

“I don’t want to give away the ending.”

Meghan Covington, artistic director of the River’s Edge Theatre Company
p 9



SummerArts
Camp offers children an array of artforms
p 3

RIVERTOWNS

Dispatch

Local News,
Locally Sourced

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ARDSLEY — DOBBS FERRY — HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON — IRVINGTON



Five more years
School district retains Block through 2030-31
p 5

Rivertowns
mark milestone
as U.S. turns 250

*Uncle Sam contends with
Mother Nature*

BY TIM LAMORTE

REGION Two hundred and fifty years after the United States declared its independence, the Spirit of ‘76 contended with forces of nature more powerful than the British Empire of the 18th century.

From July 2–5, celebrations scheduled to mark that milestone were disrupted by a heatwave that yielded to a blustery thunderstorm on Independence Day.

In Ardsley, the 90-plus-degree temperature caused the cancellation of an event at Bicentennial Park that was to include a reading of the Declaration of Independence.

The oppressive weather also caused Con Edison to reduce voltage to southern Westchester by 8 percent on July 2 in an effort to maintain service as it repaired its equipment. That reduction led to a power failure that evening at the Yonkers Joint Wastewater Treatment Plant, which then discharged 39 million gallons of partially treated sewage



Wind whips the flag at the Sept. 11 memorial at Waterfront Park in Dobbs Ferry on the evening of July 3.

into the Hudson River.

Westchester County, which owns and operates the plant, advised the public to avoid contact with the river on the morning of July 3. Though the plant resumed full operation

that afternoon, the Village of Dobbs Ferry canceled a fishing derby planned for Waterfront Park on Saturday, July 4.

On July 7, the County again urged the public to avoid recreational use of the river

due to residual effects of the power failure and after heavy rain on July 6. During periods of significant precipitation, the County’s combined sewage system, which carries
Continued on page 4



MorDance to animate Parton’s world
p 7

“It’s really inspiring to hear about how people speak about their experience in Dobbs.”

New Dobbs Ferry Village Administrator
Mike Neppl
p 8



SPORTS
Forté finishes decorated career at Duke
p 15

The Poll

What’s your firsthand experience with coyotes this past month?

As answered by 168 readers of the Rivertowns Dispatch

52% No direct experience

21% I’ve seen one from afar

16% I know someone who’s seen one

11% I’ve had a close encounter

Vote at rivertownsdispatch.com/the-weekly-poll



The Blotter

ARDSLEY

Deer attack: A deer attacked a 72-year-old man and his dog on Shady Road on the afternoon of Tuesday, June 30. The man's right hand and leg were injured.

Burglary arrest: A 20-year-old Manhattan resident was arrested on July 3 for burglarizing the Mobil station at 891 Saw Mill River Road on April 21, 2026. Cash and lottery scratch-off games were stolen after the front door was forced open. He was charged with three felonies — burglary in the third degree, grand larceny in the fourth degree, and criminal possession of stolen property in the fourth degree.

Theft of checks: On July 3, an Ardsley resident reported

ed that she had mailed seven checks to the same payee on June 15, and that a different payee deposited two of the checks for \$5,000 and \$6,000 on July 3. The checks were sent from the Ardsley Post Office.

DOBBS FERRY

Public lewdness arrest: An 18-year-old was arrested for exposing himself to a cleaning woman inside a cottage at The Children's Village residential treatment center on the evening of Monday, June 29. He was charged with public lewdness, a misdemeanor.

Menacing report: A 19-year-old reported that two unidentified men menaced her outside the Look Cinema at Rivertowns Square after midnight on Tuesday, June 30. The men left before police arrived.

Thefts from vehicles: Two men wearing ski masks and hoodies stole a total of \$1,010 from three unlocked vehicles parked on Maple Street on the morning of

Tuesday, June 30. A security camera recorded one of the thefts at 4:15 a.m.

Ulta arrest and thefts: A 33-year-old Newburgh resident was arrested for shoplifting \$397 worth of items from the Ulta Beauty at Rivertowns Square on Wednesday, July 1. She was also arrested for thefts of items totaling \$2,826 on Nov. 21, 2022; \$3,350 on March 18, 2026; and \$1,103 on April 17, 2026. She was charged with one count of grand larceny in the third degree, a felony; two counts of grand larceny in the fourth degree, a felony; and one count of petit larceny, a misdemeanor. Officer Robert Marron made the arrest.

Also on July 1, two earlier thefts were reported. An unidentified man and woman stole \$1,680 worth of items on Saturday, June 27, while an unidentified woman stole \$3,038 worth of items on Sunday, June 28.

HASTINGS

Disorderly conduct: A

29-year-old Bronxville resident was cited for disorderly conduct, a violation, at Boulanger Plaza, off Main Street, on the morning of Monday, June 29.

Suspended registration: A 53-year-old White Plains resident was arrested for a suspended vehicle registration, a misdemeanor, on Broadway (Route 9) at Washington Avenue on the afternoon of Wednesday, July 1.

Window damaged: The driver's-side rear window of a 2018 Audi Q5 parked on Rose Street was damaged on the afternoon of Wednesday, July 1.

Graffiti at Harmon Center: Graffiti was spray-painted on the inside of a door on the bottom floor of the James Harmon Community Center, 44 Main St., on the afternoon of Friday, July 3.

Hit and run: The unidentified driver of a black sedan backed into the front passenger side of a 2025

Mercedes EQS parked on Southgate Avenue and then left the scene on the afternoon of Sunday, July 5.

IRVINGTON

Fawns in distress: Police received reports of a fawn stuck in a fence on Lewis Road on the morning of June 29, a fawn in a pond on Taxter Road on the afternoon of June 29, and a dead fawn on Hancock Place on the afternoon of July 4.

Coyote sightings: Coyotes were reported on Hamilton Road on July 1, on Birch Lane and Emory Road on July 2, on Bertha Place on July 4, and on Bertha Place and Hudson Road West on July 5. On Bertha Place, there was an altercation with a dog on July 5.

Reservoir trespassers: Police dispersed swimmers and kayakers from the Irvington Reservoir on July 2 at 3 p.m., and then more swimmers at 4:43 p.m. Boating, fishing, and swimming are not allowed in the reservoir.

RIVERTOWNS

Dispatch

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Dobbs Ferry Gem

7 Overlook Road

Light-filled, spacious 2,500 SF, 4-BR home featuring a generous open flow, oak floors, and custom carpentry finishes. Enjoy a renovated granite/stainless eat-in kitchen, family room opening to a private stone patio, and an expansive primary suite with marble spa bath. Features an incredible 1,100 SF finished basement with custom wet bar, 2-car garage, and central AC. Walk to village parks, pool, and Juhring Nature Preserve.

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SummerArts camp offers children an array of artforms

BY RITA WALTON

REGION As the dog days of summer settle in, Rivertowns children can stay cool and creative at SummerArts. Open to students in grades 3–9, the camp offers hands-on experiences with teaching artists during the final weeks of summer. Classes begin Aug. 3, with registration available for one, two, or all three weeks.

The new SummerArts camp director, Devon Berkshire, brings experience in theater as an actor, director, and producer and has worked in arts administration and event production. She lives in Warwick, in Orange County, with her husband and two children. Her own introduction to the arts makes creating meaningful experiences for students important to her.

“These kids are in third to ninth grade, and that’s around the time when I started discovering theater,” Berkshire told the Dispatch. “It was a formative experience and started me on my path. Serving as camp director is a great opportunity. I’m excited to deepen the good work SummerArts has done over the years.”

The SummerArts camp is based at the First Reformed Church in Hastings, which has air conditioning as well as outdoor space. Alongside working artists who are also educators, campers will explore various art forms, including music, storytelling, performance, and the visual arts. Classes are organized to accommodate beginners and more experienced students. In between classes, students can play outside, work on projects, or spend time with friends. Every Friday, there will be a showcase of student work open to family and friends.

“I would say it’s more of an arts camp with summertime fun thrown in rather than a summer camp with the arts thrown in,” Berkshire said. “What’s unique and exciting about SummerArts is its multi-disciplinary approach. Every week there’s a different slate of teaching artists, and kids explore each week. Some of the teachers have been doing SummerArts for years and some are new to the program, but the teachers come in with their own take on their art form.”

SummerArts is a program of RiverArts, a



SummerArts director Devon Berkshire

longstanding nonprofit that offers multi-disciplinary arts experiences in the community. RiverArts board member Josh Suniewick, who lives in Hastings, told the Dispatch that SummerArts “started as a place for kids to go in August. It gave kids a way to express themselves and experiment with their voices. Devon has come on to take the reins this year, and she’s excited about developing this — teaching kids, creating community, fostering artistic expression — touching on all the mission points of RiverArts.”

Some of the teaching artists have taught at SummerArts before, while others will be teaching there for the first time.

“The returning artists are well-known to the campers and the community,” Berkshire said. “All are working, professional artists, so the kids can be part of a training process. I’ve met kids who’ve been through the camp, and they just love it.”

The SummerArts offerings include an improv comedy class, African drumming, drawing, and screenwriting. Adam Hart, a musician and educator who lives in Hastings, will teach a class entitled “Sound Collage.”

“This is my second season teaching with SummerArts,” Hart told the Dispatch. “I find the kids involved are looking for an alternative to the standard camp format, and it is rewarding to be able to offer a curriculum that goes way out of the box. Attendees in ‘Sound Collage’ will be immersed in sounds created from found and recycled objects. They will experience how silence is sound as well, and just like negative space is used in sculpture to create form, silence can be used in sound to emphasize a moment between sounds. We will explore sound patterns, textures, communication, and emotions.”

Other classes offered include “Paper World-making,” led by Jess Blaustain, a returning

artist-teacher. This class will teach students a variety of paper cutting and folding techniques to create large-scale paper worlds.

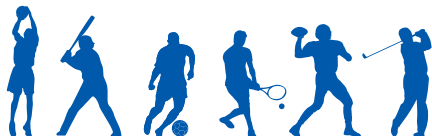
“Poetry in Motion” will be taught by Phyl-isha Villaneuva, the Westchester County poet laureate, who is also a returning artist-teacher. In addition to writing poetry, students will use spoken word, movement, and music to explore ideas and emotions.

One of the new classes will be “Storytelling Through Collage,” taught by Li Lu. The workshop will offer a range of collage materials and suggest that students reflect on their summer and upcoming school year to tell a story and create a special project.

Registration for SummerArts is open for students entering grades 3–9. The camp meets Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Visit riverarts.org/summerarts for more information and a list of classes. Email summerarts@riverarts.org with questions.

