

PennDOT's promise

Fund discussed to mitigate demolished Skinners Falls Bridge

By SONIA AHMED

SKINNERS FALLS, NY AND MILANVILLE, PA — A little over a year after the Skinners Falls Bridge was destroyed, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) officials and community members met to discuss potential mitigation measures.

The Skinners Falls Bridge was a historic bridge connecting Skinners Falls, NY and Milanville, PA. PennDOT demolished the bridge last year due to safety concerns, following reports of its structural unsoundness.

In attendance at the June 17 meeting were five community members, two representatives from the Upper Delaware Council (UDC), one representative from the National Park Service and numerous PennDOT officials.

A proposed memorandum sets aside \$200,000 in funding for a monument in recognition of the bridge, using previous bridge pieces.

Additionally, \$300,000 will be allocated to the UDC, with a three-year period given to the UDC to create a comprehensive list of what the funding

will be spent on for PennDOT to review.

On Wednesday, Milanville resident Rose Biondi raised some concerns about the draft.

"The suggestions commemorate a loss. They do not mitigate one," she said. "The \$300,000 to UDC is for broad regional education and recognition—not anything tied specifically to replacing what Skinners Falls Bridge itself contributed."

Biondi added that some suggestions she felt would adequately mitigate the loss were "a pedestrian/bike-only bridge incorporating salvaged truss members," "the scenic overlook that was already planned," and "a maintenance/stewardship fund tied to the Milanville Historic District specifically."

Kristina Thompson, PennDOT historic preservation supervisor, explained that a new bridge would not be discussed at the meeting, and that this section of PennDOT, which focuses on the historical aspects of architecture, does not have the funds for that.

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RR photo by Sonia Ahmed

Musician, writer, and priest David Rude voiced his thoughts about President Donald Trump at a Delaware Valley Action! meeting on Monday.

Activist group gathers in Milford on Trump's birthday

By SONIA AHMED

MILFORD, PA — Activists gathered in the Delaware Valley Action! building to watch a livestream of a concert hosted by the Committee for the First Amendment and No Kings on June 14.

The concert, called Rise Up, Sing Out, was hosted in New York City's Town Hall, marking the simultaneous occurrence of President Donald Trump's birthday, Flag Day and Puerto Rican Pride Day.

Attendees were welcomed to

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'The land of the tax exemption'

Callicoon settles tax exemption litigation after four years

By PATRICK KELLY

TOWN OF CALLICOON, NY — The Town of Callicoon passed a resolution officially ending four years of litigation over a tax exemption request for a piece of property, at its monthly town board meeting on Monday, June 8.

The litigation, which went all the way to the New York State Court of Appeals, arose after the First United Methodist Church of Flushing, Queens, applied for a whole property tax exemption for an approximately 70-acre plot of land in the Town of Callicoon. The town denied the claim because the property was in a rural district; the town claimed that the property's intended religious use was not eligible for an exemption in that district.

The church then sued the town in order to overturn their decision. During the trial, the church changed its reason to claim tax exemption from religious to charitable by farming the land and giving the food away to those in need back in Queens.

"This was a bold-face lie," supervisor Tom Bose said to the **River Reporter**. "They never had any intention to grow anything or give anything away."

Bose said that the church had prepared a small area

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OPINION

Time and the drugstore

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COMMUNITY LIVING

The importance of giving locally



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FOOD

What lives in the far lives in you



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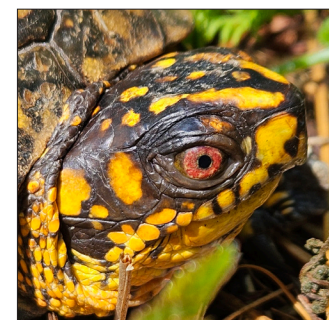
Tour Willow Wisp



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OUTDOORS

A herd of turtles



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■ IN BRIEF

Riley backs bill for seniors, people with disabilities

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Josh Riley (NY-19) signed on as a co-sponsor of the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act, bipartisan legislation to overhaul Supplemental Security Income (SSI) rules that penalize seniors and people with disabilities for saving money or taking a job.

Under current rules, a senior or person living with a disability can qualify for SSI only if they have less than \$2,000 in savings, or \$3,000 for a married couple. The SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act would raise those limits for the first time since 1989, when median U.S. rent was only \$500/month. The adjusted savings cap, \$10,000 for an individual and \$20,000 for a married couple, encourages recipients to work and save, and ends the marriage penalty by setting the couple’s limit at twice the individual amount. The bill ties limits to inflation so they keep pace with rising costs going forward.

UDC TAG applications due by August 21

UPPER DELAWARE RIVER, NY & PA — The Upper Delaware Council (UDC) announces the opening of its 2027 Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) program. Applications from the UDC’s member municipalities will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. on Friday, August 21.

Since its 1988 inception, the UDC has cumulatively awarded \$968,463.50 to its member towns, townships and the five river valley counties to fund 270 municipal projects that further the goals and objectives of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Management Plan.

Brown continues push for data center moratorium

HARRISBURG, PA — Sen. Rosemary Brown (R-40) is continuing her call for stronger safeguards on large-scale data center development in Pennsylvania, urging state leaders to put residents and local communities first as the industry expands.

- Brown’s “Residents First” legislative package would:
- Require data center developers to provide “will-serve” letters confirming utilities can handle a project at full build-out before a formal application is submitted.
 - Limit large-scale data center development to zoned industrial areas.
 - Mandate an independent, third-party water impact study and analysis at least 30 days prior to any formal application and require long-term follow-up.
 - Direct the state legislative budget and finance committee to study emerging data storage technology and evaluate its long-term viability, including whether current technology may become obsolete and whether emerging alternatives may reduce environmental and resource impacts.

Meetings this week

Wednesday, July 1

Honesdale Borough Planning Commission

HONESDALE, PA — 7pm, 303 Commercial St. Judith 570/253-0731 x10.

Lackawaxen Planning Board

LACKAWAXEN, PA — 6pm, 169 Urban Rd. 570/685-7288.

Thursday, July 2

SC Legislature

MONTICELLO, NY — 9am & full legislative board meeting 10:30am, legislative chambers, 100 North St., sullivanny.us.

Town of Forestburgh Board

FORESTBURGH, NY — 6pm, 332 King Rd. 845/794-0611.

UDC Council

NARROWSBURG, NY — 6:30pm, 211 Bridge St. 845/252-3022.

[Publisher’s note: Interested in attending one of these meetings regularly as a trained observer? Email social@riverreporter.com or call 845/252-7414, ext. 127. Visit riverreporter.com/news-reports to check out meeting coverage.]



RR photo by Sonia Ahmed

Sustainable Sullivan co-founder Eric Feinblatt discusses the new legislation with Scott Mace, Thompson’s town supervisor.

Clean air act proposed at Thompson Town Board meeting

By SONIA AHMED

TOWN OF THOMPSON, NY — Eight environmental advocates spoke out at a Thompson town board meeting in support of a clean air act on June 16.

The clean air act was proposed by Sustainable Sullivan, an environmental group in the county. Similar legislation was passed in the Village of Monticello recently, also proposed by Sustainable Sullivan. The Monticello act was described by Eric Feinblatt, co-founder of Sustainable Sullivan, as making building an incinerator “so difficult for a company to pursue that it would basically kill it.”

On June16, advocates further spoke about what passing this act in the Town of Thompson would mean to them.

Feinblatt said that the new legislation in Monticello “culminated in the passage in what is the most protective clean air act in the United States,” adding that the town should partner with the village to pass the same act.

“I don’t think you [the town board] have been privy to all the things going on,” he continued, adding that Monticello’s board of trustees were furious that the county had never brought up the proposed incinerator to them. The incinerator would be located in Thompson, but would affect Monticello as well, according to Feinblatt.

Rebekah Creshkoff, co-founder of Sustainable Sullivan, echoed Feinblatt’s sentiments, commenting that the act would prevent “descendants 100 years from now having to clean up.”

Councilmember Melinda Meddaugh asked for a summary of the law. Creshkoff and Feinblatt explained that it would require any incinerators to test for 20 different toxins and publicly post those results, making the act not necessarily anti-incinerator.

Many town residents expressed concern about the “forever chemicals” that incinerators emit.

“I want to protect my grandkids,” Jim Powell, local resident, told the town board. Powell cited tobacco and lead as previous dangerous chemicals and drugs that the public addressed before the government, relaying that the incinerator is a similar situation.

Harry Weisel, president of Beaver Lake Estates, said that if an incinerator is built without regulatory measures, future homeowners and businesses will not want to be in the area.

One participant asked if the incinerator would generate any revenue for the town. Scott Mace, Thompson’s town supervisor, responded it would not generate any that the town board knows of.

Local resident Carolyn Coughlin remarked that one of the best features of the town is the environment.

“That’s why people come here, and it’s the economic powerhouse of this area,” she said, urging the town to pass the act to protect the environment.

“On behalf of the board, we are as concerned as you are,” councilmember John Pavese assured attendees.

Mace later told the **River Reporter** that the proposed act was “intense,” explaining that it would give any member of the public a right to file a claim against the municipality.

“We have some questions,” he said, adding that the town board has not come to an official decision on the legislation yet.

The next town board meeting will be on July 7 at 7 p.m. The Thompson Town Hall is located at 4052 Route 52, Monticello, NY. For more information, see www.thompsonny.gov/event/town-board-meeting-162/

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Pike leaders talk federal cuts

Town hall discusses Medicaid, SNAP cuts plus resources, ways to help

By STELLA TANNENBAUM

EAST STROUDSBURG, PA — Current and former Pike County leaders warned of hard times to come and highlighted essential community resources to a crowd of about 50 at the Lehman Township Community Center on Thursday, June 4.

HR1, or the “Big Beautiful Bill,” goes into effect at the end of the year, meaning the impacts of cuts to Medicaid and SNAP will be felt starting in 2027.

“Those changes are ultimately going to mean fewer dollars coming to Pennsylvania for both the Medicaid and SNAP programs,” said Becky Ludwick, vice president of public policy at the Harrisburg-based Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC). “And with that, Pennsylvania has some really tough decisions to make in terms of how to fill those gaps.”

Milford Mayor Candace Mahala said she “invited all elected officials in the local areas” to the town hall raise awareness about the health care cuts resulting from the law. The event was part of the Seven Days in June campaign, a national week of action against the health care cuts, said Mahala, who is also an organizer with the Pike Health Is Primary coalition.

Impacts in Pike County

PPC’s “Mapping the Cuts” project, which aims to “bring to life” what HR1’s changes mean for Pennsylvania children using Congressional budget office estimates, quantifies the effects Pike County residents can expect.

An average SNAP benefit reduction of \$157 per month equates to 46 fewer meals per month, or a meal and a half less per day, Ludwick said. In Pike County, 36 percent of

children are enrolled in Medicaid, she said. And, in addition to direct loss of coverage for families who rely the programs, cuts to SNAP and Medicaid will reduce money going to grocers and hospitals, which could affect service for everyone.

Many will lose benefits entirely, as HR1 also tightens restrictions on who will be eligible for these assistance programs, said PJ Jahn, a former hearing officer for Medicaid and SNAP denials in Delaware.

These changes will exacerbate the high costs local residents are already facing, said Rep. Tarah Probst, D-Monroe/Pike, who described the far-reaching impacts of HR1.

“The next generation that’s supposed to have a better shot, they’re not going to have that much of a shot to move forward,” she said.

Probst, who represents Porter, Lehman

and Delaware Townships, said 777 families in her district will be impacted by SNAP cuts. She outlined other national trends and policy decisions affecting constituents in her area: decreased health care spending complicates the possibility of attracting new medical facilities to the area; cutting guaranteed student loans reduces available pathways to high incomes; private equity buying single family homes and mobile home parks increases rents; high energy costs are crushing vulnerable community members.

But constant uncertainty and political disagreement make legislating difficult, Probst said. She added that it’s often difficult to know what federal funding the state will or won’t receive, and several Pennsylvania House proposals aiming to lower the cost of living have died in the state senate.

PROMISES - Page 1

Participant Michelle Bennett asked if the \$500,000 could be put into a fund, gain interest and then be put towards building a new bridge.

Thompson said that would not be possible.

“It’s such a waste of money,” Biondi said.

As tensions rose, many community members also expressed frustration that they had no access to the river now.

“A monument doesn’t do anything for me,” attendee Jeff Lubar said.

Tom Kearns, natural and cultural resources program manager for the National Park Service, said that the park service would not want to absorb the monument, and would approve of it being on the New York side of the former bridge.

UDC Executive Director Laurie Ramie said that while it’s “hard to think of anything that will offset that loss,” the UDC would get professional opinions from cultural programs on where to spend its mitigation monies, rather than making the decision completely on its own.

Though PennDOT cast doubt on the likelihood of suggestions for a new bridge and access to the river, the department seemed to agree with participants that a marker would be more respectful than a monument made from salvaged bridge parts.

“It was very traumatic seeing that bridge get crushed and pushed,” Biondi commented.

Bennett added that they could make a viewing center, and Thompson thought that the restored bridge plaque might make a good marker.

Ramie showed participants a screenshot from May of a person named Donald Wayne selling five-foot “Millanville bridge sections” for \$50 on Facebook Marketplace.

“We thought this was very offensive,” Ramie said.

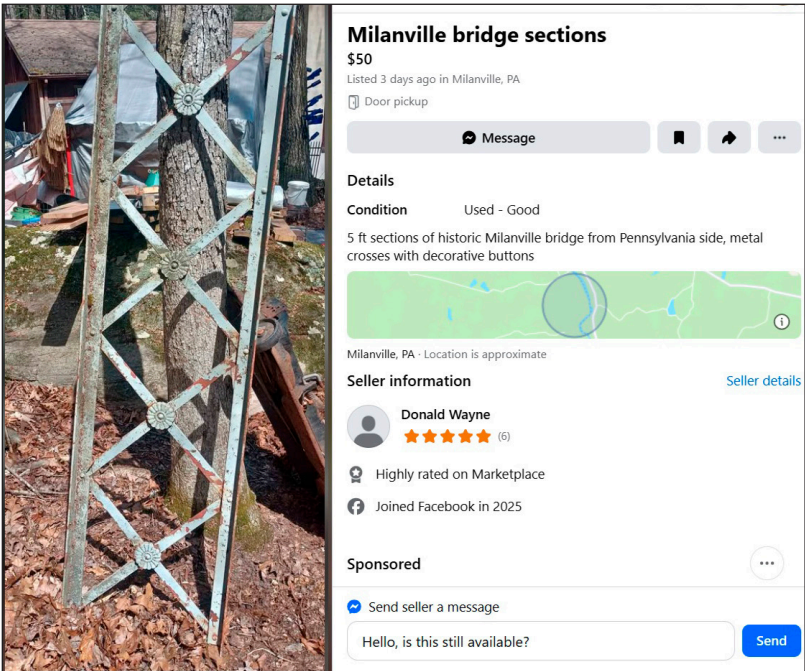
Thompson explained that bridge pieces not salvaged by PennDOT were the responsibility of the contractor.

Heather Gerling, PennDOT architectural historian for districts three and four, concluded that the memorandum would “optimistically” be finalized by mid-August.



Photo provided by PennDOT

Salvaged bridge pieces, which include 20 railing pieces (not all pictured), 3 vertical pieces, 1 bridge portal, and a bucket of hardware, according to Gerling.



The Facebook marketplace ad for Skinners Falls Bridge pieces.

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enjoy ice cream, and were handed lyrics, party blowers and pins before the event started.

One attendee, David Rude, said he was “quite thrilled” with the crowd that attended the event.

Rude added that he is a life-long Republican, but that Trump “stands against everything the Republican party represents.”

“I’m a bloody patriot,” an activist sitting next to Rude commented, adding that she attends all the No Kings events in the area.

She remarked that she has also seen a significant drop in the amount of counter-protestors at events.

In addition to attending protests, the attendee added that she also emails senators weekly, asking them to focus on protecting health care.

“He [Trump] cannot behave any other way,” Rude said.

“He’s always been a bully, and still is,” the attendee chimed in.

The livestreamed concert started, and local activists excitedly blew their party blowers as host Jane Fonda came on the screen.

“We want to take back our flag,” Fonda said.

“I agree with everything she’s saying!” one attendee cheered.

Guest performer Sasha Allen then sang Sam Cook’s “A Change Is Gonna Come.”

After Allen’s performance, TV anchor Joy Reid gave a speech on the importance of freedom of the press, stating that a “certain orange assh*le” is responsible for many journalists being laid off in recent years.

The crowd of about 40 local activists then sang along to Woody Guthrie’s “All You Fascists Bound to Lose” when Bette Midler took to the stage.

Ms. Rachel, a popular YouTube educator, also made an appearance with the Peace Poets, a New York City group of musicians advocating for social justice, echoing sentiments against ICE policies and procedures.

“We need to end the cruel policies of family separation,” Ms. Rachel said.

Performers and speakers also included Julia Roberts, Robert DiNiro and Patti Smith.

More DVA events can be found on its Facebook page.

Get your associate's, ASAP!

SUNY Sullivan is chosen for the second year cohort of the SUNY ASAP Program

By PATRICK KELLY

TOWN OF FALLSBURG, NY — On Tuesday, June 16, the State University of New York (SUNY) system announced that its Advancing Success in Associate Pathways (ASAP) program will be expanded to six more community colleges across the state, including SUNY Sullivan. The program, designed to help students graduate on time with an associate's degree, will officially start for the newly added schools in the Fall 2026 semester.

ASAP began as an initiative within the City University of New York (CUNY) system, after which SUNY developed a statewide version. The program includes several types of aid for students, including financial support, personalized advising services, priority for class registration, career support and a community of other ASAP students.

All of these forms of assistance are designed to help retain students and help them complete their associate's degree on time, as well as better prepare them for either entry into the workforce or transfer into a four-year institution.

"It's a fantastic way to see students succeed," SUNY Sullivan President David Potash told the **River Reporter**. "A lot of places really think it's the best model in the nation for improving retention and student completion. So we are just thrilled to start it here at SUNY Sullivan."

SUNY Sullivan has high hopes for the program, setting a goal of 150 students for the first cohort. However, Carissa Massey, the college's vice-president for academic and student affairs, told the **River Reporter** that the program could benefit students beyond those who are in the ASAP program, with infrastructure to support campus-wide success.

"The great part... is we build the program, and we don't limit it to those students," Massey said. "All students will have access to those revisions, like the change in scheduling, like the scaling of individualized advising and the alignment with course schedule selection with completing the degree in a timely manner."

For students, the first step for students entering the ASAP program will be meeting their advisor. Students in the program will be given an advisor who will serve as

their advisor for the entirety of their time at SUNY Sullivan. Students will be required to regularly meet with their advisor to check in on their progress, and students can use their advisor for resource referrals for any number of issues a student may have.

"The advisor would be able to direct them or help them to get different resources that they need," dean of student development services Stacey Johnson told the **River Reporter**. "There's one-on-ones, there are different types of workshops, there is career planning, and it's the person that they would go to if they're having any struggles at all, so this person is there to help them and make sure that they have a connection to the campus."

