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TOP STORY

A would be windfall

House proposes to give millions to localities

By **JIM FRANCO**
francoj@spotlightnews.com

Congress is set to address a proposed \$350 billion relief package — the state and local piece of the overall \$1.9 billion stimulus package — that could bring millions of dollars to local governments.

According to the tentative distribution proposed by the House, as listed by the Committee on Oversight and Reform,

New York state would get \$12.7 billion, short of the \$15 billion requested by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, and municipalities across the state would get \$10.6 million.

Albany County could see \$60 million, the Town of Colonie: \$8 million, Guilderland: \$7.9 million and Bethlehem: \$7.8 million. U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko said municipalities in his 20th Congressional District will receive \$440 million, including \$174 million in Albany County.

The proposed allocations, which are based loosely on population, will likely change depending on negotiations between the House and the Senate.

“Capital Region communities have showed incredible strength and resilience in the face of this dangerous pandemic, but this fight has weighed on our spirits and depleted our family, municipal, county and state budgets; our local communities may not all survive long months of further economic hardship without federal help,” Tonko said in a statement. “This plan puts money in the pockets of millions of Americans, scales up vaccination production and distribution and delivers a lifeline to state

Continues on page 3

CULTURE



The virtual reality of enforcement

Catapult Games teams up with Schenectady Police Department.

Story on Page B1

DISCOVER DELMAR



Delmar Rocks!

Casting rocks at your neighbors is frowned upon, usually.

Story on Page 5



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BUSINESS

Dave & Buster's is not playing games

Entertainment venue names Gov. Cuomo in lawsuit over shutdown

By **MICHAEL HALLISEY**
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DALLAS, Texas — In New York state, shopping malls are open. Restaurants are open. Casinos, bowling alleys and gyms, too, are open. Dave and Buster's, however, has not been allowed.

Last week, Dave and Buster's filed suit in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York against Gov. Andrew Cuomo. In a 14-page argument, the Dallas-based entertainment and dining business claims the governor violated both state and U.S. constitutions and

"[Cuomo] has never publicly explained how arcades are meaningfully different... in the context of COVID-19. Museum, aquarium, and art gallery guests engage in similar activities to arcade guests. ... Yet these 'low-risk indoor arts and entertainment' facilities are permitted to operate under safety protocols that are similar to what [Dave and Buster's] has adopted in other states."

— Dave & Buster's as stated in a lawsuit filed last week



Dave & Buster's claims Gov. Andrew Cuomo has left the arcade/restaurant venue out in the cold in its lawsuit.

Dave & Buster's

is seeking declaratory and injunctive relief.

"One of the nation's leading arcade and restaurant chains, brings this action to challenge the arbitrary and unconstitutional decision by Governor Cuomo to close down all arcades statewide while allowing comparable businesses, including casinos, bowling alleys, and video lottery gaming facilities, to remain open," reads the suit. "The arcade shutdown has resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs for hard-working New Yorkers across the State, and threatens to jeopardize Plaintiff's market share and the long-term economic viability of Plaintiff's New York stores, all without cause."

Dave and Buster's closed its New York venues in March once Cuomo issued shutdown orders across the state to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Since then, the governor's office has opened industries in a piecemeal fashion, including restaurants, casinos and bowling alleys. The restaurant's unique business model, however, has essentially excluded it from reopening.

Last month, Dave and Buster's reported a 75 percent decline in store sales over the first nine weeks of the fourth quarter compared to the previous year. About 65 percent of its stores remain open across the country. Before the pandemic, Dave and Buster's employed over 1,200 team members at eleven locations across New York state. Due to the shutdown, the chain has furloughed all but forty of them.

Stores and New York and California, 27 in total, remain closed despite mitigation measures the chain said it implemented from the beginning.

Dave and Buster's argues that it was one of the first national chains to implement daily temperature checks and to require all guests and

employees to wear masks, and that stores continue to safely operate "in virtually all of the states in which it does business..." Those measures include modified store layouts, frequent cleanings of all surfaces throughout the day by dedicated staff and installation of multiple hand sanitizer stations.

"It has repeatedly offered to comply with any reasonable public health guidelines that New York might prescribe," states the suit.

Cuomo launched a tiered system to reopen industries across the state, a timeline in which Dave and Buster's captured in its suit. The restaurant chain has sat idle as museums and art galleries opened last June, bowling alleys and gyms last August, casinos last September and movie theatres last October.

"[Cuomo] has never publicly explained how arcades are meaningfully different... in the context of COVID-19," states Dave and Buster's. "Museum, aquarium, and art gallery guests engage in similar activities to arcade guests. Guests often visit with groups of family or friends and they typically spend extended periods of time indoors. They move throughout the facility and touch shared surfaces. Yet these 'low-risk indoor arts and entertainment' facilities are permitted to operate under safety protocols that are similar to what [Dave and Buster's] has adopted in other states. ..."

"Such disparate treatment for similarly situated businesses has no countenance under the laws and constitutions of the United States and the State of New York."

Dave and Buster's location at Crossgates Mall has remained closed since shutdowns were first mandated last March.

Price Chopper/Market 32 and Tops Markets to merge

Transaction expected to double their footprint in the Northeast

SCHENECTADY — Price Chopper/Market 32 and Tops Markets announced last week that they have entered into a definitive merger agreement that creates a powerful alliance between the two storied independent grocery chains, as it nearly doubles their collective footprint in the Northeast.

This transaction unites two iconic New York-based grocery chains with deep ties to their local communities and shared commitments to service, savings, and convenience. With increased scale across their almost perfectly contiguous footprints, the merged companies are expected to be better positioned to compete and offer even more value and outstanding services to their customers across the Northeast.

Scott Grimmatt, Price Chopper/Market 32's President and CEO, will be CEO of and serve on the Board of Directors of the new parent company which will oversee the operations of nearly 300 Price Chopper, Market 32, Market Bistro and Tops Markets stores and collectively employ more than 30,000 teammates.

Frank Curci, Tops Markets Chairman and CEO, will serve on the Board of Directors of the new parent company and as a consultant to assist in the transition. Blaine Bringhurst, Price Chopper/Market 32's Executive Vice President of Merchandising, Marketing and Store Operations, will lead the Price Chopper/Market 32 business. John Persons, Tops Markets

President and Chief Operating Officer, will lead the Tops Markets business.

"This merger marks a major step forward and collectively elevates our ability to compete on every level," said Grimmatt. "It leverages increased value for our customers, advances shared opportunities for innovation, fortifies the depth of our workforce, community and trade partnerships, and ultimately accelerates our capacity to deliver a distinctively modern and convenient shopping experience."

The new parent company will be headquartered in Schenectady. The Price Chopper/Market 32 and Tops Markets businesses will retain main offices in Schenectady and Williamsville and will continue to be managed locally by their respective leaders.

"Tops has always put serving customers and providing an exceptional shopping experience at the center of everything we do, and this merger is no different," said Persons. "Our associates, who take pride in their work and recognize the importance of the role they play in taking care of customers and communities, will continue to be the backbone of our company."

With roots dating back to the 1920s, both Tops Markets and Price Chopper/Market 32 have grown exponentially over the last century, building and acquiring stores across Upstate New York and throughout the Northeast. The merged companies are committed to serving their markets across the Northeast.

The transaction is expected to close in the coming months and is subject to regulatory approval.



The House Committee on Oversight and Reform is suggesting \$7.8 million to the Town of Bethlehem, among the highest amounts of aid among Albany County communities.

Illustration by Jim Franco / Spotlight News

From page 1 ... A would be windfall

and local governments to ensure local teachers, firefighters, police officers, nurses and other essential workers are supported while they work to keep our communities going.”

Under the House plan, municipalities in Rensselaer County would receive \$82.7 million, those in Saratoga County would see a total of \$49.9 million, Schenectady

County, \$117 million and Montgomery County \$17 million.

All told, according to Tonko, \$130.2 billion is earmarked for local governments under the House plan. The majority, \$65.1 billion is slated for cities using a modified Community Development Block Grant formula, \$45.57

billion for municipalities with populations of at least 50,000, 19.53 for municipalities with populations less than that and \$65.1 billion for counties distributed based on population.

The money, long clamored for by states and municipalities across the country, is to help offset the impact of COVID-19. Locally, it was felt most with a decrease in sales tax revenue, but projections were not as bad as initially anticipated. In March, 2020, Albany County was

projecting a \$34 million drop in sales tax but it was closer to an \$18 million drop at the end of the year.

Few municipalities raised taxes, and Albany County’s 2021 budget includes a modest tax decrease for the third year in a row.

Colonie was forced to furlough nearly 50 employees, mostly part timers, in 2020, to close a projected \$7 million shortfall due mostly to a projected sharp decline in sales tax revenue. But, the 2021 budget increases taxes by under \$10 for the owner of a median value home and increases spending by only about a half a percent over 2020.

Supervisor Paula Mahan said as the pandemic took hold in March and there was more not known than known she directed all department heads to cut their respective 2020 budgets by 10 percent. Some of those cuts, in large part and where possible, were carried through in the 2021 budget and will be restored as the town gets its financial footing back.

“I’ve been advocating with our representatives for assistance for local government because we all have been hit so hard so this would be helpful,” she said. “I’m hoping it will keep going in that direction but That’s all I know at this point. It would be a huge help for everyone. The cost of the pandemic, what we have to put out

and what we lost and what we had to put on hold, it is very, very significant. Everything had to be adjusted to get through it, there is not a municipality around that has not been hit hard. It is clear, the states and municipalities need help and the effects will be positive on all the communities.”

In Bethlehem, the town was able to make up for sales tax shortcomings by using approximately \$1 million from the reserve fund and it froze step-up raises for non-union employees. Supervisor David VanLeuven was not confident a bailout was the size proposed by the House is coming.

“I’ll have to dig into the details, but I’ll believe it when I see it,” he said.

While municipalities were champing at the bit for the windfall, EJ McMahan, founder of the conservative leading think tank the Empire Center for Public Policy, said at least at the state level it is putting off the inevitable.

“By contrast, earlier COVID-19 relief and stimulus bills awarded funding through increased Medicaid reimbursements or aid to education, which has tied the state’s hands to some extent,” he said in statement. “In either situation — strings or no strings — federal largesse will only create bigger holes to be filled once this (likely) last and largest hunk of

federal aid is spent. But an amount as large as the House is considering would allow him (Cuomo) to put off tough decisions until fiscal year 2024, the first budget of his hoped-for fourth term.”

