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New private
school opening in
Cairo this fall



See page 15

98 receive diplomas in
Class of 2021 commencement



By Melanie Lekocevic
Capital Region Independent Media

GREENVILLE — Greenville High School awarded diplomas to 98 graduates in the Class of 2021 outside the school Friday night in an in-person commencement.

Principal Matthew Ward opened the ceremony honoring the graduates for their tenacity in completing an untraditional school year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“They have all endured and risen above in an unprecedented time in the history of Greenville and in our entire nation,” Ward said.


The start of the 2020-21 academic year was fraught with uncertainty, he said.

“Looking back to September, this school year started with fear, nervous-

See 2021, page 14

The Greenville High School Class of 2021 celebrated commencement in front of the school Friday evening.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



ALEXANDRA MOSS

The Pastel Society of America selected Stanley Maltzman as the 2019 Hall of Fame Honoree. They showcased his work on a reserved wall in the Grand Gallery as part of the Annual Exhibition's display of pastel paintings selected from all over the world.

100-year-old artist enjoys
a life bursting with color

By Joanne E. McFadden
For Capital Region Independent Media


FREEHOLD — This Fourth of July marks not only the birthday of the United States, but also the hundredth birthday of renowned artist Stanley Maltzman of Freehold.

Maltzman was born in New York City and grew up in the Bronx. He served in the United States Coast Guard in the Pacific aboard the USS Centaurus during World War II. He attended the Phoenix School of Design and began a career as a commercial artist in Manhattan, painting signs and the sides of delivery trucks.

He and his wife Rachael moved to Yonkers to raise their two daughters, and he evolved into an accomplished landscape artist working most often in pastel or charcoal, but also pencil and watercolor. His works have been widely exhibited, accessioned into museum collections, and published in books and magazines. For example, his work is part of the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Carnegie-Mellon University

See ARTIST, page 14

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Maltzman as a young boy
growing up in the Bronx.



GOP voters nominate full slate in town elections

By Melanie Lekocevic
Capital Region Independent Media

GREENVILLE — More than 100 Republican voters attended last week's GOP caucus to nominate a full slate of candidates to be on the ticket in the November town elections.

The caucus was held in the North Barn of George V. Vanderbilt Town Park, with several incumbents facing off against challengers for the nomination.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Jackie Park was not nominated to another term, with newcomer Jessica Lewis winning the nod instead.

The race was a close one. Park was nominated by former tax collector Mary Yeomans and Lewis was nominated by former Greene County Sheriff Greg Seeley. Lewis came out ahead with 65 votes to Park's 54.

“I am elated over the support I received tonight and I appreciate everyone coming out,” Lewis said after getting the nod. “I look forward to working with you all during this election and I would be honored to be your town clerk.”

All other incumbents were nominated to the Republican ticket.

Town supervisor, two council seats, town clerk and highway superintendent will be on the ballot

come November.

Town Councilman Joel Rauf nominated incumbent Town Supervisor Paul Macko for the town's top spot.

“After seven terms, two years as a member of the town council, [Paul Macko] steered the ship for this small town very successfully and through some pretty stormy waters,” Rauf said in his nomination.


Art Merini seconded the nomination.

Walter Schelling then nominated Peter Liquari for the supervisor's position, which was seconded by Rebecca Liquari. Neither gave a speech nominating the candidate.

More than 100 Republican voters then headed to the front of the room to cast their ballots. Macko came out on top with 88 votes to Liquari's 24.

“We work hard for Greenville,” Macko said following the caucus vote. “We got quite a bit accom-

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MELANIE LEKOCEVIC/CAPITAL REGION INDEPENDENT MEDIA

Greenville Republicans nominated a full slate of candidates for the town elections in November.

MAILING LABEL HERE

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Community Calendar

To have your organization's events added to our calendar, please enter them online at www.greenvillepioneer.com

JULY 2021

3 - Town of Durham Fourth of July Parade, 11 a.m. There will be ice cream, hot dogs, soda and a bounce house at the festival grounds, 2267 Route 145, East Durham. Fireworks at approximately 9 p.m.

5 - Cairo Town Hall closed in observance of Fourth of July holiday.

5 - Durham Town Court, 3:30 p.m., 7309 State Route 81, East Durham.

6 - The Michael Benedict Quartet performs, Greenville Summer Concert Series at the gazebo in Veterans Park, Routes 32 and 81, Greenville. Free admission.

6 - Durham Town Board workshop, 7:30 p.m., 7309 Route 81, East Durham.

7 - Greenville Planning Board meeting, 7 p.m., Town Hall, 11159 Route 32, Greenville.

12 - Cairo Town Board meeting, 7 p.m., Town Hall, 512 Main St., Cairo.

12 - Durham Town Court, 3:30 p.m., 7309 State Route 81, East Durham.

13 - The Lustre Kings performs, Greenville Summer Concert Series at the gazebo in Veterans Park, Routes 32 and 81, Greenville. Free admission.

13 - Greenville Zoning Board meeting, 7 p.m., if needed. Town Hall, 11159 Route 32, Greenville.

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19 - Greenville Town Board meeting, 7 p.m., Town Hall, 11159 Route 32, Greenville.

19 - Durham Town Court, 3:30 p.m., 7309 State Route 81, East Durham.

20 - Girl Blue performs, Greenville Summer Concert Series at the gazebo in Veterans Park, Routes 32 and 81, Greenville. Free admission.

20 - Durham Town Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., 7309 Route 81, East Durham.

26 - Durham Town Court, 3:30 p.m., 7309 State Route 81, East Durham.

27 - The Matthew Finck Trio performs, Greenville Summer Concert Series at the gazebo in Veterans Park, Routes 32 and 81, Greenville. Free admission.

AUGUST 2021

3 - Medusa Moonshine performs, Greenville Summer Concert Series at the gazebo in Veterans Park, Routes 32 and 81, Greenville. Free admission.

4 - Greenville Planning Board meeting, 7 p.m., Town Hall, 11159 Route 32, Greenville.

10 - The Funkshins performs, Greenville Summer Concert Series at the gazebo in Veterans Park, Routes 32 and 81, Greenville. Free admission.

10 - Greenville Zoning Board meeting, 7 p.m., if needed. Town Hall, 11159 Route 32, Greenville.

16 - Greenville Town Board meeting, Town Hall, 11159 Route 32, Greenville.

17 - The Brad Monkell Quintet performs, Greenville Summer Concert Series at the gazebo in Veterans Park, Routes 32 and 81, Greenville. Free admission.

Rescue Squad eyes new headquarters

By **Melanie Lekocevic**
Capital Region Independent Media

GREENVILLE — The Greenville Rescue Squad has purchased 2 acres of land on Route 81 and is next planning to build a new headquarters and multi-bay garage to store ambulances and equipment.

Ted Nugent, chairman of Greenville Rescue Squad, Inc., presented the town board with the group's plans for construction at the June 21 meeting at town hall.

The rescue squad has serviced the town since 1972.

The squad's crew and one of its ambulances are currently located at the Greenville firehouse. The second ambulance is housed at a second fire station in Norton Hill.

The agency — a nonprofit, all-paid squad — is looking to consolidate its crew and ambulances at a single location.

"The rescue squad purchased 2.16 acres from the Greenville fire district on Route 81, just east of [Route] 41," Nugent said last Monday.

The organization is looking

to construct two buildings on the property — a house where the crew's quarters would be, and an 80-foot-by-80-foot multi-bay garage to house the vehicles.

"It would be able to hold the ambulances, the paramedics, as well as equipment storage and have room for expansion in the future if need be," Nugent said.

Renderings and specific plans for both buildings are not ready at this time.

The property cost about \$5,000 per acre for a total of just over \$10,000, Nugent said. The cost of the two buildings is expected to be roughly \$500,000 to \$600,000 and would be financed through a 30-year mortgage, Nugent said.

As a private nonprofit organization, the Greenville Rescue Squad, Inc., would finance the project on its own. The town would not pay toward the building or property purchase, Nugent said.

But before plans for the construction are finalized, the squad is looking to secure an agreement from the town that would grant immunity from zoning codes to speed up the process.

"Because we are an emergency service, the town board can prevent all those planning board meetings and hearings," Nugent told the board.

Immunity can be granted through the Monroe County Immunity Analysis, which was established through a court precedent in 1988, according to the New York state Department of State.

Town attorney Tal Rappleyea said the immunity deal would mesh well with this project.

"They would still have to adhere to building codes and get a certificate of occupancy, but they wouldn't have to comply with zoning or go to the planning board and zoning board of appeals, which would be very intensive reviews," Rappleyea said. "I recommend it in this case. There are a number of cases throughout the years that have said that this type of situation is exactly what that [Monroe County] case was about."

week, but Town Supervisor Paul Macko said the community is satisfied with the service it is receiving from the rescue squad.

In addition to being granted immunity from the usual reviews as an emergency service organization, the rescue squad is also looking for assurance from the town that their services will continue to be needed in the future before moving ahead with the pricey project.

"We contract with the town for ambulance service," Nugent said. "We would like some kind of commitment from the town that they are going to continue contracting with these multi-year contracts so we know we will not spend all of this money to put up a building and then the town will do something different in a year."

The squad is in the second year of a three-year contract with the town.

The town board did not take action at the board meeting last

month, but Town Supervisor Paul Macko said the community is satisfied with the service it is receiving from the rescue squad.

"We are pleased with the services you have brought the town," Macko told the rescue squad. "The vast majority of our residents are very pleased with the fact that they can dial 911 and in a matter of a minute or two they are off the floor and on the way."

The squad pays rent for its space at the firehouses and monthly payments on the proposed new buildings would be in the same range, Nugent said.

"It's not much more from what we are paying right now in rent," he said.

The next step will be for the rescue squad to make a formal presentation to the board at its July 19 meeting to request immunity from zoning codes and the typical approval process.

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Police Blotter

Editor's Note: A charge is not a conviction. All persons listed are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Charges can be amended or dismissed.

STATE POLICE

■ Anthony Baez, 48, of Cocksackie, was arrested at 8:39 a.m. June 4 in Cocksackie and charged with aggravated harassment of an employee by an inmate, a class E felony. He was held.

■ Megan S. Vandenburg, 25, of Climax, was arrested at 2:49 a.m. June 5 in Cocksackie and charged with second-degree criminal contempt, a class A misdemeanor. She was released on a cash bail of \$500.

■ Charles E. Hahn, 59, of Prattsville, was arrested at 10:06 a.m. June 4 in Prattsville and charged with driving while intoxicated and aggravated driving while intoxicated per se both unclassified misdemeanors. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Jason M. Diaz, 36 of Hannacroix, was arrested at 8:05 p.m. June 4 in New Baltimore and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance a class A misdemeanor-or. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Lionel L. Rushford, 46, of South Cairo, was arrested at 4:03 a.m. June 5 in Cairo and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Moses Doctor, 59, of Cairo, was arrested at 4:03 a.m. June 5 in Cairo and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Jennifer K. Osoria, 28, of the Bronx, was arrested at 6:52 p.m. June 5 in Cairo and charged with driving while ability impaired by drugs, an unclassified misdemeanor. She was released to a third party.

■ Richard J. Crianza, 34, of Cairo, was arrested at 5:37 p.m. June 5 in Cairo and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor; third-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class B felony; and third-degree criminal sale of a controlled substance, a class B felony. He was held.

■ Anthony McGough, 19, of Prattsville, was arrested at 4:10 p.m. June 5 in Prattsville, and charged with criminal mischief intent to damage property, a class A misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Erick A. Lopez, 30, of the Bronx, was arrested at 3 p.m. June 6 in Hunter and charged with driving while intoxicated and driving while intoxicated per se, both unclassified misdemeanors. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Edwin J. Brockett, 51, of Catskill, was arrested at 6:33 p.m. June 6 in Athens and charged with driving while intoxicated and driving while intoxicated per se, both unclassified misdemeanors. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Brandon M. Downes, 28, of Hannacroix, was arrested at 9:14 June 6 in New Baltimore and charged with driving while intoxicated and aggravated driving while intoxicated per se, both class E felonies. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Miguel Vidal Maceda, 56, of Long Beach, New Jersey, was arrested at 9:43 p.m. June 6 in Greenville and charged with driving while intoxicated and driving while intoxicated per se He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Breanna N. Smith, 31, of Oak Hill, was arrested at 6:50 p.m. June 7 in Cairo and charged with fourth-degree grand larceny and fourth-degree grand larceny, both are class E felonies. She was released on her own recognizance.

■ Paul C. Kozlowski, 31, of Catskill was arrested at 2:26 p.m. June 8 in Catskill and charged with second-degree criminal impersonation, a class A misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Matthew D. Ford, 44, of Saugerties, was arrested at 5:59 p.m. June 9 in Cocksackie and charged with second-degree criminal contempt, a class A misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Michael Scalice, 34, of Catskill, was arrested at 1:21 a.m. June 10 in Catskill and charged with manufacturing drug-related paraphernalia, two counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and possession of a hypodermic instrument, all class A misdemeanors.

■ Christine A. McGraw, 53, of Gilboa, was arrested at 1:11 a.m. June 12 in Hunter and charged with two counts of manufacturing drug-related paraphernalia, a class A misdemeanor; three counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor; fifth-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class D felony; and second-degree criminal use of drug paraphernalia, a class A misdemeanor. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Justin D. Burroughs, 35, of Grand George, was arrested at 1:11 a.m. June 12 in Hunter and charged with two counts of manufacturing drug-related paraphernalia, a class A misdemeanor; two counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor; fifth-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class D felony; and second-degree criminal use of drug paraphernalia, a class A misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Vincent Coleman, 25, of Cocksackie, was arrested at 9:30 a.m. June 11 in Catskill and charged with first-degree promoting of prison contraband, a class D felony. He was held.

