

■ TOP STORY

We've got a plan



A sign of the times: A woman wearing a mask under virus mitigation protocols carries a "Defend Black Lives" sign in a demonstration last June at Four Corners in Delmar. After similar protests across the New York State, Gov. Andrew Cuomo mandated communities draft plans for police reform. Bethlehem is expected to adopt its plan in a town board meeting tonight.

Michael Hallisey / Spotlight News

Bethlehem Town Board prepared to adopt Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative Plan

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

DELMAR — Bethlehem Police Chief Gina Cocchiara states she welcomes body cameras, open doors and implicit bias training in the town's now complete Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative Plan.

In her chapter of the town's historic police reform document, Bethlehem Police Chief Gina Cocchiara stated her department is "very different" from the one she joined in 1998, but acknowledges more changes can be made.

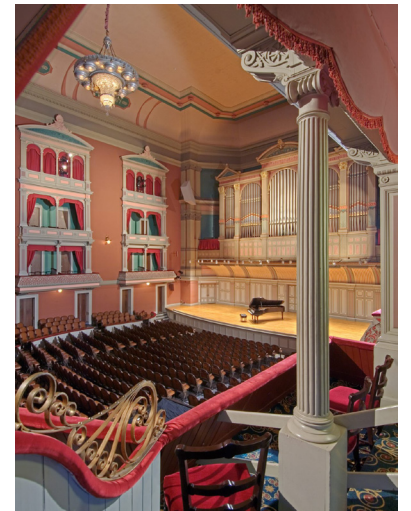
The Bethlehem Town Board is expected to adopt its Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative Plan tonight, Wednesday, March 24, at 7 p.m.

"While the following pages are intended to meet the April 1, 2021 deadline established by Governor Cuomo, they are by no means the completion of the effort to address the challenges identified within them," stated Town Supervisor David VanLuven.

Within the 109-page document is an executive summary, preceding the words of both the town's supervisor and police chief, suggesting various improvements.

Continues on page 4

■ ENTERTAINMENT



Listen for your cue

Capital District venues positioning for possible summer season.

Story on Page B1

■ SPORTS



Soccer is back

Bethlehem Central comes up big in games from both varsity squads.

Story on Page 9



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SPOTLIGHT ON FINANCE

House hunting during the pandemic

By HARJIT EARNEST
KeyBank Capital Region Home
Lending Leader – NMLS #480702

Thinking about buying a home?

You're not alone. Almost everywhere you look, home sales are up—and prices are too.

With more of us spending time at home on account of the pandemic, and thanks to low interest rates, there's strong demand for more spacious dwellings, leaving fewer homes for sale and considerable competition among buyers.

Here's a guide to homebuying during the pandemic—from determining your deal breakers to closing the deal.

Buying in a Seller's Market

- From the jump, recognizing the realities of the current housing market will help you reduce surprises and negotiate your search.
- Up, up, up. Since the end of summer, total existing home sales are more than 20% higher than during the same span last year, according to the National Association of Realtors (NAR).
- Prices on the rise. Entering the fall, the median home price was \$313,000 – more than 15% higher compared to 2019.
- Low supply. With fewer than 1.5 million homes for sale, housing inventory is at a record low at the current pace of sales and down nearly 20% from a year ago.

• Going fast. Homes are staying on the market an average of just 21 days. Around 72% of homes are selling in less than a month, NAR stats show.

Homework

Now it's time to think through why you want to buy a home. Start by defining your dwelling to help you recognize your next home when you see it. Ask yourself about must-have (and nice-to-have) amenities, which may be shifting in this time of COVID-19. Considerations include:

- Office space. Many work-from-home arrangements are likely to continue in some shape, even after the pandemic.
- Staying active. Working out under your own roof? Having dedicated spaces for keeping active helps you stay healthy at home.
- More nights in. Keep in mind essentials for helping you unwind.
- Pets. More furry friends have joined our families during the pandemic – they need their space too.
- Delivery. With everything from groceries and takeout coming directly to our doors, consider the offerings you need to be available in your new neighborhood.

Also be sure to take a long view. Most homeowners stay an average of 13 years before selling a place, according to the NAR. With any home you may purchase soon, ask yourself: Is this the right home for after the pandemic too?

Weigh the benefits of remaining in your current home—or waiting until the market becomes more buyer-friendly.

Obey Your Budget

With historically low interest rates, borrowing money hasn't been this cheap in generations. Still, given mixed economic news, knowing how lenders are tightening requirements can help keep your bottom line balanced.

- Credit score. The best terms tend to be available with higher FICO scores.
- Prequalification. A mortgage loan officer will help you narrow your search into a set price range before you begin house hunting. Especially in a competitive buying market, this step can strengthen your position as a buyer when you make an offer on a house.
- Solicit multiple mortgage quotes; even small differences can add up over the life of your loan.
- Turn to resources like mortgage loan officers and online mortgage tools to help smooth the process.
- Cost ceiling. With bidding driving up prices, keep in mind this rule of thumb: Strive for your house payments to be lower than 30% of your gross income.
- Don't forget homeowners insurance, property taxes and maintenance fees in your calculations.
- Down payment. Know that 20% down isn't a requirement. Several down payment options are as low as 3% – and sometimes as little as 0%.

Find Your "No Place Like"

Reducing your delays and buying demands can be key in

navigating the listings landscape – and snagging a home also eyed by other buyers.

- Set your expectations. Get a sense of price-per-square-foot of homes in the areas you're looking. This measure can help you compare dissimilar dwellings and their value.
- Real estate agent at-the-ready. Ask around for recommendations, especially regarding agent responsiveness.
- Lean on your agent to negotiate in a bidding war and know when walking away is in your best interest.
- Expect limited open houses and individual tours, especially in homes still occupied by sellers.
- Pictures, video walk-throughs and 3D tours available on real estate sites can help you

spot potential issues.

- Low inventory means your real estate agent could suggest seeing fewer homes before starting to submit offers.
- Sweeten the deal. Multiple buyers interested in the same home means you will be required to submit your absolute best bid.
- Know your upper price limit ahead of time.
- Stay positive. Winning-by-bid may take a few tries. That's OK – it's part of your journey to the right place.

Close Strong

Once your offer's been accepted, congratulations are almost in order. Nail these final steps:

- Loosen the logjam. Given the plethora of property purchases,

prepare for delays, but cause none of your own.

- Be flexible, but firm. Push to stay on-schedule as your closing date nears, especially if you have a deadline to vacate your current living space. Build in cushion time, if doable.

Smart homebuying requires preparation, patience and perseverance, even in normal circumstances – and especially in today's market. Stay informed and safe. Happy hunting.

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How Much You Should Have in Savings?

Everyone has different needs, wants and goals. That said, the amount you should have in savings might look a little different from your friend or your neighbor. But in general, you can get started by using a few rules of thumb.

Save for Emergencies: Everyone should have cash set aside to cover emergencies or unexpected expenses that don't fit into your normal budget. What would you do if you lost your job or landed in the hospital? An emergency fund can help keep your finances in order while you get back on your feet. At a bare minimum, aim to keep \$1,000 in a savings account you can use for emergencies. Then, work on building that up to approximately six months of your take-home pay.

Build a Cash Buffer: In addition to keeping money in a savings account, you probably want to keep a little extra cash in your checking account. The point of this money is to make sure there's a little more than what you know you'll spend each month so that you can avoid an accidental overdraft to your account.

Set Aside 10 Percent of Your Income: When it comes to growing your savings, most experts suggest saving at least 10 percent of your income, and earmarking that money for your future. If you can save more, that's even better; more savings equates to more financial security.

Set up Automatic Savings: Look into savings tools like KeyBank's EasyUp®, which transfers \$1 to your savings every time you use your KeyBank debit card. Those small amounts can make a big impact over time.

■ POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY CALLS



A firefighter holds down a water hose as the garage smolders in the background.

Thomas Marra / Special to Spotlight News

All hands on deck

Fast-acting crews contain Elsmere fire

By THOMAS MARRA
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ELSMERE — Police say the Thursday fire that partially destroyed a Brookview Avenue home Thursday afternoon appears to be accidental and started in the garage.

Elsmere and Delmar fire departments were initially called to 20 Brookview Ave. at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, March

18, after the property owner returned home, opened the garage door and reportedly observed fire in the garage.

Parked inside the garage was another car and flammable liquids.

“Anytime you’re working around a car, whether it’s a fire or an accident, there’s many hazards,” said Elsmere Fire Assistant Chief Frank Wickham. “In this particular case you’ve got a car on fire inside a structure, so that adds to the dynamics.”

Selkirk and Slingerlands fire departments

“It really impressed me today. We had a lot of firefighters here today really, really quickly.”

— Frank Wickham,
Elsmere Fire
Assistant Chief

immediately followed, and North Bethlehem Fire responded to the scene to provide rehab for firefighters fighting the fire and Selkirk Fire brought their air truck to replenish the supply of air bottles used by firefighters on the scene.

“The other thing of concern with any kind of car fire is the bumpers,” Wickham said. “They’re usually under the possibility of actually causing an explosion with the sensors and the gas-filled pistons within the bumpers.”

Wickham said the main body of fire was in the garage and there was a slight extension into the house. As crews were checking for extension they noticed heavy fire in the basement, but crews were able to quickly knock the fire down.

Wickham said there was also a point during the call where fuel was running down the driveway from the garage and towards the firefighters, but that situation was quickly handled.

No injuries were reported, though Delmar-Bethlehem EMS responded with two ambulances to standby at the scene with Albany County Paramedics.

“It really impressed me today,” said Wickham. “We had a lot of firefighters here today really, really quickly.”

Left hanging

By THOMAS MARRA
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GLENMONT — A vehicle was run off the road in Glenmont Sunday evening, March 14, leaving its occupants leaning off the side of the roadway.

The Bethlehem Police Department received a call around 5:50 p.m., for a vehicle off the road on Glenmont Road, near the River Road intersection. Due to the unstable vehicle with the occupants still inside, the Selkirk Fire Department was dispatched at 6:15 p.m. to assist in removing the occupants from the vehicle.

Firefighters stabilized the vehicle from the passenger side to prevent it from rolling down the hill.

Chains were then attached to the driver side of the vehicle and connected to a rescue vehicle to further prevent the vehicle from moving.

“It was just precautionary,” said Selkirk Fire Assistant Chief Phil Peters. “If we tried to take the occupants out, the vehicle could have slid or actually overturned.”

According to a Bethlehem police statement, officers said they found a 2019 Kia Sorrento leaning off the roadway.

“Through investigation it was discovered that an unknown make/model vehicle was heading east on Glenmont Road and did cross the double-yellow line into the westbound lane that the Kia was travelling in,” stated the police report.

Police said the Kia then made an evasive maneuver to avoid a collision, causing it to leave the roadway and come to a rest leaning on the side of the road.

Firefighters assisted in helping the two occupants out of the vehicle once it was stable for the occupants to exit.

The vehicle was brought back up to the road by Roberts Towing.

Glenmont Road was closed during the incident.

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From page 1... Police reform

The document, posted online last Friday, is the culmination of a comprehensive law enforcement effort directed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo. The governor's office mandated the communities structure such a plan in last June's executive order, following the controversial death of George Floyd under the hands of police in Minneapolis.

Similar to neighboring communities, Bethlehem formed an advisory committee comprised of community leaders selected for respective fields of expertise. Members of the committee were selected last September.

The document comes before the board less than two weeks before the governor's imposed April 1 deadline.

Cocchiara first made a promise towards police reform once she was first hired to the chief position last August. More than once, she has claimed to be a target of discrimination within the town's law agency since joining the force in 1989. She has made it a particular point to continue changing the "warrior" culture from within.

"We want guardians, not warriors," she stated.

Last September,

VanLuven presented figures suggesting a disparity between the number of traffic tickets issued to people of color versus the town's demographics. He shared how nearly 40 percent of all tickets issued by Bethlehem Police Department in 2019 were to people of color, contrasting against the nearly 95 percent are whites who live in town, according to the 2010 census.

The police department later balked at suggesting people of color were targeted. The department was in the midst of transitioning to a new ticketing system, from hand-written to electronic. The department said, the town supervisor did not have a complete record.

Cocchiara, however, did say that under previous leadership the police department used "misguided methods" that "negatively impacted" residents, people of color, and visitors from "less affluent circumstances."

"Our Police Department now realizes that this enforcement may have negatively affected people from less affluent circumstances, some of whom were people of color," she stated. "In acknowledging this outcome, we will ... do a better job of balancing the

needs of public safety..."

Within the committee's executive summary, nine opportunities for reform and reinvention are identified, the first of which is the creation of a community board to ensure transparency and accountability of the Bethlehem Police Department.

Many of the bullet points touch upon concerns shared across the nation regarding use of force and best to utilize social workers and specialists instead of armed police officers with answering mental health calls.

In one of the committee's ten meetings, social workers were also discussed as a possible replacement for on-campus School Resource Officers at local high schools. The practice of having on-duty police officers at local schools dates back to at least the early 1980s with the implementation of the DARE program. Though SRO's are specialized officers who often serve as social workers, community leaders were more concerned with them wearing firearms. By law, on-duty officers are required to be armed.

