

# BABY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE

## Winter Storm Fern Brings Bitter Cold and Plenty of Snow

by John Conway

**HURLEYVILLE** — During the winter of 2021, it was the month of February that set records for snowfall in Sullivan County, as the average accumulation for the month was exceeded on February 2, when a two-day storm dumping 24 inches on the region finally subsided. The total snowfall of 43 inches for the month left the streets of Hurleyville clogged with piles of the white stuff, making parking difficult and crossing the street an adventure.

In 2018, it was early March when winter storm Riley taught many northeasterners a new word: bombogenesis, as heavy snow and high winds paralyzed much of the region, leaving many without electric power for up to a week. Clean up continued for months afterward, as hundreds of downed trees had to be cleared throughout the county.

While winter storm Fern, which hit the region in late January this year, may not have exceeded those benchmarks, it did leave its mark, as heavy snow created havoc with Main Street parking and bitter cold temperatures persisted well into this month.

Still, Hurleyville and Sullivan Coun-

ty, while hard hit, fared better than many other areas, some of which saw record snowfalls and temperatures 30 degrees or more below average.

One thing that set Fern apart from other major winter storms was its range. The storm wreaked havoc on a wide swath of the United States, from Texas to Maine. In all, at least 147 deaths have been attributed to Fern across 13 states, and more than a million customers, mostly in southern states, were left without power.

The governors of more than 20 states declared states of emergency in preparation for the storm, and National Guardsmen were activated in 12 states. One source reported that between January 23 and 25, the number of counties nationwide under a winter storm warning was the largest ever recorded. In New York City, early voting in special elections was cancelled and LaGuardia Airport was shut down. Across the country, more than 9,000 flights were cancelled due to the storm.

Locally, Sullivan County Manager Josh Potosiek said that 60 county DPW workers covered 22 plow routes, with four plow trucks in reserve, in case any should be disabled.

Although temperatures in the area remained well below normal as February arrived, the biggest problem in Hurleyville seemed to be the aftermath of the storm, as curbsides—and fire hydrants—remained buried in snow, hampering firefighting efforts, making parking impossible, and crossing the street difficult. While the town of Fallsburg highway crews did a commendable job in keeping the roads passable throughout the treacherous storm, clean up afterward took longer than many

people thought it should, especially in Hurleyville.

Still, by February 3, town trucks were hauling load after load of snow and parking spaces were mostly cleared along Main Street. The timing was fortuitous, because some forecasters were predicting another major nor'easter prior to the middle of the month.

After all, as we were reminded on Groundhog Day, there are still six more weeks of winter.

PHOTOS BY JOHN CONWAY  
**Top right: The entrance to some buildings became temporarily inaccessible as road crews prioritized clearing the streets.**

**Bottom right: The severity and length of the storm made it apparent that after awhile there was nowhere to push the snow.**



**Bottom middle: While Main Street was cleared of snow, the piles along the curbs made parking and crossing the street difficult for days after the storm.**

**Far left: The west side of the rail trail was largely inaccessible after the heavy snow.**

PHOTO BY JACK HALCHAK  
**Top middle: Firefighters and other officials remind homeowners and private snowplowers that fire hydrants need to be kept clear for public safety. This one was not.**



## Voters Approve FCSD Capital Project Proposals

**FALLSBURG** — The Fallsburg Central School District has announced that both of the propositions in their Capital Project vote have been approved. Here are the final results:

Proposition #1: 95 Yes, 17 No  
Proposition #2: 92 Yes, 19 No

The first proposition will focus on various renovation projects, such as upgrading the parking lots, sidewalks, and heating and air conditioning systems.

The second proposition will approve purchasing property adjacent to Benjamin Cosor Elementary School in order to expand the entryway and make it safer for buses and emergency vehicles to pass through.

"On behalf of the Fallsburg Central School District and the Board of Education, I would like to thank you for supporting our building project propositions," said Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Ivan Katz. "We will now be able to move forward with necessary repairs, replacements and renovations to improve our school district facilities for many years to come. Your voice matters!"

The renovation project approved in proposition #1 will replace and widen the parking lots at both the junior-senior high school and Benjamin Cosor Elementary School, improving traffic and adding parking spaces.

The project also includes HVAC upgrades throughout the district, including the addition of air-conditioning in all buildings. The replacement of aging fuel tanks, the addition of a covered walkway at the elementary school and



SENTINEL FILE PHOTO  
**Fallsburg School Superintendent Dr. Ivan Katz**

the installation of a card-swipe access on classroom doors is also part of the project.

The school district proposed the purchase of the property adjacent to Benjamin Cosor Elementary School approved in proposition #2 in order to widen the school's only entrance and exit, which currently measures about 40 feet.

School officials say that the propositions will have a 0% impact on the taxpayers. For more information about the capital project, please visit the district's website at fallsburgcsd.net.

## All DMV Offices to Close for Tech Upgrade

*Sullivan County DMV Closed February 12-18*

**MONTICELLO** — The Sullivan County Department of Motor Vehicles, along with all DMV offices in New York State, will undergo a large-scale system upgrade next month that will require an extended closure.

In February, the New York State DMV is implementing the initial phase of a multi-year project to replace and modernize its aging technology systems. To bring the first part of the new system online, the State is ceasing all DMV operations, including online and the phone system, starting February 13.

"Due to this, our DMV office will not be open from Friday, February 13 thru Wednesday, February 18," explained County Clerk Russell Reeves. "The office will reopen Thursday the 19, provided we receive the go-ahead from State DMV leadership."

During this time, the State DMV will migrate about 30 million records to the new system and complete the transition to bring the first phase of the upgrade online.

"No DMV transactions will be able to be completed during this

period, including through the State DMV website, and phones will not be answered by the State," advised Mr. Reeves. "However, the County Clerk's Office WILL be open. While we won't be able to provide DMV services, we will answer questions as we are able."

**PLEASE NOTE:** All Sullivan County Government Center offices—including the DMV—will be closed on Thursday, February 12 for Lincoln's Birthday and Monday, February 16 for President's Day.

About the Upgrade: New York State DMV has contracted with software company FAST Enterprises, LLC, which has implemented similar systems in more than 20 other states, to help NYS DMV modernize its technology platforms and service delivery in two major stages over the next two years. The new technology will replace and consolidate a significant portion of DMV's legacy technology, some of which are over 50 years old. The goal of this initiative is to make the DMV more secure, stable, and agile and to provide DMV customers with more efficient, secure, and convenient services.

## Legislature Schedules Meet With Newly Named Charter Review Commission

*Mandated Review of County Charter to Get Underway*

**MONTICELLO** — The Sullivan County Legislature last month announced the formation of a Charter Review Commission, and has now scheduled a meeting with its members.

The special meeting will be held in the Legislative Hearing Room at the county Government Center on Thursday, February 19 at 11 a.m.

"Our founding document, the Charter, requires the Legislature to convene a Charter Review Commission every 10 years, and the last one started meeting in 2015," explained Legislature Chair Nadia Rajsz in 2025, announcing that the county was seeking people willing and able to review this important document to see if changes are warranted."

In soliciting participation for the commission, Ms. Rajsz emphasized that "we're particularly interested in hearing from residents who might never have served on a County advisory committee before."

The Sullivan County Charter requires that Commission members be "qualified county electors": 18 years of age or older and eligible to vote in local elections. It also stipulates that members should represent various segments of the community. Letters of interest were to have been received by Legislature Clerk AnnMarie

Martin by the end of last March, and it had been announced that commission members would be selected in May with meetings starting in June. It was not explained why the selection process was delayed by more than six months.

Commission members will choose the frequency of their meetings, who their chair/vice chair will be, and what officials, experts and other speakers will be invited to provide information. At the conclusion of their deliberations, they will provide a written report to the Legislature, including recommendations to revise the Charter, if deemed necessary. The legislature then decides whether or not to act on the recommendations, with some changes necessitating approval by voters in a referendum.

Two popular topics sure to be discussed include staggered terms for Legislators, so that all nine lawmakers are not up for election at the same time, and the creation of the position of County Executive, which has been a controversial one in the past.

The members of the Charter Review Commission are: Bill Lothrop, Moreen Landfish-Lerner, Camille Johnston, Bill Liblick, Paul Barnett, George Rose, Kaylee Roebuck, John Conway and Ken Walter.



