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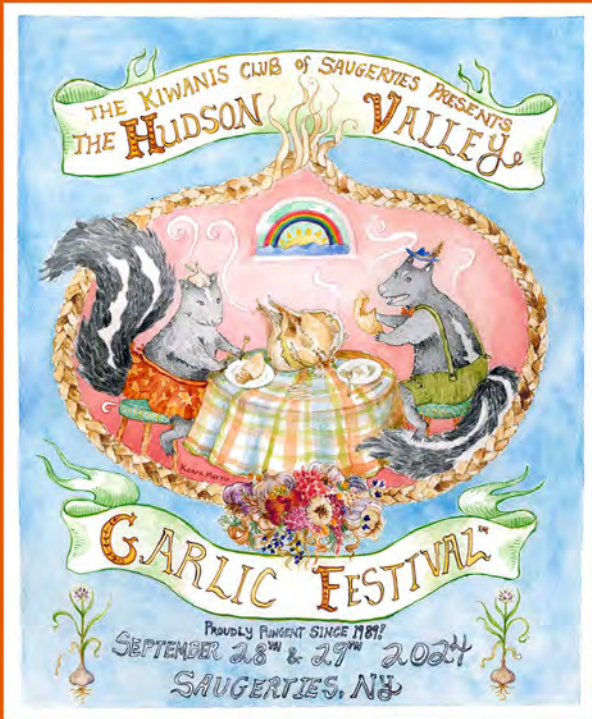
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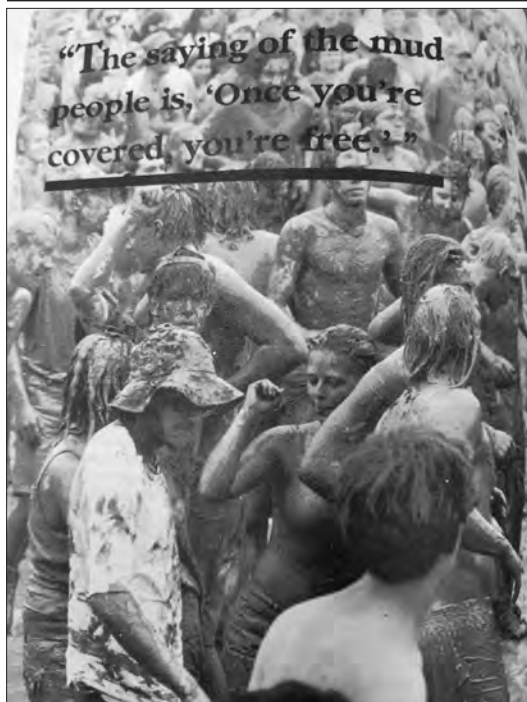


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The Saugerties Mall. Concertgoers leaving and returning to the site at will Saturday.



Three generations spanning two Woodstocks, Marty Rotblum, president of Maverick Knolls in Woodstock, his daughter, Barbara Washin of Saugerties, and her son, Michael Washin, at Woodstock '94. Barbara Washin attended the first festival 25 years ago in Bethel, but Rotblum passed on that opportunity. He says he was too old at the time.

One hell of an event

Remembering Woodstock '94

by Crispin Kott

THE FESTIVAL DUBBED “2 More Days of Peace & Music” has morphed into a months-long celebration for the 30th anniversary of Woodstock '94, itself the 25th anniversary of the 1969 Woodstock Music and Art Fair. It's very much a Saugerties event.

Woodstock '94 was held at Winston Farm in Saugerties over three days -- not two -- in August 1994. The setting is remembered by many for the mud. In case

you missed out because of whatever you might have been consuming at the time, check out footage of California Bay Area pop-punk trio Green Day's shenanigans on the Sunday. Mud covered the band, the crowd and much of the South Stage. It also covered bass guitarist Mike Dirnt's dropped tooth.

Of course Woodstock '94 is remembered for many other things, including a surprisingly eclectic lineup of music, which struck a symbiotic chord among such performers as first-wave Woodstock-era legends Crosby,

Stills & Nash, Country Joe McDonald, John Sebastian, Santana, contemporary MTV-faves The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Nine Inch Nails, the Cranberries, Metallica, and Aerosmith. The Band turned their set into a Sixties mixer, with guest appearances by Hot Tuna, The Byrds' Roger McGuinn, and Bob Weir of the Grateful Dead.

Even Bob Dylan, ostensibly a local, played in Saugerties, accepting an offer he'd declined 25 years earlier.