■ Luis Gonzalez, 28, of Germantown, was arrested at 9:31 p.m. June 11 in Cocksackie and charged with driving while ability impaired by drugs, an unclassified misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Terence M. Capucci, 31, of East Durham, was arrested at 12:02 a.m. June 12 in Durham and charged with driving while intoxicated, a class E felony. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Monica I. Casper, 29, of Earlton, was arrested at 2:47 p.m. June 13 in Catskill and charged with driving while intoxicated, driving while intoxicated per se and aggravated driving while intoxicated per se, all unclassified misdemeanors. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Candace M. Larsen, 34, of Cairo, was arrested at 5:32 p.m. June 14 in Cairo and charged with third-degree menacing, a class B misdemeanor, and criminal mischief, a class A misdemeanor. Her arrestee status is unknown.

■ Gary Livoti, 62, of Long Beach, was arrested at 9:35 p.m. June 14 in Catskill and charged with driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor. He was released on his own recognizance.

■ Jacqueline M. Luciano, 31, was arrested at 5:37 p.m. June 15 in Cairo and charged with second-degree criminal contempt and seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, both class A misdemeanors. She was released on her own recognizance.

■ Heather A. Haff, 35, of Leeds was arrested at 5:37 p.m. June 15 in Cairo and charged with two counts of manufacturing drug-related paraphernalia and seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, both class A misdemeanors. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ A 14-year-old male from West Cocksackie was arrested at 8:41 p.m. June 15 in Cairo and charged with second-degree burglary, a class C felony, and third-degree criminal mischief, a class E felony. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Joseph A. Coghlan, 38, of Chesapeake, Virginia, was arrested

at 6:57 p.m. June 12 in Cocksackie and charged with second-degree reckless endangerment, a class A misdemeanor, third-degree unlawful fleeing a police officer in a motor vehicle, a class A misdemeanor, and reckless driving, an unclassified misdemeanor. He was released on his own recognizance.

■ Anthony Smith, 25, of Cocksackie, was arrested at 9 a.m. June 16 in Cocksackie and charged with first-degree promoting prison contraband and third-degree criminal possession of a weapon, both class D felonies. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Alicia M. McNulty, 30, of Freehold, was arrested at 2:54 a.m. June 17 in Cairo and charged with manufacturing drug-related paraphernalia and two counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, both class A misdemeanors. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Raymond J. Robles, 51, of Catskill, was arrested at 9:31 p.m. June 17 in Catskill and charged with fifth-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class D felony. He was held.

■ Carter M. Goss, 23, of Athens, was arrested at 1:14 a.m. June 19 in Catskill and charged with third-degree unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, driving while intoxicated and driving while intoxicated per se, all unclassified misdemeanors. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Matthew D. Swartout, 43, of Cocksackie, was arrested at 11:13 p.m. June 18 in Cocksackie and charged with driving while intoxicated

and driving while intoxicated per se, both unclassified misdemeanors. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Scott C. Andrus, 32, of Catskill, was arrested at 12:45 p.m. June 19 in Catskill and charged with second-degree obstructing governmental administration and resisting arrest, and endangering the welfare of a child, all class A misdemeanors. He was released on his own recognizance.

■ John J. Ray, 54, of East Durham, was arrested at 11:57 p.m. June 19 in Greenville and charged with manufacturing drug-related paraphernalia, a class A misdemeanor, and fifth-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class D felony. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Anthony Vannucci, 49, of Freehold, was arrested at 3:30 a.m. in Greenville and charged with driving while intoxicated and driving while intoxicated per se, both unclassified misdemeanors. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Jesse A. Hildenbrand, 40, of Cocksackie, was arrested at 11:28 p.m. June 21 in Cocksackie and charged with manufacturing drug-related paraphernalia and seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, both class A misdemeanors. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Jennifer R. Pascuzzi, 36, of Cocksackie, was arrested at 11:55 p.m. June 21 in Cocksackie and charged with manufacturing drug-related paraphernalia, a class A misdemeanor; three counts of seventh-degree criminal possession

of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor; fifth-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class D felony; possession of a hypodermic instrument, a class A misdemeanor. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Bilal Minnis, 22, of Cocksackie, was arrested at 1:53 p.m. June 22 in Cocksackie and charged with first-degree promoting prison contraband and third-degree criminal possession of a weapon, both class D felonies. He was held.

■ Christopher P. Juzapavicus, 28, of New Baltimore, was arrested at 2:35 a.m. June 23 in Climax and charged with fifth-degree criminal possession of stolen property, a class A misdemeanor; seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor; second-degree criminal use of drug paraphernalia, a class A misdemeanor; and driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Dylan T. Rogers, 27, of Norton Hill, was arrested at 2:40 a.m. June 23 in New Baltimore and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, an unclassified misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

GREENE COUNTY SHERIFF

■ Jonathan R. Johnson, 37, was arrested at 3:42 p.m. June 15 in Catskill and charged with second-degree aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, an unclassified misdemeanor.



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518-239-6544

Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter Day Saints
County Route 41, Greenville Center
518-966-4043

Greenville Center Baptist Church
County Route 41, Greenville

Durham-Oak Hill
United Methodist Church
Route 22, Durham
518-239-6377

Medway Congregational
Christian Church
Route 26, Climax
518-731-2106 & 518-731-8867

Christ Episcopal Church
State Route 32, Greenville
518-966-5713

Our Lady of Knock Shrine
State Route 145, East Durham
518-622-3319

Cornerstone Baptist Church
State Route 145, East Durham
518-634-7095

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
State Route 81, Oak Hill
518-239-6727

Asbury United Methodist Church
State Route 81, Norton Hill
518-966-4181

South Westerlo Congregational
Christian Church
County Routes 403 & 406, South Westerlo
518-966-5094

Greenville Christian Church
State Route 32, Greenville
518-966-4519

St. John the Baptist
Roman Catholic Church
State Route 81, Greenville
518-966-8317

Grapeville Baptist Church
Route 26, Climax
518-966-4265

Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witness
State Route 81, Greenville
518-966-8941

Dormansville United Methodist Church
Route 312, Dormansville
518-756-2812

Trinity Episcopal Church
Albany Hill Road, Renaselaerville
518-797-5295

Westerlo Reformed Church
State Route 143, Westerlo
518-797-3742

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church
Church Street, Cairo
518-622-3319

Medusa United Church of Christ
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Pandemic relief funding is in the bank

By **Melanie Lekocevic**
Capital Region Independent Media

CATSKILL — COVID-19 pandemic relief funds are in the bank. The county has received the first of two grants from the federal government aimed at aiding municipalities in recovering from the coronavirus outbreak that began in the middle of March 2020.

The Greene County Legislature voted at its monthly meeting to accept the first installment of the American Rescue Plan Act grant of \$4,582,858.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 was signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 11 authorizing direct aid to counties and other entities to assist in the recovery from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The county will receive a total of \$9,165,716 in two installments, the second by March 11, 2022.

The first installment is in an account at the Bank of Greene County.

The resolution accepting the first half of the grant money was adopted by the Legislature with one dissenting vote by Legislator Michael Bulich, R-Catskill.

Bulich said he opposes the distribution of funds through the American Rescue Plan because the country cannot afford the total \$9.1 trillion COVID stimulus package passed by the federal government.

“By the time that gets paid back by your kids and great-grandkids, it will probably be \$30 million,” Bulich said of the money Greene County received. “There is nothing liquid about that money — there is no way to pay it back. We are already taxed at the max.”

The stimulus aid awarded to the county does not have to be paid back by the county — Bulich referred to the overall stimulus package, claiming it is not a wise financial move by the federal government.

There are also limits to how Greene County can spend the money because the county did not show

a financial loss following the pandemic.

“If you look at the bill, there are so many stipulations and regulations for this county on how we can spend the money because we are in good financial shape,” Bulich said. “We are eligible, but only for certain things. It was supposed to be for what transpired and what we lost in the pandemic, but Greene County didn’t really lose much.”

Other counties — such as Albany County, where high-revenue malls were closed for months during the shutdown — suffered more severe economic losses, Bulich said.

He also fears what could happen in the coming months following distribution of the American Rescue Plan grants.

“The government is printing money — that is all they are doing, and that devalues the dollar you have in your pocket right now,” he said. “That is why inflation is already starting to take hold.”

Greene County Legislator Charles Martinez, R-Coxsackie, agreed the stimulus relief aid is a risky financial move for the nation, but said the money will be spent, so Greene County might as well benefit from it.

“We are going to pay one way or the other, so we might as well take the money,” Martinez said. “We have half of it already.”

The county has yet to determine how the funds will be utilized.

“We are talking about using it for broadband and infrastructure like water and sewer,” Martinez said. “We will use it wisely, but there are requirements by the federal government on how the money can be used so we will have to go over their guidelines.”

The funds are to be used for specific purposes aimed at improving the county’s ability to respond to future pandemics, Greene County Legislature Chairman Patrick Linger, R-New Baltimore, said.

The county has two years in which to use the funds.



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Jail opening delayed over construction changes

By **Melanie Lekocevic**
Capital Region Independent Media

COXSACKIE — The new Greene County Jail was scheduled to open to accept inmates July 1, but construction changes mandated by the state have pushed back the start date.

The new start date may be Aug. 1, Greene County Legislator Greg Davis, R-Greenville, said at the Greenville Town Board meeting last Monday.

The New York State Commission of Correction — the oversight agency tasked with evaluating all county jails and other correctional facilities — walked back some of its approvals on the jail project, located on Route 9W.

“There were a couple of things they wanted changed and it will depend on whether we can get those things procured and installed by that date,” Greene County Legislature Chairman Patrick Linger, R-New Baltimore, said.

It is unclear how much the delay will cost the county because the Commission of Correction has not made its list of change orders final, Linger said.

“We’re not even sure how much they want us to do or what they want us to do,” Linger said.

County officials are not certain how long the opening will be on hold because there is a delay in the procurement of materials.

“We’re seeing a delay in getting the materials like other big construction projects,” Linger said. “We’ll have to see what we need to do to satisfy the Commission of Correction.”

Among the issues was an area of fencing on the perimeter of the grounds.

“We initially had a block wall there and the state wanted a fence so there is open air,” Linger said. “Now they don’t want the inmates able to see the parking lot. At this date it is difficult to make those



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The opening of the Greene County Jail is being delayed and the new start date may be Aug. 1, according to Greene County Legislator Greg Davis, R-Greenville.

changes.”

A final decision has not been reached on how to address the fencing issue, but the county will likely put up some sort of barrier around the chain link fence, Linger said.

There are also staffing issues at the jail, Greene County Legislator Charles Martinez, R-Coxsackie, said Thursday.

“We are short on corrections officers — we have 27 and we need 30,” Martinez said. “We are looking to hire people, but they have to be on the civil service list. They took the test a few weeks ago, so it will be some time before they will be on the list.”

It is unclear at this time when the new jail will open its doors to accept inmates, Martinez said.

Most of the administrative operations at the temporary sheriff’s office, 370 Mansion St. in West Coxsackie, have been moved to the new jail building, which will also house the sheriff’s office.

The Commission of Correction does not oversee the sheriff’s office, so about 75% of the staff

were able to move into the new building about one month ago, Linger said.

“Once we had the certificate of occupancy for the administrative side, we moved in about three-quarters of the department that was working there,” Linger said. “The only thing left at the Mansion Street site is jail intake. When we take someone in, we have to do paperwork and transfer them to another facility. We only have physical custody of them for up to four hours and that is still being done in that building.”

The temporary sheriff’s office on Mansion Street will be closed once the new jail opens up for inmates.

It is not known what will be done with the temporary site after the sheriff’s office vacates it completely.

“Initially the Office of Court Administration was looking to consolidate and that would have been a good place to do that, but it looks like maybe the Office of Court Administration is pulling back on that,” Linger said.

Hitting the road and enjoying every moment

By **Melanie Lekocevic**
Capital Region Independent Media

CATSKILL — As the state and nation emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, many are itching to get out and about and local officials want to remind them of everything available right here in Greene County.

The “Journey to Greater” campaign was launched by Greene County Tourism to promote the county and all it has to offer — and to look beyond the obvious.

“We are trying to create an experience for visitors, not only to the destination they are going to, but also to experience the entire journey — from the time they leave their home to the time they end up at their final destination,” Greene County Tourism Director Heather Bagshaw said last Thursday.

Stopping at local spots along the way — from a village diner to public art exhibits like Coxsackie’s owls and Greenville’s ducks — can make for a more complete travel experience, according to the initiative.

“For instance, if they were going to visit Hunter Mountain and ride the Skyride, we also want them to explore the village of Catskill and all the nooks and crannies along the way,” Bagshaw said. “So they might come and have lunch in the village and go up and get some fruits and vegetables from Story’s [Nursery], and then go up to their des-

tination. We want them to understand it is not about enjoyment of the final destination, but rather the entire journey of the vacation.”

Sites that might not turn up on internet search engines can add depth and dimension to a trip to Greene County, she said.

“Greene County has all these fabulous assets and activities to offer and sometimes these little hidden gems are found just by being alert as you are driving through,” she said.

The “Journey to Greater” campaign focuses on drawing visitors to local restaurants, shops, lodging properties, attractions and other businesses, according to a statement from Greene County Tourism.

The marketing campaign uses both digital and social media platforms to promote the county and partnered with several social media influencers to promote the county to their audiences.

“They go to different places and talk about all the great things that Greene County has to offer and they promote it to their followers on social media,” Bagshaw said. “We choose these influencers based on the number of followers they have and the type of content that they are pushing to their audience.”

One social media influencer the campaign partnered with was Karina Benninger, an avid hiker in the area who promoted the less crowded hiking trails in the coun-

ty, gear you need and how to hike safely.

A second promotional initiative the county is participating in is the statewide “Roam the Empire” campaign, coordinated by the New York State Tourism Industry Association.

“Roam the Empire” — a play on New York’s moniker, the Empire State — encourages New Yorkers to think of their home state when looking for vacation and travel opportunities.

“We really want to remind New Yorkers that it’s great to explore their own backyard and that it is safe to do so, particularly coming out of the pandemic when people aren’t necessarily comfortable getting on a plane,” Bagshaw said. “This will remind them that they don’t necessarily have to travel far to be able to vacation and that New York state is a great vacation place.”