SENTINEL FILE PHOTO  
**Sullivan County Legislature Chair Nadia Rajsz**



## Hamlet Happenings

by Kathleen Sullivan



### HURLEYVILLE-SULLIVAN FIRST (HSF)

The members of Hurleyville-Sullivan First will begin getting gardens, planters and barrels ready for planting in early spring. Everyone is welcome to come out and help. Work dates will be announced.

Hurleyville-Sullivan First continues to work with the Hurleyville Hub on planning events that contribute to the continuing revitalization of the hamlet.

For more information about Hurleyville and Hurleyville-Sullivan First, please visit the group on Facebook or at [www.hurlevillenyny.com](http://www.hurlevillenyny.com).

### HURLEYVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Bread of Life food pantry will be open on Thursday, February 19 and on Thursday, February 26 from 3 until 4:45 p.m. Visitors to the food pantry are asked to please bring a bag. In case of bad weather, cancellations will be announced on Facebook or you can call Lonnie...845-798-4809.

Sunday services are held at the church at 9 a.m. Children of all ages can attend Sunday school at the church during services.

Pastor Wendy delivers sermons on the church's page on Facebook at 11 a.m. on Sundays.

All are invited to pray with others over the phone on the church's prayer line on Sundays from 7 – 8 p.m. The prayer line phone number is 605-472-5491 and the access code is 251678.

The Bible study group meets in the sanctuary at the church every Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Donations of diapers, new socks, new underwear and new t-shirts for children in foster care are being collected at the church. The volunteers at the church also collect new t-shirts and new underwear for veterans along with new clothes for women who are starting over after escaping from domestic violence. Please contact Cookie at 845-428-5871 or Goldie at

## BREAD OF LIFE FOOD PANTRY



**Thursday, February 19th**

**Thursday, February 26th**

**3:00pm - 4:45pm**

**Hurleyville United Methodist Church  
263 Main Street  
Hurleyville**

845-467-1641 for more information on the program.

Anyone in need of gently used winter clothing for adults and children can contact the church at 845-434-5097.

Please call Lonnie at 845-798-4809 for more information on services and activities at the church. You can also get updates at the church's page on Facebook.

### THE SULLIVAN COUNTY MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The historical and genealogical archives at the Sullivan County Museum are open for exploration on Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. or by appointment.

Guided tours of the Museum...behind the scenes and regular exhibits...are available. There is no charge for the hour-long tours but registration is required. Please call 845-434-8044 to make a reservation.

Sullivan County memorabilia and books describing the history of Sullivan County are always available at the Museum gift shop.

The volunteers at the museum work on a variety of activities including research and exhibits.

Anyone interested in exploring genealogy and the history of life in Sullivan County can contact the museum for information on volunteering.

The Museum, located at

265 Main Street in Hurleyville, is open on Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is free. Donations to meet the increasing cost of operating the Museum are appreciated.

Visit [www.scnyhistory.org](http://www.scnyhistory.org). You can also visit the Sullivan County Historical Society and Museum on Facebook.

### COLUMBIA HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE (CHNA)

The Columbia Hill Neighborhood Alliance (CHNA) was formed in 2012 by a group of local residents dedicated to sustainable and responsible development, protection of our water supply, preservation of our rural environment and the safety of wildlife.

Members of the group have met regularly since then and continue to closely monitor the status of the proposed Gan Eden project on Columbia Hill and other developments in the towns of Fallsburg and Thompson.

The developer of the proposed Gan Eden project has requested the required approval from the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) for water withdrawal from the wells at the project site. The wells are in Hurleyville. Approval has not been granted yet. The DRBC needs further review of the project.

The site of the proposed project has a history of runoff flooding of roads and neighborhoods in Hurleyville. The planned overbuilding of the proposed project will only exacerbate the existing situation.

The impact on noise, traffic, electric capacity and air quality will affect the entire neighborhood. The development is in the Hurleyville Fire District. The Hurleyville Fire Department will be responsible for the protection of lives and properties at the development.

The group meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Hurleyville Firehouse. The meetings are open to the public.

Visit CHNA at [www.columbiacnhill.org](http://www.columbiacnhill.org) and on Facebook to learn how you can help to protect your environment and your community by demanding responsible and sustainable development.

*Eight years ago this month, Hurleyville resident John Simon started writing his "From the Weather Center" column for The Hurleyville Sentinel. The column has appeared every month since, and this month, in recognition of his anniversary, we are revisiting his very first column...*

Groundhog Day is a popular day in the USA and Canada. It comes with myths and legends. The weather lore was brought from German-speaking areas where the

## FROM THE WEATHER CENTER

by John Simon



### GROUNDHOG DAY

badger is the forecasting animal. In the United States and Canada, if the groundhog sees his shadow on February 2 there will be six more weeks of bad weather. If it is cloudy and he doesn't see his shadow, it is the sign of an early spring.

Groundhogs are rodents and weigh between 12 and 15 pounds. They can live up to 8 years, have the ability to climb trees, and are also called a bear-rat. In Nova Scotia, Groundhog Day is called Dax Day (from the German word for

groundhog), and it is also called Candlemas day. Punxsutawney Phil has predicted 103 forecasts for winter and just 17 for an early spring, and Phil is only 39% accurate in his predictions.

This year, as it seems he almost always does, Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow, predicting six more weeks of winter.

*John "the Weatherman" Simon writes a regular column on weather for The Sentinel. He lives in Hurleyville.*



PHOTO PROVIDED

## Tango Café at HPAC Unveils New Winter Menu

### Acclaimed Local Chef Jay DeSimone Joins Team

HURLEYVILLE – The Tango Café at the Hurleyville Performing Arts Centre (HPAC) is thrilled to announce the launch of its new winter menu, crafted by accomplished local chef Jay DeSimone.

Featuring a mouthwatering selection of brunch and dinner offerings, as well as a diverse cocktail menu, the new menu is perfect for families, couples, and anyone looking to enjoy a delicious meal in a warm, inviting atmosphere.

Brunch lovers can now savor Sunday mornings at Tango Café, with brunch served from 9 a.m.

to 1 p.m. Menu highlights include:

- Croque Madame: Grilled ham, fried eggs, and hollandaise sauce.
- Breakfast Burger: A hearty burger topped with a fried egg.
- Chicken and Waffles: A classic comfort dish with a gourmet twist.

For dinner, served Thursday from 4 to 9 p.m. and Friday–Saturday from 4 to 10 p.m., Chef DeSimone has crafted a menu that masterfully combines bold flavors with refined culinary techniques. Menu highlights include:

- Braised Short Rib: Served with confit garlic mashed potatoes, Brussels sprouts with pork belly lardon, and pan jus.
- Shrimp and Mushroom Risotto: A creamy, savory delight.
- Arancini Al Telefono: Camaroli rice, fresh mozzarella, panko, roasted red pepper jam, and microgreens.

The cocktail menu is equally impressive, featur-

ing local favorite Catskill Provisions Spirits.

Guests can also enjoy a wide selection of local beers and wines. Signature drinks include:

- The Dammit Janet: Vodka, muddled blackberries, Chambord liqueur, lime juice, rosemary simple syrup, and club soda.
- The Let's Begin: Gin, lemon, honey simple syrup, and butterfly pea powder.

### Perfect Pairing with HPAC's Full-Service Movie Theater

Located next door to Tango Café, the Hurleyville Performing Arts Centre Cinema features a full service movie theater showing first-run films that perfectly coordinate with the café's operating hours. With showtimes at 6 p.m. on Fridays, 3 p.m. on Saturdays, and 2 p.m. on Sundays, guests can enjoy a delicious meal at Tango Café before or after catching the latest blockbuster. Whether it's a family outing or a date night, Tango Café and HPAC Cinema make for the ultimate entertainment and dining experience.

Special Offers:

- Show your HPAC movie

stub and receive 15% off your check (alcohol excluded).

- First responders enjoy 10% off as a thank-you for their service.

In addition to the new menu, Tango Café offers live music every Friday and will soon introduce Trivia Nights, making it a lively and welcoming spot for the community.

"We're excited to offer a dining experience that perfectly complements the cultural and entertainment offerings at HPAC," said Christina Antizzo, CEO of HPAC. "Chef Jay DeSimone's new winter menu is a fantastic addition, and with the café's proximity to our movie theater, it's the perfect destination for families and couples alike."

