

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

By Kristine Coulter  
& Kate Goldsmith

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

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

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

**Phil Benante, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools in the Arlington Central School District,** said he feels that the ban is working well.

“Generally, I notice that our students are more engaged with each other and our staff throughout the school day, particularly in less structured settings like the cafeteria and hallways.”

Dr. Benante added, “I know that our teachers appreciate the change – the phones were a consistent distraction in the classroom. Our student leadership has also expressed a support for the restriction as they have realized that it has led to a more socially engaging environment for them. Similarly, parents had concerns at first, particularly out of concern for their ability to reach their children in the event of [an] emergency. I think our procedures have reinforced that parents and children will always be able to get in touch with each other – in our case, we ask them to do so through their house offices in our high school.”

Asked if there has been improvement in students’ grades as a

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Family, faith are driving forces  
for Hyde Park fighter Fatima Kline

By Morgan E. Maier

Michelle Kline was ringside for her daughter’s first fight. Fatima was 9 years old, with large eyes clouded by the loss she just faced. With no beginner’s level fighters available, an older, advanced opponent was her only match. Flecks of anger appeared, as her mom/biggest fan refused to let Fatima quit before the second bout. Fatima would get her first win that night, the first stoking a resilient fire that has since defined her professional career. Now fighting out of Hyde Park on the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) circuit, Fatima Kline has collected a world ranking and plenty of attention.

New York City natives, the Kline family moved from Long Island to Hyde Park when Fatima was 13. Her parents’ wish was to get away from clogged streets and borough-to-borough traffic. What they found in the Hudson Valley was a community fit for faith and fitness, from Precision Boxing & MMA to Cavalry Chapel of the Hudson Valley. By then, Fatima had been fighting for three years. Navigating Haviland Middle School, a brand-new environment, and early “teenagerhood” had her dabbling in different interests. Crew was her thing for a while, but she found her way back to mixed martial arts during her high school years.

“I started training, and within the first few months, I was training three or four times a day. It was almost hard to get me out of the gym,” said Fatima Kline of her early days in the sport. “Primarily, it was for self-defense, and then as I grew older,



Resilient Hyde Park fighter Fatima Kline, center, is pictured with family members, from left, parents Carl, Michelle and siblings Tabitha, Vince and Troy. *Courtesy photo*

because I just loved it. I enjoyed it, and I was really good at it.”

At 15, she’d fight women nearly twice her age, quickly moving up to expert divisions. From there, she would dominate.

The Kline crew gets to travel with Fatima, their version of a family vacation – a fierce, competitive bunch of seven, competing in jiu-jitsu, wrestling, boxing, and gymnastics. With increased attention in the community and national media, the family takes it in stride. They have known their Fatima is special since she began, the early praise raining from opposing coaches, trainers, behemoths in the fighting communities.

“Even if she didn’t win, the growth

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Fire at historic Hyde Park mansion  
displaces 11 on New Year's Day

By Curtis Schmidt



The Hyde Park Fire Department responded to a large-scale structure fire at the Millennial Kingdom Family Church (Crumwold Hall), located at 30 Mansion Drive at 8:12 am on New Year’s Day.

Hyde Park Town Supervisor Alfred Torreggiani confirmed there were no injuries, including the 11 people who lived in the estate, as well as first responders working to stop the blaze.

Chief Steven Wilcha of the Hyde Park Fire District said the fire was determined to have been caused by a space heater that ignited, combined with open doors that

allowed the fire to spread rapidly throughout the structure. Upon arrival, crews encountered significant fire conditions requiring a prolonged and coordinated response.

He said fire suppression, overhaul, and property conservation operations continued for an extended period, with all units clearing the scene on Friday, Jan. 2, at approximately 5 p.m., after more than 33 hours of continuous operations.

Wilcha said supplying water to the scene proved challenging due to hydrant locations. Firefighters established long

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Smoke billows from the Kingdom Family Church (Crumwold Hall) in Hyde Park on New Year’s morning. There were no injuries, including the 11 people who lived in the estate, as well as first responders working to stop the blaze. *Courtesy photo from the Rhinebeck Fire Dept. Facebook page*

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# 7 restaurants to host Dine Out for History

## Millerton eateries collaborate with North East Historical Society

This winter a total of seven Millerton restaurants will support the North East Historical Society’s Dine Out for History events. This marks the highest number since the pandemic temporarily shut down the series from March 2020 through 2022.

On select dates from Jan. 18 through March 23, 2026, participating Millerton restaurants will host their own Dine Out for History night, where 10 percent of the proceeds from all patrons that night will be donated to the historical society to support its research, digitize its collection and make historic content more available to the public.

“We’re very happy to see the significant support we are getting from local restaurants,” said Edward Downey, president of the North East Historical Society. “We aim to bring them more business at a tough time of year, and from the feedback

we’ve gotten, their patrons enjoy rallying to support local history.”

Diners can go whenever they want at dinnertime on the designated nights, but they are encouraged to mention Dine Out for History to the hosting restaurant.

The historical society will start the series of events at The Millerton Inn, 53 Main St., on Sunday, Jan. 18. An optional brief presentation – a participatory local history quiz – will be at 5:30 p.m. for those who want to come early. It will be offered with a free glass of wine, and guests can enjoy their dinners at the inn after that. Dinner reservations are requested.

The other participating restaurants are Taro’s at 18 Main St. on Thursday, Jan. 29; Willa at 52 Main St. on Thursday, Feb. 12 (reservations requested); the Oakhurst Diner at 19 Main St. on Sunday, Feb. 22; Pasture Kitchen at 130 Route 44, on Thursday, March 5; the Golden Wok at Railroad Plaza, 2 Main St., on Sunday, March 15 (takeout only); and Round III at 5523 Route 22, on Monday, March 23.

To get a reminder, please sign up for



A colorized postcard of the Harlem Line railroad depot on North Center Street in Millerton in the early 20th century. *Photo courtesy of North East Historical Society*

the North East Historical Society newsletter by contacting Ed Downey at eddowney12@gmail.com.

The North East Historical Society is on the second floor of the NorthEast-

Millerton Library, 75 Main St., Millerton. Its hours are 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Fridays or by appointment. For more information, contact Ed Downey at eddowney12@gmail.com.

# Weekend archery classes return to Bowdoin Park this winter

## Registration opens Jan. 15

Registration for the winter session of Dutchess County Parks’ popular weekend archery classes at Bowdoin Park in Poughkeepsie will open on Thursday, Jan. 15, at 9 a.m. Sessions begin on Jan. 31 and will take place inside Bowdoin Park’s community center auditorium. The program consists of five classes, held on

Saturdays, with various time slots to accommodate more students. The sessions, each an hour long, are designed for children ages 8 and up, and adults with any level of archery experience. Space is limited, so be sure to register early at [www.DutchessNY.gov/ParksEducation](http://www.DutchessNY.gov/ParksEducation).

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

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

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

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

3:30-4:30 p.m.

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

For registration and programming information, visit [DutchessNY.gov/Parks](http://DutchessNY.gov/Parks).

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

continued from cover

result of the ban, Benante said, “I have not researched this.”

**Mike Benischek, Public Information Officer of the Red Hook Central School District,** noted, “The impact of the bell-to-bell policy has been most evident in our cafeterias and senior lounge. While our students had already responsibly followed our previous policy banning phone use during class time, many were on their devices during free periods and lunch. This year we’ve seen an increase in face-to-face interaction and interpersonal recreation.”

Benischek added, “The ban has been effective and the students have been largely responsible complying with it. Early in the year, our ex officio student members of the Board of Education provided a report to the board indicating our high school students were adapting immediately. Some students began bringing in old-fashioned iPods to listen to music and digital cameras.”

Benischek said one of those students, senior Maddie Clements, shared, “There was a dance competition in the senior lounge one day. Just, super cool stuff has been going on that would not have been happening last year or the last couple of years.”

He noted, “Our students on the middle school’s principal’s council also shared they feel the ban has been an improvement in the school community.”

As in all districts, some parents initially had concerns about how they would get in touch with their children during the day, but Benischek noted “Since September, though, those concerns have largely disappeared. The majority of students, I think, have accepted and adapted to this policy as simply the new normal

within the school, and the teachers, of course, were always in favor of this change.”

Because Red Hook CSD already had a policy preventing phone use within classroom, except when allowed by a teacher, Benischek said, “we did not anticipate the ... policy having a significant impact on students’ grades, and it would be too early to analyze that impact at this point in the year. However, as we have seen an increase in conversation and group interaction, we can say there has been a positive impact on the climate and culture within the secondary buildings, and that – we would expect – could not have a negative impact on student performance.”

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

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

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



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

outdoor games for lunch.”

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

“Students have been very cooperative. If they are seen with a cell phone at any point during the day, they are required to turn their phone into the office. The students have been very cooperative with this as well. The first day of school, we collected almost 30 cell phones. By the second day of school, the number was in the single digits,” he noted.

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

“Our teachers were very much in support of the cell phone policy. They appreciate the schoolwide consistency and have noted that students are more engaged in class. We have received posi-

itive feedback from parents as well. While I wouldn’t say that most students like the policy, a number of them have (quietly!) told us that they are more focused and engaged in class.”

Regarding improvement in students’ grades, Dwyer said, “We have noticed an improvement in students’ grades and their overall level of academic engagement.”

The governor’s proposal included several exemptions to smartphone restrictions, including for students who require access to an internet-enabled device to manage a medical condition, where required by a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP), or for other academic purposes, such as translation.

# DC Parks’ rental reservation system opens in January for pavilions, camping & more

Staggered reservation opening to help improve customer experience

Dutchess County Parks has announced 2026 reservations for pavilions, campsites, kayak slips, boathouse, and other facility rentals will open next month. Due to the popularity of rental facilities, the online reservation system for rentals at Bowdoin, Quiet Cove, and Wilcox Park will open on staggered dates to handle demand and ensure a smooth reservation process for guests and staff alike.

Reservations for the 2026 rental season will open at 9 a.m. on the following dates:

- Tuesday, Jan. 13 - Bowdoin Park Pavilions
- Tuesday, Jan. 20 - Quiet Cove Boathouse and Kayak Slips
- Tuesday, Jan. 27 - Wilcox Park Pavilions and Campsites

Dutchess County Parks Director Brian Coons said, “Dutchess County Park facility rentals continue to grow in popularity.

To better serve our park guests, we are opening reservations for the 2026 facility rental season earlier to better accommodate families’ planning needs.”

Amenities available for rent at Dutchess County’s Parks include five pavilions, the Maple Knoll Lodge and cabins, and the Ellesdie Chapel at Bowdoin Park in the Town of Poughkeepsie; the boathouse and kayak slip at Quiet Cove Riverfront Park in the Town of Poughkeepsie; and three pavilions, 27 campsites, and Scout Field at Wilcox Memorial Park in the Town of Milan. Organizations looking to schedule park facilities for tournaments such as disc golf, soccer or cross country events, should call the Parks office.

Reservations can be made online at [dutchessny.gov/ParksEducation](http://dutchessny.gov/ParksEducation) (login required). Some facilities, including Maple Knoll Lodge and Scout Field, are only available by calling the Parks office.

Rental fees vary by facility and are due upon reservation. Additional permits or proof of insurance may be required. Visit [dutchessny.gov/parks](http://dutchessny.gov/parks) or call (845) 486-4600 for complete information.

# Wallace Campus in Poughkeepsie awarded \$110 million from State

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

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

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

“These investments reflect my commitment to creating quality, modern

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

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

# Fire at historic Hyde Park mansion displaces 11 on New Year’s Day

continued from cover

water supply operations, laying approximately 1,300 feet of hose to one hydrant and an additional 1,000 feet to a secondary hydrant to maintain adequate fire flow. Large volumes of water were required to suppress the fire, protect exposures, and preserve as much property and irreplaceable personal items as possible.

“The Hyde Park Fire Department would like to sincerely thank our residents for their cooperation and conservation of water during this incident, which was critical to supporting emergency operations,” said Wilcha. “I am extremely proud of the coordinated efforts and professionalism displayed by all responders during this incident.”

The Hyde Park Fire Department extends its gratitude to the following assisting agencies and organizations for their invaluable support: Fairview Fire Department, City of Poughkeepsie Fire Department, Arlington Fire Department,

Roosevelt Fire Department, Pleasant Valley Fire Department, Rhinebeck Fire Department, New Hackensack Fire Department, New Hamburg Fire Department, East Fishkill Fire Department, Highland Fire Department, Millbrook Fire Department, and Beekman Fire Department.

Emergency Medical Services and Special Units responding included: Empress EMS and East Clinton SORT Truck. Hyde Park Police and Dutchess County Sheriff drone unit.

Supporting Agencies and Organizations included: Dutchess County 911, Dutchess County Water & Wastewater Authority, Brandl’s Towing, Hyde Park Highway Department, Hyde Park Town Hall, Red Cross, and Petro Home Services.

Supplies and support were generously donated by Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino, Legislator Brendan Lawler, and Home Depot.