The choice to have SROs on campus is made by each respective school district. The committee suggests school districts to reimagine contemporary programs involving SROs on campus.

In direct response to the George Floyd case, and numerous others, the committee suggests mandatory use of officer-worn body cameras and additional training focused on de-escalation, defensive tactics and implicit bias.

From 2015 to 2019, the Town of Bethlehem reports only 16 cases of Use of Force in approximately 16,000 reported calls. Nonetheless, Cocchiara said she would welcome body cameras.

"Black lives matter in Bethlehem – in our government, our schools, and our community – and we are committed to achieving greater justice, equity, and fairness in Bethlehem, not just in words, but in actions," VanLuven stated.

Threatening St. Thomas caller under supervision

DELMAR — The Albany man arrested for a phoned threat to St. Thomas the Apostle School in February, was released under the supervision of the Albany County Probation Department by the Bethlehem Town Court.

Michael A. Litz, 35, is two felony charges of making a terroristic threat and aggravated harassment as a hate crime, after an alleged phone call to the Delmar private school.

Litz also faces separate charges for a potential violation of his probation after a misdemeanor harassment conviction in Albany last September. According to the Albany County District Attorney's office, he was sentenced to probation in that case with mental health conditions.

The violation of that case also remains open and pending.

Court did not set bail in response to the terroristic threat case, said the DA's office. He was released under the supervision of the Albany County Probation Department by the Bethlehem Town Court after arraignment on Feb. 22.

— Michael Hallisey

BUSINESS

Don't say goodbye

Stewart's working to help preserve old Miss Glenmont Diner

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

GLENMONT — Stewart's Shops is proposing yet another expansion project in Bethlehem, the latest of which impacts the old Miss Glenmont Diner on Frontage Road.

"Stewart's is working with the current owner to preserve the pre-fabricated Art Deco portion of Johnny B's Diner and has no intentions of demolishing this community treasure," Stewart's Shops stated in a release to Spotlight News after details of the chain's expansion suggested the diner would be demolished.

The proposal includes the merging of two neighboring parcels, the

existing Stewart's Shop on 33 Frontage Road, and Johnny B's Glenmont Diner. The diner, which closed last June, was formally known as Miss Glenmont Diner.

At least one of the two buildings is to be razed to make room for a new, 3,975-square-foot convenience store, a 2,000-square-foot fuel island with four pumps, and another 840-square-foot diesel canopy with two fuel islands. The chain will add an additional 6,000-gallon diesel tank to the fuel storage tanks already in place.

"Stewart's is very excited for this opportunity to reinvest and revitalize this existing site," stated James Gillespie, of Stewart's Shops, within the application submitted in February. "The consolidation of the two parcels will allow us to begin the essential changes

"Stewart's is working with the current owner to preserve the pre-fabricated Art Deco portion of Johnny B's Diner and has no intentions of demolishing this community treasure."

— Stewart's Shops

needed to ensure continued success at the location ... with additional greenspace and landscaping throughout the site..."

Stewart's Shops has had a storefront at the location since at least 1982, that's when the deed to the nearly half-acre lot was sold to Dake Brothers, Inc.

The initial proposal, submitted to the town in February, suggested the diner was subject



The present-day Johnny B's Glenmont Diner has stood off Frontage Road since 1962.

Johnny B's Glenmont Diner

to demolition. News of the plan was met by public outcry over social media. Stewart's Shops' latest statement reveals a common interest in preserving the eatery's history.

The Silk City Diner model that sits on 21 Frontage Road has been there since 1962. It's

the second of two that have been there. The first succumbed to fire only a year after it opened.

For generations, the restaurant had fed residents and local businesses under the Miss Glenmont sign — one of a few similarities it shared with Miss Albany Diner in the Capital City's Warehouse District.

Miss Albany Diner is an older cousin of the one in Glenmont. It was built before World War II in 1941. Through the years, it had retained many of the characteristics that distinguish Silk City Diners from others.

The Art Deco style buildings, with cherry wood

Continues on 13

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■ EDUCATION

BCSD wants bus fleet to go electric



to move toward an electric bus fleet. One downstate district — White Plains Public Schools — has used five electric buses since 2018 as part of a pilot project run by a privately-owned firm.

Bethlehem could be one of the first K-12 school districts in New York to ask its residents to decide on such a commitment to electric vehicles.

At its March 17 meeting, the school board approved the bus plan, putting the proposal before a vote of district residents in May. The board is still working on budget development, with a proposed budget for 2021-22 expected to be finalized on or around April 14.

“We have determined the time is right to seek approval to begin making this change to our fleet of vehicles,” said Holly Dellenbaugh, school board president. “District administrators are working

hard to leverage all available incentives to allow the district to evolve its fleet in a cost-neutral way and now voters will have the opportunity to weigh in.”

Chief Business and Financial Officer Judith Kehoe said the bus plan for 2021-22 would allocate \$1,675,000 for the purchase of up to nine large school buses and charging stations to accommodate the electric buses.

The purchase would need to be approved by voters as part of the annual bus proposition, as is required for all capital acquisitions. The district receives a return of state aid of approximately 64.8 percent on transportation costs. The state aid on the purchase of the buses and charging stations would be approximately \$1 million.

Kehoe said the school district uses an annual bus replacement plan to determine when older

Voters could choose yes-or-no to \$1.9M proposal for nine electric buses, charging stations

By **MICHAEL HALLISEY**
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DELMAR — Bethlehem Central’s school board agreed “the time is right” to go green.

A \$1.9 million proposition was presented before Bethlehem Central’s school board on Wednesday, March 17. The plan includes up to nine, large buses at a cost

of \$1.475 million, electric stations at \$200,000 and \$210,000 worth of new GPS and telematic equipment for the entire bus fleet.

The proposition will go

before district residents when they vote on next year’s school budget on Tuesday, May 18.

If approved, Bethlehem Central would be one of the first districts in the state

Continues on 13

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■ COMMUNITY

Thanks for the tip

Two Buttons Deep drops \$1,600 tip on Jim's Tastee Freez

ELSMERE — Two Buttons Deep, the news and entertainment website, dropped a hefty-sized tip on Jim's Tastee Freez, their largest since launching its "Big Top Energy" campaign earlier this month.

The tip, more than \$1,600, was delivered by Two Buttons Deep cofounder and personality Jack Carpenter on Monday, March 15.

"This is what the #BigTipEnergy project is all about," he said.

The proprietors of Jim's Tastee Freez turned the tables by promising to match the tip and donate the sum to the Pandemic Produce Pick-up in Albany.

"We have been lucky enough to serve such a wonderful community for



Cold cash in hand on a donation later paid forward.

over 50 years," shop owners shared through an online statement, "so it is with such a full heart that we wish to give back."

The owner of the popular ice cream stand,

James Sheldon, died in January. Carpenter had said the news of Sheldon's passing inspired him to gift a donation towards the Elsmere storefront.

— Michael Hallisey

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Our teachers deserve to get bear hugs

DELMAR — Saturday, March 13 marked the anniversary of a full year of pandemic education and the challenges that have been created for school districts, families and students.

On behalf of the community of Bethlehem, The Delmar Progress Club wanted to recognize the heroes who are the frontline classroom/specials teachers and aides who have been thrust into roles, situations and environments they never could have imagined.

With a generous donation by the Glenmont Walmart, over 600 washcloth teddy bears were created by volunteers in this organization, many of whom are retired teachers themselves. On Friday, March 12, every educator in the district received a bear with a simple but heartfelt message "Thanks for making school BEARABLE during the pandemic!"

— Kathy Raffé

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Attend this workshop to:

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- receive referrals to an attorney or housing advisor for next steps.

The nonprofit **HomeSave Coalition** is made up of housing and legal services agencies - Affordable Housing Partnership, Albany County Rural Housing Alliance, Better Community Neighborhoods, TRIP HomeOwnership Center, United Tenants, Empire Justice Center, Legal Aid Society and The Legal Project.

This Foreclosure Prevention Program is funded through the New York State Attorney General Home Owner Protection Program (HOPP) and is endorsed by The City of Albany, Assemblymembers John T. McDonald III and Pat Fahy and Senator Neil Breslin. These participating HUD-approved nonprofit HOPP agencies do not charge fees.

Walter W. "Bill" Eck, Jr.

SLINGERLANDS — Walter W. "Bill" Eck, Jr. passed away on Friday, March 19, 2021.

The former Slingerlands Fire Department Fire Chief was remembered by his crew shortly after the news of his passing circulated around town. In a statement shared online, the fire department said, "our hearts are broken."

"Our world has been turned upside down," the Slingerlands Fire Department shared in a statement posted that evening. "He was one of the strongest, most caring, big-hearted persons you could know."

Elsmere Fire Department Chief Marc Futia called Eck a close friend of his crew.

"He has been there for us in good and bad times," said Futia. "Please keep Billy's family in your prayers."

His crew in Slingerlands further described him as a mentor with a remarkable sense of knowledge and love for fire service.

"Billy cared immensely for all his firehouse 'brothers and sisters.' And, of course, he was a devoted father and "Poppy" and was so very proud of all of his children.

"We will miss you Chief, we'll take it from here. RIP."

Relatives and friends are invited to call on Wednesday, March 24, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 35 Adams Pl., Delmar. A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, March 25, at the church.

Face coverings will be required and social distancing and occupancy limits will be observed. Burial will be in Calvary Cemetery, Glenmont. The family requests that flowers not be sent. Instead, those who wish may send a remembrance in his name to the Slingerlands Fire Dept. Benevolent Fund.

— Michael Hallisey

OBITUARIES

Stephen L. Babcock

SLINGERLANDS — Stephen Louis Babcock, age 78 of Hornell, N.Y., departed this life peacefully on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. He was surrounded by his family and in the loving arms of his wife of fifty-seven years, Marie, when the Lord came to take his hand.

Steve was born on June 25, 1942, in Hornell to Louis and Helen (Dexter) Babcock. He was the eldest of three brothers and graduated from Hornell High School in 1960 where he was a standout athlete in football, basketball and baseball. Steve continued his athletic career at SUNY Brockport where he was quarterback of the football team beginning his freshman year and pursued his love of coaching and athletics. It is there that he met the love of his life and later returned to the Hornell area to raise his family.

Steve began his coaching career in 1967 at Hudson Valley

Community College and joined the faculty of Alfred State College as an instructor in health and physical education. He also served as head wrestling coach and coached cross country and tennis. During his 29 years at Alfred he founded the modern-day Alfred Intramural Program with the "President's Trophy," developed and implemented the first health and physical education majors transfer program, and founded the Alfred Summer Sports Festival Program. He was chair of various Region III sports committees and served as president of the Penn-York Conference. Steve served as director of athletics from 1987 to 1995.

In 1994 Steve fulfilled a professional dream of bringing football to Alfred State and successfully recruited legendary coach Lou Saban to serve as the program's inaugural coach. Steve was named the 1980 Region III Wrestling Coach of the Decade and was a member of two coaching Halls of Fames: The National

Junior College Athletic Association Wrestling Hall of Fame, into which he was inducted in 1985, and the Region III Wrestling Hall of Fame, which he entered in 1991. He was a five-time Region III Coach of the Year, and his career record of 217 victories, 52 defeats and eight ties ranks him as one of the most winning wrestling coaches in the NJCAA. All of these accomplishments came from a man who never wrestled a day in his life. In 1997 Steve was inducted into the Alfred State Pioneers Hall of Fame.

An extraordinary coach and mentor, Steve touched the lives of hundreds of athletes over the years, including 27 All-Americans, and his leadership inspired the careers of many future coaches and athletic directors. Steve believed that success, in every aspect of life, was less about your natural abilities and more about what you believed was possible. He was a gentle, kind, and loving man who always had an ear to listen and "special" advice to give.

Steve's passion for life will carry on in the lives of his eight grandsons, all of whom he was blessed to share his legacy. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and friend, and we will all miss his beautiful smile. Steve is survived by his wife and soulmate of 57 years, Marie Elizabeth, and their three children, Kristine (Drew) Wolfe of Denver, Colo., Jeffrey (Liz) Babcock of Pittsburgh, and Kimberly (Mark) Verstandig of Albany. He is also survived by his eight grandsons, Austin Wolfe, Grayden Wolfe, Bowen Wolfe, Steven Verstandig, Kyle Verstandig, Christopher Verstandig, Jonathan Babcock and Jameson Babcock. A celebration of Steve's life will be held on June 5, in Saratoga Springs. Expressions of sympathy and love may be shared with the family at P.O. Box 645, Hornell, NY, 14843. applebeefuneralhome.com.

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■ SCHOLASTIC SPORTS

Soccer is back in Bethlehem

Boys win 3-0

COLONIE — The Fall 2 season is kicking off this week and the Bethlehem boys soccer team jumped out to a 1-0 record by beating South Glens Falls 3-0 on Tuesday, March 16, at Afrim's Sports Park.

Three different Eagles scored, Ryan Browne, Mike Maloney and Kiran Sood, in the non-conference game.

Bethlehem was one of two Suburban Council schools, along with Ballston Spa, that opted to not play soccer last fall. There are also other conferences, like the Foothills and the Colonial, that are playing soccer this fall.

The Fall 2 season, which in addition to soccer for a few schools includes football and volleyball, will last about six weeks and then the spring season will begin and which includes track, baseball, softball and lacrosse.

