

# BEACON FREE PRESS

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## Kyriacou, Flowers advocate for Hochul's auto insurance proposals

### City reports

Mayors of the City of Beacon, Poughkeepsie, Middletown, Dunkirk, and Niagara Falls traveled to the Capitol last week to advocate for inclusion of the Governor's auto insurance proposals in the FY27 State Budget. The mayors met with key members of the New York State Senate and Assembly to discuss the importance of the proposals, which will save money for everyday New Yorkers. Additionally, they discussed the importance of the proposals to municipalities, which will achieve savings both directly on their municipal vehicles and indirectly on the vehicles of contracted providers. The mayors also highlighted the importance of the reforms to local small businesses and nonprofits, many of whom rely on vehicles to deliver goods and provide services.

In a press release, Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou said, "Auto insurance rates have been increasing for not only families, but municipalities as well, including vehicles for police, fire, highway maintenance and other essential services. It is imperative that we fight to reduce the cost for our residents, and the Governor's proposal does just that."

New York drivers pay some of the highest car insurance rates in the nation, paying over \$4,000 on average towards annual insurance premiums. These high premiums are a result of outdated and anomalous laws that enable fraud and encourage expensive litigation and put New York out of step with other states. Hudson Valley and Western New York communities need the Governor's common-sense reforms that will align New York with other states, preserve the ability of victims to get the justice they deserve and crack down on the major drivers of auto insurance costs.

City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Yvonne Flowers remarked in the release, "Residents of the City of Poughkeepsie, from our nonprofit organizations and Main Street businesses to our hardworking families, are feeling the strain of rising auto insurance costs. Governor Kathy Hochul's proposal to lower these costs is a practical and thoughtful step toward easing the financial burden on New Yorkers. That is why I traveled to Albany to join fellow mayors from across the Hudson Valley in advocating for these important reforms."

## Central Hudson invests \$200,000 in DCC green tech programming



Representatives from Dutchess Community College (DCC), Central Hudson, the Dutchess County Legislature and government officials gathered at the DCC site in Fishkill on Earth Day, April 22. Central Hudson invested \$200,000 into the college's Green Tech Programming.

-Photo by Kristine Coulter

### By Kristine Coulter

Dutchess Community College (DCC) and Central Hudson announced the expansion of clean energy and advanced manufacturing workforce training programs on Wednesday, April 22, which was Earth Day. The announcement was made at the DCC site on Route 9 in Fishkill where an investment of \$200,000 to DCC from Central Hudson was made for the Green Tech Program.

During his remarks, DCC President Dr.

Peter Grant Jordan shared that he talks with alumni and members of the community. "It was clear to me that DCC had a powerful impact." He continued, "It's my honor to make sure I am perpetuating that legacy."

According to officials, the development of a new, state-of-the-art HVAC and building trades laboratory within DCC's Center of Excellence for Business, Industry and Innovation will be used with the funds by Central

Hudson. The lab will provide hands-on training in modern, energy-efficient technologies, including heat pumps, mini-split systems, and high-efficiency electric equipment central to New York State's clean energy transition, it was stated. The new 9,200 square-foot instructional space, it was remarked, "will replicate real-world working environments."

Continued on page 3

## Lit Lit to celebrate 5 years

### By Kristine Coulter

Lit Lit, Beacon's open reading event for writers, will be celebrating its five-year anniversary on May 1. To celebrate this occasion, it was stated, there will be an extra-special version of Lit Lit, with food and drink, the usual 5-minute time limit will be extended to 7 minutes, and attendees will be invited to perform any sort of art they like, not just limited to writing, it was stated. The event will go from 7 to 9 p.m.

Lit Lit occurs monthly, on the first Friday of every month at the Howland Cultural Center, 477 Main St. in Beacon.

"I decided to hold the first Lit Lit during the pandemic, in May 2021, because Beacon's writers hadn't had a chance to share their work with others in a long time, and also because people were lonely, and I could see we needed to have a community event. The first couple of Lit Lits were held on Zoom. After that, we met for a few months in the backyard garden of Homespun Restaurant. Finally, I believe in October 2021, we moved to our current space at the Howland," recalled Donna Minkowitz, founder of Lit Lit founder, in an email.

Continued on page 3



Lit Lit, an open reading event, will celebrate 5 years in Beacon on May 1. The above photo was taken in 2021.

-Photo courtesy of Tania Steele

# Car show excitement builds as vintage autos head for Rhinebeck



More than 600 antique, classic and hot rod and custom autos are planned to be on display at the Rhinebeck Car Show at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds on Saturday and Sunday. The Swap Meet is set on Friday.

By Jim Donick

Once again the annual Rhinebeck Car Show kicks off the Hudson Valley's vintage car calendar as the first big show of the season. It will be at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds from May 1 to 3.

"We expect a great turnout this year, if the weather cooperates," says Mike Butler, the president of the event. "There could be as many as 600 cars on both days. We have some very special cars coming, as well, including the General Lee from the 'Dukes of Hazzard' and the Ford Grand Torino that was featured in the TV program 'Starsky and Hutch.' Additionally, we'll be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the iconic Ford Bronco."

The annual Rhinebeck Auto Show promises three days of automotive activity with something for any automotive taste, lots of food and vendors who attract even those not bringing a car. Owners displaying a vehicle will be vying for First, Second and Third Place awards in 56 classes.

The first of the three days is Friday. It is the opening of the weekend-long swap meet. People in search of a particular part will be there for the opening. With well over 200 vendors expected, one can likely find nearly any needed part for any automobile. There will also be vendors with tires, garage equipment, tool storage solutions, automobilia, and even just the latest style of sweatshirt or jacket to dis-

play one's enthusiasm. There will also be a car corral where one might find a special car to drive home.

Saturday is for Hot Rods, Customs and Race Cars. One can expect to see wild custom paint jobs in colors the factory never dreamed of. Some will have engines putting out well over 500 horsepower. Hot Rods and Customs are the domain of owners who want their cars to be unique and to reflect their own tastes and imagination.

Sunday brings the vintage and classic cars. These are generally unmodified from new and are often shown with an eye to original details that may rival the efforts of the people who actually built them. These cars will represent everything from the car your grandparents or parents drove to the one that you could only dream of as a youth.

Being the first big show of the season, preparation for the Rhinebeck event has the midnight oil burning in garages all through the area. Enthusiasts are anxious to begin a new season. Noted local vintage car restorer Johnny Morris said, "We sit around all winter without an event and then the spring comes and we get to go to Rhinebeck. We're waiting all winter without driving our cars. When this show comes up, it's like a big-time automobile concert with all the right sounds and sights."

Morris will be going with half a dozen of his buddies, several of whom will



Car restoration specialist Johnny Morris has been working all winter to prepare autos for this weekend's Rhinebeck Car Show at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds. -Photo by Jim Donick

be bringing cars that Morris restored for them.

"I'm finishing up this '68 Camaro RS. It's almost ready to go and will be when I get the hood mounted," he says. "The paint came out beautifully and the guys who did the mechanicals are geniuses."

Many of Morris' customers think of him as a bit of a magician when it comes to the aesthetic restorations he turns out.

Shawn Christensen, who is the advisor to the FDR High School Winners Circle team creating a racing car in competition with a number of other high schools around the state, remarks that he and his team of students are "super excited" about showing their car in Rhinebeck this year.

"We're working pretty hard right now to

finish up some details, but we will be ready in time. This year, we're even more excited that several other local high schools will be bringing their cars, too. People will be able to see and admire the work of the FDR team as well as those from John Jay, Pine Plains and Arlington high schools."

The schedule for the event reflects a very full and exciting weekend.

Friday, May 1: Swap Meet setup and opening (Noon-5 p.m.)

Saturday, May 2: Rod & Custom Show (8 a.m.-5 p.m.)

Sunday, May 3: Antique & Classic Car Show (8 a.m.-5 p.m.)

For registration and specific vendor inquiries, visit the official Rhinebeck Car Show website, <https://rhinebeckcarshow.net>

## Milling and paving work on Fishkill Ave. in Beacon

The City of Beacon will have milling and paving operations on Fishkill Ave. from Blackburn Ave. to Prospect St. Work is expected through April 29 for milling and May 4 through May 7 for repaving.

It was recommended by officials to check the City website for more updates.

All work is weather-dependent and subject to change, it was noted.

### Held in Grace: Reflection on Life, Death & Grief

#### A Supportive Gathering for Honest Conversations About Loss, Hope, and Healing

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Announces Addition of Jordan M. Gwynn**






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**See story,  
page 8**



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COLLINS & SAPPE LLP**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

## Central Hudson invests \$200,000 in DCC green tech programming

Continued from cover

Assistant County Executive Ron Hicks remarked during the presentation, “We’re competing against the world.” He said this is a significant investment and shared when the Dutchess County Legislature years ago approved of the funds for the program at the Hudson Valley Regional Airport.

He said the students knowing they “can walk out of here with a job” is “phenomenal.”

“This work is my calling. The idea of getting students together with employers – the idea of living in this community ... we are about access to everyone,” said Jordan. He later stated that DCC is also ensuring students’ success and “that they leave [DCC] with skills” that are going to get them that job.