SUNY Sullivan administrators are excited for what the program will bring to the campus and how the program will expand upon the university's stated mission of cultivating students' personal growth and professional advancement while also preparing them for success.

"Going to college takes a lot of courage," Potash said. "Learning means that you realize you want to make some sort of change, and what ASAP does is provide

research-based structured support that helps students through that process"

"It aligns with the college's mission to provide access, opportunity, and student success," Johnson said. "We're really looking forward to help these students transition successfully into college and helping them complete their goals and stay on track academically, because that is really important, and ASAP is definitely one of the most powerful tools to improve student outcomes."

"We're excited, we're proud, that means that the system believes in the institution and its professionals and the systems we have in place to be able to deliver on this commitment," Massey said. "This helps us close equity gaps. ASAP has shown to be particularly strong in terms of results for students from traditionally underrepresented populations, first-generation low-income students. It is a leveling mechanism, so that those students are actually able to start off at the same level as students who may have more resources available."

The program will begin with the fall semester of 2026. Interested students can check their eligibility and learn more about the program at sunysullivan.edu/asap.

EXEMPTIONS → Page 1

of land to farm, and according to him "the only thing that grew were weeds."

However, the court ruled in favor of the church. While the court did acknowledge there were some disputed facts of the church's usage of the land, according to the decision "the court found all witnesses credible."

"Mr. Kim candidly acknowledged inconsistencies in representations on the exemption application and in documents filed during the course of litigation and his testimony," Justice David M. Gandin wrote in the decision. "However, the court finds him credible as to both the purpose for which the church purchased the property and the scope of its use."

Callicoon decided to appeal the decision. The appeal's court also sided with the church, until the town decided to pursue the matter to the New York State Court of Appeals. The Court of Appeals, in a 4-3 decision, also sided with the church and granted them tax-exempt status.

"There is simply no basis to disturb Supreme Court's findings, affirmed by the Appellate Division, that the town failed to discharge its burden to prove a zoning violation sufficient to defeat a tax exemption for either of the tax years in question," Chief Justice Rowan D. Wilson wrote in the majority opinion.

Wilson continued to say that the court's purpose was not to rejudge the case, but merely see that there was support for the decision that was reached by the lower court. Wilson found that there was enough support to back the claim that the church was

using the land for the purpose of farming for charitable means.

"Our role is not to substitute our judgment for that of the hearing court but rather to determine whether there is record support for the decision it reached. Here, the trial record supports Supreme Court's finding, affirmed by the Appellate Division, that although petitioner may have purchased the property with the intention of using it as a 'retreat,' its actual use of the property was to clear approximately one acre of the parcel and, on that cleared area, grow vegetables for charitable distribution to low-income Queens residents."

The dissenting opinion however, paints a different picture. Dissenting members of the court found that the church was in violation of zoning laws, regardless of what other purposes the land might be used for.

"There is only one way to read this record. On multiple occasions, the church violated the town's zoning code by holding religious gatherings on the property, because such gatherings do not fall within any 'permitted use' in the RU Rural District," Hon. Jenny Rivera wrote in the dissenting opinion. "[The] Supreme Court therefore should have denied the church's petitions, regardless of how the church used the property on other occasions. The majority's analysis to reach the opposite conclusion is a house of cards, constructed by individually unpersuasive arguments that cause the whole structure to come collapsing down upon minimal scrutiny."

However, the majority's decision was final. Now, the Town of Callicoon must pay the church back the taxes they collected

during the 2021, 2022, and 2023 tax years, which is approximately \$15,000 cumulatively, according to Bose. The town also must pay \$1,202.04 in printing costs for the church's briefs.

Other bodies that collected tax, such as the Sullivan West Central School District, must also pay back funds they received from the property taxes collected during that period. At a Thursday, June 18 school board meeting, Sullivan West's Board of Education passed a resolution similar to the one passed by Callicoon, saying that the district will pay back "an amount not to exceed \$25,000."

Bose told the **River Reporter** that the decision of the court "angered" him.

"I still don't believe [it]," Bose said. "It should make every property owner angry over this. Everyone that pays taxes, because there is no reason that 70-some acres should come completely off of the tax rolls."

Bose said that this case is just a symptom of a wider issue. Revenue from real property taxes are the largest funding source for local governments, and Bose said that tax exemptions only add fiscal stress to struggling local governments and add a burden to non-exempt taxpayers.

"It's been well known in Sullivan County over the years that, you know, we're the land of the tax exemption," Bose said. "Eventually, the more tax-exempt properties there are, it ends up putting more of the burden on the taxpayers that do pay taxes."

Bose also said that he thinks more people should know and be aware of the situation with tax-exempt properties. Bose said during the meeting that while the town board could go into executive session to vote and

"I still don't believe [it]," Bose said. "It should make every property owner angry over this. Everyone that pays taxes, because there is no reason that 70-some acres should come completely off of the tax rolls."

discuss the resolution because it pertained to ongoing litigation, he chose not to. He said he wanted the public to see what the board did for taxpayers, and to show how common this really is.

"I want people to know what went on," Bose said. "Because the more people that know this, they'll know: number one, they have a board that's going to fight for us; and number two, that this type of thing happens far too often."

Bose said that while the matter is settled in this case, the broader discussion about tax exemptions is far from over, and broader awareness is needed.

"It's wrong. It's wrong, and more people need to wake up to this," Bose said. "Including our justices that sit on these appellate divisions and the court of appeals; they need to wake up to it."

Memorializing Juneteenth, recognizing Black trailblazers

By PATRICK KELLY

SULLIVAN COUNTY, NY — In a packed legislative hearing room, Sullivan County celebrated Juneteenth and recognized two of the county's Black trailblazers, in a presentation focused on both the past and the future of the Black community in Sullivan County.

Juneteenth is celebrated every June 19; its name is a portmanteau of the words June and nineteen. It is a celebration of the abolition of slavery. The date marks June 19, 1865, the day when enslaved people in Galveston, TX found out about the emancipation proclamation through announcements by Union troops, two years after the proclamation was signed.

The day since has been held as a "second independence day," according to the Smithsonian. The day became an official holiday in 2021.

To commemorate the holiday this year, Hon. William T. Little, Jr., the first Black New York State Supreme Court Justice from Sullivan County, and Debbie Mack, the first Black, female postmaster of Monticello, were presented with awards from the Sullivan County Legislature, NYS Assembly Member Paula Elaine Kay and the Third Judicial District Gender Fairness Committee.

"As a young boy growing up in Monticello, I could never imagine that one day I would serve as a justice of the New York State

Supreme Court, but that to me is one of Juneteenth's lasting lessons," Little said.

Little added that the message of Juneteenth should be equal parts focused on the past, the pioneers who got us to where we are, and on new generations of leaders who will guide us into the future.

"Freedom is not only about the removal of barriers but the creation of possibilities for those who come after you. My journey is only one small reflection of that truth, and I learned that... growing up here in Sullivan County," he said.

"We've heard this so many times that it takes a village to raise a child, and when I look around this room, I can tell you that that is absolutely the case," Little said. "I was fortunate to grow up in a community here, Monticello, Sullivan County, where people invested in one another, neighbors looked out for one another and where community leaders quietly showed the importance of public service for me."

Mack echoed this sentiment, saying that to truly celebrate Juneteenth, we need to come together and educate our youth. Mack said that the only way to fight discrimination and hatred was to educate our youth and encourage unity.

"Teach them," said Mack. "Everybody knows right from wrong. You might not like me, I might not like you, but let's get that crap out of our minds. Teach every-



RR photos by Patrick Kelly

Sullivan County legislators and officials recognize Debbie Mack, the first Black Female Postmaster of Monticello. Pictured are legislator Amanda Ward, left, legislator Luis Alvarez, Mack, legislators Catherine Scott and Nadia Rajs, and executive director of the Sullivan County Human Rights Commission Ramone Wilson.

body, adults included, too. It's never too late to stop it. It's never too late to stop the discrimination"

"We got to show our kids that we're practicing what we preach," Mack continued. "You gotta teach them right from wrong. You gotta teach them what education is. You gotta teach them what bullying is."

The ceremony then recognized the future of the county by honoring Future AI Labs, a recently concluded program that tasked students with developing a website that focused on a theme related to Juneteenth. The program was praised for allowing students to work with new, emerging technology and educate themselves on its usage.

"As we celebrate the achievements of the past, we must also invest in the future. That is why I'm so proud of the Future AI Lab initiative, which we just saw this year," said Ramone Wilson, the executive director of the Sullivan County Human Rights Commission.

"The connection between Juneteenth and the Future AI labs is actually quite simple. Juneteenth is a story about access: access to freedom, access to education, access to opportunity, access to a future that previous generations could only dream about. Judge Little expanded what was possible in our courts. Debbie Mack expanded what was possible in public service, and the students

and interns participating in future AI labs are preparing to expand what is possible from technology, business, government, health care education and fields that may not yet exist. That is the promise of Juneteenth," Wilson said, "not simply [to] remember how far we have come, but investing in how far we can go."

Legislator Amanda Ward, who led the event, emphasized the importance of the young people in the room and how they were leading the way forward. Ward, who gave a portion of her discretionary funds to help support the Future AI Labs, said she would continue to invest in the future of the county by investing in the youth of the county and future Black excellence.

"You guys are a true investment," Ward said. "I will, and have, dedicated all of my time, my resources into making sure that you all have what you need to be great, that you all believe in yourselves and know that anything and everything is attainable."

"Sullivan County has a tremendous amount of Black excellence," Ward said. "And it just doesn't date back to today, and so I will make it my mission to every year make sure I educate our community here, and they know what great Black excellence has come from Sullivan County and is to come."



Sullivan County legislators and officials recognize William T. Little, Jr., the first Black Supreme Court Justice from Sullivan County. Pictured are legislators Luis Alvarez, left, and Amanda Ward, Little, Jr., legislators Catherine Scott and Nadia Rajs, and executive director of the Sullivan County Human Rights Commission Ramone Wilson.

NEWS FROM RADIO CATSKILL

NY re-opened its shelter housing funding; Sullivan still isn't ready to apply

By KIMBERLY IZAR

SULLIVAN COUNTY, NY — For decades, housing and public health advocates have tried to build a homeless shelter in Sullivan County—but where it'll go has been a heated debate for years.

Last April, the county legislature came close to approving a 20-bed facility in Thompson but failed to agree on both the location and the project scope.

The New York Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) then suspended accepting new funding applications months later in September 2025 for the agency's Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP), the program Sullivan County was planning to apply for, before legislators could reach an agreement.

Now, the state has re-opened its RFP for the housing funding program this June, but Sullivan County says they're still not ready to apply.

Sullivan County Legislator and Health and Human Services Committee Chair Cat Scott said the legislature is working on nailing down an existing structure that would need retrofitting and is still in the beginning planning phase of the potential facility.

"I'm cautiously optimistic that we are moving forward with that, but I'm not sure if our timing's gonna work out for this year or next year," said Scott.

Sullivan County has never had a homeless shelter for unhoused residents and is the only county in the Catskills and mid-Hudson Valley without one. Neighboring Delaware, Orange and Ulster counties all have an emergency housing shelter.

Sullivan County currently places over 240 adults and children across several hotels and motels across the county according to the latest county data.

The "hotel for housing" model has been widely criticized as an inefficient solution to address the root causes of homelessness. The system cost Sullivan County about \$5.8 million in 2025 alone—up from \$3.4 million in 2024—and doesn't include any wraparound support such as mental health support or emergency food assistance.

One concern critics have raised is that a gateway housing shelter could lead to increased substance use and public safety issues where it's built. But Scott says the county has been working to ensure there are adequate community safety measures in place.

"This is a program that's gonna have staffing 24 hours a

day. There's gonna be security cameras. There are things that are being put in place to make sure that this facility is a good neighbor, no matter what community it finds a home in," said Scott.

Sullivan County already has a housing nonprofit partner, HONOR, ready to operate the facility, which also oversees the homeless shelter in Orange County.

For years, community advocates have urged the legislature to stop stalling and address the county's homelessness crisis head on.

Marty Colavito, prevention programs issue leader with Sullivan County's Cornell Cooperative Extension, said that the organization's food delivery program is projected to make more than twice as many emergency food deliveries this year, in addition to their scheduled deliveries.

"Situations are gonna get worse, and homelessness follows," said Colavito during a June 11 legislative committee meeting. "I truly hope that we're that close because we've been talking about a site for now well over a year, and we've been talking about resources for well over a year and every day that goes by we feel hopelessness in this county."

OTDA released its RFP on June 5 and will accept applications starting July 28.

■ MY VIEW

BY DOUG ROGERS

Exactly what is being labeled as antisemitism?

A recent My View, titled “Why is antisemitism so rampant today in America?” (**River Reporter**, June 11-17) invites us to understand the complexity of the issue in all its social, political, technological and international facets.

Unfortunately, because the writer fails to put the issue in the context of the events taking place in the world today, he not only fails to engage the actual complexity of what we’re dealing with, but also exposes some of the deep contradictions and cognitive dissonance that are currently tearing our country apart.

Throughout the piece, the writer appeals to principle: “We’re a nation that prides itself on tolerance and diversity.” “Societies become stronger when they protect minorities...,” “All Americans deserve to live free from hatred and discrimination.”

For those who give more than a passing interest to the principles of equality and human rights, there has been awareness, since long before October 7, 2023, that Palestine, as a whole and in pieces, has been the scene of great injustices within recent history, to which the United States has been directly complicit. History didn’t begin on October 7, but its aftermath has brought the world into a new era—the age of genocide, when all crimes and atrocities are seemingly permitted.

If equality and human rights are America’s strength, why shouldn’t those principles apply to our close ally, Israel, which we fund generously with our tax dollars? Here we see the contradiction begin to take shape. Israel, in its fundamental conception, has no interest in these American principles.

Americans learned late that the state of Israel was formed in 1948 out of a brutal depopulation campaign carried out through most of the land of Palestine. Since 1967, the remainder has been under Israeli military occupation, where Palestinians have been denied all rights—the right to self-determination, the right to vote, equal protection under the law, access to justice, and the right to security and freedom of movement.

■ THE EXPERIMENT CONTINUES

BY FREDERIC J. FRANSEN

The unfortunate gerrymandering wars

A 1965 “Wizard of Id” comic strip by Johnny Hart and Brant Parker went as follows: The diminutive but tyrannical king is addressing his subjects on the need for peace and harmony. He then proclaims, “We must all live by the Golden Rule.”

The people were confused at what he meant until the Joker clued them in: “He means whoever has the gold makes the rules.”

The converse is also true: “Whoever makes the rules has the gold.”

I was reminded of this when I saw that Elbridge Gerry is in the news again.

Unfortunately, not for the fact that he was a member of the Second Continental Congress. Nor that he signed the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation. Not even that he served as vice president under James Madison. Instead, he’s in the news because the Democratic and Republican parties are once again “gerrymandering.”

The term comes from the shape of a political district that Gerry, then Massachusetts governor, allowed his Democratic-Republican Party to draw to gain an extra congressional seat. It looked like a salamander, and the term gerrymandering was born.

Gerry found the idea “highly disagreeable,” but signed the gerrymander bill anyway.

Gerry was not alone among the Founders in opposing such political gamesmanship. Along with the protection of minority rights, a core American principle is the idea of limiting the ability of any one “faction” from taking power

Zionist Israel is not a nation that prides itself on tolerance and diversity; it does not protect minorities, and Palestinians don’t live free from hatred and discrimination.

The belief in equal rights for all people makes one an advocate for Jewish rights and an enemy of antisemitism, but it also necessarily makes one an anti-Zionist. So this blurred line between criticizing the actions of the state of Israel and having animosity toward Jewish people means everyone gets smeared with the same antisemitism brush. Students who organized across racial and religious lines to oppose Israel’s atrocities were the first to be attacked. Just pointing out the factual crimes of Israel or even advocating for the rights of Palestinians now earns you the label of antisemite.

There is real antisemitism, born of reactionary impulses of tribalism and xenophobia. But in today’s discourse, there is no way to distinguish between regressive hatred and the principled stand for American values. Both are called antisemitism by supporters of Israel. So the troubling resurgence of antisemitism is not quite what it seems.

The state of affairs poses the question: is concern for feelings really as important as the genocide taking place in Gaza, which apparently has no cut-off date? If we want to stand on principle, shouldn’t it be that all people, everywhere, have a right to be free? We are nearing a thousand days of the ordeal that the defenseless civilians of Gaza have endured. Three years of no electricity, of living in tents, of random murder by drones, of starvation, of the threat of indiscriminate detention served up with medieval torture. How long would any of us survive these conditions? That’s the point, isn’t it? To torture and murder and starve until there’s no one left.

It is a status quo that our democracy is unlikely to survive. Free speech is gone, elections are subverted by money, and our government, administered by both parties, seems content to see this horror show play out to the bitter end. All of us who are concerned about equal rights, diversity and tolerance need to come together to bring this nightmare to an end.

Doug Rogers lives in Long Eddy, NY.

and tyrannizing the rest of the country.

What makes the U.S. Constitution so brilliant and enduring is the many ways in which it works to prevent permanent factions. In Federalist No. 10, Madison noted that, since the “CAUSES of faction cannot be removed,” efforts need to be sought in the “means of controlling its EFFECTS.”

Yet political parties emerged so quickly that when George Washington was leaving office, his warnings against parties formed a central part of his Farewell Address: “I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the state,” he warned.

They serve to “organize faction, to give it an extraordinary force; to put, in the place of the delegated will of the nation the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community ...”

And when there is a lot of back and forth, as we are experiencing today, “The alternative domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge ... is itself a frightful despotism.”

In 1986, economist James Buchanan won a Nobel Prize in economics for the development of a field of study known as Public Choice. Buchanan’s key insight was that the self-interested behavior of individuals in private life was likely to continue when they entered politics. In other words, being elected doesn’t somehow turn a human into an angel.

Or as the Nobel committee wrote in announcing Buchanan’s prize, “Individuals who behave selfishly (in) markets can hardly (be expected to) behave wholly altruistically in political life. ... Political parties ...

■ SNARKY NEWCOMER

OPINES, BASELY
BY LEAH CASNER

Time and the drugstore

After our snack behind Godzilla’s head in Tokyo’s manga and anime shopping district, I went into a drugstore to buy some sore throat and runny nose over-the-counter medicine, and came out with remedies that did not work and my ego was crushed.

The tourist advice websites had assured me that in Japan, the worst thing you can do is blow your nose in public. But I had a very free-flowing nose and had not brought any American pills because I wasn’t sure what was allowed through customs. I should have known no one was going to inspect an old lady’s bags. I’ve often wondered what I could get away with if I had more criminal tendencies.

At the drugstore, a clerk magically appeared and I pointed to my nose and throat. The clerk seemed to understand and took me to what I figured was the cold medicine display. While I pretended to be able, I grabbed a package that looked promising, or at least not fatal. When I looked up, she had disappeared. (HELP HELP I am alone in a foreign country’s drugstore and I don’t have any idea what I am doing HELP.) Was I supposed to have followed her? While I was wondering what to do, another lovely young clerk came over to me and gestured to a different counter.

