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Village of Fishkill officials honor Colon with inaugural Volunteer of the Year Award



Local resident Eddie Colon was awarded the Village of Fishkill's inaugural Village of Fishkill Volunteer of the Year Award at Van Wyck Village Hall in the Village of Fishkill earlier this month. Pictured with Colon is Village of Fishkill Mayor Kathy Martin.

-Courtesy photo

By Kristine Coulter

Local resident Edwin "Eddie" Colon was recognized by the Village of Fishkill Board of Trustees at its December meeting. Colon was awarded the inaugural Village of Fishkill Volunteer of the Year Award.

"It's interesting that we see a lot of people a lot of times, like 10 percent of the people do 90 percent of the work," said Village of Fishkill Mayor Kathy Martin.

She said the board wanted to recognize a person, committee, business or entity who does a lot of the charitable work "because they are so meaningful" to the community.

"So, the person we chose for this year's first inaugural award is Eddie Colon. Eddie is everywhere. He has a lot of energy and he is always willing to help. If you need something done, this is a guy you can call," remarked Martin.

Colon has played an integral part with the Fishkill Food Pantry, the recent retired flag box that is now in the village outside of McHoul Funeral Home on Main St., donations for local children, the Fishkill Rotary Club and so many other events, according to the mayor. "I can just go on and on," she said.

The plaque inscription said it was awarded for "exceptional dedication" and "unwavering commitment to the community."

"I'm very proud to award you, this number 1, volunteer of the year award," Martin told Colon.

"Thank you all," said Colon.

"I'm very grateful," said Colon, adding he doesn't want to be famous.

"I do [volunteer work] from the bottom of my heart." Colon said he will continue to do what he's doing.

Colon was also recognized by Dutchess County Legislator Douglas McHoul. Colon was presented with a proclamation from the Dutchess County Legislature by McHoul.

In a social media post, it was stated, "The Village of Fishkill recognized Edwin Colon's outstanding contributions to the community by presenting him with the inaugural Village of Fishkill Volunteer of the Year Award, courtesy of Mayor Martin and the Board of Trustees."

The post continued, "Mr. Colon's selfless volunteer efforts have greatly benefited numerous local projects, including the Fishkill Food Pantry and Fishkill Rotary."

Municipal officials look back at 2025 and ahead to 2026

By Kristine Coulter

What are the goals local officials have in the coming year? What accomplishments do they tout as the top ones for 2025 in their municipalities? The following are the replies offered by municipal leaders who responded with their answers.

City of Beacon

The two goals for the City of Beacon, said City of Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou, via email, are:

- (1) Developing detailed design specifications for the Beacon Rail Trail, followed by soliciting/awarding construction bids; and
- (2) Gaining ownership of University Settlement Camp from the state, which will allow City investment in additional recreational infrastructure.

Kyriacou was asked about the two biggest accomplishments in Beacon for 2025.

The mayor responded:

- (1) Enacting a 2026 Budget that limits property tax increase to well below the inflation rate, while raising employee salaries; and
- (2) Committing to rapidly building the Beacon Rail Trail in 2-3 years.

Town of East Fishkill

A goal for 2026, said Town of East Fishkill Supervisor Nick D'Alessandro, is to continue the Town's economic development plans. Officials will try to increase the tax base with commercial businesses.

D'Alessandro said about the accomplishments in the town, "We finished our Comprehensive Master Plan. [It took] almost two years in the making. We adopted it this year."

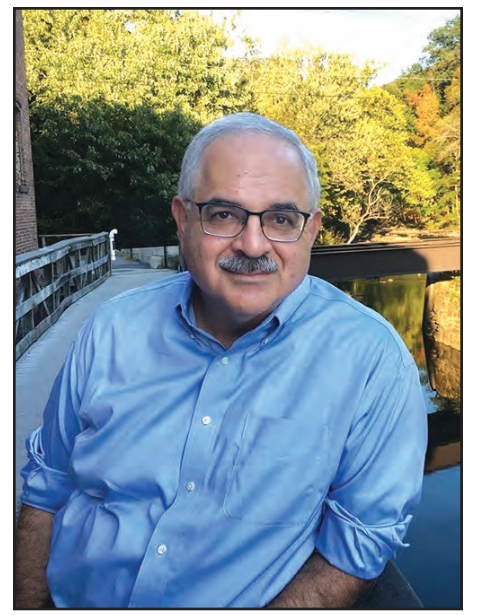


Nick D'Alessandro, Town of Fishkill

-Courtesy photos

D'Alessandro, who was re-elected in November to another term as the leader of the town, said, "My hat goes off to the Comprehensive Master Plan Committee" volunteers and especially Councilwoman Marianne Flores, who was the liaison to the committee. Flores and the volunteers gave "a lot of dedication and effort to the Town."

The East Fishkill supervisor also noted the other accomplishment was "keeping all our services without cuts to any departments." He thanked all of the Town employees for their dedication to the well-being of the community.



Lee Kyriacou, City of Beacon

Town of Fishkill

Town of Fishkill Supervisor Ozzy Albra said in 2026 the town will continue to have "the best" infrastructure and will continue to complete any projects that need to be finished.

Albra said the infrastructure was the top accomplishment in the Town of Fishkill this year.

In a letter to residents in Oct. Albra explained that the Dutchess County Health Department "warned" officials in 2020, that the Merritt/Snook Well Field was "in violation since 2007."

Continued on page 2

Outgoing council members honored for their service to Beacon community

By Kristine Coulter

Outgoing Beacon City Council members Molly Rhodes, Jeff Domanski, George Mansfield and Pam Wetherbee were recognized and honored for their service to the community.

Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou said, "This is for Molly Rhodes in appreciation for your four years of service." He remarked that Rhodes ably served Ward One.

"I appreciate my time on Council," said

Rhodes, who noted she is "moving on" to the Dutchess County Legislature to represent Beacon and a portion of Fishkill. Rhodes said she is "looking forward to continuing to serve everyone. Thank you."

Kyriacou said he tried to dissuade Rhodes from moving on because she was so good at [the work] she did.

Jeff Domanski, who was not in attendance at the meeting, was on the council for two years. He represented Ward Two.

Kyriacou remarked to Mansfield, "George you've been doing this a long time." Mansfield represented Ward Four.

"Beacon got a tremendous community service from you. I'm very appreciative of what you've done," the mayor told Mansfield.

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Outgoing council members honored for their service to Beacon community



Continued from cover

“I said good-bye two years ago but here I am again,” remarked Mansfield. He added, “It’s been truly an honor to serve this community, it’s a great community.”

Kyriacou noted Mansfield also served on the City of Beacon Planning Board for two years before serving on the council.

“Beacon benefitted a great deal from your presence,” Kyriacou told Mansfield. The mayor told Wetherbee he was

“incredibly appreciative of all your service.”

Wetherbee, who represented Ward Three, said, “I just want to thank everyone and thank you to all the residents out there who thought that I could be their voice and support them.” She thanked her fellow council members.

“The changes in Beacon [are] amazing; it can’t be done without council members and mayors who really look out for the best for the city,” said Wetherbee. She also thanked City Administrator Chris White.

White wished them all the best.

Utility poles removed as ‘signifiant progress’ in trail project

Utility poles on the west side of Route 9D were removed by Central Hudson, revealing a much-improved view of Storm King Mountain and Bannerman Island along this section of the Route 9D Scenic Byway earlier this month. Earlier this year, new utility poles were erected on the east side of the road and, subsequently, power was transferred to the new poles.

This work marks significant progress in the early stages of the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail Breakneck Connector and

Bridge project, as it allows for the construction of the new Metro-North Breakneck Ridge station, the Breakneck Connector trail, enhanced crosswalks, and amenities like restrooms and wayfinding signage.

The utility relocation project was performed in collaboration with several Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. partners, including Central Hudson, NYS DOT, and Consigli Construction, and others.



City of Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou recognizes outgoing members of the Beacon City Council (clockwise from top left) Pam Wetherbee, Molly Rhodes and George Mansfield during the council meeting on Dec. 15 in Beacon.

-Courtesy photos City of Beacon

Municipal officials look back at 2025 and ahead to 2026

Continued from cover

“The Town took immediate action, designed a larger mixer to allow it to draw water from a Village of Fishkill well located south of that property. This allowed us to lower the chlorides which removed the violation from the Health Department. The total cost to get into compliance was \$100,000 and no addition rate increase to homeowners.”

Albra stated previously that the town, in the last five years, has upgraded its recreation building, police station, highway department and all of its parks.

Village of Fishkill

Village of Fishkill Mayor Kathy Martin remarked, via email, on her plans for the year for the municipality she leads.

“In 2026, I plan to continue improving our safety and walkability. I also plan on expanding on our events and adding new ones, like our very successful Parade of Lights,” said Martin, via email.

“One of my biggest accomplishments this year was focused on public safety. We were awarded the “Safe Streets and Roads” grant. The Village of Fishkill was one of only 13 municipalities in NY State that were chosen for this award. This funding will

allow us to improve public safety and walkability. Paving Merritt Blvd. was another major road improvement the Village was able to complete. I was very happy that this project went so smoothly,” said Martin, who was re-elected in 2025.

The mayor added, “Another accomplishment was to improve our residents’ quality of life by working on a rail trail, and expanding the tax savings for our volunteer [firefighters], Veterans, and senior citizens by expanding the tax exemptions.”

Town of Wappinger

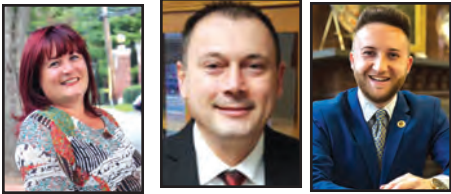
In the Town of Wappinger, town supervisor Joseph Cavaccini said via email parks will continue to be a priority.

“Over the next year, our Administration and Town Board’s goal will be to continue the progress we’ve made in our parks and operations extends to every corner of our town.”

What does that entail?

