THE HURLEYVILLE SENTINEL.

Covering Main Street and Beyond.

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ONE LAST CURTAIN CALL

Catskill International Film Festival Celebrates HPAC's Legacy and Looks Toward the Future





Photos Provided

HURLEYVILLE — There are some places that become more than the walls that surround them. They become a home for creativity, a gathering place for dreamers, and a stage where stories come to life. They hold the laughter of strangers who become friends, the applause of audiences moved by a powerful performance, and the quiet tears that come when something meaningful reaches its end.

For one unforgettable weekend last month, the Hurleyville Performing Arts Centre (HPAC) was all of that and more.

The Catskill International Film Festival returned to the beloved venue for a three-day celebration of independent cinema, artistic discovery, and human connection. But this year, beneath the excitement and applause, there was something more profound: the knowledge that this would be the festival's final celebration at HPAC before it closes its doors forever.

Hundreds gathered in person, while thousands more joined online to watch films free of charge and vote for their favorites in the Audience Choice categories. Filmmakers shared their visions, audiences embraced unfamiliar stories, and friendships formed in the spaces between screenings and celebrations.

It was a weekend of extraordinary highs and heartbreaking goodbyes—a celebration of what art can accomplish and a tribute to a place that helped make it possible.

And as the final curtain approached, one message became clear: A building may close, but the stories, relationships, and inspiration created within it do not have to end.

A Sold-Out Opening Night Filled With Magic

The celebration began with a sold-out opening night that brought energy, excitement, and a touch of Hollywood glamour to Hurleyville.

Guests arrived for a red-carpet party featuring live music by Jolly Joe Jester, followed by a comedy performance from Keith Prince of Corner Store Comedy. They mingled, signed posters, purchased festival merchandise, enjoyed food, and reconnected with familiar faces while meeting fellow artists and film enthusiasts.

Then came the films.

The evening's highlight was the world premiere of Where the High Ends, a locally shot production that struck a powerful emotional chord with the audience. When the screening ended, applause and cheers filled the theater. Some audience members were moved to tears—not from sadness, but from the unmistakable joy of witnessing a story resonate so deeply.

In those moments, the purpose of independent cinema became tangible. A filmmaker's vision, brought to life through countless hours of work, had found its audience. A story had crossed the invisible distance between the screen and the hearts of the people watching.

That connection is something no award can fully measure.



The festivities continued in HPAC's glamorous ballroom, where DJ Zeno kept the celebration going late into the night. Filmmakers and attendees danced, celebrated their achievements, and made new connections, while ticketed guests participated in nightly raffles that added another layer of excitement to the weekend.

Yet even amid the music and celebration, the people behind the festival understood how much work had gone into making the night possible.

Festival Co-Chairman Charles Marinaro took a moment to recognize the friends, family members, and planning committee whose dedication had helped bring the event to life.

"I did not do this event alone," Mr. Marinaro told the crowd. "In fact, I have had much support from close friends and family throughout. Without our planning committee working tirelessly, our event would not be possible."

He also acknowledged the determination required to bring independent films from an idea to a finished work. Audiences may see only the final product, but behind every film are decisions, sacrifices, setbacks, and moments when a filmmaker must find the strength to keep going.

The festival was a celebration of those unseen efforts—and of the courage it takes to share something personal with the world.



More Than Movies: A Weekend of Connection and Discovery

Throughout the weekend, the Catskill International Film Festival offered far more than screenings. It created opportunities for artists to learn, collaborate, and discover what might be possible beyond the theater doors.

An engaging panel discussion brought acclaimed director Spencer Sherri and author Thelma Adams together to explore the process of adapting books to film. A casting workshop led by Heidi Edklund offered insight into another essential part of filmmaking, while question-and-answer sessions allowed audiences to engage directly with the people behind the stories.

Red-carpet gatherings and after-parties created space for conversations that might never have happened otherwise. Aspiring artists had the chance to learn from experienced professionals. Filmmakers exchanged ideas, celebrated one another's achievements, and began building relationships that could extend well beyond the festival weekend.

And the reach of those stories stretched far beyond Hurleyville.

Thousands of viewers watched films online at no cost, discovering new voices and participating in Audience Choice voting. That expanded audience reflected the festival's commitment to accessibility and its belief that independent cinema deserves to be seen, heard, and experienced by as many people as possible.

For filmmakers, that opportunity matters. A film does not need a massive budget or a famous name to move someone.

Sometimes, all it needs is a screen, an open mind, and an audience willing to listen.

Over the course of the weekend, HPAC became a meeting place for those possibilities—a place where creativity was encouraged, stories were shared, and the next chapter of someone's artistic journey might quietly begin.

The Words That Brought the Weekend into Focus

As the festival drew toward its closing ceremony, the celebration took on a different meaning.

The awards, the applause, and the excitement of the weekend were still present, but so was the reality of saying goodbye to HPAC. For those who had invested their time, energy, and hearts in the center, the closing represented the loss of something deeply personal.

Festival Co-Chairmen Charles Marinaro and Anthony Gagliardo joined Christina Antizzo, CEO of the Hurleyville Performing Arts Centre, to offer heartfelt farewells and reflect on the venue's impact on the local arts community.

Ms. Antizzo became emotional as she thanked the staff who had stood beside her through HPAC's final chapter. Her tears spoke to something that statistics, programs, and lists of performances can never fully capture: the human relationships that sustain a cultural institution.

Behind every event are people who arrive early, stay late, solve problems, welcome guests, and work tirelessly to make something meaningful happen. Over time, that work becomes more than a job. It becomes a shared purpose, a community, and a part of who they are.

HPAC was not simply a place where people came to watch performances. It was a place where people helped create them.

Mr. Marinaro, too, struggled to hold back tears as he reflected on the venue's closing. In an effort to express the bittersweet nature of the moment, he shared the familiar words of Dr. Seuss:

"Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened."

It was a fitting sentiment for a weekend filled with both celebration and sorrow. There was genuine sadness in knowing that HPAC's doors would close, but there was also gratitude for everything that had happened within them.

The performances. The friendships. The opportunities. The moments when an artist took a chance and discovered that someone was listening.

Those things cannot be erased by a closing date.

Charles Marinaro's Message to the Filmmakers: What Did You Get Out of the Deal?

Perhaps one of the weekend's most meaningful moments came when Mr. Marinaro turned his attention to the filmmakers gathered before him.

His words were not simply a congratulations to those whose films had been selected. They were a reminder of why the festival existed in the first place—and of what can matter long after the awards have been handed out.

"You could have submitted anywhere in the world,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

A MARKER FOR JUDGE COOKE

Historic Marker Unveiled at His Former Home in Monticello

MONTICELLO—The Sullivan County Historical Society and the Sullivan County Bar Association paid tribute to the memory of Judge Lawrence H. Cooke on Tuesday, October 27 by unveiling a historic marker at his home in Monticello.

Judge Cooke, who died in 2000, was a lifetime Monticello resident, and served as Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals—the highest judicial office in the state-- from 1979 to 1984. He and his wife Alice raised their three children in the home at the corner of Broadway and Port Jervis Road in the village, and resided their until their respective passings, 59 years in total.

Much of the Cooke family was in attendance at the ceremony, which originated at the Sullivan County Courthouse—incidentally named the Lawrence H. Cooke Sullivan County Courthouse in the Judge's honor in 1997. After refreshments and speeches before a packed house at the Courthouse, presided over by Judge Danielle Jose-Decker, the event shifted to the backyard of the home where the actual marker was unveiled, with many of the attendees moving with it.

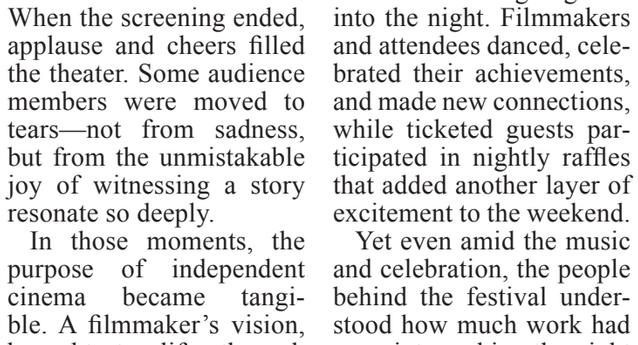


PHOTO PROVIDED

Members of the Cooke family and others gather around the new marker at the former Cooke home.

In addition to Judge Jose-Decker, who served as Master of Ceremonies, speakers at the Courthouse included Judge Cooke's two sons, Ed and George, Assemblywoman Paula Kay, retired Appellate Court Judge Anthony Kane, Appellate Division Presiding Justice Elizabeth Garry, Sullivan County Historical Society President Suzanne Cecil, town of Thompson Historian Alvin Dumas, and Sullivan County Historian John Conway.

