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'Roots of Liberty' garden project honors America's 250th



This AI-generated image depicts the gardens at Mount Gulian Historic Site as they will appear by mid-summer. The red, white and blue combination will be repeated at all the gardens, albeit using different flower types.

-Courtesy image

The Verplanck Garden Club (VGC) of Fishkill will honor the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence by creating seven new gardens at important historic locations in Fishkill and Beacon. Featuring red, white and blue flowers, the seven gardens will be anchored by a 5-foot-tall colonial soldier silhouette, crafted of metal. Each soldier is uniquely designed to hold a flag, a musket, or a drum.

The "Roots of Liberty" garden project, is partially funded by the Verplanck Garden Club and by the Town of Fishkill, who will later place the statues in their Garden of Heroes at the Town Hall complex. The soldier silhouettes were manufactured and installed by Robert Van Winkle, a master metal-worker and restorer of important statues such as Sybil Luddington, another famous Revolutionary-era heroine.

Mr. Van Winkle is world-renowned for his work on refurbishment of statues at many locations, both in the US and internationally. His careful work of restoration has been deployed at Shakespeare's birthplace at Stratford-on-Avon in England with statues of MacBeth, The Tempest and Caesar. Seventeen statues created by the Art Students League that were originally installed and displayed in NYC, were later donated by the Florida Arts Council to be installed by Mr. Van Winkle in Key West, Florida. Locally, he installed the Daniel Nimham statue in Fishkill. "It was our delight to find out that Bob lives and works in Fishkill and we are honored to have his talent and keen knowledge of history deployed on this project," said Katherine Gambino, Chair of the Roots of Liberty project.

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Jim Crifo of East Fishkill at 100: POW and World War II hero



Jim Crifo of East Fishkill, pictured at right in his military uniform during World War II, participated in the D-Day operation and additional combat missions. One of those missions involved taking part in "glider assaults" and landing with men and equipment behind enemy lines. Crifo was captured and spent time as a Prisoner of War and was liberated in May of 1945.

-Courtesy photos



Editor's note: As we prepare to honor our fallen soldiers on Memorial Day, we present the following - an account of one soldier's days during World War II.

By Jim Donick

James (Jim) Crifo of East Fishkill is no longer a young man. He's a hundred years old and no longer likely to be able to jump out of an airplane into a hostile land as he did over 80 years ago just after midnight on D-Day.

Crifo had been training as an electrician when he was drafted. The skills he had been learning were in great demand by the military as they were the key to establishing and maintaining communications

among units throughout the world and particularly in the heat of combat. Crifo ended up in the 101st Airborne Division as a communications specialist. First, though, he had to learn the dangerous skills of being a parachutist.

The story of D-Day has been told in these pages before. This massive effort included parachutists landing behind the beaches in the middle of the night to secure the exits from the beaches and to keep the enemy from being able to mount a counter attack. The 101st dropped behind Utah Beach just after midnight and they secured the town of Saint-Mere Eglise, France and the roads passing through it. Being a communications spe-

cialist, Crifo was in the first echelon, the first guys to land. He jumped into the dark that night and, once on the ground, went to work. One of his colleagues ended up hanging from the top of the church in the center of the village, others ended up in trees or flooded fields where a number drowned. It was a long night for the men of the 101st - fighting for their lives, waiting for the dawn and trusting that the landings on the beach would soon bring them relief. Their actions that night are the stuff of legends. Jim Crifo played his part bravely.

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Spring Antiques at Fairgrounds on May 23-24

Barn Star Productions and Frank Gaglio are thrilled to announce the return of the Spring Antiques at Rhinebeck Show, opening to the public on the Memorial Day Weekend - Saturday, May 23, and Sunday, May 24 - at the historic Dutchess County Fairgrounds in Rhinebeck.

Recognized as one of the Hudson Valley's premier antiques events, the show will once again fill three spacious and well-ventilated buildings with an exceptional collection of antiques, vintage finds, art, collectibles, and design from across the globe and throughout the centuries.

This spring's show promises one of Rhinebeck's most exciting lineups yet, welcoming several outstanding new exhibitors alongside many longtime favorites, creating a vibrant and visually inspiring shopping experience for collectors, designers, historians, decorators, and treasure hunters alike.

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Unique and interesting pieces of furniture will be among the attractions at the annual Antiques at Rhinebeck at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds this weekend.

-Courtesy photos

Jim Crifo of East Fishkill at 100: POW and World War II hero

Continued from cover

France never forgot. In 2015 on July 3rd, Crifo was taken to New York City to be honored by the French Government with that country's highest military or civilian honor, the "Légion d'honneur."

After D-Day, the war was hardly over for Crifo or the men of the 101st. He transferred to glider assault. Though still in the 101st, he would arrive at the scene of the battle in a glider that also carried equipment, sometimes a jeep, sometimes a trailer of equipment or other material. The gliders that were used were built by Waco aviation of mostly wood and fabric. They were towed behind a C-47 or other transport plane and cut loose near to the target area. The glider pilot then flew the craft to the ground and more or less crash landed it in what they hoped would be a big enough farmer's field to keep the landing survivable. The gliders were nicknamed "flying coffins" for just this reason. It was one-way ticket to the battle and the pilot only had one chance to land it safely. With no engine, there was no chance to go around again and look for a better spot.

In September of 1944, Crifo and his division were assigned to take part in a major offensive to capture a large part of occupied Netherlands and to secure a significant bridge across the Rhine River and open a route for the invasion of Germany. It was called "Operation Market Garden." The operation was later immortalized in the movie "A Bridge Too Far." That bridge was a British goal and it was not taken.

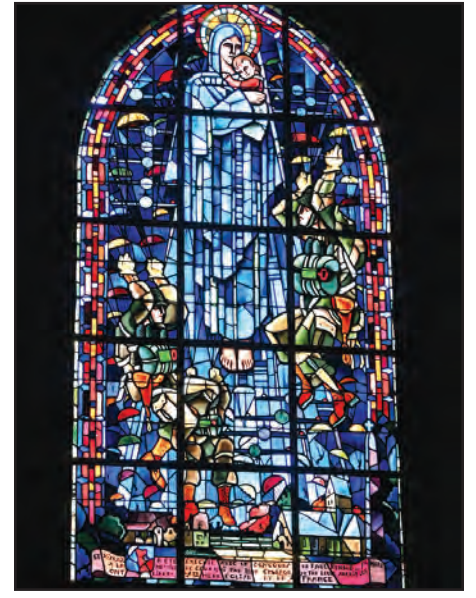
Crifo's glider carried a pilot, six soldiers, and a trailer of communications equipment. When they made their crash landing, there were Germans nearby. Crifo and his colleagues exited the glider and quickly came under fire. He and two others returned fire while the other four managed to escape into the woods. Crifo



was captured and the two with him were killed. The Germans might have killed him on the spot, but took him prisoner, "likely for information. I was the only one left. They interviewed me. I didn't tell them anything," he recalls.

During his period as a prisoner, he was moved a couple of times, ending up in a work camp. When asked what he thought about in that period, he says, "It took a lot out of me ... the way you think changes. You feel a little hope that you'll get home someday." Late in his captivity, Crifo got sick and was transferred to a German hospital. It was there he was liberated in May of 1945. His biggest regret? "I put my mom through so much. First she heard I was missing in action and then, later, that I was a POW. That's my only regret, that I put my mom through so much."

Crifo was honored by the Town of East Fishkill this spring. The whole town celebrated this local hero. Asked what advice he might offer, he noted "Just be grateful that you're alive and able to do the things you want ... and to do them well ... and be good to people when you can."



During the D-Day operation, Jim Crifo and his colleagues parachuted behind Utah Beach. One of Crifo's fellow soldiers ended up hanging from the top of the church in the center of the village of Sainte-Mere Eglise, France. The mannequin above and other displays pictured are in Sainte-Mere Eglise, a reminder of when soldiers in the 101st Airborne dropped in after midnight on D-Day.

-Photos by Jim Donick

'Roots of Liberty' garden project honors America's 250th



Soldier silhouettes have been installed at various historical sites selected for the Roots of Liberty project by the Verplanck Garden Club. The Fishkill sites include the First Reformed Church (pictured here), the Van Wyck Homestead Museum, Trinity Church, the Rombout Rural Cemetery, the Brinkerhoff Inn, the Daniel Nimham statue, and in Beacon, the Madam Brett homestead and Mount Gulian.

-Courtesy photo

Continued from cover

Each garden is chaired by club members who will draw upon the larger membership of the VGC to do the planting of the more than 970 flowers including blue Salvias, white Vincas, red Impatiens, and other selections optimal for the sun/shade conditions of any given site.

Donna Shelley-Baumler, a VGC member, has deployed her drafting and horticultural skills to plan each garden and derive estimate plant counts. She is working with our local nursery provider, Sunny Gardens, to source the plants. "It was a pleasure to design the seven patriotic gardens and select the appropriate colorful flowers. I am honored to have been part of this project celebrating the Town of Fishkill and its contribution to our nation's birth," said Donna Shelley-Baumler.

