



The Gardiner Gazette

Spring 2011 - Issue #10

A call to community ...

Free ... please take one

Do You Vote in Local Elections?

... a brief word from the Editorial Committee at the Gardiner Gazette

OK, OK. We understand; not everyone wants to run for town office, but we'd like to make the case for why you should at least *vote* in the local election this fall. In fact, it's one of the reasons we started *The Gardiner Gazette*—we became aware that many people in town reserve their trips to the polls for elections at the state and national level, and the *Gazette* seemed like a good way to work on changing that.

3,094 Gardiner residents voted in the 2008 Presidential Election. In 2009, 1,668 voted in the local election, and in 2010, 2,223 of us voted in the non-presidential state and national election. As the numbers show, 1,426 more people turned out to elect the president of the United States than turned out to elect our current Town Board.

Local elections...continued page 6

Omnibus Consortium Tackles Excessive Property Taxes

by Gioia Shebar

The Omnibus Consortium, of which Taxnightmare.org is a founding member, is composed of numerous groups that joined together six years ago in Gardiner to address the excessive and chaotic property taxes that are devastating the middle class. Taxnightmare.org now has a large base of supporters statewide, and our reach is vastly increased by membership in the Omnibus Consortium.

Currently, school, county and local property taxes are based on the purported real estate value of one's home. They are subject to the fluctuating economy, the difference in assessment from area to area and formulae that make the cosmological constant look like a first grade math problem. If you lose your

Consortium...continued page 17

Also in this issue ...

Courtney Weis, 4-H Club, pg. 2

Preserving Farmland, pg 2

Maggie MacDowel, pg 3

Volunteer: Melissa Fairweather, pg 4

Gardiner in Transition, pg. 5

Cupcake News, pg. 6

Local Haircuts, pg 7

Wright's Farm, pg 8

Equestrian Team, pg. 9

Art in Gardiner, pg. 10

Gardiner Singers, pg. 11

Just a Bite, pg 13

Aging in Place, pg 14

Help Run Your Town, pg 15

Community Updates, pg 16



Turtle Day 2011—May 14

It's almost that time! For the past two years the Walkkill Valley Land Trust has sponsored a one-morning Eastern Box Turtle survey at the home of Anne and Ray Smith on Forest Glen Road.

The Smiths, with the aid of biologist Joe Bridges, have been monitoring the turtles on their 65 acres since 2005 in an effort to ascertain their range and understand their behavior. 43 individual turtles have been found. Last year, three were outfitted with transmitters (by DEC permit) and were followed until hibernation in late fall. You can learn more at www.boxturtlesny.com, or sign up with the Land Trust (255-2761) to join the search at 10 am on May 14. The Smiths are interested in all local sightings, so if you see a box turtle and photograph it, they will be happy to add it to their web site!

At left, Parker Redfern and #37, getting friendly at Turtle Day 2010.

A Well-Rounded Experience: The Ulster County 4-H

by Anne Smith



Courtney and Zak

What organization for young people includes projects in horticulture, fashion design, cooking, community service, art and photography, as well as livestock and domestic animal life? 4-H. Courtney Weis joined the Ulster County 4-H at



age five, working first with rabbits, then, at age eight, with dogs. Last year she was a member of a canine drill team that captured Grand Champion title at the New York State Fair.

Courtney's (who, sadly, this article was written) was a Great Dane with titles and over of listening to es such as the canine partner, Zak died shortly before written) was a Great several therapy dog two hundred hours children read at plac-Duzine Elementary School and the Gardiner Library. A language-impaired kid herself, Courtney didn't speak until she was three. She takes special satisfaction in seeing kids gain two to three levels by reading to dogs and has another Great Dane, Ullie, in training for his Therapy Dog International (TDI) title. She also attributes overcoming her own language problems to the 4-H community service and public speaking programs in which she has always been involved.

Courtney is a student at Ulster Community College, where she is majoring in criminal justice. Her goal is a masters degree in the subject from SUNY, Albany, and eventual work with a police K9 unit. In her spare time she shares her expertise as an adult volunteer with the 4-H, works at Dunkin' Donuts in the winter and at a Harley dealer in Newburgh in the summer. She claims to have met nicer people at Harley than at Dunkin' Donuts.

Courtney says, "I learned a lot through 4-H. Life would have

been so different without them. I also learned from my father not to judge people by appearances. Tatoed, facial-haired motorcycle riders are just the same as everybody else." When she was 18, Courtney's father held her hand while she got a family-designed tattoo!

At the Ulster County Fair in New Paltz last summer there were 300 4-H'ers and 2,000 exhibits. For information on 4-H contact Jenny Burkins at the 4-H Office, 340-3990. Back ...

Preserving Gardiner Farmland

by Ray Smith

At a January ceremony, the Town of Gardiner handed the Open Space Institute a check for \$50,000—payment in full on the Town's commitment to assist OSI in purchasing the development rights to Marty and Thelma Kiernan's 132-acre cattle farm on Bruynswick Road in Gardiner. Six months previously the Gardiner Town Board had committed to the amount, but stipulated that it should be raised privately to spare local taxpayers an increase.

A nucleus of six people, including myself, materialized to do the fundraising. OSI had allowed up to three years to raise the money, but the committee agreed unanimously to raise the full \$50,000 by year-end 2010, when the closing was scheduled. Despite numerous phone calls, emails, letters and one-on-one meetings, by early December it seemed clear we'd be lucky to have \$25,000 by the end of 2010. Ironically, it was a significant donation from the Gackstatter Foundation—in Connecticut—that gave the effort a second wind. A total of just over \$50,000 was ultimately collected, from change and bills put in collection cans left with local businesses, and via checks ranging from \$10 to \$2,500.