Wappingers Central School District Superintendent of School Dr. Dwight Bonk was in attendance for the announcement. “We’re ecstatic for this partnership. It’s going to provide many opportunities for our students. We’re very fortunate to have this facility right here in our backyard,” said the superintendent.

Bonk noted the Wappingers CSD is “beginning this whole career awareness

piece at the elementary level,” adding, “it’s not that early.”

Wappingers Falls resident and DCC student Jonathan Nuñez said during the presentation that DCC courses are “absolutely amazing.”

“I thank DCC for everything they’ve done for me,” said Nuñez, who attended Roy C. Ketcham High School in the Wappingers CSD.

Anthony S. Campagiorni, Central Hudson Electric & Gas Corporation Executive Vice President, Strategic Development, stated, “It’s about the people and good clean jobs.”

“We’re deeply rooted in this community. We’ve been here for 126 years,” remarked Campagiorni.

“There’s so much going on and there will be more innovation going on” at DCC, said County Legislature Chair Yvette Valdés Smith, who noted enrollment at this DCC site has been growing.

Town of Fishkill Supervisor Ozzy Albra remarked, “This is positive for the Town of Fishkill. It’s another tangible asset that makes the community great.” He added this will assist in getting people to continue investing in Fishkill.

For more information, visit <https://www.sunydutchess.edu>.



Dutchess Community College President Dr. Peter Grant Jordan makes remarks on Central Hudson’s \$200,000 investment in the college on April 22 in Fishkill.

-Photo by Kristine Coulter

## Lit Lit to celebrate 5 years

Continued from cover

“When people attend these days, they can expect a welcoming, friendly crowd, whether they’re coming to read their writing, or just to be in the audience and listen. We have around 15 to 20 writers read their work each time, in all genres — poetry, fiction, essays, memoir, even plays. And we have around 35-40 people in the audience,” said Minkowitz.

According to the founder, “Many writers tell us they are reading their work for the first time at Lit Lit. Both audience

members and writers tell us they find the event warm, open, and receptive, and they find the writing surprising and often poignant.”

It was noted that many of Lit Lit’s regular attendees are published authors, but the non-published writers are also very talented!

“We have regular attendees not just from Beacon, but also from Kingston, New Paltz, Peekskill, Cold Spring, Garrison, Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, Fishkill, Wappingers Falls, and New York City,” said Minkowitz.

### Held in Grace: Reflection on Life, Death & Grief set for May and June

Held in Grace: Reflection on Life, Death & Grief will be held May 5 - June 2. The supportive gathering will meet for five weeks at 6:30 p.m. at Christ United Methodist Church, 60 Union St.

in Beacon. All are welcome. Organizers said one does not need to be experiencing a recent loss to attend.

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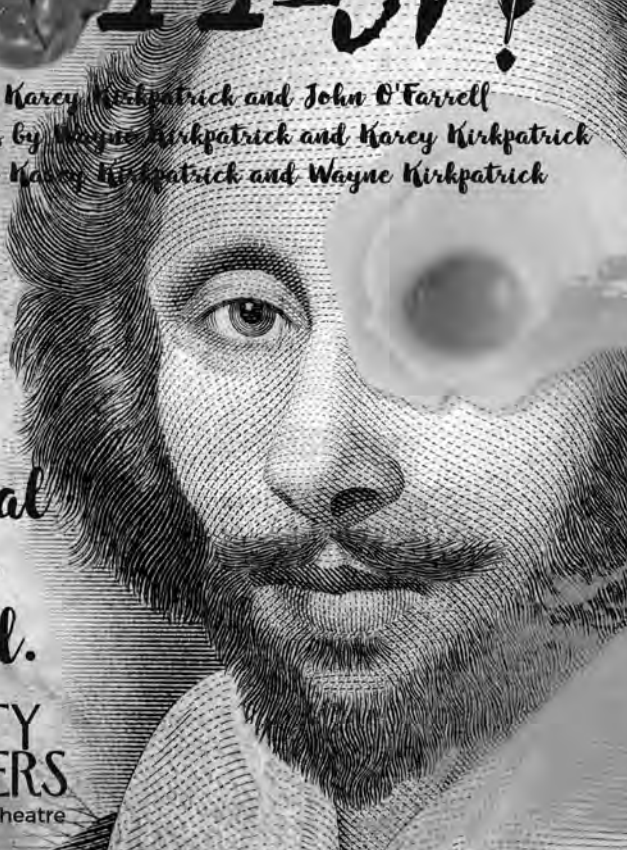
**Where:** 60 Union St., Beacon  
**When:** May 9, 2026  
**Time:** 9am – 2pm

**Breakfast:** Bacon, Egg and Cheese  
**Lunch:** Hot Dogs



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# Viewpoints

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

### Policy on letters:

- Letters that contain statements that are libelous or slanderous will not be published.
- Letters that include personal attacks will not be published, 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.

## Rolison keeps fighting for lower utility bills

### To the Editor:

Across our communities, I continue to hear the same concern from families and small businesses: utility bills are simply too high, and the cost of taxes, fees, and surcharges exceeds the cost of the energy itself.

For the second time, in Albany, I introduced an amendment that would temporarily suspend utility bill taxes and surcharges, mirroring my legislation, Senate Bill 8463, and is designed to provide meaningful, immediate savings to New Yorkers during a time when affordability is a growing crisis, not relief in 5 - 10 years.

Unfortunately, the Senate majority voted against this amendment again, but this is not the end of the fight.

I brought this proposal forward because it is a practical, commonsense solution that meets people where they are right now. And while it was not adopted this time, I remain committed to pushing for policies that ease the burden on ratepayers and put money back in your pockets.

To the residents of our district: I hear you, I see the challenges you're facing, and I will not stop fighting for you. I will continue to advocate for real solutions that make everyday life more affordable and ensure your voices are heard in Albany.

Senator Rob Rolison  
New York State Senate, District 39

## Mid-Hudson libraries bring joy to all

### To the Editor

The staff of the Mid-Hudson Library System just completed their celebration of National Library Week (April 19-25). Our theme this year is "Find Your Library Joy!" to highlight how libraries strengthen communities and support lifelong learning.

When I think about how I find my "Library Joy," I just have to read a member library

newsletter or scan their social media feeds. Our member libraries bring joy to so many, in so many creative, unexpected, and meaningful ways.

Recently I found joy in seeing the Pawling Library host "Anything Can Happen Day!" for students at Pawling Elementary School; watching the Reed Memorial Library in Carmel bring back the legendary local history walk with several beloved, retired 4th grade teachers in their community; receiving invitations to ribbon cuttings at the Roeliff Jansen Community Library for their new pavilion and the Woodstock Library to celebrate the completion of their new facility – all of these things bring me joy.

But what I am most joyous about is the everyday success I see exhibited by library directors, library workers, library trustees and Library Friends groups. From getting the right book into someone's hands; to teaching someone how to get an email address or decipher an online form; to creating programs that bring neighbors together to learn and be a community together – our library people are what makes me most joyous of all. Please thank your local library workers, trustees, and Friends Group members for all they do to bring Library Joy to their communities.

Rebekkah Smith Aldrich  
Executive Director of the Mid-Hudson Library System

## Non-response from Senator Rolison on ICE issues

### To the Editor:

I've been involved in group calls with our Senator Rob Rolison which I can only describe as 'defensive,' uninformative, non-collaborative. I know many others with similar experiences, especially as we press passing legislation like NY4ALL to protect immigrant neighbors and all of us from ICE's depredations.

Due to such evasion, I recently joined a group of Vassar students from the "For the Many" chapter to visit Senator Rolison's Poughkeepsie office. The students made 150+ calls, sent a 1/2 dozen emails to him requesting a meeting: no response.

We didn't expect to see him, but when we arrived, there he was. Our group started an impromptu meeting, desperate to get answers or support on the issues we feel must be resolved by these pending bills.

Several students and I spoke with Senator Rolison, looking for common ground, but it was no better than it had ever been. We know he was a cop for 26 years, we know he dealt with immigrant issues and communities many, many times. So, we asked him a simple question: politics aside, how does he feel in his heart about our immigrant neighbors, and what outcome does he want for them?

Based on his non-response, I can only assume Senator Rolison has no sympathy for their plight, and a thick skin and casual contempt for his constituent's well-being. My final request was simple, "Set a date to meet to get updates on these issues?" Providing these Albany updates to constituents is part of his elected role.

He failed us again, same answer: "I don't know, not sure." His secretary was there, so of course he could know a date/time to meet with us?

Well, I can say we will be back, invited or not. Our votes (some of our votes, anyway) put him in office, and all of our tax dollars pay for him. He KNOWS he hasn't much time left in office and will just run out the clock, do nothing, enjoying salary and benefits. He showed his contempt for the plight of our immigrant neighbors, and all who suffer from ICE's outrages.

What I took from this meeting is that Senator Rolison simply does not care, so I had to share what I know with my Hudson Valley neighbors. I hope you'll join me at the ballot box in November, vote for a State Senator who will respond to our needs and concerns.

