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Impaired driving enforcement effort planned for Super Bowl Weekend

High-visibility crackdown set for Feb. 8-9

Law-enforcement agencies across Dutchess County will take part in a high-visibility enforcement effort during Super Bowl weekend to prevent impaired driving, with increased patrols and checkpoints in place from Sunday, Feb. 8 through Monday, Feb. 9 to keep roads safe and dangerous drivers off local roads. This initiative is designed to protect all motorists during one of the year's peak periods for social gatherings and travel.

Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino said, "Dutchess County's roads should be safe for everyone. We thank the dedicated men and women of law enforcement who work year-round to keep our neighbors safe. Make the winning play during Super Bowl weekend and plan for a safe ride home."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, on average nationally, three people will lose their lives to drunk driving just in the time it takes to watch a football game. Super Bowl weekend historically results in higher rates of alcohol-related driving risks, compared with a typical Sunday, due, in part, to increased social drinking and travel.

Studies show that highly visible community safety efforts can cut impaired-driving deaths by up to 20 percent, and sobriety checkpoints are an important way to bring attention to the issue. The Super Bowl enforcement effort is one of several high-profile campaigns led by the New York State STOP-DWI Association. Similar efforts also take place around Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving and during the December holiday season.

While these initiatives have helped lower the number of alcohol- and drug-related crash deaths across New York, impaired

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Caricature artist Marlene Kryza loves to create fun for everyone



Caricature artist Marlene Kryza, a Hudson Valley transplant, is pictured working in her studio. At right, one of her subjects shows off his portrait during an event. In addition to her artwork, Kryza enjoys building relationships with a wide variety of individuals. *Courtesy photos*

By Morgan E. Maier

Whether the subject is monochrome, tied to a railroad, or a bird shedding colorful plumes in fear, Hudson Valley transplant Marlene Kryza's caricatures capture the side rarely seen off paper. Looking just above her left shoulder, one prepares to feel seen, while each brush stroke reveals a new layer.



A caricature cannot exist without expectations for the exchange. Within minutes, each side knows what the other wants. Will a dead silence blanket the session, or playful conversation? One person begs Marlene to destroy their face. The next wants nothing more than an uncanny resemblance.

Some people simply want to know about Marlene. The interaction becomes

their gateway to finding out: "how does one become a caricature artist?"

The result is a permanent memento, a moment preserved in time, or a relationship dynamic condensed into one representation. A husband's head fills more than one sheet; his proportionally shrunken wife is placed expertly within.

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Marist Women's Basketball 'Pink Game' to honor Miles of Hope on Feb. 7



Breast cancer survivors and Marist women's basketball team members join forces at half-time during the annual Pink Game, set this year for Saturday, Feb. 7. The event includes a fundraising raffle for Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation. *Courtesy photo*

The Marist Athletics Department will host its annual Pink Game on Saturday, Feb. 7, when the women's basketball team faces Saint Peter's at 2 p.m. in McCann Arena at Marist University. Attendees are encouraged to wear pink to show their support for breast cancer awareness.

The game marks the 16th time the Marist Athletics Department will partner with Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation to promote the importance of breast cancer awareness in the Hudson River Valley. Proceeds from the evening's 50-50 raffle will benefit the Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation.

The executive director of the Miles of

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Snowstorm creates interesting scenes



The snowstorm of Sunday, Jan 25, blanketed the area with a sea of white and created a variety of interesting images. Clockwise from top left, corn stalks in a field on the Salt Point Turnpike, a waterfall on the Little Wappingers Creek in the hamlet of Salt Point, a snow-laden Santa at Hummingbird Ranch Farm Store, a decorated barrel at Hackett Farm Supply measures the snow, mountains of snow at Hackett Farm Supply, grave markers at the Salt Point Cemetery, flowers turned into snowballs on Route 44 and snow-covered Cedar bushes on County Route 72. *Photos by Curtis Schmidt and courtesy photo*



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Caricature artist Marlene Kryza loves to create fun for everyone

continued from cover

Live drawings at special occasions are a performance involving everyone - artist, subject, the line of patrons waiting for their moment in the hot seat.

“You get a souvenir, and it’s entertainment at the party. That’s more of a performance because people do not want to have awkward silence. It’s lots of yukking it up with people,” said Marlene, who has drawn at many a bar mitzvah, wedding, birthday occasion and even county fairs.

Marlene verbalizes through gestures and facial expressions. When she is enjoying the ride, you will know. If the track goes awry, you will also know. With the signature “mini golf face,” a theater mask complement to poker face, Marlene is a trained mime with a tangible prop: her marker.

Caricature is an art of trading - the spoken stamp of approval, “I’m going to borrow that,” inks a job well done. Styles are unique to each artist. Some sketch out their drawings, while others use animal features for flourish. Marlene creates each portrait on the spot, prioritizing the recognizable over the fantastical.

“I try not to sacrifice likeness for exaggeration, because you can exaggerate beyond a likeness. I think a really good caricature artist could do both brilliantly,” she said.

Beginning a journey

Love of illustration is not the only driving force behind the caricatures. A deep belief in the art has lived within Marlene since her youth. For her, summers at the fair meant caricatures over cotton candy. At her grandparents’ house, there lived a portrait of her grandma as a princess, and Grandpa the frog. Kissed by a damsel, man becomes amphibian. Written above him was an inside joke Marlene never understood. Still she studied each line, the blend of whimsy and grotesque revealing new details with every visit.

Marlene was drawn years later by a sign on her college campus that read CARICATURE ARTIST WANTED. Seated nearby was Deb, who would become Marlene’s first mentor.

Life-changing caricature kismet ensued, as each offered what the other was seeking. Emboldened by the belief and an early-twenties zeal for testing unknown waters, Marlene took up the craft that very instant. It has hooked her for over 25 years.

The journey sent her from Ohio to Denver, back to the Eastern Seaboard near that New Jersey upbringing. New York City’s South Street Seaport brought Marlene’s first caricature kiosk. Every day she trudged her cabinet across cobblestones and dashed to get it inside at any sign of rain.

Marlene was magnetic for South Street employees, tourists, and native New Yorkers who crossed the stretch daily. Each traveled thresholds of being drawn, of feeling seen. Some beat cancer and completed a bucket list item. Others swapped strolls for a seat under Marlene’s umbrella, emboldened by the seaport’s open air expanse. The bustle brought one unexpected constant: regular customers making annual traditions at Marlene’s hand.

“I never really expected that to be a thing, people getting multiple caricatures, but there would be locals that would come every year for their caricature,” she said.

Fellow performers and clientele crept toward Marlene’s spot with childlike interest. She drew the New York City skyline thousands of times, seared I Love NY within her muscle memory. The drawings stay as memories of the first caricature setup, but also as a reminder of her growth as an artist. Since moving from Brooklyn to the Hudson Valley, Marlene travels New York’s fair circuit from April to October, drawing in counties from Dutchess to Delaware.

Always “lubricating the gears”, Marlene is constantly practicing the craft. She finds beauty in sharing the energy with young artists, seated with curiosity at her table. As many others did throughout her own journey, Marlene Kryza offers the artist’s chair. She gives a marker, statuesque gaze just above their shoulder, and a challenge.

“Draw me.”



One of Marlene Kryza’s subjects is amused by his caricature portrait. Courtesy photo

NORTHERN DUTCHESS NEWS

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Caricature artist Marlene Kryza entertains and works at her easel at the South Street Seaport in New York City. Courtesy photo

‘I try not to sacrifice likeness for exaggeration, because you can exaggerate beyond a likeness. I think a really good caricature artist could do both brilliantly.’

- Marlene Kryza

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Letters must be e-mailed to be considered for publication. We cannot accept handwritten or faxed letters.

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Reader responds to State of the State article

To the editor:
RE: "Hochul unveils ambitious agenda in 2026 State of the State" (January 21)

It was obvious from the first paragraph of this front page 'story' that the article had been written by a public relations person on the Governor's staff, not one of your reporters.

A newspaper slanting their coverage to help their preferred candidate is nothing new. We, as a nation, long ago dismissed the idea that the media is dedicated to revealing and reporting the truth. Whether it is Fox News promoting Republicans or CNN, MSNBC, CBS, NBC, ABC, and others doing all they can to support Democrats, bias in the media is everywhere.

I have no problem that the SDN is working for the Hochul campaign and the Democrat party. What I do have a problem with is you have taken propaganda and masqueraded it as news.

It is insulting and misleading to present spin as reporting. If I want to read Hochul's position, expertly spun to make her appear to be wonderful, I'll go find it on her website.

You published a story that was written by someone who works for the subject of the story and didn't disclose it. In your rules for letters to the editor it states, "The Southern Dutchess News will not be used as a vehicle to place misinformation."

That rule should apply to the editorial content as well.

Matt Williams
Pleasant Valley

Editor's note: The article on the Gov. Kathy Hochul's State of the State address was a rewrite of an article sent by the Governor's office to news outlets around the state. Our editors edited it for clarity and removed many adjectives and comments that ingratiated the Governor. Our goal was purely to provide information for our readers. Our papers do not endorse political candidates or office-holders – local, state or national.

Faster than anyone could have guessed

To the editor:

The U.S. attack on Venezuela takes us back to the 1930s, when a pretentious and histrionic buffoon somehow become the head of the most powerful military in Europe. He claimed that other sovereign nations (Austria, Czechoslovakia, and finally Poland) really belonged to him and his Third Reich. Somehow Germany's richest industrialists (Krupp, I.G. Farben, Siemens, BMW, and Volkswagen) were there to fund his dream of making the Germanic race great again.

So is Trump now moving in a similarly dangerous direction? Like many authoritarians, Trump has moved much faster than anyone could have guessed. He has destroyed freedom of speech on most college campuses with his demands that criticism of the genocidal state of Israel is antisemitic. His billionaire buddies have bought up a great deal of the nations' newspapers and TV stations (Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Rupert Murdoch, Marc Benioff, Larry Ellison, and John Henry). He has taken control of ICE, a private army paid for by the public. And Trump has greatly benefited from the weakest and most corrupt of any modern day opposition party. They are all on the same Israeli payroll.