Spurring the tourism industry will also help the state’s economy, according to the New York State Tourism Industry Association.

“This year when you choose to vacation in New York, you will help re-employ over 300,000 fellow New Yorkers who lost tourism-related jobs in the pandemic,” according to the organization’s website. “You will help revitalize local businesses and communities. And you will restore sorely needed local tax revenue to help fund our state’s economic recovery.”



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pictured with CGHS/SPCA Adoption Counselor Andrea Balli is the sweetest 7-year old Staffordshire terrier mix, Cami. She came to the shelter as a surrender about three months ago. She unfortunately doesn’t do well with other animals, which is her reason for being here. She’s the sweetest, she truly is! She has such a tender disposition and she’s the most gentle girl, taking treats ever so softly. If you have no other pets, she would make the best addition to any house.

Soft Paws Exotic pets

By **Aaron Clause**
For Capital Region Independent Media

You may well have seen a critter in a pet store or elsewhere (like Craig’s List), specially caged, just waiting to be the hit of every cocktail party or football game you invite friends over for.

It may have two, four, six, eight or more legs — or none at all. It may eat other live animals, making it extra intriguing. It may come in splendid colors or be black as night. It may have fangs or venom, pinchers or stingers, claws or stink glands.

In the pet “industry,” as well as in the realm of sheltering, these animals are termed as “exotics.” Exotics can be found in specialty pet stores, by people advertising their sale (or their free giveaway after the tank has been outgrown), or in the wild.

One of the trends of the last couple decades has been to collect the most unusual, unique, gross, smelly, dangerous, creepy, slimy, sharp, insatiable creature one can find, plop it in a fish tank with a heat lamp and some wood shavings, put a screen over the top and show it off as though nature has been personally circumvented.

Many victims of the exotic trade include reptiles (for example, snakes, turtles, etc.), birds, amphibians (frogs and salamanders), arachnids (such as tarantulas, scorpions), arthropods (e.g. centipedes), insects and even many wild mammals (hedgehogs, skunks, squirrels, monkeys, etc.)

Though the research, discovery and nature of all of these creations are important scientifically and ecologically, it has been demonstrated time and time again that the household maintenance and display of these animals was never meant to be.

I’ll say that again: These types of animals were NOT meant to be companions!

Let’s look at some cold, hard facts. Warning — some of these facts are shocking and may be disturbing:

■ In the United States more than 40% of snakebite victims intentionally put themselves in harm’s way by attempting to capture wild snakes or by carelessly handling their dangerous pets — 40% of that number had a blood alcohol level of 0.1% or more. (Source: [https://cdn.mdedge.com/files/s3fs-public/jfp-archived-is-](https://cdn.mdedge.com/files/s3fs-public/jfp-archived-is-sues/1987-volume_24-25/JFP_1987-10_v25_i4_venomous-snakebites-in-the-united-states.pdf)

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■ You may remember the Stamford, Connecticut, pet chimpanzee attack in February of 2009, which caused a caretaker to have to undergo face transplant surgery as a result. She had a huge battle to be fought in court.

■ The U.S. incidents of large cat attacks have resulted in the deaths of 25 humans, 20 adults and five children; the additional mauling of 273 more adults and children; 291 escapes (meaning they had originally been contained!); the killing of 150 big cats; and 134 confiscations — in other words, someone’s large “pet” cats removed from those “owners!” (Source: <https://bigcatrescue.org/big-cat-attacks/>)

■ Some of you may remember the 8-foot Burmese python that strangled a 2-year-old toddler in Florida after escaping its unlocked cage. To note, the owner of this snake had no permit for it — which is a misdemeanor. Florida has instituted permit requirements for reptile ownership after people kept dumping their exotic pets into the wild, causing turmoil to the natural ecology and danger to the general population. From the actual 911 call: “The baby’s dead! Our stupid snake got out in the middle of the night and strangled the baby.” (Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wnba31684161>)

The list goes on. If you really want to get grossed out, the internet has a lot of class-A photographs of pet rattlesnake bites and constricted children to slam the point home.

To be continued...
Feel free to call us with any questions at 518-828-6044 or visit www.cghs.org. The Food Bank is open to any from the public in need of pet food or for those wishing to donate food from 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. daily. Spay/neuter clinics for cats are \$86 male or female, including a rabies vaccination and a 5-in-1 feline distemper combination vaccination. Nail clipping services are available 10-11 a.m. every Saturday at the shelter for a donation of \$10 for cats and \$15 for dogs (currently prepaid only).
Aaron Clause is an administrative assistant at the Columbia-Greene Humane Society/SPCA. He may be contacted at cghsaaron@gmail.com.

Weekly concert series in Veterans’ Park

GREENVILLE — Got plans for Tuesday nights this summer? Beginning July 6, from 6-8 p.m., a free concert series will be held in Greenville at the gazebo in Veterans Park.

The kickoff event features The Michael Benedict Quartet and ice cream courtesy of Stewart’s Shops of Greenville.

Presented by Community Partners of Greenville and the Town of Greenville, different bands offering a variety of styles will play consecutive Tuesday nights through Aug. 17.

The outdoor concert series will be held at the gazebo next to the Greenville Public

Library at the intersections of Route 32 and 81. The concerts will move to Prevost Hall, Greenville’s community center next to the library, in the event of rain. Bring your own chairs for the outdoor concerts.

Following the opening concert by The Michael Benedict Quartet, The Lustre Kings will play on Tuesday, July 13. Other groups include Girl Blue, The Matthew Finck Trio; Medusa Moonshine, The Funkshins and the Brad Monkell Quintet. A complete list of the groups and musicians is available at www.cpog.org and on flyers around town.

“Bring a chair and reconnect with

neighbors while enjoying the music of talented musicians and seeing what Greenville has to offer,” said Town Supervisor Paul Macko.

This year’s event was organized with the help of jazz musician Brad Monkell, a graduate of the Greenville School District and The College of Saint Rose in Albany.

“We especially thank the sponsors who helped make this a free series for the community,” said Barbara Walter, treasurer of Community Partners and an organizer of the event along with Community Partners member Debbie Van Atzingen.

Sponsors of the concert series include

Community Partners of Greenville, the Town of Greenville, Greenville Memorial Public Library, the Friends of the Greenville Library, Greene County Government Speenburgh Grant through Greene County Legislator Greg Davis, R-Greenville, and the Greenville Rotary, along with local business sponsors of Greenville Day: Greenville Saw Service, Walenta & Co. Insurance Agency, EP Nevins Insurance Agency, FPI Mechanical and Stewart’s Shops.

For more information about the concerts, visit www.cpog.org or email info@cpog.org.

Camadine, True take top spots in county primary

By **Melanie Lekocevic**
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

CAIRO — There was only one primary race for elected office in Greene County last Tuesday.

Cairo Republicans headed to the polls to nominate two candidates in the race for the Greene County Legislature seat representing Cairo that will be open when Legislator William Lawrence steps down for retirement.

Michael J. Camadine was the top vote-getter with 183 votes, or 42.5% of the total votes cast. Sherry B. True received the second-highest number of votes Tuesday with 155, or 36%, according to the Greene County Board of Elections.



Michael J. Camadine



Sherry B. True

All election results are unofficial until they are certified by the Greene County Board of Elections.

Camadine and True will represent the Republican Party on the ballot on Election Day in Novem-

ber when every seat in the Greene County Legislature will be up for grabs.

The third candidate on the ballot Tuesday was Cairo Town Supervisor John M. Coyne, who received 85 votes, or 19.7% of

the ballots cast. There were eight write-in votes.

A total of 295 ballots were cast.

The totals do not include the 65 absentee ballots that have been received by the Greene County Board of Elections. Absentee ballots had to be postmarked last Tuesday and received by the county within one week in order to be valid.

But there will not be enough absentee ballots to change the outcome of the election, Republican Election Commissioner Brent Bogardus said Wednesday.

Absentee vote counts were not available at press time.

“It’s not going to change anything because there are two leg-

islative nominations and the two with the highest votes were ahead by more than the absentee bal-

lots,” Bogardus said.

The majority of absentee votes have been returned to the county, but Bogardus said he did not immediately have a precise number of outstanding ballots.

“Most of them are back. A few more could trickle in — they have a week to arrive so we won’t open and count them for a week yet,” Bogardus said. “But they shouldn’t change the outcome of the election.”

The board of elections will also do a cross-check to make sure people didn’t vote twice — by absentee ballot and again in person, he added.

COVID state of emergency ends in NYS

By **Kate Lisa**
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

NEW YORK — New York’s state of emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic ended last week after remaining in effect for more than 15 months.

New Yorkers endured stricter capacity, social distancing, disinfection and additional health screening requirements in businesses and social settings since the COVID-19 pandemic officially began when Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order March 7, 2020.

The state of emergency expired Thursday.

“It will not be renewed, it will punctuate the expiration of the emergency we have been in,” Cuomo said last Wednesday during a briefing in Manhattan.

Most of the state’s pandemic-related restrictions were lifted June 15 after 70% of state adults received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, but the state of emergency remained intact.

Masks or facial coverings continue to be required for unvaccinated New Yorkers, or people on public transportation, in health care, correctional facilities, nursing homes or congregate settings and homeless shelters.

The state will continue to follow the U.S. Center Disease Control and Prevention’s COVID guidelines, which recommend children in schools and at summer camps wear face masks indoors.

The end of the state of emergency terminates all pandemic-era executive orders, including alcohol-to-go, or the temporary privilege that allowed New Yorkers to order alcoholic beverages from establishments to go or be delivered.

Alcohol-to-go were scheduled to end after Friday, according to a tweet from the state Liquor Authority.

Melissa Fleischut, president and CEO of the state’s Restaurant Asso-

ciation, criticized the sudden ending of to-go alcoholic beverages in a statement last Wednesday. Lawmakers floated legislation this session to permanently legalize the temporary executive mandate, but did not vote to pass the measure.

“A permanent extension of alcohol-to-go is supported by 78% of New Yorkers, but the Legislature failed to extend it and now the executive order has ended,” Fleischut said. “Only in New York would elected officials ignore an overwhelming majority of the public. Restaurants are struggling to find staff, keep up with rising costs and manage a limited supply of goods and nearly two-thirds of the applicants will not receive [federal] Restaurant Relief funds. New York state must do more to help, not hurt, our restaurant industry.”

Republican lawmakers on June 7 called on their colleagues and legislative leaders to vote to terminate New York’s state of emergency and return the state to prepandemic government operations before session ended June 10. Lawmakers did not take the issue up for debate or a vote.

“Today’s news that the New York governor’s emergency executive powers will finally be lifted is long overdue news,” Senate Minority Leader Rob Ort, R-North Tonawanda, said in a statement last week. “The progress we’ve made wouldn’t have been possible without thousands of frontline workers, business owners and everyday New Yorkers who sacrificed so much over the past year.

“Now it is time for us to turn our undivided attention to the economic recovery and the rising crime wave devastating major metro areas all across the state. As elected officials, we must lead by example. Government officials should finally resume normal operations including making themselves available to the public and press.

“We must do better to restore trust in our government, and that begins

by making ourselves more accessible and accountable as state leaders.”

The Legislature unanimously voted in early March 2020 to grant Cuomo expanded spending and decision-making authority under the pandemic-related state of emergency. At the time, lawmakers and officials did not know how long the state of emergency would remain in effect, or how long it would be necessary to conduct legislative session remotely.

“Unfortunately, when Democrats in Albany had an opportunity and responsibility to return checks and balances back to state government and return control and authority back to local municipalities and school districts, they didn’t act,” Assembly Minority Leader Will Barclay, R-Pulaski, said in a statement. “For more than 15 months, 19.5 million people have been operating under executive orders, arbitrary restrictions and emergency declarations. Tomorrow, it finally ends. New Yorkers can now, at long last, return to their daily routines and a sense of normalcy. It is time to move forward.”

Senators in the minority conference have pushed a hostile amendment to rescind Cuomo’s expanded pandemic authority 47 times since last summer.

Both houses of state Legislature, controlled by a supermajority of Democrats, amended the governor’s powers March 5, but did not rescind the additional executive authority.

Cuomo started last Wednesday’s COVID-19 briefing without the state’s updated coronavirus infection rate, hospitalizations and deaths for the first time since early March 2020.

“No numbers today — we have reached a new plateau that should give us all confidence and success,” the governor said. “It’s a long time coming, [and] a product of our efforts.”

The first New York resident tested positive for COVID-19 on March 1, 2020.

Study: Greene lowest in area for broadband coverage

By **Melanie Lekocevic**
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

The federal government released a first-of-its-kind interactive digital map identifying areas around the country in need of broadband expansion, and Greene County has the lowest rate of internet access among surrounding counties.

The U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration released the map showing key indicators of broadband. This is the first map that has compiled data from both public and private sources and includes data at the county, census tract and census block level, based on information from the U.S. Census Bureau, according to the department.

“As we release this important data to the public, it paints a sobering view of the challenges facing far too many Americans as they try to connect to high-speed broadband and participate in our modern economy,” U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo said in a statement.

According to the digital map, 22.2% of households in Greene County do not have access to the internet and 16% do not have a computer, smartphone or tablet.

By contrast, in neighboring Albany County, with six times the population of Greene, 12.7% of households are without internet access. In Columbia County, 16.6% of households do not have access to the internet and in Dutchess County only 9.4% do not.

Karl Heck, director of Greene County Economic Development and Planning, said there are areas of the county where internet remains inaccessible, but the county is working on it.

“There are still gaps in the system,” Heck said. “This is something the county has been very aggressive about as far as working to get funding that is available. A lot of progress has been made.”

The county has put out a survey to identify where internet is available and where it isn’t to a very specific degree — home by home — as part of the Greene County New York Broadband Availability and Adoption Initiative. The goal is to identify where there are gaps so the county can come up with a plan to address them.

The county is asking residents and business owners to complete the survey by the Aug. 31 deadline.

