

The Gardiner Gazette

WINTER 2022 | ISSUE 52

A CALL TO COMMUNITY

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SKIING THE GUNKS

by L.A. McMahon and Veronica O'Keefe Ruoff

The Gardiner area, affectionately known by outdoor enthusiasts as "The Gunks," is well known for rock climbing, biking, and hiking. Cross-Country Skiing is perhaps the lesser-known sport of our region, though its history here is no less lengthy. And, in large part, due to the dedicated enthusiasts of Shawangunk Nordic Ski Association (SNSA), a Gardiner-based non-profit with a mission to "promote and support all aspects of cross-country skiing in the Shawangunk Mountains and surrounding Hudson Valley Region," skinny skis are making a comeback.

Its co-founders and primary drivers, Mark Ruoff, Veronica O'Keefe Ruoff,

and Eric Weigeshoff, all reside in Gardiner. In a recent interview with Mark and Veronica (who you might recognize from the Mountain Brauhaus Restaurant) the duo brimmed with enthusiasm and recounted how over the past few years there has been exponential growth in attendance at the ski clinics and races they organize each year (snow and Covid permitting). SNSA works closely with Ann Gregory, coach of the New Paltz High School Nordic Ski Team, to coordinate these events. Mark is Assistant Coach for the team. Both New Paltz and Wallkill High School students assist with the

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Photo: Veronica Ruoff

TOWN SNOW REMOVAL

by Superintendent Brian Stiscia, Town of Gardiner Highway

It is important to be reminded of a few things in regards to snow removal and winter driving. During and after snow removal events, highway agencies like the Town of Gardiner Highway Department, in the course of plowing, receive emails or phone calls regarding damage to mailboxes or garbage/recycling cans, either from snow plows directly or from the force of snow being thrown by plows. If such damage is indeed caused by snow removal, it is not done intentionally. It is, however, an unfortunate consequence of snow removal.

Placement of all garbage cans for pickup should be in the driveway – NOT in the traveling way of the road. The best method to protect your

mailbox during the winter months is to ensure it is properly attached to a post that is in good condition. Keep the mailbox assembly simple to limit impact surface area for plowed snow.

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Photo: Brian Stiscia

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CIVIC NEWS

CLIMATE SMART GARDINER (CSG)

The Town of Gardiner has completed the pre-requisite actions for the NYSEDA Clean Energy Communities Program, which brings us closer to obtaining a \$5,000 NYSEDA grant for green projects. Also on the energy front, the Town is participating in the "Mid-Hudson Regional Solar Mapping Project," designed to help assess which Gardiner land may be suitable for "solar arrays," which, simply put, are a collection of multiple solar panels that generate electricity as a system. We are currently considering a solar array at the Gardiner landfill. Decreasing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions is always a priority, and Gardiner's LED streetlight conversion with the NYPA, is designed to lower costs and decrease GHG emissions. To inform and direct our planning, we are also working on a Community GHG Emissions Inventory, compiling data which will help us to be more targeted on how and where we focus our GHG mitigation efforts. Our continued efforts with the Community Choice Aggregation (CSA) program makes it

possible to offer the best green deal on renewable electricity to residents while we continue our efforts toward a community solar option designed to reduce Gardiner residents' electric bills by about 10% annually. For more info: www.facebook.com/climatesmartgardiner.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION (ECC)

Gardiner Well Water Testing


All of us living in Gardiner rely upon wells for our drinking water. In order to help protect the quantity and quality of our wells, the Town of Gardiner has established an Ad-Hoc Water Protection Committee which is working with the New York Rural Water Association (NYRWA), a private, non-profit organization, on a drinking water protection plan. NYRWA is a federally-funded organization that provides free technical assistance to rural and small communities across New York.

An initial step in the development of a drinking water protection plan is to collect information on Gardiner's well water quality and quantity through a

ECO-VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY & SAVE THE DATE

Help keep Gardiner beautiful by volunteering at the **11th Gardiner Riverkeeper Sweep**. This event is co-sponsored by Climate Smart Gardiner and will occur on Saturday, May 7th, 2022, 9 am-12 pm. Volunteers are needed to help clean up debris along the Wallkill River and its banks, as well as the tributaries that feed the river. The Gardiner Riverkeeper Sweep is our annual day of service to the Wallkill River. Both land and water volunteer opportunities are available. Last year, Gardiner was one of 25 project sites where volunteers removed a total of 29 tons of debris from along the Hudson River and its tributaries!

Special Position Available (Water Crew Leader): If you have a rowboat or canoe, are a strong paddler, and can lead others on the Wallkill River from Farmers Turnpike to the Transfer Station, this opportunity is for you! Volunteer registration begins in April. **For more information, or to volunteer in any capacity,** please contact Rebecca Carucci, reb747505@gmail.com.