Brian McElroy  
Poughkeepsie

## Dutchess County Health Fair returns to Dutchess Community College on May 2

The Dutchess County Department of Health will host its fifth annual Y.O.U.R (Young, Old, Urban, Rural) Health Fair on Saturday, May 2, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Dutchess Community College's Falcon Hall. This free, family friendly event brings together dozens of local organizations, health professionals and county agencies to promote wellness, prevention, and community connection. The event is free to the public, and there will be free shuttle service from the City of Poughkeepsie.

In its fifth year, the Dutchess County Health Fair has become a signature event for Dutchess County, offering residents an opportunity to explore a wide range of health resources in one accessible location. More than 70 exhibitors will be on hand to share information on physical and mental health, preventive care, nutrition, fitness, and community support services. Attendees can speak directly with healthcare providers, learn about insurance options, and discover programs available throughout the county.

Attendees can meet a wide range of service providers on topic areas such as:

- Public health, tick-borne illness and lead prevention;
- General health from childhood to senior care;
- Mental health and recovery services;
- Veterans Services;
- Environmental health;
- Nutrition; and
- Heart health.

This year's fair will feature interactive demonstrations and hands-on learning opportunities, along with wellness activities

for all ages. Food trucks, giveaways, and family friendly entertainment will make the event both informative and enjoyable. Dutchess County's "Fit Dutchess" initiative will host an interactive photo booth, provide play mats for children, and share fresh local apples from a nearby orchard.

As part of Dutchess County's ongoing efforts to ThinkDIFFERENTLY, the Department of Health's Early Intervention and Preschool Division will host a beach themed, sensory friendly area designed to create a welcoming and comfortable environment for individuals with sensory sensitivities. This thoughtfully curated space will feature engaging games and activities tailored for children of all abilities.

For even more fun, attendees can take part in exciting outdoor attractions, including food trucks and car seat checks provided by the Dutchess County Sheriff's Department.

Health Fair attendees will be able to take home many free health-related items, such as tick removal kits, hot/cold packs, emergency preparedness gear, bento boxes, food thermometers, lifesaving Narcan kits and much more. Attendees can also enter to win a variety of raffle prizes including gift baskets and gift cards from local eateries and experiences, by completing the Health Fair's "passport," which encourages visitors to explore and engage with vendors throughout the event.

Dutchess County Public Transit will provide free shuttles from the Transit Hub on Market Street in Poughkeepsie to Falcon Hall, running in continuous loops from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

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# Area 4-H Clubs to be featured May 3 at Hackett Farm Supply



Hackett Farm Supply in Clinton Corners will host a Children's Activities & Fundraiser event on Sunday, May 3 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. The store is located at 2297 Salt Point Turnpike, just off the Taconic State Parkway. The event is designed to support Dutchess County 4-H youths and the many different clubs and interests involved with the clubs. Everyone is invited to attend. Included will be baked goods, arts and crafts, farm animals and more. Residents are encouraged to help the youths raise money for their clubs and fundraising projects. For more information, call the store at 845-266-3494 or text 845-309-8686. In the photos (clockwise from top left) are members of the following 4-H Clubs - Homespun Hangout, Legen – Dairy Moo Crew and Crafty Quilters.

-Courtesy photos

## I Love My Park Day returns for 15th year

By Kate Goldsmith

Volunteers are key to maintaining New York's state parks and historic sites. I Love My Park Day, set this Saturday, May 2, celebrates the invaluable work they do to help park staff beautify trails, plant native flora, and prepare outdoor recreation spaces for the summer season.

I Love My Park Day is presented by Parks & Trails New York, in partnership with New York State Parks and Department of Environmental Conservation. Beautification events will be held at more than 100 state parks, historic sites and public lands in all of New York's regions.

In the Mid-Hudson region, the following sites are participating:

- **Bannerman Island:** Join the Bannerman Island spring-cleaning trail and garden maintenance team for a day of fun, camaraderie and environmental volunteerism. Sign up is requested at [bannermancastle.org](http://bannermancastle.org), or call the Bannerman Castle Trust office at 845-831-1001 for more information.

- **Lake Taghkanic State Park:** Help clean up the park's pollinator garden, plant some flowers around the park or assist with some shoreline cleanup. The event starts at 10 a.m. Call 518-851-3631 for more information.

- **Staatsburgh State Historic Site:** From 9:30 a.m. to noon, volunteers will assist the site with some landscaping and grounds tasks, including weeding and mulching around the mansion and gathering branches and debris in areas of the

park. Up to 25 volunteers are sought. Registration required at <https://www.ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park-day>. Volunteers receive event T shirts (while supplies last); a pizza lunch; and complimentary mansion tour is offered by the Friends of Mills at Staatsburgh.

- **Taconic State Park:** Starting at 11 a.m., volunteers are invited to participate in landscaping, gardening, cleanup projects and more. Sites with projects may include Copake Falls Campground, Copake Iron Works, Roe Jan Park, and the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. Registration is not required but highly encouraged. Meet at the Copake Falls Park Office. Bring work gloves, appropriate clothing for working outdoors, and water bottles. Register at [www.ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park-day/](http://www.ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park-day/) and search for Taconic State Park; or call 518-329-3993.

- **Walkway Over the Hudson:** From noon to 2 p.m., participants will weed, prune, mulch and water beautification areas on either side of the Walkway. Additional projects including trash cleanup and painting may be offered as needed. Attendees young and old are welcome.

Volunteers should bring closed-toe shoes, layers, water and a snack. Bring gloves and small garden tools, as well, if possible. All participants will receive a special I Love My Park Day tote bag and sticker.

Sign up to volunteer on Walkway's East (Poughkeepsie) Approach: [walkway.org/ILMPDEast](http://walkway.org/ILMPDEast).

Sign up to volunteer on Walkway's West (Highland) Approach: [walkway.org/ILMPDWest](http://walkway.org/ILMPDWest).

## County comptroller releases Department of Mental Health audit report 'with no major discrepancies'

### County reports

The Dutchess County Comptroller's Office has completed its audit of the Dutchess County Department of Mental Health (DMH) for the period January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2024. DMH provides prevention, treatment, recovery, and support services for Dutchess County residents living with mental health issues, intellectual or developmental disabilities, and substance abuse disorders.

The primary objectives of the Comptroller's Office were to assess, evaluate, and verify the Department's receipt of state aid funding, contract adherence, and the health of their fiscal procedures. While the Comptroller's Office did not identify any major discrepancies during the period reviewed, it was recommended that the Department of Mental Health make efforts to complete their reconciliations annually and to produce written

policies and procedures for all processes related to the receipt and use of state aid.

"Our Office recognizes the significant challenges faced by the newly created Department of Mental Health, and we appreciate the time and effort they've made to review and improve their operations," said Comptroller Aymar-Blair. "Their meaningful engagement with our audit process should give taxpayers confidence that the Department of Mental Health will continue to strive for operational excellence in the years ahead."

The Comptroller's Office would like to thank Commissioner of Mental Health, Jean-Marie Niebuhr, and her team at the Department of Mental Health for their assistance in the preparation of this audit.

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) Audit Report for January 1, 2022-December 31, 2024 can be found on the Comptroller's website.

## Sports Museum of Dutchess County sets Opening Day

The Sports Museum of Dutchess County has announced its 2026 Opening Day, taking place on Saturday, May 2, from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Carnwath Farm Historic site, 81 Carnwath Farm Lane in Wappingers Falls.

This year's theme, "Come See What's New," invites visitors of all ages to explore the latest exhibits and discover fresh additions celebrating the rich history of sports in Dutchess County and beyond.

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## RENEGADES ROUNDUP

# Yankees hurlers draw crowds as Renegades top Brooklyn

By Morgan E. Maier

The Hudson Valley Renegades find themselves on the winning side of a polarizing series this week. Not particularly scandalous, unless you count the appearance of two top Yankees hurlers, but the 5-of-6 series win propelled the Renegades to the top division spot (.5 game lead), while the Brooklyn Cyclones (5-15) sank to the bottom in one fell swoop, which would have been a series sweep if not for a Sunday doubleheader split.

**Who's (in) First?** - While the Renegades are used to winning of late, this homestand marked many a first: The first walk-off home run, then the second. Kaeden Kent and Kyle West opened the series by taking Cyclone pitchers deep into the Dutchess night in back-to-back ninth innings. Next up, the star-powered sellout(s). Hudson Valley hosted an uncharacteristically large weeknight crowd - 4,712, as reported by Renegades' own Joe Vasile - as the Yankees' Gerrit Cole took the mound on April 23. Yankee hurler Carlos Rodón commenced his own High-A rehabilitation the next night, offering 4.1 scoreless innings to the subsequent 10-2 Renegades victory. The Renegade bats showed out for the new pitching staff, as Hudson Valley went on to win the next two, outscoring Brooklyn 16-6.

Brooklyn got one back on April 26, the first of a doubleheader slate after Saturday's washout. Franyer Herrera put an end to the Cyclones' longest winning streak of the season with a quality start (5.0 IP, 1ER, 2 H, 3 BB, 5 K). The only earned run came off Corey Collins' second home run of the season. Collins' first left the yard three days earlier, launched off 2023 Cy Young Award winner Cole.