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



Members of the Pleasant Valley Community Garden presented an aerial photograph of the garden to Steve Gessner, director of the Pleasant Valley Ecumenical Food Pantry, on Dec. 17 at the pantry at 92 Martin Road in Pleasant Valley. From left are Paulette Thomas, Gwen Davis, Mark Davis, Dave Talbot, Steve Gessner of the Food Pantry and Janice Novet. The aerial photo was by Brian Grim of Dutchess Drone Solutions. Everything grown at the garden is meant to benefit the pantry — nearly 2,500 pounds of vegetables last year. Pleasant Valley Community Garden members also presented a financial donation to the Food Pantry from fundraising by its members, said Janice Novet, president of the organization. The Pleasant Valley Community Garden meets the first Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. at the Pleasant Valley Library. All are welcome to join the gardening discussions and to work as garden volunteers. *Courtesy photo*



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(Published weekly)  
Northern Dutchess News & Creative Living is a division of the Southern Dutchess News, produced and printed in Dutchess County since 1959. The Southern Dutchess News is an official newspaper of Dutchess County, as voted by the Dutchess County Legislature. The Northern Dutchess News is the official newspaper of the Towns of Amenia, Millbrook, Union Vale, Stanford and Rhinebeck. Submit all legal notices to [sdnlegals@aol.com](mailto:sdnlegals@aol.com).

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[cschmidt@sdutchessnews.com](mailto:cschmidt@sdutchessnews.com)  
Deadline is Thursday at 3 p.m.

To submit arts-related news  
and calendar events:  
[creativeliving@sdutchessnews.com](mailto:creativeliving@sdutchessnews.com)  
Creative Living deadline is Thursday  
at 3 p.m. for publication the following week.

Northern Dutchess News serves the towns of Amenia, Beekman, Clinton, Dover, Hyde Park, LaGrange, Milan, Pine Plains, Pleasant Valley, Red Hook, Rhinebeck, Stanford, Union Vale and Washington; the villages of Millbrook, Red Hook, Rhinebeck and Tivoli; and the hamlet of Salt Point

The Southern Dutchess News  
84 East Main Street  
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590  
845-297-3723

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NOTE: Letters to the Editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Northern Dutchess News.  
Letters must be e-mailed to be considered for publication. We cannot accept handwritten or faxed letters.

### ‘Let us respect each other’s patriotism’

To the editor:  
'Tis the Season, of Joy, Peace, Camaraderie and Blessings! Hopefully, civilized independent thinkers will repudiate perseverating on hateful political fantasies, for at least a fortnight.  
May we please refrain from using inciteful rhetoric, notwithstanding introspective noble intentions. I am a child of the 1930s. I’ve lived through WWII and have studied the history of that era. I am confident that reasonable folks will find no similarities to Nazi Hilter nor Fascism in the world today. Anyone who is an honest historian or broker should know that, unless their objective is to provoke. There’s nothing advantageous with that!  
Folks on the left and right seek to validate their own opinions by exclusively devouring liberal or conservative media how myopic and obtuse, or perhaps, simply Nelsonian ignorance. Whatever the case, virtue signaling should be left to the truly virtuous! Unless we unveil ourselves of more than one side, we are not being honest with ourselves and those that we wish to influence.  
Please, let us shut down the intrusive thoughts, as well as the political blather and drivel. Let us respect each other’s patriotism. Let us pray!

Frank M. Volz, Jr.  
Pine Plains

### Leader of the free world?

To the editor:  
Barely 48 hours into 2026, our “Peace President” has illegally used the United States military to attack a sovereign nation and extract its President. If that’s not enough for a Saturday morning, he stated that we are “going to run” Venezuela to ensure that we revive Venezuela’s oil industry and get compensated for it.  
I have no love for Nicolás Maduro. He did not win his last election and the people of Venezuela surely deserve better, but this fiery return of American Imperialism will only further erode American credibility and therefore power in the world.  
This action—no matter how it turns out in the days ahead—imperils our true allies and emboldens our true enemies, including Putin as he eyes his next bites of Europe beyond Ukraine, and China as it amplifies its threats against Taiwan.  
To this add: destroying the White House’s East Wing; supporting genocide; protecting pedophiles; destroying aid to the world’s most vulnerable; launching military strikes around the globe; promising to intervene to protect protesters in a foreign land, while threatening peaceful protests at home; threatening Greenland with annexation; establishing a pardon economy for drug lords and fraudsters; deploying troops and masked officers to our cities; constructing concentration camps on our soil; and deporting human beings without our Constitutionally guaranteed due process to countries where we know they will be tortured.  
Two decades ago, would any of us have ever believed that any of this—let alone all of this—would be possible? Doubtful, and surely none of us would have believed that we would have a President who would so casually trash and discard the mantle of “Leader of the Free World” earned by the sacrifices of generations of our citizens who made America great by their strivings, and who would have known that we are better than these actions done in our names and funded by our taxes.  
For anyone wishing to remind themselves of what Americans once thought about tyrants and true Presidential leadership, we recommend PBS and Ken Burns’s documentaries on the American Revolution, and The Roosevelts. They remind us that while we’ve never had perfect leaders, we have had great ones who put the American people first and, by uniting us, created American greatness. And We The People? Well, I for one am writing and calling my reps to insist Congress assert its authority and hold this administration accountable for its actions. I urge you to do the same.

Mark Lagus  
Town of Northeast

### What about the Venezuelan citizens?

To the editor:  
Secretary of State Marco Rubio says no more military action, while Trump contends the U. S. will run Venezuela. How, without U. S. boots on the ground, unless Venezuela’s military has been co-opted?  
The U. S. has long sought Venezuela’s huge oil resources, from the Rockefeller days.  
Descendants of Spanish settlers dominated the government, but when Hugo Chavez took power, the native population finally got help. Chavez initially worked with the U. S. and our oil companies, which ended after the short-lived coup against Chavez,  
Chavez died of a mysterious illness, and was succeeded by Nicholas Maduro.  
Despite the misery visited on Venezuela by the U. S. sanctions, there is still support for the government from the native population.  
While it is possible that this U. S. regime change will somehow turn into prosperity and peace in Venezuela, note Russia’s difficulties with oil refinery drone attacks. Harbingers of the future as Chavezistas resist?  
The saying goes that carrots work better than sticks. Trump employed the stick, we’ll see if any carrots appear for Venezuelans.  
Officials emphasized that no U. S. lives were lost, key to avoiding the “what was it for?” question. Trump said “No other country ... can do such a maneuver.” Perhaps because no other country would think it right to do so.  
I believe Trump’s attack is wrong, and without legal authority.  
Frank Stoppenbach  
Red Hook

### NYS must declare EMS an essential service

To the editor:  
New York must declare Emergency Medical Services an essential service. The current system is failing patients, municipalities, and the EMS professionals who respond when every second counts.  
Across the state, ambulance response times routinely exceed 30 minutes, even for life-threatening emergencies. Municipalities are forced to pay significant and rising contract fees just to secure dedicated ambulance coverage, while neighboring communities often rely on an unreliable patchwork of volunteers and mutual aid. This model leaves entire regions vulnerable and puts lives at risk.  
At the same time, EMTs are required to complete more than 200 hours of initial training, pass state certification exams, and maintain continuing medical education, yet many are overworked, underpaid, and leaving the field. Call volumes are increasing, patient needs are more complex, and New York continues to treat EMS as an optional service rather than a core public safety function.  
I have seen these challenges firsthand through years of volunteer fire service, and most recently by completing New York State EMT training at Dutchess Community College on my own time. That experience reinforced what EMS providers have been saying for years: the system is stretched to a breaking point.  
Declaring EMS an essential service would establish stable funding, shared responsibility across communities, and a more reliable emergency response system. When session resumes, I will advocate for the reforms and resources needed to ensure timely, lifesaving care for every New Yorker.  
Assemblyman Anil Bephan Jr.  
New York State Assembly, 105th District

## Pok Library District to host history events

“The Hidden History of Slavery in New York,” Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, 2-3:30 p.m., Sadie Peterson Delaney African Roots Branch Library, 29 North Hamilton St., Room 224, Poughkeepsie. Advance registration required. (845) 485-3445 or [www.poklib.org](http://www.poklib.org)  
With a debate raging in the United States about what should and shouldn’t be taught about slavery in schools, high school student Richard French IV wanted to learn more about New York City’s prominent and largely untold role in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. This 30-minute documentary for broadcast television digs deeply into an infamous chapter in our country that largely hasn’t made its

way into the history books.  
A Q&A with the producer Larry Epstein follows the film. Epstein is an award-winning documentary and news producer, journalist, writer, anchor, and corporate copywriter. He is currently a writer/reporter for the River Journal, Peekskill Herald and The Examiner, and also a freelance producer at News 12. He is a former executive producer at MSNBC, and former senior-level producer at the Fox News Channel and Fox Business Network.  
**Local History Open House,** Wednesday, Jan. 14, 5:30 p.m., Adriaance Memorial Library, 93 Market St., Poughkeepsie. No registration required.

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# Over \$2 million awarded for Community Programs through Dutchess County’s Agency Partnership Grant

Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino has announced more than \$2 million has been awarded to 27 non-profits through the 2026 Dutchess County Agency Partner Grant (APG) program. The APG program provides two-year grants for programs that address specific community needs, including youth supports, mental health, literacy, nutrition, transportation and workforce development, among others.

Serino said, “We are proud to collaborate with so many dedicated non-profit partners throughout Dutchess County to address important needs in our community. Their hard work, ideas and real understanding of our community needs make them great partners as we pool our resources through the Agency Partner Grant and tackle the challenges people are facing. By working together, we can make a real, lasting difference and help Dutchess County become an even stronger and more supportive place for everyone.”

The APG program is a competitive grant process run by the Department of Planning & Development for local 501(c)(3) non-profits. Every application is reviewed by the County’s volunteer Community Development Advisory Committee, which then makes final recommendations to the County Executive for approval.

For 2026, \$1.5 million in grants have been awarded under the traditional APG program with an additional \$502,583 coming from the Department of Community & Family Services (DCFS) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH).

Projects funded through the 2026 Agency Partner Grant Program include:

- Abilities First, Inc. - \$44,779 to reprise the Teaching Kitchen, which provides hands-on cooking and life skills education for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Astor Services for Children & Families - \$54,405 to support the Dutchess County Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program, which is an intensive treatment program designed to keep youth, ages 11-18, with mental health and behavioral needs in the community by preventing unnecessary inpatient hospitalizations. The program utilizes an evidence-based practice, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, to teach skills needed to reduce high risk behaviors and prevent out-of-home placements.
- Boys & Girls Club of Newburgh, Inc. - \$115,343 to continue implementation of a comprehensive afterschool program, Project Learn, formerly known as The Afterschool Project, which targets the academic, social and behavioral development of youth in the City of Poughkeepsie.
- Catholic Charities Community Services of Dutchess, Inc. - \$37,310 to provide a Homeless Prevention Case Management Program, which offers emergency rental assistance, financial literacy education, crisis intervention and comprehensive case management services to promote long-term housing stability for low-income families in Dutchess County.
- Catholic Charities Community Services of Dutchess, Inc. - \$33,928 to maintain its Senior Medical Transportation program, which promotes access to non-emergency medical care for seniors, who lack other means of

transportation.

- Center for Justice Innovation - \$45,000 for the Families First Court Initiative, based in Dutchess County Family Court, which aims to assist youth and their caregivers through a multi-disciplinary approach involving evidence-based interventions and specialized, trauma-informed support to keep court-involved adolescents in family settings versus congregate care and to help prevent future involvement in the court system.
- Community Based Services, Inc. - \$36,138 to support Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities, which educates parents and caregivers on available programs and resources for transitional-age students with disabilities who are aging out of school-based programs, as well as collaborating with schools to reach individuals who may benefit from participation in programs offered by local special needs agencies.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County - \$69,779 to continue supporting 4-H Youth Development: Literacy Assistance for All, which prepares youth of all abilities with financial literacy, writing comprehension, public speaking and leadership skills to succeed as they transition into adulthood.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County - \$116,485 to continue supporting Green Teen and No Child Left Inside: Youth Vocational Training, which broadens youth exposure to environmental science, provides outdoor workforce development opportunities, and promotes health outcomes.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County - \$53,300 to continue supporting the evidence-based Parenting and Support Education (PASE) program, which enhances parenting skills by utilizing a hands-on learning approach suitable for all literacy levels.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County - \$38,500 to continue supporting the Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP), which encourages, educates and supports grandparents and other relatives who have taken on the responsibility of surrogate parenting for parents who are unable or unavailable to care for their children.
- CultureConnect - \$25,972 to support CommunityConnect, an afterschool enrichment program for English as a New Language (ENL) elementary school students in Red Hook.
- DAY ONE Early Learning Community, Inc. - \$166,314 to support the Teacher Apprenticeship Program (TAP), which provides adults with hands-on workforce development training in early childhood education to produce workforce-ready educators upon program graduation.
- Dutchess County Pride Center - \$21,779 to continue the Teen Drop-In program to provide services year-round, giving LGBTQ+ teens access to affirming adults and safe spaces to increase self-esteem, lower anxiety, improve school performance and create greater community engagement.
- Dutchess Outreach - \$59,000 for food procurement to meet the increasing food access needs for individuals and families served through the organization’s food pantry and The Lunch Box community meal program.
- Family Services, Inc. - \$50,000 for Youth Thrive, an after-school and summer

program focusing on advancing mental wellness for City of Poughkeepsie youth through mentoring, academic support, healthy living workshops, individual therapy and recreational activities in a safe environment.