The Bethlehem boys are slated to play a 14-game schedule game with the next a home game scheduled for Saturday, March 27 against Ballston Spa.

Check out our website for more photos of the game.

— Jim Franco



Girls win 7-0

COLONIE — Six different Eagles scored during the girls soccer Fall Season 2 opener 7-0 win over South Glens Falls on Wednesday, March 17.

Casey Holstein had two goals while Jo Van Royen, Liz Ramsey, Katie Sellers, Phoebe Hosford and Katie Hotaling all had a goal on the turf field at Afrim's Sport Complex in Colonie.

Bethlehem was one of two Suburban Council teams, along with Ballston Spa, to forgo soccer last fall and opt to play during what is dubbed the Fall 2 season. The entire Foothills Council, which includes South Glens Falls, is playing in Fall 2.

Bethlehem will host Gloversville of the Foothills Council today and host Ballston Spa on Saturday, March 27,

Check out our website for more photos of the game.

— Jim Franco



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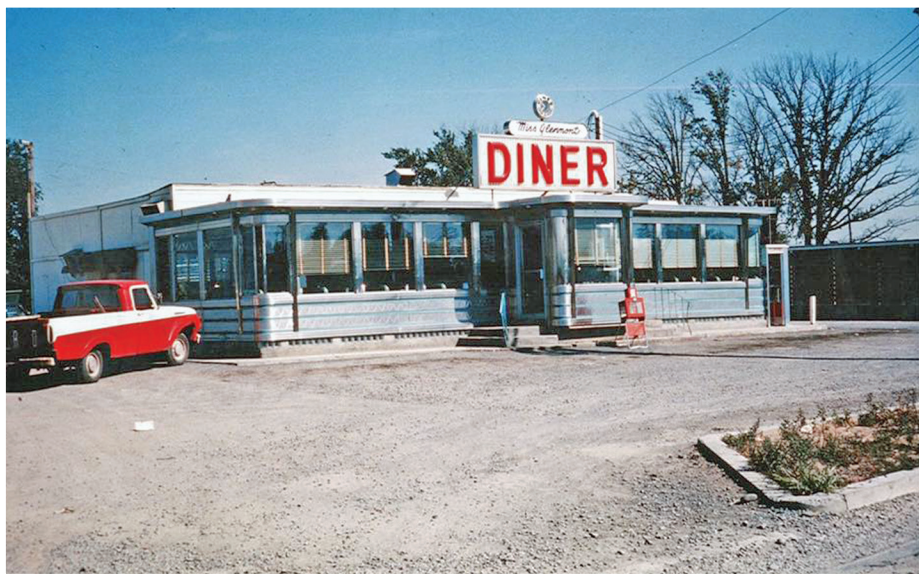
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Aside from the Miss Glenmont that once stood across the street, the original Silk City Diner model was in place for about a year before it was destroyed by fire in 1961. The structure standing on Frontage Road today still dates back to 1962.

Johnny B's Glenmont Diner

From page 5 ... Don't say good bye

and porcelain-enameled steel, and geometrically tiled floors, were built to resemble train cars. Only 1,500 of the Silk City Diner model was made by the Paterson Vehicle Company from 1926 to 1966.

The Broadway eatery preserved the look so well, it was used to shoot a scene in the 1986 film "Ironweed," starring

Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep. In 2000, it was listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

The Glenmont restaurant has been known by a few different names over the years, the last 15 of which it's been called Johnny B's Glenmont Diner. It was the last place to stop and eat before Routes 9 and 32 split away from one another as

motorists drove further into town from Albany. It's also one of the few places for employees of YRC Freight, Geist Brothers, and visitors of Quality Inn and Suites to walk over and grab a bite.

John Behiri, the eponymous "Johnny B," had embraced the power of social media. Each day he'd post his daily specials on Facebook. Homemade chili was always on the menu. The pandemic closed its doors last March. By the following June, Behiri shared the message "with a very heavy heart" that

they'd remain closed for good.

"I'd like to say that it was a great honor and pleasure being part of the business landscape in such a wonderful community," he wrote. "And whether you only came in once or were a regular, we thank you and greatly appreciate that you chose Johnny B's."

The application was presented before the Bethlehem Economic Development and Planning Committee on Thursday, March 18.

From page 6 ... Electric fleet

buses have reached the end of their useful lives and will become more expensive to maintain than to replace. This year's plan would remove nine large 2009 diesel buses. Doing so allows the district to qualify for approximately \$1 million in grants from the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority to purchase up to five electric buses.

Leveraging the NYSERDA funding is key to the purchase of electric buses, Kehoe said.

"The amount that we would receive from NYSERDA would bring the cost of a new electric bus within \$40,000 of the cost of a new diesel bus," said Kehoe. "If you factor in all costs over the life of both types of buses, now you have two vehicles that essentially cost the same, but with the added benefit of one being environmentally-friendly."

Kehoe said plans for the district's first electric buses have not been finalized. She said the final plan could include nine electric buses

or a combination of some electric and some diesel buses depending on both available incentives and the available supply of the electric vehicles for the next school year.

Superintendent Jody Monroe said the district thought about starting with one or two buses, "But we are not dipping our toe in the water with our plans to go electric."

"One of the many things COVID has taught us is not to be timid," said Monroe. "Five buses or more would give us a much better idea of the long-term feasibility of an electric bus fleet. We expect incentives to become more plentiful and the technology to improve even further. This plan has us jumping in with both feet but first, we would need the support of the community."

"This plan, at its core, is to move at a pace that will allow us to maintain a bus replacement schedule that provides the safest, most reliable transportation for our students," Monroe said.

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ignated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 68-09 Beach Channel Drive, Arverne, NY 11692. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-264089

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

SOUTHOLD SUNDRY LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/19/21. 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, 50 Lighthouse Road, Southold, NY 11971. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-263047

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

STUDEO PREP LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/11/21. 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 Jody Vorchheimer, Esq., 3333 Henry Hudson Parkway, 3N, Bronx, NY 10463. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-262530

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

STUDIO 3D LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 11/04/20. Office: Al-

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bany 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, 543 Union Street, Unit 3D, Brooklyn, NY 11231. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-264306

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

STYLES BY SELA, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/22/21. 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 Blerona Sela, 41 Alberta Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10314. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-263000

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

SURF AVENUE GARAGE LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/22/21. 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, 10 E. 33rd Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10016. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-263001

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

TAGAS RESTAURANT HOLDINGS, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY

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on 02/16/21. 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, 511 East 80th Street, Apartment 9-J, New York, NY 10075. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-263365

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

TEACHING ASSOCIATE PROGRAM LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 03/10/21. 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, 88-34 Aubrey Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-264092

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

TEAM HOGAN CONSULTING LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/16/21. 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, 5 Palisades Drive, Suite 315, Albany, NY 12205. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-262624

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NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

TELL ME CHARLENE LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 03/12/21. 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, 10 West 65th Street, No. 3-G, New York, NY 10023. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-264196

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

THE BAY CLUB PHF, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/22/21. 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, 430 Dehnhoff Walk, Ocean Beach, NY 11770. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-263002

Notice of Formation

of The BlaQue Resource Network, LLC, a Domestic Limited Liability Company (LLC). Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 03/18/2021. Office location: County of Albany. SSNY is designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to: 350 North-

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ern Blvd, Ste 324-1226, Albany, NY 12204. Purpose: any lawful purpose. D-264547

NOTICE OF PLLC FORMATION

THE LAW OFFICE OF CLARA FELDMAN PLLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/01/21. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the PLLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the PLLC, 301 Mayfair Drive N, Brooklyn, NY 11234. For the practice of the profession of Law. D-263091

NOTICE OF PLLC FORMATION

THE LAW OFFICE OF NICHOLAS BENEDETTO PLLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 01/21/21. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the PLLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the PLLC, 352 Seventh Avenue, Suite 907, New York, NY 10001. Purpose: For the practice of the profession of Law. D-262701

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

THUNDER ROAD VENTURES LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/19/21. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the

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LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 303 E. 83rd Street, Apartment 19G, New York, NY 10028. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-262991

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

TORO ENTERPRISES LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 03/17/20. 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, 39-16 104th Street, Corona, NY 11368. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-264540

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

TWO U SQUARE, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/26/21. 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, 1991 Broadway, #26/27C, New York, NY 10023. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-263391

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

UNIVERSAL DREAMS LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/17/21. Office: Albany County. SSNY designat-

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ed as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 1670 Nelson Avenue, 1st Floor, Bronx, NY 10453. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-262737

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Formation of UPSTATE CONCRETE & CONSTRUCTION, LLC. Art. Of Org. filed with the Sec'y of State of NY (SSNY) on 02.22.2021. Office location, County of Albany. SSNY has been designated as agent for service of process. SSNY shall mail a copy to: Upstate Concrete & Construction, LLC, c/o Couch White, LLP, 540 Broadway, Albany, NY 12207. Purpose: any lawful act. D-262946

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

VELLIOS REALTY, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 01/27/21. 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 Peter Vellios, 81 Ardmore Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10314. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-263556

To place your Legal Notice: Call 439-4949

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NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

VIANGE ENTERPRISES LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 01/08/21. 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, 6310 Dieterle Crescent, #2, Rego Park, NY 11374. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-262352

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

Y & H 2000 COLLINS LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 03/12/21. 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, 2225 East 5th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11223. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-264201

NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION

ZLURCH, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/16/21. 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, 5 Newbury Place, Huntington, NY 11743. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-262635



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Spotlight on Opinion

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That's a hit below the belt, sir

Bethlehem's pending adoption of its Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative plan will soon be touted as an historic achievement, forcing a Police Department to admit past transgressions and community leaders to publicly commit to do better. Indeed, the 109-page document serves its people in doing both. There is honesty, and we dare say sincerity, captured within this well-packaged, colorful and polished piece of work. We are, however, concerned that there are some undertones, statements and accusations included just beyond the executive summary that diminish the effectiveness of the report.

Compliments should first be shared to those of the community who volunteered their time to ask the tough questions, and often stood firm against defended practices excusing archaic behaviors that were devoid of understanding the detrimental consequences of them. The initial intimidation of facing such a discourse was just the first of many obstacles, these face-to-face conversations between everyday citizens and those who shape civil policy, but had to have been the largest.

Read the words of Bethlehem Police Chief Gina Cocchiara and you will find a welcoming blend of thoughts that offer apologies for the past, and

a willingness to change for the future. She recognizes the "warrior mentality" that once defined its culture. She acknowledges the "enthusiastic approach" to public safety that was as "effective" as it was "aggressive," and that it "may have negatively affected [less affluent] people." Specifically, accepting calls from residents simply identifying a person of color walking through the neighborhood, instead of properly vetting the request with more information.

Cocchiara also confidently stands by her staff when welcoming the opportunity for such safety precautions as wearing body cameras. These tools have proven to be effective at times in capturing behaviors rooted in implicit bias. But, she also proudly shares the department's record for extremely low use of force rates, and complaints. Indeed, the true light of the police department we have come to understand in recent years is revealed in this report, and strongly contrasts against the venomous words we heard in recent protests. Those angry words could be used to describe other police departments, but not ours. The chief's willingness to change, and open her doors to the community, is worth commending.

In the months since our town was tasked with the responsibility of

drafting this plan by Gov. Andrew Cuomo last June, this predominantly white community has learned to question the status quo and appreciate the hidden context before us.

Town Supervisor David VanLuven often refers to Cocchiara's appointment as the town's first step towards reform. He did it last summer. He documented again within the town's Black Lives resolution last September. And, he does so here in his introduction to this plan, pages certain to be referenced for years to come.

"In Bethlehem, the process for creating this plan has been rigorous," he states. "It began with the promotion of Gina Cocchiara to replace the previous police chief who in 2009 was disciplined for using a racial slur."

This would be worth sharing if Cocchiara's appointment also took place in 2009, and not 11 years later.

Let's keep in mind, this paper took Town Hall to task that year when then-Bethlehem Police Chief Lou Corsi received just a slap on the wrist. The Democrat-led board at the time went further by stating they did not see their police chief as a racist. Now, 11 years and four supervisors later, this administration is willing to call him as such? Unless VanLuven is stating he took an active role in seeing Corsi out the door,

this is not an achievement upon which one hangs his hat.

Corsi retired — a decade, plus one year, later — with all the honors afforded an officer in good standing, including a parting gift hand-delivered by VanLuven.

Where the town's police chief has shown humility and strength by apologizing for past mistakes, you see spin doctoring here from our town's supervisor. Chief Cocchiara has earned our respect. The process by which she was selected, however, falls upon the town board.

"The process for hiring Chief Cocchiara was intensive and thorough, spanning several months and involving extensive input from many residents at demonstrations, on social media, and in conversations by email, phone, and in person."

By thorough, do you also attribute violating open meeting law, neglecting to call up and review the personnel files of each candidate, and overlooking public perception of appointing the only candidate who sat on your party's committee? We don't expect you to share as much, but what's not spoken speaks louder than what you do share.

"In September 2020, the town supervisor and Town Board passed a strong resolution supporting Black lives with all but one Town

Board Member voting in favor of it..."