**There it goes, Cebert!** - Jack Cebert continues to impress, lowering his earned run average (ERA) to a sub-1.00 mark. The scheduled starter on April 23, Cebert took over for Gerrit Cole after a 10-pitch, .2 inning appearance by Ben Grable. Zeroes across the board for another strong outing lowered Cebert's earned run average to .098. Minimal runs, maximum strikeouts. All efficiency. Cebert has thrown 69.8% of pitches for strikes across his first three outings.

**Stop Your Pitchin'** - The Renegades are bottom-three in a plethora of offensive categories. Hits, runs, RBIs, and batting average are a few of the most glaring. Enter the best pitching staff in the South Atlantic League. Hudson Valley allows the fewest baserunners per inning (WHIP), while notching the second-most strikeouts. As a staff, they have allowed just 13 home runs - one for every long ball launched by the 'Gades hitters!

The Renegades (12-8) will go on a weeklong getaway to the Jersey Shore to face the BlueClaws (10-10) for the first time this year. It projects to be a battle of top pitching, as the two teams boast the division's lowest batting average against. Jersey Shore staved off its own series sweep with a Sunday win over the South Division-leading Bowling Green Hot Rods (14-7), and holds a third-place tie with the Wilmington Blue Rocks. The Atlantic Ocean will likely be too chilly for a dip during Hudson Valley's delayed spring break, but the first-place Renegades look to stay hot on the shore.



Pitcher Jack Cebert continues to impress for the Renegades, lowering his ERA to under 1.00 and throwing 69.8% of pitches for strikes across his first three outings.

-Photo by Dave Janosz

## Focus on each shot leads young Vilardi to golf's dream courses

By Morgan E. Maier

For generations of golfers, even stepping onto Augusta National's grounds is a dream. At just 10 years old, Hopewell Junction's Mario Vilardi did just that recently - competing in the Drive, Chip and Putt National Finals on national television, in front of large crowds, and finishing just one point shy of the title. Now, just weeks later, Mario is already setting his sights on international competition.

The Drive, Chip and Putt National Finals bring together the top junior golfers from across the country during Masters week at Augusta National. Mario scored 28 out of a

possible 33 points in the competition. Strong driving earned him valuable points, and a first-place finish in the chipping discipline kept him in contention heading into the final putting discipline, where he ultimately finished just one point behind Texas' Stephen Sanders, who won the national title in the Boys 10-11 division.

"I was just thinking that I always had a chance to win, and I had to focus on this next shot," said Mario.

Beyond its pristine appearance, Mario quickly learned that Augusta is even more challenging than it looks on television. Its dramatic slopes are difficult to see on

screen, and the greens play far faster than they appear.

Mario's father, David Vilardi, walked alongside Mario on the lush Augusta grassgrounds, prepared as it would be for the 90th Masters Tournament. Large crowds lining the paths stunned the pair moving through the grounds. Fans' applause enveloped father and son's every step - Augusta's treatment for all golfers, 7 years old or 70. Personnel gave the juniors their spotlight, from the welcome dinner, interviews, and live broadcast coverage. Mario played in front of the masses in Georgia and the Golf Channel audience at home. With thousands watching, he delivered the timely, clutch shots that he has become known for making.

"It's great what the Drive, Chip and Putt program is doing, giving these kids an opportunity to compete at Augusta, which is incredibly difficult to experience otherwise. Every detail was so precise. It was an incredible experience for both the kids and the families," said Dave, noting the 'unbelievable' welcome that the 80 junior golfers and their families received. At 18 years old, U.S. Amateur champion Mason Howell was the youngest competitor in

the Masters field. A high school senior, Mason is closer in age to the oldest Drive, Chip, and Putt competitors than the bulk of his competitors, and a shining example of the possibilities for hard-working young golfers.

There were many sweet spots beyond the staple peach-laden menu and the ice cream sundae Mario enjoyed from his trophy. He met his favorite golfer, Bryson DeChambeau, preparing for a sixth Masters appearance. As anyone who has met their sports hero knows, Mario's experience was exhilarating, fun, and mostly indescribable. Over dinner, Mario clicked quickly with Idaho native and fellow competitor Owen, over sports they enjoy and just being boys. After watching a Masters practice round, Mario's brush with the quick greens and green jackets came to a close.

Each moment—from the competition to the friendships he formed—was the result of a year of preparation and belief. For Mario, it was never a question of whether he would make it to Augusta, but when.

Continued on page 9

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# Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center showcases 3 new art exhibitions

The Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center will showcase three new art exhibitions in its galleries starting on May 1, continuing through June 30. Featured in the Victorian Gallery at 9 Vassar Street in Poughkeepsie, NY will be photographer Joel Mason. At 12 Vassar Street, Julian Allen will present his paintings in the Reception Gallery and Monika Kalra will display her multi-media work in the Hancock Gallery. Free Public Art Opening Receptions will be held in all three Art Galleries on Friday, May 8, from 5-7 p.m.

Joel Mason, who earned a BFA from Cooper Union and an MFA from Hunter College/CUNY, is Professor Emeritus in the department of Communication Design at New York City College of Technology/CUNY. Prior to his career as a design educator, he served as Director of Graphic Design for New York's Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Administration (PRCA). He later maintained a graphic design practice for clients including Citicorp, the New York State Department of Law, and the Alliance for the Public Schools. Mason's current work explores a range of ideas and interests from photography to lens-based digital photo prints and vector-based geometric systems.

"Looking through the view finder the first time I ever took a picture, I was immediately drawn to subjects resembling those I'd been composing with pencil, paint and paper," he remarks. "My understanding of subject matter deepened as I saw photography become a bridge between the physical world of things and those same things transformed into flat juxtaposed shapes."

Mason has exhibited his work at the Grace Gallery (Brooklyn, NY), Leubsdorf Gallery (Hunter College), Woodstock Artists Association and Museum, and at the Art Society of Kingston. He moved to the Hudson Valley in 2016 and currently resides in Kingston.

Julian Allen is a multidisciplinary artist working across illustration, painting, animation and music. He graduated from the Hartford Art School with a BFA and his creative journey is rooted in a deep passion for storytelling and expression through diverse mediums mainly using oil paint, graphite, charcoal and ink. "In my recent work, I explore themes of individuality and leadership, delving into the resilience of the human spirit and its ability to transcend limitations," he recants. "Through vivid imagery, dynamic compositions, and emotionally resonant narratives, I aim to challenge viewers to reflect on what it means to break free

and achieve the extraordinary...whether through the delicate interplay of color and form in my paintings or the precise detail of my illustrations, my art seeks to inspire action as much as reflection." Allen's work has been featured in exhibitions throughout the lower Hudson Valley, and is held in both private and public collections.

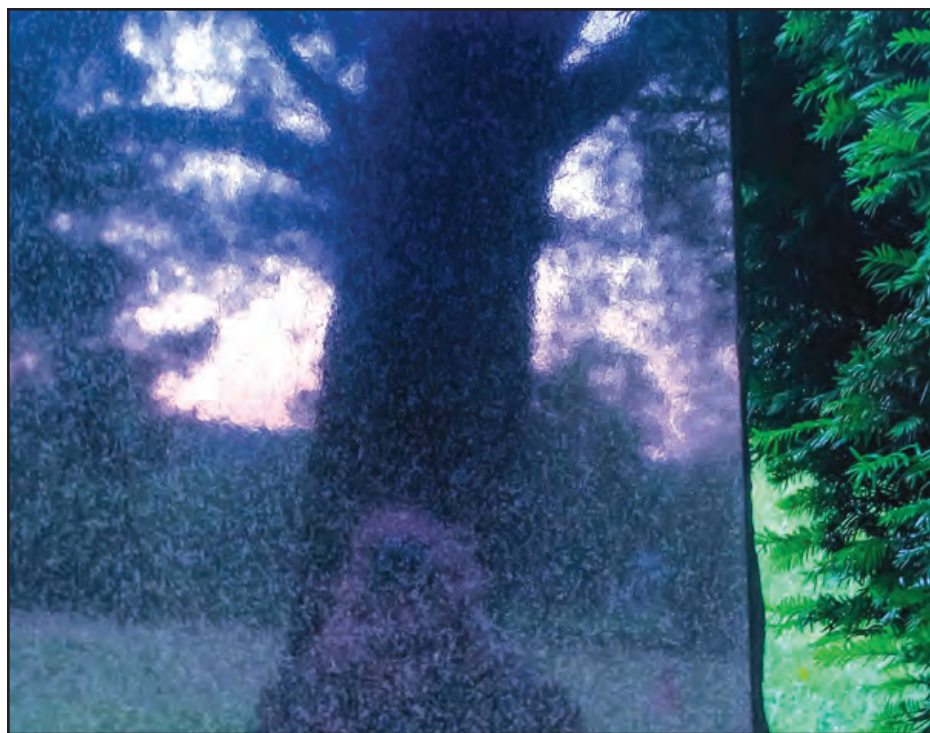
Monika Kalra is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores consciousness and inner transformation through a reflective journey within oneself. Born in Delhi and now based in New York, early in her career she founded the artistic fashion brand Monaara in London after working with major fashion houses.

