

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



HAPPY KWANZAA!

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Brain surgery survivor Torres turns to life of 'giving back'

By Rich Thomaselli

It's a special anniversary for Joe Torres. It's been 10½ years since the Wappingers Falls resident was given 10 years to live. He had a tumor in his brain that was bleeding, and he was initially misdiagnosed as having a stroke. Once the diagnosis of a brain tumor was confirmed, he went through a 13½-hour surgery.

That was at Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital in New York City.

Today, he and his family and his doctors are marking a milestone. He appeared in a commercial that will debut next year in which he praises the staff of the hospital. It was something that would have been unthinkable even five years ago. But Torres is resilient and has surrounded himself with an entire community of supporters.

"I wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for them," he said.

Today, he is a beloved bus driver for the Arlington School District. Back then, he worked for a large commercial bank and said he found himself mumbling when speaking with clients. And he had some severe facial drooping. With the urging and support of his wife, Selina Wesley-Torres, who is a registered nurse, he has found a new purpose in life with the children.

"When people ask me what I do," he said, "I tell them that I help protect and deliver our greatest asset ever."

To that end, he and his fellow bus drivers have helped raise funds for the Children's Home in Poughkeepsie, as well as the Grace Smith House.

Torres has always been an advocate for Columbia-Presbyterian and, in fact, through his social media, the hospital



Arlington Central School District bus driver Joe Torres of Wappingers Falls dresses as Santa and is involved in a variety of community service activities during December each year.

-Courtesy photo

contacted him and asked him to appear in the new commercial.

Continued on page 2

Gillian Murphy new director for Howland Public Library

By Kristine Coulter

Gillian Murphy is the new library director for the Howland Public Library. The announcement was made recently. Murphy takes over for former director Kristen Salierno.

"Howland presented an amazing opportunity to continue to grow as a library leader. Growing up down the river in Cold Spring [Putnam County] makes it feel like I'm coming home. I love the rich history, breathtaking views, and of course, the people in Beacon (not to mention the great food and music). I am thrilled to be a part of it in a different way now," Murphy recently stated in an email to Southern Dutchess News.

Murphy was asked about her prior employment experience.

"I have enjoyed a career in libraries that allowed me to make significant contributions to the greater community. I learn what the community needs and then try to find a way that the library can help. Over my career this has led to many creative partnerships, innovative services/resources/programs. I am a strong leader that will build a collaborative library team to work with our district's residents/organizations/institutions," Murphy explained.

"The Board of Trustees is very pleased to announce that Gillian Murphy has joined the Howland Public Library as our new Director," Diane Landau-Flayter,

?President of the Howland Public Library Board of Trustees, stated in a newsletter emailed the HPL.

What would Murphy like the residents and patrons of the library to know about her?

"I absolutely LOVE being a library director! I think I am the luckiest woman



Gillian Murphy

-Courtesy photo

alive to get touch as many lives as I do. Ironically, I grew up with a fear of libraries because as a child I never felt welcome. I was shushed constantly and often left feeling horrible. This experience helped shape my philosophy about libraries. I want everyone to know that they are welcome at the library – everyone," remarked Murphy.

Continued on page 2

Carol Drive bridge now open in East Fishkill – six months ahead of schedule

By Kristine Coulter

Six months earlier than the estimated completion date, the bridge on Carol Drive is now open. A small ribbon-cutting ceremony was held earlier this month in East Fishkill in the neighborhood which has nearly 70 homes.

The \$3.5 million dollar project was funded 80 percent with federal funds, 15 percent with state funds and 5 percent with town funds, said Nicholas D'Alessandro, supervisor for the Town of East Fishkill.

"Traffic engineers HVEA were a tremendous help, along with our Town engineer Scott Bryant and his staff," remarked D'Alessandro.

The supervisor also noted New York State assemblyman and senator Anil Beephan and Rob Rolison assisted with getting funding for the project. Beephan attended the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Beephan thanked residents for their patience. Now, he said, "there is a new, safe bridge for residents."



Town of East Fishkill Supervisor Nicholas D'Alessandro makes the ceremonial first ribbon cut during a ceremony for the Carol Dr. Bridge earlier this month in East Fishkill.

-Photo by Kristine Coulter

Continued on page 2

Brain surgery survivor Torres turns to life of 'giving back'

Ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrates \$3.5 million project completion

Continued from cover

His recovery was not easy. He said that for the first 11 months after the surgery, he had severe headaches that rivaled migraines - sometimes worse.

But he persevered and is a respected political activist in the county and a community leader.

Oh, and a well-loved bus driver for the district.

"It's the most rewarding experience I've ever had," said Torres, who once drove a city bus route through the streets of Brooklyn. "I needed to do something different."

So when he saw an advertisement for the need for school bus drivers in the Arlington District, he jumped at it and passed all of the required tests. Still feeling like he had to do more, he organized his fellow bus drivers and became involved in community service. He has even dressed up as Santa Claus himself.

All of this is with the encouragement and support of his wife.

"She did everything," Torres said. "She made all the appointments and came to all the visits. She always encouraged me. She told me to always remember where I am at today, because it's only going to get better in the future."

Though he said his body is still recovering, his mind is fully intact. So with great pride and passion, he is back to his first love.

Children and helping others. "Kids have always been like my weak point. I will literally put everything on the line for kids," Torres said. "But I wanted



Joe Torres gives the "thumbs up" sign from his hospital bed in this photo from 10 years ago at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. He went through a 13 1/2 - hour surgery for a brain tumor. He recently appeared in a commercial in which he praises the hospital staff.

-Courtesy photo

to expand it and everybody was all in favor of that."



East Fishkill, New York State and local business officials attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Carol Drive Bridge in East Fishkill on December 5.

-Photo by Kristine Coulter

Continued from cover

Lydia Biskup, from Rolison's office, presented a commendation for the work done on Carol Dr.

D'Alessandro thanked county legislators John Metzger and Steve Caswell who represent East Fishkill in the Dutchess County Legislature.

Jacob Crowell, with OCS Industries in Poughkeepsie, remarked it was "definitely a pleasure" working with town officials and the engineers on the bridge project. "They all did their part," he said.

Crowell said "the longest part [of the project] was getting Phase 1 done. There was a huge existing bridge" to deal with,

which took about four months, he said. There was also flooding - a lot of flooding - which occurred after a storm in July.

"The flooding definitely impacted us. Trying to pick up the pieces that were left - that was the most difficult part," Crowell stated.

Luckily, he said, there were abutments that were not destroyed, and rebar left.

"I think it looks wonderful. It looks nice for the community. They don't have to worry about the bridge being closed anymore. They can come and go now to and from work and home (easily)," said Crowell.

Howland Public Library has new director

Continued from cover

"Gillian brings to us a strong commitment to libraries, and over 20 years of experience as Library Director from the Julia Butterfield Library in Cold Spring, and most recently, the Elting Library in New Paltz. We are extremely fortunate that Gillian has accepted the position to lead our library," stated Landau-Flayter, who also gave thanks to Salierno for her

years as library director.

As for the goals Murphy has for HPL, she stated, "Bonding and brainstorming with my team. Then set goals and outline strategies with that team to make HPL the best library it can be."

If anyone in the community is interested in meeting with her, Murphy said, please feel free to reach out to her at director@beaconlibrary.org.

Food banks, restaurants team up on 'Holiday Hunger Appeal'

This year, in an effort to make an even bigger impact on lives of individuals and families, the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York and Food Bank of the Hudson Valley have teamed up with the New York State Restaurant Association (NYSRA) and local restaurants for its "Holiday Hunger Appeal."

The campaign is the Food Bank's largest and most significant fundraising event of the year. It runs until Christmas Eve.

Participating restaurants have Food Bank signage driving diners to a customized landing page where they can make donations on the spot from their mobile phones. Restaurants on board include Wildfire Grill, 88 Charles Street, Blue Java Coffee and Market, Iron Café, Il Cenocola, Shadows on the Hudson, West Hills Country Club, and Cosimo's. NYSRA has been recruiting members throughout the Food Bank's 23-county coverage area to participate in the campaign. Restaurants can sign up to participate by contacting Kyleigh Cherry at kyleighc@regionalfoodbank.net.

Additionally, a Holiday Hunger Appeal display has been set up at Woodbury Common Premium Outlets and the

Galleria at Crystal Run, and fliers are being distributed at Bethel Woods Center for the Arts during its Peace, Love & Lights month-long event as a way to share the holiday spirit.

"Food insecurity is an issue for millions of New Yorkers 365 days a year. But it is especially difficult during the holiday season. We are incredibly thankful for the participation of local restaurants to help raise the funds needed to put food on the tables of the community members we serve across the Hudson Valley. These efforts can truly make a difference," said Tom Nardacci, CEO of the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York.

"Cosimo's Restaurant Group is proud to be a partner for the Regional Food Bank's Holiday Hunger Appeal. We feel very strongly about the Food Bank and its mission," said Nick Citera of Cosimo's Management Group.