Thinking she was going to save me—think of the Jurassic Park scene where Ellie is throwing the switch to get the park back online and is relieved to feel an arm on her shoulder (“Oh, Mr. Arnold!”) which turns out to be no longer attached to Mr. Arnold—I turned to her and she led me to some prettily packaged somethings, and smilingly patted the skin around her own, youthful smooth skinned eyes. She was trying to get me to buy some cream to cure or cover the hideous disfiguring dark baggy circles under my eyes.

Fortunately, the other clerk reappeared with her hands full of paper and brought me to a checkout, where I had to sign forms saying it was safe to sell me these products, and that I had no nefarious purpose in mind. I think. Since the forms were in Japanese and I do not read Japanese, I was just making wild guesses about what they said.

Now my self-confidence had had a thrashing, and even if the medicines had worked, I couldn’t stop thinking how I looked to the people of Japan, even after my son pointed out, “Mom, she was trying to sell you stuff.” Well. I know that. OK, I had forgotten for a minute. But it had still stung.

But I needn’t have worried so much about my runny nose, or even my baggy eyes. As blatant tourists, we got a lot of leeway and not much obvious disapproval.

The interpreter at our private tea ceremony graciously said she understood that Americans couldn’t sit with our legs completely folded under as the Japanese did, because our legs were longer. I tried to joke, “and our knees are 96 years old!” She gasped and said, “Oh! I never would have thought ...” I had to stop her quickly before she said, “You don’t look a day over 80!” (I’m only almost 70.)

Once I got home, did I rush to buy grotesquely expensive anti-aging stuff with labels I could read in English? I did. Do I use them religiously—the only thing I am religious about—though I can’t say I’ve noticed any differences? Of course I do.

■ QUOTE OF THE WEEK

VISIT RIVERREPORTER.COM/QUOTE
FOR A REFLECTION AND MORE QUOTES

“Democracy is not the building of a house, but the building of a nation.”
—Lyndon B. Johnson

■ MY VIEW

BY BRYAN GOLDEN

Think before you act

Acting without first thinking is too common. It is called reacting. It leads to unintended negative consequences. Problems are needlessly created or exacerbated. In this state, you are driven by emotion rather than logic. Anger, jealousy, bitterness, hurt, fear and distrust are some of the feelings that bypass rational thought.

Thinking after acting makes as much sense as a carpenter who cuts first and then measures. Once cut, a board cannot be made longer. Actions, once taken, can't be undone. A skilled carpenter measures carefully before cutting. Being prudent means thinking before acting.

Thinking before acting is responding. This is where your behavior is well thought out and planned. Just because someone else acts does not compel you to react. Thinking puts reason before emotion.

Without a consciously thought-out response, you revert to a knee-jerk reaction. This is your default automatic behavior. What do you say or do when upset, frustrated or angry? It's common to become trapped in the same patterns of reactive behavior. Other people will pick up on this and use it to manipulate you.

Since emotions cloud your ability to think clearly, take time to calm down whenever you are upset. Acting in haste bypasses the thinking stage. Rarely is there a pressing need to act immediately. More time is on your side than you realize.

Once you are calm, you are in a position to begin assessing your situation. Start by answering a few questions. What happened? Does it really matter? Do you need to respond at all? What are you trying to accomplish? Your objective answers stimulate your thinking process.

Not only do you want to formulate an appropriate strategy for your response, but you also need to keep things in perspective. "Don't sweat the small stuff" should always be kept in mind. Many circumstances, which at first seem upsetting, are insignificant when compared to the big picture of your life. These situations typically require little or no action. You can just let them go.

When action is necessary, keep your objective in mind. Know what it is you are looking to accomplish. Consider all of the options available to you. Identify the pros and cons in each option. Objectivity is essential. It may be helpful to bounce your thoughts off a neutral person whom you trust.

Before deciding on your appropriate response, make sure you gather all of the facts directly from the source. Using second- or third-hand information as a basis for your decisions is a faulty strategy that leads to erroneous conclusions. Realizing a short-term gain at a long-term expense is self-defeating.

Take care not to burn bridges if possible. You never know what circumstances and people you will encounter in the future. Well thought-out action is more likely to solve problems and preserve relationships than an emotionally fueled reaction.

Actions have consequences. Think things through from different perspectives. What impact will your actions have on the various people and situations involved? Are you acting in your best interest, or is there some desire for retribution? Your actions should improve your circumstances, not make them worse.

Before deciding on a particular course of action, run the different options through "what if" scenarios. This approach forces you to consider all of the various cause-and-effect relationships. You want to anticipate what impact your action will have so you are not caught by surprise. How will other people react? What action will they take? What are the benefits and liabilities for you?

A well thought-out response gives you the best chance of taking appropriate action that yields the desired results. Use these suggestions to help you think before you act.

Bryan Golden is the author of "Dare to Live Without Limits." Contact him at Bryan@columnist.com or visit www.DareToLiveWithoutLimits.com.

■ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Metaphorically yours: the free market and supply/demand

The free market, like the social contract, is a model or metaphor for events that never take place. So, the former—operating under the principle of supply-and-demand—is imagined to explain the transactional agreement between buyer and seller for each good and service.

A recent My View ("An open letter to Rep. Josh Riley," **River Reporter**, June 11-17) somewhat overstates the prevalence of this activity in driving the U.S. economy. While most consumer goods/services may be viewed under this rubric, probably one quarter of economic activity is generated by the various levels of government.

Additionally, some of the market-based activity is heavily regulated. Public policy—e.g., withdrawing from the funding of subsidized housing—has had devastating impact. Sixty years ago, the private housing market, even in a place like NYC, was affordable because of the competition from public housing. The writer notes some exceptions to the dominance of supply/demand, one being the Hormuz Strait closure, interfering with "prices [which] are determined automatically." But those more likely responsible for pain at the pump could be avatars for the concept of supply and demand: those gamblers in petroleum futures who have never had to "Gojo" the West Texas Light from under their nails.

Michele P. Brown
New York, NY

Tenants' union holds General Assembly

On June 13, the Hudson Valley Tenants Union (HVTU) held its first-ever General Assembly. This was a three-hour event and tenants ratified a constitution, elected leadership, and set priorities for the next year.

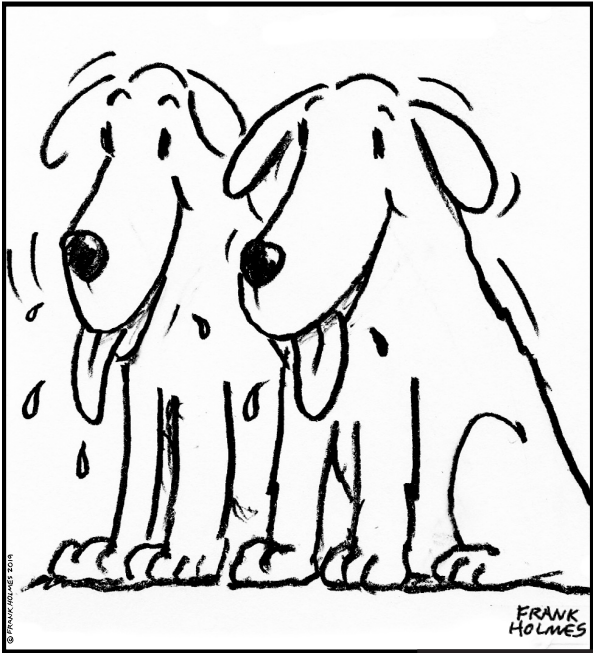
Over 50 members participated and voted.

The ratified constitution was built by a tenant-led bylaws committee created in January, and it outlines that anyone who shares the goals of the HVTU can join as a member, as long as they are not a landlord or make money from other people's housing in some other way.

The constitution also outlined the primary purpose of the HVTU: organizing new associations, especially across specific landlord portfolios. A five-member tenant council was also created to govern the organization, and tenants elected the following individuals to serve on the council over the next year: Caitlin Ruppert, Raquel Gonzalez, Brigid Kelly, Andrew Hiller and Steph De John.

Members also proposed and voted on resolutions to guide the work of the Hudson Valley Tenants Union over the next year. After debate and deliberation, all five resolutions proposed passed with nearly unanimous majorities (there were a few abstentions).

DR. PUNNYBONE



A Pair of Pants

- Resolution 1: Ensure tenants file for rent reductions
- Resolution 2: Organize tenants beyond Kingston
- Resolution 3: Help pass the REST Act
- Resolution 4: Affiliate with the statewide tenant bloc
- Resolution 5: Support pro-tenant mayoral candidate in Kingston.

(The full text is available; email info@hvtenantsunion.org.)

Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha spoke about the need to build more tenant power to accomplish legislative victories in Albany, such as the passage of the REST Act (see below), which would make it easier to expand rent stabilization throughout upstate New York.

The HVTU works toward building tenant power across the Hudson Valley through collective action and community organizing. Learn more at hudsonvalleytenantsunion.org/.

Hudson Valley Tenants Union
Kingston, NY

NY GOP endorses Auringer

Jackie Auringer (Republican and Conservative candidate for Congress in NY-18) is exactly the kind of candidate Republicans need to win in the Hudson Valley.

Jackie brings energy, common sense and a real understanding of the challenges facing families across the district. She is focused on lowering costs, restoring public safety, protecting taxpayers and bringing accountability back to Washington.

In Congress, Jackie would join strong New York Republican women leaders like Nicole Malliotakis and Claudia Tenney in fighting for affordability, security and common-sense government.

Pat Ryan has become a reliable supporter of the radical Democrat agenda in Washington, Albany and New York City, while families across the Hudson Valley are paying the price. Jackie is one of us, and she will fight for the people of this district.

The New York Republican Party is proud to endorse Jackie Auringer for Congress.

Ed Cox
Chair, New York State Republican Committee
Albany, NY

[The **RIVER REPORTER** welcomes letters on all subjects from its readers. They must include the correspondent's phone number. The correspondent's name and town will appear at the bottom of each letter.

Letters are printed at the discretion of the editor. It is requested they be limited to 350 words; longer letters may not be printed, or may be edited down to the appropriate length. No letters or My Views in excess of 800 words will be printed. Deadline is 1 p.m. on Friday.]

For more letters, visit riverreporter.com/opinion.

GERRYMANDERING - Page 6

will try to obtain as many votes as possible in order to reach positions of power or receive large budget allocations." In short, whoever makes the rules gets the gold.

While there probably is no cure for this, the antidote is careful rulemaking. As the Nobel Committee noted, Buchanan showed that "the design of constitutional rules takes on great importance." In fact, it's the key.

While members of Congress have always been popularly elected, it wasn't until the passage of the Apportionment Act of 1842 that states with multiple representatives were required to divide themselves into single-member districts, as we have today. With such districts, the theory goes, it is difficult for any one party consistently to win every congressional seat in a state. Local concentrations of people with different interests are often enough to activate Madison's idea of factions canceling each other out.

Today's gerrymandering wars are nothing other than an attempt by both parties to predetermine the outcome of elections.

Most Americans today are unhappy not only with the parties but with the system itself. They are tired of letting the king make the rules. The last time this happened, nearly 250 years ago this month, it led to a revolution.

Frederic J. Fransen is the president of Amerion College in Huntington (WV) and CEO of Certell Inc. He wrote this for InsideSources.com.

■ DEATH NOTICES

John H. Beisel

John H. Beisel, 79, of Lackawaxen, PA, passed away June 19, 2026. John was born October 2, 1946 in Callicoon, NY. A Mass of Christian burial was celebrated June 23 at St. Ann’s Church in Shohola, PA. Burial followed in St. Mark’s Cemetery in Lackawaxen, with military honors.

Grace L. Coutts

Grace L. Coutts, 89, passed away June 17, 2026 at home. Grace was born June 9, 1937 in Susquehanna, PA. The funeral was held June 23 at Teeters’ East Chapel in Hawley, PA. Burial will be in Pine Grove Cemetery in Paupack, PA.

Trisha Marie Badenhop Ellis

Trisha Marie Badenhop Ellis, 46, of Scranton, PA and formerly of Honesdale, PA, passed away June 15, 2026 at home. Trisha was born November 12, 1979. Funeral services and burial in the Waymart Cemetery at Canaan Corners will be private and held at the convenience of the family.

Dorothea Selma Szczesniak

Dorothea Selma (Weiss) Szczesniak, 97, of Honesdale, PA, passed away June 18, 2026. Dorothea was born March 22, 1929 in Berlin, Germany. A memorial service will be held on Friday, June 26 at 11 a.m. at Congregation Beth Israel, Court Street, in Honesdale.

Family Fun Day celebrates freedom

MILFORD, PA — All are invited to celebrate Freedom250 at Grey Towers National Historic Site on Saturday, June 27 with a fee-free day and refreshments.

The family-friendly event runs from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. and will include a free museum open house, forest scavenger hunt, a U.S. Forest Products Lab exhibit, historic fire tower tours and refreshments.

Activities to enjoy on the grounds include:

11 a.m.: Flag presentation and national anthem;

11:15 a.m.: Welcome;

Noon to 3 p.m.: Free first-floor museum open house, tours of historic fire tower and a Yale foresters’ campsite;

Noon to 2:30 p.m.: Strolling musician;

12:30 p.m.: Refreshments;

1 p.m. to 3 p.m.: Forest scavenger hunt; and 3 p.m.: Retiring of the flag.

Grey Towers is located at 151 Grey Towers Dr. Learn more at www.fs.usda.gov/greytowers.

Sullivan County Courts to host Independence Day celebration

MONTICELLO, NY — The Sullivan County Judiciary, in partnership with the New York State Unified Court System’s Third Judicial District, invites the public to an Independence Day Celebration on Thursday, July 2 at noon on the lawn of the Sullivan County Courthouse in Monticello. In the event of inclement weather, the ceremony will be held in Courtroom One of the Lawrence H. Cooke Memorial Courthouse.

Admission is free.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence—a milestone that calls upon every institution of American civic life to pause, reflect and reaffirm the values upon which this nation was founded, a news release noted. “The Sullivan County Courts are proud to observe this historic anniver-

Kauneonga Lake Farmers and Makers Market returns

BETHEL, NY — The Kauneonga Lake Farmers and Makers Market will bring together a diverse mix of local agriculture, handcrafted goods, live music and educational resources at this year’s markets. The Summer Market, held outdoors, takes place on Saturdays from June 27 through September 5 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Veterans Square, (the Strip) 3594 Rte. 55 in Kauneonga Lake.

Attendees can explore offerings from regional vendors and community organizations.

Fresh Food & Farm Products: JR’s Farm Fresh Beef LLC, the North Country Farm, Sticky Fingers Delectables, Roots of Heather and Flowering Sun Ecology.

Artisanal Baked Goods: Hoffman Bread, Wheat and Tare Bread, Cheesecake Bob’s Baked Goods and Blueberry Hill.

Handcrafted Art, Metaphysical Items and Jewelry: Art by Adrienne, Mueller Jewelry, Pascale Paintings and Prints, Crooked Willow Pottery, Lori Rae Jewelry, Light Curves Glass, Sina Arts, Art by Joyce and Jim, Callin Barber, Blooming Brims, Teresa’s Treasures, Nana MMM, Fancy Candle, Earth Treasures and original works

Bethel unveils 2026 cultural calendar

TOWN OF BETHEL, NY — The Bethel Local Development Corporation and the Town of Bethel have officially announced a year-round schedule of community events for 2026. The calendar is anchored by the Thursday night lakeside concert series, the weekly Farmers and Makers Market and a unified multi-faith winter celebration to close out the year.

Thursday concerts at Gazebo Park

The signature Thursday Summer Concert Series returns to Gazebo Park, located at 3562 Rte. 55 in Kauneonga Lake. In the event of bad weather, the concerts will move to the Kauneonga Lake Fire Pavilion, 3574 Rte. 55 in Kauneonga Lake.

All performances are free to the public and will run from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The program is made possible with funds from the Statewide Community Regrant Program of the New York State Council on the Arts, the governor, and the New York State Legislature. It is administered locally by the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance.

sary with a ceremony that brings together members of the judiciary, law enforcement, Veterans, community organizations and the public in a shared expression of gratitude and patriotism.”

The ceremony will feature the presentation of colors by the Sullivan County Sheriff’s Office Color Guard, a contingent from Scouting America Troop 101, and honored participation by Veterans’ organizations and the Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks, Lodge 1544. Performances of the National Anthem and “God Bless America” will be provided by Albee Bockman and Lori James, respectively.

The Sullivan County bench will play a central role in the program. The Hon. Meagan Galligan, Justice of the New York State Supreme Court, will read selected ex-

brought together by the Bethel Council of the Arts.

Specialty Goods and Treats: PickleLicious, Roots of Heather, Windy Willow and Lisa’s Liquids.

Pets & Pet Products: Pawfect Pleasures Pet Treats, All Paws Matter and Katskill Kritters.

Community and Health Resources: Bill Zarick Treatment, Sullivan County Department of Public Health, Sustainable Bethel, Kauneonga Lake Fire District, Lake Association of White Lake and NY Animal.

Pop-ups: Monteleone Hydrofarm, Be Kind Bake Shop, All the Glitters, Lorna Soaps, the Girl Scouts and more.

“Our market is so much more than a place to shop—it is a true gathering space that celebrates the incredible talent, resilience, and creativity of our local farmers and makers,” said Moreen Lerner, manager of the Bethel Local Development Corporation. “By combining fresh, local food with original art, live music, and vital health and sustainability resources, we are building a stronger, healthier and more connected community. We can’t wait to welcome everyone back for an incredible season.”

2026 Lineup

July 2—Swing Shift Orchestra (a tribute to first responders)

July 9—Aerial Acoustics & The Wagner Project

July 16—Grey Davidson & Garry G

July 23—D’raz & The Lucky Devils

July 30—Jaketown Road

August 6—The AM Band

August 13—Woodstock Tribute Band

August 20—Carl Banks & Charles

Highway Hootenanny

August 27—River Ramblers with Steve Schwartz

September 3—Robert Tellefsen Band

These programs are supported by generous community partners and in-kind donors, including Bold Gold Media, Forestburgh Playhouse, Sullivan County Dramatic Workshop, East 52 Wine and Liquor, T&C, Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, Sticky Fingers, Eldred Preserve, STEAM, Lori Rae Jewelry and the Bethel Council of the Arts.

cerpts from the Declaration of Independence, followed by commentary and interpretation by the Hon. James Farrell, Judge of the Sullivan County Court and Surrogate’s Court. The Hon. Jacqueline Ricciani, Judge of the Sullivan County Family Court, will reflect on the foundational principles that shaped the creation of our democracy as articulated in the Federalist Papers. The Hon. Stephan Schick, Justice of the New York State Supreme Court, will conclude the ceremonies with his reflections.

The ceremony will be followed by light refreshments on the courthouse lawn. Local dignitaries and community leaders are also expected to participate. The public is encouraged to arrive early and bring lawn chairs or blankets.

The event is free and open to the public.



By Missoulabirdnerd - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?>

Great horned owl horks up a pellet. Families can dissect different owl pellets at the Van Scott Nature Reserve on Saturday, June 27. (Pellets get sanitized before being sold for science projects.)