Through her art, she invites viewers on a journey of inner transformation, self-discovery, and an authentic reflective experience she calls "The Eternal Expression."

She shares, "My purpose is to offer healing vibrations in a chaotic world, helping souls navigate challenges, rebuild inner strength, and emerge renewed." She continues, "Since 2001 and at a young age, I have practiced meditation with the Brahma Kumaris. Each composition is informed by extended periods of silence and inner observation allowing metaphysical insight to be translated into a refined visual language." She explains, "I attempt to create in a blissful and meditative state to manifest the impressions of spiritual vibrations and metaphysical experiences through art." Kalra's work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions across London, New York City, the Adirondacks, and Florida, reflecting a practice that moves between urban and contemplative environments.

Her recent exhibitions include the Spirituality and the Arts conference at the Harvard University Divinity School, the LABRC Sacred Arts program at Oxford University, UK, View Arts Center, and the Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts. She is currently a resident artist at Peace Village Learning and Retreat Center in NYS. With "Rosary of Victory," her recent body of work being exhibited at the Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center, she explores the spiritual perspective on the journey of gaining victory over the self.

She reflects, "Success is External, whereas Victory is Internal. True victory is when one is able to conquer the faculties of mind, intellect and impressions and become their master." The series traces the soul's progression through successive states of consciousness and transformation, inviting viewers to pause, center themselves, and reconnect with inner strength.



"Westford Split" by Joel Mason.

-Courtesy photos

The Victorian Gallery at 9 Vassar Street is open Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Hancock Gallery and Reception Gallery at 12 Vassar Street are open Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. but visitors should stop by 9 Vassar Street first or call the Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center Office at 845-486-4571 for access. The 12 Vassar Street Galleries are also open during events at the VBI Theatre. Visit the Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center website at

cunneen-hackett.org for more information on the artists exhibiting their work in the Visual Art Galleries.

The Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center is a non-profit organization whose mission for over four decades has been to meet the artistic and cultural needs of the Hudson Valley by showcasing professional and community artists in theatre, music, dance, and the visual arts, and to provide a variety of performance, exhibition, and office spaces.

## Feldman, Kleidman, Collins & Sappe LLP announces addition of Jordan M. Gwynn

Feldman, Kleidman, Collins & Sappe LLP (FKC&S), a leading personal injury and medical malpractice law firm in the Hudson Valley, has announced that Jordan M. Gwynn of Fishkill has joined the team as an associate attorney. For more than 40 years, FKC&S has represented clients in complex matters in state and federal courts throughout the Hudson Valley and Capital Region.

"Jordan brings a strong litigation background and a thoughtful, disciplined approach to his work," said Jeffrey M. Feldman, founding partner of FKC&S. "His courtroom experience and commitment to public service make him a valuable addition to our team and to the clients we serve."

Gwynn earned his Juris Doctor, cum laude, from Albany Law School, where he was a Dean's Scholarship recipient and served as an associate editor of the Albany Law Journal of Science and Technology. During law school, he gained experience through internships with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of New York, the Queens County District Attorney's Office, the Saratoga County District Attorney's Office and the Dutchess County Public Defender's Office.

Prior to joining FKC&S, Gwynn served as an assistant district attorney in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office. In that role, he managed a substantial caseload of felony and misdemeanor matters, handling cases from investigation through resolution. He regularly appeared in court for arraignments and hearings, presented numerous cases to the grand jury and has meaningful trial experience. His work included prosecuting violent crimes, including assaults and weapons



Jordan M. Gwynn

-Courtesy photo

offenses, as well as domestic violence, sex offenses, child abuse and financial crimes. He worked closely with law enforcement on investigations and charging decisions.

A Hudson Valley native, Gwynn was born in Kingston and earned a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from The College of Saint Rose, where he served as assistant director of undergraduate admissions for more than a year following his graduation. He is admitted to the New York State Bar and enjoys running, boxing, volunteering with his fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. and occasionally performing stand-up comedy.

that's italian!

by luigi coppola



# Miracle worker?

Luigi amazes Pop with his TV-fixing ability.

I had to go to my father's house and reset his cable box. It reminded me of something that happened a few years ago.

A while back, Pop called me in a full-scale, five-alarm panic — the kind of panic where he skips hello and goes straight into screaming like the house is sliding into the Atlantic.

**Pop** (on the phone): *LUIGI! THE TV — SHE'S DEAD! DEAD! COME QUICK!*

I didn't hear him say TV. I'm thinking: stroke, fall, chimney collapse; Momma threw a shoe at him — something serious. I race over like I'm responding to a hostage situation.

I walk in ... and Pop is standing over the cable box like it owes him money.

The thing has no lights, no power, no nothing. It's not even pretending to be alive.

Pop is pacing the living room like he's waiting for Maury to reveal whether he IS or IS NOT the father. The second I kneel down, he's hovering over me like I'm performing open-heart surgery on the rug.

**Pop:** Maybe you gotta smack it. Maybe the electricity shes a stuck. Maybe the wire is ascared. Maybe the cable company isa closed. Maybe the Russians did something. Maybe the Pope shut it off.

I finally turn around and say, "Pop ... go to your bedroom. I need privacy." Like I'm about to crack a safe.

He stomps off, muttering about how "in my day, we fix-a everything with pliers and a prayer."

Mom is sitting in her chair, arms crossed, smirking, watching this circus like it's her favorite show.

**Mom:** *He's gonna give YOU a heart attack someday, Luigi. The box shes a dead, HE'S the one having the funeral.*

Pop yells from the bedroom: *LUIGI! YOU NEED ANYTHING? A FLASH-LIGHT? A PRAYER? A SANDWICH?*

Momma rolls her eyes so hard she almost sprains something. What Pop doesn't know is ... I've got an ace up my

sleeve. I go to the spare bedroom, grab the backup cable box — the secret emergency unit — and swap it in. Two minutes. Done. No drama. No CPR. No séance. Just plug-and-play.

I call out: Pop, it's fixed.

He comes marching back in like a general returning from war. Sees the TV working. His whole face lights up like I just resurrected Julius Caesar.

**Pop:** *You're a genius!*

Mom doesn't miss a beat.

**Mom:** *Genius? He plugged in a box, Anthony. Relax.*

Pop ignores her, pats me on the back like I saved his life, gives me a loaf of bread and sits down triumphantly. But here's where it gets good. Ten minutes later, BOTH my brothers call me — separately — because Pop has already phoned each of them with his version of events

My phone rings. It's Brother #1.

**Brother #1:** "What did you do now? Pop said you performed surgery on the TV."

Before I can answer, my other brother calls on the other line.

**Brother #2:** "Luigi, Pop said you brought the cable box back from the dead. What the hell happened?"

I'm juggling calls like a customer service rep.

**Me:** "I swapped the box."

**Brother #1:** "That's it?"

**Brother #2:** "He made it sound like you rebuilt the Pentagon."

Meanwhile, in the background, Pop is yelling loud enough for BOTH of them to hear through the phone:

**Pop (yelling):** *HE'S-A GENIUS! HE FIX-A EVERYTHING! LIKE Marconi!*  
Momma shouts from her chair:

**Momma:** *Marconi? He plugged in a box, Anthony. Calm down before your topee falls off.*

And that's how, in one night, I became: **The Michelangelo of Cable Boxes**  
**The Marconi of the Hudson Valley**  
**And the family tech support hotline**  
All because Pop's cable box took a nap. Enjoy this recipe for a special loaf of bread.

### Rustic Italian Bread

- Ingredients**
- 4 cups Italian Type 0 flour or bread flour
  - 1 3/4 cups lukewarm water, added gradually
  - 2 tsp fine sea salt
  - 2 tsp dry yeast
  - 1 tsp sugar
  - 1 tbspx extra virgin olive oil

### Instructions

In a small bowl, dissolve the yeast in about 1/2 cup lukewarm water with the sugar. Let it sit 5-10 minutes until slightly foamy.

Place the flour in a large bowl. Add the yeast mixture and begin adding the remaining water gradually, mixing as you go. Add olive oil if using.

Stir until a shaggy dough forms, then add the salt. Continue mixing, adding

small amounts of water as needed, until the dough is soft and slightly tacky.

Transfer to a lightly floured surface and knead 8-10 minutes until smooth and elastic. Adjust with tiny amounts of water or flour only if necessary.

Shape into a ball and place in a lightly oiled bowl. Cover and let rise in a warm spot for about 2 hours, or until doubled.

Gently deflate the dough. Shape into one large rustic loaf or divide into two smaller loaves. Place on a parchment-lined sheet or in a floured proofing basket.

Cover and let rise again for 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Score the top of the loaf. For a crisp crust, place a small pan of hot water on the bottom rack. Bake 30-35 minutes until golden and hollow-sounding when tapped.

Transfer to a wire rack and let cool completely before slicing.

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

## Focus on each shot leads young Vilardi to golf's dream courses

Continued from page 6

"A part of our brain is like, 'Okay, yes, we want that too, but gosh, we have to also keep realistic expectations,'" said David. "And then he was just a point away [from winning]. He knows how difficult it is to get back there and what it takes, but that's his goal for next year."