- Greystone Programs, Inc.\* - \$44,329 for Supported Employment (SEMP) which expands opportunities for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to achieve and maintain competitive, integrated employment in Dutchess County. Participants receive individualized support in the areas of career exploration, resume and interview preparation, job development and matching, employer outreach, and on-the-job coaching to support retention.
- HONOR EHG, Inc. - \$100,000 to support the Street Outreach Program which will identify, engage and assist individuals experiencing homelessness in care coordination, social and behavioral health supports, and emergency shelter, to achieve long-term, stable housing.
- Land to Learn - \$53,300 to continue supporting SproutEd, a nutrition assistance program that engages elementary school students in the City of Beacon in nutrition, health, environmental stewardship and social-emotional, math, science and literacy skills, through hands-on experiential learning.
- Literacy Connections - \$42,859 to continue the Adult & Family Literacy program which promotes basic literacy skills for adults and children. Adult learners receive student-centered, one-on-one or small group tutoring lessons, while children are assigned a one-on-one book buddy, to promote basic reading and comprehension skills.
- Mediation Center of Dutchess County, Inc. - \$116,907 to fund an evidence-based Restorative Justice Initiative that works with schools in Dutchess County to address conflict and behavioral matters, while promoting pro-social outcomes in a diplomatic and non-punitive way.
- Mental Health America of Dutchess County, Inc. - \$99,926 to support the work of a coordinator through the Street Outreach Program, which will provide for streamlined integration and management of street outreach activities for improved tracking and linkage of care for unhoused individuals throughout Dutchess County. Services also include screening, housing navigation, and health-related social needs referrals.
- NAMI Mid-Hudson, Inc. - \$86,376 to provide mental wellness and mental health literacy to individuals affected by mental illness through the Family-to-Family program, as well as an informational seminar, both providing participants with information on the biology of brain disorders, an understanding of diagnoses, treatment options, crisis intervention techniques and available community support and referral options.
- North East Community Center, Inc. - \$48,075 to continue the Community

Partnership with Schools and Business program, a paid job skills training program for youths and young adults, where they acquire transferable work readiness skills and training to promote their successful transition to adulthood.

- North East Community Center, Inc. - \$43,427 to implement a year-round Comprehensive Out of School Time program to provide afterschool and summer enrichment activities that will preserve socio-emotional and academic gains and mitigate summer learning loss for Webutuck Central School District students.
- North East Community Center, Inc. - \$37,320 to provide a variety of nutritional Food Access Programs, including the Fresh Food Access Hub, a community garden, a Summer Food Service Program and youth food access internship opportunities.
- Poughkeepsie United Methodist Church - \$30,914 to support the Harriet Tubman Academic Skills Center, which provides academic and social support to promote educational and behavioral outcomes of underserved children in the City of Poughkeepsie.
- Ramapo for Children - \$36,309 to expand the Staff Assistant Experience program to include day, evening and residential program services designed to assist youth with learning differences, attention difficulties and developmental disabilities in gaining social, vocational and independent living skills.
- Reading & Math, Inc. dba Ampact - \$68,700 to support its Early Learning Corps program, which provides supplemental literacy and numeracy whole-class, small group and one-on-one tailored tutoring services to prepare preschool-age children in the City of Poughkeepsie for success in kindergarten and beyond.
- Red Hook Community Center, Inc. - \$15,103 for a School Year Youth Employment program for youth and young adults in northern Dutchess County, providing opportunities for pre-employment and soft job skills training, including résumé writing, mock interviewing and financial literacy, as well as paid employment at a business within the local community.
- Taconic Resources for Independence, Inc. - \$44,200 to support Special Education Advocacy services for parents of children with special needs. The advocate will help parents navigate the special education system to ensure students have access to the support and accommodations necessary for them to achieve their fullest potential.
- The Art Effect - \$166,806 to support the afterschool and summer Youth Workforce Development in Arts & Media program that prepares City of Poughkeepsie youth for higher education and employment opportunities by providing arts-based curriculum, training and hands-on experience in media production and the visual arts.



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# NYS Ag Dept. reminds farmers to practice measures to prevent spread of avian influenza

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

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

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

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

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

General biosecurity tips to follow include:

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

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

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

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

# Upcoming events at Stanford Grange

Stanford Grange will host its Annual Winter Soup Dinner on Saturday, Jan. 17, at the Stanford Grange Hall, 6043 Route 82, Stanfordville, at 5 p.m. All dinners are take out only. The menu will consist of your choice of a quart of homemade soup (chicken noodle, winter minestrone, or butternut squash), your choice of bread (French bread or homemade cornbread), garden salad with dressing, and pineapple upside down cake for dessert. Donation is \$17 per dinner. For reservations, please call Grange Secretary Ryan Orton at (845) 868-7869. Please note which kind of soup and bread you would like when you call to order.

Stanford Grange #808 will host a Fraud & Scam Awareness Presentation for Seniors by the Dutchess County Sheriff’s Office on Saturday, Jan. 24, from 10 a.m. to noon, at the Stanford Grange Hall, 6043 Route 82; Stanfordville. Those attending will learn how to recognize common scams targeting seniors, protect personal information,

avoid phone and internet fraud, and what to do if a scam is suspected. Admission is free, and a continental breakfast will be available. For more information, contact Grange Chaplain Heidi Bornemann at (914) 484-0919.

Stanford Grange #808 will host a Defensive Driving Course on Saturday, Jan. 31, at the Stanford Grange Hall, 6043 Route 82, Stanfordville, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is \$38 per person. This course allows New York drivers to receive a 10% discount off their collision and auto liability insurance and remove up to 4 points on your license for any violations incurred in the last 18 months. The class includes festive classroom participation and informative movies as well as a delicious homemade lunch served by the Grange Dinner Committee with a free will offering asked. For more information or to request an application for the course, contact Grange Secretary Ryan Orton at (845) 868-7869.

# Chili Cook-off set at the Copake Grange Jan. 24

The great Chili Cook-off takes the edge off winter at Copake Grange #935, 628 Empire Road, on Saturday, Jan. 24, from 5 to 7 p.m. Spice up the evening with a delicious variety of chilies. Those in the mood for cooking, can bring their favorite chili in a large crockpot. Those in the mood for eating can choose from plenty of tasty concoctions to eat-in or take-out. Prizes go to the favorites. Attendees are invited to taste, vote and

eat. Admission is free admission. The price of chili is \$5 to eat-in or take-out.

All ages are invited for food, fun and warmth at this event organized by the Grange’s Program Committee and sponsored in part by Stewart’s Shops and the Ackerman Foundation

To get more information email [copakegrange@gmail.com](mailto:copakegrange@gmail.com) or visit [www.copakegrange.org/events](http://www.copakegrange.org/events).

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Family Trivia Night set Jan. 7 at Stanford Grange

Stanford Grange #808 will host a “New Beginnings” Family Trivia Night on Wednesday, Jan. 7, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Stanford Grange Hall; 6043 Route 82; Stanfordville. The theme for the evening will be everything new with the New Year. Teams of any size and ages are welcome to participate. The donation per team regardless of size is \$5 to enter (to help cover costs of heat and electric for the Grange Hall). Advanced sign ups are helpful, but not required. There will be prizes for the top 3 teams. Refreshments of snack foods, homemade baked goods, and drinks (soda, water, coffee, hot chocolate) will be available for sale. To sign up or to request more information, contact Grange Secretary Ryan Orton at (845) 868-7869 or [rorton808@yahoo.com](mailto:rorton808@yahoo.com).

## Winter Rhinecliff Soup Sales

Winter Rhinecliff Soup Sales, sponsored by Rhinebeck Grange #896, are offered on the third Thursday of the Month: Jan. 15, Feb. 19 and March 19. Soup is sold by the Quart. \$10 per quart. Take-out only. Pick up at Morton Memorial Library, 82 Kelly St., between 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Email: [JoBaer2@gmail.com](mailto:JoBaer2@gmail.com) to be emailed the soup choices for each month and pre-order online.

## Pancake Breakfasts in Rhinecliff

The Rhinecliff Volunteer Fire Company and Rescue Squad host Winter Pancake Breakfasts on Sunday Mornings from 8 to 11:30 a.m. on Feb. 8, March 8 and April 12. Enjoy a pile-high of “Rhinecliff’s Best” pancakes, sausage, fruit, coffee and juice. It’s all-you-can-eat, so bring your appetite and your friends! Breakfast is \$10 for adults, \$4 for children (children under age 6 eat for free).

Breakfast is held at the Rhinecliff Firehouse (corner of Shatzell & Orchard, Rhinecliff). Proceeds Support the Rhinecliff Vol. Fire Co. Call Cynthia at (845) 876-5738 or e-mail [csaniews-ki1@gmail.com](mailto:csaniews-ki1@gmail.com) for more information.

## ONGOING

**Parkinson’s Support Group** - at Starr Library Community Room, third Monday of the month, noon-1:30 p.m. The monthly Parkinson’s Support Group is a gathering place for those with Parkinson’s and their loved ones to create community and share information. The group will meet each month to offer a space for everyone to discuss their challenges and successes, share stories, connect with others who are navigating similar issues, and sift through medical information and the latest news about available treatments. Refreshments and resources provided. Register via the online calendar at [www.starrlibrary.org](http://www.starrlibrary.org). The library is at 68 West Market St., Rhinebeck.

**Chess:** First & third Mondays, 7 p.m., at Clinton Town Hall, 1215 Centre Road, Rhinebeck.

**Men’s fellowship and Bible study:** Tuesday nights, 7-9 p.m., in the home of David Mahoney, 21 Mountain View Road, Staatsburg. Call (845) 797-4805 for more information.

**PV Garden Club** meets first Thursday of the month. Want to learn more about gardening while helping your neighbors? Join Pleasant Valley Community Gardens for its monthly meetings at 6 p.m. the first Thursday of every month at the Pleasant Valley Library. No experience necessary. Pleasant Valley Community Gardens are volunteers learning as they grow vegetables and flowers in Helen Aldrich Park on Route 115. Everything we grow is to benefit local food pantries. See our Facebook page and website at [www.pleasantvalleycommunitygardens.com](http://www.pleasantvalleycommunitygardens.com).

**Meals on Wheels of Hyde Park and the Village of Rhinebeck** is seeking volunteer drivers during the hours of 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Drivers are needed Monday-Friday. You can drive one or more days each week or substitute as needed. All drivers work in teams so couples or friends are encouraged to volunteer together. For more information visit [www.mealsonwheelsofhp.org](http://www.mealsonwheelsofhp.org) or, contact Andrea Tkazyik at (845) 229-5896.

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# 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.
- Do not meet up with someone that you don’t know; if you’re asked to do this it is surely a scam, and it is very dangerous as well.
- If someone calls you and tells you that a relative has been hurt or is in jail, confirm it first before sending any money. Call other relatives or a legitimate law enforcement agency for confirmation before any money is sent. If they’re posing as a relative, try and contact that relative for confirmation.
- Sending money overseas is especially risky; use extreme caution.
- Ask the person for their call back number and ask to speak to their supervisor to confirm the info; if it’s a scam they will most likely hang up at this point and the number they give you will be bogus.
- If a loved one has recently passed

away be wary; in some cases perpetrators have even preyed on victims by searching through the obituaries and calling surviving loved ones. If you get calls from people you don’t know soon after someone passes away, be careful and confirm it before you send any money.

- In some cases someone will call and tell the victim that they’ve won money, but to “process the claim” they need to first send money. Beware this is most definitely a scam and don’t send any money – you should never have to pay money to claim a prize. If it seems too good to be true, it most likely is.
- If there’s any doubt about a phone call/email/letter you’ve received contact the Sheriff’s Office before sending any money.
- Scams tend to increase during the holiday season, so be especially alert for them during those times.

It is very important not to send any money to anyone that you don’t know until you’ve confirmed the situation through an independent source and feel comfortable with it. If it’s a scam once the money is sent it’s very difficult, and most times impossible, to get it back. If anyone thinks they may have been the victim of a scam they are encouraged to contact the Sheriff’s Office at 845-486-3800 or via the tipline at 845-605-CLUE or dcsotips@gmail.com.

## 988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE IS LIVE

The first nationwide three-digit mental health crisis hotline is up and running. It is designed to be as easy to remember as 911, but when you dial 988, a dispatcher will connect callers with trained mental health counselors.