"We are extremely proud to participate in this community appeal. We understand how difficult the holidays can be for so many families in our area. Anything we can do to increase awareness and help make a positive change is our honor," said Michael Bonura of Bonura Hospitality Group.



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Urban trail connecting City, Town of Poughkeepsie named 'Marcus J. Molinaro Northside Line'



U.S. Congressman Marc Molinaro, former Dutchess County Executive, recently attended the ceremony for the urban trail connecting the City and Town of Poughkeepsie, which is called the "Marcus J. Molinaro Northside Line."

-Courtesy photo

The first phase of Dutchess County's urban trail project in the City and Town of Poughkeepsie is open for public use and touting a new official name – the Marcus J. Molinaro Northside Line (MJM Northside Line) – honoring Dutchess County's seventh County Executive for his commitment to Dutchess County Parks and his service to the County.

Dutchess County Executive William F.X. O'Neil announced the new name Dec. 16 at a gathering on the trail that included Rep. Molinaro, his predecessor, as well as community leaders and stakeholders –including Scenic Hudson, Walkway Over the Hudson, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and Marist College – to celebrate a soft opening of the trail in the City and Town of Poughkeepsie and spread the word that the trail is now open for year-round use.

The MJM Northside Line is a 16- to 22-foot-wide, dual-lane pathway for pedestrians and cyclists stretching 1.2 miles from the new Hudson Heritage Plaza in the Town of Poughkeepsie to Parker Avenue (State Route 9G) in the City of Poughkeepsie. The trail connects many community assets, providing easy access between housing, jobs, schools, businesses, hospitals and parks. The trail features lighting and is monitored by security cameras and law enforcement patrols to enable safe, 24-hour use, and will be plowed, as necessary, during the winter months. Other amenities include secure bike parking, bench seating and bike-repair stations.

County Executive O'Neil said, "This trail is a fantastic new connection for residents, visitors and students alike. For those looking to save on gas, the Northside Line is a fast, safe path to bike or walk to work or school. And for those looking to get more exercise, this split-use trail is a perfect way to safely connect to our popular WRS Dutchess Rail Trail and the world-renowned Walkway Over the Hudson. Thanks to the vision and dedication of our own former County Executive, Marc Molinaro, as well as community

stakeholders, we are proud to bring this new kind of trail – which will be open, lit and monitored 24/7/365 – to fruition."

Initially known as the Dutchess County Urban Trail project, the MJM Northside Line was constructed along a former CSX rail line that was purchased by Scenic Hudson as part of its mission to increase public use trails throughout the county. Scenic Hudson transferred ownership of the property to the County in late-2019 and, following an extensive public outreach process that informed the final design in partnership with Scenic Hudson, construction began in mid-2022. Construction of the spur between Parker Avenue and West Cedar Avenue was completed in 2022, with the remaining spur completed earlier this fall. The project, which totaled \$11.6 million, was funded in part by federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) dollars.

"We were proud to work closely with CSX to secure this land and then turn it over to Dutchess County - it is gratifying to see this project come to realization. The Northside Line, going past our future Scenic Hudson headquarters and community space, is so important to Poughkeepsie, providing an important link for the City's northside neighborhoods, where many households face economic challenges and do not have access to a household vehicle. Being able to walk or bike to educational resources, recreation, groceries and more is vital," said Seth McKee, Executive Director for The Scenic Hudson Land Trust, Inc. and Land Programs.

"Projects like this help close the 'Nature Gap' – a term coined by the Center for American Progress to detail the inequity and lack of access to open space in the nation's cities – bringing open space into neighborhoods. We are proud to continue to work alongside with the County, City of Poughkeepsie to bring open space into neighborhoods, by building climate smart infrastructure and ensuring equity and nature are front and

center," McKee continued.

As part of the event, the County also highlighted the City of Poughkeepsie Fire Department and its new Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV), which was acquired with funding from the County's Municipal Innovation Grant (MIG) and will be used along the trail, among other areas, to assist with faster emergency medical response for trail users. To expedite response time, the vehicle is stored in a shed adjacent to the trail that was also funded by the department's MIG award.

"We appreciate Dutchess County stepping up once again and delivering a Municipal Innovation Grant to the City of Poughkeepsie," said City of Poughkeepsie Fire Chief Joe Franco. "This grant has allowed us to purchase a vehicle that will be used to protect the safety and health of people, residents and visitors alike, who are using the rail trail and might require medical assistance. The Fire Department is grateful for the county partnership, and the timing is perfect, as the county expands the rail trail with a northside spur."

The trail's new name provides recognition of the numerous contributions of Rep. Molinaro, who during his 11 years as Dutchess County Executive, championed historic investment and expansion of Dutchess County's parks system. From improvements at Quiet Cove Riverfront Park, Bowdoin Park and Wilcox Memorial Park, to purchasing and developing properties such as Camp Nooteeming in Pleasant Valley, the Lake Walton Preserve in East Fishkill and the Northside Line. His staunch support of a wide range of recreational avenues for residents of all abilities fit his personal motto, "Marc's for Parks!" From Heritage Financial Park, formerly Dutchess Stadium, to the more than 35 miles of rail trail spanning the county, Rep. Molinaro saw numerous projects to fruition, resulting in positive impacts on residents' lives, creating connections and building opportunities.

Congressman Marc Molinaro said,

"Introducing: the Marcus J. Molinaro Northside Line Urban Trail! Thank you, and what an honor. I was proud to have a hand in developing this linear park as County Executive and can't wait to see the connections it makes and potential that's now unlocked - for everyone of every age, background and ability."

The potential next phase of the trail would provide an interface with the Marist College campus, providing connections to residential housing at One Dutchess as well as Upper

Landing Park, Waryas Park and the Poughkeepsie Train Station along the Hudson River waterfront.

Marist College officials, including Marist College Executive Vice President Geoff Brackett and Tim Murray, Athletic Director, were also on hand for the event along with members of the Marist track program as well as runners from the Eastern Dutchess Road Runners Club.

According to Marist Executive Vice President Geoffrey Brackett, "This project will have a meaningful impact on all residents of the County, including the students, faculty, and staff at Marist, and is another example of the inclusive, forward-thinking, and well-executed planning by our county's officials. Marist is proud to partner with communities throughout Dutchess County and excited to support initiatives like this that make our community better."

While the trail is considered to be "substantially" complete, there are still finishing touches to be completed including installation of wayfinding signage and permanent, decorative safety railings. A formal ribbon cutting event featuring family-friendly activities will be held in the spring of 2024.

To learn more about the Northside Line project, and other Dutchess County Parks including the County's extensive system of rails trails, visit dutchessny.gov/parks.

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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, 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
- 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 Southern Dutchess News 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 Southern Dutchess News.

NOTICE OF EARLY DEADLINES

Southern Dutchess News will be on a holiday schedule for the December 27, 2023 and January 3, 2024 issues.

Editorial and Advertising deadlines for the December 27 issue are Thursday, December 21, at 5 p.m.

Editorial and Advertising deadlines for the January 3 issue are Thursday, Dec. 28, at 5 p.m.

Email cschmidt@sutchessnews.com for more information.

Christmas poems to celebrate the holiday

To the Editor:

Christmas 1958

Christmas is the time of year,
When people start to sing and cheer.
Halls are decorated with mistletoe and holly,
The Christmas dinner is bright and jolly.

While the carolers are outside singing,
The church bells are softly ringing.
For soon on earth they will rejoice,
The Prince of Peace, Gods Only choice.

Hail the Prince who is blessed,
Hail the son of righteousness.
May his birth bring peace for all to see,
The Prince has come to set men free.

Christmas 1994

Christmas is the time of year,
When people start to sing and cheer.
Halls are decorated with boughs of holly,
Children singing, let's be jolly.

Santa will be coming soon,
With his sleigh, he will jump the moon.
Bringing presents to all the girls and boys,
Down the chimney with his sack full of toys.

Christmas is also the time of year,
We celebrate Christ and all his good cheer.
Born in a stable, no room at the inn,
To help the world and cleanse it of sin.

So, when opening presents or trimming the tree,
Remember our savior who died for thee.
Take a moment of silence and say our Lord's Prayer,
So, the spirit of Christmas will always be there.

Leslie Pisaturo
Poughkeepsie

Remember which legislators 'did the right thing' when it came to voting on pay increase

To the Editor:

I am in agreement with the Dutchess County Conservative Chairman's responses to the Dutchess County Legislators' outrageous raises in his Dec 6, 2023 letter to the editor. Fifteen lawmakers (14 Republicans and 1 Democrat) voted to give themselves a 68% raise. In addition to the raises for legislators, the county executive, county clerk, comptroller and sheriff also got very large raises. Including stipends and higher salaries for the majority and minority whips.

