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A Victorian Nutcracker Remembrance

On YouTube
December 22, 2020-January 2, 2021

A virtual performance that tells the story of The Nutcracker through the lens of archival video footage from previous Orpheum Dance Program productions, combined with scenes filmed this December in iconic locations in Hunter, Tannersville, and Windham.

This event is FREE

Pre-registration is required: please visit catskillmtn.org to pre-register.

Instructions for accessing the stream will be sent upon registration.

This event is made possible by donations from Peter & Sarah Finn, All Souls Church, the Struthers Family, and with public funds from the Greene County Legislature through the County Initiative Program, administered in Greene County by the Greene County Council on the Arts dba CREATE.
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Each year since December of 2015, the Catskill Mountain Foundation's Orpheum Dance Program has proudly presented its annual production of the beloved holiday favorite, *The Nutcracker*. With the pandemic swirling and cancellations continuing, Orpheum Dance Program Director, Victoria Rinaldi has created a new version of this magical story. *A Victorian Nutcracker Remembrance* is a virtual performance that tells the story of *The Nutcracker* through the lens of archival video footage from previous Orpheum Dance Program productions, combined with scenes filmed this December in iconic locations in Hunter, Tannersville, and Windham. The virtual performance will be available online from December 22, 2020 through January 2, 2021.

The Orpheum Dance Program’s annual tradition came to a halt with the ongoing restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most live performances have been cancelled since March, 2020: there is nary a *Nutcracker* during the 2020 holiday season. Young dancers will not grace our stages in the roles of party children, soldiers and mice. Young professional dancers will not be traveling to the Mountaintop to dance pivotal roles in the story of *The Nutcracker* at the Orpheum Film and Performing Arts Center in Tannersville this December.

Beginning in December, 2015, Catskill Mountain Foundation and Victoria Rinaldi partnered with well-known dancer Valentina Kozlova and choreographer Margo Sappington to bring a professionally staged version of *The Nutcracker* to the Mountaintop. Since then, Rinaldi has enlisted the help of renowned choreographers and dance programs, such as Valentina Kozlova Dance Conservatory of New York, Petrov Ballet School, and JKO/ABT School and Ballet Academy East, both in New York City. Children in the community appeared on stage alongside professional dancers in the Catskill Mountain Foundation’s first production of *The Nutcracker*. From early October until the performances on stage in December, the children learned to dance, some for the very first time, in roles as party children, angels, toy soldiers, and the children of Mother Ginger. Those first performances were eagerly anticipated by the children, their families and the community alike. That year, the magic of *The Nutcracker* became the Mountaintop’s new annual holiday tradition.

Many of the dancers have grown up performing increasingly difficult roles each year. The children in the community learn the most basic, yet entertaining and endearing, roles. More advanced ballet students vie for the opportunity to dance the roles of Clara...
and the Prince. The Snow King and Queen dance a beautiful pas de deux in the Land of Snow. The Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier welcome Clara to the Land of Sweets and dance a pas de deux as she leaves. The adults play the roles of parents and guests at the Christmas party, in addition to the Mouse King, Drosselmeyer, and Mother Ginger. These roles, along with dancers from faraway lands and various other roles, are well-suited to the performers’ various abilities. Ballet students the world over learn these roles and cherish any opportunity they have had to perform one or more of them during the holidays.

**A Victorian Nutcracker Remembrance**

opens with archival rehearsal footage and narration explaining the history of the Orpheum Dance Program’s annual Nutcracker, the film and the plot of the ballet.

The ballet begins with gift laden families, dressed in colorful Victorian-era costumes designed for a winter stroll through town. They leave their homes to attend the Stahlbaum’s Christmas Eve party. Clara Stahlbaum and her mischievous younger brother Fritz welcome the guests to their home. Dancing, magic tricks, and doll dances entertain the convivial guests. The wooden Nutcracker doll given to Clara by Auntie Drosselmeyer comes to life and leads toy soldiers in battle with the Mouse King. Clara and the Nutcracker find their way to the Land of Snow. As Act I ends, they leave the Land of Snow and make their way through the forest on their way to the Land of Sweets.