Tango Café Hours:

- Brunch: Sundays, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Dinner: Thursdays, 4 – 9 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays, 4 – 10 p.m.
- Live Music: Every Friday

Tango Café is located at 219 Main Street, Hurleyville, NY 12747, within the Hurleyville Performing Arts Centre.

## Child Care Providers Needed

LIBERTY-- If you have considered working with or teaching young children, there is no better time to start! Sullivan County needs childcare throughout the county!

According to The U.S. Census Bureau, the population estimate as of July 1, 2023, is 79,920 people in Sullivan County. 6.1% of the county's population are children under the age of 5 (US Census Bureau, 2010).

Making the under 5 population in Sullivan County, 4795 children. The current number of infant / toddler childcare spots available in Sullivan County is 1129. The bottom line is Sullivan County children and current providers NEED your assistance as childcare is filled with waiting lists.

Consider working from home and teaching children. You can run your own small business from home while contributing to and supporting the working families in Sullivan County!

If you're worried about start-up cost, we may be able to assist in supply costs through our Infant/Toddler program. Most training

courses through our agency are FREE for Sullivan County providers!!! Please contact the Sullivan County Child Care Council for step-by-step assistance with the application process, business aspect of your program, as well as the programs and resources available when your program is established.

The Sullivan County Child Care Council, Inc. has determined an immediate need for Infant and Toddler childcare based on our referral services:

- County wide - of 44 inquiries 31 were for Infant and Toddler care
- Requests for Infant and Toddler care through our agency have been made mainly for Fallsburg, Liberty and Monticello
- Most of our providers have no infant or toddler spots available

For more information please visit our website: [scchildcare.com](http://scchildcare.com), The Office of Children and Family Services at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/becomeaprovider.asp>, or give our office a call at (845) 292-7166.



by Mimi

### VALENTINE'S DAY THOUGHTS

The day of wine and roses is only days away  
Are you ready with the chocolates?  
Or does she prefer a perfume spray?

For your hubby or your boyfriend  
Have you thought about what you'll buy?  
Will it be his favorite restaurant, some cologne or a handsome tie?

Perhaps if we think about it  
There might not be the need  
To spend a lot and make a fuss  
Just show your love indeed!

Make a point of setting time for just the two of you  
No distractions like kids or phone  
Here's what you can do  
Make a special meal together  
Talk about how your love has grown

Give a sweet caress, a gentle kiss and a card with words sincere  
End the meal standing face to face  
And say, "I love you so much, dear."

- Mimi  
February 2026

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Editor-in-Chief ..... John Conway  
Website Editor..... Kathleen Sullivan

Contributors: Kelly Adams, Walker Budde, Mira Comstock, Luna Daugherty, Brian Dennis, Win Hadley, Jack Halchak, Jane Harrison, Jasper Lantz, Lily Barrish, Levner, Rose Mandelbaum, Lydia McArdle, Mimi, Eve Minson, Allegra C. Ramirez, Jack Robbin, Emmett Schwalb, Jonathan Shimkin, John Simon, Denise Sullivan. Kathleen Sullivan.



## FORAGE GATHER MARKET & CAFE

**234 MAIN STREET, HURLEYVILLE, NY**



# HURLEYVILLE PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE TO HOST BLACK LEGACY PROJECT FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HURLEYVILLE – The Hurleyville Performing Arts Centre (HPAC) is proud to announce that it will host the nationally acclaimed Black Legacy Project on Friday, February 27, as part of its Black History Month programming. This free community event will take place in the HPAC Cinema and promises to be an inspiring evening of film, music, and meaningful conversation.

The Black Legacy Project (Black LP), developed by the nonprofit Music in Common, is a musical celebration of Black history designed to strengthen understanding across communities and foster conversations about racial equity. The program brings together musicians and community members to explore the legacy of Black history,

its modern-day relevance, and how shared artistic experiences can reduce division and hate.

The evening will begin with a screening of the Black Legacy Project's documentary, which explores the stories and themes behind the music. Following the film, the Black LP band will perform a live set featuring reimagined songs tied to the Black American experience, original works created through their collaborative roundtable process, spoken word pieces, and an opportunity for audience discussion.

HPAC is actively seeking sponsors to help bring this impactful program to our community. Thanks to a generous discount from the Black Legacy Project, HPAC can host this event for a reduced



artist fee of \$1,500, making local sponsorships critical to covering the remaining costs, including hospitality and promotional efforts. Sponsorship support will allow HPAC to offer this program free of charge, ensuring accessibility for all.

“This program is a perfect fit for our Black History Month schedule and aligns with HPAC’s mission of inclusion, cultural engagement, and community access,” said Megan Dewitt, Program Coordinator at HPAC. “We’re thrilled to bring this nationally recognized project to Hurleyville and provide our community with an evening of music, history, and dialogue that bridges generations and perspectives.”

Event Details:  
• Date: Friday, February 27

• Time: 7 p.m.  
• Location: HPAC Cinema, 219 Main Street, Hurleyville, NY 12747  
• Admission: Free community event (donations encouraged), Concessions and a cash bar available.  
Sponsorship Opportunities: Local businesses, organizations, and individuals are invited to partner with HPAC to support this event. Sponsorships will help cover the artist fee, hospitality for the musicians, and promotional efforts, ensuring the program remains free and accessible to the community. Sponsors will be recognized in event promotions and materials, offering valuable exposure while supporting a meaningful cause.

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY *The Weatherman's Octennial Year at the Sentinel*

by Lily Barrish Levner

HURLEYVILLE – It is now eight years that John Simon has been writing a monthly column, From the Weather Center in this newspaper. He started in February of 2018, and every Tuesday he reports to the Sentinel's office, and in addition to writing the column, he assists John Conway, the Sullivan County Historian and editor of the paper.

Mr. Simon's column always focuses on some aspect of the weather. He recalls when he was younger and was watching the Weather Channel on TV, how he became fascinated with it. He has pictures he collects of weather-related events. Every day, he checks the radar as well as watches AccuWeather, and logs onto NOAA.gov.

From memory, he describes a tornado that reached 115 miles

per hour and destroyed a barn along with a gas station a few years ago. Another tornado struck last year in Pike County. No damage, but he remembers the tornado being stuck in a field.

“There was a severe thunderstorm, and in the distance, I saw a tornado tunnel in the background with low clouds. It was the first time I was experiencing something like that,” he said.

Both Johns typically have a conversation about possible topics for the month's column, and then one of them decides which idea to run with. They try to keep it seasonal so that, for example, snow isn't written about in the summer.

“John is very good at turning what he's interested in into a learning experience. Some of his great assets are that he follows up, retains information, and has a great memory,” said



John Simon with one of the Singer Sewing Machines he restored.

Mr. Conway.

When Mr. Simon isn't working alongside Mr. Conway, his all-time favorite pastime is playing video games. He enjoys a lot of old classics like the Xbox and Nintendo. He collects rare video games. He's also a huge pro wrestling fan, a music enthusiast, a rock collector, a book collector, and is into tales about buried treasure and haunted places. He has a full collection of Mr. Conway's history books displayed on his bookshelf.

And Mr. Simon has a hidden talent, as well – restoring antique sewing machines that are on display at the Sullivan County Historical Society. “He's learned to do the mechanical part, cleaning, oiling, and replacing belts on vintage sewing machines,” Mr. Conway said.

Occasionally, Mr. Simon sews on his own, once making his own pillowcase with Rachel

Carrigan, who runs the Fiber on Main Studio next door to The Hurleyville Sentinel.

Mr. Simon became particularly interested in Singer Sewing Machines upon learning of the historical connection of the company to Sullivan County through one of its early presidents, George Ross Mackenzie. He delights in telling new acquaintances about the Mackenzie saga, including its connection to Hurleyville's own Collaborative College High School.

When not immersed in one of his hobbies, Mr. Simon is likely to be found drinking a cup of hot cocoa—with whole milk and peppermint—at Forage & Gather or eating anything with bacon at one of the Sullivan County diners.

“John's a good guy to be with; he knows his stuff and he loves history,” Mr. Conway said.

