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The Greenville PIONEER

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Storm wreaks havoc in Coxsackie

See page 5



Water, sewer project to be rebid

By Melanie Lekocevic
Capital Region Independent Media

GREENVILLE — The proposed water and sewer extension project has been put out for a second round of bids after initial bids came in higher than expected. The parameters of the project will also be modified in an effort to streamline the project and bring down costs. Five bids were opened by town officials in June. “We opened bids June 15 and they came in noticeably higher than what was anticipated,” Town Supervisor Paul Macko said. “We had a conference call with the Environmental Facilities Corporation, which controls the funds, so we have a resolution for a water and sewer upgrade to set a public hearing for the amount of funding we will need to complete the project.” The public hearing was scheduled for July 12, after the Greenville Pioneer press time. The low bidder in the Request for Proposal was Tech Industries at \$2,980,920. The high bidder was Peter Luizzi & Bros. at \$3,859,638.

The town has \$1,972,187 in available funding for the project so is a little over \$1 million short on paying for it in its current form. Other sources of funding are also being considered, including federal COVID-19 stimulus funds that have been allocated to Greenville, Macko said. “In the COVID-19 relief package to the towns, they are talking about money for infrastructure,” Macko said. “It’s looking like Greenville has just under \$400,000 coming in two installments. You get half of the money in 2021 and the other half in 2022. The board will have to decide how that money is spent and if the project would qualify for this, but if you could save \$300,000 or \$400,000 doing that and then put some of this money to it, we could really soften the blow of doing the project that way.” Altering the scope of the project could also save some money. A representative from Tech Industries approached town officials after the bids were opened and said the town could realize significant savings if the water tank is replaced with a new glass-lined tank rather

than refurbishing the old one, which was installed in 1975, Macko said. “In his estimation, we could probably save over \$400,000 if we got rid of the existing tank and put in a mini glass-lined tank for pretreating,” Macko told the board. “As long as the base that was there for the existing tank is in decent enough shape to accept the new tank, he thought we could see substantial savings if we demo’d it and put in a new tank for pretreatment.” Town Councilman John Bensen said a new tank makes more sense. “I would much rather see a new water tower there rather than fix the old one, especially with the cost involved,” Bensen said. If the town board decides to replace the tower rather than refurbish the old one, the project would have to be rebid, town attorney Tal Rappleyea confirmed to the board. “I think you do have to go out to bid because you are changing a fairly substantial piece of it,” Rappleyea said. Macko agreed the project would have to be rebid to give all contractors “a level playing field.” “At this juncture, if we can save

\$350,000 or \$400,000 and have a brand-new tank, I don’t know why we wouldn’t consider doing that,” Macko added. Water Superintendent Leroy Bear urged the town board to come to a decision and move ahead with the project. “We are running out of time for construction season,” Bear said. It was not known at press time if the new bids would be submitted in time for the July 12 public hearing, but Macko said it is important to keep the community informed either way. “Whether we have those new bids in by the 12th or not, I still have to enlighten everybody and let them know that we are still going to need more money to complete the project,” Macko said. “We might need another informational meeting when we get the new bids.” The water and sewer extension projects were combined into a single project. The water and sewer lines will be extended about 2,400 feet on Route 81 from Hill Street, and will also improve water volume and pressure to homes in the Country Estates development.

From vacant lot to cascade of flowers



Debra Teator turned a tree stump into a whimsical “gnome house.”

By Joanne E. McFadden
Capital Region Independent Media

If you’re driving through Freehold and spot a “gnome house” crafted from a tree trunk, the property just opposite showcases an extensive garden which the Clematis Garden Club has chosen as its July Garden of the Month. When Don and Debra Teator moved into their Freehold home in 1983, it was a vacant lot with a house and a large pine tree. Over the past 38 years, Debra Teator has transformed the home’s landscape into an engaging outdoor space with plenty of color and green contrasted with local stone and interesting accents throughout. From spring through late summer, the garden exhibits a cascade of blossoms, with one plant bloom-



Debra Teator with the garden sculpture and concord grape arbor in her Freehold garden.

Community honors Independence Day with patriotic display

By Melanie Lekocevic
Capital Region Independent Media

DURHAM — There were American flags and patriotic displays of red, white and blue as far as the eye could see during the annual Fourth of July Parade in Durham the day before Independence Day. The community turned out in force to celebrate the nation’s birthday as 50 floats made their way down Route 145, with parade-goers lining the route, cheering and waving Old Glory as marchers passed by. Some marchers tossed candy to eagerly awaiting children and others handed out flags to spectators. Fire departments, the sheriff’s department, local elected officials, area businesses and non-profit groups all took part in the festivities. Assemblyman Chris Tague, R-102, rode in a silver convertible and waved to the crowd. Marchers from the Norton Hill Colonial Regiment wore period costumes, with several dressed as Uncle Sam leading the way. There was even a donkey decked out in



Marchers from the Norton Hill Colonial Regiment make their way down the parade route in the annual Fourth of July Parade on Route 145 in Durham.

Isle, with musicians from Pipes and Drums of Greene providing musical accompaniment. At the parade’s conclusion, everyone gathered at the cultural center where the kids could play in the bounce houses and everyone partook of hot dogs, ice cream and other refreshments. And wherever you looked, there was red, white and blue. “I am here to celebrate the Fourth of July,” Kathy Whitbeck, from Preston Hollow, said. “We always celebrate and bring every red, white and blue thing we can find. If you are not here today, you belong here.” The meaning of the holiday was not lost on onlookers. “Independence Day is a time to remind ourselves to reflect on the importance of what this country means,” said Patricia Walsh, who wore a red, white and blue cowgirl hat. “I am a first-generation American — all my relatives are from Ireland — and this reminds us of what the whole purpose of America is and the fact that we are all separate

See DISPLAY, page 15

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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

- 17-18 - 38th annual Coxsackie Yard Sale Weekend, village of Coxsackie, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Maps of the village will be posted on telephone poles throughout the village of Coxsackie.
- 17 - Knitting/crocheting group, Heermance Memorial Library, Ely Street in Coxsackie, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. All levels invited to sit, create and learn. Bring your own materials. Drop in.
- 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.
- 21 - Greene County Family Planning walk-in clinic, 3-6 p.m. Confidential, free or low-cost access to all available family planning services. Teens welcome. No appointment necessary. Greene County Family Planning, 411 Main St., third floor, Catskill.
- 21 - Greene County Legislature public hearing on Local Law No. 2 of 2021: "Establishing countywide animal abuse registry," at 6:30 p.m. Greene County Municipal Building, 411 Main St., Catskill.
- 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.

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- mer Concert Series at the gazebo in Veterans Park, Routes 32 and 81, Greenville. Free admission.
- 28 - Greene County Family Planning walk-in clinic, 3-6 p.m. Confidential, free or low-cost access to all available family planning services. Teens welcome. No appointment necessary. Greene County Family Planning, 411 Main St., third floor, Catskill.

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.

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Manage energy use during the warmest weather

- Hot and humid weather can be expected over the next couple of months, which often leads to higher energy use as residents and businesses use air conditioning to keep cool.
- “Higher energy use can raise both the wholesale market supply price for electricity and electrical use, which can also raise electricity bills,” said Ryan Hawthorne, vice president of Electric Engineering and Operations. “Using appliances efficiently, especially during the hottest weather, conserves resources and can help residents manage their energy bills.”
- Ways in which customers can save energy include:
- Setting thermostats on air conditioners to 78 degrees and higher during times when the home is not occupied and considering the use of fans to keep cool. Also, changing dirty filters on air conditioners will help the unit run more efficiently.
 - Closing doors, windows, curtains, shades and blinds during the day to seal out the heat and block sunlight when temperatures are at their highest.
 - Turning off lights and appliances when not in use, and unplugging electronic devices, such as televisions, entertainment systems and computers, that continue to draw power even when off. Some devices use up to 25 watts of “standby power” when idle, and approximately 10% of the total energy used by homes powers devices that are not in use. Plugging these devices into a power strip and then switching off the strip when the devices are not used is a convenient and effective way to reduce standby power.
 - Using large appliances such as dishwashers and clothes dryers during the evening hours, when overall energy use is less.
 - Keeping refrigerator and freezer doors closed as long as possible and limiting the time they are opened.
- Residents are also reminded to drink plenty of fluids, stay in air-conditioned rooms when possible, stay out of the sun and check up on relatives and neighbors. Young children and pets should never be left unattended in vehicles under any circumstances.
- For a complete list of heat safety tips, visit www.weather.gov/safety/heat-during.
- Learn more about Central Hudson's energy efficiency programs, products, incentives and rebates at www.cenhud.com/my-energy/save-energy-money/. To learn how to prepare for storms, visit www.cenhud.com/outages/storm-preparation-safety/.

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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

■ Jesse A. Hildenbrand, 40, of Coxsackie, was arrested at 11:28 p.m. June 21 in Coxsackie 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 Coxsackie, was arrested at 11:55 p.m. June 21 in Coxsackie 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 Coxsackie, was arrested at 1:53 p.m. June 22 in Coxsackie 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.

■ Conor T. Moan, 24, of Greenville, was arrested at 2:30 a.m. June 24 in Catskill and charged with second-degree obstructing governmental administration, a class A misdemeanor; driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor; and first-degree aggravated unlicensed operation, a class E felony. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Sarah A. Broderick, 36, of Niverville, was arrested at 10:09

p.m. June 24 in Catskill and charged with driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Kristie L. O’Neill, 38, of Cornwallville, was arrested at 6:12 p.m. June 24 in Cairo and charged with unlawfully growing cannabis and endangering the welfare of a child, both class A misdemeanors. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Noel M. Dam, 22, of Acra, was arrested at 10 p.m. June 24 in Durham and charged with illegal possession of a vehicle identification number, a class E felony. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Sarah J. McCool, 45, of Coxsackie, was arrested at 10:42 p.m. June 24 in Coxsackie and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Keith E. Kritz, 30, of Coxsackie, was arrested at 10 a.m. June 25 in Coxsackie and charged with first-degree promoting prison contraband, a class D felony. He was released to a third party.

■ Alexander F. Santos Lopez, 24, of Catskill, was arrested at 9:55 p.m. June 25 in Catskill and charged with driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Edward H. Vorseggern, 54, of Clifton Park, was arrested at 10:31 p.m. June 25 in Catskill and charged with second-degree obstructing governmental administration, a class A misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Andrew M. Bernhardt 42, of Scarsdale, was arrested at 11:30 p.m. June 25 in Catskill and charged with driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Nathaniel J. Dodge, 42, of Connecticut, was arrested at 11:15 p.m. June 25 in Catskill and charged with driving while ability impaired by drugs, an unclassified misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Michael A. Radzikowski, 28, of South Cairo, was arrested at 1:30 a.m. June 26 in Catskill and charged with driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Peter Dunham, 64, of Cedar Knolls, New Jersey, was arrested at 9:58 p.m. June 26 in Jewett and charged with driving while intoxicated, a class E felony. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Maureen Moore, 64, of the Bronx, was arrested at 5:28 p.m. June 26 in Cairo and charged with driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor. She was released on her own recognizance.

