

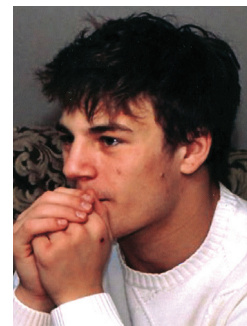
# THE Spotlight

\$1.00

DECEMBER 10, 2014

VOL. 57, #50

*Serving Bethlehem, New Scotland & Guilderland*



## On the books

Governor signs off on legislation spurred by Voorheesville teen's suicide.

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## NEWS

### March into the season

Bethlehem's holiday parade lets community usher in the holidays.

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## TOP STORY

# A tree's tale

Mayes family has been providing the town tree for the past five years

By **MARCY VELTE**

[veltem@spotlightnews.com](mailto:veltem@spotlightnews.com)

**SELKIRK** — December is the busiest time of year for Brian and Nanett Mayes.

The couple started their small Selkirk tree farm in 1991. They had planted the trees when they first bought the property on Pictuay Road four years prior.

"The first year, we sold about 12 trees," said Brian Mayes. "The next year, we sold maybe five."

Nanett Mayes said that Majestic Tree Farm has been a labor of love. It had to be built up over several years before there were enough trees at the appropriate size for customers to come and cut down for Christmas.

"We started from ground zero and

**Continues on page 16**



Nanett and Brian Mayes started their Selkirk tree farm in 1991. The business has been providing the town with its Christmas tree for the past five years.

Photos by Marcy Velte/Spotlight



## ENTERTAINMENT

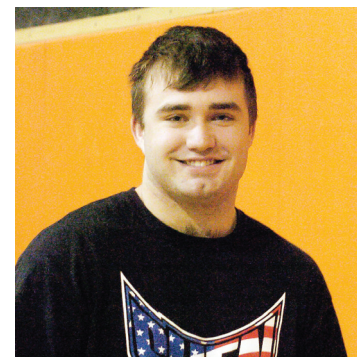


### A village tradition

Altamont's Victorian Holidays Celebration has something for all ages — and cats and dogs, too.

Story on Page B1

## SPORTS



### The next step

Chris Tangora and the Bethlehem wrestling team are looking to move up to the next level this season. The process began with Bethlehem's first varsity tournament.

Story on Page 11

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## SCHOOLS

# Jerry's Law on the books

Family of V'ville teen suicide victim hopes legislation will help spare others the pain they went through

By **JOHN PURCELL**  
purcellj@spotlightnews.com

**VOORHEESVILLE** — Mary Clark was ready, if needed, to lobby lawmakers for a fourth year, but her call to protect other families from the tragedy her family faced was finally answered late last month.

"I would have been there next time, but I hoped I wouldn't have to be," said Mary Clark.

For three years, she has been on a crusade to get "Jerry's Law" passed in the state Legislature and then signed by the governor. The bill never made it out of the Legislature the two prior sessions, but this June, it passed both houses and landed on the governor's desk in November. Cuomo signed it into law on Nov. 21, a week before Thanksgiving.

"I was told many times that it would take a long, long time," said Mary Clark. "Most of the time, I would be told, 'Lady, do you know what you are up against?'"

She said the bill that passed is "more watered down" than what she was hoping to achieve, but its passage has given her family closure.

"On a personal level, it has provided great healing for my family," she said. "It is the first peace I had myself because I know it brought peace to my son. Besides my grief, I had to watch him suffer, so this had been a gigantic thing in my life."

The New York State Council of School Superintendents spoke against an earlier version of the law, which would have required a parent or guardian of a student being suspended to be given information on the Committee on Special Education referral process prior to the hearing.

Robert Lowry Jr., spokesman for the state Council of School Superintendents, previously said the prior version of the bill led to concerns it could be "abused" and "could delay districts from dealing with truly dangerous students."

The bill that passed only requires districts to notify parents or guardians of the rights to have their child referred and evaluated by its Special Education Committee upon enrollment. The notification must also have the name and contact information for the committee chairperson or whoever processes referrals to the committee.

Any student facing suspension for more than five days was already required to receive a hearing.

Clark said she and other family members families were not aware they could refer Jerry to be evaluated by the district's Committee on Special Education before he was suspended. Voorheesville Superintendent of Schools Teresa Thayer Snyder has previously

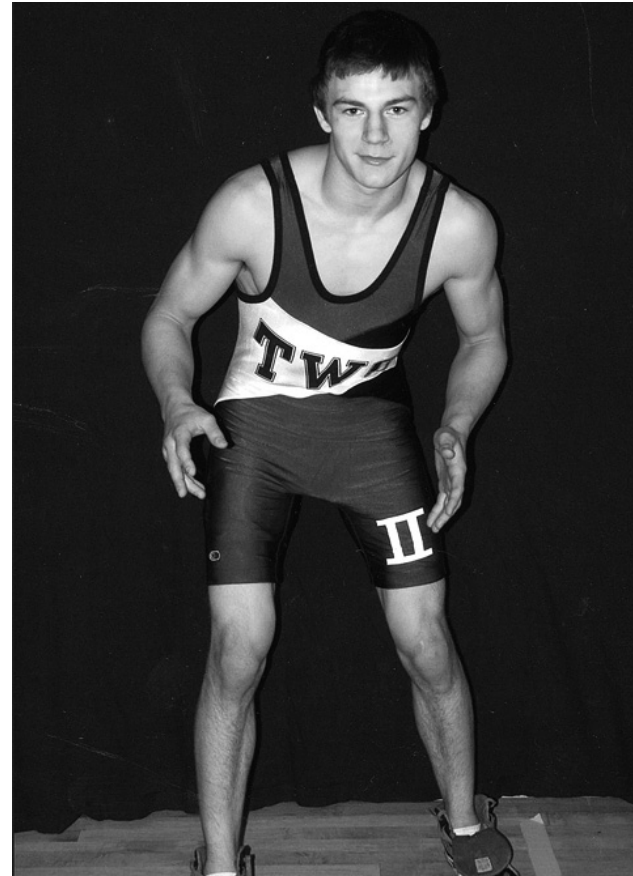
said the Clarks were made aware of the committee.

Jerry Clark was 17 years old when he committed suicide on April 27, 2010, shortly after Voorheesville High School administrators suspended him for six weeks. At the time, he was on prescribed antidepressants and mood stabilizers. There is also a history of mental illness in the family, according to Mary Clark.

Jerry fell asleep several times in class, broke the school's dress code and acted out in other ways before being suspended.

Mary Clark will continue her fight in Jerry's name because she is a member of the Voorheesville Community Alliance for Healthy Choices. The organization grew out of the district's Risk Behavior Task Force.

"There is so much more to be done," she said.



Jerry Clark was an accomplished wrestler at Voorheesville High School.

Spotlight File Photo

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## ■ COPS, COURTS and EMERGENCY CALLS

# Duo charged with using counterfeit bills

Bethlehem police arrested two Albany residents on Friday, Dec. 5, for allegedly using counterfeit currency to pay for goods at several area stores.

Police executed a search warrant for an Albany residence where authorities believed counterfeit money was being manufactured and used at area businesses. Over the past two months, Bethlehem and Colonie detectives, along with the U.S. Secret Service, have investigated multiple subjects passing counterfeit \$20 bills at stores. During these incidents, the suspect typically purchased an item of nominal value to receive the maximum amount of genuine currency as change.

Police arrested Umar Davis, 21, and Zhaine Fletcher, 21, both of Albany, for allegedly using counterfeit currency

at multiple locations. Davis and Fletcher were charged with two counts of criminal possession of a forged instrument in the first degree and two counts of conspiracy in the fourth degree, both felonies.

Judge Ryan Donovan arraigned them in Bethlehem Town Court. Davis was remanded to Albany County jail in lieu of \$90,000 bail. Fletcher was remanded to county jail in lieu of \$50,000 bail.



Umar Davis



Zhaine Fletcher

Both were scheduled appear in Bethlehem Town Court on Wednesday, Dec. 10, for a preliminary hearing.

Bethlehem police are continuing the joint investigation with the Albany Police Department, Colonie Police Department and U.S. Secret Service, with additional charges pending.

Police recommend storeowners inspect money to ensure it's genuine prior to accepting it.

## Man pleads guilty to having drugs at motel

Joshua Bojkovic, 27, of Guilderland, pleaded guilty to criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, a felony, in Albany County Court Thursday morning, Dec.

4, according to county District Attorney David Soares.

On March 31, the Albany County Sheriff's Department obtained a search warrant for 2019 Western Ave., Western Motel, in Guilderland. While searching the hotel, police found Bojkovic to be in possession of nine ounces of powdered cocaine, a quantity of MDMA, and "other narcotics," according to the District Attorney's Office.

Bojkovic faces five years in state prison, to be followed by three years of post-release supervision, when sentenced on Jan. 29.



Joshua Bojkovic

a motor vehicle in the second degree. Police stopped Pittman on I-90 westbound, and he allegedly failed field sobriety tests. A chemical breath test later revealed he had a BAC of 0.16 percent. When a finger print check was run for Pittman, police said they discovered his identity. He allegedly provided a driver's license with a different identity. He was scheduled to be arraigned in Guilderland Town Court Monday, Dec. 1.

• Bethlehem police arrested Donald Buist, 63, of 100 McGuffey Lane in Delmar, on Monday, Oct. 27, around 11:30 p.m., and charged him with aggravated DWI for having a BAC of 0.18 or higher and various traffic infractions. Police said a resident reported a vehicle swerving while traveling westbound on Delaware Avenue and using a turn signal at every block. The resident followed the vehicle and observed the driver then make a left turn onto Elsmere Avenue and reportedly hit a curb. This damaged the passenger side rim and deflated the tires. The car then continued south and parked in the driveway of 31 Greenleaf Drive.

The resident then called the police to report the incident and went to

check on the driver. The resident said Buist exited the car and allegedly acted "belligerent" and had a hard time standing. The resident notified the driver that they had called the police and authorities were on their way. The driver then went into the house and turned on the lights. Police arrived and interviewed the resident before knocking on the door of the home.

Police said Buist refused to say he was driving until the resident was called inside and confirmed it. Buist then allegedly admitted to driving after having a few drinks earlier in the day. Police observed Buist to be unsteady on his feet and have droopy eyes. Police said he failed sobriety tests and a chemical breath test later revealed he had a BAC of 0.2 percent. Buist was arraigned, released and scheduled to return to court at a later date.

• Guilderland police arrested Tyrone R. Fitch, 39, of 7 Boenau in Albany, around 1:15 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 22, and charged him with DWI, illegal U-turn and driving while using a mobile device. Police observed Fitch using a mobile device while driving westbound on Western Avenue and make an illegal U-turn. Police observed him to have a strong odor of alcohol on his breath, impaired motor coordination and glassy, bloodshot eyes. Fitch allegedly admitted to consuming two Coors Light "tall boys" before driving. During standardized field sobriety tests, police said he was unable to control his bladder function and urinated in his pants. A chemical breath test revealed he had a BAC of 0.17 percent.

## Other arrests

• State Police arrested Earl L. Pittman, 34, of Schenectady, around 3:30 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 30, and charged him with forgery in the second degree and offering a false instrument for filing in the first degree, both felonies, criminal impersonation in the second degree, DWI and aggravated unlicensed operation of

## Got news?

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All events must be open to the public and announcements should contain the date, time, location and cost, along with contact information. Announcements are published space and time permitting.

Submissions can be emailed to news@spotlightnews.com with "community news" in the subject line.

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## ■ TAXES

# BCSD talks tax exemptions

Conservation easement and veterans designations to be discussed at public hearing

By **MARCY VELTE**  
veltem@spotlightnews.com

**BETHLEHEM** — Town officials have asked the Bethlehem Central School District to consider taking part in the new conservation easement tax exemptions for qualified landowners.

School board members heard a presentation on the exemption by Town Supervisor John Clarkson and Planning Director Rob Leslie on Wednesday, Nov. 3. Although the town has already passed the measure into law, many residents are waiting to see if the school district and county will sign on before applying.

"We believe this is a great, new tool in preserving open space," said Clarkson. "We, the town, are asking you to opt in because obviously it will be much more effective if your taxes are weighed in, as well for the exemption."

Guilderland and Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk Central School Districts have also been approached, along with Albany County. They have yet to make a decision.

The town passed a "bare bones" version of the law in August, which includes all of the state's mandates. Residents can then apply for the exemptions, with a Conservation Easement Board approving specific recommendations and requirements for each individual property before the application is passed on to the town board.

The exemption would mainly be based on how long landowners committed their land to remain open space.

The shortest amount of time, which is mandated by the state, would be 15 years and comes with a 50 percent tax break. No development can occur on the land during the easement's timeframe, and the restrictions stay with the deed, not the owner of the property. Those who apply for a perpetual easement would see a 90 percent tax break.

If landowners break the exemption and develop a portion of their land, they must pay back five times the amount of tax saving for them the last year, plus 6 percent interest for up to five years.

Some school board members were concerned landowners would be getting a tax deal if they opted to develop their land in the middle of the easement. Clarkson said developing on the land and paying the fine also does not mean a landowner gets out of the easement, since it remains with the deed. The only way to break away from the easement would be with approval from the Conservation Easement Board.

Within the Bethlehem Central School District, 119 properties would be eligible for the program. These are properties with more than five acres of vacant land.

Clarkson said that by opting in to the program, the school district will not receive less in tax revenue, but taxes would be redistributed among residents.

"I wouldn't want anyone to think, 'Good heavens, our school district might get less revenue.' It's simply about who pays it," said Clarkson.

According to district Chief Business and Financial Officer Judi

Kehoe, if every eligible property applied for a conservation easement at the minimum 15 years, the average resident would see a tax increase on \$7 per \$250,000. At the large end, if every eligible landowner applied for the perpetual easement at a 90 percent tax reduction, the average homeowner would see their school taxes increase by \$13.

Clarkson said the town is expecting only about a quarter of the eligible landowners to apply for the program, and it would be rare for someone to apply for the perpetual exemption since those landowners are more likely to just donate their land to a charitable group like the Mohawk-Hudson Land Conservancy.

Leslie said just two other towns in the state now have conservation easements programs. One is Elma in western New York, with three or four properties receiving exemptions. The other is Orchard Park with 75 to 100 properties.

