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You don't have to be an artist to reap the benefits of making and enjoying art. In fact, even small doses can be advantageous. Here's what you should know.

A TOOL FOR LEARNING

Making art helps learners create different kinds of connections in their brains and increases their ability to think creatively and solve problems.

A FEEL-GOOD ACTIVITY

Art isn't just for kids. In fact, an increasing number of adults are making art as a way to relieve stress. From filling in adult coloring books and making art journals to completing DIY projects and assembling crafts from a kit, it's easy to find ways to unleash your creativity.



Indeed, taking a pause to color, paint, draw or sculpt allows you to break away from routine thoughts and the daily pressures of modern living. What's more, creating art has been shown to release dopamine in the brain, one of the chemicals believed to be responsible for feeling good.

VIEWING ART IS ALSO GOOD FOR YOU

Studies indicate that just one hour of looking at art, such as at a museum, can change the way you think and feel. In fact, it's been shown that those who spend time looking at art are able to think more critically about things and feel more empathy toward other people.



From doodling with a pen to creating a masterpiece with paint and a canvas, making art is good for you. And remember, creativity is like a muscle: the more you use it, the more powerful it will be.

Turn the page for an artistic opportunity you can tap into, and on the next page is an nearby opportunity to view artwork on the big screen at the Headwaters Arts Center.

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The Art for Wellness Program

Wednesdays 6–7:30pm
January 14 – April 8, 2026

Headwaters Arts Center
66 Main Street, Stamford

607-214-6040

headwaters@roxburyartsgroup.org
www.roxburyartsgroup.org

The new Art for Wellness program at Headwaters Arts Center is a free weekly program connecting creative expression with mindfulness practices. Introducing a creative project every Wednesday between January 14th–April 8th, at 6–7:30p, the Art for Wellness program will show participants how to explore their creativity, provide self-care, and contribute to a creative community that is supportive and deeply nourishing.

According to the American Psychiatric Association, “simply engaging in creative activities can boost your mental health.” Art for Wellness is designed to help prevent winter isolation and encourage self development for a truly restorative season.

Participants do not need to register or attend all meetings, and all materials and instruction will be provided.



Painting by Fons Heijnsbroek

This program is sponsored by Margaretville Telephone Company. All programs offered by the Roxbury Arts Group are supported by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the NYS Legislature, the A. Lindsay and Olive B. O'Connor Foundation, the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, The Community Foundation for South Central New York, the Tianaderrah Foundation, The Delaware National Bank of Delhi, and individual supporters.

*They're
Singing
Our Song!*

Great edition, Gretchen... so much info and wonderful stories.
Always so happy to get your emails. Thanks for all you do.

— Barb Funck



Wintertide Film Series

Samsara (2011) Friday January 27, 6-8pm
 The Princess Bride (1987) Friday February 13, 6-8pm
 Charade (1963) Friday February 27, 6-8pm
 Flow (2024) Friday March 13, 7-9pm
 Metropolis (1927) Friday March 27, 7-9pm

LOCAL LENS SHOWCASE-SHORTS

Friday April 10, 7-9pm

LOCAL LENS SHOWCASE- FEATURE FILMS

Friday April 24, 7-9pm

Headwaters Arts Center

66 Main Street, Stamford

607-214-6040

headwaters@roxburyartsgroup.org

www.roxburyartsgroup.org

Headwaters Arts Center invites the community to escape the winter cold with the Wintertide Film Series, a curated selection of films spanning nearly a century of cinema. Enjoy five carefully selected films every 2nd and 4th Friday from January through March, followed by two special evenings in April showcasing local filmmakers' work. Entry to the films is free and concessions like popcorn, soda, candy and hot chocolate will be available for purchase.

The series opens January 27 at 6pm with *Samsara* (2011), a breathtaking visual meditation filmed over five years in 25 countries. This wordless exploration of the cyclical nature of life offers new perspectives on our world and our connections to it.

On February 13, 6pm celebrate Valentine's Day with Rob Reiner's classic *The Princess Bride* (1987), followed February 27, 6pm with a Parisian thriller

Charade (1963); a film starring Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant that blends romance, comedy and mystery.

March brings two visually stunning films at a later time. On March 13 at 7pm *Flow* (2024) an Oscar winning innovative dialogue free animated feature that relies on music, natural sounds and imagery to tell a compelling story of a cat surviving a catastrophic flood with a menagerie of other animals. Then on March 27, Fritz Lang's groundbreaking silent film *Metropolis* (1927). This German Expressionist science fiction epic set in a futuristic city (in the year 2026) split between wealthy elites living in luxury and the suppressed working class toiling underground.

Then in April, Local Lens Showcase will present two evenings of films by filmmakers from our region. The Showcase on Friday April 10 will feature short films, under 30 minutes; while the one on April 24 with feature-length films. The submission form for film stakeholders, directors, writers, actors, editors is available at www.roxburyartsgroup.org/open-calls and due by March 7th, 2026.

All screenings take place at Headwaters Arts Center, 66 Main Street in Stamford. While folding chairs are provided, audiences are invited to bring their own chairs or blankets for the floor to create a cozy, communal viewing experience.

About Roxbury Arts Group Established in 1979, The Roxbury Arts Group is a non-profit multi-arts organization on a mission to infuse the heart of Catskill communities with the power of the arts. Through captivating public performances, inspiring exhibitions, engaging classes, and critical artist support, The Roxbury Arts Group ensures that artists from all walks of life and art lovers of all ages have access to quality programming and opportunities. RAG operates three venues: Roxbury Arts Center, Headwaters Arts Center, and the historic Old School Baptist Church.