Now the tyrant is making his list of the next countries to attack. He wants the military to increase its budget by half a trillion next year. And ICE has begun shooting protesters and calling them terrorists. We don't really need to understand the rise of fascism in the '30s. The takeover and destruction of our precious democracy is already upon us.

Fred Nagel
Rhinebeck

OUR POLICY ON LETTERS

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

Impaired driving enforcement effort planned for Super Bowl Weekend

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driving continues to claim too many lives. Well publicized campaigns like STOP-DWI are designed to further reduce these dangerous and preventable crashes.

Drivers can do their part by planning ahead for a sober ride. The free "Have a Plan" mobile app helps users find safe transportation options and is available at stopdwi.org/mobileapp.

Vassar Brothers Medical Center named 'one of America's 50 Best Hospitals'

Vassar Brothers Medical Center (VBMC) has been named one of America's 50 Best Hospitals by Healthgrades. This achievement, Healthgrades' highest honor for clinical excellence, places VBMC among the top 1% of hospitals nationwide for the 10th consecutive year.

In addition to this distinction for overall care, VBMC earned national and state recognition for exceptional patient outcomes in key service areas, including:

- One of Healthgrades America's 100 Best Hospitals for Cardiac Care.
- One of Healthgrades America's 100 Best Hospitals for Critical Care for two years in a row.
- #3 in New York for Critical Care.
- Five-Star Recipient for treatment of coronary interventional procedures, heart attack, heart failure, sepsis, respiratory failure, COPD, pneumonia, and Upper Gastrointestinal Surgeries.

"These recognitions reflect the skill, compassion and unwavering dedication of every member of our team," said Susan Browning, President of Vassar Brothers Medical Center. "Year after year, our clinicians and staff deliver exceptional care to our community, and we are proud to once again be named among America's 50 Best Hospitals. Quality, patient safety and outstanding outcomes remain the foundation of everything we do."

VBMC's achievement is based solely on what matters most: patient outcomes. To determine America's 50 Best Hospitals for 2026, Healthgrades evaluated risk-adjusted mortality and complication rates for more than 30 of the most common conditions and procedures at approximately 4,500 hospitals nationwide.

Healthgrades' analysis shows outcomes continue to vary widely between the nation's highest- and lowest-performing hospitals. If all hospitals performed similarly to America's 50 Best, an estimated 209,081 lives could have been saved between 2022 and 2024.* These findings show the importance of choosing a hospital with a proven record of excellence.

"This year's America's Best Hospitals list gives patients a clearer picture of where high-quality care is delivered most consistently," said Alana Biggers, MD, MPH, medical advisor at Healthgrades. "Patients can feel confident in their decision to seek care at Vassar Brothers Medical Center, an organization setting the standard for clinical excellence nationwide."

Consumers can visit Healthgrades' America's Best Patient Advocate Center to learn more about how Healthgrades identifies national leaders in quality and outcomes.

*Statistics are based on Healthgrades analysis of MedPAR data for years 2022–2024 and represent three-year estimates for Medicare patients only. Visit Healthgrades.com to view the complete 2026 America's Best Hospital Awards Methodology.

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Union Vale Fire Department works to raise funds by ‘Picking up the Tab’

The Union Vale Fire Company began collecting aluminum beverage tabs for the Ronald McDonald House Charities in Albany the end of 2024. To date, 169 pounds of aluminum tabs have been collected for the charity.

Union Vale Fire District Public Information Officer Kathy Welsh has partnered with the Eastern District Home Bureau of NYS Federation of Home Bureau Inc. which includes Home Bureau Eastern District Chairperson Alice Dickson, Dutchess County Home Bureau Chairperson Anne Christmas, and Eastern District/Dutchess County Home Bureau Community Service Chairperson Marie Elliott to collect aluminum tabs for Ronald McDonald House Charities.

Welsh said, “When I heard the Home Bureau was collecting aluminum tabs for a worthy cause, it occurred to me that we could help to collect even more aluminum tabs and invite the public to participate.” And the public has come through in flying colors!

“For example, 2nd Asst. Chief Travis Floyd of Wassaic Fire Rescue “The Blue Crew” noticed our campaign on social media and decided they would collect tabs for us,” said Welsh. As a surprise in December 2025, they delivered 5 pounds of tabs right to the firehouse!

“These tabs will be given to the Ronald McDonald House in Albany to help with their heating expenses. We are

very grateful to Kathy Welsh, the fire department, and the entire community for partnering with us and helping to support this project,” said Community Service Chairperson Marie Elliott.

Elliott added, “As a result of Dutchess County sharing this collaborative effort at a state meeting, other areas have begun to initiate their own collaborations to benefit their local Ronald McDonald houses.”

Welsh said the fire company will continue their campaign. As a courtesy, and for the public’s convenience, there is a drop-off container at the Union Vale Town Hall, 249 Duncan Road, where the public can bring their aluminum tabs Monday through Thursday, 9 am to 4 pm.

“We are very happy to help the Eastern District Home Bureau of NYS to ultimately help Ronald McDonald House Charities,” said Welsh.

The Union Vale Fire Company is located in Dutchess County, NY. www.UVFDNY.org

Dutchess County Home Bureau, part of the New York State Federation of Home Bureaus, is a women’s organization centered around crafting with a focus on community service, fellowship, and family life. Their local community service efforts focus on helping veterans, those in nursing care facilities, and babies born at Northern Dutchess Hospital and Albany Medical Center.



Members of the Wassaic Fire Rescue “The Blue Crew” delivered five pounds of aluminum tabs to the Union Vale Fire Department in December. Second Assistant. Chief Travis Floyd noticed the Union Vale campaign a year ago and had his crew start saving tabs. And, as a surprise, he delivered them to the Union Vale Fire Department to help out Ronald McDonald House Charities. From left are Wassaic FD Junior Firefighter Nathan Monty, Union Vale FD Public Information Officer Kathy Welsh and Wassaic FD 2nd Asst. Chief Travis Floyd. Courtesy photo

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Postal Service seeks help keeping access to mailboxes clear of snow

The Postal Service is reaching out to communities throughout Upstate New York to raise public awareness on the importance of keeping walkways, sidewalks, and approaches to mailboxes clear from snow and ice so carriers can provide safe mail delivery.

Any amount of snow can cause a dangerous situation for mail carriers and others. Keeping a clear path to and around mailboxes will help mail carriers continue consistent delivery as well as keep them safe from potential slipping and/or injuries.

The Postal Service is issuing the following snow removal tips:

- Clear enough snow from curbside boxes to allow mail trucks to approach

the box, deliver mail, and to drive away without the need for backing or departing the vehicle.

- Walkways should be cleared of snow and ice, allowing enough traction to avoid slips, trips or falls.
- Steps and handrails should be kept clear of ice and snow and in good repair to avoid injury to letter carriers or others.
- Overhangs should be free of snow and ice as well to reduce the risk of falling debris.

Customers with questions or comments about their mail service can contact the Postal Service at 1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777) or by clicking on Contact Us at the bottom of the Postal Service’s USPS.com homepage.

Get Well Rich!

A photograph of a man in a cowboy hat and a woman standing behind a table filled with jars of honey. The man is Rich Focht of Hummingbird Ranch Farm Store. The table has various honey products, including jars and bottles. A sign in the background says "Local Raw Honey" and "Hive Mix".

Rich Focht of Hummingbird Ranch Farm Store fell and broke an ankle. Wishing you a quick recovery.

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Staff at Pleasant Valley Department Store
Craig Marshall, Town of Clinton Historian
Staff at Jeanie Bean & Family Delicatessen
Diana Ritchie & Westminster Presbyterian Church, Salt Point

A collage of food items including a burger, a pizza, a salad, and a drink. The logo for Coppola's Ristorante is in the top right corner.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Skating rink open to the public

Town of Clinton Recreation announces that the Friends Park Ice Skating Rink is open to the public for open ice skating, weather permitting. Helmets encouraged. Friends Park is at 2350 Salt Point Turnpike, Clinton Corners.

Stanford Grange's upcoming events

The Travel Club of Stissing Mountain Junior - Senior High School in Pine Plains will serve a Spaghetti & Meatball Dinner on Saturday, February 7, at the Stanford Grange Hall, 6043 Route 82, Stanfordville. All dinners are take out only at 5 p.m. The menu will include spaghetti, meatballs, side salad, Italian garlic bread, and dessert. Donation is \$17 per dinner. Total proceeds will benefit the Travel Club's trip to Greece during the summer of 2026. For reservations, contact Stanford Grange Secretary and Travel Club Co-Advisor Ryan Orton at (518) 398-7181 Ext. 1144 or (845) 868-7869, and leave a message.

Stanford Grange #808 will serve a Chicken & Biscuits Dinner on Saturday, February 21, at the Stanford Grange Hall, 6043 Route 82, Stanfordville. All dinners are take out only at 5 p.m. The menu will include chicken with gravy, mashed potatoes, homemade biscuits, peas, carrot salad, and Chocolate Cherry Dump Cake for dessert. Donation is \$17 per dinner. For reservations, call Grange Secretary Ryan Orton at (845) 868-7869, and leave a message.

'The Nature of Nature' film screening & panel discussion set Feb. 8 at Bard

Bard College will present a screening and panel discussion of the documentary film, "The Nature of Nature: Biodiversity in the Hudson Valley," followed by panel discussion and reception, on Sunday, Feb. 8, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. The screening will take place in the Olin Humanities Auditorium, 35 Henderson Circle, Campus Road, Annandale-on-Hudson. Park in the Olin Commuter Parking Lot.

An ode to the remarkable variety of life in the Hudson Valley, the film celebrates the living fabric of this unique landscape. From high elevation forests to the globally rare tidal marshes along the Hudson estuary, the 30-minute documentary film captures the beautiful, the complex, the familiar, and the unknown ... guided by the plants, animals, and people that call the Hudson Valley home. More details on panelists to come.