Dialing 988:

- Is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible support for anyone experiencing mental health related distress.
- Provides support: People may dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.
- Help for VETERANS: Veterans can press “1” after dialing 988 and be connected directly to the Veterans Crisis Lifeline.



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## Family, faith are driving forces for Hyde Park fighter Fatima Kline

*continued from cover*

that happened, it skyrocketed after three years of getting her rear end handed to her. But she knew, when she hit that turn, that was it. Then she started going big on everything. We’re flying to Texas, Mexico, and California,” said Michelle. “When she moves up, we move up.”

From the 5,000-member congregation that prayed over her career to local gyms that supported her as a young fighter, the Franklin D. Roosevelt High School alumna thrived with the early support of her community. Where the local gyms used to be her home base, Kline now trains in New Jersey with UFC flyweight Erin Blanchfield. It’s a 90-minute drive that Kline will take every day if it means being close to home for the 44 other weeks.

The level of training that Fatima needs is no longer locally grown. The commute has proven especially effective on the largest stage.

On July 12, 2025, her 25th birthday, Kline fought veteran Melissa Martinez in Las Vegas for UFC320. Martinez would be done by the third round, crumpled to the canvas by a kick connected with her jaw. The knockout earned Kline “Performance of the Night” honors. The fight would be Martinez’s last; she announced her retirement in September 2025.

Returned to her preferred strawweight class, Kline went undefeated in 2025, proving her worthy of a #12 world ranking. Two victories sat on either side of the ground-shaking go against Martinez, each a demonstrative victory to make her case for WMMA Rankings’ Breakout Fighter of the Year.

“She isn’t letting off the pedal,” said Fatima’s dad, Carl Kline. He recites mentions of “The Black-Belt-Hunting Purple

Belt,” who was gaining attention in the jiu-jitsu circles. A similar awe came walking Fatima up to a ceremonial weigh-in, a fight where he was also in her corner. Then, Carl was reminded of his former boxing days, a dream deferred, and returned through his daughter.

“It was crazy, because it’s like God giving it back to me. And that’s why I’m always telling my kids, if you want to do something, go after it, and then you have no regrets,” he said.

Home is where the family is. The tight-knit Kline unit of seven prays and trains together. One hobby, less intensive than grappling, but one that the family does together, finds Fatima outside of camp playing golf - a cerebral game that requires discipline and mental toughness.

When she’s training, another driving force is her family. She’s grateful for the sacrifices they’ve made since she was 10 years old, and the support they give her now. They are the ones she runs to at the end of grueling eight-week trainings, the faces she finds in the crowd after a fight.

“Being an adult and having to sacrifice my own time, I want to make all the time that they sacrificed worth it. I feel like winning these fights and getting to where I’ve always said I wanted to be is almost a way of giving back to them for everything they’ve sacrificed for me,” said Kline.

Out of camp, Kline finds joy there. She’ll watch her nephews while her sister, Trista, trains jiu-jitsu. Nothing beats being in the gym together, rolling, wrestling, and having fun in their family way. A role model to her younger siblings, including 13-year-old Tabitha, Fatima is a symbol of hard work and dedication that transcends rankings or records.

Fatima’s fighting style reaches beyond wrestling or mixed martial arts. It isn’t strictly jiu-jitsu or boxing, either. Her experience in both has fueled the ferocity that she brings to the ring. Her game is well-rounded, polished to a frightening point. Veteran Angela Hill, the UFC’s “gatekeeper,” saw it firsthand at Madison Square Garden (MSG) when Fatima capped her tremendous year with a unanimous decision. The whole family was in attendance, making memories inside the hotel as fans lined the sidewalk outside.

“I don’t think my dad has ever hugged me longer than that exact moment,” said Fatima.

Over fluffy pancakes in the morning after MSG, the family relished in the milestone, and the miles moved together. As a child, Fatima would sign cards to her mother with promises of being in the UFC. She has since turned heads in Denver, fought monsters in Mexico, and vanquished veterans at every turn. She’s had conditioning from her younger sister’s gymnastics instructors, trained with world-talents like Blanchfield, and obtained Muay Thai instruction in Thailand.

With fans and competitors on alert around the UFC, “The Archangel” is sending her message.

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# Arlington boys win 36th Duane Davis Tournament



Players from Our Lady of Lourdes and Marlboro compete in the opening game of the Duane Davis Memorial Christmas Tournament. *Courtesy photo*

By Morgan E. Maier

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

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

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

MVP Cyrus Cowings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

# DCC, SUNY Delhi streamline admission

Dutchess Community College (DCC) and the State University of New York College of Technology at Delhi (SUNY Delhi) agreed to streamline admission for DCC graduates with an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Electrical Technology into SUNY Delhi's Bachelor of Technology (BT) in Mechatronics Technology program. The agreement was formalized during a signing ceremony and announcement to build a new \$32 million applied technology facility at SUNY Delhi, expected to open in 2030.

This newest articulation agreement expands the more than 80 established pathways that help DCC graduates transfer seamlessly into bachelor's degree programs at SUNY, City University of New York (CUNY) and private colleges across New York and beyond. To qualify for admission into SUNY Delhi's BT program via this pathway, students must have earned their AAS in Electrical Technology, or a closely related program, at DCC and hold a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0.

"Dutchess Community College is thrilled to enter into an agreement with SUNY Delhi to streamline transfer for our Electrical Technology students who wish to pursue their bachelor's in Mechatronics Technology," said Raymond Houston, DCC's vice president for instruction and learning. "Opportunities like this ensure our students can commit to their studies with confidence, knowing that they will have strong support and academic continuity

during their time at both institutions. We thank SUNY Delhi for their partnership and shared commitment to the success of our students and the vitality of our communities."

"As one of the leading institutions in advanced manufacturing education in New York State, SUNY Delhi is proud to partner with Dutchess Community College to connect these future-focused degrees in ways that expand opportunity for students across the state and strengthen regional workforce development," said SUNY Delhi Provost Dr. David Brower. "By working together and linking complementary degrees across the SUNY system, we are addressing critical industry demand for highly skilled manufacturing professionals, supporting economic growth, and preparing graduates to be leaders in the industry."

DCC students studying Electrical Technology and other related programs engage in hands-on learning in the Mechatronics Lab at the College's Fishkill campus. Students pursuing this pathway will continue their studies at SUNY Delhi.

This is the first articulation agreement for DCC students who wish to pursue bachelor's degrees in Mechatronics Technology, an emerging, interdisciplinary field that includes mechanical, electrical and software engineering. Demand for mechatronics degree holders continues to grow, and mean average salaries in New York come in just under \$80,000 annually.



From left: Chancellor John B. King Jr., DCC Vice President for Instruction and Learning Raymond Houston, SUNY Delhi Provost Dr. David Brower, SUNY Delhi President Dr. Mary Bonderoff and the SUNY Delhi mascot. *Courtesy photo*

# Barrett announces \$1M for DCC to expand childcare

Assemblymember Didi Barrett (D-Dutchess/Columbia) recently announced that she secured \$1,000,000 in funding to support a transformative expansion of child care services at Dutchess Community College. The funding will be used to create two infant care rooms, improve safety and infrastructure for drop-off and pick-up, and significantly expand DCC's capacity to provide childcare services to students and families across Dutchess County.

"Assemblymember Barrett's leadership has made a tangible difference in addressing some of the most significant barriers our students face, including access to affordable housing and high-quality childcare," said Dutchess Community College President Peter

Jordan. "By helping to remove those obstacles, she has opened doors for more adults in our region to pursue their education, build careers with family-sustaining wages, and contribute to the vitality of Dutchess County."

All of DCC's childcare offerings provide safe, play-based learning environments. The College currently offers Universal Pre-Kindergarten, in partnership with Poughkeepsie City School District, and daycare for children ages 18 months to five years at the Louis Greenspan Day Care Center, as well as preschool for children ages three to five at the June Roush Pierson Laboratory Nursery School. The new infant care rooms are expected to open in fall 2026.

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# ‘Get lit’ and feel good

Light causes our brains to produce ‘feel good’ chemicals

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

**Factors that may cause SAD to develop**

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

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

**Treatments and management**

Antidepressant medication and psychotherapy are options for treating some cases of SAD. But there are also lifestyle changes that can manage the condition

(and lead to contentment) before considering more invasive measures. Everyone can benefit from human connection: Stay in touch with friends and family to avoid social isolation. Eat regular, nutritious meals and don’t ingest toxins (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, drugs). Go to bed and wake up at the same times daily to control your biorhythms. Get consistent physical activity.

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

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

**Light boxes for treating SAD**

Light boxes offer controlled delivery when natural light is limited or the weather is poor. Combining both time outdoors,



Incandescent, fluorescent and LED-1 light bulbs. Below: Fluorescent light bulb. Photos by Francine Wizner

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

**The way we ‘get lit’ has improved**

Illumination has undergone modernization! The first practical incandescent light bulb was invented in 1879. It used a carbon-filament that glowed when heated. In the 1970s and 1980s, compact fluorescent lights were used. The spiral tubes were more energy-efficient and longer-lasting than incandescents. By the late 2000s, advancements in Light-emitting Diodes (LEDs) made them more common. They are more energy-efficient and longer-lasting than earlier light bulbs.

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

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

As a part of a skin-care regime, LED

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

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

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



Creative Living

is the arts and entertainment section of

NORTHERN DUTCHESS NEWS

A division of Southern Dutchess News

84 East Main St., Wappingers Falls, NY 12590 • 845.297.3723 • [www.s dutchessnews.com](http://www.s dutchessnews.com)

Publisher: Albert Osten

Executive Editor/General Manager: Curtis Schmidt

Editorial/Creative Director: Kate Goldsmith

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Advertising: [sdnadvertising@aol.com](mailto:sdnadvertising@aol.com)

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# Musical groups bring joie de vivre to New Year's Eve Millbrook



By Jim Donick

Millbrook finished 2025 with a village-wide music party of unbridled joy and enthusiasm. The town came out, some even in costume.

The celebration's music program offered three bands, each of a very different style, filling both the Grace Church

and the Lyall churches. They played half-hour sets during the event organized by the Millbrook Rotary Club.

Playing in Lyall Church, the Hammerhead Horns' enthusiasm and *joie de vivre* all-but-embraced the audience. Their vocalist, Leslie Barkman, like the

*continued on page 11*



Clockwise from top: This button, designed by Millbrook Central School District student Lydia Kascsak, served as entry to the New Year's Eve Millbrook event. The Hammerhead Horns opened the festivities at Lyall Memorial Church. Hammerhead Horns drummer Peter Vumbaco lays down a riff. Paul Quigley of the blues band Nite Train, expresses himself on guitar. Hammerhead Horns features trombonist Jeff Roberts. *Photos by Jim Donick*



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# New Year's Eve Millbrook

continued from facing page

rest, changed musical styles as if all of the tunes were simply a part of her own soul. The band's offerings covered the well known and the less so. A high point was a most raucous rendition of the NRBQ song, "Hot Biscuits and Sweet Marie." Hardly anyone in the audience may have ever heard it. Many walked away with it playing in their heads.

In a county sort of style, Miss Paula and the Twang Busters, with Miss Paula as the lead vocalist, had some of the audience dancing in the aisles.

Rhythm and Blues were provided at the Grace Church by the band Night Train. Band leader Ken Briggs' bass held the music together, while Steve Greenfield on alto sax and Paul Quigley on guitar, improvised in grand style.

For a final set, the three bands came together in Lyall Church for a mass jam. Melding their three styles appeared seamless. Watching their joy as they worked together was a perfect ending to the evening.



Left: Miss Paula of the Texas Swing band Miss Paula and the Twang Busters sings to revelers at New Year's Eve Millbrook. Below: Blues band Nite Train features Steve Greenfield on alto sax. Bottom: Characters from a whimsical performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Photos by Jim Donick



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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

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

THEME: BODY LANGUAGE

ACROSS

1. Hot Springs and such

5. \_\_\_\_ Bell and \_\_\_\_ Barker

8. Wharton degree, acr.

11. Artist's inspiration

12. \*Move head to show attention

13. Angry growl

15. Shamu, e.g.

16. Diva's number

17. Put on fancy dress (2 words)

18. \*Making facial expression showing pain

20. Mine passage

21. Single-handedly

22. Assistance

23. Made according to specifications

26. Economizes

30. Biochemistry acr.

31. Aerie baby

34. Genesis skipper

35. Leaves out

37. \*Some look up and to the right when telling one

38. Watcher

39. "The Forsyte \_\_\_\_" by John Galsworthy

40. Forty winks

42. Fraternity letter T

43. \*Said "easy peasy" with fingers

45. Like a weight lifter, usually

47. Weasel-related onomatopoeia

48. Undo laces

50. Helicopter sound

52. \*Showing low self-esteem or boredom

56. 100 centimes

57. Purl partner

58. From square one

59. Frustration, in a comic book

60. "At \_\_\_\_, soldier!"