Act II begins with angels dancing. Then comes the Sugar Plum Fairy, divertissements, the Nutcracker Prince pantomime, Spanish, Arabian, Chinese and Russian dances, Marzipan Shepherdess, Mother Ginger, flowers, Grand pas de deux, male and female solos, ending with Drosselmeyer leading Clara off stage. Clara wakes in her bed on Christmas morning and tiptoes downstairs to find her wooden Nutcracker doll sitting under the Christmas Tree.

Although *A Victorian Nutcracker Remembrance* is a creation borne of...
necessity, it is a fitting production for the sixth year of this annual tradition, allowing the community to look back over previous Nutcrackers and see the changes in their children’s ballet development, and for some, to see their progression into young professionals. Entire families have chosen to participate in the outdoor Victorian scenes this year. Fabric for vintage clothing, scarves, gloves, hats, coats, footwear and fur have been assembled and refashioned as costumes worn by characters in the Victorian era. The cast list boasts 190 dancers and other cast members, whether in archived video or filmed this December. They hail from 13 towns in Greene County and places far and wide, but all of them have a connection to the Orpheum Dance Program.

Kaatscast, a Catskills-based podcast, will feature Victoria Rinaldi speaking about _A Victorian Nutcracker Remembrance_ on December 22. The link to Kaatscast is https://anchor.fm/kaatscast. The podcast episode, which is also available on all the major platforms, will appear at the top of the page on December 22 and will run for two weeks.

**About The Nutcracker**

With a libretto based on a story by E.T.A. Hoffman, music by Tchaikovsky and classic choreography by Maurice Pétipa, _The Nutcracker_ tells the story of little Clara, who receives the gift of a Nutcracker soldier from her godfather, the magician Herr Drosselmeyer, at a Christmas party. Clara’s brother, doing what brothers tend to do, promptly breaks her new toy. Her godfather repairs it, but of course Clara is still worried: after the party is over and the household has gone to sleep, Clara sneaks downstairs to check on the little fellow. At the stroke of midnight, strange things start to happen: the Christmas tree grows to an enormous height and all of Clara’s toys begin to come to life. Suddenly, the room is filled with an army of mice, led by their Mouse King. Clara’s Nutcracker comes to life and leads his soldiers in a fierce battle against the mice. Just as it looks as if the Nutcracker is going to be vanquished by the mice, Clara throws her slipper at the Mouse King’s head, dropping him to the floor. We then begin Act II, where the Nutcracker has transformed into a handsome prince and leads Clara on a magical journey through the Lands of Snow and Sweets. The journey caps off with a magical pas de deux between the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Prince. This pas de deux contains perhaps one of the most iconic moments in ballet history: the solo “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy.”

**For More Information**

_A Victorian Nutcracker Remembrance_ will be available on YouTube to anyone who registers to receive the link. The film will be available from December 22, 2020 through January 2, 2021. More information and the link for registration can be found at www.catskillmtn.org. Donations are appreciated, as your support allows us to continue to bring world-class performances to our audiences.

_This event is made possible by donations from Peter & Sarah Finn, All Souls Church, the Struthers Family, and with public funds from the Greene County Legislature through the County Initiative Program, administered in Greene County by the Greene County Council on the Arts dba CREATE._
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IPOETRY

Curated by Robert Tomlinson

We asked a few poets to write a poem in response to 2020 as the year comes to an end ...

A Long Fall

invisible demons emerge from wild animal markets and fly up your nose medical experts say you may cough a few times or lose the ability to breath and die within a few days stay away from people

the lawns are cluttered with plastic signs shouting the names of hopeful candidates some of them may be buddhas while others are only human

the leaves outside my window have turned gold a rainy day is perfect for writing poetry car tires hiss though the puddles I haven’t completed my life yet

—Rodney Alan Greenblatt

This Year’s Flavor

If it’s not diseases it’s war
If it’s not war it’s fire
If it’s not fire it’s earthquakes
Or a deluge of melted snow

Burn up in the fire
Then the ground gives out from under
Soldiers bust down your door
Better not sleep

Watch out for elected officials
Flood insurance? Forget it Someday we’ll have a governess Instead of a president

Covid nostalgia’s the next big thing People won’t give up their masks Or go to the movies Staying home is hard to give up

The present is never glamorous Behind or ahead is better In the future people will watch TV They’ll just call it something else

—Brian Dewan

Victory Dance

After the empire is defeated
After the ogre is returned to the underworld
Then rebels rejoice and heroes receive medals
Then they have to face themselves or else
Become ogres and empires.