Reception to follow event. Free admission; registration required at <https://www.bard.edu/news/events/>

DAR to meet virtually Feb. 8

The Chancellor Livingston Chapter NSDAR will meet on Sunday, Feb. 8, via Zoom at 2 p.m. business (members only); with speaker at 2:30 (open to the public). As we celebrate America 250, the DAR continues to recognize under-recognized patriots. The program will feature a female patriot, Rebecca Brewton Motte, presented by CLC member Amanda Hodges who now resides in Charleston, who will discuss and show a video of Rebecca Motte, Firestarter. Free. For information about this meeting or how to become a member, email Doris at darrhinebeck@gmail.com. Zoom Meeting ID: 697 483 1531. Passcode: 310471

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 csaniew.ki1@gmail.com for more information.

Skilled Trades Fair to returns to Arlington High School Feb. 11

On Wednesday, Feb. 11, Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino's Skilled Trades Fair, in partnership with the Arlington Central School District, will return to Arlington High School, 1157 Route 55 in Lagrangeville, from 6 to 8 p.m. This free event is open to all Dutchess County residents and no RSVP is required to attend.

The County Executive's Skilled Trades Fairs connect hundreds of students and their families with diverse career opportunities in the Hudson Valley in fields such as construction, electrical work, plumbing, masonry, and more.

Participating businesses will have a unique opportunity to engage with motivated students and adults, eager to explore careers in their trades. Local businesses and trade organizations interested in showcasing their opportunities at the fair are encouraged to register online at dutchessny.gov/AHSTradesFair or contact the Dutchess County Executive's Office at 845-486-2000 or CountyExec@dutchessny.gov. There is no fee to participate, however space is limited, and spots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Repair Cafe set Feb. 14 at Brookmeade

Don't toss it...fix it! Bring items in need of repair to free Repair Café at the Pavilion at Brookmeade, 34 Brookmeade Dr., Rhinebeck, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 14. We love keeping fixable things out of landfills. Coaches offer repairs, as well as advice for fixing broken but beloved items – mechanical, electrical, electronic, metal, wood, ceramic, jewelry, clothing – you name it! Knife sharpening is also available.

Sponsored by Sustainable Hudson Valley. In case of inclement weather, please confirm the event by checking <https://www.repaircafehvh.org/rhinebeck> or emailing elaine.rhinebeckrepaircafe@gmail.com. Future Rhinebeck Repair Cafes will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on May 9, Aug 8, and Nov 14.

Film screening in Kingston Feb. 15

Sunday, February 15, from 2 to 5 p.m., at the Old Dutch Church, 272 Wall St., Kingston, NY. Showing of "Gaza Fights For Freedom," a must-see debut feature film, directed by Abby Martin, that shows you Gaza's protest movement like you've never seen before. Thought provoking and inspiring cinematic portrayal of Palestinians' heroic resistance to oppression, repression and ethnic cleansing from their homeland. Free admission and community reflection/discussion after the film. Cosponsored by: Middle East Crisis Response mideastcrisis.org, Columbia County for Palestine, JVP Hudson Valley, Mid Hudson Valley DSA, New Paltz Quaker Meeting, Peace Education Center, Rally Middletown, Veterans For Peace, and Women In Black - New Paltz. Contact: mecr@mideastcrisis.org or 845 876-7906

Winter Rhinecliff Soup Sales

Winter Rhinecliff Soup Sales, sponsored by Rhinebeck Grange #896, are offered on the third Thursday of the Month: 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 to be emailed the soup choices for each month and pre-order online.

Rhinebeck Garden Club to meet Feb. 25

The Rhinebeck Garden Club's monthly meeting is set Wednesday, Feb. 26, at 10 a.m., at

BABY CHICKS & ROSES EVENT

SET FEB. 13 AT HACKETT FARM SUPPLY

The staff of Hackett Farm Supply in Clinton Corners has scheduled a Night of Baby Chicks & Roses from 5-8 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 13. The store is located at 2297 Salt Point Turnpike, just off the Taconic State Parkway.

The event includes the following:

- A complimentary glass of champagne or sparkling cider
- Pick up baby chicks and/or roses for someone special
- Chat with Morgan from Poulin Grain
- Sign up to win free poultry feed for a year
- Test your chicken knowledge to win prizes

To pre-order baby chicks and roses, call the store at 845-266-3494 or text 845-309-8686.

Rhinebeck Village Hall, 76 East Market Street. Speaker Ashley Gamell of Partners for Climate Action Hudson Valley, will talk about the design of Rhinebeck's new pollinator demonstration garden, located at the east entrance of the Municipal Parking Lot. Gamell's presentation will highlight the vision behind the garden, the native plant species selected for the site, and the role pollinator-friendly landscapes play in supporting local ecosystems. The meeting is open to the public but guests are asked to join after attending two meetings. The 2026 Yearbook will be distributed and reviewed. Refreshments served. For more information about this program, or the RBGC or upcoming programs, please contact Sue, 845-797-3226.

Menopause Journey program

"Change is Inevitable: Courage and Confidence through Midlife Transitions" is set February 26 from 7-9 p.m. at the Starr Library, 68 W Market St, Rhinebeck (downstairs; use back door for entry.) This event is designed to empower and educate women navigating the perimenopause/menopause journey. Dr. Amy Novatt will lead an informative discussion that covers hormonal changes, HRT, and body image, and certified life and health coach Marybeth Cale will facilitate activities designed to help guests consider what makes them thrive and what action steps they can take to optimize feelings of well-being. Space is limited; reservations required. Learn more at estuarycoaching.com/packages.

Hyde Park Chamber Breakfast set March 12

The Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce will hold its next Breakfast Meeting on Thursday, March 12, from 7:30 to 9 a.m., at the Eveready Diner, 4184 Albany Post Road (Route 9), Hyde Park. The speaker will be Patricia Munk, Dutchess County Emergency Response. The cost to attend is \$25 per member, \$30 per non-member. Advance reservations are requested via www.hydeparkchamber.org; payment online or at the door.

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.starlibrary.org. The library is at 68 West Market St., Rhinebeck.

Chess: First Monday, 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 web site at www.pleasantvalleycommunitygardens.com.

The Frederick W. Vanderbilt Garden Association seeks volunteers to perform all tasks required to plant and maintain the formal gardens on the grounds of the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site in Hyde Park. No gardening expertise is needed, training is provided as the volunteers work. Volunteers must be age 18 or older and be able to perform, at minimum, basic physical labor such as bending, kneeling and carrying buckets. Garden work is done during the spring, summer and fall months on Saturday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The Association also offers a "Greeter Program" on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. At least two-volunteers are needed for each afternoon. No gardening involved. The Greeter volunteers encourage visitation to the formal garden through the provision of self-guided tour brochures and explanation of the garden emphasizing the volunteerism involved in the garden maintenance and the need for community support through monetary donations. Work as often and on any days that suit your schedule. For further information, e-mail volunteers@vanderbiltgarden.org or visit www.vanderbiltgarden.org.

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 or, contact Andrea Tkazyik at (845) 229-5896.

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Pine Plains tracksters shine at Section 9 meet

By Morgan E. Maier

The first month of 2026 has come and gone for the county’s winter sports teams. It has been 31 days of work, personal records and learning experiences in the pool, around the track and on the hardwood. Some personal bests in indoor track and field highlighted the waning days of January, while basketball’s unstoppable squads flirt with perfection (records as of Jan. 31).

Bombers soar at Section 9 - Always aiming for higher, whether its podium or personal records, Pine Plains earned a plethora of hardware at the Section 9 indoor track and field championships.

National qualifiers Violet Bliss (#14 in NYS, 1M) and Daniel McPherson showcased their distance running and sprinting strengths. McPherson took 1st in the 3200m and 2nd in the 1000m. Bliss had a pair of silver medals, in the 3000m and 1500m events. Both Pine Plains teams took top honors in the 4x400 relay. Michelle Blackburn, Bliss, Madison Jennings and Madison Williams earned 1st place in the girls’ race. Sean Geiesler, Colin Stevens, Matthew Spada and McPherson took third overall in the boys’ event. On January 11, Blackburn became the school record holder (1:42.02) in the

600m. She finished 3rd overall in the race at the Section 9 championships. Edelhthom Puido Palma had the Bombers on top in the field events, placing 1st in the weight throw, and second in shotput.

Spartans keep the clean slate - The Spackenkill boys’ basketball team was undefeated in six January contests, scoring 77 points per game while allowing 45. The Spartans’ tear comes at a critical turn of the season, with six games to go in the regular season. One match sits between the Spartans and an undefeated Division-III (Section IX) campaign. The team will close out the regular season on Feb. 19, visiting Onteora for one final divisional matchup.

Vassar’s Schoenegge makes D-III history - Down at Boston University on Jan. 30, Poughkeepsie was well-placed at the Terrier Classic. Haley Schoenegge, a junior at Vassar College, set the all-time Division-III record in the 1000m (1K) track event. Schoenegge’s career-best, set a week earlier, had hardly hung in her record books before the Kentucky native crushed the mark - shaving nine seconds off among a field of athletes from Division-I and Division-II. Her 2:50.14 time earned an eighth place finish and marked the fastest D-III time in NCAA history.

Storm prompts emergency appeal for blood donors

Thousands of donations lost due to dangerous travel conditions and weather-related disruptions

New York Blood Center (NYBC) and New Jersey Blood Services (NJBS) today announced they are extending their blood emergency appeal for an additional two weeks after a historic winter storm brought blood donation operations across the region to a standstill, wiping out critical progress made in rebuilding the local blood supply.

The storm dropped more than a foot and a half of snow in parts of the region and forced the cancellation of all NYBC and NJBS operations on Sunday, Jan. 25. Weather-related disruptions have continued, resulting in the loss of nearly 2,000 blood donations, a sudden and significant setback at a time when inventories had just begun to recover. This marks the first time NYBC has been forced to extend an already-declared blood emergency due to a severe weather event.

Earlier this month, NYBC and NJBS declared a blood emergency as supplies reached critically low levels. While initial donor response helped stabilize inventories, the storm erased that progress almost overnight, creating an urgent and

renewed need for blood donations.

“This storm could not have come at a worse time,” said Jeannie Mascolino, Vice President of Blood Operations at New York Blood Center and New Jersey Blood Services. “We were just starting to rebuild the blood supply when nearly 2,000 lifesaving donations were lost in a matter of days. Patients don’t get a snow day; surgeries, cancer treatments, traumas, and emergencies continue, and we need donors to help us recover.”