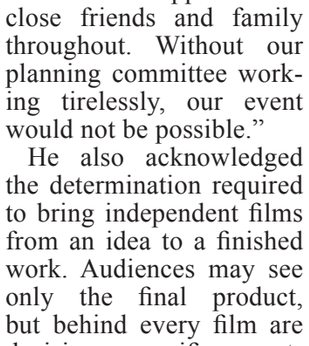


PHOTO BY JOHN CONWAY

Judge Cooke's son, George Cooke, former Sullivan County Clerk and retired Commissioner of Jurors, speaking at the Courthouse event.

Major Tina Perez of the New York State Court Officers sang the National Anthem, and retired NYS Police investigator and current town of Mamakating Justice Terence Mullen provided bagpipe music for the processionals.

HEAP Season Is Here *Sign Up for Benefits Has Begun*

LIBERTY – The 2026-2027 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) season has begun.

"HEAP's regular component– offering a one-time payment to help buy fuel to heat a home – began on Monday, November 2," notes Sullivan County Social Services Commissioner Giselle Steketee.

"But the Heating Equipment Repair & Replacement (HERR) and the Heating Equipment Clean & Tune (C&T) components had already begun. They provide funding to have trained professionals inspect, service and even replace furnaces, boilers, stoves and other heating equipment for the homeowner."

Eligibility and benefits are based on income, household size, the primary heating source, and whether or not the household has a member who is under age six, over age 60, or permanently disabled. You may qualify even if you think you won't, so to apply for a 2026-2027 HEAP grant, go to https://mybenefits.ny.gov/mybenefits/begin or call 845-807-0142.

In-person applications are being accepted at Office for the Aging and the Department of Social Services, but please call ahead to confirm.

Applications can also be obtained from the County's community partners (please call first):

- Action Toward Independence, 845-794-4228
- Independent Living, 845-794-3322
- Sullivan County Office for the Aging, 845-807-0241

Income thresholds for 2026-2027 Regular HEAP:

Household Size	Gross Monthly Income
1	$0-$3,563
2	$0-$4,659
3	$0-$5,756
4	$0-$6,852
5	$0-$7,948
6	$0-$9,045
7	$0-$9,250
8	$0-$9,456
9	$0-$9,662
10	$0-$9,867
11	$0-$10,073
12	$0-$10,278
13	$0-$10,515

The Sullivan County HEAP Office can be reached at 845-807-0142 (hit option #2) or HEAP@sullivanny.gov. The fax number is 845-292-4651.

Hamlet Happenings

by Kathleen Sullivan



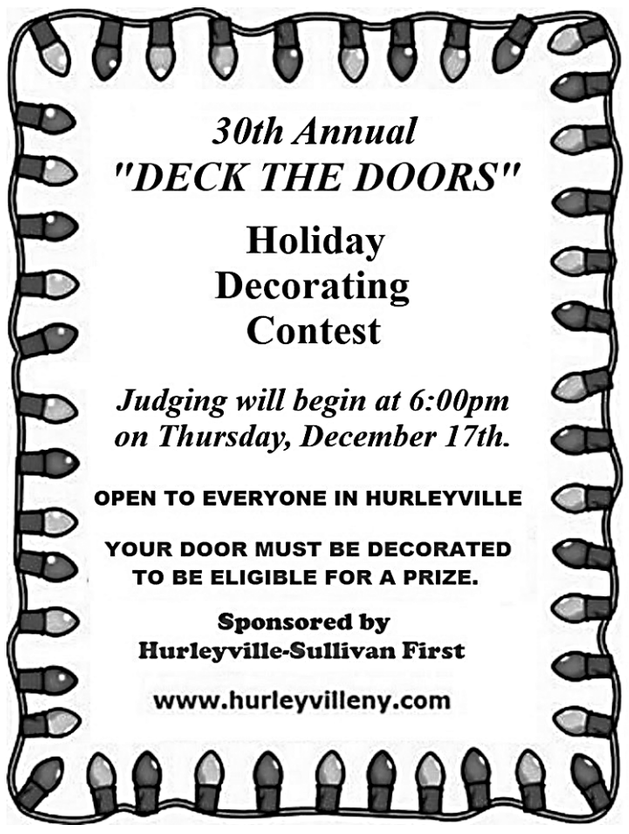
HURLEYVILLE-SULLIVAN FIRST (HSF)

Hurleyville-Sullivan First will hold the 30th Annual "Deck the Doors" Holiday Decorating Contest on Thursday, December 17. Judging will begin at 6 p.m. Make sure your lights are on! All holiday-decorated doors in the hamlet, both residences and businesses, are eligible. Winners of the contest will be awarded prizes provided by Hurleyville business owners and members of Hurleyville-Sullivan First.

"Holiday in Hurleyville" will be held on Saturday, December 5 from 12 until 6 p.m. The event will feature a holiday tree exhibit at the Sullivan County Museum, a visit with Santa, craft-making for kids, holiday shopping specials and a luminaria on the rail trail. The event will conclude with a tree and menorah lighting at the entrance to the Hurleyville Rails to Trails.

Members of HSF will get the barrels and planters on Main Street and at the post office ready for winter this month.

For more information about Hurleyville and Hurleyville-Sullivan First, please visit the group on Facebook or at www.hurleyvilleny.com.



HURLEYVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Food for Thanksgiving will be distributed at the Bread of Life food pantry at the church on Thursday, November 19 from 3 until 4:45 p.m. Donations for the Thanksgiving food distribution would be greatly appreciated. They can be left at the church on Thursdays from 5:30 until 7 p.m., and on Sundays from 10 to 11 a.m.

The Regional Food Bank will hold a mass distribution "Thanksgiving Give-away" at the Sullivan County Government Center on Saturday, November 21.

Visitors to the food pantry will have to provide proof of their address and proof of residency for the members of their household…leases, shelter forms, mail addressed to the visitor and children's school records.

The whole family is invited to come join the fun at "Messy Church" on Saturday, November 14 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. This family-friendly event features arts & crafts, games and music.

Everyone is invited to participate in "Prayers in Person" at the church every Thursday from 10 a.m. – noon and from 5:30 – 7 p.m.

Sunday services at the church begin at 9 a.m. Children of all ages are invited to attend Sunday school at the church during services.

Pastor Bette Sohm delivers sermons on Facebook at 11 a.m. on Sundays.

You can 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.

Volunteers at the church are collecting socks, gloves, hats, underwear and diapers for children in foster care. They are also gathering paper goods for Preventive Services. This county program supports parents in their efforts to keep their children safe and healthy in their own homes. Please contact Cookie at 845-428-5871 or Goldie at 845-467-1641 for more information.

You can visit the church's page on Facebook for more information on services and activities at the church.

THE SULLIVAN COUNTY MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Sullivan County Historical Society will open its annual Holiday Theme Exhibit at the Sullivan County Museum on Saturday, December 5. The event, held in conjunction with "Holiday in Hurleyville", will feature holiday-themed artificial trees, Hanukkah displays, and Kwanzaa displays created and decorated by individuals, businesses, and organizations. The trees and displays can be set up between November 27 and December 4. Please call 845-434-8044 or email scecil@scnyhistory.org for information.

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., and on Sunday from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Admission is free. Donations to meet the increasing cost of operating the museum are appreciated.

You can visit the Sullivan County Historical Society and Museum at www.scnyhistory.org or on Facebook.

COLUMBIA HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE (CHNA)

The members of Columbia Hill Neighborhood Alliance (CHNA) are dedicated to the group's mission of sustainable and responsible development in our community.

The group has met regularly since 2012 in order to be prepared for when the developer of the proposed Gan Eden Estates project on Columbia Hill appears again before the Town of Thompson Planning Board. The group meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Hurleyville Firehouse. The meeting is open to all residents of the community.

The proposed project will endanger the community and the environment in so many ways including:

• Scope of the project – 534 townhouses, 89 buildings, community center, pool, athletic courts and fields, 400,000-gallon water tank, over 2 miles of interior roads

• Threat to municipal and private water supply – primary wells for Gan Eden are in the Town of Fallsburg

• Harmful effect on neighboring wells as far away as Mongaup Road

• Adverse effect on neighboring wetlands and wildlife

• 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.

