerial photo was by Brian Grim of Dutchess Drone Solutions.

Everything grown at the garden is meant to benefit the pantry — nearly 2,500 pounds of vegetables last year. Pleasant Valley Community Garden members also presented a financial donation to the Food Pantry from fundraising by its members, said Janice Novet, president of the organization. The Pleasant Valley Community Garden meets the first Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. at the Pleasant Valley Library. All are welcome to join the gardening discussions and to work as garden volunteers.

-Courtesy photo



NYS Agriculture Department reminds farmers to practice measures to prevent spread of avian influenza

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets reminds New York poultry and dairy farmers to practice good biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The caution follows a recent detection of HPAI in a dairy herd in Wisconsin and increased detections in wild birds and poultry nationwide during the migratory season.

While no cases of HPAI have been found to date in New York dairy cattle, the State confirmed one case in the past month in a live poultry market. There have also been several detections in wild birds in New York this season. The Department’s proactive efforts to prevent the spread of HPAI, including implementing testing and import requirements for dairy cattle, remain in place. To date, there are no cases of HPAI in humans in New York State and the Department of Health continues to remind New Yorkers that the risk to humans is low.

State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball said, “New York continues to take an aggressive, proactive approach in response to outbreaks of HPAI across the nation and I know that our farmers have been working hard to keep their animals safe. Still, in the thick of the migratory season, it’s crucial that we remain vigilant and that our farmers take precautionary measures and ensure strong on-farm biosecurity measures are in place.”

“Protecting the health of New Yorkers remains our top priority,” State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said. “Even though the risk of avian influenza to New Yorkers remains low and there are no human cases in New York State, we are closely monitoring the situation and working with our partners to keep people informed and protected. Strong biosecurity and early reporting help safeguard public health.”

Biosecurity Measures
The Department encourages all live-

stock and commercial and hobby poultry farmers to review their biosecurity plans and take precautions to protect their animals. Poultry biosecurity materials and checklists can be found on the USDA’s “Defend the Flock” website. Livestock biosecurity materials and resources can be found on the USDA livestock website.

General biosecurity tips to follow include:

- discourage unnecessary visitors and use biosecurity signs to warn people not to enter buildings without permission;
- ask all visitors if they have had any contact with any birds in the past five days;
- forbid entry to employees and visitors who own any kind of fowl;
- require all visitors to cover and disinfect all footwear;
- lock all entrances to chicken houses and barns after hours;
- avoid non-essential vehicular traffic on-farm;
- clean and disinfect poultry transport coops and vehicles between hauling birds to processors and returning to the farm; and
- report anything unusual, especially sick or dead birds, to the State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

In addition to practicing good biosecurity, dairy farmers and poultry owners should keep their animals away from wild ducks and geese and their droppings. Outdoor access for animals should be limited at this time.

The Department continues to encourage farmers to be in close contact with veterinarians if they see any signs or symptoms of illness in farm animals. If any of these symptoms are noted, veterinarians are urged to call the Department at 518-457-3502.

To report sick birds, unexplained high number of deaths, or sudden drop in egg production, contact the Department or the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) at 866-536-7593.

Groceries donated to Castle Point food pantry



Members of the Wappingers Ladies Auxiliary and Disabled American Veterans (DAV) standing in front of the \$2,000 worth of groceries donated to the food pantry at VA Castle Point. The groceries were purchased at Hannaford, 1490 Route 9, in Wappingers Falls.

Additionally, the Ladies Auxiliary contributed another \$2,000 check which resulted in 28 Christmas gift baskets for the residents. It also provided a small celebration in the Castle Point residence. There were apple and blueberry pies, cheesecake and a few dozen doughnuts to bring the holiday spirit to the veterans.

The remaining funds were donated to the chapter to continue the mission of support to the residents at Castle Point and all Veterans in the Hudson Valley.

-Courtesy photo

Edwards: Town of Poughkeepsie will never request wire transfer for placement on agenda

Local government entities in the Hudson Valley and those doing business with municipalities have recently become a target of email scams, according to Town of Poughkeepsie Supervisor Rebecca Edwards. A group is impersonating Town officials via email, sending various messages in attempts to solicit funds from companies and individuals. In one email, payments are being requested via wire transfer under the guise of “fees necessary for permit approvals,” Edwards stated in an email to residents on Dec. 29.

The Town of Poughkeepsie will never request a wire transfer payment for placement on an agenda or email someone in this manner to demand fee payments for permit approvals.

Email correspondence from Town of Poughkeepsie employees will always come from a @townofpoughkeepsie.ny.gov email address. If you receive an official-looking email from a different domain or suspect for any reason an email is not legitimate, do not send money or respond. One can confirm the validity of any communication by contacting Town Hall offices directly at 845-485-3600.

It is always best practice to follow up with a phone call to confirm, if one receives any email correspondence requesting personal information or payment, suggested Edwards.

The Town of Poughkeepsie is doing everything possible to deter these activities, according to Edwards. One’s cooperation and vigilance in reporting suspicious emails is paramount in the fight against frauds and scams, she noted.

“Your help in reporting these incidents allows us to continue protecting our township from cyberattacks like these. We especially thank business owners and residents for informing us when suspicious activity is noticed,” the supervisor stated in the email.

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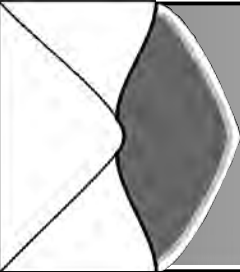
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Viewpoints



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

Policy on letters:

- Letters that contain statements that are libelous or slanderous will not be published.
- Letters that include personal attacks will not be published, with the exception of political figures.
- Letters written in response to other letter writers must address the issue at hand, rather than mentioning the writer by name and must refer to the headline and date the letter was published.
- Letters referring to news stories must mention the headline and date of publication.
- The Beacon Free Press will not be used as a vehicle to place misinformation.
- Information must be attributed to a specific individual or published item (ie- tell us where or from whom you obtained the information)
- All letters must contain a name, hometown and phone number for verification.
- Letters appearing on the Viewpoints page are the views of the writers alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Beacon Free Press.

Time to declare EMS an essestial service

To the Editor:

New York must declare Emergency Medical Services an essential service. The current system is failing patients, municipalities, and the EMS professionals who respond when every second counts.

Across the state, ambulance response times routinely exceed 30 minutes, even for life-threatening emergencies. Municipalities are forced to pay significant and rising contract fees just to secure dedicated ambulance coverage, while neighboring communities often rely on an unreliable patchwork of volunteers and mutual aid. This model leaves entire regions vulnerable and puts lives at risk.

At the same time, EMTs are required to complete more than 200 hours of initial training, pass state certification exams, and maintain continuing medical education, yet many are overworked, underpaid, and leaving the field. Call volumes are increasing, patient needs are more complex, and New York continues to treat EMS as an optional service rather than a core public safety function.

I have seen these challenges firsthand through years of volunteer fire service, and most recently by completing New York State EMT training at Dutchess Community College on my own time. That experience reinforced what EMS providers have been saying for years: the system is stretched to a breaking point.

Declaring EMS an essential service would establish stable funding, shared responsibility across communities, and a more reliable emergency response system. When session resumes, I will advocate for the reforms and resources needed to ensure timely, lifesaving care for every New Yorker.

Assemblyman Anil Beephan, Jr.
New York State Assembly, 105th District

BEACON FREE PRESS

Published Weekly, Wappingers Falls Shopper, Inc.
84 East Main Street, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
Albert Osten, President

serving the communities of:
Wappingers Falls, Hopewell Junction, Southern Poughkeepsie,
New Hamburg, Red Oaks Mill, Fishkill, Chelsea, Wicopee,
New Hackensack and Stormville
Publisher - Albert Osten
Editor - Kristine Coulter
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THE BEACON FREE PRESS (ISSN 0192-9631) is published weekly by the Wappingers Falls Shopper, Inc., 84 East Main Street, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590. Second-Class postage paid at Wappingers Falls, 12590 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEACON FREE PRESS, 84 East Main Street, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590.