“That means continuing to invest in modern infrastructure — safer roads, efficient water/sewer plants, stronger drainage, and improved recreational facilities so our community continues to plan responsibly and sustainably,” explained Cavaccini.

Town officials will also continue to update Wappinger’s Town Code “to reflect



From left, Kathy Martin, Village of Fishkill, Ozzy Albra, Town of Fishkill, and Joseph Cavaccini, Town of Wappinger.

-Courtesy photos

the quality-of-life reforms our residents want to see in preventing high density development and fostering innovative attractions that support our rural-suburban way of life. Let’s continue the momentum here in our great Town of Wappinger,” he said.

Cavaccini, who was elected to a second term in 2025, said, “One of the first things I focused on when taking office was bringing accountability, efficiency, and transparency back to Town Hall. We looked closely at how every dollar was being spent and how we could better manage our resources for the taxpayers.” He continued, “One of the most significant steps was diversifying our town’s fund depositories, which allowed us to finally

earn interest on previously idle funds. That change alone is now generating nearly \$600,000 in new revenue every year — that’s real money staying right here in Wappinger.”

He also noted the reimagination of the Town’s Recycle Center from losing \$300,000 per year to the Town processing its waste in-house with the purchase of a new roll-off truck.

“My goal is to make Wappinger a place where small businesses can thrive and families can enjoy all the benefits of a modern, connected, and character-filled town,” said Cavaccini. He mentioned the Wappinger Protection Act, which is a legislative package that is focused on “preserving the town’s suburban-rural character and maintaining sustainable growth.”

A moratorium was passed and subsequent code changes which prevent large-scale multi-family housing developments allowing officials to ensure that infrastructure, schools, and emergency services can keep up before any new major projects were allowed to move forward. “In doing so, we prevented 5,000 units from coming into our single-family zoned areas, a problem you will never have to see,” said Cavaccini.



Happy New Year!

Wishing Everyone

the Best in 2026!



2026 County Budget process complete with list of overrides and amendments

Following the Dutchess County Legislature’s adoption of the 2026 County Budget, County Executive Sue Serino returned the budget unsigned, expressing concern about the County’s fiscal sustainability following the Legislature’s additional \$7.2 million draw down from the County’s fund balance for the multiple legislative amendments. The County Executive also line-item vetoed legislative amendments that added positions to the budget without sustainable offsetting revenue.

After the Dec. 17 Legislature Meeting for Budget Overrides/Adoption of Tax Levy and conclusion of the 2026 Dutchess County Budget process, Serino commented, “The 2026 Dutchess County Budget is now complete. The legislative amendments adopted, while worthy, only kicked tough decisions down the road to next year. Adding millions in new spending and drawing millions more from our fund balance is not a sustainable path – it was a risky choice given the challenges ahead, including union contract settlements, rising state mandates, declining federal support and economic uncertainty. As we move through 2026, my priority will continue to be doing what is right for Dutchess County: making the difficult choices necessary to strike the right balance between the cost of programs and services and the taxes needed to pay for them. Achieving that balance will demand compromise and I look forward to working together with the Legislature in 2026 to manage this budget responsibly and in the best interest of our neighbors.”

While the \$653.6 million adopted spending plan included all of the essential services and key priority investments from Serino’s budget plan, including public safety, elder fraud prevention, housing, youth and mental health and more, the additional legislative amendments increased the overall spending plan by nearly \$2.2 million.

Serino said the majority of legislative amendments relied heavily on the County’s fund balance, appropriating more than \$7.2 million to pay for numerous one-time costs, additional positions and to maintain the sales tax exemption on clothing and footwear items under \$110 per item, bringing the total appropriation of fund balance and Community Benefit fund to more than \$33.9 million for 2026.

Serino had previously expressed her concerns about how using significant fund balance would lead to many more difficult decisions for the 2027 budget in a memo to the Legislature prior to the budget adoption.

The amendments to add new, recurring positions costs using fund balance, which is a one-time revenue, are particularly problematic, according to Serino. In the development of the Executive budget proposal, Serino and the Budget Office worked closely with Executive Department Heads, as well as elected officials to figure out how to control position costs while still achieving key priorities without layoffs. With creative cost cuts and shared sacrifice, the Executive Budget included the deletion of 10 vacant positions and an additional 17.5 positions were held vacant for the year across various departments. Legislative amendments, however, added five positions to the District Attorney’s Office, including positions slated to be held vacant, at a cost of more than \$711,000.

Serino line-item vetoed three of the five positions, citing lack of a sustainable revenue source in her veto message to the Legislature.

The adopted budget does keep the property tax levy under New York State’s property tax cap as Serino crafted in the Executive Budget, with the property tax rate reduced from \$2.17 to \$2.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Serino concluded, “As we look ahead, we

know we will have many tough choices in the coming year, particularly as we craft the 2027 budget. I look forward to working with the Legislature in 2026 to address these challenges together.”

Here is the complete list of amendments adopted by the County Legislature:

- Five amendments, totaling \$31,400, for the Department of History for REV 250 programming including professional services program, temporary positions, training seminars, employee travel and travel reimbursement (Legislature Chair Will Truitt) –offset by increase in DMV revenue;

- \$138,600 for the County Clerk’s Office for security at the Department of Motor Vehicles (Legislature Chair Will Truitt) – offset by increase in DMV revenue;

- \$50,000 for the Department of Planning and Development for increased funding to Destination Dutchess for REV 250 (Legislature Chair Will Truitt) – offset by appropriated fund balance (Community Benefit Fund);

- \$4,436,736 million for the removal of the elimination of the sales tax exemption on clothing and footwear purchases under \$110 per item (Assistant Majority Leader Michael Polasek) – offset by appropriated fund balance. (This is a net number, as the revenue that have gone to local municipalities was removed.)

- \$1 million in additional funding for the Dutchess County Housing Trust Fund (Minority Leader Yvette Valdés Smith) – offset by appropriated fund balance (Community Benefit Fund)

- \$711,058 for the Dutchess County District Attorney’s office to fund five full-time positions (Legislator Chris Rolison) – offset by appropriated fund balance (Community Benefit Fund)

- \$253,000 for the Dutchess County Sheriff’s Office for long-term rental/lease of equipment including Drones as First Responder (DFR), interview rooms, body cameras (Legislator John Metzger); offset by appropriated fund balance (Community Benefit Fund)

- \$60,000 for the Department of Planning and Development for additional funding for the Dutchess County Drug Task Force for Town of Fishkill officer (Legislator Doug McHoul) –offset by increased vacancy factor

- \$120,000 for the Department of Public Works for the Commissioner of Jurors’ rent for an accessible facility, (Legislator Doug McHoul); offset by increased vacancy factor

- \$50,000 for the Office of Veterans Affairs to increase funding for the GoGo Veteran program (Majority Leader Deirdre Houston); offset by appropriated fund balance (Community Benefit Fund)

- \$750,000 for the Department of Planning and Development for a shared services grant program to fund infrastructure improvements to town and village halls, gathering spaces, firehouses and parks, (Majority Leader Deirdre Houston); offset by appropriated fund balance (Community Benefit Fund)

- Decrease the salary for the Clerk of the Legislature by \$13,000 (Majority Leader Deirdre Houston); Housekeeping item

- \$200,000 for the Department of Planning and Development for a shared services grant program for municipalities for homeless prevention (Legislator Kristofer Munn); offset by increase to real property tax levy.

DC Legislator Lisa Kaul announces campaign for NY State Senate District 39

Democratic Legislator Lisa Kaul is announcing her campaign to run for New York State Senate District 39.

“I’m running because we are at a critical moment. Working people are being crushed by rising costs. Our freedoms and basic dignity are under attack. And climate change threatens our future,” said Kaul. “I’m running because we all deserve the opportunity to thrive, not just make ends meet. To get there, we need new leadership who will fight and deliver for us.”

As the County Legislator representing District 6 (Town of Poughkeepsie), Kaul has forged cooperation between state, county, and municipal governments to bring resources where they are needed. After a decade of partisan impasse, Kaul worked across the aisle to solve environmental and infrastructure problems, obtaining funds for a new waste management strategy. Kaul will bring the same solutions-oriented approach to Albany.

Kaul grew up in India, where her mother was a teacher and her father was a career army officer.

“We didn’t always have clean water or uninterrupted power, so I learned early on that basic reliable infrastructure is precious,” Kaul said. “We didn’t have a lot, but my father’s job gave us healthcare, food and housing, and it gave me a secure launchpad. My parents taught me to live within my means and showed me what a life of service and good citizenship look like.”

After completing college in India, she won a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University, where she earned a PhD. In 2004, she and her husband moved to the US, where they raised their son.

In 2008, Kaul became an American citizen. In the 21 years that she’s lived here, she has contributed extensively to her community in the Hudson Valley. She led the successful fight to keep her local elementary school from closing, was elected to the Board of Education, and organized the Poughkeepsie Women’s March Across the Hudson. She volunteers actively with local community organizations, serves on the board of Planned Parenthood Greater New York Action Fund, and created and runs a Repair Café where neighbors help each other mend things to keep them out of the landfills.

In 2023, Kaul ran to represent District 6 (Town of Poughkeepsie) in the Dutchess



Lisa Kaul
-Courtesy photo

County Legislature against a Republican who had held public office for 17 years, and won with 58 percent of the vote, becoming the first AAPI legislator to serve in the county. In 2025, she ran unopposed.

Kaul will fight to:

- Restore our rights to the basics: housing, healthcare, education and food.

- Break down barriers: inadequate child-care and eldercare, transportation gaps, immigration status, disability barriers, and an unfair justice system.

- Tackle the climate crisis: advance climate solutions that lower energy costs, create jobs, and protect our communities from costly climate disasters and public health crises.

- Keep New Yorkers safe: defend reproductive freedom and bodily autonomy, protect our clean air and water, and address the epidemic of gun violence.

- Protect our democracy: Fight to protect the voting rights and freedoms of every New Yorker, and hold those who seek to violate them accountable.

Kaul is ready to bring strong leadership, hard work, and grassroots power to build community, coalitions, and a successful campaign.

