



New food pantry site on Main Street Photo by Helen McLean

### THE GREATER FRANKLIN FOOD PANTRY

By Don Hebbard

Residents of the Town of Franklin and the former Treadwell School District have for many years been able to rely upon the Treadwell Food Bank for help in feeding their families during times of crisis. Conceived as an outreach project by the Treadwell United Methodist Church Crisis Relief Committee in the 1980s, the Treadwell Food Bank has continued to operate out of the basement of the church as an independent food bank, staffed by community vol-

unteers and funded solely by donations. Individuals, community groups, local businesses, the United States Postal Service, and food drives all provide support.

The food bank is open every Friday afternoon. Any area family in need has been welcome to visit once per month and receive three shopping bags filled with canned goods, dry goods, paper products, personal care products, two meats, a gallon of milk, a dozen eggs, loaf of bread, and one pound of

See PANTRY, continued on Page 15

### SPEED SIGN IN PLACE!

By Michael Sellitti  
Photos by the author

After many years of concern, there is finally some relief. After all the research, planning, petitions, meetings, phone calls, presentations, meetings, conversations and more meetings, our community's persistence at resolving a problem that has plagued Sidney Center for far too long has paid off.

Solar-powered radar speed signs have been installed at the en-



One of Sidney Center's new solar speed signs

trances to the hamlet on County Route 23 with the hope of curbing speeding.

This project is funded by a grant from a New York Department of State program called *Creating Healthy Schools & Communi-*

*ties*. The Sidney Center Improvement Group (SCIG) has had hamlet safety in mind since its very beginnings. Speeding in the village has been an issue for its residents for far too long. SCIG heard the calls of concern from the community and worked long and hard to find a solution.

The breakthrough came two years ago when SCIG connected with the Community Coordinator for *Creating Healthy Schools & Communities*. Residents

See SIGN, con't on Pg. 15

### APPEALING YOUR UNAPPEALING ASSESSMENT PART II: Judicial Review

By Brian Brock

If you are unsatisfied with the assessed value of your property from the Board of Assessment Review, then your third step for appealing is to apply for a judicial review. However you must have already completed the first two steps of consulting with the assessor and administrative review by BAR. Afterwards, judicial review must be initiated within 30 days of the filing of either the final assessment roll or the notice of such filing, whichever is later.

If your property is small, then you may apply for Small Claims Assessment Review by a hearing officer. This is available for either a residential property (one, two, or three-family) or for a vacant property too small for such residences. The filing fee is only \$30. Information regarding SCAR can be found from the NYS Unified Court System <http://ww2.nycourts.gov/litigants/scar/index.shtml>.

Otherwise, you will have to begin tax proceedings in state court, by which the court reviews the BAR deci-

See ASSESSMENT, continued on Page 16



The Love & Hope Cat Sanctuary Photo by Judy Gabey

### HISTORIC VOTE Sale of beer & wine to be allowed in Franklin restaurants

By Carla Nordstrom

The November 2019 Franklin General Election could have been inconsequential. None of the races for Town Board were contested due to a late change in the New York State Election Law that moved the primary date from September back to June. It was not possible to file petitions for candidates because of the time constraint, but there was time to put a question on the ballot.

Franklin had been a dry town since 1881 when 72% of voters passed a resolution to prevent the sale of alcoholic beverages. This policy was reaffirmed in 1899 and again in 1937, following the repeal of Prohibition. A vote in 1999 al-

See VOTE, con't on Pg. 8



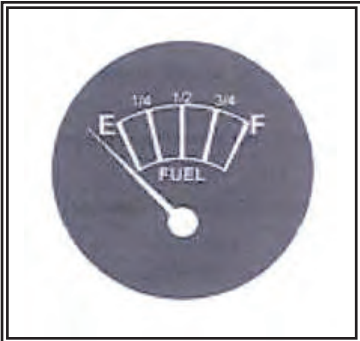
Frank and Jennifer Walker

### ALL FRANKLIN SENIORS WIN PERSEVERANCE AWARD

By Susan Barnett

Frank and Jennifer Walker, owners of Frank Walker, Inc. on Route 21, have been giving a cash award to one graduating Franklin senior every year for several years. They don't even want to say how many. They've always kept

See AWARD, con't on Pg. 11



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# HAIL, FRANKLIN CENTRAL SCHOOL CLASS OF 2020!



Madelynn Ackley



Jonahthan Davis



Josaline Hotaling



Nicholas McWeeney



Rileigh Brown



Dylan Dewey



Brian Johns



Jvian Myers



Gabriel Smith



Morgan Carpenter



John Michael Gloster



George Machala



Alyssa Nowhitney



Brock Warner



Kristin Cronk



Sumer Golinski



Molly McLaughlin



Trinity Rivera

*This has certainly been one of the most unusual years for graduating seniors. Many of the annual graduation events, such as graduation ceremonies and senior dances have had to be cancelled, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eighteen students are graduating from the Franklin Central School this year. Here are their plans for next year.*

*Compiled by Lynne Kemen*

**Madelyn Ackley** (Valedictorian) is going to SUNY Oneonta and plans to major in Biology.

**Rileigh Brown** will be attending SUNY Cobleskill and will major in Equine Studies or Animal Science.

**Morgan Carpenter** plans to attend SUNY Cobleskill and will major in Equine Studies.

**Kristin Cronk** will work on a BSN at SUNY Delhi. "The worst part about school ending so suddenly it that I only got about halfway through my clinicals in the New Visions program, I was learning so much from profes-

sionals in the hospital."

**John Davis** has been accepted at The College of Southern Nevada. He is undecided about a major.

**Dylan Dewey** is going to SUNY Morrisville. He plans to study Automotive Technology, and to start a shop after graduation.

**Jon Michael Gloster** is unsure of his future plans.

**Sumer Golinski** will be attending SUNY Morrisville and plans to major in Nursing.

**Joseline Hotaling** will study Auto Mechanics at SUNY Delhi.

**Brian Johns** is unsure of his future plans.

**George Macala** will attend Johnson and Wales University and plans to study Graphic Design.

**Molly McLaughlin** (Salutatorian) will study Criminal Justice at SUNY Oneonta. She then plans to transfer to The University of Albany to study law in their accelerated program.

**Nicholas McWeeney** is attending Clarkson University to study Environmental Engineering.

**Jvian Myers** is unsure of his future plans.

**Alyssa Nowhitney** will do a dual degree in Nursing at SUNY Delhi. "The dual-degree program entails I'll be receiving my associate degree and also a bachelors in science and nursing. I will come out of college as a Registered Nurse. My dream is to become a trauma nurse!"

**Trinity Rivera** plans to join the workforce in Food and Business.

**Gabriel Smith** wants to study History and Education at SUNY Oneonta.

**Brock Warner** plans to major in Welding at SUNY Delhi.

See SENIORS, continued on Page 5

**CONGRATULATIONS,  
CLASS OF 2020!**

**THE NEW FRANKLIN  
REGISTER WISHES YOU  
ALL THE BEST IN YOUR  
FUTURE ENDEAVORS!**





# FRANKLIN LOCAL

Local News  
Local Events

Local Issues  
Local Concerns



## WALKING IN THE OULEOUT VALLEY CEMETERY TOWN BUILDING UPDATE

By Carla Nordstrom

As an avid walker, one of the places that has offered me solace while being shut in by Coronavirus has been the Ouleout Valley Cemetery. It is a quiet place, even though this year more walkers have benefitted from its calm beauty than I've seen in previous years. I've walked in the cemetery for years but recently have been more appreciative of having such a lovely place to wander where family and old friends have been laid to rest.

The Ouleout Valley Cemetery is not what it was when I first walked through it with my father, who lived down the street. As a historian, he was thrilled when the New York State Historical Society named it as one

DOESN'T OUR  
CEMETERY DESERVE  
BETTER CARE?

of the most beautiful cemeteries in the state. The magnificent white hydrangea with round puffs of bloom are no longer pruned or

cared for, some have died, and others grow into unruly bushes. Spruces have been cut down and the new trees that the Rotary recently planted are too small to make much of a difference to the landscape. It feels like there is little interest in mowing around shrubs or trees. Perhaps they should consider flat gravestones, to make mowing easier.

The most famous gravesite that I know of is Lewis Hines', the social photographer who documented child labor and immigration at the beginning

See WALK, con't on Page 15

By Don Hebbard

It was reported in the New Franklin Register of March 2020 that the offices of the Town of Franklin would temporarily continue in their current locations: Justice Court, Town Clerk, and Code Enforcement Officer at 574 Main Street; operational offices at the town sheds at Routes 21 and 357. As of now, all offices will remain at these locations indefinitely.

The pandemic and the resulting unsettled economic situation have prompted the town board to take a cautious approach toward investing in a new building. While consolidation of town services would have certain advantages for town residents, the board has decided that this is not the time to take on a substantial debt for a new facility.

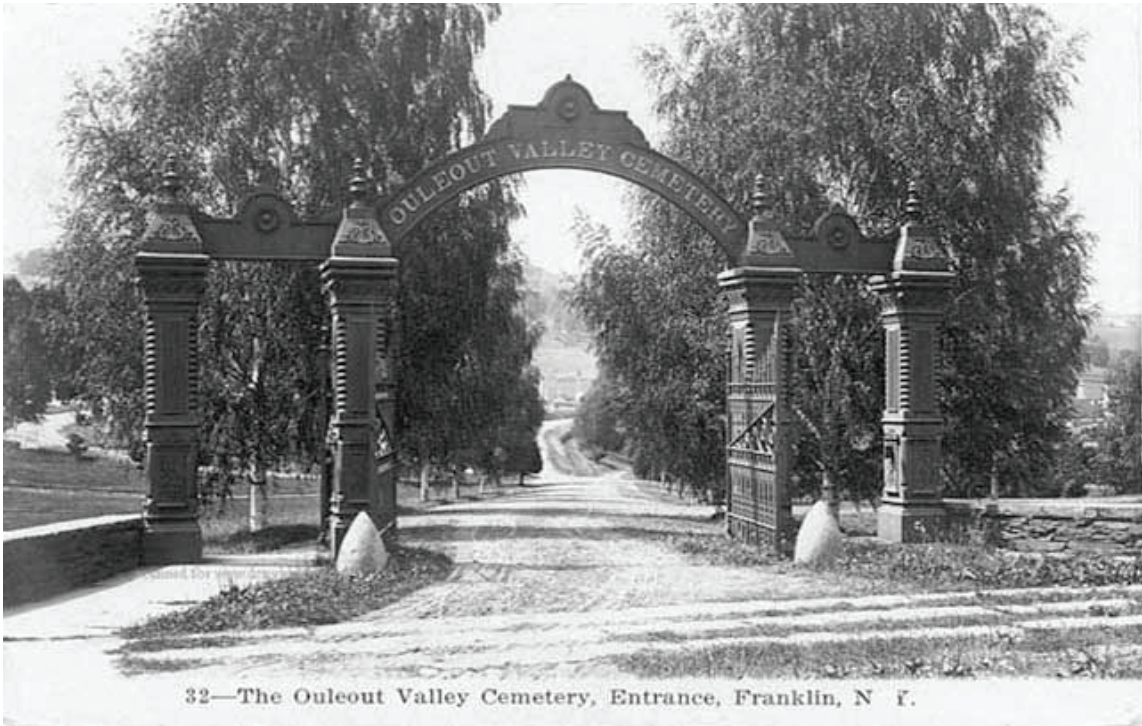
A long-term agreement for 574 Main Street is being negotiated with the Walter Rich Charitable Foundation. Under the terms of the agreement first set up with Walter Rich in 2000, the Town of Franklin has leased part of the building for \$1 per year for a term of fifty years. The town has

been responsible for snow and ice removal on the driveway and parking lot. The Foundation has been responsible for building maintenance. The town and foundation have been operating under that agreement for twenty years.