Dissect owl pellets at the DHC

BEACH LAKE, PA — On Saturday, June 27 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., an Owl Pellet Dissection Lab will be held at the Van Scott Nature Reserve, 571 Perkins Pond Road.

It’s a chance to explore the fascinating world of owls through one of their most unique clues: owl pellets. Attendees will work individually, in pairs or in groups to dissect owl pellets and discover what’s hidden inside. By identifying and piecing together rodent bones, fur, feathers, and other remains, participants will learn about owls’ diets, hunting habits, and behavior while learning about the important role these birds play in the ecosystem. The program costs \$5 for conservancy members or \$10 for non-members; kids 12 and under attend for free. Advance registration is requested and children must be accompanied by an adult to attend.

For more information, call 570/226-3164, 845/583-1010 or visit www.DelawareHighlands.org.

Temple Sholom to discuss Jewish astronauts

MONTICELLO, NY — The U.S. space program is a model of diversity, and includes 20 Jewish astronauts. How does it feel to be a Jewish spaceman or -woman? What responsibilities to the Jewish community come with this role?

On Monday, June 29 at 1 p.m., Hope’s Compass and Temple Sholom will screen “Fiddler on the Moon.” A panel discussion about Judaism in space will follow the short video. Panelists will include the film’s director, Seth Kramer, and Rabbi Chuck Diamond. Dr. Hope Blecher Croney will moderate the discussion. A grant from Assembly Member Paula Kay has provided funding.

Admission costs \$10 cash or a check payable to Temple Sholom.

Reserve a seat by sending in the payment or calling 845/794-8731. Light refreshments will be served.

■ NARROWSBURG NEWS

BY GREG TRIGGS

To market!

The Narrowsburg Farmers Market is open every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. throughout the summer. A wonderful local resource, you're sure to run into neighbors and their dogs gently strolling the grounds of the Union, 7 Erie Ave., while enjoying talented live musicians.

Dreading planning a Saturday dinner for weekend guests? You'll find inspiration at the market. Dreading the weekend guests? Send them to the market for a couple of hours and tell them not to come back until they've found some fresh heirloom medlars.

They'll *never* come back. Medlars are a winter-ripened fruit. HA!

Your guests will still have a lovely time thanks to a slew of terrific products, including jams and preserves, a buffet of tempting bakers, organic farm goods and amazing crafters.

If you're with them and need a break, there are also cider and spirit vendors. Ask for a free sample before heading back to engage with your sociopathic college roommate who just happened to be passing through Narrowsburg at the height of the summer season, claiming there were no Airbnb spaces available that allowed his asthmatic mini-horse emotional support animal.

They deserve our support, because farmers' markets bring nutrition, variety and vitality to a community. They also make economic sense. Money stays local while supporting area farmers, artisans, entrepre-

neurs and small businesses. Forty-five cents of every market dollar stays local. Compare grocery chains, with 15 cents estimated to stay local.

Along with fresh strawberries, the market creates a gathering space where community identity thrives. Access to fresh food, often organic, is unsurpassed. Children learn healthier eating and sustainability habits. Food often travels only a few miles from farm to market, which reduces fuel use and emissions.

Small farms contributed \$2.4 billion to the American economy in 2023, and that's just one economic success story. Add to that the creation of local jobs. Direct sales allow farmers to keep more of their revenue. The icing on the artisanal lovingly baked cake is that locally spent dollars are thought to circulate multiple times within a community, supporting farmers, their employees, nearby suppliers and nearby restaurants and shops.

The market has a robust website full of useful, come rain or come shine, information. Visit it at narrowsburgfarmersmarket.org. On the website, they share their priorities and goals, which include commitments to:

- Celebrate and share the bounty.
- Uphold the integrity of our land.
- Support the farmers, food producers and artisans who work tirelessly to provide food that feeds both our bodies and our souls.

To that admirable list you could also add assisting in the management of annoying—but beloved—weekend guests. See you at the Narrowsburg Farmers Market, now through the end of October, then resuming again next May.



Contributed photo

For 35 years, the Wayne County Community Foundation (the Foundation) has acted as a "one-stop shop" for philanthropic giving to support grants to local nonprofit organizations, scholarships and field-of-interest funds.

The importance of giving locally

Resting on a share of a fund started by Ben Franklin himself, the Wayne County Community Foundation gives to local causes—and offers much more

By RYANNE JENNINGS

It all started with Ben Franklin.

Franklin left a bequest of \$4,000 to be held in trust for 200 years for community benefit. In 1991, the Pennsylvania legislature distributed the matured fund—then valued at over \$2 million—to community foundations across the state to perpetuate charitable causes and fulfill Ben Franklin's legacy of localized community philanthropy.

That is what community foundations do best. At the time, Wayne County didn't have a community foundation, so a group of volunteers worked to establish our very own community foundation. To this day, we continue to utilize the funds from Ben Franklin's bequest; we make grants each year from the Ben Franklin Fund to honor community members who demonstrate a lifetime commitment to community service and philanthropy.

For 35 years, the Wayne County Community Foundation has acted as a "one-stop shop" for philanthropic giving to support grants to local nonprofit organizations, scholarships and field-of-interest funds.

The foundation continues to be invested in the idea that community foundations serve the needs of the entire county, now and in the future.

The foundation also serves as a resource for nonprofits to strategize how to fund large projects and connect them with other funders, program partners and grant opportunities.

While it might not be possible for the foundation to fund an entire project, we always work to assist in helping to figure out a plan to make a project successful.

The Wayne County Community Foundation, like others, is governed by a volunteer board of directors and run by a team of staff with deep knowledge of the community and significant expertise in nonprofit management. We go beyond simply making grants that advance charitable activities: we also identify current and emerging issues, stimulate resources to address those needs, and help Wayne County prepare for the future.

For 35 years, we have been investing in the future of Wayne County and are built to do so forever.

For more information about the Wayne County Community Foundation and to set up a meeting to discuss your charitable giving goals, contact Ryanne Jennings at rjennings@waynefoundation.org or visit waynefoundation.org.

Ryanne Jennings is the president/CEO of the Wayne County Community Foundation.

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BUSINESS

from a local perspective

From video games to sourdough *Roger That Bakery finds its rise in Callicoon*

By LEANNA BALLESTER

CALLICOON, NY — Esteban Eliza will be the first to tell you—he didn’t even really like baking.

Before 2020, bread wasn’t his thing. He did however love food, as he grew up around his grandfather’s Puerto Rican cooking, and traveled across the U.S. eating the delicious cuisine our country has to offer. But baking? Not particularly. He was a software engineer who spent a lot of his career working on video games, and had way more interest in pastry than sourdough.

Then the pandemic happened. Like a lot of us, he started a sourdough project. Unlike most of us, he didn’t quit when the world opened back up.

“I didn’t have a knack for it,” he said, “I failed a lot.”

He kept tinkering anyway. Worked on pizza dough. Made bread that wasn’t quite right and made it again.

The turning point came when friends at Good Find Farm in Damascus wanted baked goods for their farm stand. Suddenly the hobby had a reason to get serious. He

dialed in the starter, the temperature and the recipe and made something he was actually proud of.

That farm stand led to wholesale bread for the Callicoon Pantry, all while he was still working in software full-time.

Then the nonprofit he worked for went bankrupt and laid everyone off. He looked for another engineering role but nothing felt right.

“I didn’t have the passion anymore,” he said. “I was much more motivated to look up sourdough cultures than software algorithms.”

So he made the leap and rented commercial kitchen space, scaled up for wholesale, got invited to join one of our local farmers’ markets and that, he said, is where everything really took off. Soon he took over the space where Grizzly Bagels had been in Callicoon; that was Labor Day weekend in 2024, and he had great success there.

Roger That Bakery now has its own storefront at 26 Upper Main St. in Callicoon, right next to the Callicoon Theater.

The name matters to him. He started the

business with a partner, and “Roger” came from one of her late relatives—someone remembered for sparking creativity. For Eliza, who spent years in interactive storytelling and game development, “roger that” means dialogue. It means someone heard you, an affirmation.

The shop is now growing into more than bread; he now carries tinned fish, olive oils, local flour from Wild Hive Farm, bread knives and proofing baskets. He’s building out an espresso program with Driftaway Coffee out of Brooklyn and has his eye on house-made butters, jams and fresh-milled grains. He mills small batches now on a countertop stone mill and hopes to go bigger eventually.

Eliza says it’s the hardest job he’s ever had. Also the most rewarding.

“It’s really cool to become part of the community,” he said. “I feel so grateful and connected.”

That feels right. Because that’s what Roger That actually is: bread made with patience and humility, by someone who stumbled into a calling and had the guts to follow it.

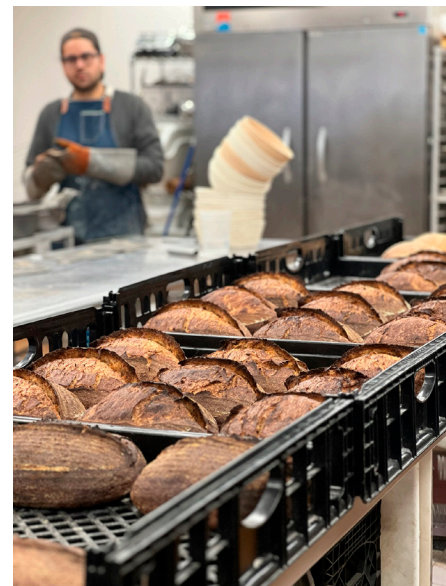


Photo by Esteban Eliza, Roger That Bakery
Bread trundles on by at Roger That Bakery.

Get some bread

You can find Roger That Bakery at 26 Upper Main St. in Callicoon. Stop in, grab a loaf, and follow along on Instagram @rogerthatbakery for what’s coming out of the oven next.

Monticello Kiwanis hosts community leaders

Contributed by the MONTICELLO KIWANIS

MONTICELLO, NY — Over the past few months, the Kiwanis Club of Monticello has hosted a very interesting lineup of community leaders and officials.

The Hon. Jacqueline Ricciani was sworn in as Sullivan County Family Court Judge on December 29, 2025. Judge Ricciani described how she has been working to assist vulnerable children in our community through the legal system.

Kathleen Lara was elected county treasurer in November 2025 after serving as deputy treasurer for 11 years. She discussed the numerous responsibilities of the county treasurer, including disbursing funds, collecting property taxes, revenue collection, financial reports, etc.

Matthew Sush was appointed as the president and CEO of the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce on February 2, 2026. From Day One, he has been busy directing the organization’s efforts to promote, support and advocate for the local businesses in the community. His past experience as a business relations officer at Jeff Bank is definitely beneficial for his new duties.

Scott Mace was elected Town of Thompson Supervisor in November 2025. He delivered an informative PowerPoint presentation focusing on a long-term comprehensive plan covering zoning developments, housing,



Contributed photo

Sullivan County Family Court judge Jacqueline Ricciani, far left, was presented with a 75th anniversary Kiwanis mug by Kiwanis President Marvin Rappaport and Kiwanis Program Chairperson Linda Barriger.

recreation, parks, youth programs, etc.

It was easy to determine that the above presentations were a hub for learning about the inner workings of our community, since club members and guests were intrigued by the subjects and lingered, buzzing with many questions.

The Kiwanis Club of Monticello meets on the first Monday of the month at Albella’s Restaurant at 6 p.m. The focused mission is to improve the world, one child and one community at a time. Check out the club’s Facebook page at Monticello, NY Kiwanis Club.

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Wayne Bank has supported the Wayne County Community Foundation (WCCF) with a donation through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC).

Wayne Bank donates to the Wayne County Community Foundation

HONESDALE, PA — Jim Donnelly, president/CEO of Wayne Bank, announced that Wayne Bank has supported the Wayne County Community Foundation (WCCF) with a donation through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC).

Ryanne Jennings, WCCF president/CEO, accepted a check for \$4,000 from Donnelly. With this donation, Wayne Bank helps the foundation offer academically advanced programs in the Wayne Highlands, Wallenpaupack Area and Western Wayne School Districts, the bank said.

“Supporting educational opportunities today helps strengthen our communities for the future,” said Donnelly.

The Wayne County Community Foundation invests and administers funds to award grants, scholarships and promote programs to a wide range of humanitarian, educational and cultural organizations.

This gift was made possible because of the EITC program offered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, acting through the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Jeffersonville Bancorp announces first-quarter earnings

JEFFERSONVILLE, NY — Jeffersonville Bancorp, Inc. (OTCQB - JFBC) announced its first-quarter net income of \$3,282,000 or \$0.77 per share compared to \$2,718,000 or \$0.64 per share for the same quarter in 2025.

The increase was primarily attributable to an increase in loan interest and fees, an increase in securities income and a decrease in the credit loss provision.

Interest and dividend income decreased by \$187,000 and tax expense increased by \$171,000.

“Despite global events causing economic

uncertainty, we are well positioned with ample liquidity, high profitability and a robust capital position,” said president/CEO George Kinne Jr.

Shareholders received a 33.33 percent increase in the quarterly dividend, from \$0.15 to \$0.20.

Jeffersonville Bancorp is a one-bank holding company that owns all the capital stock of Jeff Bank. Jeff Bank maintains 10 full-service branches in Eldred, Callicoon, Jeffersonville, Liberty, Livingston Manor, Monticello, Port Jervis, White Lake and Wurtsboro.

Chamber to hold networking breakfast

MONTICELLO, NY — The Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce will hold its July Networking Breakfast from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Friday, July 10 at Resorts World Catskills, 888 Resorts World Dr.

The event “provides a welcoming and engaging atmosphere to connect with fellow business professionals, community leaders, entrepreneurs and community stakehold-

ers from throughout Sullivan County and beyond,” the chamber said.

Register at business.catskills.com/community-events/Details/monthly-net-working-breakfast-july-10-2026-1766132?

The Bagel Festival takes place on Sunday, August 9 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Monticello.

Promotions for two Garnet Health staff

MIDDLETOWN, NY — Garnet Health announced the promotion and expanded leadership responsibilities of two clinical ancillary staff members, Amy Russell-Parlman and Keith Wilson.

Russell-Parlman has been promoted to senior administrative director, diagnostic imaging, where she will oversee diagnostic imaging across all three Garnet Health hospital locations. She began her career as a radiologic technologist and is certified in radiology, CT and MRI.

Wilson has been promoted to admin-

istrator, clinical ancillary. In this role, he will oversee respiratory therapy; the Sleep Center; outpatient wound care; and rehabilitation services, including physical, occupational and speech therapy.

He began his career as a respiratory therapist and joined Garnet Health in 2023 as director of respiratory therapy, with additional oversight of the Sleep Center and outpatient wound care.

To learn more about Garnet Health or to join our team, visit garnethealth.org.

Jeff Bank converts to national charter

JEFFERSONVILLE, NY — Jeffersonville Bancorp, Inc. (OTCQB - JFBC), the holding company for Jeff Bank, announced that on May 28, the bank was approved by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) for conversion from a New York State to a national charter. At that time, the bank will operate under the name “Jeff Bank, National Association.” The bank has six months from the date of approval to implement the conversion.

The company expects that the charter conversion will not have a significant impact on the bank’s current activities or investments, it noted in a press release. “The charter conversion also should not adversely affect bank customers and will not affect the terms and conditions of loan and deposit accounts.”

George W. Kinne Jr., president/CEO of the bank, said, “We believe the conversion to a national charter will streamline the

supervisory process required by a state charter, whereby regulatory examinations are conducted alternately with the state’s financial services regulator and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. In addition to eliminating differences in approach to safety and soundness examinations, under a state charter, separate compliance and Community Reinvestment Act examinations are required, which duplicate efforts. A national charter brings the added benefit of federal preemption of state laws, which improves competitiveness, especially as Jeff Bank operates in the State of New York on the borders of two other states, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.”

As a result of the charter conversion, the OCC will be the bank’s primary regulator. The Federal Reserve Board will continue to be the primary banking regulator for Jeffersonville Bancorp.

Mini-grant recipients include Forest City Outdoor Town Action Team

FOREST CITY, PA — Endless Mountains Heritage Region announced the partnership mini-grants for 2026, including a \$4,000 award to the Forest City Borough/Outdoor Town Action Team.

The awardees were selected from 24 applications submitted across EMHR’s four-county service area.

The award to Forest City Borough/Forest City Outdoor Town Action Team supports the placement of the third of five public sculptures designed to connect the D&H Rail Trail with the Forest City community and downtown.

The ongoing project aims to strengthen trail-to-town connections, enhance community identity and encourage increased visitation to the area, the action team said.

The EMHR Partnership Mini-Grant Program supports projects that promote heritage preservation, outdoor recreation, community revitalization and regional collaboration.

“The Forest City sculpture initiative continues to reflect these goals by blending public art, outdoor access and local pride,” the team added.

Assurance Home Watch renews accreditation

FOREST CITY, PA — Assurance Home Watch NEPA has renewed its accreditation with the National Home Watch Association (NHWA) for the fourth consecutive year, “reinforcing its position as a trusted provider of professional Home Watch services throughout Northeast Pennsylvania,” the business said.

Jennifer Mayers has also earned the Certified Home Watch Professional (CHWP) designation through the NHWA certification program.

Founded by Kenneth and Jennifer Mayers, Assurance Home Watch NEPA provides visual home inspections and concierge services for seasonal residents, vacation homeowners, short-term rental property owners and homeowners who are away from their properties for extended periods of time.

The National Home Watch Association, established in 2009, is described as the leading organization representing the home watch industry across the United States and Canada.

“Home Watch is a professional service involving scheduled visual inspections of homes and properties while homeowners are away. Whether a homeowner is traveling, living seasonally elsewhere, managing a vacation home or overseeing a short-term

rental remotely, Home Watch services help identify obvious issues such as storm damage, water leaks, HVAC failures or security concerns before they escalate into major and costly repairs,” the program wrote. “Accredited member companies are vetted for professionalism, ethics, insurance requirements and industry compliance.”

The Mayers family has lived and worked in the region for more than 25 years. “As homeowners ourselves, we understand how important it is to know your home is being cared for by someone you trust,” said Jennifer Mayers. “Our goal is to provide homeowners with peace of mind through dependable communication, professional oversight and personalized service.”

Assurance Home Watch NEPA serves Wayne County, Susquehanna County, Pike County and Lackawanna County as well as surrounding communities, providing routine home checks, storm monitoring, emergency response coordination and concierge services tailored to homeowners’ needs.

You can reach the business at 570/729-5750 or at info@assurancehomewatchnepa.com.

Learn more at www.assurancehomewatchnepa.com.

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Food in the Upper Delaware



■ **JUDE'S CULINARY JOURNEY**
BY JUDE WATERSTON

A Greek in the woods

For 20 years before retiring, Janet and I were weekenders at our house in Callicoon. During the blustery months of January through March, we closed the house and returned to New York City. I almost always went out to Queens on the weekends to stay at Janet's spacious apartment, as my own living quarters were little more than a cell. When I didn't feel like cooking, we would venture out to restaurants not far from Janet's apartment.