In December, the relief package passed by Congress did not include direct aid to municipalities with many Republicans are still hesitant to bail out states, like New York, that were struggling prior to the crippling COVID-19.

In addition to allocating \$350 billion in funding to states, localities, tribes, and territories, the Committee’s Fiscal Year 2021 Reconciliation Act include

\$570 million for emergency leave for federal and postal workers, and \$117 million for oversight entities to promote transparency and accountability of all federal coronavirus relief funds. It also includes a payment of \$1,400 to qualifying individuals, an extension to the child tax credit and federal unemployment benefits and possibly a \$15 minimum wage. It also includes aid to help schools pay for costs associated with the pandemic but the breakdown was not readily available.

The House is slated to vote before the end of February and depending on how negotiations go with the Senate, which, like the House, is now controlled by Democrats, it could be passed by the middle of next month.

Let’s Play Ball!

Digest Size Guide Featuring:
Statistics • Team Rosters • Schedules • Previews

This digest is referenced to all season long by fans!

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■ TOWN GOVERNMENT

Town Board left with so many questions

Three abstain from vote to approve appointment to fill entry-level position

By MICHAEL HALLISEY
halliseym@spotlightnews.com

DELMAR — Bethlehem Town Board members reached a rare stalemate while scrutinizing the appointment of an entry level position in its human resources department.

Of the board's five members, three abstained from voting on Wednesday, Feb 11. The no-votes thus prevented the motion to hire Katelyn Berger as a personnel assistant from passing. Recent hirings have earned the board's approval without cursory discussion, but this one prompted a half-hour discussion over ethics. Berger is also Town Board Member Jim Foster's

domestic partner.

Berger was selected from the county's civil service list among a field of three candidates. Mary Tremblay-Glassman, the town's human resources director, said her department had canvased qualified candidates based on the results of a 2019 exam. After interviews, Tremblay-Glassman said, she was the best fit.

The interview process did not reveal Berger's relationship with the town board member. And, Tremblay-Glassman said, she was under no legal obligation to share the information.

Foster, however, disclosed Berger as his domestic partner to board members while agenda items were discussed the previous Friday. It was then he shared he would have to recuse himself from any debate and abstain from Wednesday night's

vote. Before that, neither Tremblay-Glassman nor Town Supervisor David VanLuven knew of her relationship with the board member.

Town Board Member Joyce Becker raised concerns over the appointment when she thought the Town was under a hiring freeze. Tremblay-Glassman said departments have been hiring to fill vacancies. Most recently, the police department has hired a secretary and a communications person. Both were approved by the board. Nonetheless, Becker abstained, suggesting the Town reassess staffing needs as many employees now work from home.

Town Board Member Maurren Cunningham expressed varying concerns ranging from nepotism to security. Before the meeting, she said she raised a hypothetical question

with VanLuven as to whether or not he would take issue with her sister taking the same job. She said he would have taken an issue, as it would be viewed more as a political move.

Cunningham's sister is Albany County Assemblywoman and Bethlehem Democratic Chairperson Joyce Cunningham.

Cunningham shared that she was still uneasy with the thought that someone related to a board member would have access to sensitive files. She, too, abstained.

Though it was clear the vote faced three abstentions, VanLuven and Town Board Member Jim Coffey voted yes to the appointment. The town supervisor shared that, outside of vetting department head candidates, he trusted the human resources department with the hiring process.

Board members agreed to revisit the vote in two week following further discussion over Cunningham and Becker's issues.

Phone Scam

DELMAR — A town resident reported a telephone scam using a reported relationship with the Bethlehem Police Department recently.

According to the Bethlehem Police Department, the resident said she received a phone call from someone representing the agency and asked for support through a monetary donation.

Once the resident provided a credit card number to the caller, the line then disconnected. The quick thinking resident did then immediately contact her credit card company with the belief that she was just a victim of a scam and contacted the Bethlehem

Police where the scam call was confirmed.

The Bethlehem Police, the Bethlehem Police Officers Union or Bethlehem Police Supervisors Union do not conduct phone solicitation fundraising.

Anyone who gave any donations for the Bethlehem Police Department over the phone, to please contact them at 518-439-9973.

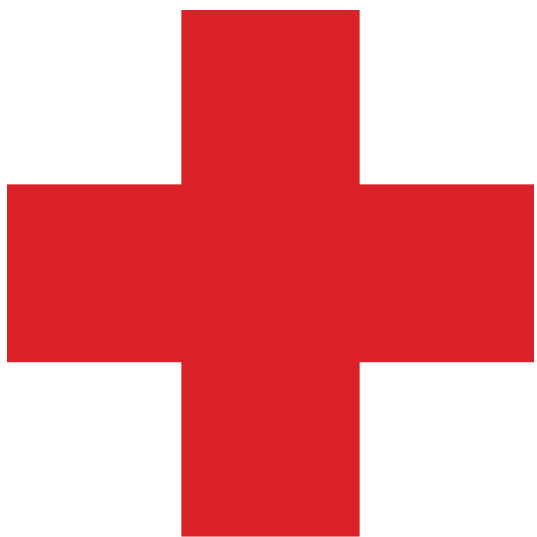
Reform and Reinvention

DELMAR — The Town's Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative will hold its fifth Community Forum on Thursday, Feb. 18, at 6 p.m.

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Delmar Rocks!

By **MICHAEL HALLISEY**
halliseym@spotlightnews.com

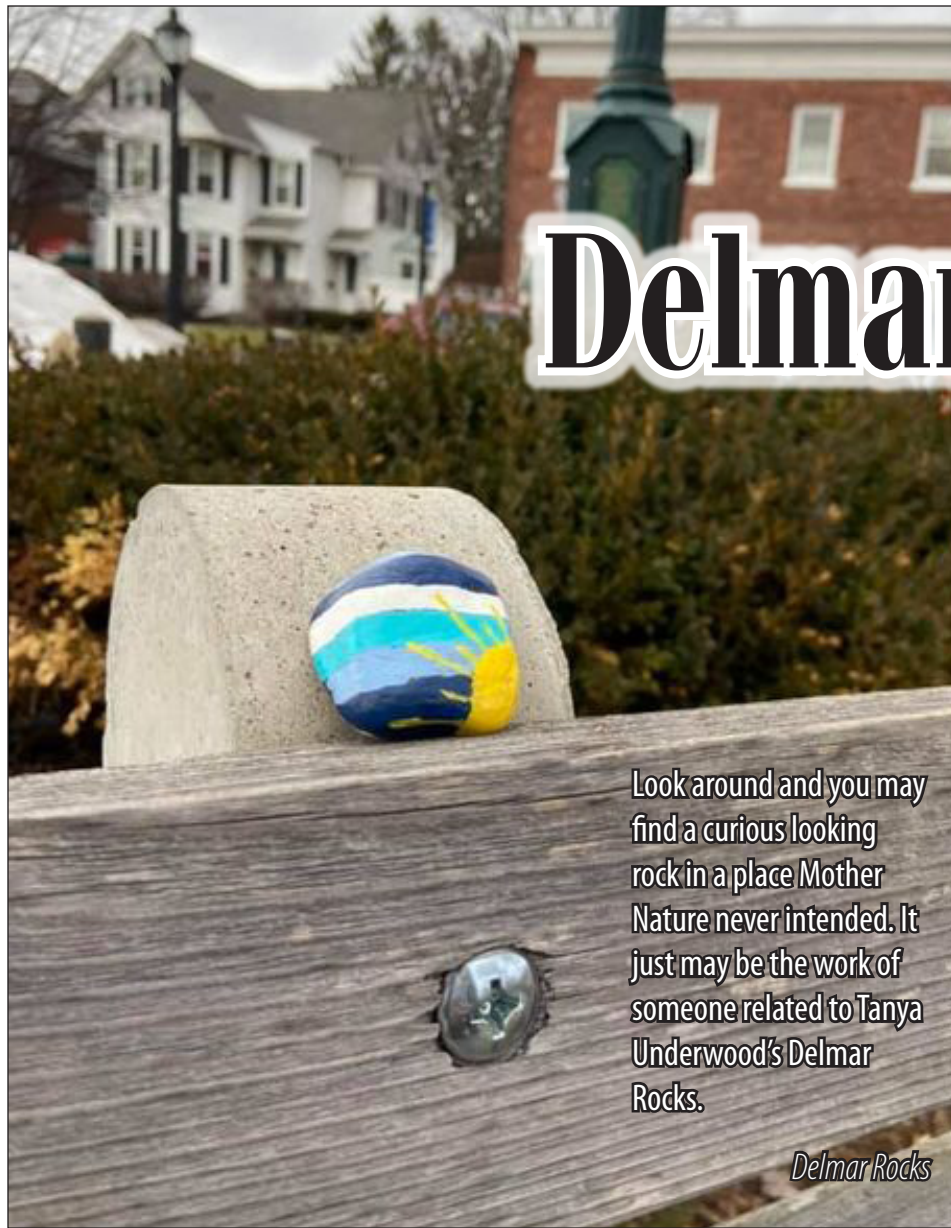
DELMAR — Casting rocks at your neighbors is frowned upon, normally. Delmar Rocks, a local group of artists, has changed that perception by spreading friendlier messages and with a kinder delivery.

Continues on next page



A rock depicting Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders sits on the grounds of Bethlehem Town Hall. It's one of dozens of painted rocks inspired by the online group Delmar Rocks.

Delmar Rocks



Delmar Rocks!



From page 1 ... Sowing seeds of love

Look around and you may find a curious looking rock in a place Mother Nature never intended. It just may be the work of someone related to Tanya Underwood's Delmar Rocks.

DelmarRocks

The loosely organized troupe follows a simple goal. They paint rocks with positive messages and deposit them around town with the hope people find them. It's a bit of a makeshift cache hunt, except there are no instructions other than those found on the backside of a found rock. Rocks that are found are done so by happenstance.

Tanya Underwood started the movement last spring. Like 1.4 million other New Yorkers last April, the mother of one was newly unemployed in the midst of a pandemic. Time spent home was

suddenly in abundance. It was then she opted to round up a few friends from the neighborhood to paint.

"It was a pandemic. I had just been laid off from my job. We were all kind of home quarantining it," said Underwood. "I talked to a couple of my friends and I said let's get our friends together and paint some rocks, try to start something up in Delmar."