Checks were sent by 229 donors from 144 households, including 21 households with one residence in Gardiner and another elsewhere, and 27 households based exclusively elsewhere. Perhaps encouraged by the Kiernan Farm success, in January, the Town Board voted unanimously to authorize our Open Space Commission to apply for another Federal Farmland Protection

Farmland...continued page 4

DID YOU KNOW? If only half the households in Gardiner sent \$10 per year, the Gardiner Gazette would be self-supporting. Will you be one of the households that keep us going?

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Editor's Note: This article, and the article "Aging In Place" on page 14 were submitted independently. They present two options for aging with dignity.

Maggie MacDowell At Woodland Pond

by Anne & Ray Smith

If you're a well brought up young lady who, at age 17, disobeys her father and takes flying lessons...how do you top that in later life? Try this: celebrate your 75th birthday with your first sky dive over Gardiner! That's what Maggie MacDowell did. She explains that she watched the sky divers sail over her house for about 10 years, so was excited when her opportunity came and she met her instructor, "a handsome dude who clearly had much to live for so everything was going to be ok." And it was, even though she forgot to spread her arms while in free fall. But she had a nice soft landing in a tandem jump with her dive master, Geoff.



Maggie and Gilly. Photo: Anne Smith

In 2009, Maggie engaged in another adventure—moving into an apartment at Woodland Pond, the newly-created retirement community located in New Paltz. She says that a major advantage to having a retirement community so nearby is that she hasn't really left Gardiner. She has only "partially" left. Maggie did not consider any other retirement community.

Very recently she relinquished her real estate broker's license after 31 years, but continues her intense interest in crafts-weaving, spinning, quilting, felting, etc. She is presently weaving a dog leash! At one time she was shepherdess to 50 ewes and a ram. This was her introduction to shearing and wool. Now she

has Gillie, a Bichon Frise who bears an interesting resemblance to a lamb, and is just as skittish but very loving.

When asked how she feels about living with a lot of old folks Maggie laughed and says she "hangs out a lot with youngsters, those kids who are still in their 70s," that chronological age doesn't matter as there are so many interesting people from whom to learn and enjoy. She and Gillie have a ground-level apartment facilitating access to the lawn adjacent to her screened porch. Maggie is chairman of the garden committee, keeping her tied to the earth. She describes Woodland Pond as a "small village" and with a "fabulous support system." She knows most of the residents at least by name. To further "keep out of trouble" she swims every week in the heated pool, sings with the Pondaliers (Woodland Pond's choral group), attends a weekly Qigong class, attends many of the movies provided for residents, has learned some Euro-dancing, takes advantage of the Woodland Pond Library, is a member of a committee called Decor Design, is in a knitting group, attends lectures, and is newly involved in taking a memoir writing class. A very full life and "no boredom allowed."

And who wouldn't mind not having to rake leaves and shovel snow? Back ...

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Farmland, from page 2

grant to help fund purchase of the development rights to the Hess Farm.

This 75-acre farm is on Sand Hill Road at Marabac Road and adjoins Tantillo's Farm, which fronts on Route 208. Early indications are that the value of development rights may exceed the original estimates. The federal grant would normally be for half the appraised cost of the development rights, and would require matching funds to cover the other half. The Town Board's authorization to apply for the grant did not approve use of Town money, so if the application is successful and a federal grant is awarded, the Town and the Open Space Commission will again need to assemble the matching funds required by the grant.



The Hess Farm on Sand Hill Road. Photo: Mike Reynolds

The Open Space Institute has indicated it would give serious consideration to providing half of the matching funds. There are also indications that other support might come from the Ulster County Open Space and Recreation Fund and the Gackstatter Foundation. The Open Space Commission will also be using a new, searchable database of grant-making organizations, recently made available at the Kingston and Poughkeepsie public libraries, to develop additional funding partners.

Finally, at its February 8 meeting, the Gardiner Town Board added Mike Reynolds and Kelly Tripp to the Open Space Commission, naming Marty Kiernan as an alternate. The other members are Sadell Cantor, Gale Foster, John Friedle, Kathy Hudson, Tim Hunter, Carol LeFevre and Marc Moran, Chair.

Back ...

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Volunteer in the Spotlight

by Barbara Sides

Melissa Fairweather began volunteering as a child. One of Elting's Librarians would pick her up on the way to work so the youngster could shelve books. Today, Melissa coordinates close to 200 volunteers at the Gardiner Library. Some come in daily, some weekly; others present programs or help with special events. "The library is a wonderful place to volunteer because we can always find a niche for any interest, talent or time commitment," Melissa states.



Melissa's parents, Matthew and Emily, served as role models. Both were Scout leaders and her Dad coached baseball. Not surprising then, that after college, Melissa volunteered at a playgroup for handicapped toddlers and their siblings. When she became a mother, Melissa became very active in La Leche League (LLL), a breastfeeding support and information organization. While raising three sons, she found the time to become the chief administrator for LLL of Eastern New York State and later, Division Publications Administrator for the Eastern United States. Melissa still volunteers with the New Paltz group.

As her children grew, Melissa served on the boards of the Huguenot Nursery School and High Meadow School, spent time each week at her sons' classes, coached soccer, volunteered for the PTA and for the Hudson Valley Golden Retriever Club. The beginning of her volunteer efforts at the Gardiner Library began in 1989 with a box of books that needed shelving. When Melissa's middle son was at a library story time, and the baby amused himself, Melissa asked if she could help; she was soon filing cards in the card catalog. When the youngest, Gavin, went to school, Melissa volunteered one day per week at the library. That led, in 2000, to a Town Board approved job subbing when either Librarian Peg Lotvin or Children's Librarian Alice O'Connor was on vacation. Melissa now works part time, a few days per week at the library, but still volunteers many more hours than she is paid for.