NYBC and NJBS are urging all eligible blood donors, especially those with O-, O+, and B- blood types, to give blood or platelets in the coming days to help stabilize the supply. All blood types are urgently needed. To view current eligibility guidelines or make an appointment, donors can call 1-800-933-2566 or visit nybc.org.

In light of recent updates to FDA guidance, more people than ever may now be eligible to give. Blood donors can give every 56 days, and platelet donors can give twice per month. To help prevent future shortages, NYBC and NJBS encourage donors to become All Seasons Lifesavers by donating once each season. NYBC and NJBS also offer additional donor loyalty programs that recognize consistent giving throughout the year. Learn more at www.nybc.org.

Marist Women’s Basketball ‘Pink Game’ to honor Miles of Hope Feb. 7

continued from cover

Hope Breast Cancer Foundation, Pari Forood, has enjoyed having a close relationship with Marist.

“Every year, Marist sports teams play a pink game honoring breast cancer survivors and raising awareness for this disease,” Forood said. “Miles of Hope funds support services, education and outreach for people affected by breast cancer within the nine counties of the Hudson Valley and one of the reasons we are so successful is because of partners like Marist.”

At halftime, the Marist Athletics Department and Miles of Hope will recognize breast cancer survivors with a special on-court ceremony. Survivors interested in taking part in the event should contact Assistant Athletics Director for

External Affairs, Harrison Baker, via email at harrison.baker@marist.edu.

The first 500 fans to enter the arena will receive a free pink T-shirt to raise awareness in the fight against breast cancer. Visit <https://milesofhope.org/> for tickets and more information.

The Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) public charity established in March 2004. The mission of the foundation is to fund support services, education and outreach for people affected by breast cancer within the nine counties of the Hudson Valley, New York (Columbia, Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester, Rockland, and Orange, Ulster, Greene, and Sullivan counties).



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Assistant County Executive Ronald Hicks to retire from government service



Ronald Hicks

Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino has announced the upcoming retirement from government service of Assistant County Executive Ronald Hicks. Hicks, who will officially retire May 1, has dedicated more than 30 years in public service across several layers of government, including the past decade in his current role.

Serino said, “Ron has been a tireless advocate for our neighbors, always working to make government accessible, accountable and efficient. His leadership in economic development and his dedication to making government more responsive have made Dutchess County a model throughout New York State. The impact of his work will reap positive benefits

throughout our community for years to come.”

Hicks, a fourth-generation Dutchess County resident, began a career of public service with a college internship with the Office of the Speaker of the New York State Assembly, where he had the opportunity to assist a frustrated and exhausted constituent find a solution to their difficult situation. This experience gave him a firsthand understanding of the power and influence of government to solve problems and in many cases be life-changing for individuals. The experience propelled a career in public service that included multiple leadership roles in both State and County government, including District Director for the late Assemblymember Eileen Hickey, Dutchess County Deputy County Clerk, Regional Director for former Gov. George Pataki and Regional Director for Empire State Development.

In 2012, he returned to Dutchess County Government to serve as Deputy Commissioner for Strategic Planning & Economic Development and was responsible for transforming the County’s economic development program. He forged strong and productive partnerships with community-based, economic, and educational organizations, and led the establishment of the County’s Economic Development Advisory Council and the Think Dutchess Alliance for Business. In 2015, he was appointed Assistant County Executive for Economic Development, serving as senior policy advisor aiding in the oversight and strategic planning of County departments, agencies and public

authorities, including overseeing contracts and initiatives tied to employment, workforce, agribusiness, tourism and economic development.

Hicks’ many other accomplishments during his Dutchess County Government tenure include:

- Consolidated and collocated the primary economic development organizations in Dutchess County to establish the Think Dutchess Alliance for Business;
- Established and managed the Economic Development Advisory Council (EDAC);
- Oversaw the implementation of best practices, policies and measures that held the authorities accountable;
- Established a local workforce utilization policy;
- Oversaw the rebranding and business development of the County’s airport as Hudson Valley Regional Airport (HVRA);
- Collaborated extensively with Dutchess Community College (DCC) for the creation of workforce development pipelines that provide residents with a low-cost pathway to high-demand careers, including the establishment of the school’s Aviation Education Center at HVRA, which included a new \$14 million hangar, as well as DCC’s Mechatronics Lab in Fishkill.
- Reduced Dutchess County’s industrial vacancy rate from 14% to 2%;
- Increased the LDC’s financing portfolio by more than \$1 billion; and
- Attracted more than 3 million square feet of commercial development.

Hicks said, “I am deeply thankful to

County Executive Sue Serino. From the beginning, we connected through our shared values, a common commitment to public service and a strong ethical foundation, something that is both uncommon and truly meaningful to me. Leaving government service is genuinely bittersweet, especially because I so deeply appreciated the chance to work by her side. We are aligned in what matters most, and beyond that, she leads with a level of empathy, sincerity and caring that is rare to find. It has been a true honor to serve the residents of Dutchess County, to work under Sue’s leadership and to stand with an extraordinary team of colleagues I trust and respect.”

As part of Hicks’ retirement transition, Serino has designated Eoin Wrafter, Commissioner of Planning and Development, to support project facilitation and other Assistant County Executive responsibilities, with Deputy Commissioner Jennifer Coccozza assuming expanded oversight of the Planning Department’s day-to-day operations.

“From day one, Ron has been a trusted part of my team, and I am fortunate to have had his wisdom, advice and leadership over the past two years. Although we will miss his guidance and insight daily, I’m comforted knowing he’ll continue to call Dutchess County home and am excited to see what the next chapter brings for my friend. I can’t thank Ron enough for his many years of dedicated service to the people of Dutchess County, and I wish him nothing but happiness and success in his well-deserved retirement from government service,” concluded Serino.

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- 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.

Serino allocates \$12K to expand local libraries’ digital collections

Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino has partnered with the Dutchess County Library Association to expand the eBook and audiobook collection available across all 22 libraries in Dutchess County with a \$12,000 Agency Partner Grant to give residents greater access to digital titles.

Serino said, “Libraries are a central part of our communities, opening doors to learning, comfort, and connection. The popularity of digital titles helps expand these connections, but are a costly challenge for our local libraries. I am thrilled to partner with the Dutchess County Library Association to help offset some of these costs and expand their collections—giving our neighbors more flexible opportunities to read, learn, and feel connected, wherever they are.”

eBooks and audiobooks continue to become more and more popular for book lovers, offering flexible options for busy schedules and accessible formats that accommodate different reading preferences and needs. However, eBooks and audiobooks create new challenges for local libraries as they are much more costly compared to print copies. To provide digital titles, the Dutchess County Library Association uses Libby, as user-friendly app. Under the Libby model,

libraries must purchase special licensing to allow them to lend to multiple users. These licenses must be renewed periodically, or after a set number of checkouts, and ultimately cost libraries three to four times more than print editions of the same book. These higher costs can often limit the number of digital titles offered, leading to longer waiting times and reduced access for residents seeking high-demand titles.

With the Agency Partner Grant, Serino is helping expand DCLA’s digital collection, increasing access to hundreds of new titles. Current titles are available at <https://mhls.overdrive.com/> or by downloading the Libby app from the Apple or Google Play app store. A valid library card is required to sign in and access book titles within the Dutchess County library system.

Carol Bancroft, President of the Dutchess County Library Association said, “We are grateful to County Executive Serino and the County for providing the funding that makes the expansion of our digital collection possible. Their support is a meaningful and important step toward meeting the growing needs of our community and ensuring that everyone can access our titles that fits naturally into their lives.”

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--HELD OVER--

Send Help (R)

Iron Lung (R)

Shelter (R)

Hamnet (PG13)

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It's 'Tree O'Clock' somewhere

Country artist Alan Jackson sang, “It’s only half-past twelve, but I don’t care. It’s five o’clock somewhere.” Frustrated with the long work-day, Jackson knew that only part of our Earth can be illuminated at once; it’s sunset in another place. The performer’s home in Nashville, just like here, is in the Eastern Standard Time Zone. (So, if it’s 12:15 p.m. in Dutchess County, it’s 5:15 p.m. in London.)

Time is measured by rotation and revolution, but it’s all about the tilt!
Earth’s rotation is demonstrated every 24 hours with the cycles of day and night. Our planet also completes a revolution around the sun in a year. But unless you are an astronomer or regularly observe celestial bodies with your telescope, the most obvious sign of Earth’s orbit is the seasons.

Yet, if it weren’t for axial tilt, there would be no seasons! The tilt is what causes Earth’s hemispheres to receive differing amount of sunlight throughout the year. An Earth that sat straight would be one with constant climates at the different latitudes. A constant climate everywhere would alter many aspects of life, especially agriculture. Cultural practices worldwide would be effected since rituals, traditions, and holidays are tied to the seasons.

Arbor Days aren’t always in April
Fortunately, Earth is tilted about 23.5 degrees from the plane of its orbit around the sun. Because of that, Februaries in our

locale produce cold winters. We won’t celebrate Arbor day till planting season in April. In contrast, Villanueva de la Sierra in Spain has moist winters. They will celebrate Arbor Day February 17, 2026.

Tu BiShvat, also called Jewish Arbor Day or “New Year for Trees,” likewise occurs in January or February of (our) Gregorian Calendar. The festival is observed on the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat. That is when most of Israel’s winter rains have fallen, signaling the spring season and the beginning of a new fruit-bearing cycle.

Rabbi Zalman Sandhaus is the Rabbi at The Pardess Center for Jewish Life, which operates a farm and seasonal kosher market in Hopewell Junction. Rabbi Sandhaus shared some philosophy behind Tu BiShvat: “A person can be compared to a fruit tree. Our values are like roots. When they are strong, we are resilient to adversity. Strong values allow us to grow and become ‘fruitful’ by doing good deeds, which may make a positive impression on others and inspire them to do the same.”

Other Arbor Days occur differently across the globe. In Egypt, the January 15th day coincides with the country’s mild winter climate. South Africa celebrates Arbor Week at the beginning of September, their springtime. Cambodia’s and Mexico’s July Arbor Days were established by political decrees. Australia has two separate celebrations in July to encourage people to collaborate in tree planting across the country.