• Destructive effects of runoff – flooding on Main Street, Columbia Drive and Mongaup Road, danger to downhill wells, flooding of Congregation Anschei Cemetery

• Wastewater treatment plant discharge via a ditch, not a pipe – a threat to residences, Fallsburg town wells, Congregation Anschei Cemetery, the Hurleyville Rod and Gun Club

• Wastewater treatment plant failure – a threat to residences, Fallsburg town wells, Congregation Anschei Cemetery, the Hurleyville Rod and Gun Club

• Questionable structural integrity of on-site dam with 3-acre pond

• Electric capacity

• Threat to air quality

• Hazards of increased traffic

• Potential dangers of entrances to the development

Visit CHNA on Facebook to learn how you can help to protect your community by demanding responsible and environmentally-friendly development.

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HOLIDAY IN HURLEYVILLE
DECEMBER 5TH
12 TO 6PM
BUSINESS SPECIALS
VISIT WITH SANTA
HOLIDAY SHOPPING
KIDS CRAFT MAKING
TREE & MENORAH LIGHTING
LUMINARIA
TREE EXHIBIT AT MUSEUM
MUSIC

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

The following letter is an opinion piece, and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of this newspaper, its publisher or its staff. The Hurleyville Sentinel will happily print opposing or supporting views as they are received.

Dear Hurleyville

Most people think a museum's busy season is its most important one. Very few realize the hardest season is the one when the doors are closed and no one is watching.

Two years ago, the Roscoe O&W Railway Museum was barely open, and the building was in disarray. Then a new group of volunteers sprang into action and, through a lot of hard work, transformed it into a welcoming space once again.

Last year we welcomed about 710 visitors. This year, more than 1,350 people have come through our doors, and Haunted Afternoons has been bringing families to the museum throughout October. On Saturday, October 10th, we welcomed over 100 visitors in a single day! Volunteers, visitors, and neighbors like you made that comeback happen.

Now picture that same building in January: quiet, dry, and holding at a steady 55°F, with every photograph, station record, and artifact safe and waiting for spring.

That's why I'm reaching out. This winter, we need to protect what this community has rebuilt, so the museum opens in spring stronger than ever.

We've already done our part: the museum is paying $1,200 from its own still-modest funds for required electrical repairs, including exit signs, safety detectors, and outlets. So every dollar you give goes to protecting the building and collection through the cold months.

Our Winter Care Fund goal is $6,300—enough to purchase approximately 1,000 gallons of heating oil at the most recently quoted price of $6.29 per gallon. Even while our doors are closed, caring for Roscoe's history continues. Maintaining approximately 55°F is part of our effort to provide a stable winter environment for the photographs, documents, and artifacts entrusted to our care.

PROTECT THE MUSEUM THIS WINTER

Every $63 buys 10 gallons of oil, and every gift, large or small, helps us reach our goal.

This is for anyone who has ever stood on that platform, told a grandchild about the trains, or believes a small town's history is worth keeping at home.

If that sounds like you, please give by November 25th, if at all possible.

If you'd prefer to donate by check to Roscoe O&W Railway Museum, write "Winter Care Fund" on the memo line, and mail it to PO Box 305, Roscoe, NY 12776. The museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit; your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

With gratitude,

Dave Davidson
Board Member, Roscoe O&W Railway Museum

Temple Sholom to Host Chanukah Event

MONTICELLO-- On Sunday, December 6 at 1 pm, Temple Sholom will celebrate Chanukah with a party for children of all ages. The temple will supply potato latkes, jelly donuts, songs, and stories.

The event will run until 3 p.m. Attendees are requested to bring their own menorahs. The temple will supply candles.

Tickets for adults are $5 in advance and $8 at the door. Children under age 13 are welcome to join the party at no charge. Reservations may be made by telephone or by sending a check to Temple Sholom.

RSVP by Tuesday, December 1 by sending a check for payment to Temple Sholom, PO Box 664, Monticello, NY 12701, or by calling Temple Sholom 845-794-8731 or Susan Kantor 845-798-0578.

Snow date is December 13. All members of the community are welcome.

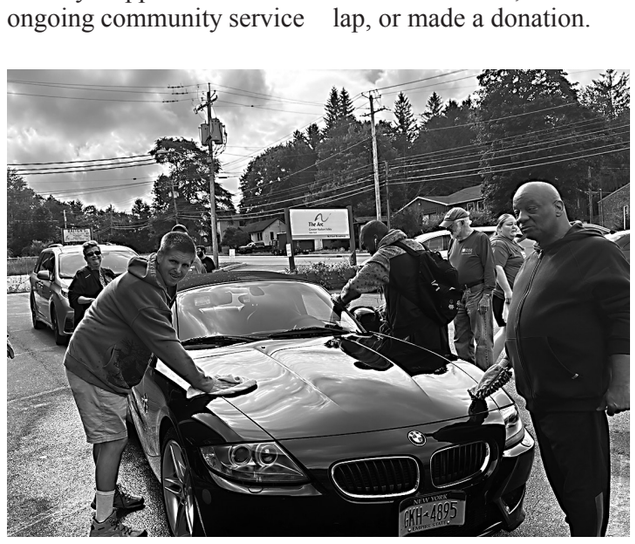
AKTION CLUB REMAINS ACTIVE

MONTICELLO-- The late summer weeks ended with two successful fundraising events for the members of the Aktion Club of Sullivan County and proved that a combination of teamwork and community spirit can drive successful results. The club is sponsored by the Kiwanis Clubs of Monticello and Woodridge and is an organization comprising adults with various degrees of disabilities who are affiliated with New Hope Community, the Arc Greater Hudson Valley, and The Center for Discovery.

The first event was the Aktion Club's annual Car Wash, which took place on August 22 at the Arc Greater Hudson Valley facility on East Broadway in Monticello. While the car wash was free, community members stepped up significantly with tips and donations totaling $400. The proceeds directly support the club's ongoing community service events enabling the members to continue developing leadership skills while giving back locally.

The Club gathered again in September for a moving Walk to End Alzheimer's hosted at the New Hope Community Garden. The event brought together the agencies' staff, family and club members walking along the garden with a display of symbolic purple shirts and holding flowers representing various connections to Alzheimer's cause – whether caring for a loved one, honoring a memory, or supporting the hope for a cure. The walk generated $325, which was sent to the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter and will go toward care, family support services and medical research.

Aktion Club members extend their thanks to everyone who stopped by to get their car washed, walked a lap, or made a donation.





PHOTOS PROVIDED

FROM THE WEATHER CENTER

by John Simon



THANKSGIVING SNOW STORMS



SENTINEL FILE PHOTO

We all know that winter doesn't officially begin until December 21 each year, but this area has often seen significant snow storms weeks before that date. Some of the most memorabe early storms have actually come on Thsnksgiving Day, turning one of the nation's busiest travel days into a nightmare for many.

According to Christy Bowen, writing on the website, weatherforecastnow.com, one of the most infamous Thanksgiving storms came in 1971. That Thanksgiving Day snowstorm was the greatest November snowfall on record for Albany, NY, with 22.5 inches of snow reported, while up to 30 inches blanketed the Catskills and upper Hudson Valley, including Sullivan County, causing major travel disruptions and power outages.

That year, the snow began to fall the day before Thanksgiving, and continued into Thanksgiving Day. The snow turned the roads treacherous, and many were not plowed until the following day, leaving some commuters stranded. The Catskills were among the hardest hit areas, with deep drifts and hazardous driving conditions.

This storm is still remembered as one of the most notable Thsnksgiving snowstorms in U.S. history, with its timing catching many residents off guard.

Other notable Thanksgiving snowstorms occurred in 1950, when wind gusts of 83 miles per hour, the strongest ever, were reported in Albany, with sustained winds of 50 to 60 mph; and in 1989, when low pressure tracking across the Carolinas brought heavy rain to the southern Atlantic coast and blanketed the middle Atlantic and southern New England with heavy snow. More than nine inches fell over Long Island, and the six inches that hit Newark, New Jersey that day remains a record for Thsnksgiving Day.

Fortunately, although they have been known to occur, Thsnksgiving Day nowstorms do not hit this area regularly, and it is typically high winds and cold, sometimes freezing rain that are more common. You will be happy to know that The Farmers' Almanac predicts cool but mostly fair weather for New York on Thanksgiving Day this year, with only a chance of flurries in northern or higher-elevation areas — no major storms are expected.

Happy Thanksgiving.

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

HONORING HISTORY AND HISTORIANS

Sullivan County Historical Society Hosts Annual Dinner

by John Conway

ROSCOE — The Sullivan County Historical Society's annual dinner was held at the Rockland House in Roscoe on October 18, and in addition to installing a new slate of officers for the upcoming year, the Society honored two organizations with awards.

The Beaverkill Chapter of the National society Daughters of the American Revolution was recognized at the SCHS History Maker for 2026, while Fort Delaware Museum of Colonial History in Narrowsburg, NY received the History Preserver Award.