WINTER FUN

Snowmobiling and ATVing Season is Here!

With the advent of the chilly season comes a fresh new world of outdoor fun and snowy adventures. Beyond skiing, snowshoeing and skating, thrill seekers are sure to love snowmobiling and ATVing. Here's an overview of these two increasingly popular winter activities.



Snowmobiling: an undisputed classic



Fast, powerful and built for freezing temperatures, snowmobiles remain a must-have for winter adventure enthusiasts. The combination of tracks and skis gives riders excellent manoeuvrability over deep snow and icy patches.

If you want to operate a snowmobile, you generally need a valid driver's licence and appropriate protective gear. Depending on local laws and your age, you may also be required to complete a training course before you hit the trails.

ATVs: ideal for extreme conditions

Winter-ready all-terrain vehicles, such as quads with tracks, offer equally memorable experiences. Heavier than snowmobiles, ATVs don't travel as well as snowmobiles over powdery snow. However, for riding through water or over muddy and rocky terrains, the ATV's weight distribution enables more stable handling.

Climate change is increasingly producing rapid shifts from heavy snowfall to sudden thaws, making winter conditions less predictable. ATVs are built to handle these challenges safely. Like snowmobiles, your local regulations may require you to have a valid driver's licence to operate an ATV.

What will you choose this year, a snowmobile or an ATV? Visit a specialist retailer in your area to find the model that's right for you.



International Snowmobile Safety Week

takes place from January 10 to 18, 2026.

Help your local snowmobiling organization spread the word on safe riding practices.

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#)



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Reaching New Heights

Bramley Mountain joins 2026 Fire Tower Challenge



Photo courtesy of Friends of Bramley Mountain Fire Tower

What a great way to start the year! Friends of Bramley Mountain Fire Tower volunteers John Sandman and Barbara Jones along with super stewards Nicole Thomas and James Patrick Cummings led a hardy group of hikers on snowshoes to the summit of Bramley Mountain as part of New York State's First Day Hikes.

The Friends of Bramley Mountain Fire Tower are thrilled to announce our inclusion in New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's 2026 Catskill Fire Tower Challenge.

The Catskills Fire Tower Challenge encourages experienced hikers to visit the region's remaining fire towers on Balsam Lake Mountain (Hardenburgh), Hunter Mountain (Hunter), Overlook Mountain (Woodstock), Red Hill Mountain (Denning), Tremper Mountain (Shandaken), the Upper Esopus Fire Tower at the Catskills Visitor Center and now Bramley Mountain Fire Tower in Delhi and Mt. Utsayantha in Stamford.

"The Catskills Fire Tower Challenge introduces New Yorkers and visitors to the exceptional hiking opportunities available on New York State public lands," said Commissioner Amanda Lefton. "Each year, hundreds of outdoor enthusiasts take Governor Kathy Hochul's advice to get offline and outside by taking the challenge and visiting the beauty of the Catskills from the heights of one of the historical fire towers. The Challenge is helping more people appreciate and enjoy all that this region has to offer, inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards."

continued...

To kick off our inclusion, the Friends of Bramley Mountain Fire Tower and Catskill Mountain Club led a First Day Hike at Bramley Mountain, despite the day's wind and cold temperatures..

This past summer, the first summer that Bramley Mountain Fire Tower was open, the number of hikers on the Bramley Mountain Trail almost tripled. Those who stewarded at the tower were thrilled to welcome visitors from around the Catskills, from around the country and from around the world. The views from the summit are amazing even for those who don't climb the tower, and just about everyone who hiked up thoroughly enjoyed their time with our stewards on top of the mountain. We know that being part of the Challenge will bring us even more visitors.

Anyone interested in becoming a steward, spending a couple of weekend or holiday days between Memorial Day weekend and Indigenous People's Day on Bramley Mountain, should contact us at info@bramleymountainfiretower.org



To complete the Challenge

Participants must visit all eight Catskill Fire Towers between January 1, 2026 and December 31, 2026.

Participants document their completion of the visits on the DEC website dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hiking/catskills-fire-tower-challenge.

All participants who complete the challenge will receive a letter and a commemorative Catskills Fire Tower Challenge patch designed with the 2026 completion year.

The first 1,000 finishers will also receive a one-year subscription to DEC's Conservationist magazine and a gift subscription for a second person of their choice.

Finishers who completed the challenge multiple times will receive an additional commemorative Catskills Fire Tower Challenge prize.

Upon completion, finishers will be able to download a customizable certificate and will be eligible to win prizes after the challenge period is closed.

Finishers will be entered into a grand prize drawing.

**Read the full text of the
DEC press release here:**

<https://dec.ny.gov/news/press-releases/2025/12/dec-announces-expansion-of-the-catskills-fire-tower-challenge>



6 steps to keep your feet healthy

From athlete's foot and plantar warts to corns, bunions, calluses and blisters, many problems can affect your feet and negatively impact your quality of life. Adopt these six simple habits to prevent both minor and serious foot issues.

Clean your feet daily. Wash your feet every day with a mild cleanser, rinse them thoroughly and dry them well, especially between the toes. However, avoid soaking your feet in very hot water for too long, as it can weaken your skin and nails.

Wear the right shoes. Whether you're out and about every day or playing sports, always choose shoes that fit properly and provide good support. Save those sky-high heels for special occasions.

Remove dead skin cells. About once a week, gently exfoliate your feet with a pumice stone, foot scrub or exfoliating glove to remove dead skin cells.