■ Brian J. Baskoff, 44, of Brooklyn, was arrested at 5:58 p.m. June 27, in Cairo and charged with fourth-degree criminal mischief and petty larceny, both class A misdemeanors. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Yoli E. Gomezosoria, 29, of the Bronx, was arrested at 11:23 a.m. June 27 in Catskill and charged with two counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Billy J. Dart, 34, of Hudson, was arrested at 10 p.m. June 27 in Catskill and charged with third-degree criminal possession of a weapon, a class D felony. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Meleya A. McKay, 23, of Chatham, was arrested at 2:35 a.m. June 28 in Cairo and charged with three counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor, and third-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class B felony. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Samantha M. Steenburn, 26, of Catskill, was arrested at 2:35 a.m. June 28 in Cairo and charged with fifth-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class D felony, and third-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class B felony. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Stephanie L. Schleimer-Harris, 32, of Coxsackie, was arrested at 10:45 p.m. June 27 in Coxsackie and charged with driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Daniel G. Rikard, 60, of Prattsville, was arrested at 3:42 p.m. June 29 in Prattsville and charged with driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Randy T. Vanalstyne, 19, of Chatham, was arrested at 11:31 p.m. June 29 in Cairo and charged with driving while ability impaired by drugs, an unclassified misdemeanor. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Jason P. Andrews, 36, of Athens, was arrested at 9:38 p.m. June 30 in Catskill and charged with first-degree aggravated unlicensed operation, a class E felony; driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor; and aggravated driving while intoxicated with a child, a class E felony. He was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Shannon M. Caston, 33, of Kingston, was arrested at 2:27 a.m. July 1 in Catskill and charged with manufacturing drug-related paraphernalia and seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, both class A misdemeanors. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Corinna M. Hawver, 24, of Athens, was arrested at 10:40 a.m. July 1 in Athens and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and possession of a hypodermic instrument,

both class A misdemeanors. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Shane C. Foster, 43, of Climax, was arrested at 4:42 p.m. July 1 in New Baltimore and charged with manufacturing drug-related paraphernalia and two counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, both class A misdemeanors. He was issued an appearance ticket.

CATSKILL POLICE DEPARTMENT

■ Natalie Williams, 37, of Hudson, was arrested at 1:14 p.m. June 19 in Catskill and charged with petty larceny, a class A misdemeanor. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Tammy L. Dunham, 50, of Haines Falls, was arrested at 4:36 p.m. June 19 in Catskill and charged with petty larceny, a class A misdemeanor. She was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Anthony J. Depaola 32, of Catskill, was arrested at 5:35 p.m. June 18 in Catskill and charged with third-degree assault, a class A misdemeanor. He was released on his own recognizance.

■ Lionel Rushford Jr., 46, of Athens, was arrested at 9:29 a.m. June 17 in Catskill and charged with four counts of petty larceny, a class A misdemeanor. He was released on his own recognizance.

■ Reginald M. Bonneau 34, of Catskill, was arrested at 7:12 p.m. June 21 in Catskill and charged with fifth-degree criminal possession of stolen property, a class A misdemeanor.

Lawmakers request special session to pass Clean Slate

By Kate Lisa
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

State lawmakers and legislators vehemently urged the Legislature last Tuesday to reconvene in a special session to seal the criminal records of millions of New Yorkers.

The Clean Slate bill, sponsored by Assemblymember Catalina Cruz, D-Queens, failed to pass the Legislature before session ended June 10. The bill would seal the criminal records of about 2.3 million New Yorkers after three years of the start of a sentence for a misdemeanor offense and seven years for a felony.

“When we left, I had spoken to [Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie] and the speaker is very much committed to making this bill, this law, a reality,” Cruz said.

Lawmakers reached a deal in the last week of session to pass Clean Slate before leaving Albany, but could not vote on the bill because of a technical drafting error.

Cruz was one of several lawmakers and activists to participate in a virtual rally last Tuesday to call on the Legislature to reconvene in a special session to pass Clean Slate and seal millions of criminal records preventing New Yorkers from accessing employment, housing and education opportunities.

Sirena Sharpe, originally from Syracuse, was convicted for her involvement in a large Central New York cocaine distribution ring in 2008.

Sharpe was 17 at the time of her felony drug sale charge, was incarcerated and completed parole. Her past record continues to prevent her from getting hired for jobs, or accepted into colleges or universities, she said.

“I’ve paid my debt to society, but I’m still being punished,” Sharpe said. “I filled out 73 appli-

cations and these were basic retail jobs, and I got denied for most of them directly because of that felony.”

Sharpe has fought for issues impacting incarcerated people since completing parole, and spoke as an advocate with the Center for Community Alternatives.

Sharpe, who has two academic degrees, added, “I’m still turned down for accounting and professional jobs I’m fully qualified for.”

Cruz has spoken with Heastie’s staff, but not with the speaker directly about reconvening since scheduled session days concluded.

“It’s hard to tell if they will reconvene or not,” she said. “We could because of an emergency or any other issue. I’ve had conversations with people in the Assembly. The possibility of us coming back is hard for me to be able to tell.”

Representatives of the Assembly Majority and Heastie, D-Bronx, did not return multiple requests for comment and would not answer questions about the Legislature holding a special session.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, D-Yonkers, has repeatedly voiced support for passing Clean Slate.

“The Senate Majority has long supported the Clean Slate bill and look forward to it becoming law,” Senate Majority spokesman Mike Murphy said.

Legislative leaders have suggested they could call the Legislature to reconvene for a special session at any time, but remain tight-lipped about reconvening. Representatives with the Senate Majority did not answer questions about if, or when, lawmakers will be called back to session in 2021.

The Legislature has largely held session virtually since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Preston Hollow Baptist Church State Route 145, Preston Hollow 518-239-6544	Cornerstone Baptist Church State Route 145, East Durham 518-634-7095	Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witness State Route 81, Greenville 518-966-8941
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints County Route 41, Greenville Center 518-966-4043	St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church State Route 81, Oak Hill 518-239-6727	Dormansville United Methodist Church Route 312, Dormansville 518-756-2812
Greenville Center Baptist Church County Route 41, Greenville	Asbury United Methodist Church State Route 81, Norton Hill 518-966-4181	Trinity Episcopal Church Albany Hill Road, Rensselaerville 518-797-5295
Durham-Oak Hill United Methodist Church Route 22, Durham 518-239-6377	South Westerlo Congregational Christian Church County Routes 403 & 406, South Westerlo 518-966-5094	Westerlo Reformed Church State Route 143, Westerlo 518-797-3742
Medway Congregational Christian Church Route 26, Climax 518-731-2106 & 518-731-8867	Greenville Christian Church State Route 32, Greenville 518-966-4519	Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church Church Street, Cairo 518-622-3319
Christ Episcopal Church State Route 32, Greenville 518-966-5713	St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church State Route 81, Greenville 518-966-8317	Medusa United Church of Christ 111 County Route 351, Medusa 518-239-4843

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Obituaries

Mary Leah Brush

Mary Leah Brush, a longtime resident of Westerlo, passed away on June 25, 2021, after a brief illness.

She was born July 19, 1938, to the former Edward and Elizabeth Stiffen. She is survived by her beloved husband of 54 years, Victor; daughters Donna (Dennis) McCormick and Cheryl (Jeffrey) Lee; grandchildren Nick Tambasco, Jared (Brittini) Tambasco, Bryan (Collene) McCormick, Heather (Brian) Dumire, Thomas (Samantha) Alheim, Shane (Jamie Pratt) Alheim, Victoria (Joshua) Slingerland; and several great grandchildren. She is also survived by her sister Betty

Davis, brother William Stiffen, and many nieces and nephews. In addition to her parents she is predeceased by her son, Thomas Alheim, sister Joan Stromeyer, and brothers Jack, Frank, Edward, James, Joseph, Thomas and Robert.

She was a longtime member of the American Legion Auxiliary Post 120 of Holly Hill, Florida. Interment will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, donations in Mary Leah's name can be made to Halifax Health-Hospice C/O Fund Development, 3800 Woodbriar Trail, Port Orange FL 32129 or The American Cancer Society.

AG: Remain vigilant against rise in telephone scams

ALBANY — New York Attorney General Letitia James issued an alert to New Yorkers across the state to remain vigilant against a surge in telephone scams seeking to take advantage of unsuspecting consumers.

A rise in reported complaints have shown that fraudsters are again utilizing a telephone scam in which scammers impersonate a utilities customer service representative and urge customers to buy gift cards and call back with the serial numbers to pay what they claim is a delinquent bill. Scammers convince customers to pay the bill by threatening to cut off service and suggesting nearby stores that sell gift cards to immediately pay the bill in question. Consumers who are contacted do not necessarily have delinquent or outstanding bills.

“As New Yorkers continue to suffer the economic impacts of the COVID-19 public health crisis, scammers have seen this as an opportunity to take advantage of the economic anxiety that many New Yorkers feel and the additional time some have needed to pay their bills,” James said. “Utilities are essential services that are needed for households to survive. Falsely threatening to shut off these vital lifelines is not only heartless, but unlawful, which is why this type of illegal activity will not be tolerated for a moment. I strongly urge any New Yorker that has been targeted by this type of fraud to report these calls to my office immediately. We will do everything in our power to protect consumers from bad actors who use economic instability as leverage to line their pockets.”

As part of the fraud, scammers put pressure on customers to pay immediately or else have their services cut off instantly. Utility providers do not call and threaten to shut off service

if an immediate payment is not made. Utility providers also do not accept gift cards as a form of payment.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) advises consumers to never disclose their banking information or other personal identifiable information over the phone, even if their caller ID displays a number belonging to a certain utility provider, as many scammers are now duplicating or “spoofing” utility phone numbers to appear more legitimate.

When reporting scams to the OAG, consumers should report the specific charges, the dates and times of the phone calls that were placed, and any threatening language that was used in an effort to pressure them to go out and purchase gift cards.

Utility bill scams have increased in the past year as many Americans struggle to keep up with household bills due to the global pandemic. The OAG has taken action and issued various consumer alerts connected to telephone scams. Last September, the OAG partnered with the Federal Trade Commission and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to launch Operation Corrupt Collector, a national initiative to target scammers who use scare tactics to collect on debts that they did not have the right to collect and/or that a consumer did not legally owe. In many of these cases, collectors used the same caller ID “spoofing” technique that scammers are currently using in the Orange and Rockland Utilities’ collection scam.

New Yorkers who have been targeted by this or any other scam are urged to file a complaint by completing and submitting a Consumer Frauds and Protection Bureau online complaint form or by calling 800-771-7755.



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Attorneys prepare subpoenas, secure documents in Cuomo probe

By Kate Lisa
Capital Region Independent Media

ALBANY — Officials are expected to start issuing subpoenas to advance an impeachment investigation into Gov. Andrew Cuomo after attorneys spent months gathering relevant evidence, including interviewing witnesses and procuring thousands of emails and text messages, lawmakers said.

The Assembly Judiciary Committee will issue subpoenas to various witnesses as part of the Legislature’s independent probe into allegations of sexual harassment and misconduct against the governor and a multitude of other accusations. The committee met last Wednesday morning.

A team of attorneys with independent law firm Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP leads the Assembly’s investigation and can receive testimony from witnesses under oath, Assemblymember Charles Lavine, D-Glen Cove, said.

Davis Polk & Wardwell has obtained more than 100,000 documents including emails, texts, letter correspondences, personnel records, training materials, transcripts and more in gathering evidence in its months-long investigation, Lavine said before the committee entered executive session.

“I am very pleased with the continued process of this investigation,” said Lavine, who chairs the Judiciary Committee.

Lavine indicated the Assembly’s investigation is not near completion, but did not specify how long it will continue.

Attorneys have received multiple documents from legislative counsel, interviewed hundreds of people and continue to take steps to secure evidence.



COURTESY OF GOV. ANDREW CUOMO'S OFFICE

Gov. Andrew Cuomo speaks at a COVID-19 briefing in the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in Manhattan on June 2.