The new agreement would amend the original lease, with some terms superseding the original agreement, but most terms remaining in place. This agreement is the result of negotiations by a committee composed of two members of the town board and two members representing the Foundation. This four-person committee will continue to make recommendations to their respective boards for managing the agreement and for setting priorities of operation and building maintenance.

The lease term would change to ten years, renewable two times to run to the end of the original fifty-year agreement. The foundation would continue building maintenance and the town would continue to clear the driveway, but also pay a rental fee of \$400 per month toward building maintenance.

See TOWN, continued on Page 15



32—The Ouleout Valley Cemetery, Entrance, Franklin, N. F.

## THE MAYOR'S CORNER

With Tom Briggs

Part of my daily routine during this pandemic is to accompany my dog Mimi as she continues her canine quest along the trails that skirt the Ouleout Creek.

Occasionally I'll meet young people riding on their four-wheelers or their dirt bikes. Most of them are friendly and all are careful to slow down so as not to mow me down as they whiz by. They are good kids and they're just doing what many of today's teenagers who live in the country do for recreation.

There are benefits to walkers who share common trails with recreational vehicle operators. The trails are less likely to be overgrown and the R.V. users tend to create new trails as they power through the fields and forests.

There are downsides as well. When the trails get soggy or when the riders cross brooks, the vehicles tend to tear up the soil and mess up the streams. Huge ruts are formed, and unfordable pools are created in the streams, making it difficult for those of us walkers who aren't nimble of

foot to proceed on the trails. I use a cane when I go out into the woods and this helps, but trail walking has become more difficult as the four-wheelers take their toll.

Some of these trails cross private property and are available to the public only through the good will of the property owners. One concern that I have is that over the last couple of years the wear and tear of motorized traffic has become quite noticeable, especially where these trails cross streams. I would hate to see these privately-owned trails be closed as a result.

When I was a child growing up in the 50s, most private property was not really private. My friends and I could walk or bike out of town and proceed for miles on farmland and in forests without fear of some angry farmer or second-home owner demanding that we get off their property. Of course, we presented very little threat to the owner. After all, what kind of damage can a bike do? Other than feeding apples to some cows once, I never really posed much of a problem for the landowners. I would like to think that we had more respect for the land than we do today, but in many respects that was hardly the case.

One thing I remember quite clearly is my experience as a member of a Boy Scout troop. In those days we were taught the value of good deeds, the value of truth in all things, and the importance of being respectful of nature. I can remember at a camping event, one of my

friends was caught carving his initials in a tree. The Scout leader immediately made arrangements to send him home. Although to this day, I think that this punishment was a bit much, I did learn that there exists an evolved sense of stewardship that needs to be applied when we engage with nature and the world around us. This was played out when we broke camp. We would gather and organize our gear. We would put out the fire and scatter the embers. We would police the area and collect any garbage that was laying around. We understood that it was our responsibility to leave the campsite as clean as it was when we arrived.

One could say that this rule is a metaphor for how one generation should treat the next.

Don't get me wrong. I think it would be unfortunate for these trails to be closed to motorized vehicles. But I would hope that, possibly with help from their parents, the young riders would learn to become stewards of the trails that they ride on and organize some workdays to maintain these great trails that they get so much joy from using.

At some level, it's not about ruts and stream banks. More importantly, it is about assuming responsibility and learning the importance of reciprocity. This is how our community will maintain its thoughtful character and this is how our young people will spread a sense of well-being beyond.



# THE VOLUN-TOURIST IN RUSSIA

By Shirley Ferguson

*Photos by the author*

The year was 2005. I had been retired for a couple of years, had completed most of the renovations on my 1835 house, joined a couple of local volunteer organizations, as well as the Unitarian Universalist church in Oneonta. I had been bitten by the travel bug some years before, for sure, and now that I had a little more leisure time, I began searching online for a different way to travel, one that might pique my interest.

I found several organizations that combined international travel with volunteering. What? I had never heard of this, and I was fascinated. I wondered at first if I was too old to do this type of travel, but after looking at the pictures of the volunteers, I saw that a majority of them were more likely my age than they were that of spring chickens! I was particularly taken with Cross-Cultural Solutions, a not-for-profit based out of New Rochelle, NY, begun in the late 80's and offering trips to ten developing countries around the world. Their mission was to address critical global issues by providing meaningful volunteer service to communities abroad, while contributing responsibly to local economies.

I was hooked! After perusing the countries in which I could volunteer, I signed up for a month stay in Yaroslavl, Russia. Yaroslavl is a city of 600,000, part of the Golden Ring of ancient towns, located 165 miles NE of Moscow.

In preparation for my trip I bought some language tapes - like-ly from Pimsleur - and I listened to a different one every time I got in the car, struggling with the unfamiliar sounds. The tapes helped with basic words and phrases and provided a familiarity with the sounds of the language, but I never became anything close to conversant. And once home, without any kind of further practice, I promptly forgot almost everything I'd learned!

For my month there, I lived in a simple hotel right in the center of the city. My room contained a bed, a chest of drawers, a chair,



*This was a no-nonsense hotel!*

and thankfully my own bathroom. The shower was free standing with a small lip running around the four-foot square area where one was meant to stand. The shower curtain could be pulled only three quarters of the way around and fell several inches short of the floor. I flooded the bathroom more than once!

There were four other volunteers: two women my age, and two

women in their 20's. We slept and ate our meals at the hotel, Monday to Friday. If we chose to stay at the hotel over the weekends, our meals would be provided, but because weekends were our only free time, most of us elected to travel away from the city, and, of course, all associated costs were then absorbed by us. I've found this to be a fairly consistent practice among volunteer/travel trips. The very basic hotel was fine, although the rooms were quite hot. The heating system, controlled by the government, is turned on for everyone in October and not turned off till May - and this was the beginning of a very warm April. The thermostats in the rooms cannot be adjusted, not even turned off! I had to force my window open every night hoping for a breath of night air. A fair number of mosquitoes wafted in as well due to no screens on the windows.

In Yaroslavl we worked at various institutions throughout the city, including an orphanage, a shelter, a hospital for kids with emotional difficulties, and a hospital for women with physical, mental or emotional issues, and frequently a combination thereof. An interpreter was always with us, and two volunteers at a time worked at each placement. Each assignment provided its own set of challenges, and just living for



*Orphan boys support each other*

four weeks in a strange city where the language, the food, and the culture were foreign to me added additional challenges.

But after the first few days of getting over jet lag and the seven hour time difference, I adjusted to the routine: up at six, breakfast at seven, followed by a briefing meeting given by either the Director or one of the interpreters, a quick foray into the supply room to grab whatever arts and crafts or sporting equipment we would need for our morning assignments, and by 9:00, into the van that would take each of us to our assignments for the day. At noon, we would be picked up and carted back to the hotel for lunch. At 1:30, back into the van for the afternoon assignment. Once a week, instead of going to one of the placements, we were taken out in the van to investigate various attractions in the city.

Nikolai, our very personable driver, tried his best to make us feel at home despite his not speaking much English, and us speaking even less Russian. Although the van was five years old, the seat belts had never been used, and the buckles were still sealed in plastic. I found out later that many Russians

feel it's an insult to the driver's driving abilities if the passengers use seat belts. Not using seat belts was yet another stressor for me. Ever since seat belts had become commonplace, I had always worn one. The traffic and congestion in Yaroslavl were intense, exacerbated by people driving very fast, honking their horns to make a point, yelling at other drivers, and weaving in and out of traffic with little or no regard to annoying little things like lanes or stop lights. Pedestrian injuries and deaths were not uncommon, and, in fact, one day we passed a man lying in the street with a jacket pulled over his face who apparently had just met his demise. One hopes that things have changed in the last fourteen years, but as recently as 2018 news articles claim that Putin drove across a new bridge that he was dedicating without wearing his seatbelt.

My first assignment was to Pereskopsky Orphanage. All the assignments we worked at were located in drab old and very institutionalized looking buildings, and the orphanage was no exception. It was divided into three parts - one for babies, one for kids ages two to six, and one for older kids. I mostly worked with the young kids. I learned that many of them actually had one or two living parents, but alcoholism and/or drug addiction, combined with the poor economy, had forced the parents to place the kids in the orphanage, or the kids had been removed from the house by the authorities and placed there. This was common practice around the country, and even at this point, fourteen years later, facts state that Russia still has 600,000 orphans. The orphanages act like our foster care system works here, although I never heard of a child being returned to his or her family if the parents managed to get their act together. Adoptions out of these institutions are rare, both foreign and domestic, and although the folks that work in them try their best, the orphanages are sometimes seen as merely warehouses for kids.

At age eighteen every child ages out of the orphanage. These kids were then literally put out on the streets. All their basic needs had been taken care of, albeit barely - food, clothing, shelter - so they lacked even the most basic skills for taking care of themselves. Most had not learned any kind of trade during their years at the orphanage, so not only did they not know how to take care of their basic needs, they were also clueless as to how to apply for a job, write a check, establish a budget, run their lives as responsible adults. Thus, it wasn't too surprising when I learned that many, after having left the orphanage, fell into drug and alcohol usage, as well as into the sex trades. The Director told us that a mentor system was being put into place so a teacher or a counselor from the orphanage could stay in touch with the newly released child for the first year in an attempt to help with the transi-

tion to 'real life'.

The little kids in the orphanage broke my heart, so obviously starved for attention and love. We played games with them like 4 Square and Jenga that did not require language skills to, worked on arts and crafts projects, and helped some of the younger ones tie their shoes, use scissors, and draw basic shapes.

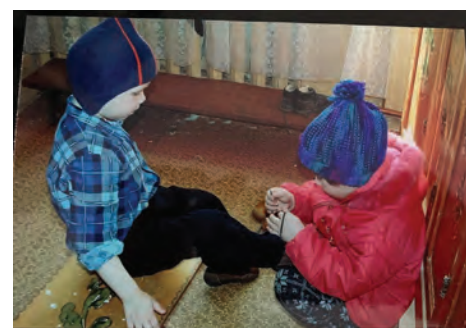
Their playground had mini-



*Masha shows off her new hat*

mal equipment - rusty swing sets, a jungle gym, and a sandbox with rotting sides that feral cats used as a litter box. Because any kind of sports equipment was in short supply, we would take balls and jump ropes with us, but these items had to be returned to the craft room at the hotel each day. Some of the kids on the playground just stood around and watched while others engaged in games or other activities. And several kids always seemed to go kind of wild once outside, yelling, fighting, pushing, bullying, etc. It was apparent that there were not enough teachers or assistants at the school, and those who were there were overworked and underpaid, many without any kind of relevant training or education. The staff was also responsible for the cleaning of the school. When we volunteers were there, the teachers never came out onto the playground with us. Most likely they were using this opportunity to grab a quick smoke or cup of tea.

I'll never forget seeing a cute



*Helping a younger child tie his shoes*

little toddler named Dmitri stumbling around the playroom, barely able to walk, and I assumed a physical deformity prevented him from walking normally. When I asked, I was told that he had recently been dropped off at the orphanage by the authorities, and that he had actually just learned to stand upright and take a few steps by himself. His parents had kept him in a cardboard box for the first three years of his life.

*To be continued...*

**WATCH FOR PART II,  
COMING IN OUR FALL ISSUE**



# GREEN BANKS GARDENING



**With  
Deborah Banks**

Containers also can be moved to follow the sun across the yard if six-plus hours of sunlight is otherwise hard to come by at your place. (Hey, it gives you something to do while you're staying home.)

## EATING THE GARDEN

Gardening is popular again. Well, no one is at the door wanting to know the difference between tree and intersectional peonies, but I hear that there's a run on mail-order vegetable seeds. Local greenhouses are doing a brisk trade in tomato seedlings. Meanwhile, air pollution is down all over the planet and consumer spending has plummeted. Fatality rates are way down for the salamanders, frogs and turtles who cross our roads during their spring migration.

It's ironic that this devastating pandemic is so good for the planet.