"For over a century, patriotic aspects of Sullivan County history have been preserved through the Beaverkill Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution," the SCHS noted in announcing the award. "Organized in 1917, this women's organization of dedicated volunteers has worked tirelessly to keep our region's Revolutionary roots alive by promoting genealogical research for membership lineage to colonial American patriots. Throughout its 110-year history, the Beaverkill Chapter has initiated historic preservation projects such as gravesite restoration and location of burial sites of Revolutionary War veterans. In 1917, the Chapter members fed the National Guardsmen who were detailed to guard the Sullivan County railroad bridges during World War I. Today, the Chapter helps commemorate the yearly ceremonies at the Minisink Battlefield as well as sponsor the Wreaths Across America project.

"Likewise, the Chapter supports local schools through sponsoring community and citizenship awards to our youth. For its commitment and dedication in preserving Sullivan County's heritage, The Sullivan County Historical Society is pleased to award the Beaverkill Chapter DAR as this year's SCHS History Maker for the year 2026."

Fort Delaware, operated since 2021 as a public-private partnership between Sullivan County and the Barryville-based nonprofit, The Delaware Company, was first opened in 1957, and will celebrate its 70th anniversary next year.

"In this year when America celebrates its colonial history with the Semiquincentennial anniversary of the signing of the nation's Declaration of Independence, The Sullivan County Historical Society likewise pays tribute to Sullivan County's own colonial history," the SCHS noted.

"Fort Delaware was created as a life-sized replica of the colonial stockaded forts that protected the pre-Revolutionary settlement of Cushetunk along the upper Delaware River. For seven decades, Fort Delaware has operated as a living museum, preserving the colonial way of life through demonstrations and educational programs performed by a trained staff and artisans costumed in colonial attire. The story that is told at Fort Delaware and by its directors, both past and present, has led The Sullivan County Historical Society to honor Fort Delaware as its nominee for History Preserver for the year 2026."



PHOTO BY JOHN CONWAY

SCHS President Suzanne Cecil speaking at the annual dinner on October 17.

The SCHS also bestowed special recognition on long time member Donna Denman.

Prior to the awards presentations, Suzanne Cecil was installed for another term as the SCHS president. She is believed to be the longest serving president in the organization's history.

A MINUTEMAN AT MINISINK

New Statue Dedicated as Part of Rev War Semiquincentennial



PHOTO BY JOHN CONWAY

The full-sized bronze Minuteman statue at the Minisink Battleground in Barryville.

BARRYVILLE—The Sullivan County Semiquincentennial Commission hosted another event last month commemorating 250 years of American independence. This time, several members of the Commission were on hand to dedicate a new full-size bronze Minuteman statue at the Minisink Battleground Park in Barryville. Participating Commission members included co-chairs Debra and John Conway, Ruth Huggler, Virdanna Lawrence, and Lynn Priebe.

The statue was procured with America 250 funding from New York State, through the Sullivan County Legislature augmented with money from the Barryville based nonprofit history education group, The Delaware Company.

The dedication took place on Saturday morning, October 25. About 60 people attended.

A history hike led by Sullivan County Historian John Conway along the Park's Woodland and Battleground Trails followed, with about 40 participants.

Speakers at the statue unveiling included Sullivan County Legislature Chair Nadia Rajsz, who praised the collaboration required to complete the project, and District One Legislator Matt McPhillips, who talked about the importance of preserving history. The Fort Delaware Fife & Drum Corps provided musical accompaniment and the Mamakating VFW furnished the honor guard and salute.

The Sullivan County Division of Parks, Recreation & Beautification, under Director Brian Scardefield, installed the statue and landscaped the area around it.

The statue is a replica of the sculpture by Daniel Chester French that stands at the battlefield in Concord, MA. That statue, dedicated in 1875, marks the site of the Battle of Concord, which was one of the opening events of the American Revolution.

The website, Lost New England, notes that the French sculpture "stands on the west side of the Old North Bridge, on the spot where the colonial militiamen assembled on April 19, 1775 and fired the famous 'shot heard round the world' at the British redcoats on the east side of the river. This short skirmish lasted less than three minutes, but it forced the British to abandon their search for colonial military supplies and retreat to Boston. This was the first military victory of the war for the colonists, and it was also the first time that British soldiers were killed in combat during the war."

Neversink and Denning History Afternoon

Time and the Valleys Museum

GRAHAMSVILLE – Sunday, November 8 is Neversink and Denning History Afternoon from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Time and the Valleys Museum on St. Rt 55 in Grahamsville.

Photos, records, books and artifacts from the Museum's archives and research room for the towns of Neversink and Denning will be will be out and available to the public for research. The Museum's archivists Lynn Priebe, Wanda Terwilliger, Beverly Muthig and Diane Garritt will be on hand to answer questions. Attendees are invited to bring questions and their own photos, stories and records to share. At 2 p.m., Trustee, Educator and Researcher Lynn Priebe will give a special program on Revolutionary War burials.

Admission to the program is FREE and includes entrance to the Museum's exhibitions, including the new exhibition, The Great Fear: Frontier Life During the American Revolution, and the 1930s Catskill Farm with more than 15 buildings. For more information visit the website timeandthevalleysmuseum.org, email info@timeandthevalleysmuseum.org or call 845 985-7700.

Current Exhibitions:

• Water and the Valleys, an exhibit on the history of the Rondout and Neversink watershed area from early geological times to the 20th century. This exhibition includes a section on the Lenape Native Americans, early area settlers, farming, local industries and more.

• Tunnels, Toil and Trouble: New York City's Quest for Water and the Rondout-Neversink Story, an engaging exhibition on NYC water supply system and the towns that were removed to build the system, includes why New York City needed water, a description of the three water systems, the heartache of the people who had to give up their homes and how the complex system was built.

• NEW! The Great Fear: Frontier Life in the American Revolution an immersive and interactive exhibition on the dangerous frontier life during the Revolution in Orange, Ulster and Sullivan Counties, including native, loyalist attacks and patriot attacks, the hardships of settler life, Native life before and after contact and the Battle of Chestnut Woods. It includes audio, video, games and hands on activities.

• 1930s Catskill Family Farm is an outdoor, open air experience with over 15 early farm buildings all illustrating life on a Catskill family farm during the 1930s, about to be removed for the building of a NYC reservoir. Building include a farm house, 1870s barn, sap house, sawmill, chicken coop, workshop with WORKING waterwheel and many more with hands on activities, video and audio.

The Museum is located at 332 Main Street (St. Rt. 55) in Grahamsville, Sullivan County. It is open to the public on Saturday and Sunday, from noon to 4 p.m. through September or by appointment. Adults admission is $10, Children under 16 $5, and children under six are free. Museum members are FREE. Free admission to active duty military members (with ID) and up to five family members through our status as a Blue Star Museum. This free admission for members of the military and their families runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

For more information call 845 985-7700, e-mail info@timeandthevalleysmuseum.org or visit https://www.timeandthevalleysmuseum.org/.



Out Divine Corners Way

by Jonathan Shimkin

I've had memorable Thanksgivings at the tables of relative strangers, at times when "home" (the place, the notion) felt far away. The hospitable spirit of the holiday — a compound of harvest festival and tribal gathering — was alive on those occasions and can be traced back to Thanksgiving's semi-mythic origins in the coming together of Wampanoag natives and Plymouth Pilgrims in 1621.

And back even further: the model of a harvest festival was part of the cargo carried by the Pilgrims from England; they would have known it as Lammas. It is a ritual as old as agriculture. The Romans had their Cerealia, dedicated to the goddess of grain, Ceres; the Jews, their feast of Sukkot. The Wampanoag's own Cranberry Day likely preceded these observances by millennia.

The ethic of hospitality that graces the holiday is likewise rooted in ancient custom. "The commandment to care for the stranger is mentioned more times than any other commandment in the Torah," one commentator notes, citing Leviticus: "Like the native among you shall be the stranger who sojourns with you, and you shall love him like yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." This is a good thing to remember at Thanksgiving. In any given year, we are as likely to be strangers as natives, roles that can turn on a dime. The Natives of 1621 saw their homeland transformed into a veritable Egypt by the descendants of the very Pilgrims who once came ashore strangers in a strange land.

The distinctive feature of 1621 was diverse tribes seated together at the same board. Thanksgiving is a communal holiday; the company drawn together may be neighboring tribes or your own kin. The indelible Thanksgivings of my childhood brought two branches of family together, year after year, hosted at either the house of my parents, in Westchester, or that of my aunt and uncle, in New Jersey. I recall the latter more vividly than the former, perhaps because the journey we undertook to get there —over bridges, through tunnels —heightened the sense of the occasion.