MON-FRI 7AM–7PM
SAT 8AM–1PM

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— June 2026 home sales —

	BD/BA	SQFT	LIST PRICE	SALE PRICE	SP/OLP%
Ardsley School District					
590 Ashford Avenue Ardsley	3/2	1,298	\$785,000	\$930,000	118.5%
68 Allen Street Dobbs Ferry	3/2	1,480	\$849,000	\$972,000	114.5%
34 Western Drive Ardsley	3/2	1,487	\$889,000	\$1,050,000	118.1%
32 Bramble Brook Road Ardsley	3/3	1,562	\$1,050,000	\$1,055,000	100.5%
33 Overlook Road Ardsley	3/2	1,659	\$945,000	\$1,070,000	113.2%
473 Winding Road Ardsley	3/2	2,544	\$1,250,000	\$1,300,000	104.0%
10 Old Jackson Avenue #48 Hastings	4/4	3,303	\$1,150,000	\$1,350,000	117.4%
7 Highland Drive Ardsley	5/3	2,707	\$1,349,000	\$1,390,000	103.0%
22 Lewis Avenue Dobbs Ferry	4/4	3,134	\$1,299,000	\$1,552,000	119.5%
9 Shady Road Ardsley	5/3	3,370	\$1,579,000	\$1,599,000	101.3%
179 Sprain Road Scarsdale	6/5	6,300	\$2,295,000	\$2,295,000	100.0%

Dobbs Ferry School District					
16 Ogden Avenue Dobbs Ferry	2/1	1,052	\$575,000	\$525,000	91.3%
7 Lisa Court Dobbs Ferry	2/2	1,605	\$690,000	\$725,000	105.1%
9 Virginia Avenue Dobbs Ferry	4/2	2,000	\$869,000	\$900,000	103.6%
20 Maple Street Dobbs Ferry	3/2	1,426	\$825,000	\$986,000	119.5%
40 Devoe Street #B Dobbs Ferry	3/3	2,664	\$1,249,999	\$1,300,000	104.0%
234 Judson Avenue Dobbs Ferry	3/3	2,385	\$1,375,000	\$1,500,000	109.1%
206 Palisade Avenue Dobbs Ferry	4/3	1,890	\$1,350,000	\$1,510,000	111.9%
15 Keller Lane Dobbs Ferry	6/5	3,816	\$1,450,000	\$1,525,000	105.2%
75 Oliphant Avenue Dobbs Ferry	6/4	3,538	\$1,850,000	\$1,850,000	100.0%
156 Palisade Street #C Dobbs Ferry	4/3	2,510	\$2,299,000	\$2,185,000	95.0%

Hastings School District					
48 Fenwick Road Hastings	3/2	1,548	\$925,000	\$1,250,000	135.1%
59 Euclid Avenue Hastings	4/2	1,874	\$1,250,000	\$1,325,000	106.0%
6 Circle Drive Hastings	4/3	2,056	\$1,325,000	\$1,500,000	113.2%
8 Harvard Lane Hastings	4/3	2,825	\$1,499,000	\$1,765,000	117.7%
131 High Street Hastings	4/4	2,452	\$1,350,000	\$1,784,000	132.1%

Irvington School District					
140 N Broadway #K4 Irvington	1/1	850	\$225,000	\$236,000	104.9%
120 N Broadway #14D Irvington	1/1	750	\$250,000	\$265,000	106.0%
33 Mountain Road Irvington	3/2	1,655	\$652,800	\$699,999	107.2%
310 Birch Lane Irvington	2/3	1,717	\$800,000	\$750,000	93.8%
72 Sunnyside Place Irvington	2/3	2,014	\$789,000	\$837,800	106.2%
110 Valleyview Road Irvington	2/2	1,828	\$800,000	\$860,000	107.5%
100 Ardsley Avenue #5G Irvington	3/3	1,400	\$950,000	\$925,000	97.4%
82 Taxter Road Irvington	3/3	1,890	\$1,099,000	\$1,075,000	97.8%
153 Fieldpoint Drive Irvington	4/4	3,148	\$1,499,000	\$1,562,500	104.2%
35 Alta Vista Circle Irvington	5/4	2,771	\$1,649,000	\$1,750,000	106.1%
4 Ilinka Lane Irvington	5/3	3,525	\$1,499,000	\$1,795,000	119.7%
26 Marker Ridge #13 Irvington	3/4	2,675	\$1,720,995	\$1,889,299	109.8%
9 Irving Place Irvington	4/5	3,440	\$1,850,000	\$2,410,000	130.3%
18 Barney Park Irvington	5/5	4,861	\$2,700,000	\$2,850,000	105.6%

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250th celebrations
Continued from page 1

stormwater runoff and toilet water, overflows into rivers to avoid overwhelming treatment plants.

—

A place for everyone

On the morning of July 3, Hastings Mayor Tom Drake hosted a gathering at the James Harmon Community Center to recognize the range of residents who contribute to the character of the village.

The walls of the community center’s largest room were lined with banners promoting events and organizations, including occasions honoring residents of assorted races and religions.

“This is meant to celebrate the different communities in our village,” Drake told the Dispatch.

The speakers included U.S. Congressman George Latimer, who pointed out that “This nation has survived as an experiment,” and State Assemblymember MaryJane Shimsky, who noted that “We have a certain amount of tension in this country about what America is and what America is supposed to be.”

The elected officials were followed by representatives of the Hastings Rainbow Families, Students and Parents for an Inclusive Education (SPICE), Hastings High School Affinity Club, American Legion Post 1195, Hastings Little League, RiverArts, and the Jewish community.

Laura Heisler Mitton of Hastings

Rainbow Families, which supports LGBTQ residents, described the village as “a place where everyone can belong,” while Diana Pan of SPICE, which advocates for integrating inclusive history in education, stated that “We are fortunate to live in Hastings.”

“The feeling that your hometown sees and welcomes you is priceless,” Heisler Mitton said.

Musician Matt Turk, a fourth-generation Jewish American, thanked the community for supporting Jewish neighbors in the face of increasing antisemitism. He then capped the gathering by singing “America the Beautiful.”

—

Band of brothers (and sisters)

On the evening of July 3, the second installment of the eight-week Friday Night River Jam at Waterfront Park in Dobbs Ferry featured seven members of Sounds of Valor, a band made up of men and women who served in the U.S. military.

Earlier this year, through an open audition process, the 10-member band was formed by its lead singer, 79-year-old Tom Mooney of Dobbs Ferry, who served in the U.S. Army from 1966–68, during the Vietnam War. Sounds of Valor performed their first concert on April 9 at the Irvington Theater.

In Dobbs Ferry, Mooney was joined by Army veteran Timothy Richardson (saxophone), Air Force veteran Michael Sicola (guitar), and Navy veterans William Eggleston Jr. (bass), Charlie Hough (drums), Velvet Salgado (keyboard), and

Chuck Thomas (guitar).

Their set, which included songs by Mooney, was cut short by strong winds and a threat of rain that succumbed to a golden sunset.

—

‘Our greatest strength’

On July 4, while Sounds of Valor performed at the Intrepid Museum in Manhattan, the Village of Dobbs Ferry hosted its annual Thomas Cullen Picnic at Waterfront Park, minus the fishing derby.

The picnic started off with remarks by

—

“The feeling that your hometown sees and welcomes you is priceless.”

Laura Heisler Mitton of Hastings Rainbow Families

Latimer, Shimsky, Mayor Christy Knell, and former Mayor Don Marra, who held office from 1989–1997. Marra recalled that the picnic was first held in 1973, after the village celebrated its centennial, and was named for a former deputy mayor and volunteer fire department chief who managed it for 10 years.

DJ Joe Rooney of Rooney Tunes Entertainment provided the soundtrack for the picnic and led activities such as a pet parade — which attracted three dogs — and a water

balloon toss and a potato sack race, both of which drew more participants.

Between 8–8:30 p.m., a thunderstorm scattered the attendees at Waterfront Park and at Matthiessen Park in Irvington, where a decision was made to launch fireworks about an hour early, which the storm interrupted. Dobbs Ferry waited until the scheduled time period, between 9–9:30 p.m.

The storm knocked out power to more than 7,000 customers in Westchester, according to Con Edison.

During her remarks that afternoon, Knell referred to the summer of 1781, when American troops camped in Ardsley and French troops camped in Hartsdale marched through Dobbs Ferry on Aug. 18 on their way to Yorktown, Virginia, where they forced the British to surrender on Oct. 19.

“They were fighting for something that had never quite existed before,” Knell said of the Continental Army, “the idea that people could govern themselves, that they could disagree, debate, and build something better — together. That a stronger nation was a result of the efforts of many, not a single ruler, which all requires a willingness to listen, to stay curious, and to show up for each other.”

“That idea is 250 years old today. Yay!” Knell continued. “And these 250 years have not been easy. It is hard. It’s hard to work together. But it’s our greatest strength, and it’s what has made us what we are today — so awesome, so unique, so innovative, the place where people can work hard, and live free, and do well.”

DATA SOURCED FROM ONEKEY® MLS. WHILE BELIEVED ACCURATE, THE INFORMATION IS NOT GUARANTEED. DATA REFLECTS CLOSED RESIDENTIAL TRANSACTIONS FOR JUNE 2026 IN THE HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, DOBBS FERRY, ARDSLEY AND IRVINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICTS.



ARDSLEY

— Coming Up This Week —

Summer Concert Series:
The Groove Machine

Saturday, July 11, 6–8 p.m.
Pascone Park

Free; bring a blanket or chair to sit on the lawn

Planning Board Meeting

Monday, July 13, 8 p.m.
Village Hall

Agenda available at ardsleyvillage.gov

Gardening with Native Plants

Tuesday, July 14, 11 a.m.

Ardsley Public Library

Register at ardsleypubliclibrary.org

Architectural Review Board Meeting

Tuesday, July 14, 8 p.m.
Village Hall

Agenda available at ardsleyvillage.gov

Senior Program: Historian Walt Johnson

Wednesday, July 15, noon
Ardsley Community Center

George Washington and the
Road to Independence

Wednesday, July 15, 2 p.m.
Ardsley Public Library

Register at ardsleypubliclibrary.org

Summer Reading Club: Fossil Craft

Thursday, July 16, 5 p.m.
Ardsley Public Library

For kids who've just finished grades K–5
Register at ardsleypubliclibrary.org

Call for Muralists

Deadline: July 17

Submit designs for vibrant public art inspired
by nature or local history and culture.