There was a nod to the nascent EDM scene, Friday's Ravestock, which includ-

ed sets by Deee-Lite, the Orb, Orbital, house-music pioneer Frankie Bones, and Aphex Twin, who saw his set cut short after, according to a September 1994 report in *Rolling Stone* he signed

his contract with an alias, thus depriving PolyGram Records the rights to include his music on Woodstock '94 live releases.

Woodstock '94 also showcased local music, giving over the massive North

Stage on Friday to artists like Ftu Ftu, the Paul Luke Band, Lunchmeat, Peacebomb, 3, and Abba Rage. Their music shared in common a Catskills core, whistling across bluestone and agreeably

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meandering like the Esopus Creek.

Woodstock '94 was special for many reasons. For locals, it brought both revenue and attention (and, sure, traffic) to the area. It carried the peace-and-love vibe toward the end of the century. By contrast to its followup (Woodstock '99, held on an old Air Force base in Rome, New York), Woodstock '94 was a triumph. If you need more info on the controversial '99 iteration, there are two competing documentary series and a popular podcast about it.

The events have started

Let's head back to the garden, back to the Winston Farm of 1994, back to a wet

and sometimes wild three-day weekend in Saugerties. The celebration honoring the 30th anniversary of Woodstock '94 began revealing itself on a Friday in late May with Groovin' Around Saugerties, this year's Chamber of Commerce-backed public street art installation, featuring "hippie buses" designed and decorated by local artists. It runs through Labor Day.

By the time you read this, a few other linked events have already taken place: - a sunset Chamber of Commerce concert at Tina Chorvas Park on June 7, the annual Sawyer Motors car show on July 7, and "Remember Woodstock '94: Revisiting the spirit of Peace and Music

in Saugerties" presented by the Friends of Historic Saugerties at the Saugerties Public Library.

Not to worry. There is still much to come before, during, and immediately after the actual 30th anniversary festival, which took place on August 12-14 of that year.

Here's the current calendar

July 27 - For the Record at the Lamb Center (41 Market St.) sponsored by Shout Out Saugerties and Emerge Gallery. Exhibit runs through August 25. Free.

August 1 - Images of Woodstock '94 by photographer Mike Saporito at Grist Mill Real Estate (265 Main Street). Runs through September 30. Free.

August 2 - Saugerties Chamber of Commerce sunset concert at Tina Chorvas Park. 6:30 p.m. Free

August 3 - Woodstock '94 Remembered: an art and music event featuring live music, guest MCs, and a food-truck festival at Cantine Field from 2 to 9 p.m. Free.

August 3 - Woodstock '94 photo exhibition featuring works by Nancy Donskoj at The Sketchbook, a new gallery annex to the Jane St Art Center at 9 Jane Street. Opening reception is August 10 from 3 to 6 p.m. Exhibit runs through August 31. Free.