That said -
Tears of joy!
Fireworks!
Victory dance!
A good night’s sleep.

—Rodney Alan Greenblatt
The Year of the Plagues

Not all the first born died instantly.
Some lingered for days and the howls
Of anguish would speckle the day
With bolt upright anguish.
My uncle, languished in his bed.
Tall, muscled, brawny,
Laid low by a foreign God
whom Pharaoh had denied
Yet again.
My uncle fought bravely
Trying to speak, gurgling,
The blood in his mouth,
the Signal of the end struggle,
He laid there in silence.

Funny the things you remember
About years like those
The sounds of the crickets
And grasshoppers chirping
On a warm summer night
Coming from the tall grass
The dry winds coming off
The dessert, and thinking how
Lovely it all was. A momentary lull
In a year of horrors.
Grasshoppers usually lead such
Secluded, solitary lives.

Then there were the first outbreaks
The discussions at dinner were filled
With exhaustion, anxiety, dread.
We prayed it was a passing thing.
We were all too tired in our hearts.
The smell of the dead fetid cattle
Donkeys, goats
Piled on one another like pyramids
Swarms of black flies swirling
Like so much smoke
Set aflare, the stench of
Blackened Carcasses still filled our noses
And drained our souls.

But then came the upsurge
And some how an innocuous insect
Becomes a giant menace
And suddenly a swarming cloud
As big as the sky
You can't talk, at least not outside,
Lest one flies into your mouth.
We stayed shuttered inside for days,
Baking bread, dreading the front door.
They were in our beds, our pots,
Our stews, our cups of
Reddish water.
The horrible humming as it got
Louder and louder, till it was a terrifying
Roar you could not out shout.

Yet Pharaoh denied, told us to persevere
As one horror replaced another
And now here was my uncle,
gaunt and weakened, struggling,
His bronze skin ashen,
Fighting to prove Pharaoh's proclamations.
I clenched my fists, bit my lip,
Knowing his was yet another body
To be thrown on one of the
Numberless pyres in the squares
Around the city

We were among the lucky.
Many had passed instantly
With no chance to bid farewell.
My uncle's slow passing
was the wrenching reward left to me.
I Remained by his side, comforting,
As the rage inside me burned.
This was his Pharaoh's murder.

Uncle's wheezing came to a momentary halt
And A small cricket chirped it's song
Individual, sweet, not the terrifying din,
music to our ears.
And my uncle's red lips creased a smile,
He looked into my eyes.
And then he passed over to Osiris
And the cricket sang a mournful
Goodbye.

—Carlo DeVito
Before you embark on any adventure in the Catskills, be sure to stop at the Park’s official Visitor Center, the Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center! The Catskill Interpretive Center is your gateway to Catskills, where you can learn about the vast outdoor recreational opportunities in the area as well as discover Catskills communities and rich cultural and natural history. The Catskill Interpretive Center is now open for phone consultations and for drive-up information.
The Delaware & Ulster Rail Road events season is on hold for the remainder of 2020, and looks forward to welcoming you back in 2021! The Ulster and Delaware Railroad Company (U&D) was a Class I railroad headquartered in Rondout and founded in 1866. It was often advertised as “The Only All-Rail Route To the Catskill Mountains.” At its greatest extent, the U&D ran from Kingston Point, on the Hudson River, through the heart of the Catskill Mountains to its western terminus at Oneonta, passing through four counties (Ulster, Delaware, Schoharie and Otsego), with branches to Kaaterskill and Hunter in Greene County. Although a small railroad, it was big in stature, as it went through many favored tourist hot-spots. Many elegant hotels kept business going, some of which were sponsored or built by the railroad. The train is now run by the Catskill Revitalization Corp, who is responsible for maintaining the 55 linear miles of property in Delaware County, combining public use trail and right of way with railroad tracks intact.
A frequent contributor to the Guide magazine, Francis X. Driscoll is an award-winning nature photographer, whose work has appeared in National Geographic Explorer and Cynthia Dantzic’s prestigious book 100 New York Photographers. Over the years he has captured some of the most iconic images of the Great Northern Catskills. Driscoll is a self-taught photographer, whose work involves total immersion in a setting so that he might capture that rare glimpse and share it with others. His primary subject is the Catskill Forest Preserve, and his best shots are often hard-won through years of returning to the same place with a sense of expectation for the beauty that might be revealed to him on any given day. He shares his craft with others by leading hikes, conducting workshops and giving private instruction. His book, Images of the Northern Catskills, is a celebration of his work. The largest selection of his work can now be found at Tannersville Art & Antiques, open Friday through Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm.