What is this? This is not a mea culpa. We know that 2021 is an election year for both VanLuven and Republican Town Board member Jim Foster, but we did not expect to see such pettiness. Not after Foster has twice explained that his no-vote had nothing to do with the principles stated within the resolution.

Foster's argument was that a revised resolution was posted online only hours before "all but one" town board member pushed to pass it without providing ample time for residents to review it. The simple mention of the event without context is misrepresenting the facts. Worse, the casual placement of these few words in the police review document, which will be billed as an historic undertaking by the present administration, is nothing short character assassination. Even Democrat Ted Hartman recently called Foster a "good guy," yet you leave readers to deduce the Republican as a racist.

Omitting context can sway focus away from the real and important tasks that need to be done. This is another sad example of our leaders interjecting politics and labeling it historic to justify bad processes and behavior.

Actions speak louder than words and words cannot hide your actions.

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LIBRARIES

In-person hours Monday

We are ready to welcome you back as we reopen our doors to in-person library use! Stop by and browse our shelves for that perfect book you didn't even know you needed. Make copies or use the printer. Pick up a giant stack of picture books to enjoy with your child at home. Or get answers to all those burning reference questions – in person.

Please note, masks that cover the nose and chin will be mandatory inside the library building, regardless of a person's vaccination status, and we are requiring everyone to sanitize their hands upon entry. We're also limiting the number of patrons inside to 15 at a time, which means there might be a short wait before entering.

You may also notice some changes to the way things look inside. At this



time, inside seating and public computers will not be available, but we have a number of Chromebooks that can be checked out for at-home use, along with WiFi hotspots to help you get connected.

We're open:

Monday-Thursday 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

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Friday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday 1-5 p.m.

*Just a reminder, although the building will be closed on Sundays, the self-serve copier will still be

available in the entranceway during curbside hours.

Our phased-in reopening plan is guided by state and local guidelines, as well as the latest scientific recommendations. Visit our website at www.bethlehempubliclibrary.org for more information.

Tax forms at the library

The tax filing deadline has been extended to May 17. Do you need forms? We've got them at the library. If you don't see what you're looking for with our pre-printed forms, just let us know – we might be able to print one out for you. Forms are available in the library during browsing hours or for curbside pickup.

It's all fun and games

Need a break from the

monotony of a pandemic schedule? It'll be game on Monday, March 29, when you join us virtually for an ultimate mash-up of games – Bingo, trivia, scavenger hunts and more! Get together with other adults for an entertaining evening of games while staying safely at home.

Our Ultimate Game Night starts at 7 p.m. Go to our online calendar at bethlehem.librarycalendar.com to sign up.

Put down roots

Get growing with our 2021 seed library featuring a variety of open-pollinated vegetables, herbs and some flowers. You can now select your seeds online for pickup. The seed library is currently available to Bethlehem cardholders only and is limited to 10 seed packets per household.

— Kristen Roberts

Kids engineering with MiSci

Students in grades k thru 2 can learn about the science of engineering through an engaging story and hands-on engineering project from the wonderful educators at the Museum of Science and Technology. From 10:30 to 11:15 a.m., Wednesday, April 7, children will learn how to build their own flying machine and get to test and improve its performance. Please register for this program online, or by phone. Registrants will be notified when supplies will be available for pick up and the Zoom link will be emailed before the class.



April Book Discussions

Fiction Book Discussion: "Lies in White Dresses" by Sofia Grant, Wednesday, April 7, at 7 p.m.

Tween Book Bunch: "From the Desk of Zoe Washington" by Janae Marks, Thursday, April 8, at 6:30 p.m.

Teen BookFlix Club: "Shadow and Bone" by Leigh Bardugo, Friday, April 9, at 2 p.m.

Nonfiction Book Discussion: "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind" by Yuval Noah Harari, Monday, April 12, at 7 p.m.

— Lynn Kohler

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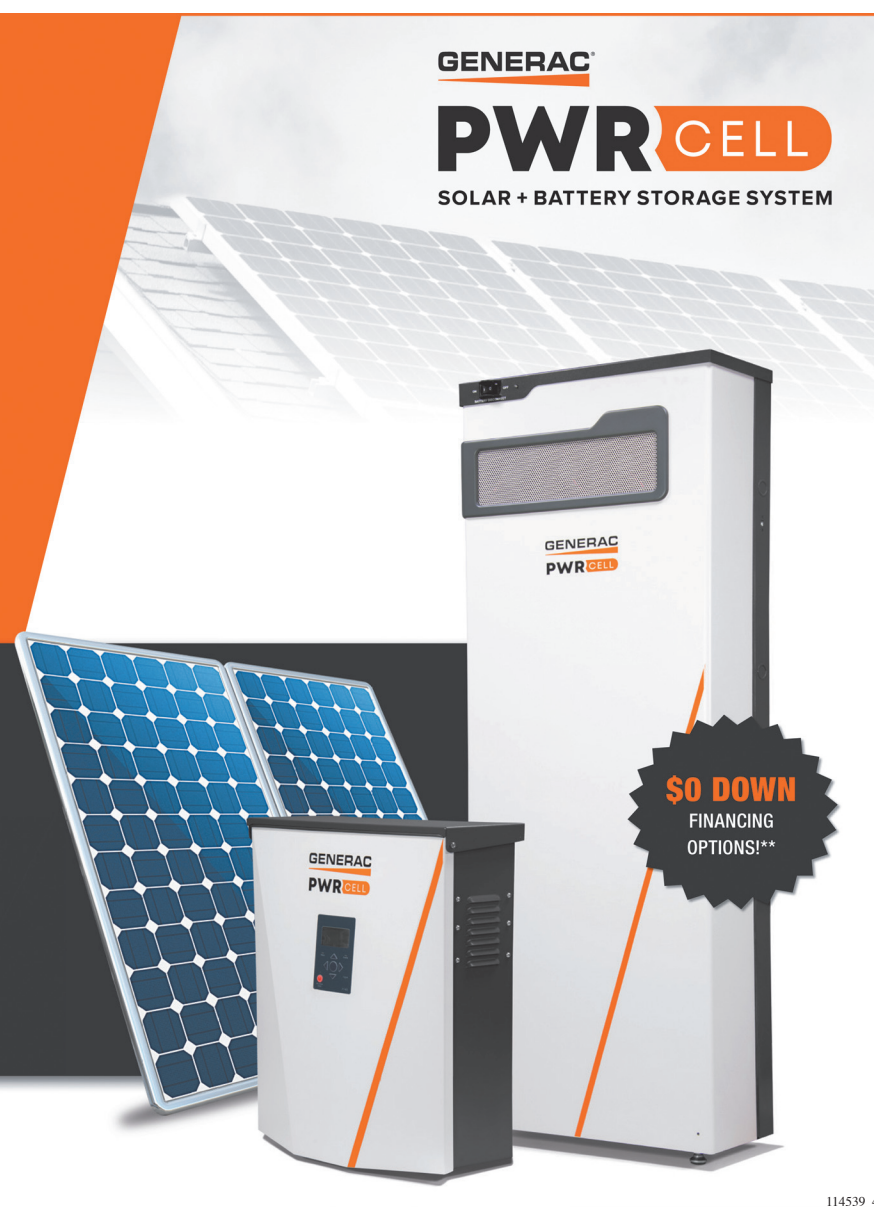
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LIBRARIES

Talking podcasts

Podcast enthusiasts: you're invited to Earbuds & Bookmarks! Each month, we'll listen to a podcast in advance, then connect online to share our thoughts. This month's meetup on Saturday, March 27, at 3 p.m. centers on "Five Games for Doomsday," a show in which people can only take five games along with them. Stand-up comic and board game commentator Grant Lyon is the subject of this interview, which first aired on Jan. 4, 2021. Please see <https://guilderlandlibrary.org/eab> for complete details, and register in advance to receive the link for our March 27 virtual meeting.

Creativebug

Explore our new arts & crafts learning tool for all ages and skill levels - Creativebug! Try your hand at painting, knitting,



crocheting, sewing, screen printing, cake decorating, and much more with the dynamic demos and in-depth workshops offered online. Thousands of videos led by experts are available, with new content added daily. Children can benefit from engaging classes, including STEAM-focused activities inspiring hands-on learning fun. Try Creativebug today with your Guilderland Library card at: <https://www.creativebug.com/lib/guilderlandlibrary>.

Craft & Chat

Speaking of crafts... here's the perfect online gathering to encourage creative inspiration. Let's craft while we talk...or talk while we craft! Meet fellow

crafters online as we gather for casual conversation and share ideas on Monday March 29, at 6 p.m. Register on the Events tab of our website for the Zoom link.

Computer Coaching

Are you getting the most out of your Apple Watch, iPhone, MacBook, or Apple TV? Would you like assistance with our website's Learning Express tool to craft your résumé? Coach Robin stands ready to offer customized help! Register for a one-on-one appointment Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. or Thursdays at 10 a.m. on the Events tab of our website.



Guilderland Public Library's monthly podcast discussion group, "Earbuds & Bookmarks," meets virtually Saturday, March 27, at 3 p.m. to talk about the "Five Games for Doomsday" interview with stand-up comic and board game commentator Grant Lyon. Details and registration may be found at <https://guilderlandlibrary.org/eab>. Photo provided

Closed for Easter

The library is closed Sunday, April 4 for Easter. No curbside services or return shed access will be available.

Storytime Kit

Stop by and grab a Spring-themed storytime kit for your preschooler during curbside hours

starting Monday, April 5, at 10 a.m. Each themed bag for ages 2-5 contains suggestions for eBooks, music, and rhymes to share, plus fun activities and crafts.

Night Owls Online

The next installment of our monthly Night Owls Online book discussion group is slated for Monday

April 12, at 7:30 p.m. All are welcome! We will examine "Rules of Civility" by Amor Towles. Please place a hold on this book for curbside pickup by calling 518-456-2400 or emailing ask.librarian@guilderlandlibrary.org, and register on the Events tab.

—Luanne Nicholson

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Time Passages

Weathered, old barn is appreciated through pictures.

Page B11

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INSIDE



Backstory

Where was David Alan Miller when he received the news?

Page B3



Down to four

Nippertown's Music Madness tourney is nearing the end.

Page B3



Fire it up

The weather is warming up, and so is your grill.

Page B9



Listen for your cue

Capital District venues positioning for possible summer season

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

If the Capital District continues to lower its COVID-19 cases, area venues might be able to turn the lights on this year.

Continues on page B4



Spring **HOME** Improvement PAGES

• STYLISH DESIGNS • INNOVATIVE IDEAS • HOME IMPROVEMENTS

ISSUE DATE:

April 7

AD DEADLINE: **March 31**



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 Spring has popped up, and it's time to enjoy the outdoors again!
 Mabon Hallisey / Special to The Spot 518






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 24 Months | 21,000 Total Miles

2020 FORD ESCAPE SE AWD
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 or Lease For: **\$149/mo**
 \$3,599 Total Due at Signing
 24 Months | 21,000 Total Miles

2021 FORD EXPLORER XLT 4WD
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\$17,663

2017 FORD F-350 PLATINUM
 FX4, 6.7L Power Stroke Turbo Diesel, Off Road 4x4, 4dr Crew Cab, Power Moonroof, Tow Package, 53,522 Miles.
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2016 FORD EXPLORER
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RECENTLY ANNOUNCED

Twice makes it a habit

Albany Symphony earns second Grammy Award

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

ALBANY — When David Alan Miller heard he won his second Grammy, he wasn't even watching the show. Because COVID-19 restrictions prevented him from attending the ceremony in California, he was home with his family. He was leaving Fred the Butcher's new location in Slingerlands when his daughter told him the news.

Albany Symphony Orchestra took home the coveted award in the category of "Best Classical Instrumental Solo" for its performance of Chris Theofanidis' Concerto for Viola and Chamber Orchestra. Richard O'Neill was featured as the soloist and Miller was recognized as the conductor.

"It's such an honor to be recognized against some of these massive orchestras who have resources far beyond ours," Miller said. "I had steeled myself for a loss because of the talent we were up against."

ASO and O'Neill beat out the Boston Symphony Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, German pianist Igor Levit and Germany's Symphonieorchester Des Bayerischen Rundfunks. Boston and Philadelphia's orchestras are widely revered as two of the most extensive, talented orchestras in the country.

"I really didn't think we were going to win because it was such a strong category," Miller said. This was Albany Symphony's fifth nomination in seven years. The orchestra won its first Grammy in 2013. "We're such a little orchestra and some of these

"Nobody wants to hear a Tchaikovsky piece recorded for the 20th time," Miller said. "We want to contribute to the industry in a different way."

— David Alan Miller,
Albany Symphony
Music Director

places have way more than we do."

Miller said at the time of this year's nomination that the feat was unique because of the viola's solo. Violas are in the middle of the string section, so the instrument tends to get lost easily; if one studies nominations for solos in the category, many feature violin or piano.

O'Neill is only the second person to receive the award for a viola performance since the creation of the category. The Korean-American violist was nominated twice before.

"This is a great day for the viola," O'Neill proclaimed, as he accepted the award virtually. While thanking the recording academy for "this honor of a lifetime," he continued to show his gratitude towards Theofanidis, Miller and "the wonderful Albany Symphony."