Many of us are staying home as much as possible and getting into that Little House on the Prairie vibe. Making sourdough bread, sewing our own masks, patching clothes, raising chickens. Also growing our own food and sharing what we have with our neighbors.

But what if you don't have room for a traditional vegetable garden? You may have more room than you realize. Many vegetables and herbs grow well intermixed with ornamentals in the existing beds around your house or even in containers on your porch or patio. You're probably not going to grow corn that way or enjoy seeing a large butternut squash plant sprawled across your front lawn, but you can grow a lot of food with intermixed plantings.

Rosalind Creasy pioneered the concept of landscaping with fruits and vegetables decades ago with her landmark book on edible landscaping. Her enthusiasm and her beautiful garden have been an inspiration to many gardeners. In Rosalind's own garden, her trees bear fruit, her trellised vines provide colorful beans and her containers overflow with strawberries, herbs and edible flowers. Look for her book on Amazon or at the library; it's a wonderful resource as you reconsider your own garden. Also check out her interviews on YouTube.

Many vegetables are beautiful plants. 'Bright Lights' Swiss Chard immediately comes to mind, along with colorful peppers, purple string beans, red-speckled lettuces, purple cabbages and dark green dinosaur kale.

Eggplants are lovely in bloom and have that outstanding fruit. Rhubarb makes a nice border plant with its large leaves and red stalks. Highbush blueberries are great landscape shrubs with their abundant berries and green leaves that turn a brilliant red in autumn.

Patio tomatoes are smaller in stature and do well in containers, along with many herbs. I have grown them in pots in front of our house near the driveway. They love the extra heat and produce better than the bigger tomato plants in our garden. Tomatoes do not enjoy our cool nights.

And containers can be yanked into the garage or up against the house to sit out an early frost or thunderstorm in safety. This is easier if you have the bigger pots on wheels. You can find inexpensive plant trolleys online or in local big box stores.

Herbs are both useful and decorative. Bronze fennel is gorgeous in spring, with its chocolate brown leaves and that licorice smell. Culinary sage has lovely grayish green leaves. Nasturtium and viola flowers are edible additions to salads. Peppermint, spearmint and pineapple mint make wonderful garnishes and teas, but remember to grow them in containers. Mints are rampant spreaders! A row of chives can serve as a border for a garden bed. If you don't eat all the purple blooms, be sure to deadhead them or your chives will seed into other areas.

The traditional early to mid-June garden planting time is behind us, but many vegetables have still plenty of time to grow. Lettuces, arugula, spinach, endive and other greens can produce all summer, especially if you start a few new plants every week or two. This succession planting technique allows you to keep the salads coming even though older plants may bolt to seed in the summer heat. Beans, radish-



*Kale, lettuce and bronze fennel growing with iris and allium in Diana Hall's garden in Franklin.*

es, turnips and cucumber produce quickly.

And now is actually the perfect time to plant the more cold hardy vegetables, like kale, cabbages, beets and broccoli. To tuck some of these into an existing flower bed, you may need to purchase small plants or start them from seed in trays, so that bigger plants don't shade them out. Tuck a few lettuce or kale plants in where your spring pansies are ready to relinquish the space. Grow a cucumber or some beans up a trellis.

For some vegetables, an advantage of late planting is that you outwit some of the common garden pests like cucumber beetles. Apparently, they are out at the beginning of summer, but move on when there's nothing left to eat. Intermixing vegetables with your perennials can also confuse pests. Avoid spraying pesticides; they are certainly not something you want to eat.

Have some fun this summer with your garden. Grow something tasty. Take pictures of your victory garden and share with us all on the Franklin Facebook page.

Gardening increases our resilience as a community. Be proud of it.



*Zelia Hope Vanessendelt sports a stylish mask handmade by Carla Nordstrom  
Photo by Zelia's mom, Shana Ko*

## SENIORS, continued from Page 2

The Franklin community donated funds so that each graduating senior could receive lawn signs printed with the school logo, congratulations, and his or her photograph and name.

Jayne Bolton, Guidance Secretary/Registrar said "We are still working on details. But more than likely we will be proceeding with a "virtual" ceremony. That seems to be the trend right now. I am certainly working outside the box on this one. I have promised the senior class of 2020 that it will be as traditional as possible with a few little twists."

The NFR asked Franklin Central School administrators Brad Zilliox (superintendent), Bonnie Johnson (principal), and Brendon Coyle (school counselor/senior class advisor) for a statement about their graduating class of 2020. Here is their joint reply:

"The Franklin Central School District Class of 2020 consists of eighteen intelligent, hard-working, unique individuals. The future is limitless for each and every one of these students. Born into 9/11 times and graduating high school during this current pandemic, this group of young adults seems to have received a calling to achieve under adversity and flourish as strong and powerful problem solvers. They are leaving us to pursue various skills, trades, professions - nursing, engineering, criminal justice, science, graphic design, architecture, history education, and work with animals. They will enter the real world ready for whatever challenges lie ahead and no doubt will be successful in their endeavors.

"To the Class of 2020, we are honored that you will represent our school and community as you start your careers, and we wish you nothing but the best."

Cronauer/Brower

## Electric & Plumbing



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kitchen  
basics

By  
Carla  
Nordstrom

BAGELS & LOX

For anyone missing a typical New York City brunch, here is a way to make it in Franklin.

BAGELS

- 1 ½ cups warm water
- 1 TBL regular or fast yeast
- 1 tsp salt
- 4 - 4 ½ cups of flour, with more for kneading (bread flour works best)

The day before you plan to serve the bagels, combine the water and yeast. If using regular yeast, let sit for ten minutes before adding flour and salt. If using fast yeast, combine with flour and salt immediately.

Using either a stand mixer with a dough hook or by hand, mix the ingredients until a dense dough is formed. Put the dough onto a floured board and knead until it is smooth. Bagel dough is denser than most bread dough. Place it back in the bowl, cover with a plastic bag or wrap and let rise for about 2 hours, until doubled in size.

Turn the dough back onto a floured board, let rest for 10 minutes. The dough will be soft and fluffy, so knead in enough flour to make it dense. Form into a disc, cover with plastic wrap, and place in the refrigerator overnight.

The next day, preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. and boil water in a large pan.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator. Cut into 8 to 10 pieces depending on how big you want the bagels.

Roll each piece into a rope about 10 - 12 inches long, flip it over the back of your hand, bring ends together in the palm of your hand and squeeze then roll it back and forth until the ends are attached.

Place 2 or 3 bagels in the hot water and boil for approximately 1- 2 minutes on each side. Remove with a slotted spoon.



Photo by Andy Bobrow

If using seeds, sprinkle poppy, sesame or everything seeds on the bottom of a baking sheet. Place the bagels on a baking sheet, sprinkle with seeds, and bake for 25 to 30 minutes. Place on a rack to cool.

ANDY'S COLD SMOKED SALMON

- 3 TBL sugar
- 2 TBL salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- 1 lb skin-on Atlantic farmed salmon filet that is relatively thick with veins of fat.

Mix three ingredients together and spread on the flesh side of the salmon, so it is well covered. Turn the fish over into nonreactive shallow casserole, skin side up. Cover with plastic wrap and weight it down with two large cans of tomatoes. Let it sit in the refrigerator for 24 – 36 hours. Once it starts to throw off liquid, it is ready to smoke. Scrape the salt off the salmon, rinse it, and dry with paper towels.

Throw a fist-sized amount of charcoal and some wood chips into a smoker's fire box and light it. Smoke the fish skin side down for 2 to 3 hours depending the thickness of the salmon and how smoky you want it. The temperature needs to be low so that the salmon does not cook.

Serve with fresh bagels, sliced tomato, red onion and for a special treat Sherman Hill Farmstead's goat cheese.

Enjoy!



NOTES FROM NYC

By Manette Berlinger

It's been challenging living in the city during the pandemic, even for the lucky ones who are healthy. My husband and I, who are in the most vulnerable age group, live in Manhattan in a seven-story building with thirty-three apartments. Everyone uses the lobby, elevator and basement, and there's a constant stream of delivery people, so we did not leave our apartment for almost two months while the virus raged through the city.

We discovered a new life online. We found masks, gloves, sprays, wipes and monster rolls

of toilet paper. We learned how to snag delivery slots in our local markets by searching after midnight or at the crack of dawn. We disinfected food and sprayed packages, and patiently waited two days to touch them. We took the trash to the basement and collected the mail in full-dress PPE. Against our normal instincts, we backed away if we saw a neighbor or friend.

We learned how to connect with FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype, and Zoom, and called every friend and relative we could think of. We combed the web for things to do, see, hear and join, and watched TV and movies with rapt attention. Every night at 7:00, from our window, we cheered our valiant healthcare workers. When it finally felt safe to venture outside, we walked to the park at dinner time when we knew it would be relatively empty. We became deft at dodging bikers, avoiding runners, and skirting anyone without a mask.

Now the city is reopening. Our empty, shuttered streets are coming to life. Restaurants are setting up outdoor cafes while offering takeout at their doors. Miles of streets have been closed to traffic so adults can meet and kids can play, thinning the crowds in the parks and restoring a sense of connection. Together with the recent protests, reopening the city has brought people closer than the guidelines of social distancing

permit, so we are watching closely to see if the virus flares up.

Though it's been a challenge being here, even for those who are comfortable at home, it's also been inspiring to witness the grit and goodness of frontline workers, as well as the kindness of strangers. We have learned how to be inventive and resilient. We have plumbed our relationships and interests, cleaned our closets, and fixed many things that were broken.

Photos of the empty streets and sidewalks of NYC's Upper West Side by the author.



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# OUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

## Invaluable and in Danger

By Alexis Greene

One hundred years ago, the counties of Delaware, Otsego, Schoharie and Chenango hosted a newspaper in nearly every major city and town.

But as the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, the popularity of radio and network television news, not to mention the rising costs of printing and delivering a newspaper, began to make the business of publishing a small-market paper less than profitable. Comes the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with several twenty-four-hour cable news channels and nearly instant access to news websites on a smart phone, and the audience for a paper tossed onto a porch or steps in the morning, to be read with scrambled eggs and coffee—well, that audience has diminished.

The advertising base has also narrowed, as communities have changed.

Leonard Govern, who owned *The Walton Reporter* from 1997 until 2010, when he sold it to Decker Advertising in Delhi, recalls that “beginning in the mid-’90s, farms started disappearing, car dealerships went out of business, farm machinery dealers went out of business, feed stores—everything that goes with supporting an agricultural community.”

On Delaware Street in Walton, he remembers, “there used to be two men’s shops, three women’s apparel stores. But the big box stores came along...if you could get the Walgreens and Targets to advertise in local papers, there would

In our four-county area we have witnessed the decrease of local newspapers first-hand. *The Delaware County Times* ceased publication in 2016. The weekly *Tri-Town News*, which began life as *The Sidney*

**THE EVENING SUN**  
Delaware County's Hometown Daily Newspaper

*Record* in 1882, then combined with and absorbed papers in Bainbridge and Unadilla, published its last issue on December 21, 2018. The hundred and sixteen-year-old *Catskill Mountain News* published its last weekly edition on January 15, 2020. Despite messages on its website that CMN “is currently tied up in some legal issues” but “We will begin posting some news content here,” as of this writing there were no fresh postings since mid-January. CMN’s owner and publisher, Joan Lawrence-Bauer, did not respond to a request for an

**The Daily Star**

interview.

The loss of these papers only reinforces how valuable community newspapers are. From the middle of March through the end of May, *The Daily Star* devoted nearly its entire front page to covering the Covid-19 pandemic in the four-county region. Community papers offer a cornucopia of information about everything from planting corn and raising chickens, to local taxes, elections, municipal meetings, school and sports events. Every spring, summer, and fall *The Deposit Courier* highlights recreational activities at the Delaware River.