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Brandywine
11157 State Route 23
Windham, NY 12496
brandywinewindham.com
518 734 3838

For the past 35 years, this full-service Italian restaurant has offered great food and impeccable service. Share wonderful memories with your loved ones as we fill your table with delicious Italian cuisine. Born and raised in Southern Italy, owner Louis Caracciolo has mastered the art of Italian
cookery. We guarantee that we know the formula to capture the rich flavor of your favorite Italian dishes. Every Wednesday is Pasta Night!

Chalet Fondue/
Nunzio's Pizzeria
55 State Route 296,
Windham, NY 12496
chaletfondue.com
518 734 4650
The Chalet Fondue serves the finest in German, Swiss, and American cuisine, in a charming old-world European setting. Accented with soothing candlelight, European fireplaces, and hand-picked German decor, you will feel as though you are in the Alps.

Nunzio’s Pizzeria is located inside the Chalet Fondue. Serving Italian specialties and homemade pizzas, with gluten-free options. Curb-side pickup is available.

Chef Deanna
1645 County Highway 6
Bovina Center, NY 13740
chefdeanna.com
Now offering catering to go and take-out, with delivery available for larger events! Porch pickup for take out orders from 5 to 7 pm on Sunday.

Chef Deanna has been on the cutting edge of the sustainable food industry for over 15 years. Surrounded by farmers and local food makers, Chef Deanna creates beautiful dishes using her Sicilian heritage and her love of everything sweet and savory.
Hunter Mountain Brewery
7267 Route 23A
Hunter, NY 12442
HMBCatskills.com
518 263 3300

We are now open for indoor and outdoor dining. With a full spacious outdoor deck we can accommodate our guest while practicing social distancing. Our full menu is available along with our popular authentic Indian dishes. Every Thursday we have a Sushi pop up restaurant. We have a pet friendly deck...plus a special dog menu! 20 craft beers are on tap, including 13 of our own craft brews.

Jessie’s Harvest House
5819 Main Street
Tannersville, NY 12485
jessiesharvesthouse.com
518 589 5445

Restaurant and Lodge is a warm and comfy restaurant and lodge that features a delicious menu of rustic American style cuisine with locally sourced ingredients from the beautiful offerings of the Catskills. Overnight accommodations are also available in the cozy private guest rooms overlooking the scenic views of Hunter Mountain.

Mother Earth’s Storehouse
Locations in Kingston, Poughkeepsie and Saugerties
motherearthstorehouse.com
845 246 9614

Over 30 years ago brothers Chris and Kevin Schneider helped start the organic and all-natural food trend in the Hudson Valley. Although it may seem like a recent trend, the organic and sustainable “Buy Local” movement has been around for many decades. Though modest in size, Mother Earth’s Storehouse has always been focused on wholesome, nutritious foods that are not ladened with artificial ingredients. Come experience Mother Earth’s at any one of their three convenient Hudson Valley locations in Kingston, Poughkeepsie and Saugerties.

Pancho Villa’s Mexican Restaurant
6037 Main Street
Tannersville, NY 12485
panchovillamex.com
518 589 5134

The Best Mexican Food this side of the Border! Pancho Villa’s is owned and operated by the Oscar and Patricia Azcue family. They have been proudly serving authentic Mexican food on Main Street in Tannersville since 1992. Rooted in tradition, their passion is sharing great food and good company. All of the traditional Mexican favorites are served here, from enchiladas and burritos to chimichangas and flautas...plus great margaritas and daiquiris! Open every day except Tuesday.