“The purpose of their process is to gather substantive evidence as well as to assess the credibility and corroborate information learned during these interviews,” Lavine said.

Lavine served Cuomo a notice of non-retaliation March 15, mandating the governor cannot retaliate against any person who serves as a witness in the Legislature’s impeachment investigation.

Issuing subpoenas could serve as an added layer of protection for legislative staffers and counsel who fear retaliation in giving testimony.

Assembly-hired attorneys with Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP updated the 21-member Assembly Judiciary Committee about the latest details of the investigation in executive session for more than an hour last Wednesday. The committee had not publicly met in more than a month.

The committee commenced an impeachment investigation in March after at least nine current and former staffers accused the governor of sexual harassment and misconduct and the federal government started a probe that Cuomo’s top aides intentionally underreported state COVID-19 death data in

nursing homes and congregate care.

State Attorney General Letitia James, a Democrat, and federal prosecutors continue to investigate the governor’s multiple scandals in separate inquiries unrelated to the Legislature’s probe.

James is pleased with the current trajectory of her probe into Cuomo and his administration, which includes examining the safety of the Gov. Mario Cuomo Bridge, or Tappan Zee Bridge replacement, if the governor directed or had knowledge of executive aides withholding information about the bridge’s safety concerns or attempted to suppress related investigations; and allegations that Cuomo helped family and friends get access to scarce coronavirus tests early on during the pandemic.

The attorney general declined to disclose further details of the ongoing investigation during an event at the state Capitol last week, but said the concurrent Legislature and federal probes into the governor have not conflicted.

The Judiciary Committee expanded its scope in April to determine if Cuomo used state employees or resources to help publish his \$5.1 million coronavirus memoir “American Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

The governor has pushed back against repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

Members of the public can provide relevant information to the state Assembly team conducting the impeachment investigation via a confidential hotline. Send a tip to ny.assembly.investigation@davispolk.com or call 1-212-450-3600.

Storm wreaks havoc in Coxsackie

By Melanie Lekocevic
Capital Region Independent Media

COXSACKIE — A destructive storm tore through Coxsackie on Wednesday, downing trees, knocking out power and sending heavy branches crashing into homes.

One tree estimated at over 100 years old near St. Mary’s Church on Mansion Street was toppled, falling onto power lines and causing outages for everyone in the area.

The National Weather Service in Albany reported storm damage in numerous areas in the Capital Region, “with the most extensive being in the Coxsackie/Stuyvesant area,” according to a statement from the organization.

Heavy rain and high winds began at around 3:45 p.m. Wednesday, picking up strength and leading to significant damage throughout the village.

A state of emergency was declared “due to damage from a potential tornado,” according to a statement from Mayor Mark Evans.

Residents were asked to stay indoors and traffic into the village was halted as road crews tended to the cleanup and utility workers attempted to restore power.

“Approximately 100 trees are down with electrical wires,” Evans said. “The situation is hazardous.”

Jason Southwick was at work when the rain and high winds began. He believes it was a tornado.

“Everybody is saying that — that it was a tornado and hurricane mixture,” Southwick said.

Several homes on Mansion Street and Route 385 suffered damage including broken water pipes, holes in roofs and siding ripped from the walls.

The powerful storm led to power outages for about 30,000 customers in the Mid-Hudson



MELANIE LEKOCEVIC/CAPITAL REGION INDEPENDENT MEDIA

A powerful storm officials suspect may have been a tornado tore through Coxsackie on Wednesday., toppling a century-old tree on Mansion Street and knocking down power lines.



MELANIE LEKOCEVIC/CAPITAL REGION INDEPENDENT MEDIA

Neighbors helped each other with cleanup efforts after a Coxsackie storm officials believe may have been a tornado.

Valley and another 2,000 outages in Greene and Albany counties, according to Central Hudson.

“Our crews have made significant progress throughout the day, but we know there is much work to be done,” said Ryan Hawthorne, vice president of Electric Engineering and Operations for the utility company.

Nearly 1,000 customers in Coxsackie were without power

Wednesday evening, according to Central Hudson reports at 8 p.m.

Residents were warned to stay at least 30 feet away from downed power lines and to assume that any such lines are live.

Village officials urged residents to stay indoors and avoid any unnecessary travel as crews continued cleanup efforts Wednesday evening.

Soft Paws

Exotic pets

By Aaron Clause
For Capital Region Independent Media

Let me pick up from where I left off in the last column.

Aside from the many lethal attacks, bites, stings, etc., however, there is another aspect to consider. Less aggressive and non-lethal exotics, like some species of birds and many small mammals, are just not designed for indoor residences.

First, there is the issue of veterinary care. All “pet” animals, exotic or not, require adequate wellness care (such as food, water, a suitable living environment, regular veterinary check-ups), as well as veterinary care when they are ailing. Exotic vets are few and far between; most vets will not take the risk of dealing with exotics. If you find one, they will most likely be specialized in one exotic type, such as birds or snakes. Try finding a vet for your sick Vietnamese centipede!

Second, let me backtrack a hair to where I mentioned adequate wellness care. For even “simple” dog and cat wellness, shopping can sometimes be difficult — just picking the right food or supplements, or utilizing effective anti-parasitic medications. The research has to go five times deeper for exotics, however, as their habitat must be completely recreated in an indoor sanctuary for them to survive, let alone thrive.

While some birds and small mammals can accept room-temperature surroundings, cold-blooded reptiles, amphibians, insects, etc. have to be equipped with specially temperature-monitored cages. Food is a whole other issue, between finding a diet that works for an exotic, then locating where food can be

purchased and delivered from to maintain health.

All of this also bows to the fact that there is no way to bring the great outdoors inside — you can’t possibly build a cage, crate or fence large enough to give an exotic the acreage they would have in their natural habitat.

Let’s be realistic. There’s nothing you can give your chinchilla, squirrel, box turtle, iguana or toad that will make them believe they are “right at home.” Containing exotics is simply making them “cope” for the exchange of human pleasure. Dogs and cats, on the other hand, thrive on the companionship they receive in caring homes, and their future without such an existence would be bleak.

It is for all these reasons that I vehemently proclaim that exotic animals should absolutely not be pets. Let them live in the world they have been created for. Instead, come rescue a cat or dog who can give you abounding payback for the favor!

Feel free to call us with any questions at 518-828-6044 or visit our website at www.cghs.org. Our 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. to 4:00 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 every Saturday from 10-11 a.m. 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.

Grandma Mackey’s Diary

1950 life in Medusa

Transcribed from her diary by
Kathy Saurer Osborne

Sun, July 16: Cloudy. Finally got started for Delite’s. Gene & I went with Chuck & Joyce. The rest came with Don & Gertrude. Had a nice dinner. Chuck & Joyce & Don & Gert went to the Races. I came home with Don’s car. Stubby came for Gene. Had a nice birthday. Got money candy etc. HB, LSH

Mon, July 17: Fair. Gene washed & I ironed some. Crocheted etc. Went to Chorus with Ada. Chuck took Joyce to Greenville. Ruffie’s house (matress) on fire. Engine here to put it out.

Tues, July 18:

Showers. Did the ironing. Grace G. brought me a nice box of stationary for my birthday. Took a ride to Ravenna Delmar Slingerlands etc. Had cream & called on Mr & Mrs Stanley Snyder. Talked with Joyce.

Wed, July 19: Fair. Lite came for me & I ironed mended & cleaned some eggs. They brought me home 9.30. Don in Albany at a meeting. Marilyn home with Adele.

Thurs, July 20: Rain. Fair tonite. Cleaned bedrooms etc. Worked on Gene’s tablecloth. Durland called & Addie. Don not home to supper working at the Dairy.

Fri, July 21: Fair. Don got home 3 A.M. Finished putting a

new unit at the Dairy. Cleaned livingrooms & refrigerator. Don Joyce & Adrienne came late 8:30. Tired & hungry. Chuck called on the phone.

Sat, July 22: Fair & cool. Crocheted & ironed etc. Adrienne went back this A.M. Gene working at Mrs Cooks. Don in Albany this A.M. P.M. he mowed lawn & worked in the garden. Adele at Marylins. Chuck came he & Joyce went out for the evening.

Sun, July 23: Fair. Went to Church. Had dinner & went to the Races. Gertrude went too. Adrienne here tonite. Goes back with Don in the morning.

Mon, July 24: Fair. Rain tonite. Chuck came for

Joyce. The washing dried & I did hand washing & ironed & mended socks. Am going to Chorus with Ada & Mrs Hahne. Later: Poured all the way home.

Tues, July 25: Fair. Did the ironing. Mrs Johnson called & we went for a ride. Saw Broome Center Chapel & Mitchell Hollow Chapel. Two cute churches. Ours is a barn beside them. Don has a cold. Addie called tonite.

Wed, July 26: Fair. Made raspberry pie & got groceries. Crocheted etc. Don’s birthday. Joyce & I gave him a back up light. Gene shorts. Gertrude & Adrienne here tonite.

Thurs, July 27: Fair. Cleaned bedrooms & congo-

leum. Did dishes got meals made beds etc. Adele here there & yonder. They swam & Ernie was here.

Fri, July 28: Showers. Cleaned livingrooms & dusted etc. Joyce came with Don & Chuck later in their ‘49 Lincoln. We took a ride. You should have seen the mouths drop open!

Sat, July 29: Fair. Shower tonite. Delite & Philip & JoAnn are coming tomorrow for dinner. Got things ready. Sent beans to the Church Fair. Addie & I went & after took a ride to Thatcher Pk. Chuck came late for Joyce & they came home late. Chuck stayed till 7 A.M. Ha! Ralph Brazer’s barn burned tonite.

Police: Woman tried to decapitate her dog with a sword

By Bill Williams
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

CAIRO — A Greene County woman was arrested on felony charges for allegedly attempting to decapitate one of her pet dogs with a sword, Capt. Tracey Quinn of the Greene County Sheriff’s Office said July 1.

Pauline Waldron, 67, of Cairo, was charged last Wednesday with one count of aggravated cruelty to animals, a felony, Quinn said.

Waldron is also accused of stabbing the dog several times and then leaving the animal for eight hours to die without seeking any medical care, Quinn said.

The female Australian Cattle Dog is recovering at an undisclosed specialist veterinary clinic in the Albany area, Ron Perez, president and CEO of the Columbia-Greene Humane Society, said Thursday.

The dog was transferred to the Albany clinic after she underwent emergency, life-saving surgery at Catskill Animal Hospital on Route

9W in Catskill, Quinn said.

Police could not say who found the dog or how it was brought to the Catskill Animal Hospital.

The dog lost a lot of blood but was doing as well as could be expected considering the severity of her injuries, following the surgery, Perez said.

Perez saw the pictures of the dog’s injuries and was horrified.

“Those were some of the most gruesome pictures I have ever seen,” Perez said.

The Greene County Sheriff’s Office was notified of the animal cruelty case last Wednesday, when they were called by the Catskill Animal Hospital. Following an investigation, the department’s Criminal Investigation Unit arrested Waldron, Quinn said.

The dog was in extreme pain when it arrived at the hospital, Perez said.

“I can’t imagine how someone can do this to another living creature, let alone her pet,” Perez said.

Five other dogs that were locat-

ed in her home were seized and brought to the Columbia-Greene Humane Society, Quinn said.

Two Australian Cattle Dogs, and three Jack Russell Terriers were examined at the shelter, and all appear to be in good health, Perez said.

The shelter is now holding the dogs for their safety and may be put up for adoption in the future, Perez said.