"We are so incredibly proud of Richard for his incredible work," Miller said of O'Neill at the time of the nomination in November.

Since the orchestra's first win, Miller said the recognition has been steady. He credits this to the group's approach to music; it tries to record either contemporary music or music that hasn't been recorded before.

"Nobody wants to hear a Tchaikovsky piece recorded for the 20th time," Miller said. "We want to contribute to the industry in a different way. Chris [Theofanidis] is a composer we've worked with annually for about 10 years and he has a way of making this group 'sing' in a way that's so unique to him."

Theofanidis, 53, is a graduate of Yale, the Eastman School of Music and the University of Houston. His work has

been commissioned by some of the biggest forces in classical music, including the London Symphony, The Philadelphia Orchestra and others across the country. He served as the Pittsburgh Symphony's Composer of the Year from 2006 to 2007; during that time, he wrote a concerto for esteemed violinist Sarah Chang. Theofanidis is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Fulbright Fellowship to France, six ASCAP Gould Prizes and a 2007 Grammy nomination for best composition of "The Here and Now," amongst other awards.

"This is a great endorsement for the work we've been doing, especially as we are preparing to announce next season's program, which will begin in October," Miller said. "I hope it gives us some rocket fuel as great things keep coming down the pike."

Albany Symphony will offer both live and virtual shows next season; Miller said the live shows are contingent on COVID-19 restrictions and how far along the vaccination progress is in the Capital District.

For more information, visit albanysymphony.com.

Four bands remain in Music Madness

ALBANY — Nippertown's "March 'Music' Madness" bracket is down to just four bands, and the whittling down process to the finals starts today, Wednesday, March 24.

The final four contestants are Girl Blue versus Candy Ambulance, and Glass Pony versus Bad Mothers.

Last week's voting came down to the wire. Girl Blue squeaked by Side B and Bad Mothers barely edged out Talia Denis, as over 100 votes came in during the last two hours, alone.

The winners of this round are guaranteed some recording time. The runner-up gets four hours at Troy Savings Bank Music Hall (where both of Albany Symphony's Grammy Award-winning performances were recorded). The winner will get three days in the studio, engineering, equipment usage and consultation from White Lake Music and Post in Albany.

Third and fourth place finishers receive \$100 each, and the opportunity to play a live stream at the Palace Theatre with the top two places.

Fifth through eighth place receives \$50. Nippertown is going to offer each of them the opportunity to do a private live stream at Albany's newest private venue, the Jive Hive.

See Nippertown.com for more information.

— Michael Hallisey

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Answers on Pg. B10



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SUMMER CAMP guide

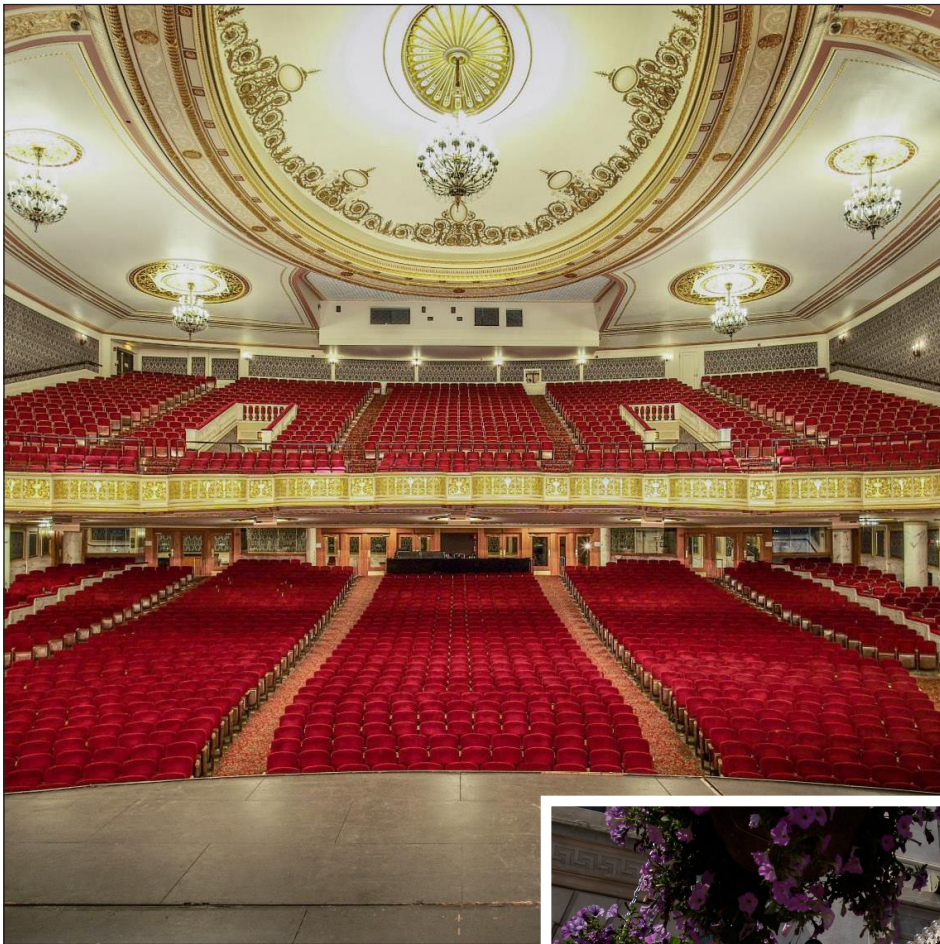
Listings and editorial on all the Capital District's Summer Camp activities, workshops and programs.



INCLUDES DIRECTORY LISTINGS in print & online - (Limit 50 words)

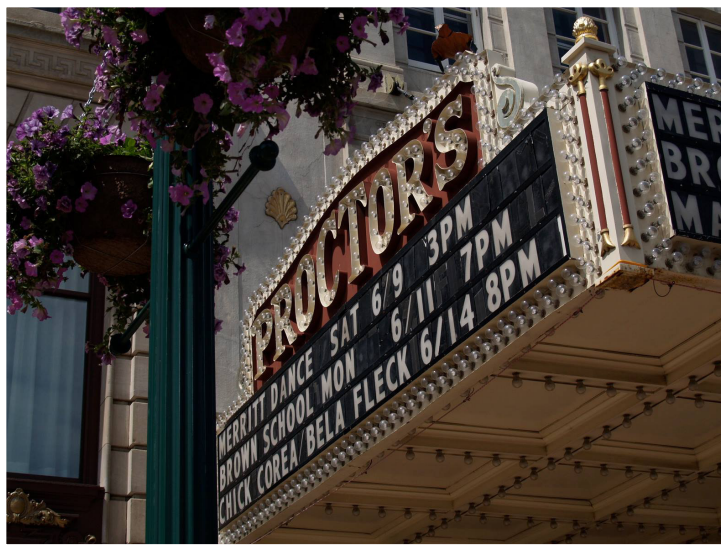


Issue Date: **APRIL 14**
Deadline: **March 30**



Restaurants and establishments who host modest live music shows welcome April 2 as a lift from crippling virus mitigation restrictions, but that's not the case for theatres. Proctors, the Palace, Cohoes and Troy music halls can't host many shows without a chance to fill all of their respective seats.

Proctors Collaborative



From page B1 ... Listen for your cue

It's been over a year — 54 weeks exactly — since the last live shows in the 518. When the COVID-19 pandemic crashed into the area in March 2020, venues were forced to shutter suddenly and without any end in sight. What many thought was going to be a two-week inconvenience has turned into an endless hiatus, with many business owners pivoting to keep their business open and others succumbing to the financial strife and closing for good.

While restrictions against gatherings, masked or not, are still pretty tight, many area venues are finally seeing some light at the end of the tunnel.

Downtown Albany

The Palace Theatre is dark.

The ornate structure, which costs an arm and leg to maintain in itself, has had zero revenue during the shutdown, according to Sean Allen, the director of marketing for the historic venue.

"We had to shut down so quickly last year," Allen

recalled. "We had a packed show one night and within a matter of hours, we were told we had to shut everything down. It went from all to nothing in the blink of an eye."

The Palace has been hosting a steady stream of digital shows. As hope begins to build, the Palace's upcoming schedule is boasting a few shows. As of right now, Allen said he's confident the shows scheduled in May, one hosting Cody Jinks on May 12 and another, A Midsummer Night's Slay on May 22, will be postponed until vaccines poke a greater number of people. The next show on the schedule is a feature headlined by ballroom dancing professionals and "Dancing with the Stars" alums Maksim Chmerkovskiy, Val Chmerkovskiy, Peta Murgatroyd and Jenna Johnson on July 6.

"We're hopeful we can keep the May shows, but our number one priority is the safety of our guests and we want to make sure when we are able to bring people back in, we are doing it correctly," Allen said.

"[We're] cautiously optimistic that with the vaccine rollout schedule that capacity guidelines will grow and that we'll be in a position to open the doors at some or all of our venues for controlled, safe events as early as this summer."

— Jim Murphy,
Proctors Collaborative

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62						63					64			

CLUES ACROSS

- Now and __
- Israeli city __ Aviv
- Indicates near
- Minneapolis suburb
- Large Australian flightless bird
- Fine-grained earth
- Plant genus that includes water caltrop
- Peacock network
- TV writer Dunham
- Excessive fluid accumulation in tissues
- They __
- Muslim ruler title
- Position given in respect of
- Explaining further
- Measuring instrument
- Romanian monetary unit
- Council of __, 1545-1563
- Savory jelly made with meat stock
- Journalist Tarbell
- Most suspenseful
- Festivity
- Animal embryos
- Fertility god
- Medical patients' choice (abbr.)
- Type of sword
- Competition
- Bird of the cuckoo family
- Afflicted in mind or body
- Engineering organization
- Beverage receptacle
- Spiritual leader
- Doctor of Education
- Where golfers begin
- Impudence

CLUES DOWN

- Vietnamese offensive
- Fast mammal

- Oh goodness!
- The back of one's neck
- One who lives in another's property
- Involve deeply
- Alfalfa
- Tropical tree resin
- Sudden fear
- Jewish religious month
- Veterans battleground
- Musical symbol
- German river
- Paddle
- Lizard
- Shock treatment
- The common gibbon
- Brew
- Usually has a lid
- Lenses in optical instruments
- Time zone in Samoa (abbr.)
- Wrinkled dog; Shar __
- Denotes equal
- TV network for children
- Take the value away from
- Female graduates
- Don't know when yet
- "__ tú": Spanish song
- "Seinfeld" character
- Bleated
- Entwined
- Away from wind
- Soft creamy white cheese
- Swiss river
- Prejudice
- Actor Idris
- They resist authority (slang)
- Speak ill of

Answers on Pg. B10

“Everything right now is contingent on the numbers continuing to go down.”

As of April 1, indoor venues like the Palace are allowed to have 100 people inside. For the theatre that can hold 2,800 people, 100 isn't close to financially viable. The Palace, like many venues, needs to see capacity upwards of 90 percent to be able to pay talent, staff, stagehands and provide the full experience the venue is known for.

“We are open to doing socially distanced shows if we can make it both safe and feasible for everyone involved,” Allen said. “If not at full capacity but we're able to open, the questions posed are how can we do this, what are the legalities we need to follow, what needs to be met and how can we make sure we are able to pay both our people and the performers.”

Upstate Concert Hall's anticipated move into downtown Albany has been halted by the pandemic. Its move from Clifton Park to the old Capital Repertory Theatre stage at 111 North Pearl St. was reported last October. The venue is expected to bring in fans of its edgy programming; fans of heavy metal, hardcore,

“We know how much you have missed gathering on our grounds for extraordinary encounters with beauty. And we have profoundly missed sharing those moments with you.”

— Elizabeth Sobol,
President and
CEO of Saratoga
Performing Arts
Center

underground and rap that many of the larger venues don't often book.

The concert hall has also been hosting virtual streams, the most recent featuring alternative metal group Ra.

“What we thought would only be a few weeks has turned into a year,” UCH posted on its Facebook page on March 13. “It's been a struggle to survive, but there's a light at the end of the tunnel. We can't wait to be in action



Dave Bigley

again and welcome you back.”

Troy, Cohoes, Schenectady

A stone's throw from Albany in either direction, Troy and Cohoes host two historic venues. Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, known for its elite acoustics and revered reputation, is actively planning its fall season, executive director Jon Elbaum said.

“We're feeling good

about the vaccine rollout and think we will be able to offer our fall schedule in some capacity,” Elbaum said, adding he's hopeful things will be reverting to normal around that time. Right now, the music hall has only canceled one show and postponed many, with the first show offering tickets for April 18.

Elbaum said the music hall has downsized its staff and reduced the hours of the ones left, a common occurrence amongst venues

once hosting an extensive workforce.

Troy Savings Bank Music Hall is still beating, though. The performance that earned Albany Symphony Orchestra its latest Grammy Award was recorded there, much like the one that earned the orchestra its first one. It's also hosting virtual streams, with one of the most recent being Grateful Dead tribute The Wheel. Nonetheless, Elbaum said social distancing guidelines are

what will ultimately delay the music hall's reopening because it needs to see a packed house to be a viable night.

“All we can do right now is just keep up the increased cleaning and wait to see the rules for what's allowed,” Elbaum said.

