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LARGEST PAID CIRCULATED NEWSPAPER IN GREENE COUNTY

**Residents asked
to keep eye out for
spotted lanternfly**

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Volume 15, Issue 1

MY VIEW: Newspapers reach strongest supporters of growth

By Peter W. Wagner
Publisher, nwestiowa.com

Many of today's metro newspapers are facing serious circulation problems they created for themselves.

Owned and managed by profit conscious investment groups, most large and medium-size city papers have stripped their newsrooms of reporters and editors and become dependent on corporate-produced feature articles to fill their pages.

Many groups have sold the publication's familiar real estate locations, outsourced their ad and page design to distant locations and chosen to shut down their

See GROWTH, page A2

Mailing label

Rotary scholar's Peace Boat journey brings global issues home

By Marlene McTigue
Capital Region Independent Media

GREENVILLE — Liana Lekocevic, the recipient of an inaugural Greenville Rotary Club scholarship in 2024, recently returned from a transformative journey aboard the Peace Boat, a global initiative focused on climate change awareness, peacebuilding, and cultural exchange.

Her voyage from Mexico to Alaska on the Japan-based Peace Boat provided firsthand experiences of the devastating effects of climate change and is inspiring her to take action within her local community and abroad.

A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY

"You hear about global warming, but

when you meet people who are losing their homes, it becomes real," Lekocevic said.

The Peace Boat brought her face-to-face with individuals directly impacted by climate change, including people from small island developing states (SIDS), whose lands are disappearing due to rising sea levels.

"One of the people I met was from Grenada, and while she was traveling to join the Peace Boat, her island was being hit by a hurricane," Lekocevic said. "Half of it was destroyed, and she couldn't contact her family for three days."

During her journey, she witnessed the dramatic effects of climate change, including glaciers calving into the sea.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Greenville Rotary Club scholarship recipient Liana Lekocevic holding up the symbol of United Nations SDG No. 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Barr: Hurricane Helene leaves trail of tragedy in western North Carolina

The devastation from Hurricane Helene was wide ranging in western North Carolina.

By Marlene McTigue
Capital Region Independent Media

The small mountain communities of western North Carolina are still reeling in the wake of Hurricane Helene, a storm being called a "1,000-year event" for its unprecedented destruction.

Entire towns were swallowed, homes obliterated, and lives tragically lost, as rivers rose 30 feet in a matter of hours. For John Barr, a New York-based representative of TCI who traveled there, the devastation in Chimney Rock and surrounding areas has left a lasting impression.

"This wasn't just a flood; this was Mother Nature reshaping the earth," Barr said, recounting his second trip to the region. "Hundreds of thousands of tons of earth were removed, foundations swept away, and houses were literally deposited into the river."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

John Barr of TCI, third from right, with volunteers from the Chimney Rock Volunteer Fire Department in North Carolina.

TRAGIC STORIES FROM THE STORM

The tragedy is etched into

the stories of the people who lived through it. One of the most heart-wrenching accounts Barr

shared was of a woman in Chimney Rock who refused to evacuate.

"She was in her late 60s, used a walker, and had been in her home for 40 years. When the evacuation notice came, she told her neighbors, 'Where am I going to go? If the good Lord's going to take me, He'll take me here,'" Barr said.

Tragically, the floodwaters engulfed her home, taking her life.

Another story involved a man who had lost his home in the mountains. After walking for four hours to reach the valley, he witnessed a woman in a white Jeep swept away by the surging floodwaters.

"He locked eyes with her as her car was taken into the river," Barr recounted. "It was the last thing he saw before she disappeared. He told me, 'I can deal

See BARR, page A2

B1



Middle school
accolades

This Day in History January 10

1917 Suffragettes the "Silent Sentinels" first protest outside The White House, in Washington led by Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party



0 91119 81003 1

BARR, from page A1

with losing my home, but I can't get that moment out of my head."

ENVIRONMENTAL DEVASTATION

The storm also brought environmental catastrophe. Toxic waters now flow through the rivers, polluted with debris, gasoline, propane tanks, and even human remains. Barr noted that pets separated from their owners during the evacuation wandering the area were drinking from the river and dying within 24 hours.

"The river is orange, filled with the wreckage of people's lives—mattresses, bathtubs, you name it," Barr explained. "They're trying to dredge it, but this cleanup is going to take years."

Despite the overwhelming destruction, the resilience of the affected communities shines through. One example is Cara and Paul, a

couple from the nearby town of Bat Cave who had to be evacuated from their home by helicopter.

Cara, a schoolteacher, and Paul, a retired attorney, have been separated for seven weeks since the hurricane, unable to return to their home. Yet their crew reopened their small restaurant, the Lake Lure Market and Bistro, to provide meals for their community.

"They said, 'If we cook it, do you think they'll come?'" Barr shared. "And they did—500 people a day."

AIDING THE EFFORT

Barr's sister, Kerry Barr O'Connor, CEO of Dress for Success in Charlotte, played a critical role in facilitating aid. Through her connections, Barr and his team were granted access to the disaster zones to help with relief efforts.

TCI of New York made a significant financial contribution to the Chimney Rock



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Businesses, homes and entire neighborhoods were devastated by the storm, dubbed a "1,000-year" event.

Volunteer Fire Department, whose members have worked tirelessly despite their own hardships.

"These are volunteers with full-time jobs, demol-

ishing buildings and digging through debris," Barr said. "They're the backbone of their community, just like our firefighters back home in New York."

Reflecting on the tragedy, Barr emphasized the importance of sharing these stories.

"These aren't just headlines. These are people's lives," he said. "The lady

in her home, the man who watched that Jeep get swept away—these stories need to be told. Communities like ours in New York need to hear them because, God forbid, this could happen to us someday."

Barr, who has faced his own personal losses, including a house fire, says the experience has fueled his desire to help.

"I'm blessed to have the resources to be here," he said. "And I'll keep coming back. This isn't just about rebuilding homes—it's about rebuilding hope."

For now, the people of western North Carolina face an uphill battle. As Barr said, "They will rebuild. It will take 10 years, but they'll do it. These communities are resilient because they're made up of people who care deeply for one another. That's what will get them through."

GROWTH, from page A1

presses and have the paper printed at some far-off location that requires limiting the daily news and sports coverage to whatever happens before the middle of the afternoon the day before delivery.

With the printed local information, breaking news and sports coverage coming two days later, metro papers have seen a rapid decline in circulation that's often been reported and documented by the many television networks and digital news services.

Unfortunately, many smaller, still thriving, community papers have been wrongly included in the drama, being judged as out of touch and no longer effective because of the negative management moves taking place in the larger metro newspapers.

Granted, circulation numbers for the newspapers in the numerous communities our Iowa Information Media Group serves also have seen some decline. But not nearly as much as the daily newspapers in nearby cities where the losses are numbered in the thousands. One daily within driving distance of our Sheldon corporate office has seen a decrease from 64,000 subscribers to 14,000 households the last few years. Another, in a much

smaller but closer community, has experienced a drop from a one-time high of 16,000 subscribers to just over 2,000 homes.

There are additional reasons for these lower subscriber numbers beyond the high profit motives of some investment groups.

The most obvious is the increased dependence on digital news reports by the younger generation. But such reports are often only national in scope or biased and one sided. There have been some recent studies that tell us that the newest generation is returning to their local newspaper because of the inclusion of local news and ease of finding the information they are looking for in a well-edited and organized printed or digital newspaper.

The 2024 America's Newspapers Trust Study reported that while public confidence in national news sources is declining, local newspapers remain a trusted source for communities across the country.

More than half of Americans see their local newspaper as their most reliable news source, citing transparency and ethical standards that are the dominant drivers of trust in the media. Local newspapers and local television stations receive a 51% rating in the study. Local radio stations re-

ceived a 49% rating. Traditional over-the-air television networks received a 43% rating and national newspapers 36%. At the bottom of the list were the cable news networks at 36% and social media at 20%.

Other reasons for declining subscription numbers include the increased subscription prices being charged for single copies and home delivery. That increase is primarily due to the exaggerated increases being charged to publishing companies by the manufacturers of newsprint and aluminum printing plates and increased postal fees. The U.S. Postal Service also is causing problems with its delays in delivery and nondelivery of subscriber ordered newspapers.

Finally, the lack of employment opportunities at the major metro papers has resulted in a decline in the number of individuals choosing to make a career working as reporters and editors. Just finding capable employees for our various newsrooms has become extremely difficult.

But there is some good news. A few metro newspapers, committed to timely local coverage, are thriving. The Minneapolis Star Tribune is one. And the Portland Oregonian has just moved its print and online newspapers to the traditional broadsheet (large page) format.

And, according to past National Newspaper Association executive director Tonda Rush, the national satire publication *The Onion*, after more than a decade of online-only publishing, is bowing to economic reality and relaunching its print edition.

But it is difficult for me, with nearly 70 years in the broadcast and publishing businesses, to understand the lack of support by some businesses regarding their local community newspaper. Don't they understand the local newspaper is still the best way to reach the community members who are most interested in seeing everyone succeed?

When I visit with subscribers in towns and cities where our Iowa Information Media Group owns newspapers, or read the various studies that cross my desk, I consistently see that it is the community leaders: the mayor, city administrator and city council; the school superintendent and board members; local business owners; community or-

ganizers and influential residents, and the passionate local sports fans who regularly subscribe to and read their local newspaper.

This is a large group who truly care about the future of their community and who are the most likely to shop and buy at home, from a store in their city or town, before they shop online or out of town. They are the desired customers who will come back time and time again for their next pair of shoes, bread and milk, house or farm loan, party dress, fine piece of jewelry or new car. Those shopping online will not.

True, Facebook and other forms of social media promote themselves as being free and targeted, but those who do all their buying online can quickly check a dozen different sites and often find the same item at a much cheaper price. And unless the business is willing to pay a premium, Facebook limits the number of email addresses receiving any firm's sales message so not to overload their system.

In most cases, an ad in any one of our newspapers, figuring 2.3 readers per household, is going to be seen by anywhere from 1,500 to 10,000 more potential buyers than an ad on social media. Plus, the message reaches the most influential voices in the community and nearby area. Those community leaders will echo the value to their associates and close friends.

Plus, the local newspapers provide the added value of being a source shoppers know they can trust and look to for local ideas, direction and inspiration.

So don't be confused by all that is trending regarding major city newspapers. The same is not always true about hometown papers. Hometown newspapers are loaded with information that can't be found anywhere else and published by individuals and families who love what they do and will be around for a long time to come. Embrace them, share your story ideas with them, and support them with your advertising dollars. It can only lead to a better future for one and all.

Peter W. Wagner is the founder/publisher of The N'WestIowa Review. He lives in Sibley Iowa and may be reached at pww@iowainformation.com.



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ALL ARE WELCOME!

The Greenville PIONEER

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - Letters to the editor must include the author's name, address and daytime telephone number. Authors are limited to one letter every 30 days. Letters are published at the discretion of the editor and must be original content.

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

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

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

✝ Freehold Congregational Christian Church
County Routes 67, Freehold
518-947-8823

✝ South Westerlo Congregational Christian Church
County Routes 403 & 405, South Westerlo
518-966-5094

✝ Trinity Episcopal Church
Albany Hill Road, Rensselaerville
518-797-5295

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

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

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

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

✝ Grapeville Baptist Church
Route 26, Climax
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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

■ James Corr, 45, of Smithtown, was arrested Dec. 18 at 2:51 a.m. in Catskill and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor. Corr was issued an appearance ticket.

■ William Blacharski, 37, of Catskill, was arrested Dec. 18 at 12:07 p.m. in Catskill and charged with acting in a manner injurious to a child less than 17 and third-degree assault/recklessly causing physical injury, both class A misdemeanors. Blacharski was released on his own recognizance.

■ Joseph Henry Helmedach, 51, of Acra, was arrested Dec. 19 at 3:18 a.m. in Cairo and charged with fourth-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class C felony, and second-degree criminal use of drug paraphernalia and manufacture of drug-related paraphernalia, both class A misdemeanors. Helmedach was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Raymond Walker, 23, of Greenville, was arrested Dec. 19 at 1:33 p.m. in Coxsackie and charged with criminal mischief/intent to damage property, a class A misdemeanor. Walker was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Christopher Krieg, 35, of Cairo, was arrested Dec. 20 at 2:34 a.m. in Cairo and charged with second-degree criminal contempt/disobeying a court order and criminal mischief, both class A misdemeanors. Krieg's arrest status was not reported.

■ Jade Jones, 19, of Cambria Heights, was arrested Dec. 21 at 11:56 a.m. in Coxsackie and charged with second-degree introducing con-

traband into a prison, a class A misdemeanor. Jones was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Elizabeth Peterson, 58, of Utica, was arrested Dec. 21 at 10:40 a.m. in Coxsackie and charged with second-degree introducing contraband into a prison, a class A misdemeanor. Peterson was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Joseph McNally, 52, of Saugerties, was arrested Dec. 21 at 6:35 p.m. in Coxsackie and charged with driving while intoxicated and operating a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08%, both unclassified misdemeanors. McNally was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Bradford Boobis-Chanin, 52, of Catskill, was arrested Dec. 22 at 12:47 a.m. in Catskill and charged with driving while intoxicated and third-degree aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, both unclassified misdemeanors. Boobis-Chanin was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Stanislav Nikolaev Stanskikh, 42, of Watertown, Massachusetts, was arrested Dec. 22 at 1:17 a.m. in Hunter and charged with driving while intoxicated and aggravated driving while intoxicated with a blood-alcohol content over 0.18%, both unclassified misdemeanors. Stanskikh was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Malik Keshon Lewis, 26, of Poughkeepsie, was arrested Dec. 22 at 2:15 a.m. in Catskill and charged with driving while intoxicated and operating a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08%, both unclassified misdemeanors. Lewis was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Michael Johnson, 46, of Brooklyn, was arrested Dec. 22 at 12:33 p.m. in Catskill and charged with one count of third-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell, a class B felony; one count of fifth-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a

class D felony; five counts of tampering with physical evidence, a class E felony; and five counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor, one count of second-degree criminal use of drug paraphernalia/package, one count of second-degree criminal use of drug paraphernalia/scales, and one count of manufacture of drug-related paraphernalia, all class A misdemeanors. Johnson was transported to central arraignment.