“I know the Hudson Valley community; we have what it takes to meet this moment together,” she said.

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Viewpoints



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

Tribute to Dr. George Verrilli ‘was the best!’

To the editor:

Congratulations on what for me is the best Northern Dutchess News and Southern Dutchess News article for 2025! I didn't know Dr. George Verrilli, but did get to know much about this admirable man thanks to the warm and personal tribute article written by Jim Donick and Curtis Schmidt.

Your article has a "home-town" feel as it relates so much about how Dr. Verrilli was not only a respected local physician, but also how much he gave back to our Rhinebeck/Red Hook community. Including comments from others in the community did much to highlight how he so positively affected so many as well.

Mark Van De Carr's stories by Curtis Schmidt added a really interesting twist to the presentation, noting how the good doctor enjoyed life "in the fast lane" with his auto racing experiences. These are the kind of people we like to hear about. Thanks for bringing his story to us, his Northern and Southern Dutchess neighbors!

Craig Marshall
Town of Clinton

NYSOFA and DMV share tips and resources for older drivers

The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) and New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offer tips and resources for older drivers, their families and caregivers. Being proactive about safe driving skills is critical for drivers of all ages, but particularly for older adults so that they can maintain their independence and stay engaged in their community.

In New York, according to the Institute for Traffic Safety Management and Research (ITSMR), drivers age 65 and over account for 21 percent of all New York licensed drivers but are involved in only 11 percent of the fatal and personal injury crashes. Older drivers are also less likely to engage in reckless driving behaviors, according to ITSMR crash data. Despite fewer total fatal crashes, older drivers who are involved in crashes are more likely to be killed or suffer severe injuries when compared to younger drivers, and nationally, the rate of fatal crashes involving older drivers is on the rise, according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Board (NHTSA).

New York State Office for the Aging Director Greg Olsen said, “NYSOFA’s goal is for older adults to be as active and engaged in their communities for as long as possible, and one way to ensure that is by maintaining safe driving skills. If you’re a family member or caregiver of an older adult driver, encourage them to keep up with their driving skills and to learn about new traffic patterns, vehicle features, and traffic laws. Lastly, help maintain safe driving skills by taking a point and insurance reduction driver improvement course like AAA’s RoadWise driver program.”

“We want everyone, regardless of age, to be safe on the roads,” said Mark J.F. Schroeder, Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles and Chair of the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee. “For older drivers, being aware of their health and addressing any potential issues that could impact their safety and the safety of others is paramount. We want people to keep their license for as long as it’s safe to do so. We are happy to partner with the Office for the Aging to help raise awareness of this important topic.”

Decisions about ability to drive should never be based on age alone. Instead, it is

important to accurately assess age-related changes so that the driver can adjust driving habits to remain safe on the road or choose other kinds of transportation.

Tips for adjusting driving habits

- Exercise regularly to increase your strength and flexibility.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medications – both prescription and over-the-counter medications – for any potential effects on your ability to drive safely.
- Have your vision checked every year.
- Drive during daylight and in good weather.
- Find the safest routes with well-lit streets.
- Plan your route before you drive.
- Leave a large following distance behind the car in front of you.
- Avoid distractions in your car, such as listening to a loud radio, texting or talking on the phone.
- Consider potential alternatives to driving, such as riding with a friend or using public transportation to get around.

CarFit

CarFit events offer older adults the opportunity to check how well their personal vehicles "fit" them. CarFit is an educational program developed by AAA, AARP, and the American Occupational Therapy Association, with the goal of providing drivers with information and resources to enhance their safety in the driver’s seat. At a CarFit event, trained experts show drivers how to enhance comfort, safety and fit within their vehicle. Find more information on free CarFit events.

Offices for the Aging and their community partners are also a resource to help older drivers, including safety assistance or alternative transportation options. Area Agencies on Aging provide about 1.7 million rides annually to older adults in the community. To expand capacity, the aging network, through NYSOFA, has also partnered with GoGoGrandparent’s ride-share network to provide an additional 24,000 rides in participating counties since the beginning of the partnership, according to an announcement this summer. To reach local assistance, call the NY Connects helpline at 1-800-342-9871.

Sheriff’s Office to implement new internal phone system

Dutchess County Sheriff Kirk Imperati has announced that the Sheriff’s Office is in the process of implementing a new automated phone directory system, set to go live beginning January 5, 2026.

This new system is designed to improve public access, streamline call routing, and ensure that requests for assistance are

handled in the most efficient manner possible. The updated system allows callers to reach specific areas within the Sheriff’s Office through a centralized main number and clearly defined menu options. This enhancement is intended to reduce delays, improve customer service, and provide both the public and law enforcement part-

ners with direct access to the appropriate resources.

The main phone number for the Dutchess County Sheriff’s Office will remain 845-486-3800. Callers will now be guided through an automated phone tree with options to connect directly to the following bureaus and units: Emergency Communications, Pistol Permits Unit, Patrol Bureau, Internal Affairs Bureau, Dutchess County Drug Task Force, Evidence and Property Unit, Administration, Records Unit, Civil Unit, Training and Recruitment Unit, Detective

Bureau, Special Operations Bureau and Corrections Division.

Sheriff Imperati said, “This new system improves accessibility and ensures that calls are handled by the appropriate personnel as efficiently as possible. It allows us to better serve the residents of Dutchess County while also supporting our law enforcement partners.”

Members of the public are encouraged to use the automated directory for non-emergency matters, however emergencies should continue to be reported immediately to 911.

Academy recruits help apprehend larceny suspect

The Dutchess County Sheriff’s Office reports assisting with an investigation of a larceny that occurred on Parker Avenue, in the City of Poughkeepsie, at approximately 1:45 p.m. on Dec. 22.

While out conducting a Physical Fitness test on the North Side Trail, Dutchess County Law Enforcement Academy recruits sprang into action when a civilian alerted the police recruits that a package had just been stolen from her front porch on Parker Avenue.

The victim provided Ring Doorbell footage of the responsible party, who had fled onto the trail where the recruits were conducting their testing. Recruits alerted DCSO Academy staff and together they were able to locate and detain the subject in question. Evidence of the crime was

also located and recovered by the recruits on the trail, which the suspect had attempted to dispose of.

This subject was found to be in possession of stolen property and turned over to the City of Poughkeepsie PD, who were interviewing the victim during this time. Items recovered included stolen Christmas presents for the victim’s children, which were sent by a family member. The property was returned to the victim, and the investigation was handled by the City of Poughkeepsie.

Despite being a few months away from their graduation, the Academy recruits showed they are ready to serve the residents in and around Dutchess County. Their fast thinking and actions helped stop a real-life Grinch from spoiling Christmas for a local family.

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Dutchess County
Historical Society

New Year traditions & news sampling from the past as we head into 2026



The January 1, 1823 “carrier’s broadsheet” of the Poughkeepsie Journal, a gift to DCHS in January of 1926 by Franklin D. Roosevelt.

-DCHS Collections, photo

By Bill Jeffway

The reliable arrival of this singular, annual event prompts us to look at New Year traditions and news of the past.

January 11, 2026 will mark the 100th anniversary of the donation of two single-page New Year’s Day newspaper sheets by Dutchess County Historical Society (DCHS) founder, Vice President and active lifetime member, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In his letter, FDR pointed out that both “carriers’ broadsides” were from the Poughkeepsie Journal on New Year’s Day. One was from 1816 and the other from 1823.

The year 1926 was important for FDR, because it was the year he purchased the Warm Springs, Georgia estate to help him recover from polio. He became New York Governor in 1928 and then U.S. President in 1932 until his death in 1945 at Warm Springs.

Inspired by FDR’s gift, the 1944 Yearbook contains a wonderful article by the then editor and noted historian, Amy Pierce Ver Nooy, called, “The Carrier’s Address – A New Year’s Greeting,” which can be found on this digital bookshelf: dchsny.org/yb-1941-1965

In what Ver Nooy called, “a quaint American practice for more than a century [from 1776] ... which seems to have been discontinued even in our smaller communities,” she explained that an annual greeting was offered on behalf of the newsboy or carrier. The later 1800s became crowded with local businesses vying for attention by offering New Year calendars and “souvenirs” with an ultimate goal of promoting their business.

Early issues, like the December 27, 1786 Poughkeepsie Advertiser (known by 1789 as the Poughkeepsie Journal), are explicit in their suggestion that a “favor” be bestowed on the carrier, in the form of a gratuity. Two-hundred thirty-nine years ago, local readers found a separate sheet with this poem:

“To the generous subscribers for the Poughkeepsie Advertiser.”

“Through wet and dry, and frost and snows, With fingers numb’d and aching toes, I ride to please with heart sincere, And wish you all a happy Year.”

“Each Wednesday morn’, as soon as

light, I mount my horse and ride ‘till night, To bring you news from ev’ry quarter, That happens on the land or water.”

“I dauntless push through wet and dry, And at your door, ‘here’s news’ I cry; In hopes of a small recompense, For serving you with diligence; Though small the gift at the New Year, Will help me thro’ with greater cheer.”

“May commerce, trade, and arts increase, Wars and contentions ever cease; The God of Peace grant you success, And all your virt’ous doings bless.”

Let’s check out a few of the newsworthy items in New Years of the past.