The first Arbor Day
A granite marker in the Spanish village of Mondoñedo commemorates the world’s first documented tree planting celebration in 1594. In 1805, Villanueva de la Sierra had its first tree-planting festival, in conjunction with Carnival Tuesday (the last day of feasting before the start of the Christian fasting period of Lent). In 1872, the first Arbor Day, as it known today, began in the plains of Nebraska. People were encouraged to plant trees for windbreaks, fuel, building materials, and shade. Arbor Day has since become globalized.

No original ideas; only original adaptations
Tree-planting days and traditions tied to religious or cultural practices predate those documented “firsts.” India’s National Festival of Tree Planting was initially celebrated in 1947, yet the custom is related to ancient scriptures of Hinduism, which teach that trees are sacred and that deities reside in them. Similarly, the Shinto and Japanese cultures (10,000 BCE – 300 CE) included beliefs in gods that are thought to inhabit



Community gathers for Tu BiShvat festivities at Schomre Israel in Poughkeepsie. Below: A blindfold tasting has been part of previous Tu BiShvat festivities at Schomre Israel. Photos courtesy of Rabbi Shlomo Krasner, Congregation Schomre Israel

it trees and sacred forests. Tu BiShvat began nearly 2,000 years ago. Jewish farmers used the date to mark the age of their fruit trees; religious laws forbade the eating of the fruit before the tree’s maturity.

Rabbi Shlomo Krasner of Congregation Schomre Israel in Poughkeepsie described Tu BiShvat as a day to bless agriculture for contributing to our livelihood and health. At Schomre Israel, Tu BiShvat is celebrated in original ways! They have hosted classes such as fruit carving and candy making, DIY sushi, and citron liqueur; They have served a “miracle fruit bar,” 100+ kinds of exotic fruits and nuts, cheese and grape juice pairings; as well as hosted blindfolded weird exotic tastings.

The temple’s way of celebrating “New Year for Trees,” as well as all of the observances of “Arbor Day” around the word, share something with the song “It’s Five O’Clock Somewhere”: They are all Original Adaptations. The version of the song you are most used to hearing,

recorded by Jackson and Jimmy Buffet, was written by other musicians, was a common phrase before the song was written in 2003, and was a quote attributed to Red Skelton in 1959.

Arbor Day is globally varied and locally specific. Whatever version of it was first celebrated is open to debate. The holiday is about practical environmental action that is adapted to the ecological needs of each regional climate. It might not be tree o’clock here, but it is somewhere.

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



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County Players to present Aaron Sorkin’s ‘A Few Good Men’

County Players, one of the longest-running community theater companies in the area, will present “A Few Good Men” by Aaron Sorkin. This Main Stage production directed by Michael J. Froehnhoefer opens Friday, Feb. 6, with additional performances scheduled for Fridays and Saturdays Feb. 7, 13, 14, 20, 21 at 8 p.m., with matinees on Sunday, Feb. 15, and Saturday, Feb. 21 at 2 p.m., at the County Players Falls Theatre, 2681 West Main St., in the Village of Wappingers Falls.

Court is in session. One woman fighting for her place in a world of men, two young Marines accused of murder, and a world in which lives and nations hang on the precision of orders followed. But if lives depend on following orders, where do you draw the line? See the hard-hitting drama that launched Aaron Sorkin’s brilliant career.

The production features the local talents of Christopher Alvarez, Jason Anson, Mike Boden, Paul Coleman, Cora Colwell, Matthew DeHond, Jack Ellwanger, Ana Hein, Aaron Heisler, John Leinung, Glen Macken, Kevin McCarthy Jr., Keller Mickle, Rebecca Nagle, Dante Nastasi, Vincent Peter, David J. Ringwood, and Jeffrey Sculley.

Of this production, director Froehnhoefer says, “Most remember the line: ‘You can’t handle the truth,’ but a line that resonates is, ‘You don’t need to wear a patch on your arm to have honor.’ When watching this show you will see how each character defines honor, and grapples with it in very different ways. We are all human, and I want to believe that we all strive to find honor in our lives. Let us help each other find it.”

Tickets are \$26 adults, \$24 senior 60+, military, students (with ID at the door)



The Cast of “A Few Good Men.” Performances are at County Players in Wappingers Falls from Feb. 6 to 21. Photo courtesy of Louisa Vilardi Photography

and children under age 12. Individual tickets are available online in advance of performance dates at countyplayers.org and the Box Office is open for in-person ticket sales one hour before each performance. Visit <https://countyplayers.org/a-few-good-men/>

This production of “A Few Good Men” is supported by Gold Show Sponsors: Denny & Rosemary Evaul and is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals, on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. (concordtheatricals.com).

Hudson Valley Credit Union proudly sponsors County Players’ 68th Season.

Accessibility: County Players Falls Theatre is equipped with an assistive listening system for the hard of hearing. If you require wheelchair accessibility, please contact the Box Office at (845) 298-1491.

For more information, visit the website or go to twitter.com/countyplayers, instagram.com/countyplayers/ or facebook.com/countyplayers.

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DOT-TO-DOT PUZZLE

See page 14 for finished puzzle (no peeking!)

Stars

Stop at each star (★), then skip to the next number and start your line again. End ★ 109

By David Kalvitis

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The Dutchess County Library Association (DCLA) will present “Warming Winter Soups with Holly Shelowitz,” a virtual event taking place on Zoom on Thursday, Feb. 19, at 6 p.m.

Patrons from any library in Dutchess County are welcome to attend, but registration is required to receive the Zoom link. Check with your local library for more information.

CROSSWORD

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Fun at the DMV

Pop takes a couple of wrong turns when trying to register his car.

I recently had to go to the DMV to get a new license. It reminded me of when Pop went to the DMV to register his car.

Pop: Luigi listen, I gotta geta the car registered.

Me: That's easy Pop; you can just mail it in.

Pop: No, Ia waited to long and itsa gotta be done in two days.

Me: You want me to go do it for you?

Pop: No. Ima gonna go. Is it ina the same place.

Me: Yeah, Pop, right on Market Street. But Pop, you've got to make an appointment now.

Pop: Nonja you worry. Ima gonna be fine.

Me: Pop, you gotta make an appointment.

Pop: Yeah. Yeah. Whatta you thin, Ima the olda man?

Two hours later he walks back into the restaurant.

Me: Wow! That was fast! How did you do it so fast?

Pop: I noa getta done. I waited a half hour just for a the parking space. Ia tried to go inside and the girla shea yella at me. I tolda her, Ima old. Shea tells me I have to make an appointment.

Me: Oh, God. Then what happened?

Pop: She let me inside and there were no a lotta people there. So I tried to walka up to the desk and they yelled at me to get

a ticket and waita my turn. I said Ima old. They no care. I wenta to taka the ticket and I push all kinds ofa buttons and I get 5 tickets. The guard hea yellsa ata me. I askda hima for help. I tolda him Ima old man and he told me I hava to waita my turn.

Me: So what did you do?

Pop: I saida some things in Italian and hea understood me. He yella at me, so Ia left.

Me: That lasted two hours?

Pop: No. I lefta the parking lot and I mada the right. Did you know itsa one way?

Me: Oh, God.

Pop: The police hea stopsa me. I said Ima sorry. Ima old. So he yellsa at me. I turna the car around with all the other cars yelling and push their horns.

Me: That lasted two hours?

Pop: No I wenta up Main Street and Ia maka the right downa a Liberty Street. You know that ita no a street? Ita only a sidewalk now?

Me: Oh, God. So what happened?

Pop: The sama policeman he come over and hea starta yelling ata me again. I tella him Ima old. He giva me a ticketa.

Me: So then you came here?

Pop: Yeah. Hersa the registration anda the ticketa. Cana you do it for me?

Me: Yeah Pop no problem. (I look at the registration) Hey, Pop? What month is it now?

Pop: June; why?

Me: This registration isn't due till July.

Pop: Somnagum!

Tip of the day: When you need to register your car, make sure you have the correct date. In the meantime, here is a nice recipe with mushrooms.

THREE MUSHROOM SAUCE

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pound crimini mushrooms, sliced
- ¼ pound fresh shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- ¼ pound fresh morel mushrooms, sliced
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 ounces white wine
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 8 ounces of your favorite pasta
- 1 ½ teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
- 1 ½ teaspoons chopped fresh chives
- ¾ cup freshly shredded Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste

Method

- Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add the olive oil. Add the mushrooms and season with salt and pepper and cook until golden browned, about 10-12 minutes.
- Stir the garlic into mushrooms and cook for 1 minute; pour in white wine and cook until wine is nearly evaporated. Mix

chicken stock into mushroom mixture; season with salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer, reduce heat, and cook until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes.

- Pour the heavy cream into mushroom mixture and stir to combine. Simmer for 5 minutes until the mixture starts to foam.
- While the mushrooms are finishing cooking, fill a large pot with water and bring to a rolling boil. Stir in the pasta and cook until al dente, about 8 minutes. Drain but do not rinse pasta; transfer to a large serving bowl and keep warm.
- Stir thyme and chives into mushroom sauce and turn off heat; mix 1/2 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese into sauce until cheese has melted.
- Pour all the mushroom sauce and half the mushrooms over pasta, reserving about half the mushrooms in the skillet. Toss pasta in sauce until coated; top with remaining mushrooms and remaining Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese for garnish.

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.

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The Two Of Us Productions offers Suspense Theater Feb. 7

The Two Of Us Productions, the award-winning theater company based in Columbia County, will present the second installment of its Virtual Live-Staged Readings for 2026 on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 7 p.m. via Zoom, in collaboration with Roving Actors' Repertory Ensemble (RARE) Inc. Two new chilling radio dramas are featured.

"That Thing In The Window": A quiet evening. A familiar room. And a window that shows something that shouldn't be there. When a man notices a strange figure appearing again and again in his window – always watching, never moving – curiosity turns to dread. No one else sees it. No explanation fits. And the closer he gets to the truth, the more he begins to fear that the figure is not outside at all ... but waiting for him.