A favorite was in Astoria—a historically Greek neighborhood—with many eateries and food shops featuring Greek and Cypriot ingredients. We found a restaurant called Zenon Taverna and ate there often. We were taken by the friendliness of the customers, who often plied us with food they couldn't finish or thought we should try. It was homey, unpretentious and the food was delicious.

Over time, we became friendly with the owner, Stelios Papageorgiou, who would stop by our table to chat or offer a gratis dessert. Somehow it came up one evening that he too had a place not far from us, in Orange County, where he went to unwind when not working at the restaurant. He'd cook, hunt and garden on his large plot of land. He added, "You must come sometime and see my property." We exchanged phone numbers.

One morning, months later, I answered the phone to hear a man speaking excitedly. I had trouble understanding him because his accent was heavy. Then I heard the words, "Zenon Taverna" and realized it was Stelios.

We were surprised that he had actually made good on his promise to invite us for a visit. I grabbed the only bottle of Greek wine we had in the house and we hopped into the car one morning.

When we arrived, having driven down a long winding road, we found Stelios, dressed in khaki shorts and a long-sleeved top, a knife in a leather sheath at his belt. We were introduced to his friend Costos, who was visiting Stelios for the day, then taken on a tour of the enormous garden. There were lettuces, cabbage, corn, fava and green beans, squash, peppers, chard and the heftiest deeply hued beefsteak tomatoes I'd ever seen. Stelios walked us to a large, rustic wooden table heaped with the ripe bounty he had already picked and then motioned for us sit at the table, where Costos was comfortably ensconced.

"What were you hunting for this morning?" I asked as our host brought over wedges of glistening tomato wedges and sliced kohlrabi on two paper plates.

"I sat 20 feet up in a tree for two hours waiting for a bear," he said, adding, "They have been giving out permits because the bears are coming dangerously close to people's homes."

"Have you cooked and eaten bear?" Janet inquired.

"Of course, I eat everything I hunt," was his answer.

With a beer in hand, Stelios sat on a big cooler that abutted an enormous grill, while Costos brought out a bottle of ice-cold ouzo (an anise-flavored aperitif) and poured each of us a small glass. "We eat the kohlrabi raw with a little ouzo before a meal," Costos instructed. It was crisp-textured and crunchy, reminding me of jicama.

Stelios moved to the grill and began cooking. First, he brought over tender octopus, slick with olive oil and lemon juice, then *halloumi* cheese, blackened with grill marks and slightly tangy in taste.

"Do you like porgy?" our host asked, holding up a whole scaled fish and then placing it over the hot coals.

Meanwhile, he served us slices of bread he had grilled, then announced, "I'm making chicken *souvlaki*." Janet and I glanced at each other, eyes popping open wide. Soon came rounds of pork tenderloin, pork ribs and homemade sausage brought from the restaurant.

We had not expected to be fed and were overwhelmed. Costos smiled as Stelios worked contentedly.

"I don't garden. I don't hunt. I don't cook," he said, "I just come to relax with my friend. More ouzo?"



Glorious green beans

RR photo by Jude Waterston

"No, no thank you," I said, adding "we really should be going, and I'm stuffed."

To our surprise, Stelios set to quickly packing take-out containers with the entire porgy, then another with chunks of chicken kebob that had been skewered with onions, tomatoes and bell peppers. He set them before us.

"Come, come, you must take from the garden," he insisted, gesturing toward the table laden with the produce we'd passed before. He strode over to our open car trunk with a bucket filled with huge leaves of Swiss chard and a bag he'd filled to the brim with green beans, throwing in a couple of ears of corn and a few carrots for good measure. I had taken a number of those glorious tomatoes and added them to the trunk.

We hugged goodbye and thanked him for the treat of being with him in his paradise. Oddly for me, I had not retrieved the camera I always keep in the glove compartment of the car. I had not taken a single photograph. I wanted to remember the magic of that day forever, just as it had been.

When we arrived home we went out onto the back porch of the house and I placed all the fruits and vegetables on the picnic table there. Now I grabbed my camera and captured the full scope of Stelios' largess. During the following week, Janet and I relived that idyllic day as we ate from his garden and grill and, most strikingly, from his generosity and big-heartedness.

Oven Roasted Green Beans

Serves 4

If you can find French green beans, called haricot verts, use them, as they are slimmer and longer than regular green beans—a classy, more elegant version.

3/4 pounds green beans, ends snipped

1/3 cup (1 large) shallot, peeled, halved, very thinly sliced

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 1/2 teaspoons freshly grated lemon zest

Preheat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.

Place the green beans in a gratin or shallow oven-proof baking dish. Scatter the shallots over the beans. Drizzle 1 1/2 tablespoons of the oil over the beans, and season with salt and freshly ground pepper. Toss gently. Cook the beans, tossing once, until just tender and shallots are golden, about 15-20 minutes.

Remove from oven and scatter lemon zest over beans. Drizzle with remaining 1/2 tablespoon of olive oil and serve immediately.

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What lives in the jar lives in you

An investigation into fermented foods, ancestral microbiomes and the cultures we carry in our gut

By HEDY SCHNELLER

When you crack open a jar of kimchi, sauerkraut or yogurt, you might ask: Who, exactly, made it?

The obvious answer is the person who brined the cabbage, salted the cucumbers, or cultured the milk. But there is a less visible answer, one that reaches back through generations of culinary tradition and into the invisible world of microbes that were recruited—intentionally or not—by every cook who came before.

Fermented foods are not simply preserved foods. They are living ecosystems, shaped as much by cultural habit and ancestral recipe as by salt and time. And increasingly, researchers are asking: Does the culture that shapes the food then go on to shape the people who eat it?

The microbiome question

Your body hosts trillions of microbes. But who decides which ones move in?

The human microbiome—those complex communities of bacteria, fungi and other organisms living on your skin, in your mouth, and especially in your gut—is not fixed at birth. It is continuously shaped by the environment, and most powerfully by diet.

Like any ecosystem, a healthy gut microbiome depends on diversity. The more varied the microbial landscape, the more resilient and functional it tends to be. One of the most direct routes to microbial diversity, researchers now believe, runs through the kitchen.

On the microbial scale, we are what we eat in real ways.

The cultural mechanics

Is sauerkraut just sauerkraut—or is it a microbial fingerprint of an entire culture?

Fermentation creates what scientists describe as an extreme microbiological environment: low in oxygen, high in salt and acid, hostile to most pathogens and welcoming to specific strains of beneficial bacteria. It is an ancient technology—one of humanity's earliest methods of food preservation—but it is also, in a profound sense, a cultural act.

Korean kimchi, German sauerkraut, Ashkenazi Jewish kosher pickles, Bulgarian yogurt, southwestern Chinese pao cai—each represents not just a flavor tradition but a distinct microbial world. Minor differences in preparation, the pinch of extra salt, the choice of spice, the local water source—all of these shape which microbes flourish and in what proportions.

The result: Your sauerkraut is not the same as your neighbor's sauerkraut, even if you used the same recipe. Every crock and jar holds its own microbiome, authored by the choices—conscious and unconscious—of the person who made it.

Field research and key observations

- Homemade ferments were found to contain dozens of bacterial strains, compared to between two and six species typically found in commercially pasteurized products.
- Different ferment types—sauerkraut vs. kimchi vs. yogurt—showed distinct microbial profiles, much as different ecosystems share broad features but differ in species composition.
- Recipe nuances matter: even within a single ferment type, individual jars differed meaningfully based on small variations in technique.
- Measurable impact: participants who consumed fermented foods showed clear changes in gut microbiome composition over the study period.



Photo by Kelsey Todd on Unsplash

Learn more

Flachs, A., & Orkin, J. (2024, April 17). "Fermented foods sustain both microbiomes and cultural heritage." The Conversation. www.theconversation.com/fermented-foods-sustain-both-microbiomes-and-cultural-heritage-226685.

Where anthropology meets microbiology

If taste is cultural, and culture shapes fermentation, and fermentation shapes the gut—does heritage literally live inside us?

This is the question that led two anthropologists to a deli in St. Louis and eventually to a fermentation workshop in Tennessee. Working with practitioner Sandor Katz and nine workshop participants, they collected 46 food samples alongside daily gut microbiome measurements—a rare attempt to map the chain from cultural practice to microbial outcome.

What they found reinforced something intuitive but rarely quantified: The cultural values embedded in a recipe—a preference for dill, a distrust of excess salt, the decision to ferment for three days rather than five—produce measurable differences in both the taste and the microbial ecology of the final product. Culture, in other words, is not merely metaphorical here. It is biochemical.

Health implications

Could your grandmother's pickle recipe be protecting your heart—or restoring your gut after a course of antibiotics?

The health implications of microbially rich fermented foods are an active and expanding field of inquiry. Preliminary evidence links regular consumption of live-culture fermented foods to improved cardiovascular health, enhanced immune function and faster recovery of healthy gut microbiome balance following antibiotic treatment.

The caveat is significant, however. Store-bought fer-

mented foods are frequently pasteurized—a process that kills all living microbes—and then reinoculated with a small number of standardized bacterial strains. The result is a product with consistent flavor but one stripped of the complex microbial diversity found in traditionally prepared, homemade ferments.

The deepest question

What if the microbes in your gut were not entirely yours to begin with—but were passed down, like a recipe, through your family line?

There is mounting evidence that gut microbiome profiles are heritable—passed from parent to child not only through genetics, but through the shared environment of family food traditions and the microbes that colonize us in early life.

The microbes thriving in your gut right now may share lineage with those that flourished in the gut of your great-great-grandparents—shaped by the same regional ingredients and the same ancestral recipe for what constitutes "good food."

Dear reader, as you consider the bubbling jar on your counter or the yogurt in your fridge, remember that you are participating in a conversation that predates modern medicine. These microbes are silent stewards of our history, carrying the "flavor" of our ancestors directly into our biology. By tending to these cultures, you aren't just making a snack—you're curating a living legacy that connects your past to your future, one microbe at a time. Enjoy the journey into the invisible; it turns out we've never been traveling alone.

Hedy Schneller is the founder of illumia Skincare, based in Honesdale, PA. In her previous professional life, Schneller was an occupational therapist and rehabilitation director. In addition to her work with illumia, she writes an opinion column for the River Reporter. Visit www.illumiaproducts.com.

■ THE FOOD OUT HERE
BY HUNTER HILL

Oxtail soup

Reader beware, misnomers ahead.

First of all, oxtail: Oxtail is what we call beef tail, not necessarily from an ox or other bovine species. It's somewhat of a universal term.

Secondly, soup: Soup means many things to many people. Some people generalize, while others care deeply about the subtleties that define things like chili, gazpacho, broth and anything in between. For transparency's sake, this soup will come out not unlike a thick gumbo or even a chili. Additionally it's a bit of a personal preference as to whether or not you include rice in the rendering of the soup, or if you are like me and prefer to cook it separately and pour the soup over top like a thick stir fry over a bed of rice.

Now that we've gotten some of the interpretive stuff out of the way, allow me to back up a little. Why oxtail soup? It's June; it's getting hot outside; it really isn't soup season, so why make a heavy, hearty soup? Well, I'll tell you. Cleaning out the freezer.

Yup, spring cleaning has led to catching up with our meat inventory, and through

procrastination or just an abundance of other good things to eat, the oxtail, which I had saved, never got used.

Oxtail soup is one of those things you've either had and will crave again forever, or you've only heard about and haven't yet caught the addiction. It's rich, it's hearty, and most of all, it makes a unique flavor compared to traditional beef cuts due to the high density of collagen and rendered fats between the bones.

When I'm butchering, we have a set of things from each cow that are optional. These include the organs like the heart and liver, as well as the tongue and oxtail, which are muscles. Customers have the option of taking these or telling me to throw them in the compost. A shame, I know, but these are custom animals not federally inspected ones, so I don't have the option of redistributing these items elsewhere.

In any case, nearly half of my customers always ask me, "What can you make with oxtail?" I have always replied with the oxtail soup idea because it is the most well known



RR photos by Hunter Hill

Oxtail soup is rich, it's hearty, and most of all, it makes a unique flavor compared to traditional beef cuts due to the high density of collagen and rendered fats between the bones.



Oxtail soup is one of those things you've either had and will crave again forever, or you've only heard about and haven't yet caught the addiction.

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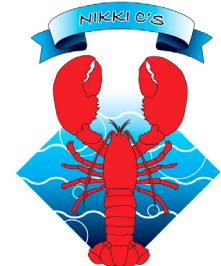
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application bar none. That being the case I have been saving my own oxtails for a while but had yet to actually cook them.

I can finally say now, though, that the Hill family has checked that box, and a tasty box it was to check. You can set this up at the beginning of the day, or be like me and prep it the night before, then just pop it in the fridge until morning and hit a button on the slow cooker. Behold the magic of the slow cooker. A day at work and dinner smells fantastic as you walk in the door.

The way out here, we use all the extra parts of the cow because some are hidden gems. And some make good dog food, but hey, she's a good dog and she loves liver as much as I fail to desire it. So the next time you get a cow butchered or maybe just need inspiration at the meat case, maybe try the tail.

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Oxtail soup

Recipe courtesy of Hunter Hill

- 1 oxtail, separated into segments
- Butter or olive oil for searing
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 large carrots, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 cup red wine (Cabernet or pinot noir preferred)
- 2 cups beef broth
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- salt and pepper to taste

Sear oxtail segments on all sides until browned, using your preference of butter or olive oil.

Place tail segments into the slow cooker and add all ingredients. Heat covered on low heat for 8 to 10 hours until meat falls off the bone.

Remove all bones and serve over cooked rice. Chew carefully; there are small bone discs that are easy to miss.

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FARM TO TABLE

Is land worth preserving for the people?

A discussion at Union Farmers Co-op in Tennessee

By KRISTIN WEBBER

MAYNARDVILLE, TN — *Once upon a time, I lived in the Upper Delaware region, where I farmed, raised chickens, and wrote for the River Reporter. When I moved to East Tennessee in 2023, I began noticing something familiar in the landscape, the people and the connection to the land. Though separated by distance, the Upper Delaware and East Tennessee share a way of life that is rooted in agriculture, community and tradition.*

That realization inspired this Farm-to-Table series. Through these stories, I hope to connect farmers, growers, makers and readers from both regions—highlighting where their experiences overlap, where they differ and what we can learn from each other. Along the way, I'm honored to introduce you to remarkable people and businesses whose work, traditions and legacy continue to shape the communities they call home.

"How much is the land worth preserving for the people?" That was the question Ben Wilmoth and I discussed throughout our conversation for the next installment of the farm-to-table series.

Ben, a lifelong Tennessee resident, is the general manager of the Union Farmers Co-op (www.unionfarmercoop.com), about 30 minutes from Knoxville on a two-lane highway. It's two lanes for now. A major construction project is underway to expand it to four lanes. Maynardville is currently seeing an increase in traffic and population growth—more on that in a minute.

You might think of the Union Farmers Co-op along the same lines as the Agways found in the Upper Delaware region. Ben is not only the manager of the Co-op, but also a farmer himself—mostly beef cattle, though he also raises his own garden.

Farmers' co-ops have existed since the 1940s and have long been a mainstay of the local agricultural community. Ben recalls both his father and grandfather getting their farming supplies from local co-ops. I met Ben after stopping into the Co-op and asking if I could tell their story.

I think there's a great deal to be said about what is happening here in East Tennessee and what it means for the land. We are seeing an influx of people moving to the area alongside a loss of next-generation farmers. That became the focus of much of our conversation.

Ben has his finger on the pulse of the farming community in Union County and the surrounding area. He graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin with a bachelor's degree in agricultural business before heading back east to work at the Claiborne County Farmers Co-op, eventually landing his current position as manager of the Union Farmers Co-op. Before that, he attended Walters State Community College through the Tennessee Promise program.

Ben appreciates the unique position the co-op occupies. He gets to see the day-to-day realities



of farming and noted that many local farmers work full-time jobs and farm in their spare time. The farms in East Tennessee are not the large-scale production operations found in other parts of the country. Here, farms are typically smaller and focused on livestock production. As you drive the backroads, you'll see cattle farms scattered across the landscape.

The Farmers Co-op primarily sells in bulk to the local farmers. In fact, Ben had just wrapped up the busy fertilizer season when we met. But much like the Agways of the Northeast, the Co-op is more than a bulk supplier. It also caters to small farmers and growers—the backyard homesteader, the cattle farmer with a large garden each summer, and everyone in between.

One of Ben's favorite quotes from his time at the Claiborne County Farmers Co-op came from his mentor, Mike Welch: "That lady's rose bushes is just as important to her as that man's 100 head of cattle." I think that sentiment reflects the role most small-town co-ops and farm supply stores still play in rural communities.

But the most pressing topic is what is happening to the land itself.

As I mentioned earlier, East Tennessee—especially around Knoxville—is experiencing a rapid influx of new residents, and the housing market is booming as a result. At the same time, there seems to be a decline in people willing to farm. As older farmers

age out, many have no heir interested in taking over the operation. Developers then offer premium prices for their land—often more money than the farmers could ever make working it themselves—and eventually the land is sold. Soon after, construction begins on another development marketed as "affordable housing."

But to what end?

That is where Ben and I spent most of our conversation: debating the finer points of what happens when farmland disappears at the rate we are losing it here in East Tennessee. There are no easy solutions—or at least none we could find. We are both understandably concerned about where this ends.

Is there a way to promote farming in our area? Right now, it feels like an uphill battle: the convenience of big-box stores, the hurried pace in which we find ourselves living, and the relatively low cost of living in this region all play a role. But how long will that lower cost of living last? If more people continue moving here, farmland continues disappearing, and convenience culture keeps growing, how long will things really stay "cheap"?

Dear reader, you may not be experiencing this where you live. That is part of the purpose of this series: to show what is happening outside your own local area. I'll be back soon to explore the other side of this conversation—something Ben and I discussed at length—how these same pressures do not yet seem to be affecting other parts of the country, especially regions of upstate New York.

Not yet, anyway.

Kristin Webber is a farm-to-table lifestyle curator, writer and founder of Chicken Librarian and Yarn & Sundries Antiques. Her editorial work explores slow living, seasonal skills and the people and places shaping food, culture and community. You can find out more about her work at [chick enlibrarian.com](http://chickenlibrarian.com).



RR photos by Kristin Webber

Ben Wilmoth, general manager of the Union Farmers Co-op

Join the Amateur Radio Service

SWAN LAKE, NY — Every year, whole communities find themselves in the dark, and despite the internet, cell phones, email and other modern tools, are unable to communicate. Floods, blizzards and other severe storms can leave people with an inability to contact their loved ones.

In these cases, one consistent service that has never failed the public is amateur radio.

Volunteer ham radio operators provide backup communications support to the Sullivan County Office of Emergency Management, the American Red Cross, FEMA and other agencies who might need the ability to communicate during a natural disaster. On Saturday, June 27 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Richard Martinkovic Emergency Services Training Center, the public will have a chance to meet and talk with Sullivan County's emergency communicators and see for themselves what the Amateur Radio Service is all about.