## NY Expands Electricity Discount Program

MONTICELLO – In mid-January, New York State announced the launch of the Enhanced Energy Affordability Program (EEAP), an expansion of the existing Energy Affordability Program (EAP), which provides discounts on electricity and gas costs to eligible residents.

plained Nadia Rajsz, chair of the Sullivan County Legislature. “All you need to qualify for EEAP is have an active residential electric or gas account with a participating utility, and be under the household income limits.”

NYSEG, Orange & Rockland Utilities and Central Hudson Gas & Electric all participate in both programs, though discounts vary with each. You can only be enrolled with one program at a time, either EEAP or EAP.

vivors Pension, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Federal Public Housing Assistance, Lifeline Telephone Service and Safety Net Assistance.

To inquire about enrollment, contact your utility:

- NYSEG: <https://www.nyseg.com/account/waystopay/help-with-bill/eap-and-eeap> or 1-800-600-2275
- Orange & Rockland: <https://www.oru.com/en/accounts-billing/payment-assistance/new-york/energy-affordability> or 1-877-434-4100
- Central Hudson: <https://www.cenhud.com/en/account-resources/assistance-programs/bill-discount-program/> or 845-452-2700

**About EEAP**

Launched last month, the Enhanced Energy Affordability Program offers utility bill discounts for income-qualified households that aren't eligible for EAP, as they don't partici-

pate in State or Federal benefits programs like HEAP or SNAP.

Households having annual income that's less than these levels are eligible for EEAP:

- 1-person household - \$69,477
- 2-person household - \$90,854
- 3-person household - \$112,232
- 4-person household - \$133,609
- 5-person household - \$154,986
- 6-person household - \$176,364
- 7-person household - \$180,372
- 8-person household - \$184,380

To apply for EEAP, no matter what utility provides your service, visit <https://nyeeap.com/> program or call 1-877-400-2501. You will need to provide proof of income earned in the past month for all household members (such as pay stubs, Social Security or pension statements, self-employment records, etc.). Be sure to also have your utility account number handy.

For information about both EAP and EEAP, visit <https://dps.ny.gov/energy-affordability-program>.

SPECIAL ISSUE      ★★      JANUARY 2026

# TANGO @ HPAC

ANNOUNCES  
**WINTER HOURS**

THURSDAY 4-9PM  
FRIDAY 4-10PM  
SATURDAY 4-10PM  
SUNDAY 9AM-1PM

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## Out Divine Corners Way

by Jonathan Shimkin

When you're snowed in, you can always be plowed out; when you're iced in, you tend to stay put. We stay put on the last Monday of 2025. Divine Corners Road is black ice; the driveway, an icy ramp with melt on top, making the surface even more treacherous. I check the back window of our cottage for signs of vehicles on the road, but no one is out there. The only movement is of tree branches nodding in the wind and the occasional critter — squirrels in the trees, deer in the field.


I never tire of the view through this back window. A diagonal tree trunk, directly behind the cottage, bisects the frame; to the right, the dense mass of woods; to the left, the deep open space of two snow-covered rises, flanked by the road at the far edge of the frame. A lone silo across the road rhymes with the verticality of the trees. Overhead, a silvery-grey sky hangs low. It's all so perfectly composed. The frame shapes the landscape, or shapes my perception of the landscape. This particular window is a near-equivalent of the golden ratio of Vista Vision, evoking memories from my cinephile youth. I could be watching “A Rich Wintry Scene,” directed by Nicholas Ray or Elia

Kazan — a widescreen landscape imbued with emotional resonance. Around noon, as the day grows warmer, mist rises from the ground, billowing and thickening into a whiteout so total there isn't a shadow of a shape visible within it. The world is in eclipse; for a quarter of an hour, I have the disquieting sensation of floating in a void. Gradually, road and silo reemerge and the sense of disorientation recedes. By two o'clock, the sky is clear, the sun's brightness so amplified by reflection off the ice and snow that I have to look away.

By four o'clock, the day is already drawing to a close. The air chills and dims. The clouds regather, darker than before, forming a charcoal-grey bowl that encircles the horizon — a bowl chipped and cracked along its rim, and, through the cracks, the saturated reds and purples of a winter's sunset flare. Along the road, I can see the red and white lamps of vehicles coming and going; the way's been cleared; Tuesday will be a workday again.

Jonathan Shimkin, writer and editor, may be contacted at [jonathanshimkin@gmail.com](mailto:jonathanshimkin@gmail.com), or via his website: [jonathanshimkin.weebly.com](http://jonathanshimkin.weebly.com).

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## From the Firehouse

by Jack Halchak, Past Chief H.F.D.



The Hurleyville Fire Department is always looking for help, to fight fire or support those that do. We even supply all the gear and provide all the training needed, for free. Stop by any Monday night and find out how you can help.

County wide the Fire Services has been very busy at the start of 2026 with structure fires, activated alarms and, surprisingly, a number of pedestrians being hit by vehicles. With all the snow that we have had, sidewalks are not cleared so you cannot get on to them because of the piles of snow left by the plows, and people are walking in the road and getting hit.

Another problem we have encountered is the use of lamp cords as an extension cord for portable heaters.

Have you ever heard of a “lamp cord?” It is exactly what it says it is, the electric cord from the lamp to the wall outlet. It is also sometimes called a zip cord. These cords are designed for your lamps and are of a very light gauge wire. They are not designed for, and should never be used with, a portable electrical heating device. A portable heater should be plugged directly into the wall and NOT be used with an extension cord. The lamp cord cannot manage the electrical load, they get from the heater, they get hot and can cause a fire. We have already had that happen this heating season.

We also have responded to a number of oil burner malfunctions and chimney fires. Clean them!

I have mentioned this problem before: Private snow plowers are burying fire hydrants. This is a dangerous practice. If



ILLUSTRATION PROVIDED

your snowplow contractor is burying the fire hydrant near your house, tell them to STOP it.

I know that there are many ways that you can be alerted to an emergency such as a storm, power outage, water main break etc. One way is to use **NY-ALERT**. You can sign up for what alerts you want to receive at

[alert.ny.gov/sign-up-ny-alert](http://alert.ny.gov/sign-up-ny-alert)

Another is close to home from the Town of Fallsburg, called CODERED. The Town of Fallsburg has updated the CODERED system. If you signed up previously just check your account. With CODERED you can get an email message, text message, or a phone message. This is an effective way to be informed about emergencies in the Town of Fallsburg. For example, when there is a watermain break, pending storm, severe weather etc., so sign up today. You can go to the Town of Fallsburg website or **account-portal.onsolve.net/fallsburgtownny**

The 2025 dispatch statistics for the Sullivan County Fire Departments are in. Fire departments responded to 6,699 calls in 2025. That is down from 2024's 7,252 calls. Topping the

list were activated alarms with 1,665 in 2025 vs 1,695 in 2024. Structure fires in 2025 were at 288 and in 2024 there were 290. Brush fires in 2025 was at 109 and in 2024, there were 128. Motor vehicle accidents (MVA) were at 1110 in 2025 vs 799 in 2024. That is a huge jump.

As for the Hurleyville Fire Department, we respond to 140 calls in 2025 vs. 165 in 2024. Activated alarms in 2025 were 73 and in 2024, 85. Mutual Aid calls in 2025 were 30, and in 2024 were 29. We responded to 21 Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVA) in 2025, and 19 in 2024.

Although overall, with Hurleyville and County numbers down a little the summer months were still extremely busy.

Remember we are all volunteers and respond from sleeping, birthday parties, dinner, lunch, meetings, etc. You name it, we are on our way when the tones go off.

Do not forget, coming up on February 14 is the Hurleyville Fire Department Town of Fallsburg 38th Annual Ice Fishing Contest. Morningside Lake is the place to be 7 a.m. – 3p.m. Trophies, prizes, bait, raffles and fun. Be Safe Out there.

## SENIOR CINEMA

### HPAC Announces 2026 Schedule

HURLEYVILLE-- The Hurleyville Performing Arts Centre (HPAC) is thrilled to unveil its 2026 Senior Cinema lineup, featuring a curated selection of beloved films and a new, convenient showtime of 1 p.m. This cherished program, held on the second Thursday of each month, continues to provide seniors in the community with an opportunity to connect, engage, and enjoy a welcoming space for entertainment and socialization.