■ Chuan Pin Tsuei, 48, of Athens, was arrested Dec. 22 at 12:33 p.m. in Catskill and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and manufacture of drug-related paraphernalia, both class A misdemeanors. Tsuei was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Natalie Bellerose, 19, of Catskill, was arrested Dec. 22 at 8:49 p.m. in Catskill and charged with operating a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08% and driving while intoxicated, both unclassified misdemeanors. Bellerose was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Conner James Douglas, 23, of Athens, was arrested Dec. 22 at 9 p.m. in Coxsackie and charged with driving while intoxicated and operating a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08%, both unclassified misdemeanors. Douglas was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Nicholas Acevedo, 27, of Woodside, was arrested Dec. 23 at 4:33 p.m. in Tannersville and charged with driving while intoxicated and operating a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08%, both unclassified misdemeanors. Acevedo's arrest status was not reported.

■ Omar Santos-Lopez, 37, of Catskill, was arrested Dec. 23 at 10:16 p.m. in Tannersville and charged with operating a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08% and driv-

ing while intoxicated, both unclassified misdemeanors. Santos-Lopez was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Angela Christine Constant, 46, of Palenville, was arrested Dec. 24 at 12:59 p.m. in Catskill and charged with driving while intoxicated and operating a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08%, both unclassified misdemeanors. Constant was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Nicholas Sawyer Teitter, 28, of Saugerties, was arrested Dec. 24 at 5:03 p.m. in Catskill and charged with driving while intoxicated and operating a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08%, both unclassified misdemeanors. Teitter was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Andrew Arvidson, 34, of Cornwallville, was arrested Dec. 24 at 10:24 p.m. in Durham and charged with operating a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08% and driving while intoxicated, both unclassified misdemeanors. Arvidson was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Elizabeth Cyr, 29, of Pawling, was arrested Dec. 26 at 5:39 p.m. in Catskill and charged with second-degree criminal contempt/disobeying a court order, a class A misdemeanor. Cyr was issued a bail bond in an undisclosed amount.

■ Winona Ladeau, 39, of Williamstown, Vermont, was arrested Dec. 27 at 2:03 a.m. in Catskill and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and manufacture of drug-related paraphernalia, both class A misdemeanors. Ladeau was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Ernest Taylor, 36, of Catskill, was arrested Dec. 27 at 7:45 p.m. in Athens and charged with third-degree criminal mischief/damaging another person's property, a class E felony, and two counts of second-degree menacing, two counts of

fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon with intent to use, and one count of criminal mischief with intent to damage property, all class A misdemeanors. Taylor was taken to central arraignment.

■ Dashaun Chester Sligh, 27, of Poughkeepsie, was arrested Dec. 27 at 11:14 p.m. in Catskill and charged with driving while ability impaired by drugs/combined influence of drugs or alcohol and drugs, an unclassified misdemeanor. Sligh's arrest status was not reported.

■ Brian Patrick Kennedy, 28, of East Islip, was arrested Dec. 28 at 3:20 p.m. in Tannersville and charged with operating a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08% and driving while intoxicated, both unclassified misdemeanors. Kennedy was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Henry Blanco, 38, of Emerald Park, New Jersey, was arrested Dec. 28 at 4:35 p.m. in Athens and charged with fifth-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and second-degree forgery, both class D felonies; seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, second-degree criminal tampering, second-degree criminal use of drug paraphernalia, fifth-degree criminal possession of stolen property and seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, all class A misdemeanors; and third-degree aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, an unclassified misdemeanor. Blanco was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Carl Maxwell, 49, of Athens, was arrested Dec. 28 at 8:03 p.m. in Westerlo and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and manufacture of drug-related paraphernalia, both class A misdemeanors. Maxwell was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Donald Durando, 43, of Smithtown, was arrested Dec. 28 at 10:33 p.m. in

Windham and charged with aggravated driving while intoxicated with a child passenger less than 16, a class E felony, and driving while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor. Durando's arrest status was not reported.

■ Roberto Santiago Cruz, 62, of Ravena, was arrested Dec. 28 at 10:49 p.m. in Catskill and charged with driving while intoxicated and aggravated driving while intoxicated, both unclassified misdemeanors. Cruz was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Murilo Rosendo, 30, of New York City, was arrested Dec. 29 at 2:54 a.m. in Hunter and charged with operating a motor vehicle with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08%, driving while intoxicated and third-degree aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, all unclassified misdemeanors. Rosendo's arrest status was not reported.

■ Michael Eisgruber, 39, of East Berne, was arrested Dec. 30 at 3:44 p.m. in New Baltimore and charged with second-degree possession of a forged instrument, a class D felony. Eisgruber was issued an appearance ticket.

■ Jeremiah Simpson, 46, of Cairo, was arrested Dec. 31 at 10:38 a.m. in Cairo and charged with second-degree bail jumping, a class E felony. Simpson was taken to central arraignment.

■ Tammy Swanson, 52, of Poughquag, New York, was arrested Jan. 1 at 2:03 p.m. in Catskill and charged with three counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and one count of manufacture of drug-related paraphernalia, both class A misdemeanors. Swanson was issued an appearance ticket.

■ An unidentified juvenile, 16, of Rensselaer, was arrested Jan. 1 at 9:37 p.m. in New Baltimore and charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a class A misdemeanor. The individual was released to a third party.

C-D Middle School 1st Quarter Honor Roll

CAIRO – The Cairo-Durham Central School District announced its Cairo-Durham Middle School Principal's Honor Roll, High Honor Roll, and Honor Roll members for the first quarter of the 2024-25 school year.

To qualify for the Principal's Honor Roll, students must record a grade point average of 95 or higher throughout the quarter. To qualify for High Honor Roll, students must record a grade point average between 90 and 94. For the Honor Roll, students must record a grade point average between 85 and 89.

PRINCIPAL'S HONOR ROLL

6th Grade:

McKenna Gooch, Giancarlo Greci, Devin Hoover, Cataleya Juusola, Brayden Maraglio, Alexander McClung, Serenity Morse, Benjamin Nova, Leila Pritchard, Thomas Rushkoski, Richard Sitterly Jr., Jack Twomey, Zipporah Zucker

7th Grade:

Marco Alvarado, Patricia Jeune, Dylan Mulligan, Hailee Myers, Natalie Olivett, Arysia Ortiz, Ruby Palmer, Benjamin Sessa, Reagan VanDenburgh, Aubree Walz

8th Grade:

Zoey Choinsky, Baylee Kastner, John Kiley, Rebecca Mahler, John Mirandona, Abigail Pritchard

HIGH HONOR ROLL

6th Grade:

Christopher Armstrong, Serina Backenroth, Adalyn Butler, Makayla Cucceraldo, Rogan Delaney, Zachary Dziedzic, Jenelle Gaylord, Oliver Goff, Nicholas Jacklitch, Susan Jobson, Jillian Kiley, Tomasz Kolodziej Jr., Aaliyah Maderic, Daniel Martell, Gabriel Masterson, Annabella McGakey, Elayna Montgomery, Matthew Morgan, Marshall Mulligan, Michael Multari, Leona Smith, Alexander Twitty, Logan Urban, Liam Vedder, Xavier Woodhouse

7th Grade:

Joshua Adeoti, Leslie Cruz, Madelyn Dedrick, Brayden Herdman, Luke Hulbert, Elayna Jones, Dayyan Lalgee, Hunter Lee, Felicity Lendin, Brielle Lewis, Calvin Lewis, Autumn Nielsen, Gianna Race, April Rooney, Nadav Saad, James Sasso, Kassidy Schrull, John Silvia, Thomas Slater Jr., Sophia Sternbach, Thomas Sylvester Jr., Anthony Tritto, Brayden Vedder, Ryan Young, Lily Zeun, Logan Zeun

8th Grade:

Kasandra Backenroth, Darien Barris, Sophia Cuti, Mya DeRose, Xaviyer James, Grace LaRosa, Lexi Maderic, Lucy Palmer, Michael Parks Jr., Grace Plank, Wynter Plank, Francesca Porter, William Pugsley, Charles Rushkowski, Trinity Smith, Collin Thorne, Alana Torres, Teagan Watkins

HONOR ROLL

6th Grade:

Abiona Anthony-Davi, Steven Barris-Palacure, Rylen Dalton, Loki Dauley, Revin

Dobert, Benjamin Felton, Briella Geiger, Mia Gonzalez, Aleah Hough, Jesse Lawless, Paul Lawson Jr., Mason McGovern, Levi Miller, Mariana Mora Restrepo, Riley Neer, Maggie Palmieri, Brendan Panyan, Asher Plank, Kit Plank, Clayton Shocklee Jr., Madeline Speenburgh, Grace Vedder, Ian Wolf

7th Grade:

Rigoberto Agar, Frances Baxter, Owen Chapman, Chloe Collins, Damon Dauley, Jano Guiragossian, Harry Hackett, Brendan Hasenkopf-Massaró, Sofia Hernandez Merino, Jonathan Higgins, Annabelle Holbrook, Daniel Lopez, Giavanna Massaro, Joseph Parks, Kaylee Relyea, Silas Smith, Logan Thorne

8th Grade:

Seamus Gavin, Amelia Hammond, Seamus Haugh, Natalie Hennig, Rojer James Jr., Tyler Kern, Carter Maland, Keith Mather, Martin Mora Restrepo, Joseph Nicola Jr., Giovanna Orso, Maya Powers, Skylar Racano, Bella Sneider, Joseph Tritto III

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Obituaries

Patrick F. Fallon



Patrick F. Fallon

Patrick F. Fallon, 86 years old, most recently of Greenville, NY, was born in Dublin, Ireland, and passed away on Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2024, at his residence surrounded by his loved ones. He was the son of the late Michael and the late Catherine Fallon.

He is survived by his loving wife of 67 years, Patricia; his children, Michael

(Kathleen), Catherine (Maria), Kieran (Diane), Anne Marie (Michael), Maureen (Richard), and Patrick Jr. (Suzanne). Also, surviving is his brother, Michael. He was loved by his many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and friends. He will be sadly missed. May he rest in peace.

In addition to his parents, Patrick was preceded in death by his sister Kathleen and brother, Laurence.

Mass was held on Saturday, Dec. 28, at 10 a.m. at St. John the Baptist Church, 4987 State Route 81, Greenville. Services were officiated by Father Jay Atherton.

Calling hours were held on Friday, Dec. 27, from 4-7 p.m. at A.J. Cunningham Funeral Home, 4898 State Route 81, Greenville.

Condolences may be left at www.ajcunninghamfh.com.

Soft Paws

Accidental poisoning

Accidental poisoning is a common emergency situation for household pets.

Our animals do not always have the ability to differentiate between a tasty treat and a toxic substance. Antifreeze that contains ethylene glycol has a sweet, pleasant taste to animals and causes kidney failure if even a small portion is ingested.

All chemicals, drugs and plants should be regarded as potential poisons unless otherwise known. Aspirin and Tylenol (acetaminophen) are highly toxic to cats. Other common drugs, such as ibuprofen, iodine, and primidone, can also be poisonous depending on the animal and the amount ingested.

Certain shampoos and flea control products, especially those containing organophosphates, can also be quite hazardous if used incorrectly.

When in doubt, check it out! Call your veterinary hospital or a poison control center if you have questions about a particular substance. Some poison control centers are well informed about animal poisoning, but others may refer you to additional sources.

Sometimes pets are inadvertently harmed when humans intend to target other critters. Rat poison, roach poison, and gardening aides like snail pellets and weed killers are common threats to pets. Salamanders and toads can be toxic if ingested as well.

Even chocolate, which contains theobromine, can cause seizures and even death if consumed in high enough concentrations. While a few chocolate chips consumed in a cookie are not enough to harm most dogs, larger quantities of the “good stuff,” and especially pure baker’s chocolate, can be quite problematic.

If your dog craves chocolate, seek out treats designed especially for pooches – most of these treats contain carob, which has a similar flavor without the risk. This way your little chocoholic can have the treat without the threat!

Keep in mind that many fruits and vegetables can be harmful to your beloved big dog... grapes, raisins, and onions are but a few.

Finally, many household and garden plants can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, heart problems, convulsions, coma, and/or death if eaten by dogs and cats. Some common plants that can be poisonous to pets: Aconite, amaryllis, azalea, bittersweet, caladium, castor bean, common box, crown-of-thorns, daffodil, daphne, dumbcane, elephant ear, English holly, English ivy, euonymus, foxglove, honeysuckle, hyacinth, hydrangea, iris, Jerusalem cherry, jonquil, larkspur, laurel, lily-of-the-valley, narcissus, nightshades, oleander, philodendron, pine needles, poinsettia, precatory bean, rhododendron, rose bay, skunk cabbage, wisteria and yew.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pictured with CGHS/SPCA Animal Care Technician Sarah Ozmon, Merriweather is the sweetest 6-year-old Russian Blue. She absolutely loves all forms of affection, and especially belly rubs! She even loves being carried around. Merriweather does prefer a quiet environment, so a low-key household is best for her.