It appears the increased taxes on hotels and sales tax are going into the pockets of those elected instead of being fiscally responsible. They should donate their raises to the homeless or veterans in need. This action along with the excess millions of dollars spent on the Renegades facility upgrades and the County Justice and Transition Center should have been utilized to create a countywide ambulance service.

If you believe you need to have high salaries to attract better quality candidates - you are wrong. Those are the candidates we don't want.

A slight raise along the lines of whatever the employees who work for the county received would have been the right thing to do. It does not matter what party you are in to know that we must elect fiscally responsible candidates.

It is equally important to remember their blatant lack of transparency by adding this as a last-minute amendment to the budget. Actions like these confirm what people normally think of politicians - they are just no good.

I hope the voters remember the names of the fifteen greedy legislators when their terms are up and they ask for your vote again.

To the legislators who voted against this increase, 'thank you' for representing the people and being fiscally responsible.

I hope those who said 'No' don't face any retaliatory actions for doing the right thing for the people.

Louise Daniele
Fishkill

Dutchess County Sheriff's Office, Dutchess County SPCA team up to assist neglected animals

The Dutchess County Sheriff's Office and Dutchess County SPCA announced a new more extensive partnership to enhance the protection of abused and neglected companion animals in all of Dutchess County. Prior to the partnership, Dutchess County SPCA utilized its own peace officer to investigate allegations of abuse and neglect. It did so under contract to the Sheriff's Office. Under this new arrangement, investigations into alleged abuse and neglect of animals will be conducted directly by the Sheriff's Office, and DCSPCA will spearhead the care of animal victims, assuming responsibility for their housing and medical care, as well as providing medical and forensic evidence for the prosecution of their abusers. This will be the core function of DCSPCA's new Saving Animal Victims with Empathy (SAVE) program.

"We are proud of the cases we've been able to prosecute and the animals we've been able to save," said DCSPCA executive director Lynne Meloccaro, "but in recent years it has become apparent that one humane law officer working in-house at DCSPCA is

not sufficient to provide enforcement throughout the entire county. With the extensive resources of the Sheriff's Office, it will be possible to protect animals on a whole new level. DCSPCA will provide the specialized support needed for these cases, including the medical treatment and recovery of abused animals and the collection of the necessary evidence to assist the Sheriff in prosecuting abusers. Our new SAVE program will allow us to focus our effort on the care of animal victims."

Sheriff Kirk Imperati agrees that the enforcement of humane law, and the prosecution of offenders, should be the purview of the county's lead law enforcement agency. "People who harm animals with malicious intent are criminals just as much as people who harm people," he said. "Cases of this sort should be dispatched through this office like other criminal cases. In partnership with DCSPCA and the district attorney's office we will be able to provide greater protection to the companion animals of Dutchess County."

The new arrangement will go into effect January 1, 2024.

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Winners of Firemen's Christmas Stockings announced



For the 43rd year in a row, four students in the Beacon City School District were presented with the annual Firemen's Christmas Stockings. This year's winners, one from all of the four elementary schools in the district, each received a five-foot stocking filled with gifts including a smoke detector. The annual event is sponsored by the volunteer firefighters of Lewis Tompkins Hose Fire Co., Beacon Engine Co., Mase Hook & Ladder Co., Dutchess Junction Fire Co. and Slater Chemical Fire Co.

This year's winners (from left) were Daniel Blackburn of Sargent Elementary and Lorenzo Sannicandro of Glenham Elementary. Not pictured are winners Ryan Gill of South Ave. Elementary and Giovanna Abarca of J.V. Forrestal Elementary. Posing with the children are Lewis Tompkins Hose members Bob Simmonds, Tony Piccone and Dave Simmonds.

-Courtesy photo

New financial literacy proposal to graduate high school receives praise from Jacobson

Assemblymember Jonathan Jacobson (D-104) praised the new State Education Department Blue Ribbon Commission proposal to require financial literacy classes to graduate high school. This requirement mirrors Jacobson's own bill (A2298), according to a release from his office.

"Graduating high school seniors should enter adulthood with a basic understanding of personal finances. By requiring financial literacy in public high schools, New York can help ensure that every student, regardless of their current socioeco-

nom status, is equipped to make informed personal financial decisions," said Jacobson.

Jacobson said he is hopeful that this proposal to require financial literacy classes will be adopted when the Board of Regents makes final changes in the spring and will be implemented as soon as possible.

To learn more about the Blue Ribbon Commission and New York State graduation requirements, visit nysed.gov/grad-measures.

Sign up for 21-Day Equity Challenge by United Way of Dutchess-Orange

United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region is challenging the community to a 21-Day Equity Challenge that will share resources about specific equity topics in our community for each day of the challenge. One can choose to read an article, watch a video or listen to a podcast - or delve more deeply into the topic by engaging with all three.

Depending on one's choice, each challenge will take a few minutes, up to an hour daily. The 21-Day Equity Challenge begins on January 15th, Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This is an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of how inequality affects our lives and our community. To sign up, to www.uwdor.org/mlk24.



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- Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse
- Culinary Institute of America
- Decoda
- Disabled American Veterans
- Garrison Art Center
- Girly Wolfpack Project
- Grace Smith House
- Greystone Programs
- Hope For Youth Foundation
- Hudson Valley Hospice
- Locust Grove
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- Miles of Hope
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VETERANS NEWS WITH ADAM ROCHE

PTSD and the Holidays



Adam Roche

The holiday season is a time of gathering with family and friends, often considered a time of goodwill, peace and reflection. For too many veterans, however, that's not the case. For them, the holiday season can be a time of loneliness, isolation and depression because scores of our vets are quietly dealing with Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome, or PTSD.

Most of the public has heard of PTSD. In fact, the expression is so common, many genuinely caring and sympathetic individuals often have only a modest reaction when they hear it; they don't know PTSD is considered a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mental health professionals say this disability can develop after going through or witnessing any number of horrendous or life-threatening situations. Personal exposure to, or witnessing life events such as assault, physical or sexual abuse, terrorist attacks and, of course, engaging in the theatre of combat, are just some examples that can cause the condition. PTSD is often debilitating, causing serious problems in one's ability to function in social situations and the workplace, putting severe stress on relationships.

Through my counseling work with hun-

dreds of veterans suffering with a variety of PTSD symptoms, I have seen how tepid – and often unintentional – responses from others causes feelings of shame. When we don't recognize PTSD as a true disability, our veterans may be perceived as weak as they cope with it, causing many to fall into a lifestyle of seclusion and a sense of despair.

Unless a person, or someone close to them, has had close contact with anyone dealing with one or more of the symptoms of PTSD, the condition would understandably seem abstract with little tangible understanding.

Symptoms of PTSD often mimic other forms of clinical anxieties, making it hard to diagnose. Symptoms range from observable traits like a short temper, over-reactions, excessive drinking, mood swings and road rage, to the less overt, such as sadness, inability to express emotion, boredom or a feeling of doom.

These characteristics are often triggered and heightened during the holiday season, causing those suffering to miss out on holiday joy. The expectation of having to be jovial around family and friends heightens the trauma, invoking stress and anxiety. In fact, being around groups is a prime rea-

son bad memories surface in PTSD sufferers, often causing "survivors' guilt" about those they once served with who didn't make it back home.

Having served two terms of active duty in battle, both in Iraq and Afghanistan, I understand this feeling. Even with the years of knowledge and learned skills I have acquired in my work with the Vet 2 Vet program and now as Director of Dutchess County Veterans Services, helping others cope with, and in numerous cases overcome, this mental health condition, I still sometimes feel the effects of my own personal struggle with PTSD resurface. If it were not for the coping strategies I've learned through years of support from my peers, I, too, might struggle a lot more with my own ongoing battle with PTSD.

Statistics show nearly 60 percent of veterans experience mild to severe symptoms of PTSD. With Dutchess County home to some 13,000 veterans, it's likely most people reading this column know someone in their day-to-day life who struggles with some form of PTSD.