The other planning committee members -- Amy Mackenzie, Diane Gil, Cecilia Schnackenberg, Patricia Quiana, Mary Ann Martinez, Bonnie Detweiler, and JoAnn Norris -- positioned and marked the garden locations with the input of the historical site boards of directors.

Gil remarked, "With the cooperation of the historical site owners, we have located the gardens in the most optimal and visible locations possible, and we are grateful for the sites stewardship of these properties."

Detweiler said, a VGC member and

garden chair, "There will be gardens at the Van Wyck Homestead Museum, the First Reformed Church, Trinity Church, the Brinkerhoff Inn, the Rombout Rural Cemetery, the Daniel Nimham Statue, the Madam Brett homestead and at Mount Gulian. Not all will be full-scale gardens; some will be potted displays due to the location's size constraints."

Gambino added, "All the gardens will be highly visible and distinctive, with their red/white/blue color scheme and soldiers heralding to the community and to tourists that this is a location worth visiting during this anniversary year."

Not all the required funds to implement the Roots of Liberty project have been raised. The garden club provided a portion of the initial funds, but the group is seeking additional donations from fraternal and civic organizations, and the public to complete the funding required. "While a large donation from one of these groups will help immensely, it's the \$5 and \$10 donations from our Fishkill and Beacon community members that will mean the most to our fundraising efforts, as it means that our citizens become part of the historical celebration," said Gambino. "Citizens may contribute online at <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/donate-to-the-roots-of-liberty-project-by-the-verplanck-garden-club>. Donations to our non-profit organization for this project are tax deductible."

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Problem-solver Bob Balkind prepares for his next challenge

County Public Works Commissioner set to leave role on May 22

By Curtis Schmidt

In his 20-plus years with the Dutchess County Department of Public Works – 13 as Commissioner – Bob Balkind has never fixed a pothole or driven a snow-plow truck. He hasn't driven a bus or repaired a Sheriff's Office vehicle. He hasn't flown or repaired a plane at the Hudson Valley Regional Airport. He hasn't handled tools and equipment in building maintenance or the construction of road and bridge projects on county roads. And though he loves to spend time in County parks, he hasn't taught courses or maintained property at the parks.

However, what Balkind has done has affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of Dutchess County residents everyday and empowered the directors of all of the eight divisions of the Department of Public Works to continually improve and make a positive difference in the community.

And after 20-plus years of coordinating and problem-solving on the county level, Balkind is retiring – with his last day being this Friday, May 22.

"I'm very proud of the work we do and I've been blessed to be able to work with people who are so committed to helping others," he said. "I have always realized true satisfaction in knowing that we make a positive difference in our communities every day."

And that hasn't always been easy. When you lead a department that is tasked with overseeing the design, construction and maintenance of 1.2M sq ft of office space, 181 county bridges and is responsible for maintaining the county's 395 centerline miles of roads, including during all kinds of storms, opportunities for failure always exist. And, to be clear, buildings and highways encompass only two of the divisions of the Public Works Department. Others include Public Transit, Parks, Aviation, Engineering, an Auto Service Center and Finance.

Balkind said his goal has always been

"to create opportunities to make our leadership team – and everyone under them – feel value, to give them the responsibility and authority they deserve. My primary job is to facilitate the success of everyone and to give them the (mental) tools to make better decisions."

That's called "empowering others, leading by example and putting your ego aside." Balkind further breaks it down into coordination, collaboration and, most importantly, listening.

"I try to see every person I encounter as an opportunity to learn from," he said. "I learned a long time ago that I don't learn when I speak. So, I try to do a lot of listening."

Balkind, who has a bachelors degree in civil engineering and is a licensed Professional Engineer in NY, MA and NJ, and has been working at the trade he loves for 38-plus years, notes that he used to run engineering and highway divisions.

"Those two I could handle, but not the others," he said of his overall role. "My managers are much better at what they do. I don't try to pretend and they know that. I trust them and am here to help. I'm not a 'my way or the highway' guy."

He said he and his directors "use mistakes as teaching moments, and luckily, we make a lot of mistakes and learn from them. The public depends on us to 'get it right' every time and we try to do our absolute best every day."

And, to be clear again, the job of the Public Works Department is 24/7/365. Storms and ensuing crises know no boundaries.

"I always tell people - this is not a job where you show up in the morning and go home in the afternoon," said Balkind. "Whether it's a 2 a.m. fire at one of our facilities, a tree in the road or a huge snowstorm – when the need arises – we have to be there. These situations can't wait til the morning after. There have been many days when we spend every minute of every hour handling all aspects of a dif-



Dutchess County Department of Public Works Commissioner Bob Balkind is pictured with a tracked excavator in the Public Works garage.

-Photo by Curtis Schmidt

ficult situation" – and everything else takes a temporary back seat.

The department has emergency plans, along with a full set of emergency procedures and processes in place to follow. But then, no two situations are totally the same. After each emergency, Balkind said, "We always go back and revisit each situation with questions like 'How did we react? What did we do wrong? What did we get right? What could we have done better?' We depend on our feedback and the feedback of everyone – including residents – to always get better at what we do."

As he looks back over his "very gratifying

career," Balkind said he chose civil engineering because he has always enjoyed the role of a problem-solver. Even as a child he said he liked solving jigsaw puzzles, Sudoku and others. "Finding solutions is what drives me and my career has been a natural outgrowth of problem-solving. I like to be challenged," he said.

And his next challenge? Finding his next career. "Initially, I want to see what it's like to not go to work every day," he said. "But after that, I have a lot of choices."

We can safely imagine Bob Balkind will stay quite active.

24-hour 'Taps' Tribute – Memorial Day 2026

In observance of this 80th Anniversary of Wappingers VFW Post 5913, local resident Dani Masterson will lead a 24-hour Sounding of Taps to honor the World War II servicemembers, who made the ultimate sacrifice, and the veterans of that era who have since passed away. The tribute is scheduled to commence at 3 p.m. on May 24th and will conclude at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day, May 25th.

Beginning at 3 p.m. on May 24th, the 24 notes of Taps will be sounded every hour on the hour. Each sounding will serve as a tribute to the young servicemembers who lost their lives on distant battlefields and high seas during World War II, as well as to the veterans whose enduring service has shaped the local community.

The first 19 hours of this commemo-

ration will take place at Mesier Park in the Village of Wappingers, Dutchess County. Throughout the night and into the morning, these notes will echo across the Park, standing as a quiet assurance that the sacrifices of these individuals are not forgotten.

The final 5 hours, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Memorial Day, will be held at VFW Post 5913, located at 8 School St.

This Post was established 80 years ago by returning World War II veterans who bore the burdens of war and created a space for remembrance and continued service. Concluding this observance on their grounds is a fitting honor to their legacy.

Masterson is still sounding every night as part of a 365-day tribute (Tuesday, May 26th will be Night 365).

Memorial Day program set at Fishkill Rural Cemetery

Fishkill Rural Cemetery will be hosting a Memorial Day Program on Monday, May 25, at 11 a.m. at the Hugh J. Maurer Mausoleum on cemetery grounds, 801 Rt. 9 Fishkill.

Keynote speaker will be Captain Travis

Salley, Professor of Military History West Point.

Light refreshments will be served. The rain or shine event is free of charge.

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BHS students make honor roll

The Beacon High School administration said the following students have made the 3rd-quarter honor roll for the 2025-26 school year.

9th Grade Principal's Honor Roll

Luna Ayers-Uekawa, Trevor Bacon, Fiona Burke-Smith, Elodie Duquesne, Lilah Fisher, Alice Gabel, Edith Giunta, Manasvi Gupta, Silas Hayes, Samih Jabar, Samantha Johnson, Davia Kelleher, Julian Khan, Pixie Kimberg, Ileana Lawrence, Anthony Lopez, Christian O'Brien, De'Jaun Rigby, Zbigniew Rybak, Ashley Senior, Silas Stampleman, Daniel Tschang, Emery Vergolina, Marina Winters

9th Grade High Honor Roll

Natalie Allen, Alexandra Alon, Sarp Bagriyanik, Viviana Bailey, Hazel Balogh, Desmond Barchetto, Amaya Bravo, Teaghan Burks, Madison Carr, Ethan Cason, Lily Cheyne, Chase Christman-Evans, Ivy Cohen, Shuprova Das, Kylie Ebeling, Shaniya Evans, Willow Faiella, Jack Garrett, Jordan Garzon, Eli Gilleo, Lucien Guido Taylor, Grace Just, Miles King, Vivienne Lipari, Ralph Marinaccio IV, Ivan Martinez, Auwaab Mohammed Murtada, Suvi O'Shea, Dominick Pulcastro, Dion Qelaj, Diannie Ramirez, Tallix Roan, Sophia Romero, Jonathan Saraceno, Genevieve Shrawder, George Stadler, Willa Staempfli, Ryan Sulca, Sherley Tacuri, Mia Tapia, Kylie Thomas, Everett VanCott, Joshua Velazquez, Anita Vigeant, Lily Vogrincic