Use a moisturizing cream. The skin on your feet tends to dry out and crack. Apply a suitable lotion or cream to keep it soft and hydrated. Use a light touch and avoid applying cream between your toes, where moisture can build up.

Trim your nails properly. Cut and file your toenails regularly with clean tools. Be careful not to cut them too short, as this can lead to ingrown toenails.

Consult a professional if you have concerns. Do your feet hurt when you walk? Is your skin irritated or itchy despite good care? Is a wound not healing? No matter the problem, don't wait for it to get worse. See a foot health professional promptly.

Treat your feet with care! Because they're often out of sight, feet are frequently neglected. It's never too late to take care of them!



Are you storing your toothbrush correctly?

If stored incorrectly, your toothbrush can become a breeding ground for bacteria, which can be harmful to your health. It can even cause re-infection after a cold. Here's a quick reminder of the best storage practices.

- After brushing, rinse your toothbrush thoroughly to remove toothpaste and debris. Clean both the bristles and the handle.



- Place your toothbrush upright in a holder or glass so excess water can drain away.
- Make sure toothbrushes belonging to different household members don't touch each other.
- Keep the toothbrush holder or glass about one metre away from the sink and toilet to prevent contaminated droplets from landing on the toothbrushes.

Adopt these healthy habits today. Your smile will thank you for it!

STORING MEDICATION: Are you making any of these mistakes?

Medications are sensitive to several factors. If you store them incorrectly, they can lose their effectiveness or even become dangerous to your health. Therefore, it's essential to handle and store them with care. Here are three mistakes to avoid at all costs.

Mistake #1: Not reading the labels

Always check the storage instructions for your medication. Most pharmaceuticals must be kept:

- Away from direct sunlight
- In a room without risk of freezing or excessive heat
- Away from humidity
- In the refrigerator

continued...

You can find this information on the label, packaging insert or your prescription. Read it carefully before storing your medication.

Mistake #2: Blindly relying on the expiry date

The expiry date of a medication only applies to unopened products stored in their original containers. In other words, if the container has been opened or stored under different conditions, the expiry date may no longer be valid.

Mistake #3: Storing them in one of the worst places

Many people keep their medications in an unlocked cabinet above the bathroom sink, as you often see in movies and TV shows. Avoid this habit at all costs. The bathroom is warm and humid, which can damage your medications. Also, avoid storing them in your car's glove compartment or on a windowsill.

If you have any questions about storing a medication, ask your pharmacist for advice.



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Let's celebrate our everyday **HEROES**

Dear Readers,

Our communities are filled with everyday heroes—people who go above and beyond to help, support, encourage, and uplift those around them. Some save lives. Others make a difference through compassion, service, leadership, or simply showing up when it matters most.

Do you know someone who inspires others with their courage or commitment? Nominate them and share a short testimonial so we can recognize the impact they make and celebrate their story!

**Email us at ataap16@gmail.com or mail us a note at
A Time and A Place, P. O. Box 65, Arkville, NY 12406**



Pet Me Please!

Heart of the Catskills
Humane Society

by Laura Wright

Have cat, will travel

Have you traveled with your pets? It's more common for pet owners to travel with dogs. Dogs tend to be exposed to the car and other places and people far more often than the family felines. However, some people would rather travel with their cat if the alternative is finding a pet sitter or boarding. Here are some tips if you'd like to try traveling with your cat.

Travel can make cats nervous, and if you already have an anxious cat, you should talk with your vet about possible pre-trip anxiety medications for travel. You can also try a pheromone-based spray to help calm your kitty, such as Nature's Miracle. Don't spray it directly on your cat. Spritz it inside their carrier and on their blankets to create a sense of safety and calm. It's a good idea to do short "practice trips" in the car beforehand, to get your kitty comfortable with the smells, sights, and motion of the car.

Speaking of carriers, you should have your cat safely in a cat carrier/travel crate when traveling. When cats get scared, they can fit into very small spaces, such as under car seats. It can be very hard to get them out, and that experience will put a wrench in your trip for everyone! If you can acclimate your cat to wearing a harness and leash before the trip, that is an extra measure of security. Include your cat's own favorite blankets and toys in the carrier. Cats know their own scent and will feel more at home with their own belongings.

That goes for their litterbox as well. Cats prefer their own potty (as we all do), so make sure you pack their litterbox/scoop and the litter they use. It's a good idea to pack cleaning supplies as well, such as pet wipes for your pet and disinfecting spray and paper towels for messes. Have a plastic garbage bag on hand for dirty paper towels and litter scooping.

Bring your cat's food and favorite treats. Cats are



more sensitive to food changes than dogs, and you don't want to have to introduce them to new food or treats on vacation. That can lead to tummy and digestion issues. If your cat is on special prescription food and medication, make sure you have enough for your trip, plus a little extra (just in case). Keep your vet's number on hand as well.

Cats usually prefer their own space. Unless your cats are besties and are more nervous being separated, it's a good idea to let your cat have its own space. Don't put your cat together with another animal your cat doesn't like or get along with. Keep your cat and dog in separate areas of the car, if possible, unless they get along well. The less stress the better.

Don't open your car door unless your cat is completely secure. Cats that are spooked will look for an escape route, and they are fast!

If your cat tolerates a collar it's a good idea to have some form of ID on them when away from
continued...

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home. Especially if your pet isn't microchipped, a safety collar (that comes apart if it gets caught on something to avoid strangulation) with an ID tag is another option. Dog forbid your kitty does get loose while you are away! The kitty is much more likely to get back to you quickly if they have some form of ID that links to you as their person.