Drug Task Force: 39-year-old man charged with criminal possession of controlled substance

The Dutchess County District Attorney’s Office Drug Task Force has announced the successful execution of a search warrant at 40 South Hamilton Street in the City of Poughkeepsie following a narcotics investigation.

Agents began the investigation after developing intelligence about a suspected dealer selling narcotics and dangerous drugs out of an apartment located at 40 South Hamilton Street. Drug Task Force Agents identified Leon V. Allen, 39, as the individual allegedly distributing narcotics in the City. Over the course of the investigation, Agents allegedly conducted purchases of narcotics from Allen, which ultimately led to the securing of a search warrant for multiple apartments within 40 South Hamilton Street believed to be utilized for the storage, concealment and distribution of narcotics and dangerous drugs.

On Dec. 10, Drug Task Force Agents along with members of the Dutchess County Sheriff’s Office Emergency Services Unit (SWAT) and the Poughkeepsie SWAT team executed the search warrant at 40 South Hamilton Street in the City of Poughkeepsie. During the execution of this warrant large quantities of cocaine, drug packaging materials, U.S. currency, digital scales and other items associated with the sale and distribution of narcotics were seized, according to officials.

According to law enforcement officials, Leon V. Allen was charged with the following:

1 Count of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 2nd Degree, a class A-II Felony.

1 Count of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 3rd Degree (intent to sell), a class B Felony.

Allen was later arraigned in the City of Poughkeepsie Court and remanded to DCJ with no bail, according to officials. There are multiple sales charges pending against Allen related to this case by the Drug Task Force.

This investigation and enforcement action were made possible through close collaboration between the Drug Task



Leon V. Allen
-Courtesy photo Dutchess County A.G. 'sOffice

Force and the NYSP Community Stabilization Unit, City of Poughkeepsie Neighborhood Recovery Unit the Dutchess County Sheriff’s Office Patrol Bureaus, Town of Poughkeepsie and City Police Departments, City of Beacon Police Department, Town of Hyde Park Police Department, Town of East Fishkill Police Department, and the Town of Fishkill Police Department.

If anyone has information regarding this case or about any other individuals selling drugs in Dutchess County, you are urged to contact the Drug Task Force confidential tip line at 845-463-6040 or by emailing your tips to Drugtaskforcetips@gmail.com. As with any criminal case, the charges described above are merely an accusation and those individuals named in this release are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Beacon Police Blotter

The following is from the City of Beacon Police Department,

Dec. 1: Dog Bite-West Center Street- Caller reported that her dog was attacked by an unleashed dog. Report taken. Investigation conducted.

Dec. 2: Traffic Stop-Washington Avenue-Mark R. Ronda, 41, of Beacon, was charged with Aggravated Unlicensed Operation Vehicle 3rd & Miscellaneous Vehicle & Traffic Violations.

Dec. 3: Harassment-Main Street- Caller reported being harassed by an individual known to him. Report taken. Investigation conducted.

Dec. 4: Lost Property-Matteawan Road- Caller reported mail that was expected never arrived. Report taken. Investigation conducted.

Dec. 4: Harassment- Fishkill Avenue- Caller reported receiving harassing messages at his place of employment from an individual not known to him. Caller would like the incident documented. Report taken.

Dec. 4: Burglary-Forrestal Heights- Caller reported that someone has entered her apartment without her knowledge or permission and now things are missing. Report taken. Investigation conducted.

Dec. 4: Auto Accident-Church Street-Alex A. Graf, 23, of Cold Spring, Putnam County, was charged with DWI 1st, Aggravated Unlicensed Operation Motor Vehicle 3rd, Alcohol-Cannabis in Motor

Vehicle on Highway & Miscellaneous Vehicle & Traffic Violations.

Dec. 5: Harassment-Verplanck Avenue- Caller reported being harassed by individuals known to her. Report taken. Investigation conducted.

Dec. 8: Larceny-Eliza Street- Caller reported a package from Amazon that was delivered went missing. Report taken. Investigation conducted. Package was located.

Dec. 11: Traffic Stop- Wolcott Avenue-Jason Chinchitty, 37, of Beacon, was charged with Aggravated Unlicensed Operation 2 & Miscellaneous Vehicle & Traffic Violations.

Dec. 11: Welfare Check-South Avenue- Caller reported not seeing his tenant in 12 days. Report taken. Investigation conducted. Tenant was located.

Dec. 12: Traffic Stop-Verplanck Avenue-Tavares D. Gaither, 44, of New York, New York was charged with Aggravated Unlicensed Operation 2nmd & Miscellaneous Vehicle & Traffic Violations.

Dec. 13: Suspicious Condition-Harbor Hill Court- Caller reported receiving suspicious text messages from a number not known to him. Report taken. Investigation conducted.

Number of Calls: 293
Auto Accidents: 5
Domestics: 7.

Film screenings by BluePath Service Dogs set for Jan. and Feb.



BluePath Service Dogs “Hope in Motion: Breaking Barriers with Autism Service Dogs,” short film shares stories of connection, courage, and transformation, highlighting how BluePath dogs bring safety, independence, and joy to children with autism and their families. Join them for one of the upcoming screenings either in person - or virtually:

Wednesday, Jan. 28, Bedford Playhouse, Bedford, Westchester County
The event runs from 6:30–8 p.m. and includes the 15-minute documentary film beginning promptly at 6:45pm, a panel discussion, cocktail reception, and the opportunity to meet service dogs in training.

Tuesday, Feb. 10, Virtual Screening
The free, virtual event runs from 7–8p.m. and includes the 15-minute documentary film followed by a panel discussion and Q&A. Stay tuned for registration information.

-Courtesy photo

WJHS November Students of the Month receive certificates from Beacon Elks



Beacon Elks Lodge #1493 presented the November Students of the Month certificates at Wappingers Junior High School, in the Wappingers Central School District, on Wednesday, Dec. 10. The students were chosen for their participation, helping fellow classmates, academics and volunteering at the elementary school, assisting in the after-school program. Students received a certificate and gift card for their accomplishments.

The Beacon Elks thanks Giacomo’s Pizza Café for sponsoring the event with them.

Pictured (from left): Cathy Oken, Youth Activities Chair; Jeanine McAuley, Exalted Ruler; Gavin Emanuele, (7th Grade), Catherine Perri, teacher; Jordan Sahawneh, (8th Grade); Sara Drotzer, teacher and Terrence Thompson, principal.

-Courtesy photo

Arlington boys win 36th Duane Davis Tournament

By Morgan E. Maier

In the final high school boys’ basketball tournament of 2025, Our Lady of Lourdes High School held the 36th annual Duane Davis Memorial Christmas Tournament. Arlington’s Admirals faced the Warriors in the championship game, and took down the hosts 76-57.

Three days, eight varsity teams, and 12 games stood between the Admirals and their hardware, as the tournament kicked off on Saturday, Dec. 27. Spackenkill and John Jay (EF) opened the contests with a tight 58-53 contest, where the Spartans took the victory. Boston Smith scored 14 for John Jay. Michael Forlivo scored 13. Beacon would outlast New Paltz 67-65 in the Bulldogs’ first game, but fall to Arlington in overtime on Day 2.

The tournament, held annually by the Dutchess County Basketball Coaches Association, was renamed in honor of legendary Roosevelt High School and Mount Saint Mary College coach Duane “Coach” Davis. In a repeat of the 2024 tournament, Arlington and Lourdes met for the title game. The two-time reigning champions’ quest for a threepeat would be thwarted by visiting Arlington, led by All-Tournament

selection Zach Butts and MVP Cyrus Cowings.

Lourdes took on Marlboro in the tournament’s first late game, a wire-to-wire Warriors win. Led by 19 points from Bleck Ngon and 18 points from Aaron Watson, Lourdes took it 76-36 over the Dukes.

Spackenkill too fell to the Warriors the following day, 55-52, earning their spot in the first consolation game against Beacon. Led by All-Tournament selection Ryan Landisi, Beacon would again prevail 61-51.

Ketcham narrowly beat Marlboro in the second consolation game, a gritty 52-50 win over an outmatched Dukes team. Having nearly squandered an 8-point lead with three minutes in the game, the Storm churned back to capture their sole tournament win.

A day earlier, the Patriots of John Jay displayed another dominant performance against the Dukes. The 62-33 onslaught in the Sunday matinee brought all eyes to John Jay.