9th Grade Honor Roll

Riley Anderson, Shannon Anzovino, Brayden Arroyo, James Bailey, Gavin Barone, Hawken Brickman, Jack Bunker, Xylie Burns, Andrew Caporale, Connor Coldrick, Sebastian Concepcion, Hailey Day, Fischer Delaney, Gabriela Diaz, Sofia Dunay, Braedan Eraca, Grace Fleming, Evan Greenspan, Carolina Guerra, Emmett Havers, Isabella Hernandez Fandino, Weston Hetrick, Nahlia Keane, Samson Loeb-Sandiford, Michael MacDougall, Marianna Marrero, Celest Marshall, Michael Medina, Lena Meibauer, Yailin Novas Perez, Maxine O'Malley, Negatu Price, Leela Ramdeen, Cadence Ross, Jayden Schumacher, Landon Soltish, Avery Strang, Jaliyah Vasquez

10th Grade Principal's Honor Roll

Kaylyn Adusei, Owen Allee, Noa Buckland, Skylar Carr, Maysie Doyle, Saoirse Fehilly, Maximilian Kong, Christopher Lee, Justin Mann, Louise

Mauks, Desmond McGrath, Uswah Mohammed Murtada, Zora Nicholls, Evangeline Santise, Shane Signorelli, Nahara Simkovic, Caellum Tripaldi, Derek Waltke, Owen Youatt

10th Grade High Honor Roll

Kendall Adnams, Abigail Atkins, Madison Beltran, Lily Berry, Breannah Brace, Jaden Brito, Gavin Bruno, Wyatt Burgos, Sarah Camara, Henry Cerchiara, Zahara Cone, Lia Cosentino, Claire Cumming, Jake DeLuise, Evelyn DePalma, Joseline Duran, Christa George, Henry Greenberg, Mckenna Griffin, Henry Gute, Jose Hernandez Canelo, Alejandro Herrera, Drew Kelly, Josue Martell, Victoria Maruggi, Shayne Maxaner, Gabriel Montleon, Elise Moran, Claire Morgan, Oscar Pages, Sofia Posso Salcedo, James Reyes, Austin Ricketts, Maeve Rinaldi, Giana Rodriguez, Mack Roland, Nathaniel Salvati, Hazel Schein, Violet Schilling, Vardan Singh, Gonzalo Soria Velecela, Hayden Wilson, Luna Yawman, Josefina Zezza

10th Grade Honor Roll

Loreimi Alcantara, Jesse Apostolou, Kiersten Barber, Mathias Cabrera, Hawah Camara, Amari Clarke, Andrea Delgado, Ramon Dewey-Brink, Ryan DiNobile, Abilena Eriksmoen, Leah Fahlman, Kyle Fairbanks, Richard Ferdinand, Zoe Hammond, Jonah Hanby, Jayden Harrison, Kayden Hines, Pdraig Lanigan, Melody Longino, Heidi Maeng, Ruby Martin, Sebastian Mendoza, Oliver Meyer, Stephen Miller, Braelyn Milligan, Ismael Munoz, Payton O'Connell, Jacob Pasato Pintado, Khloe Roci, Thalia Rodriguez, Isabella Ruffy, Benjamin Seaman, Hunter Smith, Shea Tanaka, Ella Travis, Eliza Verdichizzi, Olivia Viola, Eliot Waterman, Caleb Wells-McGurk, Jude Williams, Nicholas Zippo

11th Grade Principal's Honor Roll

Maayan Alon, Jerry Chen, Terry Chen, Theodore Concepcion, Tori-Ann Crawford, Elijah Epps, Fionn Fehilly, Lily Figlia, Hailey Fish, Khloe Franklin, Shaun Jabar, Ruby King, Katelyn Kong, Lily Mack, Ash Marcus, Victoria McKay, Lily Murr, Stella Reinke, Samuel Riquelme Jr., Julian Rivers, John Rose, Charlotte Rossi, Finn Simons, Januario Stageman, Elliott Thorne, Isaac Tschang, Rudolph Vergolina, Jesse Vermeulen, Aslynn Way, Parker White, Julie Whitemore

11th Grade High Honor Roll

Mikayla Acevedo, Cecilia Allee, Molly-Rose Archer, Ziarra Beamon, Tamirnes Bernstein, Savannah Brace, Myasia Burch, Michael Cahill, Shannon Colandrea, Emily Coldrick, Zamaya Cone, Mateo Cruz, Angeleah Decker, Caroline Diaz, Ethan Diaz, Victoria Diaz, Travis Dickston, Ka'Dera Elliott, Tyler Evans, Khordae Facey, William Flynn, Hudson Fontaine, Samantha Garcia, Kayla Garderes, Emanuel Gomez, Emilio Guerra, Cole Heath, Miguel Herrera, Ryan Huynh, Hailee Jennings, Gabriel Khan, Wenang Kobarsih, Ava Lassiter, Molly Lyons, Kaycee Matos, Ethan Maxaner, Isaac McKible, Shyanne McNair, Gianna Mercer, Lakota Newman, Joseph Pallone, Levi Partlow, Lilly Pendley, Brady Philipbar, Amari Powell, Sarah Ramkalawon, Lillian Ray, Jeremiah Sellers-Richards, Katherine Sendelbach, Elias Smith, Tabitha Smith-White, Jamir Spence, Declan Sprague, Harper Strang, Gavin Troiano, Farrah VanCott, Connor Varricchio, Fabiola Vogrincic, Lila Welsh, Kayteena Wilkins

11th Grade Honor Roll

Emma Bellis, Charlotte Bowen, Juniper Breault, Hartley Brickman, Naomi Conklin, Magdalena del Puerto-Vitti, Daniel Espejo, Adriana Fazioli, Brandon Fremer, Leo Garcia, Ayham Ghazzawi, Valentin Haase, Julian Hannah, August Hayes, Teanna Jennings, Jayden Lassiter, Isaiah Luis, Jaylen Mitchell, Ray Noble IV, Brianne Papo, Octavian Paulin, David Ramirez, Trevi Romanelli, Stella Sheehy, Neji Simon, Caeleb Smith, Vincent Tonyes Jr., Nolan Varricchio, Slater Way, Andrew Whitemore, Aine Woods, Ny'el Woods, Piper Yewchuck, Ysabella Zappala

12th Grade Principal's Honor Roll

Nadeen Ahmed, James Bouchard III, Christian Clay, Peter Cohen, Isabella Galbo, Marisah George, Gabriel Godbee, Samiha Golden, Zenia Haris, Ayden Hooten, Alina Joseph, Gabrielle Khalil, Savana Kush, Alma Mart, Julia McGuire-Soellner, Aril McKee, Oscar McKible, Mira Miller, Liliana Rybak, Julian Sala

12th Grade High Honor Roll

Madison Abrahamson, Farhana Antora, Emanuele Bagala, Logan Blum, Jayden Bostick, Alexander Browning, Skylar Clair, Misleidy Cruz Cruz, Parthib Das, Grace De La Hoz, Jonah Espinosa, Javier Gutierrez Jr., Dylan Hetrick, Vincent Joao Jr., Everly Jordan, Oren Kelleher, Taylor Kelliher, Griffin Kitzrow, Eric Kruze, Carlos Lampon III, Prince Lanford-Jones, Isabella Lee, Erin Maignan, Aiden Montleone, Aiden Nieves, Adrien Okoye, Olivia Reynolds, Julius Sala, Kayla Selander, Thomas Senior, Desirae Smith, Chelsea Stephens, Clive Stewart, Rihanna Taylor, Jonathan Trentacosta, Ri'Kya White

12th Grade Honor Roll

Macy Alencastro, Alianna Alijaj, Mira Bagriyanik, Acacia Barker, Amari Battle, Aiden Buggs, Serenity Bunn, Mackenzie Campbell, Lola Ciccone, Tye Elias, Sophie Goessel, Brianna Green, Kyla Hammond, Jeremiah Hardwell Jr., Tyler Horton, Jaden Jones, Ryan Landisi, Aron Li, Josiah Lind, Tania Lindsay, Brayden Manning, Silena Negron, Eli Netboy, Annabelle Notarthomas, Nolan O'Malley, Richie Omira, Amaya Paulin, Michael Ramos, Savannah Ray, Annabelle Scher, Zachary Schetter, Anna Sevastianova, Anibal Soto III, Noah Spiak, Michai Thompson, Matthew Tumidaj, Marcos Velasco, Alexander Young

Boces CTI High Honor Roll

Bryan Brown-Rohan, Aiden Buggs, Mateo Cruz, Lily Figlia, Jeremiah Hardwell, Hailee Jennings, Isaiah Luis, Julia McGuire-Soellner, Shyanne McNair, Aiden Montleone, Lakota Newman, Jaiera Newton, Aiden Nieves, Michael Ramos, Thomas Senior, Dylan Sklenar, Tabitha Smith-White, Anibal Soto, Declan Sprague, Chelsea Stephens, Rihanna Taylor, Kayteena Wilkins, Ny'el Woods

Boces CTI Honor Roll

Serenity Bunn, Aiden Heaton, Brianne Papo, Octavian Paulin, Christian Perez, Savannah Ray, Trevi Romanelli, Julius Sala

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- 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.