- Two hundred years ago, the January 11, 1826 Poughkeepsie Journal carried the New Year’s message from New York State governor De Witt Clinton, reporting: “Notwithstanding immense emigrations to the fertile and wide-spreading regions of the west, our population is in a state of rapid advancement.” The dynamic at play was the transformational role that the 1825 opening of the Erie Canal played by connecting New York City to the U.S. West. This advancement both facilitated a mass migration west, but also became the backbone, along with the Hudson River, of the booming Empire State economy. In the first five decades as a State, New York’s population was up (from the prior decade) as follows: 1800: 73%; 1810: 63%; 1820:43%; 1830:40%; 1840: 26%.
- To fully appreciate the New Year’s news published by the Poughkeepsie Eagle one hundred and fifty years ago on January 6, 1876, we have to remind ourselves that at that time, without fail, each year the Hudson River froze solid for around three months. So the tone of astonishment that comes through this reminiscence of an ancient time when it did not freeze is better understood.
- “The Roundout Freeman, speaking of the weather on New Year’s Day [1876] says: the weather this year is wonderful, and on New Year’s Day certainly presented the most remarkable atmosphere this generation has ever experienced. Overcoats were really oppressive, and in all respects the day was more like summer than winter. Our ancestors however could beat it. In 1663, on the 30th of December, the Dutch troops sailed from



The carrier’s broadsheet declined in the late 1800s as the field became crowded with commercial “greetings and souvenirs.” Here, S.G. & J.T. Smith of today’s City of Beacon, a seller of patterns for the tailoring of clothing, offered the traditional calendar of the New Year as well as an opportunity to promote their business.

-DCHS Collections, photo

Kingston in shallops [a small, nimble sailboat] and on New Year’s Day of 1664 reached New York after an unimpeded sail of thirty-six hours, there being no more ice in the river than on a June day. Indeed, that year there was no ice at all, as Mattice Capito the clerk of this County entered on the margins of his records in the spring of 1664 that the river between New York and Albany had not once frozen over and that the Dutch had navigated it without hindrance.”

- One hundred years ago, the January 1, 1926, Poughkeepsie Eagle News announced another big step in the technological revolution at the time, which was AM radio.
- “Radio will Usher in the New Year. McCormack and Bori to Sing Here and Be Heard Abroad,” the headline flagged. The article reports, “New York, December 31 Associated Press. The radio world will launch the New Year tomorrow night [January 1, 1926] with the most elaborate attempt yet made to bring all the Earth in speaking distance. From New York, a program of music and greeting will be broadcast to Europe. In reply, another will be sent back from London. And to make it a worldwide event, news dispatches received by radio telegraph from the Orient, and South and Central

America, will be relayed across the Atlantic from New York. Nine of the most powerful broadcasting stations in the United States have been linked for the attempt.” Happily, the “attempt” was successful as reported by the following day’s newspaper!

- Finally, the editorial in the Poughkeepsie Journal of January 1, 1976 suggested, “Let the astronomers keep track of solstices and equinoxes and solar revolutions. New Year’s Day, like Christmas, is something that happens in the heart. And in every good heart this day is the same wish: May it be a Happy New Year.” This was the year the United States was preparing for its bicentennial the way we are preparing for its 250th this year.
- Whether your gratitude is expressed through the heart, or your wallet, or a myriad of ways in between as has been done over the centuries, we hope you will find much to be grateful for in the New Year!



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.

SoKe Style stitch work set for Jan. 7

Irina Mitina from SoKe LLC will show Skyllkill her beautiful SoKe Style stitch work and bringing a bit of her online local new age embroidery handcrafted items and supplies. Join other needleworkers, at Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church,

1168 Rte. 55, Lagrangeville, on Jan. 7, for fun and learning beginning at 10 a.m. or come just for this program at 12:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/SkylkillEGA or email to EGASkylkill@gmail.com.

BHS honor students named for 1st quarter

The following Beacon High School students were named to the 1st-quarter honor roll, school administrators recently announced.

9th Grade Principal’s Honor Roll

Natalie Allen, Luna Ayers-Uekawa, Trevor Bacon, Desmond Barchetto, Fiona Burke-Smith, Ethan Cason, Ivy Cohen, Sebastian Concepcion, Elodie Duquesne, Lilah Fisher, Alice Gabel, Jordan Garzon, Edith Giunta, Manasvi Gupta, Silas Hayes, Samih Jabar, Samantha Johnson, Davia Kelleher, Julian Khan, Pixie Kimberg, Ileana Lawrence, Vivienne Lipari, Anthony Lopez, Noah Montoya Gutierrez, Zbigniew Rybak, Jonathan Saraceno, Ashley Senior, Willa Staempfli, Silas Stampleman, Daniel Tschang, Anita Vigeant, Marina Winters

9th Grade High Honor Roll

Alexandra Alon, Sarp Bagriyanik, James Bailey, Vivianna Bailey, Hazel Balogh, Amaya Bravo, Hawken Brickman, Jack Bunker, Teaghan Burks, Madison Carr, Lily Cheyne, Chase Christman-Evans, Connor Coldrick, Shuprova Das, Hailey Day, Fischer Delaney, Gabriela Diaz, Sofia Dunay, Kylie Ebeling, Shaniya Evans, Willow Faiella, Grace Fleming, Jack Garrett, Eli Gilleo, Carolina Guerra, Lucien Guido Taylor, Nathan Hayden, Isabella Hernandez Fandino, Zaphira Hernandez, Greyson Johnson, Miles King, Michael MacDougall, Ralph Marinaccio IV, Marianna Marrero, Ivan Martinez, Auwaab Mohammed Murtada, Aaliyah Nelson, Madelyn Newcomb, Yailin Novas Perez , Suvi O’Shea, Riley Peterson, Sarah Pillcurima Panama, Dominick Pulcastro, Dion Qelaj, De’Jaun Rigby, Kelly Rios Palacios, Tallix Roan, Sophia Romero, Cadence Ross, Jayden Schumacher, Genevieve Shrawder, Landon Soltish, Suri Stuart, Ryan Sulca, Sherley Tacuri, Mia Tapia, Kylie Thomas, Everett VanCott, Jaliyah Vasquez, Emery Vergolina

9th Grade Honor Roll

Lorelei Aakjar, Riley Anderson, Brayden Arroyo, Gavin Barone, Charles Boulding, Roman Brandt-Cannon, Andrew Caporale, Julian Carpio, Braedan Eraca, Jayme Fuentes, Natalia Garcia, Christian Gomez, Evan Greenspan, Emmett Havers, Weston Hetrick, Grace Just, Nahlia Keane, Gabriella Larsson, Celest Marshall, Ethan McCredo, Scarlett McKimmey, Michael Medina, Lilly Nieves, Avyanna Olvera, Ace Owen, Amber Perez-Sample, Negatu Price, Leela Ramdeen, Diannie Ramirez, Nyliana Rivera, Lyra Staab, George Stadler, Avery Strang, Lily Vogrincic, Stacy Wandji, Callie Winther, Colin Witkowski, Noah Wright

10th Grade Principal’s Honor Roll

Kaylyn Adusei, Owen Allee, Gavin Bruno, Noa Buckland, Skylar Carr, Claire Cumming, Evelyn DePalma, Maysie Doyle, Saoirse Fehilly, Drew Kelly, Maximilian Kong, Christopher Lee, Justin Mann, Louise Mauks, Desmond McGrath, Zora Nicholls, Oscar Pages, Evangeline Santise, Hazel Schein, Violet Schilling, Shane Signorelli, Nahara Simkovic, Caellum Tripaldi, Derek Waltke, Eliot Waterman, Owen Youatt, Josefina Zezza

10th Grade High Honor Roll

Jacqueline Albra, Kiann Allen, Jesse Apostolou, Madison Beltran, Lily Berry, Breannah Brace, Wyatt Burgos, Sarah Camara, Zahara Cone, Lia Cosentino, Jake DeLuise, Joseline Duran, Abilena Eriksmoen, Kyle Fairbanks, Christa George, Henry Greenberg, Mckenna Griffin, Henry Gute, Maeve Haley, Jonah Hanby, Alejandro Herrera, Heidi Maeng, Josue Martell, Victoria Maruggi, Shayne Maxaner, Oliver Meyer, Braelyn Milligan, Uswah Mohammed Murtada, Gabriel Montleon , Elise Moran, Claire Morgan, Catherine Musorofiti, Payton O’Connell, Sofia Posso Salcedo, Stephanie Ramon, James Reyes, Austin Ricketts, Maeve Rinaldi, Giana Rodriguez, Isabella Ruffy, Nathaniel Salvati, Benjamin Seaman, Hunter Smith, Gonzalo Soria Velecela, Eliza Verdichizzi, Caleb Wells-McGurk, Jude Williams, Hayden Wilson, Luna Yawman

10th Grade Honor Roll

Kendall Adnams, Aaron Aduamah, Loreimi Alcantara, Abigail Atkins, Kiersten Barber, Jaden Brito, Justin Buchman, Jayla Bunch, Mathias Cabrera, Hawah Camara, Henry Cerchiara, Amari Clarke, Kasidy Collins, Misleiry Cruz Cruz, Isabella Davila, Andrea Delgado, Ramon Dewey-Brink, Ryan DiNobile, Jaden Edwards, Leah Fahlman, SaRiah Faust, Richard Ferdinand, Patrick Gara, Trinity Gill, Tania Griffin, Zoe Hammond, Jayden Harrison, Troi Harvey Semple, Gauge Heeter, Jose Hernandez Canelo, Peyton Hockler, Brianna Hunt, Mia Lentini, Ruby Martin, Emily Nivicela Jarama, Jacob Pasato Pintado, Hudson Penn, Caleb Ramirez, Luis Ramon, Khloe Roci, Thalia Rodriguez, Mack Roland, Gabriel Roquel, Bowie Roy, Angel Ruiz, Vardan Singh, Jaliyah Soto, Shea Tanaka, Jalen Thompson, Ella Travis, Olivia Viola, Cayden Williams, Nicholas Zippo

11th Grade Principal’s Honor Roll

Molly-Rose Archer, Jerry Chen, Terry Chen, Shannon Colandrea, Emily Coldrick, Theodore Concepcion, Zamaya Cone, Caroline Diaz, Travis Dickston, Elijah Epps, Fionn Fehilly, Khloe Franklin, Shaun Jabar, Hailee Jennings, Ruby King, Wenang Kobarsih, Katelyn Kong, Molly Lyons, Lily Mack, Ash Marcus, Victoria McKay, Levi Partlow, Stella Reinke, Julian Rivers, John Rose, Charlotte Rossi, Stella Sheehy, Finn Simons, Elias Smith, Tabitha Smith-White, Declan Sprague, Januario Stageman, Elliott Thorne, Isaac Tschang, Jesse Vermeulen, Aslynn Way, Lila Welsh