Superintendent Tom Douglas asked why the town didn't reach out to the district before the law was passed, so board members had more time to consider the program and voice their concerns. Clarkson said he felt getting the easement passed by the state "was a long shot" and was "pleasantly surprised" when it passed so quickly.

Some board members were concerned that passing the easements would place more strife on families who are already struggling

financially. Clarkson said many of the town's farm families are also struggling, and this was being done as another option to help, since many saw increases in their assessments after the recent reassessment project.

"There are many farm families who have had land for a tremendously long time, who perhaps weren't planning to sell to developers immediately, and for them, we, the town board, recognize there were difficulties made by the reassessment," said Clarkson, reiterating the reassessment also helped a majority of residents in town reduce their taxes.

Board members said they were apprehensive, since the results of a resident survey the town provided on preserving open space were nearly 10 years old. They asked to see the results for the full survey and any updated information the town could provide.

A public hearing on the Conservation Easement is set for Wednesday, Dec. 17, at 7 p.m. at the Bethlehem High School.

## Veterans exemption

Also on Dec. 17, the school district will hold a public hearing to determine if it should participate in the Alternative Veterans Tax Exemption.

The exemption started in 1984 and originally

was only for municipality taxes. However, the law was amended last year to include school districts. Kehoe said this would also impact the Bethlehem Public Library, if the district were to opt in.

Veterans who were honorably discharged, served active duty during wartime, and those who qualify under alternatives to "periods of war" or received an Expeditionary Medal could participate. Reservists usually cannot, though some family members of veterans may be eligible.

Like with the conservation easement exemption, the district would still receive the same amount in revenue but the taxes would be redistributed among residents. The exemption is limited to the primary residence at a maximum of \$240,000.

Those who served

during wartime could receive a 15 percent exemption; those who served in a combat zone could receive up to a 25 percent exemption, and those with a service-connected disability could receive up to a 50 percent exemption. Equalization rates are applied and this is before the STAR exemptions, so this could reduce the district's aid.

Between Bethlehem and New Scotland, 1,087 households have veterans exemptions through their towns within the schools district. If maximum benefits were granted for all eligible veterans, school and library taxes would increase by \$85 for an average \$250,000 home.

A public hearing on the Alternative Veterans Exemption is set for Wednesday, Dec. 17, at 6:30 p.m. at the Bethlehem High School.

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## ■ COMMUNITY

# Stories and Sweets Dec. 13

*A candle is a small thing. But one candle can light another. And see how its own light increases, as a candle gives its flame to the other. You are such a light.*  
— Moshe Davis & Victor Ratner

## Stories and Sweets with Santa

We've had some snow, and holiday decorations are popping up around town. Get in the holiday spirit with children of all ages at the RCS Community Library's third annual Stories and Sweets with Santa. Beginning at 10:30 a.m. on Dec. 13, the library will have crafts for kids, a bake sale of homemade sweets and a basket raffle. Santa will arrive at 11:30 a.m. to read a Christmas story.

Bakers are needed. If you can provide something delicious for the sale, call 756-2053 or email [info@rcscommunitylibrary.org](mailto:info@rcscommunitylibrary.org)

## Lunchtime book discussion

A new daytime book

## RCS COMMUNITY LIBRARY

discussion group will meet on Wednesday, Dec. 17, at noon in the library Community Room. The group will be led by Director Judith Wines, and the discussion will revolve around "Life After Life" by Kate Atkinson. Copies of the book are available for check out at the library.

## Sip and Paint

Create a quick and easy snowman project on burlap canvas at the library's first Sip and Paint. This is a relaxing evening for grownups before all the hustle and bustle of the holidays. Beginners are welcome. We'll provide the supplies and hot chocolate for sipping. All you need to bring your artistic side and some holiday spirit. Mark your calendar for Dec. 16 at 7 p.m.

Class size is limited, so please call 756-2053 or email to register.

— Carol Melewski

# Donate to Senior Projects

'T is the season to make a gift to Bethlehem Senior Projects, Inc., a non-profit organization established to support the older residents of the Town of Bethlehem. We fund half of the vehicles in the senior transportation fleet, fund the Food Pantry, support the Community Equipment Loan Closet, sponsor educational and wellness programs and contribute to the Emergency Heating Fund. Your tax-deductible donation can be made to honor a family member or a friend, or simply support the senior population in our town. Make checks payable to Bethlehem Senior Projects, Inc. and mail to Town of Bethlehem, 445 Delaware Ave., Delmar



12054. We are grateful for all of our supporters.

The Bethlehem Senior Citizens Club meets weekly on Thursdays for an enjoyable afternoon of games and socializing at the Bethlehem Town Hall auditorium, 445 Delaware Ave., Delmar, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bring a lunch and play pinochle, bingo, or mah jongg. Or just come for a chat with friends. Call Yvonne Mendleson at 472-0202 for more information.

— Wilma DeLucco

# Holiday events at the Y

First, a disclaimer: The real credit for writing this column goes to the people who created some of the most beloved Christmas movies and shows that have become an integral part of every holiday season.

A very wise man once said that the best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear. This weekend, the Bethlehem YMCA will be giving people a special opportunity to spread that cheer when we turn our ice rink into Rockefeller Center during a special Skate Into the Holidays skating event. On Saturday, Dec. 13, from 4:45 to 6:45 p.m., there will be Christmas music, lights, a Christmas tree, a concession stand with goodies and a special appearance from Santa Claus. It's an event that is sure to put a smile on your face. Smiling's my favorite.

Afterwards, no one is walking out on this fun, old-fashioned family Christmas.

When the skating is done, everyone is invited to join us for our Family Movie Night in the Community Room across from the front desk. It's sure to be a red-letter day for the Baileys and everyone else who joins in the fun.

During the movie, there will be pizza and food from the four main food groups: candy, candy canes, candy corn and syrup. Maybe even some



Ovaltine if you can decode the secret message.

Before the skating party, the Bethlehem Y will have a family pool outing from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. with floats, rafts and pool balls. Maybe even a gym floor on top of the pool for a big dance contest — but probably not; someone might fall in.

Earlier in Saturday morning, there will be the inaugural Bethlehem YMCA Winter Wonderland 5K and 3K run beginning at 9 a.m. The races begin and end at Hamagrael Elementary School in Delmar. Same day registration is available for \$25. There will also be a free kids' fun run at 8:30 a.m.

Don't be left home alone. These events are open to the entire community. Christmas Day is in our grasp, so long as we have hands to clasp. So bring your family, friends and neighbors. Remember, no man is a failure who has friends.

Yes, Christmas is on its way. Lovely, glorious, beautiful Christmas, upon which the entire kid year revolves. At this time of year, it is very important to remember those who are less fortunate.

Stop in and take an



Bethlehem YMCA volunteer Diane Lykes hangs an ornament on the Y's Giving Tree. Each ornament has a gift idea for a local child who may not otherwise receive a present on Christmas. People can take an ornament off the tree and return it to the YMCA with the unwrapped gift and brighten a family's holiday.

Submitted photo

ornament off of our Giving Tree. By doing so, you can help a local family by providing a Christmas gift for a child who may not otherwise have one. Just take an ornament off the tree and purchase the gift, which is from a wish list provided by the families. Return the gift unwrapped to the Y by Dec. 14, and we'll deliver it and bring a smile to a face and warmth to a heart. After all, Christmas doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps ... means a little bit more.

The joy of brightening the Christmas of a child who may not otherwise receive a present is the gift that keeps on giving throughout the entire year. Strange, isn't it? Each man's life touches so many other lives. Last year,

thanks to the generosity of our members, our giving tree helped more than 300 families with presents that ranged from dolls, sports gear and supermarket gift cards to an official Red Ryder, carbine action, two-hundred-shot range model air rifle. (Not really, you'd shoot your eye out.)

So, I'll double dog dare you to board the Polar Express down Delaware Avenue to the Bethlehem YMCA this Saturday, drop off a gift for our giving tree and enjoy our holiday skating spectacular and family movie night. You are sure to leave happy, running through town in the snow shouting "Merry Christmas, YMCA! Merry Christmas, Town Hall! Merry Christmas, you wonderful old Four Corners!"

— Mark Hansen

# Schoolcraft Center hosts event

## Schoolcraft Cultural Center Holiday Event

Saturday, Dec. 13, 1-4 p.m., at 2299 Western Turnpike.

Join us for a holiday visit. See our fresh cut tree, the beautifully decorated house and the progress being made in its restoration.

Music by: Musicians of Ma'alwyck — Holiday

## Town of Guilderland SENIOR CALENDAR

melodies from all over the world. Refreshments will be served.

## Transportation reminder

When the Guilderland Schools are closed due to inclement weather, all scheduled shopping trips

and scheduled medical appointments will be cancelled.

When the Guilderland Schools are listed as delayed in opening, we will still provide transportation and we may be delayed in getting to you due to road conditions — be patient.

## Aerobic-cardio circuit registration

Registration for the next session of aerobics,

Senior Fitness and Cardio Circuit classes will take place Dec. 8-10 immediately following each class.

## Wednesday, Dec. 10

Scheduled Shopping Christmas Tree Shopping Trip Exercise Class Registration 9 a.m. Cardio Circuit 10:30 a.m. Strong Bones + 10:30 a.m. Sr. Fitness



## ■ COMMUNITY

# How the Dutch brought us Santa

In this multi-media lecture at GPL on Sunday, Dec. 13, at 2 p.m., author and food historian Peter G. Rose delves into the early history of the life of Saint Nicholas and explains how this humble person became the icon that he is today.

"Joyful Traditions: How the Dutch Brought Us Santa, Presents & Treats" is part of the "Speakers in the Humanities" series that brings distinguished scholars to audiences across New York.

Rose will explain the various changes in Saint Nicholas' veneration, and relate how he was brought to America by the Dutch in the 17th century and transformed into Santa in the 19th century. The talk encompasses such subjects as literature, religion and fine arts to describe the extraordinary story of Saint Nicholas, which has had a lasting impact on American culture.

GUILDERLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY  
www.guilpl.org

Rose will have his latest book, "Delicious December," available for purchase at this event. Along with his work as an author, he is a columnist and food historian. He has lectured on a variety of topics related to Dutch-American culinary history at the Smithsonian Institute, the National Gallery of Art, the Culinary Institute of America, New York University, the New-York Historical Society, and many other societies and libraries in New York state.

This "Speakers in the Humanities" event, which is free and open to the public, is made possible through the support of the New York Council for the Humanities, a state affiliate of the National

Endowment for the Humanities.

No registration required. Just come on in.

## Come to the Hobbit Party

Children and families are cordially invited to GPL on Friday, Dec. 12, at 3:30 p.m. to join friends and neighbors for a splendid Hobbit Party celebrating the release of the final installment of the "Hobbit" trilogy.

This fun time of crafts, activities, and other Hobbit-fun is for every Hobbit fan, regardless of age. There will be popcorn, a photo booth, and a costume contest. You don't need to wear a costume, but you can if you want to. No movie will be shown at

this program.

Please call 456-2400, ext. 4 to let us know you're coming to the Hobbit Party.

## Living Well for Boomers: Part 3

The third and final "Living Well for Boomers and Beyond: A CDPHP Wellness Workshop" will be held at GPL on Tuesday, Dec. 16, at 5:30 p.m.

This vital session shows Baby Boomers how to focus on healthy living for years yet to come. Among the topics covered are eating well, staying active and getting the best night's sleep for optimal health.

Registration is required; please call 456-2400, ext. 2. You can also sign up online at [guilpl.org](http://guilpl.org); go to the event calendar for Dec. 16 and click on the "Living Well for Boomers" link.

## The Local Connections Film Series

Parts of this movie adaptation of Edith Wharton's 1920 novel, "The Age of Innocence" — showing at GPL on Thursday, Dec. 18, at 2 p.m. — were filmed right in Troy.

This great addition to our Local Connections Film Series is the "tale of 19th century New York high society in which a young lawyer falls in love with a woman separated from her husband, while he is engaged to the woman's cousin." — [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)

It stars the incomparable Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder, and was directed by Martin Scorsese. Rated PG, it was released in 1993, and is 139 minute long.

## Need a gift for your favorite reader?

If you need a special gift for the avid readers in your life, come to GPL's Better Books Sale on Saturday, Dec. 13. Doors open at 10 a.m. This sale has some special items, not the least of which being items from the late Joseph E. Persico's personal library.

## Holiday hours

GPL will be closed Wednesday, Dec. 24, and Thursday, Dec. 25, for the Christmas holiday. It will reopen at 10 a.m. Friday, Dec. 26. Your virtual hometown library is always open at [www.guilpl.org](http://www.guilpl.org).

## About the library

The Guilderland Public Library is located at 2228 Western Ave., Guilderland. — Mark Curiale

# Holiday drop-in craft day

Children ages pre-k through grade 4, with an adult, are invited to drop in on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and enjoy a snack and some holiday cheer while making crafts. Join the fun by putting together our famous "Gingerbread Houses," making some ornaments, and taking part in other holiday activities.

## Cookie exchange

Yum yum! We all want a variety of cookies and treats to put out for holiday visitors, but who has time to make so many different things? Here comes the Library Foodies to the rescue. On Sunday, Dec. 14, at 2 p.m., bring three-dozen of your finest treats along with a recipe card, and we'll have a grand old time. Of course, we'll have to do some taste tests, but the rest will be boxed up and sent home to share with your family and friends. The library will provide hot chocolate, tea and coffee and the take home containers.

Voorheesville Public Library

## Holiday shopping on Amazon

If you will be doing some of your holiday shopping online at Amazon.com, please consider using the boxed Amazon link on the library website. For every dollar spent using the library link, Amazon will donate a small portion back to the friends of the library.

## Six-week writing workshop

Join local author and historian Dennis Sullivan as he guides you on a journey through your own history. This program will be held every other Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m., from Jan. 13 through March 24. The sessions offer the opportunity for you to share what you are writing with the group and receive a helpful critique of your work. Limited seats are available, so please register early.

## December Artist of the Month

Please be sure to stroll through the hall gallery and admire "Watercolors" by Barbara McGeachen. Barbara is a local artist who does watercolors and stained glass originals. Our display case this month is a collection of nutcrackers, shared by Pat Galvin. If you have a collection that you would be willing to share at the library, please give us a call at 765-2598 and let us know about it.