If your pet is poisoned, try to find out what was consumed and the quantity. Call a veterinarian immediately and administer CPR or rescue breathing if necessary, being certain the animal’s muzzle is cleaned of the poison before mouth contact.

If the poison was absorbed through the skin, as with a flea dip, flush the area with copious amounts of water. If the poison was ingested, and is a caustic substance like bathroom, drain, metal or oven cleaner, do NOT induce vomiting. Caustic substances will do even more harm on the way up.

Other caustic substances are dry-cleaning fluids, fire extinguisher fluid, fuels like gasoline and oil, furniture polish, glues and adhesives, bleach, and paint-, rust- and varnish-removers.

If the swallowed item is not caustic (most plant materials, aspirin, acetaminophen, chocolate, etc.), induce vomiting by giving 1 teaspoon of hy-

drogen peroxide in 1 cup of salty water. Check with your vet first.

If you have it, ask your veterinarian if syrup of ipecac or activated charcoal is appropriate. Give plenty of water to dilute remaining poison and milk to coat the stomach. Pour these substances to the back of the throat, taking special care not to asphyxiate an unconscious, near-unconscious, or convulsing animal.

If you are unsure and are not confident with your course of action, ask the vet. Above all, get that animal to a veterinarian as soon as possible and bring any remaining substance or the container with you. Many poisons are reversible if treated immediately.

The 24-Hour Poison Control toll-free number is 1-888-426-4435.

Charlene Marchand is the chairperson of the Columbia-Greene Humane Society/SPCA Board of Directors.

C-GHS announces \$10K matching challenge to support community programs

HUDSON — The Columbia-Greene Humane Society/SPCA (CGHS/SPCA) announced a special fundraising opportunity thanks to the generosity of a long-time supporter and devoted animal lover. For a limited time, every dollar donated to the shelter will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to \$10,000.

This matching challenge will directly support critical CGHS/SPCA programs, including:

- Subsidized Medical Treatment for Animals: Helping pet owners with limited incomes access necessary veterinary care to keep their beloved pets healthy and at home.

- Free Pet Food Bank: Providing essential supplies to families in need to ensure pets remain in their homes.

- Animal Rehabilitation Programs: Caring for animals who have suffered from neglect, cruelty or abuse, and providing them with a second chance at life.

By doubling the impact of your donation, this matching

challenge will provide hope and support to countless animals and their families in the community.

“We are incredibly grateful for the continued generosity of our donors, whose support enables us to provide these vital services,” said Ron Perez, president and CEO of CGHS/SPCA. “This matching challenge is a unique opportunity to maximize your impact and make a real difference for animals in need.”

Donations can be made online at cghs.org, by mail to CGHS/SPCA, Attention MATCH at 111 Humane Society Road, Hudson, NY, 12534, or in person at the shelter. This matching challenge is available for a limited time, so the community is encouraged to act quickly to take advantage of this opportunity.

For more information about the Columbia-Greene Humane Society/SPCA and its programs, please visit cghs.org or call 518-828-6044 ext. 100.

A look back

Aging with Grace



PAT LARSEN

After a bit of reflection and contemplation about these past 12 months, I made the decision to do a year in review as 2024 was quickly coming to a close. I wasn’t quite ready to simply step over the threshold to greet yet another new year.

Sorry, this isn’t a political retrospective or a social statement.

It’s my story, my year... Perhaps this will serve as a reminder that we just never know from one moment to the next what’s in store for us. By the way, dreams DO come true. Of this I am certain.

2024 was my year of re-

alized dreams.

If you’re a follower of the syndicated columns that I write, then you’re aware of the passion that I have for teaching fitness programs designed for seniors and Baby Boomers.

If you’re new to my work, then please read on.

My training has been extensive as a fitness instructor. The constant flow of students in classes has numbered well over 600 ladies and gents over these past 13 years who sought to improve their health through music and movement, especially to the tunes from the oldies of the ‘50s and ‘60s.

This year, our classes grew more than any other year to date. I never expected to be in my 71st year of life teaching my peers so enthusiastically, participating week after week!

Additionally, I developed a very successful offshoot of the fitness program called, Aging with Grace...growing wiser with age.

I brought in professionals who taught all manner of health-related subjects for the aging individual to my eager groups. Here’s a few examples of the programs we’ve enjoyed this past year.

Many thanks to the insightful program taught by Licensed Acupuncturist Ms. Hui-Hsin Liu, who practices in Greenville.

Ms. Hui-Hsin Liu has brought a new level of understanding of the importance of alternative care practices to this area for the many ailments associated with the aging process. So many of my students have achieved great results under Ms. Liu’s care.

One very popular and well-attended program this past spring included an occupational therapist, Jen Rheinmiller, who spoke about how to age in place at home.

This was a particularly worrisome subject for so many of the students, who hadn’t quite voiced their concern openly before. By the time Jen had completed this class, we knew we had found a true friend in her. She vowed to return with even more suggestions and support going forward.

Health Insurance 2025 was one of the hottest topics this year. We all needed information as it related to our individual health insurance changes that were set to take place in the new year.

Under the expert clari-

fications of Erin Nevins, of the Nevins Insurance Agency in Greenville, we learned how to navigate these changes to choose the best plans to meet our individual needs. Every one of the 30 people who attended found this program incredibly useful. We’re forever grateful to the Nevins Agency.

Moving on...it was between mid-February through June of 2024, that I was honestly dumbfounded when I was acknowledged by not one of my publishers but the two who I write for: Warren Dews Jr. and Matt Avitable. Two very special, hard-working, patient men.

The Mountain Eagle Newspaper, under the direction of publisher Matt Avitable, approached me offering to produce my first book, “Reflections... Anything But An Ordinary Life.”

Matt expressed his interest in publishing this book based on the popularity of my weekly column in his newspaper.

I’ll never forget that email. I must’ve re-read it 20 times before I said “YES! I’m interested.”

And so, I began a very unexpected six-month journey involving a mastering

of Google Docs (ha! I jest) to complete the book to send off to Matt for printing.

By mid-June of 2024, I had received the first 30 copies of my book and within a few weeks’ time had sold every one, quickly moving on to more orders and more sales. I was overwhelmed with a mixture of disbelief and joy.

There were many wonderful reviews that were written about my book on Amazon.com by those friends, family and readers who were enjoying the book. That was the icing on the cake.

THIS was a dream come true. I never expected this to be the year that I’d be adding the title of book author to my list of accomplishments.

Book two is now in the works. Unbelievable!

There’s definitely one more pretty wonderful, unexpected achievement that landed at my doorstep this year as well.

I’d be totally remiss if I didn’t acknowledge this very special occasion... being named one of the Top Changemakers of Greene County for my work with seniors.

I’m not going to lie. I

wasn’t gracious about accepting this acknowledgment at first. I declined initially, YES, I declined, thinking there were far many more worthy recipients.

It took the perseverance of Capital Region Independent Media publisher Warren Dews, Jr. who called me personally to “discuss” this award. If you know Warren, you know he’s persuasive and doesn’t really take no for an answer with a style that is very unique. And one phone call and 20 minutes later I was happily accepting this award and then agreeing to attend the ceremony and to give a speech to boot.

All in all, this was a pretty stellar year and the common thread is definitely my involvement in this community. I’m so happy I took the time to review 2024. I can’t wait to see what 2025 will bring to my doorstep.

Pat Larsen lives, works and plays in Greene County with her husband Chris and pup Lily. Feel free to contact Pat to chat via phone or email at pelarsen5@aol.com or 518-275-8686.



Snowflake is fiercely protective of her new foal, named Eirlys.



Snowflake grooms her newborn.



Snowflake and Eirlys — whose Welsh name means “snowdrop” — share a tender moment.

Snowball’s diary: A mother’s love

Horses of Unbridled



SUSAN KAYNE

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I bring you another heart-warming tale from Unbridled Sanctuary. This week, we have a special treat — an excerpt from the diary of Snowball, the spirited young donkey who has captured the hearts of all who know her.

Snowball’s journey to Unbridled was long and frightening. At just two weeks old, she and her mother, Snowflake, were confined in the slaughter yards of Texas. With a deadline looming, it was a miracle that we were able to save the pair before their imminent end.

Snowflake, fiercely protective of her newborn foal, nearly lost her life in her efforts to keep little Snowball safe. On arrival at Unbridled, Snowflake could barely lift her head. Her long delicate ears were scorched from the sun and the skin on her face was blistered from exposure. Exhaustion from malnourishment and stress had taken its toll.

Now, a year later, Snowball has grown into a curious and lively young donkey, eagerly exploring her world and touching the lives of all who visit Unbridled. She brays and prances about the grounds, easily making friends. She loves cuddles and treats, and treasures time with visitors during Read To The Rescues and Canvas Of Compassion.

Unbeknownst to us at the time of their rescue, Snowflake carried the secret of a new life within her. On May 9, she delivered her precious gift just in time for Mother’s Day — a snow white, curly haired little jenny. We named Snowball’s new baby sister Eirlys, a name of Welsh origin meaning “snowdrop.”

In this excerpt from her diary, Snowball reflects on her own journey and the love that surrounds her at Unbridled. With a mix of wonder and wistfulness, she observes



Snowball shares the outdoors with one of her horse friends.

her mother’s tender bond with Eirlys, remembering the closeness she once shared with Snowflake. Through Snowball’s eyes, we witness the beauty of motherhood and the unbreakable connection between a mother and her children.

As Snowball navigates this new chapter in her life, she invites us to join her, sharing the joys and curiosities of her days at Unbridled. From the delight of greeting visiting families to the comfort of her cherished friendships with fellow residents, Snowball’s diary offers her unique perspective on life at the Sanctuary.

So, dear readers, I invite you to step into Snowball’s world, to see Unbridled through her eyes, and to celebrate with us the miracles that unfold within our fences — the miracle of new life, of second chances, and of the unwavering love that guides us all.

With warmest regards, Susan Kayne

SNOWBALL’S DIARY

My stall is the best, positioned perfectly on a corner, so I can see so much from it, from the entryway to the stable to the expanse of the indoor arena. When I hear a herd of humans afoot in the aisleway, it always promises a fun day.

My mama just gave birth to my little sister, so I am watching and standing guard, quietly, from my little corner.

Mama can take care of herself and my new little sister just fine. But I want to do my part; after all, Mama was so protective of me when I was little.

The stable is filled with laughter and smiles today, much like every day. I tune my ears in to the chatter, and I learn that for humans, it’s Mother’s Day — a special celebration, a day to honor the love and nurturing that moms provide. The bright and joyful tones of visitors’ voices envelop me like a gentle breeze, and I join the conversations with my joyful brays.

But as I stand here, watching not only all of the people but also my own mama with my new baby sister, Eirlys, in the stall right next to mine, a thought occurs to me — for us donkeys, every day is Mother’s Day!

I see it in the way Mama tenderly nuzzles Eirlys, her soft muzzle brushing over the baby’s curly hair. I hear it in the gentle nickers she offers as encouragement, coaxing Eirlys to stand, to nurse, to take her first wobbling steps. Mama’s love is a constant presence, a guiding light that shines brightly on our days. I miss her full attention on me; she is my dearest friend.

Reflecting on my own journey with Mama, I’m filled with even more love for her — if that is even possible because my heart is already brimming with affection! Through the trials we faced,

the darkness we endured, Mama’s love never wavered. She shielded me from harm, her body a living barrier against the cruelties of the world we were trapped in. Even now, in the safety of Unbridled, I carry her love with me, like a warm blanket wrapped around my soul. When I meet and play with new friends, I wish she was by my side.

Watching Eirlys, so tiny and new, I feel a flicker of excitement. I wonder what the future holds for us, as sisters. I imagine the adventures we’ll have, the mischief we’ll get into. I can’t wait until she’s big enough to play, to race through the pastures by my side.

Everyone here at the Sanctuary is bigger than me, except for Baby Gracie, but Tessie won’t be letting her play with anyone for a long time. The horses, with their long legs and flowing manes, tower over me. But with Eirlys, I finally have someone who will be my size, someone to share in the joys and wonders of growing up.

I dream of the days when we’ll explore every corner of Unbridled together, our hooves kicking up dust as we run and play. I’ll teach her all the best spots — the shady nooks perfect for napping, the lush patches of grass that taste like sunshine. Where to play hide and seek with the humans. We’ll whisper secrets and share giggles, our con-



Eirlys takes her first tentative steps.



Snowflake cares for newborn Eirlys, while Snowball watches from her adjacent stall.

nection deepening with each passing day.

And through it all, Mama will be there, watching over us with that unwavering love. She’ll guide us, teach us, and inspire us with her unshakable strength. Because that’s what mothers do — they love, they nurture, they protect. And best of all, I know that we’ll

always be safe at Unbridled, and every moment is a chance to cherish the love that flows between Mama, Eirlys and me.

SB

Susan Kayne is the founder and president of Unbridled Sanctuary, an equine rescue on the border of Albany County and Greenville.

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The obstacle person

Positively Speaking



TOBY MOORE

I was recently reading Norman Vincent Peale's renowned book, "The Power of Positive Thinking." In it, a chapter titled "I Don't Believe in Defeat" particularly caught my eye.