Cohoes Music Hall is facing similar circumstances. The music hall's programming was turned over to Playhouse

Continues on B6

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From page B5 ...

Listen for your cue

Stage Co. — the force behind Park Playhouse — last summer by the City of Cohoes. Playhouse Stage Co. producing artistic director Owen Smith said the hall is looking at probably having to postpone its May and June scheduled concerts. However, Smith is happy to say there will definitely be a Park Playhouse production, which is a separate entity from Cohoes Music Hall programming, in the historic venue in May.

“Like anyone else, we need to make sure everything we are doing is financially viable for everyone involved,” Smith said. “However, I am

confident that we will be able to start offering pretty close to normal programming by the fall.”

The venue can squeeze 500 people into the hall once orchestra seating is removed. With the April 1 restrictions released by the state, Cohoes Music Hall is also subject to the only 100-people rule, about 20 percent of its full capacity.

“We’ve offered a few streams and online productions, which has been nice because it gives the artists and actors a chance to perform, but we all agree it’s just not the same as a live show,” Smith said. “The dynamism to live events is unmatched. It’s as much a cathartic experience as it is an entertaining one.”

Despite the ongoing restrictions looking to stretch into at least the spring, Smith said the staff is ready for a live show, however they need to accomplish it. If it means a smaller crowd, specific guidance from the CDC on how to mitigate spreading

or whatever else, he’s ready.

“This pandemic has been financially, creatively and emotionally difficult for all of us,” he concluded. “I’m totally confident we will get to a place where masking isn’t needed in time.”

Proctors, which sits on the main drag of State Street in Schenectady, is also facing restrictions, but Proctors Collaborative director of marketing Jim Murphy said the venue isn’t ready to talk about its plans yet, as so much is riding on what the state says Proctors can do.

“It is not feasible to support our facilities, staff, artists and producing partners with the audience limits in the recent state guidance,” Murphy said in a statement. [We’re] cautiously optimistic that with the vaccine rollout schedule that capacity guidelines will grow and that we’ll be in a position to open the doors at some or all of our venues for controlled, safe events as early as this summer.”

Murphy added, “The economics of touring Broadway, however, require that Proctors can return to full capacity. There is

good reason to feel positive that Broadway will return this year but clearly the situation is still evolving.”

Murphy indicated a number of educational programs will be hosted during the summer; the schedule will be announced in the coming days.

Outdoor Venues

The beauty of outdoor venues, like Park Playhouse’s Washington Park location and Saratoga Performing Arts Center, is it’s significantly easier to spread people out.

Washington Park can host 1,500 people for a production, Smith said. While Playhouse Stage Co. hasn’t finalized this year’s agreement with the city for the park’s usage, he is confident the company will be performing in the park this year.

“For the park, we are around 25 percent capacity, which would allow us to bring in around 400 people,” he said. “We can make 400 people work.”

Smith acknowledged the outdoor experience of Park Playhouse’s productions is a whole culture for its guests. If you happen

among a production, it’s not uncommon to find guests picnicking on the hills or spreading out with blankets.

Saratoga Performing Arts Center is much of the same experience. While the amphitheater offers a more mainstream concert experience, many guests find themselves on SPAC’s extensive lawn space, where mosh pits are plentiful and the thick smell of beer permeates the air.

“As we move into the 2021 season, our number one priority is creating a safe environment for everyone — audience members, staff and performers,” SPAC president and CEO Elizabeth Sobol wrote in a Facebook post on February 25. “We do not yet know when we will be allowed to open — nor, more importantly, at what capacity. Will we be allowed to use the amphitheater? If so, for 500 people, 1,500? Or some other number?”

“What we can tell you is that all winter our operations team has been creating various scenarios so that whatever the number ends up being, we will be ready to execute a plan with

strictly enforced guidelines to guarantee your safety — and to bring our beloved resident companies back to their Saratoga home.”

Being that some SPAC shows can host thousands proud, the future of how SPAC plans to turn the lights on remains in the hands of the state. Sobol added the venue formed a coalition with the state that includes The Public Theatre, Lincoln Center, City Parks Foundation, Classical Theatre of Harlem, The Chautauqua Institution and the Caramoor Center for the Arts that will create guidelines and timelines to allow outdoor venues to safely reopen this summer.

“We know how much you have missed gathering on our grounds for extraordinary encounters with beauty,” Sobol concluded. “And we have profoundly missed sharing those moments with you.”

“Please know that all our waking hours are dedicated to that moment when, finally, we will be able to join together once again to celebrate our survival — and our future — together.”

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HOROSCOPES

March 2021 Week 4

ARIES – MAR 21/APR 20

Don’t shy away from the issues that keep cropping up this week, Aries. They may cause a few headaches, but they also are making the days much more exciting.

TAURUS – APR 21/MAY 21

Taurus, many people like to live by the mantra “don’t judge a book by its cover,” but many times appearances matter. Don’t regret picking out a nice outfit or a trendy restaurant.

GEMINI – MAY 22/JUN 21

Change may take you in unexpected directions this week, Gemini. The good news is that things are finally turning around for you. Enjoy this exciting time.

CANCER – JUN 22/JUL 22

Cancer, you may be drawn to people who appeal to your analytical side this week. You could be interested in some intellectual debate and need a worthy sparring partner.

LEO – JUL 23/AUG 23

Leo, if you see a chance to get ahead this week, jump on it. No matter what is involved or how inconvenient, you do not want to let this opportunity pass you by.

VIRGO – AUG 24/SEPT 22

There is much more clarity in your life this week, Virgo. It’s almost as if a veil has been lifted or if your eyeglasses prescription has been fine-tuned.

LIBRA – SEPT 23/OCT 23

Libra, there might be a lot of activity going around you over the course of the week. Whether it’s good or bad, you won’t be directly involved in any of it.

SCORPIO – OCT 24/NOV 22

Exercise caution when sharing your secrets, Scorpio. Make sure others can be tight-lipped, as some people cannot resist passing on a little gossip here and there.

SAGITTARIUS – NOV 23/DEC 21

There is great harmony in your life right now and it’s due mostly to the fact that you are working together with people both at home and at work. Keep up the collaborations.

CAPRICORN – DEC 22/JAN 20

Listen to people around you to get a fresh perspective on various components of life that you share. People may have good ideas and be willing to share their advice.

AQUARIUS – JAN 21/FEB 18

Aquarius, if you have been trying to become better acquainted with someone in your personal life or even at the office, pay attention to their body language. It can say a lot.

PISCES – FEB 19/MAR 20

Pisces, trust your heart this week and be honest with how you feel about situations. Not every decision has to be based on analysis. Trust your gut.

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For those who may need a little burger inspiration, this recipe for "Barbecue Chipotle Burgers" courtesy of the Iowa Beef Council features a beer-based homemade barbecue sauce and is best served on Texas Toast for an extra burst of flavor.

Barbecue Chipotle Burgers

Ingredients: Serves 4

- 1 pound ground beef (93 percent lean or leaner)
- 1/2 cup beer
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 tablespoon minced chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 4 slices frozen Texas Toast

2 spears pickled okra, sliced

Instructions

To prepare barbecue sauce, combine beer, brown sugar, ketchup, chipotle peppers, and Worcestershire sauce in saucepan; bring to a boil. Simmer 8 to 10 minutes until sauce is thickened; set aside.

Lightly shape ground beef into four 1/2-inch thick patties. Place patties on grid over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill, covered, 8 to 10 minutes (over medium heat on preheated gas grill, covered, 7 to 9 minutes) until instant-read thermometer inserted horizontally into center registers 160 F, turning occasionally. (Cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed ground beef. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160 F. Color is not a reliable indicator of ground beef doneness.)

Meanwhile, prepare Texas Toast according to package directions. Cut each piece of toast in half. Fresh Texas toast, buttered, may be used instead of frozen product.

For each sandwich, spread 1 tablespoon barbecue sauce over one toast half. Top with burger, another tablespoon sauce and okra slices. Close sandwich.

Cook's Tip: Dill pickle chips or pickled jalapeño peppers may be substituted for pickled okra.

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

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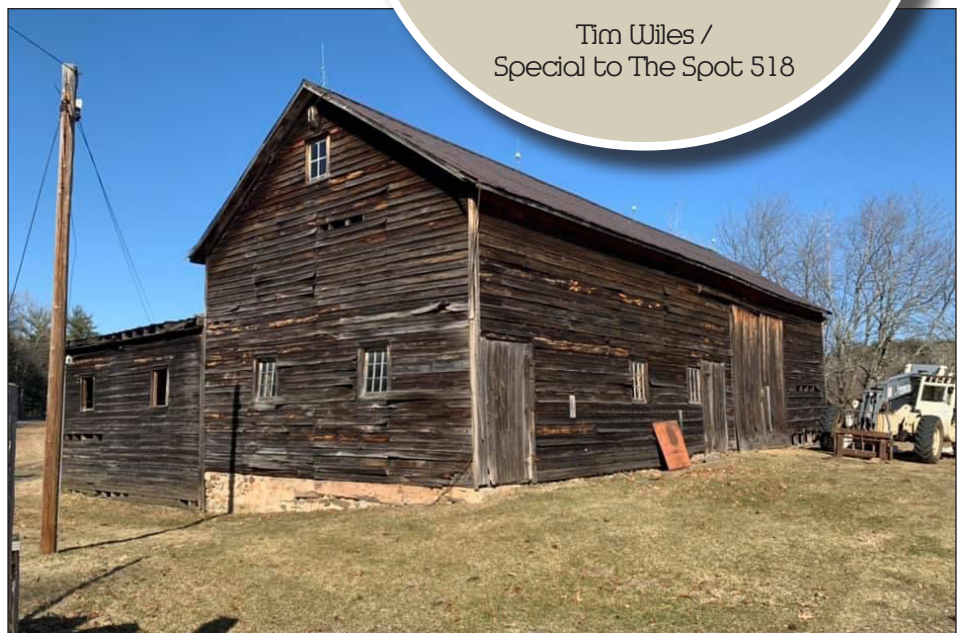


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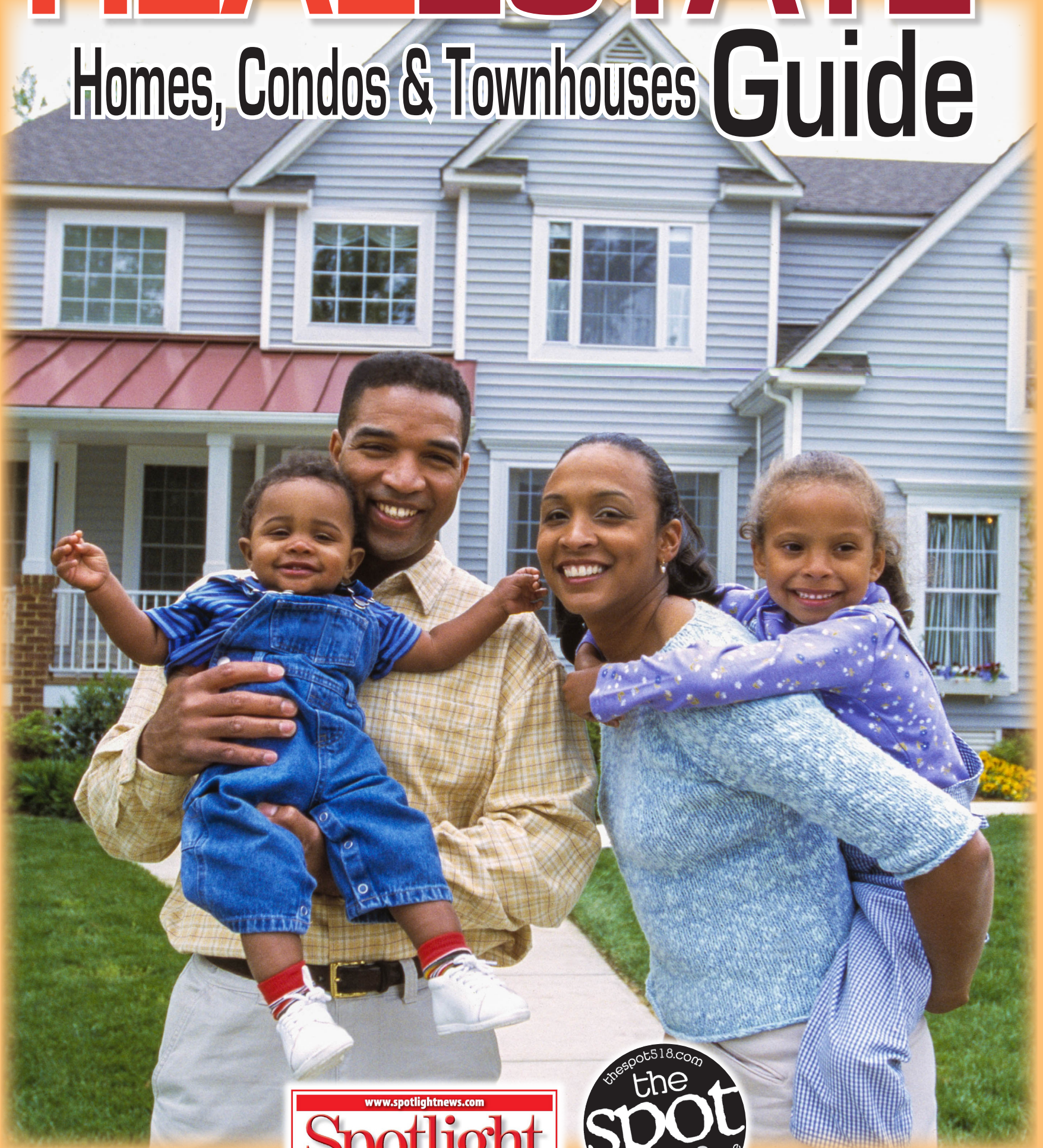
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Simple ways to make the community safer

Communities tend to be at their safest when all members pitch in to do their part

Thriving communities tend to share certain characteristics. Communities that are inclusive and encourage participation by all residents tend to thrive, as do those where there are opportunities to grow, both professionally and personally. Safety is another common component of thriving communities. When residents feel safe in their communities, they can feel free to pursue their goals, creating the sense that possibilities are endless.