The link for the application and details are
available in the Village's newsletter or email
artscommission@ardsleyvillage.gov

Celebrate Greenburgh Day

Saturday, July 18, 10 a.m.; rain date July 19
Anthony F. Veteran Park, 11 Olympic Lane

Admission: \$7 pool entrance fee;

free after 6 p.m. Festivities include mini
golf, dunk tank, inflatable water slides,
entertainment, and music.

Fireworks begin after 9 p.m.

Got news?

Email staff writer Amy Bochner at
amy@rivertownsdispatch.com



Schools Superintendent Matthew Block at the high school graduation on June 25. Photo by Rob DiAntonio.

Board retains Block ‘to embrace big challenges’

BY AMY BOCHNER

The Ardsley Board of Education voted on July 1 to extend Schools Superintendent Matthew Block's contract through the 2030–2031 school year.

Block joined the district in 2024, bringing with him 25 years of educational experience. His previous roles included teacher, building administrator, and central office administrator. From 2019–2024, he was the superintendent of Livingston Public Schools in New Jersey.

His original contract with the Ardsley School District covered the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 school years.

“There’s a lot of great things happening... but also a lot of work that we could do together,” he told the Dispatch on July 6. “We’ve done a lot over the past two years. We are on a good path and a good roll. I was excited to talk to the board about continuing the journey, and then glad they’re going to keep me around to do that.”

At Ardsley High School, Block highlighted efforts to expand higher-level and more challenging courses. This past year, the district also created a rotating block schedule that will be implemented in the fall. Block said this change will allow students to take more elective courses.

In the past two years, the middle school has seen improvements to its transportation system. At Concord Road Elementary School, a new literacy program was introduced. There has also been a new transition program from fourth to fifth grade created, which Block said the community “really wanted.” Across all grade levels, the district has expanded its use of the multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), which is a framework for identifying and supporting students’ individual needs.

Block also noted the effort over the past two years to streamline and strengthen procedures, such as the district’s hiring process, business operations, and coordination among the three school buildings.

In an email to the community on June 22, the school board described areas in which Block “has taken important steps to make a meaningful and lasting impact on our district.” This included supporting the creation of an artificial intelligence (A.I.) task force, implementing improvements around grading/reporting, as well as “championing” the expansion of MTSS, wellness initiatives, and anti-bullying training.

The board also described Block’s communication strategy as “robust.” Since joining

the district, Block has hosted the “Around the Block” podcast, where he discusses different school topics and speaks with various members of the school community. The episodes, of which there are 32, are posted on “Latest News & Events” on the school district website’s homepage.

At the July 1 meeting, Hrishi Karthikeyan, who the board members elected to be president that evening, shared his perspective on Block’s contract extension.

“I do just want to reiterate my confidence and the confidence of the board that Dr. Block will continue to embrace the big challenges and opportunity facing our district,” he said. “I want him to know that we fully support the reforms and improvements that [he has] leaned into, along with the rest of the administrative leadership team, over the last couple of years.”

In the fall, the district will begin a five-year strategic planning process. Block said this will look at individualizing instruction as well as incorporating the New York State Portrait of a graduate framework.

With his contract now extended five years, Block described the timing as “perfect.”

“It’s good to know that not only will I be here for the planning process,” he said, “but I’ll be able to be here for the implementation.”

— SCHOOL NEWS —



Somers Science Fair

Fifteen Ardsley High School sophomores earned awards at the Somers Science Fair on June 6. The fair is a regional poster competition for first-year science research students from high schools across Westchester and Putnam counties.

First Place — **Aarush Batra**, Medicine & Health; **Ivana**

Bondarev, Behavioral Science; **Clara Finkelstein**, Medicine & Health; **Serine Lee**, Cellular & Molecular Biology; **Naumika Naresh**, Cellular & Molecular Biology; **Zaamil Rabbani**, Cellular & Molecular Biology; **Berk Sucu**, Environmental Science; **Taiga To**, Microbiology.

Second Place — **Yana Chopra**, Behavioral Science; **Alexandra Herzog**, Animal Science; **Ryan**

Sue, Medicine & Health.

Third Place — **Shrey Jain**, Medicine & Health; **Jessica Kwan-Ohashi**, Medicine & Health; **Meave McEvoy**, Behavioral Science; **Jonas Zwaka**, Medicine & Health

Genius Olympiad finalists

Ardsley High School science research students **Layla**

Kunjukutty, **Maitry Brahmabhatt**, **Issy Ladha**, and **Shawn Lin** were finalists at the 2026 Genius Olympiad, an international competition focused on environmental issues and global innovation that was held at St. John Fisher University in upstate Rochester from June 8–12. Kunjukutty received an honorable mention award for her research.

ARDSLEY

— COMMUNITY BRIEFS —

Village sets rate for EV charging stations

The Ardsley Board of Trustees adopted a rate of 35 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for Village-owned electric vehicle charging stations during their meeting on July 6.

There are seven stations at McDowell Park and seven at Pascone Park. Four will be installed at Village Hall. Each station has two ports, and requires the ChargePoint app.

The installation of the stations is a collaboration between the Village, Con Edison, and Westchester County. In July 2025, the Westchester County Board of Legislators passed a law allowing the County to reimburse 50 percent of the cost for charging stations at 79 locations owned by 24 municipalities, not to exceed \$5 million. The other half of the project's cost will be covered by incentive funding from Con Edison.

Women's health clinic proposed for former Rite Aid site

During their meeting on July 6, the Ardsley Board of Trustees declared themselves the lead agency for site plan review to convert the former Rite Aid at 875 Saw Mill River Road

(Route 9A) into a medical office for women.

In June, Shannon Shiels, the vice president of operations at Oula, a midwifery-led women's health clinic, sent the board a letter of intent and applied for a permit. Her proposal is to convert 3,000 square feet of the existing retail space into a clinical office for outpatient maternity and gynecological care. The proposed use is a medical/professional office, and is not intended to provide any inpatient, emergency, or surgical services.

The board scheduled a public hearing for the proposal on Aug. 3.

Parking changes proposed for Grandview and Wilmoth

During a public hearing on July 6 about proposed changes to parking on Grandview Avenue and Wilmoth Avenue, there was opposition from two residents, leading the Ardsley Board of Trustees to keep the hearing open.

Grandview has parking on both sides of the entire street, while Wilmoth has parking on one side. One of the "major concerns" Village Manager Cerretani said, is that there is a 90-degree bend from Grandview to Wilmoth, leading to a tight turn and visibility issues.

"It really has to do with the roads not

[being] wide enough to fit three cars, so if you have [cars] parked on both sides of the street, emergency vehicles can't pass," he said.

Along that corridor, the new regulations would prohibit parking on either side. On the north side of Grandview, the prohibition would apply from a point 344 feet east of Eastern Drive to the west curb line of Wilmoth. Parking on the entire length of the south side would be prohibited. On the west side of Wilmoth, parking would be prohibited from a point 181 feet south of Mountain Avenue to the north curb line of Grandview. The policy for the west side of Wilmoth remains the same, stating that parking is banned north of Grandview's south curb line to the end of the street.

Joann D'Emilio and Joseph Lessem, who have lived on Grandview Avenue for 30 years, spoke against the proposed regulations. D'Emilio described the changes as "premature" and "broad," noting that many houses on that street do not have "a lot of parking space," leading to people parking on the street.

Lessem said he has "never known a time where there's been any personal injury to anyone" or "a time when sanitation workers were not able to get their trucks around." He also believes that if parking on either side of the street were to be prohibited, then cars

would drive "even faster, because there'll be nothing there to slow them down."

The two urged the board to conduct a traffic study. According to the board, police surveyed six out of the 19 homeowners that live in the affected area about the proposed changes. Trustee Barry McGoeys suggested sending a mailing to the residents of these

"We'll do some more work in the interim to make people more aware of exactly what it is this proposed law is suggesting."

Mayor Steve Edelstein

streets to get more reaction.

Mayor Steve Edelstein said the public hearing would remain open for the Aug. 3 meeting, "to give other others in the neighborhood a chance to come in and chat with us, and we'll do some more work in the interim to make people more aware of exactly what it is this proposed law is suggesting."

—Amy Bochner



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DOBBS FERRY

— Coming Up This Week —

Bike Skills Lecture

Saturday, July 11, 11 a.m.
Dobbs Ferry Public Library

Soap Box Derby

Sunday, July 12, 11 a.m.
Main Street

Register (\$75 for returning cars, \$115 for new cars) at dobbsferry.activityreg.com

Blood Drive

Monday, July 13, noon–6 p.m.
Dobbs Ferry Public Library

Visit dobbsferrylibrary.org to schedule an appointment

D&D Dungeon Master Academy for ages 8–18

Tuesday–Thursday, July 14–16, 4–6 p.m.
Dobbs Ferry Public Library

Registration required by emailing childrens@dobbsferrylibrary.org

Board of Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, July 14, 6:30 p.m. for the workshop and 7:30 for the regular meeting
Village Hall

Agenda available at dobbsferry.gov

School Board Meeting

Tuesday, July 14, 5:30–7:30 p.m.
Middle/high school library

Pizza and Bingo for Seniors

Wednesday, July 15, 11 a.m.
Embassy Center, 60 Palisade St.
For more information, call 914-231-8565

Spin Art for ages 3+

Thursday, July 16, 10:30 a.m.
Keeper's House
Register: childrens@dobbsferrylibrary.org

Readers' Circle

Thursday, July 16, noon–2 p.m.
Waterfront Park
Discuss "Summer's Lease" by John Mortimer
Register at reference@dobbsferrylibrary.org

River Jam and Food Trucks

Friday, July 17, 5–9 p.m.
Waterfront Park
The concert series continues with
Whoz Your Daddy, 7 p.m.

Got news?

Email staff writer Julian Michael Caldwell at julian@rivertownsdispatch.com



MorDance performs at Waterfront Park on July 19, 2025.

'Dolly in the Park' to animate Parton's world

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Characters from the catalog of singer/songwriter Dolly Parton will come to life through dance during a free performance at Waterfront Park next Saturday, July 18. The hour-long work, titled "Dolly in the Park," is the creation of Dobbs Ferry-based MorDance, led by Hastings resident Morgan McEwen.

McEwen choreographed "Dolly in the Park" in collaboration with singer and guitarist Kira Metcalf of Brooklyn, who will sing Parton's lyrics and lead the band of musicians, which will include a drummer, keyboardist, and banjo player. McEwen and Metcalf have been developing the project since 2024, when they started discussing the idea of a show centered around the music of the Rock and Roll Hall of Famer who wrote and recorded hits like "Jolene" and "9 to 5."