“But beyond event coverage,” says Matthew Avitabile, the owner, publisher and managing edi-

tor of *The Mountain Eagle* & *The Schoharie News*, “quite a bit can be done by local newspapers.” He cites “small-town block-buster exposés” such as *The Mountain Eagle*’s reporting and editorials in

2017 about what Avitabile calls the scandal involving Schoharie Area Long Term, or SALT. “People had donated to SALT for flood relief,” Avitabile recounted during a telephone interview, “and SALT spent it on salaries.”

Throughout 2017, *The Mountain Eagle* also investigated the furor surrounding a low-income senior housing project called The Birches, whose developers never seemed to meet their goals and defaulted on a nearly \$12 million bank loan.

There is no one model for a



community newspaper. *The Daily Star* in Oneonta and *The Evening Sun* in Norwich each publish five days a week. *The Mountain Eagle* & *The Schoharie News*, *The Deposit Courier* and *The Reporter* (formerly *The Walton Reporter*) are published weekly, while the *Andes Gazette* comes out once a month. *The New Franklin Register* you hold in your hands (or are reading online) publishes three issues a year.

As for business models, they run the gamut.

*The Daily Star*, which has a circulation of about 7,000 according to its Oneonta publisher Fred Scheller, belongs to a group of more than one hundred community papers called CNHI (formerly Community Newspaper Holdings, Inc.), owned by Retirement Systems of Alabama in Montgomery, Alabama’s capital. A “total access” subscription, which includes a hard copy of the paper and a digital version, costs (as of this writing) \$21.99 a month.

By contrast, the *Andes Gazette* serves a town of approximately 1,300 residents. The *Gazette* was born in 1999, according to Judith Garrison, one of its editorial staff, when a few volunteers came together and, with the help of a

small grant, put out a paper. Today the paper has a not-for-profit fiscal sponsor, the Andes Society for History and Culture (ASHC), and the four-person editorial staff and one lay-out person are still volunteers. A subscription costs \$15 a year, but you can pick up a copy at the bank or the general store for a \$1 donation. Or simply take it home for free. The New Franklin Register

is mailed to every household and business in the towns of Franklin, Treadwell, and Sidney Center, or is available for free at local stores and restaurants as well as on line at [www.franklinlocal.org/nfr](http://www.franklinlocal.org/nfr).

Each community paper has its own mission, its own style. What they share is the challenge to bring in enough revenue to survive. As Richard Snyder, owner and president of Snyder Communications, which publishes *The Evening Sun*, puts it, “the only thing that we do is try to keep the paper alive. I don’t know if there is any way that you can make money today with a small paid weekly or a small paid daily. The only way you can make money with a small paid weekly is if you are almost a husband-and-wife operation...husband-and-wife teams that really don’t mind not making

a lot of money but really enjoy going to the school board meetings and covering the local sports and taking their own pictures.”

The pandemic has worsened advertising revenues. Shuttered brick-and-mortar businesses, themselves losing revenue because shoppers are sheltering at home or ordering online from chain stores, are loath to spend money on ads.

Reportedly the pandemic cut substantially into ad revenue at *The Daily Star*, and as a result, on April 20<sup>th</sup>, the paper stopped publishing a Monday edition. According to William Ketter, CNHI’s Senior Vice-President of News, CNHI



made the decision in concert with the *Daily Star*’s on-site publisher, Fred Scheller.

“We’ve been hit hard by the virus in terms of advertising,” said Ketter during a telephone interview, “so when you lose that much revenue, you’ve got to do something to keep yourself whole.” The cancellation of the Monday edition will be permanent.

What can community papers do to survive?

For Matthew Avitabile at *The Mountain Eagle* & *The Schoharie News*, expanded distribution has helped. “We’re in about a hundred stores,” he says, “and as we have expanded geographically, that has resulted in more people using us to get their word out.” He keeps ad rates comparatively low and takes on some chores himself, like “labeling out” the subscription copies. The paper partners with local radio stations and in exchange for news, gets a positive mention.

Richard Snyder owns companies that help provide some financial ballast for *The Evening Sun*, including Sun Printing, where (full disclosure) the *NFR* is printed; Circulars Unlimited, which produces

See NEWS, continued on Page 17



be the revenue we’ve lost in local stores. But even the big grocery chains don’t do advertising. Just a flyer they insert every week. Not much revenue for us; inexpensive for them.”

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# FOCUS ON ENERGY

## PIPELINE UP-DATE

Compiled by Brian Brock

*December 31<sup>st</sup>* - Having elected to not proceed with the Constitution Pipeline project, **Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation** records a liability of \$9.4 million, which represents its estimated remaining obligations associated with this project.

*January 15<sup>th</sup>* - **The Williams Companies, Inc.** files quarterly status report of project with FERC for October 14<sup>th</sup> to January 15<sup>th</sup>.

*February 10<sup>th</sup>* - **Cabot** transfers its 25 percent equity interest in Constitution Pipeline Company, LLC to Williams Partners Operating, LLC. It did not receive any proceeds, but instead paid Williams \$9.4 million for obligations that were previously accrued.

*February 13<sup>th</sup>* - **Duke Energy Corp** takes a \$25 million impairment in fourth quarter earnings against the Constitution Pipeline Company. Along with a \$42 million impairment in 2018, this writes-off its entire investment in the project.

*February 19<sup>th</sup>* - In its financial results for 2019, **Williams** takes the full \$354 million impairment of project. The company confirms to NFR that CPC has halted investments in the Constitution.

*February 24<sup>th</sup>* - In its Form 10-K filed with the U.S. Security and Exchange Commission, **Williams Companies** states “Williams – with support from its partners, Duke, Cabot and AltaGas – has halted investment in the proposed Constitution project. While Constitution did receive positive outcomes in recent court proceedings and permit applications, the underlying risk adjusted return for this greenfield pipeline project has diminished in such a way that further development is no longer supported.”

*March 3<sup>rd</sup>* - During Q&A at the end of a panel discussion at the Bipartisan Policy Institute, CEO of Williams, **Allen Armstrong**, responds that during the delay of the final approval of Constitution, Williams started three larger pipeline projects to transport gas from Marcellus fairway: Regional Energy Access, Leidy South Expansion, and the Northeast Supply Enhancement\*. By the time that FERC waived the denial by NYS DEC, Constitution Pipeline project was no longer the best risk-adjusted return on capital.

*March 16<sup>th</sup>* - **Saul Ewing, Arnstein, & Lehr, LLP**, representing CPC, requests from Judge Mordue of U.S. District Court for the Northern District in New York that he reopen cases on 67 parcels in the ROW in New York. Once reopened, CPC intends to request: dissolving of injunctions on all those parcels, maintaining the bonds for those parcels (over one million dollars total), amending Verified Complaints concerning those parcels so that CPC possesses easement only for the time between the issuing and dissolving of these injunctions, and a week’s extension to reply to a defendant’s letter.

*April 1<sup>st</sup>* - **U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit**, Judge Susan Carney grants an abeyance to Catskill Mountain Keeper, Inc. et al v. FERC, Docket Numbers 16-345(L) and 16-361(Con).

*April 3<sup>rd</sup>* - **Court of Appeals, 2<sup>nd</sup> Circ.** grants an abeyance to NYS DEC v. FERC, Docket Numbers 19-4338, 20-158, and 20-208.

*April 16<sup>th</sup>* - **Williams** files quarterly status report of project with FERC for January 16<sup>th</sup> to April 14<sup>th</sup>.

*April 28<sup>th</sup>* - **House Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties** releases preliminary investigation into how FERC permits natural gas pipelines. It finds that FERC rubber stamps projects and prevents landowners from defending their properties.

*June 9<sup>th</sup>* - **FERC** announces an instant final rule barring its use of tolling orders to deny landowners due process. This ahead of an expected adverse ruling on the issue by U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in *Allegheny Defense et al. v. FERC*.

\* In mid-May, NYSDEC and NJDEP denied a water quality certificate for NESE. Williams abandons this project as well.

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### VOTE, continued from Page 1

lowed stores to sell beer, but aside from that Franklin remained dry. The question made it to the ballot in 2007 but 56% voted to keep the town dry. Another attempt was made in 2009 but there weren’t enough qualifying signatures to put the question on the ballot. A further attempt was made in 2018, but not enough signatures were collected.

Finally, in 2019, it became a community effort to allow restaurants to serve alcohol. People throughout Franklin collected signatures. While the required 222 signatures may not sound like a heavy lift, with a total registration of approximately 1,500 voters it was not easy because people are so spread out. Once the signatures were collected, Brian Brock under the auspices of the

Chamber of Commerce, compiled and filed the petitions and made a list of all of the people who signed them. The petitions were accepted, and Alcoholic Beverage Control Question 2 was put on the ballot.

Prior to the November election, neighbors came together to create a postcard to be sent to voters reminding them to vote. It was designed locally, and Franklin residents chipped in to pay for printing and postage. A group got together with a splash of tippie and sent out the mailing so that the postcards arrived shortly before voting began.

The November 2019 election did not turn out to be inconsequential at all. Question 2 passed with 73% of the vote, basically a reversal of the 1881 vote

that made Franklin a dry town. Some residents worried that passing Question 2 would be the downfall of Franklin with roadhouses and honkytonks sprouting up everywhere. Two Brothers Pizza has applied for a wine and beer license, but the application is on hold due to the pandemic.

A good consequence of putting Question 2 on the 2019 ballot was that a lot of people came out to vote. The last time Franklin had an uncontested election in 2011 approximately 350 people voted. In 2019, 624 voters went to the polls.

Keep in mind when you finally get to enjoy a glass of wine or a beer in a Franklin restaurant that you helped promote voter participation in Franklin.

That is something worth raising a glass to.

## FUTURE OF EV CHARGING?

### Staff Report

All the villages around us have an electric vehicle (EV) charging station, and we want one.

The village trustees are willing to be the official recipient of available grants, and Chamber of Commerce board members are willing to do the paperwork.

The problem?

Right now in Franklin, the project is homeless. Before we can apply for a grant, we need a workable site. It should be off Main Street, in the center of the village. A parking lot would be suitable, such as those beside the railroad museum, Wayne Bank, or the old grocery/deli. A charging station does not take up much room. The Chamber would like to be able to apply during the next round of funding.

Suggestions, anyone?

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# INSIDE LOCAL REAL ESTATE with SUSAN BARNETT

## REAL ESTATE, A PANDEMIC, AND YOU *A Guide to Viral Real Estate*

Realtors anticipated the summer of 2020 was going to be a very busy one in the Western Catskills. We didn't anticipate COVID-19. Nor did we anticipate that, rather than shut our business down, a public health emergency would send our industry into overdrive.

If you're confused about how realtors could continue to work during the pandemic, welcome to the club. It's not been a clear road, and there's still a lot of misunderstanding.

At first, like nearly every other industry, the state shut our business down. Personal note: I was fine with that. I wasn't thrilled about the prospect of no pay, but I also see the potential for realtors to be what health experts call "super spreaders." We travel a lot. We see multiple people. We visit multiple homes. We bring strangers into peoples' properties. Closing it all down for a while seemed smart.

Two weeks later, we were informed we were "essential." Reader, I was not happy. For my reasons, see the preceding paragraph. And many other realtors felt the same

way. Revisions quickly piled up. We could work, but we could only work remotely. We could take listing appointments, but only by teleconference. We could not accompany showings. In fact, we were instructed not to coordinate any showings. We had to put any buyer directly in touch with the seller, who could then coordinate a showing if he or she wanted to.

That last one has been a problem, as we all made sure NYSAR, our state association, was aware. I have become email buddies with the organization's president who is, at least, sympathetic and responsive. But rules are rules, he told me.

Putting buyers and sellers directly together eliminates the mediation role that a realtor performs, and you may not realize its value until you discover that, as a buyer, you've given away more information than you meant to. Or, as a seller, you find that your mention of a couple of valuable items in the garage are suddenly added into what you're expected to be selling.

But as of this writing, in mid-May, those are the rules realtors are working under. And if they don't, they're risking a \$2000 state fine. Real estate is listed as a Phase Two business under the governor's reopening plan. By the time you

read this, we may be there.