Joining Landisi in All-Tournament honors were Spackenkill’s Dylan Sultz, Ngon, and Ketcham’s Gavin Reyes.

On the cusp of league play and a brand new year, each team showcased its strengths over the extended weekend.

New law will expand definition of ‘veteran’ to include newest service branch

NYS Assemblymember Didi Barrett (D-Dutchess/Columbia) and State Sen. James Skoufis (D-Orange County) recently announced their bill to make all military uniformed service members and veterans equally represented in New York has been signed into law. The legislation, S.243/A.291-A, ensures members of the United States Space Force, the nation’s newest service branch, are included in the definition of veterans and uniformed services under New York State law.

The United States Space Force (USSF) was established in 2019 as the space service branch within the Department of Defense with the mission to secure the nation’s interests in, from, and to space. It is one of the six armed forces of the United States, one of the eight uniformed services of our nation, and the second independent space force to be formed in the world.

“We are living in an age where the freedom to maintain prompt and sustained space

operations is vital for the safety and progress of the United States,” said Skoufis. “I am proud to have carried legislation alongside Assemblywoman Barrett that will benefit the brave men and women who dedicate their lives to that mission. It is only right that all veterans, regardless of branch, are equally represented in New York State, and I am deeply gratified to see our legislation enshrined into law.”

“The Space Force is our nation’s newest service branch and this timely legislation brings parity across New York State law by ensuring that the brave men and women who serve in the Space Force are able to access the same state benefits offered to active-duty members and veterans in the other branches of the military,” said Barrett. “I thank Governor Kathy Hochul for signing this bill to ensure all of our veterans have access to the services, resources and benefits they have earned.”

Weekend archery classes return to Bowdoin Park this winter

Registration for the winter session of Dutchess County Parks’ popular weekend archery classes at Bowdoin Park in Poughkeepsie will open on Thursday, Jan. 15, at 9 a.m. Sessions begin on Jan. 31 and will take place inside Bowdoin Park’s community center auditorium. The program consists of five classes, held on Saturdays, with various time slots to accommodate more students. The sessions, each an hour long, are designed for children ages 8 and up, and adults with any level of archery experience. Space is limited, so be sure to register early at www.DutchessNY.gov/ParksEducation.

The first session will cover basic archery safety and skills for new participants. Most of the sessions will be spent

practicing with the bows, allowing participants to learn through experience. All equipment is provided. The total cost for the program is \$70 per person and includes all five classes and equipment.

Dates for the archery sessions are Jan. 31, Feb. 14, Feb. 28, March 7 and March 14 (all Saturdays).

Time slots: 8:30-9:30 a.m.; 10-11 a.m.; 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; 2-3 p.m.; and 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Other naturalist programming, including group weekday Archery, Junior Survival, Scout Programs and School Field Trips, are available by appointment and reservations can be made by calling the Parks office at 845-298-4602.

For registration and programming information, visit DutchessNY.gov/Parks.

Poughkeepsie, Beacon members of New York Air National Guard receive promotions

Air Force Major General Michael Bank, the commander of the New York Air National Guard, announces the recent promotion of members of the New York Air National Guard in recognition of their capability for additional responsibility and leadership.

Christopher Guzman from Poughkeepsie and assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing, received a promotion Nov,

1, 2025 to the rank of senior airman.

Ryan Phonelath from Beacon and assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing, received a promotion Nov. 19, to the rank of technical sergeant.

Air National Guard promotions are based on a Airman's overall performance, demonstrated leadership abilities, professionalism and future development potential.

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PPLD to host Dolly Parton Imagination Library launch party

The Poughkeepsie Public Library District (PPLD) is partnering with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to provide free, high-quality, age-appropriate books to children. On Saturday, Jan. 10, Adriance Memorial Library will host a launch party where children can sign up to receive books, and will offer a second opportunity for sign up on Saturday, Jan. 24.

In addition to signing up for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program, Marco the Magician will dazzle the crowd with his tricks (Jan. 10 only). There will be a drawing for Dolly Parton-themed door prizes, as well.

“By participating the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, our hope is to enrich the Poughkeepsie community by providing young children with free, high-quality books each month, helping to foster early literacy, and build a lifelong love of reading,” said John Turro, Head of Youth Services.

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library will mail a free book to your home month-

ly for children from birth to their fifth birthday. Children must be residents of the City or Town of Poughkeepsie to qualify for the free books. All registrations will be vetted through the Youth Services Department and are available in-person starting January 10th. Online registration will begin after January 24th. No registration is required to attend the event.

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library program is sponsored by the Friends of the Poughkeepsie Public Library District.

PPLD has been serving the community since 1874, striving to provide resources and opportunities that enrich, inform, and empower individuals of all ages. Through innovative programs, comprehensive collections, and a commitment to fostering a love for learning, PPLD aims to positively impact the lives of the people it serves. For more information, follow PPLD on Facebook and Instagram, visit the website at <https://poklib.org>, or call 845-485-3445, ext. 3707.

The Poughkeepsie Public Library District is partnering with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to provide free, high-quality, age-appropriate books to children. A Launch Party is set for Saturday, Jan. 10, at Adriance Memorial Library.

-Courtesy photo



Howland Chamber Music Circle presents Fei-Fei on Jan. 11



Musician Fei-Fei will perform at the Howland Cultural Center on Jan. 11 in Beacon.

-Courtesy photo

The Howland Chamber Music Circle (HCMC) will begin its 2025-2026 Piano Festival with the endearing and returning (for her 3rd time) pianist, Fei-Fei. She will perform at the Howland Cultural Center on Sunday, Jan. 11, at 4 p.m. Following the concert, audience members can meet the musician and enjoy complimentary refreshments. All ticket holders are invited to the reception. To purchase a ticket, visit www.howlandmusic.org. The Howland Cultural Center is at 477 Main Street in Beacon.

Fei-Fei is noted for both her command of the piano, and her engaging persona. She was a finalist in the Van Cliburn competition and subsequently featured in a documentary film about it, “Virtuosity.” She has performed solo, with symphony orchestras, with chamber ensembles, and most recently with a regional ballet company — in Europe, the U.S. and her native China. She studied at The Juilliard School

and is currently a graduate student at the Manhattan School of Music where she assists her mentor, Yefim Bronfman.

At the HCMC recital, Fei-Fei will perform works by Claude Debussy, Sergei Rachmaninov, Nadia Boulanger and conclude with Franz Liszt’s monumental Sonata in b minor. All four pieces explore the composers’ inspirations from precedents, and their journeys towards transformation. Fei-Fei’s lively commentary will help the audience to a new understanding and appreciation of each work.

HCMC now offers tickets at prices to include music lovers who may have been unable to afford our tickets in the past. A limited number of tickets will be available on a pay-what-you-wish basis. These tickets will be released one week prior to each concert.

For more information on this performance, the Howland Chamber Music Circle, or to purchase tickets, please visit www.howlandmusic.org.

Events, programs at Howland Cultural Center in 2026

The following are shows and events scheduled for 2026 at the Howland Cultural Center, 477 Main St., in Beacon.

Friday, Jan. 9, 7:30 p.m.: Come to Nerd Night Hudson Valley, The topics: Taxidermy! Surgical Catastrophes! Squirrel Invasions! Early bird advance tickets are a \$15 bargain! Or, \$20 After New Year's and \$20 at door if available.

Saturday, Jan. 10, 8 p.m.: The Artichoke Storytelling Series kicks off a new year with six funny tellers, soon to be named! The sale is set to begin at

artichokeshow.com.

Sunday, Jan. 11, 4 p.m.: Fei Fei performs for the Howland Chamber Music Circle's winter Piano Festival. Tickets: howlandmusic.org.

On the Walls: After the gift show and holidays are all done, join Bannerman Castle Trust for a new art show.

Friday, Jan. 16, 7 p.m.: Enjoy the winter concert, “It’s About Time!” of the Key of Q chorus. One can get tickets in advance.

Mental Health First Aid set for Jan. 10

Mental Health First Aid set for Jan. 10 from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Beacon Recreation Center, 23 West Center Street, in Beacon. The course is free.