Underwood said she was inspired by a similar movement in Berlin, Connecticut. The idea was to paint hearts and positive messages upon rocks. Rocks, because they're sustainable and could

weather the elements.

On the first day, Underwood corralled a few fellow moms and their children, and they all painted a dozen rocks. After which, the rocks were taken to a few public locations with the intent that they would be found. The first of such locations was the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail.

The 10-mile rail trail that runs through Delmar seemed to be the ideal spot. With state-mandated shutdowns, the trail was choked by increasing numbers of residents lost with idle time. The trail has served as a community place, hosting charity runs and chalk walks since it opened in 2016. In that first year, the county estimated 164,000 people used the Delmar spur of the trail. It was even more popular last April, as one biker observed.

"A bit crowded, but that's to be expected when

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the weather is finally in the 60s and COVID-19 has been cooping us all up in the house,” wrote Aarika Moak on Alltrails.com.

The project itself has taken legs of its own, Underwood said. People have found rocks, joined the group’s social media channels, and have painted their own rocks to be found around town.

The group’s Facebook page has garnered more than 600 followers since Underwood launched the page last spring. Today, it has a rolling news feed of pictures from people who found a rock, some of whom posed with it for a selfie soon after discovery.

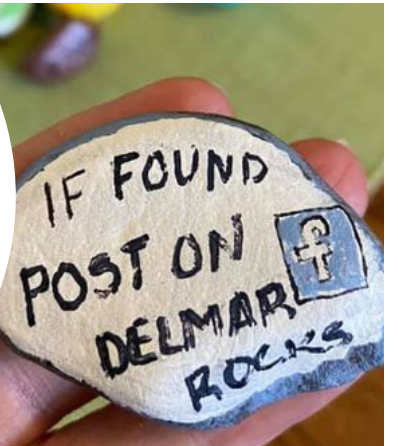
The evolution of the movement has also created a means to support local businesses. Aleta Lyons, one of Underwood’s friends, has recently painted rocks representing restaurants and dropping them off to be found near their doorsteps. One of her rocks depicting peeping eyes reading an open newspaper was found in front of *The Spotlight*.

Underwood was introduced to one of the rocks upon a recent visit to O’Slattey’s. When she walked in, one of the

“It’s been so tough, that’s why in some ways this was so therapeutic. It helps you to meet people. I’ve met people through this and learned about their situations, building our networks.”

— Tanya Underwood, Delmar Rocks, founder

restaurant’s staff members excitedly asked if she saw the rock outside. She knew it wasn’t one of hers, which only makes her happy, she said. She has watched talented artists take up the mantle, spreading more smiles across town. She went back outside to go see



The painted rocks scattered across Delmar have directors to post a picture on the group’s Facebook. From there, you can hide the rock for someone else to find.

Delmar Rocks

and recognized the work. “Yep. That’s one of Aleta’s,” she said.

It’s been nearly a year since Underwood rolled with the idea of painting those first rocks, and the movement doesn’t appear to be gathering any moss.

She’s now working, but still keeps tabs with the group. She’s since learned that local rocks have been discovered in Waterford and Syracuse. She’s also connected with the Berlin Rocks group for each to exchange and hide rocks across New England.

“It’s been so tough, that’s why in some ways this was so therapeutic,” Underwood said. “It helps you to meet people. I’ve met people through this and learned about their situations, building our networks.”

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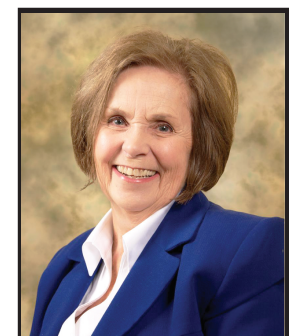


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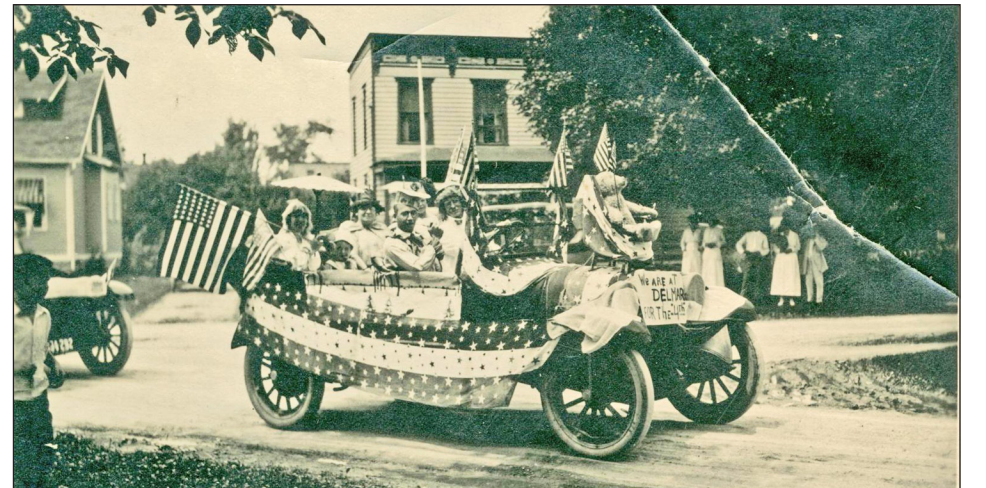
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Dignitaries in an early model automobile roll through Delmar to celebrate a banner day in Delmar in the early 1920s. Spotlight file photo

Parade Day

DELMAR — The point in which Kenwood and Delaware avenues cross holds the distinction of being the center of town, even though — geographically speaking — it is not.

There's also its beloved nickname, affectionately called "Four Corners" by generations of locals. There was even an effort to modernize the marketing of the locale by branding it with a truncated "FoCo" moniker, as often seen on automobile stickers from popular vacation spots. Nevermind that Paddock Place, which has also intersected with Kenwood and Delaware avenues for many generations, creates a fifth corner. That nickname won't fly, and making mention of it may cause someone to look at you funny.

These idiosyncrasies are



A parade float crawls past a crowd gathered at Four Corners to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Henry Hudson's landing of the Half Moon in 1609. Spotlight file photo

the stuff of hometowns. Observations you make while sitting on a bench on a warm, slow-moving summer day. A day perfect for a parade.

The procession line to each of Bethlehem's town parades runs through

this intersection each year. Before Eisenhower's super-highways, these two roads serves as major thoroughfares for travelers heading to Altamont, Cobleskill and beyond.


— Michael Hallisey



A photo from the early 1920s shows a large crowd at Four Corners. Spotlight file photo


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Residents



16,918
The number of people who reside here as of 2010.

42.3
Is the average age of a resident.



\$100,677
The median household income.

United States Census Bureau

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Delmar

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■ SCHOLASTIC SPORTS

Bethlehem gymnasts place third

LATHAM — Bethlehem came in third in the Suburban Council gymnastics championships behind Guilderland and Saratoga and ahead of Shaker.

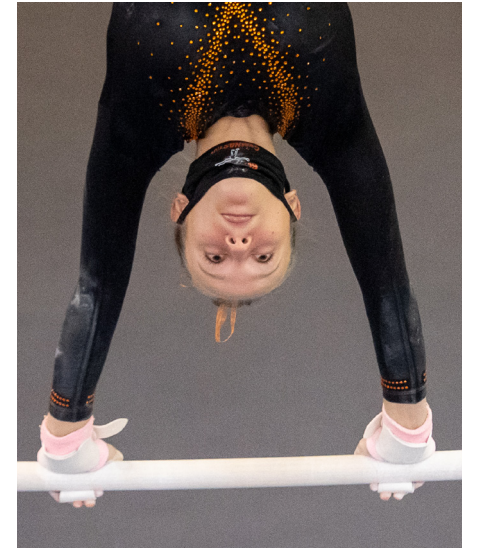
Saratoga continued to dominate the local gymnastics scene with an overall score of 171.575. Guilderland edged out Bethlehem 161.375 to 160.475. Shaker placed fourth overall with a score of 142.75.

Saratoga gymnasts took first place in all four events with Bethlehem's Ali Gray finishing third in the vault, the bars, the floor and overall.

Saratoga gymnasts took first and second overall with Ava Dallas scoring a combined 36.9 to edge out her teammate Sophia Damiano at 36.325. Gray came in third overall at 34.9. The teams competed at the World Class Gymnastics Academy in Latham at separate times and their scores were compared after the fact.

Check out our website for more photos of the meet.

— Jim Franco



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Registration is open for participants born on or after Jan. 1, 2003, on or before Jan. 1, 2016 and within grades K to 12. The season runs from April to early June.

Registration is \$125. Sibling discounts are available.

To register go to bethlehemsoftballleague.com.

LEGALS

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM Nanci Moquin TOWN CLERK February 10, 2021 D-262333

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THE RA SCHECHTER, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/08/20. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, c/o Hausman Law Group, P.C., 7600 Jericho Turn-

LEGALS

pike, Suite 402, Woodbury, NY 11797. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-259973

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Philip E. Klein, 324 East 48th Street, New York, NY 10017. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-260323

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February 17 - 23, 2021

POINT OF VIEW

SAM says NYS is in a sorry state of affairs

Michael Volpe, the current SAM-NY Chair, is a former two-term Mayor of Pelham, New York, where he was elected 5 times. Michael was the SAM candidate for Lt. Governor of New York in 2018 and has been practicing law for 30 years. For more information on SAM-NY, visit joinsamny.org.

At SAM-NY, the newest political party in New York state, we have had an interesting week. A federal court of appeals declined our request for an injunction preventing the governor, the Legislature and the Board of Elections from limiting the number of political options for New York's residents. We asked the court to overturn a law that will limit the voices of minor

political parties; thereby giving New Yorkers fewer choices in making political election choices. Bad news for New Yorkers, who deserve transparency, accountability, reform and real problem solving. We should not have a one or two-party state. Why? Well, consider the other news this week.

The Cuomo Administration "hid" the actual nursing home death toll numbers from federal authorities because of politics. One of the governor's top aides, Melissa DeRosa, admitted the lack of honesty, transparency and moral decency to the concerned and suffering families. This is simply unbelievable and unacceptable. The governor and his direct reports — DeRosa and Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker should resign, and

a federal Department of Justice investigation should commence immediately.

The SAM solution is a careful investigation of this scandal; ultimately determining criminality and unveiling and following the connections between Cuomo and our "health care leaders" who we have placed our faith, trust and loved ones lives with.