## Humane Society donations

This year, the library is collecting donations for the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society. From Sunday, Dec. 1, through Wednesday, Dec. 31, bring in any pet related item (food, leash, treats, etc.). Place them on our "donations for pets" table display. For a complete list of acceptable items, go to [www.mohawkhumane.org/wishlist.html](http://www.mohawkhumane.org/wishlist.html).

— Lynn Kohler

# A look back at 2014

This year — the beginning of Bethlehem Public Library's second century — was, as usual, packed with a wide variety of programs for all ages.

We welcomed several local authors. We learned behind-the-scenes facts about "Downton Abbey" and "Gone With The Wind." We inaugurated a memorial storytelling series.

We remembered how the Beatles took Manhattan, and we listened to classic recordings of jazz greats Stan Getz, Art Van Damme, Frank Sinatra and others.

In a more formal vein, we enjoyed a men's choir, a wind quintet, music of India and songs of Henry Purcell.

The year saw regular meetings of our origami club, Lego club, knitting club, board game club, and weekly tai chi classes. Our MakerBot 3D printer got lots of enthusiastic and creative use by children and

BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Opening Doors

Check It Out

adults. Friendly dogs lent fuzzy ears to stories read by children.

We explored history above and below ground. The restoration of the FDR library in Hyde Park was the subject of a talk and field trip, and a local spelunker recounted the history of Howe Caverns.

We teamed up with the Alzheimer's Association, Living Healthy NY, the Albany County Department of Health, Community Caregivers, the Delmar Fire Department and Bethlehem Senior Projects to learn about Lyme disease, disaster preparedness, fire safety, dementia, pain management and consumer fraud. We hosted another Red Cross Blood Drive.

Our teens presented a fabulous fashion show, modeling book-themed

clothing they designed and sewed themselves. Teens also participated in Read It Forward, sharing copies of "The Paladin Prophecy" without constraints of due dates and fines.

Our Summer Reading Program celebrated science this year, exploring everything from bubbles to buoyancy, chicken eggs to elephant's toothpaste.

The coming year promises to be just as varied and voluminous. Check our publications for library programs that ring out the old year and ring in the new.

## Holiday hours

The library will be closed on Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 24-25, for the Christmas holiday. We'll close at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 31, and remain closed till 9 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 2. We're always open online at [www.bethlehempubliclibrary.org](http://www.bethlehempubliclibrary.org).

— Louise Grieco

## ■ NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

### Friendship Singers perform holiday show

**BETHLEHEM** — The Friendship Singers present a Christmas program Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 7:30 p.m., at the Delmar Reformed Church, 386 Delaware Ave.

The program consists of mostly familiar Christmas carols and holiday favorites, and it will include audience sing-a-longs.

Prior to the event, the local women's singing group will perform the same program at four other locales. They will be featured at a luncheon meeting of the Second Milers on the same date as the evening show.

All ages are invited to attend.

### Woman's Club hosts Holiday Gala

**ALBANY** — The Woman's Club of Albany hosts its annual Holiday Gala Thursday, Dec. 11, from 6-10 p.m., at the club, 725 Madison Ave.

The club has selected two non-profit organizations as beneficiaries of its annual "Celebrate the Season" fundraising events: Grassroots Givers and the Bus Stop Club. Two afternoon teas were held Dec. 5 and 6.

The gala features music by Mixed Company and a hot-and-cold buffet. Silent auction items will be displayed for bidding at all events.

Tickets are \$75. Reservations are required. Proceeds will also support the Woman's Club.

For reservations or more information, call 465-3626 or visit [www.womansclubofalbany.com](http://www.womansclubofalbany.com).

### Q.U.I.L.T. schedules monthly meeting

**BETHLEHEM** — Q.U.I.L.T. Inc. meets Friday, Dec. 12, at the Delmar Reformed Church, 386 Delaware Ave.

The general meeting begins at 9:45 a.m. This is the organization's holiday meeting, so there will be a gift exchange and cookie social, a giant show and share and the 2014 Program Chair Challenge — Scrap Table Runner. Winners will be picked by viewers' choice voting, and the



### Veterans Miracle Center opens

The Veterans Miracle Center held its ribbon cutting ceremony Friday, Nov. 14. The center — located at 10 Interstate Ave. in Colonie — allows qualified veterans to shop without paying a penny. The center is run by Jezreel International, which was founded by Barry Feinman.

Submitted photo

top three will receive prizes.

The event is free, and doors open at 9:15 a.m. For more information, call 393-2284 or visit [www.quilt-inc.org](http://www.quilt-inc.org).

### Mendelssohn Club Christmas show

**ALBANY** — The Mendelssohn Club of Albany presents its annual holiday concert Friday, Dec. 12, at 7:30 p.m., at the Hart Theater in The Egg, Empire State Plaza.

The theme of this year's show is "Seasonal Joy Around the World." The show features a diverse program of international music, including some familiar tunes from the United States and England, as well as songs from Spain, Hungary, Israel and Nigeria.

Soprano Vedrana Kalas and the Queensbury High School Madrigal Singers are this year's special guests.

### Book release and holiday party

**GUILDERLAND** — The

Guilderland Homeopathic Clinic is hosting a book release and holiday party Saturday, Dec. 13, from 1 to 3 p.m., at its office, 2592 Western Ave.

Dr. Larry Malerba will be signing copies of his new book, "Metaphysics & Medicine: Restoring Freedom of Thought to the Art and Science of Healing." There will also be refreshments served.

For more information, call 357-4210 or [www.DrMHomeopathy.com](http://www.DrMHomeopathy.com).

### Fascinated by Falcons program

**BETHLEHEM** — Five Rivers Environmental Education Center hosts "Fascinated by Falcons" Saturday, Dec. 13, at 2 p.m., at the center, 56 Game Farm Road.

Learn about the four species of falcons that have been seen in New York. This includes the fastest bird in the world, the Peregrine, which can dive at speeds up to 220 mph.

The program starts with an indoor presentation, followed by

a walk on the trails to look for and discuss falcon habitat and prey.

At 10 a.m., visitors are invited to join a Five Rivers naturalist for a guided walk along the Service Road Loop Trail. This flat route takes people past ponds, forests and fields. Several mammal and bird species have been spotted along this trail.

For more information, call Five Rivers at 475-0291.

### Delmar Community Orchestra concert

**BETHLEHEM** — The Delmar Community Orchestra, under the direction of Michael Blostein, will present its Holiday Concert Monday, Dec. 15, at 7:30 p.m., at Bethlehem Town Hall, 445 Delaware Ave.

The concert is free and includes pops, classical works and holiday favorites.

For more information, contact DCO President Ann Gabriels at 439-6558 or email [delmarcommunityorchestra@gmail.com](mailto:delmarcommunityorchestra@gmail.com), or visit [www.delmarcommunityorchestra.com](http://www.delmarcommunityorchestra.com).

### Menorah lighting at Four Corners

**BETHLEHEM** — Bethlehem Chabad will hold a grand menorah lighting, car menorah parade and a "glow in the dark" Chanukah extravaganza Sunday, Dec. 21, from 3 to 5:30 p.m., starting at the Four Corners.

The largest menorah in the Capital District will be lit at 3 p.m. Directly after the lighting, there will be a new segment to the celebration by having a car menorah parade that goes from the Four Corners to the Normanside Country Club. People are welcome to join the car procession by calling Bethlehem Chabad at 866-7658.

The "glow in the dark" Chanukah extravaganza takes place at the Normanside Country Club. There will be glow-in-the-dark dreidels, snow globe making, face painting and more.

All events are free. For more information, call 866-7658 or visit [www.BethlehemChabad.com](http://www.BethlehemChabad.com).

### Adopt-A-Wish to help area children

**CAPITAL DISTRICT** — Make-A-Wish Northeast New York has launched its annual Adopt-A-Wish campaign to help grant wishes to area children.

Wish stars are available for a \$3 donation at Colonie Center, Crossgates Mall and branches of First Niagara Bank.

### ■ POST YOUR EVENT ONLINE

To submit an event to run in our online calendar, simply go to [www.spotlightnews.com/events/submit/](http://www.spotlightnews.com/events/submit/), become a registered user and fill out your event's information in the provided form.

Submissions are subject to approval and may take up to 24 hours to be approved.

\* News briefs for our community page must be sent via email to [news@spotlightnews.com](mailto:news@spotlightnews.com) and may not appear online.

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## ■ BUSINESS

# Monolith solar seeks tax breaks

Company makes its case before Bethlehem IDA

By **MARCY VELTE**  
veltem@spotlightnews.com

**BETHLEHEM** — Monolith Solar is seeking a tax break from the town as it aims to become the first tech tenant within the Vista Technology Campus.

The company went before the Bethlehem IDA on Monday, Dec. 1, where representatives sought nearly \$700,000 in benefits.

"This is the wave of the future," said President of Columbia Development Joe Nicolla to the IDA about the solar market. "It took us a long time to get here."

The applicant, SAE Sun and Earth Energy, asked for \$320,400 in sales tax abatements, \$48,715 in mortgage exemptions and \$313,266 in real property tax exemptions. Although Monolith Solar will occupy the space, the other company owned by co-founder Mark Fobare and Steven

Erby will technically own the property.

It was announced at a media event in October that Monolith Solar would be moving its headquarters from Rensselaer to Vista. The project includes a 16,000-square-foot administration building, a 10,000-square-foot building for warehouse and manufacturing, and an additional solar farm to potentially provide energy to Vista's other tenants.

Solar panel production will take place at Monolith's new headquarters, but the company has its eye on opening additional satellite locations as it expands throughout the state and country. There is also the possibility to expand at Vista.

Erby told the IDA about 2,400 homes could be energized by the solar farm. The panels however will be able to be purchased by companies or

homeowners in order to provide energy outside of the general area.

Bethlehem IDA Executive Director Tom Connolly asked why the solar farm is an IDA project since no tax abatements are being sought for that property. Columbia Development representatives said it was included because the purchase price of the properties will be included in one mortgage and the applicants will be seeking

to keep the two properties as one contiguous parcel, while the Planning Department is leaning toward separating them.

Along with any tax breaks sought by Monolith Solar and Columbia Development, Empire State Development is providing the company with a \$400,000 grant and \$400,000 in performance-based tax credits from Excelsior Jobs Program. These incentives are tied directly to job creation and investment

commitments. The company turned down significant tax breaks from Missouri to instead relocate its headquarters to

Kansas City, where it already had a small set of employees.

The new building and expansion will be known as 85 Columbia. The \$4.9 million project is expected to retain 49 jobs, with the possibility of creating 76 additional jobs within the next five years.

Financial records weren't included in the application, and

some board members asked why they weren't. Nicolla said those could be provided, but only if confidentiality assurances could be made, and if the information was somehow released, the ramifications would be on the IDA.

The project is already behind schedule, since Erby previously said the hope was to break ground by the end of this month.

"We're trying to get in the ground," said Nicolla. "I know the drum's been beat and Tom (Connolly) calls me once or twice a week asking 'Where's the technology?' The supervisor calls me. Joe (Richardson, vice chairman of the IDA), every time he sees me, he beats me over the head, 'Where's the technology company?' Well, here's the technology company, how do we get going?"

The next IDA meeting is on the morning of Dec. 18. The board asked for all of the additional information needed so the application is complete, with the potential to set the public hearing at that meeting.

*"This is the wave of the future. It took us a long time to get here."*

— President of Columbia Development Joe Nicolla

a mortgage tax exemption. This is just for the land, not the solar farm equipment.

The town Planning Department is still determining if the properties will need to be separated from a planning and zoning standpoint, since they are different uses, according to Director Rob Leslie. The developers said they would like

## ■ POLITICS

## County Legislature could shrink

**ALBANY COUNTY** — Reducing the amount of legislative districts appeared stuck on murky ground, but it has abruptly moved into the fast lane.

Albany County Legislative Chairman Shawn Morse and Democratic Majority Leader Frank Commisso introduced a local law Thursday night, Dec. 4, during a Democratic caucus. The legislature will set the date for a public hearing on the proposal at its meeting Monday, Dec. 8.

Hundreds of revisions were recommended in Charter Review Commission's report, but reducing the size of the county legislature from 39 to 25 members has largely remained the most contentious proposal.

Several urban community leaders previously spoke against the downsizing claiming it would reduce the amount of representation. Republican legislators have said cost savings must be tied to the reduction, with staffs or

expenses not bloating to take on the larger districts. Democrats never presented a unified position.

Morse could not be reached for comment before *The Spotlight* went to press.

County Executive Daniel McCoy said he has been calling for the commission's recommendations to be implemented since its report

was released in January, including reducing legislative districts.

Democrats could not secure enough votes during the legislature's special meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 2, to approve a settlement in a voting rights lawsuit against the county arguing the recent redistricting was unfair to minority voters.

McCoy had sued the legislature over its authority to even negotiate and reach settlement, which apparently gave some legislators cold feet on the agreement.

Even if the county legislature approved the local law to reduce its size, voters would have the final say on its reduction.

— John Purcell

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## ■ COMMUNITY

# A seasonal stroll

Bethlehem's Holiday Parade success relies on volunteers' efforts

By **MARCY VELTE**  
veltem@spotlightnews.com

**BETHLEHEM** — The Bethlehem Holiday Parade started out much smaller than its current iteration. In fact, it wasn't a parade at all.

About 25 years ago, the Delmar Fire Department had an idea. They would go caroling throughout the town and collect funds for local charities. Usually the money was collected for the Children's Hospital at Albany Medical.

Eventually the collection shifted. The department collected gifts, and would deliver them to less fortunate families in town on Christmas Eve.

"It was something we decided to do to give back," said Greg Gould, who's been with the Delmar Fire Department for more than 25 years. "We would adopt (families), and Santa would deliver them (the presents)



Even the furry residents of Bethlehem had a chance to strut their stuff at the Holiday Parade.

on Christmas Eve."

Gould said the department would bring out the old 34 Mack fire truck, and Santa Claus would ride on it while the presents were delivered. At the time, it wasn't deemed an official event by the town, but many families would come outside to see Santa and the truck. Eventually, the department started to deliver Santa to the tree at the Four Corners and allow kids come and visit with him.