However, please register to complete the pre-course work and ensure organizers bring enough classroom material.

“Hello. How are you?” A very common greeting. What if the response is not well? Learn how you can support someone who is having a mental health challenge. Attendees will have to attend the entire

class to get the certificate as a mental health first aider by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

This course is being sponsored by Nuvance Health Community Education.

For background about this program, please feel free to visit their website .

Lunch is not provided, participants are welcome to bring their own lunches and snacks. There will be a lunch break if one wishes to seek lunch locally.

‘Crazy’ exhibition at BAU Gallery in Beacon



Pictured is Leslie Fandrich’s “Chaotic Mistress,” 2024, textile, 70 in. x 65 in. x14 in.

“CRAZY,” an exhibition featuring the work of 31 female-identifying and non-binary artists that creates a safe space for rage, protest, and performance, will be shown at BAU Gallery. Guest-curated by Jaime Ransome, the exhibition will open Saturday, Jan. 10, and run through Sunday, Feb. 8. Together the 55 works are across media: painting, photography, installation, light art, video, performance, and sculpture. The exhibition, according to BAU Gallery, confronts the centuries-old stereotype that expressive, opinionated, intelligent women are “crazy” by making space for authentic responses to the contemporary world and presenting those emotions as fine art.

Inspired by Afropunk art movements and feminist punk music, CRAZY showcases art that embraces maximalist self-expression as a method of personal and political advocacy. “Curating this exhibition was a true passion project,” Ransome said. “I hope it will allow ‘girls’ to arm ourselves with the knowledge that there are more like us out there, building on the idea set out by the Riot Grrrls of the early ‘90s that with just a zine or concert or an art show, strong, smart, creative femmes can finally find each other. We’re stronger in numbers, and I just want every ‘girl’ to come out, see the show, and meet people.” Karen Allen, president of BAU Gallery,



Guest Curator Jaime Ransome is the guest curator for BAU’s “Crazy” exhibition, which runs from Jan. 10 until Feb. 8.

-Courtesy photos BAU Gallery

said, “The gallery invited Jaime to imagine and curate an exhibition specifically for our first show of the new year, and she delivered a powerful exhibition that is both inspiring and incredibly timely. As an alternative artist-run space, BAU has always been dedicated to experimentation, inclusiveness, and out-of-the-box creative production, and CRAZY does all that. We’re thrilled to help realize Jaime’s vision and offer the community a place for new art, critical dialogue, and deep connection.”

that’s italian!



by luigi coppola

‘Don’t get angry’

When Pop utters these words, there’s trouble brewing.

“Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”
When my father comes to me with those words, I know I’m in trouble. It usually means I have to do something for him that I don’t want to, he broke something, he made someone feel bad, he made a mess, or more often than not its all the above.
My father comes into the restaurant every day. EVERY DAY. Almost every day he starts with “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.” Every day I come to work in a good mood. I start my day. I get the sauce ready. I make the soups, and around noon my father comes in and says, “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”
I came home from vacation. My first day back to work. I’m running around trying to get everything put away and all my paperwork finished. Pop comes in, doesn’t ask me how my trip was, did I enjoy my time with my family, how was the weather, did you get some rest, how was your hotel, did you run over a raccoon in your rental car, anything? No I get, “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”
During the summer, when I am working at the other locations, I’ll sometimes go a week without seeing him. Instead of how did everything go at

the other places, was it busy, how did the employees do, did you break anything, did you run around naked screaming like your hair was on fire, anything? No I get, “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”
I’ll make it into the restaurant after a winter storm, when I have been out plowing and shoveling snow most of the prior evening, and the morning of, plowing, a storm. He’ll already be there. I come in with my butt dragging, arms sore, back sore, cold, wet, hungry and crabby, with the look of death on my face. Instead of asking me, would like a cup of coffee, can I make you breakfast, are you OK, would you like a pail of snow dumped over your head, anything? No I get, “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”
I’ll be home. Starting to unwind. About to get into the shower. The phone will ring. Ill see the number and know its my father. I’ll answer the phone. Instead of him saying hello, I get, “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”
I know someday, I will be just like him. I know someday, my kids will probably be saying the same thing about me, unless they already are. I know he makes a hell of a focaccia bread. But I just nonja wanta to geta angry.

Focaccia Bread Ingredients

- 2 packages (5 teaspoons) of active dry yeast
- 1 ¾ cups warm water
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ cup + ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons fine sea salt
- 2 Tablespoons Garlic Paste
- 1 stick butter room temperature
- 1 cup Mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1 jar Coppola’s Marinara for dipping

Method

In a stand mixer, with a dough hook, add warm water and yeast and mix slightly. Cover with a towel and let sit for 5 minutes.
Once yeast has poofed, add sugar, 1/2 cup of olive oil, flour and the fine sea salt. Mix for 5 - 7 minutes on low until dough is smooth and elastic.
Spray a large bowl with cooking spray (bottom and up the sides) and place dough in bowl. Cover with a towel or saran wrap and place in a draft free spot for 1 - 1 1/2 hours until doubled in size.
When dough is ready, pour remaining 1/4 cup of olive oil into a large cookie sheet and smooth around the entire sheet. Preheat oven to 450*

Plop dough onto cookie sheet and push around until dough covers entire sheet.
Mix up garlic and butter. Spread over dough.
If dough is thick and puffy then dimple dough with fingers and bake for 20 - 30 minutes (depending on oven). 5 minutes before you remove bread from oven, top with cheese and continue baking until cheese is melted.
If dough is thin and not puffy, cover and allow to rest for 1 additional hour. Then dimple dough with your fingers, bake for 20 - 30 minutes. 5 minutes before you remove bread from oven, top with cheese and continue baking until cheese is melted and gooey!
Serve with Coppola’s Marinara for dipping

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

Advanced medical aesthetics & restorative wellness guide treatments at newly opened Ritual Medical Spa



A patient receives a Hydrafacial treatment at Ritual Medical Spa in Wappingers Falls. HydraFacial treatments are fully customized and often enhanced with boosters, growth factors, or brightening and anti-aging serums to deliver immediate glow while supporting long-term skin health.

Ritual Medical Spa is a nurse practitioner-owned medical spa redefining modern aesthetics through a thoughtful balance of medical expertise, artistry, and holistic care. Founded and led by a board-certified Nurse Practitioner Injector Ashley McGillicuddy, Ritual was created with the belief that beauty is not impulsive or superficial, it is a ritual rooted in intention, science and self-honoring care.

Unlike traditional spas, Ritual operates at the intersection of advanced medical aesthetics and restorative wellness. Every treatment is medically guided, highly per-

sonalized, and designed to support both visible results and long-term skin health. Clinical safety, precision, and education are central to the practice, ensuring patients receive expert level care in an environment that feels elevated, calm, and deeply intentional.

The medical services at Ritual include neuromodulators such as Botox and Dysport, expertly placed dermal fillers to restore volume, enhance facial harmony, and soften signs of aging without overcorrection. Advanced injectable regenerative treatments such as Sculptra, PRF, PDRN



Skinpen microneedling is utilized in skin rejuvenation/anti-aging treatments. -Courtesy photos



Above: Dermal fillers are injected for facial balancing. Right: An artistically designed entrance way welcomes visitors at Ritual Medical Spa, located at 235 Myers Corners Road in Wappingers Falls.

-Courtesy photos

and PDGF are offered to stimulate collagen, improve skin quality, and support regenerative rejuvenation from within. Ritual also provides wellness-based medical services, including medically supervised weight management, peptide and vitamin injections, comprehensive bio marker testing, and other functional approaches that support vitality, metabolism, and overall well-being.

Complementing the medical practice is an expert licensed aesthetician, Mackenzie Finch, who brings a deep understanding of skin physiology, corrective treatments, and customized skincare protocols. Ritual's facial offerings go far beyond surface level pampering. Each custom facial is tailored to the client's unique skin needs, whether addressing acne, sensitivity, pigmentation, dehydration, or aging concerns. Treatments may include advanced chemical peels, dermaplaning, exfoliation, medical-grade masks, lymphatic techniques, LED red light therapy, and targeted modalities chosen specifically for the skin in front of them that day.