When the new Library building was ready for books, Melissa coordinated a 200-person human book chain to move the adult fiction section. The effort continued over the next week and overall saved the library \$8,000 in moving costs. "I get such a sense of satisfaction and have learned so much interacting with other people. When you're passionate about something, sharing that passion with others is very satisfying. You get far more back than you give when you volunteer," Melissa adds.

Thanks to Melissa and many other Gardiner volunteers with varying interests, volunteerism, with its many benefits to the community, is alive and well in Gardiner.

Back ...

Gardiner In Transition?

by Dan Guenther, Brook Farm Project, New Paltz

At times, it appears that our civilization is disintegrating from the clash of the simultaneous events of economic collapse, climate change and the dwindling supply of cheap fossil fuel known as "Peak Oil." What has taken decades for our culture to develop now seems at risk.

Most communities are hunkering down in an attempt to ride out this "perfect storm." But a growing number of towns and cities are looking to their own uniqueness, their collective genius and their local resilience to thrive in its wake. Communities as disparate as Boulder, Colorado, Sarasota, Florida and Bedford, New York, are joining hundreds of others around the world in something called "The Transition Movement."

The founder of the idea, Rob Hopkins, was a Permaculture teacher in the United Kingdom. A few years ago, when he heard about Peak Oil and climate change, he decided to apply Permaculture thinking—"positive, solution-based, design-led response"—to solve the problem. Rob focuses on the silver lining of the storm clouds and believes that a low-carbon world can be enticing.

The tenets of Transition are profound, and yet, profoundly simple; communities and regions focus on their inherent strengths

and resilience, and become more self-reliant and less dependent on heavily globalized systems for food, energy, transportation, health and housing. Hasn't Gardiner already begun the transition with its Community Supported Agriculture farms, Hamlet revitalization, Gardiner Day and open space preservation? It's obvious that we have the uniqueness, collective genius and resilience to weather this storm.

A Transition spokesperson and trainer will deliver a keynote speech at SUNY New Paltz on Thursday evening, April 28th. For more info on The Transition Movement visit www.transition-sarasota.org.

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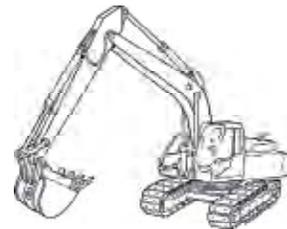
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This May, An Even Sweeter Cupcake Festival

by Laurie Willow

The Main Street Gang, a small group of Gardiner business owners committed to keeping the Hamlet open for business and growing, is diligently working on the details for the Third Annual Gardiner Cupcake Festival. This event showcases the sweeter side of the community, closing off Main Street for the day and inviting the neighbors from all around the Hudson Valley to an old-fashioned block party. Crafters, musicians, children's activities, wine tasting and an unlimited supply of cupcakes of every size and variety (this year from more than a dozen bakeries) will be tucked under commercial-sized tents, making the event a go, rain or shine, on Sunday, May 15, 2011 from 11:00 to 5:00.

The cupcake competition has become more "decorated" since last year, with the addition of celebrity judges to taste and review professional and amateur entries. Rachel Kramer Bussel and Nichelle Stephens, founding editors of *Cupcakes Take the Cake*, an internationally-acclaimed blog, are just two of the judges who will decide on the winning cupcakes. King Arthur Flour is sponsoring the amateur categories and will be providing prizes.

With such an energetic group, additions to the festival are happening weekly. It's a must attend event because "life should be one big celebration." The pride this "gang" has in this community



The cupcake steering committee: back row, Carl Zatz and Heidi Hill Haddard. Front row, Laurie Willow, Robin Hayes, Jodi Whitehead and Colleen Rifkind. The cupcakes were created by Tina Rakitze, the new pastry chef at the Village Market and Bakery.

has turned into an annual celebration that honors the Hamlet and strengthens their ties to it. For more information about this year's festival, visit www.gardinercupcakefestival.com or call the Cupcake Hotline at 845 256-1122.

Back ...

Local Elections, from page 1

Why? We can only hypothesize. People may think what happens on the national level will have more impact on their day-to-day lives. They may be better informed about what's happening in the larger world than in their own town. And yes, of course, Obama had rock star status, but presidential candidates always have the resources to saturated us with news about them.

In 2009, a Town Board seat was decided by 33 votes—it was a lackluster year with low voter turnout. In comparison, the 2003 local election had 394 more voters (at a time that the town had less population), and the election was decided by 334 votes. That election broke state records for voter turn-out; there were hot local issues on the table, and residents were more informed and more involved. Clearly, voters saw the direct connection between their vote and their lives.

Here at *The Gazette*, we see the connection every year, and our mission has been to keep that connection alive by keeping Gardiner informed. We've tried to make the case for why you should care about what happens in your backyard. Decisions made locally affect our quality of life, the types of businesses and jobs and houses available, and the types of recreational activities we can enjoy locally. Have we made the case? If you're not registered, now is the time. All you need is a voter registration form. Go to: www.co.ulster.ny.us/elections/registration.htm or call the Board of Elections at 845 334-5470.

And a note to parents: has your son or daughter turned 18? Please make an attempt to get them to register!

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Business As Usual

This column features two Gardiner businesses per issue.

Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow. Get Your Haircut Locally!

by Laurie Willow

For a while, Gardiner had no barbers. Now, by rule of serendipity, we have two. They both opened their shops on almost the same day last May. And they are both, with their different specialties, doing quite well!

Carmelo's is in the Ulster Savings Bank building at Ireland Corners, at the corner of Route 44/55 and 208. Chuck Fulco, the owner and sole operator of Carmelo's, has over 30 years experience in barbering. He has had his own shop, as well as worked in other shops. He will cut your hair, trim your beard, and will come to your house if you are disabled.