August 9 - Woodstock '94 exhibit in the Dutch Barn at the Kiersted House

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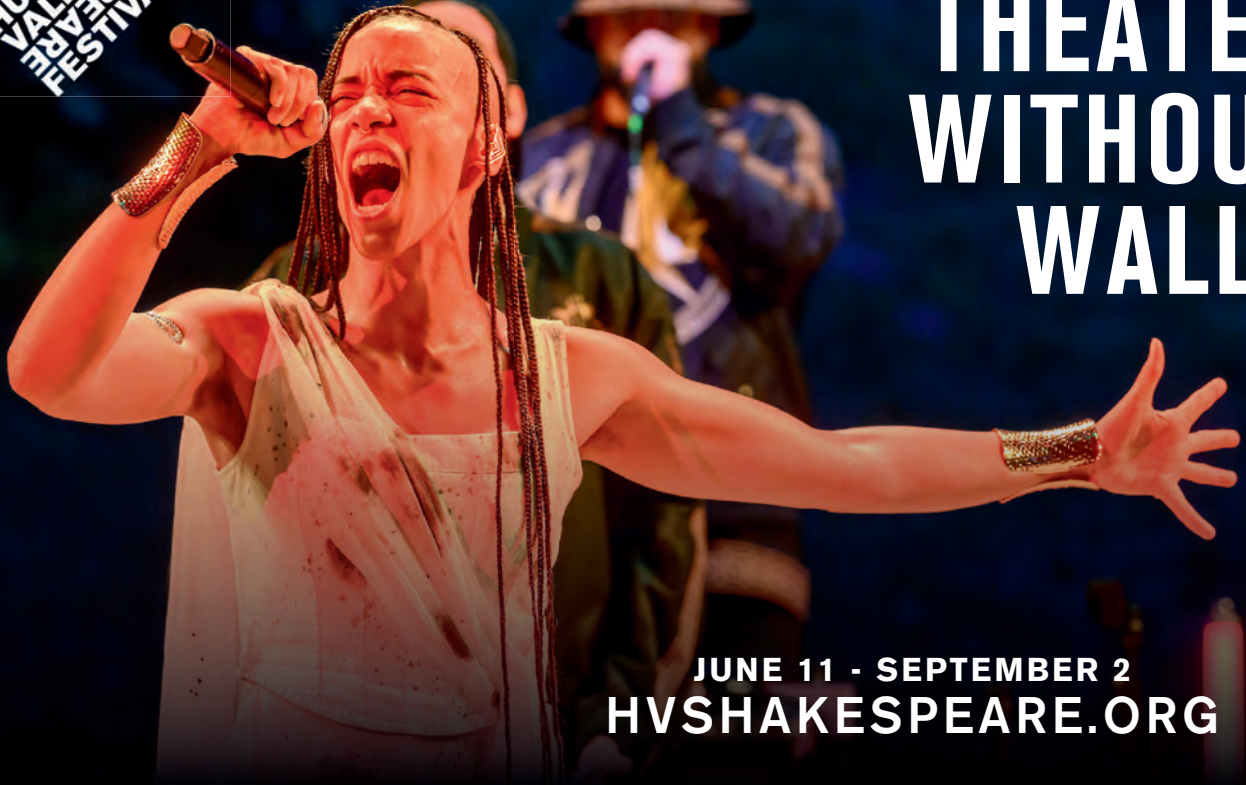
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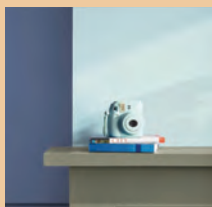
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(119 Main St.), sponsored by the Saugerties Historical Society (119 Main Street). Runs through August 24. Free.

August 12 - Professor Louie and the Crowmatix concert, plus video footage of Woodstock '94 by Tobe Carey at the Orpheum Theater (156 Main Street). Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets \$25 at <https://www.upstatefilms.org/woodstock-94-30th-anniversary-saugerties>.

August 13 & 14 - Tie Dye Days. Discounts for those wearing tie-dye at select shops, restaurants and bars posting "Tie Dyes Welcomed Here" signs. Free.

August 14 - Tie-dye trivia contest at The Partition (124 Partition Street), featuring live music by Finding Alice. Trivia contest starts at 6:00 p.m. Free.

August 15 - Woodstock '94 discussion with those who were there at The Partition (124 Partition

Street), followed by a performance by X&Y Experience. Begins at 6 p.m. Free.

August 16 - A video celebration of Woodstock '94 at The Partition (124 Partition Street), featuring live performances by the Willie Armond Band, and Lara Hope and the Ark-Tones. Begins at 7 p.m. Free.

August 16 - Woodstock '94 photographic exhibit, featuring work by Albert Watson, Danny Clinch and Cheryl Dunn at Opus 40 (356 George Sickle Road). Reception and preview from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. RSVP required at <https://opus40.org/event/woodstock-94-show/>. Exhibit runs through September 17. Free.

August 17 - The Paul Luke Band and Joey Eppard at Opus 40 (356 George Sickle Road). Tickets are \$20 adv. / \$25 gate at <https://opus40.org/event/woodstock-94-celebration-with-paul-luke-band-joe-eppard/>.

August 17 - Music in the Village at Reis parking lot featuring Roadhouse. 1 to 4 p.m. Free.

August 18 - Music in the Village at Reis

WOODSTOCK TIMES
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August 24 & 25 - Hope Rocks Festival at Cantine Field. More information at hoperocksny.com Free.

Sept 6- Saugerties Chamber of Commerce sunset concert at the Kiersted

House (119 Main Street) at 6:30 p.m. Free.

Sept 15 - Gala and auction of "Groovin' Around Saugerties" street art at SPAF (169 Ulster Avenue) starting at 3 p.m. Tickets \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door.

For additional information on Woodstock '94 events across Saugerties, visit <https://woodstock94celebration.com/>

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Shakespeare on the lawn

*Bird-on-a-Cliff presents its 29th summer
of outdoor shows in Woodstock*



DION OGUST

Left to right, Jared Reinmuth, Bill Solley and Lawrence Beck in 2020's production of *Shakespeare's Long-Lost First Play*.

by Violet Snow

*"O time, thou must untangle this, not I.
It is too hard a knot for me to untie."*

SO SAYS VIOLA in *Twelfth Night*, the Shakespeare comedy that also includes the famous line, "If music be the food of love, play on." Hear these and other immortal

words at the Comeau property in Woodstock, where Bird-on-a-Cliff Theatre Company performs the play on the Elizabethan outdoor stage at 5:30 p.m. every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from July 26 through September 1.