According to the Pan Pacific Safe Communities Network, a membership-based, non-government organization that promotes safety in an effort to prevent injuries and violence, safety benefits communities in myriad ways. The PPSCN notes that safe communities see a reduction in the numbers and costs of injuries and

violence and a promotion of community-wide health and safety, all the while instilling a sense of community pride.

Communities tend to be at their safest when all members pitch in to do their part. The following are some simple ways individuals can help make their communities safer.

- Make an effort to know your neighbors. According

“Communities that are inclusive and encourage participation by all residents tend to thrive...”

to Safe-Home.org, an online resource that aims to assist consumers as they search for sensible security solutions for their homes, knowing one’s neighbors is a great way to recognize when suspicious persons are in the area. This can serve as a safety net against burglaries and kidnappings.

- Install exterior lighting around your home and make sure street lamps are promptly fixed. Exterior lighting on the porch and around the perimeter of your



The safest communities tend to be those in which everyone pitches in to do their part.

home can make for an effective deterrent to intruders. Burglars look from dark spaces, so they’re more likely to avoid well-lit properties than those under the cloak of darkness. Urge community leaders and companies, such as politi-

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cians and local energy providers, to promptly replace street lamp bulbs when

they burn out. Street lamps make communities safer for children and pedestrians and can serve as deterrents to criminals just like lights around individual properties.

- Reinvigorate neglected

areas. Abandoned parks and run-down public gathering spaces present an image of a community that does not care about itself. That can make communities seem like easy targets for criminals. Community members can join together via social media groups or more traditional grassroots efforts like door-to-door campaigning to collectively reinvigorate neglected areas within their communities. Organize park cleanups that culminate with a community barbecue, which can serve to clean up spaces and bring community members together.

- Spread the word. Individuals are essential to building safe communities, but that responsibility is community-wide. Spread the word of your efforts via social media, township meetings, community schools, and churches. Your actions may just inspire others to follow suit.

Building safe communities requires collective efforts on the part of all residents, who can then reap the many rewards of living somewhere safe.

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Home buying during the COVID-19 outbreak

Buying a home during the pandemic presents some unique challenges

Homeowners know that the process of buying a home can be both exciting and nerve-racking. The anxiety associated with buying a home has hit new heights during the outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19.

Historically low interest rates and limited inventory has made 2020 an especially unique time to buy a home. It's also a competitive and potentially expensive time to buy a home. While the economic consequences of COVID-19 have been severe, the Federal National Mortgage Association, also known as Fannie Mae, forecasted a significant increase in median home prices in March 2020. City dwellers have scrambled to

buy homes outside of cities, where social distancing is more difficult and the risk of getting COVID-19 appears greater than it is in suburban or rural settings. That has led to a lot of competition among prospective buyers.

Prospective home buyers willing to enter the hectic

only seen in videos, but virtual tours have become the new normal in the wake of the pandemic. An April survey from the National Association of Realtors found that home tours had declined sharply. While 98 percent of realtors reported taking clients on home tours as recently as February, that number had declined to 63 percent by April. As many regions pause their reopening plans, prospective home buyers should ready themselves for virtual tours as opposed to in-person home tours.

- Expect limited inventory. While home prices are up, many people are holding onto their homes. The NAR reports that total housing inventory at the end of May 2020 was down nearly 19 percent from the end of May 2019. Buyers will have less inventory to choose from, so those intent

fray and shop for a home during the COVID-19 outbreak may benefit from knowing what to expect as they search for their next home.

- Get ready for virtual tours. Buyers might once have scoffed at the notion of buying a home they've



on buying may need to prioritize what they need in a home and focus on finding properties that can fulfill those needs.

- Expect to move quickly. Realtors have seen homes sell within days of being listed, and that has put pressure on buyers to move quickly. It also highlights the importance of finding a home inspector before

your search begins as well as a lender who can handle quick closings. Ask around for recommendations, but make sure you have these two important professionals lined up before beginning your search. Doing so will give you a better chance of buying in an unusual time.

- Make the best down payment you can afford. A high down payment makes

buyers look better no matter the state of the economy. An offer with a high down payment looks like a stronger offer, and that can make the difference between winning and losing a potential bidding war.

Buying a home during the COVID-19 outbreak presents some unique challenges to prospective buyers.

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Welcome to the neighborhood

Simple strategies to meet your new neighbors after moving

A lot goes into building safe, strong communities. While no single factor can be highlighted as more important than another in regard to building strong communities, a willingness on the part of residents to connect with their neighbors can greatly benefit local neighborhoods and the people who call those communities home.

According to Mental Health America, a community-based nonprofit dedicated to promoting the mental health of all Americans, research has shown that social connections increase happiness and lead to improved overall health and even longer lives. Adults may find that establishing a connection with their communities, and maintaining that connection while juggling the responsi-

bilities of work and a family, is not always so easy. That's especially so for adults who have recently relocated to new areas. Reaching out to neighbors can be a great way for adults to build new relationships that can benefit them as individuals and

“Don't be shy. People often want to know who's living next door, so adults who have recently moved need not be shy about introducing themselves to their new neighbors. introduce yourself and share what inspired you to move to your new neighborhood.”

strengthen their communities.

- Don't be shy. People often want to know who's living next door, so adults who have recently moved need not be shy about introducing themselves to their

new neighbors. Introduce yourself and share what inspired you to move to your new neighborhood.

- Answer and ask questions. Neighbors will no doubt ask questions when you introduce yourself, so be ready to answer these questions. Questions may focus on your career and where you grew up. If you grew up in the area where you recently moved, some of your neighbors likely did as well. Sharing stories about your school days and/or local hotspots can be a great way to break the ice. Don't hesitate to ask some questions of your own as well. Asking questions might reveal some common interests that can serve as strong foundations for budding relationships.



is perfect for meeting new neighbors. Once you have settled in, invite a handful of your neighbors over for the bar-

becue. If you have children, invite neighbors who also are parents, ideally ones whose children are the same

age as your own. Kids have sparked many a conversation, and discussions about local schools, parks and programs for youngsters can be great ice breakers.

- Volunteer. Volunteering with community-based organizations is another great way to meet new neighbors. Volunteering with an organization whose mission you identify

with may be even better, as you're likely to find like-minded neighbors who share your passions when working with such groups.

Strong communities are built around people. When moving to a new community, adults can overcome the challenges such relocations present by taking various steps to connect with their new neighbors.

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- Host a backyard barbecue. Backyard barbecues are laid back affairs, and that pressure-free atmosphere

whose children are the same

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Building a more energy-efficient home this summer

With weather forecasts calling for a warmer than normal summer and social distancing encouraging us to spend more time at home, we could all benefit from boosting our home's energy efficiency to save on energy bills. Here are some big and small changes that could help:

Start with a solid foundation. If you're adding an extension to your home, a pool to your backyard or even planning a custom-built dream home, choose sustainable materials that promote energy conservation. Instead of traditional wood-framing, consider insulated concrete forms from Nudura. The eco-friendly alternative features thermal mass walls that can reduce heating and cooling costs by up to 60 percent a year.

Work on your windows. Did you know that about 15 to 20 percent of your home's



surface is windows? This means any issues with them can have a major impact on your energy consumption. Take time to caulk any gaps

or air leaks, and consider upgrading to energy-efficient windows. Double-paned windows boost your insulation and help ensure your cooled, air conditioned air doesn't escape.

Switch to outdoor energy sources. Take advantage of the gorgeous weather to spend more time outside. Instead of cooking meals in your energy-intensive oven that also heats up your home, break out the barbecue and enjoy dinner al fresco. You can also ease up on the clothes dryer by setting up a line and some pins in the backyard and use the wind and sun for drying power.

Install a smart weather station. Technology can help you make sure you're consuming energy wisely. A smart thermostat is a great

idea, but a smart weather station can work with it and other devices to go a step beyond, programming them

around current and predicted weather patterns. For example, it can ensure your scheduled sprinkler won't

go off in the middle of a downpour.

Be mindful of your refrigerator. If you aren't careful, a lot of energy can be used by your fridge. First, make sure the one in your kitchen (and basement) is a newer model, as older ones can cost hundreds more a year to power. Then, clear it out so the shelves and drawers aren't overcrowded, which makes the fridge work harder to pump cool air throughout. Finally, if you let leftovers cool on the counter before putting them inside, your fridge will use less energy.

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Did you know?

A real estate attorney is an important professional to have in one's corner when buying or selling a home. The legal resource Find Law says that buying and selling a home can be one of the most significant purchases made in a person's life. Real estate law can be complicated, and all parties involved need to ensure they are protected as they complete transactions and negotiations.

That is why it is essential to have a real estate attorney in one's corner. A lawyer trained in real estate law will review contracts and other documents like title transfers and deeds. The attorney also handles the closing. Throughout the process, attorneys will provide legal guidance and explain terminology related to the transaction. In case of a dispute, the attorney will also provide legal representation in the courtroom, if needed, or negotiate a resolution on a client's behalf. Even though a real estate attorney is another expense in the process of purchasing real estate, it is a worthwhile investment for the protection and peace of mind attorneys provide. buying or selling a home.

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Have to go now?

How to manage relocating for a new job

Moving can be a considerable undertaking. While working professionals who are single or married with no children may find it easier to move than men and women with families, it's fair to say that anyone who is moving in the near future has some significant work ahead of them.

In its Job Relocation Survey, the moving company Allied Van Lines found that people move for a variety of reasons. Fifty percent of the 3,500 respondents indicated they relocated for career advancement or money, and many more indicated they relocated because of a job transfer (12 percent), their companies moved (9 percent) and to be closer to family/relationships (8 percent).

Regardless of what's

motivating men and women to relocate, and whether or not they're relocating on their own or uprooting their families, various strategies can make a forthcoming move go more smoothly.

1 Inquire about relocation assistance. The Allied survey found that

"Relocating for a job can be exciting and stressful. But there are ways to make moving go smoothly."

63 percent of companies offered relocation packages. That's a considerable perk, as moving can be expensive, especially for adults moving to different parts of the country. Asking about relocation expenses before being offered a job can be

tricky, but some companies may mention such packages in their job ads or in their initial meetings with out-of-town candidates.

2 Ask what relocation packages cover. Relocation packages vary from company to company. The Allied Survey found that 54 percent of companies that offered such packages covered moving expenses, while 21 percent gave new hires a lump sum of money to use as they deemed necessary. One in five companies even sponsored trips to search for homes. Adults who are offered relocation packages should get the specifics so they can start creating moving budgets.

3 Emphasize organization. Much of the stress associated with relocating can be traced to the logistics of uprooting oneself and one's family. Men and women who are unaccustomed to making lists may want to start, as doing so can help keep track of all the tasks that need to be completed before hitting the road. Various unique tasks, from can-



celing utilities to changing insurance policies, must be completed before moving, and it's easy to lose track of what's been done and what hasn't. Maintaining a to-do list and checking off tasks as they're completed can simplify the relocation process.

4 Rent your first home. The Allied survey found that 31 percent of respondents indicated the most challenging part of

relocating for a job was finding a home, while 29 percent felt acclimating to their new community was

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the most challenging aspect of their relocation. Adults who rent their first homes upon relocating can remove some of the pressure to find the perfect home, knowing full well their first home in

their new community will be temporary. If possible, rent in a location that makes it easy to immerse yourself in your new community, which should make the adjustment easier. In addition, place items that are unnecessary for day-to-day life in storage. Having some of your possessions already packed should make your next move less stressful.

Relocating for a job can be exciting and stressful. But there are ways to make moving go smoothly.

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The difference: short sale versus foreclosure

Shopping for real estate may require prospective buyers to learn a whole new language. Buyers may come across certain terms they don't understand. Among the more common terms that first-time buyers may not fully understand are "short sale" and "foreclosure."

According to Realtor.com, short sales and foreclosure auctions are situations that occur when homeowners fall behind on payments and can no longer afford to live in a home. A short sale happens when a homeowner owes more on the mortgage balance than the market value of the property

when the owner needs to sell. The homeowner can ask the mortgage lender to accept a lesser amount than the total mortgage owed making the homeowner/seller "short" on paying the lender back.

A foreclosure is a legal process that occurs when a borrower cannot make mortgage loan payments for a significant period of time. If the debt is not recouped, lenders will step in and take

ownership of the property, putting it up for sale in a foreclosure auction.