"Lady Killer": He is handsome. Polite. Perfectly ordinary. And everywhere he goes, people trust him. Behind the easy smile and impeccable manners lies a predator who leaves nothing but confusion and silence in his wake. As authorities close in, the line between civility and cruelty blurs, revealing how easily evil can hide behind good manners – and how dangerous it is to underestimate appearances.

R.S.V.P to www.TheTwoOfUsProductions.org and then see these thrilling dramas in the comfort of your own home. This performance is free to the public, donations are gratefully accepted.

Save the date for the third installment of Suspense Theater shows on Feb. 28, when The Two of Us will present another set of classic thrillers.

Last call for Morton Library's Talent Show, monologue event

Morton Memorial Library seeks participants for its annual Community Talent Show and accompanying Art Exhibition.

The Talent Show Art Exhibition will open on Friday, Feb. 27, at 6 p.m., and will be up for a week prior to the Talent Show itself, which will take place on Friday, March 6, at 6:30 p.m. The exhibition will remain up for the month of March.

Contact sandy@mortonrhinecliff.org by Feb. 7 if you are interested in participating. Works must be delivered to Morton by Saturday, Feb. 21. Contact Sandy if you have questions.

This year marks Morton's 17th annual Talent Show: an evening of jokes, bands, storytelling, guitar playing, dance, opera and much more. Use your imaginations and share your immense variety of talents with the community. This show and Morton's community are all about enjoyment and camaraderie, never judgment.

Contact sandy@mortonrhinecliff.org if you are interested in participating.

The plan is to do the Talent Show in

person this year. But, if you don't live in the area or would prefer, you can record your performance and send it in.

Richard Kopyscianski has again agreed to emcee the event.

Morton is also calling for submissions to its Fourth Annual March "Monologue" Madness. Submissions (original work only) are due by Saturday, Feb. 7. All genres welcome.

Monologues must be 7 minutes or less in length (include the approximate time length of the piece when submitting) and should NOT contain playwright's name.

Send via email to sandy@mortonrhinecliff.org or in-person/snail-mail to 82 Kelly St., PO Box 157, Rhinecliff, NY 12574.

Accepted authors will be notified by the last week of February.

Morton will present the evening of monologues on Saturday, March 28.

For questions, contact Prudence Garcia-Renart at pgarciarenart@icloud.com.

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Hope to hear from you! Thanks!

Storm prompts emergency appeal for blood donors

Thousands of donations lost due to dangerous travel conditions and weather-related disruptions

New York Blood Center (NYBC) and New Jersey Blood Services (NJBS) today announced they are extending their blood emergency appeal for an additional two weeks after a historic winter storm brought blood donation operations across the region to a standstill, wiping out critical progress made in rebuilding the local blood supply.

The storm dropped more than a foot

and a half of snow in parts of the region and forced the cancellation of all NYBC and NJBS operations on Sunday, Jan. 25. Weather-related disruptions have continued, resulting in the loss of nearly 2,000 blood donations, a sudden and significant setback at a time when inventories had just begun to recover. This marks the first time NYBC has been forced to extend an already-declared blood emergency due to a severe weather event.

Earlier this month, NYBC and NJBS declared a blood emergency as supplies reached critically low levels. While initial donor response helped stabilize inventories, the storm erased that progress almost overnight, creating an

urgent and renewed need for blood donations.

“This storm could not have come at a worse time,” said Jeannie Mascolino, Vice President of Blood Operations at New York Blood Center and New Jersey Blood Services. “We were just starting to rebuild the blood supply when nearly 2,000 lifesaving donations were lost in a matter of days. Patients don’t get a snow day; surgeries, cancer treatments, traumas, and emergencies continue, and we need donors to help us recover.”

NYBC and NJBS are urging all eligible blood donors, especially those with O-, O+, and B- blood types, to give blood or platelets in the coming days to help

stabilize the supply. All blood types are urgently needed. To view current eligibility guidelines or make an appointment, donors can call 1-800-933-2566 or visit nybc.org.

In light of recent updates to FDA guidance, more people than ever may now be eligible to give. Blood donors can give every 56 days, and platelet donors can give twice per month. To help prevent future shortages, NYBC and NJBS encourage donors to become All Seasons Lifesavers by donating once each season. NYBC and NJBS also offer additional donor loyalty programs that recognize consistent giving throughout the year. Learn more at www.nybc.org.

OBITUARIES

Geraldine May Macleary

STANFORDVILLE – Geraldine May Macleary, a beloved wife, mother, and grandmother, passed away peacefully at her home in Stanfordville, NY, on January 22, 2026, at the age of 98.

Known affectionately as Gerry by her family and friends, she was born on January 6, 1928, in Dover, New Hampshire, to the late William and Sarah Cullen. In 1955, she married her devoted husband, Richard Macleary, in Cherry Point, North Carolina. The couple recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in November 2025.

As a Marine family, Gerry and Richard lived on various military bases across the country before settling in Hyde Park, NY. There they raised their two daughters and built a warm and loving home. Gerry worked for the Hyde Park School District in the cafeteria, a role that allowed her to be present for her daughters during their formative years.

Gerry had a passion for golf and enjoyed many rounds with her husband and friends. She remained active in a women’s golf league well into her late 80s.

She leaves behind her loving husband, Richard; daughters Debra and Kendall Lyon, and Susan and Raymond Kennett; grandchildren Kelsey and Ben Hecht, Mackenzie and Dan White, Raymond and Beth Kennett, Andrew and Jill Kennett, and Ryan and Aymee Kennett; great-grandchildren Ian, Annie, Amelia, and Ava; niece and nephew Sally and Norm Cote; and Paul and Claire Bruyere. She was predeceased by her brothers Arthur and Donald Cullen and sisters Dorothy and Beatrice.

A funeral service was held on Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at Sweet’s Funeral Home. Burial followed at Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery. Her love, strength, and the cherished memories she created will remain in our hearts forever.

Jayne F. Peckham

RHINEBECK – Jayne Peckham, a long-time resident of Poughkeepsie, passed away on January 24, 2026 at the Baptist Home at Brookmeade in Rhinebeck, NY, at 81 years. She passed peacefully after many complications of dementia/Alzheimer’s. She was in attendance by many saddened family and friends.

Jayne was born in Brooklyn, Ny June 15, 1944 to Anna and Herman Miller and grew up there with her brother, Ian, and lots of close family. She attended Erasmus High School, graduating in 1962. She later got her BFA in

Art Education from SUNY New Paltz. After teaching briefly in Brooklyn, she accepted a position and taught Art in the Poughkeepsie Middle school for 30 years. She was quite popular with her students who frequently remembered her for years afterwards. In retirement, she volunteered at the Roosevelt museum and Morse Estate. She was also active with the Barrett House as an artist and teacher. She most appreciated visiting museums around the world, theatre, and music. She loved to sketch and was noted for sending personalized homemade cards to family and friends on all occasions. With husband, Bill & friends, she travelled to England, France, Spain, Italy, Costa Rica, and around the USA.

Jayne is survived by her husband of 33 years, William Peckham, a retired Landscape Architect with the DOT; her son, David Magill, his wife Marilyn, and his daughter, Madelyn of Selkirk, NY; her brother Ian Miller and his wife Rosanne from Locust Valley, NY; her niece, Zoey Miller from East Islip, NY.; and Brother-in-law Lawrence Peckham and wife Mary Martha from Bolivia, NC. Aunt Jayne was revered and loved by all of her extended family of 4 nephews, 4 nieces, and many loving cousins.

A talented artist, a strong independent woman of a kind and gentle nature will leave all who knew her with a lasting impression and fond memories.

Visitation took place on Tuesday, Feb. 3, at William G. Miller Funeral Home, Poughkeepsie, NY. Please consider a donation to a children’s charity in lieu of flowers. It would have meant a lot to her.

To leave an online condolence, please visit www.wmgmillerfuneralhome.com

Catherine M. Spross

HYDE PARK – Catherine M. Spross, 87. It is with great sadness we announce the passing of our beloved mother on January 23, 2026, in Hyde Park, NY, surrounded by her loving family. Catherine was born June 20, 1938, in Poughkeepsie, NY. Catherine had a wonderful sense of humor, loved gardening, cooking, entertaining at home, and shared her many skills with students (esp. Cut n Pierce Lamp Shades). She went to the gym with her many friends and was an excellent swimmer that once entered a challenge to swim across the Hudson River. She loved traveling, music and dancing. Most of all, she loved her family. She leaves behind her daughter Debora Walsh Peet, son Kevin (Vivian) Walsh, long time partner Robert J. Marone, grand children Kyle Walsh (Tyler Mikels), Paige Walsh (Josh

Marinack), a sister Bella Surico Landers, many nieces, nephews and friends. Predeceased by her, was husband Fred H. Spross, a son Timothy A. Walsh, mother Celestia M. McCourt (William McCourt), father Frank Surico, brothers John, Frank, Jimmy, Donnie, Gary, Joel, David Surico and nephew Scott Surico. Catherine has lived her final years at home due to the wonderful care provided by Hospice.

Visitation was held on Friday January 30, 2026, at the Joseph J. Darrow Sr. Funeral Home, Inc. Poughkeepsie, NY. Burial followed at St. Peters Cemetery, Poughkeepsie NY. To send your condolences online please visit www.darrowfuneralhome.org

Raymond Emanuel Wheeler, Jr.

AMENIA – Raymond Emanuel Wheeler, Jr., 72, a lifelong area resident died Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at Sharon Hospital in Sharon, CT. Ray worked for the Town of Amenia Highway Department for twenty-three years and for the New York State Department of Transportation in Wassaic, NY, for ten years prior to his retirement in 2010. Ray also assisted in running the family business in Wassaic for over thirty years.