HPAC's Senior Cinema program has been a life-line for many seniors in the area, offering more than just a movie screening. Each event includes a social hour, complete with coffee, board games, and a chance to share stories and skills with fellow participants. For just \$10, attendees can enjoy a full afternoon of entertainment and community—a vital resource for keeping seniors active and enhancing their quality of life.

The 2026 Senior Cinema lineup features an exciting mix of classic and contemporary films:

- February 12: Murder on the Orient Express (1974)
- March 12: Annie Hall (1977)

- April 9: Musical Chairs (2012)
- May 14: You've Got Mail (1998)
- June 11: Thelma (2024)
- July 9: Julie & Julia (2009)
- August 13: Nonnas (2025)
- September 10: Manhattan Murder Mystery (1993)
- October 8: Driving Miss Daisy (1989)
- November 12: Notting Hill (1999)
- December 10: The Holdovers (2023)

In addition to the film screenings, Senior Cinema participants are invited to stay for Coffee Hour, which now brings together attendees from HPAC's three senior programs for added convenience. This enhanced offering fosters a sense of community and provides a relaxed environment for seniors to connect and un-

wind.

HPAC is actively seeking sponsors and partners to help lower admission costs and expand the program's reach to serve even more seniors. “Senior Cinema is more than just a movie—it's a chance for our seniors to come together, build relationships, and feel a sense of belonging,” said Lourdesa Hunt, Director of Development at HPAC. “We're committed to making this program as accessible as possible, and with the support of our community, we can continue to grow and enrich the lives of our seniors.”

Tickets for Senior Cinema are available for purchase online through the HPAC website. All events will take place at the Hurleyville Performing Arts Centre, located at 219 Main Street, Hurleyville, NY 12747.

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by Mira Comstock

HURLEYVILLE – Students at the Homestead Collaborative College High School (CCHS) took on one of today's biggest questions during a recent seminar on artificial intelligence: is Artificial Intelligence (AI) helping people move forward, or quietly changing how they think, learn, and create?

After exploring several podcasts, articles, videos and documentaries, students shared their thoughts in an open discussion that revealed both their excitement and concern about how quickly AI is advancing, and how it is already showing up in everyday life.

Most students said their understanding of Artificial Intelligence was fairly limited before exploring the materials. Many were familiar with AI through sports analytics, social media algorithms, podcasts, or online tools, but few had thought deeply about its role in education/creative fields. As the discussion went on, multiple students said they hadn't realized how powerful and far reaching AI could be, and many said that the material made the issue feel more real and, for quite a few, more unsettling.

Some students also explained how their opinions have changed while learning more about Artificial Intelligence. Lucas said he once believed people would recognize the dangers of AI and eventually “slow its growth,” but now he worries that AI's convenience will outweigh people's caution. Elijah shared that while learning about AI's capabilities helped him see some benefits, it ultimately made him more concerned about the future, saying he thinks AI will “screw us over” especially in the creative field.

## CCHS STUDENTS TALK ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

### Brightening the Future, or Darkening It?



SENTINEL FILE PHOTO

These reactions reflected a common feeling in the room, that once AI is widely available, it may be difficult to control how it is used.

One of the main concerns raised during the seminar was how AI will affect students' ability to learn. Several students argued that relying too heavily on AI could weaken critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Lucas pointed to examples where students who used AI to complete assignments showed lower engagement with the material. Others, including Lydia and June, emphasized that struggling through difficult subjects helps build discipline and confidence, and explained that letting AI do the work could take away that sense of accomplishment.

Lydia put it simply: “Doing work that you might not like, teaches a life skill.”

Students were concerned that relying heavily on AI not only takes away the sense of achievement, but also takes away an essential life skill.

Not everyone thought AI's role in education was entirely negative.

Freddie compared AI to

a calculator, saying, “you learn basic multiplication, addition, etc., and once you're competent your teacher hands you a calculator. So you can learn a basic skill, but then have a tool to help you.”

Brice agreed, saying the human desire to learn is “deeply rooted. It is literally biologically within us, it's in our DNA,” and he believes humans' desire for knowledge is unlikely to disappear because of Artificial Intelligence. Both students acknowledged that AI is not currently being used responsibly, but they suggested it could support learning if used in the right way.

The topic that sparked the strongest reactions was AI's use in creative fields. Many students expressed their concern that generative AI pulls from existing artwork without permission, putting artists at risk.

Natalie explained that she knows AI is already taking opportunities away from people pursuing art careers. Others, including David, made a distinction between AI that helps in areas like science or medicine and gen-

erative AI used for art, saying support for one does not necessarily mean support for the other.

Beyond creative fields, students also questioned how artificial intelligence could change the purpose of education itself. Addie explained that education helps people discover their strengths and learn how to apply them in different areas. They worried that if AI replaces that process, students may never realize what skills they have or how those abilities could shape their futures.

Others pointed out that school is one of the few times when students can struggle and grow without long-term consequences. Several students agreed that while new skills can be learned later in life, it becomes much harder once someone is already in a career. As one student noted, Artificial Intelligence in education is concerning because “you don't know what you're missing until it's gone.”

Jack Comstock, a CCHS administrator who was invited to the seminar, encouraged students to think beyond whether AI provides

correct answers and instead focus on what is lost when humans stop grappling with hard questions. While AI could easily generate intelligent responses, he argued that it can't replace the human process of forming values and shared meaning.

The conversation also expanded to the future of work and society. With AI beginning to replace entry-level jobs, students questioned what paths into employment will look like and whether current systems can keep up with such rapid change in technology.

As the seminar concluded, students were asked to imagine how Artificial Intelligence might shape their lives over the next five years. One student shared their concern for younger generations, explaining that their younger sibling may grow up with AI constantly available as a shortcut for learning. They worried that future students might rely on AI for help without ever developing the skills to think through problems on their own.

This final reflection highlights a theme that echoed throughout the entire discussion-- the theme that Artificial Intelligence is not only changing how students learn, but challenging educators and students to decide what learning should mean in the first place. By the end of the seminar, there was no clear agreement on whether AI will ultimately help or harm society, but most students agreed it will play a major role in the future. The discussion showed that while Artificial Intelligence can offer powerful tools and opportunities, it also raises questions about learning, creativity, and responsibility- questions that students at CCHS are already beginning to think about.

## SULLIVAN 180 PAID INTERNSHIPS AVAILABLE

### Be a Changemaker in Your Community this Summer

LIBERTY – Sullivan 180 is recruiting interns for the 2026 season. Young adults

ages 16–20 are invited to apply for paid summer employment, where they will

have the opportunity to work alongside volunteers to help communities, organizations, churches, and schools bring their ideas to life.

In addition to their community-based work, interns participate in leadership and professional development and take part in a meaningful Day of Service project.

The summer employment program provides mentoring and a unique

opportunity to earn money while making a meaningful impact in the community. Interns gain valuable real-world job experience, develop leadership skills, receive a paycheck, and contribute to positive change in their communities.

Last summer, Sullivan 180 interns contributed over 2,400 hours of work, supporting projects and local initiatives in communities across Sullivan County.

“I wanted to gain experience and be part of something greater, and I'm proud to say that I believe I made a difference. That sense of fulfillment is something that truly makes me happy,” shared Howie Kiefer, a 2024 and 2025 Town of Bethel Intern. “I recommend that others consider interning with Sullivan 180. It's a chance to give back to your community while gaining valuable skills and experiences.”

“In addition to connecting with peers, the internship program offers a wonderful way to learn about Sullivan County and build relationships with community members,” said Anne-Louise Scandariato, Director of Community Engagement. “This experience helps strengthen interns' resumes, builds professional confidence, and supports the development of communication, interpersonal, problem-solving, and leadership skills while contributing to a collaborative team environment.”

To apply for the Sullivan 180 Internship Program, contact Anne-Louise Scandariato at 845-295-2405 or [Anne-Louise@Sullivan180.org](mailto:Anne-Louise@Sullivan180.org). Applications must be submitted by March 30, 2026.