Jewish Federation of Dutchess County celebrates Executive Director Karen Hochhauser as NYS ‘Woman of Distinction’

The Jewish Federation of Dutchess County announces that Executive Director Karen Hochhauser has been named the 2026 Woman of Distinction for the 39th New York State Senate District.

On Tuesday, May 5, New York State Senator Rob Rolison honored Karen at the Albany State Capitol, recognizing her as an outstanding leader whose contributions have profoundly strengthened our community. Senator Rolison noted that Karen “embodies the very spirit of service, leadership, and compassion.”

While many know Karen for her professional expertise, those of us at the Federation see the heart she pours into every project. A lifelong resident of Dutchess County, Karen returned to her roots after nearly 20 years in Asia.

Beyond her role as a powerhouse leader and certified executive coach, she is most importantly a proud mom to three boys, whom she raised during her time abroad.

At the Federation, Karen has transformed our “people-first” approach. Whether she is expanding access to critical resources or simply bringing neighbors together, her work is driven by the Hebrew concept of Tikkun Olam—the call to repair the world.

“My family’s roots in the Hudson Valley go back 85 years,” Karen shared during the ceremony. “I stand here today because of the maternal role models who came before me—my mother, grandmother, and aunt—who instilled in me that our collective strength is found in individual acts of service.”

Right: NYS Senator Rob Rolison with 2026 Woman of Distinction Karen Hochhauser.



-Courtesy photo

Local developers can apply for Housing Trust Fund Grant Funding

Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino has announced that applications are now being accepted for the latest round of funding from the Dutchess County Housing Trust Fund (HTF). \$1 million is available for projects that create or preserve affordable housing. Developer applications are now being accepted through Dutchess County’s online grant portal until Monday, June 15th.

Serino said, “The Dutchess County Housing Trust Fund is about people, not just funding. It helps families, working people and our older neighbors afford to stay in the communities they love. We support projects that add affordable housing and fit the character of our towns and neighborhoods. We welcome developers of all sizes to use this funding and help meet the need.”

This current round of HTF funding focuses on the program’s Housing Creation and Preservation (HCP) component, which supports affordable rental housing through new construction, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, property acquisition and preservation of existing units. Priority will be given to projects with 10 or fewer units. Application instructions and guidance are available online.

Both private for-profit and non-profit developers are eligible to apply. The Department of Planning & Development will host a workshop for applicants on May 7 at 10:30 a.m. at the Dutchess County Farm and Home Center, 2715 Route 44 in Millbrook. Applicants can register online to attend the workshop.

The County’s Housing Trust Fund was established to provide a flexible and nimble funding source to help a variety of affordable housing efforts become a reality by:

Providing financial assistance to develop affordable housing across Dutchess County;

Enhancing the competitiveness of affordable housing initiatives to secure additional funding;

Supporting housing projects that

align with County priorities but have limited or no funding options; and

Focusing on projects that create housing with deeper affordability levels.

Eligible HCP projects may be fully affordable or mixed-income, including single-room occupancy rentals. HCP also funds property acquisition for affordable rental housing by non-profit developers and the preservation or rehabilitation of existing affordable units to ensure long-term affordability. Affordable units created through the HTF are to be available to households with incomes up to 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) for Dutchess County, or a portion (no more than 20 percent of the units) with incomes up to 80 percent AMI.

Dutchess County has committed over \$14 million to the HTF, including \$2 million in the 2026 County Budget. To date, \$12.3 million has been awarded to twelve rental housing projects over two funding rounds in 2023 and 2025, to create or preserve more than 500 affordable rental units.

Later this year, a new Housing Trust Fund initiative will be launched aimed at supporting income-eligible, first-time homebuyers with the purchase or development of a two-family home, with one unit occupied by the buyer and the other unit available for rental, helping to expand homeownership opportunities while increasing the supply of affordable rental housing.

Housing affordability continues to be a critical priority for Dutchess County, with the Housing Trust Fund one of several efforts to expanding affordable housing supply. Other efforts include working with local municipalities on strategies to meet the unique needs of their community with the new Affordable Housing Strategies series with practical tools communities can utilize. Information about other tools and programs is available on the Department of Planning & Development’s housing webpage.

WMCHHealth names Dr. Daniel Nicastrì to lead Dept. of Thoracic Surgery

Westchester Medical Center Health Network (WMCHHealth) announced that Daniel G. Nicastrì, MD, has joined the organization as Section Chief of Thoracic Surgery within the Department of Surgery.

Dr. Nicastrì comes to WMCHHealth from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, where he served as an Associate Professor in the Department of Thoracic Surgery and held leadership roles supporting lung cancer care and quality, including coordinating thoracic surgery tumor board and morbidity and mortality conferences. A veteran of the U.S. Navy and Navy Reserve who attained the rank of Commander, he held clinical and operational leadership assignments including Staff Surgeon at U.S. Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay; Chief of Surgery at a NATO Role 3 hospital in Kandahar, Afghanistan; Chairman of the Cancer Care Committee and Chief of Thoracic Surgery at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital; and Attending Thoracic Surgeon at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

A Brooklyn native, Dr. Nicastrì earned his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College and received his medical degree

from the New York University School of Medicine. He completed a general surgery residency at Mount Sinai, a cardiothoracic surgery residency at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, and a minimally invasive thoracic fellowship at Mount Sinai. He is board certified by the American Board of Surgery and the American Board of Thoracic Surgery, and is licensed to practice medicine in New York.

His clinical expertise includes minimally invasive and robotic lung and esophageal surgery, foregut surgery (including antireflux and hiatal hernia repair), and mediastinal surgery. Dr. Nicastrì has authored peer-reviewed publications and textbook chapters on topics including early lung cancer screening and surgery, minimally invasive (VATS) lung cancer surgery, lung cancer outcomes, chest wall tumors, and tracheal surgery. He has been recognized as a Castle Connolly Top Doctor and was selected as an American Association for Thoracic Surgery Leadership Academy scholarship awardee.

Dr. Nicastrì will provide thoracic surgical care for patients throughout the WMCHHealth Network and will support its commitment to clinical, quality, and academic missions.

Legislature Chair announces launch of AI Oversight Committee

Dutchess County Legislature Chair Yvette Valdés Smith (D-Fishkill) has announced the launch of a standing committee on Artificial Intelligence and Technology Oversight. This month, Assistant Majority Leader Kris Munn (D-Red Hook) introduced a resolution to create the new committee, citing the speed with which AI is disrupting every aspect of society, including government.

The resolution passed the Government Services and Administration Committee (10-1) on the same day news broke of a planned AI Data Center in East Fishkill, and advanced to pass (16-8) the full legislature Monday night. The AI Data Center in East Fishkill would consume an estimated 1 gigawatt of power per day, roughly equal to the entire energy output of the Cricket Valley power plant in Dover.

“When government adopts powerful new technologies, the public has a right to know what those technologies are, what they do, and who is responsible for them,” said Munn. “Whether it is artificial intelligence or surveillance tools, this new committee is how the Dutchess County Legislature makes good on

that obligation.”

Legislator Brendan Lawler (D-Hyde Park), Chair of the Legislature’s Budget Committee, added, “County workers are too important to functional government to be replaced by AI for the sake of claimed efficiency. When it comes to using County services, residents want to interact with people, not chatbots. Forming this committee will protect our workforce and keep County government accessible to residents.”

“I applaud Legislator Munn for moving swiftly to address this urgent issue,” said Chair Valdés Smith. “AI isn’t coming; it’s already here, and the government needs to know the right questions to ask and how to distinguish facts from fear-mongering. The diversity of our caucus means each of us brings different experiences and expertise to the Chamber. As someone who has spent his career working in tech, Legislator Munn and the legislature’s new oversight committee will ensure that AI usage serves the best interests of Dutchess County residents—and not the other way around.”

NOTICE OF EARLY DEADLINE
 Due to a holiday press schedule for Memorial Day, the May 27 issue of Beacon Free Press will have early deadlines for all departments.
 Editorial and calendar submissions must be received by Thursday, May 21, at noon.
 Advertising must be received by Thursday, May 21, at 5 p.m.
 Contact cschmidt@s Dutchessnews.com for more information.

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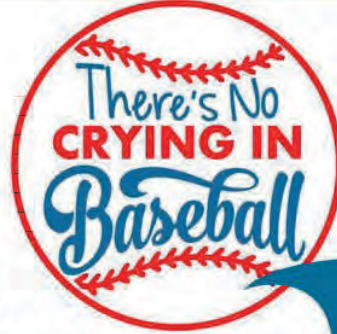


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RENEGADES ROUNDUP

Sad sweep as Renegades drop six straight to Frederick Keys

By Morgan E. Maier

The Hudson Valley Renegades hosted the Frederick Keys for the first time in team history on May 12-17. It was a week most forgettable, as the hosts dropped six straight games, swept for the first time this season and stand at 18-20 on the season. One of four teams with a 3-7 record in their last 10 games (as of May 17), the slumping Renegades suffered a range of wire-to-wire and long-stinging losses against Frederick.