Five years ago, Chuck actually retired, and he and his wife Valerie moved back to the area from Portchester. Why? You guessed it, grandchildren! Two...ages three and five. Valerie watches them three days a week, and Chuck just couldn't sit around the house. He opened the new barber shop.



Chuck Fulco in front of Carmelo's, his barber shop in the Ulster Savings Bank building. Photo: Laurie Willow

Carmelo's is open from 9:00 to 5:00, Tuesday through Friday and 8:00 to 2:00 on Saturday. He specializes in senior citizens, and considers himself an "old fashioned" barber. You can call Chuck at 845 214-2331.

Anthony DeStefano opened The Main Street Barber Shop in the Hamlet the same day as the 2010 Gardiner Cupcake Festival. Anthony comes from a large family in Modena, where he was born and raised. He is a man of many skills; he is an Elementary Ed-certified teacher, sometimes substitutes in the Walkkill School System and also worked as a union welder for seven years until his company was outsourced.



Anthony DeStefano outside the Main Street Barber Shop, next to Tiger Lily Jewelers and the Village Market. Photo: Laurie Willow

Anthony is happy to accommodate clients in their own homes. He specializes in Gentlemen cuts, fades, skin-fades, tape-ups, flat-tops and edge-ups! He is good with children, and they are good with him.

His hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 4:00 to 6:00. Thursday from 10:00 to 6:00 and Saturday from 10:00 to 5:00. Other times by appointment. Find The Main Street Barber Shop on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/pages/The-Main-Street-Barber-Shop/125232070824319, or just give Anthony a call at 845 255-2151.

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Wright's Apple Farm

by Laurie Willow

On a cold day in February, I dropped in at Wright's Farm Stand on Route 208, had a cup of coffee and bought five pounds of snack-sized apples for 99¢. Then I looked at the amazing display of homemade jams, jellies and relishes before sitting down with Ted Wright, his daughter Tammy and her husband Mike Boylan, and Ted's grandson Colin, to hear the story of the family farm. (Mike and Tammy's daughters, Samantha and Mackenzie also work the farm.)

Ted's parents, Charles and Elizabeth Wright, bought the farm in 1903. Back then it was a dairy farm, and as the family grew to include 10 children, Charles and Elizabeth also planted apple trees, cultivated a large family garden and raised chickens for eggs and meat. They took the milk to the creamery in Gardiner in milk cans. In 1904, they opened a fruit stand under the maple tree which still stands by the old farmhouse. Their first commercial apple orchard was planted in 1910, mostly in McIntosh apples. Of Charles and Elizabeth's 10 children, only Ted, with his wife Ann, stayed to work the farm.

In 1959, the cows were sold and the Wrights went into full-time fruit and vegetable farming. They have spent the last 52 years—as the farm increased from 108 acres to 500 acres—planting, worrying about the weather, hiring migrant labor, storing apples and finding markets for fruit. I asked, why farming? There are so many other options with

less work, fewer headaches and more financial reward. The answer, from all three generations, was immediate; "It's the lifestyle," they all agreed. "It's about taking care of the land, working it in each season. It's about renewing life and hope and inspiration each spring and working together as a family with a common goal.



Mike and Tammy Boylan with their children Colin, Mackenzie (with scarf) and Samantha outside Wright's Apple Farm. Inset, Ted Wright, Senior.

What can the Gardiner community do to support the farm? We can speak out against the plethora of government regulations that strangle small businesses with laws and paperwork that keep them from competing with corporate agriculture, but the big answer is obvious, BUY FROM THEM! The farm is open all year, every day, from 8:00 to 6:00 (8:00 to 7:00 in the summer). Visit www.eatapples.com and

discover all the wonderful offerings at Wright's Farm, from apple picking and picnics in the orchards to great homemade pies, jams and jellies. Skip the supermarket. Instead, stop by Wrights, and make it part of your buy-local routine. We all share in the benefits of keeping farms alive and well in Gardiner. Back ...



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Wanna Ride? More Fun Things To Do In Gardiner

by Alexandra Ciobanu, Hudson Valley Equestrian
Team team member, age 16

Always wanted to ride a horse and never found the time or right stable? Ever thought of joining an equestrian team? Recently, Diana Maglio, owner of Horses and Hounds Stables, and Jennifer Connor, trainer, started the Hudson Valley Equestrian Team here in Gardiner, New York.



Alexandra Ciobanu and her horse, Maro. Photo: Jennifer Connor

The team competes under the Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA). The mission of the IEA is to introduce students in private and public middle and secondary schools (primarily age 11 through 19) to equestrian sports, to provide information concerning the creation and development of school-associated equestrian programs, to develop understanding and appreciation of equestrian sports through organized student competitions, and to provide additional equine educational opportunities. Also, currently there are a few opportunities for these students to earn scholarship money. Through the IEA, students may have the opportunity to earn scholarships towards their college education. Riders do not need a horse to participate.

Our team competed on February 13th at Country Farms Stables in Medford, Long Island. Parents and teammates had great fun!

This newly formed Hudson Valley Equestrian Team performed in many divisions on horses randomly chosen and did very well, some placing second and third in their divisions. Not bad for a first showing!

Our team is composed of girls ages 11 to 17. The rules and regulations are similar to college equestrian teams. The Hudson Valley Equestrian Team is open to all middle school and high school students in the area: boys and girls. Training and meetings are at Horses and Hounds Stables, Inc. 1470 Albany Post Road Gardiner, New York, 12525 (845 895-9376), www.horsesandhoundsstable.com.

So if you wanna ride, come join us! Great fun for all! [Back ...](#)



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Third Annual Art in Gardiner To Raise Scholarship Money

by Michelle Terwilliger-Hathaway

Dramatic new paintings of Gardiner landscapes will be created and sold during the third annual *Art in Gardiner: Plein Air Paint Out* event and auction, scheduled for Saturday, June 4th, rain or shine. Organized by the Gardiner Association of Businesses (GAB), the annual event features paintings by adult and child artists, and raises scholarship money for local high school graduates.