“There are approximately 17,000 households in Greene County. An industry standard for a statistically valid survey is usually about 5% so at a minimum we are looking for 850 survey responses,” said Deputy County Administrator Warren Hart. “We have already received about 500 surveys so in a short amount of time we have received a very good response rate.”

To increase the number of residents and business owners responding to the survey, the county will send out a mailing next month.

“In probably the first week of July we are getting ready to send a mailer card to each household in the county so we expect the response rate will increase significantly,” Hart said.

The county is also looking to get a statistically significant sampling of responses from all corners of the county to get a broad view of internet access countywide.

“Our sub-objective is to get at least 5% in each town in the county,” Hart said. “We want to know both who doesn’t have any internet — the availability — and we also want to know what challenges there are for people for adoption — does it cost too much? Do they need it for household and business use?”

Broadband has become critical in various aspects of life, including for education, telehealth and telecommuting, Hart said.

Widely available internet access is also important for the county’s economy, Heck said.

“Broadband is an issue that touches on the economy. It’s how a lot of businesses do business, so it is an important function,” Heck said. “The pandemic has certainly shown there is a need for it everywhere.”

John Barr of TCI NY talks about the lasting legacy of Gaby Newmark, a co-founder of the Coeymans based company

Just over a year ago, Gaby Newmark passed away at the age of 88. The company honored his life last August with a dedication ceremony at the opening of their new expansion facility in Coeymans.

“Gaby lived an extraordinary life,” said Mr. Barr. “Along with his brother-in-law Sol Lefkovits the two holocaust survivors built up a company from a small business with five employees that dismantled electric motors into the G&S family of companies with 600 employees now an essential business supporting the power companies and utilities across America. It is a true American success story.”

Gaby and Sol’s story is one of perseverance, hard work and dedication to family. One that benefits many lives and protects the environment. The company takes transformers from the power companies, some that can weigh as much as a million pounds, to recycle, repur-

pose and refurbish them. 99% of the material is salvaged versus going into landfills.

“Our father’s success in business was a direct result of their staunch values. They treated people the way they wanted to be treated. With respect and dignity,” said George Newmark who is Gaby’s son. George now runs the day-to-day operations along with Sol’s son Jeffrey Lefkovits.

Brian Hemlock, TCI’s President, talks about the principals that guide the company.

“I’m living proof of how Gaby and Sol ran the company,” Hemlock said. “I started out on a road crew that went out to dismantle transformers at power plants. They believed in promoting from within and giving incentives to those who run the other facilities. They rewarded hard work. This shows employees they have an opportunity to move up.”

Mr. Barr adds, “Three years ago, we hired a young man by the name of Brett Margiasso to work on the production line. Today he runs an important section at the plant off-loading the trucks that deliver transformers. This is a huge responsibility separating out what can be salvaged and what is scrapped. He is 20 years old. That is right out of the Gaby and Sol play book. Do a good job you will be rewarded.”

Brett says, “If you genuinely pay attention and want to grow and build with this company, there is no reason you can’t.”

“The other day we had RCS students here who are the recipients of our annual college scholarships. Gaby and Sol loved giving back to the communities that gave so much to them,” said Mr. Barr. “So many people will continue to benefit from what they built. It is their lasting legacy.”

Cairo providing free lunches for kids 18 and younger

CAIRO — The Cairo-Durham Central School District is providing free lunches for all children 18 and younger this summer from July 6 through Aug. 12.

Free lunches for children will be available for pick-up between 11:45 a.m. and 12:15 p.m., Mon-day through Thurs-

day, beginning July 6. Pick-up will be at the Cairo-Durham Middle School main office (1301 Route 145, Cairo).

Please note the main entrances will be closed this summer due to construction and the CDMS main office will be temporarily relocated to the middle school

cafeteria on the left side of the school building. Signs will be posted.

No registration or income requirements are needed. Anyone 18 years old and younger can receive a free meal regardless if they are a district resident. If you have questions, contact the Cai-

ro-Durham District Office at 518-622-8534.

Cairo-Durham CSD provides free summer meals for kids in partnership with the USDA Summer Food Service Program.

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Registration open for 43rd Freihofer’s Run for Women

ALBANY — Online registration for the 43rd Freihofer’s Run for Women, which is set for Saturday, Sept. 25 at 9 a.m., is now open at freihoferstrun.com.

All registrants receive a high-performance women’s commemorative T-shirt, Freihofer’s products, chip timing, live results, printable finisher certificates, and post-race refreshments courtesy of Price Chopper Supermarkets. The registration fee is \$30 through Aug. 30.

Runners of all abilities looking to get in shape for the region’s premier all-women 5K can also sign up now for the Freihofer’s Training Challenge, which begins Monday, July 12, at 17 sites in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Dutchess counties.

The 11-week program, which costs \$55, follows a beginner’s 5K training plan and features weekly, small group training sessions led by mentors. Participants also receive emails with each day’s workout schedule, a tech shirt and clinics on strength training, nutrition, run form and injury prevention.

A virtual program is also offered for those concerned about being around others or who plan to be away during the summer. For a \$40 registration fee, participants receive weekly workout emails, a tech shirt and the program’s educational resources sent electronically.

“The Training Challenge typically begins in March when there’s snow on the ground,” said FRW Event Director Kristen Hislop. “This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Training Challenge is starting later in the year and the weather will be much nicer. We’re hoping more women will give their motivation a boost, improve their health and make some new friends by signing up.”

The Training Challenge’s beginner’s program is for women who are new to running or are coming back after a break. The program starts with walking and jogging and progresses as the race date approaches.

“The intermediate program is for those who have completed a 5K or want more challenging workouts, while our advanced program is for those athletes ready for focused speed and distance workouts,” Hislop added.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The event draws crowds of runners each year.

“These women should already be able to run five or more miles at a time.

“Both the in-person or virtual Training Challenge are designed to prepare you for the 43rd Freihofer’s Run for Women,” Hislop continued. “When registering for the 5K, choose the in-person or virtual option (same cost) and the virtual Training Challenge on the main screen. To register for the in-person Training Challenge, you’ll need to continue through the registration process to add on the Training Challenge and then select a site of your choice for your in-person workout sessions.”

The following is a list of Training Challenge sites and times:

MONDAY SESSIONS:

- 5:15 p.m. – Zim Smith Trail (3 Curry Road, Round Lake) — Beginner
- 5:30 p.m. – Albany Rail Trail (1520 New Scotland Road, Slingerlands; Park behind Slingerlands Fire Department) — Intermediate
- 5:30 p.m. – Bethlehem HS (700 Delaware Avenue, Delmar) — Beginner
- 5:30 p.m. – The Albany Coming Pre-

- serve (1 Quay Street, Albany) — Beginner
- 6 p.m. – Peebles Island (1 Delaware Avenue North, Cohoes) — Beginner
- 6 p.m. – Southern Saratoga YMCA (1 Wall Street, Clifton Park) — Beginner
- 6 p.m. – The Crossings of Colonie (580 Albany Shaker Road, Albany) — Beginner/Intermediate

TUESDAY SESSIONS:

- 6 a.m. – Halfmoon Town Park (162 NY-236, Clifton Park) — Beginner
- 5:30 p.m. – Guilderland YMCA (250 Winding Brook Drive, Guilderland) — Beginner/Intermediate
- 5:30 p.m. – The Crossings of Colonie (580 Albany Shaker Road, Albany; Back pavilion) — Beginner/Intermediate
- 5:30 p.m. – Saratoga State Park (19 Roosevelt Drive, Saratoga Springs) — Beginner

WEDNESDAY SESSIONS:

- 6:30 a.m. – Colonie Mohawk River Park (71 Schermerhorn Road, Cohoes) — Beginner/Intermediate
- 4:30 p.m. - Red Hook Town Park (Route 79, Red Hook) — Intermediate

- 5:30 p.m. – iRunLocal (425 Broadway, Saratoga Springs) — Beginner
- 5:30 p.m. – Southern Saratoga YMCA (1 Wall Street, Clifton Park) — Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced
- 5:30 p.m. – Bethlehem High School (700 Delaware Avenue, Delmar) — Beginner
- 6 p.m. – East Greenbush Library (10 Community Way, East Greenbush) — Intermediate

THURSDAY SESSIONS:

- 8 a.m. – Corinth Post Office (97 Main Street, Corinth) — Beginner
- 5 p.m. – Albany Rail Trail (722 South Pearl Street, Albany) — Advanced
- 6 p.m. – Albany Rail Trail (8 Grove Street, Voorheesville) — Advanced
- 6 p.m. – Saratoga State Park (19 Roosevelt Drive, Saratoga Springs) — Beginner/Intermediate

SATURDAY SESSIONS:

- 7:30 a.m. – Zim Smith Trail (3 Curry Road, Round Lake) — Beginner/Intermediate
- 8 a.m. – East Greenbush Bike Path (Greenwood Drive, East Greenbush) — Intermediate
- 8 a.m. – Saratoga State Park (19 Roosevelt Drive, Saratoga Springs) — Beginner

SUNDAY SESSIONS:

- 8 a.m. – Southern Saratoga YMCA (1 Wall Street, Clifton Park) — Intermediate
- 9 a.m. – The Crossings of Colonie (580 Albany Shaker Road, Albany) — Beginner/Intermediate

To learn more and sign up for the Training Challenge, visit <https://freihoferstrun.com/events/training-challenge>. Online registration through the 5K is the only method of registering. Registration closes on Sunday, July 25. A dedicated Training Challenge Facebook page can be found at facebook.com/freihoferstrainingchallenge. For more information, email khislop@freihoferstrun.com.

For additional information about the 43rd annual Freihofer’s Run for Women, 33rd annual Kids’ Run and 11th annual Freihofer’s Junior 3K Run, visit freihoferstrun.com.

Greenville’s Melody Kappel chooses Ithaca College

By Tim Martin
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

GREENVILLE — The Kappel family and the Kingston City Royals 18U travel softball team are proud to announce Melody Kappel, from the Greenville High School Class of 2021, has signed her National Letter of Intent to pitch at Ithaca College, where she will enter into the Exploratory Science program.

Kappel was one of the top players in the Patroon Conference and helped the Spartans earn the No. 2 seed in the Section II Class B playoffs, where they advanced to the semifinal round.

Kappel compiled a 12-3 record with a 0.93 earned run average on the mound her senior season, striking out 193 batters and walking 16 in 97 innings.

She batted an even .500 with one home run, 25 RBI, 27 runs scored, 10

stolen bases, a .536 OBP, .717 slugging percentage and 1.253 OPS.

“Hard work and dedication create opportunity, Melody is a great example of this,” Kappel’s coach with the Kingston City Royals 18U Brian Haller said. “The opportunity to pitch in college is something she has always wanted, and she went out and made it happen.

“She is a relentless worker, constantly improving her game. The Kingston

City Royals are thrilled that Melody has found the perfect home at Ithaca College to continue playing the game she loves.”

Her Greenville coach also congratulated her on the accomplishment.

“Melody is every coach’s dream — hard-working, dedicated, a team player and role model for her younger teammates,” Greenville coach Chris Hagan said. “I wish her the best of luck and great success at Ithaca.”

New hospitality areas to open at Saratoga Race Course

SARATOGA SPRINGS — The New York Racing Association, Inc. has announced three new hospitality areas at Saratoga Race Course set to debut during the upcoming 2021 summer meet.

The Spa Verandas at the Top of The Stretch, Tailgate at the Turn picnic area and the newly expanded section of The Stretch will welcome fans for the first time on Opening Day, Thursday, July 15.

Reservations for all three areas will be available beginning Thursday, June 24, at 10 a.m. at NYRA.com/Saratoga.

“As we prepare to welcome fans back to the Spa for the first time in two years, we are excited to introduce three additional areas where our guests can enjoy a day at Saratoga,” said NYRA Senior Director of Communications Pat McKenna. “The Spa Verandas and Tailgate at the Turn will undoubt-

edly be popular additions to our group hospitality offerings. And as one of our most in-demand destinations, the expansion of The Stretch will be met with equal enthusiasm. We look forward to the debut of these areas this summer.”

A reimagining of one of Saratoga’s most popular spots, the Spa Verandas will replace the former Top of the Stretch reserved picnic areas with six new, partially covered sections offering a modern and casual outdoor experience.

Designed to accommodate up to 45 guests each, the Spa Verandas will feature comfortable lounge furniture, mounted televisions, betting machines and private access to the track apron for uninterrupted rail side viewing as the thoroughbreds round the final turn and head for home. Each package comes with admission and programs. Food and beverage packages may

be purchased separately.

The all-new Tailgate at the Turn drive-up picnic section will welcome fans to experience a day at the Spa from a casual atmosphere offering a unique vantage point of thoroughbreds rounding the first turn.

The hospitality area will feature a total of 16 designated picnic areas where parties of up to six fans can drive up to their trackside reserved section overlooking the rail adjacent to the 1863 Club. Fans may bring in their own food and beverage.

In addition to a private picnic table, fans in the Tailgate at the Turn area will enjoy a hospitality tent with large-screen televisions, betting machines and bar service. Each six-person section must be reserved in full.

As a result of its continued popularity since

stand.

The private hospitality area — which is located at the Top of the Stretch — features modern and upscale amenities in a casual environment with outstanding views of thoroughbreds rounding the final turn.

Each lounge box seats four to six guests with comfortable bench seating and access to personal tablets. Ticket holders to The Stretch enjoy exclusive access to a full-service bar, kitchen and concessions, high-definition televisions and video screens, and private restrooms. Fans also enjoy a relaxed dress code at The Stretch. Fans can explore the new section using Saratoga Virtual Venue at NYRA.com/Saratoga.

With 70% of adult New Yorkers now vaccinated against COVID-19, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo last Tuesday announced the immediate removal of COVID-19 protocols and restrictions for nearly all activities and industries, including outdoor sports and entertainment venues. Accordingly, NYRA will open all sections at Saratoga Race Course at 100% capacity.

The lifting of all COVID-19 protocols, including the requirement for fans to provide vaccina-

tion status, applies to all hospitality areas and venues within the facility, including these three new sections as well as the popular Saratoga backyard.