That's an intriguing statement. He doesn't believe in defeat?

Yet, history and everyday life are littered with examples. The Nazis faced a resounding defeat in World War II, legendary boxer Muhammad Ali tasted defeat in the ring, and once-gi-

ant corporations like Blockbuster and Kodak have crumbled under the weight of progress.

Defeat seems not just a possibility but a certainty. So, what exactly does Peale mean when he boldly claims he doesn't believe in defeat? When you dig deeper into Peale's book, you understand exactly what he's getting at.

He discusses two types of individuals and their approaches to life's challenges. Inspired by Peale's insights, let's conceptualize a hypothetical scenario that embodies his principles.

Imagine two characters: "The Overcomer" and "The Obstacle Person." These are not individuals Peale specifically names but archetypes we can use to explore his ideas further.

In this scene, The Overcomer, who embodies Peale's philosophy of positive thinking and problem solving, discusses with The Obstacle Person, who symbolizes the defeatist attitude

Peale warns against.

The exchange unfolds something like this:

The Overcomer, noticing a habitual negativity in the other's responses, addresses The Obstacle Person with a mix of curiosity and challenge. "Why do you always emphasize the obstacles rather than the possibilities?" he asks, his voice tinged with genuine curiosity.

With a shrug of resignation, the Obstacle Person replies, "Because to be intelligent, one must always be realistic. There are undeniable obstacles in this project. And you, how do you propose we deal with these obstacles?"

"That's simple," The Overcomer responds with unwavering confidence. "I'd just remove them, that's all, and then forget about them."

The Obstacle person laughs sarcastically and replies, "That's easier said than done," skepticism heavy in their voice.

A knowing smile creeps across The Overcomer's face as they lean in slightly. "My life has been a journey of overcoming obstacles. I've yet to meet one that couldn't be dismantled with enough faith, guts and hard work."

This interaction between The Overcomer and The Obstacle Person illustrates the essence of Peale's philosophy. It's about recognizing obstacles and having the mindset to confront and dismantle them. This leads us directly to one of Peale's core pieces of advice.

To overcome any obstacle, Peale says, "Stand up to it and don't complain about it or whine under it but forthrightly attack it. Don't give way under it, and it will finally break. You will break it. Something has to break, and it won't be you, it will be the obstacle."

The Obstacle Person is already defeated before they even begin to strive toward a goal.

Why is this? It's because they are ensnared in a web of defeatist thinking.

Before embarking on any venture, the Obstacle Person already catalogs reasons for failure. Their mind is a battlefield where pessimism consistently overpowers optimism. Every potential problem is magnified, and every hurdle seems insurmountable. In this state of mind, defeat isn't just a possibility, it's a foregone conclusion. The Obstacle Person, crippled by defeatist thinking, loses the battle before it even begins.

This mindset is The Obstacle person's most significant barrier, more so than any external challenge they might face.

Contrast this with The Overcomer, who approaches the same venture with a different lens. The Overcomer acknowledges the obstacles but doesn't grant them the power to halt progress. Instead of being paralyzed by what might go wrong,

this person is energized by what could go right.

I'm sure you've recognized this in your own life. There were times when you were able to overcome a seemingly insurmountable obstacle.

I've noticed this in recent years in my own life. I've started a business that is in a very competitive market and one that seems impossible to crack. There have been moments where panic has overtaken me, but after I regain control and keep moving forward, I've found the obstacles fall away and were never as big as they seemed.

Conquering an obstacle or being defeated by an obstacle is a choice that defines your journey. Choose to rise, not surrender.

Toby Moore is a columnist, the star of Emmy-nominated "A Separate Peace," and the CEO of Cubestream Inc.

Creative resolutions

Whittling Away



DICK BROOKS

Already a new year is here, seems like just yesterday we were saying goodbye to 2023.

I remember as a small child how the years crept by, each one wonderful, but lasting for what seemed forever. Now it's kind of like watching a freight train

roar by — each car that you momentarily glimpse before it disappears down the track representing a year.

A new year brings around again new resolutions to be made. The mental strain gets stressful for me. There aren't many resolutions left that I haven't already made and broken.

Oh, sure there are the standard ones, the ones that you make every year, the ones that last maybe a month or so before you stash them away for next January so you can pull them out, dust them off and recycle them again, but they're not very creative.

The most popular one of them has to be the promise to lose weight. Talk about a

doomed resolution — you make the resolution in good faith and you stick to it faithfully until you look around on New Year's Day. Leftover turkey: turkey has no calories, so what can a sandwich for lunch hurt? Wonder Bread and Miracle Whip help make it a little more interesting, turkey being kind of dry by itself. Then there's the matter of all those cookies, cakes and candies that all your loving friends and relatives gifted you with. Aunt Bertha would be heartbroken if you didn't finish off her holiday cookies that she worked so hard on and after all, it's only once a year.

The afternoon brings the Bowl games, 53 straight hours of football games, football

games everywhere. The Home and Garden Channel even has "The Decorator Bowl." Nobody actually plays football, but they redecorate the stadium, do ornamental plantings in the end zones and redesign the cheerleaders' outfits. They are called Bowl games because of the bowls of chips and dip that are consumed in massive quantities, along with a bunch of adult beverages.

Weight loss dies a quick and relatively painless death. Don't feel too sorry, though; like the Phoenix, it will be reborn with the coming of the next New Year.

This year I'm going to keep every resolution I make. I'm an adult, I can do this. It just means

being more thoughtful and re-evaluating my personal commitment level.

I therefore resolve that in the New Year, 2025 to be exact, I will:

- 1) Not purchase or wear any purple silken jockey shorts.
- 2) Forgo pedicures.
- 3) Eat nothing made from the flesh of the Great Blue Whale.
- 4) Enter no national beauty contests.
- 5) Stop sucking on my toes in public.

I know I can stick to these and 2025 will find me a more fulfilled individual. If you find you need help with your resolutions, I'd be happy to help. It's not as hard as you may think.

In the spirit of renewable resolutions, this is the same column I wrote last year, with minor changes.

Happy New Year from our house to yours!

Thought for the week — "The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above average drivers." ~ Dave Barry

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

Reach columnist Dick Brooks at whittle12124@yahoo.com.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A boat ride down a lagoon in Mexico.

BOAT, from page A1

“You hear, ‘Oh, the glaciers are melting,’ but to actually see it and hear it crumbling and cracking is something else. It’s heartbreaking,” she said.

Reflecting on the beauty and tragedy of the Arctic landscape, she added, “People on the boat were saying, ‘Oh, look at the waterfall, it’s so pretty.’ But it’s not supposed to be there,” Lekocevic said, referring to how the melting glaciers were creating waterfalls that had not previously been seen.

A CALL TO ACTION

Now back in New York, Lekocevic is determined to share what she learned with her community.

“I’m planning to try to do community events to inform people in a way that appeals to this area,” she said.

Recognizing that local audiences might not respond well to outside perspectives, she emphasized the importance of relatable storytelling.

“As someone who grew up here, I feel I can connect with the community and share what I’ve learned firsthand,” she said.

One idea she hopes to bring to life involves engaging children in environmental education through interactive activities.

“There’s a card game I encountered abroad that teaches kids about carbon emissions. It’s called ‘Kelp in Hand,’ and it helps people understand the impact of their actions in a creative way,” she explained.

CONNECTING CLIMATE CHANGE TO PEACE

Lekocevic’s journey also reinforced the link between environmental sustainability and global peace.

“A green planet is a happy planet, and a happy planet is a peaceful planet,” she said.

Reflecting on the broader implications of climate change, she added, “If we don’t have



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The sun setting over Manzanillo, Mexico. The group next journeyed north on the Pacific Ocean, stopping in Vancouver, Canada, before making its way up to Seward, Alaska.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Liana Lekocevic on the Peace Boat with the glaciers of Alaska in the background.

enough resources to support the population, nations will start fighting for those resources. That creates more tension and less peace.”

During her time on the Peace Boat, she met survivors of the World War II bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and learned about the effects of Cold War-era nuclear testing in the U.S.

“We watched a play by someone from Nevada who was affected by the nuclear bomb tests. Her town was devastated by radiation, and people didn’t realize the impact until later. It was heartbreaking,” she said.

THE ROTARY CONNECTION

The Greenville Rotary Club made Lekocevic’s journey possible through their scholarship program.

Diane Weisbeck, a member of the Rotary Club who spearheaded the scholarship, expressed her pride in Lekocevic’s accomplishments. The scholar produced a three-minute video that shared her experiences on the Peace Boat and throughout her travels in Manzanillo, Mexico; Vancouver, Canada; and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cultural exchange aboard the Peace Boat. Most passengers on the Japan-based boat were from Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan and Ukraine.

Alaska, USA.

“Everyone was incredibly impressed. After her video we all spent time asking her questions about her experience. I looked around the room and I could see the pride in every Rotarian’s eyes, knowing that through our local Rotary scholarship, we made this life-changing

journey happen for Liana,” Weisbeck said. “We know Liana will create positive change for the world.”

LOOKING AHEAD

Lekocevic is preparing for her next global adventure: teaching English in South Korea.

“I’m currently getting my



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Greenville Rotary Club scholarship recipient Liana Lekocevic outside the Japan-based Peace Boat, docked in Manzanillo, Mexico, at the start of the journey.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Greenville Rotary scholarship recipient Liana Lekocevic, left, meeting with a Rotarian from Seward, Alaska, in a show of fellowship.

TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certification and working as a substitute teacher in my hometown school district to prepare for this,” she said.

Having studied abroad in Seoul during her junior year, she is eager to return.

“I had the best time when I was there before. It’s a very clean, vibrant place with nice people and amazing food.”

Her Peace Boat journey, however, will continue to shape her path.

“Meeting people and seeing the pain on their faces made the

urgency of climate change real for me. Now I want to share what I’ve learned and inspire others to take action,” she said.

Read about the beginning of Liana’s journey here: <https://theupstater.com/greenville-pioneer/good-news-historic-collaboration-peace-boat-rotary-and-a-local-scholar-embark-on-global-voyage/>.

See more photos from the Peace Boat’s Arctic Voyage on page B2.

Editor’s Note: Liana Lekocevic is the daughter of Greenville Pioneer editor Melanie Lekocevic.

Residents asked to keep eye out for spotted lanternfly

ALBANY — The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets announced new findings of the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) in additional locations across New York state.

Spotted Lanternfly is an invasive, non-native insect that feeds on more than 100 plant species, including tree-of-heaven, and plants and crops, such as grapes, that are critical to New York’s agricultural economy.

The department is now urging residents of a number of upstate counties, including Albany, Schenectady, Ontario, and Seneca counties, to report any additional sightings and scrape egg masses, which will help inspectors to assess impacted areas and slow the spread of SLF in New York state.

“We have been working with our partners for years to contain SLF and minimize the spread of this invasive species, which can cause extensive damage to plants and crops that are critical to New York’s agricultural economy,” State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball said. “We are incredibly grateful for the help New Yorkers have provided in the last few years and urge residents to continue eliminating egg masses by scraping them off trees, structures and outdoor furnishings now that the cold weather is here. We’re optimistic that through education and continued collaboration with our partners and the public,

we will be able to manage SLF and mitigate the impact to the grape growing industry in the years to come.”

SLF is an invasive insect that was first found in Pennsylvania in 2014. It has since been detected in 18 states, including New York.

New York’s first detection was in the late summer of 2020 on Staten Island. SLF has continued to expand its range in New York state, and in July 2024, the department confirmed the presence of SLF in Romulus, near the grape-growing region of the Finger Lakes.

During the 2024 survey season state inspectors confirmed new populations of SLF in Geneva, Ontario County; Romulus, Seneca County; the city of Schenectady, Schenectady County; and Cohoes, Albany County.

As part of the state’s response efforts, the department’s Division of Plant Industry staff are working with partners and stakeholders to determine the extent of the population in these newly reported areas. By December, it is too late in the season to see adult SLF. However, the department advises residents of upstate and Western New York to remain vigilant through the spring, when SLF begin to hatch, and report sightings of SLF by following these steps:

- Take a photo,
- Collect a sample and place



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An adult spotted lanternfly with their wings open, which can be seen when it is startled or ready to take flight. Their wingspan is about 2 inches.

it in a freezer or in a jar with rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer,

- Contact the SLF responders and report SLF directly at agriculture.ny.gov/reportslf, and,

- After reporting SLF in your area and collecting a sample, kill any additional SLF you see by stepping on it or crushing it.

The department is also urging any travelers leaving a SLF-infested area to thoroughly inspect vehicles, luggage and gear, and all outdoor items for SLF egg masses. If egg masses are found, travelers should destroy them by scraping them.

IDENTIFYING SLF

Adult SLF are easy to identify and are approximately 1-inch long and half an inch wide at rest, with eye-catching wings. Adults are active from July to December and begin laying eggs in September.

Eggs are laid in 1-inch-long segmented rows of up to about 50 eggs covered in a creamy white, putty-like substance that becomes pinkish-gray as it dries. After a few weeks the covering turns a darker tan and starts to crack, resembling a splotch of mud. Depending on the substrate, egg masses can be difficult to see and may be laid in protected locations that are difficult to inspect thoroughly.

Photos and additional information about identification and SLF lifecycle is available on New York State Integrated Pest Management’s (IPM) website.

SCRAPING EGG MASSES

SLF can lay their eggs on any number of surfaces, such as vehicles, stone, rusty metal, outdoor furniture, and firewood.