"Dolly's music transcends generations," McEwen told the Dispatch. "The woman is such a pioneer. We all look at her as this icon and artistic talent, but the things she has chosen to sing about, and the narratives that were so compelling — I think that's what really resonated with me throughout this process."

In creating a setlist for the piece, McEwen said that over the past two years she's "truly listened to every single song [Parton's] ever written." The website for The Recording Academy that oversees the Grammy Awards estimates 450 of the 3,000 songs Parton has written have been recorded by herself or other artists. "Two Doors Down," "Here You Come Again," "Your Old Handyman," and "Jolene" are among the 16 songs that made the final cut. While McEwen looks to tell a story through movement, "Dolly in the Park" is unique because Parton's lyrics will provide a vocal element that contributes to the narrative.

"Obviously, the dancers are portraying these characters on stage and giving them emotion and face and movement, but the lyrics also paint that extra layer that we often don't have with the music we've presented, that doesn't have lyrics," McEwen said.

McEwen also leaned into the fact that in addition to being descriptive in the stories they tell, many of Parton's songs are named after characters, which McEwen assigned to dancers to portray. Then McEwen worked on using other parts of Parton's catalog to weave together ways those characters could relate to each other and cross paths in a new story.

"Joshua, Chas, Jolene, Robert," McEwen listed as examples. "I was really drawn to those songs because they build that character. They give that character personality and background."

MorDance, a nonprofit, is also making progress with plans to renovate its 6,500-square-foot space at Hudson River Landing, the mixed-use commercial building at 145 Palisade Street in Dobbs Ferry. In May, the dance company was awarded \$1 million, part of the Village's \$4.5 million NY Forward grant to help revitalize the downtown area. Last month, it was announced that MorDance would receive a \$2 million Capital Projects Fund grant from the New York State Council on the Arts.

"One, the NY Forward grant is an economic revitalization grant, so for the State to recognize an arts project as an economic driver is obviously incredibly validating and rewarding as an arts organization," McEwen explained. "But then also, as an arts organization, to have the capacity to then ask the State for \$2 million in arts funding is

tremendous. There are a lot of states that don't give their arts organizations the support that New York State does."

MorDance moved to its new home earlier this year from a space in Yonkers it had been renting since January 2024. At Hudson River Landing, MorDance intends to create a multi-purpose dance studio and performance space, where rehearsals and classes will take place, in addition to shows.

Since MorDance initially applied for NY Forward money, the input from engineers and architects engaged over the past several months has revised the cost of the project from roughly \$3.8 million to \$7 million. That means that after accounting for the state grants, which the nonprofit is still executing contracts for in order to receive the funding, MorDance still has \$4 million to raise.

"In this current moment that we're in with design and development, we're really making sure that we're planning responsibly so we don't have those unforeseen costs down the road," McEwen said. "The biggest mistake we could make as a nonprofit arts and culture institution is not investing in this phase, because what this phase is doing for us is looking into the future about where MorDance is going to be in 10 years and where the community need is going to be in 10 years."

McEwen anticipates launching a public capital fundraising campaign for MorDance within the next few months, and completing the design phase of the project before the end of the year.

"Dolly in the Park" is free for all ages. The hour-long show will take place on Saturday, July 18, at 7 p.m. The rain date is July 19. Audience members are encouraged to bring a lawn chair or blanket.

DOBBS FERRY

Neppl shifts into role as village administrator

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Mike Neppl, who most recently spent four years managing roughly 300 municipal employees for upstate Newburgh, has been appointed Dobbs Ferry's new village administrator. Neppl succeeds Robert Yamuder, who will retire on July 24 after three years on the job.

Neppl's first day was June 24, with Yamuder and Neppl overlapping while Neppl gets acquainted with the community and the position.

"I think the board of trustees is an incredible team that is working really well together to identify key areas of the village that need improvement," Neppl told the Dispatch. "Whether it's affordable housing, activating Main Street, economic development opportunities, parks, shared infrastructure, and, of course, capital improvements, the board is right on it."

Neppl, 47, is a native of Newburgh who lived there until attending SUNY Albany and then earning his J.D. degree at Albany Law School. He lived in the state capital for two decades before returning to Newburgh after the pandemic, where he worked as chief of

staff and deputy city manager from August 2022 until last month. The two roles with Newburgh were the same job, but changed titles in December of last year.

"In my previous experience as deputy city manager in Newburgh, we had about \$500 million in active construction projects underway, including \$250 million in municipal infrastructure upgrades," Neppl explained. "So I feel like I can bring a lot of that experience to bear here."

Neppl was selected out of a pool of 19 applicants the Village vetted with help from former Mayor Don Marra. Mayor Christy Knell was impressed by Neppl's passion for public service.

"He has a strong grasp of what's needed here in Dobbs, having managed substantial infrastructure projects for Newburgh," Knell wrote the Dispatch. "I am really excited to see how he tackles the work we have ahead — particularly the stormwater work, the NY Forward projects, the Gould Community Center, and a path toward a new fire station."

Neppl takes pride in the experience of returning to his hometown and being part of infrastructure improvements that he described as "one of the great municipal turnaround stories in New York State." Neppl recalled that when he began interviewing for the village administrator position — and since taking the job — he was struck by how many people helping to improve the village have deep roots in Dobbs Ferry.



Village Administrator Mike Neppl

"Coming here to Dobbs and talking with so many people on staff, in the community, [and] on the board who grew up here and have ideas of how Dobbs can move into the future has been really exciting," Neppl said. "It's really inspiring to hear about how people speak about their experience in Dobbs, whether it's growing up here, working here, opening a business here, or building community here."

Neppl also applauded the Village for its emphasis on climate resiliency efforts, including stormwater management and green infrastructure, at a time when New York State is providing increasing funding for such projects. In January, while Neppl was deputy city

manager, Newburgh was awarded a \$10 million New York State Water Quality Improvement Program grant to strengthen the City's sewer and stormwater systems.

"The Dobbs Ferry Board of Trustees has really identified climate resiliency as a crucial part of planning for the village's future, and that work really excites me because not many boards have that kind of foresight, and this board does," Neppl shared.

Before working for Newburgh, Neppl was a government affairs director with Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors in White Plains, general counsel and director of government relations for the New York Library Association, an assistant attorney general in the executive bureau of the New York State Attorney General's Office, and assistant counsel in the governor's office. He also founded his own consulting business that worked with libraries and nonprofits to help them tell their stories. Neppl plans to contribute to improved community outreach.

"I will be available for any question, any concern, and continue to of course work with the board," Neppl said. "In addition to just augmenting the board's community outreach, I will be as available as I possibly can be via phone, email, or if anyone wants to drop by Village Hall. I'm just really looking forward to getting to know, truly, each and every resident in the community, what their dreams are for Dobbs, and how I can help the board achieve them."

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HASTINGS- ON-HUDSON

— Coming Up This Week —

Farmers Market

Saturday, July 11, 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Commuter Lot, Southside Avenue

For details, visit hastingsfarmersmarket.org and follow the market on Facebook

Hastings on Jazz

Sunday, July 12, 3–5:30 p.m.

VFW Plaza

The weekly summer series continues with the Peter Brainin Quintet.

Rain location: Hastings Public Library

School Board Meeting

Tuesday, July 14, noon

Hillside Multipurpose Room

Agenda available at hohschools.org

Senior Ice Cream Social

Tuesday, July 14, 1 p.m.

James Harmon Community Center

RSVP by emailing

senioroutreach@hohny.gov

Sunset Concert Series: Le Vent du Nord

Tuesday, July 14, 7–9 p.m.

MacEachron Waterfront Park

Rain location: James Harmon

Community Center

Tournament for kids entering grades 4–12

Thursday, July 16, 5–8 p.m.

Youth Advocate Program (Y.A.P.)

Game Room in the James Harmon

Community Center

Featuring matches in billiards, air hockey, cornhole, and foosball

Planning Board Meeting

Thursday, July 16, 7 p.m.

Village Hall

Agenda available at hohny.gov

Keeping It Real Book Club

Friday, July 17, 11 a.m.

Hastings Public Library

Discuss chapters 1–20 of

“The Path to Power” by Robert Caro

Email has@hastingslibrary.org

to register

Got news?

Email staff writer Amy Bochner at

amy@rivertownsdispatch.com



Photo by Meghan Covington

‘Jaws of the Merman’ makes theatrical splash

BY LAURA SCHILLER

In “The Jaws of the Merman,” an immersive production presented by the River’s Edge Theater Company this month, the women of a small waterside village follow a mysterious injunction: No one is allowed to swim.

“It’s an old rule that everybody abides by, but nobody exactly knows why,” the show’s director, Meghan Covington of Ardsley, explained. “There’s speculation — is it because of pollution in the water, or is it sea monsters? Is it because the currents are too strong? It’s kind of like this rule that people blindly follow without knowing why.”

When, secretly, the women begin swimming, they start to change in unexpected ways.

“I don’t want to give away the ending,” Covington said, “but eventually things kind of... go wrong.”

Covington, the artistic director of River’s Edge, said she first heard the story about a year ago when her children were listening to the “Grimm, Grimmer, Grimmest” podcast by Adam Gidwitz. While the podcast typically features adaptations of classic fairy tales collected by the Brothers Grimm, this episode adapted a German folk tale by Franz Xaver von Schönwerth.

Intrigued, Covington “kind of dove in and started to research this little story,” she said.

“I thought it was so fun and whimsical and different,” she explained. “And, you know, anything mermaid around here seems to do pretty well. People are into mermaids, I guess, living in the Rivertowns and having the Sleepy Hollow Mermaid Festival happening this month. So I started to dream

up this weird little storytelling show, and eventually it took shape.”

Performed at the River’s Edge studio off Boulanger Plaza in Hastings, “The Jaws of the Merman” is far from a typical theater experience. Blending storytelling, movement, music, and sensory elements, the production is part fairy tale, part art installation, and part immersive adventure.

Audience members remove their shoes before entering the studio, feeling sand beneath their feet as they settle into beach chairs. Scented diffusers fill the space with the aromas of ocean air and firewood, while projected images ripple across large hanging sheets behind which dancers bring the story to life through movement. An original synth-rock score by composer Jon Hatch of Dobbs Ferry carries audiences through the journey.

Several members of the six-person cast also have ties to the Rivertowns. Playing the Merman is Jason Landon Marcus of Croton-on-Hudson, the frontman and co-founder of the band Merman, which its website describes as “an ‘aquadelic’ rock band blending psychedelic rock, mythology, and oceanic folklore.”

Sydney Rosenberg of Yonkers, a 2022 graduate of Marymount Manhattan College, plays the main character, Narissa, an ordinary young woman whose decision to violate the village’s ban changes her life forever.