11th Grade High Honor Roll

Mikayla Acevedo, Cecilia Allee, Ziarra Beamon, Tamirnesh Bernstein, Charlotte Bowen, Savannah Brace, Juniper Breault, Aniyah Brown, Michael Cahill, Mateo Cruz, Ethan Diaz, Victoria Diaz, Ka’Dera Elliott , Tyler Evans, Khordae Facey, Lily Figlia, Hailey Fish, William Flynn, Kayla Gerardes, Abigail Getter, Emanuel Gomez, Emilio Guerra, Julian Hannah, Abigail Haydt, Cole Heath, Miguel Herrera, Ryan Huynh, Teanna Jennings, Gabriel Khan, Jayden Lassister, Ethan Maxaner, Isaac McKible, Shyanne McNair, Gianna Mercer, Lily Murr, Lakota Newman, Quincy Owens, Lilly Pendley, Brady Philipbar, Sarah

Ramkalawon, Samuel Riquelme Jr., Trevi Romanelli, Katherine Sendelbach, Caeleb Smith, Harper Strang, Gavin Troiano, Farrah VanCott, Rudolph Vergolina, Fabiola Vogrincic, Slater Way, Parker White, Julie Whittemore

11th Grade Honor Roll

Savannah Acuti, Lauren Antonucci, Dakota Barden, Emma Bellis, Hartley Brickman, Myasia Burch, Jayden Concepcion, Naomi Conklin, Tori-Ann Crawford, Angeleah Decker, Magdalena del Puerto-Vitti, Daniel Echevarria, Daniel Espejo, Adriana Fazioli, Hudson Fontaine, Brandon Fremer, Leo Garcia, Samantha Garcia, Ayham Ghazzawi, Valentin Haase, August Hayes, Aiden Heaton, Ava Lassiter, Isaiah Luis, Kaycee Matos, Endrit Mavraj, Jaylen Mitchell, Maddox Morrow, Joseph Pallone, Octavian Paulin, Christian Perez, Amari Powell, Lillian Ray, Elizabeth Roberts, Abdul-Rahman Sayibu, Jeremiah Sellers-Richards, Neji Simon, Dylan Sklenar, Ramonsito Soto Jr., Adryanah Sweat, Brevin Timm, Connor Varricchio, Nolan Varricchio, Anya White, Andrew Whittemore, Kayteena Wilkins, Ny’el Woods

12th Grade Principal’s Honor Roll

Nadeen Ahmed, Farhana Antora, Eduardo Arellano, Emanuele Bagala, Logan Blum, James Bouchard III, Serenity Bunn, Samuel Callan, Skylar Clair, Christian Clay, Peter Cohen, Grace De La Hoz, Jonah Espinosa, Marisah George, Gabriel Godbee, Samiha Golden, Zenia Haris, Ayden Hooten, Vincent Joao Jr., Alina Joseph, Oren Kelleher, Gabrielle Khalil, Alma Mart, Julia McGuire-Soellner, Aril McKee, Oscar McKible, Mira Miller, Jalani Ricketts, Liliana Rybak, Julian Sala, Kayla Selander, Anna Sevastianova, Jonathan Trentacosta

12th Grade High Honor Roll

Madison Abrahamson, Alianna Alijaj, Ashland Assael, Jayden Bostick, Ella Brill, Alexander Browning, Aiden Buggs, Misleidy Cruz Cruz, Kiera D’lppolito, Parthib Das, Diego Dickinson Case Leal, Emi Dickinson Case Leal, Tye Elias, Teo Fairbanks, Chloe Goessl, Sophie Goessl, Briana Green, Javier Gutierrez Jr., Kayla Hammond, Grace Hockler, Michael Jones, Everly Jordan, Griffin Kitzrow,

Eric Kruze, Savana Kush, Carlos Lampon III, Isabella Lee, Aron Li, Tania Lindsay, Mary Lopez, Brayden Manning, Nora Marshall, Aiden Montleon, Khiana Nicholson, Aiden Nieves, Annabelle Notarthomas, Nolan O’Malley, Adrien Okoye, Michael Ramos, Savannah Ray, Olivia Reynolds, Jaiden Rivera, Julius Sala, Mikaela Sanchez, Annabelle Scher, Wilmer Sinchi Jimbo, Katrina Skorewicz, Anibal Soto III, Gannon Statini-Perez, Rihanna Taylor, Michai Thompson, Ri’Kya White

12th Grade Honor Roll

Macy Alencastro, Jeralizz Araujo, Mira Bagriyanik, Jahcier Ballard, Amari Battle, Vincent Bergerson III, Zyarah Bush, Parker Capawana, Lola Ciccone, Christian Clemons-Simmons, Ayden Gilleo, Lily Gines, Jazmine Gonzalez, Jeremiah Hardwell Jr., Natalie Hayden, Tyler Horton, Ruby Hotchkiss, Jaden Jones, Cameron Just, Taylor Kelliher, Maceo Koerner, Mia Koller, Kiran Kumar, Ryan Landisi, Prince Langford-Jones, Josiah Lind, Lauren Maggio, Jayden Mihalchik, Jalen Morton, Silena Negron, Eli Netboy, Jaiere Newton, Caleb Pfetzing, Jonathan Richards, Elijah Rupp, Zachary Schetter, Thomas Senior, Noah Spiak, Aiden Spiecker, Chelsea Stephens, Matthew Tumidaj, Marcos Velasco, George Walker, Mya Wright

Boces CTI High Honor Roll

Bryan Brown-Rohan, Aiden Buggs, Serenity Bunn, Mateo Cruz, Lily Figlia, Jeremiah Hardwell, Aiden Heaton, Hailee Jennings, Teanna Jennings, Isaiah Luis, Julia McGuire-Soellner, Shyanne McNair, Aiden Montleon, Lakota Newman, Jaiere Newton, Aiden Nieves, Octavian Paulin, Christian Perez, Michael Ramos, Savannah Ray, Jalani Ricketts, Elizabeth Roberts, Trevi Romanelli, Julius Sala, Dylan Sklenar, Tabitha Smith-White, Ramonsito Soto Jr., Anibal Soto, Declan Sprague, Rihanna Taylor, Matthew Tumidaj

Boces CTI Honor Roll

Savannah Acuti, Ayden Gilleo, Aaliyah Iciano, Anajah Lamb, Brianne Papo, Jeremiah Sellers-Richards, Chelsea Stephens, Adryanah Sweat, Maikol Ventura Encarnacion, Kayteena Wilkins, Ny’el Woods.

Beacon Elks recognize WJHS Students of the Month



The Beacon Elks #1493 recently recognized Wappingers Junior High School Students of the Month for October. The students were chosen for their academic and social gains, volunteering with disabled students in gym class, and being a role model. The students received a certificate and a gift card for their accomplishments.

Beacon Elks would like to thank Giacomo’s Pizza Cafe for sponsoring this event with them.

Pictured (from left): Cathy Oken, Youth Activities Chair; Nancy Birkler, lodge member; Jeanine McAuley, Exalted Ruler; Catherine Perri, teacher; Andrew Rollins-Montefusco (7thGrade), Antony Kassas, (7th Grade), Jennifer Hansen, teacher; Alandra Price, Assistant Vice Principal and Terence Thompson, Principal.

-Courtesy photo Beacon Elks

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College students collect more than 1,000 toys for the holidays



Fr. Gregoire Fluet, director of Campus Ministry (third from left), stands with Mount Saint Mary College students, faculty, and staff amidst a collection of more than 1,000 toys donated by the campus community. The gifts were distributed to local families in need this holiday season.

-Photos by Lee Ferris



Mount Saint Mary College students and staff sort and bag hundreds of toys collected during the college’s annual Christmas drive. The community gathered more than 1,000 gifts to support local children.

The spirit of giving is alive and well at Mount Saint Mary College, where the campus community recently collected more than 1,000 toys for local children during its annual Christmas toy drive. Organized by Fr. Gregoire Fluet, Vice President for Mission and Ministry and campus Chaplain, the drive rallied students, faculty, and staff to ensure that families in the Hudson Valley would have gifts to open this holiday season. The donations will be distributed by Catholic

Charities of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster Counties to families in need throughout the region. On-hand to help package up the toys for delivery were Assistant Athletic Director Mike Lowell and plenty of Mount student-athletes. “This entire season – Christmas, Hanukkah, Three Kings, Kwanzaa – is a season of miracles and light that calls us to open our hearts to our neighbors,” said Fr. Fluet. “The Mount community has

answered that call in a spectacular way. To see more than 1,000 toys gathered for local children is a beautiful reminder of what we can achieve when we come together in the spirit of giving and love.” The annual drive has become a staple of the holiday season at the Mount, reflect-

ing the college’s Dominican pillars of service and community. Since Fr. Fluet’s arrival at the Mount nearly a decade ago, the annual toy drive has collected thousands of toys for local children. For more information, visit www.msmc.edu.

Miles of Hope sets dates for 2026 fundraisers

The Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation recently announced the dates for its 2026 fundraising events. These annual gatherings play a crucial role in raising funds and awareness for breast cancer support services and research across the region.

Key Event Dates

- Marist Women’s Basketball Pink Game
Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026
Miles of Hope and Marist Women’s Basketball honor breast cancer survivors and their inspiring journeys during half-time. The game will begin at 2 p.m.
- Spring Brunch & Silent Auction
Saturday, May 3, 2026
Miles of Hope will award scholarship recipients, salute event honorees, offer raffle prizes, and outline the latest breast cancer treatment and research.
- Goals for Hope
August 2026
Join a team or form your own in an annual friendly soccer tournament honoring Miles of Hope. Women’s and Men’s divisions available.
- Sponsorship includes social media posts and e-blasts. For sponsorship information: info@milesofhope.org

- 23rd Annual Community Walk for Breast Cancer
Saturday, Oct. 3, 2026
At Miles of Hope’s Community Walk, the organization honors survivors and empowers all those who have been affected by breast cancer to join the fight.

