



COPAKE
Solar
strife **A2**



MILLERTON
Setting
the tone **A3**



COMPASS
Art and
entertainment
in 2025;
and more **B1-3**



PHOTO BY ALY MORRISSEY

Eric Alexander stands in front of the Millbrook Diner on Franklin Avenue in the Village of Millbrook. Alexander was elected to represent District 25 in the Dutchess County Legislature.

Alexander says flipped legislature marks new era of governance

By ALY MORRISSEY
alym@millertonnews.com

MILLBROOK — Fresh off a narrow win in the race for Dutchess County Legislature, newly elected Eric Alexander — whose victory helped flip the county from red to blue — said the shift marks a “renewed commitment to good governance.” In November, Democrats took control of the legislature for the first time since 2008, and Alexander edged out his Republican opponent, Dierdre Houston, by just 41 votes.

A first-time candidate with an

extensive career spanning communications and financial services, 69-year-old Alexander said, “To be able to start a new chapter at this stage of my life, I really hope I’ll be able to make a difference.”

Alexander — a first-generation American — is wrapping up his tenure as Board Chair of Emerson College, his alma mater. While on the board he has worn multiple hats, including chairing the Investment Committee and supporting the finance, audit and institutional advancement com-

See ERIC ALEXANDER, A6

Newly-elected officials take their seats across northeast Dutchess County

By NATHAN MILLER
nathanm@millertonnews.com

Eric Alexander of Millbrook was one of 15 Democratic representatives sworn in to the Dutchess County Legislature on Monday, Jan. 5, marking the end of nearly two decades of Republican control of the body.

Democrats flipped six seats in the legislature in last No-

vember’s election, securing a 15-10 majority that represents a broader shift in local politics that took place in last year’s election.

Alexander will serve as the representative for District 25, which includes the Town of Washington, the Town of Amenia and a portion of the Town of

See 2025 POLITICS, A6

The life of Mary Leitch; 103 years of service, spirit and joy

By LEILA HAWKEN
leilah@millertonnews.com

AMENIA — Mary Leitch, of Amenia, whose life was filled with energy, generosity and kindness, passed away peacefully at the age of 103 on Christmas Eve morning. For decades, she touched the lives of many and left a lasting mark on the communities of Millerton, Millbrook and Amenia.

Leitch was born in Millerton in 1922 and grew up on Winchell Mountain in the hamlet of Irondale. Her early schooling was at Irondale’s 1858 one-room schoolhouse until it closed in 1930. She was proud of having been the last living person to attend that District No. 7 school, one of 14 one-room schoolhouses serving the town. From the third grade onward, she attended school in the Millerton school district.

In 2014, the Irondale schoolhouse was moved to the village of Millerton’s Main Street to serve as

See MARY LEITCH, A6



PHOTO PROVIDED

Mary Leitch, who passed away Dec. 24, is pictured at a 2024 observance marking 10 years since the Irondale Schoolhouse was relocated and restored as a visitor center for the Harlem Valley Rail Trail on Main Street in Millerton. The last living student to attend the one-room schoolhouse before it closed in 1930, Leitch was welcomed by North East Town Supervisor Chris Kennan.

Local massage therapist suggests ditching resolutions, ‘slow it down’ in the new year

By ALY MORRISSEY
alym@millertonnews.com

MILLERTON — While many view the new year as a starting line for resolutions and new habits, Millerton-based massage therapist and relationship coach Aimée Davis suggests a different course — a marathon, not a sprint. She believes a slower, more embodied approach can lead to greater fulfillment than ticking boxes off a list.

“I’m more of a daily-moment person,” Davis said, explaining that she focuses on small, consistent practices rather than big, rushed goals. Practicing conscious

See AIMÉE DAVIS, A6



PHOTO BY ALY MORRISSEY

Aimée Davis in her Millerton massage studio at 65 Main St. Davis offers massage therapy, relationship coaching and reiki in her studio and through home visits.



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Letter, Columns A5



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OUR TOWNS



A farmland vista along Route 23 in Craryville, N.Y., where Hecate Energy has proposed one of the solar arrays for its Shepherd's Run project.

Another year of solar struggles, new hearings

By JOHN COSTON
Special to the Millerton News

COPAKE — The past year marked another herky-jerky dance on the community solar front for this otherwise quiet hamlet.

As 2025 rolled along, the battle between Hecate Energy LLC and residents opposed to its proposed 42-megawatt Shepherd's Run solar farm entered its eighth year.

In February, New York State officials dismissed the company's application, and the process of review continued through the rest of the year. Officials in Albany eventually issued two additional notices of incompleteness.

Meanwhile, state legislators also weighed in on the project. State Sen. Michelle Hinchey, D-41, and State Assemblywoman Didi Barrett, D-106, both expressed concerns about the project in letters to state officials and to Gov. Kathy Hochul. Hudson Mayor Kamal Johnson wrote about concerns the city's Common Council cited in October 2024 about the safety

of Hudson's water supply.

The project has been controversial since it initially was discussed in 2017 — planned as a 60-megawatt solar farm to be located on farmland near the intersection of Routes 23 and 7. In January 2024, the project had to be downsized after the company lost control over a portion of designated land. As it now stands, Shepherd's Run will span 700 acres with thousands of solar panels covering 225 acres.

In other developments, last summer Hecate found itself in Delaware Chancery Court as a creditor sought a restraining order against the Chicago-based developer, owner and operator of renewable power projects.

A Hecate lender claimed: "Hecate Holdings is woefully insolvent, strapped for cash, and drastically over leveraged," a motion stated. Then, soon thereafter, a second creditor filed a similar motion in the same court claiming Hecate was in default in its loan agreements.

By the middle of the next month, in September, state of

ficials accepted the company's Shepherd's Run application as "complete" and within a requisite 60-day period issued a draft permit for the project. That was in mid-November.

Next up will be public hearings. Two will be virtual hearings available on Tuesday, Jan. 27, at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Four in-person hearings are scheduled for 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026, and Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026, at Town Hall in Copake.

On Jan. 10, from noon to 2 p.m. at the Copake Memorial Park Building some residents have organized a community meeting in preparation of the public hearings. Organized by Sensible Solar for Rural New York and the Arcadian Alliance, the meeting will feature talks and videos "to hear experts on how Shepherd's Run will negatively impact Copake." Speakers include Town Supervisor Richard Wolf, William Murphy, a retired battalion chief from the Fire Department of New York and Lindsay Brecht of Copake Lake Realty.

Amenia advances major projects while community life thrives

By LEILA HAWKEN
leilah@millertonnews.com

AMENIA — The past year in Amenia was marked by steady progress on infrastructure, preservation and community projects designed to improve daily life and position the town for future growth.

In March, the Town Board selected a contractor to extend the sidewalk along Route 44 between Broadway and Beekman Park, with construction beginning in August. When completed this spring, the project will provide a safer pedestrian connection between the town center and the park.

Work also advanced on plans for a new town garage and salt shed. Town crews completed site preparation throughout the year, handling initial land clearing and grading in advance of construction, which is scheduled to begin this spring.

Community groups played a role in enhancing public spaces as well. In early May, members of the Amenia Garden Club planted a native pollinator garden at the Amenia Free Library. Now established, the garden continues to attract bees, insects and birds native to the region.

New businesses added energy to the town in 2025. Isabela, Amenia's newest restaurant, opened in late March and quickly built a loyal following, drawing steady local interest. In July, the Silo Bakery also opened in Amenia, offering an array of pastries, breads and pies and becoming another popular destination.

Preservation efforts also

moved forward during the year. In late May, donations from the Amenia Historical Society and local residents supported restoration work on the town's 1937 Sanford fire truck. Once complete, the town's first fire engine is expected to return to public view, including appearances in local parades.

A long-anticipated preservation milestone was marked on July 3, when the town officially accepted the donation of the historic Wassacai Charcoal Kilns. The ceremony formalized the transfer of the two restored 19th-century stone kilns to the town on the eve of Independence Day celebrations.

Community events drew visitors throughout the year. Despite clouds and intermittent rain, classic cars lined Wassacai's Main Street in late May for a car show organized by Fenders and Flowers. In mid-October, months of planning culminated in the first annual Amenia Harvest Festival, which brought together vendors, residents and visitors.

Equestrian events also expanded in 2025. The Silo Ridge Masters returned to Keane Stud with an additional weekend of show-jumping competition. Riders were

drawn to Amenia again in early October for a three-star competition, followed the next week by a new five-star event under the Highlands Cup banner. The expanded competition included two nights of concerts and a car competition.

Voters weighed in during the November election, continuing the town's support for Democratic candidates. Rosanna Hamm won the supervisor's race, defeating Republican Terrence McCauley by a margin of 686 to 402. Democrats also strengthened their presence on the Town Board, with Walter Dietrich winning one of two full-term seats and Vicki Doyle securing the remaining year of an unexpired term. Republican Nicole Ahearn won the second full-term seat.

Amenia voters also narrowly chose to retain the town's ban on retail cannabis sales, rejecting the measure by a vote of 560 to 515.

Looking ahead, the coming year is expected to bring the completion of the Route 44 sidewalk project and construction of the new town garage and salt shed, along with continued progress on repairs to the Water District's facilities, including new well heads and pumping station.

YOUR NEWS Stay informed millertonnews.com

Pine Plains advances Town Hall plans and new businesses

By NATHAN MILLER
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PINE PLAINS — In 2025, Pine Plains advanced plans for a new Town Hall and welcomed new business development, even as the community grappled with the loss of its only grocery store.

The Pine Plains Town Board began in earnest this year the planning stages for a new Town Hall building. Officials plan to construct the facility at 8 N. Main St., neighboring the Bank of Millbrook branch at the intersection of Main and Church Street.

Representatives from LaBella Associates, an architectural firm that frequently works with municipalities, presented draft drawings of the proposed Town Hall in October.

Eastern Region Vice President Pasquale Marchese led the presentation, sharing proposed floor plans and a conceptual sketch of the building's exterior.

Marchese proposed a single-story structure with a basement for additional storage. Under the current concept, each department of town government would have its own office, arranged in a horseshoe-like configuration around a large central room that would serve as both a courtroom and a board meeting space.

Meanwhile, the Pine Plains Planning Board spent much of the year reviewing two major development proposals: a 50,000-square-foot lumber mill proposed by The Hudson Company and the town's first retail cannabis dispensary.

The Hudson Company has operated for years in a rented Pine Plains location. Representatives said the business had outgrown its current space and sought to build a new facility to accommodate construction operations, a showroom and office space.

After eight months of site plan review and public hearings, the Planning Board approved the mill at its December meeting. The new facility will be located at 2246 Route 83 along South Main Street, south of Stewart's Shops gas station.

And Upstate Pines — a dispensary based in Red Hook, New York — also received approval to open a cannabis shop at 7723 S. Main St.

The dispensary will be located at the site of the historic weigh station building.

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A wonderful way to get a sense of the history of Salisbury is to explore the oral transcripts that are available on the website of the Salisbury Association. They have taken the time to interview many people to preserve the town's culture and their experiences in living here. I started with David C. Braze, Lester (Oogie) Hoysradt, George Kiefer and Rod Lankler, and I found out all sorts of things that I never knew even growing up here. To start your exploration of what all these remarkable people have done to make the Town what it is today, please visit: salisburyassociation.org/oral-history-project/.