Non-vaccinated individuals will be required to wear a facial covering during their day at Saratoga Race Course, in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance.

NYRA reserves the right to amend admission protocols based on updates and adjustments by New York state.

The 40-day summer meet at historic Saratoga Race Course will feature 76 stakes worth \$21.5 million in total purses highlighted by the 152nd renewal of the Grade 1, \$1.25 million Runhappy Travers on Aug. 28 and the Grade 1, \$1 million Whitney on Aug. 7, as the anchors of two of the most prestigious racing days in North America.

Following the four-day opening weekend from Thursday, July 15 through Sunday, July 18, racing will be conducted five days a week, Wednesdays through Sundays, with the exception of the final week, when the meet will conclude on Labor Day.

For additional information, visit NYRA.com/Saratoga.



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Developer revives Hannacroix solar proposal

By **Melanie Lekocevic**
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

NEW BALTIMORE — A proposal for a 4.99-megawatt solar facility is back before the planning board for the first time in about a year.

The Hannacroix Solar Facility would construct a solar-energy project on about 40 acres in the town of New Baltimore.

The project went before the town planning board roughly a year ago because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It has been quite a while since this project has been here before the board,” planning board chairman Rob Van Etten said.

Over the past year, consulting engineers have been working out some of the details, said attorney Benjamin Botelho of The Murray Law Firm, based in Clifton Park. Botelho represents the developer, Teichos Energy.

“We have been kind of on hold working on technical details,” Botelho said. “There have been mostly internal discussions between our engineering consultant and the town’s engineering consultant.”

The Hannacroix Solar Facility is one of 20 large-scale renewable energy projects announced in the governor’s 2019 State of the State Address.

Energy generated by the project will remain in the local power grid and will not be transported downstate to New York City like similar solar projects in the county.

“It will go into the Central Hudson system,” said Vincent Hansen, vice president of Origination for Teichos Energy. “It’s an interconnection with the local grid.”

The project came before the town planning board at its June 10 meeting.

Planning board member Ken Finke asked about the grid’s capacity to handle the additional power.

“We were talking with another solar project in town and we were told that the grid system is maxed out and the grid system will not support any more than maybe another megawatt in the area here within a 10-mile radius,” Finke said. “I don’t know if you have an approval letter from Central Hudson or the utility company that the grid system is able to handle another 5 megawatts because otherwise we are just going through the motions here.”

The Hannacroix project is already included in that capacity, Hansen said.

“The project already has an

existing agreement,” Hansen said. “It was approved as part of the existing system.”

Members of the town’s zoning board of appeals attended the planning board meeting to provide guidance on some of the issues facing the project. The planning board pushed the project back to the zoning board of appeals for review for a variance.

If approved, the project would be on five parcels of land owned by three different owners. Teichos would lease three of the parcels and two would be purchase options, Botelho said.

But with multiple parcels, the project would need a variance to be permitted.

“They have setback rules and

this project spans multiple parcels, so we can’t meet those setback rules,” Botelho said. “It’s all one project, but they wanted us to get variances for those internal property lines.”

It is not known when the project might receive approval or break ground.


“We are hoping for approvals in the next few months from the town and then I am assuming more construction plans will need to be finalized and we will work with the utilities to get that hooked up,” Botelho said.

The Hannacroix Solar Facility is one of 20 renewable energy projects to share in \$1.5 billion in funding awarded by the state in 2019.



COURTESY OF GOV. ANDREW CUOMO’S OFFICE

The developer is reviving the Hannacroix Solar Facility project, which has been on hold for about a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pictured is a file photo of solar panels.



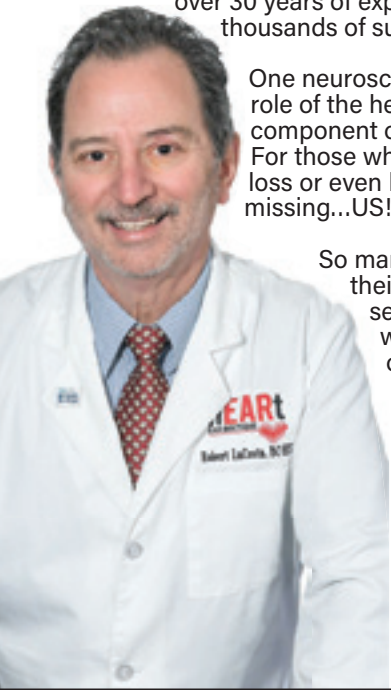
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GARDENING TIPS

BY BOB BEYFUSS



Timely tips for summer gardening

By Bob Beyfuss
For Capital Region Independent Media

The “if you don’t like this, just wait a few days” weather of spring 2021 continues into summer.

Since I returned from Florida at the end of April, I have had snow, frost, a week of rain, two weeks with no rain at all and some of the most beautiful days I can recall.

Even Mother Nature seems a bit confused as some phenological events are not in sync, as they should be. Gypsy moth larvae generally hatch when oak leaves appear and by now these hairy caterpillars should be almost 2 inches long, but I see some of them at less than a half inch, despite fully grown oak leaves.

Several readers report their asparagus beds have petered out after only a few years of good yields. This is likely due to a disease that affects the below-ground crowns

and nothing that is visible on the top growth. Crown rot is caused by poor drainage usually, but it seems to be exacerbated by weeds.

Asparagus is amazingly tolerant of table salt, which is also a pretty effective annual weed preventer. Established beds can tolerate several pounds of salt per 100 square feet and the salt may actually help to combat the crown rot.

I did have to apply an insecticide spray to my plants for tiny asparagus beetles, which caused a pause in the harvest for about a week. These spotted beetles are less than a half inch long. They lay many black eggs on the spears that hatch into soft bodied larvae in a few days. The larvae eat the foliage and cause the spears to bend over and curl as they emerge from the ground. Sometimes the tips of the spears will also begin to separate before they get tall enough to harvest, as a result of their feeding. It is

a good idea to cut off all the spears on well-established beds on a daily basis to eliminate breeding grounds for these pests. Currently I am harvesting asparagus twice a day, since the spears can grow 6 inches or more in 24 hours.

Last week I forgot to tell you to make sure you cut the garlic scapes off the plant as soon as you see them. Garlic bulbs will be much larger as a result of this action. The scapes, which are the flower stalks and bud of garlic, are entirely edible, but not necessarily as tasty as a garlic lover might like. They can be made into pesto, cooked in stir fry or, as a friend suggested, best used to make cooking stock. I scattered them amongst the rest of my garden vegetables to hopefully deter other critters.

The same friend also reported great success using Mylar, bird repellent tape, all around and in their blueberry bushes. Last year they did

not lose any fruit at all utilizing the shiny tape that blows in the wind. This is certainly worth a try as the tape is very inexpensive and several of you have reported zero harvest due to birds. As usual, please let me know if this works for you or not.

Lawns are growing at maximum rate now and as long as it remains cool and moist, you can apply fertilizer and weed killer. By far the most important key to a beautiful lawn is just to keep it mowed at 3.5 inches every time it gets to 4 inches. This frequent shearing will eliminate most broad-leaved weeds as well as, or even better, than herbicides. Of course, this tip does not apply to golf courses.

The next time you need to replace your lawn mower, consider an electric one. Lithium battery technology has advanced dramatically in recent years to allow much more powerful and long-lasting batteries. Even riding mowers de-

signed to mow acres of grass can be run on batteries now and with gas prices skyrocketing, the added cost of purchase may be recovered in a few years.

I recently bought a battery-powered chainsaw that is surprisingly powerful. The saw, plus battery and charger, cost less than \$200 in total, which is less than I paid for my last gas-powered one. It runs longer than my back allows me to saw at any one time, so there is little loss of efficiency. It is lighter, cleaner and much quieter than the gas model, so I don’t need to wear earplugs. Best of all, it starts instantly at the flip of a switch, instead of a few dozen “pulls” on my finicky old, gas-powered one. It still requires bar oil, but no mixing of gas and oil is needed for fuel. I plan to buy a battery-powered skill saw next.

Reach Bob at rlb14@cornell.edu.

Positively Speaking

Not my favorite column

By Gary W. Moore
For Capital Region Independent Media

I love spontaneity more than the average person – whether it be a spontaneous vacation or party. This last weekend has been a weekend of spontaneous fun, celebration, laughter, eating and story sharing.

More than a hundred people have poured in and around my home, patio and family room over the last three days for what has felt like a non-stop celebration. My two sons, Toby and Travis, and my son-in-law, Jeff, all worked hard to take the mantle of master grillar and made my special barbecue ribs better than I could have ever done. I’ve savored every conversation, hug, moment and memory.

By now, you might be wondering why it’s been a non-stop party in my own home. Well, I will tell you why, but it is perhaps the scariest yet most courageous sentence I’ll ever write to my readers.

I am dying.

I believe transparency is an important component in relationships. Whether it’s between husband and wives, parents and children, teachers and parents, and parents and students. Anywhere a relationship exists, transparency is important. Transparency must always lead to vulnerability, and that is always a terrifying experience.

In the beginning of the Bible, we read about Adam and Eve discovering their vulnerability in their nakedness, and they were ashamed and hid. I don’t feel shame and I don’t feel afraid to die, but being transparent and vulnerable about this reality is hard.

“Vulnerability is not winning or losing. It’s having the courage to show up when you can’t control the outcome.”- Brené Brown

As most of you know, I’ve been fighting Stage 4 stomach cancer for years. There is no cure. I’ve been working with a brilliant young oncologist who is a world leader, Dr. Pashtoon Kasi at the Holden Comprehensive Cancer



Gary W. Moore

Center at the University of Iowa Hospitals. My treatment has been cutting-edge and has extended my life by at least nine months.

Unfortunately, every treatment works until it doesn’t, and my chemo that was eating my cancer began eating healthy tissue and organs and we had to stop. We tried another, but it also failed. At the same time, I was being fed through a feeding tube and my body began rejecting the

food. I have been removed from all treatment and placed on hospice care.

What does it mean? It means to some that I am off treatment and being kept comfortable until I die. But I am not a “go quietly in the night guy.” I refuse to give up or give in; if I am breathing, I am fighting. If a new option or treatment becomes available, I’ll be the first in line. Fighting also means doing everything that I love – spontaneous parties into the night, being with the people I love, endless trays of food, laughing and being present in every single waking moment.

You are now wondering how much time? I’ve been given estimates of six days up to a month. But a month is generous. My daughter bought me a bracelet that says in Morse code, “Never Give Up!” I’ll fight to be present; I will fight to be with the people I love until my last breath.


My daughter who is a pastor continues to remind me that this is a sacred and holy journey as I cling to the hope of the future. I

do believe in God’s promises. I believe in the God of resurrection, and though I will someday die, I also believe that I will be raised to new life. I believe that someday I will join the great cloud of witnesses and experience an inextricable joy that I’ve never before known. I am at peace.

In the meantime, I will continue writing this column until I’m gone. You will know I’m gone when my daughter publishes my final column, which has already been written.

My relationship with you is precious to me. I’m grateful for your love and loyalty, and I cherish every note of encouragement. I’m not planning on checking out of here soon, but when I do, I will miss you. Cling to hope, dear friends.

Gary W. Moore is a freelance columnist, speaker, and author of three books including the award-winning, critically acclaimed, “Playing with the Enemy.” Follow Gary on Twitter @GaryWMoore721 and at www.garywmoore.com.



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WHITTLLING AWAY by Dick Brooks

No baloney, life is good

By Dick Brooks
For Capital Region Independent Media

The Queen of the house recently told me she was going to a friend’s house and I would be on my own as far as the evening meal was concerned.

This really didn’t present as much of a problem for me as it might have for some other members of my sex that I know. Some of my guy friends would be hard put to come up with a peanut butter sandwich to stave off starvation. I, on the other hand, am well versed in the culinary arts and, in fact, do most of the cooking in our house.

I fed the dog and then was ready for a culinary adventure that I hadn’t been faced with for some time: I could have anything to eat I wanted. I didn’t have to take into account anyone else’s likes or dislikes. There were no dietary restrictions to be accountable to anyone for. This could be good! I checked out the fridge, there were some good leftovers, but they were all of the “twigs and bark” variety — high in fiber, low in fat and sugar. They would serve as great fodder for mid-night snacking, but didn’t qualify as a treat. I could go get takeout — Chinese or pizza would be good. I ruled them out, not special enough.

I flipped through my mental menu, ran through some of my mother’s recipes, pleasant but

they didn’t make my taste buds tingle. I got to the file, “Favorite Forbidden Foods,” and decided to take a quick cruise through it. In it, I found what I was searching for. An item from the distant past that made my mouth water.

I headed for the supermarket and started my search. I found the first item quickly, I wasn’t even sure it was still being made — Wonder bread. It said “classic” on the wrapper, I squeezed it. It was still wonderfully soft and squishy, just like the old days. Into the cart it went and I headed for the meat counter.

I found the bologna section and located a package of the kind with the red rind on it — you know, the piece of plastic that you had to either cut off or if you were a bologna aficionado, you ripped off with your teeth. It joined the bread in the cart.

Off to the dairy section, the white American cheese I wanted was harder to find. I didn’t want the individually wrapped kind, I wanted the kind you had to peel off its companions. I found a package near the back and it joined the bread and bologna in the cart. Off to the condiment aisle where a jar of bright yellow mustard found its way into the cart, not that brown stuff with the dots in it, proper screaming yellow mustard.

I headed for the checkout, proud of the fact that at no time had I looked at the nutritional

information panel on any of the products I was about to purchase. As I passed the bakery section, a package of Twinkies called to us. My newfound adventurous self said, “What the heck,” and for old times’ sake, the Twinkies hopped into the cart, too.

Arriving home, I checked to see if any of the neighbors were looking and hurried with my bag of goodies into the house. I then spread my purchases out on the kitchen table and proceeded to make two of the most beautiful bologna and cheese sandwiches you’ve ever seen. I added the Twinkies to the edges of the plate and stood back to admire my masterpiece.

Nothing I’ve seen on the Food Channel can compare with the sight of those beauties.