Waldron was arraigned in Cairo Town Court before Justice Tanja Sirago. She was released on her own recognizance, pending a future court appearance, Quinn said.

“I have every confidence that the Greene County District Attorney will prosecute this woman to the full extent of the law,” Perez said.



Pauline Waldron, 67



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

An Australian Cattle Dog was treated for numerous injuries, allegedly inflicted by its owner in Cairo.

140-year-old resort sold to Wylder Hotels

By Melanie Lekocevic
Capital Region Independent Media

WINDHAM — The Thompson House, in the hands of a local family for six generations, now has a new owner.

The resort, built in 1880, is located at 19 Route 296, Windham, and was sold to California-based Wylder Hotels on June 10 by the Goettsche family.

The resort will get both a new name and a new look.

“We are going to be renaming it Wylder Windham and it will open in the spring of 2022,” Wylder Hotels founder and CEO John Flannigan said. “We have big plans to do a great transformation, but we will honor the soul and history of the property and bring it up to speed and make it magical again.”

The resort will be closed throughout the renovations, which are planned to be substantial.

“We have a large-scale renovation. We are in the planning stages right now and moving quickly,” Flannigan said. “We will commence in the next month or two.”

The 20-acre resort has eight buildings, which are all slated for renovations, along with the pool, landscaping and grounds, Flannigan said.

Wylder Hotels, based in Los Angeles, owns two additional resorts in Hope Valley, California, and Tilgham Island, Maryland. The Windham property will be the company’s third resort and its first in New York state.

“We focus on nostalgic, historical destination resort properties and [Thompson House] really checked every box for us,” Flannigan said. “I thought it was incredibly magical and an amazing location. It has wonderful amenities and potential.”

The renovations will honor the character of the 140-year-old resort, he said.

“We will restore, honor and reimagine this iconic property that has incredible architecture and history, and we will bring that back to life and reimagine it,” Flannigan said. That is what we do — we did it very successfully in our other two properties.”

The resort has been in the Goettsche family since it opened in 1880.

“We owned the hotel 140 years,” former owner Eric Goettsche said. “My great-great-grandparents started it and it has been passed down through the family since then.”

Goettsche, 64, said his impending retirement was the impetus behind the sale.

“We are not getting any younger and it seemed like the right time to sell,” Goettsche said. “There is a lot of excitement in the area and we thought this might be a good opportunity.”

Goettsche and his wife, Debbie, thought it would take years to sell the property, but Wylder Hotels came along quicker than they expected.

“It was a hard decision to make, but it was the right decision,” Goettsche said. “I had the blessings of my family and we thought it was a good time to sell.”

His son, Kurt Goettsche, is looking forward to seeing what Wylder Hotels does with the property.

“We are really excited to see the new owner’s vision come to life,” Kurt Goettsche said.

Greene County Chamber of Commerce President and Executive Director Jeffrey Friedman said the infusion of funds and redevelopment of the property would be good news for Windham and its economy.

“Wylder is a good-sized company that



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The pool and all eight buildings, along with the grounds, will be renovated following the purchase of The Thompson House resort by a California company.



The Thompson House, owned for 140 years by the same local family, has been sold and will undergo a full renovation.



The Thompson House on Route 296 in Windham has been sold.

is moving forward with a pretty sizable redevelopment of the property while trying to keep its historic nature,” Friedman said. “It’s a huge positive for a community anytime a major company is willing to invest money into the area.”

Windham Town Supervisor Thomas Hoyt welcomed the new owners.

“The Goettsche family has owned it for many years and they contacted me before they were going to put it on the market and sell it,” Hoyt said. “Since it has sold, I

have spoken to the CEO from Wylder, John Flannigan, and he laid out his game plan for the resort. I am anxious to see him get his project off the ground.”

The investment in a local historical property will benefit the town, Hoyt said.

“I think it’s great for the community,” he said. “Mr. Flannigan told me his plans and I think it fits into what Windham is and what Windham can put out there for people who want to visit the mountains. It’s phenomenal.”

Lawmakers oppose firearms industry liability bill

By Sam Raudins
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene County

CATSKILL — Greene County lawmakers passed a resolution opposing a bill calling for firearms manufacturers to be held liable for the “public nuisance” created by firearms.

It is unclear when Gov. Andrew Cuomo will see the bill on his desk.

The county Legislature unanimously voted at its June 16 meeting on a resolution urging the governor not to sign the impending bill. The proposed bill seeks to hold the firearms industry liable for the “specific harm illegal firearms violence causes New Yorkers,” according to the legislation, which passed both the state Assembly and Senate on June 8 but has not been delivered to the governor.

The bill would open up opportunities to sue manufacturers and gun retailers in civil cases where a preponderance of evidence shows that untenable risk was not avoided; for example, if a gun dealer does not have adequate physical security measures like cameras to prevent thefts, U.S. Rep. Patricia Fahy, D-Albany, said June 8.

The resolution passed by Greene County said Remington Arms, a firearms manufacturer with a plant in Ilion, employs upstate New Yorkers and supplies many retailers in the county. Hunting and hunting-related events are “a major recreational activity” for residents as well as an attraction that draws people to the county every season.

The bill, if signed into law, would infringe on the Constitution’s Second Amendment right to bear arms — which applies to the states — and could set a liability precedent for other industries like car companies and beer sales, according to the resolution.

Assemblyman Chris Tague, R-Schoharie, expressed similar concerns in the June 8 Assembly session.

“If you buy a vehicle, and you go out and drive drunk and you end up in an accident, are you going to turn around and sue the manufacturer?” Tague said.

According to the FBI’s National Instant Criminal Background Check database, the state of New York performed nearly 506,000 background checks for firearms sales in 2020. During the 2019-20 season, more than 591,000 people held hunting licenses in the state, according to the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Hank Coons, president of the Greene County Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs, said with the laws in the place now, if people who abuse firearms were prosecuted, no more legislation would be necessary.

“The only feeling I have about it is to hold gun manufacturers responsible for something some fool is going to do is wrong. It’s wrong. Bottom line,” Coons said. “There’s lots of things that you can hold people responsible for, but not gun manufacturers.”



“Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts.”

- Daniel Patrick Moynihan

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Bass season in full swing

By **Larry DiDonato**
For Capital Region Independent Media

The statewide season for black bass (largemouth and smallmouth bass) “opens” each year on the third Saturday in June. This year it “opened” on June 19, and “closes” on Nov. 30.

The reason for the quotes is the bass season is actually open for catch and release from Dec. 1, and closes on the Friday preceding the third Saturday in June when using artificial lures only.

So, while you can legally fish for black bass all year-round, the June 19 this year was just the first day you could keep black bass. The statewide daily limit is five per day with a minimum length of 12 inches.

DEC reminds anglers, “If the water you plan on fishing doesn’t have a special regulation for black bass (see Special Regulations section of the Fishing Regulations Guide), the statewide fishing regulation applies.”

It also cautions that some counties do not have a catch-and-release season and could have different minimum size limits for bass, so be sure to check the regulations before you head out.

Large and smallmouth bass have been described as, “New York’s top sportfish and for good reason; you can find them across the state, they are relatively easy to catch, and they are a ton of fun to land when you hook into one! Not to mention, several waters in the state are home to trophy-size fish, drawing anglers from across the country seeking out the catch of a lifetime.”

Fun Facts and Tidbits on Fishing for Bass”

- Largemouth Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*)

State Record: 11 lbs. 4 oz., Buckhorn Lake (Otsego Co.), 9/11/87

Where: Shallow, weedy areas of lakes, ponds and rivers; also prefer cover, such as logs, docks and stumps.

- Smallmouth Bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*)

State Record (tie): 8 lbs. 4 oz., Lake



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
Brook Conklin, of Catskill, with daughters Ashton, 10 (middle) and Teal, 6, in the foreground. Ashton is holding a nice smallmouth bass caught on the Sacandaga while fishing with her family.

Erie (Chautauqua Co.) 6/4/95 and St. Lawrence River (Jefferson Co.) 8/28/16

Where: Rocky or sandy areas of lakes; drop offs; also prefer cover of boulders or logs.

Techniques to try:

For early season bass, start along the shoreline or inside weed edges then work your way out deeper if not seeing

or catching fish. Good baits to try are stick baits/worms, either wacky-rigged, (hooked right through the middle) or Texas-rigged, spinnerbaits, chatterbaits (vibrating jigs) or top-water lures like a buzzbait or frog.

One quick note: Chatterbaits can be cost up to \$20 per lure. While that may be a cost of doing business for bass tour-

namer fishermen, you probably could get by with the cheaper versions. Buzzbaits like the “Whopper Plopper” are pricey as well, but work well as a hefty topwater lure.

If fishing deeper water try crankbaits, tube jigs, a Ned-rig or drop-shot rigs. A Ned-rig is a short 3-4” tail section of a stick worm threaded on a jig head. Round jig heads will work but a mushroom style jig head is more commonly used.

If you prefer using live bait, try a crayfish fished on the bottom, or a 3-4” minnow fished under a bobber.

When fishing stick baits or stick work I, along with countless other fishermen, have found one brand to be particularly effective. Gary Yamamotos “Senko” stick baits are high-quality scent-infused stick baits. They are not cheap and other brands will work, but using true Senkos has me catching more and much larger black bass.

I use colors like watermelon, black-flaked pumpkin in 4- and 5-inch sizes, but any colors will be effective. I use an O-ring sold with an applicator and hook it in the middle of the worm “wacky style.” I don’t put the point through the soft plastic which extends the life of the bait.

Just cast and let it drift down to the bottom. If you don’t get a strike, fish it slow on the bottom for just a little, then cast again. This is especially effective at edges of cover like lily pads and weed lines. If you want more information, search DEC’s website (www.dec.ny.gov) on “Wacky Rigs.” It will take you to a page with some great info and techniques.

Happy hunting, fishing and trapping, until next time.

Remember to report poaching violations by calling 1-844-DEC-ECOS.

*If you have a fishing, trapping, or hunting report, photo, or event you would like to be considered for publication, send it to: huntnfishreport@gmail.com.

Summer sports camps return to C-GCC

HUDSON — Summer Sports Camps for children ages 9 through 16 will return to Columbia-Greene Community College this July.

Camps teaching skills in baseball, softball, and soccer will begin on Monday, July 19, featuring a low student-to-coach ratio and coaching staff from area colleges and high schools.

Baseball Camp will be held July 19, 21, and 23 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. for boys ages nine – 12, and from 1 p.m. to

4 p.m. for boys ages 13 – 16, under the supervision of C-GCC Head Baseball Coach Skip Ingham. Players should bring a glove, towel, and workout gear; catchers should bring catcher’s gear.

Co-ed Soccer Camp will be held July 26, 27 and 28, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. for students ages 9 – 12, and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for ages 13 – 16, under the supervision of C-GCC Head Women’s Soccer Coach Andrew Lashua. Players should bring cleats, a towel,

shin guards (if available) and workout gear.

Softball Camp will be held August 9, 11 and 13 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. for girls ages 9 – 12, and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. for girls ages 13 – 16, under the supervision of C-GCC Head Softball Coach Kali Drum. Players should bring a glove, towel, and workout gear; catchers should bring catcher gear.

Camp tuition is \$100 per student per camp, and check-in begins 30 minutes

before the start of camp. Students will be assigned to a group according to their ability and age and will be supervised at all times by a qualified coach. Each participant will also receive guidance concerning conditioning and a summer camp T-shirt.