"It was just a lot of fun,"

said Gould.

The official town parade started eight years ago. Former Town Supervisor Jack Cunningham said the idea originated with Assistant Town Engineer Terry Ritz.

"He restores old fire trucks and told me he was taking some of his trucks to be in the holiday parade in Coeymans," said Cunningham. "He asked why we weren't doing something similar, and I thought he had a good point."



The Bethlehem Holiday Parade got its start when the Delmar Fire Department began delivering gifts to needy residents, a tradition that later morphed into the town-wide parade.

Photos by Marcy Velte/  
Spotlight

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So Cunningham asked town employees to volunteer, along with help from the police and fire departments, to put on Bethlehem's first holiday parade. The event became a hit and was continued with the next two town supervisors.

Town Clark Nanci Moquin is now responsible for the parade's organization.

"We have to collect the applications for those who want to march and line everybody up," said Moquin. "That's the hardest part."

This year, the Boy Scouts have also volunteered to help organize the parade at the beginning. One of the biggest problems in years past was parents dropping off their kids to march in the parade without enough supervision. The Scouts

offered to help oversee the children at the staging area to make it safer.

Dan Ryan Sr., father of Delmar Fire Chief Dan Ryan, played Santa when the event was first organized by the department. It's a tradition he's continued 12 years later as the event morphed into an official parade.

"I call it the shortest parade in the United States," said Ryan. "I think it's a perfect small-town activity. My favorite part is when we come into the town square and 200 to 300 kids are yelling for Santa Claus. Then all the kids come up, and the parents want a picture."

Some women from the fire department dress as elves and help make sure each child is seen by Santa and make sure the line moves quickly. They

are also in charge of giving out candy canes. Some of the kids bring their lists, or Santa will ask if they have sent out their letter yet.

"They usually say they plan to do it as soon as they get home," said Ryan.

A few years ago, Delmar Fire got Santa his own specialty fire helmet, along with a pair of fire boots, so he looks the part.

"I think I have more fun than the kids do," said Ryan.

Moquin said she likes seeing the looks on the kids' faces when they see the floats or Santa's arrival.

"This would not happen is we did not have the highway, police, fire and public works departments all working together and playing their parts," said Moquin. "It's really a joint effort from everyone in the town to be able to pull this off."



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happen — @jonas\_spotlight.

December 10, 2014

# Spotlight on Sports

www.spotlightnews.com PAGE 11

## Weekly poll

Which team will be  
the CDHSHL regular  
season champion?



Go to [spotlightnews.com](http://spotlightnews.com) and click on  
"Sports" to cast your vote, as well as see  
results of previous poll questions.

## ■ PLAYER OF THE WEEK



### ZIBBY ECKHARDT

Guilderland's Zibby Eckhardt is the Spotlight Player of the Week for the period ending Saturday, Dec. 6. Eckhardt scored a game-high 30 points in the Lady Dutch's 56-52 loss to Columbia in a Dec. 5 Suburban Council girls basketball game. Eckhardt scored a total of 42 points for the week.

...

*If you have a high school athlete you'd like to nominate for our Player of the Week, please e-mail Sports Editor Rob Jonas at [jonasr@spotlightnews.com](mailto:jonasr@spotlightnews.com).*

## ■ INSIDE



### Falling short

The Guilderland girls basketball team couldn't rally from a double-digit halftime deficit in a 56-52 home loss to Columbia Friday, Dec. 5.

Page 12

## ■ WRESTLING



Bethlehem's Jack Canova, left, competes at the inaugural Bethlehem Wrestling Tournament Saturday, Dec. 6. Rob Jonas/Spotlight

# Taking the next step

First varsity home tournament part of  
wrestling's growth at Bethlehem

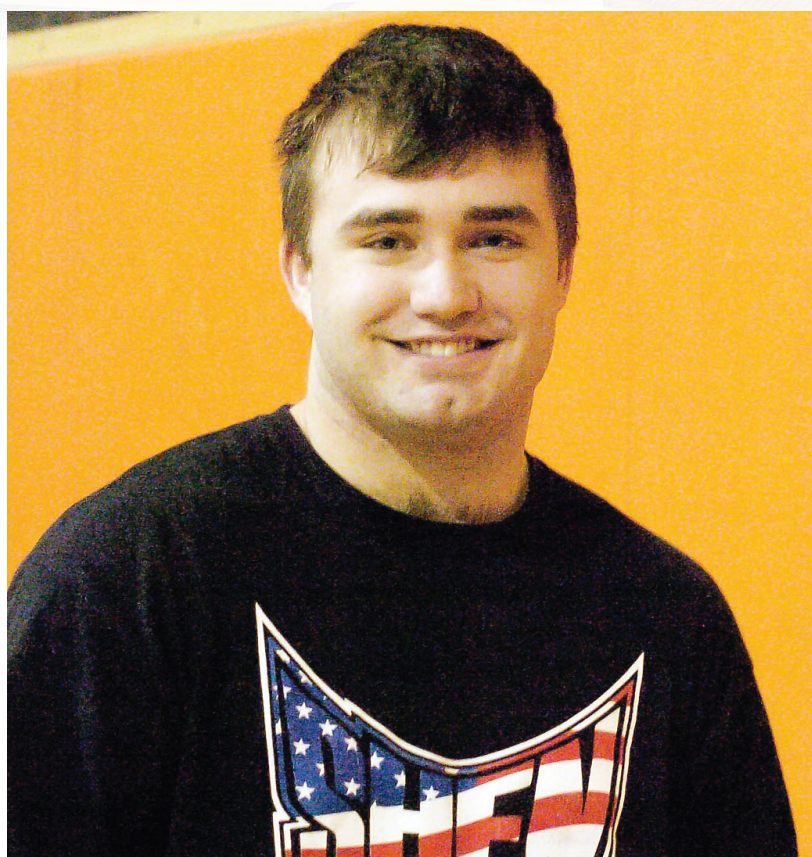
By **ROB JONAS**  
[jonasr@spotlightnews.com](mailto:jonasr@spotlightnews.com)

**BETHLEHEM** — There are two traditional types of high school wrestling tournaments — invitationals where individuals compete in a ladder-style format to determine a weight class champion, and dual meets where teams wrestle against multiple opponents.

Bethlehem wrestling coach Chris Braga decided to take a different approach when he decided to create his school's first varsity tournament, which took place Dec. 5 and 6. Taking an idea from a tournament the Eagles competed in last year at Adirondack High School in the central part of the state, Bethlehem's tournament was a random draw round robin in which individuals competed against all of their opponents in their weight classes.

"We wanted to host a varsity tournament," said Braga. "It's been a little hectic, but the other coaches have been great."

The inaugural tournament's eight-team field included smaller schools such as Salem, Watervliet, Maple Hill and Cohoes. LaSalle and Section 4's Vestal were the only large schools other than Bethlehem in the field.



Heavyweight Chris Tangora is aiming to reach the state tournament after barely missing it last season.

Rob Jonas/Spotlight

Continues on page 12



# BC boys pull even

Sica guides Eagles past Mohonasen

By **ROB JONAS**  
jonasr@spotlightnews.com

**BETHLEHEM** — The Bethlehem boys basketball team evened its Suburban Council record at 1-1 with a 69-53 victory over Mohonasen Thursday, Dec. 4.

The Eagles outscored the Mighty Warriors 19-5 in the third quarter to break open a close game. John Sica led the way with 25 points, nine rebounds and six blocked shots, and Kevin Weber contributed 11 points.

Ryan Carter had 17 points for Mohonasen (0-2).

## Girls basketball

The Bethlehem girls team raised its record to 2-0 with a 78-42 Suburban Council victory over Mohonasen Friday, Dec. 5.

The Lady Eagles used a

19-3 second-quarter run to build a 43-17 halftime lead on the Mighty Warriors (0-2), and they expanded it by outscoring Mohonasen 35-25 in the second half.

Gabby Giaccone poured in 27 points, while Kaylee Rickert and Emily Wander each contributed 13 points for Bethlehem. Saeeda Abdul-Aziz netted 21 points for Mohonasen.

## Hockey

The Bethlehem hockey team fended off Section 7's Saranac Lake 4-3 Saturday, Dec. 6, at the Bethlehem Area YMCA, to earn its first win of the season.

The Eagles (1-3-0) scored all of their goals in the second period to erase a 1-0 deficit. Nicholas Breiner, Brian Harder, Michael Lemieux and Hayes Meredith tallied for Bethlehem.

# Lady Dutch rally falls short

Eckhardt's 30 points not enough against Columbia

By **ROB JONAS**  
jonasr@spotlightnews.com

## GUILDERLAND

— The Guilderland girls basketball team's home debut did not go as planned.

Nastasja Jordan's 19 points led Columbia to a 56-52 Suburban Council victory over the Lady Dutch Friday, Dec. 5, in Guilderland.

The Blue Devils (2-0) jumped out to a 31-20 halftime lead before Guilderland roared back. The Lady Dutch (1-1) outscored Columbia 12-3 in the third quarter to get close, but the Blue Devils held on for the four-point win.

Guilderland's Zibby Eckhardt led all scorers with 30 points.

## Boys basketball

The Guilderland boys basketball team improved its record to 2-0 with a 68-46 Suburban Council victory over Columbia Friday, Dec. 5, in East Greenbush.

The Dutchmen silenced the Columbia crowd by building a 37-12 halftime lead. The Blue Devils (1-1) managed a mild comeback

in the third quarter, but it wasn't nearly enough to catch Guilderland.

Ralph Simeone drained four three-pointers on his way to a 23-point night, and Andrew Platek contributed 19 points in Guilderland's victory. Platek was coming off a 32-point performance in the Dutchmen's season-opening 67-56 win over neighboring rival Bethlehem Tuesday, Dec. 2.

Jahlil Nails netted 20 points for Columbia.

## Hockey

The reloaded Guilderland/Mohonasen/Scotia hockey team began its first season as an independent program with a 5-0 loss to Christian Brothers Academy Friday, Dec. 5, at the Albany County Hockey Training Facility in Colonie.

The Storm (0-1-0) was in danger of fizzling out after a winless 2013-14 season and playing with a 12-man roster. But they were granted independent status from the Capital District High School Hockey League, and they received seven new players to give them their largest roster in three years.



Guilderland's Zibby Eckhardt (22) drives for a layup during a Dec. 5 Suburban Council game against Columbia.

Diane Deyoe/Special to the Spotlight

G/M/S skated with CBA in its opener, but the Storm couldn't get the puck past Brothers goaltender Jared Vandeloo, who made

18 saves. At the other end, Peter Galica tallied twice for CBA (1-0-0).

The two teams meet again Friday, Dec. 12, at RPI.

## From page 11 ...

## Tangora leads the way for BC

Bethlehem's top performer was senior Chris Tangora, who easily handled the rest of the 195-pound wrestlers at the tournament. Tangora said

he is looking forward to the 2014-15 season after falling short of making the state championships last season with losses to Colonie's Wayne Burt in the Section 2 Class A and Division 1 tournaments. Burt graduated in June, leaving the door open to Tangora.

"Honestly, I've read a lot of articles on New York state wrestling news, and they're predicting me to do well," said Tangora. "I'm trying to place at states this year."

"He's got an opportunity — a serious opportunity," said Braga. "If he escapes injury, he's in the driver's seat."

Tangora has been the centerpiece of Bethlehem's wrestling renewal. A four-year starter, Tangora

was undefeated until he ran into Burt at the Class A finals, and his only other loss came to Burt again in the Division 1 championship.

"I would like to have another shot at him because he was the one athlete I never beat, but on the other hand it gives me an opportunity to show what I can do at the next level," said Tangora.

There is more to Bethlehem than Tangora. Braga pointer to Rowan Braga (126 pounds), Rob Stagnitta (138) and Jack Canova (132) as three wrestlers to watch this season.

"We have several kids who have put the time in," said coach Braga. "They're the ones who the young kids should look up to — not just Chris."

Still, Braga has some concerns about his team as the wrestling season

moves into high gear. There are three weight classes with no wrestlers, which means forfeits during dual meets — making it tougher for Bethlehem to win Suburban Council matches.

"We lost (160-pounder) Parker Tangora to a broken hand, so that's a weight class I can't fill," said Braga. "We don't have an 182-pounder, so that's another hole. And we won't have an 113-pounder until after Christmas."

Still, Braga said he thinks Bethlehem can finish high enough within the Suburban Council South Division standings to earn a spot in the league playoffs.

"Columbia is the favorite in our division, but we have a chance to finish second," said Braga. "I'd love for us to wrestle against Shen and Burnt Hills, if we can. It would be a great showcase for our guys."

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## ■ GOVERNMENT

# County study proposes plow changes

Shared Highway Services Study proposes plans to save county \$300K

By **EMILY DREW**  
drew@spotlightnews.com

**ALBANY COUNTY** — Results from an independent countywide study show Albany County and its municipalities could save more than \$300,000 if officials decide to share highway services.

The Countywide Shared Highway Services Study, done by consulting agency The Laberge Group, recommended three major pilot projects, largely affecting the towns of Bethlehem and Colonie. The proposed pilot projects are meant to maintain and improve highway services for the towns, especially

during the winter months.

"This Shared Highway Services Study is already a success," said Albany County Executive Dan McCoy in a prepared statement. "It reviewed all of the county's highway facilities to get a sense of the lifespan, safety, capacity and expansion opportunities. Winter weather is here and it is crucial that we are proactive in implementing what we have learned from this study."

The first project is the Bethlehem Snow Plowing Road Swap. The swap could save the county \$6,898 "for a full winter season by trading plow routes between Albany County and the Town of Bethlehem," according to the study.

Albany County and Bethlehem already have intersecting plow routes in some areas. There are instances when a county

truck has to travel on an un-plowed Bethlehem road to plow a county one. The project would trade routes and certain roads to make such instances simpler on both the county and Bethlehem.

"We already do share a lot of services as needed," said Bethlehem's Superintendent of Highways Brent Meredith. "Potentially, this would increase the turnaround time on my routes, and I'm assuming the county's as well. The Jericho Road piece that we would pick up is on the way to routes my trucks plow anyway. That wouldn't be a big burden to pick up that route."