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- Grading the site for drainage

SITE VISITS: January 12-19, 2026

QUESTIONS DUE: January 19, 2026

BID DUE: February 13, 2026

ANTICIPATED START DATE: April 1, 2026

ITB CONTACT: Christine Gray, AIA
christine@cgarch.com



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North East organizational meeting sets tone for new year

By ALY MORRISSEY
alym@millertonnews.com

MILLERTON — The North East Town Board convened for its annual organizational meeting on Friday, Jan. 2, where trustees affirmed priorities and set the tone for the year ahead.

"I'm really proud of the town hall that we have," said Supervisor Chris Kennan. "I think we have a great group of people who work together well, and it's a collegial place to be."

Kennan's three major priorities for the coming year include renovating and occupying the new Town Hall, continuing work on the town's long-anticipated zoning revisions, and advancing plans for a wastewater and sewer system in Millerton.

Work on the new Town Hall is expected to begin in earnest this year, Kennan said. He also expressed cautious optimism about progress on a sewer system, citing a recent meeting with U.S. Rep. Pat Ryan, D-18, and noting that a previously stalled federal



North East Supervisor Chris Kennan presents outgoing Town Board member Ralph Fedele with a commemorative gift in recognition of his 12 years of service. Fedele, who retired in December 2025, received the gift during the Jan. 2 annual organizational meeting.

PHOTO BY ALY MORRISSEY

grant will move forward. The funding, he said, would cover a significant portion of the project's engineering costs.

Additional grant applications are in progress, and the town and village continue to evaluate long-term options. Kennan described the comple-

tion of the project as "transformative" for Millerton, even if the impact would unfold gradually over time.

With a public hearing on the new commercial zoning draft scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 8, at 7:05 p.m. at Town Hall, Kennan acknowledged

the complexity and urgency of the effort. The town's code has not been significantly updated since 1977.

"I'm really proud of the work that the town has done to get to where we are at the moment," Kennan said, adding that he is looking forward to the second phase of the zoning rewrite, which will look at residential zoning after the commercial district is finalized.

The board also reviewed and approved the 2026 rules of procedure for Town Board meetings, including a discussion about public comment. Although public comment is not required by law, North East welcomes it. Under the updated rules, individual speaking time will be reduced from five to three minutes, a change that Kennan says aligns with practices in surrounding towns.

During the meeting, the Board officially welcomed newly elected Councilwoman

Rachele Grieco Cole and said a final farewell to outgoing board member Ralph Fedele, who retired after 12 years of service. Kennan presented Fedele with a commemorative gift in recognition of his years of service. Fedele thanked the board, noting how much the town has changed during his tenure.

"A lot has changed in 12 years, and I'm going to miss all of you," Fedele said.

Newly re-elected Councilman Chris Mayville was appointed deputy supervisor. Mayville and Councilwoman Meg Winkler were also designated as emergency interim successors.

Much of the remainder of the meeting focused on routine appointments and reappointments. The board reappointed Daniel Sternberg to the Planning Board following the expiration of his term on Dec. 31, 2025, and reappointed Dale Culver as Planning Board Chair through Dec. 31, 2026.

Nearly a year after fire, Millerton continues rebuilding effort

By ALY MORRISSEY
alym@millertonnews.com

MILLERTON — With another winter underway and new snow-removal equipment now in place, the village is reminded of the February morning when a fire destroyed Millerton's highway and water department building on Route 22, wiping out everything inside and setting off a year of recovery and rebuilding. The blaze broke out in the early hours of Feb. 3, as snow covered the ground.

Demolition and planning

Nearly a year later, reconstruction efforts are ongoing. Demolition for the fire-damaged building began on Oct. 27, more than eight months after the fire broke out. The removal, which was completed by BELFOR Properties, marked a significant milestone in efforts to rebuild.

"It has been a work in progress that individuals have poured a lot of their time and effort into," said Caroline Farr-Killmer, who was appointed as the fire project manager. She acknowledged that while it may have seemed like progress was slow, the process required thoughtful and thorough management. She added, "It's not something that can be accomplished overnight — I am grateful for the team effort put in by all those involved."

In the weeks after the fire, Farr-Killmer visited the charred site nearly every day, documenting damage to the structure and photographing debris to help the village rebuild its lost inventory.

Two new buildings on the horizon

The village plans to construct two separate buildings on the Route 22 site — one for the highway department and one for water operations.

The separation is now required by the Dutchess County Department of Health because a municipal water well sits on the property. Officials emphasized that Millerton's water supply has remained safe. Weekly testing by VRI Environmental Services continues, with results submitted to the Department of Health.

BELFOR Properties is expected to handle the rebuild, though an official construction timeline has not been announced by the village.

A year of recovery

With a full lineup of new snow removal equipment, longtime Highway Department member Jim Milton said the crew is ready for the season. He credits Police Chief Joe Olenik with replacing inventory that was lost to the fire.

Olenik became highway superintendent on Sept. 26, following the resignation of former superintendent Peter Dellagheffa. Although this winter will be his first leading the department, he brings extensive knowledge of village operations and already has a close working relationship with the crew. In the months immediately following the blaze, the village relied on borrowed equipment from the county and towns such as Ancram and Amenia.

The fire also destroyed Millerton's police vehicles. Replacement Ford Interceptors — designed by Olenik and the Cruiser's Division in Mamaroneck — arrived in

early September. From February through September, Millerton officers used a loaned patrol car from Pine Plains.

To help the village manage the loss of space, the Town of North East signed an intermunicipal agreement allowing the Millerton Police Department vehicles to be parked at the town's highway garage until the rebuilding is complete.

Record-setting year for firefighters

The fire marked the start of what became one of the busiest years on record for the North East Fire Company. In 2025, the all-volunteer department responded to more than 425 calls — the highest total in at least eight years.

Looking ahead, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved a \$787,813 budget for 2026, representing a 2% increase, consistent with typical year-over-year growth.

The fire company enters 2026 with a mix of veteran and new leadership and a command staff that blends career firefighting, EMS expertise, and military experience. With an emphasis on rigorous training and a tight-knit culture, leaders say the department is positioned for a demanding year ahead.

By ALY MORRISSEY
alym@millertonnews.com

MILLERTON — At a glance, Millerton's year was marked by striking contrasts. Moments of division were set against moments of community building. Major municipal milestones were followed by delays and missed deadlines. And years-long efforts to prepare for the future unfolded alongside planning efforts to celebrate the past.

Still no grocery store — and no new timeline

One of the biggest questions on residents' minds this year was the long-awaited return of a full-scale grocery store to Millerton. Early optimism followed the 2024 sale of the Millerton Square Plaza to Kim and Chris Choe, veteran grocers who own the Sharon Farm Market. After the Town of North East Planning Board approved their site plan last spring, many hoped the new "Town Gourmet Market" would open in 2025. The owners even floated an October target.

But as fall came and went, the plaza's parking lot remained cluttered with debris, and visible disrepair raised new questions about timing. During a recent visit to the couple's newly opened New Haven store, Market 360, co-owner Kim Choe said extensive interior renovations have delayed progress and that no updated timeline is available.

Still, Choe emphasized that the project is moving forward.

Pool project delayed, progress behind the scenes

Millerton's long-awaited pool at Eddie Collins Park saw both disappointment and progress this year. In July, Mayor Jenn Najdek announced that construction — originally scheduled to begin in spring 2025 — had been pushed to 2026 due to ongoing wetlands and septic-related reviews by county and state agencies.

Residents and officials alike were disappointed that the pool will not be ready for the village's upcoming 175th celebration in July. Trustees chose to delay construction until after the event, ensuring residents have a place to gather.

Even so, planning continues. Architects from LaBella Associates presented updated

designs in December 2025, and trustees finalized several key decisions, including opting against a heated pool because of cost and choosing a fully equipped commercial kitchen for the pool house.

With design details now refined and ready for county review, village officials say the project remains very much alive — just on a longer timeline than originally planned.

A year in review

Even amid delay and division, Millerton continued to show up for one another. The community turned out in numbers for major events like the Oblong Books 50th Birthday Celebration, the Millerton News Street Fair and the Memorial Day Parade. Planning is in full swing to honor the village's past with the 175th committee gearing up for a birthday bash in July.

LEGAL NOTICES

Legal Notice

John J. Contracting USA LLC, a domestic LLC, filed with the SSNY on 12/29/2025. SSNY is designated as agent upon whom process against the LLC may be served. SSNY shall mail process to 364 Pumpkin Lane Clinton Corners NY 12514

Purpose: The purpose of the LLC is to engage in any and all lawful activities for which a limited liability company may be organized under the laws of the state of New York Section 203 of the Limited Liability Company Law.

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01-29-26
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02-12-26

12-04-25
12-11-25
12-18-25
12-25-25
01-01-26

Legal Notice

Notice of Formation of Lady Hounds Farm, LLC. Arts. or Org. filed with SSNY on 8/25/25. Office Location: Dutchess County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to 364 Pumpkin Lane Clinton Corners NY 12514

Purpose: The purpose of the LLC is to engage in any and all lawful activities for which a limited liability company may be organized under the laws of the state of New York Section 203 of the Limited Liability Company Law.

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Legal Notice

Notice of Formation of Max Cohen Design LLC. Arts. or Org. filed with SSNY on 11/07/2025. Office location: Dutchess County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Max Cohen Design LLC, 253 Benson Hill Road, Dover Plains, NY 12522. Purpose: any lawful act or activity.

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OBITUARIES

Francis J. Schell

FALLS VILLAGE — Francis J. "Bosco" Schell of Falls Village passed away peacefully on Dec. 20, at East Mountain House in Lakeville surrounded by members of his family.



cal freedom. He headed the Hungarian Association of the Knights of Malta in Exile which led to the re-creation of the Hungarian Delegation in Hungary.

In his later years, he chaired the board of the David M. Hunt Library in Falls Village where he could be found raising funds by selling cuttings from his own greenhouse along with his legendary home-made jam.

Bosco's two lifelong passions were gardening and music. Always an enthusiastic dabbler, retirement enabled him to attend the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens where he earned his degree in horticulture in 1997 before settling down with Page in her published garden at Duck Hill in North Salem, NY. They eventually moved to Falls Village in 2015 where they established Church House and its garden. He took great pride in its opening to the public and last gave a virtual tour of his greenhouse in 2021 to benefit charity.

He is remembered by his loving wife Page, his two children Peter Schell and Marie-Elizabeth Offierski and their spouses Blandine and Stefan, his four step-children Keith Dickey, Kim Dickey Ambrose, Scott Dickey and Jean Dickey Quaintance and their spouses Ally, Kirk, Ilia and Don, by his eight grandchildren Irène, Valentine, Anastasia, Paul, Frederic, Conrad, Gregor, and Olga and his six step-grandchildren Claire, Helen, Freddy, Charlie, Alex and Keala.

A funeral mass was held at 11:00 a.m. on Jan. 5, 2026, at St. Martin of Tours Church of St. Mary in Lakeville. Burial followed at Sleep Hollow Cemetery in Tarrytown, New York.

CORNWALL — A good man has passed. Gerald "Jerry" Blakey, 89, of Cornwall, passed on Dec. 20, 2025.

He was predeceased by his parents Ernestine L. Blakey and Burt Blakey of West Cornwall, his brother Tom Blakey of Falls Village, and his daughter Karen B. Fisher of Cornwall.

He leaves his wife of 70 years, Patricia "Pat" Blakey of Cornwall, his son David M. Blakey of Cornwall Bridge, his daughter Lori B. Welles and her husband David Welles of West Cornwall, his granddaughter Melissa B. Root of Terryville, great granddaughter Devyn Root of Terryville, and his niece Pam B. Hart and her husband Doug of Belenca, California, and brother James Blakey of Florida.