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# DUMPSTER MAN

A Novel by Mike Vreeland

*Last month, we introduced our readers to local author Mike Vreeland's new middle-grade novel, Dumpster Man, an action-packed story of a young superhero with an unfortunate name. Twelve-year-old Trent Hartwood helps out at his relative's pizza shop. One summer night, things do not go as planned. This excerpt picks up where last month's left off... In this scene from Dumpster Man, Trent is curious to learn more about his strange transformation that occurred the night before—the night his aunt and uncle's pizza shop was robbed, and he fell in a dumpster, emerging covered in a disgusting slime that seemed to give him unusual powers...*

"I'll drop the garbage bag in the dumpster on my way out," Trent said. "Okay." Uncle Vince looked up at the clock again and untied his apron. "See

you Monday after school."

Trent left through the back door, held his breath, lifted the lid, and tossed the bag into the dumpster. He looked up and down the alley, making sure he was alone.

He pulled the old crate over, stepped up, and lifted the lid again, letting it fall open. There were more bags of garbage at the bottom than the night before. If his plan didn't work, at least he could stack the bags to get out.

A door opened in the distance. Trent stood motionless in the shadows and watched a woman step into the alley and head in the opposite direction.

Once all was clear, he climbed into the dumpster and waited.

Nothing.

Maybe last night was just a freak accident.

Trent realized he was holding his breath, trying not to let the stench get into his nostrils. It must be the

smell that does it. He summoned the courage, closed his eyes, and breathed his lungs full of the putrid air.

His skin tingled. His muscles felt firm and strong. Trent watched as slime oozed out of his pores and covered his whole body, clothes and all. He felt surrounded by a warm blanket of safety. I guess I was too freaked out yesterday to notice.

Once the transformation was complete, he smelled no dumpster stench. That's a relief. Hard to focus on anything while you're gagging and about to barf.

He looked up at the fire escape on the back wall of the pizza shop building. Time for the next test. Now, what did I do last night? He held the edge of the dumpster, squatted down, and leaped toward the third-floor landing.

Whoosh!

Trent grabbed the railing and pulled himself onto the fire escape. Another jump,



PHOTO PROVIDED

and he was on the flat roof. He walked around from his new vantage point, enjoying the view of the streets below. He could see the roofs of other buildings, with their ductwork and doorways. He saw several blocks down the streets in all directions. Cars drove past, and people walked by, unaware they were being watched. This could come in handy. Already, a plan was forming in his mind.

In the moonlight, he examined the coating of slime on his hands and arms. It appeared to be slowly flowing and swirling, but he could not feel the movement. There must be a scientific explanation for this, but I have no idea.

He then watched his feet as he took a few steps. The slime left no trail, no green slimy footprints. Good to know.

A car horn sounded, and Trent walked toward the edge of the roof. The car drove off, and the street was

quiet once again.

A terrifying thought came to him. What if the slime goes away while I'm up here? How would I explain that? How would I get down?

Trent ran to the back of the building and looked over the edge into the alley. Could he jump down four stories without getting hurt? He decided to play it safe and jumped down to the third-floor landing, then the second. After finding those were easy and painless, he leaped again and landed on the pavement, springing up and ducking into the shadows.

Trent kept out of the light as he made his way home down the alley. He stopped along the way and tried another experiment. He pulled at the slime on his arm. To his surprise, a chunk came off and was immediately replaced by more ooze. Trent flung the chunk against a concrete wall, and it stuck. Interesting.

He picked up a half-crushed soda can and pushed it into the chunk of slime.

"I'm an artist!" he exclaimed.

As he neared the end of the alley, he worried he'd be seen still covered in slime. And then what?

Trent stopped a few feet before the alley met the street. He closed his eyes and breathed deeply and slowly a few times, letting his body relax. That did the trick. The slime disappeared back into his pores. His clothes were now dry and clean.

As he walked home, he thought about how to use his newfound abilities. Those robbers will regret stealing from my family.

*Dumpster Man is available in paperback or hardcover on Amazon and soon at other online locations and local book stores. More information at [dumpster-manbook.com](http://dumpster-manbook.com)*

## FCSD Announces Honor Roll and Superintendent's Honor Roll List

FALLSBURG – The Fallsburg Central School District is proud to announce their middle and high school honor roll and superintendent's honor roll lists for the second marking period of the 2025-2026 school year. Honor roll students achieved an average of 85-91, and superintendent's honor roll students earned an average of 92 or higher.

### 7th Grade

**Honor Roll:** Janelli Anderson, Elias Blandon Rivera, Nyomi Canales-Fuentes, Rafael Carrasco Jimenez, Jeremiah Castro, Samantha Clark, Taylin Frunzi, Genesis Fuentes, Awa Gai, Emanuel Granados, Arayaah-Laurice Irby, Alexandria Mann, Nicholas Ortiz Jr, Hansel Pacheco Murillo, Dayana Padilla Orellana, Blinera Selimaj, Gabrielle Spruill, Gavin Suarez, Annabella Vences-Urquiza, Benjamin Wizwer, and Karla Zacapexpan-Reyes.

### Superintendent's Honor

**Roll:** Armani Alencaster, Bryan Balcazar Lavin, Ava Berrios, Isaac Castillo Miranda, Aubrianna Clark-Wheat, Aaron Cubias, Nelson Duque Moroy, Anthony Frunzi, Lithsy Fuentes Ardon, Madison Hernandez, Selina Lazroe, Grayson Munger, Harlow Oathout, Keylit Pineda Nieto, Katherine Reyes Serrano, Erick Rivera Moreno, Christian Robles-Hernandez, Kendra Rodriguez, Derrick Saravia, Blarina Selimaj, and Melanie Wang.

### 8th Grade

**Honor Roll:** Yasmina Aquil, Ellis Basic, Kaleb Cross, Aaliyah Deis, Franco DiCostanzo, Kimberly Duncan, Janary Fuentes Ardon, Kelvin Garcia Giron, Charlie Giron Saravia, Khloe Jordy, Angelique Marquez-Zacapexpan, Riot McCoy, Lila Odum, Kaylie Price, Logan Retana, Alexandra Reyes Lopez, Malika Rivers, Leon Rodriguez Morales, Leonardo Rojas, and Kevin

Toledo.

### Superintendent's Honor

**Roll:** Brianny Argueta Hernandez, Giselle Ascencio Martinez, Walker Budde, Darlin Chub Ujpan, George Di Napoli, Erika Garcia-Ponce, Genesis Gonzalez Alvarez, Sonja Henry, David Hernandez Martinez, Carsyn Hoefling, Margie Madrid Castro, Jackelyne Mariaca, Reja Meer, Sofia Navarrete, Ariel Payne, Kimberly Perez Castillo, Genesis Reyes-Robles, Jessica Saciolo, Anthony Santos Morales, Daylin Sierra Lizama, Zhara Snead, Holly Surerus, Ambar Vasquez, Daniel Vasquez-Nunez, Heaven Wilson, and Allison Yautentzi Reyes.

### 9th Grade

**Honor Roll:** Yasmina Bache-Seraphin, Adriel Canales Gonzales, Alyssa Florence, Amelia Forman, Leily Garcia Menjivar, Leyna Greenberg, Katherine Juarez Cadena, Michelle Maradiaga, Nelcy Orellana Mejia, Daniel Perez Martinez, Franklin Reyes-Rodriguez, Jeybi Rodriguez Benjamin, Samantha Saciolo, A'miyah Sellers, Samuel Vega Rosales, and Valery Villatoro Hernandez.

### Superintendent's Honor

**Roll:** Damian Basden, Jack Bensimon, Evangeline Capicchioni, Nicolas Ciorciari, Maria Nardi, Lourdes Parham, Cristopher Rivera Flores, and Joshua Velazquez.

### 10th Grade

**Honor Roll:** Gianna Colombo-Gonzalez, Sophia Cordova, Deysi Diaz Hernandez, John Ketcham, Dalila Koljenovic, Alisson Lagos Guardado, Emely Latacunga Guaman, Maelyn Mann, Blanca Marroquin Vargas, Paola Melendez Deras, Ronny Mendoza, Kileen Milligan, Tatiana Parada Escalante, Payton Pisaniello, Brittany Reyes Serrano, Keily Rosales Charuc, Kayden Saravia, Marion Sesay, and Helen Vasquez.