My aunt and uncle had a ranch-style house. I remember wondering at the absence of a second floor; our house had two floors. Such is the diversity of clans! So our Jersey Thanksgivings unfolded along a horizontal axis: the kids would retreat to the bedrooms at one end of the house (long hallways, many doors – ideal for hide-and-seek), while the adults sorted dishes and settled into the kitchen and den at the other end. At some point, we'd all converge upon the dining room table for the extended meal, capped by ice cream molded in the shape of pumpkins, corn cobs, and turkeys. Then we'd move to the den, where the tedium of televised football would send the kids outdoors to roam the neighborhood in the crisp late-autumn air.

In the years after my branch of the family broke up and moved, piecemeal, to New York City, my mother and I would take the train to Jersey from Penn Station, the epic journey diminished to a commute. The gathering was also getting smaller — grandparents passed away; children grew up and dispersed. The generational tide ebbed, until, in the course of time, it flowed again, as now grown-up kids returned with spouses and children of their own, nieces and nephews finding new ways to make a playground of the house.

Eventually, we had our last celebration at my aunt and uncle's. They were moving to Florida. To mark the occasion, they installed a small plaque in the basement commemorating their decades in the house – a sign against forgetting. Our families would never convene in that particular configuration again.

These days, whatever form Thanksgiving takes, some part of me still dwells among memories of those earliest ones. I look back and see my cousin and me playing hide-and-seek along the long hallways of their house: I am placing my shoes to one side of an entryway, their tips slightly protruding, and my cousin, coming down the hallway, turns towards the shoes as I leap out, shoeless, from the other side of the doorway… *Surprise!*

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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.

If you are reading this article, it is November. On November 1st you changed your clocks, (spring ahead, fall back) did you change the batteries in your **Smoke detector** and **Carbon monoxide detector**? The newer detectors have a ten-year battery life, then they are replaced and cannot be changed or taken out to be used elsewhere. People were taking batteries out of their smoke detectors and using them in their TV remote and other devices. **REMEMBER Smoke Detectors Save Lives.** Here are some **Smoke Detector Safety Tips:**

1. Install smoke alarms inside every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of your home, including the basement.

2. Test alarms monthly using the test button to make sure they work.

3. Never remove a battery to stop a nuisance alarm.

4. Replace smoke alarms every 10 years from the date of manufacture, or sooner if the manufacturer specifies.

5. Choose interconnected alarms. When one alarm sounds, all interconnected alarms sound, providing an earlier warning throughout the home.

6. Keep alarms clean. Dust and debris can interfere with proper operation. Clean according to the manufacturer's instructions.

7. Install alarms properly. Try to avoid locations where cooking smoke or steam may cause nuisance alarms.

8. Never disable an alarm.

9. Have an escape plan. Identify two ways out of every room when possible and choose an outdoor meeting place.

10. Practice your escape plan. Make sure everyone knows what the alarm sounds like and how to get outside. Once outside, stay outside and call 911.

I believe that I have touched on this topic just about every year, yet I have been on calls where the detectors are on the countertop, on top of the dresser, on the bookcase, and many other places except on the ceiling where they belong. Again, **REMEMBER Smoke Detectors Save Lives.**

October was magnificent weather wise. Look out, because Mother Nature is going to hit us with the cost of winter. Are you ready?

It is obvious that it is going to cost more to stay warm this winter. Make sure any old heating devices that have not been used in years are safe to use.

In addition, take a moment to read these safety tips to get ready for the heating season:



ILLUSTRATION PROVIDED

1. Have your heating system inspected

Schedule annual professional maintenance for your furnace, boiler, and other heating equipment. Replace filters as recommended.

2. Clean and inspect chimneys and fireplaces

Have chimneys and vents inspected and cleaned as needed. Creosote buildup can cause dangerous chimney fires.

3. Use space heaters safely

Keep heaters at least three feet from anything that can burn. Place them on a level, stable surface, plug electric heaters directly into a wall outlet, and turn them off when leaving the room or going to bed.

4. Store firewood safely

Keep firewood outdoors and away from the house. Burn only seasoned wood in fireplaces and wood stoves.

5. Inspect wood stoves and fireplaces.

Check doors, stovepipes, and connections for damage. Use a proper screen or glass doors and dispose of ashes in a covered metal container outdoors, away from buildings and anything combustible.

6. Check electrical cords and outlets

Replace damaged cords, avoid overloaded outlets, and never run electrical cords under rugs. Do not use extension cords or power strips for space heaters.

7. Never heat your home with outdoor equipment

Never use outdoor grills, camp stoves, or generators indoors or in garages. Generators must be operated outdoors at least 20 feet from the home, away from doors, windows, and vents.

Thanksgiving is right around the corner. Remember Cooking/Kitchen fires are the number one cause of house fires. Be careful in the kitchen and never leave cooking unattended. More on this next month.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Be Safe Out There & Use Some Common Sense





FROM THE FILES OF...

THE HURLEYVILLE SENTINEL.

The Only Newspaper Published in the Town of Fallsburgh

COMPILED BY **Sullivan County Historian John Conway**

November 8, 1916
News of the Week

The Methodists are putting a new roof on the church here, having secured permission from the Baptist Association to do so.

One platform upon which both presidential candidates might share: "Save us from our friends."

Now is a good time to look at the figures after your name on the Sentinel and see if it is paid in advance as it should be. Pay up now while you have the money.

Where are our correspondents? If you need stationery let us know. If you expect to read the news of the nearby villages in which you are interested, you must also consider that others might like to hear from your village and the only way is to send in the news.

November 22, 1916
Local and Personal Items

The corporation "M. E. Gardner, Inc." of Hurleyville has been chartered by the secretary of state to conduct an insurance agency. The capital stock is $4,000, consisting of shares of $100 each and the directors for the first year are as follows; Marvin Gardner and Sadie Gardner of Hurleyville and Milton Gardner of Loch Sheldrake.

I. T. McNally of Hurleyville has secured the agency for the Grant Six. Come in and look over the 1917 model. Immediate delivery. Let us tell you more about it. There is nothing that can be compared with it for anywhere near the price of $825.

To the public, I wish to announce to my friends, patrons and general public that I am moving my grocery business from its present location to the new and larger quarters in the Slausen building next door which I recently purchased. In the future I shall handle a complete line of groceries, butter, eggs, vegetables, dry goods, shoes and in fact everything in the line of general merchandise. Thank you for past favors and soliciting new business, I remain respectfully yours. A. Newberg, Hurleyville.

November 29, 1916
Local and Vicinity News

W. J. Prince & Son are putting up their saw mill on their large wood tract near Strongtown today and expect soon to have it in operation and will then be in a position to furnish wood as well as coal.

The Murray Electrical Co., has set poles and run wires up the hill to Lawyer Baker's residence.

Brenner's new feed mill is nearly ready to commence operations and makes a very nice appearance from the outside.

Farmers, Attention!

Do not spoil yours and your fellow farmers' interest by selling milk to shippers at present. We do not ship to New York. We pay $2.15 per hundred for 3.6 milk for October. We pay 3c for each one tenth of a percent above 3.6 and deduct 3c for each point below. We pay twice a month. We will pay the League's prices as soon as shippers will be forced to sign with the Dairymen's League.

We sympathize with the great work of the Dairymen's League. We are a co-operative, organized by farmers for the benefit of farmers. We will do our utmost to help the farmers gain their rights. Do not dump your milk; bring it to the co-operative Jewish Farmers Creamery, Hurleyville.

November, 2016
New Sidewalks Coming to Town

A portion of Hurleyville's Main Street will soon be getting badly needed sidewalk improvements as the result of funding obtained by NYS Senator John Bonacic.

Mr. Bonacic (R/C/I-Mt. Hope) has announced that he has secured a $100,000 grant for the Town of Fallsburg to help with the installation of sidewalks in Hurleyville. The grant was secured as part of the State Municipal Grant Program, funding for which was appropriated in the 2016-2017 State Budget.

The $100,000 grant will be dedicated to the construction of new sidewalks and curbing along the easterly side of Main Street, between Thompson Street and Cunes Road. The scope of the work includes demolition and removal of existing concrete sidewalks, new concrete curbing, relocation of one fire hydrant, asphalt paving, and restoration work including topsoil, seeding, and mulching in disturbed areas.

HPAC: One Last Curtain Call

FROM FRONT PAGE

but you chose us," Mr. Marinaro told the crowd. "You submitted. You took a chance. It was accepted when many others were not. You are the select few."

He reminded the filmmakers of what they had accomplished over the weekend. People had sat on the edge of their seats. They had laughed, connected with the stories on screen, and allowed themselves to be drawn into worlds created by the artists before them.