It's smart to be sure your cat is up to date on their basic vaccines before a trip as well. That includes a rabies vaccine and a current distemper vaccine. Have the records with you when your travel, along with your pet's vet history. That will make things go much more smoothly if you have to take them to an unfamiliar animal hospital while on vacation, and you can avoid having to call around trying to gather information at the last minute.

Lastly, remember that cats don't sweat like we do, so always be aware of the temperature in the car. Keep a good flow of air and never leave your cat in the car in hot weather. If the weather is cold, you can include a hot water bottle in the carrier for an extra bit of comfort.

With a little planning and care, the family feline could be safely and comfortably part of your family vacation. They may even end up being super savvy travelers after a trip or two! But don't force it. If you find your cat is an overly anxious traveler, let them stay home with good pet care and look forward to a sweet and purry reunion on your return (after they ignore you for a bit...).

Happy travels!

HERE'S A TIP

Pair Movement With a Daily Habit

Attach movement to something you already do—march in place during commercials, stretch while coffee brews, or do heel raises while brushing your teeth.

Use the "One-Plate Rule"

For meals, fill one plate once—half vegetables, one-quarter protein, one-quarter starch. It simplifies healthy eating without counting calories.

Protect Balance With a 60-Second Test

Once a day, stand near a counter and try balancing on one foot for up to 60 seconds. Improving balance is an effective fall-prevention tool.

Use Light to Improve Sleep

Open the blinds first thing in the morning and dim lights after dinner. This simple cue helps regulate your body clock and improve sleep quality.

Stretch Before Bed, Not Just After Waking

Five minutes of gentle stretching before bed can reduce stiffness, nighttime cramps, and morning aches.

Adopt the "Good Enough" Rule

Consistency matters more than intensity. If a walk is short, a meal isn't perfect, or a day goes sideways—it still counts.

Batch Cook Once, Eat Well All Week

Cook one large, healthy meal and portion it out for several days. It saves energy, money, and decision fatigue—especially helpful when motivation dips.

Keep a "Health Wins" List

Instead of focusing on what you should do, jot down small wins: walked 10 minutes, drank more water, slept better. Momentum builds motivation.

Make the Home Safer—One Room at a Time

Each month, improve one area: remove a loose rug, add better lighting, install a grab bar. Small changes make a big difference in independence.

Schedule Social Time Like an Appointment

Loneliness impacts health as much as inactivity. Put coffee dates, calls, or group activities on the calendar so they don't get skipped.

Happy New Year!

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SAMANTHA CLARK OF SS EQUESTRIAN SERVICES

Business Woman, Equine Appraiser, Writer, Entrepreneur, Author

by Suzanne M Walsh ©2026



Photo courtesy of SS Equestrian Services

Samantha Clark stands next to her horses. 'Amir' (the white horse) is a gray (meaning, 'white' in horse-talk) Arab Quarter Horse given to Samantha as a Christmas present in 8th grade. This is a breed that changes color.

Windham New York has always been stunning in winter, like some idealized picture- perfect ski town inside a giant snow globe high up in the Catskills. Now armchair tourists have something even more to enjoy about this picturesque place--an opportunity to get a real-feel by way of charming down-home everyday glimpses through the eyes of Samantha Clark, horse businesswoman, equine appraiser, author, entrepreneur, writer, and owner of SS Equestrian Services farm in Windham.

Samantha is sharing short clips on Facebook of life in Windham throughout the day, via the unique

lens of operating her business providing equestrian-related services high on the mountainside facing Windham Mountain. Her videos are personable; they share insights, humor, beauty, pathos, love and an expertise especially impressive in this young mother of three young children.

"My background has especially equipped me in being able to offer a large variety of services related to the wonderful world of horse industry" says Samantha, when asked whatever in the world kind of backstory brought her to this place in her life.

continued...

Watching the film clips as she moves about on her farm lends added sense to her answer—energy and competence seem to infuse everything about her.

"I graduated with a degree in Equine Business Management and have handled everything from managing a 40-horse boarding facility, to providing horse training and riding lessons for all ages and levels. I started the North American Pleasure Horse Association [she's still the president] and continue to contribute to horse industry-related periodicals."

What you'll find on her website—www.ssequestrian.com—is that Samantha's resume is lengthy. She is ASEA Certified (American Society of Equine Appraisers—the nation's only appraisal association exclusively for horse appraisers), a GSEC Grant Writer, and former publisher of *SS Equestrian's Advocate*, the bi-monthly, advertiser-supported publication for the equestrian audience of upstate, New York.

"In addition to having my own horses on the farm, we also board and train horses here. Come springtime, I'll be resuming teaching riding lessons, too."

You'll become familiar with everything Samantha talks about watching the videos she's posting sharing daily life on her farm. You'll meet the equines there too, including Samantha's own horse, "Amir".

"Amir inspired *The Horse Who Lost His Color*—the children's book I've written. My motivation for writing this story was feeling the parallel between him and me growing up together."

Amazon describes this book as a heart-warming story about a horse and a girl, with lessons "about patience, commitment and love."

The unusual book title is another story.

"Amir is a gray [meaning, 'white' in horse-talk], Arab Quarter Horse." Samantha explains. "He was nearly all black when I got him for Christmas when I was in 8th grade, and he's gradually turned all white—or gray, as we say in the horse world—over the last, almost 20 years."

When asked if that's an unusual phenomenon, the extreme color change? Samantha readily *continued...*

HAPPY HOME: SS Equestrian Services offers a variety of boarding options, including specialized boarding for horses with advanced needs.