Jerry graduated from HVRHS in 1954. He started dating Patricia "Pat" Blakey in high school, and they were married on Sept. 3, 1955.

Their first challenge as

newlyweds was hearing their new furniture had washed away in the flood of 55!

After high school, Jerry began working at Housatonic Valley Rug Shop in Cornwall Bridge.

In 1979 he bought HVRS with his partner Ed Kenniston. He retired in 2006.

Early on in his adult life he began getting involved in all things Cornwall. A member of the UCC in Cornwall, he served on numerous boards and committees there. Always ready to fix or fabricate, clean or repair whatever was needed. He served on the town's P&Z committee, building committees and more, he was elected tax collector. He was proud to serve in the Cornwall Fire Dept. Where there was a need, he found solutions.

Pat and Jerry volunteered at the Soup Kitchen in Torrington and slept in the shelter for Operation Overflow, also in Torrington. Together

Gerald Blakey

they started the medical equipment loan program out of the UCC. Volunteering 100s of hours and traveling 100s of miles delivering and picking up medical equipment for those in need.

Jerry and Pat opened their garage after the tornado of '89 and started the Blakey Family Restaurant to feed the town's people and volunteers as the clean up continued. Jerry organized blood drives, built houses in Mexico through the La Casa Project, hosted tornado anniversary parties and so much more.

Jerry amassed numerous awards, citations and recognitions for all he did. Each was carefully put away, not to be displayed, because it never was about those. As one friend said, Jerry didn't know he did extraordinary things, it's just what you're supposed to do. He was talented, humble and generous. He loved the community and the people and always was there to help. He was a family man, caring for

them up to the end.

Among the many awards he was particularly proud of his Public Service award from the State of Connecticut in 2001, The Connecticut Conference, UCC Living Waters Award in 2015 and an honoree with Pat on The HVRHS Alumni Wall of Honors 2023.

Anyone who ever met Jerry would know that he was a man of many words and always a man of his word, he will be missed.

The family would like to thank his Smilow Cancer Hospital team in Torrington, Connecticut.

Services will be held on Jan. 10, 2026, at 1 p.m. at the UCC, Bolton Hill Road, in Cornwall.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Cornwall Volunteer Fire Dept. and EMS, American Cancer Society, or the UCC Cornwall capital improvement fund.

The Kenny Funeral Home has care of arrangements.

Austin Howard Barney

SHARON — Austin Howard Barney — known simply as "Barney" to many, of Sharon, age 87, died on Dec. 23, after his heroic battle with the black breath, hannahaki disease, cooties, simian flu and feline leukemia finally came to an end.

Austin was born on July 26, 1938, son of Sylvester and Iva Barney.

He leaves behind an overwhelming amount of junk—sorry, treasures. If you've ever dreamed of owning a console TV roughly the size of a Buick, a soot-encrusted coffee pot that hasn't been properly cleaned since the Reagan administration or creatively bent hangers that he had hanging in his living room windows to dry clothes on, give us a call. Please wait for the appropriate, respectful amount of time. Tomorrow should be fine.

Austin was frugal to the extreme; some may have called him "cheap," but he preferred to think of himself as a pioneer in recycling—decades before it was cool. His kitchen was home to a vast collection of cool whip and country crock containers. The biggest challenge was finding actual cool whip or butter in his refrigerator with all the containers of leftovers that looked the same. "Open at your own risk" was our motto.

He leaves behind a wonderfully dysfunctional family—a group he tolerated, loved and occasionally avoided.

Austin was world-renowned for his lack of patience, grossly excessive extreme sarcasm, not holding back his opinion and knack for telling you exactly how wrong you were. One of his favorite quotes was, "I was only wrong once in my life. I thought I made a mistake."

He always preferred his

own cooking to anyone else's—and to be fair, it was actually pretty good.

Austin served proudly with the 6th Marines in the United States Marine Corps from Feb. 10, 1958, through Feb. 9, 1962. Semper Fi!

He was also a volunteer fireman for several years, until he realized that sprinting in the opposite direction from fire was more aligned with his personal survival goals.

A natural mountain man, he ate things from the swamp that most people avoid and cooked on a wood stove for many years. He was an avid bird watcher and found joy in feeding all the animals that frequented his property.

He was predeceased by his brothers, Sylvester Barney, Louis Barney and his sister Shirley MacDougall.

He is survived by his daughters Darlene Hardzog, Margaret Gdovin (Mike); his son, Austin Barney Jr. (Kate); his grandchildren, Savannah Hardzog, Jordan Gdovin, Violet Barney, Amethyst Barney and Austin Barney III; and his sister Anita Baird along with various other relatives. You know who you are. He will be greatly missed.

There will be no viewing, as his children refused to comply with his request to be taxidermied and propped in the corner with a beer or a glass of scotch in his hand so guests could admire him in his natural state.

Services are pending and details will be shared at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Red Cross in his memory.

Austin Barney has approved this message. Approval notwithstanding, it would have read the same.

For more obituaries, see Page B4



Joan Marie Wilbur

SHARON — Joan Marie Wilbur, 83, a seventy-two year resident of Sharon, died peacefully on Monday evening, Dec. 22, 2025, at Sharon Hospital in Sharon. Mrs. Wilbur had a forty-year career as a licensed practical nurse in Sharon, she began at Sharon Hospital and subsequently worked for Dr. Brewer, Dr. Gott, Sharon Pediatrics, Dr. Rashkoff and ultimately finished her career caring for patients at Sharon Health Care Center.

Born Jan. 2, 1942, in Colchester, Vermont, she was the daughter of the late Jerome and Catherine (Casey) Bushey. On Sept. 14, 1963, in Lakeville, Connecticut she married the love of her life, Edward Howard Wilbur, and their loving marriage spanned for over six decades. Mr. Wilbur survives at home in Sharon. Mrs. Wilbur enjoyed playing golf, bowling, dancing, horses and caring for their beloved pets. She especially enjoyed spending time with her children and grandchildren, great grandchildren and friends. She will be dearly missed by all.

In addition to her husband, Ed, Joan is survived by two children, Mark Wilbur of Deer Park, Texas and Michele

Pastre and her husband Scott of Sharon; three grandchildren, Benjamin Wilbur and his wife Janie of Deer Park, Texas, Colby Pastre and his wife Caroline of Washington, D.C. and Brittney Pastre and her husband Greg of Barrington, New Hampshire; three great grandchildren, Ila Rae Wilbur of Deer Park, Texas and Isabella and Ivy Godfrey of Barrington, New Hampshire; her brother, Jerry Bushey of North Canaan, and her sister, Mary Kruse and her husband Bob of Florida, and two nephews, Chris Goddard of Florida and Paul Goddard of Massachusetts.

There will be no public funeral service. Interment in the family niche at Hillside Cemetery in Sharon, will take place privately in the spring of 2026. Arrangements have been entrusted to the Scott D. Conklin Funeral Home, 37 Park Avenue, Millerton, NY 12546. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105. To send an online condolence to the family, flowers to the family or to plant a tree in Joan's memory, please visit www.conklinfuneralhome.com.

On Sept. 14, 1963, in Lakeville,

Send obituaries to obituaries@lakevillejournal.com

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The Lakeville Journal • The Millerton News

Gerald Blakey

they started the medical equipment loan program out of the UCC. Volunteering 100s of hours and traveling 100s of miles delivering and picking up medical equipment for those in need.

Jerry and Pat opened their garage after the tornado of '89 and started the Blakey Family Restaurant to feed the town's people and volunteers as the clean up continued. Jerry organized blood drives, built houses in Mexico through the La Casa Project, hosted tornado anniversary parties and so much more.

Jerry amassed numerous awards, citations and recognitions for all he did. Each was carefully put away, not to be displayed, because it never was about those. As one friend said, Jerry didn't know he did extraordinary things, it's just what you're supposed to do. He was talented, humble and generous. He loved the community and the people and always was there to help. He was a family man, caring for

them up to the end.

Among the many awards he was particularly proud of his Public Service award from the State of Connecticut in 2001, The Connecticut Conference, UCC Living Waters Award in 2015 and an honoree with Pat on The HVRHS Alumni Wall of Honors 2023.

Anyone who ever met Jerry would know that he was a man of many words and always a man of his word, he will be missed.

The family would like to thank his Smilow Cancer Hospital team in Torrington, Connecticut.

Services will be held on Jan. 10, 2026, at 1 p.m. at the UCC, Bolton Hill Road, in Cornwall.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Cornwall Volunteer Fire Dept. and EMS, American Cancer Society, or the UCC Cornwall capital improvement fund.

The Kenny Funeral Home has care of arrangements.

For more obituaries, see Page B4

Worship Services

Week of January 11, 2026

Christ Church Episcopal in Sharon

9 South Main, Sharon CT
Sunday Holy Eucharist at 9:00 A.M.
Transitioning through prayer
All welcome to join us
860-364-5260
www.christchurchsharon.org

The Congregational Church of Salisbury, U.C.C.

30 Main Street, Salisbury, CT
Whoever you are,
wherever you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!
Worship, Sundays at 10 am,
in-person and streaming
www.salisburyucc.org
Sharing God's shalom:
Wholeness, harmony, justice, and joy!
(860) 435-2442

Trinity Episcopal Church

484 Lime Rock Rd, Lakeville
Offering companionship along the Way
Sundays at 8 and 10:30 a.m.
Livestream at 10:30 found at
www.trinitylimerock.org
trinity@trinitylimerock.org
(860) 435-2627

St. John's Episcopal Church

12 Main Street, Salisbury, CT
SUNDAY SERVICE
10:00 a.m. Eucharist with music (Rite II)
Rev. Dr. Johan Johnson,
Priest-in-Charge
www.stjohnsalisbury.org

North Canaan Congregational Church, UCC

Joyfully opening our hearts
and doors to all God's people
172 Lower Rd/Rt. 44, East Canaan CT
Worship services Sundays at 10 am
www.Facebook.com/northcananacongregational
860-824-7232

Unitarian Fellowship of NW CT

Cobble Living Room, Noble Horizons
Sunday, January 11 at 10:30 a.m.
For information, contact Jo Lai
at jokialoui@gmail.com
All are Welcome

ST. MARTIN OF TOURS PARISH

Immaculate Conception,
4 North Street, Norfolk
St. Joseph, 4 Main Street, Canaan
St. Mary, 76 Sharon Road, Lakeville
MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil 4 pm, St. Joseph Church
Sunday 9 am, Church of St. Mary
Sunday 11 a.m.,
Immaculate Conception Church

DAILY MASS SCHEDULE

Wednesday 6pm
St. Joseph Chapel or Church

Thursday 8am
Immaculate Conception Church

Friday 8am
Church of St. Mary

ALL ARE WELCOME!

For information,
please call 860-824-7078

Congregation Beth David

A reform Jewish Synagogue
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SERVICES SATURDAY 10:30 AM

Twice Monthly • Followed by Oneg

(Calendar at congbethdavid.org)

ALL ARE WELCOME

Rabbi Jon Haddon

845-373-8264

info@congbethdavid.org

The Lakeville United Methodist Church

319 Main St., Lakeville, CT 06039
9:15 a.m. Worship Service
9:15 a.m. Sunday School

"Open Hearts - Open Minds - Open Doors"

The Rev. Dr. Anna C. Camphouse

860-435-9496

Lakevillemethodist@snet.net

Falls Village Congregational Church

16 Beech Hill Road, Falls Village

THE MILLERTON NEWS

EDITORIAL PAGE A5

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hospital addresses ambulance services

Recent public discussion regarding paramedic services in the Sharon community has understandably raised concerns. As such, we welcome the opportunity to clarify the facts and, more importantly, to reassure residents that emergency medical services in Sharon are not only continuing but strengthening.