“At the beginning, she’s just the daughter of one of the prominent families in the village,” Rosenberg said. “But she decides to break the village’s biggest rule, and after that she becomes completely different. She’s

beautiful, she suddenly seems to have all the answers, and everything about her personality changes.”

Trained as a professional dancer, Rosenberg said the production has been a unique opportunity to help create the show from the ground up. “It’s been a true collaboration,” she explained. “Everyone’s kind of choreographing the show, which is really cool.”

“The Jaws of the Merman” is unlike anything Rosenberg has experienced before. “I think everyone’s really going to like it,” she said. “It’s not what you would expect. Just expect to be on the edge of your seat the entire time.”

“Things start to go wrong because people don’t like having their long-held rules challenged,” Covington said. “But I think the story reminds us that sometimes those old rules need to change.”

That theme extends beyond the play. River’s Edge Theatre Company strives to produce environmentally conscious theater, relying on secondhand, borrowed, and repurposed materials whenever possible.

Covington hopes the production inspires audiences to rethink old habits and embrace more sustainable choices. In keeping with those values, 10 percent of ticket sales will benefit Riverkeeper, the nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the Hudson River.

The show is a half-hour long and suitable for all ages. Performances are July 16–19, at 7 and 8 p.m., at 546 Warburton Ave., Hastings. Tickets, \$27 for adults and \$17 for students and seniors, are available at riversedgetheatre.com.

HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON

Free parking coming this fall to business district

BY AMY BOCHNER

Beginning Nov. 1, visitors to the business district will be able to save their quarters after the Hastings Board of Trustees approved free 3-hour parking during their meeting on July 7. Mayor Tom Drake first proposed the measure in January. The law repeals on-street parking meter zones and fees, while amending off-street meter and parking permit zones. Currently, parking time limits and rates vary in the business district. Times range from a 2-hour limit on streets like Warburton Avenue to a 6-hour limit on Maple Avenue. A

2-hour on-street parking meter costs \$0.25 for 15 minutes, while a pay station in the Zinsser Commuter lot charges \$0.50 for an hour. The new law, which goes into effect Nov. 1, streamlines these regulations and makes them consistent throughout the downtown. The change establishes a 3-hour time limit in designated locations, between the hours of 8 a.m.–6 p.m., except on Sundays and legal holidays. The time limit will be enforced by a parking officer and license plate readers. On Warburton, the limit will apply to the stretch from Broadway (Route 9) south to 579 Warburton Ave., on the west side, and 524 Warburton Ave., on the east. For Southside Avenue, the law includes the area on the west side from the intersection of Spring Street to across from the Zinsser Commuter lot, which the legislation calls the Zinsser Plaza parking lot. On the east

side, the applicable area is Spring Street to Washington Avenue. Streets where the parking limit applies on both sides are Main; Maple Avenue between North and Spring; Villard Avenue between Warburton and Broadway; and Washington Avenue between Warburton and Southside. Other locations include the north sides of Spring Street and North Street, as well as the west side of Whitman Street, between Main Street and Christie Terrace. Also listed is the west side of River Street from the MacEachron Waterfront Park entrance to 750 feet south where parking is permitted, as well as the east side of Farragut Avenue from Mount Hope Boulevard to 750 feet south, to the end of the separating island. The 3-hour limit applies to the Boulanger Plaza, Steinschneider, and Warburton Avenue parking lots.

While on-street parking will be free, permits and fees will be required for certain off-street parking areas. The law designates the Zinsser Commuter Lot, Con Edison Lot (which the legislation calls “Southside Plaza”), and River Street parking spaces as off-street permit parking zones. For the Zinsser and Con Edison lots, parking is only allowed for Hastings residents who possess a resident permit, between 6 a.m.–6 p.m., except on weekends and legal holidays. For the Zinsser lot, this includes those with a Zinsser annual permit. If the individual parking in either lot only possesses a resident permit, then they would pay a meter fee determined by the board. For River Street, parking requires an annual River Street permit, or a meter fee for designated spaces, except on Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays.

— OBITUARY —

Anthony Ceraolo

Anthony “Tony” Ceraolo of Hastings passed away peacefully on May 22 at age 84. Born in North Queensland, Australia, Tony immigrated to the Bronx in 1947. A true renaissance man, he balanced the worlds of high-horsepower drag racing and human psychology.

To the sports world, he was the fearless independent drag racer who piloted the iconic “Traveler 125” Top Fuel nitro dragster, highlighted by a historic 5.76-second, 246 mph qualifying run at the 1981 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Gatornationals. A master welder and machinist, he built his own machinery,



with daughters Kathleen and Tonia serving as his pit crew. Driven by a curiosity about human nature, Tony earned a doctor of psychology (Psy.D.) at Yeshiva University in the Bronx and enjoyed a long, impactful career at the New York City Board of Education, where he met his dearest friend and former wife,

Janet Rivera. In retirement, he mentored young mechanics, passing down his master craftsman skills. Tony’s engineering legacy, mechanical mind, and independent spirit live on through the next generations of his family. He is survived by Janet; his children Kathleen DeHerrera, Tonia Gustafson, and Carl Ceraolo; his grandsons David, Alex, Joshua, and Luke; and two great-granddaughters.



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IRVINGTON

— Coming Up This Week —

“Edith Head: Clothing Designer to the Stars”

Saturday, July 11, 2 p.m.

Irvington Public Library

Hybrid presentation by Toni McKeen

To attend via Zoom, register at

irvingtonlibrary.org

Ribbon Cutting and Concert

Saturday, July 11, 4–7 p.m.

Matthiessen Park Stage

Official opening of the riverfront’s new stage, followed by cover bands Local Politics and The Skam.

Parking is not permitted in the Bridge Street lots.

Farmers Market

Sunday, July 12, 9 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Main Street School, 101 Main St.

For details, visit irvingtonfarmersmarket.org and follow the market on Facebook

Riverside Music: American Fanfares

Sunday, July 12, 3 p.m.

Matthiessen Park Stage

Parking is not permitted in the

Bridge Street lots.

Stuffed Animal Sleepaway Camp

Tuesday, July 14, 4–5 p.m.

Irvington Public Library

Ages 4+ are invited to drop off a stuffed animal for pickup on Saturday, July 18, 11 a.m.

More information will be provided after sign-up at irvingtonlibrary.org

Green Meadows Farm Visit for Ages 3+

Thursday, July 16, 4–5 p.m.

Irvington Public Library

Register at irvingtonlibrary.org

Jazz Forum Arts Summer Concert Series

Thursday, July 16, 6:30 p.m.

Matthiessen Park Stage

Featuring the Miles Gilbert Trio. Cancellation due to inclement weather will be announced by 2 p.m. at jazzforumarts.org

Bilingual Storytime with Flor Bromley

Friday, July 17, 10:45–11:15 a.m.

Irvington Public Library

Register at irvingtonlibrary.org

Got news?

Email staff writer Julian Michael Caldwell at julian@rivertownsdispatch.com

VOLUNTEERS of the MONTH

Peter Bernstein and Sarah Cox

*Couple forges connection
with Ecuador*

BY JANINE ANNETT

Some people like to take it easy in retirement, but not longtime Irvington residents Peter Bernstein and Sarah Cox. The husband-and-wife duo are busy with their non-profit organization, the Wichana Foundation, which they started in 2019. The Foundation supports indigenous, community-based initiatives primarily in the Andean province of Imbabura, Ecuador. The name of the Foundation comes from the Kichwa word “Wichana,” meaning “to ascend.”

The couple’s connection to that region began 20 years ago with a family vacation to the Galápagos Islands, an archipelago that is a province of Ecuador.

“I thought, as long as we’re going there, let’s go up to the mountains,” Bernstein said, referring to the Andes mountains on the mainland of Ecuador. “So, I found what I would call an eco-lodge. We arrived, and it was a beautiful place. Then we found out that the owners were friends of our family, that they knew our cousins. It was just one



Peter Bernstein and Sarah Cox in Cotacachi.

of these amazing coincidences.”

That trip sowed the seeds of enduring interest in Ecuador for Bernstein, and his family, which includes two daughters. A few years later, they returned to Ecuador to go to the rainforest. They also went back to the mountains and ended up purchasing a home in the area, returning to it again and again and getting to know the region. Bernstein and Cox learned of a community-run health center and began to support it.

“About eight years ago, we met a young couple very much involved in cultural education in their community, which is the Kichwa community in the Andes. They wanted to start a cultural center,” Bernstein said.

They asked Bernstein and Cox to help them find a nonprofit organization to help grow the center. Not finding a suitable one, Bernstein and Cox started the Wichana Foundation.

“We realized we could use it to help the

health center, use it to help this new cultural center, and then from there it just grew,” Bernstein said. “More groups came to us to ask for help, and now we have all these different programs and partners.”

Some of the Wichana Foundation’s partnerships include the Muyumi Kanki Kichwa Cultural Center, the Mojandita Curubi Health Center, Education for Ecuador, and the La Querencia Community Library.

The Foundation provides support to its partners, including fundraising, technical assistance, and administrative support. In addition, it runs its own programs that focus on health, services, culture, and supporting indigenous women.

Bernstein and Cox travel to Ecuador three to four times a year, staying for several weeks each time. Before retiring, Bernstein was a benefits consultant with SEGAL Consulting, helping working families achieve financial security. Cox, who worked as an educator at Philipsburg Manor in Sleepy Hollow, is also a longtime volunteer in Irvington, having served as a Girl Scout leader and president of the Friends of the Library. Cox is also president of Commemorate, a nonprofit organization that researched the history of enslaved Africans in Irvington. Commemorate has worked to create awareness of that population through public presentations, art, and a memorial garden.

Strengthening the connection between the Rivertowns and Ecuador even more, the Wichana Foundation’s board includes Irvington Mayor Arlene Burgos, a friend of Bernstein and Cox. The board also consists of four Ecuadorian indigenous women leaders, two of whom are medical doctors and one who holds a graduate degree in intercultural education.

The Wichana Foundation has tried to draw more attention to the Andean region in Ecuador and Kichwa culture through a 2024 book and photo exhibition (shown at the Warner Library in Tarrytown and the Ossining Library) that featured portraits of community elders.

“We have excerpts of the interviews in three languages: Quichua, English, and Spanish. There’s just not a lot of written material that tells the story of those folks,” Bernstein said. “We have also collaborated with a group of local Kichwa activists in Westchester on some cultural workshops this year at the Ossining and Greenburgh libraries with the support of ArtsWestchester.”