Katia Gushue, on Farmer's Turnpike during *Art in Gardiner*, 2009

Traditionally, the event had been held in the Fall, but a move to warmer temperatures this year could draw a different pool of artists and will provide painters with a different pallet of colors to work with, said event organizer Heidi Meier-Diponio, a local artist and art teacher at Circleville Elementary School.

Participating adult artists will check in from 7:30 to 9:00AM, before heading out to spend a good part of the day capturing beautiful vistas along roadsides, hilltops, sidewalks, creek and

riverbanks, orchards and farms. They later return to Town Hall where their works are framed and prepared for auction. The public is invited to come view the completed works and mingle with artists, collectors, admirers and prospective buyers during a wine and hors d'ouvres reception at Town Hall beginning at 5:00PM. The auction follows, beginning at 6:00PM. Last year, more than \$5,000 in paintings were sold at the auction.

Art in Gardiner usually draws about 25 adult artists from throughout the Hudson Valley. Events for children will also take place, though on different days. This year, two workshops will be held at the Gardiner Library, on Saturday, May 7, for aspiring artists in kindergarten to fifth grade; and on Saturday, May 14, for artists in middle school and high school. Workshop instructors will include Mrs. Diponio, and local artist/art teacher Pattie Eakin of the Bruynswick Art Studio & Gallery. Works from the Children's Paint Out/Workshops will be on display at the Gardiner Library starting Sunday, May 15 in coordination with the Gardiner Cupcake Festival. A special reception for families of young artists will also be held that day. Last year, 17 children participated in the Paint Out, a huge hit!

This year's Best in Show award for adult artists will again include a cash prize. The top four adult winners will show their work at local businesses throughout the summer. Winners in the child artist categories will be awarded savings bonds and art supplies.

Artist registrations are available at www.gardinernybusiness.com. To host a participating artist at your place of business or property, please call 845 641-4605 or email heidi@diponio.com. Back ...

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The Rest of You Should Be Jealous ...

by Carol O'Biso

The Gardiner Gazette has previously reported on Ulster County's proposal to pay towns to perform winter maintenance of County-owned roads within their jurisdictions, and on the fact that the Town of Gardiner had signed a one-year shared services agreement



with the County. In a test of the concept, Gardiner's Highway Department was to perform winter snow removal and sanding on McKinstry Road and Sand Hill Road, a total of five miles.

Well, a miracle has indeed occurred on McKinstry, and it's called the Gardiner Highway Department. For all the years we've lived here, McKinstry Road has been "the land the snow-plows forgot." The plows did get here, of course, but it was usually well after the white stuff had already been coming down for a long time, and they came back infrequently as storms wore on.

When the first big storm last winter started, my husband and I decided we had time to run an errand in Highland before the roads got difficult. It was a bad judgement call; by the time we left Highland conditions were poor, and deteriorating quickly. We arrived in Gardiner expecting the usual: 44/55 would be reasonable; Albany Post Road would be bad; McKinstry Road would be ridiculous. We were correct on the first two counts, but, unbelievably, McKinstry was perfectly plowed, and it stayed perfectly plowed throughout every snowfall that followed, in a winter of many snowfalls.

Our thanks to the Gardiner Town Board for signing the shared services agreement, and to the Gardiner Highway Department for taking on their new task with a vengeance. We hope the experiment worked well for both Town and County, and that the Town of Gardiner will sign a 400-year shared services agreement with the county before the start of next winter.

Back ...

Gardiner Singers Return Free Daily Performances Throughout Town

by Ann Guenther, Gardiner resident and naturalist

Local residents are invited to enjoy hundreds of concerts this spring, presented by singers performing all over town. Some have been practicing here for weeks; others have just arrived after vacationing in the South, and as far away as Central and South America. And while their songs vary in melody and volume, the intensity and passion are universal.

The first singers were practicing one sunny morning in mid-February just beyond my bird feeder. While two female Cardinals were rolling sunflower seeds around in their beaks, a male Cardinal, after a winter of quiet peeps and cheeps amounting largely to "Where's the food," or "Look out for the hawk," began emitting a few longer chirps in preparation for the full-throated song that would soon be needed to establish his territory. Unimpressed, the females continued eating.

Later that week, a White-Throated Sparrow whistled several high thin notes. After weeks of practice, the song lengthened and grew more lyrical, with its sweet melodic cadence: "Poor Sam Peabody, Peabody." (I did not make that up; you'll find it in bird books everywhere, along with its northern counterpart: "Oh Sweet Canada, Canada.") Less lyrical, but still endearing, is the song of the Phoebe. To call him a "singer" is a bit of a stretch, with his nasal, "pheebee," but I always welcome that buzzy sound when the pair of phoebes returns to build their nest under the porch roof, entertaining us with a miraculous procession of eggs—hatchlings—fledglings.

Dressed in their tiny tuxedos, Chickadees launch their plaintive

Singers...continued page 12

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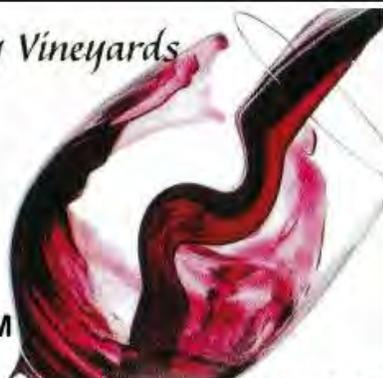
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Singers, from page 11

two-note whistle, “Deeee-doo. Deeee-doo.” (The “chick-a-dee-dee-dee” refrain is reserved for communicating other messages, such as: “Let’s go someplace else.”) Sometimes, a bush seems to emit a litany of different bird songs, but the plagiarizer usually gives himself away by inserting a quiet “meow.” This saucy gray Catbird, tail aloft, belts out one song after another in perfect imitation of a Cardinal, Blue Jay and even the local Oriole, whose song is unique and complex. Yet, the rapper with the most songs, flashing its wings and tail in great exuberance, is the Mocking Bird. An observer of one Mocking Bird in Georgia counted over four-hundred different songs or sounds.