The Cuomo Administration was given certain "emergency powers" by the legislative leadership last year because of the pandemic. This allows the governor board budget powers and authority — in contravention to the state Constitution. We now see what happens when an autocratic leader bullies, threatens and grabs power.

The result? A bad decision by the Legislature,

who now, surprise, surprise, wants to take power back. This was a legislative abdication of responsibility from the start. Should those who were afraid to fight for New Yorkers from the start really be given "power" back?

The SAM solution is term limits for the governor and the state Legislature, and open and transparent budget negotiations every year.

Another scandal in the Cuomo Administration (that was overshadowed by the nursing home coverup) comes from the New York State Thruway Authority (everyone knows all state agencies report to himself and his cronies) which was sued for \$961 Million, over the Mario M. Cuomo-Tappan Zee Bridge. The estimated \$4 billion dollar bridge (no one is sure what

it cost) was completed with little transparency or accountability and with no real information of future costs for tolls.

The SAM solution would dedicate funds to local infrastructure first and would require full disclosure of all costs for larger projects statewide. And contractors who donate to elected officials are barred from bidding on state contracts.

And one more story about dysfunction in our Empire State: The Cuomo Administration was asked to "fire" the elections commissioners in Oneida County after the debacle concerning the election in New York's 22nd Congressional District. Essentially, a court had to step in to determine who won the November election between

candidates Claudia Tenney and Anthony Brindisi.

Why? Because the D's and R's in Albany have concocted a system where each county has a D and R election commissioner. Stalemates, cronyism, infighting, lack of reform, insufficient funding and resources result, and chaos prevail at Boards of Elections across the state.

The SAM solution is independent, transparent and non-partisan BOE Commissioners for every county.

Sadly, New York state is not in a good place. We have a struggling public educational system, crumbling local infrastructure, a complete lack of real economic opportunity for many and, as a result many, many residents are leaving.

We need change!

LIBRARIES

Craft & Chat at Voorheesville Public Library Thursday

The next meeting of the Craft & Chat club will be Thursday, Feb. 25, at 6:30 p.m. Grab your latest project and join fellow crafters as we relax, and enjoy some casual conversation about whatever we feel like talking about. Register online to receive the Zoom



meeting link.

Virtual Preschool Storytime

No registration is needed, and the video link will be available on the

Library website and social media sites, to view at your convenience. Families of preschoolers can pick up a free take & make bag at the library each week, from Tuesday-Saturday.

The bag will include the storytime thematic art activity of the week. Check out some of these storytime themes:

Color My World!
Available beginning March 2.

Up, Up, and Away!!
Available beginning March 9.

Discussion Dates

Books & Beyond –
Wednesday, March 17,
at 11 a.m.: "Little Fires

Everywhere," by Celeste Ng

Fiction Book Discussion – Wednesday, March 3, at 7 p.m.: "Little Fires Everywhere," by Celeste Ng.

Nonfiction Book Discussion – "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind," by Yuval Noah Harari

Talk and Taste Cookbook Club – Thursday, March 25, at 6:30 p.m.: Top Secret Recipes Step-by-Step by Todd Wilbur

Middle School Book Club (grades 6-8) – Wednesday, March 31, at 4 p.m.: "We're Not From Here," by Geoff Rodkey.

— Lynn Kobler

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LIBRARIES

Printing and copying at the library

Our building may be closed, but you can still make letter-sized black and white or color copies at the library. For your convenience, we've set up a self-serve copier in the entry vestibule of the library to use during our curbside pickup hours. (P.S. You can also use it to print pdf or jpg documents from a USB flash drive.) For information and more printing options: www.bethlehempubliclibrary.org/services/tech-tools/wireless-and-mobile-printing.

Please note: Only one person or family group is allowed in the vestibule area at a time.

Tax forms are here

Tax forms are also available in the entry vestibule or through curbside pickup. Don't see



the forms you're looking for? Give the Information Desk a call at (518) 439-9314 and if they are available online, we will print them out for you to be picked up curbside.

Good start

Spring is just around the corner, and you know what that means – it's time to get your garden started. Starting seeds at home saves money and lets you decide what you want to grow. The library has recently added home seed-starting kits to our Library of Things collection, so you can give it a try. Our kits include special indoor grow lights and seedling heat mats to help your seeds sprout quickly and vigorously.

We also have soil meters available to borrow so you can find out if you're providing a suitable soil environment for you plants. To search for these or other items from our Library of Things collection, visit our online catalog at catalog.uhls.org/iii/encore/search.

Coming soon: Our Seed Library returns next month. Stay tuned for more information.

Kindness pass it on

"In the end, only kindness matters." — Singer-songwriter Jewel
Be sure to follow us on social media to share all the ways acts of kindness have made a difference in your life. What are your favorite quotes about kindness? Share them by tagging us at #BPLKindness. For more information about Kindness Matters at Bethlehem Public Library, visit www.bethlehempubliclibrary.org/kindness-matters.

bethlehempubliclibrary.org/kindness-matters.

Upcoming events

Registration is required for the following programs. To sign up, visit our online calendar at bethlehempubliclibrary.org/calendar.

Winter Potpourri: Shapes are Everywhere

It's all about shapes! Join us Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 2 p.m. for a storytime for preschoolers dedicated to shapes, where we'll read stories and do a fun shape-themed craft. Craft kits will be held under your name for curbside pickup the week leading up to the program. You must register to receive a craft kit.

Antiracist Book Discussion Group

Join us virtually

Wednesday, Feb. 24, at 6:30 p.m. for a discussion group for adults dedicated to reading books by diverse authors in order to gain a better understanding of race and racism. This month's book is "Americanah" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

BYOB: Bring Your Own Book (& Beverage)

Take part in a relaxed discussion for adults Thursday, Feb. 25, at 7 p.m. of what books you've have been reading, and share your opinions and recommendations. Hated a book? Loved a book? Chat with other readers in the community!

Library hours and more

No-contact curbside pickup is now available

seven days a week. Staff are also available by phone and e-mail. Please email or give our Information Desk a call at information@bethpl.org or call (518) 439-9314 and we do everything we can to get your questions answered.

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Visit our website at www.bethlehempubliclibrary.org for hours of service and building updates.

— Kristen Roberts


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Delmar Rocks!

By **MICHAEL HALLISEY**
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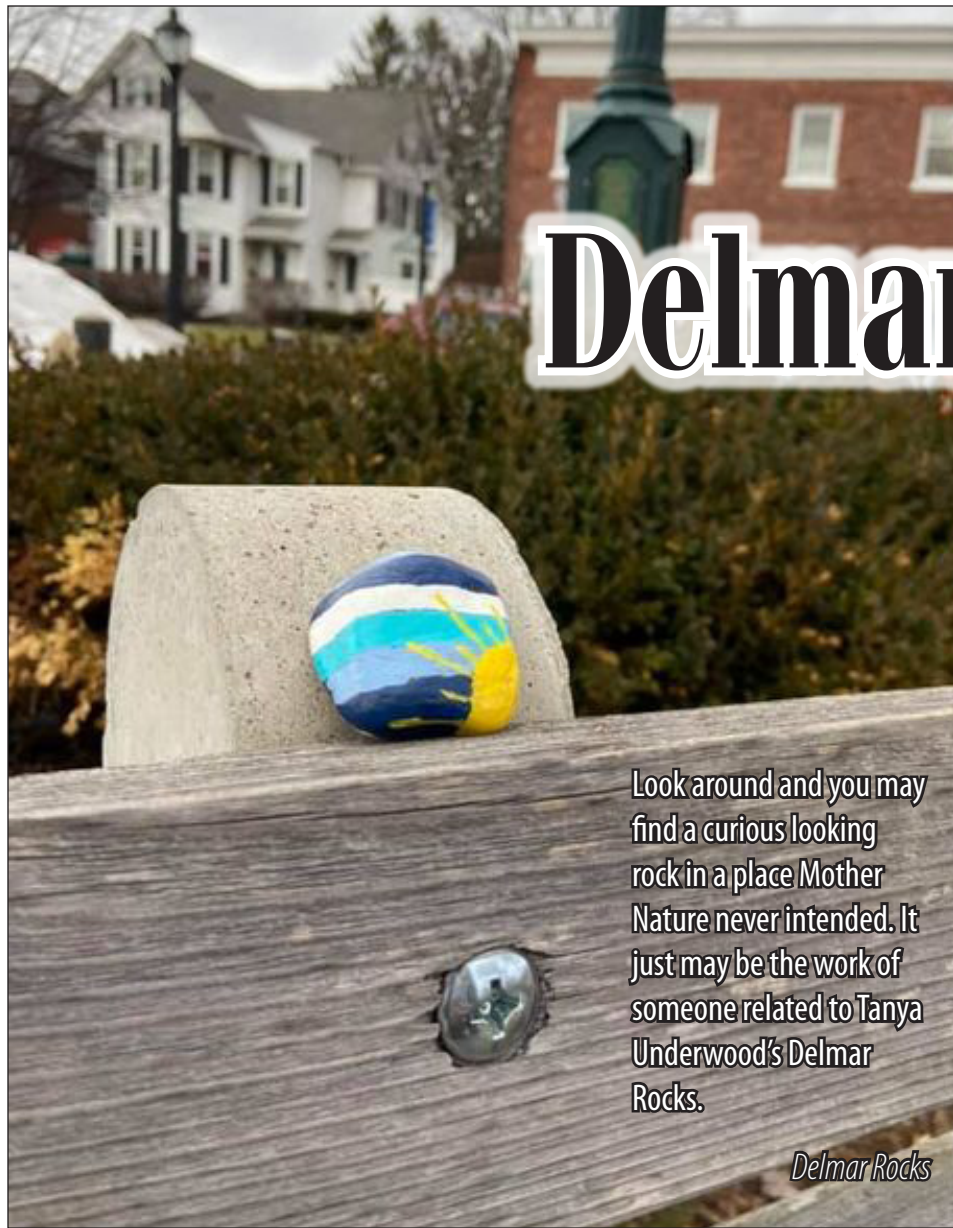
DELMAR — Casting rocks at your neighbors is frowned upon, normally. Delmar Rocks, a local group of artists, has changed that perception by spreading friendlier messages and with a kinder delivery.