Bernstein also cites the medical care the Wichana Foundation has been able to provide as being rewarding. “We have medical brigades go to places where people don’t get medical care, and we go far afield. We go by plane, by bus, even in a motorized canoe, with doctors,” he said.

“We’re not particularly experts in any one thing. We just get involved in these collective efforts and do what we can,” Bernstein said of his and his wife’s efforts to make a difference, whether at home in Irvington or in Ecuador. “I encourage other area retirees to find a way to use your skills, resources, and knowledge to contribute to initiatives that are important to you. It’s enjoyable and rewarding.”

To learn about the Wichana Foundation, visit www.wichana.org.



Peter Bernstein with Martha Salcedo in her kitchen in Mojandito Curubi.

IRVINGTON

Survey solicits input on facilities planning project

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Irvington residents have the opportunity to submit feedback on three potential scenarios to upgrade or relocate key Village facilities, which include the firehouse, police headquarters, and department of public works (DPW). Through an online survey, residents can share their opinions with New York City-based Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners (BBB), the firm that has been working with the Village since the fall and is approaching its final step in developing recommendations for several municipal facilities. BBB has been accepting feedback at multiple stages of the process, including an online survey in December, in-person workshops in February and April, and an in-person workshop at the Main Street School on June 24, featuring the same presentation in the latest survey.

Over the summer, BBB will take into account more research and the latest round of community input to further hone the options, and submit a single recommended path of action to the Village, before a public presentation in September. The facilities planning project includes three potential

scenarios, labeled A, B, and C.

"BBB is not saying you should choose A, B, or C, but we're saying here's all of the information so that people can debate, discuss, and hopefully build some consensus," BBB's director of planning and urban design Neil Kittredge told the Dispatch. "The next step is not to just pick one and go; it's basically to say, let's pick one as the one we're [the Village] going to examine now in more detail, and answer the open questions."

BBB's work is supported by New York City-based firm Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, which is providing transportation engineering and civil engineering, and construction cost estimator Vermeulens, to make sure each option is as realistic as possible. Still, Kittredge emphasized that the current study is a plan devoid of the more detailed engineering and environmental studies and architecture designs that are required once the Village zeroes in on a strategy. BBB's recommended course of action is expected to have flexibility so that if the Village runs into an issue as they undergo more detailed studies, there is room to adjust.

All three scenarios recommend relocating the DPW to the current location of the police firing range at Cyrus Field Road; using the current DPW location to build housing; renovating and expanding the volunteer ambulance corps building at its current Main Street location; and building housing at the Astor Street and Irvington Public Library parking lots, with lower-level parking.

"Because that's the next step, we haven't done the detailed environmental study, but any DPW that you would build there would have the state-of-the-art containment so that none of it is going into the ground and surrounding area, and that will be much better than the current DPW where none of that is happening," Kittredge noted.

Options for the firehouse include building a new firehouse at the municipal parking lot at the top of Main Street; housing the fire department in a new building at Broadway (Route 9) and Harriman Road that would also include the police department and village court; or expanding the current location into the adjacent Village-owned parcel of land. Expansion at the current location would require temporary relocation of the fire department to a site yet to be determined.

Firehouse upgrades were also at the core of the \$18.2 million bond proposal to upgrade municipal facilities that was rejected by voters in November 2023. After criticism of that process, Irvington formed a Facilities Planning Steering Committee in April 2024 to ensure that residents are more informed and involved. Irvington resident Michael Hanna, who serves as the community engagement adviser for the project, explained that in the near future the fire department may have to transition to a hybrid model of volunteer and paid professional firefighters to ensure that there are enough firefighters in the village, and

that he believes significant upgrades are necessary to attract professionals.

"It's getting harder and harder to recruit, and there's a reason for it," Hanna shared with the Dispatch. "Studies show volunteer fire departments are predominantly 30-to-50-year-old males from a mainly working- and middle- class background, and that's exactly the demographic that Irvington and communities like ours have been losing over the last two decades."

According to Kittredge, the police department, which is housed in the basement of the 124-year-old town hall, has one-third of the recommended area to support the unit's staff size. The firehouse, which was built in 1965, is half the recommended size. At the time the firehouse was built, the size of firetrucks was smaller than newer trucks, which presents a concern because firefighters now have less room to maneuver when responding to a call. In April, the Village committed \$40,000 to begin the process of making urgent renovations to the firehouse, such as the construction of a decontamination room to remove potentially carcinogenic material from equipment. There's currently no such room at the firehouse.

"Irvington can't expect the public servants and emergency responders to be working in the conditions they're working in right now any longer," Kittredge asserted. "It's not sustainable. There are safety hazards, the

Continued on page 14

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The Agenda

SATURDAY JULY 11

Concert in the Park

ARDSLEY

6–8 p.m. / Free. Pascone Park, 507 Ashford Ave. The Groove Machine kicks off the summer concert series. Bring a blanket or chair to sit on the lawn. ardsleyvillage.gov/parks-recreation

Frank Costa Trilogy

ARDSLEY

9 p.m. / No cover charge. Saw Mill Tavern, 925 Saw Mill River Road. Reservations encouraged. smtavern.com

Ribbon Cutting and Concert

IRVINGTON

4–7 p.m. / Free. Matthiessen Park. Official opening of the riverfront's new stage, followed by cover bands Local Politics and The Skam. Parking is not permitted in the Bridge Street lots.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream"

TARRYTOWN

7 p.m. / \$59, \$84 includes dinner. Lyndhurst, 635 S. Broadway. M&M Performing Arts Company's production of Shakespeare's romantic comedy is set in the 1960s and performed in the Palm Court's open-air theater through July 26. Appropriate for ages 8+. lyndhurst.org

Trumpeter Bruce Harris

TARRYTOWN

7 and 9:30 p.m. / \$35, \$30 for students. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. jazzforumarts.org

Comedy: Jessica Kirson

TARRYTOWN

8 p.m. / \$43–\$73. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St. tarrytownmusichall.org

Summer Saturdays: Barnyard Bash

SLEEPY HOLLOW

11 a.m.–3 p.m. / \$18, \$15 for ages 18–25 and over 65, \$13 for children. Philipsburg Manor, 381 N. Broadway. Themed events and hands-on activities with live animals and historic demonstrations. Purchase timed-entry tickets at hudsonvalley.org

"Encounter with a Spy: Major John André"

SLEEPY HOLLOW

7–8 p.m. / \$4. Rockefeller State Park Preserve, 1 Rockwood Road. Hear the tale of treachery. rockefellerstateparkpreserve.eventbrite.com

SUNDAY JULY 12

Outdoor Live Music:

Nick Dibari

DOBBS FERRY

2–5 p.m. / No cover charge. Hudson Social, 11 Station Plaza. hudsonsocial.com



Jazz Forum Arts' free summer concerts at Matthiessen Park in Irvington continue with bassist Miles Gilbert and his trio on Thursday, July 16.

Hastings on Jazz

HASTINGS

3–5:30 p.m. / Free. VFW Plaza, 558 Warburton Ave. The weekly summer series continues with the Peter Brainin Quintet. Rain location: Hastings Public Library, 7 Maple Ave. destinationhastings.org

Riverside Concert: American Fanfares

IRVINGTON

3 p.m. / Free. Matthiessen Park. Parking is not permitted in the Bridge Street lots.

Wickers Creek Market: Antiques and Vintage Goods

TARRYTOWN

9 a.m.–2 p.m. / \$5 admission fee, free for kids under 6. Lyndhurst, 635 S. Broadway. wickerscreekmarket.com

Ana Petrova Organ Trio

TARRYTOWN

4 and 6 p.m. / \$25, \$20 for students. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. jazzforumarts.org

TUESDAY JULY 14

Sunset Concert Series: Le Vent du Nord

HASTINGS

7–9 p.m. / Free. MacEachron Waterfront Park, 100 River St. Rain location: James Harmon Community Center, 44 Main St. destinationhastings.org

WEDNESDAY JULY 15

Midsummer Market

DOBBS FERRY

1–6 p.m. / Free admission. HudCo, 145 Palisade St., Suite 200. Features pre-owned and vintage clothing and accessories, flowers, jew-

elry, tarot readings, books, and coffee. hudco.eventbrite.com

Outdoor Concert: Boyce Justice Griffith Quartet

DOBBS FERRY

6:30–8 p.m. / Free. Waterfront Park. A pre-concert family-friendly Jitterbugs Jam begins at 5:30 p.m. Cancellation due to inclement weather will be announced by 2 p.m. on Facebook and at jazzforumarts.org

Mindful Meetup

IRVINGTON

7 p.m. / \$35, free for unlimited members. The Lark, 50 S. Buckhout St., G107. The theme is "Pressure is Practice." thelark.club/events

Astronomy for Kids

YONKERS

2 p.m. / \$23 for adults, \$16 for seniors, \$14 for ages 3–18, free for members. Hudson River Museum, 511 Warburton Ave. The planetarium show features an animated film exploring color, light, and perception. Recommended for ages 4–10. Reservations recommended. hrm.org

WEDNESDAY JULY 16

Outdoor Live Music: Chris and Sal

DOBBS FERRY

6–9 p.m. / No cover charge. Hudson Social, 11 Station Plaza. hudsonsocial.com

Jazz and Latin Jazz Duo

DOBBS FERRY

7–9:15 p.m. / No cover charge. Mirabella Cocina Latina Restaurant & Bar, 1 Hamilton St., in Rivertowns Square. Featuring Nicki Denner on piano and vocals and Anton Denner on saxophone and flute. mirabellacocina.com/calendar-dobbs-ferry

"The Jaws of the Merman"

HASTINGS

7 and 8 p.m. / \$27, \$17 for students and seniors. River's Edge Theatre Company Studio, 546 Warburton Ave. Immersive performance of an ancient German folk tale. Also on July 17–18, 7 and 8 p.m., and July 19, 4 and 5 p.m. riversedgetheatre.com

Riverfront Concert: Miles Gilbert Trio

IRVINGTON

6:30 p.m. / Free. Matthiessen Park. Parking is not permitted in the Bridge Street lots. Cancellation due to inclement weather will be announced by 2 p.m. on Facebook and at jazzforumarts.org

Summer Soirée

IRVINGTON

6:30 p.m. / \$50, discount for members. The Lark, 50 S. Buckhout St., G107. A yoga sculpt class is followed by cocktails, a floral bar, tarot readings, and more. thelark.club/events

Waterfront Concert

TARRYTOWN

7–9 p.m. / Free. Pierson Park, 238 W. Main St. The series continues with Anthony Giaccio and the Assortments. Presented by the Tarrytown Recreation Department. tarrytownny.gov