"You did exactly what you set out to do," he said.

Then he asked a question that went beyond the films, the competition, and the anticipation of hearing the winners announced.

"But here is the question I want you to think about tonight: What did you get out of the deal?"

Was it the award? The recognition? The satisfaction of seeing their names on a screen and their work applauded by an audience?

Or was it something greater?

Perhaps it was a new friendship with someone who understood the challenges of bringing a creative vision to life. Perhaps it was a professional connection that could lead to the next project, a conversation that opened an unexpected door, or a fresh idea that helped a filmmaker decide what to do next.

Mr. Marinaro challenged the audience to look beyond the trophies waiting to be presented.

"Because there are things far more valuable than a trophy we hand out tonight," he said. "If you walk out of here with one new friendship, one new idea, or one new opportunity, then this festival has already done its job."

In a weekend defined by endings, those words offered a powerful reminder of what can continue.

Awards recognize achievement, but relationships create possibilities. Recognition celebrates what an artist has accomplished, but encouragement can give that artist the confidence to keep going. A festival lasts only a few days, yet a conversation in a hallway, a connection at an after-party, or a kind word from a fellow filmmaker can influence a career for years.

That is the lasting value of bringing creative people together.

Mr. Marinaro's message also seemed to capture the spirit of HPAC itself. The center's significance was never measured solely by the events it hosted or the number of people who passed through its doors. Its deeper value lived in the experiences it made possible—in the people it brought together and the opportunities that emerged because they shared the same space.

As the filmmakers listened, the question became larger than any single festival.

What do we carry with us when an experience ends?

Sometimes, it is a trophy. Sometimes, it is a memory. And sometimes, it is the person we meet who changes what we believe is possible.

An Ending That Cannot Define the Future

The closing of HPAC marks the end of an important chapter in the local arts community. Its absence will be felt by the artists, staff, audiences, and supporters who helped fill it with life.

But the Catskill International Film Festival is not ending with it.

While this may be the end of an era for HPAC, it is by no means the end of the Catskill International Film Festival.

The festival will continue its commitment to celebrating independent cinema, supporting filmmakers, and bringing creative voices to new audiences. There are more films to discover, more stories to experience, and more artists whose work deserves to be seen.

The road ahead may look different. The familiar setting may no longer be there. But the heart of a festival is not confined to a building.

It lives in the filmmaker who keeps creating after a difficult setback. It lives in the audience member who discovers a story that feels unexpectedly personal. It lives in the friendships formed between artists who once knew nothing about one another, and in the collaborations that begin with a simple introduction.

It lives in every person who chooses to take a chance and share something meaningful with the world.

That is what the Catskill International Film Festival celebrated at HPAC, and that is what it can continue to celebrate wherever its journey leads.

One Last Curtain Call

For one final weekend, HPAC was filled with the sounds that had made it special: music drifting through its spaces, laughter spilling into conversations, applause echoing through the theater, and the voices of people united by their love of the arts.

There were celebrations and farewells. There were films that moved audiences to tears and conversations that may lead to something new. There was pride in what had been accomplished and sadness over what was about to be lost.

And there was gratitude.

Gratitude for the people who built something meaningful. For the artists who trusted the festival with their work. For the staff and volunteers who helped make the weekend possible. For the audiences who showed up, watched, listened, laughed, and connected. And for a venue that, for one last time, provided a home for all of it.

When the final awards were presented and the last conversations began to wind down, the weekend left behind something more enduring than a closing ceremony.

It left a reminder that success is not measured only by what we win, but by whom we meet, what we learn, and what we inspire one another to do next.

HPAC's doors may be closing, but the memories created there will remain with the people who experienced them. And the filmmakers who gathered in Hurleyville will carry their stories forward—to new screens, new audiences, new collaborations, and new beginnings.

Perhaps that is the most fitting tribute to a place devoted to the arts: not simply to remember what happened within its walls, but to recognize what those experiences made possible beyond them.

As the lights go down at HPAC, the Catskill International Film Festival looks toward its next chapter with the same spirit that brought everyone together in the first place: a belief in the power of stories and the people brave enough to tell them.

One era is ending. Another is waiting to begin.

One curtain falls, but the story goes on. "This is not the end, this is only the beginning of many wonderful existences to come..." A line delivered by Anthony Gagliardo in the film A Line Between All Things was fitting.

SUNY SULLIVAN HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR RETURNS

Local Makers, Holiday Shopping, and Support for the SUNY Sullivan Food Pantry



ILLUSTRATION PROVIDED

LOCH SHELDRAKE--SUNY Sullivan is inviting the community to shop local and get an early start on holiday gift-giving at its Holiday Craft Fair on Saturday, November 21, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will take place at the college's Paul Gerry Fieldhouse, 112 College Road in Loch Sheldrake. Admission and parking are free.

Shoppers can browse holiday décor, woodwork, pottery, clothing, food items, jewelry, gifts, art, and other locally made goods from participating vendors.

Attendees are also encouraged to bring donations for the SUNY Sullivan Food Pantry, including canned and boxed foods, shelf-safe beverages, toiletries, baby wipes, disposable diapers, and other pantry essentials. Donations can be dropped off at SUNY Sullivan's table during the event, and a portion of event proceeds will also benefit the food pantry.

"The Holiday Craft Fair is a wonderful opportunity to bring people together and celebrate the talent we have right here in our community," said SUNY Sullivan President David Potash. "We look forward to welcoming our neighbors to campus, supporting local makers, and sharing in the excitement of the holiday season. I've also found some great gifts!"

Artists, crafters, and makers are invited to apply to participate as vendors. Spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and applications are due Wednesday, November 11. Interested vendors are encouraged to apply early, as spaces may fill before the deadline.

For vendor applications and event information, visit sunysullivan.edu/holiday-craft-fair(opens in new tab) or email events@sunysullivan.edu.

THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO PART II

by Edgar Allan Poe

This classic tale of horror by one of America's great writers was originally published in 1846 and is in the public domain. In the spirit of Halloween, we have offered in two parts beginning in October; here is the conclusion…

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grave. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons."

"Yes, yes," I said; "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said, "a sign."

"It is this," I answered, producing a trowel from beneath the folds of my roquelaire.

"You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about four feet in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavoured to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi—"

"He is an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock.



ILLUSTRATION PROVIDED

Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed, it is very damp. Once more let me implore you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was not the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labours and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated—I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall; I replied to the yells of him who clamoured. I reechoed—I aided—I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamourer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

"Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—a very good joke indeed—an excellent jest. We shall have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"For the love of God, Montresor!"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud—

"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again—

"Fortunato—"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in reply only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labour. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. In pace requiescat!

That concludes our classic tale of horror by one of America's most celebrated writers. We hope you enjoyed our story and that you had a happy Halloween!

LIBERTY POLICE CHIEF TO RECEIVE SYDA FOUNDATION AWARD

FALSBURG – The SYDA Foundation is proud to announce that Steve D'Agata, Chief of Police for the Village of Liberty, has been selected as the recipient of the 2026 SYDA Foundation Community Service Award. The SYDA Foundation sponsors the Community Service Award (CSA), which was established in 1986. The CSA is a community-driven honor celebrating residents whose selfless service and visionary commitment deliver enduring impact on the well-being of their Sullivan County neighbors. This year marks the 41st anniversary of the award.

The SYDA Foundation Community Service Award presentation ceremony will take place on Wednesday, November 18, at 1 p.m. at the Sullivan County Government Center's Legislative Meeting Room at 100 North Street, Monticello, NY 12701. Everyone is welcome to attend.

This prestigious award includes a certificate of merit for outstanding service to the Sullivan County community and a donation of $7,500 to be distributed by the recipient to the charities of their choice.

At the heart of the CSA award is community. The honoree is chosen by a dedicated selection committee comprised entirely of local civic leaders and past award recipients. The committee selected Steve D'Agata in recognition of his groundbreaking advocacy for community-centered public safety and his relentless work breaking barriers to care for individuals facing mental health and substance abuse challenges. Mr. D'Agata is a model of service, and this award amplifies his dedicated and passionate advocacy for community-centered law enforcement and breaking barriers of access to treatment for those suffering mental health and substance use disorders.

A lifelong Sullivan County resident, Mr. D'Agata grew up in Bethel and Monticello. After graduating from SUNY Albany with a dual bachelor's degree in criminal justice and psychology, he returned to Sullivan County to pursue a career in local law enforcement. He became a police officer for the Liberty Police Department and moved up through the ranks, becoming Detective Sergeant, and was then appointed the Chief of Police for the Village of Liberty in 2021.