Scrape egg masses off their surface using scraper cards, credit cards, or anything else that is hard, tapered and flat. Kill the eggs by putting them into a resealable bag that contains rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer and dispose of them in the solution to be assured they will not hatch.

Each egg mass contains up to 50 eggs, so removing as many as possible can reduce the numbers that will hatch in the spring.

SLF IMPACTS

SLF feeding can stress plants, making them vulnerable to disease and attacks from other insects. SLF also excretes large amounts of sticky “honeydew,” which attracts sooty molds that may interfere with plant photosynthesis, negatively affecting the growth and fruit yield of plants and negatively impacting agriculture and forest health.

The estimated total economic impact of invasive insects in the United States exceeds \$70 billion per year, and if not contained, SLF could have an impact to New York state of at least

\$300 million annually, mainly to the grape and wine industry, which ranks third in the country in production. SLF also has the potential to significantly hinder quality of life and recreational activities due to the honeydew and the swarms of insects it attracts.

Since the first detection of SLF in New York on Staten Island in 2020, the Department (AGM), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and New York State Integrated Pest Management (IPM) have been working with partners statewide and nationally, such as the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Department of Transportation, Thruway Authority, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Cornell Cooperative Extension network to slow the spread of this invasive insect.

SLF has since been reported in all New York City boroughs, Long Island, and several areas in upstate New York. The state’s work focuses on slowing the spread of SLF and protecting vulnerable areas, such as vineyards and apple orchards, where SLF could inflict damage on New York’s agricultural and agritourism industries.

Learn more on the department’s website at <https://agriculture.ny.gov/spottedlanternfly>.

Oak Hill & Vicinity...

By Mary Lou Nahas



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A stone from Meeting House Hill honoring Revolutionary War soldier John Hull.

Hometown Heroes Banner program

The town of Durham is proud to announce the start of the Hometown Heroes Banner program recognizing servicemen and servicewomen from Durham who have served or are serving our country in a branch of the military.

The program is made possible by ARPA funds, or American Rescue Plan Act, which paid the startup costs. It will begin this spring. Town Clerk Janet Patridge and Town Councilman Scott Hulbert will oversee the program.

The banners, which will be 24" wide and 48" long and in full color, will each honor a specific Durham serviceman or servicewoman and will include their picture, rank, era of service, years of service, branch of military and sponsor's name. Banners will be displayed on poles throughout the hamlets in the town of Durham from May through November of each year.

To be eligible, an honoree must have been born in the town of Durham or have lived in the town. Honorees must have served in the United States Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard).

Family members or loved ones may sponsor a banner. The cost of each banner is \$225. A 4x6 or larger photo of the veteran needs to be submitted with the application. Proof of service in the United States Armed Forces must be provided. The town of Durham will be the owner of the banners, will maintain custodianship of them, and ensure they are hung each year.

Businesses may sponsor a banner by contacting the Durham Town Clerk by email at townclerk@durhamny.com or by calling 518-239-6122 ext. 1.

Deadline for submission of the completed form, proof of service, photo and payment is March 15. There will be no exceptions.

Mike Hayes in his book "Oak Hill Voices from an American Hamlet" noted that "starting with the Revolutionary War, residents of Oak Hill have served in every military conflict in the history of the United States. The strongest representation was in World War II when 28 men and women of Oak Hill were in uniform. All but one of them lived through their term of enlistment." If we listed those from other hamlets the numbers would be greater.

Many of the first residents in the town of Durham were Revolutionary War soldiers. Every early account seems to note that fact. For the Bicentennial, a committee developed a list of the Revolutionary War soldiers and where they were buried in Durham township.

NAME:
 Capt. John Newell, West Durham
 Capt. Aaron Thorpe, Oak Hill (upper)
 Dr. William Cook, Oak Hill (lower)
 James Utter, Saybrook Hill
 Eliakim Stannard, Goff (Wright Street)

George Wright, Brunos' (Wright Street)

David Francis, Stone Bridge

Capt. Asahel Jones

Dursos Thomas Smith,

Strong Road

Augustus Pratt, Segelman's

(Pratt Road)

Selah Strong, Union Cemetery

Daniel Kirtland, Union Cemetery

Obed Hervey, Hervey Street

Abiel Baldwin, Hayward

Rivenburg's

Jarius Chittenden, Hayward

Rivenburg's

John Cleveland, Stone

Bridge

Capt. Daniel Cornwall,

Cornwallville

George Flower, Oak Hill

(upper)

John Hull, Meeting House

Hill

Capt. John Cowles, Meeting

House Hill

To tell the stories of all the soldiers would take much more than a newspaper article. I hesitate to mention any of them because I cannot write the story of all of them. The banners will help tell the story and, in the future, I hope others will want to publish such a book or at least find a way to tell their stories.

Today, I'll share a few stories from each time period.

Capt. Dan Cornwall was born in Connecticut about the year 1753. He came to Cornwallville in 1788. His first log house he built some 30 or 40 rods S.W. of the present house. It is thought to be on a site probably just west of the center of the village.

In "In the Shadow of the Catskills" by Karen R. Rivers we learn that he experienced some trouble in getting good title to his land, being obliged to pay for it twice over before his right was undisputed. When his family reached their new home, they were far away "out west" to the friends they left behind. But they brought their faith and their religious principles with them.

He and his wife Rachel were both members of the Congregational Church in Connecticut, and very soon after the formation of the Presbyterian Church in Durham, they both united by letter on the 13th of January 1793. He was a soldier in the Revolutionary War, and commanded a company of Connecticut volunteers, and drew a pension as long as he lived. When he became old and venerable, he was often appointed moderator at the annual town meetings.

He died on Christmas Eve 1843, and his wife died May 8, 1855, nearly 100 years old. They had six children. George Flower, another soldier in the Revolutionary War, emigrated from New Hartford, Connecticut, to Oak Hill where he owned a wool-carding mill connected with a dye house and fulling mill. George Sr. had 10 children. He died in 1827 at age 86. His oldest son Abner was town supervisor and succeeded his father in business. Jervis, another son, was an intellectual man and a great musician and good



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Stanton Winnie's father served in World War I.

farmer. Ambrose, another son, occupied his father's homestead and possessed remarkable skill in playing the flute, the fife, and the clarinet. Daughters of George Sr. were Mrs. Roxie Fordham, Miss Maria Flowers, and Mrs. Lucinda Henderson. They were in their 80s in 1884 and were "much respected." A descendant, Roswell Pettibone Flower, became governor of New York and a wealthy man. I feel close to them because they owned the property where I now live.

In May 1970, Mrs. Harry Ketcham, a member of the Meeting House Hill Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), took on the project of refurbishing that cemetery. In the fall of 1973, Ken Mabey, head of the Social Studies Department at the Greenville school, volunteered to work with her. He was joined by three other teachers — Vincent Seecley, Ivan Sargent and William Ransom. Fourteen teenage boys worked, including Bruno Dobies, Harold Estep, Robert Lampman and Steven Lewis. Also, Steve Dynsink, Mark Jardine, Kevin Ashely, Martin Sargent, John Armstrong, Brian Schwartz, Barry Rasmussen, Alan Beechert, Thomas Mabey and Dennis VanderBeck.

In 1981, there was a dedication of a bronze marker in memory of Private John Hull, Continental Line, Revolutionary War. Born in Durham, Connecticut, on Nov. 20, died in Durham, NY, Oct. 29, 1832. A stone for Capt. John Cowles was also honored.

In May 1861, the Rev. Henry H. Bates entered military service at Glens Falls with an idealistic hope of the good the Civil War would do, but the horrors of battle and his own experiences broke his spirit. He survived the conflict and came to Oak Hill to recuperate. When news reached Oak Hill that the war had ended, legend has it that he rang the church bell to spread the news. In January 1868, he died in Oak Hill where he was minister of St. Paul's Church.

During the Civil War, Nathan Augustus from Oak Hill became an infantryman in Co. K 120th NY Volunteers. He was wounded at Gettysburg, survived his wound and was present at Appomattox Court-house when Lee surrendered to Grant. In 1865, he returned to Oak Hill where he went to work at an iron foundry as a molder. He is buried in the Oak Hill Cemetery.

Leslie Wade (1893-1974) served in World War I. He was a lifelong resident of Oak Hill. He played football, married a local girl, owned a house across from his parent's home, had one son, worked primarily as a painter and wall paperer, often with Alfred Tripp Burnett, had many friends in Oak Hill and Vicinity, was a poet, planted a garden, cooked, was a talented photographer. He lived life on his own terms.

His son Leslie Wade Jr. served in World War II.

Carl Ratch was born in Cornwallville, the son of Helene and Otto Ratsch. He attended grade school in Durham Center and graduated from Greenville High in the class of 1930. He was the editor-in-chief of the Greenville Gargoyle, the paper of Greenville Free Academy that year. After graduation, he gained a year of business experience with the Hazel Atlas Glass Co., living on 27th Street in Long Island City and riding the "L" to work in New York City. Ratsch then returned to the Catskills to start in a small way, as he wrote, "a progressively growing printing business that has formed the foundation for the Big Acorn Press. The printshop through its various stages of growth has been variously known as the Butterfly Press, The Tillson Rural Press (Ulster County), and the Rural Press, East Durham. Several months before the war, Carl purchased The Prattsville News, only to discontinue it in February 1942, to enlist in the Army."

He saw service in the Pacific arena during World War II as an operations sergeant in the famous 77th Division and was awarded a Bronze Star for acts



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By WWII, women were enlisting in the military. Ellen Kellum Hulbert grew up in Oak Hill and returned after her service to marry and raise her family here.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A stone at Meeting House Hill honors the service of Revolutionary War soldier John Cowles.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Those serving in World War II were noted on an Honor Roll sign.

of bravery. While away, Carl always dreamed of coming home to live and build his business. He regularly wrote letters home as well as stories, some of which he incorporated into his pamphlet "Return to the Catskills: Interesting Facts of Geography, History, Legends, Nature and Seasons in the Catskill Mts.," copyright 1946, by Carl Ratsch, Veteran of World War II. Published by Big Acorn Press, Oak Hill, NY, selling for 25 cents a copy." [I paid \$15 for my copy a few years ago.]

According to Mike Hayes in "Oak Hill: Voices from an American Hamlet": "When Carl got home, he and Ernest Millet, his sister Helena's husband, built the Big Acorn Press just as Carl had imagined. In ads Carl frequently wrote about himself and his business: Carl named one column 'The Kernel of News from Oak Hill and Vicinity,' in which he reported daily happenings of the local residents: "- Francis Birchett, Sheldon Ives, and Carl Ratsch had a ride Sunday afternoon in Carl's Model 'T.' A bumpy ride was had by all."

Eugene Kellen told Hayes he remembered Carl when he was Sunday School teacher at the Methodist Church: "We had a little group Carl organized called the Acorn Boys," Kellen said. He like to name everything he did with an Acorn in it. Carl died in 1990 and is buried in the Oak Hill Cemetery. The building that housed his press is a private home, currently for sale.

By World War II, women were enlisting in the military. One of them was Helen Kellum Hulbert, who grew up in Oak Hill, returned after her military service, and raised her family here. Many of her relatives still live in the area.

Elizabeth DeWitt, who grew

up in Oak Hill, enlisted in the Army during WWII, although her ancestor Lucas DeWitt, who was an original settler of Oak Hill, once called DeWittsburg, did not serve his country in that way.

East Durham has had its share of Hometown Heroes. To name only a few: Pat Kellegher, Neil Kellegher, Colin Kelly, Dermot Gavin, Rusty Sala.

Many Durham residents saw service during Vietnam: Doug Thompsen was one. Tim Leahy Sr., from Oak Hill, was awarded a Purple Heart for his service. Bill Carr, former town supervisor, and Councilman Nick Nahas served in the military during the Vietnam War.

The lists of those who served more recently gets longer: Patrick King, Gene Every, Rob Armstrong, Larry Armstrong and Chris Stegner all served in the Navy. Chris just retired after 20 years.

Councilwoman Joan Breslin was in the Army from 1985 to 1993. Her son Rudy also served until last year. Bill Hurd from Oak Hill served in the Army, Tim Leahy Jr. in the Marine Corps.

The sons of Joey Van Holsteyn, highway superintendent, plan a career in the military; one son just finished basic training and the other plans to enter the military next year when he graduates from high school.

This list is by no means comprehensive, but it calls to our attention all of those over the years who have been and continue to be Hometown Heroes. When the banners start to go up, think of all who have served. Contact Janet Patridge with questions about participating in the Hometown Heroes Banner Program.



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Community Calendar

JANUARY 2025

- 11 - Sound Meditation Experience with Estephanie Garcia, 1-2:15 p.m., at Mountain Top Arboretum, 4 Maude Adams Road, Tannersville. Registration is required at mtarboretum.org/events/soundmeditation. Donation is \$10.
- 11 - Princess Lockeroo & The Fabulous Waack Dancers: Dance Battle Extravaganza, 7 p.m., at Orpheum Performing Arts Center, 6050 Route 23A, Tannersville. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors, child/student \$7.
- 13 - Greenville Central Board of Education meeting, 6 p.m., at Greenville Middle School/High School Library.
- 16 - Webinar: "Parents as Partners: Modeling a Growth Mindset and Building Resilience," 6:30-7:30 p.m., hosted by Greenville Central schools. Register at greenville.k12.ny.us.
- 20 - Greenville Town Board meeting, 7 p.m., at Pioneer Town Hall, 11159 Route 32, Greenville.
- 20 - Greenville schools closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- 25 - Animal Tracking in the Snow, sessions at 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., at Mountain Top Arboretum, 4 Maude Adams Road, Tannersville. Admission is free for members and suggested \$10 donation for nonmembers.
- 25 - Winter Seasonal Walk with Justin Wexler, 1-3 p.m., at The Willows at Brandow Point, 480 State Route 385, Athens. Hosted by the Greene Land Trust.