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short survey which is now accessible online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/GardinerWellSurvey. Among other things, the survey will ask if you are interested in having your well tested by the NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) at no cost to you. In order to be selected for participation, please complete the online survey as soon as possible.

To ensure a comprehensive and thorough sampling of Town water, 20 to 25 wells will be selected by the NYRWA Hydrogeologist from among those respondents who wish to have their wells tested. Those respondents will be contacted by NYSDOH in the spring to arrange for well sampling. Test results will be shared directly with each participant by the NYSDOH and will be kept confidential. Only anonymous statistical data will be made public.

NYSDOH will be testing for the following contaminants: coliform bacteria and nitrate. It will also be testing for other parameters and

substances that can affect water quality, including conductivity, color, odor, turbidity, pH, hardness, iron, manganese, chloride, sulfate, sodium, fluoride, arsenic, and lead. A FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document with more information about the well testing program is available at <https://www.townofgardiner.org/announcements>.

We hope you can spend a few minutes to complete this survey. Thank you very much for your assistance!

GARDINER FIRE DEPARTMENT (GFD)

The Gardiner Fire Department is looking for EMT's, interior and/or exterior firefighters, drivers, etc. to join the fire department. If you are not already an EMT or firefighter we will train you. The department is fully volunteer. You will be compensated by the satisfaction that you were able to help someone in need. Please visit our website at GardinerFireandRescue.org for more information.

OPEN SPACE COMMISSION (OSC)

The Gardiner Open Space Commission welcomes the new year with 4 newly redefined goals for 2022.

1. Support the development of a Community Preservation Plan (CPP)
2. Work with the Town to ensure monitoring of its preserved lands and conservation easements
3. Educate and encourage voluntary conservation
4. Seek opportunities to support agricultural land preservation in Gardiner

PARKS & RECREATION

The first phases of Riverbend Trails at Gardiner Park are now open for you to explore! These new multi-use trails can be accessed from the parking lot beyond the Transfer Station on Steve's Lane (only during Transfer Station

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ICE SKATING AT MAJESTIC PARK

by L.A. McMahon



Photo: Kim Mayer

At the time of this writing the new ice-skating rink at Majestic Park has been active for over a month, and updates on the Gardiner NY Facebook group have kept us current on its progress as well as the success of the homemade, 44-gal. Zamboni a local hero, Michael Albright, has been refinishing the ice with. Kudos to Michael and all the volunteers who have been dedicating their time and effort to make the rink a success! I must admit that upon first hearing about the rink, I thought, "what a great idea!", but then I started wondering how many residents would take advantage of this new outdoor venue for icy play of various sorts. I hoped many would since skating is so beneficial. Learning how to ice skate builds strength, develops confidence, and teaches the value of perseverance, and thus would

obviously be great for kids who'd be learning so much more than how to ice skate. Kids are filled with the joy every time they try something new and improve even a little bit, and each time they fall, it will strengthen their confidence to get back up and try again; a very useful thing to learn in today's world.

For adults looking for a cool way to work out over the winter, ice skating has many health and wellness benefits, plus it's lots of fun! Anyone who has done it knows that skating works nearly every muscle group in the body---and they have the Ben-Gay to prove it! According to Harvard Medical School, ice skating will burn up to 200 calories per hour, making it a great way to lose or maintain weight when combined with a healthy diet. Like any cardiovascular workout, skating gets blood pumping and the heart rate up. And it's a lot of fun to glide around the ice; unlike with some other types of exercise, you probably won't even remember that you're working out, and when you're good at it, it feels like flying!

Anyone who exercises regularly would agree that working out in general is a great way to relieve stress because physical activity releases endorphins in the brain. Learning to ice skate also boosts self-confidence and hones focus as you learn the many new moves skating offers, like crossovers, going backwards and spinning.