The spa also offers HydraFacial, a results-driven, multi-step treatment that deeply cleanses, exfoliates, extracts, and hydrates the skin using patented vortex technology. At Ritual, HydraFacial treat-

ments are fully customized and often enhanced with boosters, growth factors, or brightening and anti-aging serums to deliver immediate glow while supporting long-term skin health.

What truly sets Ritual Medical Spa apart is its philosophy. Every service, whether medical or aesthetic, is approached with intention, education, and respect for the individual. Clients are never rushed or treated as trends; instead, they are guided through a collaborative experience focused on balance, confidence, and sustainable results. The space itself reflects this ethos: modern yet warm, clinical yet soulful, offering a sense of calm that invites restoration as much as transformation.

Ritual is not simply a place to receive treatments, it is a destination for those seeking expert medical aesthetics delivered with integrity, artistry, and care. In a world of quick fixes, Ritual offers something rarer: excellence rooted in science, guided by intention, and designed to help clients reconnect with their most confident, radiant selves.

Visit Ritual Medical Spa at 235 Myers Corners Road in Wappingers Falls. Call 845-583-0183 or visit online at ritualmedispaspa.com, Instagram: [@ritualmedispaspa](https://www.instagram.com/ritualmedispaspa) or send an email to Hello@ritualmedispaspa.com.

Local municipal leaders' plans to celebrate 250 years of America

Continued from cover

Village of Fishkill Mayor Kathy Martin said, "I am happy to announce that we have many exciting events scheduled to celebrate America's 250th Birthday. We will have a speaker series on the Revolution, local militia, women's roles, and indigenous perspectives."

The mayor said officials are planning a Read 250 Book library challenge. There will also be a screening of filmmaker Ken Burns' "The American Revolution."

A revolutionary theme for all Village events will be incorporated, it was noted.

Town of Wappinger officials have already

begun celebrating America's birthday.

"We have already started our 2026 event line up with programming supporting the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. From colonial reenactments to patriotic-themed activities, be sure to follow our Town closely for further updates for what's ahead!" said Town of Wappinger Supervisor Joseph Cavaccini.

As far as celebrating the country's 250th, Town of East Fishkill Supervisor Nick D'Alessandro said Town officials are working with members of the East Fishkill Historical Society in planning events for the year.

"We're planning for a big celebration right here in Hopewell Junction," remarked D'Alessandro.

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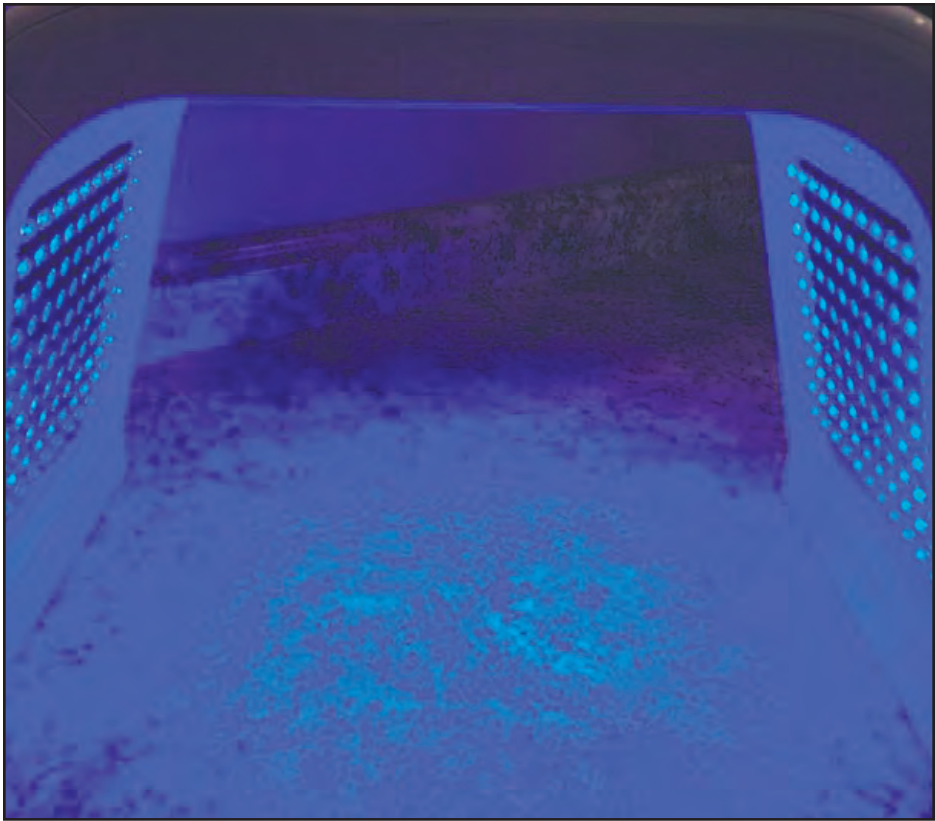
hudson valley naturalist

by francine wizner



‘Get lit’ and feel good

Light causes our brains to produce ‘feel good’ chemicals



Blue Light for Acne-Light Therapy Panel.

-Photo by Denise W of Niamh Lynn



Red Light for Collagen-Light Therapy Panel.

-Photo by Denise W of Niamh Lynn

During January, some people experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) symptoms, which include fatigue, and persistent low energy and mood. A form of depression, SAD can cause sleep and appetite problems, difficulty concentrating, and social isolation. About 5 percent of the adult population is affected in varying degrees.

Factors that may cause SAD to develop

The shorter days of fall and winter can disrupt our body’s natural rhythm. Our levels of serotonin (a neurotransmitter that helps regulate mood) are sunlight dependent. Fewer daytime hours also leads to an increased production of melatonin, a hormone that promotes sleep. Lowered serotonin, coupled with raised melatonin, can potentially lead to depression. Some folks also have a genetic predisposition to developing SAD. The condition is more common among younger adults, women, and those with a history of depression or anxiety.

Winter is cold, and the end of the holiday excitement can also be a let-down. After Dec. 21, the days started getting longer. But the small, incremental changes may not yet be noticeable. It won’t be until the end of this month that we will see about a half-hour more sun daily.

Treatments and management

Antidepressant medication and psychotherapy are options for treating some cases of SAD. But there are also lifestyle changes that can manage the condition (and lead to contentment) before considering more invasive measures. Everyone can benefit from human connection: Stay in touch with friends and family to avoid social isolation. Eat regular, nutritious meals and don’t ingest toxins (e.g.,

alcohol, tobacco, drugs). Go to bed and wake up at the same times daily to control your biorhythms. Get consistent physical activity.

Andrew O’Grady, CEO of Mental Health America of Dutchess County, encourages self-rating your happiness level on a scale of 1-10, where a rating of reasonable contentment would be a 5 or 6. If you persistently self-rate a level of 3 or 4 for the entire season, he recommends seeking help. Mr. O’Grady, LCSW-R, says that talking to your doctor about what you’re experiencing is an excellent step, because you can feel better in spite of seasonal changes. Symptoms of depression can be managed.

Time spent outside, especially on a sunny day, is beneficial for SAD. But even on a cloudy day, outdoor light can help improve mood. And time spent in nature is good for the spirit. Go for a walk! In some cases, a medical professional may recommend a light therapy box to regulate serotonin and melatonin, and thereby improve mood and energy levels.

Light boxes for treating SAD

Light boxes offer controlled delivery when natural light is limited or the weather is poor. Combining both time outdoors, when possible, and using a light box daily during winter months, is an effective strategy for causing positive chemical changes in the brain and managing SAD symptoms. Typically, a user sits about an arm’s length away from the device. Light therapy delivers an intensity which is less than direct sunlight, but brighter than overcast daylight.

The way we ‘get lit’ has improved

Illumination has undergone modernization! The first practical incandescent light bulb was invented in 1879. It used a carbon-filament that glowed when heated. In



Fluorescent light bulb.

-Photo by Francine Wizner



Incandescent, fluorescent and LED-1 light bulbs.

-Photo by Francine Wizner

the 1970s and 1980s, compact fluorescent lights were used. The spiral tubes were more energy-efficient and longer-lasting than incandescents. By the late 2000s, advancements in Light-emitting Diodes (LEDs) made them more common. They are more energy-efficient and longer-lasting than earlier light bulbs.