For more information or to obtain a registration form, contact C-GCC Athletic Director Nick Dyer at 518-828-4181, ext. 3556, or Nicolas.dyer@sunycgcc.edu.

General admission tickets for Saratoga Race Course on sale

SARATOGA SPRINGS – Single-day general admission tickets for the 2021 season at Saratoga Race Course are now available for purchase at Ticketmaster.com.

General admission tickets may also be purchased on the day of the event at all track admission gates. Single-day Grandstand admission is \$7 and Clubhouse admission is \$10 – the same as in 2019.

General admission tickets for the 152nd running of the Grade 1, \$1.25 million Runhappy Travers on Saturday, Aug. 28 are \$15 when purchased in advance. Tickets may also be purchased at the gates on the day of the event for \$20, pending availability. A limited number of Clubhouse admission tickets are available for \$25.

“There is no change to our general admission policy for the 2021 summer meet,” said NYRA Senior Director of Communications Pat McKenna. “Fans can purchase their general admission tickets in advance or at the gates. We do, however, encourage fans to plan ahead and purchase their Runhappy Travers tickets in advance to save \$5 and guarantee admission to the signature day of the summer meet.”

A Grandstand general admission ticket provides access to the Saratoga backyard, trackside apron and select areas of the Grandstand. Clubhouse admission provides access to Clubhouse dining areas, including the Turf Terrace, Club Terrace and The Porch.

Fans may also purchase season admission passes to Saratoga Race Course.

A season pass provides admission to all 40 days of the Saratoga meet, including Runhappy Travers Day.

Clubhouse season passes are available for \$75 at Season Passes | NYRA. Grandstand season passes are \$50 and may be purchased in-person at more than 150 participating Capital Region Stewart’s Shops and online at Season Passes | NYRA.

Fans will not be required to provide proof of vaccination for admission to Saratoga Race Course. Non-vaccinated individuals will be required to wear a facial covering during their day at Saratoga Race Course, in accordance with federal CDC 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 August 28 and the Grade 1, \$1 million Whitney on August 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 more information about hospitality and dining areas at Saratoga Race Course, visit NYRA.com/Saratoga.



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“Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts.”
- Daniel Patrick Moynihan

#SupportRealNews

Tire dump continues to draw complaints, allegations

By Sam Raudins
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

COXSACKIE — A tire dump operated by Green Tire Recycling on Route 81 continues to draw complaints from neighbors and allegations from town officials despite the company’s second storage location having been cleared of tires.

Green Tire Recycling owner Shane Foster had been fined by the Department of Environmental Conservation for two properties — one located on Surprise Result Road, the other on Route 81 — for a total of \$2,250.

Foster said he has cleared the Surprise Result location of tires, but neighbors of his Route 81 tire storage site said the tires have been piling up since August 2020.

The state had set a March 27 deadline for the tires to be removed from both properties, Coxsackie Town Supervisor Rick Hanse said in April. Greene County Sheriff Pete Kusminsky also said in April the sheriff’s office was assisting with DEC’s investigation.

The DEC is continuing to oversee the cleanup in partnership with local officials, according to the department.

Hanse said although the tires have been moved to Route 81, the operation is still illegal and is not authorized by the town board.

The DEC is pursuing “legal remedies” to the issue, although the extent is unknown, Hanse said.

“It’s a hazard, it’s ugly, it’s mosquito-breeding, it’s a fire hazard and it’s a violation of our zoning,” Hanse said.

It is unclear how long DEC’s legal action will take, but he is in “total sympathy” with the neighbors and others who have to see it, Hanse said.

The town is looking to cite the property owners for violating the zoning code, Hanse said. Foster said the property belongs to his cousin.

Neighbor Duane Keezer said the Route 81 dump is infringing on his property, with tires falling into his creek and pond as well as equipment blocking his driveway. But Keezer said the dump also presents a larger hazard.

“If this thing caught on fire, it would be an absolute catastrophe,” Keezer said.

Keezer said the number of tires has been increasing since he moved in in August 2020, and he estimates more than 20,000 tires are on the property.

Foster said he is actively clearing the tires by cutting them by hand and is working with the DEC “every day” to get the tires under control. He said his goal is to have the tires cleaned up in two weeks.

“I’ve been working hard,” Foster said.




Piles of accumulated tires at the Route 81 site.



The Green Tire Recycling tire dump on Route 81.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS





EMPIRE PLAN ENROLLEES: NO Out-Of-Pocket Hearing Aids

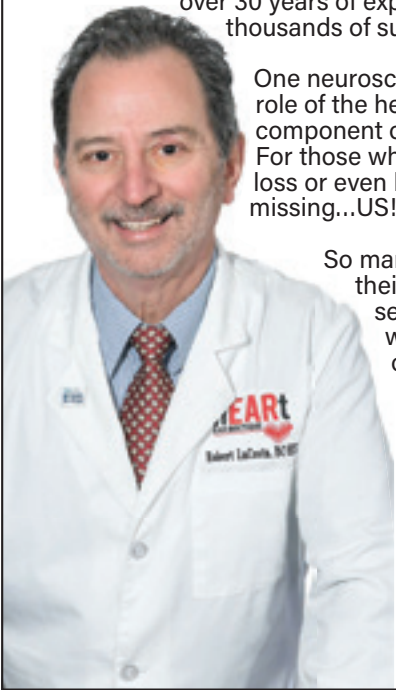
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GARDENING TIPS

BY BOB BEYFUSS



By Bob Beyfuss
For Capital Region Independent Media

First of all, happy birthday, America! The past year and a half has presented many challenges to our nation, but I am proud that our country appears to have emerged relatively unscathed. I am also happy that many families have turned to gardening as a healthy way to deal with the isolation many have had to endure. We are never alone when there are plants we grow depending on us for their sustenance.

Last week’s column on poison ivy elicited quite a bit of email from readers who shared their experiences.

One reader, Jon, has an excellent website that discusses this weed extensively: <https://www.poisonivy.org/> I was also reminded that there are many other common poisonous plants growing right now worth mentioning and some plants, such as Virginia creeper, may also be toxic to some people, but are harmless to most.

One common roadside weed, wild parsnip — *Pastinaca sativa* — produces a rash that results in blisters that resemble and are as painful as a second-degree burn. It is in the same family as Queens Anne’s lace, which it resembles, except for having yellow, and not white, flowers. It can grow to 6 feet tall, but it never reaches the stature of its close cousin, giant hogweed, which may grow 10 feet tall or even higher.

I have not seen giant hogweed in our region personally, but I suspect it may be growing around here, somewhere.

Although wild parsnip is the same plant as the common garden parsnip we eat in soups and stews, the yellow flower heads are the second-year growth from the carrot-like roots. It is a close relative of carrots, parsley and angelica, all of which can cause similar skin reactions in sensitive individuals. It is odd that the toxic effects of the sap are generally only expressed in the presence of sunlight. If you get the sap on

you, wash it off with soap and water and keep exposed skin covered from sunlight for at least 48 hours.

If you are a fan of oak trees in general, a reader highly recommends the recently published book, “The Nature of Oaks,” by Douglas W. Tallamy. I have not read it myself, but it is among several excellent unread books on my list.

Our vegetable gardens are producing all sorts of tasty treats right now, thanks to some stupidly hot weather we have had the past two weeks. I have small green tomatoes already and blossoms on my cucumbers and zucchini.

The first Colorado potato bugs have appeared on some “volunteer” potatoes I failed to dig last fall. These chunky, yellow with black stripes, beetles can wipe out potato, tomato and eggplant in short order once they start multiplying. Look for and squish their yellow eggs on the undersides of leaves as you see them. A preventative insecticide spray applied

now may be warranted. There are organic as well as conventional products available at most garden centers.

Early blight on tomatoes is evidenced by yellow spots on leaves that eventually turn brown and cause the leaves to wither and die. This disease cannot be cured, but it can be prevented somewhat, by fungicide applications applied now.

Garlic is now being harvested as the cloves expand. Pull up a bulb to see if the individual cloves are fully formed, but can still be separated from each other with your fingers. Overripe bulbs will have the cloves already separated. Save the biggest bulbs for replanting this October.

If you have space in the garden now from where you have harvested garlic, spinach, beets, turnips, lettuce or salad greens, you can still plant beans, carrots, beets and even summer squash for a fall crop. You can probably even plant a fast-maturing variety of sweet corn that is ready to

harvest in 70 days or less. Wait a few weeks to sow fall greens or lettuce. Hot weather makes radishes taste much hotter than cool weather and it also causes all sorts of plants to bolt prematurely. I made my final asparagus harvest on July 4th and allow the spears to grow to fern for the rest of the season.

My peach trees have set an overabundant crop once again that I have been trying to thin now that the “June drop” is over. Ideally, peaches should be thinned to one fruit per 8 inches of branch length. I think I may have to prop up some branches with stakes to keep them from breaking due to the added weight.

Most gardeners are reporting a good fruit set on berries as well as tree fruit. The strawberry season is in full swing now. Strawberry beds are usually only productive for a few years, sadly. Next week I will tell you how to renovate the beds.

Reach Bob Beyfuss at rlb14@cornell.edu.

Positively Speaking

By Gary W. Moore
For Capital Region Independent Media

I’m asked lately why I’m still writing. My answer is, “It’s what I do. I’m a writer.”

For me, not writing is like not breathing. Something occurs to me, and my mind and heart conspire to create the words that come out on paper. It’s just what I do and it’s who I am.

Then I’m asked the question, “How can you write and speak so openly about your death?” That’s a different question with a different answer.

I write openly about my upcoming death in hopes of helping others deal with the inevitable. We are all going to die, and I don’t believe death is something to be feared, but even welcomed.

Then there are those who are left behind and there will be grief, but I also hope to help my loved ones joyfully celebrate

with me as I pass.

Then of course there are “Death and Taxes.” I’ve been too sick to properly deal with my taxes, and I’m currently on an extension. I think it’s weird that in my last days, I’m more concerned about the IRS than dying. I understand they can’t chase me into heaven, but they can pursue my family.

A simple flat tax could solve it all but that won’t happen in my lifetime. And besides, it would end an entire unnecessary industry, so this week is “tax week.”

What’s so interesting about dying? First and foremost, it’s what we don’t know that stirs the mind ...

We are glued to stories about near death experiences (NDEs are highly debated, by the way), only because we all want to know what it will be like when we ourselves die.

Dying in public



Gary W. Moore

As consumers, we are obsessed with reviews before eating at a restaurant or purchasing a product. There is no “Yelp” for death. We read reviews because we want to know if the purchase is worth it, and we want to know what it would be like to have said product.

But when it comes to death, we don’t really get to read reviews. We also don’t get a choice. We will all die, and no one really knows exactly what

to expect. I won’t know how it will be experienced, but I do trust in the heavenly promise. I do trust God is and will be present every breathing moment.

I find it fascinating, the small daily changes in my body. I’m not really experiencing much pain. My lungs become a little more congested daily. I see my family slowly coming to terms with the impending reality, which is what I hope for. I’m told my kidney and liver function is weakening. Death may not come easy, but easier is always better.

I still have not given up. I serve the Great Physician ... my God of Miracles and Wonders. I do not understand His plan, but I’m confident that whatever it is, it serves the greater good. As much as I’d prefer to live, I submit my life to His will.

My greatest prayer is not for me, but for my family. I know there will be grief even though I pray for joy. Where there will be sadness, I pray for celebration of a happy life. The best I


can hope for is an understanding that those I love are still loved and know and pray that I carry my concern as an eternal devotion to them with me to the grave.

And finally, I pray the words to this old country and western song over all those whom I love and love me in return ...