The second proposed project to potentially save \$7,300 a year is the Town of Colonie Plowing Contract, similar to that of Bethlehem's project. It would also save "by closing the Colonie substation and reassigning personnel

along with substantial salary savings through attrition," the study said.

The Colonie contract proposes that the town takes about 20 miles of road from the county to plow in the winter. If the town takes over plowing for those roads, Albany County could then shut down the Department of Public Works Maintenance Substation housed in Colonie. This would save the county a significant amount, said Jack Cunningham, commissioner of the Colonie Department of Public Works Engineering Bureau.

However, according to Cunningham the study does not fully take into account all of the costs Colonie would take on by plowing the section of road currently covered by the county.

"From the town's perspective, the study

assumes that the county is going to pay just for that time [to plow]. I would have to hire an employee. Equipment-wise, we would have to look at equipment to see if we have the equipment to start plowing 20 miles. That's a significant amount of road," Cunningham said.

The last pilot project in the study "is to share highway facilities in areas where existing facilities are in close proximity to each other. The overall cost savings are approximately \$320,000 for constructing a joint facility in the future when the old facilities become old and outdate."

For both Bethlehem and Colonie, the next step is to sit down with Albany County officials and work out the details of putting the proposed projects into effect.

According to Cunningham, Colonie has

to weigh the cost effects between taking on the 20 miles of current county-plowed road compared to maintaining the town's current wintertime workload. What the town does not want to do, Cunningham said, is to take on a project that would have a negative effect on the town's budget and thereby, town taxpayers.

"We're going to look back at the numbers," he said. "We want to do a comparison study of what it would cost for Colonie to partake. We need to look to see if that compensation identified in the study is sufficient to cover the work in the study."

Within the next several weeks, Cunningham said he will prepare an analysis looking at costs, then get together with the county to see if an agreement can be made.

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## ■ GOVERNMENT

# Villages to share building inspector

Altamont ends contract with Guilderland, turns to Voorheesville

By JOHN PURCELL

purcellj@spotlightnews.com

**ALTAMONT** — Village officials did not have to look too far for a new building inspector after its previous shared services agreement failed to live up to expectations.

The Altamont Village Board of Trustees on Tuesday, Dec. 2, approved a shared services agreement with the Village of Voorheesville for building administrator, code enforcement and fire prevention services. The contract was effective the following day and holds an annual cost not to exceed \$10,335. The agreement will be reevaluated quarterly.

The Town of Guilderland had a similar shared services contract with the Altamont, but the agreement did not meet expectations, according to village officials. At the

same meeting, the board also approved ending its contract with the town effective Tuesday, Dec. 9.

"The arrangement with the town, which has been in place for several years, had what appeared as growing pains originally," said Altamont Mayor James Gaughan. "It really was not as effective as we would have liked it.

Gaughan said Town Supervisor Ken Runion reached out to him a few months ago in regards to terminating the shared services agreement. Gaughan asked Runion to wait a few months, so he could find a replacement.

Town Planner Jan Weston, who was working with the village, had switched from being a full-time employee to part-time, according to Gaughan. Weston had less time to work with the village after changing her hours.

"The availability of staff at the town for particularly night meetings, although we agreed to pay an overtime rate and reimburse them, was just not a desirable

*"The Village of Altamont has a tax levy amount that has been stable ... every year for the last several years."*

— Altamont Mayor James Gaughan

thing," said Gaughan.

Altamont's contract with Guilderland cost about the same as the village's new contract with Voorheesville. Under the approved contract, Voorheesville Codes Enforcement Officer Glenn Hebert will work on site in Altamont for five hours weekly.

"I am excited about it, because it is like having more of a real person all of the time for those functions that we need," said Gaughan.

He also said a record would be kept of when Hebert is working for Altamont, and if the hours fall below the contract amount, then Voorheesville will only bill for hours actually worked.

Hebert does have experience working with other municipalities while employed at Voorheesville, so he has had a similar role in prior shared services agreements.

Gaughan said the village attempted to find someone to serve as building inspector through the "normal way," but the only person that applied was not a certified building inspector.

The arrangement with Voorheesville happened somewhat by chance, because Gaughan had called Voorheesville Mayor Robert Conway to see "how it worked at his end." The inquiry led to the shared services contract being hashed out.

The agreement should also allow Altamont to meet its upcoming

tax cap requirements under the state's rebate program.

"We believe it should be an excellent opportunity to achieve a goal of shared services for us, as well as meet the tax cap," said Gaughan.

The first year of the rebate program, municipalities and school districts only had to present a budget below its state mandated tax levy limit for homeowners to get a refund for any tax levy increase. The rebate in the second year hinges on implementing a cost-saving initiative through various means, such as a shared services agreement.

"The Village of Altamont has a tax levy amount that has been

stable ... every year for the last several years," said Gaughan.

Guilderland though is still helping Altamont save some money, because several years ago the village handed off its property assessment duties to the town.

"They are doing it basically at no cost for us, which is a good thing," said Gaughan.

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Notice of Formation of Limited Liability Company (LLC). Name: R. TEATOR REALTY II, L.L.C.- Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on October 22, 2014. Office location: Albany County.

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to: c/o Accumera LLC, 911 Central Ave., #101, Albany, NY 12206. Purpose: all lawful activities. Ad#64803

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Spine Design, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 11/03/14. Off. Loc.: Albany Co. SSNY design. as agt. upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: The LLC, 130 Oceana Dr., West #3A, Brooklyn, NY 11235. General Purposes. Ad#65655

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### LEGALS

bany County. Address 542 Rowe Rd. Feura Bush, NY 12067. Filed by David Plummer. Ad#66361

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Notice of Formation of Tantrums Spa Boutique LLC, Art. of Org. filed Sec'y of State (SSNY) 11/17/14. Office location: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to 19 Emmet St., Albany, NY 12204. Purpose: any lawful activities. Ad#67518

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Notice of Formation of Limited Liability Company. Name: Three Bridges NY LLC. Articles of Organization filed with New York State Secy of State (SSNY) on 10/14/14. Office location: Albany County. SSNY is designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 343 4th Ave Suite 3A, Brooklyn, NY 11215. Purpose: any lawful activity. Ad#65843

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### LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of formation of limited liability company. Name: TWO GREEK SISTERS LLC, articles of organization filed with the SSNY on 10/17/2014. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of process to the LLC at 283 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY 12054. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. Ad#64590

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### LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY (LLC) The name of the LLC is Wedgewood One, LLC. The Articles of Organization of the LLC were filed with the NY Secretary of State on September 16, 2014. The purpose of the LLC is to engage in any lawful act or activity. The office of the LLC is to be located in Albany County. The Secretary of State is designated as the agent of the LLC upon whom process against the LLC may be served. The address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC is 219 Bell Court, Schenectady, New York 12303. Ad#64074

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Zaga Enterprise, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 10/24/14. Off. Loc.: Albany Co. SSNY design. as agt. upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: The LLC, 80-23 190 St., Hollis, NY 11423. General Purposes. Ad#65651



## From page 1 ...

### Town tree donated by family

planted all of the trees ourselves," said Nanett Mayes. "By 1991, we had a few trees that were above 5 feet, so we opened to the public."

Over the years, the farm grew, and through word-of-mouth, more people from the community began coming to Majestic for their annual Christmas tree. Eventually, the couple hired more employees and began to offer additional products made with their trees' branches.

Nanette crafts wreaths, kissing balls, garland, holiday centerpieces and

decorative swags, among other products. Last year, the couple also built a new barn with more space for Nanett to do arrangements and a warm place to greet guests.

"We thought it was time, and so far it's worked out great for us," said Nanette.

For the past five years, Majestic Tree Farm has provided the Town of Bethlehem's Christmas tree for its parade and lighting ceremony.

The first town Christmas tree was a giant

one growing outside of Town Hall. The tree would be lit much like the current tree is, but it eventually needed to be cut down because it was dying. The ceremony was moved to the Four Corners in 2004. At that time, local residents would donate one of their large pine trees to be cut down and moved to the center of Delmar.

Nanette said she thinks they were first contacted about providing the town tree since they have been providing the town with wreaths for about the past 10 years.

Down in the main fields there is such heavy traffic, the farm never gets a really tall tree. However, white fir trees were planted on a

neighbor's property several years ago. Customers used to be able to go and cut down those trees, but they eventually grew too tall for most people to want them.

"We stopped selling those to the public, but the town comes and looks at those trees," said Nanett. "Previous supervisors used to come themselves and pick out the tree before sending the crew out to cut it."

Now members of the Highway Department come to look through the trees and select one to cut down.

"But this year there isn't a lot left that have good shape to them because they grew too tight in there and they didn't get

cut out so now some have bald spots," said Nanett. "I think this might be the last year we can provide the tree."

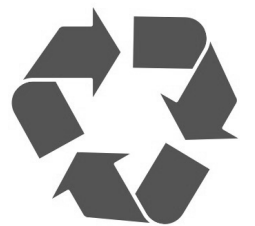
The Mayes always have donated the tree as a gift to the town. One year, Nanett and her son were also able to march in the parade, which is now a fond memory for her. These days, Majestic employees have not been able to get away to march during their peak season.

"It's just a very satisfying feeling to be able to contribute to the celebration of the holiday," said Nanette.

On weekends, Majestic Tree Farm serves fresh-baked cookies and hot mulled cider. Staff also

shake clean every tree, net it and tie it to the car as a special service.

The farm is at 185 Pictuay Road in Selkirk and is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday. To learn more visit, [www.majesticreefarm.com](http://www.majesticreefarm.com).



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# Rezone likely to clear up eyesore

Runion suggests blighted property repairs tied to Cumberland Farms approval

By **JOHN PURCELL**  
purcellj@spotlightnews.com

**GUILDERLAND** — Removal of a long-standing eyesore at a busy intersection on Western Avenue will likely be tied to allowing Cumberland Farms on the adjacent property.

On Tuesday, Dec. 2, the Guilderland Town Board weighed Tri-Way Services, Inc.'s proposal to rezone the 1.35 acres parcel at 2444 Western Ave. from local business to general business. Tri-Way is seeking to build a Cumberland Farms gas station on the property, which borders a blighted site of a former bank. The company owns both properties.

Board members ultimately stalled any decision until its next meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 16, to allow the town attorney to present the board with State Environmental Quality Review findings. The public hearing is being continued during the same meeting.

Tri-Way is proposing to build a 4,500-square-foot store, with six pumps each having two dispensers. The local business zoning allows for the convenience store usage, but not gas pumps.

The adjacent property holding the vacant building is not being rezoned. Burke said the site usage would likely be similar to the former business, a bank, which is allowed under its Local Business zoning.

Tom Burke, president of Tri-Way Services, bristled at the suggestion he would leave the blighted property undeveloped.

"I can't put a gun to a prospective tenants head

and say, 'You have to do this by (a certain date).' I am pushing as hard as I can," said Burke. "The redevelopment of this corner will allow others, who don't necessarily have the vision that this board has, to see the value of that remainder piece."

He said the two properties "go hand in hand," with the gas station attracting tenants. The two properties would share an entranceway on Western Avenue.

"There are things that I think could be done to soften the blighted look of the property," said Runion. "There are some simple things that could be done to clean up the site so that its much more presentable, so that it doesn't look as derelict as it currently appears to be."

Runion said people's eyes are directed to the overgrown site, so cleaning up the property would lead to people noticing it less.

"I don't think it's our purpose to tell you that you have to demolish the

building," said Runion, "but I think that we wouldn't be doing our job if we granted general business use on the adjoining site if we didn't condition it in some respect on cleaning up the neighboring site."

Town Planner Jan Weston has previously said she was "hesitant" to recommend the rezone without a comprehensive approach to redeveloping the two properties. Addressing blight of the adjoined property, along with the share entranceway, would closely tie both developments.

The primary contention surrounding construction plans for Cumberland Farms has been the placement of the sole proposed driveway to Western Avenue, particularly left turns entering the property.

Town Planning Board members gave a positive recommendation on rezoning the property, which is mainly required to install the gas



A decision to rezone a parcel of property at the corner of routes 20 and 146 to build a Cumberland Farms store has been delayed as the Guilderland Town Board awaits State Environmental Quality Review findings.

Artist's rendering

pumps. Planners tied their recommendation to allowing the state Department of Transportation to conduct an "after-evaluation" two years following its opening.

If the DOT found mitigation measures were needed, up to eliminating left turn entrances from Western Avenue, Tri-Way Services would be required

to make any such changes.

Developers said the rezone would fit the character of the area, citing the Stewart's located adjacent to it holding the same zoning.

"Because the proposal addresses the priorities or visions of this gateway, the zoning amendment would be consistent with the comprehensive plan," said

Stefanie DiLallo Bitter, an attorney representing Tri-Way. "The proposal does meet the majority of the (General Business) intensity regulations."

Developers could seek a variance for the amount of parking spaces required on the site, because they contended the amount required under the zoning is too great.

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**December 10, 2014**

# Spotlight on Opinion

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### ■ FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

## A game changer

**J**erry Clark was a solid student and a standout wrestler at Voorheesville High School before he committed suicide in 2010 after his mental health deteriorated.

Clark's family believes the school district didn't make the right decisions in handling him, and they set about getting a law passed through the state Legislature that would require schools to advise children and their parents of their right to have the child evaluated for mental disabilities, which would allow them to receive special education.

It took the Clarks four years, but their perseverance paid off when "Jerry's Law" passed both houses of the Legislature this past summer. The bill still had to wait on Gov. Andrew Cuomo's desk for approximately five months before it

was signed into law last week, but it's officially on the books.

This law is a game changer for parents of children who demonstrate behavioral issues such as lashing out at fellow students or crying for no reason. In the past, school districts would simply address the incident without looking into the underlying reasons why the student acted up. Now, school districts must take any possible underlying conditions into account when a student faces a suspension of more than five days and let parents know they have the right to have their children evaluated for possible mental health issues, as well as options for having their children enrolled in special education services, such as home tutoring.

Traditionally, school districts have deemed special education necessary for students who have demonstrated

developmental and physical disabilities. But these services can also benefit children diagnosed with mental disabilities, such as bipolar disorder. Being in social situations can create a variety of emotional responses that are considered outside of the norm, such as blatantly disregarding the rules or physical confrontations. While it's not ideal to pull any child out of the general student population just because he or she acts up, it may be a sign that they need more specialized attention that they wouldn't get in a regular classroom.