My goal in my current role is to teach the public of the trauma many local veterans experienced during their time defend-

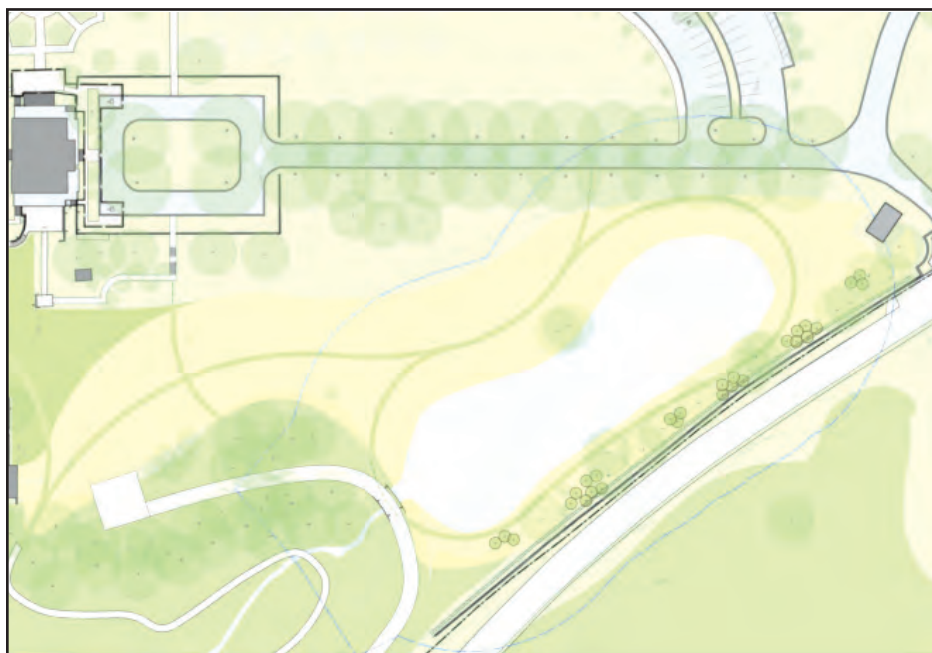
ing our country, and help open dialogue with their loved ones who may be dealing with PTSD. Explaining its complexity and gravity helps give those struggling full access to the treatment and benefits available to them. There are many service providers available in Dutchess County to help those coping with the disability.

Successfully treating people with PTSD, especially during the holidays, has many levels to it – both clinically and personally. Communicating with those you trust; setting limits on the amount of time spent and the kinds of activities you can handle; taking exercise and mental health breaks; and having a plan in place to cope with anxiety are helpful strategies to practice during this time of year.

Those who have served in the military, going into battle under some of the most dangerous conditions one could imagine, are some of the bravest people I know. Let's help them win their battle with PTSD. We at Veterans Services and Mental Health of America (MHA) want all our vets to know they are not alone.

Please call us at 845-486-2060 for an appointment or learn more at dutchessny.gov/veterans.

Meadowland Restoration project launched at Boscobel



A rendering of the Meadowland Restoration project at Boscobel House and Gardens in Garrison, Putnam County.

-Courtesy image

Boscobel House and Gardens—famous for its stunning views of the Hudson River, restored Neoclassical mansion, renowned design collection, exhibitions, and community programs —has launched a Meadow Restoration project with horticulturalist and designer Larry Weaner and nationally-recognized landscape architecture firm Reed Hilderbrand. Boscobel is at 1601 Route 9D, Garrison .

The project will convert a large area of non-native grasses and undesirable invasives into a Native Meadow that opens new opportunities to enjoy and learn Hudson Valley nature.

The plantings plan prioritizes plants that thrived in the Hudson Valley when the Munsee Lenape and Wappingers people were the region's primary stewards. Site preparation is underway and planting begins in early summer 2024. The Meadow will take 2-5 years to become fully established and will require a permanent program of careful management.

Leading the project is Larry Weaner, whose firm Larry Weaner Associates has won numerous awards for designing and managing complex ecosystems that self-propagate. "Working on the Meadow at Boscobel," effuses Weaner, "has provided an outstanding opportunity to combine history, culture, and ecology." Boscobel and LWA are collaborating closely with the local Conservation Board to ensure that the restoration process reflects the Hudson Valley's strong environmental standards, while also engaging with historians on Native American cultivation practices. Boscobel also partners on land-

scape stewardship and interpretation with the Philipstown Garden Club, Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County, and Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary.

"Boscobel is on a mission to connect our Hudson Valley landscape's past to its future by enhancing our ecology and outdoor guest experience. The Meadow reflects a transformational commitment to do that through plants, programming, and partnership," says Executive Director Jennifer Carlquist.

The Meadow is one of several sustainability initiatives that extend Boscobel's impact beyond site boundaries. In October, Boscobel earned an "Excellence Award" from the Greater Hudson Heritage Network for the Boscobel Community Tree Initiative, which has planted more than two dozen trees in the nearby town of Cold Spring in partnership with the Cold Spring Tree Advisory Board, Town of Philipstown, and Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County. Boscobel also supports local farms by subsidizing and hosting the Cold Spring Farmers Market along with Davoren Farm, which grows organic produce that it donates to local food pantries. As a nonprofit dependent upon community support, Boscobel is actively fundraising to support all of these and other sustainability efforts.

One may follow Boscobel House and Gardens at [@boscobelhg](https://www.boscobelhg.com) on social media, or visit online at Boscobel.org. For further information, call 845-265-3638.

Towne Crier Dance Jam set for Dec. 28

Get On Down at the Towne Crier Dance Jam on December 28 at 7 p.m., at 379 Main Street, in Beacon. Dance to a vibrant mix of musical styles; song requests welcome. These dances are informal and even if one comes alone, one can always find a friendly partner on the dance floor. All are welcome – singles, couples, friends, newcomers. \$10 Admission.

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

this week's puzzle solutions

This week's answer

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

SUDOKU

HESS	HER	HESS	HESS	HESS	HESS	HESS	HESS	HESS
HEWED	USA	EDWIN	SHORE	HUH	DIODE	GRING	HCH	IMNEY
ROUT	TAI	ENDEAR	SOUND	DADO	HIGH	OREO	SEVEN	CRAAG
AST	PURR	TUTTI	GAP	LICE	CROSS	TIDING	SAD	VENT
ORATE	TAJA	AGIST	STRAP	PER	POOCH	IRRA	CREAM	UVEA

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

Suguru solution

love to cook

by vicki frank day



Merry Christmas Cookies

Vicki's version of this time-honored treat kicks up the lemon flavor.



Vicki's version of "Betty Crocker's Merry Christmas Cookies" calls for extra-lemony flavor.

-Photos by Vicki Frank Day

My sincerest wish is that you feel the spirit of Christmas. I hope, as you shop and wrap and prepare, that your heart is full because that is a gift you give yourself. If you have managed to hold joy and peace there during this hectic time, then all will be merry and bright and that is a beautiful thing.

I have often written about the true meaning behind this holiday because it gives me hope to think that the magic of Christmas is alive and well, being passed along through the generations through the traditions we keep. As I decorated my tree and began planning this year's menu I was, as always, filled with happiness, warmth and lovely nostalgia, things I find I need now more than ever. It is a time when traditions bring comfort and fill me with love and gratitude.

Of course, food plays a big part for me in all of this and, again, this brings comfort and calms the stress that swirls around in my mind. I find I can set bad thoughts aside this time of year as I go through the routines of the season. Simple things, like breaking out favorite recipes, planning Christmas dinner, wrapping gifts as I sit beside the tree and going through

my vintage ornaments are rituals that heal and just plain make me happy. Most of this I do for the ones I love but in doing so I find it's just as much for myself.

How fortunate I am to have strong family traditions! Our Christmases have always been filled with time-honored rituals and I dearly love adding to them as I put them into practice each year. My mother has baked Christmas cookies for as long as I can remember, recipes that have become an important part of the holiday for me. I'm not sure if I really helped her when I was little, but I know she always loved having me there, even as I got older. As I grew up and life pulled me away, she would do it by herself. When my nephew came along, he took my place and he and his girlfriend still make it a point to help her. Even my father has stepped in, something I love picturing and am grateful for.

Mama always makes several kinds, and we all have our favorites. For my father there are thin, delicate cream cheese cookies and cheesecake bars. For my sister and me, her date-filled balls rolled in coconut or nuts, dubbed meatball cookies, are a must. And who doesn't love ginger-

bread? Every year, my mother pulls out the impressive bin filled with cookie cutters, most vintage, and specific ones are used for certain types. Houses, people, trees, snowflakes and bells, a lion, camel, cat, pig, cow and even a hippo to name a few all make their mark and add fun and whimsy, whether decorated with icing, sugar or left plain.

There's one more kind that my sister and I love, and I have taken over making them because they're not mama's cup of tea. We grew up calling them lemon dough cookies but the original recipe from our well-worn 1960s Betty Crocker cookbook says they are, in fact, Merry Christmas Cookies. Kissed with honey and lemon extract, they are soft and light and lovely and the ones I'm sharing with you today.

Before I do, a few quick notes: because I love the lemon aspect of these (and just can't leave well enough alone), I have taken liberties with the original recipe, adding a bit of fresh lemon juice and zest. The cookies will spread when baked so don't be surprised if you use a detailed cutter but get somewhat blobby results. Also, when it comes to decorating, I keep it simple with a sprinkling of colored sugar. Betty's recipe suggests using a thin royal icing, which you would do once they've baked and cooled, but I think it overpowers the delicate flavors of the cookie and I prefer mine less sweet.

LEMON-HONEY CHRISTMAS COOKIES

I recommend doubling this recipe, adapted from "Betty Crocker's Merry Christmas Cookies." You will need to chill the dough before rolling and cutting. Even so it will be sticky, so you'll also need to flour your surface and the rolling pin. The cookies should be golden in color with a soft texture and a lovely honeyed lemon flavor.

INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup (5 1/3 tablespoons) butter, room temperature
1/3 cup sugar
1 egg
2/3 cup honey
1 teaspoon lemon extract
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon fresh lemon zest
2 3/4 cup flour (plus more for dusting the

rolling surface)

1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt

METHOD

In a large bowl, mix butter, sugar, egg, honey, lemon extract, juice and zest thoroughly.

In a separate bowl, sift or whisk together flour, baking soda and salt.

Add flour mixture to dough a third at a time, mixing well to combine. Chill for at least 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly grease 1-2 baking sheets and set aside.

Sift flour over your surface and rolling pin. Place some of the dough on the surface. You will likely have to add flour as you go. (It's OK to lightly dust the top of the dough too if you find it sticking to the rolling pin). Roll out to about 1/4-inch thickness (I make mine a little thicker), then cut into shapes. If using sugar to decorate, sprinkle it on now. Transfer to prepared baking sheets with a spatula and bake 8-10 minutes (Betty says 'until no imprint remains when touched lightly.') I recommend checking after 8 minutes. Transfer to a cooling rack.

Betty claims this makes about 5 dozen cookies, but I find it makes 2-3, probably because I use cutters of different sizes.

There's still time to bake some Christmas love. With all you likely have to do you may not think so, but I promise you, taking the time to do something like this will do wonders for your spirit. Just let go, turn on some holiday tunes, find your rhythm and make it fun. Take your mind off everything else for a little while and gift yourself and the ones you love some fresh-baked magic. If you do, I hope it becomes part of your family's traditions, too, filling your hearts with comfort and joy. Merry Christmas!

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.



Libby Funeral Home, local cemeteries host Wreaths Across America ceremonies



The annual Wreaths Across America ceremony took place at the Fishkill Rural Cemetery on Dec. 16. The annual tradition is to honor veterans, MIAs and POWs. Making remarks during the ceremony were Joseph Schuka, a funeral director with Libby Funeral Home in Beacon, and Fr. Adolfo Occeno, who is with St. Mary, Mother of the Church in Fishkill.

Libby Funeral Home staff also held a Wreaths Across America ceremony on Dec. 17 at the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery in Poughkeepsie.

-Photos by Kristine Coulter, courtesy photo



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by mark adams



Wonderland

Wonderland Farm is a Rhinebeck tradition.

Steven Lobotsky was sold out of Christmas trees, 43 days before Christmas. Every year, I try to stop at a local cut-your-own tree farm to scare up a story about a local farmer trying to make their way in the world.

But not today. Steven explained that Wonderland Farm can only supply 300 trees each season, and people were buying their trees earlier and earlier every year, a trend that started during the Covid era. All of this year's balsam, canaan and fraser firs had found a home. He will replant a thousand saplings next spring.

I took in the scene – a warm fire, hand-decorated wreaths, families dragging in the last of the trees, followed by the inevitable family dog. I couldn't really write an article about it, since Wonderland Farm was closing for the season. As I was about to say goodbye, I turned and asked, "Say, Steven, how's your dad doing?"

Everyone around the fire perked up at the mention of the iconic John Lobotsky, Jr. "He's doing great. Still living at home, right up the road," Steven said. "You ought to go visit him. He's 97 years old. He'd love to see you."

I tried to call. There was no cell service on the summit of White Schoolhouse Road in Rhinebeck. Steven told me to go up to John's house and walk right in. Which I did.

Steven was correct. John was doing great, and it was as if we hadn't missed a beat. Lounging in his recliner, gripping a pair of divining rods which he uses to direct the flow of water into various ponds and streams, John regaled me with stories about the old days on the farm.

Eighty years ago, before interstate highways and refrigerated trucks, all fresh vegetables were grown locally. Sweet corn, tomatoes, beans, strawberries, and asparagus were the main crops at Wonderland. The harvest was hauled to markets in Poughkeepsie, like Mohican Market on Main Street, or put on trains bound for Manhattan. In the winter,

John and local merchant Sam Ianna would drive their old rack body truck up to the Adirondacks to cut Christmas trees and bring them home to sell in town.

"We made good, honest money," John exclaimed.

John was born a little too late to serve in World War II, so he got a job after the war working for the Department of Environmental Conservation. It seems there was a rabies epidemic among the wild foxes in the Harlem Valley. John and brother Walter were hired to kill foxes – 2,300 of them. He showed me photos to prove it.

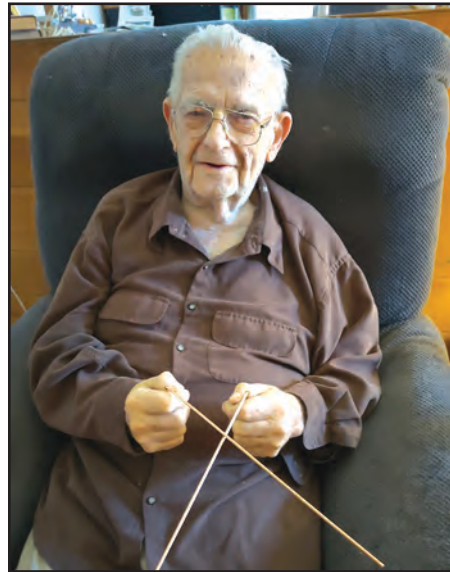
Wonderland Farm was founded in 1921, by John's father John Lobotsky Sr., who fled the country Belarus right after the Russian Revolution. In modern parlance he'd be called an asylum seeker.

Lots of immigrants started farming in the Hudson Valley around that time, including my grandfather Ralph Adams. My dad and John Jr. became friends, or more like comrades in arms, as they traded products back and forth, depending on who had too many or too few boxes of tomatoes or bushels of corn. As a teenager, I picked corn at Wonderland when our fields ran low. During a dry summer in the mid-1960s, I remember my dad standing on the side porch staring into the distance.

"Look at those clouds," he cried. "They're headed right over to John Lobotsky's place."

As the vegetable deal lost steam in the 1970s, Wonderland started raising cut flowers – asters and delphiniums, which led to the rise of Wonderland Florist, Nursery and Farm Market in the Village of Rhinebeck, still thriving under the direction of John's daughter Lynn. I stopped by to chat with daughter Susan (there is also daughter Joann) about her experiences growing up on the farm. Susan lives in Texas, but comes "home" to help out at the busy times. She had just returned to the shop after delivering a van load of flower arrangements.

"I used to love picking beans," she told



John Lobotsky Jr.



John and Walter with foxes

me, which she started doing at age 8. "You'd be out there dragging your burlap sack, not a worry in the world."

John Lobotsky's wife, Joan, died a few years ago. John's sister Julia, who just turned 100, lives with him. She is a famous scientist, known for her work with the Society for the Study of Reproduction.

There's some confusion about where the name "Wonderland" came from. Possibly

because of the wonderful food and flowers the farm produced. A more prosaic version has it that it was a wonder anything would grow at all since the ground was so full of rocks. Perfect for Christmas trees.

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



Steven Lobotsky with wife Patty and grandchildren Jakson (on the left) and Lennox

-Courtesy photos

Open Mic at the Howland Cultural Center on Dec. 22

The Howland Open Mic will be held on Dec. 22 at 7 p.m. and then it is only three days to go till Santa time. Sign-ups begin at 6:15 p.m., the drawing for time

slots is at 6:45 p.m. and the show starts at 7 p.m. The host is Jay Strauss. Organizers ask attendees offer a donation and have refreshments available by donation.

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Obituaries

MaryAnn Leenig



FISHKILL - MaryAnn Leenig, age 72, passed away on December 15, 2023 at St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital in Newburgh. She was born on March 11, 1951 in Mt. Vernon, NY to the late Louis and Nettie (LaMagna) Cavuoto. On December 30, 1972, she married her beloved husband Ronald R. Leenig at St. James the Apostle Church in Carmel, NY. Ronald survives at their family home in Fishkill.

For 15 years, MaryAnn worked as the Regional Assistant Manager for Fragrance Outlet in Woodbury Commons. She was on the Zoning Board of Appeals in the Town of Fishkill and volunteered for a number of community and school related events. These events included

assisting in the kitchen for CYO basketball games, manning the concession stand for girls recreational softball games and providing baked goods for school bake sales. MaryAnn was a wonderful cook who also excelled at baking. She catered events and wedding parties. MaryAnn was best known for her delicious eggplant and meatballs, along with her sugar cookie platters which she delivered as gifts during the holidays. Prior to going back to work full-time, MaryAnn looked after the children of family members and neighborhood friends, before and after school. Often being referred to as a "second mother" by many of the children she cared for over the years. MaryAnn was a loyal, generous, and loving person. Family and friends meant everything to MaryAnn. She loved being a grandma more than anything, and cherished all the time she spent with her grandchildren.

In addition to her beloved husband Ronald, MaryAnn is survived by her children, Nicole Sullivan and domestic partner, Roderick Perpetua of Wappingers Falls, NY, and Michele Miller of Fishkill, NY; her grandchildren: Ethan and Aidan Sullivan, and Addison and Brody Miller; her sisters Theresa Girolamo and Michelle Cavuoto; as well as several beloved nieces and nephews.