As a detective, Mr. D'Agata served on the FBI's Hudson Valley Safe Streets Task Force. His experiences on the Task Force led him to seek out ways to keep people with substance use disorders out of the criminal justice system and into treatment.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Liberty Police Chief Steve D'Agata

After encountering the challenges of connecting individuals to treatment firsthand, he began partnering with Hope Not Handcuffs, a non-profit organization which connects law enforcement to community organizations who help individuals with substance use disorders to find support. Hope Not Handcuffs currently works with 65 law enforcement agencies across six counties.

Mr. D'Agata also secured funding for the Sullivan County Quick Response Team, which uses a proactive, multidisciplinary approach to reach out within 48 hours to individuals who have overdosed, provide them with harm-reduction supplies and connect them to recovery resources.

He currently serves as Chair of the Public Safety Council for the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI), a national organization supporting non-arrest pathways to treatment and recovery. PAARI bridges the gap between public safety and public health by offering individuals struggling with substance use a pathway to treatment rather than incarceration.

As a result of many of the initiatives he has supported, Sullivan County has seen a 56% reduction in fatal drug overdoses since 2020.

A member of the SYDA Foundation Community Service Award selection committee shared that he is "inspired by Chief D'Agata's compassion and consideration and his ability to relate to everyone as neighbors."

Mr. D'Agata expressed that he is "honored and humbled to be receiving this highly regarded award" and hopes that it "brings attention to the vital work that is being done in this community to connect people who are struggling to the resources that they need."

"For over four decades, the Community Service Award has celebrated Sullivan County individuals whose dedication shapes the very fabric of our county, and Chief D'Agata embodies that spirit entirely," said SYDA Foundation Community Relations Director Monica Silva-Gutierrez. "Steve brings a rare combination of empathy, collaborative vision, and deep humility to law enforcement. His outsized impact has saved lives and fundamentally altered how our community cares for its most vulnerable neighbors."

Mr. D'Agata has chosen to donate the full amount of the monetary award to Hope Not Handcuffs.

About the SYDA Foundation & The Community Service Award:

Headquartered in the Town of Fallsburg since 1979, the SYDA Foundation is a non-profit organization that makes Siddha Yoga meditation available globally while maintaining deep, lasting roots in the local community. Established in 1986, the annual Community Service Award remains one of Sullivan County's most enduring civic traditions, created specifically to ensure that local leaders and neighbors are formally recognized by their peers for exceptional public contributions.

2027 Arts for Sullivan Grants Available

Project Grants Up To $5,000

Fellowships of $3,000 Now Available

SULLIVAN COUNTY – Each year, the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance (DVAA), the Arts Council for Sullivan County, with the support of the New York State Council on the Arts, administers Arts for Sullivan, providing grants to Sullivan County non-profits and individual artists.

• Sullivan County-based organizations can apply for project grants of between $500 and $5,000 for Community Arts and Arts Education projects.

• Sullivan County-based visual artists, musicians, writers, choreographers, filmmakers, etc., are encouraged to apply for an Individual Artist Fellowship of $3,000.

• In addition, the number of available mini-grants ($500 block grants) has been set to three for 2027.

The 2027 grant application window is October 14th – December 9th, 2026. All applications are to be submitted via the online platform, Submittable.com.

Arts for Sullivan guidelines, grant information, and information session registration links are now available at delawarevalleyartsalliance.org/grants/

Grantees will be presented with their awards at a public award ceremony which will be held in May 2027.

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SENTINEL SPORTS



SOMETHING SPECIAL

GET LOST (IN THE BEST WAY) ON CATSKILLS TRAILS

HURLEYVILLE – There's something special about a trail. The way they shortcut a corner, connect communities, lead to forts and hide-e-holes. Some have official names, associated maps, icons on kiosks. That sort of thing. Others are simply known as the "sneak route."

Each represents an invitation to explore. To bring you someplace you want to go, but don't necessarily need to be.

On either end, regardless of where you start, lies a destination. Along the way, every step connects with the landscape, its smells and sounds. Trails are an experience of motion and meditation with a rhythmic cadence that can only come from the blissfully simple act of placing one foot in front of the other.

More Than a Walk in the Woods

For Lisa Lyons, owner of Morgan Outdoors on Main Street in Hurleyville, hiking in the Catskills is all these things. Every one of which is made better with two important things:

• Good Footwear

• A Plan

"It's one thing to 'get lost' in the wonder of the Catskills," she says. "It's quite another to get lost with wet feet and no map."

Sure, Lisa can set you up with a proper pair of hiking boots, a guide book (and guide) and plenty of other quality gear. But to her, the most important product she stocks is the advice that can only come from years and years of walking in, and caring for, her neighborhood woods.

"Hiking is a belief in the inspirational and healing power of nature. It's about the importance of going outside with the goal of trying something new and coming away with a genuine appreciation, true connection and love for the landscape," says Lisa.

To her, hiking in the Catskills is a gift. One that is meant to be regifted generation upon generation through the shared awareness of conservation and the deep value in knowing your place among the trees.

As she says, "we are all truly connected."

Take a Leisurely Stroll on the Milk Train Trail

Here, that includes the mountains, trees, streams and the historic communities that live among them. In Hurleyville, you can start or finish a stroll on the Hurleyville Rail Trail at the Sullivan County Museum where Lisa says she finds a surprise every time she walks in. Built in 1912 and housed in the historic Hurleyville Elementary School, the museum is home to hand-built exhibits that will enhance your knowledge and connection with everything you'll see on a walk.

Local Tip: The Hurleyville Rail Trail is often called "The Milk Train Trail" because once the O&W Rail Line opened and connected the rural area to the metropolitan market, dairy farming along the line exploded. As late and 1900, there were nearly 4,000 working farms along the railway, most of which had a lot of cows.



PHOTO BY JOHN CONWAY

Walking on the Milk Train Trail can sometimes yield unexpected sites, such as these ducks on the west side wetland.

Today, the Hurleyville segment of the O&W stretches 6.4 miles, including 3.5 miles of ADA-compliant paved trail, extending in either direction from the heart of the hamlet. Head east toward Fallsburg to experience a gentle stroll on a friendly gravel surface through wetlands home to Kingfishers, Blue Heron and Bald Eagle. Go west for woodlands and a less popular walk through a vibrant Catskills canopy that changes with the seasons.

"The beauty of the Hurleyville Rail Trail is that everyone can experience it," says Lisa, who regularly leads guided walks on the trail. "It's a bird watchers dream, but it's also special in that it's connected directly to a lovely community filled with the kind of shops and restaurants that give you more just for stepping in the door."

Make a Modest Meander Up Historic Walnut Mountain

If you're up for a little more of a challenge but still want the cultural experience of learning about the bones of a place, a hike up Walnut Mountain in Liberty is exactly what you should do.

From 1886-1887, the summit was capped by the Walnut Mountain House. Today, just the foundation remains along with the red shale carriage roads that accessed it. Interpretive signs dot the way, taking you back in time as you climb. Who built the house and what happened to it? You'll learn both on this moderate Catskills hike.

"Whether it's a spring, summer or fall hike or winter snowshoe, I always feel like I'm escaping somewhere special when I spend time at Walnut Mountain," says Lisa. "It's the kinds of place where you can relax, listen and soak it all in."

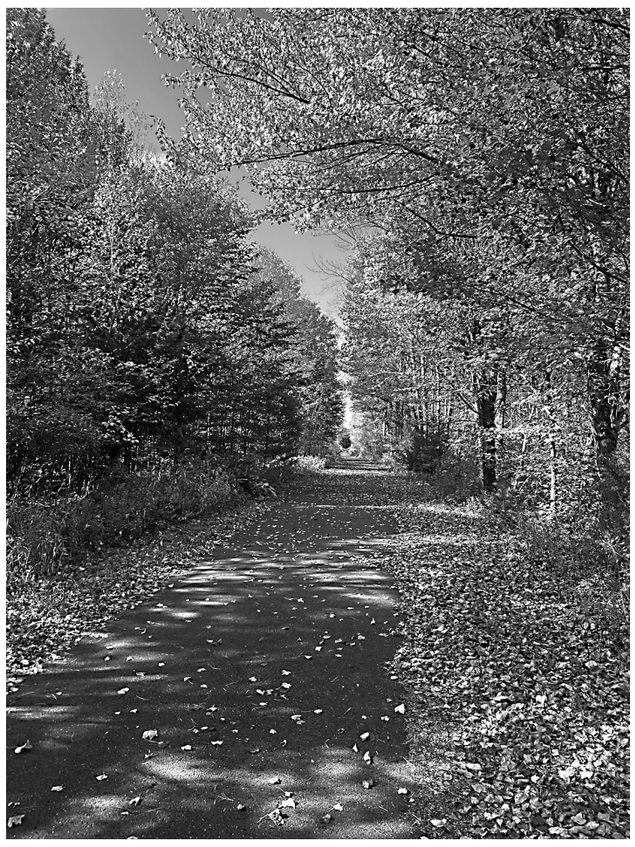


PHOTO BY JOHN CONWAY

Hurleyville's Milk Train Trail is especially beautiful in the fall.