This annual event, called "Field Day," is the climax of the weeklong Amateur Radio Week, which is sponsored by the ARRL (aka the American Radio Relay League), the national association for amateur radio. Using only emergency power supplies, ham operators will construct emergency portable stations in parks, malls and backyards all across the country. Their slogan, "When

All Else Fails, Ham Radio Works," is more than just words as they prove they can send messages in many forms without the use of phone systems, internet or any other infrastructure that can be compromised in a crisis. It is expected that more than 20,000 operators will participate in the exercise nationwide.

"The fastest way to turn a crisis into a total disaster is to lose communications," said Allen Pitts of the ARRL. "From tsunamis in Japan, to earthquakes in Nepal and tornadoes in the U.S., ham radio has provided the most reliable networks in the first critical hours of major events. Because ham radios are not dependent upon the internet, cell towers or other infrastructure, they work when nothing else is available."

The public is cordially invited to stop by the training center, located at 801-861 Old White Lake Tpk. in Swan Lake. There they can meet and talk with amateur radio operators and see what they can accomplish. There will additionally be a special station for the general public, which permits people who are interested in amateur radio to actually get on the air.

For more information, contact John Lavelle at sullivancountyares@gmail.com. To learn more about amateur radio, go to www.arrl.org or www.sullivan-ares.org.



Photo contributed by the Delaware Highlands Conservancy
Trey Talley stands with Diane Rosencrance at the Van Scott Nature Reserve.

DHC looks for new director

REGION — The Delaware Highlands Conservancy Board of Directors recently announced that executive director Diane Rosencrance will conclude 10 years with the conservancy. She will be the executive director at Bolsa Chica Land Trust in Huntington Beach, CA.

"We are immensely grateful for all Diane has accomplished during her ten years with us," said board president Jacqueline Sailer. "Without Diane's bold vision and dedication, the conservancy would not have undertaken the creation of the Van Scott Nature Reserve."

Viola & Co. holds ribbon cutting

HONESDALE, PA — The Greater Honesdale Partnership recently hosted a ribbon cutting, celebrating the opening of Viola & Co., located at 1008 Main St., Union Alley, Honesdale.

"Inspired by the owner's grandmother, Viola & Co. is a thoughtfully curated boutique that brings together style, comfort and meaningful gifts in a welcoming shopping experience," the partnership said. "The shop offers a unique selection of fashionable clothing, accessories, self-care products, cozy gifts, and carefully chosen treasures

Now the reserve is our nature center, with beautiful meadows and forests that serve as an outdoor classroom and a place for quiet walks and contemplation, as well as gatherings under the new and beautiful pavilion, with its gorgeous hilltop views."

Trey Talley, senior land protection coordinator, will serve as acting executive director of the conservancy while the search for a new director takes place.

For more information about the conservancy, call 570/226-3164/845-583-1010 or visit www.DelawareHighlands.org.

for every occasion."

"We are excited to welcome Viola & Co. to downtown Honesdale and celebrate another locally owned business investing in our community," said Sandi Levens, executive director of the Greater Honesdale Partnership. "New businesses bring energy, creativity and economic opportunity to our downtown, and we look forward to supporting their success."

For more information, contact the Greater Honesdale Partnership at 570/253-5492 or visit VisitHonesdalePA.com.



Photo contributed by Barryville Area Arts Association

Find artistic inspiration at Minisink Battleground.

Painting party at Minisink

BARRYVILLE, NY — Artists of all ages and skill levels are invited to "a day of creativity, history and scenic inspiration" at a community painting party at Minisink Battlegrounds Park on Saturday, June 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Set on the grounds of a Revolutionary War site, the park offers an inspiring backdrop for the day's events. Art, nature and history lovers can take in the history of the 1779 Battle of Minisink, the well-maintained walking trails, open fields and a memorial monument.

A free continental breakfast and complimentary lunch will be provided to those registered.

There will be a brief presentation during lunch that includes info on the dentist the Town of Tusten was named after and "the secret of Hospital Rock."

The park is located at 17 Monument Road.

This is a public park, and spectators are encouraged to stroll the grounds, observe artists at work, and enjoy the park's views.

Later in the summer, an opening reception will be held on August 8 at the Narrowsburg Branch of the Western Sullivan Public Library, 198 Bridge St., where completed works from the event will be on exhibit.

Whether you are an experienced plein air painter or simply curious to try something new, "this event offers a rare opportunity to engage with art, history and nature in a beautiful setting," said the Barryville Area Arts Association, the organization behind the event.

There is no charge, but registration is required. Email barryvilleareaarts@gmail.com to register.



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NY Ag and Markets takes on screwworm

ALBANY, NY — The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM) recently announced it has implemented new import requirements for all domestic animals coming into New York State to prevent the spread of the New World Screwworm (NWS), following detections in Texas and New Mexico.

AGM is restricting the movement of livestock and pets from impacted areas or suspected impacted areas to protect animal health and the agricultural industry in New York State.

There have been no cases of NWS detected in New York.

“New World Screwworm is serious and potentially fatal for livestock and pets, so we need to move quickly to ensure that New York is being proactive against this new threat to our agricultural industry and our companion animals,” New York State Ag Commissioner Richard A. Ball said. “While New York State has no cases of New World Screwworm, these new requirements will help ensure we prevent its spread to New York from impacted areas. We also want to remind our producers that they should also watch for signs of illness in their animals and take preventative measures, such as tightening biosecurity on the farm and implementing on-farm conservation practices. Taking these extra steps now are critical to protecting animal health.”

New York’s importation order also outlines requirements for additional veterinary testing, certification of good health and preventative treatment of animals from impacted areas. Specifically, it requires that no domestic animal originating from an infested area enter the state until the area is declared free of the NWS, and that the animal has been examined by an accredited veterinarian and found free of the infestation.

NWS poses a serious threat to livestock,

pets, wildlife and in rare cases, people. The larvae feed on living tissue and can cause severe wounds, animal suffering and significant economic harm if not detected and treated quickly. To date, there are 11 confirmed cases of NWS in livestock in Texas and one case in a dog in New Mexico.

According to the USDA, there is no concern about food safety, and the country’s food supply remains safe. The current risk to animals and people in the United States is also very low. AGM is coordinating with the New York State Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Conservation to monitor the situation and ensure state agencies are aligned in the event NWS is introduced in New York.

“While there are no cases of New World Screwworm in any animals or humans in New York State, it is important to be prepared given the threat the parasitic larvae pose to animal and human health,” State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said.

Out of an abundance of caution, the department is also urging livestock producers and pet owners in New York to remain vigilant for symptoms of NWS in their animals, which includes draining or expanding wounds as well as maggots or eggs around the navel, nose and ears.

If a producer or pet owner suspects NWS infection, they should contact the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets at 518/457-3502.

In addition, the department is also asking livestock producers to strengthen biosecurity measures on their farms and to follow the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) recommendations to implement on-farm conservation practices.

Additional information on NWS and proactive measures producers can take can be found at www.USDA.gov.

Tour Willow Wisp

DAMASCUS, PA — Farm Arts Collective presents a workshop and luncheon with Greg Swartz and Tannis Kowalchuk, the farmers and owners of Willow Wisp Organic Farm. The workshop will take place on Sunday, June 28 at noon on the farm, which is located at 38 Hickory Lane.

Swartz will lead a walking tour across the 25-acre organic vegetable and flower farm to demonstrate many of the systems and ethics behind running a solar-powered organic vegetable and flower farm. Topics to be covered will include ways of achieving soil health organically, irrigation systems, how crop rotation is essential in planning a five-year schedule, cover crops that are essential for weed control and feeding the soil, pollinators and crop diversity.

Attendees will also learn about the history of Willow Wisp Organic Farm, the obstacles that Swartz and Kowalchuk encountered and their visions for the future.

Swartz and Kowalchuk were named Farmers of the Year in 2023 by the Northeast Organic Farming Association of NY.

All levels of home gardeners and farmers are welcome to attend the tour. A farm-fresh lunch will be served following the tour, with a Q&A period throughout the luncheon.

Tickets cost \$20 (including lunch) and can be purchased at www.farmartscollective.org.



Contributed photo
Greg Swartz, pictured, and Tannis Kowalchuk are the farmers/owners of Willow Wisp Organic Farm in Damascus, PA. Swartz will lead a tour of the farm on Sunday, June 28.



Photo contributed by The Country Gardeners
Children enjoyed planting rainbow carrots, tomatoes, kale, lettuce, potatoes, winter squash, pumpkin, pole beans, cucumbers, basil, parsley, zucchini and flower seeds.

Bookworm Friendship Garden Club holds first planting

By THE COUNTRY GARDENERS

HAWLEY, PA — The Bookworm Friendship Garden Club was abuzz with activity on June 6 at the Hawley Public Library. Members of the Country Gardeners helped nine busy children plant a variety of seeds, vegetables, herbs and flowers in raised beds behind the library. Children enjoyed planting rainbow carrots, tomatoes, kale, lettuce, potatoes, winter squash, pumpkin, pole beans, cucumbers, basil, parsley, zucchini and flower seeds.

After planting and watering, the children wrote about what they planted in journals provided by the library.

Additional plantings will be held on Wednesdays from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in July and August.

The Country Gardeners will also work with adults from the Human Resources Center

(HRC) of Pike County on Wednesdays through the summer from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. At a community appreciation event on June 5, HRC staff awarded the Country Gardeners and the Hawley Library a plaque in recognition of the Bookworm Friendship Garden Club. Because of their support, HRC adults have had the opportunity to grow, develop new skills and thrive.

Donations of soil, plants and seeds were generously provided by Jan Gibbons, Lukan’s Farm Resort and members of the Country Gardeners.

There are still openings available in the Bookworm Friendship Garden Club for children aged four to 12. It is free of charge, and children must be accompanied by an adult. Register in person or call the Hawley library at 570/226-4620.

Visit www.hawleylibrary.org for more information.

Letting freedom ring at Senate House

KINGSTON, NY — All are invited to commemorate 250 years of American independence with a “Let Freedom Ring!” event on Saturday, June 27 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Senate House State Historic Site.

The day will be headlined by a special presentation of historical speeches at 1 p.m., with a reading of the Declaration of Independence and exploring the legacy of the Declaration through American history, read by community members. The day will also include re-enactors, live music, crafts, new exhibits and more.

The historical speeches were written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harvey Milk and more. Each speech touches on the legacy of the Declaration of Independence and how the speakers applied its words in their time.

The day will also include activity on the site grounds, featuring re-enactors from the 1st and 3rd Ulster Militias, live music from the Ancient Order of Hibernians Pipe Band and performer Mark Rust, demonstrations on hearthside cooking, a take-home craft and more. Visitors can tour the Senate House, the 18th-century home of the Van Gaasbeek family. It was the first meeting



Contributed photo
A special “Let Freedom Ring!” event will be held on Saturday, June 27 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Senate House State Historic Site in Kingston, NY.

place of the New York State Senate in 1777.

Senate House is located at 296 Fair St.

Senate House State Historic Site is one of 35 historic sites within the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and one of 40 facilities administered by the Palisades Interstate Park Commission in New York and New Jersey. To learn more, call 845/338-2786, or visit parks.ny.gov or www.facebook.com/senatehousestatehistoricsite.



Contributed by the Catskills Institute

“Live, Love, Laugh at Hotel Evans” (1950)

‘Catskills Romance’ at the Borscht Belt Museum

Contributed by the BORSCHT BELT MUSEUM

ELLENVILLE, NY — In the mid-1900s, nearly a million city dwellers, many of them Jewish Americans, headed to the mountains each summer to live, laugh and find love. Trading the city’s sweltering concrete for lush scenery, generations of vacationers made the annual pilgrimage north, seeking fresh air, leisure or a life-changing encounter. From “Flirtation Walks” and legendary singles weekends to free honeymoons and golden anniversary dinners, the Catskills were more than a destination—they were a sprawling playground for the heart.

“Catskills Romance: Love and Desire in the Borscht Belt” is a new exhibition opening Saturday, June 27 at the Catskills Borscht Belt Museum. The exhibit traces the relationships—both conventional and otherwise—that unfolded across the grand hotels and humble bungalow colonies. It celebrates the resort owners, maître d’s, social directors (tumblers), dance instructors and staff who masterminded countless successful matches, and explores the specific rituals of courtship that defined a Catskills summer.

The exhibit highlights the essential spaces, activities and ingredients that sparked connection: the poolside scene, the mambo

nights and champagne hour competitions, and the world-class entertainment that made the resorts irresistible to singles and couples alike.

Beyond the nostalgia, the exhibition uncovers more complex narratives: tales of hidden desire, lost innocence and the enduring memories guests carried home long after the season ended.

Drawing on rare artifacts, vintage photography, oral histories and the iconic popular culture the era inspired, “Catskills Romance” offers an intimate, adult look at a world where tradition and transgression mingled poolside—and a single dance could change a life.

The exhibit is curated by Mackenzie Griffin and Cristian Petru Panaite with support from the Catskills Borscht Belt Museum community.

The exhibit is made possible thanks to the support of the Naiades Fund, the Chaya Fund and the Victor and Pearl Tumpeer Foundation.

Admission to the exhibit is included with general museum admission.

The museum is located at 90 Canal St.

Learn more at www.borschtbeltmuseum.org/visit.

Local artist Caroline Harrow featured at Liberty Public Library

LIBERTY, NY — The Liberty Public Library will present an exhibit of watercolor paintings and prints by local artist Caroline Harrow through the end of July. The exhibit will be open to the public during regular library hours and admission is free.

The collection features watercolor paintings and prints inspired by nature,

historic bridges, barns and rural landscapes. “Harrow’s work reflects a deep appreciation for mountain scenery and the rustic character of the countryside,” the library said.

“I have a deep-seated love for the mountains and the laid-back rustic feel,” said Harrow. “My paintings depict barns and scenes from a time forgotten and disappearing.”

Harrow has earned recognition throughout the Northeast and beyond for her watercolor work.

Community members and visitors are invited to enjoy this special summer exhibit celebrating the beauty and heritage of rural landscapes through watercolor art.

The library is located at 189 Main St.

For more details, call the library at 845/292-6070 or stop by the circulation desk.



“Cow Barn”

Photo from ronibenhur.com/photos

Roni Ben-Hur

Jazz at Grey Towers

MILFORD, PA — Jazz guitarist Roni Ben-Hur and his trio will return to Milford on Saturday, June 27 at 5:30 p.m. in the pool pavilion at Grey Towers Historical Site. The performance is produced by Kindred Spirits Arts Programs.

Ben-Hur will be joined by singer Janis Siegel, a former lead singer of the Manhattan Transfer.

They will offer a mixture of American classics, international jazz favorites and original works.

“We are so excited to begin our 25th season of bringing music to Milford with Roni Ben-Hur,” said Yosif Feigelson, the artistic director of Kindred Spirits. “He’s been a popular guest in the past and I’m sure he’ll engage us all once again.”

Grey Towers is located at 151 Grey Towers Dr.

Tickets cost \$30 at the door or in advance on Eventbrite.com. Space is limited.

Kindred Spirits Arts Programs (KSAP) has been bringing high-quality musicians to the area for 25 years. KSAP is a nonprofit volunteer organization that in addition to concerts, arranges educational enrichment programs for area students. To learn more, visit www.kindredspiritsarts.org or email kindredspir@yahoo.com. “Donations and volunteers are much appreciated,” KSAP said.

For more information, visit www.kindredspiritsarts.org, or call or text 570/390-8699.

Early look at WCAA studio tour artists

HONESDALE, PA — The Wayne County Arts Alliance (WCAA) Gallery will host a preview exhibition of works by the artists featured in the upcoming studio tour. An opening reception will be held on Friday, June 26 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the gallery.

The WCAA Studio Tour, which takes place from Friday through Sunday, July 10, 11 and 12, is an annual event that brings art

lovers to the workplaces of Wayne County artists. Meet the artists, learn about their processes and much more.

The preview exhibition will be open Thursday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The gallery is located at 959 Main St.

Learn more at waynecountyartsalliance.org/studio-tour/studio-tour-artists.



“Storm Over Yasgur Farm”

Images contributed by Liberty Public Library



■ IN MY HUMBLE OPINION

BY JONATHAN CHARLES FOX

‘Tis the season

No, not the season with jingle bells, but the one that’s filled with arts and leisure springing up throughout the Upper Delaware River region. And because it’s June, theatre, music, art and all things entertainment are busting out all over. The weather has been glorious of late, the dog is gleefully rolling in who-knows-what and I’m racing to and fro in search of artistic fulfillment... and it’s only just begun.

My first stop last week was a visit to the Forestburgh Playhouse, which is already thrumming with activity as an army (and I do mean army) of actors, singers, musicians and technicians prepare to open the barn theatre (and adjoining tavern) for what looks to be an epic season. The Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce, along with a host of dignitaries, joined playhouse producer Franklin Trapp and a legion of ardent fans out to raise a glass and toast the opening of the 80th season of presenting “Broadway in the Catskills” for audiences of all ages.

Before the ribbon was cut, Trapp had a few words to say, telling us how it all came about.

“What began in 1947 as a small summer theatre tucked into the woods of the Sullivan Catskills has grown into one of the longest-running professional summer theatres in New York State,” Trapp said, wielding the giant scissors. “Generations of artists have stepped onto this stage, audiences have gathered beneath the barn roof, and stories have come to life night after night.”

“The Forestburgh Playhouse has always been more than a theatre. It is a place where talent is nurtured, careers are launched, and audiences are delighted.”

“Many who first appeared on this stage as young performers or technicians have gone on to Broadway, television, national tours and major regional theatres across the country. Others discovered here a lifelong love of the arts, returning year after year as part of a community that stretches across decades.”

“For families throughout the Catskills and visitors from around the world, the playhouse has become a tradition. Summers are marked by opening nights, standing ovations and the shared joy of live theatre. Eighty years later,” Trapp said in conclusion, “the mission remains the same: to create unforgettable theatrical experiences while cultivating the next generation of artists and storytellers.”

The upcoming season, loaded with Broadway hits, young performers learning their craft, and an ever-changing roster of boogie nights in the tavern promises to be one for the record books. Curtain up!

June marks another important milestone: Juneteenth—which the Google tells me is “a federal holiday celebrated on June 19 to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States. The holiday’s name, first used in the 1890s, refers to the day when Major Gen. Gordon Granger ordered the final enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas at the end of the American Civil War.”

I learned about the history behind Juneteenth and so much more when Gidget and I joined a sold-out audience last Friday to take in a different kind of show—presented by the Farm Arts Collective (FAC). The FAC is widely known for presenting original, thought-provoking theatrical experiences.

This year’s FAC celebration featured “Dawn of a New Century,” a “work-in-progress” written by TR Faronii, and performed by director G. Oliver King, John Neails and Crystal Tweed. Enhanced with music by Dana Bryan-Jones, the short play “illuminates an [imagined] conversation between WEB DuBois and Booker T. Washington, key players in the history of post-Civil War America.



Contributed photo

In celebration of Juneteenth, John Neails, left; Crystal Tweed; and G. Oliver King were featured in the Farm Arts Collective’s latest offering, “Dawn of a New Century,” a new play written by T.R. Faronii. It focuses on the Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863.