Certainly, the option to enroll a student in special education services is better than simply punishing the student arbitrarily for more than five days. It will allow the student to continue receiving the education he or she needs, while also taking away the stress of socializing with

other students. It's something school districts should encourage, rather than relying on the parents to ask about it.

Jerry Clark's parents claim they never received that information, which might have helped keep their son engaged in his schoolwork and possibly life in general. Now, with Jerry's Law on the books, hopefully other parents won't see their children fall through the cracks because they were unruly in school.

### TALK BACK

The Spotlight welcomes feedback on this editorial or any other hot topics in the news. Email us at [news@spotlightnews.com](mailto:news@spotlightnews.com).

*In the past, school districts would simply address the incident without looking into the underlying reasons why the student acted up. Now, school districts must take any possible underlying conditions into account when a student faces a suspension of more than five days.*

### ■ GET TO KNOW ...



**Tim Wiles**

**Guilderland Public  
Library Director**

• Residence: Guilderland

#### What is the best book you've read this year?

Probably is the "City of Women," that was a very good book.

#### What is your favorite show on TV/Streaming?

My favorite show is "CBS News Sunday Morning." I go to church at 10 a.m. every Sunday, so I will see a half hour to 45 minutes of it.

#### What was the last movie you saw?

I'm not a real movie expert these days, because when you have a 7-year-old you don't get out much. The last movie I saw in the theater was "The Lego Movie."

#### What would your dream vacation be?

I am not one for cruise ships generally, but I would love to be able to get on a cruise ship in Spain and stop at every coastal Mediterranean point. My back up dream trip would be to see all the places where The Beatles became The Beatles.

#### What are some of your hobbies?

Reading of course is one. I do like to go over to the Y and jog. I am a bit of a baseball card collector.

#### Is there an annual holiday tradition you look forward to the most?

I am partly of Scandinavian ancestry, and on Dec. 6 is Saint Nicholas' Day, which is when kids will put shoes outside their bedroom door and St Nicholas fills them with candy. We always did when I was a kid, and we continued that with our son.

#### What would your last meal be?

My wife's salmon recipe with a little asparagus on the side and probably some of her key lime pie for desert, along with a good Oktoberfest beer.

#### Who is the one person (dead or alive) that you would most like to meet?

Pope Francis. I just think he is definition

of thinking outside the box. He is the most fascinating individual that has come across my radar screen in the last few years.

#### What is your favorite local moment?

I am a season ticket holder to Union College hockey, and watching them win the national championship on TV was a really great moment.

#### What is something you think most people would be surprised to learn about you?

I taught English at a college in mainland China in 1993-94, which was a really cool and informative experience.

*"Get to know" is a weekly feature where community members are asked questions that aren't necessarily related to their jobs. If you know of someone you think should be highlighted, email [news@spotlightnews.com](mailto:news@spotlightnews.com).*

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## ■ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Tax distribution still not fair

Editor, *The Spotlight*;

Back in February 2014, the Bethlehem Town Board agreed to an open space program with the stated assurance that no-one would be forced to sell their land. Advocating, Supervisor Clarkson said, "we will never go beyond willing landowners, that's just not going to happen." In the face of his assurances, landowners still worried; one voiced her concern about the "slippery slope" that would result in landowners having to sell their property.

Today, those "slippery slope" concerns are coming home to roost. As a result of steps taken over the past 18 months by the Supervisor and the Town Board, unwilling landowners are finding they have no option but sell the open spaces they have owned and tended for decades. First, when the Town's property reassessment resulted in improbable valuations, property tax bills made continued ownership unsustainable. Second,

and in response to this reassessment snafu, Supervisor Clarkson authored a new conservation easement law that would offer property tax relief to landowners who agreed to give up property rights. Overall, having imposed taxes that make ownership infeasible, the Town wants to use tax receipts to purchase these distressed properties.

On Dec. 3, Supervisor Clarkson upped the stakes with his appeal to the Bethlehem Central District School Board for support of his regulatory seizure scheme. Under his new plan, the Bethlehem School District would provide tax breaks to landowners who surrender their property rights to the Town of Bethlehem. The practical result would be that homeowners and businesses could face significant tax increases. According to numbers prepared by the District, this program, taken together with other easements under consideration, could result in

additional taxes of as much \$93 for an average \$250,000 home. No estimate was provided for how this would affect business owners in Bethlehem.

In his presentation, Supervisor Clarkson defended his proposed tax increases saying, alternately: that the tax increases would merely offset the tax decreases residents enjoyed as a result of his 2013 property re-assessment; that there would most likely be little participation by landowners in his proposed plan; and, referring to 10-year-old survey statistics, that there is/was seemingly broad support among Town residents for his plan to raise school taxes in 2015.

But in saying these things Mr. Clarkson raised many questions. Among them, how does his tax redistribution plan comport with his insistence, in 2013, that we needed a town-wide reassessment to achieve tax fairness? We might ask how his proposed tax levy would impact those

homeowners who, this year, experienced tax increases as a result of the re-assessment. We might wonder why he would support a tax give-way program when he expects few, if any, to participate. And we might ask why we should go along with a proposal that is clearly designed to create inequity among taxpayers, while aggravating for many the arduous tax problems he created with his re-assessment plan.

The Bethlehem School Board will hold a public hearing on this matter on Dec. 17 where, with your support, many of these questions will be examined. Please attend and participate. Let's make sure that our elected representatives on the School Board act independently and in the best interests of the District, while they consider these questions and the Supervisor's conservation tax easement program.

Dan Cunningham  
Delmar

## A neighborhood to be proud of

Editor, *The Spotlight*;

I wanted to share with you some exciting news about Colonial Acres. We are a community of 113 homes located off of Feura Bush Road in Glenmont in the Town of Bethlehem. The Colonial Acres Homeowners Association has been approved as an ISC-Audubon Certified Neighborhood (for Bird and Wildlife Sanctuary).

The application we submitted documented our Colonial Acres practices in 10 key areas that creates and maintains a bird and wildlife sanctuary environment and next steps we are taking throughout 2015 to maintain and improve our environmentally sensitive practices.

Our website, [www.colonialacresglenmont.com](http://www.colonialacresglenmont.com), has a "Green Acres" section dedicated to environmental information. It includes the detailed certification submission and mapping of the community on wildlife

matters.

We are a unique community for a number of reasons. This certification documents and highlights some of these strengths: mature and diverse trees and plant growth based on being a 50 years+ community; wild areas both within the community as well as based on bordering ravines, farmland, right of way and a golf course, which creates a positive environment for birds and wildlife; environmentally sensitive and aware community members (as documented from the survey conducted during the certification process); and a single entrance to help control traffic volume and speed.

We are also uniquely positioned next to the Audubon certified golf course and have formed a tight relationship to work closely on nature projects and programs that will benefit both the Colonial Acres and the broader Town of

Bethlehem community.

This certification was one of our goals for 2014. We believe we can be a model for other neighborhoods in the Town and elsewhere — and we can learn from others as well.

We appreciate all your support to our community from the Town of Bethlehem, including the recent sidewalks that were installed to create a more walkable environment in our surrounding community. We also thank Dale Ezyk and John Andrews from the golf course, who are great neighbors and partners to us; Sam Messina, who is helping us develop the nature model; and Ron Dodson, our ISC Audubon mentor. We could not have obtained this certification without their support and the support and involvement of the Colonial Acres households themselves.

Joe Benoit  
Colonial Acres Homeowners  
Association President  
Glenmont

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# Seven Golden Rules of Personal Finance

By FRANCES O'ROURKE,  
Senior Vice President,  
Key Private Bank

**W**arren Buffet is well known for his simple two-rule approach to wealth building. Rule one: never lose money. Rule two: never forget rule one.

When talking about personal finances, it's easy to get lost in the broadness of the term. For starters, it covers everything from how we budget to how we spend, borrow, save, invest and earn. In addition, it often carries the connotation of being a day-to-day thing. But if we take a step back and really take a close look at why personal finances matter, the focus becomes very clear. How we manage our personal finances matters because it is what allows us to build wealth.

## Know the Path, and Follow the Rules

You have probably heard the adage that if you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there. For some, there's an attraction to such adventure. For the rest of us, even if we do appreciate a good adventure, we know there are risks inherent in aimless wandering—especially when it comes to money. Therefore, the key to building wealth

is to know your destination, to know the path to financial freedom is lined with smart personal finance decisions. These seven golden rules will help keep you moving in the right direction:

### 1. Always pay yourself.

The simplest way to make money is to save money. Set up your savings account for biweekly or monthly automatic deposits. Why is this so important? Because every dollar you don't save for your future is a dollar you have to re-earn for your future. It is actually more than a dollar when accounting for earnings on interest.

### 2. Keep good company.

When it comes to how you manage your finances, surrounding yourself with people who share your values and understand your goals will make it much easier for you to build wealth. This applies to both personal and professional relationships. For example, today's investment and tax environment is increasingly complex. Working with a team of qualified financial professionals and attorneys can be crucial to making sure your wealth management needs are met.



Frances O'Rourke

**3. Establish a retirement plan.** Consider a Roth IRA. Contributions to a Roth IRA are made from your after-tax income, so when you are finally eligible to withdraw you won't be required to pay federal income

tax on it. If you are employed, contribute to your 401(k), 403(b) or 457(b) account. Contributions to these accounts are often matched by your employer. Also consider opening up a high-yield savings account. Every penny matters, and when your income increases, make corresponding increases in deposits into your savings and retirement accounts.

**4. Create an emergency fund.** Save for the things you want and always spend with a plan. This is easy to do if you set up a savings account and make regular automatic deposits. Build up to a six-month emergency fund. By saving for the predictable and unexpected you will keep yourself free from being indebted to friends, family or credit cards should the unfortunate happen.

**5. Spend less than you earn.** It's really simple. If you are in the red at the end

of the month, either earn more or spend less. You can't build wealth while you are accruing debt. To earn more, you can take courses or educate yourself by learning new things and continually improving yourself. You can add other streams of revenue by taking on a part-time job or doing consulting work on the side. Spending less isn't easy, but it is doable. It requires conscious, disciplined behavioral changes. A good place to start is changing how you spend. Before you make a purchase, ask yourself: Do I just want it or do I really need it? How often will I use it? Can I afford it? Is there a cheaper alternative?

**6. Define your goals.** The importance of coordinating your investment portfolio with a long-term financial plan cannot be overstated. Identifying your life goals and aligning them to your

investment portfolio can help serve as the benchmark for evaluating portfolio performance over time. Also account for college education funding, estate planning and charitable giving goals.

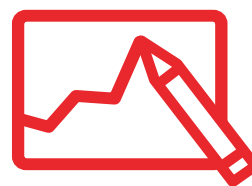
**7. Secure your family's future with a risk management strategy.** As your wealth increases, so does the potential for risks. Such risks include unexpected death, health issues, accidents or disability. Is your family prepared for these types of risks? An effective risk management strategy geared toward income replacement often involves life and/or disability insurance.

## Don't Overcomplicate Things

Managing your personal finances isn't easy. Life

happens fast, and there are a lot of shifting variables. But if you keep it simple and remember that managing your personal finances is about earning money and not losing it, and make decisions that facilitate this, you'll be well on your way to financial freedom. Living by the "seven golden rules" will help.

**About the author:** Fran O'Rourke is senior vice president and market manager, Key Private Bank, for Key's Capital Region. She can be reached at either 518-257-8733 or frances\_ourourke@keybank.com. This material is presented for informational purposes only and should not be construed as individual tax or financial advice. Please consult with legal, tax and/or financial advisors. KeyBank does not provide legal advice.



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## Keys to Effective Wealth Management

**T**o say the way to build wealth is to not lose money is like saying the journey of a 1,000 miles begins with a single step. Both are true, but what it takes to truly accomplish either is much more nuanced. The following wealth management principles are important pieces of a sound wealth management strategy:

### Estate Planning

Even if your current estate is not subject to the estate tax, estate planning is important for most individuals and families because it can help address important family issues and ensure your wishes are carried out if you die or become incapacitated. Non-tax related questions every individual should ask should include:

- Do I want input on where I go and who would take care of me if I become incapacitated?
- Do I want input on who would take care of my minor children and how the funds would be managed for them?
- Do I want my assets to go to the people or organization I choose when I die?
- Do I want to limit the amount of resources that would be available or would have to be used to provide for my long-term care?
- Do I want to avoid the costs, time and public exposure that probate exposes my family to?

### Financial Planning

A successful financial plan integrates personal goals into a diversified investment

portfolio that takes into account all liquid and illiquid investable assets. Tactical shifts in allocation can proactively capitalize on market developments but should be implemented within the framework of your long-term strategic allocation plan.

### Risk Management

It's important to identify potential risks to your family's wealth. Effective risk management strategies deal with these risks and offer solutions to protect and preserve your wealth and provide you with the comfort of knowing your family will have protection in place for the future should you die or become incapacitated. Common risk management products include life and/or disability insurance and are geared toward income replacement. Other asset protection strategies include gifting, contractual arrangements, trusts and business entity formations.

### Tax Management

Taxes can be imposed at the individual, trust, estate and business-entity levels, and they can impact almost all aspects of your financial life, from business and investment income to wealth transfer and estate planning techniques. Tax planning can help you estimate future income and liabilities so you can minimize impacts, assess charitable giving strategies and plan beneficiary designations.

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**Cirque for the season**  
 The Palace stage comes alive with 'Holidaze.'  
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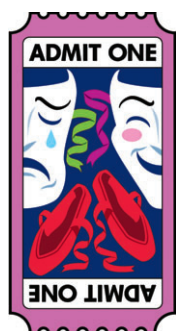
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**Easy entertaining**

Cooking class on Monday, Dec. 15, from 6-9 p.m., covers easy and festive make-ahead recipes. Dishes include classic cheese fondue, baked brie en croute, sweet and spicy nuts, cranberry cream cheese rollups and more. Takes place at the Latham Price Chopper. Cost is \$55 per student; wine will be served. Register online at [www.marketbistro.com/CookingSchool/Class/UpcomingClass](http://www.marketbistro.com/CookingSchool/Class/UpcomingClass).