In the 29 years that Bird-on-a-Cliff has been performing at the Comeau, said company co-founder David Aston-Reese, "... we did do the Scottish play

and *Hamlet*, but we rely more on the comedies. It's summer. People want to have a good time. They like the Comeau setting, the stage, and the forest behind the property."

Aston-Reese has learned from successful summer-stock owners who bring back big Shakespeare's comedies every ten years. "I thought that was a good rule of thumb," he said. *Twelfth Night* is

receiving its third production this year. The company founders, Aston-Reese and Elli Michaels, often appear in the plays, but this year he is co-directing with Hank Neimark, while Michaels will appear as Maria, the servant who is key to a comedic mischief-making subplot. Aston-Reese said the couple met in a production of *Taming of the Shrew* in New York City. "Elli was cast as Kate, and I was Petruccio. We ended up living

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The Main Events

- July 29** - ShoutOut and Emerge Gallery presents *For the Record*, at the Lamb Center Exhibit runs through August 25. Free
- August 1** - *Images of Woodstock '94*. Grist Mill Real Estate. Free
- August 3** - *Woodstock '94 Remembered*: featuring 8 bands, guest MC's and Food Truck Festival at Cantine Field from 2 - 9pm. Free
- August 3** - *Woodstock '94 Photo Exhibit* at The Sketchbook. Reception August 10. Free
- August 9** - *Woodstock '94 memorabilia exhibit* at the Dutch Barn. Reception 6-8 pm. Free
- August 12** - *Professor Louie and the Crowmatix concert and video on Woodstock '94* by Tobe Carey at the Orpheum Theater. Tickets only \$25.
- August 14** - Trivia contest at The Partition, with live music by Finding Alice.
- August 15** - Discussion about Woodstock '94 sponsored by Times Union, with music by X&Y Experience at The Partition. Free
- August 16** - A celebration of Woodstock '94 with videos featuring performances by The Willi Armond Band and Lara Hope and the Ark-Tones at the Partition. Free
- August 16** - Gallery opening of a collection of photographs of Woodstock'94 by Albert Watson, Danny Clinch and Cheryl Dunn at Opus 40. Free. RSVP required
- August 17** - Special Concert featuring The Paul Luke Band & Joey Eppard at Opus 40. Tickets are \$20 in advance/ \$25 at the gate
- August 17** - *Music in the Village* at Reis Parking Lot featuring Roadhouse 60's. Free
- August 18** - *Music in the Village* at Reis Parking lot with The Willi Amrod Band and Jay Collins Band. Free
- August 24 & 25** - Hope Rocks Festival at Cantine Field. Free
- Sept 15** - Celebration & Auction of "Groovin' Around Saugerties" street art at SPAA Tickets \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door

For additional information, times and updates go to Woodstock94celebration.com or scan this QR code



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above a theater on 13th Street. Then we decided we liked Woodstock.”

AFTER MOUNTING A FEW PERFORMANCES at the Byrdcliffe Theater, they heard from a friend who had audiences flocking to the free shows of Shakespeare outdoors he had been directing.

At the time, the Woodstock Playhouse was an open pavilion, where the newly created Bird-on-a-Cliff company staged *Much Ado About Nothing*. “We could tell it was going to go places,” said Aston-Reese. With the approval of the town board, they built a temporary stage on the Comeau property, the park-like setting located near the center of the village.

The stage was designed by Salvatore Tagliarino, who has designed sets for shows by artists ranging from Fleetwood Mac to Liza Minelli at locations from Broadway to the London Palladium. He created a classical Elizabethan stage with



Molly Fleming as Viola Cesario and Jordan Zakka as Sebastian, the fraternal twins that cause hilarious mistaken identity and confusion in this year’s production of *Twelfth Night*.

side and back entrances below and staircases descending from the prominent central balcony.

When the stage needed replacement a few years later, the Catskill Watershed Corporation provided a grant for a more

permanent structure, which has been the company’s outdoor home ever since.

Last year’s production, *As You Like It*, featured two young women who were so outstanding as Rosalind and Celia, that they have been brought back to explore

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similar themes of cross-dressing and mistaken identity in *Twelfth Night*.