Sharon Hospital is now part of Northwell Health, the largest health system in the Northeast, with extensive emergency transport and EMS capabilities across western Connecticut and the Hudson Valley. As part of this system, Sharon Hospital is supported by a licensed and experienced paramedic program already operating in the Danbury and New Milford region, with the ability to extend those services to appropriately support the Sharon community.

Effective January 1, 2026, Sharon Hospital will ensure 24/7 emergency medical coverage for the community. This includes support for emergency response, interfacility transport and critical care needs, backed by the depth, redundancy, and clinical oversight of a larger health system. These capabilities are not theoretical – they are already in place and functioning successfully across our region.

Some commentary has focused on the hospital's decision not to continue sponsoring Northern Dutchess Paramedics (NDP). It is impor-

Christina McCulloch
President,
Sharon Hospital

Ambulance contract termination bad decision

What a rotten decision to terminate the contract with Northern Dutchess Paramedic (NDP) and to replace it with a single paramedic assisted by an EMT.

When I was an EMT with Salisbury, beginning in 1985, we were an advanced life support (ALS) service, and we had an ALS member on each team who could start IVs, use MAST trousers and, I believe, intubate.

These members were available on each shift but did not come out for calls where they were not needed. However, the state of Connecticut, not understanding the needs and abilities of our area, sent down a decree that we had to have an ALS person respond to every call even if it was a simple injury with no need for advanced life support.

So, due to a shortage of people who wanted to take the advanced EMT-I training, we were forced to give

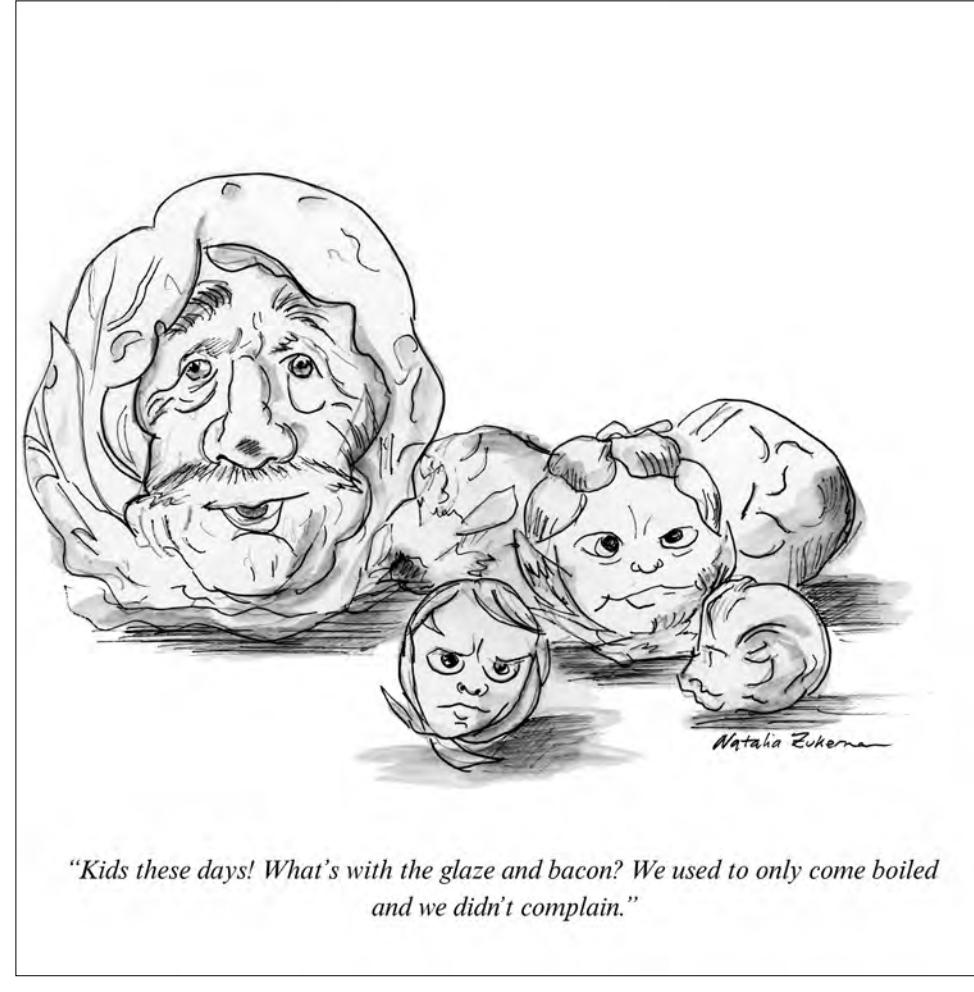
up our EMT-I service and just be a basic life support service with NDP coming out for an increasing number of calls.

The current plan is risible for its inadequacy, a patently obvious cost-shaving ploy, that will strain volunteer services and endanger patients.

I have no idea if it is even a possibility for local volunteer services to resume ALS even if they can staff the calls adequately.

With the growing number of talented, smart people coming into the area, many of whom actually want to do something good around here, I wonder if the local volunteer services couldn't train enough ALS personnel so that we could once again be more than just BLS services. Otherwise, I foresee a lot of needless morbidity and mortality arising from this ill-considered decision.

Marietta Whittlesey
Gallatin



"Kids these days! What's with the glaze and bacon? We used to only come boiled and we didn't complain."

Route 22, hospital deficit and usage, skating and business climate

The following excerpts from The Millerton News were compiled by Kathleen Spahn and Rhiannon Leo-Jameson of the North East-Millerton Library.

January 3, 1935

Bixby Favors Rebuilding Of State Route 22

The movement launched several weeks ago by Harlem Valley residents for reconstruction of the portion of State Route 22 which lies in Dutchess County has been endorsed by James S. Bixby, divisional superintendent of the State Highway Department.

January 10, 1935

Grange Hall To Be Started This Spring

Construction of the proposed new Grange hall will be started in the spring as soon as weather conditions permit, it was revealed at the regular meeting of the Millerton Grange held Monday night when plans for the building were discussed. About forty members were present.

Government Seeks Sites For Colonies

The Harlem Valley section may be selected by the Federal Government as the site of one or more colonization subsistence settlements, it became known last week when it was disclosed that Government representatives have been making surveys and inquiries in the Towns of North East, Amenia,

January 1, 1976

Hospital Deficit Up Sharply This Year

Sharon Hospital ended its 1974-75 fiscal year with a net deficit of \$64,940, up from \$23,927 the previous year. The Hospital's annual report, mailed this week, showed continuation of other recent trends.

The numer[sic] of days of in-patient care declined by 1,662 for the year ended Sept. 30, 1975. But the number of visits to the emergency room at Sharon continued its climb in recent years. The past year saw 7412 patients treated in the emergency room. In 1973-74 emergency room visits totalled[sic] 7200. Emergency room use has more than tripled in the past 5 years.

Once again more New York State residents than Connecticut people were

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Millerton News

January 4, 2001

Millerton Business Climate Improves

Everyone agrees the Millerton business climate has improved dramatically in the past year.

"We're not the county's poor cousin anymore. We can't be ignored any longer," said John Gilmore, co-president of the Greater Millerton Chamber of Commerce.

New businesses have been piling up all around Millerton, taking advantage of the influx of out-of-towners who are attracted by the village's scenic and commercial offerings, as well.

Established merchants have been making efforts to fill visible spaces, particularly those on Main Street.

Snips, owned by Michelle Powers, has recently moved into the location between Oblong Books and the Millerton Card & Coin that was left open after the closing of the Plain Clothesman. Millerton's health food store and café, Manna Dew, owned by Gina Trivelli, also moved to Main Street, which created

the opportunity for Maria Tamburino to open Jump Start Café at Railroad Plaza.

Another eatery has entered the business world in Millerton. W.D. McArthur and Co. restaurant dropped anchor on the corner of North Center and Main streets at the site of the old smokehouse. McArthur's is thought to be a welcome addition to the community, not only by diners, but also by merchants, who believe they will profit from the additional exposure and clientele.

Despite the relatively improved appearance of the village, there are still many empty storefronts that need to be filled. In particular, the building left empty by Riley's Furniture remains so.

Residents and merchants should not feel discouraged by the vacant spaces. McDonald's has recently opened at the site that formerly housed Burger King; the restaurant was closed for more than a year before McDonald's took over. Also, the Village Diner was closed for about a month, yet the stoves are once again fired up.

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THE MILLERTON NEWS

(U.S.P.S. 384600)

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Thursday, January 8, 2026

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Our goal is to report the news of our communities accurately and fairly, and to foster the free flow of information and opinion.

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PHOTO BY JENNIFER ALMQUIST

Snowy and still

MARY LEITCH *Continued from Page A1*

a visitor center for the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. The preservation project was accomplished by the Friends of the Irondale Schoolhouse, an organization that had been formed in 2008 and continues to manage the operations of the visitor center.

"If you sit still, you will rust," was a favorite Leitch saying, perhaps inspired by the Irondale district and the area's iron industry.

Leitch delighted in the outdoors and in the company of animals and people, caring for many dogs—especially Jack Russells—and cherishing the horses that were part of her long, vibrant life.

An avid sportswoman, she enjoyed deer hunting and fishing, keeping her licenses current right up until her passing. She was a longtime member of both the Jack Russell Club of America and the Dutchess County Professional Horsemen's Association.

In 1958, she married William (Billy) Leitch of Millbrook, a professional horseman, sharing a love of the sporting life and enjoying active membership in the Millbrook Hunt Club. Billy pre-deceased her in 2015. The pair never had any children.

Mary Leitch spent her life caring for others, whether nurturing children or tending to horses. When the pandemic began in 2020, she found yet another way to help others, sewing over 600 facemasks that she freely gave to anyone in need.

"She was mother to so many by her love," said Bishop Gerardo Colacicco of St. Jo-

seph's Church in Millbrook, during her funeral mass on Tuesday, Dec. 30. Bishop Colacicco enjoyed many years of friendship and had visited with Leitch during her final days and hours, as did numerous neighbors and friends.

At the age of 101, Leitch was featured in The Millerton News by Arts Editor Natalia Zukerman, part of a series of

articles highlighting her many contributions and active involvement in the community.

"She was my girl; she was everyone's girl," said Pine Plains resident Nan Cassidy, reflecting on decades of friendship.

"You could say a lot of nice things about Mary," said Paula Redmond of Amenia. "No grass grew under Mary's feet. She loved life, and she loved people," Redmond said, a sentiment shared by Redmond's husband, Toby Collins, from their perspective as next-door neighbors to Leitch.

"She even had a Harley Davidson at one point that she was very proud of," Redmond added.

"Mary Leitch was a special person," observed Pastor Douglas Grandgeorge of The Smithfield Church in Amenia.

"When it was inconvenient to attend St. Joseph's where she had been baptized after expressing a lifelong desire to be a Catholic, she gladly attended Smithfield Church with her friends and neighbors, Paula and Toby. For that reason, she and I became fast friends. She was our nearest neighbor to the north, greatly loved and respected."

and wellness, Davis is reluctant to embrace either label. "I'm in the business of people," she said after a moment of reflection, adding that she believes there is a light inside of everyone.