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YOGA WELLNESS BODYWORK

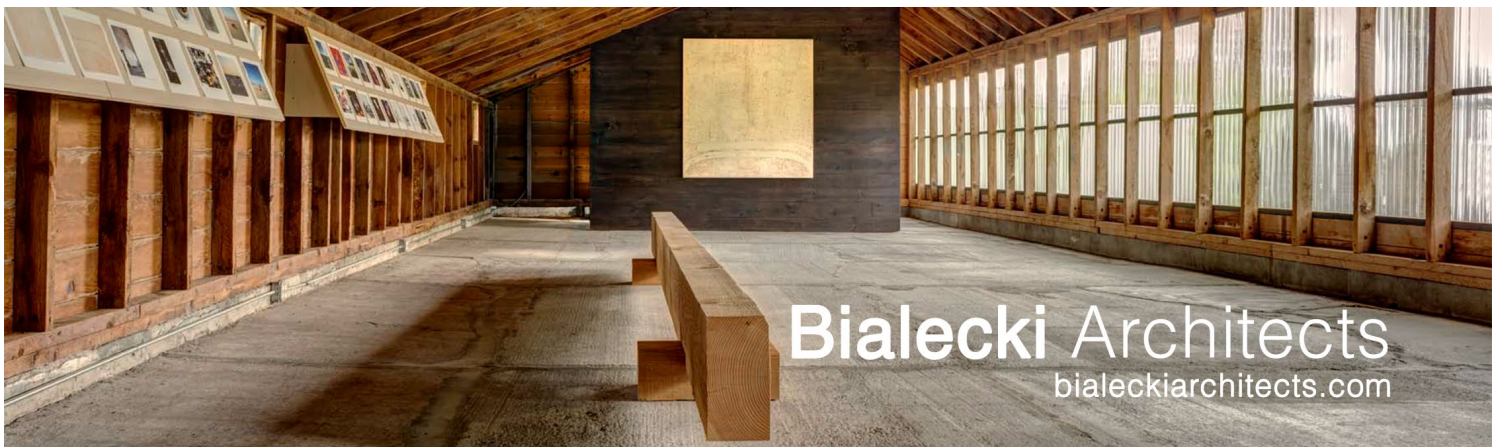
by Misha Fredericks



Photo: Kat Majestic, KMPhotography

In the heart of our hamlet there is a treasure tucked right in plain sight next to the post office, Yoga Wellness Bodywork. There, the soft saffron-colored walls, gentle music, and iridescent Thai bowls welcome one into the peaceful, healing space. The owner, Sharon Paddock, started the business around 9 years ago when she was living in Rhode Island. So, it was our good fortune that, after being weekenders in Gardiner for 20 years, Sharon and her husband decided to move their business here in 2017 and make Gardiner their permanent home. "But why Thai yoga massage?", I asked. Apparently, Sharon discovered how effective Thai bodywork was for her own aches and pains years ago, and she fell in love with it. For the uninitiated, Thai massage is an ancient bodywork modality handed down from one

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NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART AMBULANCE

by Matthew Goodnow, Chief and Donna Lyons, Rescue Captain



Photo: VCI Emergency Vehicle Specialists

The Gardiner Fire District has a new ambulance as of November 22nd, 2021. This new 2021 Horton Model 603 Type I Ambulance on a 2021 Ford F-550 4X4 Diesel Chassis replaced the 2003 Type III Ford E-450 Ambulance that the residents of Gardiner would see around town.

The new ambulance has many state-

of-the-art features including a Horton 360 view camera system (which includes a back-up camera), Induct 500- UV-C Light in the Heat & AC Duct in the patient's compartment which continuously cleans the air to deter the spread of the virus, a Horton Occupant Protection System (seat belts that extend to give the EMTs a greater range of movement allowing them to work on the patient while protecting themselves), as well as more common features such as automatic folding mirrors, air bags in the patient compartment, reflective graphics wrap, dual on board oxygen tanks, and a custom cab console to house communication equipment.

As you may know, the ambulance is the most used vehicle in the Gardiner Fire Department fleet. In 2021 the fire department responded to 583 calls for assistance from our neighbors. Of these, the ambulance responded to 363 EMS calls dispatched for medical

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NOVEL RECYCLING PROGRAM AT THE GARDINER LIBRARY

by Nicole Lane



Photo: Nicole Lane

Environmentally responsible stewards like to recycle every possible item they can to support the planet. Unfortunately, the options for recycling are severely

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TREE PLANTING ALONG WITH WALLKILL RIVER

by Tara Hoey



Photo: Laszlowimage LLC

On May 8, 2021 a group of 51 hardy volunteers and 3 Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) personnel set out in the rain and mud to plant 300 trees along the Wallkill River at the recently opened Riverbend Trails at Gardiner Park. This Trees for Tribes project was a huge undertaking. From start to completion it took over 300 volunteer hours to complete. The Town of Gardiner, in partnership with Climate Smart and Parks and Recreation, applied for and received a Trees for Tribes grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation which fully covered the cost of the project.

"The program's goal is to plant trees and shrubs along streams to create a forested riparian (streamside) buffer that helps decrease erosion, reduce flooding damage, improve wildlife

and stream habitat, and protect water quality." - DEC

On planting day, it was wet and muddy but that didn't stop our volunteers from turning up in force. They hiked 15 minutes to get to the planting site which had been prepared with 300 pre-dug holes. The DEC had evaluated the site and selected a mix of 170 native trees and 130 native shrubs best suited for this area. There were 28 different species of plants selected.

Under the direction of the DEC, volunteers were instructed on how to properly plant trees, install weed mats, and tree tubes.

Laszlo Andacs, of Laszlowimage LLC, donated aerial photos of the Trees for Tribes site documenting before and after photos for our historical records. He will continue to photograph the site in the years to come. With a total planting area of 38,400 square feet, his aerial photos are an important tool that will be used to monitor the trees and plants.