Photo courtesy of SS Equestrian Services



answers, “No—it’s typical of that breed and color!” An interesting fact, a horse that changes color—just one of the many I’ve learned about in horse universe.

Samantha juggles motherhood and creative entrepreneurship smoothly with horse-related duties beginning at 7 am after the two older children are off to school. The littlest one stays by her mom’s side all day, which is when video filming takes place. Late afternoon is quality time spent with the children followed by chores needed in readying the horses for the evening ahead.

After dinner evenings are when Samantha focuses down on maintaining her online media presence.

Working on the computer includes yet another aspect of her business, a rather large one comprising the mainstay of her business and something which she happens to be very good at: researching and comparing data analysis needed to produce results for the horse appraisal contracts she receives from all round the country. To a layman, this specific area of the equine industry is quite jaw-dropping in its detailed attention to every conceivable aspect of the horse mind, body and spirit—a specialized kind of art all its own.

And her video-blogging idea started out just as an experiment, has been catching on ever since. This

is happening not just within the small, but close-knit, community of horse-industry enthusiasts, but with outside onlookers like ourselves as well.

On her website Samantha additionally posts great reads as blogs providing professional advice, up-to-date equine-related products reliably tested and worth looking into and helpful equestrian networking information. Humanness is her keynote.

Samantha’s solid philosophy is as simple as it is appealing. She writes, “As a small business owner, you want your public to know that you are also human and caring. Your passion for your cause should resonate with everything you do. After all,” she adds, “being relatable to people emotionally is the best way to connect and retain a durable, authentic connection...” A productive truth in any profession, as well as in life itself.

Be sure to check in with Samantha on her website and Facebook page at “SS Equestrian Services”.

Samantha Clark Equestrian Services

2637 Route 10
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(518) 429 4863

slc@ssequestrian.com

www.ssequestrian.com



Having trouble getting your ducks in a row?



Being a small business owner is tough. You wear a lot of hats. And often that marketing hat just never fits comfortably. You went into business, well... to do your business... not to be a marketing expert. Wouldn't it be nice if you could depend on someone to help you grow your business?

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Woman Down by Colleen Hoover
The Viper by Brad Meltzer
The Right to Remain by James Grippando
Skylark by Paula McLain
The Storm by Rachel Hawkins
The First Time I Saw Him by Laura Dave
My Husband's Wife by Alice Feeney
The Method by Matthew Quirk

NON-FICTION

The Shortest History of Scandinavia by Matt Kuldkepp
Evergreen by Trent Preszler
Finding Your Third Place by Richard Kyte

LARGE PRINT

The Nantucket Restaurant by Pamela Kelley
Christmas at the Restaurant by Pamela Kelley

JANUARY Events

WINE GLASS PAINTING!

Thursday January 22nd, at 3:30.

A painting event aimed at adults.

Call 845-586-3791 for details

NARNIA OR NEVERLAND?

Stop in, starting Jan 8, and vote for your choice ... Have a closet that leads to Narnia or Neverland? Vote on our wall chart, drop your name in the jar, and you might win a great book prize. Open to adults and children.

FIBER ARTS CLUB

Saturday Jan 24 from 10 to 12pm

Work on your own fiber arts (knit, crochet, embroider, sew, etc) and meet other makers. All are welcome - beginner to expert. No formal instruction but we will help if we can.

FPL BOOK CLUB Next meeting

January 15 at 2pm via Zoom

The book for August is The book is *Nightshining* by Jennifer Kabat. Contact the library director at 845-586-3791 or email director@fairviewlibrary.org for the Zoom link or more information.

MAH JONGG every Friday 1 to 4pm

Crafts with Miss Cherie

Video instructions will be posted on Facebook on the dates indicated below. Craft components available in the library at least 48 hours before the demo.

TO GO CRAFT:

Available January 8 - Sparkly Snowflake

Simple crafts will always be available in the children's room. These can be done any time during open hours using the directions and sample provided. Adult supervision is required.

SELF-GUIDED CHILDREN'S CRAFT

Jan 16 - Art inspired by Mondrian

Jan 30 - Paper punch Snowflake



by CJ Karcher

Owner & Systems Administrator

Level Up Tech Support

Tech advice for a Happy New Year

Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and survived your family gatherings. If you received new tech and struggled to set it up, I hope a family member could help. It seems like any 8-year-old becomes the family IT department the day after Christmas! If you did get some new tech and didn't get it set up, give us a call.

I know I sound like a broken record, but I can't stress enough the DO NOT CALL THAT NUMBER rule. Over the holiday, several people got hit with pop-ups after visiting sites related to their medical needs. Pop up messages claimed their antivirus was out of date and/or the system was infected. This is a scam designed to lure you into buying something, gain access to your system, or both. You can turn off these notifications by clicking the three dots on the pop-up then clearing your browser's cache. Look for "Delete browsing data" under History. This will usually stop the pop-ups, but it's still recommended to have your system properly cleaned afterward.

I know it's not spring yet, but it never hurts to get a head start on Spring cleaning. It's a good idea to have your system cleaned at least once a year. Over time, temporary files accumulate in hidden areas of the operating system, and even routine scans and cleaners don't always remove all the gobbledygook. More often than not, there is also software installed and running that can be harmful—OneTouch and Wave Browser are two of the biggest offenders.