I filled up a glass with whole milk from the bottle usually reserved for making yogurt and went into the family room, set the plate down on the end table, flopped into my recliner, kicked the feet up, clicked the TV on. There was a NASCAR race on. I picked up the first sandwich, admired it, and took a bite.

There are times when life is just so good that it almost hurts.

Thought for the week — If a cow laughed, would milk come out of her nose?

Until next week, may you and yours be happy and well.

Reach Dick Brooks at Whittle12124@yahoo.com.

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Oak Hill & Vicinity...

By Mary Lou Nahas



Yard sales, which start the day about 9 a.m., are something of a frenzy of shoppers looking for bargains.



The event started as a way to support St Paul's Church, one of the town's two historic churches listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A memorial service for Karla Tyson and others will be held Monday.

By Mary Lou Nahas
For Capital Region Independent Media

Plans are coming together for the annual Oak Hill Day, this year on Saturday, July 31. The day is intended to celebrate the spirit of the community, both past and present.

Karen Patterson, president of the Oak Hill Preservation Association (OHPA), which originated and sponsors the day to support the community and help preserve the rich history of the hamlet, is chairing the event this year.

The number of people who come each year speaks to the spirit of the day and to the hamlet. The event typically starts at 9 a.m. with lawn sales around town, and ends with ice cream and music on the lawn of the Oak Hill Methodist church at 4:30 p.m.

Much of the activity is the yard sales along Route 81 and on side roads. There has never been a real map because people often wait until the last minute to decide to have a sale and because no one has wanted to be in charge of making a map, a job which takes a lot of work. Sales are noted with signs provided by OHPA.

This year OHPA has purchased new signs, but if anyone still has an old one (people frequently keep their sign from year to year — it is easier than returning, storing and handing out again), they can definitely use it. The new signs can be picked up at the post office, town building and I U Tripp store closer to July 31.

There is an Oak Hill Day Facebook page that will advertise locations of sales off Route 81. The Oak Hill and Vicinity Facebook page will also advertise the location of sales if we know them. You can ask questions or report plans on both sites. Anyone planning something please do contact OHPA; it is very awkward when two events are offered at the same time. That has caused issues in the past.

If you are coming from the direction of Greenville, the first sale you will notice is Mert and Kathy Hulbert's group sale — not to be missed. They have parking, donuts, great people to talk to, great stuff to buy.

There will also be several booths with local artisans offering soap, wreaths, art, skin care products, all locally made. There



The historic marker will be dedicated at 10:30 a.m.

Oak Hill Day on the way

will be a booth for Animal Kind, which has been generous in helping find homes for homeless cats in town. You can stop by and get information and also leave donations such as sheets, towels and food, which the shelter can use.

Food will be available at St. Paul's Lutheran Church (desserts), the Oak Hill Methodist Church, and the Yellow Deli will be open; they report it is one of their busiest days of the year. Mert and Kathy's sale usually has delicious donuts. Earthworm has wonderful organic picnic food. Diane Dratz always organizes the ice cream social with free ice cream provided by Stewart's.

An exciting addition this year is pizza at the Oak Hill Methodist Church, provided by Michael, Max and Melanie Wesslock.

As Melanie explains: "After hosting successful pizza fundraisers for our church, out of our home pizza oven, we're excited to take the pizza on the road! For Oak Hill Day, we're bringing our wood-fired, farm to table, pizza, to the Durham Oak Hill UMC! Look for the "Pizza Box": it's a converted, vintage horse trailer, with made-from-scratch pizzas. We've built a wood-fired oven on our property, and Michael's pizzas have gotten quite a following here! Our last fundraiser, we 'sold' 60+ pizzas to the amazing community who came out in support of our historic little church! We're hoping to double that on Oak Hill Day with our new mobile biz, with 100% of the profits going to the church. It's a project made of great food and community fellowship. We look forward to seeing everyone on July 31!"

At 10:30 a.m., after the early morning yard sale rush has tapered off, the marker designating the Oak Hill Historic District will be dedicated. The marker was installed by the town just before the

quarantine and while we planned a dedication ceremony, it never happened, so July 31 will be the day.

There will be historic programs at both churches. While the topics are still in the planning stage, we are thinking about having a return of the very popular "Growing Up in Oak Hill," when longtime residents share their experiences. There also will be a program on the "Early Post Cards of Oak Hill." If anyone would like to give another program or even just suggest one, please contact me or Karen Patterson.

There will be a booth at the Oak Hill Church where members of the Greene County House Committee can explain how to list your house on their register. And OHPA will have a booth explaining what work they do and how you can get involved in historic preservation and restoration.

Historic buildings that will be open that day include Ford's store, a carriage house, 1830s law office, I U Tripp general store, Oak Hill Methodist Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Yellow Deli in Lyman Tremain Opera House and Lodge Hall.

Four new shops are open in town this year — Mattice, Earthworm, USED and Pidgin.

Mattice is a boutique department store featuring the world's top and oldest brands for women, men and children; bed, bath, tabletop, apothecary, desk and specialty food as well as an engineered knitwear-driven collection of original and renovated apparel. It is housed in the Mattice Law Office next to the DeWitt Farmhouse.

Earthworm offers picnic, produce, prepared food. Located in the carriage house that housed Hort and Pott, they opened May 28 and are open Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5

p.m. Sierra Lash and Scott Vernon welcome visitors to picnic in their garden.

USED is a popup shop operated near Earthworm.

Pidgin, housed in the Ford's Store building, is operated by poet-collector Kostas Anagnopoulos. Pidgin is best described as an antique shop with select contemporary merchandise from brands and designers that Kostas loves. It is a uniquely individualistic shop, hard to describe and yet fundamentally authentic. A place where one can spend hours perusing distinctive one-of-a-kind objects or stock up on core essentials of the perfect country weekend.

You can see there is lots to offer at Oak Hill Day.

Karen says, if you would like to participate, don't wait to be asked; please say so but please say so as soon as possible. OHPA wants to include everyone who wants to participate and to have it run smoothly.

Oak Hill Day originated as Garage Sale Day to support St. Paul's annual rummage sale. Karla Tyson was a strong force in organizing that sale and in supporting the town and OHPA. Sadly, Karla passed away this year. We all miss her love and care.

On Aug. 1 at 2 p.m. there will be a Service of Remembrance and Celebration of Life for Karla Tyson and also Vivian von Schenck Muth, Robert Lord and Fred Pfrommer at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Everyone is invited.

Columnist Mary Lou Nahas is the Town of Durham Historian. She lives in Oak Hill, thus the name of her column.

Greene County wins 2021 NYSAC Pioneer Award

Greene County has been selected as the winner of the 2021 New York Association of Counties Pioneer Award.

The Greene County Legislature continuously strives to keep county employees safe, while keeping costs down, according to county officials.

As a member of the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), Greene County utilizes a specific solution that maximizes safety and wellness practices through ongoing monitoring and training, therefore minimizing incidents that may result in costly workers' compensation claims.

The Public Employee Risk Management Association (PERMA) provides municipal employers across New York state with the best possible workers' compensation coverage and risk management services for the most reasonable

cost. It is a non-profit organization specializing in services for local governments and the largest self-insured provider of worker's compensation for public entities in New York state.

In support of county safety and wellness initiatives, PERMA and NYSAC developed their annual Pioneer Award that honors members who address challenges and produce a positive impact on the safety and health of their employees.

PERMA and NYSAC, after evaluating their entire membership in the areas of program participation, financial analysis and ongoing adherence to safety and wellness protocols, has selected Greene County as the recipient of their 2021 Pioneer Award for exceeding these metrics over the past year.

As part of the county's safety and risk management program, Greene County designated a PERMA Certified Safety Coordinator (CSC) to work closely with every department in the county, conducting regular inspections of all properties and facilities, and to make sure everything is up to code and maintained properly.

The CSC has created a system

to ensure the county is constantly keeping its facilities safe, as well as being mindful of possible dangers to its employees.

Greene County also partners with PERMA to minimize accidents, participating in quarterly meetings, thoroughly reviewing cases, determining causes and implementing preventative measures going forward.

Using PERMA's extensive training library and online resources for ongoing employee training, Greene County uses every tool at its disposal to increase safety and reduce injuries.

"At the end of the day, it's really about making sure our employees are healthy, strong and well," County Administrator Shaun Groden said.

This mindset motivated the county to create its "Well-Incentive" program, which rewards employees with gift cards for getting regular medical check-ups.

"For Greene County, safety and wellness are about more than preventing injuries," Groden said. "It's about letting people know they are valued and cared for."

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ARTIST, from page 1

in Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Coast Guard Museum in New London, Connecticut, to name just a few. He has exhibited at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. and the famous Salmagundi Club in New York City. In addition, his art has won numerous awards.

About 50 years ago, Maltzman left his career in New York City behind to move to Freehold, where he and Rachael built a home on a piece of property that was part of the resort the Canti family owned.

“It was his choice to leave a successful career in the commercial arts to live a humble life in the Catskills doing what he loved to do every day,” said daughter Susan M. Story of Rensselaerville.

LOVE OF NATURE

Greene County is the perfect place for this nature-lover artist. Maltzman is known for his love of nature, which developed early in his life when he took trips to the country with his family and spent numerous summers at Boy Scout camp.

One of his former students, Jennifer Alberti Atwood of Dracut, Massachusetts, remembered a story of when someone had seen Maltzman out painting or drawing on a Sunday afternoon and they had questioned his absence from church earlier that day.

“He said, ‘I’ve been in church all day,’ because nature is his sanctuary,” Atwood said.

He would often work en plein air, drawing and painting out in the open as he immersed himself in the nature he loved so much.

“My father is a generous person with a great respect for nature,” Story said. “He has devoted his life to preserving and describing nature through his work.”

ARTIST AS AUTHOR AND TEACHER

Maltzman not only devoted his life to nature, he has also dedicated



Maltzman's work, “Burning Embers.”

it to teaching others.

He authored two books, “Drawing Nature” and “Drawing Trees Step by Step.” It was the latter that South Westerlo artist Tammy Liu-Haller stumbled upon when she returned to drawing after a time away from it.

“I thumbed through the front and back, and I realized when I read the forward that he lived in my own town,” Liu-Haller said.

While Maltzman has an impressive list of exhibitions, awards, publications and commissions, an equally important and enduring part of his legacy is as a teacher. After discovering his book, Liu-Haller found that Maltzman offered classes at the library, so she studied with him.

“He’s such an accomplished artist, but you wouldn’t know it talking to him because he’s so approachable,” she said. “To be able to sit there and witness him start a piece from scratch — it was amazing.”

Atwood was just 8 or 9 years old when she met Maltzman. He was her teacher for watercolor and drawing classes at the Cairo Public Library.

“He loved sharing his talent with young kids,” Atwood said.

She continued to study with Maltzman until she left for col-

lege, describing the artist as “very positive” and “very encouraging.” When she was a junior in high school, Maltzman invited her to his Tuesday evening sketching classes.

“They were for adults, but he saw in me the creativity to be able to handle adult portrait classes,” Atwood said. “Those were fun times I had with the older people. They opened up their arms to me and were accepting of me — that I was an art student and up and coming.”

The sketching class also helped her cope with high school life.

“I was bullied a lot, and it was nice to find a sanctuary to be able to use my creativity and to learn from Stanley and the other adult sketchers that were there,” Atwood said.

Maltzman’s instruction had a profound and lasting influence on Atwood. After struggling to find a field she wanted to study at Regis College in the mid-1990s, considering journalism, teaching, psychology and sociology, she finally found graphic design, a booming field with the advent of the internet. Eventually, she found her way to teaching, becoming an art teacher.

“I always found myself using Stanley’s artwork and the information he shared with me with other art students,” Atwood said.

For example, Maltzman instructed his students how to make

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



CHRIS KARLE/GREENVILLE PIONEER

Adler Karle of Westerlo does a “board slide” on a rail at the new skate park.

the sky look like it was bursting with color.

“I recall once that Stanley said, ‘The sky can be every color of the rainbow,’” Atwood said.

When Atwood challenged that it could not be green, Maltzman responded that indeed, the sky could be green, right before a tornado.

Atwood has stayed in touch with Maltzman, and she has artwork that he gifted her over the years, including for her wedding, hanging on the walls of her home. When she visited Maltzman to show him her then 2-year-old son, Maltzman signed a piece of artwork and gifted it to the toddler.

ARTIST AS FATHER... AND TEACHER

“Growing up with a prominent artist as a father was a gift and a challenge,” Story said.

During her childhood and youth, she had a hands-on art education in creativity and the art world.

“As far back as I can remember, I was watching him draw and paint,” Story said.

To interest her in art, Maltzman brought his daughter different art materials with which she could experiment and took her on numerous trips to New York City.

“We would take the train down to New York City and visit galleries, museums and even the annual outdoor Greenwich Village show, which was fascinating for so many reasons,” she said.

Story even tagged along with her father when he began teaching workshops to observe and assist.

Maltzman impressed upon his daughter and other students the importance of drawing.

“Every artist loves color, but it will be difficult to paint without first training your eye to see, practice and the understanding of values,” Story said.

Atwood remembers Maltzman instructing her to keenly observe

that which she desired to capture on canvas.

“He’d always say, ‘Look, look,’” Atwood recalled.

Story benefitted from this instruction, too.

“He has particularly taught me to see the beauty and uniqueness of every tree,” she said.

This led her to take on the challenge of painting a life-sized apple tree dedicated to her father-teacher, “The Tree Man,” and to an artist friend who died of COVID-19, Bill Creevy.

CONTINUING TO INSPIRE

Maltzman continues to be an inspiration for both family and students, professionally and personally. He still teaches workshops at area libraries.

The honors keep coming, too. In fall 2019, the Pastel Society of America selected Maltzman as its Hall of Fame honoree for the year, and The Butler Institute of American Art in Youngtown, Ohio, selected one of his works for its Legacy Collection.

“Stanley is a wonderful and rare talent who dazzled the staff of The Butler Institute of American Art when his pastel ‘Evening Glow’ was first exhibited,” said the museum’s executive director, Louis A. Zona. “His ability to create a sense of drama through his utilization of light and dark values in remarkable.”