Feel good AND look good: LEDs are used in light therapies for SAD and skin

Gen-Zers made “lit” mean fun. Sheryl Crow, a Baby Boomer, sang that she was “gonna soak up the sun” and “tell everyone to lighten up.” As an early vintage Gen-Xer, I believe in having fun, soaking up the sun, and lightening up. It was my skin care specialist at Niamh Lynn Spa in Wappingers Falls, Denise W., a late vintage Gen-Xer, who suggested I try an LED Light Therapy Panel.

As a part of a skin-care regime, LED lights can produce specific wavelengths of light which allow for targeted treatments (e.g., blue destroys acne-causing bacteria, red for collagen production, and near-infrared to promote cell repair). Clinical trials have demonstrated the effectiveness of LED light therapy; the FDA has cleared LED therapies for skin care.

In contrast, LED light boxes emit full-spectrum white light to mimic sunlight and correct the effects of winter darkness for those experiencing symptoms from SAD. LED lights generate little heat, making them safe for close proximity to the skin and preventing burns. For skin care, mental health treatment, and all other personal health decisions, consult a medical professional about your own individual situation.

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

Obituaries

Mary E. Hamilton



Mary E. Hamilton, 90, a resident of Wappingers Falls since 1991, and formerly of Piscataway, NJ, passed away on December 25, 2025.

Born in Orange, NJ, she was the only child of Charles and Helene Egbert, who both predeceased her.

Mary attended the College of Saint Elizabeth, now Saint Elizabeth University, and received her BS in Chemistry. She took her first job out of college as a chemist at the Ciba-Geigy Pharmaceutical Corp. in Summit, NJ, where she met her future husband Wassel Sopchak.

On October 8, 1960, Mary married Wassel Sopchak in New Jersey with whom she raised their four children, all of whom survive her.

Mary's children and their offspring are:
Daughter Alexandra and husband David Zeloof of Virginia, and their four children:

daughter Sarah and husband Zachary Conord of Virginia, and their three children, Thomas, Zoe and Penelope; son Joshua and wife Jenna Zeloof of Virginia; son Michael and wife Christina Zeloof of South Carolina, and their two children Jayson and Gavin; son Jonathan Zeloof of Virginia.

Mary's son James Sopchak and his wife Tracy of Reading, Massachusetts, and their son Miles Sopchak.

Mary's son David Sopchak of Waltham, Massachusetts, and his daughter Monaka Sopchak.

Mary's son Stephen Sopchak of Essex Junction, Vermont and his three children: Emma, Lucy and Theodore Sopchak.

After nearly 29 years of marriage, Mary's husband Wassel Sopchak, passed away in August of 1989.

On January 16, 1991, Mary married Fred Hamilton, of Wappingers Falls, NY. She spent many happy years with Fred in the Hudson Valley prior his passing away in August of 1999.

Mary was a devout Catholic, and has been an active member of Saint Mary, Mother of the Church in Fishkill, NY, since she relocated to Wappingers Falls, NY. She was so grateful for all the clergy and friends she encountered as a member of said parish over the years.

Mary traveled frequently over the years to visit and celebrate events in the lives of her grand- & great-grand children.

Calling hours were held on Thursday, January 1, 2026 at the McHoul Funeral Home of Fishkill, Inc., 1089 Main Street, Fishkill, NY. A Mass of Christian Burial was offered on Friday, January 2, 2026 at St. Mary, Mother of the Church, 106 Jackson Street, Fishkill, NY followed by burial at Resurrection Cemetery in Piscataway, NJ.

To leave a condolence, please visit Mary's Book of Memories at www.mchoulfuneralhome.com.

Dolores Ann Daly



Dolores Ann Ammirato Daly, a resident of Fishkill from 1971 to 2021, passed away on December 30, 2025, at the age of 86.

Born in Paterson, New Jersey, she was the youngest child of Joseph Ammirato and Angelina Lupinacci.

Dolores attended Eastside High School in Paterson, New Jersey, and continued her studies at Katherine Gibbs School, where she became a legal secretary. She began her career at ITT in New Jersey, where she met her husband, Joseph Michael Daly, with whom she raised three children. After nearly 32 years of marriage, Dolores's husband, Joseph, passed away on April 8, 1994.

After her husband's passing, Dolores found solace and happiness while working for over a decade at the Holiday Inn in Fishkill, New York, running the front desk. Through a colleague, she was set up on a blind date with Robert Schoen (aka Mr. Bob). They enjoyed

over 15 years of joy together, spending time in Beacon, New York, and Jensen Beach, Florida.

She is survived by her three children and their families: Patrick Daly, his wife Nancy Daly, and her granddaughter Mary Katherine of Cary, North Carolina; Kerry Daly-Paredes and her husband Walter Paredes Vallarino of Ossining, N.Y.; Timothy Daly, his wife Miki Araki-Daly, and her grandsons Kiki and Sani Araki-Daly of Oyster Bay, N.Y. She is also survived by her longtime partner, Robert Schoen.

Dolores was known for her love of flowers, plants, swimming, music, and dancing. She was deeply involved in her children's lives, whether taking them to their activities or hosting their friends at home. Her most rewarding accomplishment was being a mother and grandmother.

Her laughter, compassion, and flair for life will be deeply missed by all who knew her and will carry her love and lessons with them always.

A graveside burial will be held on January 10th at 12:30 p.m. at Fishkill Rural Cemetery. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Dementia Society of America in her memory.

June Neubauer



June Neubauer, 92, passed away on Christmas Day, December 25, 2025, at the Taconic at Hopewell. An area resident since 1952, she previously lived in the Bronx.

Born in the Bronx on July 30, 1933, June was the daughter of the late John and Margaret (Fitzsimmons) Stillwell. She was employed as a teacher's assistant for Wappingers Central School District until her retirement. During her retirement, she was a waitress at Rocco's for many years.

On September 29, 1951, at St. Benedict's Church in the Bronx, June married John W. Neubauer, who predeceased her in 2011. June is survived by her children and their spouses, John and Betsy Neubaue,r and Midge and Michael Cangelosi; her grandchildren, James Cangelosi, Michael Cangelosi, Kate Neubauer, and Mary Palakas; and her great-grandchildren, Maxwell, Franklin, June,

Theodore, Mikey, Lea, and Cloey.

Calling hours were held on Tuesday, December 30, at the McHoul Funeral Home, Inc., 895 Route 82, Hopewell Junction. A Mass of Christian Burial was offered on Wednesday, December 31 at St. Denis Church, 602 Beekman Road, Hopewell Junction, followed by burial at St. Denis Cemetery.

Please visit June's Book of Memories at www.mchoulfuneralhome.com.

Frederick Zaitz



Frederick Zaitz, 94, of Wappinger Falls, NY, passed away Saturday afternoon at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, NY. He was the beloved husband of Mary Ann (Yeskatalas) Zaitz.

Born March 5, 1931, in Forest City, PA, Frederick was the son of the late Frank and Katherine Zaitz. He proudly served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. Prior to his retirement, he worked as a sales manager for Sears, Roebuck and Co. in Middletown, NY. Frederick was a member of the Slovenian Heritage Club and a former member of the Browndale Fire Company. He especially enjoyed polka music and polka dancing.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his son, Fred Zaitz of Medford, NJ; his

daughter, Kathryn Zaitz of Atlanta, GA; three grandsons, Matthew, Zachary, and Benjamin Zaitz; a granddaughter, Dean Fullerton; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his brother, Frank Zaitz; and his sisters, Mary Zaitz, Josephine "Sophie" Orasin, and Frances Wojcik.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at St. Joseph's Church, 739 Delaware Street, Forest City. Interment will follow at St. Anthony's Cemetery, Forest City. A viewing will be held Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. until the time of Mass.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Frederick's name to the Browndale Fire Company.

Arrangements are entrusted to the Kevin M. Lesjack Funeral Home, 513 Main Street, Forest City.

Jo Ellen Irwin



Jo Ellen Irwin, a resident of Saugerties and formerly of Wappingers Falls, entered into rest Monday, December 29, 2025 in Saugerties. She was 81.