- Miles of Hope Day
Oct. 23, 2026
Sports teams, schools and businesses are encouraged to celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month on Miles of Hope Day by hosting their own fundraiser. Miles of Hope will set up a fundraiser page and send materials and pink items to give away at your event.

Each event offers an opportunity for supporters, survivors, and community members to come together, celebrate progress in breast cancer research, and generate vital resources for those affected by the disease. Proceeds from all events directly fund local programs, patient support, and educational initiatives. Registration for the 2026 events are open. Individuals and organizations interested in participating or sponsoring are encouraged to visit the Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation website for details and updates. MilesOfHope.org.



Volunteers load gifts into a charity’s van.

Dance set for Jan. 3 at Elks Club in Beacon

Get On Down at the Elks Lounge Dance Night on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026 at 7 p.m., at 900 Wolcott Ave. (Route. 9D), Beacon. Lose oneself to the exciting mix of music played by DJ Rhoda. These dances are informal and even if one

comes alone, one can always find a friendly partner on the dance floor. Admission is \$15 and includes complimentary snacks, and a full cash bar. For more information, call 845-765-0667 or email rhodaja@optonline.net.

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Local farmers in the new year

by mark adams

‘Sparks of optimism’ emerge for 2026

“Good luck!”
“It’s such a mess!”
“It’s impossible to farm here.”
“I have no idea.”

These are some of the comments I got when I asked local farmers what’s in store for the new year. Zippy Duvall, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, has always been optimistic when he talks to farmers about the future. But this month he writes in his newsletter, “It’s not in my nature to focus on the clouds overhead, but it’s not wise to ignore them either. Farmers across the country are facing a growing economic storm. Crop prices are low and production expenses are at record highs. As we hear more rumbles of tariffs, the storm is impossible to ignore.”

When I got deeper into conversation with Hudson Valley farmers, I was able to tease out a few sparks of optimism, as we searched for the pony:

- **Mark Doyle, manager of Fishkill Farms** – “Crops that are part of the experience for the customer is where you’re going to make money.” Fishkill Farms is a real farm, not just an empty lot with a few pumpkins thrown around for a “pick your own” experience. And they have lots of value-added products for visitors to buy, like the new Treasury Pommeau. Still, the cost of labor is a huge concern, since farming is so labor intensive. Government, especially N.Y. state, grants will be available for help getting excess product to food banks, but they need to be consistent.
- **Isaac Coon and his dad Peter** – “Milk prices are low, and I don’t think they’ll get much better. Tariffs are hindering the sales of powdered milk.” Coon Brothers Dairy just installed robots to milk their 350 Guernsey cows. But they still need labor, and Peter points out that it’s a big challenge to convince people that a farm is a nice place to work. Peter remembers a farmers’ meeting 50 years

- ago where everyone was pessimistic, “But I’m still here,” he says. The local dairies that survived and will continue to thrive are focused and innovative.
- **Mandy Dykeman** - “Absolutely a future!” Especially if it involves agritourism. The Dykeman family grows pick-your-own pumpkins on their 350-acre farm in Pawling, along with sweet corn, tomatoes, apples, and dozens of other crops, sold at markets and their farm stand. Mandy points out that the tourist popular hay ride is not a form of agritainment, but a way to get their customers to the pumpkin patch. It just happens to be fun.
 - **Charles Hurd from Hurds Family Farm** – Diversification is the key to the future. Charles is optimistic, planting new apple trees, and selling into the wholesale market while also offering pick your own. Still, he laments that local farming is a break-even business, even when everything goes right. You really need enough income to, for example, buy a decent car or help send your kids to college. A lot of younger apple farmers are diversifying into hard cider, which might be the secret in 2026, if we don’t have a glut.
 - **Ron Spadafora** – “There is optimism” in the cannabis industry. Ron’s company Farm QC holds one of the original marijuana production licenses. His optimism stems from the federal government’s rescheduling cannabis, now allowing for research and normal business tax deductions. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the CBD and THC in marijuana treats chronic pain, epilepsy and anxiety, but now these theories can be properly researched and quantified, opening up new legal markets for a local crop.
 - **Gregg Pulver** – the new Deputy County Executive is a long-time farmer, currently renting out his farm for corn and soybean production. He told me that Hudson Valley farmers are experiencing “pressures from everywhere.” but that we (I’m a farmer, too) are “more resilient than most. The people still doing it are doing it well.” The economics for straight



Dairy farmers Isaac and Peter Coon.

-Photo by Mark Adams

agriculture are not looking good. We have to ramp up to value-added, and have total control of our product. Create a marketing opportunity. A good example would be Hudson Valley Fresh, the milk brand that sells a local product better than other brands, and also is value added, with their famous chocolate milk. Gregg laments that not enough people are buying local farm products. It’s up to the farmers themselves, in 2026, to make sure that their products are the best on the market and that everybody knows it.

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

A lasting legacy: Our Lady of Lourdes High School dedicates gymnasium to Coach Brian Giorgis

Honoring the legacy of Coach Brian Giorgis, Our Lady of Lourdes High School (OLL) dedicated its gymnasium in his name on Sunday, Dec. 14. “Coach Giorgis’ influence at Our Lady of Lourdes High School extends far beyond championships and banners,” said OLL Principal Meghan Vilardo. “He lived our Catholic mission each day, coaching with faith at the center and leading with integrity. Through this dedication, his legacy is now permanently woven into the fabric of our school, standing as a daily reminder that true greatness is achieved through faith, humility, service and love, and ensuring his example continues to inspire for generations

to come.” Giorgis, who is the only scholastic coach to make New York State Final Four appearances in four different sports – basketball, softball, volleyball and baseball – served the OLL community for 25 years. He was inducted into the New York State Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in 2010 and the New York State Public High School Athletic Association in 2024. During his tenure at OLL, Giorgis served as the head coach of the girls’ basketball program for 19 seasons, securing nine State championships, 19 league championships and a total of 451 wins. Giorgis continued his coaching career at Marist University for 21 years, retiring in 2023.



From left, Assistant Principal Caroline Beyer, Coach Brian Giorgis and Principal Meghan Vilardo are pictured at the dedication of the gymnasium at Our Lady of Lourdes High School in Poughkeepsie.

-Courtesy photo

love to cook

by vicki frank day



‘There’s always more to learn’

New perspectives bring promise for 2026.

And so, we come to the end of another year. I do hope you have some things to look back on fondly and are looking forward to an even better year ahead. As for me, 2025 was bittersweet, its highs and lows bringing new perspectives, making me even more grateful for all I have and bringing into clear focus all I need to change. I have to believe it’s never too late to become my best self.

When I look back on my year in food, I can say it was a good one. My passion for cooking was reinvigorated in a way it hasn’t been for many years; and almost every day saw me busy in the kitchen, music or a podcast playing, while I came up with recipes, revisited old ones or discovered new ones to try. It’s fun to get lost in the process again (like I did for several days while making this year’s Christmas feast and why this is a short article – it was fun but I’m tired!). All year I set goals and challenged myself and played and had fun. There were mistakes and triumphs, and I like knowing there’s always more to learn.

To my list of go-to recipes I added crunch wraps (where have they been all my life?!), taco casserole, lemon pudding cake, manicotti made with crepes, summer vegetable lasagna, no-churn pumpkin ice cream and peanut butter-potato chip cookies, to name a few. I’m looking forward to growing that list in the year to come. I revisited some old favorites and even improved them, which is its own reward, if you ask me. Dusting off old recipes always feels a bit like spring cleaning. You see them with new eyes and have more experience to change them up and make them new again.

I also got into a routine with cooking, which felt great and helped make me more productive and efficient. I now schedule my time in the kitchen, planning everything ahead, from shopping lists and weekly menus to what to do with leftovers. I actually look forward to the part of my day spent in the kitchen, finding comfort in knowing that it’s my time to unplug from everything else that’s going on and just have a date with food. It’s

been a good perspective changer.

In addition, I said a tearful good-bye to my beloved cat Phoebe, stole some time for myself, reflected on gratitude, allowed myself to take a few shortcuts now and then and had some fun, creative adventures with my sister. I continue to learn about myself and am sometimes surprised by what I can accomplish while also admitting my shortcomings, which I’m working on and hope to improve. I need to do better and be better and a new year is as good an excuse as any.

I’m not one to make New Year’s resolutions or tell you what you ought to do, but I think it’s OK to make a friendly suggestion or two. To that end, it warms my heart to hope I can inspire you in some small way and encourage you to take chances, try new things and savor as many moments as you can, even – and maybe especially – the small ones. Don’t be afraid to challenge yourself, try new things and have fun doing it. Try not to have any regrets. Take pride in even the smallest accomplishments and treat your-

self when you can.

Might I also suggest taking a few moments to relax with your favorite beverage – a nice cup of tea or coffee, a glass of wine or a cocktail – and just be. Set pressure aside, breathe deep and know that doing so is no less than you deserve, especially after a busy holiday season. Tomorrow is another day and another year. What you do with it is ultimately up to you, even when you don’t feel like it is. Try to stay positive, be good to yourself and kind to others, do your best, listen, love and always, always find something to be grateful for. Happy New Year!

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.

Correction



Both of the above photos from the Dec. 17 issue of the Southern Dutchess News and Beacon Free Press were taken by photographer Nicole Bowland. The photos were part of our presentation on the Hudson Valley Reapers hockey team. Nicole Bowland is the original photographer for both photos. Our presentation carried the incorrect photo credit.

Sheriff’s Office warns of ongoing scams

The Dutchess County Sheriff’s Office would like to warn the residents of Dutchess County and surrounding areas about scams that once again seem to be on the rise.

Scams are ways in which criminals will attempt to get money from people by contacting them and making up elaborate stories. In some cases the perpetrators have tried, sometimes successfully, to use the victim’s emotions about a loved one in trouble to get money. It’s common for the perpetrators of these scams to try to get money by telling people that one of their relatives has been seriously hurt or is in jail, and that they need money right away. In many cases they will pose as a law enforcement official or another relative to try and convince the victim that it’s legitimate.