K, bye - The Renegades entered the week with a 50/50 home record and fell below .500 at the close of the weekend. As of May 17, Hudson Valley holds the second-highest home strikeout count in the South Atlantic League (215), as Frederick fanned 10 or more Renegades in 5 of 6 games this series. Though the Keys struck out a series-high 17 times on May 17, they completed the sweep with a second straight 6-3 victory.

Bullpen Bulletin - Plenty of Renegades relievers did their job this week, particularly in the finale. After Frederick scored six runs over

the first three innings, Hudson Valley held them scoreless the rest of the way. It took five guys to go the distance, and though the Renegades offense strung together half of the needed runs, the rallying hit never came. Hudson Valley had another 6-3 loss the night before, though 4/5 relievers taking the mound offered a scoreless outing.

One-run bummers - The Renegades lost twice to Frederick on a one-run decision. The May 13 midday matinee saw a ninth-inning visitors' comeback, as the Keys scored three times before Hudson Valley could record its final three outs. The Renegades would drop the contest 5-4 after leading from the first through the ninth innings. On May 14, Wilson Rodriguez drove in a first-inning RBI to get the 'Reegades started, but the Keys quickly equalized on a home run before taking a third-inning lead. Both teams were held scoreless past the fifth, as Frederick would hang on for the 4-3 lead. Starter Rory Fox went six innings, as Brandon Decker, Hansel Rincon, and Andrew Landry each contributed a



Kyle West of the Renegades rounds the bases after hitting a homerun during Veterans Appreciation Day at Heritage Financial Park.

-Photo by Dave Janosz.

scoreless frame.

The surging Keys hold a half-game lead of the South Atlantic League,

while the sub-.500 Renegades look to right their woes on the road against the last-place Brooklyn Cyclones.

League Standings

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE NORTH						
	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	STRK
Frederick BAL	25	13	.658	-	9-1	W7
Greensboro PIT	25	14	.641	0.5	7-3	W1
Wilmington WSH	19	19	.500	6.0	3-7	L4
Hudson Valley NYY	18	20	.474	7.0	3-7	L6
Jersey Shore PHI	17	21	.447	8.0	3-7	L1
Brooklyn NYM	10	28	.263	15.0	3-7	L2
SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE SOUTH						
	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	STRK
Bowling Green TB	27	12	.692	-	8-2	L1
Winston-Salem CWS	23	16	.590	4.0	6-4	W4
Rome ATL	22	17	.564	5.0	7-3	W2
Hub City TEX	21	17	.553	5.5	7-3	W2
Greenville BOS	15	24	.385	12.0	2-8	W1
Asheville HOU	9	30	.231	18.0	2-8	L2



May			
05/26/26	vs. Bowling Green	06:05 PM	Women in Sports Night WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets
05/27/26	vs. Bowling Green	11:05 AM	Education Day presented by Heritage Financial Credit Union WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets
05/28/26	vs. Bowling Green	06:35 PM	Beach Night WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets
05/29/26	vs. Bowling Green	07:05 PM	Star Wars Night WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets
05/30/26	vs. Bowling Green	05:05 PM	2026 Renegades Team Card Set presented by Dutchess Tire Center WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets
05/31/26	vs. Bowling Green	02:05 PM	Halloween in May WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets
June			
06/09/26	vs. Jersey Shore	06:35 PM	Petting Zoo Night WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets
06/10/26	vs. Jersey Shore	06:35 PM	Pride Night WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets
06/11/26	vs. Jersey Shore	06:35 PM	Soccer Night WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets
06/12/26	vs. Jersey Shore	07:05 PM	Superhero & Villains Night WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets
06/13/26	vs. Jersey Shore	05:05 PM	Seinfeld Night: A Game About Nothing WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets
06/14/26	vs. Jersey Shore	02:05 PM	Copa de la Diversión™ presented by Cafe Con Leche: Puerto Rican Day Celebration WMCHealth Club Lounge Tickets





Renegades Extra!



IMPACT
PR & Communications

**Tompkins Community Bank announces
Banking Division Leadership Transition**



Carol Schmitz



Kristen O'Keeffe

IMPACT
PR & Communications

Fun with fans at the ballpark



Fan participation is a key element in the fun at Hudson Valley Renegades games at Heritage Financial Park. Above, children interact with the Renegades mascots. A young fan runs around the bases between innings. And a canine fan watches from the bleachers during "Retriever Night" at the ballpark.

-Photos by Dave Janosz

Renegades' Liñan named SAL Pitcher of the Week

By Morgan E. Maier

Minor League Baseball (MiLB) has announced that Hudson Valley Renegades RHP Sean Paul Liñan has been named the South Atlantic League Pitcher of the Week for the week of May 4-10. Liñan is ranked by MLB Pipeline as the Yankees' #22 prospect.

Liñan, 21, threw 6.0 hitless innings on Saturday, May 9, against the Winston-Salem Dash, allowing just one walk while striking out seven batters. The right-hander set down the first 13 batters he faced in the start before a one-out walk in the fifth inning to Boston Smith.

In addition to his season-high 6.0 innings, Liñan needed only 69 pitches to tie his season-high in strikeouts. All seven

strikeouts came on Liñan's changeup, which is called one of the best in Minor League Baseball by MLB Pipeline.

He is the second Renegades player to win a weekly award in 2026, joining Luis Serna, who was named SAL Pitcher of the Week on April 13. Liñan was acquired by the Yankees in a trade with the Washington Nationals on March 22, 2026 in exchange for INF Jorbit Vivas.

This is the second weekly award in Liñan's career, as he was previously named California League Pitcher of the Week on 4/20/2025 while pitching for Rancho Cucamonga in the Dodgers organization. He was also named California League Pitcher of the Month for April 2025.



Right: Sean Paul Liñan of the Renegades threw 6.0 hitless innings on Saturday, May 9, against the Winston-Salem Dash, allowing just one walk while striking out seven batters.

-Photo by Dave Janosz

Tompkins Community Bank announces Banking Division leadership transition

Marking a leadership transition within its community banking division in the Hudson Valley, Tompkins Community Bank (Tompkins) has announced that Carol Schmitz, senior vice president and community banking manager, will retire after 24 years of service to the company. In anticipation of Schmitz's retirement, Tompkins also announced that Kristen O'Keefe, currently community banking operations manager, will be stepping into the role of community banking division manager for the Hudson Valley market.

Schmitz joined Tompkins in 2002 as a manager at the Lagrange branch and held roles at the Brewster and Wappingers branches before ascending into her role as community banking manager. Throughout her two decades with Tompkins, Schmitz exemplified deep community involvement both through her leadership on the bank's contribution committee and through her own volunteer work as a board member for the American Heart Association, a dedicated volunteer with Dutchess Outreach and Habitat for Humanity and a member of the 2012 Leadership Dutchess class.

"It is difficult to overstate the incredible role Carol has played in the growth and continued excellence of the Hudson Valley. She has brought leadership, expertise, and deep commitment to our customers, communities, and colleagues," said Dave DeMilia, president of Tompkins' Hudson Valley market. "Her impact on our organization and the people she has mentored along the way will be felt for years to come. We are grateful for her decades of dedicated service and wish her all the best in her well-earned retirement."

Schmitz will be succeeded by Kristen O'Keefe, who will step into the role of community banking division manager for the Hudson Valley market. O'Keefe joined Tompkins in 2003 and has held several roles throughout her 23-year tenure, most recently serving as community banking operations manager under Schmitz, where she oversaw the sales and operations of twelve Tompkins branches throughout the Hudson Valley.

"Throughout her Tompkins career,



Carol Schmitz, above, and Kristen O'Keefe

-Courtesy photos



Kristen has demonstrated not only exceptional leadership and expertise, but a continued dedication to strengthening our communities," said DeMilia. "I can think of no one better to step into this role, as Kristen is an integral part of our team's efforts to grow and expand our services in the Hudson Valley."

Through a personal commitment to community service and ongoing professional development, O'Keefe frequently donates her time to a variety of local non-profits including Dutchess Outreach, United for the Troops and Habitat for Humanity, has served on the Planning Committee for the Mahopac Relay for Life and is a 2022 graduate of Leadership Dutchess. She resides in Carmel with her husband and two children.

love to cook by vicki frank day



Road trip!

A new twist on a treasured tradition

I don't know how it can be May already, but here we are and it's the start of a season made for living outdoors and taking trips. One of my favorite things to do is going to flea markets, and for many years that's just what my mother, sister and I did for our annual girls' weekend this time of year. We'd journey to Brimfield, Massachusetts for the oldest and largest flea in the country, stay in a hotel and go to a lovely dinner. We'd hit the market again in the morning for a few hours before heading back home. Lots of fun, lots of treasures and lots of treasured memories to count among my many blessings.