He is a personal inspiration, too.

“Life could be so disastrous, but he always looks at the bright side of things,” Atwood said, noting that Maltzman never seemed to age.

Maltzman continues to inspire Story.

“He looks forward to every day and doesn’t complain about aches or pains,” she said. “He just wants to keep creating and loves to share his knowledge with others. He is looking forward to teaching this fall.”



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2021, from page 1

ness, skepticism. A whole new playbook was written in August, setting the stage for a traditional year to be turned on its head,” Ward said.

Students and faculty adapted to a hybrid in-person and remote learning schedule, virtual lessons, shortened sports seasons, canceled concerts and the school play, and social distancing, among other changes.

“These are the graduates who will be remembered as having spent their senior year having Google Meets and electronic assignments,” Ward said. “They are students who rose to the occasion when met with a situation that was disappointing, to say the least. They are the Class of 2021, and they truly are Spartan Strong.”

The Greenville mascot and team name is the Spartans.

Salutatorian Benjamin Gorneau gave an emotional address and thanked teachers, staff, family and his fellow students for taking the journey through school with him.

“Reflecting on the past 13 years is very difficult,” Gorneau said. “I know we have all made our own memories, yet we have been on this ride together.”

Valedictorian Emily Duncan noted that students have become comfortable with familiar faces and places.

“But this is exactly why it is time for us to leave,” Duncan said of graduation from high school. “We have all grown tremendously in the last four years, but we have reached a point where there is no more growth for us here and so we will move on.”

Even as they face the unfamiliar, students can be in control of their own lives, she added.

“I encourage you to find solace not in familiarity, but rather in knowing that in any situation you face, you can use curiosity and optimism to choose what you get out of your experiences. In this way, you are in control of your own narrative,” Duncan said.

The commencement’s guest speaker was Stephen Siebrecht, who teaches Advanced Placement European History and coaches track and field. He spoke of the lessons learned during the coronavirus pandemic.

“One of the things I learned in the past year and a half is the ability of humans to adapt, survive and even thrive under the most difficult of circumstances,” Siebrecht said.

Students, teachers and parents adapted to the changing environment as the school made its way through an academic year punctuated by the pandemic, he said. Sports returned to the campus but with new protocols and health practices, and with cooperation from everyone involved, teams were able to compete.

“In academic settings, despite the challenges presented by remote learning, many of our staff and students adapted to new daily routines and found new creative ways to demonstrate their learning,” he added.

But there were lessons that came with the pandemic, such as getting better at using technology, taking the time for self-reflection and learning to appreciate time spent with loved ones, even in the face of isolation, Siebrecht said.

“Perhaps the most important lesson of this pandemic for all of us is to avoid taking things for granted,” he said.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Catskill Wheelhouse Community School will register students from 2 years old to fifth graders, offering a new private elementary school option for area families this fall.



The Catskill Wheelhouse Community School will open its doors in Cairo beginning in September.

New private school opening in Cairo this fall

By **Melanie Lekocevic**
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

CAIRO — A new private elementary school is planning to open its doors this fall.

The Catskill Wheelhouse Community School, 665 Main St., Cairo, will begin teaching students as young as 2 years old up to fifth graders starting in September, Elementary School Director Alanna Navitski said.

“We have been operating a preschool and child care program in Catskill since 2015,” Navitski said. “We are moving to Cairo and opening our new community school that will serve grades K-5. We are also going to continue offering early childhood programs.”

The initial plan was to open the school in the fall of 2022, but there was sufficient interest to move the opening date up a year, Navitski said.

“The reason we are opening the school right now is that we have a lot of demand from families, I think in response to COVID — everyone’s plans were thrown up in the air and I think that made people think about how they were spending their days and that has led many people to look for educational options that take a holistic child-centered approach,” Navitski said.

The school’s progressive educational model will be child-di-

rected and seek to teach a love of learning and develop problem-solving skills, she said.

“An important piece of our program is that we are looking to develop curriculum based in real-life issues in our community,” Navitski said. “We are seeking to build a curriculum that is built around community engagement and cultivating children as real-life problem-solvers, inventors and creators.”

Early Childhood Director Christina Dietmann will oversee the youngest students ages 2-5.

“It is so important to learn to love learning,” Dietmann said. “Rather than it being ‘I am the teacher, I am the one who tells you what you need to know,’ it’s ‘Let’s discover the world together and learning is a joy, rather than something you have to do.’”

The school is chartered by New York state and meets all state-mandated curriculum requirements, she said. Outdoor learning experiences will be a big part of the curriculum.

In its inaugural year, the school will accept eight 2-year-olds; 12 preschoolers; eight students in kindergarten through second grade in a mixed-age group; and eight third through fifth graders, also in a mixed-age group.

Students in all grades will attend school six hours a day from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Public school bus

transportation is provided by the Cairo-Durham school district to families within 15 miles of the school.

Tuition will vary depending on the family’s finances.

“We are running the program on a sliding scale,” Navitski said. “It starts at zero, free, and goes up to \$18,000 a year. The sliding-scale tuition will be based on a financial assessment that parents will complete based on their individual financial situation.”

The school will also offer a satellite location, the Forest School, a fully outdoor half-day program at a farm in Germantown in Columbia County, 305 Wire Road, primarily for early childhood students ages 2-5.

Forest School prioritizes open exploration, Dietmann said.

“That is the research-based best way that kids learn,” she said. “Rote learning in the early childhood years is not effective. What is effective is building a

broad vocabulary, having rich multi-sensory experiences that develop a strong neural network, fostering curiosity. That’s why we take that approach.”

Tuition for Forest School will also be on a sliding scale.

“It starts at free if your family really doesn’t have any financial resources to contribute and the max tuition is \$11,880 — that is for the highest income bracket,” Navitski said.

GOP, from page 1

plished during a difficult time. I became town supervisor on Jan. 1, 2020 — we had the mortgage crisis, and I wasn’t town supervisor for two days when we had a horrible ice storm that left people without power for like two weeks. I got hoisted right into things.”

Macko said some of his top concerns are national issues that could impact local residents.

“My concern is the inflation and the energy costs and the cost of food and how that will affect our residents moving forward into next year,” Macko said. “Gasoline prices are up more than a dollar a gallon five months into the new president and I don’t know where it is going to stop, and I am very concerned about heating oil costs this fall.”

Town Councilman Richard Bear, the longest-serving member of the board, was nominated by Tor Tryland, with Macko seconding.

“[Richard Bear] has been here as a councilman for 17 or 18 years,” Macko said. “He is very much involved with Greenville Day, recycling and he works very closely with our highway superintendent on specifications for trucks and equipment for the highway department. It is a privilege to nominate him for town council.”

Clifton “Kip” Drollette was nominated by Clifton Powell, Jr., and praised for his work with the Greenville Volunteer Fire Company.

“I have known Kip for 15 years, mostly through the fire department and rescue squad,” Powell said. “Kip has served this town as a

volunteer firefighter, past fire commissioner and now chief. Kip has worked with the rescue squad as a driver and as a certified first responder with the fire department. Kip has shown his dedication by his service to the people of the town and if given the chance, would continue serving the people of this town as a member of the town board.”

Voters again headed to the ballot box and gave the nod to Bear with 64 votes to Drollette’s 47.

“The board we have is very much working together,” Bear said at the caucus’ conclusion. “We have many accomplishments in the last two years — our sidewalk project is coming along and we should be finishing that in another couple of weeks. We ordered a new truck for the highway department this year and that should be here in a few days. We will keep going and keep things rolling.”

The nomination for the second open seat went to incumbent Town Councilman Travis Richards, who was nominated by Town Councilman John Bensen and seconded by Gary Nicholson. Richards was unopposed for the nomination.

“I am looking forward to working for the town for another four years, hopefully outside of COVID so we can move forward,” Richards said.

Incumbent High Superintendent Michael Dudley was nominated by Gary Nicholson and did not face a challenger, coasting to the nomination.

“It’s been a pleasure working with the town board,” Dudley said. Election Day will be Nov. 2.

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Let’s Go Together, #CoGreene!

Man charged with vehicular assault

By Bill Williams
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

NEW BALTIMORE — Following a three-week investigation into a two-car accident, a Greene County man was arrested on felony charges last Wednesday, Steven Nevel, public information officer for state police Troop F, said.

Von Flierl, 31, of New Baltimore, was charged with second-degree vehicular assault, a class E felony, and driving while intoxicated, Nevel said.

On May 29, at about 7:26 p.m., a 2018 Volkswagen Golf was being driven north by Flierl on Route 9W in New Baltimore when he collided with a 2013 Hyundai Accent, which was being driven by an unidentified woman south on Route 9W, Nevel said.

The investigation into the crash revealed Flierl made a left-hand turn and failed to yield the right-of-way, slamming into the other vehicle, Nevel said.

New Baltimore Fire Company and Ravena Rescue Squad were

sent to the scene by Greene County 911.

Flierl and the woman were taken to Albany Medical Center by ambulance. Flierl complained of neck injuries.

While he was being interviewed by troopers, it was determined that he was impaired by alcohol and was subsequently arrested, Nevel said.

The woman sustained serious injuries, including a head injury, several rib fractures, and lacerations to her abdomen, Nevel said.

Part of Route 9W was closed while crews worked.

Due to the extent of the woman’s injuries, Flierl was charged with vehicular assault, in addition to driving while intoxicated, Nevel said.

He was given appearance tickets for New Baltimore Town Court.

Under state Penal Law, drivers will face a charge of second-degree vehicular assault if they cause serious physical injury to another person and operate a vehicle while they are legally intoxicated. Le-

gally intoxicated means that their blood alcohol level is at least .08, or they were driving while their ability is impaired by drugs.

The maximum sentence for second-degree vehicular assault is four years in prison. The judge in the case has the option of sentencing to probation. The sentence will depend on the driver’s prior criminal record. The sentence will include the suspension or revocation of the defendant’s driver’s license.

Living on Purpose

The turning point of World War II

By Dr. Billy Holland
For Capital Region Independent Media

Every year in June, we observe the anniversary of the Normandy invasion of World War II, commonly called D-Day.

By the way, the “D” simply stands for whatever day a military assault is planned. For example, D-3 meant three days before a D-Day, while D+7 meant seven days after a D-Day.

On June 6, 1944, America and its allies engaged in one of the most significant military operations of the 20th century. I have personally suffered loss from war and have a deep appreciation for the service and sacrifice men and women make to protect our country. My mother’s youngest brother, Kenny Maye, was killed in Korea and I have his dog tag, casket flag and a rare picture of him. He was only 20 years old in 1950. Sadly, his existence is nearly unknown and I often wonder about the life he could have had. For everyone who has sacrificed for this great nation, thank you for your service.

I live a couple of miles from a national military cemetery and from the highway, you

can see many of the over 12,000 perfectly lined white marble tombstones. I admit I’ve often driven past hardly thinking about how each of these individuals at one time or another accepted the call of duty.

And what is that call? To defend and protect our freedom, whatever the cost! These brave soldiers were willing to give their life for their country and I cannot help but wonder how many of us have convictions that strong?

The First Amendment was not only signed into existence with ink but with the blood of over 1.1 million Americans who have died in U.S. wars, along with even more that have suffered from physical and mental difficulties. The privilege and freedom we have to share what is on our mind are liberties that have come at a great price and we should always remember the cost of this blessing.

As a volunteer chaplain for a veteran’s health care facility, I have the opportunity and honor to sit and talk with many fine men and women who have served in our nation’s military. The Second World War veterans who are still alive are now in their 80s and 90s and I believe it’s important to not only re-

cord and preserve their amazing war stories, but to sincerely listen to and respect who they are as individuals.

One of these residents is a man named Edward Hicks, who willingly stepped forward when his country needed him the most. He was 22 years old and had just married his lovely bride Mary Lou four months earlier. He received the call to join the front-line and bravely responded to what would be known around the world as “Operation Overlord.” The American soldiers knew the difference between right and wrong and they refused to allow a world in which wrong prevailed.

Edward and his company were assigned to 6 miles of beach that was code-named “Omaha,” which has been recorded as one of the bloodiest first wave battles of Normandy. Only 600 men survived out of 2,600 that came ashore. He recalls when he jumped out of the amphibious vehicle, how the water was up to his neck and icy cold. Being loaded down with full gear that was now water-logged, he said it was very difficult to keep from drowning. As bullets were splashing the water and whizzing past his head, all he knew to do was to stay as low as possi-

ble. Using floating bodies as shields, he was numb with fear.

As he slowly crawled upon the sand, he immediately began to dig a hole where he could partially avoid the onslaught of constant machine gun fire. Somehow throughout the day and thankfully with the Germans running out of ammunition, the small group managed to slowly make their way inland and went on to accomplish the mission.

Edward received several medals for bravery including a Silver Star and 4 Bronze Stars, but there is much more to being a hero than human fortitude and earning awards. It is recognizing the depth of spiritual love. The love that Jesus demonstrated on the cross is the type of compassion that inspires individuals to love and protect others as much as they love themselves. John 15:13 reminds us that, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Dr. Billy Holland lives in Central Kentucky with his wife Cheryl, where he is a minister, Christian author and community chaplain. To learn more, visit: billyholland-ministries.com.

Program to help foreign-born veteran families

By Kate Lisa
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

ALBANY — Alex Jimenez lived to help others who cannot help themselves.

It was a mission he took to heart: Jimenez served as a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army in the 2000s, inspired to enlist after 9/11. Before he enlisted, Alex expressed his desire to help others in a letter to his U.S. Army recruiter.

An al Qaeda-led group took Jimenez, 25, prisoner in 2007 during Operation Iraqi Freedom when he served in the 10th Mountain Division. His body was discovered more than a year later.

Andy D. Jimenez said Thursday his older brother would be honored to know his legacy of selflessness lives on.

State assemblymembers this session unanimously passed bill No. A.4660/S.04710 to create the Alex R. Jimenez New York State Military Immigrant Family Legacy Program. The bill would create a fund for a program to help connect families of state veterans and active military personnel to resources to secure legal immigration status.