While these situations can be troublesome for the homeowner facing financial peril, distressed properties can be advantageous for buyers who oftentimes can buy homes at steep discounts. However, short sales and foreclosures are not without challenges.

The real estate experts at Zillow say that foreclosures and short sales involve more layers than traditional transactions. Zillow offers that bank lenders historically can

typically sold "as-is" and at auction. The real estate agency Re/Max says buying a foreclosure typically is faster than buying a short sale, and an investor can buy a foreclosed home for below market value. But foreclosures cannot be contingent on

the sale of another home, so a buyer must have funds in place and be ready to move quickly.

Short sales are often initiated by homeowners looking to avoid foreclosure. As a result, short sale properties may be in decent condition.

This may not be the case with a foreclosure. The American Society of Home Inspectors says foreclosed homes may have been neglected by having utilities turned off and no maintenance done on the home. Other homes may have been purposefully van-

dalized by the former owner or by squatters.

Short sales and foreclosure properties are options for buyers who want to get the best price possible on a home and are willing to take some risks in their pursuits.

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be slow at giving approval for mortgages to purchase short sale properties or even agreeing on an amount for the sale. As a result, buyers may miss out on other opportunities while waiting for short sales to move along.

Foreclosures carry their own hurdles. Buyers may not get a chance to even see a foreclosure property, nor be eligible to have it inspected, as foreclosed homes are

6 home trends to consider

Home design and real estate trends come and go, but once in awhile certain concepts exhibit considerable staying power. Staying abreast of what's hot and what's not can be a bit overwhelming. This list breaks down some of the trends that have made a splash and figure to be around for some time.

1 Open concept spaces: Watch the DIY Network or HGTV and you'll quickly understand that open floor plans remain highly coveted. Many modern, newly built homes have a large multi-purpose area that blurs the borders of the kitchen, dining area and family room. These homes make it easy to entertain and keep an eye on youngsters.

2 Patterned fabrics and upholstery: Solids will always have their place in home decor, but patterned furnishings are making a name for themselves as well. Today's home-

owners are not afraid to experiment with geometric and floral patterns alongside neutral colors to showcase their personalities, advises the real estate industry resource The Lighter Side of Real Estate.

3 Farmhouse chic: Many people want the ambiance of a rustic, antique farmhouse even if they live miles away from the country. Reclaimed wood on the walls, exposed beams, eclectic accessories, and a big wood table in the dining room are hallmarks of farmhouse style. This is a fun design trend that can be personalized for cozy appeal.

4 Hidden appliances: Making appliances disappear into the background is a growing trend. This is achieved with products that blend in with or are hidden behind cabinetry.

5 Row homes: Popularized in the 19th century and then again in the 1960s and 1980s, townhouses are

making another comeback. Townhomes made up about 12.4 percent of all new construction in the single-family home market last year, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau. According to a Realtor.com survey released in October 2017, townhouses were the most popular form of housing after single-family homes. They were especially popular among millennial buyers, about one-third of whom planned to purchase a townhouse in 2017.

6 Multigenerational homes: Buyers between the ages of 53 and 62 are increasingly looking at homes that can accommodate children older than 18, with a room or apartment available to care for an aging parent, states the National Association of REALTORS.

Home trends continue to evolve, and some trends have exhibited more staying power than others.

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Simple, inexpensive staging strategies

Staging a home sounds complicated, but it is not as much as you think

Staging has long been part of selling a home, and for good reason. When selling a home, it makes sense for sellers to make their homes as appealing as possible, even if a recent study indicates that staging may not compel buyers to offer more money.

Researchers at Old Dominion University and Johns Hopkins University found that staging did not have a significant effect on the actual revealed market value of a property. However, homeowners should not interpret that as a reason to skip staging. In fact, the study's authors note that staging gave buyers more favorable impressions of a property, which might accelerate the selling process.

Staging a home need not be difficult. In fact, homeowners can employ sev-

eral simple and inexpensive staging strategies to entice buyers to make offers on their homes.

Clear out the clutter

Especially in bathrooms and closets. Clear out the clutter in each room in the house before hosting an open house. Note that it's

"Staging a home sounds complicated. But there are various simple and inexpensive ways to make a home more attractive to prospective buyers."

not just bedrooms and living rooms that should be made to look

open, spacious and clutter-free. A luxurious, hotel-quality



An inviting, clutter-free foyer or entryway can make a strong first impression on prospective home buyers.

bathroom that's open and airy can impress buyers, as can organized closets that are not jam packed with

clothing, shoes and other wardrobe items that have a

tendency to take over closets the longer someone lives in a home.

Let the sun shine in

A home that's bright and airy tends to appear more spacious and livable than one in which the windows and blinds are closed. Before hosting an open house, open the blinds and crack some windows if the weather permits.

Start right inside the front door

A welcoming, clutter-free foyer or primary entryway makes a strong first impression, immediately giving buyers an idea of what it will be like to welcome their own friends and family into a home should they buy it. If you hang your coats on a coat rack in a foyer or entryway that does

not have a closet, remove the coat rack before hosting an open house. Coat racks can make the space feel cramped. If there's room, place a small table and bench just inside the door.

Take care of the yard.

You only get one chance to make a first impression, and the first thing buyers will see when they pull up outside your house is the exterior of your home. Landscaping is important, and a well-maintained yard suggests to buyers that owners have taken pride in their homes, and that may extend inside the home. Make sure the grass is freshly cut, shrubs and trees have been trimmed, bald spots in the lawn have been addressed, and exterior living spaces have been cleaned and cleared of clutter.

Staging a home sounds complicated. But there are various simple and inexpensive ways to make a home more attractive to prospective buyers.

REALESTATE

Homes, Condos & Townhouses Guide

THE HAMLET AT SLINGERLANDS



DESCRIPTION

The Hamlet at Slingerlands is a 90-unit luxury apartment community nestled in a natural wooded 10-acre setting in the Town of Bethlehem featuring spacious apartment homes with private garages. Located just off NYS Route 85, minutes from the Capital Region's universities, hospitals and technology center, the development has convenient access to Interstates I-87 and I-90. The Hamlet at Slingerlands adjoins Price Chopper Plaza with direct pedestrian access.



Contact Information

1365 New Scotland Road
Slingerlands, New York
Phone: 518-391-9901

Info@thehamletcommunities.com

AMENITIES

- Nine foot ceilings throughout with crown molding in living rooms
- Pre-wired for high speed internet/TV technology
- Private garage for each residence, most with direct access
- Kitchens with stainless steel energy star appliances, granite countertops, breakfast bars, solid wood cabinets, built-in microwave, garbage disposal and dishwasher
- Bathrooms with granite countertops and ceramic tile flooring
- Central air conditioning and high efficiency gas heat
- Individually controlled and separately metered utilities
- Full-size washers and dryers
- Hardwood style flooring in kitchen and living areas and carpeting in bedrooms
- Most apartments include private patio or balcony
- Wooden-style window blinds
- Walk-in closets with built-in shelves
- Fireplaces in two-bedroom with study apartments
- Direct pedestrian access to Price Chopper Plaza

Preparing your home for the next natural disaster

We all want our homes to be safe, comforting spaces that offer refuge and protection from the outside world. The global pandemic has taught us this, as well as the importance of preparation, not just for illness, but also for natural disasters like fires, floods, earthquakes, and tornados.

Making sure your house is a secure and resilient structure is critical no matter where you live, as global warming has altered the climates and weather events of many regions. Fortunately, thanks to advances in design and innovative materials, building a stronger, disaster-proof home is possible.

An alternative to traditional wood-framing, Nudura insulated concrete forms are an excellent option many engineers and designers are turning to.

The steel-reinforced solid concrete cores range from four to 12 inches, providing far superior strength and safety compared to wood. Meanwhile the non-toxic, fire-retardant expanded polystyrene foam provides a fire protection rating of up to four hours.

Homes built with these ICFs are proven to survive natural disasters –houses that faced Hurricane Michael in Florida and Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans are still standing. ICFs

even offer wind resistance of up to 250 mph (402 kph), equivalent to an F4 tornado. Homes that use ICF construction have other added benefits, including enhanced insulation for lower energy bills, a reduced carbon footprint, and improved ventilation for

better indoor air quality and lower susceptibility to mold. Concrete forms also require less maintenance over time, saving you the expense and effort of continuous upkeep and providing additional peace of mind.

REALESTATE Homes, Condos & Townhouses Guide

People move for various reasons. Some have outgrown their existing homes and need something bigger, while others move to downsize.

Regardless of why people move, moving occurs more often than you might think. The U.S. Census Bureau says one in nine people relocated in 2015 to a new neighborhood, a new state or even across the country. Relocating, whether it's around the corner or miles away, affects people's lives in many ways. A smooth transition to a new place involves understanding the



Transition smoothly after relocating

process and getting the support necessary to make the move a success.

Research potential destinations

Give ample thought to where you might live before uprooting yourself and your family if you have one. The career resource Change Recruitment suggests using the internet as much as possible to learn about the location. Sites like Niche can paint a picture of an area, providing information regarding its demographics, points of interest, schools, and much more. However, an in-person visit will be

needed to get a true feel for the neighborhood.

Understand the costs

Apart from the fees associated with buying a home, relocating involves hiring movers, unpacking belongings, temporary storage rentals, charges to turn on/off utilities, repairs for the new home, and several other expenses.

If you're moving because of a career opportunity, the company may contribute to some of the moving costs. Check with a human resources professional to determine if the company provides relocation compensation.

Get out and meet people

Use every opportunity to meet neighbors and people with shared interests. Attend community events and/or school functions. Some employers may have meet-and-greet events. Online services like Meetup list groups of like-minded people who may periodically meet up in your community. The sooner you make friends and acquaintances in your new town or city, the more likely you are to feel at home.

With some planning and a little assistance, relocating can go smoothly.

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*CBPP's average sales price YTD vs MLS





Many people now opt to stay in their homes and improve their properties rather than move out.

The choice for staying put or moving on

Many home improvement television series showcase people deciding whether to improve upon their current homes to make them into the houses of their dreams or to put “for sale” signs in their lawns and move on to something new.

The question of whether to move or stay put depends on various factors. Such factors may include emotional attachment to a home, the current economic climate and the cost of real estate. Current data points to a greater propensity for people to invest and improve upon their current properties rather than trading up for something new.

According to information collected by John Burns Real Estate Consulting, the

percentage of homeowners moving up to their next home is the lowest in 25 years. Many are opting to make starter homes permanent by expanding them and repairing homes for the long haul.

The National Association of Realtors said that, between 1987 and 2008, home buyers stayed in their homes an average of six years before selling. Since 2010, however, NAR says the average expected length of time people will stay in their homes before selling is now 15 years.

Part of what’s fueling this permanency is that many home buyers were able to acquire rock-bottom mortgage interest rates shortly after the 2008 recession. As a result, they’re not inclined to walk away from

those rates, even if doing so means getting more house. Also, a low inventory of available houses has stymied repeat buying for many people.

Those factors and others have led many homeowners to invest in renovations instead. The experts at Bankrate say realistic budgeting and comparing renovation project costs against mortgages and interest rates can further help individuals decide whether to remain in their current homes or move out. Very often a smarter layout and more efficient floor plan can make meaningful differences in spaces. Renovations and redesigns can make sense and often are less expensive and disruptive than moving.

THE RICHER TEAM AT



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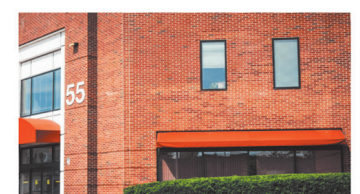
Shovel ready project-2.4 Acres
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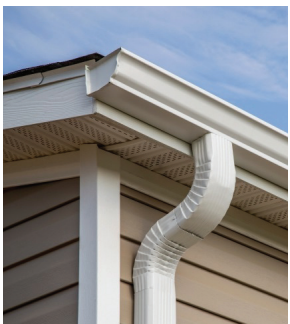
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Jessica Richer

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John Bevilacqua

The Property Shop

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The Hamlet at Slingerlands

The Windsor Development Group, Inc.

The Hamlet at Slingerlands is a 90-unit luxury apartment community in the Town of Bethlehem featuring 58 spacious apartment homes with private garages in a natural wooded setting and 32 spacious apartment homes located in a three story mixed use building. The Hamlet is a mixed-use development consisting of apartments, retail, restaurants and office space in a walkable environment.



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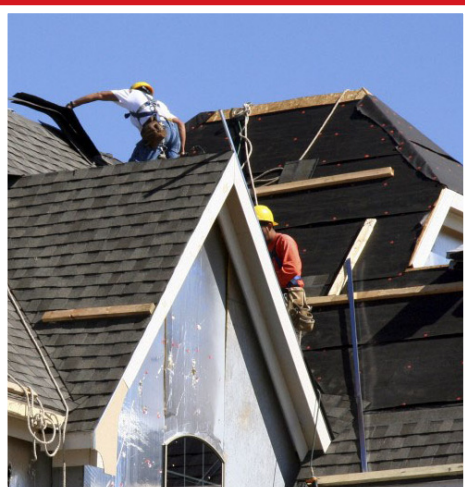
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