But while the thrill of the hunt was the focus of the trip, it was always our time together that was the most priceless treasure of all. It may sound trite, but it's so true. We would set out early in the morning and stop for coffee to drink on the way. Once there we would get right to shopping, walking the many, many fields full of vendors and their wares, sometimes with something specific in mind, other times just knowing it when we saw it, but always having the best time. If you've never been, you can't understand the enormity of Brimfield. Antiques, collectables, old and new, acre after acre of everything and anything you could imagine or ever want. There's so incredibly much to see.

But our trips weren't just a feast for the eyes. Food played a big part, as well. We would usually get lunch at one of the many vendors (the last year we went I made sandwiches for us), not just welcome because we were hungry, but because by then we needed to sit a spell. Our tradition was to end our first flea market day by late afternoon, head back to the hotel and relax with charcuterie and martinis on the balcony of our room. We might go for a swim before getting dressed for dinner at a nice restaurant in town. Blissful.

This was just what we did our very first trip there together, but it has become legendary. The hotel where we were staying had an adjacent restaurant on the same property. We walked to it and stood on line a long while before being seated. A really long while. We later found out the restaurant had just been taken over by new management a week or so before, and they clearly hadn't worked the bugs out yet. They certainly hadn't prepared themselves for the onslaught of people in town for the flea market. It didn't help that it was also prom weekend and teens in their finest were everywhere getting their pictures taken by the lake that backed the hotel. It was pretty chaotic.

We were finally led to our table, making our way through the crowded dining room to a screened-in porch area in back, which gave us a great view of the posing prom goers and their paparazzi parents. We were pretty hungry at this point, a tad frustrated, though we were amused and

understanding in equal measure, and very much wanting cocktails. We ordered a round of dirty martinis and a running joke was born.

A quick note here as an ex-server. The staff, while a bit blind-sided, was clearly doing their best, and I appreciate the stress they had to have felt at being overwhelmed. I think that's why, instead of getting angry, we chose to find the humor in the situation. Remember how I said they weren't prepared? They had run out of clean glasses. And, apparently, also olives. Our martinis finally came after a really long time. In clear plastic Solo cups. With mismatched olives they'd scrounged from the neighboring hotel bar. How do we know all this? They told us! We were hysterical, picturing the servers desperately looking under bar mats for any stray olives that may have escaped their containers (not what happened, but a funny visual). (At least I don't THINK that happened...) They actually had someone literally run next door for our olives. Priceless!

With that memory firmly planted in our hearts and minds, there was only one thing to do: find clear glass "Solo" cups to take on subsequent trips to carry on the tradition. And find them I did, although the only ones available looked like cups crushed in the middle, which was even better! They became our official girls' trip martini glasses, a fun reminder of our first time at our beloved Brimfield, like a postcard commemorating the first of many special trips to come.

Those trips also helped me hone my charcuterie skills. There's nothing like traveling to make you really plan ahead. The first year I may have packed too much and was too fussy for having to set everything up in a hotel room. By the time I finished setting up it was almost time to go to dinner! After that I narrowed it down to a just a few things - the right amount to complement the cocktails while whetting our appetites for the dinners to come. And what lovely dinners they were! After that first year we sought the area's best seafood restaurants, which were a real treat for us and seemed perfect for a short New England holiday. I will never tire of or fail to appreciate going out to dinner. It's a decadence I savor, especially with my girls! For me at least, food is a huge part of any vacation and everything I have, from food I pack for the trip to dining out, adds to the experience and the memories.

This week my sister and I will be in Brimfield for the whole run of the market, but this time as vendors. Mama will be with us in spirit - a week is just too long for her to be away. We're not sure what to expect, but we know we'll have a great time and that it will be an adventure. That is why I wasn't able to share a recipe with you this time - I've been prepping and packing and organizing - but when I get

Continued on page 9

Save the Date:
May 30, 2026



— for the Grand Re-Opening of —
Senate House State Historic Site

After being closed for an important restoration project in 2025, Senate House will re-open with the debut of two brand-new permanent exhibits, as well as a day of community celebration!

Join us for:

- Ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10:00 a.m.
- Open-house style tours of Senate House
- Food trucks
- Colonial music from Carla and Keyes
- Reenactors from the 1st and 3rd Ulster Militias
- Take-home crafts
- Revisit the Revolution traveling exhibit

Saturday, May 30, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Senate House State Historic Site
296 Fair Street, Kingston, NY 12401



Scan the QR code to learn more and save the event to your calendar




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May 30, 2026

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Spring Antiques at Fairgrounds on May 23-24



Continued from cover

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- Oriental rugs
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- American and Continental furniture
- Fine porcelain and ceramics
- Fine and decorative prints
- Mid-century and modern design
- Books and ephemera
- Asian arts
- Military and nautical antiques
- Fine art and folk art
- Textiles, samplers, and quilts
- Stoneware and redware pottery
- Native American jewelry and artifacts
- Shaker furniture and accessories
- Art pottery and art glass
- Silver and watches



Spring Antiques at Rhinebeck features jewelry and much more - all to the delight of shoppers from all parts of the Hudson Valley and beyond.

-Courtesy photos

- Graphic posters and advertising
- Folk signs and early toys
- Vintage décor and much more

In addition to world-class shopping, guests can enjoy free parking, a specialty food vendor offering a delicious variety of menu options, and the charm of nearby Historic Rhinebeck Village, making the weekend a perfect destination for collectors and families alike.

Show Hours are 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Saturday and 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Sunday. No pets please.

love to cook



Memories from 2014-2015 road trips, clockwise from top left: From left, Vicki, her Mom Elaine and sister Robin, enjoying one of their first road trips to the renowned flea market in Brimfield, Mass.

Vicki whips up a charcuterie board.



Photos courtesy of Vicki Frank Day

Continued from page 8
packing and organizing - but when I get back, I'll be heading to the kitchen. Who knows? Maybe I'll be inspired by something I'll order when we go to one of those seafood restaurants to treat ourselves, which we certainly will! And along with the food, I'll be savoring quality time and many happy memories. I hope you have some adventures too.

Vicki Frank Day's background includes over two decades in various aspects of the food service industry. In addition, she has over 27 years' experience in marketing, graphic design, copy writing, food styling and research. She believes cooking should be a fun adventure, that food should be an experience and that every day can be a special occasion. Email her at vickiloves2cook@gmail.com.

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250 years of local voices diverge on US relationship with Britain



Above: DCHS Collections is full of items with Royal insignia and references in documents prior to 1776. To what degree was the new United States of America an extension of, or a rebuttal to, the United Kingdom?

By Bill Jeffway

As part of our country's celebration of 250 years of independence from Britain, King Charles, III, recently addressed the U.S. Congress. His comments reflect the challenge of describing the 250-year-old US/British relationship. Was the US "born of" Britain such that we can directly trace back our values and laws? Or was the US born in opposition to, and distinct from British foundational values? Do we have more in common with France, for example, a country that also topped a King, that has a constitution inspired by ours, and was essential to our independence 250 years ago?

On April 26, 2026 King Charles mentioned the most frequently cited evidence in support of the case of a close evolution from England. The June 15, 1215 Magna Carta was signed by King John. It recognized that the King and government were not above laws, and went further, defining specific rights that sound familiar today, including due process, and separation of powers.

King Charles referred to the "Great Charter" this way, "[Your founding fathers] carried with them, and carried forward, the great inheritance of the British Enlightenment – as well as the ideals which had an even deeper history in English common law and Magna Carta. The U.S. Supreme Court Historical Society has calculated that Magna Carta is cited in at least 160 Supreme Court cases since 1789."

A century ago in the 1920s, the once mighty British Empire was finding it increasingly difficult to keep a grip on countries that sought their own independence. At the same time, the United States was expanding as a global power.

How we describe our historic ties to Britain became a subject of debate in the public sphere, in particular public holidays and public school teachings.

The free public school movement gained traction in the 1820s and 1830s. There were calls for American public education to be distinct and free from British traditions. Nowhere was this more clearly articulated than through the voice of a Poughkeepsie author and publisher, Jesse Torrey. Torrey argued in the 1830s

and 1840s that American children were still being educated with British textbooks that carried pernicious British assumptions and values.

He announced in 1849 that Poughkeepsie would be the base for publishing "Torrey's American School Library," a national resource to make more American books accessible to all through public schools. In the launch of a series of such books in 1828, his "Mental Museum for the Rising Generation" established the principle of including in the appendix the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and bylaws that could be used to create local free libraries. He felt it was imperative to lay out this "throughline" to create a uniquely American education.

The idea of a strong and independent country grew as the United States expanded its global footprint (and role) through the 1898 Spanish American War. The emergence of World War One in 1914 was putting unprecedented pressure on the British Empire. Britain was feeling a need to flex its muscles on the world stage in terms of "soft power," the idea that it was the source of values and laws. On June 15, 1915, with the war raging, proposals for a celebration of Magna Carta Day emerged in England and "all English speaking countries" as they claimed the document had forever remained "the greatest and noblest declaration of popular rights."