Todd Rundgren

TARRYTOWN

8 p.m. / \$77–\$108. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St. tarrytownmusichall.org

FRIDAY JULY 17

'80s Rock: 80 Proof

ARDSLEY

9 p.m. / No cover charge. Saw Mill Tavern, 925 Saw Mill River Road. Reservations encouraged. smtavern.com

River Jam and Food Trucks

DOBBS FERRY

7–9 p.m. / Free. Waterfront Park. The summer concert series continues with Whoz Your Daddy. dobbsferry.gov/recreation-department

Movie on the Trail

DOBBS FERRY

8:30 p.m. / Free. Keeper's House, 15 Walnut St. Screening of "Lilo & Stitch." aqueduct.org

David Janeway Quintet

TARRYTOWN

7 and 9:30 p.m. / \$35, \$30 for students. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. jazzforumarts.org

Film Screening

TARRYTOWN

7 p.m. / \$11. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St. "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." tarrytownmusichall.org

Opinion

The Dispatch welcomes letters to the editor about subjects related to the Rivertowns. Letters must be no more than 300 words, submitted by Monday at noon for that week's issue, and include the names, home addresses, and phone numbers of their writers. No letter is guaranteed publication. To submit a letter, visit rivertownsdispatch.com/contact-us

Thanks to neighbors for helping to rescue runaway dog

To the Editor:

We want to share our deep appreciation for all the efforts to successfully rescue our runaway dog. On July 4 weekend, he bolted from home unexpectedly, up into the woods, apparently afraid of the fireworks and thunder. His tracker failed to work. Our neighbors hiked in the woods with us, drove the streets with us, and supported us through the ordeal. People we didn't know posted information on local Facebook groups, rescue websites, and even called various police departments. After a harrowing night of searching through rain and thunderstorms, the dog was located early the next morning on the South County Trailway, a couple of miles from our home. We were able to successfully capture him and bring him home safely. As they say, it takes a village. And ours is the best.

The Zager Family
HASTINGS

Officials who opposed Feiner should be less 'machine-like'

To the Editor:

What were they thinking? And I don't mean that rhetorically, as I truly wish to

know what caused such an intimidating array of mainstream Democratic officials to get behind the well-funded, nearly successful attempt to unseat Greenburgh's much-beloved town supervisor. Yes, I'm aware that during the course of nearly four decades' worth of uninterrupted public service Paul Feiner has attracted vehement detractors. I'd always chalked this sort of thing up as some inexplicable phenomenon, not unlike those strange Hillary-haters who no doubt played a significant role in the outcome of the 2016 presidential election.

In this case, what seemed abnormal had become regarded as normal, while coming across to me as mob mentality ganging up on a hard-working, sincere administrator whose selfless service has been appreciated by most folks I know. We may never know what sparked it all — for example, what's at the root of all the ongoing friction between members of the Greenburgh Town Council and our town supervisor.

While I would apologize to those who might take exception with my coming across as such an unabashed supporter of Feiner, I do take pride in pointing out how clearly his self-effacing posture "reflecting on the constructive criticisms," for example, sets him apart as a class act in our current difficult, divisive climate. Contrast this with the rigid, defensive, often outright ugly confrontational approach reflexively practiced by certain prominent public figures.

Let's hope the Democratic Party as a whole, but most especially those at our local level, will manage to find a path forward toward becoming more reflective, inventive, and less machine-like in the future. I'll bet Paul Feiner might be among the first to agree

with how empowering it can be to maintain the option of reassessing and changing course, and the willingness to admit having made a mistake or two.

Dave Saphra
EAST IRVINGTON

Protect patient choice regarding equipment for diabetics

To the Editor:

As someone who has lived with Type 1 diabetes for more than 30 years, I rely on the Dexcom G7 continuous glucose monitor and automated insulin delivery system to safely manage my condition. Together, these technologies help monitor my blood sugar in real time and automatically adjust insulin delivery, reducing the risk of dangerous highs and lows, helping me stay healthy and independent. For people with diabetes, access to these technologies is a matter of life and death.

A recent Medicare policy change would make continuous glucose monitors and insulin pumps subject to a competitive bidding program, potentially shifting patients from owning their devices to a rental model. Under this model, patients will have to return their current device before getting a new one, creating new risks for delays, confusion, and disruptions in care. Diabetes technology is highly personal. The best device is the one that a person with diabetes can use consistently. Congress should protect patient choice and prevent harmful

disruptions before they happen.

In partnership with the Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition, I urge Congressman George Latimer to support language in the FY2027 Labor-HHS-Education bill that protects access to diabetes technology.

Marta D. Legan
DOBBS FERRY

Include RiverArts in planning for Lipchitz studio

To the Editor:

It was of great interest to see the Lipchitz studio article (Dispatch, July 3). Having grown up in Los Angeles and seeing his 29-foot bronze sculpture "Peace on Earth" as the centerpiece of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, his was always an iconic work. I am sure his legacy would approve of this passing the torch to a new generation of artists.

I would strongly recommend that the formed committee should include the RiverArts organization. They have been headquartered in an office in Hastings for many years. Of all the arts-related organizations in southern Westchester, RiverArts, for me, has done more to support the artist community in this region than any other institution or museum.

The committee would benefit greatly by RiverArts' breadth of experience and knowledge on making this future venture a success for Hastings.

Bruce Richards
DOBBS FERRY

Irvington facilities Continued from page 12

buildings are not ADA [compliant], they're cramped and too small. It's just not what you want your public workers to be experiencing."

The relocation of some facilities has emerged as the recommended option in some cases, such as the DPW facility, because it could make space for housing or commercial development that could bring revenue to the Village, and help pay for renovations.

"You can maximize market-rate or even luxury housing, and that would raise more money and help offset the cost for taxpayers who are here today, and it also helps pay for the costs of these changes," Hanna explained. "It doesn't totally pay for it; people's taxes will go up by some margin, and that's the question — by how much?"

There has been no set date for the public presentation of the scenario the Village will choose to explore further. To review the three scenarios and complete the online survey, visit, irvingtonny.gov/827/Facilities-Planning-Project.

Classies

Submissions are due by 12 p.m. Monday for that Friday's paper. To purchase a classified notice, go to market.rivertownsdispatch.com/classies



PUBLIC NOTICES

**HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON
LEGAL NOTICE**

NOTICE OF HEARING BEFORE THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE VILLAGE OF HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 295-143B of the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson Zoning Code, Notice is hereby given that:

A Public Hearing will be held by the Zoning Board of Appeals on Thursday, July 23, 2026, at 7:00 P.M., in the Meeting Room, Municipal Building, 7 Maple Avenue, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York.

The Hearing will be held on the application of Derek Tarsy & Lauren Lindstrom for relief from the strict application of the Village Code Sections 295-20C.2, 295-52A, 295-52J.3, 295-53.1, 295-69F.1(a&c), 295-69F.1(d)(1)(b), 295-69F.2(a)(1&2) for a proposed two story addition, 3rd floor modification, Front Porch, New driveway, New Deck, Swimming Pool, and Storage Sheds at their single-family dwelling, located at 11 Elm

Place. Said property is located in the R-7.5 Zoning District and is known as SBL: 4.40-35-9 on the Village tax maps.

Non-conformity details for the proposed work is as follows:

1) Paving in a Required Yard; Proposed — 278 sq. ft.; Allowed — None; {295-20C.2} Variance required 278 sq. ft. (Patio, pool curbing & front walkway)

2) Pool Side Yard Setback; Proposed — 8'; Required Minimum — 20'; {295-52A} Variance required 12'

3) Pool Rear Yard Setback; Proposed — 7'; Required Minimum — 20'; {295-52A} Variance required 13'

4) Pool Lot Area Coverage; Proposed 6.67%; Required

Maximum — 6% {295-52J.3} Variance required .67%

5) FAR; Existing - .289; Proposed - .473; Required Maximum - .375; {295-53.1} Variance Required .098 (736 sq. ft.)

6) Enclosed Porch Front Yard Setback; Proposed — 10.3'; Required Minimum — 25' {295-69F.1(a)} Variance required 14.7'

7) Enclosed Porch Side Yard Setback; Proposed — 5'; Required Minimum — 8' {295-69F.1(c)} Variance required 3'

8) Pool Shed Side Yard Setback; Proposed — .3'; Required Minimum — 8' {295-69F.1(c)} Variance required 7.7'

9) Building Stories; Existing — 2.5 Stories; Proposed — 3

Stories; Required Maximum — 2.5 Stories {295-69F.1(d)(1)(b)} Variance required ½ Story

10) Building Coverage; Existing — 26.69%; Proposed — 31.77%; Required Maximum — 30% {295-69F.2(a)(1)} Variance required 1.77% (133 sq. ft.)

11) Development Coverage; Existing — 34.11%; Proposed 46.83%; Required Maximum — 40% {295-69F.2(a)(2)} Variance required 6.83% (512 sq. ft.)

12) Parking in a Required Yard; Proposed — 2 spaces; Allowed — None; {295-30A} Variance required 2 spaces

The Zoning Board of Appeals will, at this time and place, hear all persons in support of such matter and any objections thereto.

Plans will be made available for review at the Building Department and on the Village web site on or about the Friday prior to the meeting date: www.hohny.gov

Josh Heitler, Chair, ZBA
CASE NO.: 10-26
PUBLISH: Rivertowns Dispatch

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Formation of Elster Rare Books & Art LLC filed with SSNY on 03/11/2026. Office Location: Westchester County SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom precess may be served. SSNY shall mail process to 12 Hazel Lane Larchmont, NY 10538. Purpose: any lawful act or activities.

Sports

EDITED BY ROB DIANTONIO

Irvington's Forte finishes decorated Duke career

BY ROB DIANTONIO

When Max Forte arrived at Duke University in the fall of 2021, the Irvington graduate carried the aspirations of a talented athlete from a small public high school. His goals were modest by Division I standards: become a consistent scorer in the Atlantic Coast Conference, eventually surpass the 25-foot mark in the long jump, and represent one of the nation's premier academic institutions with pride.

Five years later, Forte leaves Duke having accomplished far more than he ever imagined.

Forte recently earned his master's degree in management studies from Duke's Fuqua School of Business as an MMS Fellow while competing in his final season as an NCAA decathlete. After earning his undergraduate degree in biology while following the pre-med track, Forte balanced graduate school with one of the most demanding events in college athletics, capping his career as an honorable mention All-American in the decathlon.