In a surprising move, new-comers to the Gardiner area are up-staging other birds. They’ve been arriving here from the South over the past few decades, probably due to climate change. These pugnacious little birds belt out the loudest, most penetrating songs, and they practice year-round. The first time I heard the loud and incessant refrain of a Carolina Wren—from my bed (before sunrise!)—I wanted to throw my pillow out the window at it. Not many people have seen or even know about this handsomely-dressed, sparrow-sized bird sporting bright shades of brown, white eye-liner and an up-turned tail. It enjoys living in dense undergrowth and around gardens, but beware: if it nests close to your house, you may lose sleep.

To hear my favorite singers I head to the nearby woods around sunset. Near the edge, the Wood Thrush sits atop a tree stump, letting loose its flute-like “ee-o-lay, ee-o-lay.” Deeper into the woods, the Hermit Thrush sings its gorgeous song, also clear and flutelike. But if I’m very lucky, I’ll sometimes hear the most enchanting singer of all, the Veery. Peterson’s field guide describes the song as “liquid, breezy, ethereal, wheeling downward.” It’s a song that can work magic. Late one afternoon I lingered so long in the woods listening to a Veery that I became disoriented and lost my way. It was as though its song had penetrated my mind and rendered *me* ethereal

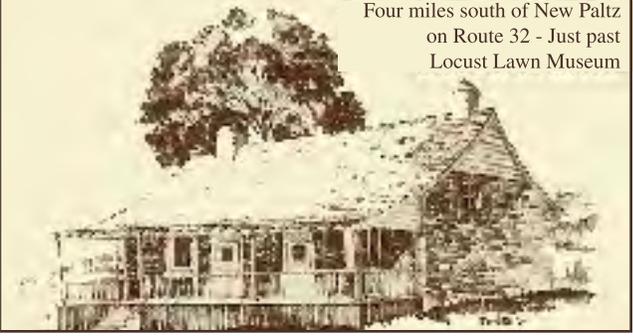
Don’t let yourself get lost in the woods—but don’t miss these concerts. The singers are at their peak, the seats are best before the full curtain of leaves hides the performers—and the admission price is affordable to all. *Editor’s Note: There are a number of web sites where it is possible to listen to audio clips of bird songs. One is www.birdjam.com/learn.php.* Back ...

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Just A Bite ...

This column reports on exemplary offerings from area restaurants.

Wednesday Wings at the Gold Fox!

by Carol O'Biso

Four beers on tap, 30 bottled beers (including a gluten-free variety) and over 20 flavors of wings ... what's not to like? And on Wednesdays, you'll like it even more because wings are 35 cents each, all day. According to George Vlavis, whose family owns the Gold Fox, the three most popular wing flavors are Sweet Thai Chili, Bourbon and Garlic Parmesan, but you can also get—to name a few—Garlic, Sweet Honey, Pineapple Teriyaki, Cajun, Jamaican Jerk, Lemon Pepper Vinaigrette, Barbecue, Honey Barbecue or Honey Mustard.

In our house, a tentative, "Any thoughts about dinner?" is code for, "Get in the car. We're going to the Gold Fox." If you're looking for trendy décor, this is not your spot, but a platter of wings, a house salad (a large portion of lettuces, roasted red peppers, croutons, tomatoes and cucumbers, served with toasted bread) and a Sam Adams always work for me, especially when they're served up by the smiling face of bar manager, Jack, in a place filled with friendly, familiar people to wave at and chat to.

For Buffalo Wings you do, of course, get to choose mild medium or hot ...but then there's Holy Hotness. Let me tell you about Holy Hotness Wings.... they're HOT. Are we clear about this? My husband prides himself on a tolerance for hot foods that is off the Richter scale for most people. Still, he could not finish a whole plate of Holy Hotness wings, and while watching him try, I was mentally calculating how long it would take the Gardiner Fire and Rescue Squad to reach Ireland Corners. Spontaneous combustion seemed imminent.

The Gold Fox makes all its own wing sauces. Holy Hotness is made with fresh habanero peppers, rated between 100,000 and 350,000 on the Scoville scale, a rating system developed in 1912, because pharmacist Wilbur Scoville had some time on his hands and decided to use it figuring out which peppers were most likely to blow people's heads off. By contrast, the



Holy Hotness wings at the Gold Fox. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

more common jalapeno pepper rates a mere 2,500 to 8,000 Scoville units.

There are, of course, other great offerings in the bar, like fried calamari, hamburgers, fish and chips and so on, and you can, of course, get wings on any day of the week (\$7.75 for a dozen) but Wednesday Wings, when wings are only 35 cents each, has become so popular that you can now get them in the restaurant section, too.

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Aging In Place

by Yvonne Allenson, Former Member and Chair,
Office for the Aging Advisory Council

As Bette Davis once said, "aging isn't for sissies." Parenthetically, if you know who Bette Davis is, then I am reaching the right audience. In spite of the search for the fountain of youth, the aging process inexorably takes its toll on the body— chronic disease, decreased energy, aching joints, decline in visual acuity. The big question is, how does one deal with this change? By reacting, or preparing?