The planting site is along the Wallkill River, in an area classified as a 100-year floodplain, which means it should only flood once every 100 years. In the past year alone, it has experienced flooding three times. The trees planted will help stabilize the riverbank. This long-term positive impact of the planting project will benefit many generations to come. It is one important way our community can prepare and adapt to a changing

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GARDINER HISTORIAN, A.J SCHENKMAN'S NEW BOOK, PATRIOTS AND SPIES

by A.J. Schenkman

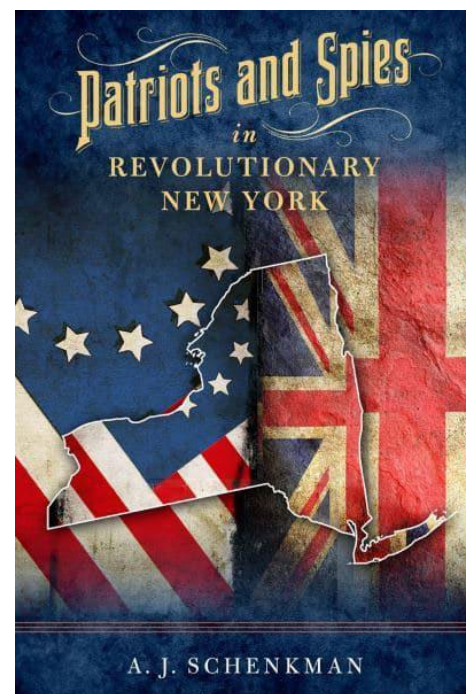


Photo: A.J. Schenkman

Spies! Loyalists! Tories! Conspiracy! Strange messages? Codes in invisible ink? The American Revolution was first and foremost a civil war that tore at the very fabric of families as well as society. Patriots were determined to separate from England; while Loyalists were just as determined to

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MAJESTIC HARDWARE TO HARDWOOD: A NEW BEGINNING

by Alan Rothman



Photo: Alan Rothman

Many in Gardiner have been wondering what happened to Majestic Hardware and its very upbeat, affable, and community-minded owner, Michael Ciavolino. In brief, he found that operating a one-site hardware store became a great challenge, especially during the pandemic. As for Michael, he is still doing what he does best, this time creating a new service-oriented business called Majestic Firewood.

Michael came along with a vision of service, being the strength of such a business, and bought Majestic’s Hardware, which had been a mainstay in Gardiner for many generations. His vision was not only to be a hardware supplier, but to also become an integral part of the community in a variety of ways.

“We wanted to bring back a hometown hardware store feel but

POLLINATOR GARDEN AT THE GARDINER LIBRARY

by Angela Sisson



Photo: Wallkill Valley Pollinator Pathway

The Wallkill Valley Pollinator Pathway has teamed up with the Gardiner Library to create a pollinator garden

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GARDINER LIBRARY UKULELE GROUP

by Amber Munding-Glaeser



Photo: Jeff Pfeffer

Jeff Pfeffer began playing musical instruments 30 years ago—both guitar and ukulele. With the Ukulele Group at the Gardiner Library, “The Ulster County Ukuleleans,” he finds

joy in both leading the group and watching them further their skills, especially in the area of performing in front of others. “I have been playing the guitar since I was sixteen and the ukulele since I was forty and I just love to play music. I love to get in front of people and perform. Put me in front of a microphone. I just really love it. If someone is shy about performing I join them. I just want it to be a welcoming place and for people to feel comfortable.”

The Gardiner Library group is an evolution from Jeff’s work with the Pinebush Ukulele Group. He credits Sheryl Silver for encouraging him. “I walked into the library and asked about forming the group and they said ‘yes!’”

The group meets once a month, every second Wednesday from 6-8 p.m., at the Gardiner Library. Jeff encourages people to come and join and not feel intimidated. “The ukulele is such a playable instrument, you really don’t

have to be an expert to pick it up and play.” “I would suggest if anyone wants to play and be a part of the group they should join us. It’s easy going, fun and no pressure whatsoever. I encourage people to play individually and then get up and play in the group.”

Jeff performs at community centers, the Library Fair in New Paltz and also works on the New Paltz Library’s musical program. For the Gardiner based group and it’s gatherings he gives people sheet music and adds a few songs per week. He has been putting together a song book since the group started. He writes a little bit himself and personally loves tin pan alley songs. As part of the gathering each month he has an open mic portion of the night—encouraging people to perform in front of people.

“In most things I don’t consider myself a leader, but with this I find I have to pay attention and keep people

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SKIING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

clinics and show up to race. The ages of attendees span all generations, from small children up to very senior citizens.