Continues on next page



A rock depicting Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders sits on the grounds of Bethlehem Town Hall. It's one of dozens of painted rocks inspired by the online group Delmar Rocks.

Delmar Rocks



Delmar Rocks!



From page 1 ... Sowing seeds of love

Look around and you may find a curious looking rock in a place Mother Nature never intended. It just may be the work of someone related to Tanya Underwood's Delmar Rocks.

DelmarRocks

The loosely organized troupe follows a simple goal. They paint rocks with positive messages and deposit them around town with the hope people find them. It's a bit of a makeshift cache hunt, except there are no instructions other than those found on the backside of a found rock. Rocks that are found are done so by happenstance.

Tanya Underwood started the movement last spring. Like 1.4 million other New Yorkers last April, the mother of one was newly unemployed in the midst of a pandemic. Time spent home was

suddenly in abundance. It was then she opted to round up a few friends from the neighborhood to paint.

"It was a pandemic. I had just been laid off from my job. We were all kind of home quarantining it," said Underwood. "I talked to a couple of my friends and I said let's get our friends together and paint some rocks, try to start something up in Delmar."

Underwood said she was inspired by a similar movement in Berlin, Connecticut. The idea was to paint hearts and positive messages upon rocks. Rocks, because they're sustainable and could

weather the elements.

On the first day, Underwood corralled a few fellow moms and their children, and they all painted a dozen rocks. After which, the rocks were taken to a few public locations with the intent that they would be found. The first of such locations was the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail.

The 10-mile rail trail that runs through Delmar seemed to be the ideal spot. With state-mandated shutdowns, the trail was choked by increasing numbers of residents lost with idle time. The trail has served as a community place, hosting charity runs and chalk walks since it opened in 2016. In that first year, the county estimated 164,000 people used the Delmar spur of the trail. It was even more popular last April, as one biker observed.

"A bit crowded, but that's to be expected when

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the weather is finally in the 60s and COVID-19 has been cooping us all up in the house,” wrote Aarika Moak on Alltrails.com.

The project itself has taken legs of its own, Underwood said. People have found rocks, joined the group’s social media channels, and have painted their own rocks to be found around town.

The group’s Facebook page has garnered more than 600 followers since Underwood launched the page last spring. Today, it has a rolling news feed of pictures from people who found a rock, some of whom posed with it for a selfie soon after discovery.

The evolution of the movement has also created a means to support local businesses. Aleta Lyons, one of Underwood’s friends, has recently painted rocks representing restaurants and dropping them off to be found near their doorsteps. One of her rocks depicting peeping eyes reading an open newspaper was found in front of *The Spotlight*.

Underwood was introduced to one of the rocks upon a recent visit to O’Slattey’s. When she walked in, one of the

“It’s been so tough, that’s why in some ways this was so therapeutic. It helps you to meet people. I’ve met people through this and learned about their situations, building our networks.”

— Tanya Underwood, Delmar Rocks, founder

restaurant’s staff members excitedly asked if she saw the rock outside. She knew it wasn’t one of hers, which only makes her happy, she said. She has watched talented artists take up the mantle, spreading more smiles across town. She went back outside to go see



The painted rocks scattered across Delmar have directors to post a picture on the group’s Facebook. From there, you can hide the rock for someone else to find.

Delmar Rocks

and recognized the work. “Yep. That’s one of Aleta’s,” she said.

It’s been nearly a year since Underwood rolled with the idea of painting those first rocks, and the movement doesn’t appear to be gathering any moss.

She’s now working, but still keeps tabs with the group. She’s since learned that local rocks have been discovered in Waterford and Syracuse. She’s also connected with the Berlin Rocks group for each to exchange and hide rocks across New England.

“It’s been so tough, that’s why in some ways this was so therapeutic,” Underwood said. “It helps you to meet people. I’ve met people through this and learned about their situations, building our networks.”

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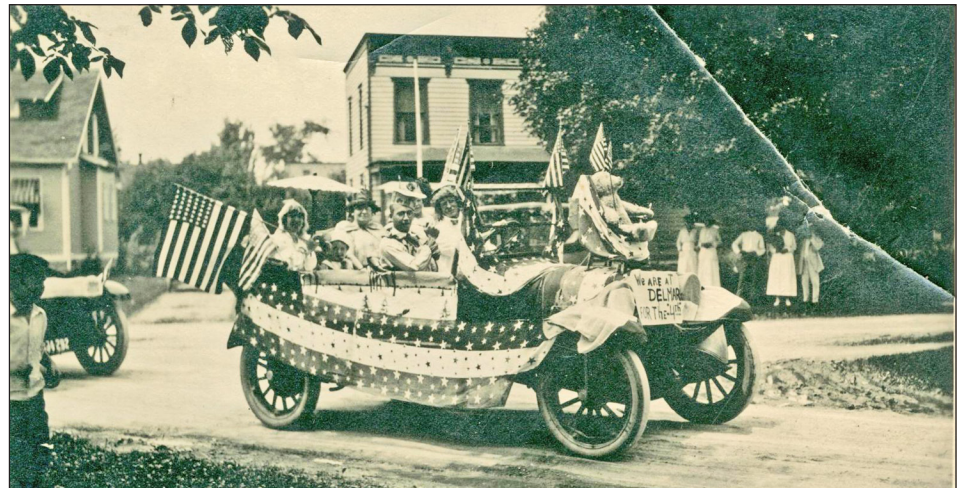
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Dignitaries in an early model automobile roll through Delmar to celebrate a banner day in Delmar in the early 1920s. *Spotlight file photo*

Parade Day

DELMAR — The point in which Kenwood and Delaware avenues cross holds the distinction of being the center of town, even though — geographically speaking — it is not.

There's also its beloved nickname, affectionately called "Four Corners" by generations of locals. There was even an effort to modernize the marketing of the locale by branding it with a truncated "FoCo" moniker, as often seen on automobile stickers from popular vacation spots. Nevermind that Paddock Place, which has also intersected with Kenwood and Delaware avenues for many generations, creates a fifth corner. That nickname won't fly, and making mention of it may cause someone to look at you funny.

These idiosyncrasies are



A parade float crawls past a crowd gathered at Four Corners to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Henry Hudson's landing of the Half Moon in 1609. *Spotlight file photo*

the stuff of hometowns. Observations you make while sitting on a bench on a warm, slow-moving summer day. A day perfect for a parade.

The procession line to each of Bethlehem's town parades runs through

this intersection each year. Before Eisenhower's super-highways, these two roads serves as major thoroughfares for travelers heading to Altamont, Cobleskill and beyond.


— Michael Hallisey



A photo from the early 1920s shows a large crowd at Four Corners. *Spotlight file photo*


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16,918
The number of people who reside here as of 2010.

42.3
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\$100,677
The median household income.

United States Census Bureau

Education



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Snow walkin'

Guilderland hosted a snowshoeing race.

Page B11

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■ CULTURE

■ INSIDE



March Madness

Bragging rights are at stake for local music artists, fans.

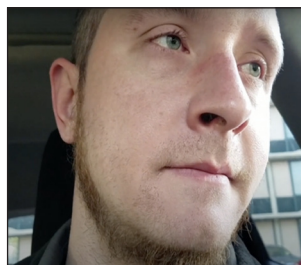
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Hope

American Cancer Society is bringing back Daffodil Days.

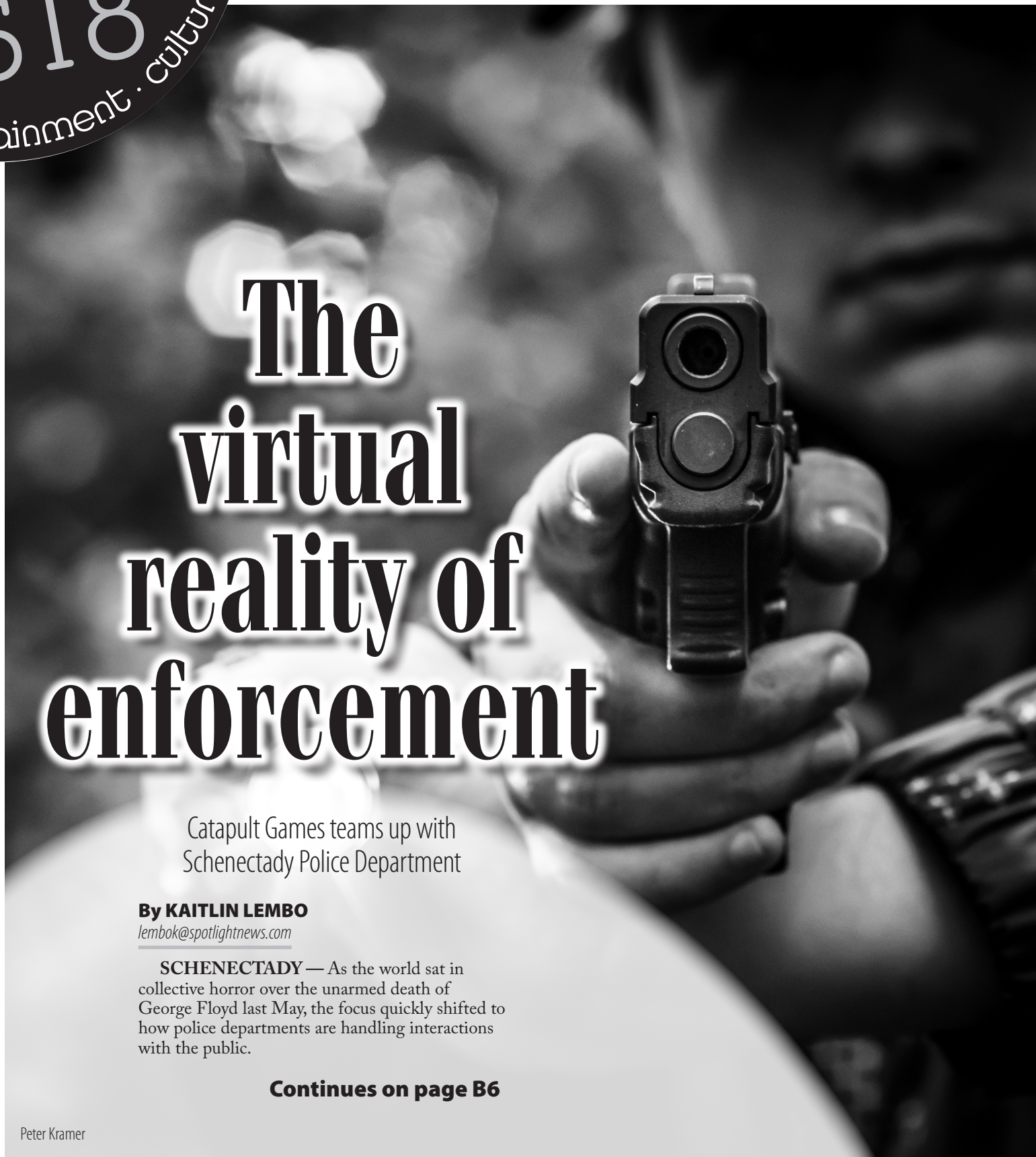
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Passion project

Local filmmaker rides the wave of creativity in new documentary.