“They do magic on the stage,” said Michaels. “It was the actors that propelled me to say we should do *Twelfth Night*.” Molly Fleming will play the shipwrecked Viola, who disguises herself as a man and takes the name Cesario to obtain a job with Duke Orsino, played by Bobby Fleming, Molly’s husband. Sandra Cummings will appear as Olivia, who falls in

There’s a curious pleasure concentrating to the point where you let the lines flow through you.

love with Cesario when s/he woos her on behalf of Orsino.

THE POETRY OF SHAKESPEARE’S WORDS can be challenging, but there’s a curious pleasure concentrating to the point where you let the lines flow through you. A plot synopsis appears in the program in case the language washes over your head.

Aston-Reese recalled the first classical play he was involved with when he stage-managed a summer stock production of *She Stoops to Conquer*, the 1773 comedy by Oliver Goldsmith. “My untrained ears couldn’t understand a word,” he said. “Then the show was extended an extra week, and by the second week, I



PHOTOS BY DION OGUST

Above, 2016’s production of *Measure for Measure*; left, Yasemin Eti and David Remple in the 2018 production of *Romeo and Juliet*.



understood. The writer was using words in an unfamiliar pattern, and I suddenly started to hear it.”

When directing Shakespeare, Aston-Reese spends a lot of time making sure the actors understand the sense of the words. “An actor can know what he’s saying, but he has to use Shakespeare’s exact words connected to the meaning. He writes in word-thoughts. It challenges that part of our brain that puts sentences together. He doesn’t hand it to you on a platter, but he’s a brilliant playwright.”

AUDIENCE MEMBERS ARE INVITED to bring chairs (some are available for rent) or blankets to sit on the lawn. Many attendees pack a picnic. Admission is free, with a requested donation of \$10 when the hat is passed at intermission.

If you have kids who like theater, they may be riveted by the spectacle. My daughter was. And if not, you haven’t wasted money on pricey tickets or tortured other audience members with a wriggling little one. A walk around the grounds with a parent makes a nice break for restless kids.

Shows are canceled only in case of torrential downpours, so check the weather

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before heading out. Remember there are shows each weekend in August on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, through September 1. If it rains, you'll get another chance. Performances start at 5:30, so there's time to eat at a local restaurant afterwards.

The Comeau property is on Comeau Drive off Route 212 near the center of the hamlet of Woodstock.



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- AUG 11 ARIEL QUARTET, postlude
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- AUG 18 ISIDORE STRING QUARTET
- AUG 25 REED TETZLOFF, piano
- SEPT 1 BORROMEO STRING QUARTET,
HENRY KRAMER, piano
- SEPT 8 Music from COPLAND HOUSE

MAVERICK SATURDAY NIGHTS

- JUL 27 **6pm** ANGELA HEWITT, piano
Maverick Chamber Music Festival
- AUG 3 **8pm** SIMON SHAHEEN TRIO
- AUG 10 **6pm** AFTER SPRING SUNSET:
A Tribute to Peter Schickele
- AUG 17 **8pm** STEVE GORN, VINAY
DESAI & SAMIR CHATTERJEE
- AUG 24 **8pm** MARGARET LENG TAN,
piano and toy piano
- AUG 31 **8pm** BILL CHARLAP TRIO
- SEPT 7 **8pm** MIGUEL ZENÓN QUARTET
- SEPT 14 **8pm** BRIGHT MORNING STARS:
*An Evening of Friends, in Tribute
to Happy Traum*

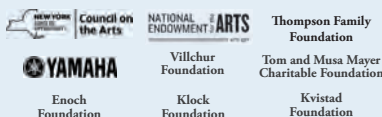
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- AUG 30 **8pm** JENNY LIN, piano
Maverick Chamber Music Festival

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- AUG 10 ELIZABETH MITCHELL PLAYS
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- AUG 17 BIRDS OF PREY & WILDLIFE
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Freer-Eddy-Wurster House, c. 1766; 1877, Kingston. Italianate aerie superimposed on a stone house.

“Legacies on the land”

A saga of the historical architecture of southern Ulster County

by **Geddy Sveikauskas**

IN THEIR LESS guarded moments, Ulster County preservationists despair of being able to communicate the value of learning about the extraordinary natural and socio-historical setting in which we live. Every example of a fast-food restaurant next door to a historic home is like a dagger in their hearts.

Often dismissed as NIMBYs and elitists, they find it difficult to respond.

“Historic preservation is typically regarded as an elitist practice,” writes urban sociologist Aaron Passell in a recent book. “In this view, designating a neighborhood as historic is a project by and for affluent residents concerned with aesthetics, not affordability. Such efforts lead to gentrification and rising property values for wealthy homeowners,

while displacement afflicts longer-term, lower-income residents of the neighborhood, often people of color.”