Davis said she first discovered this light at age 18 when she worked at Berkshire Meadows, a facility for students with complex medical and developmental disabilities. She felt a pull to work alongside students with the greatest needs — many of whom were in wheelchairs and nonverbal. During this four-year period, Davis was responsible for feeding, bathing and bringing a sense of joy to these students. "We would play music and we became close like family," Davis reflects on a period of her life when she stepped into the role of nurturer and caregiver. It was around this time that Davis also became a young mother.

The work and her role as a mother ignited a lifelong passion for learning about and supporting people. Davis said that, as a Capricorn, she tends

ERIC ALEXANDER *Continued from Page A1*

mittees. Alexander gets a kick out of telling people he holds a "B.S. in Speech," which he jokes will serve him well in politics.

Jokes aside, as his work in education winds down, Alexander is ramping up his own education as he gets up to speed on the requirements of the legislature and what will be expected of him. He plans to work with colleagues across party lines to benefit Dutchess County, with a particular focus on District 25, which includes Amenia, the Town of Washington, the Village of Millbrook, and Pleasant Valley.

"Bipartisanship brings good things like checks and balances," Alexander said,

adding that one-party leadership has led to wasteful spending and a lack of transparency within the county.

Alexander said he plans to judge his first year in office by whether the needs of rural communities are better understood across county government. "Broader and better awareness of the needs of this part of the county — that's success," he said, adding that a more collaborative process would also be an indicator of success.

He is also committed to "maximizing vertical integration of government," meaning tighter coordination between town, county and state officials. Having met State Sen. Michelle Hinchey several

times, Alexander said he will "unashamedly advocate" for constituents in his district.

He said housing, transportation and the EMS crisis are among the top priorities as he heads into the new year. Alexander is critical of the recent vote to spend another \$2 million on supplemental ambulance services, which he described as a Band-Aid. "It's kind of like trying to rent a solution," he said. While the county-supported supplemental services improved EMS response time in some areas, Alexander said, "Not here — not in my town. So, that's my job, to represent these communities."

He also warned that the county's growing reliance on

private EMS providers like Empress — which is backed by private equity — could create long-term vulnerabilities. "Every year, we are the product and the client," he said. "And we should consider being the competition."

Though 12 months may not seem like enough time to achieve meaningful change, Alexander laughed, "Nothing is more motivating than a one-year term."

Drawing on his communications experience — which played a role in his campaign — Alexander plans to keep constituents informed and engaged through a newsletter and social media content. He said, "I want to be very available and visible."

2025 POLITICS *Continued from Page A1*

Pleasant Valley. He narrowly defeated legislative veteran Deirdre Houston, ending her eight-year tenure in the legislature.

Chris Drago was re-elected to his seat representing District 19, and was sworn in for his second term in the legislature on Monday. He told the News in November that the results reflected shifts in voter engagement and a renewed focus on local races.

"The federal political environment woke up a lot of people," Drago said, citing November's record-breaking government shutdown and his belief that dissatisfaction with President Donald Trump drove people to the polls.

Democrats also saw strong wins in municipal elections across northeast Dutchess County, securing majorities on the Town Boards in Ame-

nia, Pine Plains and Stanford.

Chris Mayville and Rachele Grieco Cole were sworn in to their seats on the North East Town Board on Friday, Jan. 3. Party lines are less clear in the Town of North East, where the Democratic and Republican caucuses often cross-endorse candidates for local office. Mayville and Grieco Cole will serve full terms on the North East Town Board, alongside council members Meg Winkler and Lana Morrison and Town Supervisor Chris Kennan.

In Amenia, Democrat Rosanna Hamm was elected to serve as Town Supervisor, defeating Republican Terrence McCauley 686 to 402. Joining her on that board will be Democrats Walter Dietrich and Vicki Doyle and Republican Nicole Ahearn, giving Democrats a 3-1 majority in

the voting body. The new board is set to be sworn in at the town's reorganizational meeting on Thursday, Jan. 8.

Pine Plains Democrats won a decisive 4-1 majority on that Town Board, with democrats Murphy Birdsall and Trevor Roush winning bids to join Kevin Walsh and Jeanne Sisco as council members. Supervisor Brian Walsh narrowly won his re-election bid, making him the sole Republican with voting power on the board. That board was sworn in at Pine Plains Town Hall on Tuesday, Jan. 6.

Washington Democrats Maxine Verne and Susan Mancuso won each of the two open seats on the Washington Town Board. Supervisor Gary Ciferri won an uncontested re-election bid for his seat. The board will meet on Thursday, Jan. 8, for its an-

nual reorganization meeting where Verne, Mancuso, Supervisor Ciferri, Deputy Supervisor Joseph Rochfort and newly-appointed council member Deirdre Houston will be sworn in for their terms. Rochfort was elected in 2023 for a four-year term ending in 2027 and Houston was appointed to the remainder of a term that will also end in 2027. Verne, Mancuso and Ciferri will all serve until 2030.

And voters in the Town of Stanford followed the trend too, electing Democrat Julia Descoteaux as Town Supervisor and Democrats Teddy Secor and Charlie Cunningham on the Town Council. Descoteaux, Secor and Cunningham will join Nathan Lavertue and Eric Hains on the Stanford Town Board after a swearing in ceremony on Thursday, Jan. 8.

AIMÉE DAVIS *Continued from Page A1*

living year-round allows her to forego new year's resolutions. "I made one yesterday and I'll make one tomorrow — I'm constantly tracking what's coming up, what's drifting and what I want to change."

As an intuitive healer, Davis has developed a deep appreciation for the human body over the years — and makes it her mission to help others do the same. "The body is so powerful — it's just brilliant," Davis said from her cozy, wood-paneled massage room in downtown Millerton.

Located at 65 Main St., the unassuming pink building is also home to naturopathic doctor and acupuncturist Brian Crouse. Davis laughs about their serendipitous meeting — which happened while she was eating a tomato sandwich — a chance encounter that eventually led to their shared workspace. Today, Davis is 12 years into her own practice, shaped by decades of training and experience in both bodywork and relationship counseling.

Although her work exists at the intersection of health

and wellness, Davis is reluctant to embrace either label. "I'm in the business of people," she said after a moment of reflection, adding that she believes there is a light inside of everyone.

Davis said she first discovered this light at age 18 when she worked at Berkshire Meadows, a facility for students with complex medical and developmental disabilities. She felt a pull to work alongside students with the greatest needs — many of whom were in wheelchairs and nonverbal. During this four-year period, Davis was responsible for feeding, bathing and bringing a sense of joy to these students. "We would play music and we became close like family," Davis reflects on a period of her life when she stepped into the role of nurturer and caregiver. It was around this time that Davis also became a young mother.

The work and her role as a mother ignited a lifelong passion for learning about and supporting people. Davis said that, as a Capricorn, she tends

to go all in when it comes to studying or understanding something. From training in chakras and reiki to studies in neurology, anatomy, and physiology, Davis has embraced lifelong learning and continues to see value in gaining knowledge from both peers and her community.

One mantra Davis lives by is "if it's not a heck yes, it's a heck no," a mentality rooted in trusting intuition, being present, and coming back to your body. Each career stop has been a stepping stone to her current practice, which itself continues to evolve with the addition of relationship coaching and intuitive healing to supplement massage therapy.

Trusting intuition is core to her job, and was core to her following her own path. While it can feel scary to take a leap and start something new, Davis said she knew she was

ready to put her "sunglasses on and jump into the bright abyss." For anyone thinking about taking their own leap, Davis said, "the rhythm begins if you're in alignment and doing what you're meant to be doing."

Today, she works with clients in a variety of ways — and no two sessions are the same. Davis said she has moved away from lengthy intake forms in favor of simply sitting with someone and meeting them where they are. "What I care about is how you are today," she said, noting that what emerges in one session may look entirely different in the next.

While Davis is trained in anatomy, physiology and neurology — and works regularly with muscle tension, injury recovery and post-surgical care — she is also attuned to the emotional and energetic patterns that can surface in

the body. She describes her approach as intuitive and often guided by things that are difficult to articulate. Information can come to Davis through sensation, temperature or imagery that arises as she works.

One early experience in her practice remains formative. Davis recalled working with a client whose blood tests suggested something was wrong, though no diagnosis had yet been made. While working near the client's liver, Davis said she experienced a powerful and unsettling visual that gave her pause. Unsure how to proceed, she sought guidance from trusted mentors before eventually encouraging the client to pursue further care.

A later diagnosis confirmed liver cancer. More than a decade later, Davis continues to work with that same client and has at times served as a patient advocate, accompanying her to medical appointments.

While Davis is adamant that she does not replace medical care, she trusts what shows up. "I've learned not to ignore it," she said.

As the new year unfolds, Davis hopes people will resist the urge to overhaul themselves overnight and instead consider what it might mean to slow down and build support. She encourages people to think in terms of a "care team," recognizing that wellness does not have to take a single form.

"I just want people to give their wellness a better chance," she said. For Davis, the work is less about resolutions and more about relationships — to the body, to one another, and to the rhythms that already exist beneath the noise.

"We still have choices," she said. "And when we take care of ourselves, we're better able to take care of each other."

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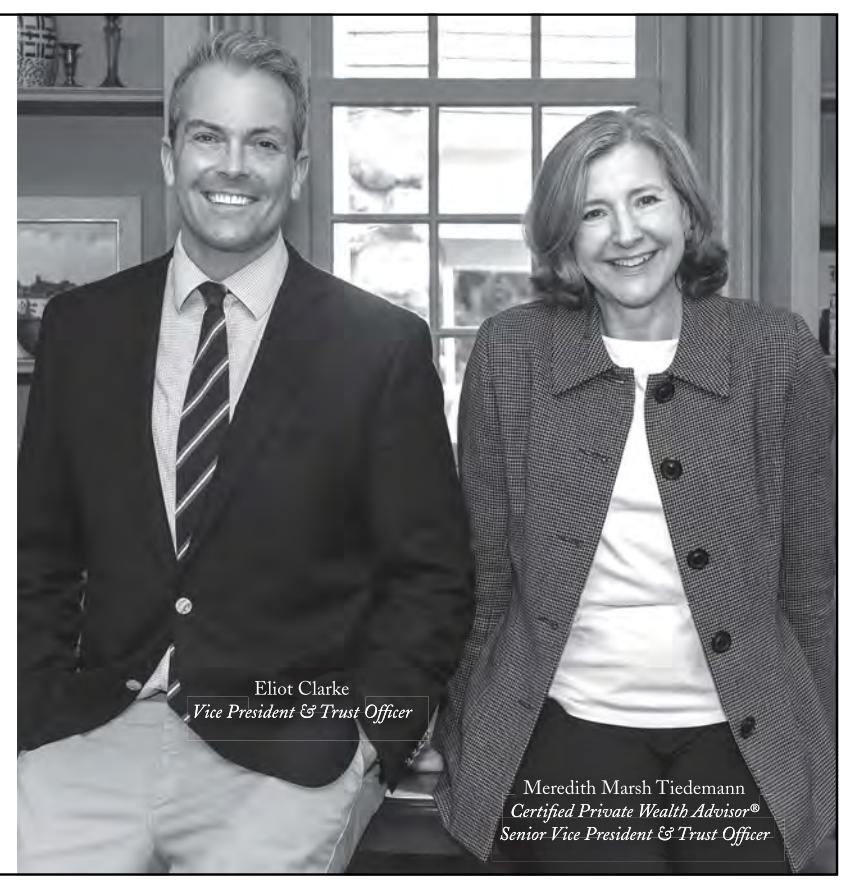
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COMPASS

Your Guide to Tri-State Arts, Entertainment & Lifestyle

2025 RECAP: NATALIA ZUKERMAN

Art and entertainment in 2025

In 2025, the pages of Compass tracked the steady hum of creativity across the Northwest Corner. Here's a look at some of the highlights that shaped the year.