61. Don't go

62. Dashboard acr.

63. Like Willie Winkie

64. Frustrated driver's recourse

DOWN

1. Urban haze

2. Make like a cat

3. Ascus, pl.

4. Same as sea moss (2 words)

5. Rice wine

6. Dress with a flare

7. Rudolph, when older

8. Famous Christmas guests

9. Like some champagnes

10. High mountain

12. Toyota truck model

13. Part of flight

14. \*Showing agreement

19. Healing plants

22. Be in a cast

23. \*Show anger with arms

24. Unnerve

25. Eurasian antelope

26. "\_\_\_\_ but not heard"

27. Much, in Italy

28. Song of praise

29. \*"I don't know" move

32. \*One's smiling because one's \_\_\_\_

33. Intoxicated

36. \*Showing impatience with fingers

38. Like retina and brain connecting nerve

40. Large edible mushroom

41. Keen

44. Nice place for a rocking chair

46. Reuse ideas

48. Forearm bones

49. Hustle and bustle sound

50. Sandwich alternative

51. Stay out of its way!

52. Place at angle

53. Gung-ho about something

54. Close by

55. Gwyneth, for short

56. Opposite of #54 Down

CROSSWORD

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12 NORTHERN DUTCHESS NEWS & Creative Living - January 7-13, 2026



# Don't get angry

Luigi braces himself whenever Pop says these words.

“Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”

When my father comes to me with those words, I know I'm in trouble. It usually means I have to do something for him that I don't want to, he broke something, he made someone feel bad, he made a mess, or more often than not its all the above.

My father comes into the restaurant every day. EVERY DAY. Almost every day he starts with “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.” Every day I come to work in a good mood. I start my day. I get the sauce ready. I make the soups, and around noon my father comes in and says, “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”

I came home from vacation. My first day back to work. I'm running around trying to get everything put away and all my paperwork finished. Pop comes in, doesn't ask me how my trip was, did I enjoy my time with my family, how was the weather, did you get some rest, how was your hotel, did you run over a raccoon in your rental car, anything? No I get, “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”

During the summer, when I am working at the other locations, I'll sometimes go a week without seeing him. Instead of how did everything go at the other places,

was it busy, how did the employees do, did you break anything, did you run around naked screaming like your hair was on fire, anything? No I get, “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”

I'll make it into the restaurant after a winter storm, when I have been out plowing and shoveling snow most of the prior evening, and the morning of, plowing, a storm. He'll already be there. I come in with my butt dragging, arms sore, back sore, cold, wet, hungry and crabby, with the look of death on my face. Instead of asking me, would like a cup of coffee, can I make you breakfast, are you OK, would you like a pail of snow dumped over your head, anything? No I get, “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”

I'll be home. Starting to unwind. About to get into the shower. The phone will ring. Ill see the number and know its my father. I'll answer the phone. Instead of him saying hello, I get, “Leesten. I nonja wanta you to geta angry.”

I know someday, I will be just like him. I know someday, my kids will probably be saying the same thing about me, unless they already are. I know he makes a hell of a focaccia bread. But I just nonja wanta to geta angry.

**FOCACCIA BREAD**

**Ingredients**

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

**Method**

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

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

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

# The Two Of Us Productions announces 2026 season

The Two Of Us Productions, the award-winning theater company based in Copake, recently announced its 2026 season of quality live theater and music. For its 26th season, The Two of Us Productions has picked shows aimed to please, entertain, and inform its many enthusiastic audience members:

- **“Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson”**- an irreverent, darkly comic, modern take on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous sleuth and sidekick. This fast-paced romp re-examines the world's most famous detective story with a bold new lens as

Ms. Sherlock Holmes (yes, it's also a girl's name) and Ms. Joan Watson join forces to emerge from pandemic fog as a deeply codependent, quasi-dysfunctional Odd Couple adventure duo—solving mysteries and kicking butts, until they come face-to-face with a villain who seems to have all of the answers. Performances on March 20-29 at the Copake Grange in Copake.

- **“The Minutes”** - a sharp new comedy about small-town politics and real-world power, from the author of “August: Osage County,” exposes the difficult real-

ities behind some of our most closely-held American narratives while asking each of us what we would do to keep from becoming history's losers. Planned on June 12-21 at the Claverack Library in Claverack.

- **“Man Of La Mancha”** - this classic musical is inspired by Miguel de Cervantes and his 17th-century novel “Don Quixote.” It tells the story of the “mad” knight Don Quixote as a play within a play, performed by Cervantes and his fellow prisoners as he awaits a hearing with the Spanish Inquisition. It is chock full of wonderful music, including the signature “To Dream The Impossible Dream.” Planned for Nov. 6-15 at the Copake Grange in Copake.

The Two Of Us Production's 2026 Season is complementing these three captivating full-scale productions with its seventh season of live staged-readings presented via Zoom. These readings, started in 2020, have continued to draw enthusiastic audiences and actors. For 2026, the company will present three pairs of Suspense Theater mystery thrillers on Jan. 17, Feb. 7 & Feb. 28, followed by the annual staged-readings of “Dracula” on Oct. 24 and “A Christmas Carol” on Dec. 5.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [www.TheTwoOfUsProductions.org](http://www.TheTwoOfUsProductions.org) or send email to [TheTwoOfUsProductions@gmail.com](mailto:TheTwoOfUsProductions@gmail.com). One can also contact the company through Facebook @The-Two-Of-Us-ProductionsRare-Inc.

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# ‘Quirky’ works featured in new Palaia exhibition



Works by Franc Palaia are on display at the Curio Cabinet of the Hudson Valley in Poughkeepsie from Jan. 9 to Feb. 28. Works include “Homage to the Cave Painters,” 2023 and (below) “Rusty” mural, Havana, 2024. *Images courtesy of the artist*

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

Palaia is a very active polymath whose studio practice includes painting, photography, sculpture, murals, public art, sign painting, curating and music. This show includes a selection of works from several of his “Urban Wall” series spanning four decades that include Italian, French, Cuban and American series.

These multi-layered pieces are constructed with a variety of materials from his photography culled from many countries and cities where sections of urban walls, layered with graffiti, murals, street art, posters and signs are transformed and rearranged into odd, quirky, media savvy fabrications that look like they were torn directly from city streets but are actually not what they appear to be. Other works

in this eclectic presentation include, photo light boxes, photo lamps, conceptual sculpture, political installations and other quirky works rarely exhibited in the Hudson Valley.

The title of the show comes from combining the name of the establishment, CURIO, and CURIOSO, which in Italian means odd, strange, peculiar, humorous and a bit weird.

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

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

## EXHIBITIONS

**Carole J. Wolf Gallery**, 45 Pershing Avenue, Poughkeepsie. **Through Jan. 10:** The works of five Hudson Valley teens are featured in The Art Effect’s Senior Project Exhibition. Featured artists in this year’s show represent five different Hudson Valley communities: Phoenix Barra-Greenmyer of Middletown, Kenny Gray of Holmes, Sadie Pomerantz of Rhinebeck, Chanel Reed of Poughkeepsie, and Virginia Zengen of Stanfordville. Viewings by appointment, Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-4 p.m. [thearteffect.org/senior-project](http://thearteffect.org/senior-project) or (845) 471-7477.

**Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center**, 9 & 12 Vassar St., Poughkeepsie. **Through February:** The Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center kicks off its 2026 Art Exhibition Season with 13 artists in three Visual Art Galleries. Featured in the Victorian Gallery at 9 Vassar St. in Poughkeepsie will be Kelly Stohr, presenting her solo exhibition, “Shadow Map.” At 12 Vassar St., WomensWork.Art brings together 12 artists for their group show, “Something About the Women,” in the Hancock and Reception Galleries. **Free Public Art Opening Reception** will be held in all three Art Galleries on Friday, Jan. 9, from 5 to 7 p.m. Visitors must call the Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center Office at (845) 486-4571 for access. More info: [cunneen-hackett.org](http://cunneen-hackett.org)

**Curio Cabinet of the Hudson Valley**, 300 Main St., Poughkeepsie. **Jan. 9-Feb. 28:** “Curio - Curioso” a solo exhibition by noted multidisciplinary artist Franc Palaia. **Opening reception:** Fri., Jan. 9, 5-7 p.m., refreshments provided. [www.curiocabinetHV.com](http://www.curiocabinetHV.com)

**Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center**, Vassar College, 124 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie. **Through Feb. 1:** “Chronostasia: Select Acquisitions 2020–2025,” an exhibition that brings together more than 560 works acquired over the past five years. **Closing Program:** Thurs., Jan. 29, 5:30 p.m., in Taylor 102, artist talk with Cecilia Vicuña. (845) 437-5632 or <https://www.vassar.edu/theloeb>

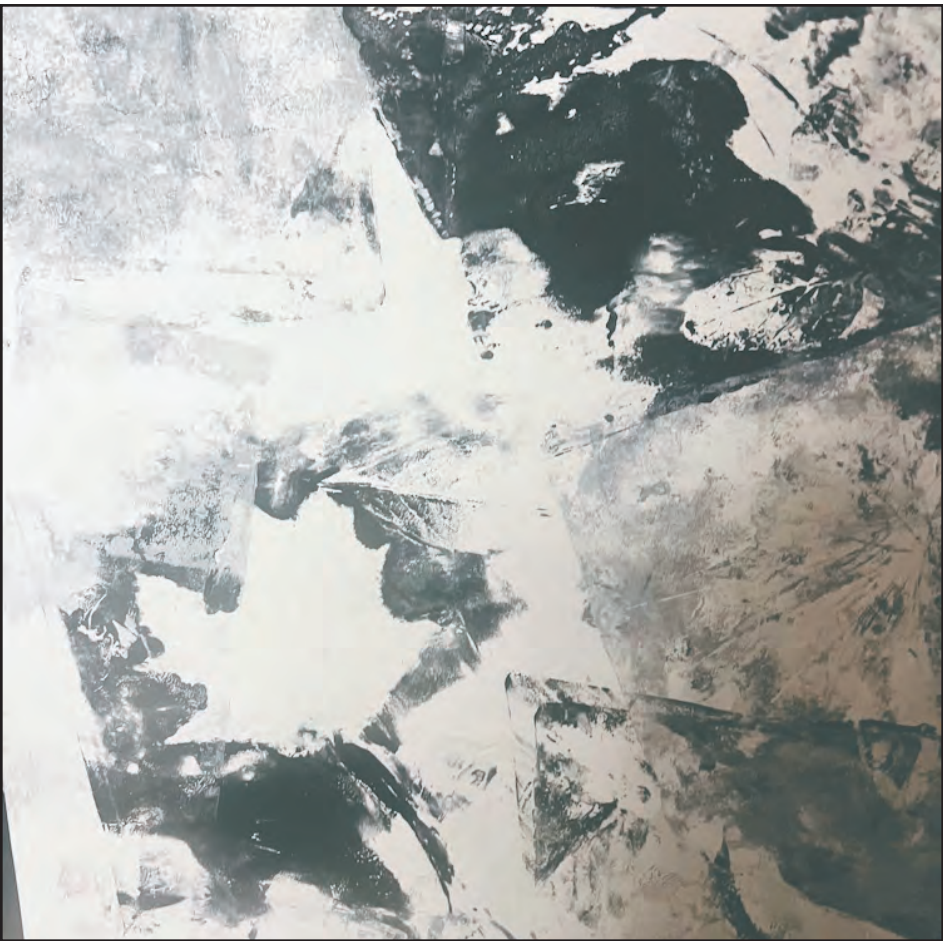
**Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library & Museum**, William J. vanden Heuvel Gallery, 4097 Albany Post Rd. (Rte. 9), Hyde Park. **Through July 7:** Special exhibition, “Signature Moments: Letters from the Famous, the Infamous, and Everyday Americans,” During their extraordinary public careers, the Roosevelts interacted with a “who’s who” of the 20th century. “Signature Moments” opens the FDR Library’s archives and museum for an insider’s view of the remarkable – and sometimes surprising – variety of personal exchanges with an amazing array of famous (and a few infamous) people, including golden age movie stars, queens and kings, scientists, and legendary military heroes. Visitors will see signatures of literary giants, celebrated artists, world leaders, and, of course, prominent politicians and political activists – including seven American presidents. Regular Library and Museum admission applies to view the exhibit. [www.fdrlibrary.org](http://www.fdrlibrary.org)

**Howland Cultural Center**, 477 Main St., Beacon. **Jan. 10-April 12:** “Bannerman Island and the Mighty Hudson River Exhibition,” the Second Annual Collaborative Hudson Valley Landscape Fine Art Show, featuring unique fine art paintings, watercolors, prints, photography and mixed media works in a variety of genres - from traditional and representational works to abstract masterpiece. **Opening:** Sat., Jan. 10, 1-3 p.m. (845) 831-4988 or [www.howlandculturalcenter.org](http://www.howlandculturalcenter.org)

**The Inn at Bellefield**, 25 Old Vineyard Place, Hyde Park. **Through January:** Arts Mid-Hudson presents an exhibition of alcohol ink paintings by Linda Lavin. Her semi-abstract images often echo impressionistic landscapes, alive with flow and movement. Working without brushes, she embraces the fluid, unpredictable techniques of alcohol ink on impervious surfaces such as tile, glass, and yupo paper, creating works that are both dynamic and distinctive. More info at [artsmidhudson.org/art-at-the-bellefield](http://artsmidhudson.org/art-at-the-bellefield).