"Who wouldn't want to go back to Augusta, right?" said Mario's mother, Louisa Vilardi.

And it was there on the world's biggest golf stage that Mario's mindset shifted. He visualized winning it all.

The family journeys next to the Golf Coast of Scotland, where Mario will join other top juniors at the 17th annual U.S. Kids Golf European Championship. This invitational promises unfamiliar terrain and the signature windy, winding Scottish fairways. Neither fazes this young golfer.

"I never really know the course [where I play]. So I just think about playing my best," said Mario.

The Vilardis will continue to support Mario's dream at every turn. To take the flights, carry the bag, and witness each milestone alongside him. Especially if that means a return to next year's Drive,



*Hopewell Junction resident Mario Vilardi during the Drive, Chip and Putt National Finals in Georgia.*

-Courtesy photo

Chip, and Putt National Finals, where Mario plans to take the title.

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# Obituaries

## Addison Goodson



Addison Thomas Goodson, III, a resident of Beacon, New York since 2005, passed away peacefully at home on April 19, 2026. He was 69 years old.

Born on September 15, 1956, in New York City, Addison was the son of the late Addison Thomas Goodson, Jr. and Elizabeth Govern Goodson. He grew up in a family deeply connected to public service and education. His mother was a dedicated educator in the New York Public School System, and his father worked for the New York City Library System.

Addison attended the Bronx High School of Science, where he thrived alongside his siblings in the city's public school system. During his youth, he spent summers working at the Henry Street Settlement, an early reflection of his lifelong commitment to community service. He later received a full New York State Regents Academic Scholarship and graduated from Southampton College, a campus of Long Island University.

Addison spent time living in Los Angeles, where he co-founded and helped develop a restaurant job training program at the St. Joseph Center in Venice Beach. The program trained unhoused individuals in both front- and back-of-house restaurant skills and became the foundation for the now-renowned Bread & Roses Café. Addison also co-chaired several charitable fundraisers, bringing together notable members of the Hollywood community to support the program. Throughout his life, he remained a passionate community organizer, activist, and advocate, and also served as an Ombudsman.

A man of many talents and passions, Addison was especially devoted to writing poetry. He began composing as a child and continued throughout his life, sharing his work through readings at the Howland Cultural Center and other local venues. He also had a lifelong love of soccer, playing locally with the United Football Club of Beacon and supporting his favorite teams, Manchester United and FC Barcelona.

Addison loved to travel and experience different cultures. He was known for his roguish wit and gallows humor, bringing laughter and light to those around him. He is survived by his beloved wife, Nilufer Goodson; his son, Addison T. Goodson IV; his sister, Klair Ethridge and her husband Ben; his brother, Marc Gaynor and his wife, Anna; several nieces and nephews; and many friends and community members who will miss him dearly.

In addition to his parents, Addison was predeceased by his daughter, Gamze Merih Goodson, and his brother, Peter Shephard. A celebration of Addison's life was held on Thursday, April 23 at Nilufer's Home Kitchen, 135 Main Street, Beacon. A community fundraising effort to support his wife Nilufer can be found at: <https://gofund.me/3c2664d86>

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

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

## Denise Marie Lukavic



Denise Marie Lukavic, 52, resident of Bristol, CT for 25 years and formerly of Wappingers Falls, NY, passed away Monday, February 9, 2026, at the Smilow Cancer Center at Yale New Haven Hospital in New Haven, CT, after a long battle with lung cancer. She was born October 9, 1973, in Sleepy Hollow, NY, daughter of John and Lynn Lukavic of Wappingers Falls, NY.

Denise graduated from Roy C. Ketcham Senior High School in Wappingers Falls, NY, class of '91. She played softball for the town of Wappinger and RCK High School. She then went on to graduate from Dutchess Community College with an Associate's Degree. Denise had worked her entire career in the footwear industry. Recently Denise had become a TikTok content creator,

where she developed a loving and supportive community which was about sharing landscape videos with a focus on water. She was also an active member of Terryville Fish and Game Club in Connecticut, where she served on the board.

Denise is survived by her partner, Thomas Markwica; her parents John and Lynn Lukavic; her brother John P. Lukavic (Jennifer); her nieces Nora and Mary Grace Lukavic; her uncle Robert Lukavic; her aunts Joanne Trotter (Pete) and Dianne Lyles; her cousins James Lyles, Dawn Suter, Lisa Ruiz, Jeanine Suter and Angela Johnson. She was preceded in death by grandparents, Rodrick E. Suter, Helen B. Suter, Joseph F. Lukavic, and Anna C. Lukavic; her uncles, John T. Suter and Roy E. Suter, and her cousin Peter Michael Trotter.

Her family will gather with friends to celebrate her life on Monday, May 11, 2026 from 5-7pm at DELEHANTY FUNERAL HOME, 64 East Main Street, Wappingers Falls, NY, where a prayer service will be offered at 7PM. Interment will follow on Tuesday, May 12th at 1PM in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, 540 N. Broadway, Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591.

In lieu of flowers, the family wishes for memorial donations to be made in Denise's memory to the American Lung Association - Hudson Valley Chapter, 35 Orchard Street, White Plains, NY 10603. To offer a message of condolence or share a fond memory, please visit: [www.DelehantyFuneral.com](http://www.DelehantyFuneral.com).

## Theresa Morgan



Theresa Morgan, a lifelong Village of Wappingers Falls resident, passed away peacefully on April 23, 2026; at the age of 100. She was born at St. Francis Hospital in Poughkeepsie, NY on January 17, 1926, daughter of the late Santo and Marianna (Brescia) Ruggiero.

Theresa grew up in the City of Poughkeepsie where her father had a floral business with two greenhouses.

Theresa was awarded a scholarship to the Colorado Springs Art Academy, where she pursued her passion in art, and while out west she met the love of her life, Cecil Morgan. On September 10, 1946, in New Mexico, she married Cecil, who predeceased her on December 11, 1976 after 30-years of marriage.

Theresa and Cecil moved back to New York and opened a flower shop in the Village

of Wappingers Falls in 1949, which the family has continued to this day.

Theresa was an accomplished artist and floral designer. She was an avid cat lover. Having adopted and saved scores of cats. She brought much happiness to this world through flowers and art.

Theresa is survived by her son, Stephen Morgan and his partner JoAnn Sifo; her daughter, Rosemary La Susa and her husband Ronald. She is also survived by her two grandsons Jay Canez and Jacob Morgan; her three great-grandchildren, Michael Kenney, Jack and Matthew Canez; and several nieces, nephews and friends.

Along with her husband and parents, Theresa was predeceased by a granddaughter Theresa Rose Kenney in 2007. She is also predeceased by her two brothers Samuel and John Ruggiero.

Her Family received Friends on Tuesday, April 28th at DELEHANTY FUNERAL HOME, 64 East Main Street, Wappingers Falls, New York. A Mass of Christian Burial will be offered 10am, Wednesday, April 29th at St. Mary Church, 11 Clinton Street, Wappingers Falls, followed by interment in St. Mary's Parish Cemetery.

Her Family wishes for memorial donations be made 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](http://www.DelehantyFuneral.com).

## GIVE BLOOD GIVE LIFE



### Who needs blood?

Under normal circumstances, every two seconds someone in America will need a blood transfusion. Blood transfusions are used for trauma victims - due to accidents and burns - heart surgery, organ transplants, women with complications during childbirth, newborns and premature babies, and patients receiving treatment for leukemia, cancer or other diseases, such as sickle cell disease and thalassemia.

# Past chief of 2 local fire departments remembered

Local resident Timothy Laffin died at the age 60 on April 16. Laffin was a lifelong Village of Wappingers Falls resident.

"It is with profound sadness that the Hughsonville Fire Department announces the passing of our Past Chief of Department, Timothy Laffin.

Past Chief Laffin joined the Hughsonville Fire Department in 2001. He quickly advanced through the ranks, being elected Assistant Chief in 2008, a position he held with distinction for six years. In 2014, he was elected by the membership to serve as Chief of Department. He became a Life Member of the Hughsonville Fire Company in 2017," the Hughsonville Fire Department posted in part on social media.

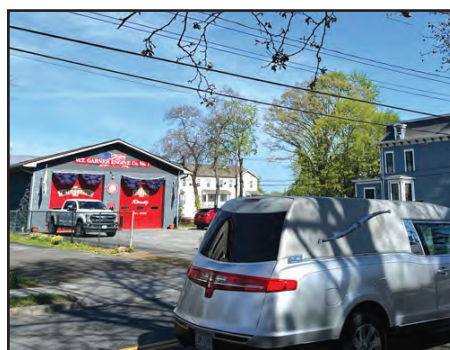
W.T. Garner Engine Co. #1 in

Wappingers Falls, where Laffin was also a past chief, posted on Facebook, "Chief Laffin was a dedicated leader, a respected mentor, and a true brother to all who had the privilege of serving alongside him. His commitment to the department and the community will never be forgotten. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends and also the Hughsonville Fire Department."

Late last week the department posted, "Chief, your mentorship and leadership will be dearly missed. We know you'll be watching over us every time the fire whistle blows.