“Will the circle be unbroke, by and by lord by and bye? There’s a better home there waiting in the sky lord in the sky.”

Yes, I believe with all my heart that I will soon return to my eternal home, prepared for me by my Lord and Savior, where I’ll spend eternity with my loved ones surrounded by peace and joy.

May God bless you all.
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

Pondering the uses of zucchini

By Dick Brooks
For Capital Region Independent Media

Our garden is a thing of beauty this year, but our three zucchini plants are getting worrisome. They are threatening to take over the neighborhood.

The last few years, one plant has supplied our needs and left some unpicked that grew huge. What can you do with a 16-pound zucchini? Knowing there are those of you out there without the time to properly ponder upon the great questions of our time or who are not confident in their powers of ponder, I have graciously decided to share the results of my week’s mental activities with you.

There are the obvious common usages for a giant green squash like using it as a doorstop or to beat off rabid raccoons who are lurking under the porch. I spent most of my time trying to come up with more creative uses like:

1) A hollowed-out zucchini makes a neat kayak for your guinea pig. This also allows the little critter to share quality family time in the pool. An American Girl doll life vest will provide the aquatic safety necessary to protect all but the chubbiest of these little creatures.

2) If a food dehydrator is available, slices of zucchini that have been dried to the consistency of a two-by-four make neat paving stones for mean-

dering garden paths; any excess pieces are handy for re-soling old clogs.

3) Cut a 6-inch hole in the side of one of your green giants, scoop out all the inside stuff that you can, allow to dry for a week or so, coat liberally with polyurethane and hang in a friendly tree as a nesting box for large birds like crows and vultures. They will greatly appreciate your efforts since they are usually neglected when it comes to bird housing, the little cute birds getting the most in the way of available housing.

4) Last year there was a pumpkin shortage, or so they said. I personally think it was like the gasoline shortage — after taking out a second mortgage, I was able to purchase all the pumpkins I needed or wanted. This year, if they try to pull that stunt again, why not substitute another member of the squash group — a large zucchini would make a good substitute for making a jack-o-lantern. If the green color bothers you, it is a problem easily solved by a can of orange spray paint. Yes, I know zucchini and pumpkins aren’t the same shape, but the really little kids won’t care and the older ones can make just as big a mess scooping out the inners and you’re recycling a veggie that might have gone to waste otherwise.

5) The best use I was able to come up with was to just leave the largest ones in the garden

until after the coming fall frost freezes them and they get all squishy. Smack them firmly onto the ground, being careful not to get splattered, then pick out the seeds and place them in a safe place to dry. When dried, put them in sandwich-sized Zip-lock bags and store them in your freezer. Now comes the good part! Watch the national news and the next time you hear of a famine in some far distant part of the world, you can help. Rush to the post office and mail your bag of seeds to the prime minister or whoever is in charge. Include instructions for planting and in a month or so, send the same person all the zucchini recipes you can — they’re going to need all they can get. You have solved your zucchini problem, helped solve the dilemma of world hunger and given a struggling nation a new export, which they will probably ship to our country and sell so cheaply that our farmers won’t be able to compete, thus solving future problems involving oversized squash. I just hope they don’t spray them with lead-based paints before they ship them to us.

Thought for the week — If Wile E. Coyote had enough money to buy all that Acme junk, why didn’t he just buy dinner? — or grow zucchini!

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



The Creamery was a busy place in its day. The shell of the building is still there next to the school.

More to Potter Hollow than meets the eye

By Mary Lou Nahas
For Capital Region Independent Media

Potter Hollow is a small hamlet in the town of Rensselaerville, probably best known because Potter Palmer, who went on to own the Palmer House in Chicago, was born and grew up there. But it is much more than the birthplace of a famous person. Today I want to share some stories about day-to-day life there.

According to Norman Faulks, who authored a history of the township of Rensselaerville, Potter Hollow was first settled about 1806. Its early settlers were the Potters, Samuel and Timothy, from whom it derived its name.

People Made It Happen Here: gives further early history: 1824 Spafford's Gazetteer recorded: Pottersville, 2 miles west of Preston Hollow, has a Friends Meeting House and 10 or 12 houses and a school house, some shops and a sawmill. Preacher Stephen Treadwell was the quaker minister.

1872: Potter's Hollow had a Friends Meeting Hall, an Inn, store, 2 shops.

1886 Norman W. Faulks: Potter's Hollow is also a small village, lying in the extreme west part of the town, of about 100 inhabitants. It has a post office, a hotel, a Quaker Church, two stores, one a hardware and the other for general merchandise.

Liz Briggs, who grew up in Potter Hollow and attended Greenville High School, wrote a "History of Potter Hollow" for the school publication Silhouette:

1870: Two blacksmith shops, two apiarians (bee keepers), one general store, two wagon makers, one hotel (Russell House), physician and surgeon.

By 1890 a stage driver, harness maker, shoemaker, carriage maker, boatman, postmaster, clergyman, sawmill, two hotels: Potter Hollow Inn, Old Colonia Spruces, hardware store, about 70 families.

In the 1900s two stores, creamery, sawmill, blacksmith shop, hotel with store in it.

And there are more accounts. As you will see, Jay Makely, whose family moved there from Manorkill, figured in many of them:

The Potter's Hollow store was built in the late 1800s. Nickolas Hallenbeck owned it about 1900

but soon closed it on account of ill health and moved to Hudson. In April 1903, Jay Makely heard it was for sale. He rode his bicycle to Catskill, took the ferry to Hudson, bought the store and bicycled back home the next day. This was a general store and stocked most anything that local people would need. The Makelys operated the store until 1915, when they rented it to Verge and John Nickerson.

"Verge Wilsie also had a store in Potter's Hollow. This store burned in 1917 and Makelys sold their store to Verge Wilsie in 1918 who operated the store until 1944 when daughter Lela operated it for a while and then sold it to Roland and Flo Young. Mrs. Young sold it to Mr. and Mrs. James Elbrecht.

The Potter's Hollow Grange No. 1555 was organized in 1937 at Makely's Hall and held their meetings there until their new hall was built.

The old Crapser Saw Mill and Grist Mill was located about a half mile west of Potter's Hollow on the creek side of Route 354. The foundations of this mill still stand. Jay Makely bought this mill in 1912 and moved the saw mill down just west of Potter's Hollow school house. Jay sawed lumber for many years for \$3 per thousand using steam power. Jay also had a dance hall on the second floor of the building housing the saw mill where he held weekly dances for several years."

A Nickerson daughter wrote a marvelous account of growing up there: Unfortunately, I do not know her name, but she described herself: The first three years of my life were spent in the old Wilsie house across from the store. I was born there on April 23, 1915, and my cousin Esther was born there on May 11, 1916. Our fathers Verge and John Nickerson, ran the store."

She remembers Potter Hollow in about 1920: "The populations of Potter Hollow were not very large. We had 22 houses, a blacksmith shop, a general store with a barber chair, the creamery, a saw mill with a meeting room above, a community church, a one room school and a hotel.

"Of the 22 families, seven were related to my father's family. Everyone in the village knew each other's business and spent consid-



The photo of the store interior gives an idea of the range of its contents.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



The People's Store carried everything. The building is standing today, but is in disrepair.

erable time talking about each other.

"There were a few people in the village who held grudges against each other. George Brand who lived across the road from us didn't speak to John Mulbury who lived below the store. The feud was supposed to have started when John's cow ate some of George's Garden. Each Halloween the boys would take George's gate off and carry it down to John's and remove John's gate and carry it up to George's. My father would have to load the gates and return them to their proper owners.

"Lew Cole and Jay Makely had their own feud. Jay would have square dances and show old films in the hall above his sawmill. Lew didn't care to attend and made loud complaints about the loud noises and the sounds of people coming and going to Jay's programs.

"Jay was the P.T. Barnum of Potter Hollow. He often went to New York City and bought bargains from fire sales or push carts and would try to sell them to the local people.

"Each year Jay would put on a gala Fourth of July program and he would involve the whole community. He set up a well-greased pole and would offer a prize to the person who could climb the pole. Many contestants, who had been drinking a bit of hard cider, would put on quite a race. Then there was a butter tub race. Each contestant would have a wheelbarrow on which would be piled three butter tubs. They would start at the small village square in front of Jay's house, then turn and return back up the hill. There was also a nail-driving contest for the women of the village. Nails would be started into a board and with their hammers poised above the nails, the contestants would have to see who could drive the nails home.

"On the grounds of the sawmill Jay had a large pit dug. This was

to be used to roast an ox. The ox was really an old bull that Jay had bought from a farmer for a low price. The church ladies were selling homemade ice cream and cake. When it became dark, Jay would announce that the fireworks would begin. The evening ended with square dancing in the hall over the mill. Jay's Fourth of July celebrations were always gala affairs.

"Most people in Potter Hollow had telephones and there were 10 people on each line. Linda Wilsie was the telephone operator or 'Central' as the switch board was called. Three lines served the village and a few nearby houses. You could ring any one on your own line without using 'Central.' Everyone on the line could and usually did, listen in to all the calls.

"The Hotel did not have a telephone; people from New York City would call and desire to talk to Mrs. Hozel or her son. Linda would be very upset at this. She not only would have to find someone to run up to the hotel to alert the Hozels, but it also meant that no incoming calls could be received nor could any outgoing calls to handled, for an hour or more.

"When anyone was in trouble, the Village neighbors swung into action. If someone was ill, neighbors would appear with soup or offer to help care for the sick person. If a family had a death the word would go out and spread about the village quickly. All kinds of food would be prepared and brought to the home. Potter Hollow was at that time a fine place to spend your childhood."

Another account of the hamlet recounts, there were two blacksmith shops. One owned by Palmer E. Bates, who moved there from Livingstonville about 1908. One of his specialties was a large logging and wood sleigh. He made one for John Makely in 1934 with lifetime steel runners including two coats of paint for \$25. One could haul about

two cords of stove wood or 1,000 board foot of lumber in log on his sleigh. Ray Reed later owned Palmer's blacksmith shop and was a well-known resident for many decades. Fred Hahn also has a blacksmith shop between Frank King's and Ray Reed's house.

"Jay Makely bought a new auto in 1909, a Metz. It had neither windshield or top, probably one of the first cars in this town. I believe the hard road from Potter's Hollow to Preston Hollow was completed about this time. Jay had a dog that liked to run beside the car. He took several people (one at a time) for their first auto ride to Cooksburg and back, but the dog was always in the lead."

The Potter's Hollow creamery was started in the early 1900s as a farmer's co-op with shares \$35 each, local farmers buying one to five shares each. This was a butter factory at this time. In 1916 it became a milk and cheese plant, shipping cream and farmers' cheese. The creamery closed about 1933.

There was also a large three-story hotel on the site where the Michael Yuhas' house is now. It was very active for many years, having a large ballroom where they held dances, Justice Court and sometimes an old-fashioned medicine show. It burned in 1957."

Osee Mulbury, resident, teacher, historian, in 1954 began writing a series of newspaper articles about Old Potter Hollow that recount stories of most of the houses and residents in the town—but that is a story for another day.

It is fair to say that Potter Hollow has always been a special place and continues to attract new folks while retaining many of the long-time ones.

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

Safety tips for grilling and outdoor activities

With summer officially here and COVID-19 restrictions loosening around the country, many people will look to grilling, cookouts and other outdoor gatherings to enjoy the warm weather. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is providing important reminders

and guidelines for safely enjoying these activities.

Make sure your gas grill is working properly:

- Leaks or breaks are primarily a problem with gas grills. Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year.