Lately there have been two main scams circulating. In the first one the perpetrators pose as law enforcement or corrections officials and tell the victim that a loved one has been arrested and is in jail. They proceed to tell the victim that their loved one can be released from jail if they pay a sum of money, and then once the money is paid it’s discovered that the loved one was never incarcerated to begin with. This scam preys on emotions and is common with older victims being told that their grandchildren are in jail.

The second scam, unrelated to the first one above, is common during the holiday season and occurs when the perpetrators pose as someone familiar to the victim and ask the victim to purchase gift cards for them in exchange for reimbursement. Of course reimbursement is never made

once the cards are purchased and turned over to the suspects.

The Sheriff’s Office has identified at least two victims that have each lost several thousands of dollars as a result of the aforementioned scams.

The Sheriff’s Office offers the following general tips to help people avoid these scams:

- If you’re contacted by someone you don’t know asking for money, for any reason, it’s very likely a scam.
- If you receive correspondence from someone that you don’t know and they instruct you to keep the matter confidential and not tell anyone about it, it’s most likely a scam.
- Emails or text messages that contain misspelled words, grammatical errors, don’t make sense, or are sent at odd hours – for example the middle of the night - are most likely scams.
- Legitimate law enforcement would not attempt to satisfy a warrant or make promises to avoid prosecution by soliciting money.
- If you receive an email or text about an order you didn’t place or asking you to send money call the company using a legitimate number. DO NOT follow the instructions in the email, click on any links in the email, or call the number provided in the email.
- If someone you don’t know asks you to purchase merchandise, transfer money, provide bank information, provide remote computer access, enter a code, or click on a link given to you by them use caution as it is likely a scam.

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Obituaries

Vincent J. Benedetto Sr.



Vincent J. Benedetto Sr., a life-long Village of Wappingers Falls resident, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on December 9, 2025 at his home; at the age of 81. He was born in Wappingers Falls, NY on August 9, 1944, son of the late Louis J. and Mary R. (nee DiMarco) Benedetto. Vincent attended St. Mary’s School and later attended Wappinger Central High School.

He worked for many years as a laborer and later, a foreman at Sun-Up Enterprises in Wappingers Falls, until he retired.

Vincent was a Life-Member of the S.W. Johnson Fire Co #2 of Wappingers Falls; where he served as a volunteer fireman for 60-years, and held the rank of Lieutenant for many years. He enjoyed

cooking, especially for the firehouse, and also volunteered for Knights of Columbus events. He also enjoyed gardening, loved his vegetable garden but mostly his family he loved dearly.

Vincent is survived by his two sons, Vincent J. Benedetto Jr., and his wife Denise; Michael Benedetto and his wife Kathy. He is also survived by his beloved sister Mary Beth Krakower; his four grandchildren, Branden, Gabby, Ryan and Lindsay; 1 great-grandson Hudson Benedetto, and several nieces, nephews & friends.

Along with his parents, Vincent was predeceased by his two brothers Robert Benedetto and Louis J. Benedetto Jr.

His Family received Friends on Friday, December 12th at the DELEHANTY FUNERAL HOME, 64 E. Main Street, Wappingers Falls, NY. A Mass of Christian Burial was offered on Saturday, December 13th at St. Mary’s Catholic Church 11 Clinton St., Wappingers Falls, followed by interment in St. Mary’s Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers the family wishes for memorial donations to be made to Hudson Valley Hospice, 374 Violet Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. To offer a message of condolence or share a fond memory, please visit: www.DelehantyFuneral.com.

Roy Lopez



Roy Lopez, a resident of Kissimmee, FL, formerly of Dutchess County, NY, passed away on November 25, 2025; at the age of 56. He was born in The Bronx, NY on October 9, 1969, son of Olga Acevedo and the late Adiel Lopez. He attended Truman High School in Co Op City Bronx, NY; He later went back to school to proudly acquire his GED with his best friend Alice Ramirez-Sweeney.

Roy attended cosmetology school at Richard the First Cosmetology School, and received his license. He became a

well-known Cosmetologist in the Hudson Valley and went on to own and operate his own salon, The Roy Lopez Intrigue Salon in Fishkill, New York; until retiring from it. Six years ago, he was so proud to have achieved his paralegal license.

Roy had a passion for musicals and painting; he also loved caring for animals, Disney, the beach, and watching new TV and Movies.

On October 31, 2011, at Kevin McCurdy’s Haunted Mansion (during the Autumn Blizzard), he married Chuck Morris, whom survives him at home.

Along with his husband of 14 years of marriage, Roy is survived by his two children: Savannah Lopez-Elderkin and Ory Lopez; his brother Ady Lopez and his mother Olga Acevedo. He is also survived by several nieces, nephews, family & dear friends, in particular his furry friends, Piper, Paige, Kit and a host of others.

His Family gathered with Friends to Remember & Celebrate his Life on Saturday, December 20th at the DELEHANTY FUNERAL HOME, 64 East Main Street, Wappingers Falls, New York, where a remembrance service was offered. Interment will be private at the convenience of his family. To offer a message of condolence or share a fond memory, please visit: www.DelehantyFuneral.com.

Jeffrey ‘JeffFree’ Alan Relyea



Jeffrey Relyea came into this world on April 20, 1959, in Wappingers Falls, New York, born to Ralph and Ethel Relyea. From the very beginning, he carried a lightness of being—a curiosity for life, a devotion to music, and a heart tuned to love. Somewhere along the way, he remembered who he truly was and chose the name JeffFree, a name that reflected the spirit he lived from: open, unbound, and awake.

Jeff took his qualities of goodness and honesty and established a lucrative business, All Season Siding. His craftsmanship allowed him to work with many prominent builders throughout Dutchess County, NY. His reputation allowed him to move on to Schoharie, NY where he established All Season Construction. His quality craftsmanship allowed him to build beautiful homes in Schoharie

County, NY.

He leaves behind his two sons, David Relyea of Schoharie, New York, and Steven Relyea and his wife Michelle of San Diego, California—extensions of his being, walking the world in their own way. His heart overflowed with love for his grandchildren, Parisay and Atlas, whom he adored as teachers, miracles, and reminders of wonder.

Jeffrey is also lovingly held in the hearts of his siblings: Michele and Larry Haynes of New Hamburg, New York; Michael and Gay Relyea of North Augusta, South Carolina; Susan and Mike Reed of Eureka Springs, Arkansas; Judith Durland of Schoharie, New York; and Steven and Rosanna Relyea of Fishkill, New York. He is remembered with great affection by his many nieces and nephews, each one touched by his presence in their own sacred way.

For the last eight years, Jeffrey offered his gift freely on the streets of downtown Eureka Springs, his harmonica singing through the air like a prayer. He didn’t just play music—he was the music. His melodies met people where they were, softening edges, opening hearts, reminding us to pause, to breathe, to feel.

When the streets were full, he was there. When the streets were empty and the night settled in, he was still there—keeping quiet company with the moon and anyone who needed a moment of peace. He was a familiar sound, a steady presence, love humming through brass and breath.

Though his body has moved on, Jeffrey has not gone anywhere. We hear him still—in the echoes of a harmonica, in the hush after a long day, in the simple joy of being alive. What we carry forward is not just memory, but presence. What we loved in him lives within us now.

A celebration of life will be held at Lake Leatherwood in Eureka Springs sometime in January, with another gathering planned in New York in the spring. Details will be shared with family and friends as plans unfold.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to A Cup of Love Food Pantry, a charity JeffFree loved and frequented, in honor of his generous and compassionate spirit. Donations can be made online at: acupofloveministry.org

Much love to a brother, a friend, a traveler who walked gently and loved deeply. The music continues. The love remains.

Be here now, JeffFree.

Milagros ‘Millie’ Connor



Milagros “Millie” Connor, a longtime resident of Wappingers Falls passed away peacefully at home surrounded by family on December 11, 2025, at the age of 75. She was born on April 25, 1950, in Isabela, Puerto Rico, as the daughter of the late Rafeal Diaz and Rosalina Sosa.

On April 7, 1979, in Isabela, Puerto Rico, she married the love of her life and best friend, Thomas Connor, who survives her at home. They met each other while working at Empire Mutual Insurance and were in love at first sight. They were blessed with four sons. Millie was a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. She was a dedicated homemaker raising her four children and supporting her husband’s career.

She took great pride in her children’s successes and accomplishments. Her grandchildren always brought a smile to her face in the later years of her life. She was a kind soul who always saw the best in people and was always willing to help her friends and family out.

Millie enjoyed spending time with her friends and family, going for walks and would often be seen eating her favorite meal, Spaghetti and Meatballs with diet ginger ale soda. Millie worked for 20 years as a bus monitor for the Wappinger Central School District, and for over 15 years as a store clerk at Wal-Mart in Fishkill; until she retired in 2016. She also worked several years for St. Martin Press Publisher.

Along with her dedicated husband Thomas, of 46 years, Milagros is survived by her three sons Thomas Connor, Michael Connor, and David Connor and daughter-in-law Melissa. Sadly, she was recently predeceased by her beloved son Kevin Connor on May 17, 2025. She is also survived by her two loving grandchildren, Tanslenn and Mannix; her sister-in-law Mary Tiernan, brother-in-law Martin Tiernan, and several nieces & nephews.

Alongside her parents and son, Kevin, Milagros is predeceased by her sister Virgin and brother Anibal; her sister-in-law and brother-in-law Frances and Henry Lawlor; her nephew John Lawlor.

She had a profound impact on all who knew her and will be missed. Gone from our sights but never from our hearts.

Her Family received Friends on Wednesday, December 17th at the DELEHANTY FUNERAL HOME, 64 E. Main Street, Wappingers Falls, New York. A Mass of Christian Burial was offered on Thursday, December 18th at St. Mary Catholic Church, 11 Clinton St., Wappingers Falls, followed by interment in St. Mary’s Cemetery. To offer a message of condolence or share a fond memory, please visit: www.DelehantyFuneral.com.