- 26 - The Social Salon: A New Year Gathering, tours at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. for \$5 per person, at Thomas Cole Center, 218 Spring Street, Catskill.
- 28 - Webinar: "Parents as Partners: Ways to Encourage Open Communication with Your Teen," 6:30-7:30 p.m., hosted by Greenville Central schools. Register at greenville.k12.ny.us.
- 29 - Greenville schools closed for Asian Lunar New Year.

FEBRUARY 2025

- 7 - Charity Fine Art Auction Viewing Gala, 6-8 p.m., at Main Street Community Center, 5494 Main Street, Windham. Tickets available at Mainstreetcenter.org.
- 8 - New and Beginning Farmer Workshop, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties, 6055 Route 23, Acra. Fee is a sliding scale from \$5 to \$15. Register at eventbrite.com.
- 8 - Charity Fine Art Auction Live Auction, 6 p.m., at Main Street Community Center, 5494 Main Street, Windham. Tickets available at Mainstreetcenter.org.
- 17 - Greenville Town Board meeting, 7 p.m., at Pioneer Town Hall, 11159 Route 32, Greenville.
- 22 - Winter Tree Identification with Marc Wolf, 1-2:30 p.m., at Mountaintop Arboretum, 4 Maude Adams Road, Tannersville. Register at mtarboretum.org. Registration is free for members and a \$10 donation for non-members. Registration is required.

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Grandma Mackey's Diary

1953 life in Medusa

Transcribed from her diary by Kathy Saurer Osborne

1953

Sunday, Nov. 29: Another beautiful day. Charles had to work. Sky called to tell us he has a girl, Debora Ann. Called on Milly a few minutes and walked around the park. Went to see Ilene and the baby. Stopped and had pizza on the way home. Venetian Italian.

Monday, Nov. 30: Fair. Joyce packed all day. We had supper with Milly and took Sunny home (Milly's nephew). Had a nice ride, while Chuck took Sky and three or four of the boys over to see his (Sky's little girl). Chuck came for us at Milly's and we came here for the night. Trout and Connie came and we visited. They are taking the trailer over to

Portsmouth tonight.

Tuesday, Dec. 1:

A beautiful day. Joyce had pains most of the night and Charles took her to the hospital this A.M. I got breakfast, did dishes and kept busy as best I could. Chuck phoned and they have an 8 3/4-pound boy. Arrived about 4:30 P.M. We all went to see them in the evening. Mrs. Brown went along. She's nice — "Jean." Joyce feeling fine. Charles couldn't do much to the trailer, he's blocking it up etc. tomorrow so we're staying with Sky again tonight. Charles told Milly the news.

Wednesday, Dec. 2:

Another beautiful day. Up 6:30. Sky had the duty until 8 A.M. tomorrow. Got breakfast and got he and

Charles off. Did the housework. Crocheted and called on Jean Brown next door. At 4:30 Charles came and I came with him to the trailer. Made fire and put away a few things and went to see Joyce and so to bed. She had gotten a letter from Gene. They're all well and about as usual.

Thursday, Dec. 3:

Beautiful day. Charles fixed the water and sewage and we had breakfast and he worked the A.M. Then went to the Base. I put things away. P.M. ironed a little. Evening we went to see Joyce. She's feeling fine. Trout and Connie came over afterward. Had coffee and crackers and cheese. Visited. Had a nice long letter from Adrienne.

Friday, Dec. 4:

Cloudy. Rain in the evening. Charles went to work at 5 A.M. Up late. Got my breakfast and did the ironing. Dusted up, etc. Found out about diaper service. Called on two ladies, Mrs. Hazel Savage and Mrs. Rol-

lins. Charles and Sky came for supper and then we went to see Joyce. She may come home tomorrow. Ilene isn't right yet and can't go home. Chuck went to Sky's for the night. Gene sent a card and Adrienne one, too.

Saturday, Dec. 5:

Beautiful day. Up 7:30. Hand washed and ironed a little. Crocheted. Charles came 11:30. About 1 we went for Joyce. She's feeling very well and the baby is good. Neighbors came in to see the baby. Charles went to the movies with them tonight. Had a card from 'Lite, letter from Gene and card and letter from Mrs. Whitbeck.

Sunday, Dec. 6:

Fair and warmer. Up late, did washing. Rested, wrote letters, etc. Chuck and Joyce went to Cradock to the store. Charles riding to Portsmouth with neighbors.

Monday, Dec. 7:

A beautiful day. Did baby washing. Charles and Joyce went to the store. Then he

had to go to work. Joyce put some things away. We had letters from 'Lite and Gene, and Joyce and Charles a card from Mrs. Traynor and from Adele. Charles has to stay to guard the galley tonight. Comes home tomorrow at noon. Rain and wind last night. Tore a big piece off the awning.

Tuesday, Dec. 8:

Beautiful day. Up late. Did washing, called on Mrs. Savage. Found out from the bus terminal at Norfolk a bus leaves there 5:20 A.M. and gets in Catskill 11:44 P.M. Will leave Friday or Saturday A.M. Baby wakes to eat and that's about all. Charles came 2:30 P.M. He and Joyce went to the store in the evening.

Wednesday, Dec. 9:

Cloudy. Did everyday work. Mrs. Rollins and Mrs. Savage called while Joyce was giving Kevin a bath. Washed and the clothes dried nicely. Charles came about 7 P.M. Another lady and baby called to see Kevin in the

P.M. Had pretty cards from Mr. and Mrs. Eufemia. Also, the local papers from Gene.

Thursday, Dec. 10:

Rain A.M. Charles went to work at 5 A.M. Washed clothes and visited. Baby good. Am packing to start home tomorrow. Have to start early to get the 5:20 A.M. bus. Joyce feeling good.

Friday, Dec. 11:

Fair. Said goodbye to Joyce and Kevin, and Charles took me to Norfolk. The sun came up while I was on Kiploke Ferry. Very beautiful! Rode all day. In New York City 5:30. Catskill-Albany bus left 7:35. Home 1 P.M. Adrienne, Bill and Gene there to meet me. No suitcase. Will come later.

Saturday, Dec. 12:

Fair. Tired. Did only necessary work. 'Lite, Philip and JoAnn came over to see me. Stayed for wrestling. Brought us liver and eggs. Thank you!

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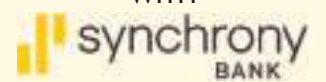


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SPARTAN STRONG NEWS

Superintendent's Message: Late buses



DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT MICHAEL BENNETT

Due to the bus driver shortage and low ridership numbers, Greenville Central School District suspended all late bus routes beginning Monday, Dec. 16, 2024. We will reassess transportation capabilities throughout the year. This does not impact regular bus routes, it only affects middle and high school late buses.

Please know that this decision does not come easy. Since 2021 we have reduced our late bus offerings from six routes, four days per week, to three routes, three days per week due to driver shortages and low ridership numbers.

Our transportation supervisor has worked tirelessly to condense routes and utilize substitutes but unfortunately, we're still unable to find consistent staffing to ensure late bus route coverage.

I recognize this decision impacts a small number of students, as roughly 10 students ride the late buses each day, across three routes. However, I committed to sharing major transportation changes back in September, and I believe this is a major, but temporary, change.

If you, or someone you know, are over the age of 21 and interested in becoming a bus driver or a substitute bus driver, please reach out to Mary Judeikis at judeikism@greenvillecsd.org. You do not need to be a licensed bus driver to express interest, the district provides FREE training to assist in acquiring a CDL license, all while receiving the training rate of \$16.39/hr.

Bus route drivers at Greenville Central School District earn \$24.58 per hour, a competitive salary above the state and national averages. Additionally, route drivers earn sick/personal time, receive holidays/summers off, have access to dental and vision insurance, and are eligible for the NYS Employee Retirement System. Substitute drivers earn \$23.50 per hour and are eligible for the same retirement system.

Swim and Dive Team

GREENVILLE — Greenville merged with Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk to form a Swim and Dive team this year.

At press time, RCS-G defeated Queensbury 103-73 and defeated Hudson Falls-South Falls 119-22.

RCS-G won 8 out of 12 events, and Ashton Guntert took first in the 200 IM and second in the 100 Butterfly. Great job Ashton!

Transition Services Information Night, January 15

GREENVILLE — Transition Services Information Night is a time for families to learn about the services available to students with special needs.

These services can help plan for life transitions for students with IEPs and 504s, which can be complicated. Join the Greene County Transition Council on Jan. 15 at 6 p.m. in the Greenville High School cafeteria to learn more.

This free event is open to all Greene, Albany and Ulster county residents. Light refreshments will be served.

Some of the organizations that will be in attendance include the Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs Program, which offers referral support to families with kids up to 21 and infor-

mation on social services, insurance coverage, public health services, educational services, early intervention services, and Supplemental Social Security Income. The Arc Mid-Hudson New York provides support for people pre-K through adulthood with intellectual and other disabilities and offers information on guardianship and trusts for students with disabilities. The Office of People with Developmental Disabilities provides information on local, non-profit service agencies for people with developmental disabilities.

Please contact Brook Van Fleet at 518-966-5070 x321 or Laurie Gallagher at 845-331-4300 x41218 with any questions.

Everyday Heroes

GREENVILLE — The Everyday Hero Award is a monthly award at the elementary school given to one student in each grade who exemplifies expected and positive behaviors at school.

This is not an academic award — the Everyday Hero is someone who follows directions, helps out around the classroom, completes assignments, and is friendly and kind on a daily basis.

• Kindergarten - Julia

Julia is a kind friend who is always willing to help a peer. She is a great listener who demonstrates empathy for others on a daily basis. She loves learning and enjoys teaching her classmates.

• Grade 1 - Braxton

Braxton is a very kind student. He

always gets his work done in an efficient manner. He does the right thing without being asked and is a great role model.

• Grade 2 - Emma

Emma is a great student who always gives 100%. She always pays attention and tries her best. The amazing thing about Emma is her compassion and empathy for her classmates. She is the first person to help out another student, looks for classmates working alone to sit with, comforts those who are sad or having a difficult time, and always encourages others.

• Grade 3 - Roma

Roma is very hard working and always kind to her teachers and peers. She is very responsible and respectful to ev-

eryone around her.

• Grade 4 - Adriano

Adriano is a kind and caring person. He looks out for others. He always gives his best effort on his work and is a wonderful listener. He is a fantastic role model to others.

• Grade 5 - Maria

Maria consistently puts forth her best effort in her work and actively listens to those around her. Maria is an outstanding role model in the classroom. She always participates in class, asks insightful questions, and offers help whenever it is needed.

Congratulations to the elementary school's Everyday Heroes!

Students take part in Buy in Greene commercial

GREENVILLE — For the seventh year in a row, the Greenville High School chorus and music technology students have collaborated with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce and KathodeRay Media to produce their "Buy in Greene" holiday video and radio advertisement.

The ad has been live on social media since November, and is airing on local radio (WRIP and The Cat). The chorus students recorded all the backing vocals, the music technology class mixed and mastered each vocal part, and some students recorded instrumental parts for this year's ad — a reworking of "Frosty the Snowman." Finally, Mark Gustavson from KathodeRay Media sang the lead vocal with the students' backing tracks.

A huge "thank you" to the GCS students for their outstanding work!

HS CHORUS SINGERS

Soprano: Finn Brownsell, Emma Diehl, Aurora Hostash, Anjali Keenan, Rachel Domanico, Jorda Catlin, and Claire Schelling.

Alto: Scarlett Coons, Jasmine Ellis, Hanna Tanner, and Amara Thompson.

Baritone: Karl Houlihan and Michael Semaska.

MUSIC TECH STUDENTS

Alex Buquet, Lucas Bender, Emma Diehl, Jasmine Ellis, Chloe Casper, and Brody Shaver.

INSTRUMENTAL

Alex Buquet on the trumpet, Brody Shaver on the piano, and Amara Thompson on the drums.



COURTESY OF GREENVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

This was the seventh year in a row that Greenville students worked on the annual Buy in Greene holiday commercial.



COURTESY OF GREENVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Students providing vocals on this holiday season's Buy in Greene commercial.



COURTESY OF GREENVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Greenville Middle School honored its Students of Character for November.



COURTESY OF GREENVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
The Students of the Month for November at Greenville Middle School.

Middle school accolades

GREENVILLE — Each month, the middle school awards three students with the Student of Character award, and six students with the Student of the Month recognition.

November's Spartan Strong trait was "Take Action." Students were encouraged to go about their days and think of all the

ways they can take action to benefit themselves and their community, whether it's picking up trash in the hallway, minimizing distractions when working on homework, or supporting a friend in need.

Taking action is about being mindful of your choices.

These three students were selected as

the November Students of Character: Ella T., Jayda T., Noah V.

The following students were selected as the November Students of the Month: Aidan R., Raegan R., Josh M., Lyla U., Helen C., and Jaylan G.

Congratulations, middle school students!

Greenville Rotary's Peace Boat Journey

GREENVILLE — The Greenville Rotary Club sponsored a scholarship that sent local scholar Liana Lekocevic on the Japan-based Peace Boat.

Lekocevic went on a journey from Manzanillo, Mexico, up to Vancouver, Canada, and on to Alaska, to learn about peace-building initiatives and environmental issues.