- If your grill has a gas leak detected by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off both the gas tank and the grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.

- If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and do not move it. If the flame goes out, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least 5 minutes before relighting it.

Never leave equipment unattended:

- Make sure to closely monitor food cooking on the grill. Turn the grill off promptly when you're done cooking, and let it cool completely before returning it to its original location.
- For campfires, fire pits, and chimineas, always have a hose, bucket of water, or shovel and dirt or sand nearby, and make sure the fire is completely out before going to sleep or leaving the area.
- Keep equipment a safe distance from things that can burn:
- Place your grill well away (at least 3 feet) from anything that can burn, including deck railings and overhanging branches; also keep them out from under eaves.
- Keep portable grills a safe distance from lawn games, play areas and foot traffic.
- Keep children and pets well away from any type of equip-

ment in use.

- In areas where campfires are permitted, they must be at least 25 feet away from any structure and anything that can burn. Also make sure to clear away dry leaves and sticks, overhanging low branches and shrubs.

Use fuel and fire starters properly:

- If you use a starter fluid to ignite charcoals, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- Never use gasoline or other flammable or combustible liquids on firepits, chimneys, or campfires.
- For electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire, make sure the extension cord you are using is designed for outdoor use.
- If a fire breaks out, call the fire department:
- For any type of outdoor fire that can't be quickly and effectively extinguished, call the fire department immediately for assistance.

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I wanted to thank everyone within the Ravena / Coeymans / Selkirk communities for their continued support over the last year. It has been difficult at times but we have managed to get through it and provide a helpful community service. We are back to regular business hours Mon - Fri 10am - 5pm / Sat 10am - 3pm / Closed on Sundays

Currently, with the volume of bottles and cans we are only taking drop offs - bring in your empties, place them in a designated area, we take your name and then give you the earliest time frame to come back or any time thereafter to collect your money. Since opening in July 2018, we have helped raise approximately \$52,500, which is almost 924,000 bottles/cans for 50 different organizations which anyone can donate to.

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FLOWERS, from page 1

ing as another fades away.

Teator learned about gardening from her mother growing up.

“I was probably born with a shovel in my hand,” she quipped.

She has carried on the family tradition of gardening, planting more flowers than vegetables, like her mother did.

“My grandfather always complained that I didn’t plant enough vegetables,” Teator said.

There are some vegetables, including a few varieties of tomatoes, broccoli, lettuce, edible sweet peas, cucumbers and rhubarb (Don likes to cook this), but it is clear that Teator favors flowers and flowering trees and shrubs.

There is a giant hedge of forsythia all down one side of the property. Bluebells are her favorite plants.

“They’re great to be planted with hostas, because the hostas don’t come up that early, so you’ve got real pretty flowering bluebells, and then the hostas come up and the bluebells fall to the ground and seed themselves,” she said.

In other areas there are irises, day lilies, other types of lilies, rhododendrons, phlox and golden chain, to name a few. The golden chain looks similar to wisteria, but in yellow, Teator explained.

She also has many Eastern redbud trees on the property, as well as peach and plum trees. The fruit trees produce a prolific amount of fruit, which she cooks with, freezes, and gives away.

Teator credits the glacial till — the mix of sand, silt, clay and gravel—that glaciers deposited over 10,000 years ago when they melted, as a major contributing factor to being able to create the garden she wanted.

“It’s 5 to 6 feet of loam with no rock in it, so it’s just amazing dirt,” she said, noting that she would not have the gardens she has with a different kind of soil.



DON TEATOR
The lily pond at Debra Teator’s Freehold garden. The Clematis Garden Club chose the garden as the July Garden of the Month.



DON TEATOR
A brick walkway bordered by pink rhododendrons on one side leads to the backyard garden

This has allowed her to easily add stone features to her garden, such as walkways, walls, a lily pond and a reflecting pool. Walking through the garden, it becomes apparent that Teator favors stone. She accumulated the stone she wanted slowly over time. Much of it came from Don’s family’s former 75-acre farm nearby.

“I love building stone walls,” she said.

The soil facilitated the construction of other stone features.

“It’s so easy to dig a hole,” Teator said. “I started digging the re-

flecting pool because it was just so easy.”

A statue of a little girl, reflecting, with her head resting on her knees, sits at one end of the pool. Another pond has koi and other fish in it.

Other visual features are a large concord grape arbor with a metal arch. It is mostly for show, as the lack of light underneath causes the fruit to rot before it matures. Another feature is a bare tree trunk that Teator adorned with colored glass bottles to make a sculpture.

Teator spends at least a couple



DON TEATOR
The east side of the house large Rhododendron, Moss Phlox, Iris.



MORGAN MCFADDEN
Debra Teator in her garden with some deep purple lilac.

of hours a day or more tending to her garden.

“The weeds take over real fast, so you have to watch that,” she said.

One tip she has is to put mulch down each year. She and Don go to the recycling center in Bethlehem where they can purchase leaf and wood mulch for \$25 a yard.

“A couple of truckloads of that every year or every other year really helps to improve the soil,” she said.

She also does a major cleanup in the fall so she can start easily in the spring after minor cleaning.

That gnome house across the street from her home is a testament to Teator’s creativity. When the tree fell over one day because it was rotten in the middle, it downed two telephone poles and closed the road for a day.

After the debris was cleaned up, Teator added little stone steps leading up to the stump, which she topped with an A-frame roof flanked by hanging lanterns. She hung a window on the stump and installed a door, complete with a small flower wreath, at the base.

The Clematis Garden Club meets in Greenville and consists of around 40 members from Greene, Albany and Schoharie counties. New members are always welcome. For information, call Jean

Horn at 518-966-4260.

Debra Teator shared the recipe she uses to make peach crisp from the peaches she grows in her Freehold garden.

Peach Crisp

Topping:

- 6 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 1/2 inch pieces and chilled
- 3/4 c coarsely chopped pecans, walnuts, or almonds

Filling

- 3 pounds of peaches, peeled, pitted, and cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 1/4 c granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoon lemon juice

Mix flour, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt in a food processor. Pulse in butter to make a coarse meal. Add nuts and pulse until the mixture clumps together. Refrigerate at least 15 minutes.

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Mix peaches, sugar, and lemon juice. Transfer mixture to 8-inch baking dish. Sprinkle topping evenly over top. Bake for 40 minutes until the filling is bubbling and the topping is golden brown.

The D-lightful vitamin

By Mary Schoepe
For Capital Region Independent Media

The July 4th holiday has come and gone and lots of fun in the sun is here for the next couple of months.

And speaking of the sun, as a kid I spent countless hours playing outside, enjoying the sunny weather, and I’m sure you did, too! But as an adult, the fear of developing skin cancer changed that carefree attitude for many of us. Unfortunately, because of this sun phobia, 1 billion people worldwide are vitamin D deficient and if left untreated, that deficiency can lead to some serious health issues.

Michael Hollick M.D., Ph.D. and the leading authority on vitamin D, reported more than a decade ago that staying out of the sun results in a significant drop in vitamin D levels. And according to a report published in Medical News Today, low vitamin D levels increase the risk of death from cardiovascular disease and 17 varieties of cancer.

Unfortunately, most people don’t realize they have a deficiency because the signs are very subtle. And those subtle but common symptoms include getting sick more often, low back pain, fatigue, depression, anxiety, dry skin and increased hair loss.

In today’s article, you’ll discover why you shouldn’t shun the sun! Vitamin D plays a number of very important roles in your body, including the ability to absorb calcium and keeping your nerves, muscles and immune system working properly.

When the sun’s ultraviolet B (UBV) rays hit your skin, processes inside the tissue start making vitamin D for the body to use. Research published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition and the Journal of the American Medical Association reported that when bare skin is exposed to sunlight, amazing things happen such as prevention of depression, protection against cardiovascular disease and autoimmune diseases like multiple sclerosis, lupus and psoriasis. It can also support healthy teeth and gums, boosts immune function and helps with memory, learning and concentration.

Adding a vitamin supplement to your diet can also help you lose weight, too. In one study, people taking a vitamin D supplement were able to lose more weight than people taking a placebo. Scientists chalk this up to vitamin D’s appetite-suppressing properties.

But overdoing it in the sun can potentially lead to skin cancer. So Holick suggests that if you’re going to get out in the sun, you should do it between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. for significant sun exposure. Protect your face and tops of your ears because they are the most sun-exposed and sun damaged areas.

It’s also recommended that you allow 10-15 minutes of unprotected sun exposure to your arms, legs, abdomen and back. Then follow up with good sun protection like 30 SPF or higher.

According to David Servan-Schreiber, M.D., Ph.D., “Following Dr. Holick’s advice about vitamin D is possibly the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and save yourself from many chronic diseases including cancer.”

So get out in the sun this summer. Your body will thank you for it!





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DISPLAY, from page 1

individuals who come together as a whole. I am so appreciative of the opportunities that we continue to have here.”

Chris Gowane, of Connecticut, watched the parade from the entrance to the cultural center.

“My wife was born and raised in Japan and I was just explaining to her what [the holiday] means,” Gowane said. “It is about the freedom to think and feel as I wish. There are a lot of places in the world where people can’t do that, so I don’t take that for granted.”

Local businessman and former Greene County Legislator Kenneth Dudley served as one of two grand marshals for the parade. Dudley is also president of the Michael J. Quill Irish Cultural and Sports Centre.

“I am proud to be part of this. I was honored to accept,” Dudley said at the parade’s conclusion. “This is a great day to celebrate. I wish things were like they were years ago when everybody respected the country and respected one another. But this is a great event today.”

Terry Patterson, grand marshal along with Dudley and treasurer of the cultural center, noted the work put in by volunteers to host the parade.

“It’s amazing how many peo-



MELANIE LEKOCEVIC/CAPITAL REGION INDEPENDENT MEDIA
Dozens of vehicles sporting flags, balloons and all kinds of red, white and blue decorations participated in the annual Fourth of July parade.



MELANIE LEKOCEVIC/CAPITAL REGION INDEPENDENT MEDIA
A woman waves two handfuls of America flags in the annual parade on Saturday.

ple were here,” Patterson said. “It’s a small hamlet, but so many peo-

ple came. People underestimate a small town, but I never did.”



MELANIE LEKOCEVIC/CAPITAL REGION INDEPENDENT MEDIA
Parade Grand Marshals Kenneth Dudley and Terry Patterson wave to onlookers.



MELANIE LEKOCEVIC/CAPITAL REGION INDEPENDENT MEDIA
Even the marching donkey was all decked out in red, white and blue.

Weekly concert series continues in Veterans’ Park

GREENVILLE — Got plans for Tuesday nights this summer? A free concert series is being held in Greenville at the gazebo in Veterans Park.

Presented by Community Partners of Greenville and the Town of Greenville, different bands offering a variety of styles are playing consecutive Tuesday nights through Aug. 17. The concert series kicked off July 6.

Concerts are 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 com-

munity center next to the library, in the event of rain. Bring your own chairs for the outdoor concerts.

Remaining bands scheduled to play this summer include 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.

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.

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.

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C-GCC will hold an open house for prospective students both in-person and online on
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For more information, contact the Admissions Team at **518.828.4181 ext. 3427** or admissions@sunycgcc.edu.



Watchdog: Public needs info on state’s climate goals

By Kate Lisa
Courtesy of Columbia-Greene Media

ALBANY — The state must act quickly to meet its ambitious climate change goals, a state watchdog group said last Monday, hours before climate leaders met to advance plans to achieve strict benchmarks mandated to curb New York’s greenhouse gas emissions.