Whatever phase we're at, you should know that the market isn't just hot. It's sizzling. Unlike the flight to upstate that followed the 9/11 attacks, this one feels like it's about lifestyle more than safety. Naturally, downstate buyers are looking for a less congested place to call home, but they're also looking for a better life for their families, a better place from which to work remotely. Staying inside for a couple of months has led us to all do some soul searching.

There are multiple offers for inexpensive second homes, but there is also a steady stream of serious buyers interested in country homes with access to fast Internet. The Hudson Valley has been the topic of many news stories on the hike in upstate real estate, but the real story is more rural. The Hudson Valley was already crowded with urban expats. Prices have skyrocketed, and inventory is low.

Those new pioneers are looking farther. They are looking for value, both in property and in how they live their lives. Distance to the city is less important now that there's an openness to remote



workplaces. They need to be able to get on their laptops and do their jobs. They want a safe place for their children to play. They want a welcoming community. And they want to look out their windows and see what we see – beautiful countryside and big skies. It's been a stressful spring. They are looking for a place to heal.

And I'm looking for more listings, because they're snapping up everything I've got.



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## THE BARE TRUTH

By Robert Lamb

Photos by the author

After a two-year hiatus, I finally returned to the Last Frontier.

As a kind of celebration, I planned this road trip to Seward. My friend Jared is back home from his cancer treatment and is doing well, and we are going fishing!

The drive south from Cantwell opened my eyes to the changes caused by the recent drought. The lack of good winter snow-pack high on the mountains coupled with a long-lasting drought has had devastating effects on the many area streams. The streams we have fished for years were barren. Streams where we once measured depth in feet are now just inches deep. The mountains have no lingering snow fields to replenish them. Trout and salmon need water colder than sixty degrees, and these streams were in the high seventies. For the fourth year in a row, much of the fall and spring precipitation fell as rain, which quickly ran off.

Another huge change that shocked me was the color of the forest. Consisting of predominantly black spruce, the forest once appeared deep green to black, depending on the level of light.

Now that great boreal forest is dying. From the Denali lookout on the Park's highway, you see tens of millions of dead black spruce killed by the spruce beetle and turned an ugly rusty orange. Many dead trees have fallen over in a drunken sprawl. The moist cold and once mostly fro-

zen soils have melted and dried out, leaving the shallow root systems with nothing to hold onto. On June 28<sup>th</sup>, it was ninety degrees in Cantwell. This is not historic, but it has not been that warm since nineteen thirty. Then in nineteen forty-four came the coldest winter on record. Hopefully Alaska will soon return to its "normal" weather pattern.

I booked our fishing charter with The Fish



House in Seward for a Saturday morning. It is a three hundred and fifty-mile, six-hour trip from Cantwell to Seward. With our boat boarding at six a.m., we left Friday morning and arrived in town early evening.

Seward is a port city at the head of Resurrection Bay and a mecca for tourists and fishermen. There are city camping sites on the waterfront, right next to the boat harbor.

We had hoped to fish for silver salmon, but those fish were not cooperating. We set up camp in a hemlock grove a hundred yards from the bay. There is something very special about roasting fresh Alaskan oysters over an open fire while a sweet sea breeze wafts the aroma past your nose.

While it was hot and sunny in Cantwell on Friday, it was cooler, wet and overcast in Seward on Saturday. Jared and I along with a dozen other clients listened to the captain's safety talk, then boarded the *Servant*, a large boat

capable of comfortably holding fifteen people. It had a large heater in the enclosed cabin, and a bathroom. Rod holders were spaced along its gunwale rails.

As we motored across the bay, we scanned for marine life. It was a surreal experience standing at the stern looking out over the sea. I could not tell where the slate gray water ended and the billowing fog began. Every so often, the fog would thin just enough to show another boat following us. Like a ghost ship in a movie, it would suddenly fade away in the fog.

We were on a salmon/halibut combo charter. Once on the fishing grounds, we were given poles set up for halibut. Halibut hooks are unique in that they are a circle hook. Unlike J hooks, circle hooks allow the halibut to firmly hook themselves. If you try to set the hook yourself, you

pull it out of their mouth. The plan was to catch our limit of halibut then switch to more traditional gear for salmon.

The action started off well, then slowed after we each had one fish. Jared re-baited his hook with a piece of herring and had just dropped it in the water when a fish took his bait. When he reeled it in, it was not a halibut but a nice fat dime-bright silver salmon. Everyone was surprised to see a salmon caught on a halibut hook. Jared re-baited for halibut and dropped it over the side. Almost immediately another fine salmon took it.

Since we were not yet fishing for salmon, the Captain had some amusing things to say about it. But I wasn't really surprised that Jared could catch salmon on a halibut rig. After all, he is the Fish Whisperer.

At the end of the day, a good time was had by all.

*Vivamus risu caritate*  
Live, laugh, love

## NEW PLAYGROUND DEFACED

**Sidney Center basketball court hit by vandals**

By Michael Sellitti

Since late 2017, the Sidney Center Improvement Group (SCIG) has been actively working on restoring and revitalizing the Sidney Center Park & Playground. After a successful fundraising campaign, which included financial support from individuals, local businesses, and other non-profit organizations, SCIG has made great progress in pursuit of this goal.

But with great progress comes minor setbacks. As part of Phase 2 of the project, SCIG contracted a local paving company to resurface the basketball court located in the park. SCIG also purchased new Un-alam posts and backboards and hoops. As of last fall, thanks to the support and assistance of the Town of Sidney Highway Department, the basketball court was looking better than it has in many years.

But when the snow finally melted and the pandemic's stay-at-home restrictions began to lift, something disheartening came to light – the basketball court had been defaced. Paint had been splattered across the surface and the year "2020" dripped as if in an art project gone wrong. As if that wasn't bad enough – long parallel gouges ran from one side of the court to the other: the result of snowmobile skis skidding across the newly-paved asphalt.

When SCIG began this project, some community members voiced concerns that there would be people who wouldn't appreciate what we were doing, that our work would be destroyed rather than embraced. Cynicism has never held this determined little group back before – if anything, it has motivated us to do more.

Regretfully, we must admit that the cynics had valid concerns. Regardless, we have many generous donors who believe in

this project and our ability to get it done, and we will continue forward despite the desecration. In addition, this suggests that we need to be better at involving those disgruntled individuals, by encouraging them to be part of the process and take ownership of the transformation.



*Paint splatters on new asphalt*

SCIG has a dedicated group of volunteers who believe in the power and spirit of community. No one in our group is an expert at rebuilding parks or public outreach – we're simply a group of people who want to make Sidney Center a nicer, healthier, and more enjoyable place to live. A park is a place where people of all ages and walks of life can spend time connecting with others and with nature. It's good for the soul, it's good for our physical and mental health – and now it's more important than ever to make this type of environment available to our residents.

We simply ask the whole community to lend a hand to prevent future vandalism to the park. This will help move the project forward with the many exciting additions we have yet to complete there.

In time, the Sidney Center Park and Playground will again be the vibrant, active little park that many of us remember from years ago – just a little bit different.

*To follow the progress of the park project, please visit SCIG's Facebook page. If you'd like to support the project or have suggestions for planning, please email us at:*

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COVID-compliant baked goods at the FFM Photo by Helen McLean

FRANKLIN FARMERS' MARKET EXPANDS

By Susan Barnett

Despite New York's COVID-19 shutdown this spring, the Franklin Farmers' Market is growing in its fourteenth year. The community-supported weekly outdoor market announced that Lindner's hard cider from Hamden and Wandering Brook Farm from Delhi with dairy products and laundry soap are now joining the Sunday event. Sherman Hill Farmstead Cheeses is expected to return next month. Fokish Bakery from Franklin and Hare and Feathers Farm are also returning. Off-Road Maple from Franklin was a new vendor who joined on Memorial Day weekend. Vendors who have already returned for the new season include Cordwood Acres, East Brook Community Farm, Elk Meadow Farm, Empire Angus Farm, Enough...and A Little Bit

More, and John the Baker. Tables for outdoor seating have returned, but they will be placed farther apart with fewer chairs at each table. During the continuing public health emergency, vendors and customers will wear masks, and masks will be provided for anyone who has forgotten one. Social distancing and limited customer numbers will help ensure compliance with state guidelines. The Franklin Farmers' Market accepts coupons from the Farmers' Market Nutritional Program. The market is held every Sunday until Columbus Day from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. on Institute Street in front of Franklin Stage in the village.

For more information or to order online for pick-up, go to the market's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FranklinNYFarmersMarket/>

Your Neighbor's View...  
CAN WE MAKE A CASE FOR  
DEFUNDING THE POLICE?

By Carla Nordstrom

Dwight Mott, a resident of Unadilla, asked the crowd at the Unadilla for Black Lives Matter rally on June 13<sup>th</sup>, if they felt safe in Unadilla. Most people nodded that they did. Unadilla closed its police department a number of years ago and Mott made the point that this is what it is like in communities that do not have police forces. You may wonder what people from a small, mostly white rural community can bring to the current Black Lives Matter conversation about defunding the police. As it turns out, there is a lot that can be said because many of these communities exist without the police. Of Delaware County's nineteen towns, only one, Colchester, has a police department. Five of the larger villages - Margaretville, Delhi, Sidney, Walton, and Hancock - do have local police, though the village of Deposit just closed its police department on March 1, 2020. It's not that towns like Franklin don't have crime. Our bank has been robbed, a man was arrested this past February for involvement in dog fighting, and if you remember back to 2001, a statewide manhunt ended in Franklin when a murderer was captured on Otego Street. Town police departments are expensive to maintain, so our law enforcement needs are handled by the Delaware County Sheriff's office and the New York State Police. It's true that nothing much will happen if you park in front of a no park- See POLICE, continued on Page 19

AWARD, continued from Page 1

it quiet. This year, like just about everything else, that is different. This year, they've decided that they're going to give what they call the Perseverance Award to every member of the graduating class. And they're letting the school thank them publicly. "We were trying to think what we could do to help this year," Jennifer said. "Frank decided all of the kids were really getting cheated out of a big milestone in their lives. So they're all going to win." The Walkers will write a check to the school, and the school will then distribute \$500 to each graduating senior. For the past several years, the school has told the Walkers about one student who seems to epitomize the perseverance the couple wants to reward. "Frank went to school here," she said. "And his mom pushed him. He hated school. Without her, he might not have graduated." The couple, who once owned Catskill Tractor and then moved away to run a livestock auction company in Schoharie County, moved back to Franklin twenty years ago. They don't have any children of

their own. "We decided we wanted to do something to give a student a little boost," Jennifer said. "Frank's a successful businessman, but without the boost he got from his mother, who knows what might have happened?" They asked the school to identify a student who maybe wasn't top of the class, or even necessarily heading to college -- someone who was going to graduate but who'd had to try a little harder to get that diploma. "We wanted it to go to someone who had to overcome difficulties, like Frank did," she said. "We're fortunate enough to be able to do this." This year, that award will go to eighteen students. And although the Walkers don't see going public about their generosity as a challenge, Jennifer admits she hopes the rest of the community will start thinking of ways it can show some appreciation to members of the class of 2020, who will be missing a ceremony that has always been a significant rite of passage. "Maybe hearing about this will encourage someone else to try to give the kids a boost," she said. "It's what small towns are all about."

FOR SALE  
A selection of  
the egg tempera paintings of  
GAIL BUNTING

Contact John Ott  
607-723-0728  
JHOTT727@gmail.com



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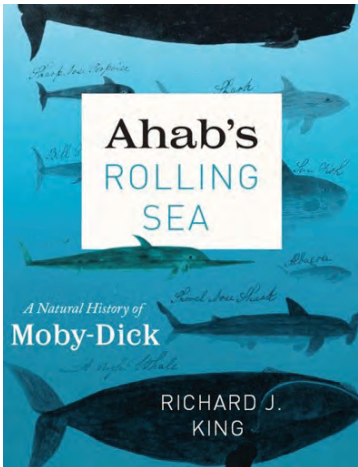
BOOK REVIEWS



AHAB'S ROLLING SEA: A Natural History of Moby-Dick

By Richard J. King, U. Chicago, 430 pp.