Passell explores how community activists and local governments use historic preservation to accelerate or slow down neighborhood change. He argues that this form of regulation is one of the few remaining urban policy-interventions that enables communities to exercise some control over their changing neighborhoods.

The secret weapon in exurban areas, where the fabric jointly wrought by man and by nature are so closely intertwined, is the story of how what is came to be – an origin tale of endless fascination to all, or almost all.

The sumptuous book *Legacies on the Land*, an exploration of “the historic houses, hamlets, and landscape of south-

ern Ulster County,” was published by Black Dome Press in Catskill.

This is no fly-by-night compendium. Shepherded by editor Vals Osborne and a flock of editors and researchers, the hefty volume is the culmination of 14 years of sustained efforts.

“Originally researched and written as guidebooks for historical house tours that covered ten communities in Ulster County across several centuries,” explained admiring reviewer Christopher Pryslopski, editor of *The Hudson River Valley Review*, “the material has been thoroughly revised and expanded upon ...”

The team of 20 dedicated volunteers, many of them professional historians and writers, labored under the auspices of the Huguenot Historical Society on a 450-page volume with 17 maps and more than 400 photographs, including 300

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William Edmund Bruyn House, 1926-1927, Gardiner. Colonial Revival Estate.

in full color. The economics of digital color printing even for short runs has changed dramatically, according to Steve Hoare of Black Dome Press. The result is photography of stunning quality in this book, which sells for \$35.

Local livelihoods

Houses, hamlets and landscapes. Dwellings, groups of dwellings and the land on which the inhabitants live. Individuality, community and surroundings.

About four hundred years ago – a long time by the standards of American history – European settlers of various nationalities – seized some rich lands in the Hudson Valley populated by the indigenous Lenape people.

The Europeans started with a trading post in Ponckohockie in 1615 and a growing number of farms, mostly populated by settlers from the Fort Orange (now Albany) area. All were ordered by governor Pieter Stuyvesant to construct and take shelter within a stockade in Kingston in early autumn of 1658.

A few years later, a small population of Dutch, Huguenots (French Protestants) and Walloons (Belgian Protestants) moved from Kingston (called by the Dutch name Wiltwyck until 1664) to Nieuw Dorp, the “new village” now known as Old Hurley, and thence to establish what is now Huguenot Street in New Paltz in 1677, surrounded by 40,000 acres

purchased in questionable circumstances from the Native Americans. They called their like-minded group The Duzine.

Over the next centuries, a tangled web of houses, settlements and landscape -- accompanied by several profound revolutions in transportation and technology -- evolved into a rich variety of human livelihoods. Until tourism came along, the different communities of southern Ulster County came to specialize for the most part in agricultural and extractive industries.

This is a book with an introduction and ten chapters, each of which boasts its own thorough introduction.

The first three chapters are based on house tours of central New Paltz, of the westerly hamlets up to the Gunks, and of the formerly LeFevre family lands southeast of the village core down Route 208 toward Gardiner. The fourth looks at the changing face of agriculture west of the Wallkill River in Gardiner and Shawangunk.

The fifth chapter centers on the fruit farms of Marlborough, the sixth on the hamlets of Plattekill, the seventh on “the mysteries of Clintondale,” and the eighth on rural Lloyd.

The ninth chapter tracks the Rondout Creek’s passage to the Hudson River past St. Remy, along Black Creek and through the Town of Esopus.

Finally, the tenth and final chapter

visits the cement works and canal town of Rosendale and beyond.

Exurban turnaround

What does this sustained feat of prodigious scholarship bring to the community table? Though the full returns will never be available, current signs point in multiple directions.

Ulster County has long been an exurban second-home oasis for New York City residents. Because the local jobs picture has been bleak for many decades, however, substantial financial penalty is involved in the transition to full-time local residency.

In the last two years, data from the real-estate industry has shown a rapidly changing picture. For decades, Ulster County housing prices have lagged behind the state average. Recently, they’ve leaped above average, and 2024 mid-year numbers show that trend continuing. Ulster County is more attractive to immigrants, it seems.