### Superintendent's Honor

**Roll:** Addison Alvarado, Autumn Atkinson, Maddelynn DeMondo-Gernant, Natalia Evangelista, Mariama Gai,

Amhara Gillmer, Hannah

Goldsmith, Melanie Gomez Perez, Isabella Gonzales, Eriberto Gonzalez Jr, Jancarlos Guardado, Camdyn Hoefling, Sophia Jacobs, Senaida Jeronimo Sanchez, Yasmel Leon Mota, Brandon Marica, Dayana Mendoza-Gallo, Dillan Padilla Avila, Joslyn Smith, and Zayd Snead.

### 11th Grade

**Honor Roll:** Michael Avelar Martinez, Juliana Barreto, Sarah Blume, Bethany Carvajal, Kaddyjatou Darboe, Blanca Flores, LeonJahn-aeSkye Fountain, Ashleigh Fuentes Ardon, Fatoumata Gai, Madelin Gonzaga Moreno, Alison Granados-Fuentes, Chanel Han, Adryana Kozachuk, Cessy Lezama Rodriguez, Conner McManus, Jozyr McNeil, Dominic McPherson, Heysel Mejia Corcio, Glenda Mendoza Dominguez, Tristin Miller, Yulenh Phillip, Anselmo Pinzon, Daivon Ramos-Troy, Joshua Rosales, Shastelyn Sandoval-Melara, James Smith Jr, Marisol Vasquez-Nunez, Sierra Velazquez, and Rodrigo Zacapexpan Reyes.

### Superintendent's Honor

**Roll:** James Bensimon, Emalina Cenovic, Jordyn Cerone, Carissa Ciorciari, Riley Gorr, Eric Moocz, Robert Perra, Melanie Rivera, Efrain Rodriguez, Abigail Toledo, Alisha Tremper, Peyton Varner, and Xavier Young.

### 12th Grade

**Honor Roll:** Katherine Alvarado Castro, Edison Bastidas Avendano, Xzavier Berrios, Bintou Darboe, Olivia DeGraw, Marcos Deras Lopez, Jonathan Dias Paredes, Emmabella Ferreira, Sebastian Fowler, Bella Gomez Lopez, Angel Gonzales, Treyvon Hayden, Brian Ingber II, Jaxon Ingber, Hector Jami Cocha, Zoey Ketcham, Anastacia Ladd, Raphael Ladd, John Landaverde Rodriguez, Eric Li, Carmen Montes Velasco, Jarvin Nunez Mejia, Christian Pinelli, Iliana Pinzon, Isis Santos Berrios, Marilyn Santos, Mehakdeep Singh, Noelle Varner, Bryan Vazquez, Justin Yautentzi Reyes, and Carlos Zavala Garcia.

### Superintendent's Honor

**Roll:** Angelina Alvarado, Kyleigh Avery, Andrew Bensimon, Lee-Ann Di Napoli, Jacob Espinoza, Haley Mackerley, Douglas Medina Carcamo Jr, Allanah Owens, Madeline Pantel, Allison Rojas, Tracy Severino Paredes, Kierstyn Surerus, and Skylar Wright.

## NOMINATE YOUR FAVORITE OLDER NEW YORKER!

*Nominations of Locals 55 and Older Are Due by March 2*

MONTICELLO – The NYS Office for the Aging will celebrate Older New Yorkers' Day on May 26, and Sullivan County has an opportunity to nominate two local residents!

At the ceremony in Albany, all honorees will receive a package that includes:

- A commemorative pin
- A hard copy of the book of biographies
- A certificate

Additionally, they will be featured on social media and rightfully celebrated in local media.

The deadline for submitting nominees is March 2. Thus, the Sullivan County Office for the Aging is seeking nominations of older adults from the local community to be represented at this event. These nominations can come from civic leaders, elected officials, and community organizations.

The nominee should be a volunteer aged 55 or older that has made a difference in the community through civic engagement.

Nomination forms are available at <https://sullivanny.gov/departments/aging> (click on "Nominate a 2026 Older New Yorker!") or can be obtained by contacting the Office for the Aging at 845-807-0243 or emailing [sullivanofa@sullivanny.gov](mailto:sullivanofa@sullivanny.gov).

## Founder of Hope Alive 845 Calls on Governor Hochul to Address Failing Systems for New York's Most Vulnerable Children

MONTICELLO – Despite repeated outreach and calls for action, Governor Kathy Hochul has refused to meet with representatives from Hope Alive 845 to discuss the Hope Alive Act, a critical legislative proposal aimed at enhancing child safety in New York State. This act would grant law enforcement and law enforcement-adjacent agencies access to school records to aid in the search for missing and exploited children. Additionally, Hope Alive 845 is calling for a comprehensive statewide review of New York's Child Protective Services (CPS), which continues to fail underrepresented children across the state.

Domingo Ramos, founder of Hope Alive 845, expressed frustration over the Governor's refusal to engage in discussions that could save lives.

"The crisis of missing and exploited children in New York is not an issue we can ignore, yet Governor Hochul refuses to sit down and discuss real solutions. The Hope Alive Act is designed to provide law enforcement with the necessary tools to locate children faster, and the Governor's refusal to engage is a disservice to the very communities she claims to protect," said Mr. Ramos.

Under the current system, bureaucratic red tape signifi-

cantly delays investigations when children go missing. The Hope Alive Act seeks to cut through these barriers by allowing law enforcement timely access to school records, ensuring critical information is available in the earliest and most crucial hours of a child's disappearance.

Additionally, the widespread failures of New York's CPS system disproportionately affect underrepresented children, leaving them trapped in cycles of abuse, neglect, and systemic abandonment. Hope Alive 845 is calling for a statewide review of CPS policies and procedures to expose systemic failures and implement reforms that prioritize children's safety and well-being.

"We see case after case where CPS fails to protect children from dangerous environments, yet there is no accountability. Without reform, we are sentencing these children to a future of suffering. The Governor's silence on this issue is un-

acceptable," added Mr. Ramos.

Hope Alive 845 is urging state lawmakers, advocates, and concerned citizens to demand action from Governor Hochul and the New York State Legislature to ensure that child protection is a priority, not an afterthought.

For more information or to support the Hope Alive Act, please contact Hope Alive 845 at

About Hope Alive 845: Hope Alive 845 is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting vulnerable children in New York State through advocacy, intervention, and legislative action. The organization works closely with law enforcement, community leaders, and policymakers to create meaningful change for at-risk youth.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Celebrating Older New Yorkers Day with close to 100 others in Albany in 2025 were, from the left, Sullivan County Office for the Aging Director Lise-Anne Deoul, Debbie Bradley, 2025 awardee Sabina Toomey, NYS Office for the Aging Director Greg Olsen, 2025 awardee Gayle Irving, Karin Pantel and Sullivan County Volunteers Coordinator Monika Roosa.

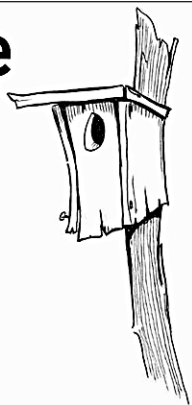
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# SENTINEL SPORTS



## SULLIVAN STRUGGLING

### GENERAL CAGERS NOW STAND AT 8-14

by Win Hadley

LOCH SHELDRAKE – The SUNY Sullivan men's basketball team has had an up and down season since returning to Division III play this season, and lately there have been more downs than ups.

The Generals have lost three of their last four games, including two at Paul Gerry Fieldhouse, where they are typically tough to beat, and now stand at 8-14 on the season (at press time).

The win came against Region XV opponent LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City on January 24. Although down by eight at halftime, the Generals rallied on the opponent's home court and

secured a hard fought 84-80 victory over the Red Hawks.

The win put Sullivan at 8-12 on the year, and 7-8 in Region play.

Hassan Niang led the Generals in scoring in the contest, connecting on seven 3-pointers and finishing with 32 points. Tomas Hernandez added 15 points for Sullivan.

Next came archrival, SUNY Orange, in Middletown. The Colts entered the game ranked #23 in the nation among Division II schools, so it was an uphill battle going in, and Sullivan was never really in the game, trailing at halftime by 52-33. They fared little better in the second half, and ended up on the short end of a 92-65 score.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Nicholas Sanchez led the scoring for the Generals, scoring 14 points while also pulling down 8 rebounds. David Fowler finished with 10 points and 9 rebounds.