Review by William B. Rossow



Many of us had to read Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* in high school; some of us enjoyed Ismael's narration of the story of the last voyage of the Pequod for Captain Ahab's revenge on the white whale. Some of us may have seen Gregory Peck's portrayal of Ahab. A few of us even enjoyed the interleaved chapters on the physiology and behavior of whales, the technical details of the whaling process, and how whaling ships were structured and operated, with pictures and schematics provided.

The story also describes the multi-ethnic make-up of the crew and how they got along with each other, with the ship's officers and with Ahab. There were detailed descriptions of what the sea and sky looked like as well as the birds and fish encountered as the ship sailed from

America, southeast across the Atlantic, around the Cape of Good Hope, and into the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

AHAB'S ROLLING SEA examines the accuracy of key events in the story and all of those descriptive and technical details in Melville's mid-19<sup>th</sup> century book. It also gives an update on the sad status of the fourteen different types of whales and their populations today.

Melville got most of it right, with some literary exaggerations: sperm whales really could be that big and many of them have white patches on their heads (squid can also be as big as pictured). Different kinds of whales do appear most often in specific parts of the world's oceans. And yes, whales did fight back against their tormentors, sank many small boats, killing the sailors, and even sank whole ships. Sailing was a very dangerous activity for the crew, never mind the added dangers of hunting a whale.

The details of the ocean environment, of the whales, fish, and birds one sees – these are accurate, from Melville's own observations during his ocean voyages, though he did not sail in all of these seas. AHAB'S ROLLING SEA is a fascinating compendium of nautical and whale knowledge, as is the original novel by Melville.

LIBRARIAN'S PICKS

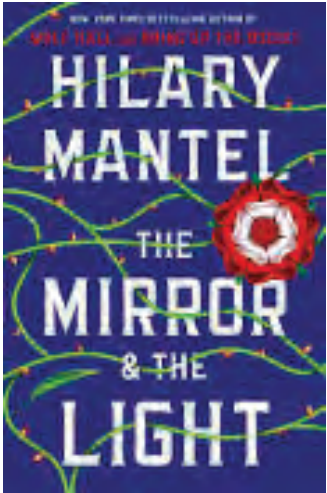
By Wendy Barckhaus

THE MIRROR AND THE LIGHT

By Hilary Mantel.

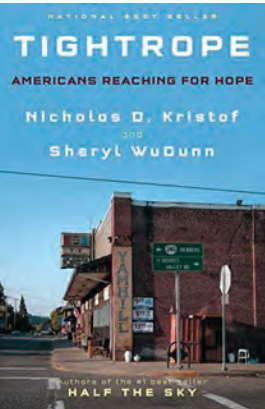
This is the last book in the trilogy about the rise and fall of Thomas Cromwell. The others are WOLF HALL and BRING UP THE BODIES.) The son of a blacksmith, Cromwell rose to become the most powerful person in England excepting King Henry VIII. He orchestrated the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, as well as the beheading of Anne Boleyn. He helped free the Church of England from the control of Rome. He made many enemies.

In this final volume, Mantel traces the last four years of Cromwell's life as he strove to serve a capricious king and accumulate power for himself. The book is beautifully written and a riveting read, even knowing Thomas Cromwell's eventual fate.



TIGHTROPE: Americans Reaching for Hope

By Nicholas D Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn



Kristof and WuDunn travel to Kristof's hometown of Yamhill, Oregon, seeking to understand why a quarter of the people he rode the school bus with are either dead or in jail. They find poverty accompanied by despair, alcoholism, opioid addiction, and jail. Good union jobs that once offered a decent standard of living have gone overseas. Social programs have been cut.

The authors find a similar situation in Baltimore, where black workers suffer from many of the same problems, with the added burden of a history of systematic racism. Rejecting the notion that anyone can "pull themselves up by their bootstraps," the authors call for government to invest in its people through a variety of social programs. A thought-provoking book.

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

- Walt Whitman

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,  
Those of mechanics, each one singing his  
as it should be blithe and strong,  
The carpenter singing his  
as he measures his plank or beam,  
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work,  
or leaves off work,  
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat,  
the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench,  
the hatter singing as he stands,  
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's  
on his way in the morning,  
or at noon intermission or at sundown,  
The delicious singing of the mother,  
or of the young wife at work,  
or of the girl sewing or washing,  
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,  
The day what belongs to the day—  
at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,  
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.



Walt Whitman was born on May 31, 1819 in West Hills, LI, New York. He died on March 26, 1892, in Camden, New Jersey. Whitman was the quintessential American poet (his nickname was "The Bard of Democracy"), opening poetry to the people by means of his expansive free verse. Whitman's love of America can be heard in all of his poems. Here, he describes how workers take joy in their various occupations. He only mentions women toward the end of the poem, almost certainly because women, in his time, rarely worked outside the home.

- Bertha Rogers

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plore, take risks and celebrate the many facets of their creativity with the goal of becoming unblocked and staying that way. "Creative sobriety" begins with a humble daily action of picking up our creativity, "one day at a time" for no less than five minutes in every twenty-four-hour period.

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[www.artsanonymous.org](http://www.artsanonymous.org)

**Reflections of solitude:** during the pandemic, a group of local artists have taken this practice to heart, sharing their 5-Alive work over the internet to counter feelings of anxiety and isolation brought on by sheltering in place.

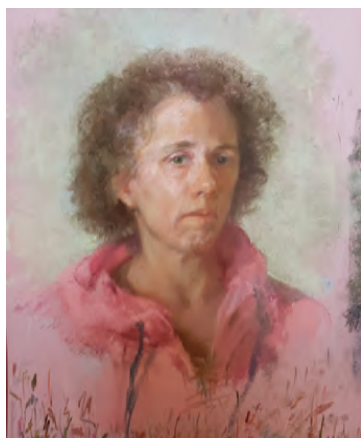
Here they share some of it with us. Don't look for formal titles or proper provenance. These are mostly quick work, studies, gut responses to the strange life we've been leading due to COVID-19.



Untitled, by Edmond Rinnooy Kan



"Sway" by Karen Elting



"Quarantine Self-Portrait" by Janet Wentworth Erickson  
"Heavy, long, cold, and dark, the days of social distancing and quarantine resulted in this pastel self-portrait, observed from life, in a mirror."



Untitled by Julia Clay



"Window View" by Carla Hall



"Norm" by Janet Wentworth Erickson



"Honeymoose" by Sandra Finkenberg



"In the Studio" by Lisbeth Firmin



"Masked Nude" by Charles Bremer



Untitled Abstract, by Tony Martin

## MUSIC NOTES BY JOHN O'CONNOR



### FAREWELL, JOHN PRINE

If anyone has ever heard me sing at our Farmers' Market, you are likely to have heard me sing *Mexican Home* or *Angel From Montgomery*, songs that came from the imagination of John Prine, who died in April from the coronavirus.



John Prine: earlier days

His fame was greatest among those who appreciate songwriting with an ear for the roots of American music. John Prine was a chameleon of a songwriter, touching folk, rock and roll, country, and blues, with a wit like no other.

I remember being turned on to him in the early 70s by a friend who was always more ahead of the curve than I was. I was skeptical of Prine at first, thinking he was just another trend, but I gave him a listen. The first album I listened to was his second release, *Diamonds in the Rough*, the all acoustic one with *Everybody Needs Somebody* and the *Late John Garfield Blues*, maybe one of his best songs. And as was his habit, he included one Carter Family song. I was an instant convert.

John Prine's finest work was on his first self-titled album, often the case with artists. This included seminal songs like *Hello In There*, *Sam Stone* and *Donald and Lydia*, songs so powerful you wondered how anyone could have written them. And this was a guy in his twenties. As far as I am concerned, though he made good music until the end, he never got close to having so consistently fine a collection as that first one. The further he went on with his career, the more it was hit and miss, with some very good "hits" that exploited clever lyrics, catchy tunes and inspired rhymes. There was a lot of collaborative work. I don't know how that works and I am sure it is not fair of me, but it always disappointed me to see a co-songwriter

credited to a song of his I liked. (My own prejudice. I can't imagine writing a song with someone else. To me it would be like being in the confessional with my mother.) The only later song that really echoed the kind of powerful message and craftsmanship of his first album was *Unwed Fathers*, who he co-wrote with Bobby Braddock.

There were, of course, some very strong and unusually good songs in other respects, songs like *Come Back to Us Barbara Lewis* and *Mexican Home* - enviable works of art that were immersed in layers of meaning and mystery. But a lot of his songs tended toward what appeared to be the simple task (a genius in itself) of stringing inspired rhymes together in a litany of cliches. Like "fish and whistle, whistle and fish/eat everything that they put in your dish" or "you'll be waiting for a phone call at the wrong end of a broom/that town will make you crazy, crazy as a loon."



John Prine in 2019

It worked like a charm but it wasn't serious stuff like *Angel From Montgomery*, that slammed you over the head with the wooden plank of working-class life. It was the kind of work that tended to please those who go for the clever stuff, the surface pleasures.

But underneath even the later songs were the many levels that a poet knows how to simmer and brew. No one since Johnny Cash was able to capture the careless pursuit of happiness in the side streets of working-class dreams. A lyric like, "with a pack of Camel cigarettes in the sleeve of my T-shirt/heading out to Hollywood just to have my feelings hurt" is an example of how you pack in seven pages of a novel into a few words. The only other songwriter who knows how to do that is the under-recognized rival to Prine, Michael Hurley.

Being at home all the  
**See PRINE, con't on Page 17**

**To see this work in full color, visit our website:  
[www.franklinlocal.org/nfr](http://www.franklinlocal.org/nfr)**





“Barbara”

PAINTING AND ADVOCACY

By Jessica Farrell Paintings by the author

I am a painter and a mental health advocate living in Delaware County. Six years ago, I joined my local NAMI chapter. NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is a grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for Americans affected by mental illness. In 2015 and 2016, I was able to partner with NAMI through my job at the David Byrd Estate, and facilitated several awareness conferences.

I was always captivated by the people who shared powerful stories of recovery. One of those stories belonged to my Aunt Barbara. Several years ago, she sent me the diary she'd kept during her struggle with bipolar disorder in the 1960s. She hoped her mental health recovery journey could help others.

Barbara was the cool aunt, an animal lover,

that let my sisters and me stay up late listening to Herb Alpert records. Along with the diary, she sent photographs of herself as a young girl. The images did not reveal the mental unrest that would hold her captive on and off for years. Her writings exposed an alternate narrative that haunted my imagination.

My aunt's writings and my advocacy work in the community coalesced. This was the jumping-off point for a new series of paintings titled, *The Wilderness Diary*. It features portraits of people who have all experienced a mental health struggle. Many are peer recovery specialists I've worked with in my community.

During adolescence, our physical transformation is paralleled by subtle changes hidden deep within our biological landscape. I wanted to explore this window in time. The mercurial skies and enigmatic landscape of my home in the Catskills became the backdrop for my paintings, which mirror the emotional and physical isolation my subjects describe. I decided to pair each person with an animal companion as part allegorical indicator, foreshadowing mental states to come, and as part, protector.

*The Wilderness Diary* is not only a meditation on the people I painted, but also a reflection on our on-going mental health crisis. Lack of funding for mental health services has had a profound effect on communities everywhere. Delaware County has one of the highest suicide rates in the state. Eighty percent of the inmates in our jail have some form of mental illness. In 2017, a group of advocates and I formed the Mental Health Justice Project to address concerns related to area jails and mental illness.

My paintings became a refuge from the harsh reality, the injustices and inhumanity people must endure in overwhelmed systems of support.