Mid-Hudson Pattern of Progress this year published a report based on IRS data, “Money Migration,” which indicated that Ulster County residents, with a total taxable income in 2020 of \$6.1 billion, received an injection of \$547 million (with \$327 million of it coming just from Manhattan and Brooklyn) in the two years of the pandemic. These immigrants had money

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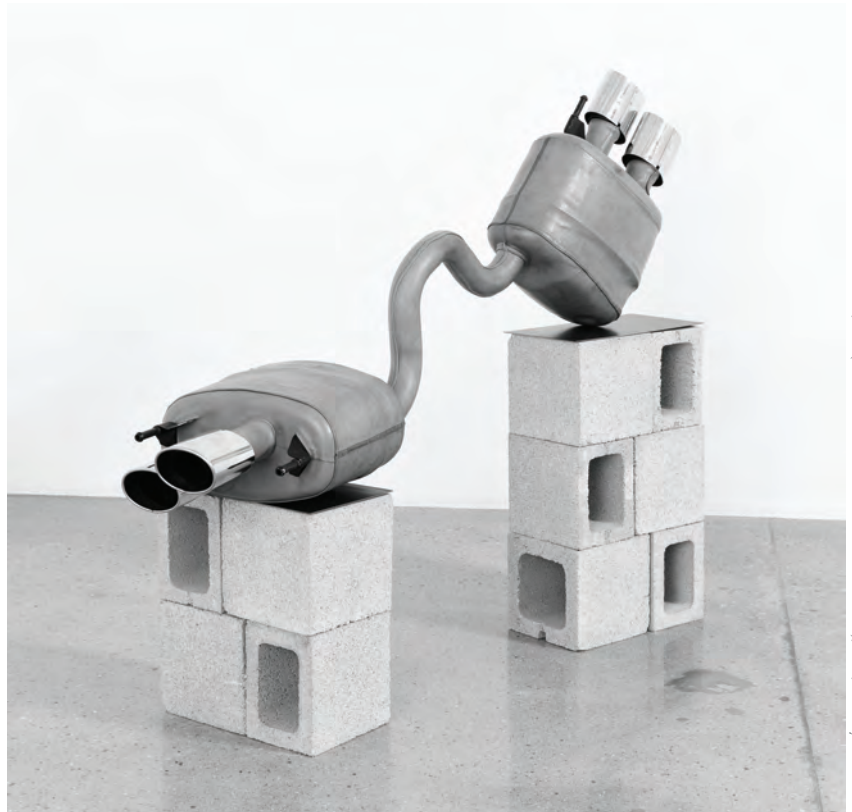
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Dahn Gim, Erin (from the series "Names I Had You Call Me"), 2018, courtesy of the artist

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Johannes Cornelius Decker House, 1720 and later, Shawangunk. Early Dutch-style stone farmhouse.

to spend.

That's great for real-estate buyers, but it's a disaster for renters.

The combination of rising prices for shelter and relatively low wage increases has made Ulster County a poster child for gentrification. The intertwined fabric jointly wrought by man and by nature means little to people who can't afford a roof over their heads.

Will this trend, which is more evident

in the upper Hudson Valley than in the lower part, continue?

A number of factors are involved in money migration. One of the most significant seems to be that the percentage of people working digitally at least part of the time from home now exceeds 33 percent of the entire American work force. The Covid epidemic has changed work habits. Workers are getting New York City paychecks while sitting in

Ulster County homes.

Moneyed digital immigrants prefer to live in places on their way to successfully integrating individuality, community and surroundings. Is Ulster County going to be one of them?

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Ulster Publishing (est. 1972) is a Hudson Valley media company with its office at 322 Wall Street in Kingston. For more info on upcoming special sections, including how to place an ad, call (845) 334-8200, fax (845) 334-8202 or e-mail info@hudsonvalleyone.com.

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Hudson Valley art

It slaps!

by Sparrow

DOES IT MAKE sense to speak of a Hudson Valley style of art? I questioned a number of local experts.

“What is the nature of Hudson Valley art?” I asked Tom Luciano in a text. “Nature is the nature of Hudson Valley art!” he replied. “From Thomas Cole to Nat King Cole, it’s always been Nature Boy!”

Thomas Cole was the founder of the Hudson River School, circa 1825. “Nature Boy” was a hit song by Nat King Cole in 1948. Tom’s the owner of Luciano Fine and Decorative Art in Shokan.

Chase Folsom, of Headstone Gallery in Kingston, disagreed. “I think style in reference to place is just weird. It’s natural that you go to New York City, somebody’s going to paint cityscapes. Up here, yeah, people paint nature, but people have always been obsessed with nature.

“I’m thinking of Jim Hodges. He lived in New York City, early in his career, and he had no money, and he went to bars, and he would draw flowers and floral motifs on bar napkins -- and it ended up becoming a piece.”