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The virtual reality of enforcement

Catapult Games teams up with Schenectady Police Department

By **KAITLIN LEMBO**

lembok@spotlightnews.com

SCHENECTADY — As the world sat in collective horror over the unarmed death of George Floyd last May, the focus quickly shifted to how police departments are handling interactions with the public.

Continues on page B6

Peter Kramer



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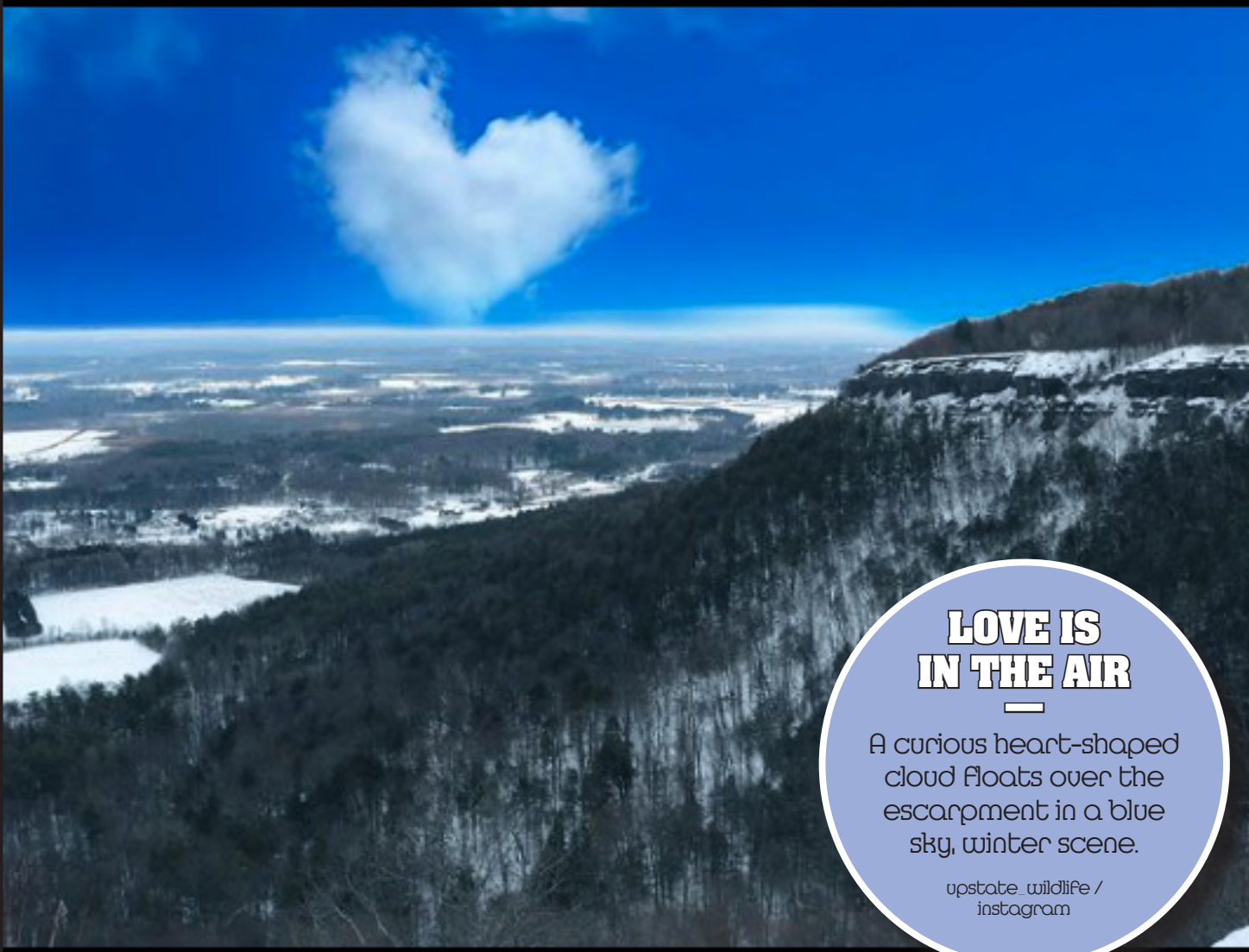


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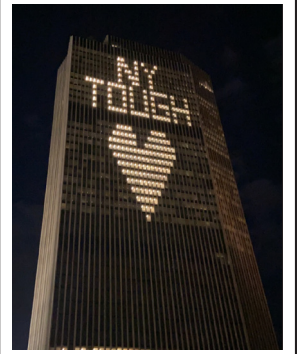
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**LOVE IS
IN THE AIR**

A curious heart-shaped cloud floats over the escarpment in a blue sky, winter scene.




upstate_wildlife /
instagram



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RECENTLY ANNOUNCED

Bragging rights at stake

Capital District's March "Music" Madness Tourney announced

ALBANY — March Madness is approaching, but instead of basketball, we long for local music.

Nippertown, in partnership with The Spot 518, is launching its inaugural local March "Music" Madness tournament.

The virtual bracketed tournament pits local musicians in friendly competition, vying for bragging rights and the opportunity to win cash money. The seven-week event plays out across the polls with fans voting in to

help their band advance to the next round.

The tournament is accepting nominations from local music fans from now until Saturday, Feb. 20. Nominate your favorite local bands at <https://www.nippertown.com/march-music-madness/> and yes, you can nominate more than one band.

The Capital District's music scene has long been appreciated but has recently garnered national attention with several of our own artists featured on national television audiences of "The Voice" and "American Idol." In 2016, a New York City-based data resource group placed the Tri-City area as No. 6 — one rung behind Austin, Texas — on its

nationwide list for the best music scene.

Our local March "Music" Madness will feature 64 musicians/bands from the Capital Region and include artists from every genre. Each will be welcomed to gather their fanbase to help them advance.

Bands have the opportunity to win various cash prizes made available by our sponsors (Denis Entertainment Group, Laboom Entertainment, Putnam Place, and The Dona Frank Team Select Sotherby's Int'l Realty, and more...). Prices will be \$250 for the Winner, \$150 for the Runner-up, and \$100 for 3rd and 4th place Semi-finalists. Nippertown

is also working with venues to do a special live stream show with the semi-finalists.

To find out about sponsoring the tournament, please email Jim Gilbert at jim@nippertown.com.

Voting will take place each week on Nippertown from Wednesday to Saturday. Bands who advance will be announced on Wednesdays in The Spot 518, as well as, on Nippertown.com. Michael Hallisey (The Spot 518) and Jim Gilbert (Nippertown) will also discuss results live on their Facebook Live program that airs every Wednesday night on Nippertown's FB page.

RECENTLY ANNOUNCED



Two Buttons Deep on music

By MICHAEL HALLISEY
halliseym@spotlightnews.com

ALBANY — Two Buttons Deep, the zany news and entertainment website that has covered the lighter-side of the Capital City for the past several years, launched its first Musicians Showcase on Thursday, Feb. 11.

Two Buttons Deep personalities segued between a dozen different local artists from local establishments, placing the spotlight on both our music and our scene.

Recorded performances included music from Stellar Young, Warden and Company, The Gold Hope Duo, Liam Davis, Riley Williams, Up the River, Under the Den, Millington, Three Jays, Mark & Jill, North Side Sound, and Symone Noelle.

Each of the artists were vying for a \$500 cash prize and a year-long supply of Miller Lite provided by DeCrescente Distributing Company, Honest Weight Food Co-op and CDTA.

More than 200 viewers watched the live, Thursday night broadcast.

No winner was announced before this edition went to print on Monday.

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CULTURE

Sunshine of your love

American Cancer Society is bringing back Daffodil Days

By **KAITLIN LEMBO**
 lembok@spotlightnews.com

LATHAM — The American Cancer Society of the Capital Region is brightening up days once again by hosting its annual Daffodil Days.

The fundraiser, which will close the ordering service on Feb. 22, is selling daffodils to families of those suffering with cancer, as well as offering the option to send a bouquet to an anonymous patient fighting cancer in the hospital or a nursing home. Pick up will be until March 22 at the organization's offices, at 1 Penny Lane in Latham. Donors can purchase flowers by calling 518-220-6934.

"The response of people who receive the daffodils is always extremely positive, especially those who were not expecting the flowers,"



Daffodils, the first flower to bloom in spring, often times serve as symbolism for hope to those battling with cancer.

Georgia Vieira, American Cancer Society Community Development Manager, said. "Sending the daffodils seems to be a universal way that those fighting cancer recognize there are people out there pulling for them getting better."

The idea behind the Cancer Society's choice of daffodil is two-fold.

While daffodils are bright, yellow, happy flowers, the organization looks to the time of year that daffodils bloom. Because they are the first flowers to spring up once winter is over, many patients with cancer and their families view the sunny buds as tokens of hope, recovery and strength.

"Despite a roughly \$200 million budget gap that resulted in cuts to both personnel and non-personnel expenses that was caused by the coronavirus this past year, [we've] continued to engage with people where they live their lives as we worked hard to serve patients and attack cancer from every angle

through research, education, advocacy, and patient services," Vieira said in a press release.

The American Cancer Society was planning to host Daffodil Days last year and had already collected money for the flowers. Two days before delivery, COVID-19 shut the Capital District down, severely limiting options for flower delivery both from the growers and to donors. Vieira said she was shocked when "99 percent" of the donors told her to keep the money, even though they understood the flowers wouldn't be coming.

"We really want people to know we're back to it this year and spread the word that a bunch of daffodils can drive the point home that you're thinking about someone who is fighting a really brutal fight," Vieira said. "There's nothing like watching people's faces light up when they receive the flowers and the motivation it brings."