Level Up offers system tune-ups. We check your

systems for threats, clean out junk that software cleaners may miss, and ensure the system is updating properly with all critical updates installed. We also optimize the system for best performance, physically clean out dust and debris, and check hardware components to make sure they're functioning properly and not showing signs of damage or failure.

I hope everyone's 2026 is off to a great start. I'm excited to bring Level Up Tech Support into its 7th year of business. Always remember: DO NOT CALL THAT NUMBER. Help your system last longer and keep your data safer by scheduling yearly tune-ups. As always, feel free to send any questions to TechTalk@LevelUpTechSupport.com.

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3 accessories to make winter driving more enjoyable

Do your winter plans include a lot of driving? Cold weather can quickly make any trip uncomfortable for many reasons. Slush, extreme temperatures and icy road conditions all play a role. Fortunately, a few simple accessories can make your outings much more enjoyable. Check out these three handy accessories.

1. Anti-slip pedal covers

Snow and water can make your boots slippery on the pedals while you're driving. Rubber pedal covers improve the grip between your soles and the pedals, keeping you safer on the road. On longer drives, they also help reduce foot fatigue, which has a direct impact on your comfort.

2. Heated mug

Never leave home without your coffee or tea? A heated mug will always keep your drink at the perfect temperature, no matter how cold it gets outside. Equipped with a power cable that plugs into your vehicle's 12V socket, it's a must-have for winter travel. Some models even come with touch controls for extra convenience.



Warm up with these products to make winter driving more pleasant!

3. Heated steering wheel and seat covers

That icy chill you feel when you first get into your car can take a while to pass if you rely solely on your car's heating system. Heated covers for your steering wheel and seats warm up faster than the entire vehicle cabin. They'll help you reach a comfortable temperature more quickly.

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TOMATO TOMAHTO

An Italian Diner & Bakery

by Iris Mead

You say tomato (to-may-to) and I say tomahto (to-mah-to), lyrics from a song written by George and Ira Gershwin for the 1937 movie *Let's Call the Whole Thing Off*, and sung by Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald.

Tomato tomahto is also the name of a new café/restaurant in Margaretville with an Italian theme. The name also fits because the owners, Noli and Anastassia Alaj grow many varieties of tomatoes in their garden and have a family tradition of friends and family harvesting them and making sauce.

Recently opened over Thanksgiving weekend, Tomato tomahto offers lunch plates, Neapolitan pizza, house made focaccia, and sandwiches on fresh baked bread. Wine and beer are available.

As owners of Sun & Soil Bottle Shop in Andes and Oda Wine Bar in Margaretville, Anastassia and Noli have the background in food service to grow this business and now offer a new dining experience in the Village.

Noticing the lack of availability of fresh bread in the area, Anastassia began her quest to learn breadmaking techniques in order to offer the area fresh homemade breads. She took classes and practiced making different kinds of breads until she was happy with the results and now bakes 3-4 types of Italian country loaves for sale at the restaurant. Demand has been high since customers have discovered the delicious flavor of fresh-baked breads. A high-end oven ordered from Italy is used for bread baking and pizzas which makes a big difference in the baking of each. Come early as the fresh baked breads have been selling out each day.

Noli and Anastassia have not forgotten the sweet side of Italian food. They offer favorites such as maritozzizi, bombolone (vanilla or Nutella), tiramisu, cheesecake and, of course, cannolis. The crème filling of the cannolis ranks high on this author's list. Presented in a display case at the front, it is hard to



Tomato tomahto owner, Noli Alaj, presents one of his specialty pizzas before sliding it into the oven.

resist adding one to your order.

Tomato-tomahto is located in the newly-painted charming white cottage on the southeast end of Main Street. Decorative plates from around the world and artwork line the walls in honor Anastassia's father who passed last year. Italian pastas, canned tomatoes and other Italian products are offered for sale.

Noli, who is Albanian, and Anastassia, who is half Georgian and half Russian, and their 2-year old son, Kai, came to the Catskills eight years ago. After purchasing the landmark Bussy Building in Margaretville, they decided to use part of the building as a restaurant and opened Oda Wine Bar in July of 2023. Known for its lovely outdoor terrace and cozy inside dining it has become a favorite dining place in the Village. Foods from the Balkan regions are highlighted.

continued...

At present time, Tomato tomahto is open for lunch only on Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00-5:00. They hope to be open on Fridays soon. Future plans for the restaurant include dining on the balcony, which faces the East Branch of the Delaware River, and remodeling of the barn that is attached to the restaurant as a relaxing space with a bar and place for eating and games. Soft-serve ice cream will be available soon. Also in the works are plans to hold a Tomato tomahto night at Oda's once a month. Watch for more information on this. There are no plans for dinner service at this time, but they would be open to catering special dinners.

Tomato tomahto

520 Main Street
Margaretville
551-220-8485

 @tomtom_diner



TOMATOES: *However You Say It, They're a Garden Favorite*

Whether you say "to-MAY-to" or "to-MAH-to," we can all agree on one thing: tomatoes are one of the most beloved and versatile crops in the garden. The debate over pronunciation has been around for generations—often used playfully to highlight regional differences—but the fruit itself (yes, botanically it's a fruit!) brings people together far more than it divides them.

Tomatoes come in hundreds of varieties, from tiny cherry and grape types to hefty beefsteaks and richly colored heirlooms in red, yellow, green, and even deep purple. They thrive in warm weather and full sun, making them a summer staple in home gardens. With just a bit of consistent watering and well-draining soil, most gardeners can count on a rewarding harvest.