“Everybody who’s here has come from somewhere else,” Lauren Aitken, co-director of Headstone, pointed out. “Like Rich Cali; he’s from Austin.”

It’s been this way for a while. “People would ask, in the early 20th century, Is there a Woodstock style?” noted art historian Bruce Weber. “And the consensus of critics, in major magazines and newspapers, was that there wasn’t – and that was good! Because of the diversity. And that’s what makes it interesting.”

“SOMETHING I DO NOTICE IN THE Hudson Valley: I’m going to use the word craft,” Folsom added, on reflection. “There are a lot of incredible craftspeople here. They



Schechet, an example of an artist who uses the space the area provides to make massive sculptures that can be seen at Storm King Art Center and are made right here in the Catskills.



VIOLET SNOW

have the benefit of time and space, and sometimes money. I see a lot of furniture makers here, beautiful furniture makers – which makes sense. You have to use massive logs, so you need space. I do see a lot of people who take advantage of space around here; and they’re making work I’ve never seen before.”

Aitken mentioned a recent visit to the studio of furniture-maker Michael Puryear. Lauren and Chase also taught me the phrase “It slaps,” meaning that something’s really good – hence the title of this essay.

Lots of people have collections up here, which they store in their basements, attics, outbuildings. There’s cheap yard sales, and Family of Woodstock has a free store. (Even I have a massive number of socks, if

Local Artist Ann Byer makes art out of collections.



Left, *Strength Tarot Card*; upper right, *Old Fish Face*; lower right, *Me and Charlie*, all by Dana Weidman.

that counts as a collection.) Sometimes those piles of keepsakes transform, almost effortlessly, into artworks.

I know two artists – Marilyn Stablein and Ann Byer – who’ve made sculptures out of their necktie collections. And come to think of it, who needs neckties in the Hudson Valley? Men, and a few women, carry them up from Brooklyn, and gradually divest themselves of these archaic accessories.

DANA WEIDMAN, PROFESSOR OF MEDIA arts and film at Dutchess County Community College, spoke to me about her art studies. “For the last few years I’ve been painting at the Harvest Gallery, on the Greig Farm in upper Red Hook. It’s not really a class. We all have our easels set up in the gallery; we pay a monthly fee. And Drew Miller, who’s our teacher – it’s his gallery – is an amazing portrait painter.

“It never would’ve occurred to me to paint a portrait, because when I started taking classes with Drew I could barely draw a circle – but because he’s a portrait painter, that’s what I’m learning,” said Weidman. “I think what’s kind of cool is, even though Drew never says, ‘Okay, this week we’re going to paint ... a certain subject,’ we do have this odd synergy in the gallery, where all of a sudden you’ll

walk in and we’re all painting dogs.”

That’s a good point. In urban centers, dogs are shrinking. One sees guys with goatees in Manhattan walking creatures that resemble large, well-trained mice. But in the Hudson Valley, dogs can be dogs. (In fact, one is barking next door as I write this.) The dogs in our local art, I would wager, are vivid and more robust than the ones in city paintings.

Weidman is also the director of her college’s art gallery. “When you think about Hudson Valley art, you inevitably think about landscape,” she remarked. “And I’m actually working on a show for March 2025, where I was introduced to a local artist, Daisy dePuthod. She’s French, and she paints the coast of Maine, the Hudson River. Central to the work is often water. I’m thinking about water in the landscape, thinking about what



A bench made by local artist Rennie Cantine.

water means to us. What is the Hudson Valley? It’s water; it’s the source of life.

“So I was considering having a dual show, and I ended up talking to a more abstract artist, and this man is also French, his name is Jean-Marie Martin, and he works in blue. He works with his hands – he doesn’t even use a brush! There’s such an aquatic nature to the work: dark blue, indigo blue.

I wrote him an email, coming out of his studio, ‘I feel like your work has waves in it, like it’s always moving.’ He mixes his paint with silicone, so it’s sort of wavy.

“So I’m talking to Daisy and Jean-Marie about having a dual show: one is a very abstract way of thinking about water, the other is representational.”

ART HISTORIANS SAY THAT THE HUDSON River School painters obsessed on light, but come to think of it, the light was usually reflected in a body of water. After all, it wasn’t called the Sunshine School.

The town I live in, Phoenicia, has one “use value” – to employ a Marxist term – besides a smattering of tourism. Our job is to create drinking water for New York City. Mostly that involves standing aside and letting the Esopus Creek flow. (Though one of my friends, whom I’ll call Xerxes, ritually pees in the creek once a year, as a symbolic rebuke of the Big Apple.)

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