Here are photos more photos from the journey.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lily pads floating in a lagoon in Mexico.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A street scene in Manzanillo, Mexico.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Liana Lekocevic on the Peace Boat off the coast of Seward, Alaska.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A bird native to Mexico seen in a lagoon.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A baby turtle released onto a beach in Mexico.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Liana, far right, with Youth for the SDGs participants eating fresh mangos right off the tree.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The sun setting over the Pacific Ocean in Manzanillo, Mexico.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

An eagle feeding on the Alaskan coast.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A humpback whale in the Gulf of Alaska.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Pacific Ocean, seen from a beach at Manzanillo, Mexico.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A variety of sea birds seen along the rocky coastline of Seward, Alaska.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Youth for the SDGs group performed numerous beach cleanups in Mexico, pictured, and Canada.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Humpback whales bubble-net feeding - a hunting technique used by teams of whales to catch fish and krill.


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Will my WEP reduction go away if I continue working?

Social Security Matters



RUSSELL GLOOR

Dear Rusty:

I'm 63 years old and have not yet started my Social Security. I now work for the State of Illinois and will draw a pension from that state's university system. I don't pay into Social Security from this position and, as a result, my Social Security payment will be reduced. But I have also worked elsewhere and contributed to Social Security for 26 years.

If I retire from the state

university and begin drawing my reduced Social Security payment, and then work in a different job that does contribute to SS, will the reduction to my Social Security payment ever be eliminated? Or will I be permanently stuck with the smaller Social Security payment?

Signed:
Curious Educator

Dear Curious:

A rule called the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) will apply to your Social Security benefit because your Illinois state pension was earned without paying into the Social Security program.

The basic rule is that anyone with a pension earned without contributing to Social Security, and who is also entitled to Social Security benefits, is subject to WEP, which reduces that person's Social Security retirement benefit. It's a law enacted many years ago to equalize how SS benefits are paid to all Social Security beneficia-

ries. However, the WEP rules also provide relief for those who have only a small non-covered pension, and for those who have separately contributed to Social Security for a lot of years. For example:

- The WEP reduction to your SS benefit cannot be more than 50% of your non-covered (IL) pension.

- The WEP reduction is smaller for each year over 20 years contributing to Social Security from substantial earnings.

- WEP does not apply to those who have at least 30 years contributing to SS from substantial earnings.

Although you could retire at 63 and collect your pension from the university and also collect your WEP-reduced Social Security, you have something else to consider if you take another job that pays into Social Security.

Social Security has an annual "earnings test" for

those who collect benefits before their full retirement age (FRA). The earnings test limits how much you can earn while collecting early SS before they take away some of your benefits. The earnings limit for 2024 was \$22,320 and, if that is exceeded, you will lose \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. If your work earnings substantially exceed the earnings limit, you would likely be temporarily ineligible to receive Social Security benefits. FYI, the earnings test no longer applies once you reach your full retirement age, which for you is 67.

Without knowing your expected income from a new job, I can't say how much of your SS you would be able to receive, but you can use this as a guide: Social Security will take away benefits equal to half of what you exceed the annual earnings limit by, and they typically recover by withholding future benefits. If 12 months

or more of benefits are withheld, you will be temporarily ineligible to receive benefits until your earnings are less, or you reach your full retirement age (the earnings test no longer applies once you reach your FRA).

So, depending on your expected annual work earnings, you may wish to defer claiming your Social Security until you either earn less or reach 67 years of age.

If you already have 26 years contributing to Social Security from "substantial earnings," your WEP reduction will already be mitigated, and any additional years of substantial earnings from which SS payroll taxes are deducted will result in an even smaller WEP reduction. If you can achieve 30 years of SS contributions from substantial work earnings, WEP will no longer apply.

So, you may not be "stuck with" the WEP reduction permanently, but you will need to contact Social Security to request that

your WEP reduction amount be reviewed in light of any additional years of SS-covered earnings (this should be done after you submit your income taxes each year you have additional SS-covered earnings).

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance.

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How the U.S. can manage its increasing debt load

The Retired Investor



BILL SCHMICK

U.S. deficits at \$35.225 trillion are going through the roof and interest payments on our debt load account for an increasing share of gross domestic product. We are not alone in facing this trend. The question is what monetary and fiscal policymakers will do about it.

The time-honored, go-to strategy that has worked well for decades among nations in times like these is to

devalue one's currency. How does that work?

Readers need to understand that the level of interest rates plays an important role in currency devaluation. For example, the U.S. dollar and U.S. interest rates work hand in hand. When traders buy dollars, they don't just keep their money in the currency and hope it goes up. Most often they buy dollar-denominated Treasury bonds where they can get an interest rate return on their money.

If the Federal Reserve Bank cuts interest rates the return for holding those dollars is reduced. That triggers a move to sell the dollar and buy bonds in another currency that yields more. The opposite occurs when the Fed raises rates as they have been doing for the last two years. How does this impact the U.S. debt load?

In the simplest terms, imagine I owe you \$10; if I push down the dollars' worth by lowering interest rates,

those 10 greenbacks of debt will be worth less as well. If I keep doing that, over time, my debt to you becomes more and more manageable, since it too is less valuable.

You, the lender, may not be happy about it, but there are compensations. A weaker dollar may mean the lender (foreigners who buy our debt, for example) can buy more products priced in cheaper dollars with their currencies. If their plans also include investing money in plants and equipment in America, the cost of doing so suddenly becomes cheaper and they can build more for less.

The key to succeeding at such a strategy is coordination among nations, and a lot of it. Otherwise, it becomes a currency free-for-all and a race to the bottom for all concerned. Most nations understand this from prior experience, and so central bankers and their treasury counterparts work behind the scenes to ensure an even

keel in devaluation that overtime allows their debt loads to be reduced.

I believe the devaluation of the dollar has already started. It was, in my opinion, partially behind the yen-carry trade debacle ("Japanic Monday") of three weeks ago. The dollar, after years of strength, had been falling gradually against many currencies for weeks, but not the yen. The actions of the Bank of Japan to raise interest rates slightly forced the yen to strengthen against the dollar practically overnight. This currency catch-up trade caused havoc around the world. Bankers want to avoid this kind of fallout whenever possible.

Many believe that a potential rebound in the inflation rate is behind the record run in gold prices recently, but that is not the whole story. There are many global traders, as well as a whole host of central banks, that realize a devaluation of the dollar is underway and have

been buying gold as an alternative form of currency.

How will devaluing a dollar to ease our debt impact you? Since a weaker dollar means that the dollar can be exchanged for less foreign currency, producing goods priced in dollars and goods made in other countries is more expensive for American consumers. Devaluation can also lead to higher inflation. Therefore, a devaluation must be managed carefully. And finally, it could lead to lower profits for some companies that import a great deal of materials from offshore. That could lead to layoffs in the labor force.

Bill Schmick is the founding partner of Onota Partners, Inc., in the Berkshires. Bill's forecasts and opinions are purely his own and do not necessarily represent the views of Onota Partners, Inc. (OPI). None of his commentary is or should be considered investment advice. Anyone seeking indi-

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God is not only watching, He intervenes

Living on Purpose



DR. WILLIAM HOLLAND

Late one stormy London night in 1763, a man filled with despair was determined to end his life. He hired a driver to take him to the river and was convinced that if he could only cast himself into the depths of the Thames, his agony could be finally put to an end.

He was unwavering in his resolve as he stepped down from the carriage and as it pulled away; he walked

through the fog toward the pier and suddenly noticed a strange figure sitting there, staring at him as if he had been expecting him.

In the awkward silence, he also observed the tide was extremely low and decided that maybe he should try something else. Returning home, the desperate man decided to poison himself with an overdose of laudanum, a potent drug derived from opium. But he couldn't raise the bottle to his lips. He tried again and again, however each time, it was as if an invisible hand was pushing it away.

Finally, he attempted to hang himself from the door frame, but after losing consciousness the rope snapped, and his housekeeper revived him.

For reasons he could not conceive, it seemed something was trying to prevent him from ending his misery. That man was William

Cowper, the famous English poet, and this had not been the first time he had contemplated suicide, only to be held back by peculiar forces.

Cowper battled depression and felt that he was unworthy in the eyes of God. His parents introduced him to a therapist who was a Christian where he presented the gospel to Cowper and often prayed with him.

One day, while reading the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead in John chapter 11 and about faith and salvation in Romans chapter 3, God opened William's eyes to the reality of the grace and hope that God was offering.

Here is what Cowper wrote in his journal about his experience: "Immediately I received the strength to believe in Christ, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made,

my pardon sealed in His blood and all the fullness and completeness of His justification. In a moment I believed and received the gospel...my eyes filled with tears, and my voice choked with transport; I could only look up to heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder."

He accepted God's grace, leaving him in awe and filled with joy.

Soon after, he sought a fresh start and moved to a village called Olney, where he met another man who had also experienced God's mercy in a season of great desperation. It was John Newton, the celebrated Anglican minister who had earned a reputation for the convicting power of his preaching.

Cowper moved into a house next to Newton and experienced a sense of peace from Newton's friendship and care. Newton understood that for the fragile

poet's life to find purpose, writing would need to be a part of his recovery. He encouraged Cowper to turn his creative talents to composing Christian songs, and the two collaborated on a collection of nearly 350 works known as the Olney Hymns.

Through the years, countless souls have found spiritual comfort in the beautiful music written by these two men. Newton is best known for his most famous work, "Amazing Grace" inspired by his miraculous rescue at sea.

Cowper is not only remembered as one of England's greatest poets but also composed many hymns of his own, including "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood" and "God Moves in a Mysterious Way," which proclaim the merciful intervention of a God that loved him and wanted to save him.

Cowper knew first-hand that our journey is filled

with constant warfare, and confirms what John Bunyan said referring to this life as, "A valley of tears."

For those who sense that doubt has overtaken hope, or maybe you are just feeling lonely and sad today, be encouraged to know that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. The Lord designed your destiny before you were born, which included a very special mission that He is trusting you to accomplish for Him.

Do not allow your emotions to deny the joys of God's truth. A line from Cowper's "Mysterious Way" poem: "For God is His own interpreter and He will make it plain, in His own time, and in His own way."

Read more about the Christian life at billyhol-landministries.com.

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DEC encourages volunteers to become campground ambassadors

ALBANY — The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced the opening of the 2025 application period for the Campground Ambassador program to connect more New Yorkers with the outdoors.

Like other campground host programs, volunteer campground ambassadors assist DEC campground staff in welcoming and assisting the millions of visitors who vacation in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks each year. Ambassadors conduct environmentally themed activities and other programming to enrich the camping experience of visitors.

The DEC encourages New Yorkers who are passionate about camping and the outdoors to help introduce new campers to DEC fa-

ilities and other outdoor activities.

“Campground ambassadors assist DEC staff by enhancing the customer service experience offered at our facilities and conduct fun, educational and meaningful programming opportunities,” Interim Commissioner Sean Mahar said. “Offering exciting programming for campers is an integral part of continuing the success of our campground program, bolstering New York’s campgrounds as the destination in the Adirondacks and Catskills for building memories and connecting visitors to nature for generations to come.”

Ambassadors serve two weeks during the DEC’s core camping season (July through Labor Day). In consideration for services pro-

vided, a campsite will be provided to ambassadors for the duration of their stay at one of the following participating locations:

- CATSKILLS**
 - Kenneth L. Wilson Campground & Day Use Area
 - North South Lake Campground & Day Use Area
- ADIRONDACKS**
 - Ausable Point Campground & Day Use Area
 - Buck Pond Campground & Day Use Area
 - Cranberry Lake Campground & Day Use Area
 - Fish Creek Pond Campground & Day Use Area
 - Frontier Town Campground, Equestrian & Day Use Area
 - Lewey Lake Campground &

- Day Use Area
- Luzerne Campground & Day Use Area
- Meacham Lake Campground & Day Use Area
- Moffitt Beach Campground & Day Use Area
- Nicks Lake Campground & Day Use Area
- Northampton Beach Campground & Day Use Area
- Rogers Rock Campground & Day Use Area

To apply for the 2025 program please complete and submit the application. The deadline for applications is Jan. 10.

To view the full details of the program, please visit DEC’s Campground Ambassador webpage at dec.ny.gov or call 518-457-2500

x1. DEC operates 51 campgrounds and four day-use areas in the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves. The summer camping season runs through the summer; some facilities remain open during fall foliage and hunting seasons.

For more information on DEC-operated campgrounds, including a list of campgrounds and schedules, visit DEC’s website at dec.ny.gov and go to the Camping link under the Outdoor Recreation section, or call DEC’s Bureau of Recreation at 518-457-2500.

To make reservations at any of these camping facilities, call ReserveAmerica at 1-800-456-CAMP (2267) or visit the ReserveAmerica website.

Capital Region welcomes new Christian music video station: Spirit TV

ALBANY — The Capital Region now has a new option for entertainment and inspiration with the launch of Spirit TV, a new Christian music video television station.

Broadcasting on Channel 4.3, Spirit TV is the first and only station of its kind in the area, offering a continuous stream of uplifting music videos to over 3.1 million homes.

Featuring a diverse selection of artists, from contemporary favorites like Newsboys and MercyMe to acclaimed voices like Kirk Franklin and Tori Kelly, Spirit TV provides a platform for both established and emerging Christian musicians. The station aims to not only entertain viewers but also strengthen their faith and offer a positive outlook on life, according to a statement from the station.