ART

The Hotchkiss School marked 50 years of co-education with The Art of Joy Brown, a sweeping retrospective honoring the internationally celebrated sculptor. Opening Feb. 22 in the Tremaine Art Gallery, the exhibition traced Brown's five-decade journey from her early pottery training in Japan to the large-scale bronze figures now installed around the world — and newly on the Hotchkiss campus.

Millbrook School hosted the first-ever Firefly student artist showcase in February, bringing together young artists and art enthusiasts from schools across New York and Connecticut.

The David M. Hunt Library's Art Wall continued to feature local artists, including Jon Kopita, who displayed a decade of his meticulous, repetitive hand-lettering exploring order and identity.

A collaboration between The Nutmeg Fudge Company, artist Gerald Incandela, and Saint John Paul the Great Academy resulted in a vibrant student-designed mural in Torrington.

Great Barrington marked a major milestone this year with the unveiling of a life-sized bronze sculpture of W.E.B. Du Bois in front of the Mason Public Library. Created by National Sculpture Society honoree Richard Blake, the piece anchors a redesigned public plaza.

The Wassaic Project received a \$100,000 multi-year operating



PHOTO BY ALY MORRISSEY

The cast of 'Once Upon a Mattress' at Sharon Playhouse.



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE BATES

Martha Stewart at Trade Secrets.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Sculptor Richard Blake in his studio at work on his sculpture of W.E.B. Du Bois.

grant from Foundations for Community Health and Amy Wynn stepped down Oct. 31 as the first executive director of the American Mural Project (AMP) in Winsted.

BOOKS

We welcomed new freelance writers Laurie Fendrich and Olivia Prager who covered the region's robust literary scene. Highlights included Ann Temkin at Cornwall Library; Ruth Franklin at Congregation Beth David; Elias Weiss Friedman (AKA "The Dogist") at Troutbeck; Gwen Strauss at the White Hart Speaker Series; and the return of the Haystack Book Festival in Norfolk. Books & Blooms celebrated its tenth anniversary in June with a two-day celebration of gardens, art and the rural beauty of Cornwall.

FILM

The Triplex in Great Barrington hosted screenings, festivals and conversations throughout the year, from a Bob

Dylan biopic talkback with Seth Rogovoy to student screenings of "Selma," benefit events and the launch of the Queer Cinema Club. The Stissing Center expanded film programming with a new projector and a short-film festival featuring local artists and the Moviehouse in Millerton continued its incredible programming.

Legendary civil rights activist Dolores Huerta sat down with The Journal in October in advance of the screening of "Dolores" in Norfolk, the documentary by Peter Bratt and executive producer Carlos Santana that presents an unflinching portrait of a woman whose voice, body and will shaped the political terrain of the United States.

MUSIC

From brass bands and local musicians at street fairs and green spaces to classical and chamber

music series presented by organizations from Music Mountain to Tanglewood, music was a staple of the Compass calendar.

The Twelve Moons Coffeeshop in Falls Village continues its once-a-month series that consists of a robust open mic followed by a featured performer.

The American Mural Project's live music and Happy Hour Piano Series was also a monthly anchor that featured a multitude of styles of music.

The Indigo Room, a new performance space connected to The Mahaiwe in Great Barrington, opened in the beautifully

Continued on next page



PHOTO BY LANS CHRISTENSEN

Jumpfest 2025

COMMUNITY: NATALIA ZUKERMAN

Eat your way to Jumpfest's 100th anniversary

There's just one month until Jumpfest's 100th anniversary weekend of ski jumping in February, and the celebration is already underway. For the first time, Jumpfest organizers have launched a community restaurant month as part of the milestone event, running from Jan. 4 through Feb. 4, inviting locals and visitors alike to dine around town in the lead-up to the historic jumps.

The inaugural promotion includes 42 participating restaurants across the Northwest Corner, ranging from cafés to pubs. Participating spots include The White Hart Inn, Black Rabbit Bar & Grille, Roma's Pizza, Sweet William's Coffee Shop, The Boathouse, and The Woodland, among many others.

The all-volunteer Salisbury Winter Sports Association (SWSA) has hosted ski jumping on Satre Hill in Salisbury since the 1920s, keeping alive one of the few Eastern U.S. ski jump venues and introducing generations to the sport.

Diners can take part by downloading an entry form at jumpfest.org/100/ one-month-to-the-

So grab your appetite and eat your way to the jumps — no skis required.



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SPACE

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...2025 entertainment

Continued from previous page



Morgan James performing at the new Indigo Room at the Mahaiwe.

restored historic firehouse next door, offering a smaller space for intimate performances. The Mahaiwe continued to delight with programming that included greats like Old Crow Medicine Show, Paquito D'Rivera, Natalie Merchant, Roseanne Cash and many more.

Crescendo, the award-winning organization that brings works from the Renaissance and Baroque periods to new life, launched its 22nd season with performances at Saint James Place in Great Barrington and Trinity Church in Lakeville.

Rufus Wainwright performed a benefit concert for Out for Dutchess at The Stissing Center. The beloved Race Brook Lodge in Sheffield hosted its final Fall Gratitude Festival before closing its storied doors.

COMMUNITY

Trade Secrets celebrated its 25th anniversary with record crowds. The annual event, benefiting Project SAGE, featured over 50 vendors and special attractions like a signing of Martha Stewart's gardening book, following a day of local garden tours.

Scenic bike routes were explored in these pages and Kerri Lee Mayland's offerings on design are a delightful new feature. Dee Salomon's column "The Un-gardener" continues to inform and delight and community events such as the Farm Fall Block Party at Rock Steady Farm in Millerton kept readers connected to local farm life.

THEATER

The Sharon Playhouse delivered a lively season of classic musicals, sharp comedies and community-centered work. Highlights included "Million Dollar Quartet," a popular run of "Annie," A.R. Gurney's "Sylvia" and a fall staging of Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap." The Writers Playground Festival championed new short plays by local writers, while the YouthStage program mounted family favorites like "Once Upon a Mattress," "Finding Nemo Jr." and

"101 Dalmatians Kids," giving young performers steady opportunities onstage. The Playhouse also welcomed new managing director, Meghan Flanagan.

The Ancram Center for the Arts celebrated its 10th anniversary. Highlights included the "Real People Real Stories" series, the regional premiere of "Where the Mountain Meets the Sea," and Plein Air Plays 3.0, which brought original short plays to surprise outdoor locations. The Center also advanced new work through its Play Lab Residency, featuring David Cale's "Blue Cowboy" and "Framed," a new musical by Ancram local Mary Murfitt with music by Murfitt and Pam Drews Phillips.

In May, Richard Maltby Jr.'s "About Time" opened at Goodspeed's Terris Theatre. He spoke with us about the deeply personal revue, describing it as a meditation on aging, memory and the strange clarity of life's "third act."

The Stissing Center continued to expand its theatrical footprint in 2025, presenting a mix of classic drama, new work and intimate staged readings. Highlights included Theatre On the Road's atmospheric "Dracula," a summer run of the off-Broadway musical "Kafkaesque," and Tangent Theatre Company's reading of Harold Pinter's "Betrayal."

Highlights of the theater at Hotchkiss in 2025 included a spring premiere of "R.I.P. Lunch," an original play by alumna Mallory Jane Weiss, and a lively fall production of the musical "Pippin." Housatonic Valley Regional High School also had a strong theater year in 2025, highlighted by a spring production of "Urinetown" that earned statewide recognition.

summer performances through the Grumbling Gryphons Theater Arts Camp, and student apprenticeships at Sharon Playhouse. We also welcomed new writers Annette Stover and Richard Feiner who have beautifully expanded our theater coverage.



Eddie Curtis of New Jersey amused himself catching little smallmouth bass in the Housatonic during a Trout Unlimited event in August.

An angler's year testing rods, riversides and patience

I was very optimistic as winter loosened its grip in the early part of 2025. I had a couple new rods to play with, my rotator cuff problem on my casting arm was resolved in a satisfactory manner, and I joined a private fishing club in the Catskills and was looking forward to exploring new water.

Some of the exploring and trying new things with new rods happened, but a lot of it did not. I blame Nature.

(Listening to anglers complain about the weather is as tedious as it gets, so feel free to skip the next bit.)

Just for laughs I plotted out the Housatonic flow from April 1 to Nov. 22 on the United States Geological Survey website. What I got back was an inverse bell curve, with high flows at the extremes and a long period of very low flows in between.

Amazingly, this corresponds to the rain, or lack thereof, between April 1 and Nov. 22. It's just science.

So, looking back at the Tangled archives and my own hastily scribbled journal notes, I see that I started out when the snow and ice were still on the ground on the Blackberry in North Canaan and Macedonia Brook in Kent.

I do remember trying out a short rod, 6-feet 10-inches, from Zen Tenkara. I used it with two-fly rigs, including



TANGLED LINES
PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

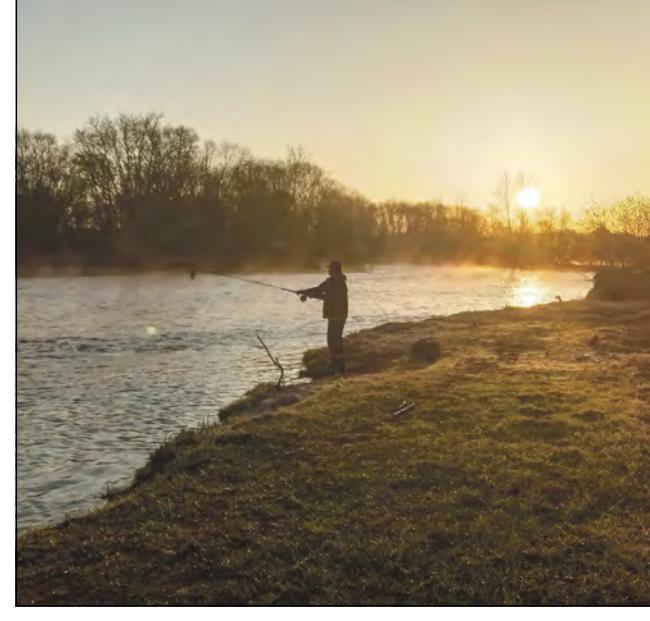
weighted flies, which should not work in theory, but it did in practice. The biggest problem was when a guy in the parking lot asked me what it was. I said, "It's a Hachi" and the guy said, "Gesundheit."

I had an interesting encounter with a couple of DEEP guys who were putting some brown trout fry in the Blackberry, since they had them to spare and were wondering what would happen. I suggested that they would get eaten up fairly quickly by the adult trout and they agreed but did it anyway.

The private water was a bust. There's no other way to put it. I got there three times all year, and by the beginning of July the drought had settled in and the stream was nothing but a trickle.

I'm going to reup because I enjoyed meeting my fellow club members and the nice landowners who allow us to barge around their properties. This year I'm going to hit it often and hard in May and June, circumstances allowing.

My Catskill fishing buddy Gary Dodson has got the big fish bug bad. We went back to Pulaski in late April and I caught a steelhead using a decadent and depraved method called "plugging." I'm



Gary Dodson casting at dawn on the Salmon River in Pulaski, New York in late April. It was cold but it sure looked nice.

glad to have done it once and feel zero need to do it again.