Funeral arrangements are private and under the direction of McHoul Funeral Home of Fishkill, Inc. 1089 Main St. Fishkill. A memorial service will be held in early March for friends and family to honor and celebrate MaryAnn. The family will notify friends and loved ones of the date and location once finalized.

Please consider making a donation in memory of MaryAnn to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital www.stjude.org

Debra Pisco



FORMERLY OF BEACON - Debra Pisco (72) of Tampa, Florida passed away peacefully after an extended illness, December 9, 2023. She was born in Beacon, New York and received a nursing degree from Vassar College. She worked at Butterfield Hospital in Cold Spring, New York, prior to moving to Tampa, Florida in 1983. She loved being around children, which led her to the Hillsborough County School System where she taught at both Lake Magdalene and Carrollwood Elementary Schools until retirement.

She was preceded in death by her parents Edmund and Delores Turner, and her sister Cherie. She is survived by her husband Vincent, daughters Tara and Heather, and son Brad; along with four grandchildren.

A private family memorial service will be held, prior to interment later this year at St. Joachim's Cemetery in Beacon New, York.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Shriners Children Hospital (813-281-0300), 2900 N. Rocky Point Drive, Tampa, Florida 33607.

Ralph J. Holt Jr.



WAPPINGERS FALLS - Ralph J. Holt Jr., 69, of Wappinger Falls, NY passed away on December 12, 2023. He was born in Lowell, MA on December 8, 1954, the eldest son of the late Sylvia and Ralph Holt Sr. Ralph graduated from John Jay High School.

Ralph was preceded in death by his brother Brian, and is survived by his wife of 45 years Mary Jane, his children Shannon and Caitlin Holt, his brothers Dennis (Lori), John (Denise), and Christopher (Karen), as well as several nieces and nephews.

Calling hours were held on Monday, December 18th at Delehanty Funeral Home, 64 East Main Street, Wappingers

Falls, NY. The Mass of Christian Burial was offered on Tuesday, December 19th at St. Columba Church, 835 Route 82, Hopewell Junction, NY followed by interment in Wappingers Rural Cemetery.

Jerry A. Rocco



Former long time Westchester County resident, Jerry A. Rocco, 98, passed away after a brief illness on Sunday December 10, 2023 at the at the FDR Montrose VA Medical Center's Veterans Nursing Facility.

Jerry was born in Manhattan, NY on September 2, 1925. Jerry was raised first in Lodi, NJ before moving to The Bronx until he joined the Navy in January 1944 for a two year enlistment stint as a radio operator. Jerry served on the LCS - 88 (aka The Mighty Midgets) in the Pacific Theater which included participating in the Battle of Okinawa. Jerry was Honorably Discharged in January 1946. Jerry was awarded the Asiatic Pacific One Star Ribbon, the Commendation One Star Ribbon, the American Theatre Ribbon, the Victory Medal and the Asiatic -

Pacific Theatre of War Campaign Ribbon. Upon returning back home in New York after the war, Jerry reluctantly returned to his field of training which was a meat cutter/butcher. Not long after that, using these skills, Jerry embarked on a fifty year sales career, with primary concentration in the new home food plan industry.

In 1950, Jerry married Mary T. Byrne of Pelham, NY. They had two children, Steven and David. After first living in Yonkers for twenty years, they moved to Mt. Vernon for the next eighteen years. In 1987, Jerry and Mary relocated to their dream house in Hopewell Jct., NY. They were married for 43 years until Mary passed away in 1993 due to complications due to pneumonia. Jerry lived in Dutchess County until December 2020 where he was relocated to live in an assisted living facility in northern Westchester. When this arrangement became untenable because of Jerry's failing health, he was admitted to the FDR Montrose VA Medical Center's Veterans Nursing Facility where he stayed until he passed due to complications of a major stroke.

Jerry is survived by his sons, Steven (AnnMarie) and David (Ruby) as well as seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren. He is also predeceased by his mother, Antonietta, his father, Antonino, his brothers Michael and Eugene and sister Nina Borruso.

Calling hours will be held on Monday December 18, 2023 from 4-8 pm at the McHoul Funeral Home, Inc., 895 Route 82, Hopewell Junction. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Tuesday December 19, 2023 at 10 am at the Church of St. Denis, 602 Beekman Rd., Hopewell Junction.

Carmine D. Giordano



BEACON - Carmine D. "Toote" Giordano, a lifelong resident of Beacon, entered into rest on December 10, 2023. He was 102 years old.

Toote was born on July 14, 1921 in Beacon the son of the late Vincenzo and Madelaina Pietragallo Giordano. On August 25, 1942 he married the former Audrey Coons. Mrs. Giordano predeceased Toote in 2004.

Carmine proudly served in the U.S. Army during World War II where he served in the Army Air Corps until his honorable discharge in 1945. Toote worked as a hairdresser and owned Carl's Beauty Salon in Newburgh before retiring. He was a parishioner of St. Joachim - St. John the Evangelist Church, a longtime member of the Southern Dutchess Country Club, a life member of the Knights of Columbus, Trinity

Council #445 and a former member of the Beacon Elks Lodge #1493.

Toote is survived by his children, Michele Zane and her husband, Brian, Carla Robinson and her husband, John, Michael Giordano and his wife, Christine, Gina Morgan and Danielle Haran and her husband, Brian; his thirteen grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren; many nieces and nephews and extended family.

In addition to his parents and wife, Toote was predeceased by his daughter, Karen Giordano in 1966; his siblings, Dominic, Vito, Bartolomeo, Michael, Joseph, Tony, Louis Giordano, Florence Bingert and Kate LaValle.

Family and friends will gather on Wednesday, December 20 from 3 to 7 p.m. at Riverview Funeral Home by Halvey, 2 Beekman Street, Beacon. Members of the Knights of Columbus will conduct a service at 6 p.m. at the funeral home. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Thursday, December 21 at 10 a.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church, 35 Willow Street, Beacon followed by cremation. Military honors and burial of Toote's ashes will be held on Friday, December 22 at 10 a.m. at St. Joachim Cemetery, Beacon.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to either the Church of St. Joachim - St. John the Evangelist or to the Alzheimer's Association.

To send a personal condolence please visit www.riverviewbyhalvey.com.

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

Joan Gasparovic Gambeski

FISHKILL - Joan "Schatzie" Gasparovic Gambeski died after a brief illness on Sunday, December 10, at the age of 62.

She was a dedicated community leader and a devoted mother with an extensive network of family and friends who will miss her. In her role as Executive Director, Gifts and Legacy Planning, at Marist College, she was passionate about working collaboratively with donors, colleagues, and key partners to make a difference in the lives of others.

She is survived by her husband of 34 years, George P. Gambeski, her children, Catherine Gambeski and Mark Gambeski, all of Fishkill NY, and her sister, Elaine Jay, of Dallas TX.

Calling hours will be Friday, January 12, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Wm. G. Miller & Son FH, Inc., 371 Hooker Ave, Poughkeepsie, NY, 12603. A Memorial Mass will be held on Saturday, January 13, at 11 a.m. at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel at Marist College.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Wm. G. Miller & Son FH, Inc. If you wish to send an online condolence, please visit our website at www.wmgmillerfuneralhome.com.

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DUE TO A HOLIDAY PRESS SCHEDULE FOR Dec. 27th & Jan. 3rd issues

The Southern/Northern Dutchess News will have an early deadline.

The Dec. 27th Issue, will be on Dec. 20th before noon.

The Jan. 3rd Issue will be on Dec. 27th before noon.

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holiday greetings

Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center to host 3 new eclectic art exhibitions

The Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center, located at 9 and 12 Vassar Street in Poughkeepsie, will kick off 2024 with three new eclectic art exhibitions in their Visual Art Galleries that will run from January 3 to February 29. Featured in the Victorian Gallery at 9 Vassar Street will be Stacy Pearl, and at 12 Vassar Street will be Jane Ehrlich in the Reception Gallery and Rebecca Zeh in the Hancock Gallery. Free Public Art Opening Receptions will be held on Friday, January 5, from 5 pm to 7 p.m. for Jane Ehrlich and Rebecca Zeh at 12 Vassar Street, and again on Friday, January 12, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. for Stacy Pearl at 9 Vassar Street.