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221 Professional Services

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223 Beauty Services

225 Business Services

226 Travel & Services

227 Bridal Services

295 Financial

296 Mortgages

300 Real Estate

301 Townhouses & Condos

302 Commercial Property

304 Mobile Homes

305 Lots & Acreage

400 Townhomes & Condos for rent

401 Apartments for Rent

402 Rooms for Rent

403 Furnished Rooms

404 Furnished Apartments

405 Wanted to Rent

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Thanksgiving Day 2025 marked the 50th year of the Chase Family Football Game, which has been played through rain, snow, freezing temperatures and good weather, for five decades.

Wappingers Falls Judge Raymond Chase, who initiated the game in 1975 and who has played in and sponsored it every year, was presented by Tom Raiche with a quilt made of past years' shirts. The Young Warriors defeated the Mature Warriors 6-5.

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Tabby: Domestic short Hair Cat. Adult 3-8 yrs, Female, Medium 7-11 lbs. Tabby is a Buff/Tan/Fawn color. Personality is Affectionate, Curious, Gentle, Playful, Quiet and Shy. Adopt: ARF, Simons Lane, Beacon, NY

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


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](http://www.incrediblepupspetresuce.com) and submit an adoption application.

Pets for Adoption

Karla, German Shepherd Dog Mix. Adult, 3-8 yrs, Female, Medium 26-60 lbs, short hair, color, Black. She's Affectionate, Playful, Athletic, Protective, Smart and Loyal. Adopt: ARF, Simons Lane, Beacon NY

Pets For Adoption

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More than 50 white coats awarded at Mount Saint Mary's Nurse Practitioner ceremony

More than 50 students from the Mount Saint Mary College Nurse Practitioner program were honored at the winter 2025 White Coat Ceremony on Friday, Dec. 12.

The graduates' white coats were presented to them by their chosen family members, from spouses and children to parents and grandparents, symbolizing the support systems that helped them reach this milestone.

The ceremony reflected the students' transition to the professional nurse practitioner role. Nurse practitioners are advanced practice nurses who provide high-quality healthcare services, with the ability to diagnose, treat, and prescribe across a wide range of health problems.

After welcome speeches by Professor Nancy Gartin-Checchi, Graduate Nursing Coordinator, and Dr. Robert Gervasi, president of the Mount, students and their families enjoyed a congratulatory message from Dr. Lynette DeBellis, associate professor of Nursing and Chair of the School of Nursing.

Dr. Gervasi reminded the graduates that their new title comes with a profound responsibility to the whole person, not just the patient's physical ailments.

"The white coat is a symbol of competence, yes, but it must also be a symbol of

conscience," said Gervasi. "You are called to bring light to the shadows of illness, and to treat every individual with the dignity they deserve as children of God."

Anne-Marie Uebbing, associate professor of Nursing and a certified Family Nurse Practitioner delivered the keynote address. She urged the new Nurse Practitioners to remember the humanity behind the science.

“Never lose sight of the art of nursing,” said Uebbing. “Guidelines and protocols are essential, but it is your empathy, your listening ear, and your advocacy that will truly heal those entrusted to your care.”

Graduate Sherene Williams was selected to discuss the group's progression through the rigorous program. She highlighted the resilience of the Class of 2025.

“We are not the same people who walked into our first class,” said Williams. “We have been tested, we have been tired, but we have been transformed. We are ready to step into our communities and make a difference, not just as providers, but as partners in health.”

The sentiment of the class was further reflected in the ceremony program, where students shared their personal philosophies. As graduate Nicole Zazzero noted, the goal of the Nurse Practitioner is "to



More than 50 students were honored at the recent Mount Saint Mary College White Coat Ceremony on Friday, December 12.

-Photo by Lee Ferris.

cure sometimes, to relieve often, and to comfort always.”

For more information, visit
www.msmc.edu.

2026 Art Exhibition Season kicks off at Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center on Jan. 3

The Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center kicks off their new 2026 Art Exhibition Season with thirteen talented artists whose works will be showcased from Jan. 3, 2026 to Feb. 29, 2026 in three Visual Art Galleries. Featured in the Victorian Gallery at 9 Vassar Street in Poughkeepsie, will be Kelly Stohr presenting her solo exhibition, "Shadow Map." At 12 Vassar Street, WomensWork.Art brings together twelve artists for their group show, Something About the Women, in the Hancock and Reception Galleries. Free Public Art Opening Receptions will be held in all three Art Galleries on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026 from 5-7 p.m.

Kelly Stohr is a visual artist residing in the Hudson Valley whose practice relies on the methods of intuitive wandering, spontaneous conversation, and chance encounters. The result is a fateful chain of events that leads her from one subject to the next. “I use cameras to navigate our distracted, psychically lonely 21st century existence as a young woman in this present moment,” Kelly explains. “Through images and textures that feel both universal and oddly specific, I hope to bring a shimmer of the collective unconscious to the surface and encourage us to look a little closer at what’s already there.” In addition to being an accomplished photographer who has showcased her work in group and solo exhibitions, Kelly is also the writer of the blog “The Junk Drawer” that functions as a curated collection of found images and scattered thoughts.

Womenswork.Art is dedicated to supporting emerging and mid-career female, femme-identifying, non-binary and marginalized artists and curators across the spectrum of artistic mediums to explore themes ranging from the personal to the global. Their group exhibition, “Something About the Women,” features Poughkeepsie-based female artists Stephanie Russell, Shirley Benjamin, Carolyn Schlam, Randi Chalfin, Suzanne Bonzer, Maryanne Ramirez, Bridget Vasquez, Samantha Palmieri, Lynn James, Kate Mitchell, Elinor Levy, and

Womenswork.Art owner, Nikki Hung who will present recent works of their own choosing. "It is imperative to keep giving artists a platform to show their works and for an audience to hear their messages," explains Nikki. "I'm thrilled that the talented artists assembled for this diverse group show at the Cunneen-Hackett Art Center will be afforded the opportunity to showcase their thought-provoking works of art." The Womenswork.Art Gallery Space and Office is located on the third floor of the 12 Vassar Street building of the Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center.

The Victorian Gallery at 9 Vassar Street is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 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 should stop by 9 Vassar Street first or call the Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center Office at 845-486-4571 for access. The 12 Vassar Street Galleries are also open during events at the VBI Theatre. Visit the Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center website at cunneen-hackett.org for more information on the artists exhibiting their work in the Visual Art Galleries.



The Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center kicks off their new 2026 Art Exhibition Season in January with 13 artists.

-Image by Kelly Stohr

this week's puzzle solutions

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

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

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

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

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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

		1			1
				3	
2					
4					3
3					
			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: YEAR-IN-REVIEW

ACROSS

1. W.E.B Du Bois' org.
6. Rascal
9. Ho-hum
13. "Pomp and Circumstance" composer
14. Tropical constrictor
15. Forgo
16. Tequila source
17. + or - atom
18. Reason by deduction
19. *Trade war "weapon," pl.
21. *2025 MLB World Series winners
23. ____-tzu
24. C&H crop
25. Dunce
28. Western necktie
30. Catch in a snare
35. Ginger cookie
37. Master of his castle
39. Use a razor
40. British slang for donkey
41. Arch and ball locations
43. Winglike
44. March celebrants
46. *Arthur Sze, 2025 ____ Laureate
47. Dam-like structure
48. *Beyoncé's "Cowboy ____," 2025 Grammy winner
50. King Kong and Curious George, e.g.
52. Like a fox
53. What Pinocchio did
55. *Florida Panthers won this org.'s '25 championship
57. *"Wicked: ____ ____"
61. *Late environmentalist and chimpanzee expert
65. German submarine destroyer
66. *2025 Ryder Cup loser
68. Manuscript sheet
69. Brazilian coins
70. Roll-your-own one, for short
71. To the left, on a boat
72. Orpheus' instrument
73. Geological time period
74. They are cut by Federal Reserve

DOWN

1. At room temperature, bar order
2. Algae, sing.
3. Petri dish filler
4. Raise trivial objections
5. Ready to be assembled
6. Avian wader
7. Farm sound
8. China's goodwill "____ diplomacy"
9. Collision, onomatopoeically speaking
10. *Taylor Swift's "The ____ of a Showgirl"
11. Affirm solemnly
12. Third-person possessive pronoun
15. Makes broader
20. Why do they fall in love?
22. *Aryna Sabalenka's seed
24. Auto contents
25. Pertaining to osmium
26. *2025 Academy Awards Best Picture winner
27. Faquir, alt.spelling
29. Pilot's stunt
31. Spring event
32. Pneumonia symptom, pl.
33. Be of use
34. *Blue Origin's 2025 singing passenger
36. Boll weevil, e.g.
38. *____ Seek
42. Shorthand typist, for short
45. Serfs
49. 2016 Olympics host, for short
51. Ram's horn at a synagogue
54. Draw a conclusion
56. Parkinson's disease drug
57. Roll up
58. Heed
59. Lion sound
60. Dorothy's last name
61. *Lady of "The Mayhem Ball"
62. Tons (2 words)
63. Lira, pl.
64. Land parcels
67. *Gary Oldman received this honorary in 2025

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
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
65						66	67			68			
69						70				71			
72						73				74			

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

Stockings for Veterans Holiday Drive a success, thanks to volunteers



Local funeral director Joe Schuka and Delehanty Funeral Home held a Stockings for Veterans Holiday Drive, which ended on Saturday, Dec. 20. Volunteers were set to deliver the stockings to Castle Point VA and some local assisted living facilities last week. Schuka has brought this event to the community for more than five years. He hopes to continue the program.

“It’s a great way of the community coming together for the benefit of others, and in this case, OUR VETERANS,” stated Schuka.

Special thanks was offered to local organizations, such as the Fishkill Rotary Club, the 105th Airlift Wing Alumni Association in Newburgh, local Scouts of America groups Troops 41 of Beacon and Troop 86 of Fishkill, M&T Bank regional office in Fishkill, and many community members from the Wappingers Falls area.

-Courtesy photos Joe Schuka



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