Beyond music videos, Spirit TV will occasionally feature special programs and messages from inspiring leaders.

Spirit TV is a collaborative effort by Thaddeus Pinckney, head of the Rensselaer United Methodist Church Faith Community and chaplain at Ellis Hospital, and Randy Hogue, Jr. from WPTR, a community-based radio station in Schenectady.

Recognizing the unique challenges of reaching a region often cited as the least religious in America, Spirit TV intends to play a role in fostering community engagement. The station plans to incorporate a free community/church calendar on screen, allowing local organizations to promote their events and activities alongside the music videos.

“We are thrilled to see how viewers will embrace this vision of spreading the Gospel throughout the Capital Region,” Pinckney said. “Early feedback has been incredibly positive, with viewers sharing how the music has already provided comfort and encouragement during difficult times.”

Watch Spirit TV on Channel 4.3 and experience the uplifting power of Christian music in your own home.

For more information, please contact: Sprittvalban@gmail.com, Thaddeus Pinckney at 518-669-7966, or Randall Hogue, Jr. at 518-844-4215.



COURTESY OF NICOLE CAMPBELL

A bobcat sighted in Columbia County.

DEC releases updated Bobcat Management Plan

The final 2024-2033 Management Plan for Bobcat in New York State is now available on DEC’s website. This plan provides a comprehensive review and update of the status of New York bobcats since the previous management plan was released.

The updated plan addresses information gaps by providing a review of existing monitoring programs, new research to understand bobcat population dynamics, and strategies for improving future data collection that may better inform decision-making.

DEC’s three main goals for bobcat management in New York are to:

1. Maintain or enhance bobcat populations in all ar-

reas of the state where suitable habitat exists;

2. Provide for the sustainable use and enjoyment of bobcats by the public; and,

3. Ensure that DEC is meeting the public desire for information about bobcats and their conservation, use, and enjoyment.

A draft of the updated plan was available for public review and comment in January to March, 2024. The final plan was modified to incorporate feedback from public comments.

Updates from the draft plan include the addition of a section discussing recent research findings on bobcat occupancy, more detail on current bobcat research being conducted in New York state, and the inclusion of

updated harvest and observation data. The full assessment of public comments can also be found on the DEC website at dec.ny.gov.

Major elements of the plan include:

- Implementing a targeted camera-trap survey to improve our understanding of bobcat populations throughout upstate New York;
- Developing a population model that incorporates existing data (harvest numbers and demographics, observation information, estimated density from above survey) to estimate population trends;
- Updating criteria to

guide recommendations for modifying existing harvest opportunities or opening new areas to bobcat harvest;

- Improving the accuracy of demographic information (sex and age) collected from harvested bobcats, allowing for a better understanding of harvested populations;

- Compiling information on bobcat-human interactions and developing guidelines for avoiding conflicts; and

- Understanding and addressing public values and interests regarding bobcats and bobcat management decisions.

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\$15M in new grant funding for community reforestation

ALBANY — There is \$15 million in grant fundings available through the new Community Reforestation (CoRe) Grant Program to expand, restore, and create urban forested natural areas.

The funding helps fulfill the 2024 State of the State “25 Million Trees Initiative” launched by Gov. Kathy Hochul to recognize the importance of trees and forests for climate resiliency and community health. The State of the State commitment included a \$15 million appropriation for competitive grants supporting resilient reforestation.

The majority of the grant funding—12 million—is available for municipalities, Indian Tribes and Nations, and not-for-profit organizations to reimburse costs for projects to create new forests or restore forests impacted by invasive species or other environmental challenges.

The maximum grant amount is \$3 million and the minimum grant amount is \$150,000. An additional \$3 million is available for state agencies, state author-

ities, and state educational entities to expand and restore forests on state lands in eligible areas.

Eligible CoRe projects include planting trees, preparing sites and removing competing or invasive vegetation interfering with tree seedling growth, and/or protecting new plantings from deer browse. Additional consideration will be given to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities or communities with low Tree Equity scores, which measure the intersection of urban tree canopy and a population’s social vulnerability. Funds cannot be used for real property (land) acquisition or for planting and maintenance of individual street or park trees.

The Department of Environmental Conservation will host a webinar on Thursday, Jan. 9, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., to provide information and answer questions about this new Community Reforestation funding opportunity. Visit DEC’s website at dec.ny.gov for more information. Registration is required to attend the

webinar.

Grant applications will be accepted until 2 p.m. on March 12. Applications must be submitted through the SFS Grants Management System (SFS). Those wishing to apply need to establish an account in SFS. Once registered, search SFS for “CoRe.”

For more details about the grant opportunity, including application and scoring criteria, visit DEC’s website or email urbanforestry@dec.ny.gov.

In addition to the CoRe Grant Program, \$4.5 million was previously announced and currently available through the Establishing Large Forests (ELF) Grant Program for private landowners to establish new forests. ELF builds on New York state’s popular Regenerate NY Forestry Cost Share Grant Program and is designed to support the creation of new forests crucial for mitigating climate change, providing wildlife habitat, protecting air and water quality, and supplying timber, an important renewable resource.

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COURTESY OF NYS MUSEUM

Artwork by artist Margery Ryerson will be on exhibit through Sept. 5, 2025.

NYS Museum exhibit: 'Margery Ryerson: Art is Contagious'

ALBANY — The New York State Education Department has announced the opening of a new exhibition, "Margery Ryerson: Art is Contagious," now open for public viewing at the New York State Museum.

The exhibit will be open from now through Sept. 5, 2025.

This landmark exhibition features more than 80 extraordinary works spanning Margery Ryerson's illustrious career, including vibrant paintings, delicate watercolors, intricate prints, and evocative drawings. The collection celebrates Ryerson's deep connections to New York and her remarkable yet understated impact on the art world.

"We are thrilled to present this first-ever monographic exhibition of Margery Ryerson's work, much of which is so closely connected with New York's history," Dr. Jennifer Lemak, chief curator of History at the State Museum, said. "While Ryerson is perhaps best known for co-authoring important and enduring instructional art books, she was also a tremendously gifted painter and printmaker in her own right."

Ryerson was born in 1886, graduated from Vassar College in Poughkeepsie in 1909, and moved to New York City in 1911, where she lived until her death in 1989 at the age of 102. Ryerson studied under famed art instructors, Robert Henri and Charles W. Hawthorne, and worked with each to compile their classroom lessons into published instructional guides.

The book she co-authored with Henri, "The Art Spirit," is still in print today, more than 100 years after its publication, and remains one of the most influential books ever written about the nature of art and creativity, the artist's place in society, and the importance of building on what came before.

While Ryerson is widely known within the art world for her influential writing, she also created beautiful and lasting works of art. Most notably, her depictions of the poor and immigrant children going about their daily activities in New York City's settlement houses from the 1920s through the 1940s beautifully capture this important chapter in the state's history. The exhibition includes artifacts and information about New York's settlement houses to help place Ryerson's work within its historical context.

Works of art by Ryerson are included in the collections of some of the world's leading museums, including the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.; the Cleveland Museum of Art; the Brooklyn Museum; the Uffizi Gallery, in Florence, Italy; and the Bibliotheque Nationale, in Paris, France.

The exhibition, located in the New York State Museum's West Gallery, will be on view through Sept. 5, 2025.

DEC releases Striped Bass Young-of-Year survey results

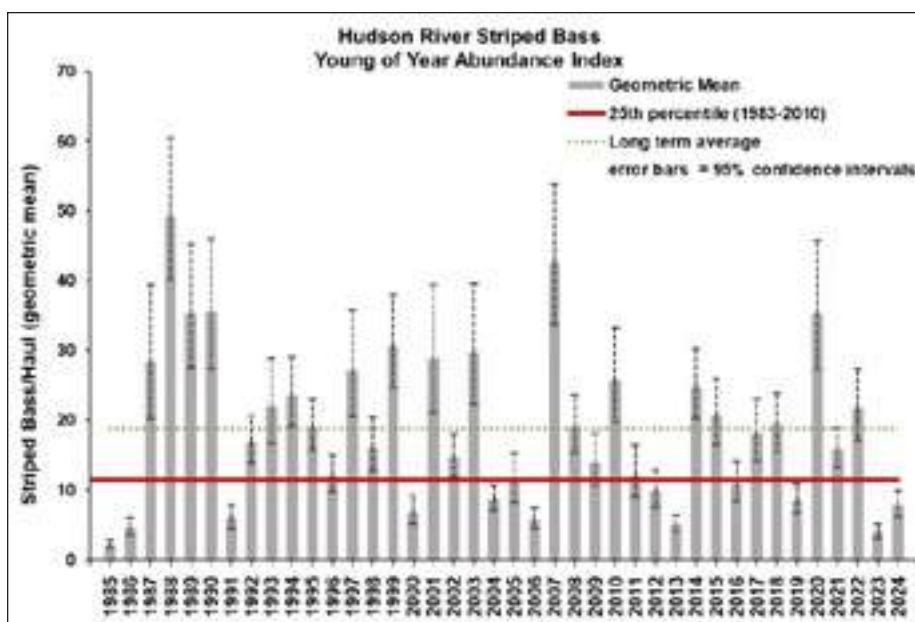
ALBANY — The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced the 2024 Hudson River striped bass young-of-year survey results for 2024 depict a second consecutive year of poor juvenile production in the Hudson River.

The index value, which provides an estimate of annual juvenile production for striped bass in the Hudson River, is generated through a beach seine survey at 13 sites in the lower Hudson River conducted bi-weekly from July to November.

This is the 45th year of the survey, which provides long-term monitoring information about striped bass and other fish species in the Hudson River.

"DEC's annual juvenile striped bass survey conducted in the Hudson River is a critical method for measuring the reproductive success and potential future abundance of the striped bass population along the Atlantic Coast," said DEC Interim Commissioner Sean Mahar. "Given the challenges striped bass are experiencing in other spawning areas and the poor results of the 2023 survey, this year's below average index value in the Hudson River heightens the concerns of the future availability of this critical resource as we approach the next decade."

The 2024 value for the DEC's Hudson River striped bass young-of-year index was 7.85 fish per haul. This value is below the long-term average, and for the second con-



SOURCE: NYS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

secutive year, survey values were below the 25th percentile. The survey can be found on the dec website at dec.ny.gov.

Juvenile production is an important part of rebuilding the coastal striped bass stock and is heavily dependent on environmental conditions in estuaries along the Atlantic Coast. The recent low values in the Hudson River add to concerns about striped bass production in other Atlantic coastal estuaries. The Maryland young-of-year index in the Chesapeake Bay also posted poor re-

sults in 2024, extending a string of poor annual reproduction events in the Chesapeake Bay to a sixth consecutive year.

New York state works cooperatively with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) to manage striped bass. In response to projections from the 2024 Stock Assessment Update, the ASMFC Board met Dec. 16, to consider adjusting 2025 management measures to reduce fishing mortality and increase the probability of rebuilding the coastal stock of striped bass.

Give a Hoot silent auction

CAIRO — The Cairo-Durham Middle and High School is raising funds for the CDTA Scholarship through its Give a Hoot silent auction.

Five chainsaw-carved wooden owls made by Tom Morrissey, a Class of 2008 alum, are on display and still up for auction.

Tom Morrissey is a local self-employed professional chainsaw carver and the Cairo-Durham Rotary Club's president. He was recently invited to showcase his chainsaw carving during Mr. Criswell's classes. After-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The remaining chainsaw-carved owls that are up for auction at Cairo-Durham Middle and High School.

ward, the seven finely carved owls Tom carved that day were given to the school for an internal silent auction.

Staff and faculty throughout the middle and high school's campus have the chance to bid on the five remaining beautifully carved owls. Proceeds from winning bids will go toward the CDTA Scholarship fund.

One owl is auctioned every month. Bidding starts on the first day, and bidding ends on the second Wednesday of the same month. Faculty and staff can find a sign-up sheet in the art room, E-7.

The owls are currently on display near the gymnasium.

DEC seeks volunteers for Winter Raptor Survey

ALBANY — New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Region 4 is seeking volunteers to participate in the DEC's Winter Raptor Survey.

The survey is designed to identify habitats used by bird species, especially those that are threatened or endangered. The data will be used to help guide future conservation and protection efforts.

Region 4 Acting Regional Director John Weidman said, "The DEC Winter Raptor Survey is an excellent opportunity

for avid birdwatchers, nature enthusiasts, or novices who just want to get involved to participate in conservation. Volunteers will assist regional wildlife biologists in tracking New York's bird species to ensure these birds are protected and able to thrive in our ever-changing environment."

Stationary surveys are completed on a weekly schedule from mid-November to late April and survey sites are located across the nine counties that make up DEC Region 4, including Albany, Greene, Columbia,

Rensselaer, Schenectady, Schoharie, Montgomery, Delaware and Otsego counties.

The survey is a 1.5-hour commitment beginning one hour before sunset and ending 30 minutes after sunset.

While the specific goal of the survey is to identify habitat used by threatened northern harriers (*Circus hudsonius*) and endangered short-eared owls (*Asio flammeus*) during their non-breeding winter period, DEC records all raptors seen or heard, including owls, hawks, vultures, falcons, and eagles.

Volunteers are welcome to participate in as many or as few surveys as their schedules allow and DEC will provide training to those in need. DEC does not provide transportation to and from survey sites. Volunteers are also asked to use their own binoculars for surveys.

Please email DEC Region 4 Wildlife Biologists to learn more about the program and how to get involved in the Winter Raptor Survey at wildlife.r4@dec.ny.gov.

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