According to an analysis of Ulster County demographic data, "the county's aging population is increasing and will become a larger percentage of the population." Between the years 2000 and 2035, the county's overall population is projected to increase 6% (due to births and the influx of new residents), but the number of seniors over 60, 65 and 85 years old will increase dramatically —72%, 79% and 100% respectively—due to the aging of the existing population.

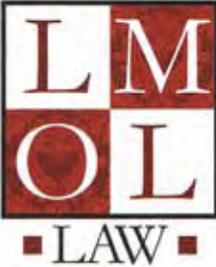
When I examined the age of Gardiner residents in 2008, there were 862 over age 60 and 326 over 70. A survey by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) reports that almost nine out of ten people over 60 wish to live out their lives in familiar surroundings. This concept of staying in your home for as long as possible and maintaining your independence and dignity is promoted at federal, state and local levels because it is cost effective.

There are many examples of grassroots community efforts to create viable ways for people to grow old at home. Beacon Hill Village in Boston pioneered "the aging in place" approach ten years ago. The 400 members pay yearly dues in exchange for the security of knowing that a pre-screened carpenter, chef, computer expert or home health aid is one phone call away. The Town of Montgomery (which includes Maybrook, Walden and Montgomery) has organized a volunteer program called the Seniors' Independence Project, designed to assist with transportation needs, simple chores, light housekeeping, yard work and snow removal. Its brochure lists pre-screened vendors who also give a discount when asked.

In Ulster County, the Family of Woodstock received a grant from the New York State Office for the Aging to explore the

needs and current support systems for maintaining seniors in their homes. This study, which covers the northern half of the county, may serve as a template for the rest of the county. In particular, it is designed to focus on issues related to rural areas. One of the key problems is transportation; imagine what would happen if the keys to your car were taken away. In the 2010 Office for the Aging survey of seniors, transportation ranked near the top as an issue that impacts their lives. It is especially a problem in rural communities. Currently, UCAT (Ulster County Area Transit) and RSVP (Retired Seniors Volunteer Program) provide some assistance. The AARP is the lead agency in legislation to improve pedestrian safety. "Complete Streets" legislation, currently before both houses of the legislature in Albany, requires engineers to consider the needs of all users of the roads: to provide crosswalks, to time lights to allow seniors to cross roads safely and to install sidewalks. Safe pedestrian traffic will encourage people to walk, and minimize their reliance on automobiles.

Statistics show that seniors are more likely to get killed on our roads because of poor pedestrian accommodations that fail to adjust to their needs. Zoning laws such as Gardiner's, which encourage housing in the hamlet, will provide an environment for more walking and less riding. With the support of the County Executive, Mike Hein, the Office for the Aging plans to make the "aging in place through community empowerment initiative" a priority in 2011. Since Gardiner's Master Plan mentions the need to address the quality of life of its older residents, this may be the time to start preparing for the future. With surrounding communities working together, we can help older residents live independently with dignity and a sense of community. Back ...



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Want To Help Run Your Town?

by Councilwoman Nadine Lemmon

Ever contemplated getting involved, giving back, having a voice? Well, have we got an opportunity for you!

Every two years, the Town of Gardiner holds local elections for various positions in the Town. This fall there will be a number available: two openings for Town Board, one for Supervisor, one for Judge and one for Highway Superintendent. And, as always, we need candidates to step up to the plate!

I never dreamed of getting involved in "politics." First, in the back of my brain were all of the nasty things I'd heard about politicians, and more specifically, LOCAL politicians. Second, I'm a very private person—the thought of being a public official was counter to everything I had grown up with. But now, after having served on the Town Board for almost 8 years, I've got to say: this has been one of the most important, and rewarding, experiences of my life.

In New York State, we have what is called a "Home Rule" law. This law gives extensive power to local governments to decide what is best for their community. So, as a town, we can develop policies and pass laws that address our specific needs and situations. The Town Board in Gardiner, which has five voting members elected by the community, makes the final decisions on where our community is heading.

I came close to moving away from Gardiner in 2001—there was extensive development pressure in the Town, and I became aware that our Town Board was not addressing the issue head on. Controversial subdivisions—including the proposed luxury development on 2,500 acres of the Shawangunk Ridge called "Awosting Reserve"—were threatening everything that I loved here. Instead of running away, I decided to see what I could do to change things. I decided to get involved.

Looking back over the last eight years, I can say with confidence that the old adage that "nothing ever gets done in politics" is simply not true. The Town Board, along with a committed group of volunteers, has taken significant steps. It created and adopted a new Master Plan and Zoning Law, an Open Space Plan and Law and a Hamlet Master Plan. It renovated and enlarged the Town Hall and built a new library, renovated the hamlet sewer system to make it environmentally-friendly, raised significant funding for sidewalks and hamlet revitalization efforts and permanently preserved open space—including Awosting Reserve's 2,500 acres and the Kieran Farm.

There is more work to do, and, though I regret having to make the decision, it is time for me to pass the torch. If you are interested, please contact either the Democratic or Republican Party Chairs: Leon Steiner or Pattie Jacobsen. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have: 255-4374.

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Updates On A Few Things Of Interest ...

by Laurie Willow

The Fate of the Former Library Building

What's happening? At the January 11th Town Board meeting there was a discussion regarding the future of the former library building. A motion was made to sell the building (a \$100,000 offer had already been made by a private citizen). It was defeated by a three to two vote. Voting for the sale were Nadine Lemmon and Warren Weigand. Voting against the sale were Rich Koenig, Carmine Mele and Supervisor Joe Katz. At that point, a motion was made to try to find a tenant who will renovate the building at his or her own expense. It would be leased from the town at a nominal fee in order to allow the renovator/lessee a chance to run it at a profit and to recover their renovation costs. The Town Board voted to authorize Supervisor Katz to look for possible tenants.