I've had an 11-foot-4 weight switch rod kicking around for a few years. I never knew how to rig it up. In the two-handed rod world,

the line weight designation means diddly. It's all about grains and different tips and all this stuff that I just don't want to learn.

Since Gary was already down in that rabbit hole I just gave him the rod, a big inexpensive Redington reel and asked him to get the appropriate lines and tips and set it up for me. Which he did, for about \$150.

And I got to deploy it on the water precisely once in September before...

My right hip got the Gang Gong from the

medical profession.

Yep. By the time this is published, I will have had my new right hip for about a month.

At this rate I'm going to be about 40% after-market parts.

So the entire autumn fishing routine, normally a happy and productive time, was shot to hell. My hip worked just enough to let me know that the kind of aggressive and active fishing I like to do was out of the question.

So apart from fiddling around in a half-hearted way with the fall stockies on the Blackberry in October, I spent the fall and early winter sitting around watching YouTube fish videos and plotting and scheming for all the excellent fishing adventures I will have with my new right hip.

At The Movies

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TRI-CORNER CALENDAR

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PHOTO BY DEE SALOMON

The unmistakable V-shape of a beaver-hewn tree trunk.

Why beavers matter

Long before we moved to Litchfield County, there had been a flood on the property caused by the breakup of a beaver dam miles away from the house, near the top of the state forest on Sharon Mountain. There, beavers have a pond whose dam usually slows the run of a stream that journeys down the mountain, under Route 7, through our property and empties into the Housatonic River. Who knows what other damage the water did on its way down from the broken dam, but the resulting flooding left a watermark about knee-high on the inside of our old cottage, now painted over.

What do beavers have to do with ungardening? At its core, ungardening is about restoring native habitats and increasing the diversity of native plants and animals in an ecosystem — aka biodiversity — which we must accomplish because, frankly, our lives depend on it.

For all their practical nuisance to humans, beavers are central to maintaining ecosystems across a large portion of the U.S. They are considered a keystone species: As with the keystone in an arch, an ecosystem will fall apart without its support. In the 18th and 19th centuries, beavers were killed nearly to extinction by trappers who sold their fur. Their return is helping to repair the areas surrounding their habitats. The homes they cleverly engineer filter pollutants, boost plant and animal biodiversity and create resilience to climate change — and they do this quickly.

Most negative human experiences with beavers result from blocked culverts and dammed streams that create the beavers' ideal pool-like environment. This causes flooding upstream of the blockage and drought downstream.

"We need to find ways to live with beavers," said Sandy Carlson, a teacher and poet who recently completed the Beaver Institute's BeaverCorps Wetland Professional



training in Southampton, Massachusetts.

"When beavers hear the trickle of water flowing out from a pond or stream, it triggers their instinct to block this release by building a dam. This insight led to a rather low-tech innovation that has allowed beavers and humans to more happily coexist. Cleverly called the Beaver Deceiver, the device lowers the water level of the pond without triggering the beavers' water-trickle instinct."

The Beaver Deceiver is a 6-foot-diameter wire mesh cage protecting one open side of a PVC pipe. It is installed in the deepest part of the pond, with the pipe running over the beaver dam — where it can be camouflaged — and into the water on the other side. Water is drawn out of the pond, lowering the water level upstream while maintaining flow downstream.

Carlson has apprenticed with Diane Honer of Beaver & Wildlife Solutions, based in Chester, Connecticut, performing site assessments and installing pond-leveler devices so beavers and humans can coexist. "People are happy because the water level is low, and the beaver thinks the water level is fine," she said.

Last year, a family of beavers moved in nearby, building a low-profile home against the side of a large tree trunk that had fallen into a rela-

tively deep part of the Housatonic. This created a small, pond-like area on the downriver side of the trunk.

I wasn't aware of these creatures until one day, while walking along the river, I stopped in my tracks. Like one of those puzzles where you're meant to spot the differences between two images, something was missing. A weeping willow we had planted a decade earlier, flourishing on the riverbank, had disappeared from view. Up close, the unmistakable V-shape of a beaver-hewn trunk was almost cartoonlike — yet not at all funny. That tree was one of the few non-native species we planted, and I had imagined it fulfilling the romantic "leaf cascade over the water" look willows do so well.

My son told me beavers seek out willow for its salicylic acid content — the active ingredient in aspirin. I imagine they had a drug-addled willow fest at our expense.

The solution to this particular beaver problem is even more low-tech than the Beaver Deceiver: installing wire mesh or a plastic cage around trees you want to protect from beaver teeth. It also helps to know which woods beavers prefer. Their favorites include aspen, poplar, willow, alder, birch and maple. Protect those first, before hardwoods and conifers.

Let's welcome the beaver and its ecosystem-restoration superpowers.

Dee Salomon 'ungardens' in Litchfield County.

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TRI-CORNER CALENDAR

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JANUARY 9

The Color of Growth

Millbrook Library, 3 Friendly Lane, Millbrook, N.Y.

Jan. 9 to Feb. 28.

An exhibition featuring Irja Bodén, JoAnne Lobotsky, Patrick Neal and Colin O'Con, exploring nature and landscape as sites of ongoing transformation through color, abstraction and memory.

Opening reception: Friday, Jan. 9, 6 to 8 p.m.

Artist talk: Saturday, Feb. 21, 2 p.m.

JANUARY 10

Hart Preserve Hike

Hart Preserve, towards the end of Cherry Hill Road, Cornwall, Conn.

Cornwall Conservation Trust will host a hike of Hart Preserve Saturday, Jan. 10, at 10 a.m. led by Matt Petrillo and Terry Burke. This is a 0.75 mile walk through fields, meadows and woods with a moderate incline to stunning view of the Housatonic River Valley. Possible critter tracking ID included.

Family Day with White Memorial Conservation Center

American Mural Project, 90 Whiting St., Winsted, Conn.

11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Cost: Free.

AMP's monthly Family Day offers hands-on activities for children of all ages, including games, story time, art projects and interactive learning. Highlights include story time and crafts with Carol Parent of Beardsley Library and a Sensational Study program with White Memorial Conservation Center, featuring a barred owl and a Honduran milk snake. Teen Art Studio runs concurrently.

Staged Reading: Roman Fever

Ghent Playhouse, 6 Town Hall Place, Ghent, N.Y.

Jan. 10 at 4 p.m.; Jan. 11 at 2 p.m.

Tickets: \$25; proceeds benefit Columbia County EMS/Education

The Ghent Playhouse presents a staged reading of Edith Wharton's short story "Roman Fever," exploring friendship, rivalry and long-held secrets. Performances are followed by a cocoa and cookie buffet. Advance tickets suggested at ghentplayhouse.org.

Staged Reading: Roman Fever

Smoke Signals in Sunlight

Kenise Barnes Fine Art, 7 Fulling Lane, Kent, Conn.

Hours: Thurs. to Sat. 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Sun. noon to 4 p.m. and by appointment.

Kenise Barnes Fine Art is pleased to announce Smoke Signals in Sunlight, a two-person exhibition featuring new work by Hudson Valley-based artists Susan English and Laura Moriarty. The exhibition brings together two artists whose practices are deeply rooted in material exploration, natural processes, and the poetics of landscape — each approaching abstraction through distinct yet resonant vocabularies.

Opening reception: Friday, Jan. 9, 6 to 8 p.m.

Artist talk: Saturday, Feb. 21, 2 p.m.

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Book Signing with Author Laurel Karsyn

Whistle Pig Books, 62 Main St., North Canaan, Conn.

Whistle Pig Books welcomes fantasy author Laurel Karsyn for a book signing on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, from noon to 3 p.m. at 62 Main St., North Canaan. Karsyn will be signing copies of her novel *The Witching Hour*, a paranormal romance about a young man who uncovers a hidden line of witches in the mysterious town of Ember Falls. Copies of the book will be available for purchase. For more information, visit whistlepigbooks.com.

Genre Fiction Book Club

Scoville Memorial Library, 38 Main St., Salisbury, Conn. scovillelibrary.org

Come join us on Thursday, Jan. 15, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., if you enjoy reading and discussing fantasy / romantasy / romance / mystery / thrillers / YA / sci-fi.

This new book club offers a chance to enjoy conversations, snacks, and book recommendations. This month's book is "HEARTWOOD" by Amity Gaige. Registration is appreciated. Learn more at www.scovillelibrary.org/event/genre-fiction-book-club-384

JANUARY 16

Opening Reception for the Salisbury Association Exhibit SWSA's First 100 Years

Academy Building, Main St., Salisbury, Conn.

Exhibit hours Tuesdays-Saturdays (Jan. 17- Feb 5) 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. with extended hours during Jumfest posted on Salisburyassociation.org.

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OBITUARIES

Lana Audrey Anguin

AMENIA — Lana Audrey Anguin, 80, a lifelong area resident, died peacefully on Sunday, Dec. 28, 2025, at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport. Lana dedicated nearly twenty-five years of her life to the Town of Amenia where she was the secretary and administrative assistant to the Amenia Town Supervisor from 1988 to 2012. She also worked closely with the Town of Amenia Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals overseeing project administration for many years. Lana also worked at the Wassaic Developmental Center in the late 60's and early 70's in the recreation department and she worked part time for the Red Hen Sign Co. in Amenia.

Born Nov. 16, 1945, in Sharon, she was the daughter of the late Stanley and Edith (Brothers) Anguin. Lana was a graduate of Webutuck High School and attended Dutchess Community College. On Dec. 1, 1973, in Sharon, she married Heyward "Woody" Cary Cohen. Mr. Cohen died on Aug.



1, 2014.

For many years Lana was a Girl Scout Leader for Troop 19 in Amenia and taught arts and crafts during summer recess. She was a devoted caregiver to her mother and father for many years and was an avid animal lover. She adored cats and dogs and was a proud supporter of the Pet & Wildlife Fund. In her spare time, she enjoyed traveling abroad, theater performances, cooking and baking and watching television, a good cup of coffee, going out to restaurants and watching movies at The Moviehouse in Millerton with her daughter. She will be dearly missed by her loving family and many friends.

Lana is survived by her daughter, Rebecca Anguin-Cohen and her companion George Kormendi of New York, New York and her sister, Donna Bavis of Rhinebeck, New York. Lana will be lovingly remembered by her niece, Jennifer Segelken and her husband Michael of Millerton, New York, her nieces

Elaine Whalen and Audrey Bavis and her nephew, Peter Bavis and her great nephews, Christopher and Tyler Segelken, and great nieces, Kirsten Mitchell and Emily Whalen. In addition to her parents and husband, Lana was also predeceased by her sister, Elaide Gahn of East Corinth, Vermont.

Calling hours will be held on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Scott D. Conklin Funeral Home, 37 Park Avenue, Millerton, NY 12546. A time of sharing memories and reflections of Lana's life will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the funeral home. Pastor William Mayhew will officiate. Burial will take place privately on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, at Evergreen Cemetery in Pine Plains, NY. Arrangements have been entrusted to the Scott D. Conklin Funeral Home, 37 Park Avenue, Millerton, NY. Memorial contributions may be made to Dutchess County SPCA, 636 Violet Ave., Hyde Park, NY, 12538. To send a condolence to the family, flowers to the service or to plant a tree in Lana's memory, please visit www.conklinfuneralhome.com

Photo by Leila Hawken

OUR TOWNS

A year of pride, participation and progress in Millbrook

By LEILA HAWKEN
leilah@millertonnews.com

MILLBROOK — Throughout the year, a supportive Millbrook community turned out for civic participation and celebratory events, reinforcing strong local bonds while finding moments of shared pride and reflection.