In the kitchen, tomatoes shine no matter how you pronounce them. Slice them into salads, simmer them into sauces, roast them for depth of flavor, or enjoy them straight off the vine with a sprinkle of salt. Their natural sweetness and acidity make them a cornerstone of cuisines around the world.


So call it a "to-MAY-to," call it a "to-MAH-to"—but don't call it boring. This humble fruit is proof that delicious things grow when you give them a little sun, soil, and care.



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Brenda Barker's Next Chapter

This book is a bit surreal because it is a book about a book and the process of publication. Or, more accurately, about Brenda Barker, a fictional character who has written a book and her personal path to publication. What is notable is that Brenda is sixty-four when she pens her debut book. She then inexplicably snags a coveted spot at a highly competitive writer's conference far away from her small town, both in distance and familiarity in wine drenched, Northern California.

Author Wendy Tokunaga puts the reader in the passenger seat as Brenda, a recent widow and empty-nester, drives the last few hours from the airport to the exclusive Sky Ridge Writers Conference. But buckle up, it's going to be a bumpy ride. I once asked an editor what makes a good story, and he answered, "Troubles, troubles, troubles." Check. This book has troubles in spades.

I have been to a couple of writer's conferences but none like this one. *Brenda Barker's Next Chapter* is a fast-paced, rollicking, boozy, romantic, gourmet food-filled, wholly unpredictable story. Just when you think you have it figured out. You don't. The plot twists will keep you awake reading. Just one more chapter. You will crave snacks. But you won't have the right kind in your house, because the foody descriptions are heavenly. You might want a glass of wine or two. Tokunaga's wording almost makes the imaginary manifest itself.

Despite the cutthroat rejection and competitive backstabbing often associated with the publishing industry and boldly caricatured in this book, Tokunaga balances this with an astutely comedic tone that gives space for the forging of unlikely friendships and the bloom of romance.

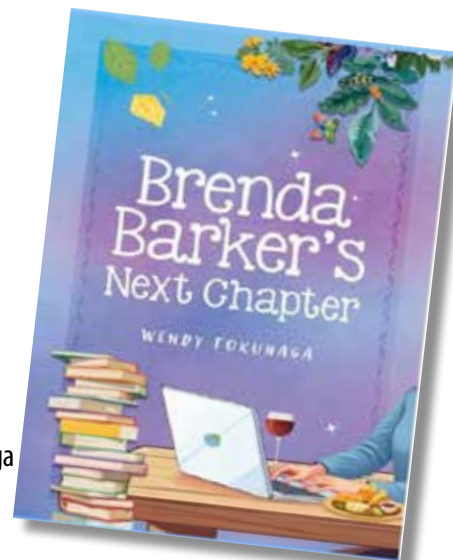
The glue that holds this story together is the expertly executed tight timeline, the whole book takes place in

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**BARNES
& NOBLE**

Author: Wendy Tokunaga

Publisher:
Blydyn Square Books



the span of a week and the strength of the female protagonist. It is refreshing and inspiring to read about an older woman bucking society's expectations to reach for her own dreams. Brenda questions her lifelong desire to write and it is a privilege to watch her confidence grow. It gives a reader hope that perhaps their second half of life can be as vital as their first. It is never too late for second chances.

I judge a book by the standard of, if I continue to think about it after the last page is read and I judge a character by, if I could see myself being friends with them. Yes and yes. Brenda Barker's refreshing vulnerability, empathy and a touch of awkward weirdness would make her a very good friend to have. It is entitled, next chapter, not last chapter, so I'm encouraged that there may still be another chapter, a sequel down the road.

Hot off the presses in February 2026, available for pre-order now at Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Note: This book contains some mature language and themes which may not be suitable for all readers.

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STRANGE BUT TRUE

by Lucie Winborne

In 1945, Soviet children presented the U.S. ambassador in Moscow with a wooden Great Seal as a friendship gift. It just happened to include a hidden listening device, which spied on American diplomats for seven years before it was discovered.

When humans blush, their stomach also turns red.

On the California side of the U.S.-Mexican border is a city named Calexico. On the opposite side is a town called Mexicali.

England's Queen Victoria defied both the clergy and her personal physician to become the first monarch to use anesthesia (chloroform) during childbirth.

Women blink about two times less often than men.

Professional chefs in wealthy 17th-century European households were primarily men, who often cooked in the nude or in their underwear due to kitchens' intense heat.

Deaf quarterback Paul Hubbard was the first to use the "round formation huddle" in football, to ensure that his teammates could interpret his hand gestures.

Benedict Cumberbatch is the second cousin, 16 times removed, of King Richard III, whom he portrayed in the 2016 BBC miniseries "The Hollow Crown."

Crime novelist James Patterson co-wrote the famous "I'm a Toys 'R' Us Kid" jingle

In 1997, a woman from Louisville, Kentucky, left actor Charles Bronson all of her money, a total of about \$300,000, in a handwritten will. She didn't know him, but it can be deduced that she was a fan.

The Woolsey Hall auditorium at Yale contains an extra-wide seat built to fit alumnus and former professor William Howard Taft.

Adults typically produce about 2 pints of gas each day, in an average of 14 farts. However, it's apparently quite normal to pass gas up to 21 times per day.

At his inauguration, Teddy Roosevelt wore a ring with a lock of Abraham Lincoln's hair.

Michelangelo may have accidentally left a thumbprint on a wax sculpture's butt.

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Spaghetti Carbonara

This simplified version of a classic Italian dish could very well become one of your favorites!