That same day, June 15, 1915, New York State school commissioner Albert Finley ordered all schools to mark the day with ceremonies. At the Memorial Day crowd of 1916 at Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery, Poughkeepsie School Superintendent Sylvester Shear said, "I feel that the time is not far distant when the Magna Carta shall be written larger and broader and in better terms as a guide for all civilizations." In 1918 he said, "In all our six wars we have fought for the extension of the principles of Magna Carta and the Declaration of Independence."

The International Magna Carta Day Association argued, "Whatever the race

Above left: Poughkeepsie School Superintendent Sylvester Shear was an advocate for the annual celebration of Magna Carta day in public schools. On Memorial Day of 1916 he promised, "Magna Carta shall be written larger and broader and in better terms as a guide for all civilizations." Above right: DCHS founder, and Irish Catholic political leader John Mylod (shown with Eleanor Roosevelt) was a leader in the Knights of Columbus, a group that actively pushed back on what it saw as the growing "pro-British" orientation of history through Magna Carta Day and new schoolbooks.

-Courtesy photos

or origin of the people of the United States today they acknowledge fully and freely that their history is a continuation of British history, and that the principles of Magna Carta and other great instruments of British Freedom have come directly down the stream of time as the common Heritage of the Anglo-Saxon race."

But by 1923, a growing revolt against not only the celebration of Magna Carta Day, but an accusation that there had been a pernicious corruption of school textbooks, got headlines. The accusations were reminiscent of those of Joseph Torrey a century earlier.

The June 4, 1923 New York Times reported that New York City's Commissioner of Accounts, David Hirschfield, recommended that eight American History schoolbooks be banned from public schools as too "pro-British and anti-American."

Other leading dissenting voices were Catholic organizations like the Knights of Columbus. Irish Catholics, in particular, would have had a hard time endorsing the idea that Britain was the source of world freedom, given Britain's treatment of what eventually became the Irish Republic.

A highly regarded local leader of Catholics and Irish Catholics was John Mylod, who helped found the local Knights of Columbus. As a founder of the Dutchess County Historical Society, Mylod may have been influential in the only instance of its kind I can find, where the board of the Dutchess County Historical Society in 1923 endorsed a resolution urging that history be taught "with fairness, open-mindedness, and resistance to political interference" – an obvious pushback on what was seen as emerging pro-British advocates.

Although there were some scattered and lesser attempts to create a Magna Carta Day annual celebration after the 1920s, the idea never took hold in the U.S. or British Commonwealth. Debates about schoolbook content obviously remain, but are less likely to be about foreign influence and more about what part of American history to emphasize.



Bill Jeffway is the Executive Director of the Dutchess County Historical Society and can be reached at bill.jeffway@dchsny.org or 845-293-7711.

Obituaries

Jeannine McGuire-Guerra



Jeannine Mary McGuire-Guerra, 59, of Pleasant Valley and formerly of Jupiter, Florida, passed away on May 8, 2026, after a courageous battle with cancer. Born in Peekskill on August 25, 1966, she was the daughter of the late William McGuire and Nora Vetter. Jeannine dedicated many years of service to Dutchess County as the Assistant Director of Medicaid for the Department of Community and Family Services and was a proud member of the CSEA Union. Jeannine was a devoted member of the Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church, where she generously shared her time and talents through Sunday school, fundraising efforts, Dinner with Santa, Operation Christmas Child, the food pantry, and the CROP Walk. She also served as recording secretary for the

Northeastern Cooperative Parish and Chair of the church Administrative Board. Her strong faith, compassion, and commitment to helping others touched many lives.

Above all, Jeannine cherished her family. She was a loving mother, Sister and grandmother who found her greatest joy in the time spent with her children and grandson, Nastacio. She also had a deep love for animals and was actively involved in animal rescue work while pursuing her dream of becoming an animal rehabilitator. Her beloved dogs, Tucker and Meredith, were a special part of her life.

Jeannine is survived by her husband, Jose Guerra; her children, Catey Catalan and her husband Nastacio, Nora Guerra, and Adrian Guerra; John Pillsbury And her grandson, Nastacio Ortiz; her siblings, James, Ronnie, Michael, Maureen, Colleen and Patrick; along with many nieces, nephews, relatives, and friends. In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her brother, Stanley.

Calling hours were held at the McHoul Funeral Home, Inc., 895 Route 82, Hopewell Junction. A funeral service was held at the funeral home, followed by interment at St. Denis Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to Out of the Pits in Jeannine's memory. Out of the Pits address is P.O. Box 2311, Albany, NY 1220. A link to their donation page can be found at, <https://outofthepits.org/donate/>

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• Beacon Free Press
• Northern Dutchess News

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222 Tax Experts
223 Beauty Services
225 Business Services
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Announcement

NOTICE OF EARLY DEADLINES: HOLIDAY PRESS SCHEDULE ISSUE.

Southern/Northern Dutchess News and Beacon Free Press will have an early deadline for the May 27th ISSUE. Advertising must be received by: May 20th

CALL: 845-297-3723 for more information.

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HOMES FOR SALE

NOTICE OF EARLY DEADLINES:

Due to a Memorial Day Press Schedule Southern & Northern Dutchess News and the Beacon Free Press have the following early deadlines for Classified Display Ads:

May 27th Issue Deadline is as follows:
May 20th deadline before noon.
Email: roxannesdn@aol.com or Call: 845-297-3723 Ext. 1003 for more information.



MEADOW RIDGE FAMILY COMPLEX, Beacon, NY

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904 Auto Parts and Tires

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Pets For Adoption ARF, Beacon, NY 845-831-5161 54 Simmons Lane PO Box 1129 Beacon, NY 12508

NOTICE OF EARLY DEADLINES:

Due to the Memorial Day Holiday, the Southern & Northern Dutchess News and the Beacon Free Press will have the following early deadline for Classified Display ads: May 27th, 2026 issue: Submit Classified ads by NOON on Wednesday, May 20th. Call (845) 297-3723 for more information.

PETS

Hello, my name is Cupcake! I am a 8 week old boxer/hound mix looking for my forever home! I am super sweet and playful and love everyone I meet. I am fully vetted up to what is age appropriate and I can't wait to find my new family. If you would like to adopt me please go to www.incrediblepupspetrescue.com and submit an adoption application.

Hello, my name is Binx! I am a 7 month old Collie mix looking for my forever home! I am super sweet and playful and love everyone I meet. I'm good with kids, dogs and cats. I am fully vetted up to what is age appropriate and I can't wait to find my new family. If you would like to adopt me please go to www.incrediblepupspetresuce.com and submit an adoption application.

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Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Email (with "Free line ad" as the subject) your subscription name, address, phone number, & subscriber ID, along with your ad to: sdnadvertising@aol.com
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Ads run for 2 weeks. If after 2 weeks you wish your ad to run again, it must be resubmitted.
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World War II veteran celebrates 100 years, and 75 years of marriage



Family and friends gather around Pauline and Raymond Beck during the recent celebration. World War II veteran Raymond Beck celebrated turning 100 years old. -Courtesy photos VA Hudson Valley Healthcare Systems Castle Point

World War II veteran Raymond Beck celebrates his 100th birthday and 75th wedding anniversary with his wife, Pauline.

Raymond Beck has reached a remarkable milestone—celebrating 100 vibrant years of life! “I’m happy to see this day,” he expressed with a heartfelt smile during his recent birthday celebration at the VA Hudson Valley Health Care System in Castle Point, surrounded by fellow Veterans, family members, and dedicated staff. The highlight of the event was the presentation of a Centennial certificate by VA Secretary Doug Collins, honoring

Raymond’s incredible journey. Born in the Bronx in March 1926, Raymond Beck is a proud World War II Navy veteran, specifically a Seabee. His passion for the military was inspired by a legacy of service in his family. He enlisted alongside his two brothers—one in the Navy and the other in the U.S. Marine Corps. His dedication to duty runs deep; his great-grandfather, Captain John Heybourne, served as a NY firefighter and

was later called up to fight in the Civil War, while his grandfather, Louie Schwartz, was a Rough Rider under Theodore Roosevelt and later became General Pershing’s interpreter, as stated by Pauline, his wife, with a lot of pride. These stories of valor propelled the brothers to follow in their family’s footsteps.

Raymond’s military journey took him to various bases across the globe, including the South Pacific, the Philippines, Okinawa, and Saipan.

But the celebrations didn’t end there. Alongside the festivities for his centennial birthday, Raymond and his beloved wife, Pauline, also marked their 75th wedding anniversary. The occasion, filled with love and joy, was beautifully organized by VA Hudson Valley recreation staff member Gretchen Smith and Center for Development and Civic Engagement

Director Nicole Embry, allowing the couple to renew their vows amid family and friends. Though they had originally planned a grand celebration for their 70th anniversary, the pandemic put those plans on hold. Reflecting on their journey, Pauline shared, “Though life wasn’t the same after his return from military service and combat experience, our love grew more and more, and we were always by each other’s side.” Their love story continues to blossom, with three children, four grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren adding to their joyful family tapestry.