Rest easy, Chief. We'll take it from here."

Laffin is survived by his sisters, brother, nieces, nephews and friends.



A funeral procession made its way down Route 9D past W.T. Garner Engine Co. #1 on April 23 in honor of late fire chief Timothy Laffin, a Wappingers Falls resident, who died at the age of 60 on April 16. The procession began at Delehanty Funeral Home and ended at St. Mary's Church.

-Photos by Kristine Coulter

- Southern Dutchess News  
 - Beacon Free Press  
 • Northern Dutchess News

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 & Beacon Free Press

We are not responsible for typographical errors.  
 A letter of correction will be supplied if requested.

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### 401 Apartments for Rent

#### COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMS, INC- WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY

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#### DIMARCO PLACE I, WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY

One (1) bedroom apartment AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY, rent is \$1,768.00 per month and a one month security deposit. Rent includes electric for lights, cooking, air conditioning (wall-thru air conditioners provided), heat, hot water, water, sewer and trash collection. Tenant is responsible for cable, phone and internet service. All household members must be 55 years or older or disabled. Credit/Criminal Background Check is required. Property is SMOKE-FREE. Income restrictions apply. Please call (845) 297-2004 for an application.

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THREE (3) bedroom apartment AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY, rent is \$1,764.00 per month or join SHORT WAIT LIST for Two (2) bedroom apartment, current rent is \$1,540.00. One month security deposit is required. Tenant is responsible for electric for lights, cooking air conditioning (wall-thru air conditioners provided) as well as cable, phone and internet service. Included in rent is heat, hot water, water, sewer and trash collection. Credit/Criminal Background Check is required. Property is SMOKE-FREE. Income restrictions apply. Please call (845) 297-2004 for an application.



#### MEADOW RIDGE II SENIOR RESIDENCE, Beacon, NY

One (1) bedroom apartment AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY, rent is \$1,507.00 per month or join SHORT WAIT LIST for Two (2) bedroom apartment, current rent is \$1,575.00. One month security deposit is required. Tenant is responsible for electric for lights, cooking and air conditioning (wall-thru air conditioners provided) as well as cable, phone and internet service. Included in rent is heat, hot water, water, sewer and trash collection. All household members must be 62 years or older. Credit/Criminal Background Check is required. Property is SMOKE-FREE. Income restrictions apply. Please call (845) 297-2004 for an application.

#### HIGHLAND MEADOWS SENIOR RESIDENCE, Beacon, NY

AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY. One (1) bedroom apartment, rent is \$1,247.00 per month and Two (2) bedroom apartment, rent is \$1,561.00. One month security deposit required. Tenant is responsible for cable, phone and internet service. Included in rent is electric, heat, hot water, water, sewer and trash collection. All household members must be 62 years or older. Credit/Criminal Background Check is required. Property is SMOKE-FREE. Income restrictions apply. Please call (845) 297-2004 for an application.

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# Abilities First and Foundation for Abilities First NY announce 2026 Recognition Reception Honorees

Abilities First and the Foundation for Abilities First NY celebrate the announcement of the 2026 Honorees for the 2026 Recognition Reception, taking place on Wednesday, June 3, at Locust Grove in Poughkeepsie. This evening is dedicated to honoring those who make a difference in the lives of the people we serve, whose generosity, vision, and commitment help transform our mission of empowerment and inclusion into everyday reality.

### Distinguished 2026 honorees include: Business Partner of the Year - The Culinary Institute of America

Few partnerships reflect the spirit of inclusion as beautifully as the one we share with the Culinary Institute of America. The CIA has opened its doors, and its kitchens to the people we serve, creating real pathways to skill-building, dignity, and belonging. What makes this partnership truly extraordinary is the CIA's commitment not only to providing hands-on learning experiences in the culinary and hospitality trades, but to actively hiring the individuals we support offering meaningful employment and real careers in a world-class environment. Their belief that everyone deserves both a seat at the table and the opportunity to help set it is a testament to what inclusive partnership can look like at its finest.

**Volunteer of the Year - Michelle Smith**  
True volunteerism is born from the heart, and Michelle Smith's heart has always been with Abilities First. As a dedicated volunteer, a generous philanthropic contributor, and a trusted leader serving as both a board member and Treasurer of the Foundation for Abilities First NY, Michelle gives herself in every sense — her time, her resources, and her strategic vision. Her financial stewardship has helped ensure the long-term sustainability of programs that change lives every day, while her hands-on presence reminds the people, we serve that they are valued, seen, and celebrated. We are deeply grateful

for everything Michelle brings to this mission.

### Community Partner of the Year - Paul Lloyd

Paul Lloyd exemplifies what it means to be a true community partner — someone who doesn't just support a cause from a distance, but actively works to build a more inclusive, welcoming world. His steadfast advocacy for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and his dedication to removing barriers wherever he finds them, embodies the kind of change that transforms lives. We are proud to recognize Paul for the extraordinary difference he continues to make.

### Friend of Abilities First Award - Poughkeepsie Elks Lodge 275

For the young people we serve, a prom is more than a party. It is a milestone, a memory, and a powerful reminder that they deserve every joy that life has to offer. Year after year, the Poughkeepsie Elks Lodge No. 275 has made that moment possible, opening their doors and their hearts to host an annual prom that is nothing short of magical for our students. At the center of it all is member Jane Anderson, whose dedication, creativity, and extraordinary attention to detail transforms this event into a truly one-of-a-kind celebration. Jane goes above and beyond, every single year, to ensure that every student feels seen, celebrated, and cherished. The Elks' continued commitment to our youth is a gift beyond measure, and we are so honored to call them friends.

### Abilities First Person of the Year - Staci Diliberto

Staci Diliberto is extraordinary. Every day, with grace, determination, and an inspiring spirit, Staci demonstrates what is possible when a person is supported, believed in, and given the opportunity to thrive. Nominated by the dedicated staff who have had the privilege of working alongside her, Staci's journey is a testament to the power of resilience



Volunteer of the Year Michelle Smith and Paul Lloyd will be honored during Abilities First and Foundation for Abilities First NY 2026 Recognition Reception in June.

-Courtesy photos

and the remarkable things that happen when we refuse to let any barrier define what someone can achieve. Her story does not just inspire those around her — it elevates our entire mission. We are so proud and so honored to celebrate Staci.

### Accessibility Innovation Partner of the Year - Adaptive Design Hudson Valley

What sets Adaptive Design Hudson Valley apart is not just their ingenuity — it is their heart. Every adaptive piece they create is handmade and thoughtfully personalized to the unique needs of each individual child, with meticulous attention to fit, comfort, and function. They take the time to truly know each child, ensuring that every design solution is as individual as the person it serves. That level of care, the kind that cannot be rushed or replicated — is what transforms a piece of equipment into a tool for

independence and a source of dignity. We are deeply grateful for their partnership and proud to honor an organization whose commitment to every child they touch is nothing short of extraordinary.

"It is humbling to look at this year's honorees and see the depth of dedication that surrounds our mission. Paul Lloyd, Michelle Smith, Staci Diliberto, the Poughkeepsie Elks Lodge 275, Adaptive Design and the Culinary Institute of America — these are the people and organizations who make Abilities First's work not just possible, but extraordinary," Jeffery Fox, Ph.D., President & CEO, Abilities First, Inc.

For information about event sponsorship, tickets, and congratulatory digital journal ad opportunities, please contact JoAnn Parker, Director of Development, at joannparker@abilitiesfirstny.org.

## Heart Walk raises 'critical funds'

According to the American Heart Association, a relentless force changing the future of health for everyone everywhere, approximately 436,000 Americans die from cardiac arrest each year — most often outside a hospital. Bystander CPR can double or triple a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival, yet fewer than half receive it, highlighting a critical gap in community preparedness. To support the Association's efforts to enhance CPR readiness and build a community of lifesavers in the Hudson Valley, more than 300 people gathered at the Hudson Valley Heart Walk™ on Saturday, April 25, at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, raising critical funds and learning lifesaving CPR skills.

This year's Heart Walk brought together heart disease and stroke survivors, participants from local companies and other community members to learn the lifesaving skills of Hands-Only CPR, celebrate local survivors and support the mission of

the Association. Paul Craft, retired Ellenville Police Officer, shared his story about surviving sudden cardiac arrest. His future son-in-law, John Paulsen, started CPR while first responders were on their way. Craft received a Lifestyle Change Award for improving his health after his sudden cardiac arrest, and Paulsen received a Heart Saver Hero Award at the Walk.

Gabe and Rei Saki, 10 and 6 years old, and born with congenital heart defects, were the Heart Heroes of the Walk.

Craft and the Saki children beat the Heart Walk drum on stage. Survivors also beat the drum at the end of the Walk, reminding everyone of the importance of keeping heartbeats strong.

This year's top fundraising companies included Ellenville Regional Hospital, Laerdal Medical and Medline. The newly introduced Torch Torphy will live at Ellenville Regional Hospital until next year's Heart Walk season.