“Alex would be happy, he would be honored — he would feel pleased to have known that his sacrifice was not in vain,” said Andy, age 33. He was 20 when his brother died.

While Alex was missing, federal deportation proceedings began for his wife, Yarin, who was in the United States from the Dominican Republic without documentation. Staff Sgt. Jimenez worked to obtain legal status for his wife before he was deployed, but was denied.

The state program named for Staff Sgt. Jimenez would help foreign-born mothers, fathers, siblings, spouses and children of currently serving or state veterans secure legal immigration status. Family members of deceased or discharged LGBT veterans would be eligible for the program.

“When they approached my family with [the bill], I was surprised, because I thought it was already a law,” Andy said. “...Some people give the ultimate sacrifice. You would think they’d have the opportunity to at least become a U.S. citizen.”

The story of staff Sgt. Jimenez’s bravery and the plight of his wife struck a chord with the country, President George W. Bush and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security at the time. The agency granted Jimenez’s wife discretionary parole, and she later secured permanent residency.

The measure to create the state program passed in the Assembly on June 10, the last scheduled day of legislative session. It stalled in the Senate, but bill co-sponsor Assemblyman Jake Ashby, R-Castleton, said it will be reintroduced in the next legislative session.

Ashby, a captain in the U.S. Army, completed a tour in Iraq and Afghanistan as a medical officer during his service from 2006 to 2014, and was affected by the resources available to help his fellow foreign-born soldiers and their families.

Ashby was in Diyala Province, Iraq, just outside of where Jimenez was found when he was discovered in 2008.

“We were prepping for a very large operation ... it was pretty powerful,” Ashby said Thursday. “When I heard about the ordeal his family was going through, I thought [of the program], ‘We have to do this.’”

Bill sponsor Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz,

D-Queens, and Ashby worked to develop the state program named for Jimenez for two years.

“If they are in the military, they are supposed to be able to have an easier time going through the process, but they generally don’t,” Cruz said. “How do we as the state of New York supplement what’s being done?”

An immigration case is much more likely to be successful with proper legal representation, Cruz said for immigrant families.

If passed, the state Military Immigrant Family Legacy Program would supplement the federal Parole in Place, also inspired by Jimenez’s story. The federal program provides a pathway for immigrant families while the state’s would focus on connecting immigrant families of veterans with the proper state agencies and resources to streamline the naturalization process.

After unanimous support in the Assembly, Cruz and Ashby are confident the bipartisan-supported measure could pass next session.

“We’re going to push very hard for it to pass through the Senate,” said Ashby, adding he’s having conversations with senators about the bill. “We haven’t gotten direct pushback, but there’s a lot of issues the state and majority is trying to tackle.

“Because it’s bipartisan, it’s a great opportunity we can capitalize on for unity.”

Assemblywoman Didi Barrett, D-Hudson, chairwoman of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee; and Assemblymember Chris Tague, R-Schoharie, also co-sponsor the legislation.

Lawmakers have suggested including the program in the 2022-23 state budget. It was floated for this year’s budget, but did not make the final spending plan as lawmakers continue to negotiate details to fund the program.

New York’s would be the first state program of its kind in the nation.

“It’s getting a lawyer, filing the application, getting the fingerprints and help with anything that comes with all of that,” Cruz said. “It’s a lot of red tape, a lot of bureaucratic work that’s hard for an everyday person to go through. I’ve gone through it, so I understand.

“Imagine adding to that being deployed somewhere overseas and not being able to support your loved one in doing it.”

The program would not make secure a person’s permanent residency.

The state has about 1 million veterans.

Family members of foreign-born would use the program to access resources to navigate immigration law, the process and to overcome language barriers.

Alex and Andy were born in New York City to parents from the Dominican Republic. The family returned to the Dominican Republic for several years while they were growing up, but came back to the state as young adults.

Andy said the state program would help shed light on the issue of deportation of American soldiers and their families who lacked documentation.

“We’re on the right path,” he said. “We are happy and honored that my brother’s name is being used for this purpose because it’s directing us on the right path.”

The lawmakers remained in contact with Alex Jimenez’s family while drafting the legislation named in his memory, Ashby said.

NFPA: Electric shock drowning a danger in pools and marinas

With the arrival of summer and the July 4th holiday weekend just around the corner, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is reminding people about potential electrical hazards that exist in swimming pools and hot tubs, onboard boats, on docks and piers, and in waters surrounding boats, marinas and launch ramps.

While most people are unaware of electrical dangers posed in water environments such as electric shock drowning (ESD), each year people are injured or killed from these hazards.

ESD can occur when an improperly installed or maintained electrical system results in electrical current in the water, which can then pass through a person’s body, causing a level of paralysis that can ultimately result in serious injury or drowning.

“With continued education about the presence of electrical hazards in water we can help reduce the risk of electric shock drowning from happening,” said Lorraine Carli, NFPA’s vice president of Outreach & Advocacy. “Before engaging in water activities, have a qualified electrician inspect your boat, swimming pool equipment, hot tub, and spa, and have them regularly maintained to ensure life-saving measures and protection systems are functioning properly.” Here are tips for swimmers, and pool and boat owners:

SWIMMERS:

- Never swim near a marina, dock or boatyard.
- While in a pool or hot tub, look out for underwater lights that are not working properly, flicker or work intermittently.
- If you feel a tingling sensation while in a pool, immediately stop swimming in the direction you are heading. Try and swim in a direction where you had not felt the tingling. Exit the water as quickly as possible; avoid using metal ladders or rails. Touching metal may increase the risk of shock.

POOL OWNERS

- If you are putting in a new pool or hot tub, be sure the wiring is performed by an electrician experienced in the special safety requirements for these types of installations.
- Have a qualified electrician periodically inspect and — where necessary — replace or upgrade the electrical devices or equipment that keep your pool or hot tub electrically safe. Have the electrician show you how to turn off all power in case of an emergency.
- Make sure any overhead lines are positioned at the proper distance over a pool and other structures, such as a diving board. If you have any doubts, contact a qualified electrician or your local utility company to make sure power lines are a safe distance away.

BOAT OWNERS

- Avoid entering the water when launching or loading a boat. These areas can contain stray electrical currents in the water, possibly leading to electric shock drowning or injury from shock, including death.
- Each year, and after any major storm that affects the boat, have the boat’s electrical system inspected by a qualified marine electrician to be sure it meets the required codes of your area, including those set by the American Boat & Yacht Council. Make the necessary repairs, if recommended.
- Check with the marina owner who can tell you if the marina’s electrical system has recently been inspected to meet the required codes of your area.
- Have ground fault circuit protection (GFCI and GFPE) installed on circuits supplying the boat; use only portable GFCIs or shore power cords (including “Y” adapters) that bear the proper listing mark for marine applications when using electricity near water. Test GFCIs monthly.
- NEVER modify the electrical system on a boat or shore power to make something work. The code-required safety mechanisms in place are intended to alert people if something is wrong with the boat and with shore power. Find a licensed, qualified professional to help determine the cause of the problem.

“As NFPA continues to raise awareness about this troubling trend, we encourage everyone to share these safety resources with people they know so everyone can safely enjoy the water this summer,” Carli said.

NFPA has resources for swimmers, boat and pool owners, including videos, tip sheets and checklists, that can be downloaded and shared. Please visit www.nfpa.org/watersafety.

Helping pollinators thrive with native plants on your property

By Thomas Christopher
For Capital Region Independent Media

Older adults, suggests Jackie Algon of the Wilton Connecticut Pollinator Pathway, can likely remember coming back from summertime drives with insects “splatted” all over the car’s windshield. Younger drivers, however, have almost certainly never experienced that, and for a simple reason: as repeated scientific censuses have revealed, insect populations are crashing all over the world.

That may seem like a welcome development to the insect averse, but consider what we are losing. Approximately 80% of flowering plants are pollinated by animals. Pollination is the process by which a grain of pollen is transferred from the male sexual organ in a flower to a female one, making possible the successful production of seeds and fruits. Birds and bats perform this service for a few plants, but it is insects that do the heavy lifting. In all, about a third of human food is produced with the help of such pollinators. Lose the insect pollinators, Jackie Algon points out, and you not only lose your wildflowers and the plants that produce your garden blossoms, you'll also go hungry, losing many of the fruits and vegetables you take for granted.

The causes of the insects' decline are several, but a principal one, adds Jackie, is the fragmentation of habitat. Once upon a time, farms and natural areas connected into a contiguous whole, allowing

the free passage of pollinators and other wildlife from one area to another. Suburbanization and development, however, has turned the natural spaces into isolated islands; this habitat fragmentation has led to a decline in wildlife diversity and population sizes in general and of insect pollinators in particular.

Conservation organizations in Fairfield County, Conn. tried appealing to residents about more habitat-conscious land management, but had not met with a vigorous response. However, everyone likes butterflies, as Jackie points out, and members of four conservationist groups — led by Wilton resident Donna Merrill who was inspired by a similar initiative in Oslo, Norway — found that promoting the preservation of such pollinators brought 80 people to a first meeting in 2017 about linking up natural areas with green pathways.

In practice this meant enrolling land-owners at intervals of no more than 750 meters (2,460 feet, slightly less than half a mile) to plant their landscapes with native plants that would host pollinators — providing habitat in which to raise their young and nectar- and pollen-bearing flowers for the adults. Success was such that Wilton now has three pathways reaching out from the town center all the way to the township's outskirts, in addition to many other residences throughout Wilton whose owners just want to 'bee on it!' And beyond: neighboring towns took up the cause and began installing

their own pathways, so that pollinators and other wildlife can once again wander more or less freely through much of the region.

More than 200 towns, in fact, have followed Wilton's example, throughout the Northeast and even down into the mid-Atlantic states. Aside from the intrinsic appeal of the idea, Algon suggests that a couple of other factors played a role in this explosive growth. First, that the leadership structure that Wilton modeled was deliberately non-hierarchical, so that the organization remained a grassroots one. Second was Pollinator Pathway Wilton's recognition that every town has a different style. Some wanted their initiative managed by their Conservation Commission; others included local groups committed to preservation. To suit all these different styles, the website (pollinator-pathway.org) keeps its instructions for pathway makers very simple. Indeed, it advocates just three basic steps for those wishing to participate: include native plants on your property and manage invasive species; • "do not use pesticides and herbicides"; • "rethink your lawn — mow higher and less often; consider reducing lawn size by adding native shrubs, trees, or a mini meadow; leave some bare ground and dead wood for nesting native bees; leave autumn leaves for overwintering eggs and pupae of pollinating insects"

Those who do wish to join the movement will find that the website, pollina-

tor-pathway.org, has lots of helpful advice and links under the heading “Get Involved.” To highlight their commitment, they can order a 6” sign showing their yard is on the Pollinator Pathway. In addition, those seeking information can listen to a conversation with Jackie Algon on Berkshire Botanical Garden’s Growing Greener podcast at thomaschristophergardens.com/podcast. Joining the movement is easy, and collectively, you can have a big impact while making your landscape more colorful, and more lively.

Be-a-Better-Gardener is a community service of Berkshire Botanical Garden, located in Stockbridge, MA. Its mission, to provide knowledge of gardening and the environment through a diverse range of classes and programs, informs and inspires thousands of students and visitors each year. Thomas Christopher is a volunteer at Berkshire Botanical Garden and is the author or co-author of more than a dozen books, including Nature into Art and The Gardens of Wave Hill (Timber Press, 2019). He is the 2021 Garden Club of America's National Medalist for Literature, a distinction reserved to recognize those who have left a profound and lasting impact on issues that are most important to the GCA. Tom's companion broadcast to this column, Growing Greener, streams on WE-SUFM.org, Pacifica Radio and NPR and is available at his website, <https://www.thomaschristophergardens.com/podcast>.

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Social Security Matters

A confusing question on benefits

By Russell Gloor
For Capital Region Independent Media

Dear Rusty:

When my father passed away and we went to update my mother's Social Security benefits, a question arose that I was confused by. We were asked, "Do you want to claim just your father's benefit (which was larger) or claim my mother's benefit and the difference between the two?" Either way it would come to the same amount.

Is there a reason to claim one way over the other? Perhaps a caveat that we are unaware of? Is there a loophole that we are missing that may potentially benefit the survivor? We are soon to face this question again as my father-in-law is very ill.

Signed: Curious

Dear Curious:

Well, they are basically the same amount but there is a nuance in the rules that many survivors aren't aware of.

Here's why Social Security asked that question: It is possible for a surviving spouse to claim only the survivor benefit and defer claiming their own SS benefit until a later age if their personal benefit would be more than the survivor benefit would be. A survivor benefit reaches maximum at the survivor's full retirement age, but their personal SS benefit can grow until they are 70 years old. Thus, claiming the survivor benefit (only) first, and allowing their personal benefit to grow up to age 70 is often a wise move.

Doing so allows someone to collect survivor benefits upon becoming a widow(er), while still maximizing their personal benefit. When later claimed, the higher personal benefit will replace the smaller survivor benefit. Of course, this option only makes sense if one's personal benefit would later be more than their survivor benefit.

Social Security is required to ask this

question because the person may be eligible for a higher benefit on their own if they wait until a later age to claim it, but the “survivor benefit only” option is useful only if the survivor has not yet reached 70 years of age. After age 70 they would always take whichever benefit is higher.

In most cases SS pays the person's own benefit first and then a "boost" to bring the payment up to the higher amount due as a survivor. But the choice to claim the survivor benefit only is an option if the survivor has not yet reached 70 and if their own benefit could later be more than their survivor benefit.

So, the question is — which option did your mother choose? And is your mother-in-law under age 70? If your mother's own benefit at age 70 would not have been higher than her survivor benefit from your father, then it doesn't matter which way it was recorded. And if your mother-in-law is over age 70, it

doesn't matter either. But if not and either personal benefit at age 70 would be more than their earlier survivor benefit, then opting for the survivor benefit only and waiting to claim their own later would be (or have been) a better choice.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

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