A touching moment unfolded when Marguerite DeVenuto, Raymond’s daughter, gifted toy cars to the unit’s veterans, a nod to her dad’s favorite pastime. It’s these small gestures that keep the spirit alive, reminding everyone of the bonds forged in service and love.

One-on-one job session assistance set for June 1

The East Fishkill Community Library will be hosting DC Works on Monday, June 1, for One-on-One Job Ready Sessions from 10 a.m. to noon in the Cross Room.

One may reserve a half hour session at <http://EFLibrary.org>, click on the calendar and register for the time slot you prefer or call 845-221-9943 ext. 225 for more information.

Dance set at Towne Crier

Latin Dance Beat set for May 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the Towne Crier Cafe, 379 Main St. in Beacon. Admission is \$20. Fine dining and full bar.

For more information, call 845-855-1300.

this week’s puzzle solutions

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

This week's answer
SUDOKU

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

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

Sudoku solution

Legal Notices

Legal Notice Resolution 2026086 May 15, 2026 NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held by the County Attorney of Dutchess County in the County Office Building, County Attorney's Conference Room, 5th Floor, 22 Market Street, Poughkeepsie, New York, on the 27th day of May 2026 at 10:00 a.m. on the following Local Law:

Legal Notices

ALOCALLAWREQUIRING FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTSTO PROVIDE SINGLE-USE FOODWARE AND CONDIMENT PACKETS ONLY UPON REQUEST. Atsaidtheandplace,all parties interested will be heard. Dated: May 15, 2026 Poughkeepsie, NY Susan Serino Dutchess County Executive

Legal Notices

Legal Notice Resolution 2026088 May 15, 2026 NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held by the County Attorney of Dutchess County in the County Office Building, County Attorney's Conference Room, 5th Floor, 22 Market Street, Poughkeepsie, New York, on the 27th day of May 2026 at 10:30 a.m. on the following Local

Legal Notices

Law: ALOCALLAWAMENDING LOCAL LAW NO. 2 OF 2024 REGULATING HAZARDOUS POLLUTION SOURCES IN PROXIMITY TO PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY SOURCES, AQUIFERS AND WETLANDS. Atsaidtheandplace,all parties interested will be heard. Dated: May 13, 2026 Poughkeepsie, NY Susan Serino Dutchess County

Legal Notices

Executive REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NOTICE The Purchasing Agent, County of Dutchess, Poughkeepsie, New York, hereby invites the submission of proposals for: Bid #RFP-DCP-53-26 Independent Accountants Report (CFR-iiA) for NYS Consolidated Fiscal

Legal Notices

Reports Proposals must be submitted electronically through the Empire State Purchasing Group's Regional Bid Notification System (BidNetDirect) Portal on or before 2:00 p.m., June 11, 2026. Specifications, proposal forms and submittal instructions may be obtained by visiting our website <http://www.dutchessny.gov>, selecting "Government", then selecting

Legal Notices

"Bidding and RFP Opportunities". For additional information, call 845-486-3613. The deadline for Legals is every Monday @ 12 noon for a Wednesday Publication* *When a public holiday falls on a Monday the deadline becomes Friday at noon.

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

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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

					5	4
3	4					
		2				
5					2	
		4				

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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: GRADUATION

ACROSS

1. "___ Louise"
5. Unsolicited email
9. Parentheses, e.g.
13. Not mainstream, as in art
15. Heap
16. Chesterfield, e.g.
17. Not sharp
18. Katy Perry's hit
19. Grammy of sports
20. *Bachelor of Arts, e.g.
23. Autumn mo.
24. Opposite of outs
25. Muslim ruler, respectfully
28. Retirement safety net (2 words)
31. Completely isolate (2 words)
33. "That feels good!" exclamation
34. Programmer's bane
35. Mozart's "L'___ del Cairo"
36. *Same as #11 Down
40. #me___
42. Paleozoic or Victorian, e.g.
43. Yoda: "Do or do not. There is no ___"
44. River port in Belgium
47. Not figurative
51. Wavelike patterned silk
52. "For ___ a jolly..."
53. Bass product
54. *Student speaker at graduation, usually
59. Regrettably, exclamation
61. Immanuel ___, German philosopher
62. Fortune teller's props
63. Welcome ___, pl.
64. "Cogito ___ sum"
65. Subdivision of an act
66. Olden day "you"
67. Whitetail, e.g.
68. Late actor Kristofferson

DOWN

1. Type of ape
2. Twist together
3. Not products, in chemistry
4. Dietary mineral
5. Spring, ___, sprung
6. Devoutly religious
7. Winglike
8. F te des M res honoree
9. Industrial plastic
10. Luxury furniture wood
11. *Part of graduation regalia
12. Slovenly abode
14. Pilot's estimate, acr.
21. Fire starter
22. Santa ___ winds
26. Half of NFL
27. *BA alternative
29. Same as Dao
30. "Friends, Romans..., lend me your ___," sing.
31. *Stand-in teacher
32. Self-centered one
34. Undergarment
36. *What guest graduation speaker is supposed to do
37. Dadaist Jean ___
38. *A in #27 Down
39. Marbled toast
40. *#36 Across for PhD recipient
41. Lennon's widow
45. Fish family
46. Sushi restaurant staple
47. *Professor, technically
48. Faultfinder and scoffer
49. *Former students
50. Part of eyeglasses, pl.
52. Door holder
55. Barely got by
56. Foolhardy challenge
57. Roman goddess of fertility
58. Nordstorm's outlet
59. Invoice qty.
60. Note that follows soh

CROSSWORD

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

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Sergeant Chirp's Campaign brings history to Dutchess County historic sites



The Pawling Society has launched an augmented reality history program called Sergeant Chirp's Campaign.

-Courtesy photos



Trench Brady, Marketing Director, Pawling Historical Society, right, with Will Tatuam in front of the Sergeant Chirp QR code.

The Pawling Historical Society has launched Sergeant Chirp's Campaign, a first-of-its-kind augmented reality history program that brings the Revolutionary War era to life at nine historic sites across Dutchess County. Using a free smartphone app, visitors scan special markers at each site to trigger animated AR encounters with Sergeant Chirp, a spirited cricket character who served as a witness to the events of 1776 and beyond.

The program made its public debut at the Kane House Museum in Pawling on April 26th, drawing approximately 40 to 45 visitors on opening day — one of the strongest attendance days in the museum's recent history. Sergeant Chirp's Campaign expanded to its second site: Mount Gulian Historic Site in Beacon earlier this month.

The Dutchess County rollout continues throughout 2025, with a total of nine historic sites participating in the program. Each site features a unique AR encounter with Sergeant Chirp, tailored to the specific history of that location. Visitors who collect encounters across multiple sites can participate in the program's activity passport challenge.

Sergeant Chirp's Campaign is funded in part through the Dutchess County REV

250 program, which supports commemorations of the 250th anniversary of American independence.

"Sergeant Chirp gives visitors of all ages a reason to look up from their phones and look at history in a completely new way. We're thrilled to be bringing this experience to sites across Dutchess County," said Trench Brady, Marketing Director, Pawling Historical Society.

"Mount Gulian is proud to join Sergeant Chirp's Campaign and welcome this innovative program to Beacon. Bringing augmented reality to one of the Hudson Valley's most significant Revolutionary War sites is exactly the kind of experience that connects new audiences with our history," said a spokesperson for Mount Gulian Historic Site.

Visitors to participating sites download the Sergeant Chirp app or scan a QR code at the site. When they point their smartphone at a specially marked location, Sergeant Chirp appears in augmented reality — animated, voiced, and ready to share stories from the Revolutionary War era. The experience is designed to be family-friendly, educational, and free of charge.

For more information, visit SergeantChirp.com.

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Beacon Historical Society to present 'Landscape Architecture of the Hudson Valley' with Alex Prizgintas

Join the Beacon Historical Society to commemorate historic preservation month for May as they welcome back author Alex Prizgintas, the Town Historian for both Woodbury and Tuxedo, who earned a BA in history and MPA from Marist University. Alex will discuss "Landscape Architecture of the Hudson Valley," showcasing the work of Calvert Vaux, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Andrew Jackson Downing. Prizgintas explored their rise to fame and most famous projects—much of which can be drawn to the Hudson Valley cities of Newburgh and Poughkeepsie, in addition to other nearby locations where the three crossed paths for the first time in the 1850s.

The historical society will gather for

this program on Tuesday, May 26, at 7 p.m. at Elks Lodge #1493, 900 Wolcott Avenue, Beacon. For more information, please call 845- 831-0514 or email beaconhistorical@gmail.com.

This program pays particular attention to two landmarks that received influences from both minds: Middletown's Hillside Cemetery and Newburgh's Downing Park—along with several other structures and parks designed by Olmsted, Vaux, and Downing across the Hudson Valley. Special for this showing includes highlights of Beacon's Wodenethe, Eustatia (shown below), and Tioronda estates, which were designed in part by Calvert Vaux as well as Frederick Clarke Withers.