Stacy Pearl was born in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn and attended Rhode Island School of Design, The Art Students League of New York, and Tyler School of Art and Architecture at Temple University. Her exhibition at the Cunneen-Hackett Art Center, the Meaningless Paintings series, was completed over the past few years, mostly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and consists of representational imagery. "These works incorporate imagery from 'high' art to popular culture, from sports to science, to food, to tools and machines, to idyllic scenery — it's all fair game," she relays. "Choosing the images is intuitive, random, and fun...when a specific image speaks to me, that's when I know it's right." Previously working in an abstract minimalist style that focused on color, pat-

tern and texture, Pearl's current artwork removes any sort of narrative and has no secret meaning. Her works have been exhibited at Barrett Art Center (Poughkeepsie, NY), Vestige Concept Gallery (Pittsburgh, PA), Cerulean Arts (Philadelphia, PA), Prince Street Gallery (New York, NY), Greenpoint Gallery (Brooklyn, NY), and The Art Center Highland Park (Highland Park, IL). She has lived all over the world and now resides in New York with a model-maker husband, a perpetually knitting mother, and a great dog.

Jane Ehrlich attended the School of Visual Arts, Pratt Institute and The Brooklyn Museum School. Her exhibition of paintings at the Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center are part of an ongoing series called "Fragmented Transparencies" that have a single "color field" activated by the addition of accumulations of transparent and opaque layers of white, straight, zig zag, and curvilinear layers. "The layers refer to the base color implying a degree of spatial context but intentionally maintain a shallow depth, creating tension within the visible field...forms are painted one at a time, each form referring to the one before as it transports its individual information, nuances and accidents of application," she explains. "The shapes repeat and transmute as they inhabit the painting but never as pattern; as the surface is mapped some forms collide, some connect and some

coalesce, and through this process, the layers of monochromatic transparencies, and tonal variations begin to resonate with light and the painting becomes activated." Ehrlich has exhibited in New York, Florida, New Hampshire, and Maine, with her work recently showcased at Radius 50 (Woodstock, NY), 72 A -One A Silvermine Gallery (New Canaan, CT), Hudson Eye (Hudson), Lockwood Gallery (Kingston), Salon Zurcher - Women of Spirit (New York, NY), Mohawk Hudson Regional (Albany), and 3 Abstract Artists - Susan Eley Fine Arts (New York, NY) to name a few. A recipient of the 2022 and 2023 Community Arts Grant, New York State Council of the Arts, Ehrlich lives and works in Hudson, NY and is the founder of the annual Open Studio Hudson.

Rebecca Zeh is an interdisciplinary artist who received her BFA with a concentration in drawing from Pratt Institute in 2012. She is also an improvisational dancer who has studied movement since she was 6 years old. Utilizing mixed media and print-making techniques, she creates a visual space where dance, creative movement, nature, and art-making intersect evoking the feeling of moving as one with the elements of the outdoors. "The imagery depicted is inspired by photographic references, video references, and recounted memories of adventures exploring movement in outdoor settings," she explains. "My unique experiences dancing outdoors

and in dance class strongly inform my artistic practice." Ms. Zeh has exhibited her work in several art galleries and businesses throughout New York State that include The Art Center of the Capital Region, Saratoga Arts, LARAC, Albany Center Gallery, The Hallway Gallery at Second Street Studios, 344 Storefront, The Blooming Artist Gallery, Spring Street Gallery, Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts, and North Country Arts Council. Her work has been published in Barzakh Magazine and The Crit Zine by Symmetry Art Space as well as featured in The Daily Gazette and 518 Profiles Magazine. In 2023 she was the recipient of an Honorary Mention Award at the Annual Expressions Juried Art Show at North Country Arts Council in Glens Falls. Her home, which is also her studio, is located in Ballston Lake.

The Hancock Gallery and Reception Gallery at 12 Vassar Street are open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. but visitors must 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. The Victorian Gallery at 9 Vassar Street is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 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.

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Holidays ‘round the world’

Mount faculty share international seasonal traditions

Lights twinkle, store shelves are stocked, and more than 50 years after the original airing of “A Charlie Brown Christmas,” Linus is still ready to tell us about the reason for the season.

The holiday season is in full swing, and members of the Mount Saint Mary College community bring many cultural traditions to the holiday table, inspired by customs from around the world.

Charles Zola is the assistant to the President for Mission Integration, director of the Mount’s Catholic and Dominican Institute, and an associate professor of Philosophy. Zola, of Polish and Slovak heritage, said that the heart of the Christmas celebration in Poland is the Christmas Eve meal, called Wigilia, derived from the Latin word “vigil.”

The meal doesn’t begin until after the appearance of the first star on Christmas Eve, and the youngest member of the family is usually charged with looking for it. The table is spread with a white tablecloth, under which is placed small pieces of straw, representing the manger.

The typical Christmas dinner in Poland consists of red borscht or mushroom soup, various types of fish such as haddock, pike, and herring, pierogis with various fillings, sauerkraut and peas, and boiled potatoes sautéed in dill butter. Dessert is an array of pastries, like poppy-seed rolls, nut rolls, fruit compote, and cookies.

After the meal, families attend midnight Mass, called the Mass of the Shepherds.

Mount Professor of Hispanic Studies Victor Azuaje, who moved to the United States in 1998, notes that Christmas is a time of family and faith for Catholics in Venezuela.

The main Christmas meal, served at midnight on December 24, is “the most important thing,” he explained.

The meal centers around hallacas, a calzone-like “pocket” of cornmeal filled with chicken, pork or other meats, onions, bell peppers, green olives, and seasonings. Hallacas are large, so one or two could make up an entire dinner, said Azuaje.

Families exchange presents after the late meal. But instead of writing a letter to Santa Claus, children in Venezuela ask Baby Jesus for their gifts. The Nativity holds a prominent place in the home during the holiday season, but it isn’t until midnight on Christmas Eve that Baby Jesus is placed in the manger, Azuaje explained.

For about a week before December 24, early morning Masses are held. At Christmas Mass, attendees wear new clothes.

“It’s a very special night,” Azuaje said. “You’re going to wear something new.”

Suparna Bhalla, a Mount associate professor of Biology who originally hailed from India, said the Hindu tradition of Diwali (the Festival of Lights) is in some ways a combination of Christmas and New Year’s Eve. Falling between mid-October and mid-November each year, the Festival of Lights lives up to its name: fireworks fill the sky and Hindu homes are decorated with lights.

Gifts are given between families, including dried apricots, almonds, cashews, figs, and walnuts.

“It is the celebration of the triumph of good over evil,” she explained. “In Indian mythology, it is welcoming the gods back to their hometown.”

The Mount has cherished holiday traditions of its own. For example, students, faculty, and staff look forward to the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony which includes a blessing by Fr. Gregoire



Students at Mount Saint Mary College skate around a pop-up skating rink during a recent tree lighting ceremony on the Orange County campus.

-Photo by Lee Ferris

Fluet, Interim President of the college. The Mount also helps families in need with the annual Toy Drive, which this year, exceeded 1,000 toys for local girls

and boys.

For more information, visit www.msmc.edu

Holiday Open House at the Van Wyck Homestead set December 28

The Fishkill Historical Society will host its annual holiday open house on December 28 at 6:30 p.m. There will be music, refreshments including mulled

cider, crafts, kids’ games, and an opportunity to learn a couple English Country Dance steps to dance like George Washington loved. There will be a read-

ing by Town of Fishkill Council Member Brian Wrye. The fireplace in the kitchen will be going.

The Van Wyck Homestead Museum,

504 Route 9 in Fishkill, the driveway is accessed from Snook Road.

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NOTICETOBIDDERS-RFB-DCH-2023-26 NAME OF PROJECT: BOWDOIN PARK PLAYGROUND INSTALLATION Project Description: furnish all labor, material, equipment and other facilities and items necessary or proper for incidental to the installation of playground equipment furnished by Owner at Bowdoin Park. The County of Dutchess official bid documents for this project are obtained from the Empire State Purchasing Group’s Regional Bid Notification System at www.bidnetdirect.com/new-york/county-of-dutchess. Copies of bidding documents obtained from any other source are not considered official copies. It is incumbent upon all potential bidders to view all posted addenda prior to the bid close date. You may obtain an official copy by registering on the Empire State Regional Bid Notification System at [www.bidnetdirect.com/new-york/county-](http://www.bidnetdirect.com/new-york/county-of-dutchess)

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of-dutchess or by using the link provided at www.dutchessny.gov, selecting “Government” then selecting “Bidding and RFP Opportunities.” For those without Internet access, you may obtain an electronic copy of bidding documents by contacting the Dutchess County Department of Public Works at dpwcontracts@dutchessny.gov, or in person, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4 pm: Dutchess County DPW, Business Office, 1st Floor, 626 Dutchess Turnpike, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. Upon request, all interested parties may review the hard copy of the Bid Specifications and Drawings by visiting the above referenced address. All Addenda will be posted on BidNet Direct (aka Empire State Purchasing Group) site. Bids for the above project will be received by: Caroline Miller, Contract Specialist Dutchess County Department of Public Works (DPW) 626 Dutchess Turnpike-1st