**INSIDE**



**Arts calendar**

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Check out our expanded calendar of events at [www.spotlightnews.com/events](http://www.spotlightnews.com/events).

**EVENTS**

# It takes a village

At Altamont's Victorian Holidays Celebration, the tight-knit community opens its arms to visitors

By **MICHAEL HALLISEY**  
[halliseym@spotlightnews.com](mailto:halliseym@spotlightnews.com)

The holiday spirit will be alive and well in Altamont this December, as the entire village invokes the sense of community, welcoming visitors throughout the Capital District to enjoy iconic sights and sounds.

Altamont Community Tradition (ACT) sponsors the 13th annual Victorian Holidays Celebration on Sunday, Dec. 14 from noon to 6 p.m.

"It takes a village to put on an event like this," said ACT committee member Laura Shore. "What I'm excited about is that the event is really changing and involving a lot more businesses. The number of activities is growing. A lot

more businesses are participating, and it's a pretty exciting time for Altamont."

Shore, who is an Albany transplant, moved to Altamont five years ago. She first involved herself with the celebration after she was asked if her remodeled home could be part of the annual house tour. The following year, she joined the committee. The events

**Continues on page B3**



Santa is scheduled to arrive via train to Orsini Park in Altamont promptly at 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14.

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■ ON STAGE

# A season for the spectacular

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

**ALBANY** — Aerial acrobatics coupled with gravity-defying feats of balancing are the trademarks that have followed every Cirque Dreams production for the past two decades.

On Monday, Dec. 15, Cirque Dreams Holidaze takes to The Palace Theatre stage. Where some Cirque fans may be familiar with larger arena shows, the theater is said to provide an intimate experience not to be missed.

“These particular tours are built for a theater

setting, so things are staged accordingly,” said Sean Allen, marketing director for The Palace Theatre. “It’s really well set up, so everything can happen.”

Allen said the look of the production and the look of the theater are a good fit.

“There is no scaling

*“There aren’t enough shows today where mom and dad can bring the kids and grandparents, make it a date night, fun time for teens and entertain so many generations with. ... This show has something for everyone.”*

— Director Neil Goldberg



Holidaze will bring its colorful acrobatics to The Palace Theatre Monday, Dec. 15. The Cirque Dreams show is in its sixth year.

Submitted

down. It all looks spectacular,” he said. “It’s just another way of seeing it. You are up there and personal.”

In Holidaze, Broadway director Neil Goldberg re-imagines the holiday season with more than 300 costumes, 20 acts and 30 performers from 12 countries showcasing a variety of imaginative and heart-pounding choreographed movements.

**Continues on page B3**



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## The Albany County Historical Association’s HOLIDAY HOUSE 2014 AT TEN BROECK MANSION “CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD”



### The Holiday Shop is OPEN 12 - 3:00 pm

Gift Certificates to the shop are available for purchase as well.

#### Lecture, “Hanukkah” •

Thursday, December 11 • 1:00 pm:

Rabbi Cashman will discuss the history and traditions of Hanukkah  
– Admission is free, reservations not required.

#### Musicians of Ma’alwyck •

Friday, December 12 • 7:00 pm:

“A Sprig of Mistletoe, A Garland of Ivy.” Enjoy refreshments while listening to this talented duo play a variety of Christmas tunes of different nationalities and early music.  
– \$25 per person • Reservations encouraged.

#### Holiday Tea at Ten Broeck Mansion •

Saturday, December 13 • 1:00 - 4:30 pm:

Enjoy a festive Holiday Tea served in the formal dining room.  
Seatings are from 1:00-2:30 pm and 3:00-4:30 pm  
– \$25 per person, \$20 ACHA member price  
Pre-Paid Reservations required.

#### Children’s Story Hour •

Saturday, December 20 • 10:30 am - Noon:

Bring your children to hear Holiday stories read by Sinterklaas, play parlour games, crafts, decorate cookies and enjoy simple holiday refreshments. (Recommended ages 3 to 10), Free Admission.

#### Holiday Madrigals, Coffee & Desserts •

Saturday, December 20 • 1:30 - 4:00 pm:

Enjoy afternoon coffee & desserts and holiday songs performed by the full ensemble of the Helderberg Madrigal Singers  
– \$25 per person • Reservations suggested.



Ample off-street parking is available in the lot at the rear of the Mansion Gardens.  
The Mansion Holiday Gift Shop is open during all scheduled events.  
For more information or to arrange your holiday party at the Mansion  
Albany County Historical Association, Ten Broeck Mansion  
9 Ten Broeck Place, Albany, NY ~ Phone 518-436-9826 ~ [www.tenbroeckmansion.org](http://www.tenbroeckmansion.org)

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## From page B1 ...

### Tradition rings in the season

and community involvement gave her the feeling of a Norman Rockwell painting.

"It's been a lot of fun, I have to say," said Shore. "We're having a great time here."

The day features several stops for the entire family to enjoy.

Local author and storyteller Nancy Marie Payne will be on hand for a book signing from noon to 5 p.m. at the Spinning Room on Main St. and guitarist Dave Warner will strum tunes from 2 to 4 p.m. from the Altamont Free Library.

The family dog can have his picture taken with Santa from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Agway on Prospect Terrace. There's a costume contest for both dogs and cats.

"You can't get any better than that," said Shore. "It's just a riot."

Wisely, each show is separated, with the dog show scheduled for noon and the cats to take the stage an hour later.

Children may be more interested in having lunch with Santa, which is made possible by the VFW Boyd Hilton Post on Mill Street, from 1 to 4 p.m.

An annual favorite of the holiday celebration returns, showcasing the village's most elegant Victorian period homes.

This year's Holiday House Tour features seven Altamont period and Victorian homes. These houses are so authentic in appearance to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century period, some have been recognized throughout the country. One such home is featured in OldHomes.com, a website based out of North Carolina, devoted to the subject of vintage homes.

House tours are \$10, with trolley transportation funded by SEFCU. Tickets are available at The Masonic Hall on Maple Avenue from noon to 3:15 p.m.

At the hall, people can also vote for their favorite of the Festival of Trees, co-sponsored by Altamont Country Values and 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank of Scotia. Macintosh the Clown will be on hand to provide balloons, crafts and temporary tattoos between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m.

In addition to the house tours, there will be crafts for kids in multiple locations throughout the village, including storytelling, music and an expanded Winter Market.

In years past, the Altamont Winter Market consisted of a single, vacant store front, said Shore. It has since expanded, involving 25 local vendors at four different locations. ReNue Spa is to have various homemade goods. Fiamma's Enchanted Café will also display jewelry, plus tile ornaments, designer neckware, and fair trade items. The distinct sound of bagpipes will direct people to Severson Agency on Maple Avenue, where cards and prints specific to Altamont can be purchased. And, 124 Maple Avenue will have country chic décor and organic cleaning products for the environmentally conscience.

The expansion of the celebration over the years is a product of careful planning and individuals taking the initiative. Shore said committee members start preparing for the celebration in August. The

daunting task has become easier through experience, she said.

"Since this is the 13th year, there's a real pattern to some of the activities," she said. "[Village] businesses have taken on their own thing, so we don't have to micromanage that. And, really, what we're doing is putting an umbrella over a lot of different things and putting it all together. Everybody has pitched in."

The highlight of the Victorian Holiday Celebration takes place at Orsini Park, where a train carrying Santa Claus is scheduled to arrive at the Altamont Free Library – which once served as the village train station. SMS Lines purchased the ticket for Saint Nick to arrive promptly at 5 p.m.

Festival-goers planning on staying for the long haul are likely going to want to take note of the eateries and locales set up to provide food and spirits.

The American Legion on Altamont Boulevard will hand out free chili and beverages from noon to 5 p.m. Parents may want to take note of the free wine tasting at Mio Vino on Main St. from 1 to 4 p.m. The bar, however, is open all day.

Hungerford Café is offering a special holiday menu throughout the day and Home Front Café, with its new bakery, will display a collection of nutcrackers while providing free hot beverages to patrons.

"Santa coming in on the train [and] hundreds of little kids ... people all around. It's all very exciting," said Shore. "It's just a great chance for people to come to Altamont and experience it and have a lot of fun."

## From page B2 ...

### Holiday fare

year and is marketed as "a cirque show, a Broadway musical, a holiday spectacular and a family show all in one." The stage is adorned with gigantic gifts, colossal candy canes and 30-foot towering trees. The production also features gingerbread men flipping mid-air, with toy soldiers marching on thin wires all the while snowmen, icemen and penguins, balance, jump and spin to both original music and seasonal favorites.

Since 1993, the Cirque Dreams brand has entertained more than 50 million people worldwide under Goldberg's artistic direction. Cirque Dreams shows have appeared in theaters, casinos, theme parks, at sea and on Broadway. Today, the Cirque Dreams franchise includes a growing number of popular Cirque Dreams brand shows with many future productions and brand partnerships in development.

"Cirque Dreams Holiday celebrates our brand of 20 years with this unique holiday stage spectacle for the entire family," said Goldberg. "There aren't enough shows today where mom and dad can bring the kids and grandparents, make it a date night, fun time for teens and entertain so many generations with... 'how did they do that,' 'wow' and 'amazing.' This show has something for



The 'Holidaze' show features acrobatics galore.

everyone."

There is one show on Monday, Dec. 15, at 7 p.m. Tickets are available through the Palace Theatre Box Office, Ticketmaster Charge-by-Phone at 800-745-3000, all Ticketmaster outlets, local Wal-Mart Ticketmaster Centers or online at ticketmaster.com.

### ■ IF YOU GO

- **What:** Cirque Dreams Holidaze
- **When:** Monday, Dec. 15, 7 p.m.
- **Where:** The Palace Theatre, downtown Albany
- **How much:** \$28-\$100
- **Info:** [www.palacealbany.com](http://www.palacealbany.com)

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■ ARTS CALENDAR

THEATER

**The Secret Garden**  
Tony Award-winning musical adaptation of Frances Hodgson Burnett's book. Presented by Capital Repertory Theatre. Through Dec. 21. 111 North Pearl St., Albany. Shows: Tuesdays through Sundays. Tickets: \$20-\$65. Information: 445-SHOW or [www.capitalrep.org](http://www.capitalrep.org).

**The Game's Afoot (or Holmes for the Holidays)**  
Ken Ludwig's comedy about a house party that goes murderously wrong. Presented by Schenectady Civic Players. Dec. 10-14, Schenectady Civic Playhouse, 12 South Church St., Schenectady. Tickets: \$17. Information: 346-6204 or [www.civicplayers.org](http://www.civicplayers.org).

**Shrek: The Musical**  
Stage adaptation of successful animated movie series. Presented by Schenectady Light Opera Company. Dec. 11-14, SLOC Theater, 427 Franklin St., Schenectady. Shows: Thursday through Saturday 8 p.m., Sunday 2 p.m. Information: (877) 350-7378 or [www.sloctheater.org](http://www.sloctheater.org).



**A Christmas Carol**  
A fresh take on Charles Dickens' classic story. Presented by the Theatre Institute at Sage. Dec. 10-14, Schacht Fine Arts Building, Russell Sage campus, Troy. Information: 244-4505 or [sage.edu/theatre/season](http://sage.edu/theatre/season).

**The Jungle Book**  
Stage adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's story. Presented by Home Made Theater. Dec. 12-21, Spa Little Theater, Saratoga Spa State Park, Saratoga Springs. Tickets: adults \$18, children 12 and under \$12. Information: 587-4427 or [www.homemadetheater.org](http://www.homemadetheater.org).

**A Child's Christmas in Wales**  
Dylan Thomas' story about the holidays in his homeland. Dec. 12-14 and 19-21, Steamer No. 10 Theatre, 500 Western Ave., Albany. Shows: 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday. Tickets: \$20. Information: 438-5503 or [www.steamer10theatre.org](http://www.steamer10theatre.org).

**Cirque Dreams Holidaze**  
Featuring acrobats and singers in a family holiday show. Dec. 15, 7 p.m., Palace Theatre, **Continues on B5**

Holiday memories

Steamer No. 10 Theatre presents its production of Dylan Thomas' "A Child's Christmas in Wales," where the author reminisces about his own experiences. The play runs Dec. 12-14 and 19-21 at Steamer No. 10 Theatre, 500 Western Ave., in Albany. Submitted photo

**Hollywood Confidential**  
V. Cate and Duke Ernsberger's play about a washed-up actor

trying to help a tempermental actress and getting into a scandalous situation. Presented by Curtain Call Theatre. Dec. 5-21, 210 Old Loudon Road,

Latham. Shows: Thursdays 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays 8 p.m., Sundays 3 p.m. Tickets: \$24. Information: 877-7529 or [www.curtaincalltheatre.com](http://www.curtaincalltheatre.com).

MORE ONLINE



To submit an event to run in our online calendar, simply go to [www.spotlightnews.com/events/submit/](http://www.spotlightnews.com/events/submit/), become a registered user and fill out your event's information in the provided form. Submissions are subject to moderation and may take up to 24 hours to be approved.

On the Town

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ACROSS

- 1 Understanding  
6 Bema's neighbor  
10 Meter reading  
14 After  
15 Snap the seal  
17 Moonstruck love  
18 Hatchecks' work-places  
19 Sticky snack  
21 Home follower  
22 Heaven on earth  
23 Literary monogram  
25 Up  
28 Like McCullers' Cafe  
29 Evelina composer  
31 Dump  
33 Back-of-the-book readings  
35 Typee sequel  
36 Where do I find Cleopatra's Needle?  
40 Dixie senator, once  
41 Sounds of salutes  
42 Bewildered  
44 Bar food  
45 Yuck!  
48 Winner's walk  
50 Tear into  
51 Commedia dell' \_\_\_\_

DOWN

- 52 Wise remark?  
54 \_\_\_\_ Madigan  
56 Mix at the Met  
60 Hired help  
61 One of New York's finest, e.g.  
62 Toot  
63 Grand \_\_\_\_ Plaza  
64 Gershwin tune  
65 Turns cod into bacalao
- 1 Open spaces in a forest  
2 Marriott rival  
3 Conciliated: arch.  
4 Canary's cousin  
5 Lester Young sobri-quet  
6 Kindergarten-song opening  
7 Where do I find Brooklyn's best bars?  
8 "A" Train accommo-dation  
9 Street-vendor patron  
10 Zabar's and Balducci's  
11 Ike's former address

- 12 Sleep letters  
13 Staten Island has two  
16 Venomous serpent  
20 Sheep meadow employee?  
24 Dresses of the '60s  
26 Ms. Bombeck  
27 Hussein's queen  
29 Old: abbr.  
30 Orange oil  
32 Pell Street pan  
33 Midtown  
34 Pancho's poncho: var.  
36 Mirthful Merkel  
37 Wall Street bids  
38 Part of FIT  
39 Soho co.  
43 Distinctive qualities  
45 Path to bliss?  
46 Quiescent  
47 Card game  
49 Pool-parlor powders  
51 Madrid neighbor  
53 Soon, to Sophia  
55 Rockefeller U. units  
56 Health club  
57 Norris Trophy win-ner, 1968-75  
58 Fort front  
59 City Island flier



## ■ ARTS CALENDAR (cont.)

corner of North Pearl Street and Clinton Avenue, Albany. Tickets: \$28-\$58. Information: 465-4663 or [www.palacealbany.com](http://www.palacealbany.com).