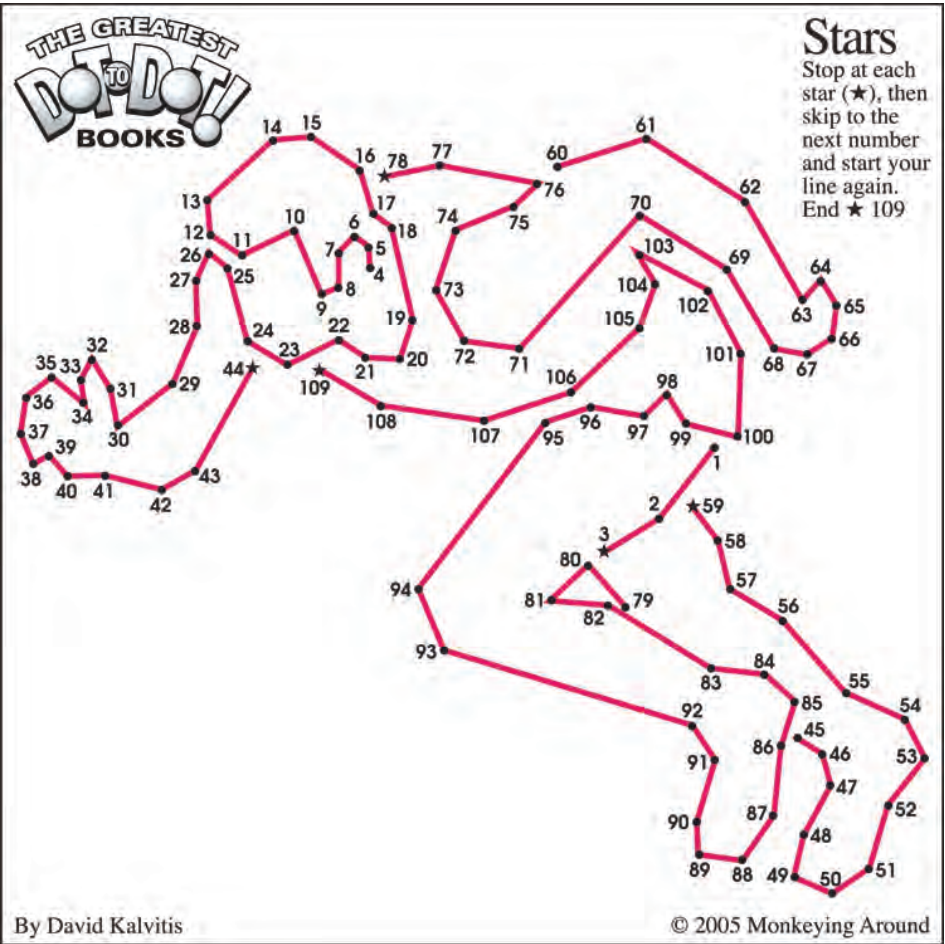
Born November 6, 1953 in Sharon, CT, he was the son of the late Raymond E. and Helen C. (Chase) Wheeler, Sr. He was educated in Amenia, NY, schools and served his community for decades as a member of the Wassaic Fire Company and The Sharon Fire Department in Connecticut. He was an avid turkey and deer hunter throughout his life and he enjoyed socializing with his many friends and taking car rides throughout the valley reg-

ularly. Ray also enjoyed spending time with his family and watching the races at Lebanon Valley Speedway. He will be deeply missed by his loving family and many friends.

Ray is survived by his companion of twenty years, Karen Ellis of Amenia; four sons, Raymond E. Wheeler of Spring Hill, FL, Michael R. Wheeler and his wife Justine also of Spring Hill, Thomas E. Wheeler and his wife Alicia of Wassaic and Christopher Ellis; his grandchildren, Branden Wheeler, Zachary Wheeler and his wife Katie, Kaden Wheeler, Michael Wheeler, Jr. and his wife Michele, Alyssa Wheeler, Thomas Wheeler and his girlfriend Kenzie Milton and Kaylee Wheeler and her boyfriend Nick; four great grandchildren, Mason, Layton, Michael III and Cole Wheeler; his siblings, Emily Tarbox and her husband Carl, Rachel Wheeler, Sharon McEathron and her husband Daryl and Helen Murphy and her husband William and several nieces and nephews. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his wife, Ruth Ann (Ammerman) Wheeler, three sisters, Hattie Butts, Juanita Donaldson and Patricia Wilson and his grandson, Hunter Wheeler.

A Celebration of Life will take place on Saturday, May 30th 2026 at 1pm at the Wassaic Fire House, 27 Firehouse Rd., Wassaic, NY 12592. Burial will take place privately at Valley View Cemetery in Dover Plains, NY. Arrangements have been entrusted to the Scott D. Conklin Funeral Home, 37 Park Avenue, Millerton, NY 12546. To send an online condolence to the family, flowers to the service or to plant a tree in Ray’s memory, please visit www.conklinfuneralhome.com

Answer to this week’s Dot to Dot (puzzle on page 10)



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WARD, MARY E	133200-6167-02-816507-0000		ALLEN, RICHARD RM	134689-6160-21-064989-0000	
DABROS, MATTHEW	133200-6167-03-002389-0000		JOHNSON, LUCILLE LT		
AUTORINO, DANIELLE	133200-6167-03-018333-0000		KELLY, SEAN P	134689-6161-03-101167-0000	
DURAN, JASON	133200-6167-04-852413-0000		PORRAZZO, COLLEEN A		
WILDLIFE PROPERTIES LLC,	133200-6263-03-387480-0000		MALIK, DANIELLE	134689-6161-77-101112-0000	
AHMED, FARHANA	133200-6263-03-461471-0000		MURASSO, KATHLEEN D	134689-6162-07-519750-0000	
RASHIED, MOHAMMED			MURASSO, LOUIS D		
KR ELEANOR REALTY LLC,	133200-6265-04-721437-0000		THOMA, ROBERTA	134689-6162-10-373623-0000	
SCHWARTZ, TANNER	133200-6266-01-167785-0000		THOMA, ROSE		
STEPNEY, KENNETH	133200-6266-19-619124-0000		MCCAULEY, KATE W	134689-6162-10-410749-0000	
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557 EDVENTURE LLC,	133200-6266-19-654134-0000		ANDERSON, BLAISE	134689-6162-15-638417-0000	
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YUSUPOV, HAIM	133400-6259-02-581943-0000		BEVANS-JENKINS, ARDEN		
JAMIESON, NAOMI W LT	133400-6260-04-656143-0000		SMITH, A TRUSTEE	134689-6162-15-665351-0000	
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MURPHY, MICHAEL L RM			AUSTIN, SHIRLEY		
C&S PROP 1 CORP,	133400-6359-02-941764-0000		AUSTIN, KYLE L	134689-6162-19-690015-0000	
CHOICE, DEONDRA	133400-6360-01-209511-0000		AUSTIN, SHIRLEY		
SMITH, DELLORD			IGNATIUS, OLIVER	134689-6162-20-801103-0000	
CAMILLUCCI, GREGORY	133400-6459-01-136994-0000		VU, KIRAPHUNG	134689-6162-20-924058-0000	
CITIMORTGAGE INC,	133400-6461-01-019612-0000		VU, LIEM		
GEM MOUNTAIN INFANT HOME CORP,	133400-6559-02-829864-0000		WISE, NICHOLAS J S	134689-6259-01-062571-0000	
MASHIAH, DANIELLE E			HONEY DO ESTATES LLC,	134689-6259-03-013310-0000	
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ORREGO, ROXANA	133400-6562-03-456442-0000		MALABAR REALTY LLC,	134689-6262-04-571014-0000	
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CUI, THOMAS	133600-6473-00-914119-0000		BEMAG LLC,	134689-6263-04-665066-0000	
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SWARTZ, DONALD R	133600-6474-00-720241-0000		RELiance GLOBALCOM SERVICES,	134689-6469-14-787650-1884	
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DIPPER, CAROL J	133600-6474-00-742230-0000		BAUER, DIANE L	134801-6272-06-380893-0000	
DIPPER, JEFFREYA			BAUER, FRANK M		
MICHETTI, LIBERATO JR	133600-6571-02-866567-0000		YUDEKOVITZ, YSHAI D	134803-6174-02-643925-0000	
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FLOOD, PATRICIA	133801-7271-13-217424-0000		MOTTOLA, ROSALIE	134889-6272-12-957652-0000	
FLOOD, THOMAS			ANGELIER, MARK W	134889-6371-00-118903-0000	
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ST JOHN, DEIDRE	133889-7171-08-944766-0000		21 & 23 AVE B LLC,	134889-6371-02-861900-0000	
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LSIM REALTY LLC,	133889-7273-00-197029-0000		GENTILE, CHELSEA	135089-6270-00-162735-0000	
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KBL PROPERTIES LLC,	134400-6363-03-447030-0000		JACKSON, KATIMA	135400-6662-00-492661-0000	
WINGED LION MANAGEMENT LLC,	134400-6364-04-721413-0000		MADARAS, CYNTHIAL	135400-6761-00-013240-0000	
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1777 ROUTE 44 LLC,	134400-6463-01-282818-0000		GARCIA, GLADYS E	135400-6959-00-109930-0000	
65 67 69 PARKSVILLE LLC,	134400-6463-01-449612-0000		DUTCHESS COUNTY,	135400-6962-00-095617-0000	
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2345 LLC,	135689-6157-04-573456-0000		ABRAMS, BRUCE		
OLD POST COMMONS LLC,	135689-6157-04-625489-0000		CORBIN, DONALD M		135689-6359-02-685574-0000
1147 ROUTE 9 LLC,	135689-6157-04-649068-0000		CORBIN, MILDRED		
MEDINA-NUNEZ, MADELYN	135689-6157-16-866487-0000		PORTEUS & SON BUILDERS LLC,		135689-6359-02-770582-0000
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NUNEZ, JOSE L			WINCHELL, CATHERINE E		135889-6566-00-955197-0000
HAJIANI, SALIMAS	135689-6157-16-898428-0000		BROWN, ERNESTINE		135889-6566-02-627814-0000
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PROGRESSIVE REALTY,	135689-6158-04-620288-0000		MIGLIORE, RICHARD F		
GREEN, LATAVIA	135689-6256-02-901774-0000		MERCER, C DOUGLAS		135889-6963-00-315813-0000
HIRSCH, LORRAINE	135689-6257-01-042944-0000		MERCER, CAROLANN		
HIRSCH, MICHAEL			OLEAGA, DALINDADIANA		135889-6965-00-840867-0000
STEUBER, DENIS J	135689-6257-01-109690-0000		SCORES, ROBERT M		133400-6560-01-181887-0000
STEUBER, KIMBERLY M					
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The deadline for Legals is every Friday @ 12 noon for a Wednesday Publication* *When a public holiday falls on a Monday the deadline becomes Thursday at noon.