Daughter of the late Dale and Bernice Beach Roarabaugh, she was born January 20, 1944 in Six Mile Run, Pennsylvania.

Jo Ellen worked as a nurse prior to her retirement. She enjoyed spending time in nature and was proud of the zinnias she grew in her garden. Jo Ellen was happiest when she was helping other people.

Survivors include her son, Jason Prizzi and his wife, Julie of Hurley; her grandchildren, Garrick, Jonathan, Nick, Chris, Olivia, John and Norah; her sisters, Judy Martin of Georgia,

Rhonda Folk and her husband, Matt of Pennsylvania and Tina Breier and her husband, Randy of Florida; as well as several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her sons, Gary Irwin and Marc Irwin; her brother, Robert Roarabaugh and sister-in-law, Edna Roarabaugh.

Family and friends gathered on Friday, January 2, 2026 at Straub, Catalano & Halvey Funeral Home, 55 East Main Street in Wappingers Falls. A funeral service followed at the funeral home.

Interment will be in the spring at Wappingers Rural Cemetery, West Main Street in Wappingers Falls.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, <https://www.alz.org>.

David A. Lyday



David A. Lyday, a longtime Village of Wappingers Falls resident, passed away on January 1, 2026 at the Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie, NY; at the age of 72. He was born in Tulsa, OK on December 29, 1953, son of Nelda (Hall) Lyday and the late Jack Shelby Lyday.

David worked for many years at IBM in East Fishkill, and The Roseton Generating Facility in the Town of Newburgh, where he was a chief operator until he retired. He enjoyed computers, golf and computer gaming. He was a very smart man, and was loved by everyone who knew him. He also loved his furry friends, especially his beloved Killian and Patrick.

Along with his beloved mother Lyday, David is survived by his loving wife of 39 years, Theresa J. (Chase) Lyday; Peter J. Csizmar; his grandson Michael R. (Spirit)

Kelly, and his four great-grandchildren: Mila, Emma, Olivia and Nova; his two sisters, Sally (Frank) Greco, Marrie Jane Lyday, and his brother, Robert Lyday.

David is also survived by a special brother-in-law Hon. Raymond (Dawna) Chase; his special nieces and nephews: Julie Greco, Evette Chase and Nick Chase

Arrangements were entrusted to the care of the DELEHANTY FUNERAL HOME, 64 East Main Street, Wappingers Falls, New York. Interment will be private at the discretion of his family. In lieu of flowers and services, the family wishes for memorial donations to be made in David's memory to the Dutchess County SPCA, 636 Violet Avenue, Hyde Park, NY 12538.

To offer a message of condolence or share a fond memory, please visit: www.DelehantyFuneral.com.

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Winter Coat Giveaway set for Jan. 10 in Beacon

Beacon community members are invited to attend a Winter Coat Giveaway on Saturday, January 10, from 9:30–11:30 a.m. at St. Andrew-St. Luke Episcopal Church, 15 South Ave., Beacon. The event is the culmination of the annual Winter Coat Drive, a student-led initiative designed to ensure children and teens across Beacon have access to warm winter clothing.

The Winter Coat Drive is led by Beacon

High School Student Council and supported by a strong network of community partners, including National Honor Society, National Junior Honor Society, Beacon City School District, I Am Beacon, and Dutchess Outreach. Together, these organizations work to ensure that every donated coat directly benefits a local resident in need.

The project unfolds in three phases: Districtwide Community Collection

Period, School-Based Distribution, and a Public Community Giveaway.

Timothy Newman, Social Studies teacher at Beacon High School and faculty advisor to the Student Council, serves as the Lead Coordinator for the Winter Coat Drive. This initiative is coordinated with the help from Kimberly Gonzalez, a 6th Grade teacher at Rombout Middle School, whose support and collaboration were instrumental in organizing both the collection efforts and organizing the community giveaway event.

“The Winter Coat Drive reflects the power of student leadership and community collaboration,” said Reuben Simmons Jr., Executive Director and Founder of I Am Beacon. “By working together, we are able to meet immediate needs while also engaging young people in meaningful service.”

Community members are encouraged to attend the January 10 giveaway. Any remaining coats after the event will be donated to Dutchess Outreach to continue supporting individuals in need.

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503 Furniture

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2-drawer, wide, metal filing cabinet. Good shape, tan, has lock but no key. 19 D x 30 W x 28 H. \$25. 845-227-5922

Queen size wood sleigh bed box spring mattress included. Exc. Cond. Best offer. 845-625-3213

503 Furniture

4 set Antique wood dining chairs upholstered seats exc. cond. Best offer. 845-625-3213

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Patio set, glass top with four chairs with cushions. 9 foot umbrella with stand. Used once, \$350. Call 845-297-4741

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516 Misc. Merchandise

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Gabby: Domestic Short Hair Cat. Senior 8+ yrs, Female, small 6 lbs, color: Tortoiseshell, Calico. She's Curious, Friendly, Playful, Athletic, Smart and Funny. Adopt: ARF, Simons Lane, Beacon, NY

Champ, Dachshund & Terrier Mix. Adult 3-8 yrs, Male, Small 0-25 lbs, Medium coat, color, White/Cream, Red/Chestnut/Orange. He's Friendly, Loyal, Loves kisses, Protective and Affectionate. Adopt: ARF, Simons Lane, Beacon NY

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WJHS November Students of the Month receive certificates from Beacon Elks



Beacon Elks Lodge #1493 presented the November Students of the Month certificates at Wappingers Junior High School, in the Wappingers Central School District, on Wednesday, Dec. 10. The students were chosen for their participation, helping fellow classmates, academics and volunteering at the elementary school, assisting in the after-school program. Students received a certificate and gift card for their accomplishments. The Beacon Elks thanks Giacomo's Pizza Café for sponsoring the event with them. Pictured (from left): Cathy Oken, Youth Activities Chair; Jeanine McAuley, Exalted Ruler; Gavin Emanuele, (7th Grade), Catherine Perri, teacher; Jordan Sahawneh, (8th Grade); Sara Drotzer, teacher and Terrence Thompson, principal.

-Courtesy photo

Beacon Sloop Club announces 2026 Alan Thomas Memorial Environmental Lecture Series

The Beacon Sloop Club will present the 2026 Alan Thomas Memorial Lecture Series.

Billion Oyster Project: Brian Reagor and Pete Malinowski
Thursday, January 15, 7 p.m.
Online

Did you know that New York Harbor was once home to 220,000 acres of oyster reefs? Billion Oyster Project was founded in 2014 with a mission to restore oyster reefs to New York Harbor through public education initiatives. What started as a project of the Harbor School has grown into a city-wide initiative across the five boroughs. Presented on zoom.

Mid-Hudson Anti-Slavery History Project: Laura Chenven
Thursday, February 19, 7 p.m. at the Beacon Sloop Club Clubhouse, Red Flynn Drive, Beacon

The people of the Hudson Valley counties played unique and important roles in the history of American slavery and abolitionism. The region was a major center of enslavement in the North. It also played significant roles in the abolitionist movement and Underground Railroad. The Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project (MHAHP) works to call attention to this neglected aspect of our past.

Captain Sarah Armour: From Hudson Valley Roots to Tallship Captain
Thursday, March 19, at 7 p.m. at the Beacon Sloop Club Clubhouse, Red Flynn Drive, Beacon

Join Captain Sarah Armour, captain of Mystic Seaport Museum's schooner BRILLIANT, for a talk on building a

career in tall ships, sail training, and traditional sail. Starting as a volunteer and trainee aboard Hudson River Sloop Clearwater and growing up in the Beacon Sloop Club around vessels like Clearwater and Woody Guthrie, Sarah will reflect on how these Hudson River communities shaped her path—and her progression to captain—over a decade of work in sail training and experiential education.

Star Party with the Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association
Thursday, April 16, at 7 p.m. at the Beacon Sloop Club Clubhouse, Red Flynn Drive, Beacon

Come out during the new moon's dark skies to explore the solar system. Indoors will be a lecture and presentation, while outdoors – weather permitting – we will have high powered telescopes to observe stars, planets and more. The Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association is a non-profit group of amateur astronomy enthusiasts in the Mid-Hudson Valley region of the state of New York.