RR photo by Jonathan Charles Fox

As the 80th anniversary season of the Forestburgh Playhouse unfolds, a new resident company of young actors will be tripping the light fantastic this season, singing and dancing their way into the hearts of audiences all summer long. Curtain up!

Based on the production, it would seem that the two historical figures had great respect for each other, despite their wildly different opinions about how the future of African Americans would unfold, as a nation healed from a war that still reverberates today.

Additionally it is unknown if the two men ever sat down to discuss the aftermath of the Emancipation Proclamation, an “executive order issued by Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863.”

What is known is that Texas refused to acknowledge the proclamation until two years after it was signed—when Granger rode into town to enforce it. Suddenly Texas’s reputation as “the lone-star state” makes sense.

As always, the collective invited the audience to linger after the production for a lively Q&A, which served (IMHO) to inspire more questions than answers regarding not only American history, but where we stand today on the issue of racism. That, for some ungodly reason, appears to be rearing its ugly head once more, almost as if we’ve learned nothing from our past mistakes.

That said, as far as I’m concerned, it’s not the typical audience that invariably

shows up to support the fine work of the Farm Arts Collective that needs to be having this discussion. My fervent wish is to see programming like this make its way into schools, colleges and communities that are apparently unaware of this disturbing, ugly period in American history.

As playwright Faronii addressed the audience, I was horrified to learn that our schools are either glossing over the actual history of slavery in our country, or simply ignoring it altogether, and am completely stymied on how this could be.

In short, my week was filled with the good, the bad and the ugly—and sadly, given the state of the country at present, I’m not surprised. As summer settles in, I’m hopeful for more of the former and less of the last two, but either way, rest assured—I’ll be offering up my less-than-humble opinion about this, that and the other, because in the immortal words of The Carpenters, Paul Williams and Curtis Mayfield... “We’ve only just begun.”

Fun Fact: “June Is Bustin’ Out All Over” is a song from the 1945 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical “Carousel,” which was adapted as a film in 1956.



RR photo by Jonathan Charles Fox

Forestburgh Playhouse producer Franklin Trapp, center, was joined by Sullivan County dignitaries, including County Clerk Russel Reeves, left; Legislature Chair Nadia Rajsz; District 5 legislator Cat Scott; Legislator Luis Alvarez; and Chamber of Commerce President Matthew Sush at the ribbon-cutting ceremony honoring the 80th anniversary and legacy of the playhouse.

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Thursday, June 25

31st Delaware River Sojourn

AREA — Jun. 20-26. Sign up for entire trip or just one day. Register delawareriversojourn.com.

Broadway in the Catskills

FORESTBURGH, NY — Tues.-Sat. 6-8pm, Forestburgh Playhouse Tavern, 39 Forestburgh Rd. fbplayhouse.org.

Concerts in the Park

HONESDALE, PA — Mon. & Thurs. 7:30pm, through July 30, Wayne County Creative Arts Council, Central Park, Church St. facebook.com/groups/WayneCreativeArts.

Plein Air Painting

NARROWSBURG, NY — Barryville Area Arts Association, 10am-2pm Fort Delaware, 6615 NY-97. Register barryvilleareaarts@gmail.com.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

HONESDALE, PA — Delaware Highlands Conservancy, 4-5pm, Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, 25 Main St. delawarehighlands.org.

Researching in German language

HONESDALE, PA — 4:30pm, with Tom Price, Wayne County Historical Society, 810 Main St. waynehistorypa.org.

Friday, June 26

Blood Drive

LAKE HUNTINGTON, NY — Noon-5pm, 70 County Rd. 116. Schedule redcrossblood.org or 800/733-2767.

Blood Drive

MILFORD, PA — 10:30am-3:30pm, 119 E Harford St. Schedule redcrossblood.org or 800/733-2767.

Jesse Terry

LAKE HUNTINGTON, NY — 7-9pm, Arts Nest, 6692 Rte. 52. myrivertickets.com.

Old Time Fiddlers

CALLICOON, NY — Conklin Hill Church fundraiser, 7:30pm, Delaware Youth Center, 8 Creamery Rd. 845/887-5155.

Rockabilly Weekend

NARROWSBURG, NY — Fri.-Sun. noon-4pm around town, hosted by Tom & Cecilia Coacci, Two Queens Coffee & Cochection Pumphouse. welcometonarrowsburg.com

‘Trees’ Nature Program

LACKAWAXEN, PA — 1-2pm, Lackawaxen Parks & Recreation, 109 Scenic Dr. 570/685-7288.

Saturday, June 27

America 250 Program

HANCOCK, NY — Rotary Club & American Legion “The Capture of Fort Ticonderoga,” with historian Scott Payne, 2pm, 210 Pennsylvania Ave., hancockny.org.

‘Back to the Future’

MILFORD, PA — With John DiLeo, 7pm, Milford Theater & Performing Arts Center, 114 E. Catherine St. themilfordtheater.com.

Blood Drive

WAYMART, PA — 9am-2pm, 596 Honesdale Rd. Schedule redcrossblood.org or 800/733-2767.

Botanical Eco Painting

LAKE ARIEL, PA — 10am, Lacawac Sanctuary, 94 Sanctuary Rd. Register lacawac.org.

Chainsaw Carving Seminar

EQUINUNK, PA — With Mike Sergi, 1pm, Equinunk Historical Society, 1972 Pine Mill Rd. Register 570/224-6722.

Edible & Medicinal Plant Walk

DINGMANS FERRY, PA — 10am-noon, Pocono Environmental Education Center, 538 Emery Rd. Register peecc.org/events.

Forests250 Family Day

MILFORD, PA — 11am-3pm, Grey Towers Heritage Association, 151 Grey Towers Dr. greytowers.org.

Jazz Cabaret

MILFORD, PA — Kindred Spirits Roni Ben-Hur Trio with Janis Siegel, 5:30pm, Grey Towers pool pavillion, 151 Grey Towers Dr. kindredspiritsarts.org.

Lavender Festival

BLOOMINGBURG, NY — Noon-5pm, artisan market, Winterton Farm, 689 Winterton Rd. wintertonfarms.com.

Libby’s Garden Kids Club

NORTH BRANCH, NY — Secret Garden tea party, 10am-noon, ages 8-15, Libby’s Garden Market, register by text 914/646-9209.

Opening Reception

LIVINGSTON MANOR, NY — Artist talk with Dike Blair, 3-5pm, Catskill Art Space, 48 Main St. catskillartspace.org.

Owl Pellet Dissection

BEACH LAKE, PA — 11am-1pm, Delaware Highlands Conservancy, 571 Perkins Pond Rd. delawarehighlands.org.

Plein Air Painting

BARRYVILLE, NY — Barryville Area Arts Association, 10am-2pm, Minisink Battleground, 17 Monument Rd. Register barryvilleareaarts@gmail.com.

Practice for Disaster Field Day

SWAN LAKE — Sullivan County Emergency Services, amateur radio services training, 2-6pm, 801-861 Old White Lake Tpke. John Lavelle sullivancountyares@gmail.com.

Princess & Superhero Train

HONESDALE, PA — Stourbridge Line, 3-5:30pm. thestourbridgeline.net.

Sweet Summer Workshop

NORTH BRANCH, NY — 10am-noon, ages 7-15, Libby’s Garden Market, 4 Ryan Rd. Register 914/646-9209.

Walk it Off

LAKE ARIEL, PA — At Ease veterans program summer hike, 11am, Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation, 94 Sanctuary Rd. Register facebook.com/Lacawac/events.

Y Market Days

HONESDALE, PA — Wayne County YMCA, Sat.-Sun. 10am-3pm, 105 Park St. Vendors 570/253-2083.

Sunday, June 28

‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’

NARROWSBURG, NY — 2-3pm, by Felix Mendelssohn performed by Sullivan County Chamber Orchestra, Tusten Theatre, 210 Bridge St. delawarevalleyartsalliance.org.

Bethel School Open House

HONESDALE, PA — Noon-4pm, Wayne County Historical Society, 348 Bethel School Rd. waynehistorypa.com.

Buffet Breakfast

LORDS VALLEY, PA — 8:30-noon, Blooming Grove Volunteer Fire Dept., 484 Rte. 739, facebook.com/BGVFD.STA25.

David Roth

LAKE HUNTINGTON, NY — 7-9pm, Arts Nest, 6692 Rte. 52. myrivertickets.com.

Farm Tour

DAMASCUS, PA — With Greg Swartz, noon-2pm, Willow Wisp Farm, 38 Hickory Ln. RSVP myrivertickets.com.

‘Find Me in Ferndale’

LIBERTY, NY — Borscht Belt Historical Marker Dedication 4pm, Maurice Gerry’s, 9 Ferndale Rd. 5-7pm, visual program & talk, Otto’s, 2514 NY-52. info@borschtbeltmarkers.org.

Historic Glassworker’s House

HAWLEY, PA — Open house tours, noon-4pm, Glassworker’s House, 45 Charles St. dorflinger.org.

Port Jervis Repair Cafe

PORT JERVIS, NY — 1-4pm, St. Peter’s Church, 31 West Main St. stpeterspj@gmail.com.

USA250 Community Picnic

LACKAWAXEN, PA — Noon-4pm, Lackawaxen Parks & Recreation, 109 Scenic Dr. 570/685-7288.

30th Anniversary Celebration

LACKAWAXEN, PA — GAIT Equine Assisted Service, 4-7pm, New Inn at Lackawaxen, 188 Scenic Dr., facebook.com/GAIT.TRC.

Monday, June 29

Italian Conversation

CALLICOON, NY — 3pm, Western Sullivan Public Library, 45 Lower Main St. Register wsplonline.com.

Tuesday, June 30

Per-Run Charity Game

HAWLEY, PA — Wallenpaupack Softball League, 2pm, for Teleios Theatro Co., Wallenpaupack Area Middle School, 139 Atlantic Ave. Donations forms. gle/5dH7kXNkxuHPonDk8.

Wednesday, July 1

‘In Search of Amelia Earhart’

LIBERTY, NY — “The Expedition to Nikumaroro,” 1pm, Liberty Public Library, 189 N. Main St. Register libertypubliclibrary.org.

Pollinator Seed Bombs

BEACH LAKE, PA — Noon-2pm, Delaware Highlands Conservancy, 571 Perkins Pond Rd. delawarehighlands.org.

Thursday, July 2

‘Breaking Barriers’

HURLEYVILLE, NY — “Understanding Disabilities” with Lee Brian Karasik, 6pm, Hurleyville Performing Arts Center, 219 Main St. hpcacny.org.

Food Truck & Fireworks

PORT JERVIS, NY — Port Jervis Tourism, 5pm, Riverside Park, 4th St. & Railroad Ave. portjervisny.gov/events.

Retro Cinema

NARROWSBURG, NY — DVAA & Clobr “Logan’s Run,” 7-9pm, 210 Bridge St. delawarevalleyartsalliance.org.

Sage Sessions

NARROWSBURG, NY — Tusten Social & Growing Old Together Sage Sessions, 1:30-3:30pm, 37 Main St. tustensocial.org.

Friday, July 3

Bywater Call

HAWLEY, PA — 6pm, Southern Soul, Harmony in the Woods, 19 Imagination Way, harmonyinthewoods.org.

Fourth of July

HONESDALE, PA — Greater Honesdale Partnership fourth of July celebration of America 250, 12noon, Central Park. facebook.com/ghphonedale.

July 4th Family Camp Weekend

DINGMANS FERRY, PA — Jul. 3-5, Pocono Environmental Education Center, 538 Emery Rd. peecc.org.

Open House

HANCOCK, NY — Museum & archive tours Fri.-Sun., 10am-4pm, American Legion Post 289, 210 Pennsylvania Ave., hancockny.org.

Saturday, July 4

4th of July Celebration

LIBERTY, NY — Liberty Rising, parade, vendors & fireworks, 10am, Main St. Rain date July 5, vendors apply by June 19. business.catskills.com.

4th of July Parade

MILFORD, PA — Noon, Pike County Semiquincentennial parade, line-up 10:30am, Ann Street Park, pikepa.org/pike250.

America 250 Parade

HAWLEY, PA — Parade noon, picnic in the park, 1-3pm, live music, fireworks, facebook.com/VisitHawleyPa.

America’s 250th Birthday

HAWLEY, PA — With Bruce Springsteen tribute band & fireworks, Silver Birches, 205 Rte. 507. silverbirchesresortpa.com.

Grand Reopening

PORT JERVIS, NY — Port Jervis Railroad Museum, 10am-4pm, Erie Turntable, 86 Pike St. pjmuseum.org.

Mamma Mania!

HAWLEY, PA — 6pm, American Tribute to ABBA, Harmony in the Woods, 19 Imagination Way, harmonyinthewoods.org.

Sunday, July 5

Fireworks

KAUNEONGA LAKE, NY — Fireworks display on White Lake, 9pm (dusk), free parking, 3586 NY-55. bethelnynyba.com.

Low Oatman Presentation

LIVINGSTON MANOR, NY — 11am-12:30pm history by Mike Valla, Catskill Fly Fishing Center & Museum, 1031 Old Rte. 17. Register, cffcm.com.

Summer Fun Fair

GLEN SPEY, NY — 11am-5pm, Kadampa World Peace Temple, 47 Sweeney Road. Vendors kadampanewyork.org.

The Best of the Eagles

WHITE MILLS, PA — Wildflower Concert Series, 6pm, Dorflinger Suydam Wildlife Sanctuary, 55 Suydam Dr. dorflinger.org.

Writing Retreat

LAKE ARIEL, PA — July 5-10, Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation, 94 Sanctuary Rd. Register lacawac.org/writing-retreat.

ONGOING

‘A Passion for the Wild’

LORDS VALLEY, PA — Featuring Guy D’Alessandro, Mon.-Sat. 9am-5pm through June 27, Chant Realtors, 631 Rte. 739, 570/775-7337.

‘Beauty of the Bashakill’

WURTSBORO, NY — Sat.-Sun. noon-4pm through June 28, Wurtsboro Art Alliance, 73 Sullivan St. waagallery.org.

Drawings & Collage

HONESDALE, PA — By Andrea J. Anderson, Mon.-Sat. 10am, through June 30, Wayne County Public Library, 1406 N. Main. blawson@wayneilibraries.org.

‘Embracing Nature’

MILFORD, PA — Featuring Scott & Debbie Helfand & Carol Lyons, Thurs.-Mon. 10am-6pm through July 6, ARTery Gallery, 210 Broad St. arterygallerymilford.com.

‘Equinox’ Exhibition

NARROWSBURG, NY — Artist Steve Deihl, Maison Bergogne, 226 Bridge St. maisonbergogne.com.

Five Gallery Exhibit

NARROWSBURG — Mon.-Wed. 8am-6pm, Thurs. 8am-8pm, Sun. 8am-3pm through June 28, Narrowsburg Union, 7 Erie Ave. narrowsburgunion.com.

George Billard Photography

ELDRED, NY — Thurs.-Sun. noon-5pm through July 5, Hall Space by Nonneta, 550 Rte. 55, hallspaceny.com.

‘Iterations of Hope’

LAKE HUNTINGTON, NY — Exhibition through June 30, Delaware Valley Opera Center, 6692 NY-52, viewing hours 845/887-3083.

‘New Ground’

LORDS VALLEY, PA — Featuring Tricia Lowrey-Lippert, Mon.-Sat. 9am-5pm, Chant Realtors, 631 Rte. 739, 570/775-7337.

‘One For All’

NARROWSBURG, NY — Wed.-Sat. 11am-5pm, Sun. 11am-4pm, Delaware Valley Arts Alliance (DVAA), 37 Main St., delawarevalleyartsalliance.org.

‘Out of Hand’

HONESDALE, PA — Member exhibition, Thurs.-Sun 11am-4pm, Wayne County Arts Alliance, 959 Main St. waynecountyartsalliance.org.

Painting Exhibition

LIBERTY, NY — Featuring Caroline Harrow, Liberty Public Library, 189 N. Main St., 845/292-6070.

‘Print Meets Paint’

MILFORD, PA — Featuring McCaleb & Dudes, Thurs.-Mon. 10am-6pm, ARTery Gallery, 210 Broad St. arterygallerymilford.com.

‘Reflection on Mother’

LIBERTY, NY — Multi-media exhibition, Fri.-Sun. noon-4pm through June 28, Liberty Museum & Arts Center, Naomi 845/807-6055.

‘Revolutions’

NARROWSBURG, NY — Wed.-Sat. 11am-5pm, Sun. 11am-4pm, Delaware Valley Arts Alliance, 37 Main St. delawarevalleyartsalliance.org.

‘Sharing’ Photography Exhibit

MONTICELLO, NY — Featuring Kathleen Johansen, Ethelbert. B. Crawford Public Library, call for viewing hours, 479 Broadway, 845/794-4660.

Summer Art Exhibition

PORT JERVIS, NY — Local artists, Fri.-Sun. 1-6pm, UpFront Exhibition Space, 31 Jersey Ave. 845/754-1808.

Summer Art Show

HAWLEY, PA — Featuring Frances Basch & Anne Crowley, The Lodge at Woodloch, 109 Birch Ln. kiesendahlcalhounart.com.

‘The Abstracted Landscape’

YOUNGSVILLE, NY — Art exhibition featuring Marjorie Morrow, Fri.-Mon. 11am-5pm through June 28, 4055 NY-52. facebook.com/domesticities.

Tif Wolf Paintings

NARROWSBURG, NY — Velvet Maple, Thur.-Tues., 10am-4pm, The Commons, 90 Main St. thevelvetmaple.com.

‘Where Wild Things Grow’

NARROWSBURG, NY — Featuring Dan Ladd & Joseph Noderer, Sat.-Sun. 11am-4pm, Ruffed Grouse Gallery, 144 Main St. ruffedgrousegallery.com.