**Millbrook Library**, 3 Friendly Lane, Millbrook. **Jan. 9-Feb. 28:** The Millbrook Arts Project presents “The Color of Growth,” bringing together four artists - Irja Bodén, JoAnne Lobotsky, Patrick Neal, and Colin O’Con - whose work re-imagines nature and landscape as dynamic sites of transformation. **Opening Reception:** Fri., Jan. 9, 6-8 p.m. **Artist Talk** with Irja Bodén and JoAnne Lobotsky: Sat., Feb. 21, at 2 p.m. [www.millbrooklibrary.org](http://www.millbrooklibrary.org)

**Tivoli Artists Gallery**, 60 Broadway, Tivoli. **Jan. 9-Feb. 8:** “The Language of Black & White,” an exploration of light, shadow, texture, and emotion through the timeless world of black and white art. **Reception:** Sat., Jan. 10, 2-5 p.m. (845) 757-2667 or [www.tivoliartistsgallery.com](http://www.tivoliartistsgallery.com). *Pictured: A work by Janene Gentile, courtesy of the artist*



**ATTENTION ART GALLERIES**

E-mail exhibition listings to:  
[creativeliving@s Dutchessnews.com](mailto:creativeliving@s Dutchessnews.com)



# A & E CALENDAR

**Jan. 9-11: Live Music at the Towne Crier Cafe,** 379 Main St., Beacon. Jan. 9: Shakedown Citi, 8 p.m. Tickets \$20 advance, \$25 door. Jan. 10: Sharkey & The Sparks, 8 p.m. Tickets \$25 advance, \$30 door. Jan. 11: Here Comes the Sun: Celebrating the Music of The Beatles, 7 p.m. Tickets \$30 advance, \$35 door. (845) 855-1300 or [www.townecrier.com](http://www.townecrier.com)

**Jan. 9-Feb. 1: “Mary Poppins,”** The Center for Performing Arts at Rhinebeck, 661 Rte. 308, Rhinebeck. CENTERstage Productions presents a musical is based on the stories of P.L. Travers and the Walt Disney Film; with original music and lyrics by Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman, book by Julian Fellowes, plus new songs and additional music and lyrics by George Stiles and Anthony Drewe. The jack-of-all trades, Bert, introduces us to England in 1910 and the troubled Banks family. Young Jane and Michael have sent many a nanny packing before Mary Poppins arrives on their doorstep. Using a combination of magic and common sense, she must teach the family members how to value each other again. Mary Poppins takes the children on many magical and memorable adventures, but Jane and Michael aren't the only ones upon whom she has a profound effect. Performances: Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat. & Sun., 3 p.m. Tickets \$29. [www.centerforperformingarts.org](http://www.centerforperformingarts.org) or (845) 876-3080

**Jan. 10: Miss Lindy’s Dance Hall,** Morton Memorial Library, 82 Kelly St., Rhinecliff. Partner Dance - beginning lesson and practice space for all, 2 p.m. Also known as Social Dancing, with origins in swing dance, these steps and moves can be used with many musical genres ... 6-count single step and 6-count triple step. Learn leader and follower roles. No partner needed for class, invite your friends. Beginners and All Levels of experience welcome. (845) 876-2903

**Jan. 11: The Howland Chamber Music Circle Piano Festival,** The Howland Cultural Center, 477 Main St., Beacon. Pianist Fei-Fei will perform, 4 p.m. Following the concert, audience members can meet the musician and enjoy complimentary refreshments. All ticket holders are invited to the reception. To purchase a ticket, visit [www.howlandmusic.org](http://www.howlandmusic.org) .

**Jan. 13: Author Talk & Book Signing,** Henry A. Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library & Home, Rte. 9, Hyde Park. “New Deal Art” (World of Art) with John P. Murphy, the Philip and Lynn Straus curator of prints and drawings at the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center at Vassar College, 6 p.m. At the height of the Great Depression, President Roosevelt’s New Deal provided federal funding for the arts. The New Deal launched the careers of artists such as Philip Guston, Dorothea Lange, Jacob Lawrence, Alice Neel, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko. Brimming with vivid images and stories, “New Deal Art” offers a dynamic survey of this period. The book highlights state-sponsored murals, paintings, sculptures, photographs, prints, and posters. The artists formed the first Artists’ Union and reimagined art as a public good rather than a private luxury. The event will also be streamed live to the official FDR Library YouTube and Facebook accounts. Free, but registration is required via [www.fdrlibrary.org](http://www.fdrlibrary.org) to attend in-person.

**Jan. 14: Film Series, “Hollywood Goes to War, 1941-1945,”** Henry A. Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library & Home, Rte. 9, Hyde Park. Screening of “Edge of Darkness” (1943), 2 p.m. In 1930, director Lewis Milestone won an Academy Award for his eloquent anti-war masterpiece, “All Quiet on the Western Front.” But with “Edge of Darkness,” made in 1943 during the dark days of the German blitzkrieg, Milestone displays no such pacifist sentiments. Indeed, this remarkable drama, set in a small Norwegian village, pays tribute to the heroic spirit of common people taking up arms against the Nazi invaders. Errol Flynn delivers a fine, understated performance as a common fisherman who leads the town’s resistance efforts. Ann Sheridan’s strong character reflects the strength of all womankind. And featured in the superb ensemble cast are Walter Huston, Ruth Gordon and Judith Anderson. Free public event, but registration is required via [fdrlibrary.org](http://fdrlibrary.org). Contact Cliff Laube at (845) 486-7745 with questions about the event.

Performances are on Fridays at 8 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$29 and available at [www.centerforperformingarts.org](http://www.centerforperformingarts.org) or by calling the Box Office at (845) 876-3080.

The role of Mary Poppins will be played alternately by Emily Holland and Emma Hempel (visit the website to see who is featured on which dates). Dennis Wakeman as Bert, Kate Worthey as Winifred Banks, Brian Kuchciki as George Banks, Harriet Luongo as Jane, Jack Ranieri as Michael, Mary Dallari as The Bird Woman, Kaeli Heffner as Miss Andrew, Thomas Iorio as Robertson Ay, Wendy Urban-Mead as Mrs. Brill, Lisa Lynds as Miss Corry, and Anthony Carl as Neleus. Featuring Abby Anspach, Mary Kate Barnett, Natalie Bunta, Kelsey Christiana, Leah Conklin, Courtney Constantino, Kiara Daniello, Maggie Dolan, River Garcia, Lily Garcia, Molly Gilman, Gabby Licari, Christine McCarthy, Kim McConville, Duane Olson, Sr., Ben Parish, Izzy Ricks, Howie Riggs, Dan Santos, David Shakopi, Lou Simone, and Eve Vuleau.

The Center for Performing Arts at Rhinebeck is at 661 Route 308, just east of Rhinebeck Village.

# Millbrook Arts Project to launch 2026 exhibition series on Jan. 9



Above: Patrick Neal, “Bronze Dahlias,” 2025 oil on canvas 36 x 36. Right: Colin O’Con “Paradise,” 2025 acrylic on canvas. Courtesy images



The Millbrook Arts Project presents “The Color of Growth,” bringing together four artists - Irja Bodén, JoAnne Lobotsky, Patrick Neal, and Colin O’Con - whose work re-imagines nature and landscape as dynamic sites of transformation. Set against the monochromatic backdrop of winter in the Northeast, the exhibition invites viewers to look beyond seasonal dormancy and consider growth as an ongoing, layered process—one that persists beneath the surface, even when unseen.

The exhibit opens Friday, Jan. 9 and runs through Saturday, Feb. 28. The public is invited to an Opening Reception on Friday, Jan. 9 from 6 to 8 p.m. An Artist Talk with Irja Bodén and JoAnne Lobotsky is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 21, at 2 p.m.

“The artists in this exhibition approach plant life not as passive scenery but as an active carrier of meaning and experience” says curator Sharon Bates. “Color functions as both subject and strategy—expressive, intuitive, and often deliberately unnatural.”

Irja Bodén presents sculptural work inspired by the untended hedgerow bordering her studio. These ceramic vessels draw from the tangled coexistence of old and new growth, focusing on invasive vines that can overwhelm surrounding vegetation. For Bodén, these forms become metaphors for the ongoing erosion of women’s rights. The open, bottomless blue interiors of her vessels evoke life, freedom, and resistance, underscoring growth as a contested and fragile condition.

JoAnne Lobotsky’s expressionistic landscapes are driven by color and texture as emotional force. Working intuitively and without preplanning, Lobotsky embraces awkwardness and deliberate clumsiness as a rejection of

polished contemporary aesthetics. Her frequently unnatural color palettes reflect environmental fragility and damage.

Patrick Neal approaches landscape and still life through a contemporary lens, using watercolor and oil to build composite scenes informed by memory, observation, and drawing. A recurring roving grid structure organizes and abstracts his imagery, emphasizing both cinematic shifts in perspective and the physical act of mark-making. Neal’s landscapes move fluidly between urban and rural environments—from public parks and construction sites to wooded regions of upstate New York.

Colin O’Con’s paintings hover between representation and abstraction, drawing on the language of traditional landscape while pushing toward the subliminal and unknown. Influenced by photography, observation, and memory—but painted from neither—his work emerges through layered washes that gradually reveal imagined terrains.

Together, the works in The Color of Growth challenge romantic notions of nature and renewal. They remind us that growth is rarely linear or benign—it is tangled, contested, and deeply colored by the conditions of the worlds we inhabit.

All programs are located at the Millbrook Library, 3 Friendly Lane, Millbrook, NY.

The Millbrook Arts Project, a community art space is a recent project of Millbrook Arts Group and the Millbrook Library that is committed to providing exhibition opportunities to visual artists and to enriching the understanding of contemporary art to Millbrook and the surrounding communities. For more information about upcoming exhibits at Millbrook Arts Project, visit: <https://millbrooklibrary.org/millbrook-arts-project/>.

# NORTHERN DUTCHESS NEWS & Creative Living

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# ‘Mary Poppins’ flies into Rhinebeck Jan. 9

CENTERstage Productions presents “Mary Poppins” from Jan. 9 to Feb. 1 at The Center for Performing Arts at Rhinebeck.

This musical is based on the stories of P.L. Travers and the Walt Disney Film; with original music and lyrics by Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman, book by Julian Fellowes, plus new songs and additional music and lyrics by George Stiles and Anthony Drewe. It was co-created by Cameron Mackintosh and is directed by Duane Joseph Olson, with musical direction by Russell McCook and choreography by Maria Coppola with Haley Swetz.

The jack-of-all trades, Bert, introduces us to England in 1910 and the troubled Banks family. Young Jane and Michael have sent many a nanny packing before Mary Poppins arrives on their doorstep. Using a combination of magic and common sense, she must teach the family members how to value each other again. Mary Poppins takes the children on many magical and memorable adventures, but Jane and Michael aren't the only ones upon whom she has a profound effect. Even grown-ups can learn a lesson or two from the nanny who advises that “Anything can happen if you let it.”

# NY National Guard members who responded to 9/11 attacks are eligible to file notice of potential claim for disability benefits

LATHAM, NY - Members of the New York National Guard who served on State Active Duty in New York City following the destruction of the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001, can now register for the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs World Trade Center Benefits Program with information provided online.

The deadline for filing this application is Sept. 11, 2026.

This state-funded pension benefit is designed to compensate Guard members who developed a 9/11 related illness since the attacks that day on Sept. 11, 2001.

The extension of a pension benefit to 9/11 responders suffering from qualified health conditions was approved by the legislature and added to New York State Military Law in 2023.

Survivors of Guard personnel who die as a result of a 9/11-related condition may also be eligible for benefits.

These benefits also apply to members of the New York Naval Militia and the New

York Guard --the state's two state defense forces-- who responded to the attacks.

Submitting the Application for World Trade Center Notice preserves the individual's right to file a claim in the future and waives no legal rights

Registering preserves your right to file a claim in the future and waives no legal rights. A service member does not have to be sick to apply.

Instructions and documents required to file for this benefit, or to submit the application of notice, can be found online at <https://dmna.ny.gov/911/>.

More than 12,000 members of the New York Army and Air National Guard, the New York Naval Militia, and the New York Guard were part of the state response to the attacks between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 11, 2002.

Service members who were on State Active Duty and involved in rescue, recovery or cleanup operations at the World Trade Center site, or in what is termed the

New York City Exposure Zone, between those two dates, are eligible to apply to the program.

Current and former members of the National Guard, Naval Militia and New York Guard, who responded to the 9/11 attacks, who are ill, and have not been reimbursed by the federal September 11 Victim Compensation fund, are eligible for benefits.