Even after the flowers are delivered, Vieira said the

organization is determined to keep the fight to cure cancer as human as possible in the Latham office. All correspondence is signed by a person, allowing donors and patients to form bonds with one of their biggest resources.

"We want to keep those lines of communication as open as possible," Vieira concluded. "We know these families are suffering enough and we want to be as warm and human as we can be."

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of 1.5 million volunteers dedicated to saving lives, celebrating lives and leading the fight for a world without cancer. From breakthrough research, to free lodging near treatment, a 24/7/365 live helpline, free rides to treatment and convening powerful activists to create awareness and impact, the society is the only organization attacking cancer from every angle.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Ancient Persian city
5. Spindles
11. Stake
12. Retrain
16. Close by
17. Commercial
18. One who publicly announces
19. American ballplayer
24. Junior's father
25. Go up or climb
26. Concern
27. When you hope to get there
28. Iacocca and Oswald are two
29. Plant of the lily family
30. Male college organization
31. National capital
33. Raccoonlike animal
34. Symbols of fertility
38. Astronomy unit
39. Series of ridges in anatomy
40. Hebrew leader
43. A portent of good or evil
44. Supreme goddess
45. Gelatinous substance
49. Engage in a contest
50. Famed ballplayer Ruth
51. Pledge
53. - __, denotes past
54. Revival
56. Spanish surname
58. Gold
59. Elsa's sister
60. Workplace
63. Large quantity of something
64. Engraved
65. Discount

CLUES DOWN

1. Shoe
2. Disquiet

3. Posture
4. Large nests
5. Soviet "Second Symphony" composer
6. Joins two pipes of different diameter
7. Exist
8. Overdose
9. Pleat of fabric
10. Predict the future
13. Burgeoning technology
14. Having made a valid will
15. Having no fixed course
20. __ route
21. Lethal dose
22. Indian musical pattern of notes
23. Athlete
27. Geological times
29. Atomic #21
30. In support of
31. Brew
32. Certificate of insurance
33. Taxi
34. Type of saying
35. For cigars
36. Phil __, former CIA
37. Local area network
38. Gym class
40. Philippine Island
41. Not great or bad
42. Eastern part of NY state
44. Gov't lawyers
45. Constructions
46. Former British gold coin
47. Unkeyed
48. Rechristen
50. Threaten persistently
51. Southeast
52. Cools your home
54. Removes the leaves
55. Regretted
57. Thus
61. Relief organization (abbr.)
62. Exclamation of surprise

Answers on Pg. B9

FILM

Chasing down one's passion project

Local filmmaker rides the wave of creativity in new documentary

By **KAITLIN LEMBO**
lembok@spotlightnews.com

SARATOGA SPRINGS — Think about four years. What have you done in four years?

Some of us have switched jobs. Others have earned degrees. Some of us have lost weight, while others have gained it. You might have been married, divorced, had kids, been dumped by a boyfriend/girlfriend or even came out to the world.

Very few things are constant over four years. A local filmmaker's latest film is the documentation of a project that took that long.

Shaun Rose is a native of Saratoga Springs. He's made several films throughout his life; his latest, "Making and Unmaking," came out in December and is the journey he took while creating his award-winning film, "Upstate Story."

The beauty of "Making and Unmaking" is the simplicity. The screen opens to a young Rose talking about centering a project around his real life because if the film tanks, what does that say about him? As a fellow creator, I know that fear. To spend any amount of time on anything creative, whether it be a story, a film, a book, even a speech, is to inherently insert yourself into the fibers of that creation. Creatives don't create because someone is forcing them to. In the depths of their heart, creatives



Shaun Rose spent four years making his award-winning film "Upstate Story" and the process was documented through vlogs and behind the scenes footage. Screen capture

produce because it's in their nature.

"Upstate Story" took Rose as long to put together as Stephen King took to write "It." Various talking heads with Rose and his loved ones show the grueling care it takes

to make a film, even one that is mostly made with the camera person's own hand. Every single scene is thought out. If a character looks to the left instead of down, there's probably a reason for that gesture and an even bigger reason why

it's shown at all. Movies are stories done with film; the face and body have to convey what words are not able to. Movie stars make oodles of money because they understand the nuances that come with performance. Rose shined

a light on this in "Making and Unmaking" by showing the grueling takes from a failed project, "Summer Daze."

The film also examines the various personal plights and plots of Rose's personal life, including the birth of his son, a stroke he had in his work parking lot and the demolition of a relationship before his current one. Despite the constant lobs to his side of the net, Rose keeps "Upstate Story" in the back of his mind, as cameras filming footage of what would eventually be "Making and Unmaking" document the journey. He's kept the monologues on his MacBook and his camera equipment on call. While he's pondering if he and his current girlfriend want a child of their own, he's willing to put "Upstate Story" on the back burner but spoiler alert, he's never ready to kiss it goodbye.

His passion proves valid; he's recognized by several entities for the finished product of "Upstate Story." "Making and Unmaking" documents the awards ceremonies and the different times he stepped on stage with his kids' drawings, bringing them along spiritually.

Perhaps the most powerful part of "Making and Unmaking" lies in that final scene; as he prepared to shave his "superstition beard" that he grows during each project, he tells his family the beard tradition breaks now. The kids chomp at the hair with scissors before Rose cleans up what's left. Just like that, "Upstate Story" is the past, with "Making and Unmaking" taking center stage. Because despite the dedication Rose had to his project, all good things pass. It's what you do next that makes the future.

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Answers on Pg. B9

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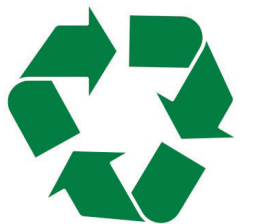
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**Recycle
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From page B1 ... Catapult Games

Since Floyd was killed, departments across the country have announced various initiatives to calm the tension simmering between police and the people.

Schenectady Police Department is taking that initiative up another step with the help of virtual reality. The force is teaming up with Schenectady-based Catapult Games and the Center for Community Justice to use video games to practice de-escalation techniques for situations officers are presented with during their shifts.

"I'm excited to team up with Catapult Games to help them test and refine their virtual reality training application," Schenectady Police Chief Eric Clifford said in a press release. "I believe that by focusing on de-escalation techniques, this application can significantly improve modern police training, leading to more peaceful resolutions of conflict."

Catapult CEO Dane

Jennings explained the simulation as a series of choices. The trainee (whether it be a new officer, a veteran of the force or anyone else in the precinct who is assigned) will be presented with a scenario that resembles a real-life situation. From the start, the trainee will have the option to approach the vehicle/person with a more subdued approach or to go in full force. The result of the choice will unfold based on the aggression involved in the approach; if the trainee chooses to politely greet a person and strike up a gentle conversation, the person might willingly disclose requested information, where if the trainee chooses to brandish equipment, the person might become more agitated, causing the situation to quickly escalate. How the situation ultimately plays out is entirely up to the trainee, as their choices are what will dictate how peaceful or violent the interaction



"Use of force by police is a major concern in our country, we believe that leveraging cutting edge technology with community input can make a positive impact on human rights and safety."

— Dane Jennings,
Catapult CEO

becomes. To make the simulation as close to reality as humanly possible, trainees are asked to use proper police protocol during gameplay so they are using their skills hands-on.

Jennings said the simulation is successful, but still not perfect; if a trainee chooses the same choices each time, the situation



Screengrabs from Catapult Games' latest simulation shows the facets of a realistic police station. CEO Dane Jennings hopes the realistic software will help officers learn how to better de-escalate situations.

will unfold verbatim, which isn't 100 percent accurate in society. However, Jennings said the ability to use virtual reality to simulate the real police station, with the roles involved represented through game characters, allows trainees to have a close-to-real experience with interactions they might encounter on

duty. Schenectady Police Department has been providing feedback to Catapult, and bringing the staff on ride-alongs, so the gaming company can better understand the nuances of a police officer's day and create stronger representation.

"Peaceful resolution, accountability, justice and

community-based remedies are at the core of our agency's mission," Center for Community Justice executive director Cheryl Vallee said in a press release. "The partnership between the Schenectady Police Department and Catapult Games is a welcome step in the right direction to help members of our community

HOROSCOPES

February 2021 Week 3

ARIES - MAR 21/APR 20

Aries, you are feeling ambitious this week, so it might be time to try a new hobby or other interest. Write down your goals and see if any align with potential hobbies.

TAURUS - APR 21/MAY 21

Taurus, some nice surprises are likely to come your way, especially in your private life. Enjoy every moment as it unfolds and express your appreciation when applicable.

GEMINI - MAY 22/JUN 21

Gemini, you are likely to upstage everyone else this week because people simply cannot get enough of your magnetic personality. If you grow weary of the limelight, take a break.

CANCER - JUN 22/JUL 22

Cancer, clear your social schedule in favor of some quiet time at home. Such a respite can provide a great opportunity to reflect and make a new plan.

LEO - JUL 23/AUG 23

Leo, you have a goal to meet someone new and there's a good chance you will discover that person in the days to come. Accept the possibility that hopes and dreams can come true.

VIRGO - AUG 24/SEPT 22

Virgo, friends often end up filling familial roles. Even though a person may not be related by blood, certain friends can be relied upon through thick and thin.

LIBRA - SEPT 23/OCT 23

Even though the holidays are over you may still want to continue the celebration, Libra. Find a way to socialize with friends or family in a responsible manner.

SCORPIO - OCT 24/NOV 22

Scorpio, you may be finished with the business that made last month hectic. Now you are ready to start a new chapter. A calm period is ahead.

SAGITTARIUS - NOV 23/DEC 21

Sagittarius, a potentially lucrative opportunity may present itself in the days to come. Consider all of your options and give equal thought to all of them.

CAPRICORN - DEC 22/JAN 20

Capricorn, even if you don't say much, there is a lot of chatter going on in your head. Take some time to find a quiet place and meditate for a while.

AQUARIUS - JAN 21/FEB 18

Sometimes you just have to take a risk without vetting all of the possible outcomes, Aquarius. If it feels like it's a good time to make a change, embrace the opportunity.

PISCES - FEB 19/MAR 20

This week is the ideal opportunity to show strength and exhibit your organizational skills, Pisces. Don't be afraid to think big.