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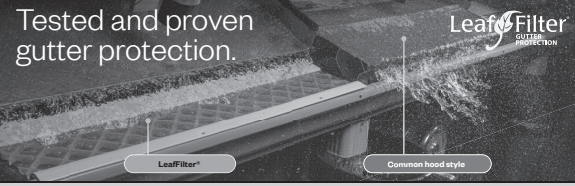
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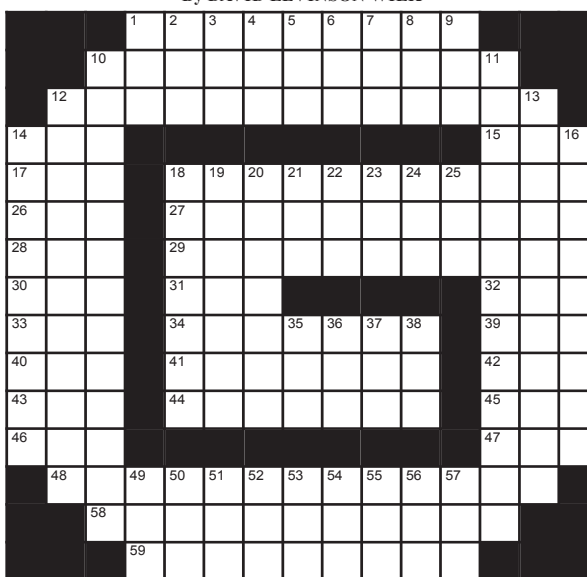
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ACROSS

- "Give me your word!"
- Generated field of some eels
- Get rid of completely
- Grand _____ (epilepsy)
- Geometric prefix
- Georgia Dome city: Abbr.
- Great White Way patron
- Grass moisture
- Gathered a party with a lot of spirits?
- Great length of time
- Growth's opposite
- George Balanchine's work is often performed by this dance co.
- Guesthouses feature them: Abbr.
- GPS heading
- Gesture of affection
- Grid centerpiece ... and the start of every clue in this puzzle
- "Guess I could go on and on" abbr.
- Ginger _____
- Gloves in Baltimore
- Gleeful song syllable
- Goldin's camera choice, perhaps: Abbr.
- Goes at a bongo, say
- Gas station's free offering
- Gerard's "his"
- Genus of plants known as marshelders
- Gel, brush or soap, e.g.
- Golden Globe nominee for "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"
- Guy Ritchie movie starring Madonna
- DOWN
- Guzzle's opposite
- Grief
- Govt. fair-hiring initiative created under LBJ
- Governor Landon who lost to FDR in '36
- Gridiron official
- German-American Heritage Mo.
- Greatest degree
- Get one's goat
- Gunn of "Project Runway"
- Guy who created the comic strip "Calvin and Hobbes"
- Ghastly whip so-named for the scratch marks it leaves
- Genre much like synchronized swimming
- Get a plan hatched beforehand
- Gave a pickup line, say
- Grammy winner for the hit song "Flashdance ... What a Feeling"
- Goody monster in a Steve McQueen movie
- Gown designer Carolina _____
- Glycoprotein found in connective tissue
- Go figure?
- Giant panda in 2005 news _____ Shan
- "Go back!" on a PC
- "Guinevere" actor Stephen
- Gangster's gun
- Get dressed (up)
- Golfer Ernie
- "Good Trouble" band _____
- Speedwagon
- Goldberg can be seen on its reruns of "Hollywood Squares"
- Grafton's "_____ for Innocent"
- Grad school major
- Garden party?
- Gregory Hines' specialty
- Gallery display
- GNC amts.
- Glass shooting marble
- Grp. representing longshoremen since 1892
- Given to playful modesty

Answer to Last Week's Crossword Puzzle



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Notice of formation of Barryville Bridge LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 05/26/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Secretary of State: Division of Corporations, One Commerce Plaza, 99 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12242. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
FORMATION OF A
LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

NOTICE OF FORMATION
OF MELODY LAKE LODGE
LLC

Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York on June 16, 2026. The office of the LLC is located in Sullivan County, New York, at 1 Melody Lake Dr, Monticello, NY 12701. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served, and shall mail a copy of any process to Melody Lake Lodge LLC, 1 Melody Lake Dr, Monticello, NY 12701. Purpose: to engage in any lawful act or activity for which limited liability companies may be organized under the laws of the State of New York.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
FORMATION OF A
LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

Notice of formation of YIDDISHE KOP STAFFING LLC. Art. Of Org. filed with the Sect'y of State of NY (SSNY) on 06/09/26. Office in Sullivan County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to the LLC, 51 MARJORIE DR MONTICELLO, NY, 12701. Purpose: Any lawful purpose

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
FORMATION OF A
LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

Bv 298 Winterton LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 5/15/2026. Office location: Sullivan. SSNY desig. as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 276 RIVERSIDE DR #2G, NEW YORK, NY 10025. Any lawful purpose.

Legal Notice

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A
LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

Notice of formation of Hometown Services LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 5/26/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Robert Walker : 6 Samyn Rd Barryville NY 12719. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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Notice of formation of Hometown Services LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 5/26/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Robert Walker : 6 Samyn Rd Barryville NY 12719. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
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LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

Notice of formation of 16 Ferndale LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 5/4/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to 16 Ferndale LLC: admin@corpexinc.com. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
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LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

Notice of formation of TLS SUPPORT & SOLUTIONS LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 03/12/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Tammy Shahzad : 198, Hemmer Road, Livingston Manor, NY 12758. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Legal Notice

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LIMITED LIABILITY
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74 JEFFERSON ST. LLC Articles of Org. filed NY Sec. of State (SSNY) 6/10/26. Office in Sullivan Co. SSNY desig. agent of LLC whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to 230 Foxcroft Vlg., Loch Sheldrake, NY 12759. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. Principal business loc: 74 Jefferson St., Monticello, NY 12701.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
FORMATION OF A
LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

Notice of formation of Crescent House Consulting, LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 04/27/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to SSNY: dstanchich@gmail.com. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
FORMATION OF A
LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

NEVERSINK REALTY HOLDINGS LLC filed Arts. of Org. with the Sect'y of State of NY (SSNY) on 5/11/2026. Office: Sullivan County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served and shall mail process to: The LLC, 48 Kitz Rd, Monticello, NY 12701. Purpose: any lawful act.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
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LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

Notice of Formation of 4150 W. SHORE DRIVE LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 04/28/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: EDWARD ZOLTAN, 2717 QUENTIN RD., BROOKLYN, NY 11229. Purpose: any lawful activities.

Legal Notice

SULLIVAN COUNTY
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COMPANY

Notice of formation of 526 Jeffersonville North Branch Road LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 5/07/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Northwest Registered Agent LLC : 418 Broadway STE N Albany, NY, 12207, USA. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
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COMPANY

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF DOLOS-VISTE LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 3/6/26. Office Loc. Sullivan County. SSNY designated as agent upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of any process to: DOLOS-VISTE LLC at PO Box 768, Ridgewood, NJ 07451. Reg. Agent: eResidentAgent, Inc.1 Rockefeller Plaza Ste 1204, NY, NY 10020. P/B/A: 765 Mosswood Ave, South Orange, NJ 07079. Purpose: any lawful activity.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
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COMPANY

Notice of Formation of a Limited Liability Company (LLC). The name of the LLC is: Northern Currents LLC. Articles of Organization were filed with the Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) office on 12/11/2025. The County in which the Office is to be located: Sullivan. The SSNY is designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The address to which the SSNY shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC is: 116 Kirk Rd., Narrowsburg, NY 12764. Purpose: any lawful activity.

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RIVER REPORTER.

Legal Notice

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
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COMPANY

MOUNTAIN VISION CARE OPTOMETRY, PLLC Articles of Org. filed NY Sec. of State (SSNY) 5/27/26. Office in Sullivan Co. SSNY desig. agent of LLC whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to 15 Chelsea Ln., Rock Hill, NY 12775, which is also the principal business location. Purpose: To practice Optometry.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
FORMATION OF A
LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

Notice of formation of Evelyn Equestrian Center, LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 04/01/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Crystal Conklin: 86 Huson Road, Parksville, NY 12768. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
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COMPANY

Notice of Formation of: Namaste World Stores LLC Art. Of Org. filed with SSNY on January 7, 2026 . Office Location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: PO Box 102, Fallsburg, NY 12733. Purpose: any lawful purpose

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
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LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

Notice of formation of NY Tyre III, LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 4/23/26. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Delaware River Solar, LLC: PO Box 384, Callicoon, NY 12723. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Legal Notice

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Capstone Lumina LLC, filed 6/8/26. Office: Sullivan Co. SSNY desig. agent for process & shall mail to 716-726 County Rd 104 #1E, Loch Sheldrake, NY 12759. Purpose: General.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
FORMATION OF A
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COMPANY

Notice of formation of LANZ LEGACY LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 4/03/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Nissar Hussain: 52 Valley View RdBloomingtonburg, NY 12721. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
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LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

Notice of formation of Liberty Elite Construction & Renovations. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 05/27/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to ZenBusiness INC: 41 State Street Suite 112 Albany NY 12207. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

SULLIVAN COUNTY
NOTICE OF
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LIMITED LIABILITY
COMPANY

Notice of formation of Patriot Hill Enterprises, LLC . Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 02/24/2026. Office location: Sullivan County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Patriot Hill Enterprises, LLC: 19 Mill House Road, Pine Bush, NY 12566. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

■ STEP OUTSIDE

BY EVAN PADUA

Time for a river trip!

Now that it is officially summer, it's time for a nice recreational river trip. The Delaware River has special meaning in our place of home. It is the main artery of life that connects our communities and ecosystem all the way to the ocean at Cape May, NJ.

A four- to eight-mile river trip on the Upper Delaware is a good goal for a first river trip of the season. Canoes move much faster than rafts, especially if you are proficient at paddling. Choosing a reasonable length of river trip and the proper type of watercraft can make or break your experience.

Keep an eye on the weather, and shy away from days forecast to have strong south or east winds. It will create a lot of work for you to get downstream, even though our river is silently swift, when there is a strong upstream wind; the above-water draft of a boat creates a lot of resistance.

If you choose a canoe as your boat of choice, be sure to wear your personal flotation device and keep an eye out for rocks.

It is important to keep the nose of your canoe pointed downstream, especially when navigating small rapids throughout our river. If you are going to hit a rock, it is best to do it nose first, rather than trying a last-minute turn to miss it and hitting it sideways.

Learning a J-stroke paddle will assist you in steering a canoe or raft on your river trip. The person sitting in the back of the boat will need to utilize the J-stroke paddle most of the day to steer accordingly.

Take note of the bends in the river, and think about how gravity affects the water as it flows downstream. Downstream is also downhill. When the river turns to the right, often the river's channel or most of the flow will then be on the river's left side. Remaining in the channel will help you move downriver and keep you out of the shallow flats. This rule is not always true but it is a good way to find the channel if you realize you are in water too shallow to paddle.

A hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, water shoes, snacks and plenty of drinking water are essentials for any river trip. These key items will keep you protected from the sun and give you the ability to walk in the water when approaching shore, or if needed, to nudge your boat off of rocks.



RR photo by Evan Padua
Spending time on the river outside is good for realizing a "go with the flow" mindset.

I like to bring fishing equipment on most river trips, but be sure the people in your boat are aware of hooks, and your ability to navigate a boat and fish can coincide. It is easy to become distracted in a canoe while fishing, then hit a rock and capsize.

Some dogs love river time; it can be a nice way for them to stay cool during the hot summer days, but beware of fish hooks and lures around dogs, because they often think they are toys.

It's time to dust off that old canoe in your backyard and get it out for a paddle. You can also call one of the many local canoe and raft liveries to get you on the water; they will set you up and transport you accordingly. There is also the option of calling me for a professionally guided fishing experience.

River trips can be as short or as long as you feel comfortable. Spending time on the river outside is good for realizing a "go with the flow" mindset. When you try to fight the current of the river, you become tired and things will often take a turn for the worse. This can be a metaphor for our everyday lives, so remember to live like a river and "go with the flow."

Be sure to wear your lifejacket, and stay safe out there.

Evan Padua can be found at Sweetwater Guide Service, www.sweetwaterguide.com/guides.

■ RAMBLINGS OF A CATSKILL FLY FISHER

BY TONY BONAIVIST

We're going the other way

Many of us who fly fish, especially those who are well along in years, still maintain a reverence for the traditional opening day of trout season, taking place on April 1 in New York State. That is in spite of the fact that a few years ago, the DEC's Bureau of Fisheries extended the season for river trout fishing from October 1 until March 31 the following year, but with no-kill regulations. There are exceptions; for example, a number of waters, especially some tributaries of the Great Lakes, will remain open to harvest all year.

But for us traditionalists, our fly rods more often than not will be cased by mid-October. That's when sadness and perhaps melancholy begin, with another Catskill winter a few weeks away. And that's when the wait starts.

Those who fly fish, fish that way because of the flies, mainly mayflies. For us, it's all about the hatches, the procession of aquatic insects that begins sometime in mid-to-late April. It starts with quill Gordon, Hendrickson/red quill, pale evening duns, March browns/gray foxes, sulphurs, Isonychias, green drakes and light Cahills. There is a smattering of other flies along with several species of caddis that make up this annual smorgasbord of trout food, and to which we look forward to fishing as well.

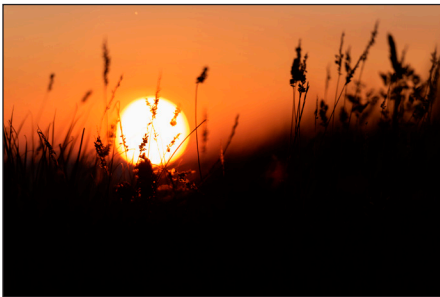
By the first week of April, anglers begin to check stream flow and water temperatures, hoping for normal conditions, which during the last several years, seldom occurred. Instead, it has been cold in the Catskills with too much rain, high flows and with some hatches, mostly Hendrickson/red quills, un-fishable because of water and weather.

If we're lucky, flows will recede, rivers will warm, and we might catch the tail end of the Hendrickson/red quill hatch, which can continue into May. There will be some Hendrickson spinners around at that time, too.

As the end of May approaches, the first hatches of pale evening duns will appear in the late afternoon or at dusk, depending on the river. Through all of this insect activity, day length will increase daily, allowing us more time on the water.

The parade of fly hatches will continue well into June, before ending with the evening emergences of *Isonychia* bicolor at the end of the month. By then, summer will be in full swing, flows dropping and freestone rivers warming to the degree that some, like sections of the Beaverkill, will be closed to fishing because of high water temperatures.

Beginning in July, on some rivers, Trico hatches will begin, around nine in the morning, and offer about two hours of fishing



Trygve Finkelsen on pexels.com
The sun sets during the summer solstice.

to the spinner fall, if there is no wind. The Trico hatch will provide the bulk of summer fishing for anglers, except on the tailwaters, where sulphurs may extend into August, which is an anomaly due to cold bottom releases.

Then sometime in July, the olives will begin and emerge well into October, for those anglers willing to fish through the cold. So what began with a great deal of hope for coming hatches and fishing opportunities in the spring will end with all the major insect activity over until the following year.

The anticipation toward this frenzy of aquatic insect activity that drew us to the river will begin to taper off in late April, as we head toward the summer solstice on June 21, which is the longest day of the year. A day when I stayed on the river until well after 9 p.m., hoping for one last rise. The next day will lose a minute of daylight and begin an ever so slow but steady journey toward fall. Sooner or later, dead poplar leaves will cover the two-track that leads into camp, announcing a change—definitely a sign that fall is not that far off.

As I look back to February and March and recall all the expectations I had for another opening of trout season, there is more than a little shock that the summer solstice is already upon us. It's a subtle message that the days will slowly shorten as we go forward. By August, the angle of the afternoon sun will be lower over the home pool, as it continues its journey toward dusk. And the night air will offer a slight chill, a reminder of the season.

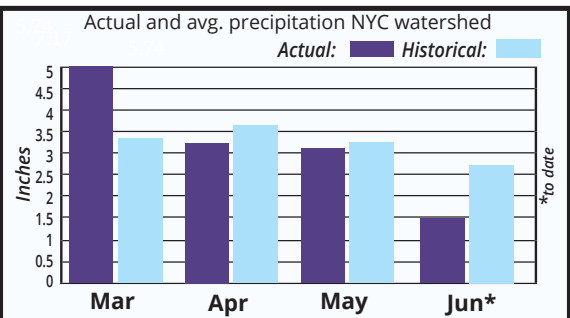
Some say that as we age, time appears to speed up. I don't know if that is true. What I do know is that the time from the beginning of trout season on April 1 to the summer solstice on June 21 happens in the blink of an eye. And once the summer solstice appears on the calendar, we begin "going the other way," on our way to fall. For me, as an aging angler, the summer solstice, while the longest, is one of the saddest days of the year.

SOUNDINGS: TAKING THE PULSE OF THE UPPER DELAWARE WATERSHED

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Reservoir levels

June 18, 2026
Cannonsville: 90.1%
Pepacton: 94.3%
Neversink: 94.4%
Total: 93.9%
Normal Total: 98.4%
Total in 2025: 83.5%





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RIVER TALK

BY SCOTT RANDO

A herd of turtles

It was a mild morning after some overnight rain last week, and just a mile after making a turn, my friend and I spotted something in our travel lane. We both ID'd the object right away, and as suspected, it was a box turtle crossing the road. After checking that it was safe to do so, I ran out and grabbed the turtle and placed her off the road in the direction she was headed.

Another mile or so down the road, the scene was repeated with a male turtle resting on the double yellow line and again, placed off the road unharmed.

This is breeding time for many species of turtles, and many are crossing roads to get to nesting areas.

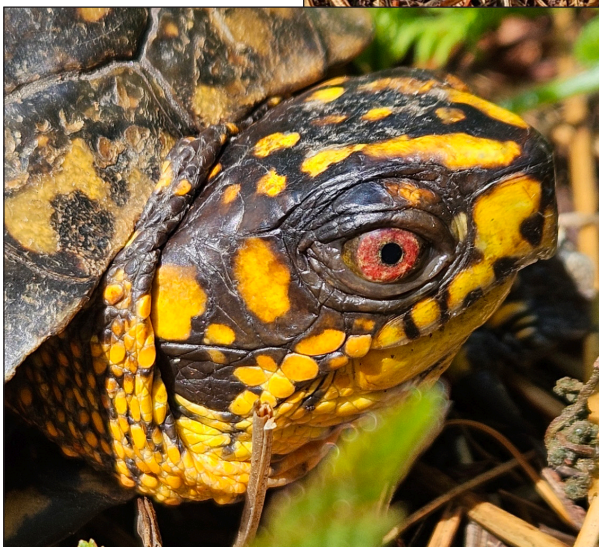
Box turtles are easy to spot if they are in the open. Their carapace (upper shell) is adorned with an array of random yellow markings, and each scute (segment of the shell) has its own pattern. The head and legs have yellow patterns and spots. These same spots help the turtle blend in with the leaf litter of a forest floor.

One of the most interesting things about the box turtle is that its plastron (lower part of the shell) is hinged and acts as a form of door to protect its head and forelegs if the turtle is threatened.

Box turtles are a species of special concern in both NY and PA; thus, it's illegal to keep or otherwise disturb them if found in the wild. Many turtle species are in decline in the region due to a number of factors, including the illegal pet trade.

If you spot a box turtle, take a few snapshots (it might be shy and close its security door; stay still for a few minutes and it will pop its head back out for a photo-op), and leave this special creature to live out its life in the wild.

RR photos by Scott Rando
You would think that a box turtle should be very visible in the wild. Although a black-and-yellow spotted shell should stand out, this picture tells a slightly different story. The marking patterns on the carapace of this turtle blend in well with the yellow-brown patterns of dead vegetation on the ground, and the black background matches well with shadows thrown by ferns and other vegetation.



A close look at the head of a box turtle reveals more yellow markings on the head and neck. One notable feature of a box turtle is its eyes. They range from red to yellow or brown. Males have red eyes and females have eyes that appear more brownish. The box turtle's mouth is well suited for its diet. Some plants and fruits, but more insects and other invertebrates, small amphibians and even carrion are eaten.

"After checking that it was safe to do so, I ran out and grabbed the turtle and placed her off the road in the direction she was headed."

DEAR EVAN HANSEN

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