### MUSIC

#### Sadie & The Hotheads

English band featuring "Downton Abbey" actress Elizabeth McGovern. Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m., The Egg, Empire State Plaza, Albany. Tickets: \$35. Information: 473-1845 or [www.theegg.org](http://www.theegg.org).

#### Jim Brickman

Grammy-winning adult contemporary musician performs songs of the season. Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m., Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, 30 Second St., Troy. Tickets: \$29-\$44. Information: 273-0038 or [www.troymusichall.org](http://www.troymusichall.org).

#### Deb Cavanaugh

Local folk singer-songwriter playing in support of new CD. Dec. 12, 7 p.m., Emack and Bolio's, 366 Delaware Ave., Albany. Free. Information: 512-5100 or [www.ebalbany.com](http://www.ebalbany.com).

#### Mendelssohn Club of Albany

Performs its annual holiday concert. This year's theme — "Seasonal Joy Around the World." Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m., The Egg, Empire State Plaza, Albany. Tickets: \$20. Information: 473-1845 or [www.theegg.org](http://www.theegg.org).

#### Brian Patneaude Quartet

Capital District jazz band. Dec. 12, 9 p.m., 9 Maple Ave., Saratoga Springs. Information: 583-CLUB or [www.9mapleav.com](http://www.9mapleav.com).

#### Robert Randolph & The Family Band

Powerful, high-energy blues. Dec. 12, 9 p.m., Club Helsinki Hudson, 405 Columbia St., Hudson. Tickets: \$35-\$55. Information: 828-4800 or [helsinkihudson.com](http://helsinkihudson.com).



### Life among the animals

Boobab (Douglas Lee Koebrich), Mowgli (Drew Burke) and Kaa (Emily Farnham Mastrianni) star in Home Made Theater's production of "The Jungle Book" Dec. 12-21 at the Spa Little Theater, Saratoga Spa State Park.

Submitted photo

#### Nowell Sing We Clear

Final season of 40-year tradition of performing a pageant of carols, featuring John Roberts, Tony Barrand, Fred Breunig and Andy Davis. Dec. 13, 3 p.m., St. John's Lutheran Church, 140 Maple Ave., Altamont. Tickets: adults \$20, children 12 and under \$5. Information: 765-2815 or [oldsongs.org](http://oldsongs.org).

#### Alan Goldberg

Singer-songwriter. Dec. 13, 7 p.m., Emack and Bolio's, 366 Delaware Ave., Albany. Free. Information: 512-5100 or [www.ebalbany.com](http://www.ebalbany.com).

#### Capital Community Voices

Presenting a program of classical and popular holiday songs. Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m., Columbia High School, 962 Luther Road, East Greenbush. Tickets: general admission \$10, seniors/students \$8.

#### 'Christmas Around the World'

Albany Pro Musica performs holiday songs from various cultures with help from Musicians of Ma'alwyck. Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m., and Dec. 14, 3 p.m.,

Carondelet Hospitality Center, 385 Watervliet-Shaker Road, Latham. Tickets: premium seats \$35, regular seats \$25, students \$10. Information: 346-6204 or [www.albanypromusica.org](http://www.albanypromusica.org).

#### 'Swinging with the Rat Pack'

Tribute concert featuring the music of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. Dec. 13, 8 p.m., The Egg, Empire State Plaza, Albany. Tickets: \$50. Information: 473-1845 or [www.theegg.org](http://www.theegg.org).

#### Averill Park Community Orchestra

Annual holiday concert. Dec. 14, 2 p.m., Algonquin Middle School, corner of routes 66 and 351, Averill Park. Free. Information: 674-6917 or email [j9bmusic@aol.com](mailto:j9bmusic@aol.com).

#### Anne Hills & Michael Smith

Two singer-songwriters from Chicago. Dec. 14, 7 p.m., Eighth Step at Proctors (Underground), 432 State St., Schenectady. Tickets: \$24 (advance), \$26 (day of show) and \$35 (Gold Circle). Information: 434-1703 or [proctors.org](http://proctors.org).

#### Brad Mehldau Trio

Piano-led jazz trio. Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m., The Egg, Empire State Plaza, Albany. Tickets: \$29.50. Information: 473-1845 or [www.theegg.org](http://www.theegg.org).

#### Delmar Community Orchestra

Annual holiday concert featuring community ensemble under the direction of Michael Blostein. Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m., Bethlehem Town Hall, 445 Delaware Ave., Bethlehem. Free. Information: [www.delmarcommunityorchestra.com](http://www.delmarcommunityorchestra.com).

### FAMILIES

#### The Fresh Beat Band

Nickelodeon's popular children's music band tour. Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m., Palace Theatre, corner of Clinton Avenue and North Pearl Street, Albany. Tickets: \$30.50-\$45.50. Information: 465-4663 or [www.palacealbany.com](http://www.palacealbany.com).

#### Max & Ruby in The Nutcracker Suite

Bunny siblings let their imaginations whisk them

**Continues on B6**

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away into a classic story.  
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p.m., The Egg, Empire  
State Plaza, Albany.  
Tickets: \$18. Tickets and  
information: 473-1845 or  
[www.theegg.org](http://www.theegg.org).

Capital District's favorite family rock band continues its annual tradition. Dec. 14, 2 p.m., The Egg,

Performing two holiday shows: "Singing For Santa" Dec. 13, noon, Saratoga Winery, 462 Washington St (Route 29); and "Family Holiday Show" Dec. 14, 2 p.m., Saratoga Springs Public Library. Information: [www.saratogawinery.com](http://www.saratogawinery.com).

Performance artist Laurie Anderson completes her Distinguished Artist in Residence with debut of full-length documentary. Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m.,

“2014 Exhibition by Artists of the Mohawk-Hudson Region,” a juried exhibit featuring the best contemporary art in the Capital District. Through Jan. 19. Plus “Ancient Egyptian Galleries” and “The Hudson River School and the Nineteenth-Century Landscape.” 125 Washington Ave., Albany. Information: 463-4478 or [albanyinstitute.org](http://albanyinstitute.org).

"Abecedarius," a collaboration between Colin Boyd and Michael Oatman, through Dec. 23. 265 River St., troy. Information: 273-0552.

“Through the Lens  
of Time: Treasures from  
the Brookside Museum  
Photograph Collection,”  
through Dec. 23. 6  
Charlton St., Ballston Spa.  
Information: 885-4000 or  
brooksidemuseum.org.

Featuring new exhibition by Daniella Dooling, Through Dec. 7. "Black," an exhibition featuring narrative figure paintings of American images telling American stories by Brian Cirno. Through Feb. 25. The College of Saint Rose, 1002 Madison Ave., Albany. Information: [www.strose.edu](http://www.strose.edu).

“Where Do You Come From?” Part of the Schenectady County Historical Society’s “Exploring Schenectady County’s Immigrant Past” project. Through Feb. 7. Plus, “Hops & Hogsheads: Beer from Colonial to Craft Brew,” through February 2015. 1100 Main St., Rotterdam Junction. Information: 887-5073 or [schenectadyhistorical.org](http://schenectadyhistorical.org).

“Making Sense of Sound,” a hands-on exhibit from San Francisco’s Exploratorium. Through June 2015. Nott Terrace Heights, Schenectady. Information: 382-7890 or [www.miSci.org](http://www.miSci.org).

“REPRESENT: Con-

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Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

*Nickelodeon's popular children's band takes the stage to perform its greatest hits live to fans of all ages. Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m., Palace Theatre, corner of Clinton Avenue and North Pearl Street, Albany. Tickets: \$30.50-\$45.50. Information: 465-4663 or [www.palacealbany.com](http://www.palacealbany.com)*

temporary Native American Art,” opens Dec. 13; “The Shakers: America’s Quiet Revolutionaries,” through March 6; “Along His Own Lines: A Retrospective of New York Realist Eugene Speicher,” through March 22. Plus, “Binghamton University Paleobotany Collection” and “The Passenger Pigeon: From Billions to Zero.” Empire State Plaza, 222 Madison Ave., Albany. Information: 474-5877 or [www.nysm.nysed.gov](http://www.nysm.nysed.gov).

“Meander, Because You Don’t See Much While Marching/Mike Glier, a 35 Year Survey.” Through Dec. 21, 140 New Scotland Ave., Albany. Information: [www.sage.edu/opalka](http://www.sage.edu/opalka).

Holding auditions for choral groups, soloists and dancers for annual telethon. Dec. 14, noon, 314 South Manning Blvd., Albany. Information: 944-2120 or [solini@cfdshy.org](mailto:solini@cfdshy.org).

94188 4



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## ■ MUSIC

# Get into the groove

Opera Saratoga hosts unconventional a cappella group

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

**SARATOGA SPRINGS** — It may be fair to say that only in Saratoga Springs can one expect an opera to break out inside a night club?

Be that as it may, Opera Saratoga promises just that as they present “The GrooveBarbers” at Vapor Night Club at the Saratoga Casino and Raceway, on Monday, Dec. 15, from 7-9 p.m.

Lawrence Edelson, artistic and general director at Saratoga Opera, is quick to say this is not your traditional opera. Instead, it is best described by the group as a “doowopera.”

“It’s really a great group,” said Edelson. “What I’m

trying to do – I’m new to Saratoga – opera can be considered high-brow, but we can have a lot of fun with the music.”

The performance promises a contemporary sound. Instead of an opera that is typically backed by an orchestra, The GrooveBarbers give a tip of their caps to the old barbershop quartet, singing a cappella. Song selections will include familiar doo-wop tunes from the ’50s and ’60s, with traditional opera arias interjected in between, but sung in English.

“Their opera arias are fantastic,” said Edelson.

Each member of this all-vocal powerhouse quartet is a bona fide star in his own right: Sean Altman, Charlie Evett and Steve Keyes are former members of the pioneering modern a cappella group Rockapella of the “Where in the World is Carmen San Diego?” television show.

Kevin West is a renowned “bald vocal guru.” They have established themselves as the go-to vocal group for rock, doo-wop, jazz and barbershop. The performance will also feature guest soprano Inna Dukach, a former Opera Saratoga Young Artist who has gone on to grace the stages of the world, including The Royal Opera House Covent Garden.

“We’re going to be in line for something unexpected,” said Edelson, adding that the quartet, which originally started in 2007, is full of spontaneity as its members feed off the energy and excitement from the crowd.

When asked if this serendipitous behavior posed a special challenge to the seasoned director, Edelson said, “Oh, I knew what I was getting in to.”

Edelson was appointed to his position in January with a long list of credits

as both a stage director and well-respected company leader. As a stage director, he has received critical acclaim for a number of productions. He is best known in the opera field as the founder of American Lyric Theater (ALT), where he continues to serve as Producing Artistic Director. He is now responsible for the oversight of both the artistic and administrative management of Opera Saratoga’s programs.

The GrooveBarbers will mark Edelson’s first, full-scale concert for Opera Saratoga.

“We’re very excited to welcome The GrooveBarbers to Saratoga Springs,” said the director. “I can’t think of a better way to ring in the holiday season than with these amazing singers performing beloved holiday favorites”

He said he was



The GrooveBarbers include Sean Altman, Kevin West, Charlie Evett and Steve Keyes. The all-vocal powerhouse quartet will perform at Vapor Night Club on Monday, Dec. 15, from 7-9 p.m.

Submitted

particularly excited to also welcome back soprano Dukach, who appeared with the company a few years ago, and who has since gone on to a stellar international career.

“It is wonderful to see those in our Young Artist program succeed and realize their dreams,” Edelson said.

Funds raised will support a variety of community programs that include the recently launched Saratoga Sings

for Seniors and an Opera-To-Go educational tour to reach 25,000 elementary school children each year.

Various ticket packages, which include \$35 for students, \$125 VIP tickets that include a post-performance reception with The GrooveBarbers and Inna Dukach, are available. Tickets at the door, which are subject to availability, will cost \$125. Tickets can be reserved online at [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/906957](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/906957).

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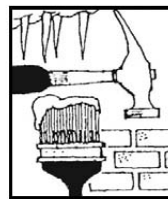


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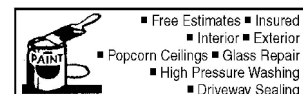
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## Sudoku Answers

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

## Super Crossword Answers

G	R	A	S	P		A	P	S	E		F	A	R	E	
L	A	T	E	R		B	R	E	A	K	O	P	E	N	
A	M	O	R	E		C	O	A	T	R	O	O	M	S	
D	A	N	I	S	H		S	T	E	A	D				
E	D	E	N		E	A	P		R	I	S	E	N		
S	A	D			A	R	L	E	N		T	H	R	O	W
					I	N	D	I	C	E	S		O	M	O
U	P	I	N		C	E	N	T	R	A	L	P	A	R	K
N	U	N			R	E	P	O	R	T	S				
A	T	S	E	A		S	A	L	A	D		B	A	H	
		S	T	R	U	T		R	I	P		A	R	T	E
					C	R	A	C	K		E	L	V	I	R
S	O	C	I	A	L	I	Z	E			A	I	D	E	R
P	P	R	O	T	E	C	T	O	R		B	L	A	S	T
A	R	M	Y			S	O	O	N		S	A	L	T	S

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