Along with the portraits, I'm creating an audio diary of my aunt's writings and a printed "wilderness diary" that includes the courageous stories of the people I painted. Despite living with a greatly misunderstood condition, they advocate for people struggling today. They are truly unsung heroes!

My friend Kaima Nelson-Bowne summed it up, "Your work stirs me deeply. I'm edged into some strange place between peacefulness and disturbance." It's true, the paintings stem from a place of great difficulty, however there is triumph, too.

Anyone can face a mental health struggle, especially during times of stress, like a pandemic. Mental illness is a facet of the human condition. Creativity itself is an irrational voyage. I hope my work helps others understand that they're not alone. There is hope!

More about *The Wildness Diary*  
@ [www.jessicafarrell.com](http://www.jessicafarrell.com)  
Contact NAMI Delaware/Otsego:  
[namidelawareco@gmail.com](mailto:namidelawareco@gmail.com)  
OR NAMI NYS: [www.naminys.org](http://www.naminys.org)  
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TRANSCRIPTION

By Kate Atkinson (Hachette Audio)  
Read by Fenella Woolgar

Is it a mystery? A spy novel? A World War II history? All of the above, as well as a deceptively quiet book in which nothing much seems to happen, then suddenly it does, and you realize it's been happening all along.

Juliet, a naïve young English woman, is recruited as a 'listener' by Britain's MI 5, to eavesdrop on Nazi sympathizers operating in WWII London. Soon enough, her bosses have her going undercover to infiltrate these groups. She has no spy training but turns out to have a knack - as well as a taste - for playing the part.

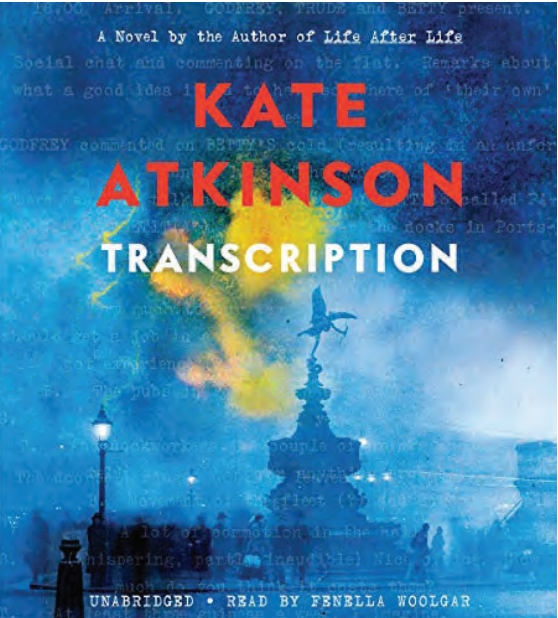
The author treats us to her usual mind games, moving freely back and forth in time. Instead of undercutting the suspense, this sense of being increasingly unmoored reflects Juliet's state of mind and helps a largely invisible menace build in a steady pace of code names, assumed identities, mysterious coincidences, and ghosts from the past.

All this is perceptively and rivetingly read by Fenella Woolgar with a sure ear for the divisions and differences within

the English class system, both during the war and later in the supposedly liberated 1970s, when Juliet is working for the BBC. Because her reading is so nuanced and thoughtful, she woos you in for a very close listen, turning up the tension in case you miss that one minor detail that will turn out to explain everything.

TRANSCRIPTION is also a rumination on role-playing as a threat to the actor's sense of personal identity, as well as on the burden of ordinariness and the impossibility of ever knowing the real truth.

Review by Marjorie B. Kellogg





**PANTRY, continued from Page 1**

margarine. Participants are asked to complete a short form to document their visit, and donors to the food bank receive a thank you note with verification of donation value as a tax record.

Over the years many volunteers have generously donated their time, energy, and money to operate the food bank. Leadership has been provided by Donna Briggs, Margaret Hazlett, Nancy Barnes, Beulah Hussey, Irma Hall, and Stella Sprague, with numerous community volunteers helping to keep the food bank door open

It now is time to pass the mantle. The Treadwell Food Bank was relocated to the Village of Franklin and will become the Greater Franklin Food Pantry. The Walter Rich Charitable Foundation has

generously offered space for the pantry in the Rich Farmhouse Community Center at 574 Main Street, Franklin. This centrally located site has ample space for food storage shelving, easy parking, handicap access, and is highly visible from Route 357.

Meg Shivers has agreed to become the coordinator for the Greater Franklin Food Pantry. Naomi Lima has agreed to be treasurer and manage the volunteer coverage on open days. Several new volunteers have been trained by Stella to join the current volunteers in staffing the pantry during open hours, and an eight-member steering committee of local volunteers has been set up to guide the pantry while opportunities to provide additional services or products are examined

The pantry is hoping to expand the hours of operation at the new location to include some hours outside of the normal workday to accommodate people with jobs. Perhaps open later Friday afternoons, Saturday morning, or even before the Farmer's Market on Sunday. The possibility of joining the county-wide food bank to gain access to county food distribution



Ready to fill shelves: L to R, Helen McLean, Naomi Lima, Vicki Davis, Susan Orem

and services will be investigated. Other options will be explored as they arise. Expanding the hours of operation or the services provided will be contingent upon volunteers willing to work those hours. The pantry would be grateful for any help provided.

The pantry relocated to Franklin in mid-June and had its first open hours in the new location at 574 Main Street on Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

If you are interested in helping the food pantry in any capacity, please contact Don Hebbard.

The website is "coming soon" but should be ready shortly:

<https://GreaterFranklinFoodPantry.org>

On Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/GreaterFranklinFoodPantry/>  
Telephone: 607-386-1601

Photos by Tony Breuer



Helpers on Moving Day: L. to R., Tim Mulroy, Susan Orem, Don Hebbard

**SIGN, continued from Page 1**

met with the Coordinator for a walking audit of the hamlet, identifying areas of concern and prioritizing which to focus on. It was determined that speed deterrent devices were needed, and that solar radar speed signs should be purchased and installed to remind motorists of their speed and encourage them to consider the safety of those living in the hamlet limits.



SCIG is grateful to our members past and present for never giving up on this issue and continuing to push for results. We are also thankful to the Town of Sidney leadership, who stepped up to support our efforts, thus ensuring that the project would be realized. And to Delaware County for taking on the final phase by installing the fixtures.

Last but certainly not least, great thanks to *Creating Healthy Schools & Communities* - a tremendous state-funded grant program, without which this would have never been possible. For their support, guidance and helping Sidney Center make progress on this important issue.

We're not done, but our new signs are certainly a step in right direction.

Stay tuned for when the signs become active, and please drive safely and with consideration for those living in the hamlet. Thank you!

**SCIG ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Sidney Center Improvement Group (SCIG) has changed its meeting date to the third Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m.. SCIG's meetings are open to the public and its members encourage residents in and around Sidney Center to attend and hear about all that the Group is working on for our community. SCIG is always seeking to engage more people in our efforts, and appreciates any time given to helping us further our mission of making Sidney Center a healthier, safer and more vibrant place to live.

SCIG members have continued meeting via Zoom throughout the stay-at-home orders and will continue to do so until further notice. If you would like to join our meetings, please send us an email at: [scigny@gmail.com](mailto:scigny@gmail.com) or a direct message on Facebook to receive the Zoom invite and meeting information.

Please also follow our Facebook page (Facebook. com/scigny) to find out

when in-person meetings will resume, or about our initiatives in progress.

Despite the situation we've all been in for the last several months, SCIG volunteers have remained committed to moving forward with planned enhancements to the hamlet. There are many exciting changes coming soon to Sidney Center. Please join us to learn more about those changes or take a drive through Sidney Center and see for yourself.

And remember, please drive safely!

As always, the Sidney Center Improvement Group's Board of Directors and member volunteers appreciate the support of the community and our local leaders, businesses and school district. In times of crisis we are reminded of our strength and resilience, especially when we work together for the benefit of all in the community. Please visit [facebook.com/scigny](https://www.facebook.com/scigny) to learn more.

**WALK, con't from Page 3**

of the twentieth century. My brother-in-law, also a well-known photographer, would visit Hine's grave when he was in town. Just as in my family, there are Franklin residents whose baby pictures were taken by a famous photographer.

There are all styles of gravestones in the Ouleout Valley Cemetery from the tall Edgerton obelisk to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century rectangular and simply-hewn stones. One that I find intriguing has no occupant below. The inscription reads:

"MY ATOMS WERE  
CREATED  
IN THE STARS  
THEY HAVE NOW BEEN  
SCATTERED TO THE  
WINDS  
AND THUS RETURNED  
TO THE UNIVERSE  
I ONLY HAD USE OF THEM  
FOR A LITTLE WHILE"

There is a stone near the entrance that lists American Revolutionary soldiers who may have been some of the earliest occupants of the cemetery. At the top



of the hill is a monument to OUR SOLDIERS DEAD. The Gettysburg Address is read each year in front of it on Memorial Day. Across the way is a fountain where Grecian ladies sit above a pool that catches the dripping water.

When I was a kid, I remember friends holding their breath as they passed cemeteries, or taking a different route so they didn't have to pass by one. This may explain why so few people walk in the cemetery - perhaps they worry that there are ghosts. I haven't encountered any ghosts so far, though I did come upon a huge snapping turtle last year when the pond was drained. The Ouleout Valley Cemetery is a perfect place to walk, especially in a time as stressful as now. It has helped me keep perspective while living through a pandemic and it's a reminder of where we are all headed.

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**ASSESSMENT, continued from Page 1**

sion. An attorney is not required but is strongly recommended. This is not an inexpensive option, costing thousands of dollars with no guarantee of success, with the process likely to drag on for a year or more and end in a compromise, not a trial.

Judicial review of decisions on assessments rarely happens in Franklin. Large commercial companies such as utilities, which have big legal departments, use the threat of legal costs to pressure a town into negotiations about reducing their assessment.

This has become such a regular practice in our county that in 2018, Delaware County board of supervisors passed a resolution to support towns financially in such lawsuits. The county receives its levy on the town property tax bill and so has a financial interest in the outcome. Also Franklin Central School District relies on property taxes for a third of its budget.

**Case Study**

The balance of power is flipped for small landowners, who are even more reluctant than towns to pay all the costs of a judicial review, mostly lawyer's fees. However, one such appeal was filed in 2018 by a not-for-profit corporation, the

value."

There was a large difference between the landowner's valuation of the property (\$100,000) and the town's (\$370,000). This difference was due to valuation of the improvements on the property, specifically the cat sanctuary. The owner held it unlikely that any buyer of the property would have a use for this unique structure, but the assessor thought otherwise.

The Town of Franklin took the opposite position in the valuation of the new school property in the hamlet of Treadwell. It was assessed at \$150,000 but sold for \$975,000 -- 6.5 times more. When asked to justify so low an assessment for that property and loss of property taxes, the assessor explained that at the time it seemed unlikely that a buyer would have use for the school building. This property was owned by a group of local businessmen, OPS Capital, LLC.

Ms. Yancey began her appeal by meeting with assessor Jim Basile in January 2018 and followed up with phone calls and emails. Eventually a grievance was filed with the Board of Assessment Review in May. Neither discussions nor administrative review yielded satisfaction.



*The sanctuary's interior in 2009, and some of its residents*

Love and Hope Animal Sanctuary, Inc., which owns eight acres on Stewart Road, Tax ID 77.-1-1.222.

The executive director of this charity is Virginia Yancey, a retired judge of the New York State Supreme Court, who moved to Franklin in 2005 and founded Love and Hope. She said that a fair and equitable assessment was necessary because of the eventual closing of the sanctuary. "It would make it difficult...to sell the property as a future buyer would be saddled with a ridiculous tax assessment, and they would have to appeal. In addition, the Attorney General of the State of New York oversees all transactions by not-for-profits and could question the difference in sale price as compared to the inflated assessment and fair market

In July, the attorney for Love and Hope filed a lawsuit for judicial review of tax assessment through a tax certiorari proceeding in State Supreme Court, Sixth District under Real Property Tax Law, Article 7, Judicial Review: Animal Sanctuary, Inc. v. The Assessor of the Town of Franklin, NY and the Town of Franklin, NY.