The maximum benefit is three-quarters of the annual State Active Duty pay the individual is authorized to receive by law.

The 2023 law provides a presumption that, if an individual becomes permanently disabled due to certain conditions and unable to perform their job, they can claim the condition was the result of participation in the events of September 11 and after, unless it can be proven the condition was the result of other factors.

Qualifying conditions for this presumption include:

- Upper respiratory tract (rhinitis, sinusitis, pharyngitis, laryngitis, vocal cord dis-

ease, upper airway hyper-reactivity and tracheobronchitis, or a combination of such conditions).

- Lower respiratory tract (bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, reactive airway dysfunction syndrome and various forms of pneumonitis - hypersensitivity, granulomatous, or eosinophilic).

- Gastroesophageal tract (esophagitis and reflux disease).

- Psychological (post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, or any combination of these conditions).

- Skin (conjunctivitis, contact dermatitis or burns, infectious, irritant, allergic, idiopathic or non-specific in nature, caused by exposure or aggravated by exposure); and

- New onset diseases (resulting from exposure as such diseases may occur in the future including cancer, asbestos-related diseases, heavy metal poisoning, musculoskeletal disease and chronic psychological diseases).

## OBITUARIES

### Lana A. Anguin

AMENIA - Lana A. Anguin, 80, a lifelong area resident, died peacefully on Sunday, December 28, 2025 at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, CT. Loving mother of Rebecca Anguin-Cohen of New York, NY and dear aunt of Jennifer and Michael Segelken of Millerton, NY. Lana dedicated nearly twenty-five years of her life to the Town of Amenia; she was the secretary and administrative assistant to the Amenia Town Supervisor from 1988 to 2012; she also worked closely with the Town of Amenia Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals overseeing project administration for many years.

Calling hours will be held on Friday, January 9, 2026 from 5pm to 7pm at the Scott D. Conklin Funeral Home, 37 Park Avenue, Millerton, NY 12546. A time of sharing memories and reflections of Lana's life will begin at 6:30 pm at the funeral home. Burial will take place privately on Saturday, January 10, 2025 at Evergreen Cemetery in Pine Plains, NY. Arrangements have been entrusted to the Scott D. Conklin Funeral Home, 37 Park Avenue, Millerton, NY. Memorial contributions may be made to Dutchess County SPCA, 636 Violet Ave., Hyde Park, NY, 12538. To send a condolence to the family, flowers to the service or to plant a tree in Lana's memory, please visit [www.conklinfuneralhome.com](http://www.conklinfuneralhome.com)

### Maria A. Cano

RHINEBECK - Maria A. Cano, age 91, of Rhinebeck, NY, passed away peacefully on December 29, surrounded by her loving family.

Maria was born on November 24, 1934, in Peekskill, NY, to the late Lorenzo Zumbo and Bernadina DeLuca Zumbo. She was raised in Peekskill, where she graduated from Peekskill High School, and later married the love of her life, Manuel J. Cano, Jr., on November 26, 1955, in Peekskill.

Maria and Manny began their family life in Copiague, NY, before settling in Rhinebeck, NY, where they built a life centered on family, faith, and community. A beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Maria was known for her devotion to her family, generosity, kindness, strength, and wonderful sense of humor.

She loved participating in community events—often dressing up in costume and winning top prize (most of the time!)—and especially enjoyed spending time at the casinos. Maria was a pillar of the community, dedicating many years to raising funds for the Juvenile Diabetes Association by organizing and running bus trips to various events. She was also actively involved with the Rhinecliff Ladies Auxiliary for many years.

Maria is survived by her loving children: Tina Cano Lee (Colie), Cheryl Provencher (Dan), Rhonda Parcesepe (Tony), Laura Theisen (Dan), and Scott Cano (Linda); her

cherished grandchildren: Danica Tate (Ted), Kaysey Sanford (Aaron), Kelly Staats (Matt), Bryan Marquardt, Matt Marquardt, Nicholas Theisen (Katie), and Alex Theisen; and her treasured great-grandchildren: Gavin, Samantha, Autumn, Owen, Calvin, and Amelia.

She is also survived by her sisters, Angie Surak and Nancy Portes; her sisters-in-law, Adriana Ludgate and Carole Demino (Sal); and many loving nieces, nephews, and friends.

Maria was predeceased by her beloved husband of 49 years, Manuel "Manny" Cano, Jr.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to Hudson Valley Hospice for their compassionate and loving care during Maria's final journey.

Friends and family were received on Monday, January 5, 2026, at Burnett & White Funeral Home, Red Hook.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at Good Shepherd Church in Rhinebeck. Burial will follow at St. Paul's Lutheran Cemetery in Red Hook, NY.

Funeral arrangements entrusted to Burnett & White Funeral Homes, Red Hook, NY.

### Edward J. 'EJ' Mahoney Jr.

HYDE PARK - Edward J. Mahoney Jr., 58, a lifelong resident of Hyde Park, died unexpectedly on Thursday, December 25, 2025. He was affectionately known to many as "EJ."

Born on May 28, 1967, in Peekskill, he was the son of the late Edward J. Mahoney Sr. and Shirley L. McCarthy Mahoney. EJ was a graduate of F.D. Roosevelt High School in Hyde Park and Dutchess Community College.

Mr. Mahoney worked for Highway Displays in Poughkeepsie for over 35 years.

An avid outdoorsman, EJ found joy in hunting, fishing, and spending time in nature. He had a lifelong love of muscle cars—especially MOPARS—and his prized possession was his 1970 Plymouth Roadrunner.

Sports were a central part of EJ's life, not only for the competition but for the camaraderie that came with them. He played golf for many years in the Thursday Night League at Dinsmore Golf Course and participated in numerous local tournaments. He traveled throughout the United States and Canada as part of a fast pitch softball travel team and was a proud member of the 1979 New York State Little League Championship team. Whether it was horseshoes, cornhole, bowling, or any game among friends, EJ was always ready for some friendly competition.

When not in Hyde Park, EJ could often be found at his home in the Adirondacks, dropping a fishing line from his kayak.

EJ was also known for his gift of storytelling. Anyone who knew him knew that he loved to share a good story—sometimes with anyone willing to listen. Nobody could tell a story quite like EJ.

Survivors include his wife, Andrea L. Mahoney of Hyde Park; daughter, Aubrie E. Mahoney of Hyde Park; step-children, Tara Tenbrock of Hyde Park, and Ted Tenbrock and wife, Emily, of Connelly, NY; and grandchildren, Brody and Conor Tenbrock. He is also survived by his cousins, Kelly, Kevin, and Kenny Mahoney, and their families; along with many lifelong friends.

Cremation has taken place. Memorial calling hours will be from 2 to 7 PM on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at Sweet's Funeral Home, Rte. 9, Hyde Park. A time to share memories will take place at 6 PM during the visitation.

In lieu of flowers, EJ's family respectfully requests memorial donations to Mental Health America of Dutchess County, 253 Mansion Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 ([www.mhadutchess.org](http://www.mhadutchess.org)).

To send an online condolence or for directions, please visit EJ's obituary page at [www.sweetsfuneralhome.com](http://www.sweetsfuneralhome.com).

### Joan Marie Pidgeon

LAGRANGEVILLE - Joan Marie Pidgeon (09/08/1936 – 12/31/2025), 89, lived in Beekman over 60 years with her husband and raised a family. After a long life, she passed away at home on December 31, 2025.

Joan was born in Highland New York. She was one of five sisters and one brother. Joan is survived by her husband Ralph Pidgeon, 86, and immediate family, sons, Ralph John, and Scott and his husband David Garland; daughter, Phyllis Mort and her husband Doug Mort; daughter-in-law Jennifer Pidgeon, and three grandchildren Matt, Zach, and Corey.

Joan graduated from Highland High School in 1956. She was a cheerleader and captain her senior year. She met her husband in 1961, and they were married June 3, 1962. They settled in Beekman and built their first and only home together to raise a family. In addition to working at IBM when they met, Joan also worked with the disabled, and later in life, as an upholsters' assistant. She enjoyed

fishing with her husband, shopping, the holidays, and playing cards. Joan and Ralph were able to take many trips together as seniors. Joan will always be remembered for her strength, convictions, and tenacity.

Visitation was held on January 6, 2026 at Timothy P. Doyle Funeral Home, Poughkeepsie. In lieu of flowers, please make donations in her name to Hudson Valley Hospice or St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

### Melissa Swart

FORMERLY OF PINE PLAINS - Melissa Swart, 58, formerly of Pine Plains, passed away on December 21, 2025, at her home. She was born on June 19, 1967, in Sharon, CT to the late Earl and Eunice (Doyle) Swart. A dedicated Administrative Assistant at Deveroux in Red Hook, Melissa was known for her professionalism and meticulous attention to detail.

Melissa possessed a zest for life that extended beyond her career. She enjoyed spending time with family and friends, particularly relishing vacations, including cherished trips to Ocean City, Maryland. Her interests also included reading and attending concerts. Socializing with friends was another joy of Melissa's. Oftentimes going out to dinner and enjoying company of those close to her.

Melissa is survived by her siblings, Linda (Paul) Treanor, Jim (Tina) Swart, Doreen (Jim) Weisner, and David (Justine) Swart. She is survived by three nephews, Keith, Luke, and Josh, as well as three nieces, Caitlin, Alyson, and Ashlee. In addition to five great nephews and one great niece. She is also survived by her beloved companion cat, Optimus.

As we reflect on Melissa's life, it is clear that her legacy will live on through the fond memories shared by her family and friends. In keeping with her wishes there will be no formal services held. Arrangements have been entrusted to Peck & Peck Funeral Homes. Condolences may be offered at [www.peckandpeck.net](http://www.peckandpeck.net).

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**NOTICE OF TAX COLLECTION 2026 TOWN OF PLEASANT VALLEY, NEW YORK**  
**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE**, that I, Mary Beth Muir, the undersigned Collector of Taxes of the Town of Pleasant Valley, County of Dutchess and State of New York, have duly received the tax roll and warrant for the collection of taxes within the Town of Pleasant Valley for the year 2026, and that I will attend at Town Hall, 1554 Main Street, in the said Town of Pleasant Valley from today to March 2, 2026 at 9:00 o'clock in the forenoon to 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon on **MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY** and **THURSDAY, FRIDAY** collection hours will be 9:00 o'clock in the forenoon to 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon. **MARCH, APRIL** and **MAY** collection hours will be 9 o'clock in the forenoon to 4:00 o'clock in the

Legal Notices

afternoon with the exception of **FRIDAY** collection hours will be 9:00 o'clock in the forenoon to 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon, except **SATURDAYS, SUNDAYS** and **LEGAL HOLIDAYS** for the purpose of collecting the taxes listed on the said roll. **PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE**, that taxes may be paid on or before March 2, 2026 without charge or interest. On all taxes received after such date, there shall be a 2 percent added interest if paid on or before March 31, 2026 and an additional 1 percent for each additional month or fraction thereof thereafter until such taxes are paid or until the return of unpaid taxes to the county treasurer pursuant to law. **TAKE FURTHER NOTICE**, that pursuant to the provisions of law the tax roll of the Town of Pleasant Valley will be returned to the Dutchess County Commissioner of Fi-

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nance on the 2nd day of June, 2026. **PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE**, a reminder of unpaid taxes will be sent on or before May 01, 2026. A fee of \$2.00 will be added to your tax bill during the full month of May. **DATED:** January 1, 2026 Mary Beth Muir Tax Collector Town of Pleasant Valley  
**REQUEST FOR BIDS NOTICE**  
The Purchasing Agent, County of Dutchess, Poughkeepsie, New York, hereby invites the submission of sealed bids for: Bid #RFB-DCP-15-26  
RFB-DCP-15-26: Preparation and Delivery of Daily Meals for Dutchess County Office for the Aging  
Bids will be received until 2:00 p.m. on the 26th day of January 2026 at the Dutchess County Division of Central Services, 378 Violet Avenue, Suite 2, Poughkeepsie, New York 12601. Specifications and bid forms may be obtained by visiting our

Legal Notices

website <http://www.dutchessny.gov>, selecting "Government", then selecting "Bidding and RFP Opportunities". For additional information, call 845-486-3613.  
**NOTICE OF ADOPTION**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the County Legislature of the County of Dutchess at a meeting held on December 8, 2025, adopted a local law entitled: **LOCAL LAW NO. 1 OF 2026, A LOCAL LAW TO EXTEND THE YOUTH DEER HUNTING PILOT PROGRAM**  
The intent of this Local Law shall be to extend the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Youth Deer Hunting Pilot Program from December 31, 2025, to December 31, 2028, and Dutchess County seeks to further its participation in said pilot program which authorizes a hunting license holder, who is

Legal Notices

twelve (12) or (13) years of age to hunt deer with a crossbow, shotgun or muzzle-loading firearm through 2028. A copy of the local law is available at the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature where it may be inspected during regular office hours. **LAURA PHILLIPS** Deputy Clerk Dutchess County Legislature  
Notice is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be held by the Planning Board of the Town of East Fishkill, Dutchess County, New York on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, 330 Route 376, Hopewell Junction, NY, or as soon thereafter as the matter may come on to be heard, in the matter of the application of Townsend Road, 2537 Route 52, Hopewell Junction, NY 12533, for the granting of a 4 lot sub-

Legal Notices

division as shown on maps prepared by Day & Stokosa Engineering, PC, 3 Van Wyck Lane, Wappingers Falls, New York, 12590, as filed in the office of the Planning Department, and which site is located and described as being: at 95 Townsend Road near Lesmar Court, in the Town of East Fishkill, NY identified as Tax Parcel # 132800-6556-00-105125. All interested parties and citizens will be heard by the Board at the public hearing scheduled at said time. **By: John Eickman, Chairman**  
**Town of East Fishkill Planning Board**  
**December 22, 2025**  
Please Take Notice that the Planning Board of the Town of East Fishkill will continue the public hearing on the 20th day of January, 2026 at 6PM in the Town Hall, 330 Route 376,

Legal Notices

Hopewell Junction, NY, or as soon thereafter as the matter may come on to be heard, in the matter of the application of the Montage at East Fishkill project for the granting of Preliminary and Final subdivision approval for a proposed cluster subdivision with 122 residential lots on a 385.5 acre parcel, as shown on maps prepared by Day & Stokosa Engineering and last revised December 22, 2025, 3 Van Wyck Lane, Wappingers Falls, New York, as filed in the office of the Town of East Fishkill Planning Department, and which site is located on Route 52 being described as a 385.5 acre tax parcel identified as #6556-00-802836. All parties in interest and citizens will be heard by the Board at said public hearing scheduled at said time.