In 2014, local skiers were incentivized to organize by their desire to see improved snow grooming conditions in our region. Snow grooming is the process of moving, flattening, rototilling, or compacting snow into tracks or fields to facilitate safe & pleasurable skiing. SNSA has since advocated extensively for this cause. In 2019-20, the organization was awarded a 'Fischer Access and Engagement Grant' to bring trail grooming to Open Space Institute's (OSI's) River-to-Ridge Trail (R2R). With support and additional funding from OSI, along with donations from local businesses and community members, SNSA acquired grooming equipment, which is now in operation, mostly with sweat equity by Mark Ruoff himself

and Peter Karis (OSI's Vice President for Parks & Stewardship, who oversaw the creation of the R2R trail).

When asked which are the "Best Ski Trails" in and near Gardiner, they opined that Minnewaska State Park, Mohonk Mountain House and Mohonk Preserve are all on their "must ski" list, and snow conditions often dictate the destination. They also gave kudos to Minnewaska for the "spectacular job" they do grooming each season, and to local gear suppliers EMS (Gardiner) and Rock & Snow (New Paltz) who do their best to supply our community with ski equipment and gear.

We also discussed the challenges of skiing in "multi-use" trails such as R2R, where the various "users" can step on each other's toes... or in this case, trails. For proper winter trail etiquette, all non-skiers will want to avoid stepping on groomed ski tracks. Snowshoes, hiking boots, fat-tire bikes, and even dogs can cause

breaks in these groomed areas that result in safety issues, particularly as the snow freezes later in the day. If a skier in a groomed track accidentally hits a frozen rut, the skier may fall and get seriously injured. To avoid these hazards, all non-skiers can walk next to the ski tracks, toward the side of the groomed trail, use designated snowshoe trails, or make their own tracks on or off-trail in a fresh snowfall. In Colorado, after the general public ignored repeated warnings, some ski trails have been closed to hikers during the 3-month, ski season. A local organization like SNSA can do much to increase community access, engagement and education, and Gardiner residents can be very proud to support the work they do. For more information about Gunks Skiing and SNSA, go to: skithegunks.com or Shawangunk Nordic Ski Association on Facebook. ●



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SNOW REMOVAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

As far as the particular agencies replacing damaged mailboxes, it must be pointed out that there is no statutory or legal authority requiring them to do so. In fact, under Section 319 of the New York State Highway Law, mailboxes are considered highway obstructions and are only "allowed" in the right-of-way as a convenience to the owner as it is understood they are required for mail delivery.

Proper mailbox / post specifications are located on the Town of Gardiner Website under Building Department Forms – Driveway Application. www.townofgardiner.org/forms. •

ICE SKATING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Bringing friends to the rink or meeting new people during lessons is also a great way to relax and unwind after a long week at work. Skating dates, anyone?

The only equipment needed to do it is a properly fitted pair of skates, which is a must. Perhaps a new skate-rental business will start up in town, or perhaps an existing business will be inspired to take on renting skates to those who are not sure they will stick with skating or just want

a day's outing? Rental skates are usually high quality, and typically you'd try on various sizes until you get the right fit. Aside from skates, make sure you bring a pair of gloves to protect your hands during falls, dress in warm clothing you can move in and bring pads and a helmet if they make you feel more comfortable.

I interviewed Sandy Thomson, a long-time skate instructor at Ice Time Sports Complex in Newburgh, about where someone who wants to start skating should begin, and she said, "a basic skating class is the safest bet if you've never been on the ice before or haven't skated since childhood. These classes teach important skills like how to stop and how to fall! Starting out by learning the right way is a lot more fun than struggling, clutching the rink wall, and possibly getting hurt." As self-conscious as so many—including me--can be, I thought, 'I guess knowing how to skate can come in pretty handy. In the least, if a person learns a few things, they won't have to worry about looking stupid when they get on ice.' For info about the new ice rink, go to townofgardiner.org/parks-and-recreation-committee, or contact the Parks and Rec Committee at parksrec.tog@gmail.com. For more info about ice skating lessons: sk8sthomson@gmail.com. •



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AMBULANCE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

or trauma. The remaining 220 calls were dispatched for various other emergencies including car accidents, house fires, brush fires, carbon monoxide detector calls, automatic alarms, etc. to which the ambulance responds as well for the care and protection of our residents and responders. When the ambulance leaves the bay, it is always staffed with a driver and at least one EMT.

The Gardiner Fire Department is a 100% volunteer organization that is here for you. Our officers and members are highly trained and fully equipped for the job. We want to thank you for your continued monetary support. Please follow us at our website: gardinerfireandrescue.org for upcoming events, fundraisers, and info on how to volunteer as a member. ●

UKELELE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

focused. I love being a part of the community and walking into the library." As I spoke with Jeff I could see the joy he has for the group and for playing Ukulele - it's infectious!