The New York Public Interest Research Group recommended officials create a public climate dashboard, or online scorecard, for people to easily access information about impending changes to achieve steep climate and energy goals legislated in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

Passed and signed in 2019, the Climate Act mandates a 40% reduction of statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and an 85% emissions reduction by 2050. The legislation also set goals to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040.

“Unfortunately, New York is still far from meeting many of its

climate goals,” NYPIRG Environmental Policy Director Liz Moran said. “To motivate New York to adopt the strong policies needed to meet the state’s essential climate goals, a scorecard for the public must be made readily available by New York state. The Climate Action Council is currently in the process of creating a Climate Action Plan to recommend actions the state can take — this is a crucial time for the public to be given information about where the state stands in respect to its climate goals.”

NYPIRG released its scorecard on the state’s progress a few hours before the state’s 22-member Climate Action Council met last Monday to continue to prepare a scoping plan with recommendations to ensure the state satisfies its steep climate goals.

Regular public reports and public accountability will be key to ensure New York meets its climate goals, according to NYPIRG, to bolster public support for changes that may not come easily to New Yorkers, including the exponential growth of solar, wind and geother-

mal energy and the phasing out of fossil fuel power plants and related infrastructure.

The Climate Act also mandates 70% of state electricity be generated by renewable sources by 2030, 6 gigawatts of distributed solar by 2025, 9 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2035 and 3 gigawatts of energy storage capacity by 2030, among others.

“For each goal established in the CLCPA, New York has much work left to do in order to achieve the goals set out in the law,” according to NYPIRG. “...New York will need to eliminate its reliance on energy derived from fossil fuel and promote renewable energy in all economic sectors.”

The state needs about 5% annual growth of using renewable energy to meet the goal of 70% renewable electricity by 2030, and to cut emissions by at least 3% each year to satisfy the 2030 goal, and 2.25% each year after that to meet the 2050 benchmark.

New York has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 13% since 1990. Electricity emissions have

declined 51% since 2005.

The state is on track to meet its solar energy requirements, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association cited in NYPIRG’s report.

“New York State has, in the past, had a poor record of meeting climate and energy goals,” according to NYPIRG. “In order to ensure New York state meets its legally mandated and ambitious goals, public support will be critical. By making a climate scorecard for the public and incorporating information on the CLCPA goals in all of New York’s climate and energy pages, the public will be enabled to better advocate for the wellbeing of their communities and for New York to adopt policies to meet its climate goals.”

The Climate Action Council on Monday reviewed recommendations submitted by its seven advisory panels last month about the best strategies to include in a draft scoping plan for New York to achieve a carbon-neutral economy. The panels are comprised of experts from across the state on Transporta-

tion, Agriculture and Forestry, Land Use and Local Government, Power Generation, Energy Efficiency and Housing, Energy Intensive and Trade Exposed Industries and Waste.

Transportation recommendations need to be amended and re-submitted, panelists said, because the strategies were too vague to improve accessibility and affordability of services to meet state decarbonization goals.

Climate leaders also stressed the need for transportation changes to be community-driven, increase electric vehicles and to emphasize improving municipal public transportation upstate and downstate with long-term bus services and high-speed rail.

State Department of Transportation Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez, a member of the Climate Action Council, noted the challenge of earmarking state and Transportation and Climate Initiative funds to expand public transportation in underserved communities, or poor, rural and minority neighborhoods.

Living on Purpose

Being less critical and more forgiving

By Dr. Billy Holland
For Capital Region Independent Media

There is nothing wrong with gaining earthly knowledge until it becomes more important and trustworthy than God’s will.

In this life, arrogance and selfishness are the result of our fallen and depraved nature.

The carnal mind controls our conscience until it is renewed through the power of the Holy Spirit. God commands that we not be conformed to the world, but be transformed. This happens when our original spirit is changed into a new spirit, which allows us to see everything the way God sees it. This is called

being born again and is a gift of salvation from the one who loves us and wants to give us eternal life.

Every Christian will face spiritual warfare and we must become determined to never compromise God’s truth. We can share our convictions, but since each person has free will, only

God can change a heart.

Instead of trying to tell everyone else how to live, maybe we should spend more time examining our hearts. We learn many things throughout our lives, but not everything we believe is true. Most of our information comes from what others have told us, and the rest from what we’ve learned through the failures and triumphs of personal experiences.

The more I research, the more I discover the world is filled with deception and things are not always what they seem. I just want to make sure that my views are not distorted. Some people do not care about right and wrong as long as they have what they need to survive. Asking God for discernment also applies to family and friends and how we have formed destructive thoughts about them. It makes the situation even worse when we gossip and share our stories with others.

We have all done things good and bad that people will associate with our character. Unfortunately, many times we have also been guilty of misjudging people. Maybe we observed someone in a weak moment or heard a story about them that was skewed, which caused us to form our opinions in error.

Yes, we indeed need to watch how we act and what we say, as we remember not to form our views about an individual based on a few glimpses of their actions. Jesus calls for us to forgive everyone and have more understanding and compassion because we all have our times of weakness and make a lot of mistakes. How many times have we acted ugly and given someone a bad first impression of us? The consequences we all must be accountable for is that even when we ask God to help us forgive, it is nearly impossible to forget.

We are quick to make our case when someone offends us

and wanting revenge is common. Many are more than willing to discard a relationship and in some cases even if it’s nothing more than a rumor. We seldom consider that as we are burning bridges, others are doing the same to us. The wounded soul must be repaired like a fractured bone.

We cannot proceed in our inner healing without spiritual realignment and as God heals us we must also forgive ourselves. Everyone is born needing to be rescued from sin and the blood of Jesus is the only ransom. Until we receive God’s love and forgiveness, we are unable to know the true meaning and purpose of life.

God is truth and the only way for us to know God’s truth is to know Him. I have seen many who have everything life can offer and yet are miserable because they did not have the presence of Jesus dwelling within their heart and mind.

As adults, we are convinced we can handle our negative emotions. We learn to hide the pain as we try to heal ourselves and manage our hatred for all the bad things we have experienced. The agony of enduring the daily grind can twist in knots and is not a place of joy or contentment. It’s heartbreaking to know that many individuals live as a prisoner because they refuse to forgive. Bitterness can take root within the heart and cause us to be incarcerated with misery and depression. However, there is good news when we accept the love of Jesus as the key to genuine peace and happiness.

We are reminded in John 8:31-32, where Jesus said, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Read more about the Christian life at billyhollandministries.com.



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Reconsidering annuals in the late summer garden

By Thomas Christopher
For Capital Region Independent Media

Annual flowers were disdained by most expert gardeners back when I was learning the trade.

There was some reason for this. The annuals available then were relatively few — petunias, marigolds, zonal geraniums and a few others — and the colors of the blossoms tended to be glaringly bright and obvious.

Gardeners who did plant annuals commonly did so in simple geometric patterns, in an echo of Victorian carpet bedding schemes. The results were naïve at best and more often just crude. I admit that I was one of the offenders.

My understanding of annuals changed drastically, though, about 25 years ago, thanks to Mike Ruggiero, who was then the senior curator at the New York Botanical Garden. Mike is one of the most expert horticulturists I have ever known. Although retired now, he still teaches at the Botanical Garden and keeps his hand in by hybridizing daylilies in his home garden.

Twenty-five years ago, one of his chief responsibilities and enthusiasms were the annual displays at the Botanical Garden. These included huge borders flanking a path: 220-feet long and 10-feet

deep on the sunny side, and 125-feet by 5-feet on the shady side.

Mike would establish a backbone for this of small trees and shrubs brought out for the warm weather from the Botanical Garden’s greenhouse collections, and amplify these with plantings of lofty, fast growers such as 10-foot-tall, maroon-leaved castor beans (*Ricinus communis*) ‘Impala.’

Around these uprights, Mike would weave a tapestry of thousands of other annuals ranging from the common to the rare — he had access to a huge variety, because he started all of his plants from seed instead of shopping at the local garden center.

Mike followed the annual trials to keep up with all the new colors and types appearing on the market. His borders were the talk of the New York gardening world and beyond.

Mike told me he loved annuals because they encouraged creativity. Starting a new perennial flower display requires a very substantial investment of money and time. Many perennials must be propagated by cuttings or divisions if the offspring are to grow up true to type, and so must be purchased as plants at several dollars apiece. That makes perennials much more expensive than annuals. Besides, perennials take two to three

years to mature, which tends to discourage risk-taking in the design.

Annuals, by contrast, mature from seed in a matter of weeks, and may be had for the price of a seed packet. Try out some daring scheme in annuals, advised Mike, and you may achieve an eye-catching success. If, however, you don’t like the results, just rip out the plants and start something else.

Perennial flowers do have the advantage of persistence. If well-chosen and cultivated, they should return year after year. Annuals, on the other hand, literally bloom themselves to death, completing their life cycle within a matter of weeks. This means you can have two or more annual displays in the same spot in a single growing season.

When I spoke to Mike the other day, he suggested that rather than just basking in the glories of your summer annuals, you should consider sowing seed of cool-loving annuals right now to set out as the summer fades for a fall show. Mike particularly recommended flowering kale and cabbage for a fall display.

Other annuals suited to summer planting for a fall display include snapdragons, sweet alyssum, and calendulas.

After studying annuals with Mike, I had the honor to co-author a book with him, “Annuals with Style,” which is still

available from online booksellers. This provides the complete view of his school of annual design and cultivation. Mike’s annual extravaganzas at the New York Botanical Garden are, alas, no more, but you can study his methods if you like in his writings and photographs and create your own explorations into floral creativity.

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

Can I get a higher benefit now because I’m older?

By Russell Gloor
For Capital Region Independent Media

Dear Rusty:
I started getting Social Security at age 62 and I am now 77. Can I get a higher benefit now that I’m older?

Signed: Needy Senior
Dear Needy Senior:
Probably not. When you first start collecting your Social Security retirement benefits (e.g., at age 62 or any other age) your SS benefit amount is permanently established and will change thereafter only if:

- A Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) is granted (which is usually done annually, starting with your payment in January of each year). There have only been three years in the last four decades that a COLA increase didn’t automatically occur. This year’s COLA increase was 1.3%.

- You later became eligible for a higher spousal benefit because your husband started collecting benefits after you first claimed, and your benefit amount at your full retirement age (FRA) was less than 50% of your husband’s FRA benefit amount.
 - You later became eligible for a higher survivor benefit because your husband passed away and his Social Security benefit was more than you were receiving (you would need to apply separately for your survivor benefit).
 - You had later earnings that were higher than any of the 35 years over your lifetime used to originally compute your benefit when you first applied. Past years earnings are adjusted for inflation, so original earnings amounts in prior years are increased to today’s dollar value to see if your recent earnings are higher.
- If you are working, Social Security monitors your earnings (and your contri-

butions through payroll taxes) every year to see if you are due a benefit increase and, if appropriate, it is automatically given.

COLA increases are also automatically given effective with each December’s benefit (paid in January) if such an increase is appropriate due to inflation as measured by the national Consumer Price Index.

So, the only other possible way your current benefit could be increased now is if 1) you didn’t claim a spousal benefit when you were eligible and you are still eligible because your husband is still living; or, 2) your husband is now deceased, and you didn’t apply for a higher survivor benefit you were entitled to when he died. If either of those are true, then you should contact Social Security to request your higher benefit.

You do not, however, get a benefit increase simply because you are now old-

er than you were when you first claimed Social Security. COLA will slightly increase your benefit automatically most years, but unless one or more of the other conditions above apply, your benefits won’t change further as you age.

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