You Have Lost America by the Irish: A Musical History Lesson
Thursday, May 21, at 7 p.m. at the Beacon Sloop Club Clubhouse, Red Flynn Drive, Beacon,

Could the American Revolution Have Been Won without their (Irish and Irish-American) participation? Come and Find Out! Bill Devlin will explain the history via a PowerPoint presentation, with songs and music from the period presented by the musicians of the Andy McGann branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann. Learn about the brave Irish and Irish-Americans who fought for our country's freedom!

'New Deal Art' author talk set Jan. 13 at FDR Museum

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum will present an author talk and book signing, "New Deal Art" (World of Art) with John P. Murphy, at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 13. The event will be held in the Henry A. Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Home and streamed live to the official FDR Library YouTube and Facebook accounts. This is a free public event, but registration is required to attend in-person. Visit fdrlibrary.org to register. At the height of the Great Depression, President Roosevelt's New Deal provided federal funding for the arts. The New Deal launched the careers of artists such as Philip Guston, Dorothea Lange, Jacob Lawrence, Alice Neel, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko. Brimming with vivid images and stories, "New Deal Art" offers a dynamic survey of this period. The book highlights state-sponsored murals, paintings, sculptures, photographs, prints, and posters. The artists formed the first Artists' Union and reimagined art as a public good rather than a private luxury.

John P. Murphy is the Philip and Lynn Straus curator of prints and drawings at the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College.

'Quirky' works featured in new Palaia exhibition in Poughkeepsie

In a new exhibition at Curio Cabinet of the Hudson Valley, multi-disciplinary artist Franc Palaia will showcase medium to small mixed-media works that incorporate his archival color photography, painting, sculpture and even architecture. The exhibition, "Curio - Curioso," will run from Jan. 9 to Feb. 28, with an opening reception on Friday, Jan. 9, from 5 to 7 p.m. Refreshments will be provided.

Curio Cabinet of the Hudson Valley is at 300 Main St., Poughkeepsie. For more information about the artist or exhibition, contact Francpalaia1@gmail.com or 845-505-3123.

Palaia has an extensive exhibition record with numerous grants and fellowships. Selected exhibitions include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Saatchi Museum, The High Museum of Art, The Dorsky Museum, the Newark and Montclair museums, the New Jersey State Museum, OK Harris, Vassar College, Fundacio Salvador Dali in Spain, Galerie Salvador, France, American Academy in Rome, Exit Art, CPW, the New Museum among others.

this week's puzzle solutions

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

This week's answer
SUDOKU

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

Legal Notices	Legal Notices	Legal Notices	Legal Notices	Legal Notices	Legal Notices	Legal Notices
REQUEST FOR BIDS NOTICE The Purchasing Agent, County of Dutchess, Poughkeepsie, New York, hereby invites the submission of sealed bids for: Bid #RFB-DCP-15-26 RFB-DCP-15-26: Preparation and Deliv-	ery of Daily Meals for Dutchess County Office for the Aging Bids will be received until 2:00 p.m. on the 26th day of January 2026 at the Dutchess County Division of Central Services, 378 Violet Avenue, Suite 2, Poughkeepsie, New York	12601. Specifications and bid forms may be obtained by visiting our website http://www.dutchessny.gov , selecting "Government", then selecting "Bidding and RFP Opportunities". For additional information, call 845-486-3613.	NOTICE OF ADOPTION NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the County Legislature of the County of Dutchess at a meeting held on December 8, 2025, adopted a local law entitled: LOCAL LAW NO. 1 OF 2026, A LOCAL LAW	TO EXTEND THE YOUTH DEER HUNTING PILOT PROGRAM The intent of this Local Law shall be to extend the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Youth Deer Hunting Pilot Program from December 31, 2025, to Decem-	ber 31, 2028, and Dutchess County seeks to further its participation in said pilot program which authorizes a hunting license holder, who is twelve (12) or (13) years of age to hunt deer with a crossbow, shotgun or muzzle-loading firearm through 2028.	A copy of the local law is available at the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature where it may be inspected during regular office hours. LAURA PHILLIPS Deputy Clerk Dutchess County Legislature

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

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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

2			2		
				5	
1		2		3	
2				2	4
		2			

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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: BODY LANGUAGE

ACROSS

1. Hot Springs and such
5. ____ Bell and ____ Barker
8. Wharton degree, acr.
11. Artist's inspiration
12. *Move head to show attention
13. Angry growl
15. Shamu, e.g.
16. Diva's number
17. Put on fancy dress (2 words)
18. *Making facial expression showing pain
20. Mine passage
21. Single-handedly
22. Assistance
23. Made according to specifications
26. Economizes
30. Biochemistry acr.
31. Aerie baby
34. Genesis skipper
35. Leaves out
37. *Some look up and to the right when telling one
38. Watcher
39. "The Forsyte ____" by John Galsworthy
40. Forty winks
42. Fraternity letter T
43. *Said "easy peasy" with fingers
45. Like a weight lifter, usually
47. Weasel-related onomatopoeia
48. Undo laces
50. Helicopter sound
52. *Showing low self-esteem or boredom
56. 100 centimes
57. Purl partner
58. From square one
59. Frustration, in a comic book
60. "At ____, soldier!"
61. Don't go
62. Dashboard acr.
63. Like Willie Winkie
64. Frustrated driver's recourse

DOWN

1. Urban haze
 2. Make like a cat
 3. Ascus, pl.
 4. Same as sea moss (2 words)
 5. Rice wine
 6. Dress with a flare
 7. Rudolph, when older
 8. Famous Christmas guests
 9. Like some champagnes
 10. High mountain
 12. Toyota truck model
 13. Part of flight
 14. *Showing agreement
 19. Healing plants
 22. Be in a cast
 23. *Show anger with arms
 24. Unnerve
 25. Eurasian antelope
 26. "____ but not heard"
 27. Much, in Italy
 28. Song of praise
 29. *"I don't know" move
 32. *One's smiling because one's
-
33. Intoxicated
 36. *Showing impatience with fingers
 38. Like retina and brain connecting nerve
 40. Large edible mushroom
 41. Keen
 44. Nice place for a rocking chair
 46. Reuse ideas
 48. Forearm bones
 49. Hustle and bustle sound
 50. Sandwich alternative
 51. Stay out of its way!
 52. Place at angle
 53. Gung-ho about something
 54. Close by
 55. Gwyneth, for short
 56. Opposite of #54 Down

CROSSWORD

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

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The solutions to the Sudoku, Crossword puzzle and Suguru can be found on page 14.

‘Bannerman Island and the Mighty Hudson River Exhibition’ from Jan. 10 - April 12



Clockwise from top left, *Bannerman Castle* by David Munford.
“Pete Seeger” by Bruce Thorne.
“River Circus Nocturne 2” by Cynthia Dill.

-Courtesy photos

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The Howland Cultural Center (HCC) located at 477 Main Street and the Bannerman Castle Trust - both in Beacon, host their Second Annual Collaborative Hudson Valley Landscape Fine Art Show “Bannerman Island and the Mighty Hudson River Exhibition,” on view at the HCC from Jan. 10 – April 12.

The exhibition opens on Saturday, Jan. 10 with a free opening reception for the artists and public from 1 – 3 p.m. The show features unique fine art paintings, watercolors, prints, photography and mixed media works in a variety of genres - from traditional and representational works to abstract masterpieces!

A variety of artists will be featured in this diverse show and most of the artwork is for sale. Visitors can expect to

see picturesque Hudson River Valley views from the lower to upper Hudson Valley, mainly focusing on the Hudson Highlands region and Bannerman Island and Castle - the Iconic historic site located in the Hudson River between Beacon and Cold Spring, and a favorite location for artists and adventurers.

Join them for this winter afternoon exhibition and reception, which will include food, refreshments and surprise musical guests. Gallery hours for the duration of the show will be Saturdays & Sundays from 1-5 p.m. and weekdays by chance and appointment.

Please call Theresa Kraft at the Howland Cultural Center at 845 - 831-4988 or Laurie Clark at the Bannerman Castle Trust at 845-831-1001 for more information.