INGREDIENTS

- 3 egg yolks
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 8 slices of bacon, finely chopped
- 14 ounces spaghetti
- Freshly ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine the egg yolks and Parmesan cheese in a bowl. Set aside.
2. In a frying pan, fry the bacon over medium-high heat.
3. Meanwhile, cook the spaghetti in boiling water. Do not drain.
4. Using tongs, remove the cooked pasta from the water, place it in the frying pan and turn off the heat. Add the egg and cheese mixture and mix well. If necessary, add a little pasta water.
5. Garnish with a generous amount of black pepper and a little grated cheese, if desired. Serve immediately.



*Have you tried one of the recipes published in A Time and A Place?
We'd love to hear about it! Why not post a photo on our Facebook page?*



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HERE'S A TIP FOR COOKING

Shake garlic cloves in a jar with a lid or bowl on top to quickly peel them.

Keep ginger in the freezer and grate it with a microplane for easy use.

Portion and freeze cooked rice in bags for quick meals.

Grate cold butter with a cheese grater for baking.

Dust bacon with flour before cooking to prevent curling and make it crispy.

Melt butter into tomato sauce for richness. Balsamic vinegar adds

sweetness and more depth of flavor.

Substitute brewed coffee for water and add an extra egg for richer flavor in cake mixes.

Add water and cover to steam onions for easier

caramelization.

Line baking sheets with parchment paper for easy cleanup; scrunch and wet it to make it stick in pans.

A clean wine bottle works as a makeshift rolling pin.

History of Our Hamlets

History of Our Hamlets is sponsored by



*Photos and recollections courtesy of Diane Galusha,
Historical Society of the Town of Middletown*

Is there anything more welcoming than a house bundled against the snow, smoke curling from the chimney, lights burning in the windows? Be it ever so humble . . .



The Manieris' new Sears Roebuck house (left) stood solid amidst the snow on Brush Ridge Road, providing shelter and comfort to the hard-working immigrant family, c. 1940.

If they didn't have to milk the cows (and run a few businesses!), the Hubbells might well have preferred to sit out this 1950s snowstorm by the coal stove in their Kelly Corners house (bottom right).

The gracious homes of Walnut Street in Margaretville were even more elegant wrapped in white early in the last century (bottom left).



"Winter is the time for stories, for sitting around the fire, and for enjoying the company of loved ones."

– Unknown



Battery technology leading the renewable revolution

As North America continues to shift toward renewable energy, batteries play a key role in making the transition possible. Because solar and wind power don't produce energy all the time, batteries store extra electricity when demand is low and release it when demand is high. This helps keep the power supply reliable, reduces the need for backup fossil fuel plants, and lowers emissions.

3 MAIN TYPES

Several types of battery technologies are in use today. Here are the three most common.

Lithium-ion batteries are the most popular type of battery, powering everything from electric vehicles to home storage systems. They're lightweight and efficient, and they hold a lot of energy for their size.

Flow batteries use liquid electrolytes stored in tanks, making them ideal for large-scale storage on the power grid. They're highly durable for long-term use as they can be charged and discharged repeatedly without degrading quickly.



Solid-state batteries replace liquid electrolytes with solid materials. Solid-state batteries are safer than traditional lithium-ion technology; they also have higher energy density and longer lifespans. Although currently expensive to produce, they could soon be able to transform both vehicle and grid storage.

Researchers are also developing batteries made with sodium-ion, zinc-air and other materials to cut costs and improve sustainability. As these technologies grow, renewable energy storage will become more affordable and widely available.

Thought for the Day

"Everything we make pollutes. The most responsible thing we can do is to make each product as well as we know how so it lasts as long as possible."

— Yvon Chouinard
Founder, Patagonia

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This Valentine's Day, celebrate love in all its forms—not just the romantic kind!



On February 14, do something small to show your appreciation for someone you love.

Valentine's Day isn't just for romantic couples. It's a chance to celebrate every kind of love in your life. Your friends, your children and other family members deserve to be reminded how much you cherish them. Here are a few simple ways to express your love on Valentine's Day.

TO YOUR FRIENDS

Write them a thoughtful note in a greeting card or surprise them with a gift card to their favourite shop. Let them know how much their friendship means to you and its positive impact on your life.

TO YOUR CHILDREN

Get out the craft supplies and let your artistic side shine! Taking the time to make heart-shaped garlands or collages with your children is a fun way to strengthen your bond.

TO YOUR FAMILY

Thank your parents, siblings, grandparents and other valued relatives for their support over the years. Even a small gesture—an assortment of teas, a restaurant gift card or a relaxing hotel stay—is sure to make them smile!

Create your own Valentine's Day treats

Buying delicious treats for Valentine's Day is sweet, but making your own homemade goodies is even better! This year, surprise your loved ones with treats that are easy to make and sure to impress.

HOMEMADE JUJUBES

Making jujubes at home is simpler than you might think. Pour half a cup of fruit juice or puree into a small saucepan. Whisk in about 20 grams of powdered gelatin and let it sit for a few minutes.

Heat the mixture over medium heat until it becomes liquid. Then, add two tablespoons of sugar and a few drops of lemon juice. Bring the mixture to a boil once more and then quickly pour it into moulds with fun shapes like hearts or roses. Refrigerate the molds until the jujubes have set.

YOGURT DELIGHT

In a large bowl, combine two cups of plain yogurt, three tablespoons of maple syrup and two tablespoons of lemon juice. Spread the mixture on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle berries over top and place in the freezer for a few hours. Once firm, cut into pieces. That's it. You now have a guilt-free frozen treat!

Make this Valentine's Day extra sweet by stopping by your local shops to find everything you need.





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