EASTER EGG

Figures that show just how popular gaming has become

Many adults who are between the ages of 20 and 50 grew up playing video games, but few may have anticipated just how big gaming would become by the time they reached adulthood. The popularity of gaming has only grown since today's 40somethings were children, and that popularity is reflected in a host of eye-popping statistics.

2.7 billion: That's the number of gamers across the globe as of 2019, according to data from the games market insights and analytics experts at NewZoo. To put that in perspective, data from the U.S. Census Bureau around the end of 2020 indicated that the global population at that time was right around 7.7 billion. That means roughly 35 percent of the global population qualifies as gamers.

\$159 billion: The amount NewZoo estimates gamers will spend on gaming in 2020.

48 percent: That's the video gaming market share of the Asia Pacific region. The second highest market share belongs to North America, which accounts for 19 percent of global video game industry revenue.

12.3 percent: This figure represents the year-on-year market share growth rate in Western Europe from 2018 to 2019. That's the highest such growth rate of any region in the world during that span.

646 million: The estimated number of esports viewers by 2023, according to data from Statista. Esports is generally defined as the competitions featuring gamers competing against one another. Statista notes that as recently as 2017 esports viewership totaled 335 million. That means the popularity of esports is likely to double in terms of viewership in the six-year period between 2017 and 2023.

experiencing difficult times. We're excited to offer our assistance and look forward to helping with the upcoming public forums."

Jennings added he hopes to broaden the simulation's horizons to the public with monthly feedback sessions and updated software so people can see how the force is training. Ultimately, the goal is for Catapult to provide a tool that will increase de-escalation skills in encounters and allow for a force that is more equipped to deal with situations in a non-violent

way.

"Use of force by police is a major concern in our country, we believe that leveraging cutting edge technology with community input can make a positive impact on human rights and safety," Jennings concluded.

"Using the coalition of experts at the Center for Community Justice really allowed us to hone in on problems in society and make the game as real as possible."

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HEALTH and FITNESS

Taking home the catch of the day

How to choose a fresh, whole fish

Lent is a 40-day period that begins on Ash Wednesday and culminates with Easter Sunday. For faithful Christians, Lent involves prayer, reflection and sacrifice, much in the way that Jesus Christ sacrificed himself for others. One of the components of giving something up is abstaining from eating meat on key days during Lent, particularly each Friday.

Various religious scholars and experts put different spins on why people abstain from eating meat during Lent. According to UMD Newman and Bulldog Catholic, meat was singled out because it is associated with celebrations and feasts.



It also is considered a luxury in different cultures. Therefore, during the solemn Lenten season, meat is eschewed in favor of “poorer” foods like fish and vegetables.

During Lent, people flock to fish mongers and the fish counters of their favorite stores. While filets, steaks and shellfish may be purchased for Friday

The eyes can reveal so many things about a person, and a fish, too. When shopping for a fresh piece of fish, take a look at its eyes. What you see can tell you just how fresh it really is.

dinners, many people also opt for whole fish for their meals. When selecting whole fish, there are certain criteria that can help shoppers select products that are fresh and safe to eat. The Michelin Guide and other resources offer these tips:

- Look at the eyes first. Fish that is fresh will have clear, bulging eyes with dark pupils. The eyes should look as lifelike as possible. Cloudy-eyed fish are old.

- Touch the fins. Ask to feel the fins to see if they are still movable and nimble. Dried, brittle fins are a mark of age.

- Smell the fish. Fish should smell like the sea, but not overly fishy. Odd smells could be indicative of an old fish and also one that has begun to decay.

- Look at the skin. The skin of fresh fish should be moist and shiny.

- Check inside the gills. The inside of the gills should be bright red, as this is the area where the oxygen vessels of the fish are located. The fresher the fish, the brighter the shade of red. Gills darken over time, so avoid fish if the gills are brown or black.

- Ask how the fish was handled. Of course, it is ideal to get fish right out of the sea, but this isn't always possible unless you've spent a day fishing. Ensure that the fish has been packed on ice and see if you can confirm how long it has been on display before purchasing it. Check to ensure that it has not been defrosted and refrozen. It is not advisable to refreeze fish.

Fresh fish is a tradition during Lent. Be sure that Lenten meals are safe and delicious by choosing fresh fish.

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7	3	8	9	1	2	6	5	4
1	6	4	8	7	5	2	3	9
3	4	7	1	6	8	9	2	5
9	1	6	5	2	7	3	4	8
5	8	2	4	3	9	7	6	1
8	9	3	6	5	1	4	7	2
6	2	1	7	9	4	5	8	3
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D	A	N	I	E	L	M	U	R	P	H	Y		S	R	
A	S	C	E	N	D		C	A	R	E		E	T	A	
L	E	E	S		S	E	G	O		F	R	A	T		
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P	H	A	L	L	I				P	A	R	S	E	C	
R	U	G	A	E		C	A	L	E	B					
O	M	E	N		D	E	V	I			A	G	A	R	
V	I	E		B	A	B	E		S	A	L	U	T	E	
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FOOD and VINO

Few things beat a hot meal on a cold day. Stews and casseroles can fit the bill in such situations, but soup is a go-to solution when looking to warm up.

This recipe for “Tortilla Soup” from “The Complete Mexican, South American & Caribbean Cookbook” by Jane Milton, Jenni Fleetwood and Marina Filippelli (Metro Books) can be served as an appetizer or light meal. The crispy tortilla strips included in the recipe add extra texture to a delicious dish.

Tortilla Soup

Ingredients: Serves 4

- 4 corn tortillas, freshly made or a few days old
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, plus extra for frying
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 14-ounce can plum tomatoes, drained
- 4 cups chicken stock
- Small bunch cilantro
- Salt and ground black pepper

Instructions

Using a sharp knife, cut each tortilla into 4 or 5 strips,

each measuring about 3/4 inches wide.

Pour vegetable oil to a depth of 3/4 inch into a heavy frying pan. Heat until a small piece of tortilla, added to the oil, floats on the top and bubbles at the edges.

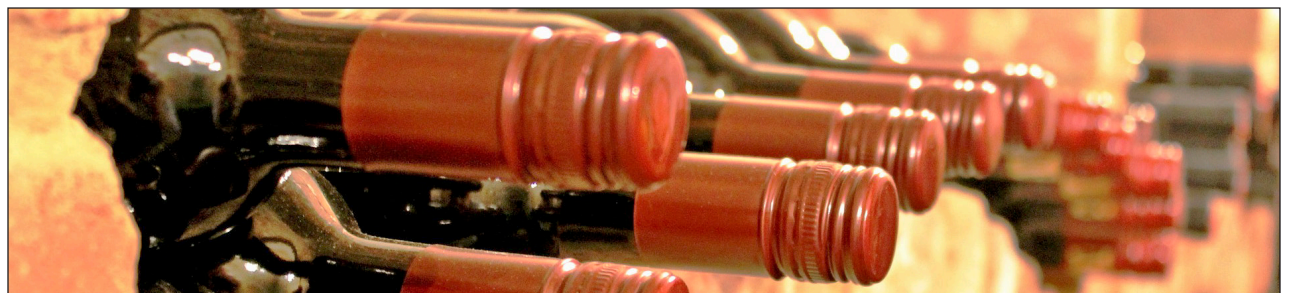
Add a few tortilla strips to the hot oil and fry for a few minutes, until crisp and golden brown all over, turning them occasionally. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on a double layer of paper towels. Cook the remaining tortilla strips in the same way.

Heat the 1 tablespoon vegetable oil in a large, heavy pan. Add the chopped onion and garlic and cook over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring constantly with a wooden spatula, until the onion is soft and translucent. Do not let the garlic turn brown or it will give the soup a bitter taste.

Chop the tomatoes using a large, sharp knife and add them to the onion mixture in the pan. Pour in the chicken stock and stir well. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and let simmer for about 10 minutes, until the liquid has reduced slightly.

Chop the cilantro. Add to the soup, reserving a little to use as a garnish. Season to taste.

Place a few of the crisp tortilla pieces in the bottom of four warmed soup bowls. Ladle the soup on top. Sprinkle each portion with the reserved chopped cilantro and serve.



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TECHNOLOGY

Straightening out the words between

Technology helping those with dyslexia

Dyslexia is a condition in which people have problems processing letters, symbols and words, potentially compromising their ability to read. According to Kids Health, a medical information site powered by Nemours, research has shown dyslexia is a byproduct of how the brain processes information. Those with dyslexia actually use different parts of the brain when they try to read than those without dyslexia, and these parts do not work efficiently.

Contrary to popular belief, those with dyslexia do not necessarily see words or letters backwards. One of the more common problems people with dyslexia experience is struggling to recognize

phonemes, or the basic sounds of speech. As a result, putting the sounds of letters together to make words can be tricky for those with dyslexia.

With widespread technology usage at home and in schools, assistive devices and apps can help change the game for children and adults with dyslexia. The organization Dyslexic Advantage has found through their Dyslexia at School Study that denial of assistive technology in American schools continues to be a large problem. Of the respondents, 68 percent reported that their students weren't offered accessible text or technology supports for reading.

Assistive technology can help those with dyslexia save considerable time and overcome challenges. People with dyslexia who opt to use assistive technology may find that



People with dyslexia who opt to use assistive technology may find that they are able to showcase their intelligence and potential more fully.

they are able to showcase their intelligence and potential more fully. The following are some tools that can be assets.

- Speech recognition software: Users can dictate to a device and have their voices converted into text. Those with spelling or handwriting may find this helps dramatically with

written communication.

- Text-to-speech software: This is essentially the reverse of speech recognition software. Text is turned into an audible voice that reads the words to the end user. This can help individuals understand written material and check over their work.

- Spellcheckers: Some spell-check programs are designed specifically for dyslexics and look for common errors and automatically replace them.

- Computer-based learning programs: These platforms are designed and written for dyslexics. They can help to improve skills in reading, writing, numeracy,

and touch-typing, offers the Dyslexia Association.

- Smartpen: The Livescribe smartpen takes a picture of notes as they are written on special paper. It also has a built-in microphone that enables the user to record what is being said in a classroom or meeting setting.

- Digital/audio books: Various providers offer online libraries of digital or audio books that can help with reading or print disabilities.

- Special fonts: There is some evidence that using specific fonts may make it easier for people with dyslexia to decipher words and letters. Helpful fonts include Dyslexie, OpenDyslexic and Comic Sans, according to Dyslexic Advantage.

Helping those with dyslexia may involve utilizing the various assistive technologies now available.



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