Local Tip: You can hike up the front or backside of the mountain. Each provides a very different experience, but you'll find most people access the top from the front. If it's solitude you're looking for, your personal party is in the back where that chatter of a Red Squirrel may be the loudest sound you hear.

Ascend a Restored Fire Tower for Panoramic Views

Those looking for adventure, a good workout, and some of the most stunning views anywhere in the Catskills should head to Claryville where you can access the trail to the Red Hill Fire Tower.

The 60-foot tower was constructed in 1921 and was fully restored and opened to the public in 2000 by the Catskill Center for Conservation and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. A new trail completed in 2021 begins in Claryville and ascends two miles and 1,200 feet through multiple biospheres.

"On a clear day, the naked eye can see High Point Monument, which is some 50 plus miles away in New Jersey. You can also take in panoramic views of the Catskills that include numerous bluestone cliffs," adds Lisa.

Those from nearby metro areas may also recognize the bright bluestone in their home urban ecosphere. It's that same Catskill stone that was used to build sidewalks and the lower parts of buildings in places like New York City.

Local Tip: In winter, water seeps through the bluestone and forms the most stunning icicles imaginable.

Find Your Sneak Route in the Catskills

Whether you start your hike in Hurleyville, Liberty, Claryville or any Catskill community, what you'll find is a natural symmetry that simply doesn't exist anywhere other than here. Here, the experience is personal, immersive and connected to the landscape.

For Lisa, a hike in the Catskills makes her feel like she's getting away with something. Maybe she is. Maybe you could too. This is the kind of place where sneak routes lead to maple lattes and laughter. They lead to friendly conversations that begin at rooty trailheads and end on handhewn barstools before picking it back up again the next day.

"I love hiking," says Lisa. "But perhaps more than personal adventure and exercise, I love helping people find their own something special by going for a walk in the Catskills. If they connect with this place like I have, I know they'll care for and love it as much as I do."

It's a place that's graciously humble but stacked with the same boldness of a cord of wood. Classic, with a side of artful curiosity. Cultured, but bristled with a two-day beard. It's people like Lisa who want you to feel the same earthen hug she gets from the Catskills dirt every time she takes a hike.

It starts right here, one foot in front of the other, with a desire to discover and an openness to trying something new. The trail you hike today will be different tomorrow. You'll see things on the way down that you missed on the way up.

The Catskills are a place where you secretly never want the game of hide n' seek to end. And it doesn't have to.

This article appears compliments of Sullivan-Catskills.com, where it first ran. It is reprinted with permission.

A HO&WL-ING SUCCESS Fifth Annual Haunted Trail Walk

by John Conway

LIBERTY – The Sullivan County Rail Trail Alliance's fifth annual HO&WL Haunted Trail Walk in Liberty last month brought people and their dogs together to enjoy a little hike and a lot of history. The guided walk, led by the Sullivan County Historian, began at the Bridge & Tunnel Brewery at 50 Lake Street in the village. About 50 people participated, and about10 dogs.

The hike began at 5:30 p.m., and there was still plenty of daylight when the group began its journey west along the trail. Periodically along the walk, the sojourn would be interrupted so that everyone could regroup and hear a brief narration about the history of the railroad, the village of Liberty, and the Rail Trail Alliance itself. There were also a couple of ghost stories thrown in along the way.

The walk continued until the trail's intersection with Chestnut Street, and then turned around. Although there were a few dropouts along the way, virtually everyone stayed with the group until the finish back at Bridge & Tunnel well after dark.

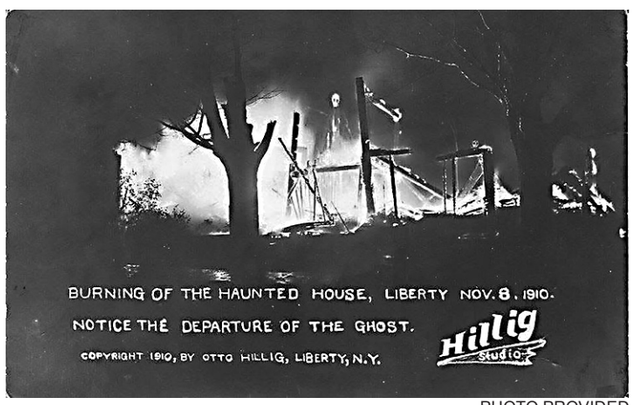


PHOTO PROVIDED



PHOTO BY JOHN CONWAY

Participants seemed particularly interested in the ghost story centered around the infamous Kilbourne house that once stood on North Main Street in Liberty, approximately where the Liberty Public Library is now. The house was abandoned around 1900 when the elderly couple who lived there apparently vanished without explanation, and it continued to deteriorate until destroyed in a late night fire on November 8, 1910.

Long reputed to be haunted in the years leading up to the fire, the house lives in infamy thanks to a famous photograph taken by Liberty photographer extraordinaire, Otto Hillig, that appears to show ghostly figures escaping from the blaze. Mr. Hillig created a postcard from the photo, and it became widely circulated.

The ghost stories were particularly appropriate—and their effect heightened--as the sun set on the walkers and the moon shined brightly overhead, providing the only visible light on the isolated sections of the trail.

Although stories of the Kilbourne house have been around for more than a century, and the Hillig photo has been published numerous times, most people on the walk were not acquainted with either. The photograph accompanies this article.



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 will win a prize. Have fun!

November Questions:

1. What two nicknames are commonly used for Monticello High School sports teams?
2. What two nicknames are commonly used for Middletown High School sports teams?
3. Liberty High School sports teams are known as the Red Hawks. What was their previous name?
4. What is the nickname for the sports teams from Hurleyville's Collaborative College High School?
5. Sullivan County Community College's sports teams are known as the Generals. What is the significance of the nickname?

October Answers:

1. What two teams played in the 1926 World Series, 100 years ago? **(Yankees and Cardinals)**
2. One future Hall of Fame pitcher won three games in the 1926 World Series. Who was it? **(Grover Cleveland Alexander)**
3. On future Hall of Famer hit three home runs in one game in the 1926 World Series. Who was it? **(Babe Ruth)**
4. The 1926 World Series ended when a player was thrown out trying to steal second base, the only time a World Series has ever ended that way. Who was the player? **(Babe Ruth)**
5. What legendary anecdote came about as the result of an incident in Game 4 of the 1926 World Series? **(The story that Babe Ruth promised a sick young boy in the hospital that he would hit a home run for him that day—and he hit three.)**

There was no winner last month...

Empowering Women in the Fire Service

Sullivan 180 Presents at 1st Annual New York Women in Fire Day

LIBERTY – Sullivan 180 Outreach Coordinator Nicole Blais presented at the First Annual New York Women in Fire Day held in Albany in September. Hosted by the Westmere Fire Department, the conference welcomed attendees from 17 counties throughout New York State, including four representatives from Sullivan County. The day featured presentations on topics including health and wellness, grant writing, leadership and emergency response.

Blais presented on the Healthiest Fire Department Challenge as a replicable framework for fire department health and wellness. The Challenge is a health and wellness competition for Sullivan County firefighters that supports the creation of healthy habits and routines focusing on physical, nutritional, and mental health. Her presentation explained how the challenge is engaging firefighters with movement and activities around creating healthy habits and routines.

"It was inspiring being able to present about the Healthiest Fire Department Challenge and the amazing work being done in Sullivan County fire departments to a room full of firefighters passionate about connecting, learning, sharing experiences, and empowering women in the fire service," Ms. Blais said.

Women in Fire is an organization dedicated to championing female leadership and participation within the fire and emergency services. The Coalition represents hundreds of individuals, both male and female, contributing to fire and emergency services in various roles, including career and volunteer firefighters, union officials, fire service educators, and research scientists. Women in Fire actively participates in various committees and task forces within the National Fire Protection Association, contributing to the establishment of firefighter qualification standards.

It is estimated that there are over one million firefighters in the United States and only 90,000 are female firefighters.

The Healthiest Fire Department Challenge is currently gearing up for a 5th year of health and a little healthy competition! Departments interested in signing up for the 2027 Challenge can reach out to Nicole Blais at Nicole@Sullivan180.org.

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.