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Floor Poughkeepsie, NY 12603 on or before 11:00AM Friday, January 12, 2024, and at that time publicly opened and read aloud. Bids received after that time will not be accepted. All interested parties are invited to attend. The bid opening for this solicitation may also be attended through Microsoft Teams Audio Conferencing. Anyone who wishes to hear bids read aloud via Teams, will need to call into the phone number listed below. We ask that you call in at least three minutes prior to bid due/time to ensure you are connected properly. All callers will be asked to identify themselves by name and organization. Join Microsoft Teams Meeting +1 516-268-4602 United States, Hempstead (Toll) Conference ID: 737 328 696#. Each bid shall be submitted as one paper original and one electronic copy and be accompanied by Bid Security (bid bond, certified check, official bank check) or a Letter of

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partment of Labor Prevailing Wage Rates PRC #: 2023013225. View Bid Specifications regarding APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, if applicable. The County reserves the right to waive irregularities in bids and in bidding and to reject any or all proposals. EXTENDING EMERGENCY ORDER 5/2023 EXTENSION TO EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 5 OF 2023 DECLARATION OF A LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY ORDER DECLARED BY DUTCHESS COUNTY EXECUTIVE: Please take notice that on December 15, 2023 at 12:00 a.m., pursuant to Article 2B of the New York State Executive Law, Article III of the Dutchess County Charter and Administrative Code Section 3.05, Acting Dutchess County Executive William F. X. O’Neil extended Executive Order 5 of 2023 dated May 18, 2023. The text of the declaration of state of emer-

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gency and local emergency orders is available at www.dutchessny.gov. EXTENDING LOCAL ORDERS 1,2&3 OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 5/2023 EXTENSION TO DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY ORDERS DECLARED BY DUTCHESS COUNTY EXECUTIVE: Please take notice that on December 14, 2023 at 12:00 a.m., pursuant to Article 2B of the New York State Executive Law, Article III of the Dutchess County Charter and Administrative Code Section 3.05, Acting Dutchess County Executive William F. X. O’Neil extended Local Emergency Order #1, Local Emergency Order #2, and Local Emergency Order #3 in furtherance of Executive Order No. 5 of 2023, dated May 18, 2023. The text of the declaration of state of emergency and local emergency orders is available at

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www.dutchessny.gov. EXTENDING LOCAL ORDERS 1,2&3 OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 5/2023 EXTENSION TO DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY ORDERS DECLARED BY DUTCHESS COUNTY EXECUTIVE: Please take notice that on December 19, 2023 at 12:00 a.m., pursuant to Article 2B of the New York State Executive Law, Article III of the Dutchess County Charter and Administrative Code Section 3.05, Acting Dutchess County Executive William F. X. O’Neil extended Local Emergency Order #1, Local Emergency Order #2, and Local Emergency Order #3 in furtherance of Executive Order No. 5 of 2023, dated May 18, 2023. The text of the declaration of state of emergency and local emergency orders is available at www.dutchessny.gov.

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

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Suguru

2					5
5			5		3
2		3		4	5
	4				2

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: HAPPY HOLIDAYS

ACROSS

1. Bag holder
6. P in mpg
9. Eye part
13. Dog
14. ____ Gershwin
15. *Eggnog ingredient
16. Hold the floor
17. ____ Mahal
18. Anti-elderly one
19. *Breaking news, to a caroler
21. *Coming, in Latin
23. ____'easter
24. "Begone!"
25. Parent-child divide
28. Fur-dwelling parasites
30. Lacrosse stick
35. Kiln for hops
37. Feline vibration
39. Little Richard's "____ Frutti"
40. Cream-filled treat
41. *Number of candles in kinara
43. Mountain goat terrain
44. **Prancing and pawing of each little hoof," e.g.
46. Carpenter's joint
47. Drug-induced state
48. Make lovable
50. "Cheers" regular
52. *Max to #57 Across
53. Overwhelming defeat
55. Thailand native
57. *Dr. Seuss' spoilsport
60. *Santa chute
64. Water border
65. "What?"
67. D in LED
68. Carved
69. Stars and Stripes land
70. Astronomer ____ Hubble
71. Hitler's sidekick
72. Joaquin Phoenix' 2013 movie
73. Crows' homes

DOWN

1. Dick's and Jane's dog
2. Famous Amos
3. Cormac McCarthy's "The ____"
4. Join the cast of (2 words)
5. Carboic acid
6. Deodorant target
7. Pitcher's stat
8. Indian prince
9. More than suggest
10. Blood tunnel
11. 90 degrees, on compass
12. Invoice qty.
15. Romp around
20. Key ____ on a movie set, pl.
22. Med school grad
24. Passepartout to Phileas Fogg
25. *Popular traditional holiday entree
26. Home run hero
27. Impostor
29. Prompted
31. "That hurts!"
32. Vegas' main drag
33. Coach-and-four
34. *Number of days in Hanukkah
36. Muscle quality
38. Word processor command
42. *Like Santa's pole
45. Repaired, as in socks
49. Mythical giant bird
51. Unmarried woman, archaic
54. Affirmative interjection
56. What timidest and polyimide have in common
57. Clarified butter
58. Theater seat arrangement
59. Wraths
60. Burn to a crisp
61. "____ your chance..." contraction
62. Make changes
63. Yearnings
64. "Be quiet!"
66. Don't waste

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							69				70			
71							72				73			

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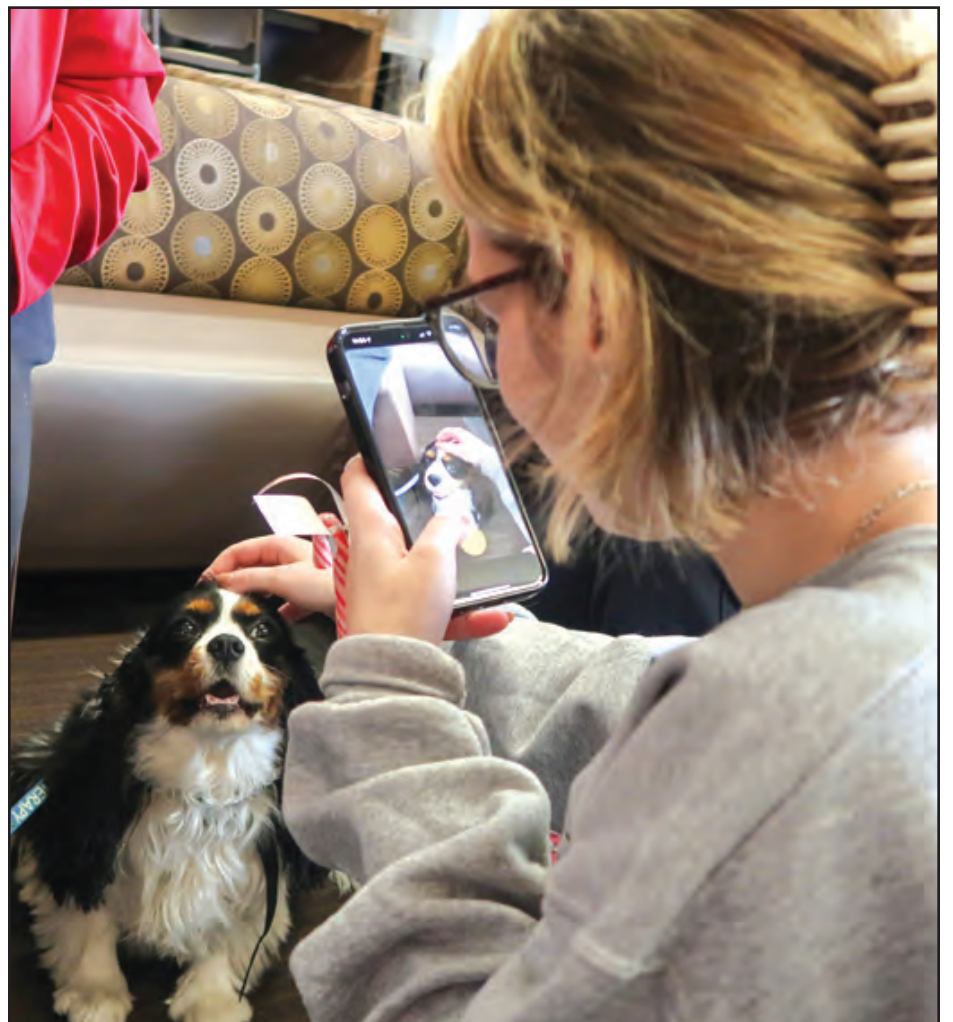
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The solutions to the Sudoku, Crossword puzzle and Suguru can be found on page 6.

Mount Saint Mary College students 'paws' and relax with therapy dogs




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For Mount Saint Mary College students who finished up their classes earlier this month, a group of therapy dogs provided a stress-busting break on December 6. These pups were sweeter than Christmas candy for the Mount community. Research has indicated that watching, petting, or talking to an animal can lower blood pressure and heart rate. The animals came to the Mount via Hudson Valley Paws for a Cause. The popular event has become a tradition at the college. For more information, visit www.msmc.edu

-Courtesy photos by Matt Frey