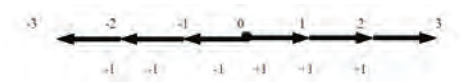
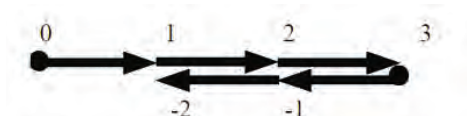
The deadline for 12/24/25 Legals is Thursday 12/18/25 at noon for a Wednesday 12/24/25 Publication\*

OPINION

Even mathematicians do not understand mathematics

By Irvin M. Miller, Ph.D.  
*I teach an enriched math course in the Wappingers Central School District. Over the years, I have been analyzing how students learn and then modifying my teaching approach. Recently, I have taught children how to do very long multiplication which has been a mystery to math teachers. Looking at how other people solve problems, I began to understand how teaching had a negative influence in how they tried to solve problems. I would like to share this discovery with you.*

The blind mathematicians touching an elephant is a parable on incomplete understanding based upon touch and interpretation. One interprets the leg as a tree, the trunk as a snake, and the tusk as a spear. The moral is that experience is limited and true understanding requires several perspectives.  
This is understood by mathematicians, but somehow some key mathematicians where able to convince others that their interpretation provided the best understanding. This influence may have had a major impact on why we have become math phobic. We can see this impact on zero, negative numbers, counting numbers, multiplication, the commutative property, and complex numbers. The evidence is in lots of YouTube videos on how people are limited in solving simple problems.  
However, we are going to take a look at the concept of counting numbers. Counting numbers are the positive integers starting with 1. Zero and negative numbers are excluded. This is an interpretation which can easily be shown to be a poor interpretation, leading to some mathematical conflicts. Let us challenge this interpretation with a few questions.  
*Please note: You will have to read the remainder of this article several times before you feel comfortable with it.*  
Learning requires challenge to both you and your teacher. It is the failure that

causes you to lose confidence in yourself and develop math phobia. For you and me, the further challenge is to explain why the experts are wrong and to convince them why your viewpoint or interpretation explains the fallacy in their reasoning. Math is about debate and thought. Now let us face the challenge.  
Is counting forward adding! Yes! Can you count backward? Yes! Is subtracting counting backward? Yes! Is adding a negative number the same as subtracting? Yes! Now the challenge is how to interpret the question to illustrate how we can use negative numbers as counting numbers. We begin by considering numbers vectors, where a positive number is a vector pointing to the right and a negative number is a vector pointing to the left.  
  
The sign becomes an indicator of direction. Subtracting a number changes its direction. Thus a positive number becomes a negative number and a negative number becomes a positive number. This geometric model can make us more comfortable with negative numbers because it is more consistent with what we see on a ruler. The zero becomes a starting point, refuting zero as being nothing.  


Now let us take a look at counting with negative numbers by starting with positive numbers.  
Multiplication is a counting process. (+3)x2=0+2+2=+6 where zero is the starting position and the three is the number of twos that we add. We can think of this as adding the twos and indicating the direction toward the right.

With (+3)x(-2)=0+-2+-2+-2=-(2+2+2)=-6, we add the twos as positive numbers and change the direction.  
Now let us use a negative number as a counter. (-3)x2= -(2+2+2)=-6 The negative sign of the counter changed the direction. The geometric representation helps us to start digesting this new approach.  
Now the interesting result: (-3)x(-2)= -(-2+-2+-2)=-(-6)=6. This illustration is much easier to understand than the conventional approach to proving that the product of negative numbers gives us a positive answer. In our mind, we see a double reverse which brings us back to the original position. This is why looking at a vector model gives us a good visual. In math, simpler is better.  
Now let us use zero in multiplication.  
3x2 = 0+2+2+2  
2x2=(3-1)x2=3x2-2=0+2+2+2-2=0+2+2  
1x2=(2-1)x2=2x2-2=0+2+2-2 = 0+2  
0x2=(1-1)x2=1x2-2=0+2-2 = 0  
We have just introduced the distributive property to prove that 0 times a number is zero. Continuing, we have: 2x0=0+0+0=0 because from the vector representation, we do not move from the starting position. We were able to prove that the negative numbers and zero were commutative without using the commutative property — we used the distributive property and redefined multiplication. This is truly important, because we do not have to assume that multiplication is commutative for all types of multiplication.

It turns out that multiplication is not always commutative as used in exponents:  
4^1=4^(2x1/2)= (4^2)^1/2=16^1/2=-4 because -4x-4=16. Also 4 since 4x4=16  
Multiplication is not commutative in matrix or vector multiplication. Mathematicians hedge by saying that matrix multiplication is just a naming procedure and it is not multiplication. This different interpretations of the definition of counting resolves a lot of anomalies, with which the old definition struggles.

The key interpretation was that numbers are vectors and that the negative sign is not signifying subtraction, but direction. Then zero was reinterpreted as a position and not as nothing. These interpretations then had us redefine multiplication. Now we restate the commutative proper:  
Addition is commutative and multiplication is distributive.  
Just this reinterpretation of counting, which led to the reinterpretation of zero and multiplication has a major impact on the foundations of mathematics.  
It took me much time to convince myself of these novel interpretations. Your task is to see if you can challenge me to convince me that there is a still better way of interpreting math. If all of this is true, how do we change how math is taught to all children, in particular, ones who already excel in math?  
*Dr. Irvin Miller is the director of the Math & Physics Exploration and teaches Enriched Math in one of the top schools in Dutchess County. He has taught in college and at a teacher's college. While in college he would teach his instructors and professors while they where teaching him. E-mail: immiller1@juno.com*



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225 Business Services  
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### SUDOKU

This week's answer

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

Answers to this  
week's diversions

(puzzles on page 12)

Dutchess County's older adult population is expected to grow again this year, both in real numbers and as a percentage of total County population. We expect this trend to continue well into the 2040s, which means the Office for the Aging plans to build on existing services for many years to come.

A quick look ahead

OFA is seeking out medical providers large and small in Dutchess County, to educate their staff more broadly regarding the programs and services that OFA provides. Think about the last time you needed to visit a hospital or urgent care facility, and prepared to return home. It would be a great time to learn how OFA services can help ease the transition back home, wouldn't it?

OFA's Ambassador and one OFA Case Manager have been designated as the point of contact for area hospitals, with a goal of taking part in discharge planning for high-risk patients who have no or limited supports in the community.

Caregiver support is key

For every older adult in Dutchess County, there's a caregiver who may themselves be an older adult, or who may be carrying their own full plate of job and family responsibilities. To help meet the needs of working caregivers, OFA recognizes that providing community resources and support is crucial. Options to be made available for caregivers include caregiver support groups, respite care services, education workshops, social adult day services, and resources for working caregivers.

OFA anti-ageism efforts

We touched on the topic of ageism in a

few recent newsletters; now, as we start the new year, we bring you more details. As part of our plans for 2026, OFA will:

- Emphasize education regarding ageism, neglect and exploitation to the public at large, community agencies, business groups and government officials;
- Work toward eliminating ageism by asserting the economic, social and intellectual value of older adults in the community;
- Regularly highlight the issue of ageism, thereby making the community at large more aware of existing biases;
- Encourage the use of intergenerational contact as a method to help dispel ageism. OFA will build upon affiliations with local colleges and high schools to pursue opportunities for intergenerational activities.

The old reliables

Summer Picnics will be back, with another 12-picnic season starting right after Memorial Day. If this is the first time you've heard of the picnics, visit [dutchessny.gov/ofapicnics](http://dutchessny.gov/ofapicnics) for a recap of the 2025 season. We'll announce the 2026 picnic schedule in April.

The OFA Senior Prom? It's planned for October. We know many of you start preparing for the following year's prom as soon as you can, so we'll let everybody know now that Hawaiian Luau is the theme of the upcoming prom. Want to see what an OFA Prom is like? Visit [dutchessny.gov/prom](http://dutchessny.gov/prom) for highlights from the 2025 Prom.

Our Friendly Calls program keeps growing as it enters its fourth year, reducing the risk of loneliness and social isolation for Dutchess County's older adults.

To be a participant and/or volunteer, see [dutchessny.gov/friendlycalls](http://dutchessny.gov/friendlycalls) or call 845-486-2548.

INVITE AN OFA SPEAKER TO YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NEXT MEETING

All kinds of Dutchess County organizations include older adults and caregivers among their members, and we'd love to stop by your 2026 meetings to talk with you and your group about what the Office for the Aging offers to the county's older adults and caregivers. Wherever your groups meet in Dutchess County, OFA can be there. We offer presentations on OFA services, nutrition, scam prevention, Medicare and health insurance, the importance of physical activity, the "Friendly Calls" program, home safety and fall prevention, and plenty more.

If your group isn't sure where to begin and would like an overview of OFA's many roles in the community, contact us at 845-486-2555 or [ofa@dutchessny.gov](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.gov) to find out more.

HELP SPREAD THE WORD

Support services for Dutchess County's older adults are more than a nice benefit – they're essential, and can be the key bridge to continued safe, independent living at home.

Many older adults here are unaware of OFA services, don't realize how OFA could help them stay independent, or don't know how to access them.

Just by reading this article, you're able to help them make an essential new connection.

We've lost count of how many times a new, happy OFA client has said to us "I had no idea" that OFA provided the services that put many of their concerns to rest.

That's why we try to meet the older adults and caregivers of Dutchess County where they are, not where someone may think they should already be. Connecting our older adults and caregivers with supports can let them know something huge: they're not alone.

We can easily be overwhelmed with choices as we age; but together we can make it much easier for our aging friends, family and neighbors to find OFA, remember us, and maybe even visit us. Visit [dutchessny.gov/aging](http://dutchessny.gov/aging) to start exploring OFA's offerings.

HELP SPREAD THE WORD, PART 2 (SUBSTITUTE SITE MANAGERS WANTED)

The Office for the Aging is looking for candidates for Substitute Site Manager positions at our eight OFA Friendship Centers, with locations in Poughkeepsie, Beacon, Hopewell Junction, Millerton, Pawling, Pleasant Valley, Red Hook, and Wassaic (South Amenia).

A typical day for a substitute site manager covers any weekday, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and includes coordinating with OFA's nutrition coordinator, senior site manager, friendship center staff and volunteers. A background check is required. You'll be able to fill in at any site that fits your schedule.

Interested? Send an email, with an attached résumé, if possible, to [ofa@dutchessny.com](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.com); or contact Janet Nuccilli at OFA, during business hours at 845-486-2555.

For more information on OFA's Home Delivered Meals and Friendship Center services, visit [www.dutchessny.gov/ofanutrition](http://www.dutchessny.gov/ofanutrition).

'SAIL' EXERCISE RETURNS FROM HOLIDAY BREAK (Wed 1/7/26)

OFA's "SAIL" (Staying Active and Independent for Life) remote exercise class is on holiday break, and will resume in the new year on Wednesday, January 7th at 10:00 a.m. Classes are also held on Fridays at 2:30 p.m., starting on January 9th.

If you have an internet connection and want to take part in SAIL via "Zoom," contact OFA for details at [ofa@dutchessny.gov](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.gov) or 845-486-2555.

Visit [dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise](http://dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise) for details on all our older adult exercise options.

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