Sullivan then faced off with Region XV opponent, the Queensborough Community College Tigers, on their home court in Loch Sheldrake. The usually friendly confines of Paul Gerry Fieldhouse failed to produce a win, as the Generals dropped a tough one, 91-82.

It was a see-saw battle, and Queensborough took a one point lead into the locker room at halftime, 40-39. The Generals were able to keep pace early in the second half, but the Tigers eventually pulled

away, and the final score was 91-82.

The Generals had four scorers in double figures in the contest: Hassan Niang with 21 points; Quentin Richardson with 17 points; Tomas Hernandez with 15 points; and Xavier Beckford with 14 points.

As The Sentinel went to press, Sullivan was scheduled to visit Rockland County Community College in Suffern for a Tuesday, February 3 game, then return home to take on the Senators from Ulster County Community College on Thursday, February 5, and for afternoon contests against Hostos Community College on Saturday, February 7, and Kingsborough Community College on Sunday, February 8.

## Rail Trail Alliance Cancels SnO&W

### Weather Conditions to Blame



SENTINEL FILE PHOTO

Winter storm Fern may have forced the cancellation of the annual SNO&W hike in Mamakating, but it did not preclude the use of the Milk Train Trail in Hurleyville. This photo was taken on Thursday, January 29.

MAMAKATING – Due to weather-related conditions, the Sullivan O&W Rail Trail Alliance decided to cancel their 6th Annual SnO&W Snowshoe Walk & Hike that had been planned to take place on Sunday, February 1 on the historic O&W Rail Trail in the Town of Mamakating. In addition to

the forecasted weather conditions, high snow accumulation at the entrance to the trail rendered the planned route impassable.

"In an effort to consider and ensure the safety of our participants, we made the difficult decision to cancel this year's SnO&W due to forecasted weather condi-

tions that are expected for Sunday, February 1, such as extreme low temperatures coupled with considerable wind gusts predicted throughout the day," said Austin Davis of Sullivan County's Division of Planning and member of the Alliance.

The Sullivan O&W Rail Trail Alliance encourages anyone who may be interested in any of their future trail events to visit their website periodically at [www.SullivanOandW.com/](http://www.SullivanOandW.com/) events or the Sullivan O&W Rail Trail on Facebook or Instagram for future event announcements.

The Sullivan O&W Rail Trail Alliance is fiscally sponsored by Catskill Mountainkeeper, and is a partnership of local government entities, non-profits, and volunteers which serve as the stewards for the trail. For more information about the O&W Rail Trail and the work of the Alliance, visit [www.SullivanOandW.com](http://www.SullivanOandW.com).



PHOTO PROVIDED

A County lifeguard at Lake Superior State Park in Bethel.

## Lifeguard Courses

### Start in March

### New and Recertifications

### Offered at Indoor Pool

FALLSBURG – The Sullivan County Parks, Recreation & Beautification Department is offering American Red Cross Blended Learning: Lifeguard Courses, Lifeguard Recertification Courses, and CPR/AED for Professional Rescuers Recertification Courses!

Throughout March-June 2026, Sullivan County Assistant Recreation Director Fiona Feltman will give these courses in the Fallsburg Jr./Sr. High School Indoor Pool (115 Brickman Rd, Fallsburg).

New Lifeguard candidates must be 15 years old by the last day of the course. Recertifying Lifeguards must bring their current certification. Participants must be able to complete the prerequisite swim test.

Lifeguard Courses

The Lifeguard Certification course is \$350 for Sullivan County residents and \$400 for non-residents.

The Lifeguard Recertification course is \$175 for Sullivan County residents

and \$225 for non-residents.

Upon successful completion, certification will include Lifeguarding (Deep Water), CPR/AED for Professional Rescuers, First Aid, and Bloodborne Pathogens Training.

CPR/AED for Professional Rescuers (CPRO) Recertification Courses

Participants must bring current certification. CPRO Recertification is \$100 for Sullivan County residents and \$125 for non-residents. Upon successful completion, certification will include CPR/AED for Professional Rescuers and Bloodborne Pathogens Training.

See a full list of course dates offered and the registration form at the Parks & Recreation Department in the County Government Center or at <https://www.sullivanny.gov/departments/parksrecreation>.

Questions? Reach out to the Parks, Recreation & Beautification office at 845-807-0287 or email [scparks@sullivanny.gov](mailto:scparks@sullivanny.gov).

## Fired Up for Health!

### The 2026 Healthiest Fire Department Challenge Begins

LIBERTY – The Sullivan 180 Healthiest Fire Department Challenge kicked off its 4th year on January 1 with 11 departments geared up to participate! In the first three full weeks of the challenge, departments have completed almost 100 points, focusing on nutrition, physical and mental health. Working out, taking walks, stretching, setting health goals, and enjoying healthy meals together are just a few highlights from the first few weeks of the challenge.

The Healthiest Fire Department Challenge is a health and wellness competition for Sullivan County fire departments that encourages physical, nutritional, and mental health activities. Departments earn "turtle points" for completing health-focused events, workouts, and trainings, with at least five members participating. At the end of the challenge, these turtle points make the departments eligible for grant funding and awards, promoting healthier lifestyles while supporting the firefighting community.

Year four marks a renewed focus on encouraging consistency; establishing healthy habits that can be sustained over time. A new "point stacking" model makes it possible to earn points consistently; helping departments build healthy habits and routines over the full challenge through September.

"The point stacking model was designed to meet firefighters where they are," said Sullivan 180 Outreach Coordinator Nicole Blais. "Even on the busiest days, small actions still count, and those small actions add up to lasting change."

"This challenge provided great opportunities for our firefighters to partici-

pate in some healthy fun, healthy, creative meals, and thinking outside the box challenges. This is another opportunity to honor our brave Sullivan County firefighters and show the communities we serve the commitment and hard work their firefighters have completed during the challenge to remain healthy," said John Hauschild, Deputy Commissioner of Public Safety and Sullivan County Fire Coordinator, Sullivan County Bureau of Fire, Division of Public Safety.

Departments continue to build momentum and are gearing up for two upcoming events: The Sue Bunce Memorial Sullivan Freeze for the Cure Polar Plunge on Saturday, January 31 and the 6th Annual SNO&W Snowshoe Walk & Hike on Sunday, Feb-

ruary 1 along the historic O&W Rail Trail in Mamakating. These events are open to the public. Join the fun and cheer on your local fire department or follow along on Sullivan 180 social media for Healthiest Fire Department Challenge updates.

It is not too late to join the 2026 Healthiest Fire Department Challenge! Reach out to Nicole Blais at [NicoleBlais@Sullivan180.org](mailto:NicoleBlais@Sullivan180.org) to sign up or learn more.

Sullivan 180 is working to build a healthy community, one degree at a time, through people, places and policy with support from Bold Gold Media Group, Manor Ink, The River Reporter, The Sullivan County Democrat and WJFF Radio Catskill. Learn more at [Sullivan180.org](http://Sullivan180.org) or [Facebook.com/Sullivan180inc](https://www.facebook.com/Sullivan180inc).



## BALLGAME BAFFLERS

BY BRIAN

Here are five ballgame bafflers for your consideration. The first person to email the most correct answers to [hurleysent@hotmail.com](mailto:hurleysent@hotmail.com) will win a prize. Have fun!

### February Questions:

1. In what year did the first Winter Olympic Games take place?
2. How many countries competed in the first-ever Winter Olympic Games?
3. Where were the very first Winter Olympic Games held?
4. In what years did Lake Placid, NY host the Winter Olympic Games?
5. Who won the first Gold Medal ever awarded in a Winter Olympics event?

### January Answers:

1. Alex Ovechkin has more career goals than any NHL player ever (912 and counting). Wayne Gretzky (894) is second, Who has the third highest career total? (**Gordie Howe**)
2. What National Hockey League team has won the most Stanley Cup championships? (Montreal Canadiens)
3. How Many Canadian cities have had NHL franchises at one time or another? (Nine: **Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver, Quebec, and Hamilton**)
4. What two teams played in the NHL's first Winter Classic Game? (**Buffalo Sabres and Pittsburgh Penguins**)
5. Which NHL team won four straight Stanley Cups in the early 1980s? (**NY Islanders**)

Shawn Reid was our January winner with five out of five correct answers.



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