That motion passed three to two, again with the same split as above. If you have any ideas for ways to rent or use this building so that it can pay for itself, please contact Supervisor Katz at 255-9675.

Sidewalks in downtown Gardiner

It was in March of 2005 that the Town of Gardiner was awarded \$365,000 to build sidewalks on Main Street. And now, 6 years later, Supervisor Joe Katz truly believes we will have at least Phase

Two this year. This phase is 100% funded and goes from the Library, up the rail trail to Main Street, then turns left and goes to the Reformed Church on both sides of the street.

Phase one is from Gardiner Gables to the Rail Trail, and is not yet scheduled. Supervisor Katz expressed amazement at the vast amount of paperwork that this project has engendered, and has begun to feel that he has now spent most of his adult life trying to get through that paperwork.

The end is in sight. Some day, when we can walk from the post office to the Deli without getting run over or falling in a snow bank, it will all be worth it, eh?

Cell Towers in town

At its March 1, 2011 meeting, the Town Board unanimously voted to approve cell tower lease agreements for two tower sites on municipal land in Gardiner. The agreements are with Wireless EDGE LLC, a tower developer selected by the Board.

The proposed sites are at the Town highway garage on South Mountain Road and at the rear of the ball field next to Town Hall. The leases would provide the Town with shared revenue for each antenna array placed on one of the towers. The designs and dimensions of the proposed towers are unclear at this time. However, it is expected that Wireless EDGE will submit formal project applications in the coming months. It will be the Town Board's responsibility to review those applications, analyze their visual and environmental impacts, and decide whether to approve the projects.

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Consortium, from page 1

job, property taxes continue unabated, and too many people are paying double digit percentages of their incomes to keep their homes off the auction block. Many more are depleting their savings to forestall foreclosure, which takes not just the amount of your delinquent taxes, but whatever equity may still reside in your home.

The state's resources, on the other hand, come mainly from an income-based tax, but also from fees, corporate taxes and transaction taxes, among many other sources, not to mention the illusory lottery millions. In addition, the state has shifted more and more funding from its broadly-based income stream to the property tax, and also persists in ignoring a Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) lawsuit decision. The court ordered the state to increase its funding of schools, which would have relieved the property tax burden considerably. *You* try ignoring a court order and see how far it gets you.

The Consortium is focused exclusively on passing the Omnibus Tax Solution Bill, which contains a circuit-breaker that ties your property taxes to your income. The state (not your neighbor) makes up the difference. The League of Women Voters has hailed the bill as the answer to the property tax crisis, and I want to stress that the bill has multiple supporters and sponsors on both sides of the aisle. Objections arise on how to fund the amount the state will pick up, not whether the bill has merit. Naturally the state pleads poverty, in good times as well as

in a recession. Since the state has exempted 800 billion worth of property from taxes; has given numerous tax breaks to multinational corporations that have yet to produce promised jobs; continues to dole out perks and privileges for state officials; and is noted for its waste, mismanagement, and profligacy, it's hard not to be furious at its response to the disaster looming with each property tax bill.

The new governor immediately revived the failed Paterson tax levy "cap," deliberately leading people to believe that the proposed "2% cap" will actually cap their individual increase at 2% per year. Not true. For *this* school tax year the Wallkill school budget was only about 1.8% higher—below the proposed 2% cap—but due to the complexities of the tax law, the tax levy in the district was 6.8% higher, and in Gardiner we saw increases of 10% or 11% (without enhanced STAR), and state aid decreased by 9.6%. A similar escalation would occur even if a cap were in place.

I'm a Democrat, so trust me when I say that Democratic governor Cuomo's proposed cap is snake oil... not property tax relief, and when it comes to middle class taxpayers, state government may turn out to be a nest of vipers.

Belonging to a consortium advances a single goal, though its individual members may have entirely different agendas in other areas. Through the strength of the Omnibus Consortium we have succeeded in making the property tax crisis a priority in Albany. If you need more info, please don't hesitate to all call me (845 256-0082) or visit www.Omnibustaxsolution.org. Back ...

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About This Newsletter

The Gardiner Gazette is a quarterly publication funded entirely by advertising and contributions. Release dates as follows:

- Jan. 15 (Submission deadline Dec. 1)
- Apr. 15 (Submission deadline Mar. 1)
- Jul. 15 (Submission deadline Jun. 1)
- Oct. 15 (Submission deadline Sep. 1)

Gardiner Gazette articles are written by community members, not by reporters. If you would like to submit an article for consideration contact us at gardinergazette@earthlink.net.

A Few Local Events You'll Want to Know About ...

- on April 23rd, 9:00 to 3:00, the Easter Plant Sale at the Gardiner Firehouse to benefit Gardiner Day.
- on April 30th, from 9:00 to 3:00, the Saint Charles Borromeo Church Rummage Sale, Church Hall, across the street from the church (call 255-1374). The kitchen will be open for light breakfast and complete lunch.
- on July 18th, 1:00 to 7:00, the American Red Cross Blood Drive at the Town Hall.

The Gardiner Gazette Advertising Lottery ...

Everyone wins eventually ...

Advertising is a good thing, but not every business can afford it.

Just give us your business card!

For each issue of the Gazette we'll pick one card "out of the hat" for a free ad.

Mail cards to "Free Ad, Gardiner Gazette, PO Box 333, Gardiner, NY

12525," hand them to Advertising Rep Michelle Hathaway, or email digital copies to mihathaway@hvc.rr.com.



• and, though by the time you get this, the April 16th Majestic Park Easter Egg Hunt will already have happened, you can always look forward to Gardiner Day itself, on the 10th of September.

At left: local residents Alden Hathaway and cousin Alexandra O'Neill at last year's Easter Egg hunt at Majestic Park, a fundraiser for the Gardiner Day Committee. Photo: Michelle Terwilliger Hathaway