Among the most significant was the long-sought recognition of PFC Charles R. Johnson, a Millbrook native who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for extraordinary valor during the Korean War.

The honor was presented by President Joseph Biden at a White House ceremony in early January and carried special meaning in Millbrook. In late May, local and county officials, a military honor guard, and Johnson's friends and family gathered at Nine Partners Cemetery for a ceremony honoring his bravery and dedicating a permanent plaque and flag markers.

Later in the year, Grace Church was filled to capacity as clergy, parishioners and community members gathered for the dedication of a new stained-glass window on the church's west facade, marking a rare and historic moment for the congregation.

Voters also approved a Capital Budget proposal in May by a wide margin, authorizing more

than \$38 million for long-needed repairs and renovations to Millbrook Central School District buildings. The project is now proceeding through the schematic design phase.

At the Millbrook Library, a new native pollinator garden was dedicated in early October on the site of a 1953 memorial garden planted by the Millbrook Garden Club in honor of the Flagler family. The family, which has ties to the area, traces its roots to Henry Flagler, a co-founder of Standard Oil and one of the most influential American industrialists.

Early October also marked the grand opening of the first phase of Bennett Park, developed on the former Bennett College campus. The event drew residents, donors and planning professionals, with a forest-green ribbon cut beneath a tent on the park's Great Lawn. The phase created Millbrook's largest public green space, a major undertaking led by the nonprofit Millbrook Community Partnership.

Planning also moved forward on a multi-million-dollar proposal to renovate the historic Thorne Building on Franklin Avenue into a comprehensive arts space, with the Planning Board expected to consider the application in early 2026. The building, which was constructed in the early 20th century and served

as a public school, has fallen into disrepair and has largely been vacant for 20 years.

Community spirit was on full display during the long-planned Community Day in September, as residents welcomed visitors from across the region for a day of activities, parades, contests and celebration.

That sense of engagement continued through Millbrook Listens, a year-long effort inviting residents to share their vision for the village's future, with volunteers gathering input at events throughout the year. Volunteers in colorful T-shirts have appeared at community events ready to listen to any and all ideas.

In the November elections, Washington Democrats won both board seats. Democrats Maxine Verne and Susan Mancuso won the two Town Council seats, defeating Republicans Nicholas Galente and Douglas Giles. Supervisor Gary Ciferri, a Republican, was unopposed.

Last week's WotW

C	H	A	I	R
S	P	E	A	K
S	A	L	O	N
S	A	U	N	A
S	A	N	T	A

- Blacksmith's striking block
- Running total, score marks
- Opposite of "most"
- Day-old bagels
- 2026 brings a clean _____

WORD OF THE WEEK ©THE LAKEVILLE JOURNAL

Charles Henry Staats

FALLS VILLAGE — Charles Henry Staats, of Falls Village, Connecticut, passed away on Dec. 22, 2025, at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, with his beloved wife and children by his side.



Charlie was born on May 16, 1939, in Ghent, New

York, to Henry and Julia Staats. The eldest of six children, he naturally became someone others leaned on. He carried a quiet strength, steadiness, and calm that defined him throughout his life.

Charlie devoted 32 years of his career to the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, where he was known to most "Chuck", before retiring and beginning a second chapter as a consulting engineer, working on road and bridge construction projects. Falls Village was his home for more than 50 years, and he cared deeply about the town and its people. He served as First Selectman and was a proud member of the Falls Village Volunteer Fire Department. His commit-

ment to his community was further exemplified through his service in the Connecticut Army National Guard, where he earned the rank of Staff Sergeant.

A quiet man with strong principles, Charlie's integrity spoke louder than words. He treasured time with

his family and close friends, finding his greatest happiness in the simple joy of being together on his back deck. He was generous in ways both seen and unseen, quietly helping others and putting their needs before his own.

He approached everything he did with care, humility, and a strong sense of responsibility.

Charlie is survived by his wife of 40 years, Carol Staats, his partner in life and love. He leaves behind his daughter, Catherine (Cady) Stone, her husband, Peter, and their children, Luke, Grace, and Nicholas, of Bronxville, New York; and his son, Major Charles (Chip) Staats, his wife, Christian, and their children, Charles (Owen) and Margaret (Maggie), of Auburn, Alabama.

Being called Grandpa and Papa was one of Charlie's greatest joys, and his love for his grandchildren was boundless.

He is also survived by his sister, Nancy DeYoe, and her husband, Wayne; his sister, Judith Gregory; and his brother, John Staats, and his wife, Paula, along with many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his parents and by his sisters, Kathy Kennedy and Joan LeBrecque.

Calling hours will be held on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026, from 4 to 8 p.m. at Newkirk-Palmer Funeral Home in North Canaan, Connecticut. Funeral services will take place on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, at 11 a.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Lakeville, Connecticut. Memorial contributions may be made in his memory to All Falls Village (allfallsvillage.org), P.O. Box 61, Falls Village, CT 06031, or TradesUp.org, P.O. Box 846, Kent, CT 06757.

Charlie will be remembered for his kindness, unwavering integrity, and for always being there when it mattered most. His presence will be deeply missed, and his legacy will live on in the lives he touched every day.

For more obituaries, see Page A4

Send obituaries to obituaries@lakevillejournal.com

Brain Teasers

CLUES ACROSS

- Lakes
- Electromotive force
- Invests in little enterprises
- Longtime Utah Jazz coach
- Small sailboat
- Actor Idris
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
- System that detects objects under water
- Harsh, grating noise
- Steward
- A fencing sword
- Infections
- Actress Ryan
- Sodium
- Swedish castle
- A lump of slime
- African antelope
- Insurance providers
- Choosy
- Ringworm
- Unpolished
- Drenches
- Pant style
- Son of Noah
- Spiritual being
- Upton Sinclair novel
- Journalist Tarbell
- Popular sports highlight show
- Born of
- Rich tapestry
- S. China seaport
- State of being unclothed
- Surrounded by
- Residue
- Away from wind
- Dried-up
- Visionary
- A very large body of water
- Garden tools
- Screen type
- Ancient Scandinavian poet
- "It's a Wonderful Life" director
- Poisonous perennial plant
- 18-year astronomical period
- Clothes
- Places to sit
- Family of regulator genes
- New York ballplayer
- Impressive in size or scope
- Jacques ___, French biologist
- One from the Big Apple
- Genus of woolly lemurs
- Songs to one's beloved
- Indigenous person of N.E. Thailand
- Supplemented with difficulty
- Farewell
- Investment account (abbr.)
- One from Utah
- Begets
- A male child
- Break apart
- Brief appearance
- Partner to "oohed"
- A light informal meal
- Fabric with smooth, shiny surface
- One billionth of a second
- Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- Close tightly
- Mail out

December 25 Solution

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

Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

December 25 Solution

2	9	8	5	7	3	4	6	1				

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DUTCHES COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

Dutchess County Sheriff's Office Harlem Valley area activity report Thursday, Dec. 18, through Saturday, Jan. 3.

Thursday, Dec. 18. — Deputies responded to the area of 546 Old Route 22 in the Town of Amenia for a report of a single vehicle crash. Investigation resulted in the arrest of Charlotte A. Witters, age 23, for DWI. Subject to appear in the Town of Amenia Court at a later date.

Friday, Dec. 19. — Deputies responded to 31 E. Main St. in the Village of Pawling for the larceny of a wallet that contained a large amount of cash. Matter under investigation.

Tuesday, Dec. 23. — Deputies arrested James M. Cookingham, age 50, for grand larceny in the fourth degree. Arrest was made as part of an ongoing investigation. Cookingham to appear in the Town of North East court at a later date.

Sunday, Dec. 28. — Deputies report the arrest of Noe Caal Choc, age 25, on a bench warrant issued for his arrest by the Town of Amenia Justice Court. Subject issued an appearance ticket to reappear in the Town of Amenia Court at a later date.

Sunday, Dec. 28. — Deputies responded to 260 Cooper Road in the Town of North East at the request of the complainant who wished to report that an unknown person cut down a tree they had recently planted on her property. Matter under investigation.

Wednesday, Dec. 31. —

Deputies responded to 2142 Route 83 Town of Pine Plains to investigate a domestic dispute occurring at that location. Matter resolved without further police intervention.

PLEASE NOTE: All subjects arrested and charged are alleged to have committed the crime and are presumed innocent until proven guilty and are to appear in local courts later.

If you have any information relative to the aforementioned criminal cases, or any other suspected criminal activity please contact the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office tip line at 845-605 CLUE (2583) or Email dcs-otips@gmail.com. All information will be kept confidential.

By CHRISTINE BATES
Special to the Millerton News

AMENIA — The Town of Amenia recorded five real estate transfers in November, spanning a range of property types: one single-family home, one luxury property at Silo Ridge, one mobile home, one parcel of land, and one commercial property.

All five properties sold above their assessed values.

The median sale price for a single-family home, excluding Silo Ridge transactions, rose to \$380,500 in November — the highest

level of the year, though still below the town's historic peak of \$430,000 set in December 2022.

In Mid-December, 14 single homes were listed for sale with four over \$1 million and eight below \$500,000, with a median listing price of \$410,000. Two commercial properties and ten parcels of land were also available.

10 May Knoll — 4 bedroom/2.5 bath home built in 1927 on 1.95 acres sold to Nour Elgharib for \$500,000.

4 Eagle Pass — 3 bedroom/3.5 bath Silo Ridge home on .24 acres built in

2023 sold to Mark Lewallyn for \$5.25 million.

4950 Route 44 — Manufactured home on 1.7 acres sold to Michael A. Scorzelli for \$70,000.

Cascade Mountain Road (#025181) — 10.87 acres of wooded, vacant rural land sold to Mason W. Morjikian for \$185,000.

3417 Route 343 — Classified as a mine, this 26.88-acre commercial property sold to Stone Feeder Property Vehicle LLC for \$3,402,000.

*Town of Amenia property transfers in November sourced from Dutchess

County Real Property Office monthly reports. Details on are from Dutchess Parcel Access. Only arm's length transactions are included.

Recorded transfers typically lag closed sales. Market data from Smart MLS Info Sparks does not include private transactions or Silo Ridge sales. The Dutchess County parcel number (*) is indicated when no specific street address is included. Compiled by Christine Bates, Real Estate Advisor with William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty, Licensed in New York and CT.

Amenia real estate sales reach a high in November

	North East	Amenia	Pine Plains	Washington	Stanford
2025 Median Price Single Family Residence % Change 2024	\$427,450 -15%	\$387,500 10%	\$528,750 46%	\$661,370 -7%	\$662,500 12%
Price per square foot % Change from 2024	\$281 5%	\$221 -6%	\$268 30%	\$293 -2%	\$346 40%
No. of homes sold % Change 2024	21 -13%	31 7%	16 14%	43 48%	30 -38%
No. of \$1 million homes sold No. of houses sold under \$400,000	3 8	5 18	3 5	12 11	4 3
Consumer Price Index 2025	3.1%	Consumer Price Index from Bureau of Labor Statistics for Northeast Region			
S&P 500 Price Change in 2025	16.40%	Dow Jones rose 13% and NASDAQ 20%			
Consumer Sentiment University of Michigan	52.9%	National sentiment -30% lower than December 2024			

CHART BY CHRISTINE BATES

Last year's real estate market at a glance

Market data from Matrix Smart MLS and InfoSparks. Compiled by Christine Bates, real estate salesperson with William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty, Licensed in Connecticut and New York.

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Classifieds

Real Estate

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REAL ESTATE

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