## 'Highlights of Dutchess County Sports' set for April 30

The Sports Museum of Dutchess County, in partnership with the Poughkeepsie Public Library District, will host "Highlights of Dutchess County Sports" at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 30 at the Boardman Road Branch Library, 141 Boardman Road, in

Poughkeepsie. The Sports Museum of Dutchess County President Bill Ponte and Board member Morgan E. Maier will offer the presentation.

Registration is required. Visit [poklib.org](http://poklib.org) for more information.

## Verplanck Garden Club to host annual plant sale on May 9

The Verplanck Garden Club will host its annual plant sale on Saturday, May 9 on the lower level of the Fishkill Town Hall, 807 Route 52, in Fishkill.

The sale is from 9 a.m. to noon. It is suggested one comes early for the best selection.

## Women's Parish Club to host annual Spring Garage and Rummage Sale

The Women's Parish Club of St. Joachim-St. John the Evangelist Church will be holding its Annual Spring Garage and Rummage Sale. The sale will take place in St. Joachim's gymnasium, Leonard Street, in Beacon.

Sale dates are:  
·Thursday, May 14, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
·Friday, May 15, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
·Saturday, May 16, 9 a.m. to Noon  
Browse the "Red Carpet" section with new and gently used brand named items! Bring a friend! Shop and enjoy a leisurely lunch. There will be many choices on the menu.

## this week's puzzle solutions

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

This week's answer  
**SUDOKU**

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

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

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

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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

				<b>5</b>	
		<b>4</b>			
		<b>5</b>			
<b>2</b>				<b>5</b>	
	<b>3</b>		<b>1</b>		

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

**THEME: LEGENDARY ATHLETES**

**ACROSS**

1. Capital of Tibet
6. Templeton of "Charlotte's Web"
9. Maisie Williams on "Game of Thrones"
13. Poisonous plant
14. UN labor grp.
15. George Orwell to Eric Arthur Blair
16. Movie genre
17. Shark part
18. Ax mark
19. \*First Native American to win Olympic Gold
21. \*The Great One of hockey
23. Be indisposed
24. Disfigure
25. Du Bois' initials
28. Hoodwink
30. Baking soda
35. Bypass
37. "Breaking Bad" product
39. Spelunker
40. Orchestra member
41. Charles Dickens' "\_\_\_\_\_ House"
43. Family room staple
44. Like United States Capitol
46. "Cogito \_\_\_\_\_ sum"
47. Tongue-\_\_\_\_\_
48. Stockholm dwellers
50. \*Tiger Woods has won this award the most times
52. On the wagon
53. Silage
55. Almond-induced state?
57. \*Jordan or Phelps
61. \*Female player with most Open Era Grand Slams
64. Infant's woe
65. Seafood selection
67. Practical
69. Stopped sleeping
70. Pigeon sound
71. \*Most decorated gymnast
72. Red, or excessively bureaucratic, one
73. End of a fuse?
74. Balance sheet entry

**DOWN**

1. Drug in "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas"
2. John Mellencamp's "\_\_\_\_\_ So Good"
3. Nanny in East Asia
4. Polynesian island country
5. Tick or mite
6. Abundant
7. \*Boxer a.k.a. The People's Champion
8. Kingdom in South Pacific
9. Loads (2 words)
10. Nabisco cracker
11. Noisy talk
12. Like Zombie's skin color
15. Low on hemoglobin
20. Perfectly vertical
22. Adam's body part
24. Measured, like electricity on utility bill
25. \*Tied for most PGA Tour wins
26. Curve like a bow
27. Biotic community
29. \*O Rei of soccer
31. Throw a line
32. Steer clear of
33. Send to a specialist, e.g.
34. \*NFL's 7-time Super Bowl champion
36. Got ready to drive
38. Old witches, usually
42. Small steep-sided hill, in Africa
45. Vandalize
49. Johnny Nash's "I Can \_\_\_\_\_ See Clearly Now"
51. West African people
54. Choose by vote
56. Abominable snowmen
57. Med. sch. requirement
58. \*Hall of Famer Bob Feller's home state
59. Hoofbeat sound
60. Nature walk
61. Narrow aperture
62. Zilches
63. Away from wind
66. Many, many moons
68. Approx.

**CROSSWORD**

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13						14				15				
16						17				18				
	19				20			21	22					
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40						41				42		43		
44				45		46						47		
48					49		50			51		52		
					53		54			55		56		
57	58	59	60						61				62	63
64							65	66			67			68
69							70				71			
72							73				74			

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# HUDSON VALLEY NATURALIST

by FRANCINE WIZNER



# A little neighing and braying about mules



*Snookie, a mini mule, will greet humans from a distance. It lives in a herd with other mules, donkeys and miniature horses.*



*Abby lives with Snookie in a mixed herd. She is quiet and curious, and will engage if you approach slowly, with patience.*



*Chicklet is a young mini mule who is settling into herd life.*



*Bailey, a standard mule (and a timid soul), with Zeus the donkey. They live in a small equine herd.*  
*-Photos courtesy of 13 Hands Equine Rescue*

Wild populations of horses and donkeys don't typically occupy the same territory. If they are in contact, behavioral differences usually prevent them from mating. Therefore, the product of their mixed parentage, a mule, is rare in nature. But, they are created through human intervention, since they are valued for being both strong and hardy.

Mules are built for packing. Their situational hesitation, mistaken for stubbornness, is actually caution. Mules are favored for their sure-footedness and calm demeanor on steep, narrow trails. Their genetic combination endows them with dense, resilient muscles, boxy hooves, and efficient metabolisms. They have high stamina for sustained work.

**Math and Science**  
Mules are sterile because they have 63 chromosomes. Reproductive cell division in mammals can't be achieved with an odd number of chromosomes. Mules are offspring of female horses, with 32 pairs of chromosomes (64 total), and male donkeys, with 31 pairs of chromosomes (62 total). Mules inherit half from each parent—32 from the horse and 31 from the donkey. They have 31 pairs, and one extra.

Even if mules had an even number of chromosomes, their "donkey chromosomes" and "horse chromosomes" are genetically incompatible for making eggs and sperm. That is what defines horses and donkeys as separate species from each other.

In fact, a species is a group of individuals that can breed with each other to produce fertile offspring. Mules are not a species. They are an equine hybrid resulting from a mare (female) and a jack (male). A hinny is another kind of equine hybrid resulting from a stallion (male horse) and a jenny (female donkey).

**Horsing around**  
If two different chefs were to bake "hybrid bread" from a horse and a donkey, there would be two very different results. A "mare-chef" would bake a "mule-loaf," with her DNA as the "base" and a jack's DNA as the "mix-in." The result would have a sturdy crust and bold seasoning. A "jenny-chef" would bake a "hinny-brioche," with her DNA as the "base" and a stallion's DNA as the "mix-in." The result would be a finer crumb and mellow flavor.

A mother's womb and mitochondrial DNA have a massive influence on the offspring. A mare is larger and produces a more robust mule; a jenny, with a smaller uterus, will produce a diminutive hinny. (Important point: Hinnies are rare because of the size mismatch between stallions and jennies).

**History**  
The first mules were bred in what is now Northern Turkey in c. 3000 BCE. Ancient Egyptian carvings show mules being commonly used as pack animals (c. 1350 BCE). Other cultures viewed mules as luxury items. The Hittites (c. 1700 BCE-1180 BCE) valued mules at three times the worth of a chariot horse. In Sumeria (c. 3000 BCE -2000 BCE), a mule cost seven times as much as a donkey!

### Cloning mules advanced cancer research

Cloning occurs in nature. It is how bacteria and yeasts reproduce. Plant clones include runners, tubers, and bulbs. Some lizards and bees are clones. Less frequently, mammals have identical twins.

Artificial cloning is used to replicate agricultural crops and livestock to satisfy global food demand. Genes and stem cells are cloned to produce insulin, develop vaccines, and study disease. While human reproductive cloning is legally restricted, animal cloning is managed through food safety and welfare standards that vary by country.

The first cloned mule, named Idaho Gem, was delivered May 4, 2003. His creation was driven by the fact that mules are sterile hybrids. While seeking to replicate an elite racing mule, researchers discovered that manipulating calcium levels was the secret to successful embryo division. This breakthrough offered major benefits for cancer research, as equine resistance to tumors may be linked to how they regulate calcium during cell growth. Consequently, a project born from the desire for a faster racing mule provided a path for potentially suppressing human cancer.

### Mules of Dutchess County

13 Hands Equine Rescue cares for more than 150 miniature horses, draft horses, donkeys, and mules. They specialize in slaughter-bound, abused, or abandoned horses, including many wild Mustangs. The non-profit is dedicated to rehabilitating and rehoming horses in need. Check out their upcoming events: <https://13handsequine.org/upcoming-events/>

There is a common thread among mules, says Volunteer Adoption Liaison Angela Zappavigna: "They are tough. They require extra patience and time, as well as gentle and consistent handling."

One event the organization is hosting is Help a Horse Day 2026. Scheduled for June 6 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., guests of all ages and levels of horse experience are welcome to come meet the farm animals. It will be a day packed with fun, including live music, delicious food and drinks, local artisans and vendors, educational demonstrations, and of course: MULES!

*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>.*

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