Over four centuries ago, Shakespeare wrote of "the law's delay/The insolence of office and the spurns/That patient merit of the unworthy takes." It was not until October 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year (2019) that Justice Ferris Lebous held a conference in Binghamton with principals Yancey and Basile and with the attorney representing Franklin, Leonard Sienko, Jr. (There had been several conferences and/or phone

calls between attorneys and Court when the parties were not present.) The judge proposed a compromise, talking separately with each party. Lebous strongly endorsed this settlement. Yancey accepted with a stipulation that the full market value would remain for three years, but Basile was unwilling. The judge was not pleased.

Two months later at a special meeting of the town board on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, they voted to accept the compromise of a FMV of \$145,000, which also would be applied for the next two years. This after some pressure was applied by the judge. Supervisor Taggart opined that this was not a great compromise, but the board accepted it to get it over and done with.

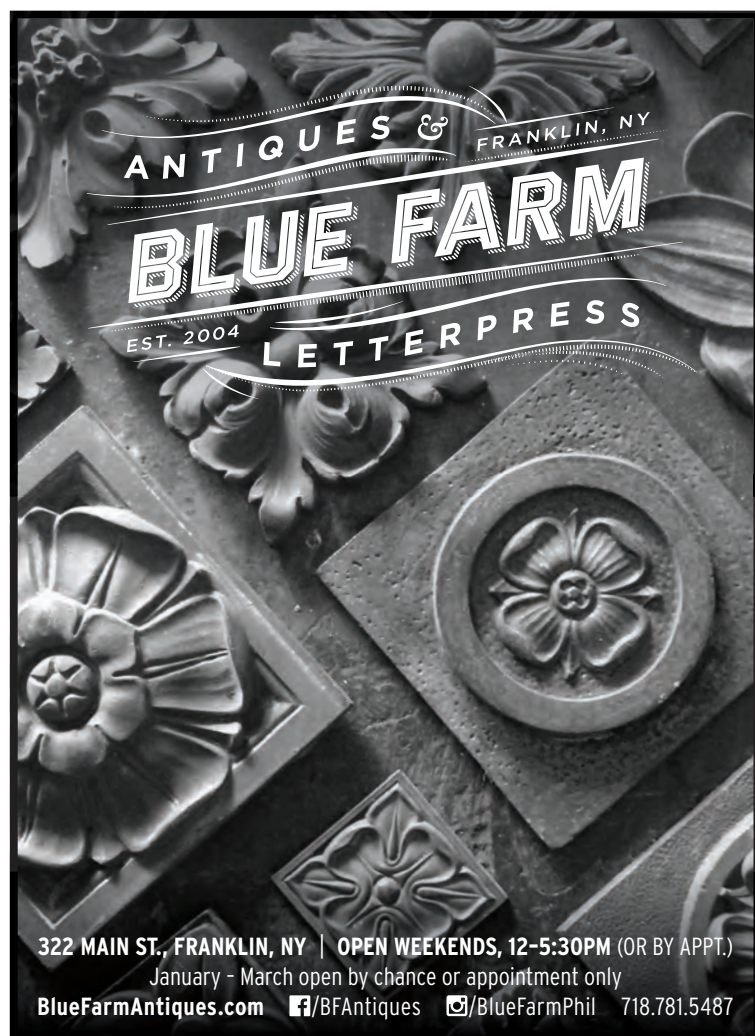
In February 2020, both parties signed the stipulation of settlement. On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, more than two years after the first discussions, Justice Oliver Blaise III (Lebous having retired) signed the order. It reduced the full market value for relevant years from \$370,000 to \$145,000 with the assessed values reduced from \$330,000 to \$131,225 (2018) and \$129,050 (2019).

The stipulation of settlement further provided that this FMV remain binding for 2020 and 2021. This valuation is \$45,000 higher than the value first proposed by the landowner and \$225,000 lower than of the value first proposed by the town -- a five times larger adjustment.

Both parties would say only that their costs were several thousand dollars, but likely the totals reached into the five figures. During the three years of this lawsuit, the town board had appropriated \$11,000 for attorney fees, although there were other costs besides this suit, such as the purchase of the thirty-three acres for a new town office building and later renegotiating a long-term lease for the old office building. Previously, the supervisor allowed that cost overruns could be paid out of the Constitution account.

What was the reason for the town not compromising on this assessment before this judicial review and its accompanying costs, for a property owned by a not-for-profit corporation that pays no tax on it?

The board took the advice of their assessor that the compromise offered was simply too low.

**TOWN, continued from Page 3**

The town board plans to proceed with a subdivision of the twenty-one-acre parcel adjoining the town sheds. The lower section of the parcel behind the cell tower and town shed building will provide a much needed buffer along the rear of the town shed property and space for future expansion if needed. The remainder of that parcel and the twelve-acre parcel at the top of the thirty-three acres can then be placed on the market to recover the purchase costs.



*The once and future town office building Photo by Tony Breuer*

**PRINE, continued from Page 13**

time during the pandemic and looking for distractions, I sat down the day after John Prine died and recorded on my iPhone -- didn't really know I could do this -- the first song of his that popped into my head, which was *Far From Me*, that unbelievably mournful song about a woman losing interest in the speaker in the song, falling out of love and him knowing it long before she tells him. That haunting and powerful chorus of such pain: "The sky is black and still now/On the hill where the angels sing/Ain't it funny how an old broken bottle/Looks just like a diamond ring."

He was, in his essence, a songwriter for the ordinary working-class person who never gets a break, the screw-up, the failure with a little light that somehow keeps burning, the drunk stumbling on his doorstep late, the lover with a big careless heart.

And it all rhymed so wonderfully.



*We'll miss you this year, but looking forward to the next!*



NEWS, continued from Page 7

advertising circulars nationally; and seven companies that produce Penny-saver/My Shopper inserts, now also available online.

Indeed, practically all the newspapers cited here are accommodating to the world of digital publishing, posting either complete editions or article selections, Their theory: subscribers increasingly want to read news on cell phones and computers, and advertisers are following. The exception is *The Deposit Courier*, which has a circulation of 2,100. Editor-in-Chief Sarah Evans, whose family company, Evans Communications, owns the paper, explains that “There is no digital version because accounts can easily be hacked, or logins shared,

and it would cut into our printed subscriptions.” Evans is uniquely optimistic that print advertising will return as pandemic restrictions on individuals and businesses lift.

Perhaps the solution to keeping community newspapers alive is simply a human one. “To succeed with a local newspaper,” Evans wrote me, “one has to be involved in the community...A person has to develop a relationship in the community and have a true love for the people, the history, the traditions of the community, and want the community to thrive....Then let that love and respect shine through in print. One won’t get rich financially running a newspaper, but the rewards are far greater than money.”



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**HOPE YOU ARE ALL WELL. WE MISS OUR PATRONS. WENDY AND XINA**

MEETINGS OF THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL 2020

January 7	6:00pm	Franklin
February 4	6:00pm	Franklin
March 3	6:00pm	Treadwell
April 7	7:30pm	Franklin
May 5	7:30pm	Franklin
June 2	7:30pm	Treadwell
July 7	7:30pm	Franklin
August 4	7:30pm	Franklin
September 1	7:30pm	Treadwell
October 6	7:30pm	Franklin
November 4 (Wednesday)	6:00pm	Franklin
December 1	6:00pm	Treadwell



CORN FIELD BY JANE CARR

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The June 6<sup>th</sup> rally in Delhi Photo by Andy Bobrow

**POLICE, continued from Page 11**

ing sign, but that doesn't mean you can get away with speeding dangerously through town when the sheriff or state police are watching.

People throughout our community have been showing up in large numbers at Black Lives Matter rallies since the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. On May 31<sup>st</sup> over 500 people filled Muller Plaza with signs and chants. A week later, on June 6<sup>th</sup> over 700 people lined up along Main Street in Delhi from Route 28 to Good Cheap Foods. 150 people showed up in Unadilla for speeches given by local residents and a shout out to Toddlers for Equality. On Juneteenth, fifty cars with more than eighty people drove from Delhi to Walton

past the Cornell Cooperative Extension as part of the Justice Ride for Black Lives. The purpose was to remind our community that symbols of hate such as the confederate flag should not be sold at the Delaware County Fair. Participants laid flowers at the cemetery gate across from the fairgrounds to commemorate residents of Walton who fought in the Civil War.

With so much participation in local rallies, it is clear that people in our community are concerned about issues raised by Black Lives Matter. Perhaps we have more to offer to the conversation than just showing up and carrying signs. We have experience with living in communities with a limited police presence and can attest to the fact that reimagining policing can work.

**The NEW Franklin Register.**  
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**RACISM, continued from Page 18**

"Discrimination cases are common in communities with colleges," Fisher said. "It could be housing, or issues with campus police, or sheriffs, or the state police. But it could also be economic, or even a social situation."

Fisher said students in Oneonta tell him that if there are two loud parties on campus, police will break up the party with black students, and turn a blind eye to the white students, to the fraternities or the sororities.

"And the kids in Sidney, in Delhi, in Oneonta, they all have their drug connections. It's not a racial thing. It's a green thing. It's a job. Those are local kids selling those drugs. And don't think they're all people of color.

But it's more likely the white kids in these situations will get a slap on the wrist if the police are involved."

Police brutality isn't unknown in Delaware County, either. In 2018, the village of Walton ended a police brutality case against its police department with a \$139,000 settlement.

Governor Cuomo has called for some reforms in response to the ongoing protests against police brutality and racism. One of his proposals, which the Delaware County Sheriff and the state sheriff's association has strongly objected to, is the release of an officer's record when there is a charge of inappropriate conduct. Qualified immunity, as it is currently used, has only existed since 1967, and does not apply to other

public employees.

"We saw that in Ferguson," Fisher said, referring to the federal investigation of police misconduct in Ferguson Missouri. "When the attorney general said the records had to be disclosed, we saw everything."

Police, he said, were issuing fines for minor infractions, then jailing people who couldn't pay the fines.

"It's a system of systemic racism," Fisher said. "If you go to the jail in Delhi, in Cooperstown, you find more people of color than there are in this area."

Fisher said not seeing racism isn't an indicator that racism doesn't exist. "Voter suppression is racism, too. Is there voter suppression here? We don't know."

**The NEW Franklin Register.**

The Newsletter of Franklin Local

**Editorial Board**

Ellen Curtis      Helen McLean  
Eugene Marner      Manette Berlinger  
Associate Editor: Brian Brock

Editor  
Marjorie Bradley Kellogg

**HAVE AN OPINION? WRITE TO US!**

At: The New Franklin Register  
P.O. Box 258  
Franklin, NY 13775  
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**What are we about?**

Franklin Local Ltd, the parent organization for The New Franklin Register and the Franklin Farmers' Market, is a not-for-profit corporation made up of Franklin residents who volunteer their time to serve this community.

Our mission statement: to work to preserve the rural character of Franklin, to grow the local economy, foster community solidarity, encourage volunteerism, and raise awareness of economic and social challenges that are likely to result from the transition from fossil fuels to sustainable energy.

We generally meet once a month, at 7 P.M. at the Franklin Free Library. The date is posted on our website. All are welcome, to offer questions and help us answer them, to share thoughts and ideas, to make things happen.

We have a number of projects that we hope to move from idea to action:

- Local food production network
- Skills and services exchange
- EV Charging Station
- Ride sharing bulletin board and/or website
- Farm to School Program for school lunches
- Community Greenhouses
- Community Energy Production
- Community Health Network

Together, let us imagine a more energy efficient, healthier habit of living, and put it to work here in Franklin, for a brighter, more sustainable future.

**PLEASE JOIN US!**

**For meeting times, location and directions, as well as lots of other information about our town, check our website:**

[franklinlocal.org](http://franklinlocal.org)

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