For anyone who is interested in exploring being a part of the Ulster County Ukuleleans you can email Jeff at flamingojeff2@yahoo.com. ●

YOGA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

teacher to the next; Sharon studied the "Northern style" of Thai bodywork with Ed Cardinal of Sol Wellness who had studied, in Thailand, under Ajarn Pichest, a world-renowned Thai massage guru. For two years, Sharon studied his style, methods, and techniques which have influenced and inspired many contemporary practitioners in his country and abroad. When asked how her other trainings in various yoga modalities affect how she practices Thai massage, Sharon said, "I studied Pranotthon Yoga training at All That Matters school in Rhode Island, and various other restorative and partner yoga trainings, all of which have greatly influenced my personal style of Thai bodywork."

Some may wonder, "What is Thai massage?" and "How does Northern-style differ from Southern-style?" Well firstly, Thai massage is an ancient mode of healing that was used in the time of Buddha, who existed sometime around the 6th century B.C., and the Thai people regard Jivaka, Buddha's physician, as the creator of Thai massage and medicine. Over time, this ancient bodywork was passed down by Buddhist monks and Thai families. The techniques used in Thai bodywork are related to yoga because both systems were spread along the Silk Road which extended through the ancient world from China

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YOGA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

through India, Asia Minor, up throughout Mesopotamia, to Egypt, the African continent, Greece, Rome, and Britain. As to the difference between "Northern" and "Southern" styles, the Northern style is slower and gentler.

When asked, "What makes Thai bodywork, as a whole, unique?" Sharon explained, "It's how the body is moved and stretched to help loosen muscles, relieve pain, and assist the body in healing itself, and it is performed with both practitioner and client fully clothed. This work also differs from other massage as it begins at the feet and finishes at the head, neck, and face. But what I think has influenced my work the most is identifying with my clients' muscle and joint pain and how that can be released by bringing the body to a state of relaxation and of letting go."

My personal experience there has been restorative. Sharon skillfully used gentle stretching, compression, and tractioning techniques to relieve muscle tension and pain. After my first Thai massage session, I felt lighter and experienced more range of movement than I'd experienced for quite some time. Sharon expresses her feelings about her work simply, "It is a dream for me to do this because it helps people who are in pain to feel well in their bodies." For more info: yogawellnessbodywork.com, or call/text (845) 275-0330. ●

RECYCLING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

limited, and many items wind up in the trash because there is no option to recycle them, i.e., toothpaste tubes and caps, toothbrushes, toothbrush outer packaging, floss containers, razors, rigid plastic packaging, flexible plastic bag packaging, and more. In 2022, the Gardiner Library has begun the pivotal work of obtaining its Sustainable Library Initiative Certification (SLI), an award-winning project to create leadership and provide tools to mobilize libraries to think and act sustainably, while also working on a final draft of a new long-range Plan of Service. As we move forward through the SLI certification process, we will complete benchmarks and take actions that are unique to the specific needs of our library and community. One of these benchmarks will be to increase the ability of Gardiner residents to be environmental stewards in our community. Therefore, the library is currently working towards providing a location to recycle items not currently accepted at the Gardiner Transfer Station or through an at-home garbage pickup service.

To begin meeting this goal, the library is working collaboratively with a group of libraries in the Ramapo Catskill Library System and is now accepting the following items: all brands of used or empty toothpaste tubes and caps, toothbrushes, toothbrush outer packaging, floss

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containers, all brands of blades and razors, rigid plastic packaging, and flexible plastic bag packaging and all brands of beauty product and skincare packaging, such as pump caps, hair spray triggers, lipstick cases, eyeliner pencils, and mascara tubes. All items collected will be recycled into new products through a program from TerraCycle, an innovative recycling company that has become a global leader in recycling hard-to-recycle materials. Although this program ends around Earth Day (April 22, 2022), the library is also exploring additional ways to permanently offer a space for recycling hard-to-recycle items. These items include eyeglass recycling, cellphone and battery recycling, pen/marker recycling, providing bags for proper disposal of medicines, and, if possible, continuing to be part of a TerraCycle Program.

The library also seeks to be a center for sustainability education for people of all ages where all can explore their current efforts at sustainable living and plan for future efforts while envisioning how their efforts will positively impact their community and the planet. Consequently, in July 2022, and in collaboration with the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency, we are organizing programming and displays to honor "Plastics Free July." In addition, as part of the summer reading theme "Oceans of Possibilities," we plan to highlight ways to become more aware of the plastics in our lives and how we can minimize

our usage of them.

We sincerely invite all to participate and join with us in our efforts, including the SLI certification process and/or the development of our long-range plan. With the cooperation of the public, the Gardiner Library can help build a more sustainable future for us all, as well as deepen the library's ability to thrive for years to come. For more info, please visit www.gardinerlibrary.org. •

TREE PLANTING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

climate. Our small community came together and made a big impact for the local environment.