Events at Pleasant Valley Library

All programs are free, unless noted. Please visit pleasantvalleylibrary.org to register and for more information on these and also on our monthly occurring programs.

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 5-7 p.m.
JoAnn C. Smith Artist Reception
Thanks to the generous donations from family and friends, the Art Gallery at the Pleasant Valley Library was named in loving memory of Jo Ann C. Smith, an artist, a library patron, a volunteer, and a wife and mother. Please join us for a showing and reception of Jo Ann's artwork (curated by her biggest fan - her husband Bruce).

Friday, Feb. 6, 6-8:30 p.m.
"Wicked: For Good" Movie Party
This special screening of "Wicked: For Good," is the sequel to "Wicked," the beloved musical. Set in the Land of Oz before and during the events of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, the film follows Elphaba (Cynthia Erivo) and Glinda (Ariana Grande) in their new identities as the Wicked Witch of the West and Glinda the Good. Enjoy "Wicked" themed

refreshments, dress in costume and sing along to the iconic songs.
* Open to ages 8 and up. For children ages 10 and under, parents must remain in the building for the duration of the program.

Saturday, Feb. 7, noon-2 p.m.
"The Well-Read Kitchen" with Annette Tomei & Pam Abrams
Culinary connoisseurs Annette Tomei and Pam Abrams will give their philosophy on making the most of your cookbooks, will share their favorites (both new and old) and will encourage participants to talk about their best-loved cookbooks.
Annette Tomei, a classically-trained chef and culinary educator at the Culinary Institute of America, is the creator and host of the online Kitchen Arts & Letters Cookbook Club. Pam Abrams is a culinary event producer for Saratoga Performing Arts Center, writer and consultant. Together, they create live and virtual cookbook events, speak, and write about their shared passion for all things cookbooks.

Monday, Feb. 9, 6-7 p.m.
The Winter Blues with Lorraine Cucci, RN
We welcome back Lorraine Cucci, RN, and owner of Healing Path to Health, for this presentation about a very common scenario that occurs to many of us during the winter months: the Winter Blues, also known as SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder). She'll discuss the reality of SAD, the causes and symptoms of this condition, and will give some simple and easy tips to counteract it.

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
Senior Movie Morning - "Lincoln"
Seniors (ages 50+) are invited to attend this special seniors-only movie matinee. Light refreshments will be provided, but feel free to bring your own snack or lunch to enjoy! "Lincoln" stars Daniel Day-Lewis and directed by Steven Spielberg.

Tuesday, Feb. 17, 6-7 p.m.
"No Greater Love: The Life & Legacy of Charles R. Johnson"
Learn about the young Arlington graduate who crossed racial barriers with

character, selfless service, and brotherly love. This program aims to celebrate Medal of Honor Recipient Private First Class Charles R. Johnson for his life and career. Sponsored in collaboration with the Pleasant Valley American Legion Post 1234, the Pleasant Valley Lions Club, and the Town of Stanford.

Friday, Feb. 27, 6-8 p.m.
Fandom Friday: "Outlander"
Join us to celebrate, "Outlander," the iconic Scottish time-travel romance series, before its 8th and final season airs in March! We'll talk about our favorite characters and storylines, compare and contrast author Diana Gabaldon's books vs. the television series, share predictions of how the show may end; enjoy Scottish snacks and tea; watch video clips and cast interviews; and play a trivia challenge to win Outlander-themed prize. Dress up as your favorite Outlander character for an extra chance to win an Outlander prize.

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A	P	L	O	M	B					R	E	M	O	T	E	R
L	E	A		P	O	P	L	A	R			T	R	E	E	
I	A	M	B	S			R	E	M		T	S	A	R	S	
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S	E	N	N	A				O	B	O	E		S	O	U	P
P	A	I	N	S				R	E	T	D		H	O	E	R
A	R	T	Y					M	R	S			A	N	T	E

SUDOKU

This week's answer

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

Answers to this
week's diversions

(puzzles on page 12)

“My uncle is convinced Taylor Swift is in love with him and needs money. Can somebody help?”

Strange as that scenario may sound, it's easier to be victimized by romance and companionship scammers than you might assume - especially if the victims are lonely or socially isolated.

The encouraging news, as we see it, is that our chances of preventing these scams can be improved with a program OFA already has in place: “Friendly Calls.” In its three years of operation, hundreds of Dutchess County older adults have reduced their risk of isolation - and thus their risk of being victimized.

The Romance Scammers' Script

Georgia State University professor and fraud researcher David Maimon recently shared an online “romance fraud playbook” used by scammers around the world.

What struck us was that the scammers do not immediately aim for their victims' money, but first for the appearance of human connection. They hook their victims with compliments; after all, it's only human to respond positively to compliments. Only after weeks of these conversations, when trust is established, do the scammers begin “billing” their victims. The romance fraud playbook comes with over 200 scripted questions and answers.

OFA's Friendly Calls can help that would-be victim protect themselves before a scammer worms their way into the victim's life ... and life savings. Contact OFA to find out more about being a volunteer and/or participant.

AARP recently released its list of what they expect will be the biggest fraud and scam trends for 2026:

1. Employment Scams: The internet is crawling with bogus job ads, with many scammers impersonating legitimate employers and job-coaching websites. Here's what to watch for:

- If the job looks too good to be true, it is. Fantastic pay? Work from home? Just a few hours a week? There's no such job.

- Never pay a fee. Isn't the idea supposed to be that the employer pays you?

- LinkedIn and Indeed aren't infallible. Social media can be a big help in landing jobs, but they both have their issues with fake job posts.

- Check the employer's website. Don't take the ad's word for it. Go to the employer's website and see if they're really offering the job you're interested in.

2. Recovery Scams: Being scammed is bad enough. Being scammed under the guise of recovering the stolen money is worse. The scammers simply pose as the law enforcement agencies to which their victim reported the crime. Recovery scammers often charge up front for “services” using gift cards, Venmo, wire transfers or cryptocurrency.

3. Fake Arrests: The victim receives a call. They're the subject of a police investigation, or they missed jury duty, or drugs were intercepted en route to their home. It's a classic false-urgency scam, only now the fakes appear more real thanks to scammers' use of artificial intelligence (AI). The advice remains the same: don't engage. Hang up.

4. “Your Computer's Been Hacked”: Yet another false-urgency scam. Scammers can easily obtain just about anybody's personal information, including yours. Stay calm, don't rise to the scammers' bait, and don't open any unsolicited attachments. Don't click on what they're telling you to click, or call who they're telling you to call.

5. Romance Scams (Some Additional Advice): - That “wrong number” call or text ... isn't. Scammers are relying on our instincts to take over here. Back in the day, when we received a wrong-number call at home we'd let the person know that, and they'd go on their way. What changed is that the scammer tries to keep their potential victim on the line, wearing them down until they slip up. Don't engage with the scammer, and you can't be victimized.

- Stay on the platform you're using. This applies to social media users. The scammer may reach out to you while you're using Facebook, and try to charm you into taking their conversation with you to a different social media platform like WhatsApp, or any of the other platforms with less robust scam-seeking algorithms.

- Funny how they can't meet face to face. That's often the story. They'll tell the victim they're an international diplomat. They're a touring musician. A model. A cowboy, even. Whatever the job they claim to have, it precludes them from ever meeting in person. But they sure could use your money.

Report scams and scam attempts

Talk to police and financial institutions as needed. dutchessny.gov/scamprevention has a list of resources. By coming forward to report scams, you'll be helping yourself and thousands of others being targeted by scammers every day.

FEBRUARY HOLIDAYS

Abraham Lincoln's birthday (Thursday, Feb. 12) is observed as a public holiday in New York State and eight other states. Dutchess County Government offices, including OFA and OFA Friendship Centers, are closed on the 12th.

The national President's Day holiday is observed this year on Monday, February 16th. Offices and Friendship Centers will be closed on that day as well.

Home Delivered Meals clients receive shelf-stable meals in advance of both holidays.

OFA CENTRAL KITCHEN VOLUNTEERS WANTED

OFA's Nutrition Services division is looking for weekday volunteer assistance in our central kitchen, at OFA headquarters in Poughkeepsie (114 Delafield St.).

Every weekday morning, Nutrition Services volunteers help prepare and package hundreds of daily hot meals for OFA Friendship Center clients and home-bound older adults throughout Dutchess County.

If you are available any or all weekday mornings (roughly 9am-noon), and can stand while doing kitchen work, find out more about this volunteer opportunity by emailing ofa@dutchessny.gov.

'SENIOR PARK PALETTE' RETURNS THIS MONTH

OFA and Dutchess County Parks are presenting the 2026 series of “Senior Park Palette” classes for Dutchess County older adults (age 60+). Dutchess County residents over 60 can sign up for one of the following free classes:

Tuesday, February 10th, 2:30-3:45 pm – Poughkeepsie Friendship Center, 114 Delafield St.

Tuesday, February 17th, 2:30-3:45 pm – Millerton Friendship Center, 28 Century Blvd. (Library Annex)

Tuesday, March 10th, 2:00-3:15 pm – Red Hook Friendship Center, 59 Fisk St. (Red Hook Community Center)

Tuesday, March 24th, 2:30-3:45 pm – East Fishkill Friendship Center, 890 NY 82, Hopewell Junction (East Fishkill Community Center) – almost full!

All supplies are provided. Class size is limited to 12.

SIGN UP FOR ALZHEIMER'S MINI CONFERENCE (Wed 3/18)

Join the Alzheimer's Association, the Office for the Aging, Sun River Health and community partners for a mini-conference and listening session on Alzheimer's disease, dementia and memory loss:

Wednesday, March 18th, 9:30-11:30am

Millerton-NorthEast Library Annex (OFA Friendship Center)

28 Century Blvd., Millerton

It's essential learning for older adults and caregivers of all ages. Sign up by calling OFA at 845-486-2555 or emailing ofa@dutchessny.gov.

The event is supported in part by grants from the New York State Department of Health.

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