"When I first got to Duke, my expectations for myself were totally different than they are now," Forte told the Dispatch. "I had always wanted to jump 25 feet in the long jump, score for my team at ACCs, and eventually be consistent enough to score at my conference meet every year. Back then I never believed my athletic ability would take me as far as it did, and I was OK and happy with that. I was very proud just to put on my uniform and say I went to this school."

Instead, Forte developed into one of the ACC's premier multi-event athletes.

His senior and graduate seasons were particularly impressive. This spring, he earned honorable mention All-America honors after qualifying for the NCAA Outdoor Championships in the decathlon. He also finished second at the ACC Outdoor Championships with 7,686 points to claim the conference silver medal after placing fourth in the heptathlon at the ACC Indoor Championships.

Those accomplishments came after another standout campaign in 2025, when Forte captured the ACC bronze medal in the long jump and established himself as one of the conference's elite jumpers. Along the way, he produced personal bests across nearly every event, including 10.60 seconds in the 100-meter dash, 47.71 in the 400, 14.34 in the 110-meter hurdles, 25 feet, 6 inches in the long jump, 15-7 in the pole vault, and 7,853 points in the decathlon.

His growth surprised even himself.

"In my first year of long jumping I was one small toe foul away from qualifying for the U20 USA competition, and the following year I jumped 24-foot-6," he said. "I started training for the decathlon my sophomore year too. I really didn't know what I was getting myself into, but with the help of my



Max Forte recorded a personal best of 25-6 in the long jump at Duke. Photo courtesy of Duke Athletics.

teammates I placed third at ACCs that year.

"Fast forward to now, I have multiple top-three ACC individual medals, an ACC team championship — the first in Duke history — and two national appearances in the decathlon along with a long jump personal record of 25-foot-5."

For Forte, the breakthrough wasn't simply about physical development. It was about mastering the mental side of the sport. Before every meet, his father delivered the same simple message: "Have fun."

"That became my mantra throughout my career," Forte said. "Being able to relax and not put overly high expectations on myself was always my strength, because pressure is usually what ruins my performances."

That mindset paid immediate dividends.

"I developed confidence early on at Duke that I could compete with the best after placing third at ACCs in my first year of doing the decathlon," Forte explained. "From there, I made it my challenge to keep the expectation thoughts out of my head and just focus on the moment I was in, the fun I was having, and the people I was around."

He also credits his teammates and coaches

for accelerating his development.

"I had the best training group in the ACC, and in my opinion the best people to surround myself with," Forte said. "We finished as the number-one decathlon group in the nation my senior year. It was the perfect place for me to grow as a person and an athlete."

The transition from Irvington to one of the country's elite academic and athletic institutions required adjustments that extended well beyond training.

"At Irvington, I had so much fun," Forte said. "Honestly, scores and marks didn't matter to me nearly as much as being able to run with my friends."

College competition changed his perspective.

"At Duke, I learned that track is closer to 80 percent mental and 20 percent physical," he said. "You have to prepare yourself before every repetition you take at practice, prepare your mind during the times you aren't at practice through mental reps, and stay positive even when the worst workouts or practices are happening."

The discipline required on the track carried over into the classroom. Forte admitted

balancing graduate school with Division I athletics wasn't his toughest academic challenge. His undergraduate biology studies while completing pre-med requirements proved even more demanding.

"I learned so much about myself and my weaknesses off the track," Forte said. "Time management was the biggest lesson I needed to learn when I got to school. I became someone who didn't procrastinate because I couldn't."

His daily routine rarely changed.

"Class until 2 p.m., practice until 5, dinner at 6, then study until bed," he said. "Getting myself into that habit and routine helped me de-stress about the worry that I wasn't doing enough."

Academically, Forte excelled as consistently as he did athletically, earning multiple USTF-CCA All-Academic Team honors along with Indoor and Outdoor All-ACC Academic Team recognition throughout his Duke career.

His leadership also evolved over five years on campus.

Initially hesitant to assume a position of authority, Forte gradually became one of the program's most respected voices. He was appointed team captain during his junior, senior, and graduate seasons, an uncommon distinction, and helped lead Duke to its first ACC team championship.

"Being an extroverted person, I felt I was able to connect with a lot of my teammates very quickly," Forte said. "Building good relationships with everyone was a priority for me from day one."

Despite competing on one of the nation's biggest stages, Forte hasn't forgotten where his athletic journey began.

"I think it's really cool to be able to put our small-town team on the map," he said. "But I can't take full responsibility for that. There are so many amazing Irvington track athletes out there right now who are paving the way for the younger generation."

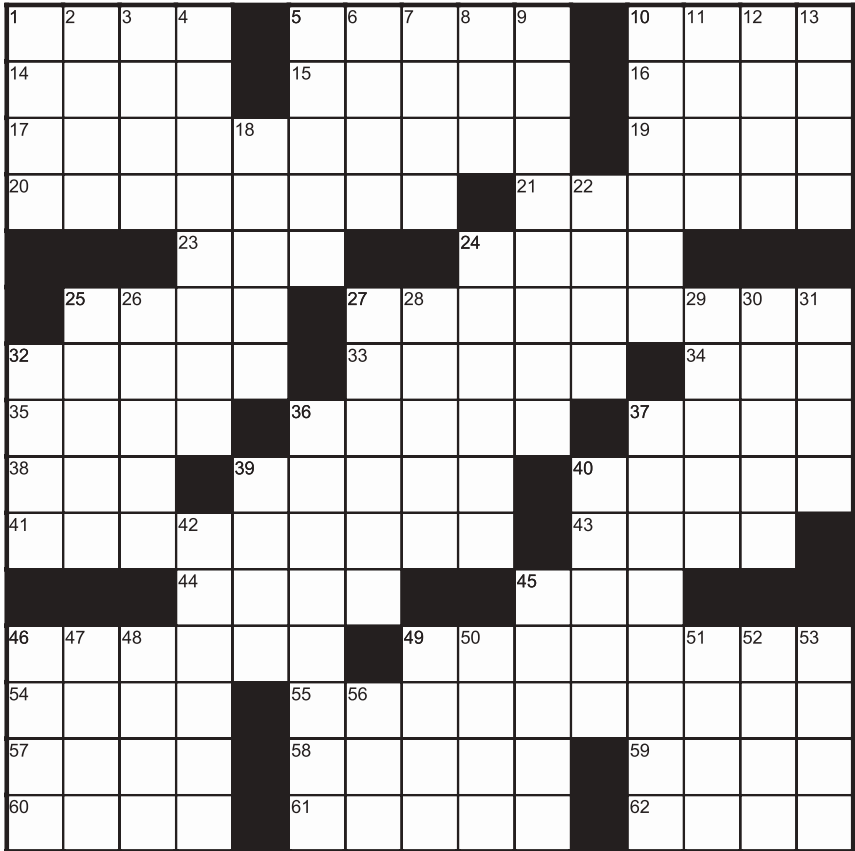
He hopes his success shows future Bulldogs what's possible.

"I think we all give kids in Irvington a path to a future in the sport," Forte said. "I'm always willing to offer help or advice to anyone who needs it."

Now, Forte is shifting his focus to the next chapter. Having dealt with some injuries during his career, he's planning to give his body a well-earned break before pursuing medical school. In the meantime, he hopes to work in clinical research or as an EMT in New York City.

"As for track, I'm putting all my ideas about it off to the side right now and just taking a break," Forte said. "Do I think there's a possibility of a return at some point? Absolutely. But that's not my focus right now."

Whether or not he returns to competition, Forte's legacy at Duke is secure.



- ACROSS**
- 1. Ear part
 - 5. Barracouta
 - 10. First man
 - 14. Mountain goat
 - 15. Wigwam
 - 16. Govern
 - 17. Solitarily
 - 19. Japanese wooden clog
 - 20. Quadrangle
 - 21. English photographer
 - 23. Bawl
 - 24. Young horse
 - 25. Hip bones
 - 27. Family members
 - 32. Gash
 - 33. Woodmen
 - 34. French, water
 - 35. Tennis star, - Natase
 - 36. Played the part of
 - 37. Poker stake
 - 38. The (German)
 - 39. Concerned with a specific subject
 - 40. Veered
 - 41. Former
 - 43. Charge over property
 - 44. Angers
 - 45. - kwon do (Korean martial art)
 - 46. Puts at rest
 - 49. Asymmetry
 - 54. Travel
 - 55. Not allowing passage
 - 57. Prefix, eight
 - 58. Crypt
 - 59. New Guinea currency unit
 - 60. Pastry items
 - 61. Sea eagles
 - 62. Finishes

- DOWN**
- 1. Rhythmic swing
 - 2. Hautboy
 - 3. Crooked
 - 4. Bodily exertion
 - 5. Inexpensive cigar
 - 6. Verne's submariner
 - 7. Candid
 - 8. Conger
 - 9. Portable organ-like instrument
 - 10. Wild sheep of Asia
 - 11. Performance by two
 - 12. Singer
 - 13. Intend
 - 18. Mother of Isaac
 - 22. Food
 - 24. Wool
 - 25. Sicker
 - 26. Dens
 - 27. Stem
 - 28. Laud
 - 29. Meeting place
 - 30. Consumed
 - 31. Took legal action against
 - 32. Team
 - 36. Tending to adhere
 - 37. Estrange
 - 39. Askew
 - 40. Cabbage salads
 - 42. Coronets
 - 45. Examines
 - 46. At the apex
 - 47. Positions
 - 48. Stringed instrument
 - 49. Reeled
 - 50. Cabbagelike plant
 - 51. Black
 - 52. Toboggan
 - 53. Oceans
 - 56. Spoil

This crossword is brought to you
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*If you want the answers next week, email us at info@hudco.co
so we know you're reading this.*

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ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK

D	A	R	N		O	P	A	L		T	R	A	C	T	
O	B	I	E		C	I	N	E		H	A	L	L	O	
R	E	S	T		T	E	N	D	E	R	F	O	O	T	
P	L	E	T		H	O	R	A		M	O	T	E	T	S
					A	B	C			T	E	N	S		
M	A	S	S		M	E	E	T	I	N	G		M	P	H
O	C	U	L		A	R		O	L	D		T	O	R	A
O	R	I	E	L		A	X	E		M	O	T	O	R	
S	E	N	D		P	S	I		B	A	R	T	E	R	
E	S	T			T	R	A	C	H	E	O	T	O	M	Y
					S	O	U	P		E	A	R			
A	B	S	U	R	D		I	R	R	I	G	A	T	E	
C	O	M	P	R	E	S	S	E	D		A	L	A	R	
I	N	U	R	E		I	L	I	E		S	E	T	S	
D	E	G	A	S		P	E	N	D		H	E	A	T	