We appreciate all the volunteers who helped last year and welcome residents who would like to assist us this year. Volunteers are needed to plant another 350 trees in May 2022 and to help with ongoing maintenance such as weeding, watering, mowing and keeping our tree tubes straight. Watering is especially important during the first two years of planting when the trees are establishing roots. Keep an eye out on the Climate Smart Gardiner Facebook Page or Town Meeting announcements for details as we get closer to May. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact: tara@hoeyfamily.com. •



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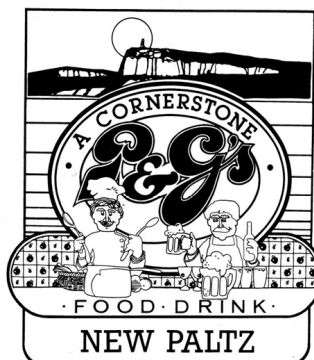
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PATRIOTS & SPIES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

defeat what they saw as a rebellion. Many do not know that during several critical periods the war was almost fatally undermined by English sympathizers or in some cases opportunistic Patriots.

Although Eastern Ulster was largely spared from significant raids and battles, New York State saw a lot of action. Early on in the war, New York City was lost to the British for the duration of the conflict. The turning point of the war also took place in New York State with the battles of Saratoga. This does not mean our neck of the woods was utterly devoid of revolutionary activity. Loyalists such as Jacob Middaugh and collectively the Marbletown Disaffection in Western Ulster and Eastern Ulster threatened the Patriot cause.

These loyalists hoped to make their way to New York City to help the British. They used a ford on the Wallkill River near the fairgrounds on Libertyville Road. Near the ford was a woman who offered to assist them in their endeavor. Her name was Widow Bevier. The Loyalists were surprised to see an American sentry Sgt. Joseph Freer of Captain Hardenberg's Company of Militia. Jacob and his company of Loyalists quickly overpowered Freer, stripping him of his weapon. This is just one of the many stories I have compiled for this newest release. What about Gardiner? After all, I am the Gardiner historian

Gardiner was not yet an entity during the Revolutionary War. The town would not come into being until 1853. However, it does not mean that what would become Gardiner did not give some of its best citizens to the war. The Hasbrouck family of Guilford had their home located across from the winery on present-day Albany Post Road. It was owned by Colonel Abraham Hasbrouck, a noted patriot. He lived in Kingston, and one of his sons continued to run his farm. Abraham paid handsomely during the war when the British attacked Kingston in October 1777. Abraham's house was burned to the ground by the British. His brother, Colonel Jonathan Hasbrouck, constructed the home that later became Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh.

Patriots and Spies in Revolutionary New York is a compilation of twelve stories regarding important moments in New York State's history during the American Revolution. All royalties from the purchase of the book will go to People's Place in Kingston, New York. "People's Place is a not-for-profit organization feeding, clothing and responding to the needs of the people in Ulster County with kindness, compassion and the preservation of human dignity since 1972." Patriots and Spies in Revolutionary New York is available wherever books are sold including Barnes and Noble and Rough Draft. ●

MAJESTIC HARDWARE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

update it a little bit with some new items and new services that we could provide for our customers. The goal was to give it a little facelift, and provide some additional service like free delivery to our customers," Michael told me during a recent interview.

He also quickly became a very visible and integral part of the community. He described a few of their efforts, "We worked with the church (in Gardiner). They feed the hungry every Thursday. We were going down there and picking up the food, and we were donating 1% of our gross sales each month to the church. That was the big thing that we did. People were coming from everywhere. Two years ago we donated turkeys for Thanksgiving." Additionally, he told me, "We also supplied a Santa Claus. We paid for a photographer to come in and take pictures with Santa. We did that too. Ya know, like Sears." Clearly, his community involvement and doing good for others made him happy.

In order to grow the business, he tried many things. He offered coffee to customers when there was nowhere in the hamlet to get a morning cup of coffee. He set up a hotdog cart and food trucks out front to attract customers. Most importantly, he, as well as their staff, went out of his way to be friendly and always helpful, the hallmark of a successful small town hardware store.

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However, there were many challenges he described during our talk, "We didn't increase our Stihl chainsaws sales. The problem is that other power dealers have a year to pay for the tools they buy. We only had 30 days. It's difficult to sell higher priced items within 30 days, so we were constantly trying to catch up. I think that was a mistake we made because we just couldn't compete with terms that were so unfavorable compared to our competitors, and with the mark-up so low. I didn't achieve that goal," Then came the pandemic and supply shortages, he said, "All of a sudden, my labor costs are going up 30% and I can't get the goods I need. I had to figure out a business where we could get smaller and still get raw materials that we can sell."

I know the issues Michael faced, as I grew up in a small, hard-goods, family business similar to Majestic Hardware. I would have been the fourth generation running it if not for my father's insistence that I attend college and, as he would put it, "push a pencil" for the rest of my working days. I remembered the challenges my dad faced as far back as the late 1960s, when manufacturers would only ship a full train carload of goods to wholesalers and retailers. If you weren't big enough to absorb that much, you had to buy from a middleman, thus cutting into your profits. Then came the big box stores, and, one by one, smaller hardware, lumber, electrical supply, and plumbing supply businesses disappeared. It seemed that the age of small family businesses, which prided themselves on service, sharing knowledge, and being a reliable fixture in the community were soon to vanish.

When asked if he would start again in a different location, Michael explained, "What I see in retail is that you have to grow or get "violently" small because all the major chains are growing each day, and you have the mid-majors like True Value and Ace Hardware. It's very difficult to compete when you have one store and they have 5 or 10 stores. So what we did was become violently smaller."

Not one to sit still, Michael now has a new business, firewood. He told me about it, saying, "our firewood business was part of the hardware store. We have now transitioned full-time into the firewood business. We sell to campgrounds, we also sell to retailers, supermarkets, B&Bs, and private clients. So that feature, the service business, is the part that will continue to grow. We are very excited about it. People can order from our Instagram 'Majestic Firewood' or from our website, majesticfirewood.com, and what's nice about our business, (the wood) is kiln-dried, it's not just "seasoned", so it contains no pests, no mold, no bugs and it's hardwood; cherry, hickory, oak. That's a critical difference that most of our competitors don't have. We do free delivery and free stacking. All you a customer has to do is point (where they want it) and that's it! Everything here is American made from our firewood to our fire starters. We don't have to wait for a container from China."

Michael's final thought. "I want to thank the Majestic family for giving me an opportunity to buy the store. I want to thank "Father" Mike and Don for all their hard work."

Author's note: Majestic Firewood is located right behind what used to be the Majestic Hardware store. Why not stop by and say hello to the always friendly Michael Ciavolino? ●

POLLINATOR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

behind the library, next to the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail (WVRT). The garden will provide valuable habitat for pollinators along the rail trail wildlife corridor. The Gardiner Library Pollinator Garden will be a stepping stone for pollinators using the rail trail as their pathway, and part of a larger effort to encourage more pollinator plantings along the WVRT.

The first step of the garden project was completed in November 2021 by a group of volunteers. Members of the pollinator committee stapled a sheet of black plastic on the lawn to smother a 500 square feet area in preparation for the new garden. In Spring 2022, the plastic will be removed and native seedlings (or landscape plugs) will be planted directly into the dead lawn turf. Over the first growing season, the small plants in the new garden will need to be weeded and watered on a regular basis. By the following year, the plants will grow to fill up the bare space, covering the ground like a living "mulch" preventing weeds from taking hold. Also, by the second year, the root systems will have established and watering can be eliminated. Thereafter, the garden should require virtually no watering and minimal weeding.

Once the plants establish and begin to flower, the pollinator garden will start to attract butterflies and bees, moths, and beetles. From the earliest wildflowers blooming in April to the asters of November, Library visitors will enjoy a long seasonal display of flowering plants as well as the birds and bees that will be foraging for food and habitat. Over the winter months, the standing dead plants will provide a home to overwintering pollinator larvae and cocoons and also attract birds foraging for seeds and overwintering insects.

Volunteers are needed to help with the pollinator garden. They will learn how to plant and maintain the garden from ecological landscapers who are overseeing the project. If you would like to volunteer with the Gardiner Library Pollinator Garden, contact Nicole at nlane@rcls.org or Angela at pollinators@wallkillvalleylt.org. To learn more about pollinator gardens and pollinator pathways, visit: pollinator-pathway.org and wallkillvalleylt.org/pp and join the pathway at: wallkillvalleylt.org/pp/join-pollinator-pathway. ●

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CIVIC NEWS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Hours at this point: Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday, 8 a.m. - 3:45 p.m). Start from the new kiosk for a moderate hike down to the Wallkill River, or check out the singletrack trails that have been created by volunteers from Gardiner Trail Alliance. There's also a purpose-built bike flow trail, which are single trails for mountain bikers of any skill level or for any kind of mountain bike, no matter whether beginner or expert, courtesy of Hudson Valley Trailworks. Head up to the top of the cap for a beautiful view of the Shawangunks. Sturdy footwear is recommended for hikers, and bikers should 'Ride Dirt, Not Mud' to help keep the trails nice. Leashed pets are welcome; please clean up after your dog, and carry any waste out with you. If it's snowy, bring your snowshoes or cross-country skis. We hope to see you at Riverbend Trails! Check out trail status and progress at www.gardinertrailalliance.org.

THE PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board reviews site plans, special use permits and subdivision applications for compliance with environmental regulations and conformance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the Planning Board is focused on safeguarding the future orderly growth of the Town of Gardiner through encouraging a balance between residential, commercial and industrial land uses. Currently, the Board is reviewing the Wireless Edge telecommunications tower proposed for South Mountain Road, and a 3,000 square foot expansion of the Tasting Room at the Tuthilltown Distillery is also before the Board. Additionally, the Planning Board is reviewing a number of Lot Line revisions and land subdivisions. ●

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