Mountain Comfort Food & Craft Cocktails
746 Main St. Margaretville, NY 12455 | (845) 586-4884
binnekiltavern.com | @BinnekillTavern on Instagram

Tito Bandito’s
Catskills Taco + Tequila Bar
302 Main Street, Pine Hill, NY 12465
@TitoBanditos on Instagram
www.TitoBanditos.com

The spiciest Apres Ski in the Catskills
featuring tacos & tequila!
The Roost
3542 Main Street
Stone Ridge, NY 12484
845 687 0022
theroostinstoneridge.com
Fresh handmade cooking, served all day. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. For breakfast: eggs & omelets, yogurt, hash and skillet dishes, pancakes, french toast. For lunch and dinner: soups and salads, quiches, sandwiches. Great burgers and fries! Vegetarian and vegan options available. Craft beer on tap. Daily specials.

The Tavern at Diamond Mills
25 S Partition Street
Saugerties, NY 12477
DiamondMillsHotel.com
845 247 0700
Recognized for its world class cuisine, Diamond Mills Tavern sets the standard. Located in Saugerties, NY, south of the Catskill Mountains where the Esopus Creek meets the Hudson River, The Tavern at Diamond Mills is truly the Hudson Valley’s hidden gem. Dine al fresco on the covered terrace or cozy up in a booth in our atrium style dining room. Whatever you choose, The Tavern will deliver an experience that will have you coming back time and again.

Tito Bandito’s Taco & Tequila Bar
302 Main Street
Pine Hill, NY 12465
845 254 3113
titobanditos.com
Tito Bandito’s, located in the center of Pine Hill, just minutes from Belleayre Ski Center, is the spot to warm up after a day on the mountain with modern Mexican cuisine and hand-crafted cocktails. Our menu features traditional and inventive tacos, quesadillas, burritos, and much more. The bar serves local and Mexican beer on tap, specialty margaritas, and an extensive tequila list. Check out our après ski specials and events online. Fun and casual. Indoor and outdoor seating. Take-out. Open for dinner Friday-Monday. Lunch Saturday and Sunday.
Woodnotes Grille at the Emerson Resort & Spa
5340 Route 28
Mt. Tremper, NY 12457
emersonresort.com
845 688 2828, option 6

Woodnotes Grille features food you know done our way with fresh local ingredients, unforgettable flavors that hone in on the local spirit, and handcrafted cocktails that are an experience as well as a drink. We give classic entrees and your favorite drinks a little spin by adding native ingredients and innovative twists.

The Woodstock Pub
17 Mill Hill Road
Woodstock, NY 12498
845 684 5470
Facebook: TheWoodstockPub

Occupying the site of the former Landau Grill (and before that, the original Woodstock Pub), the new Woodstock Pub opened this past spring after extensive renovations. New owners Chris Constant, James Constant, and Jennifer Ahearn grew up in Woodstock and bought the old drinking hole just after Thanksgiving of last year. The new Woodstock Pub serves “Pub fare with a Mediterranean flair,” with special Greek and Italian nights in honor of their heritages. Pub fare, soups, salads, burgers and sandwiches. Vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options. Patio dining and special comedy and trivia nights. Their Sweet Chili Cauliflower Wings were the winner of the 2019 Taste of Woodstock for Best Side Dish!

Catskill Mountain Foundation’s Kaaterskill Shoppe
6042 Main Street
Tannersville, NY 12485
catskillmtn.org
518 589 7500

Located next door to the Orpheum Film & Performing Arts Center, our shoppe features a curated selection of books and gifts from around the Region and around the world. Open Friday through Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm, with special shopping hours for seniors and the immune-compromised from 11 am to noon on Fridays.

Blue-Byrd’s Haberdashery & Music
320 Wall Street
Kingston, NY 12401
bluebyrds.com
845 339 3174

Blue-Byrd’s was established in the Rondout Business District in Kingston in 1992. We moved the business to Wall St. in 2004. Blue Byrd’s Haberdashery & Music is a purveyor of the finest hats and the best blues music on CD and vinyl in the region. Styles by Stetson, Bailey, Scala, Toucan, NY Hats & Caps, & Dorfman-Pacific, in addition to pieces by local artisans. Blue Byrd’s: For great hats and better blues.

CVS
60 Mill Hill Road
Woodstock, NY 12498
CVS.com
845 679 3686

Pharmacy, photo finishing, health and beauty products, fragrances, snacks, drinks, newspapers and magazines, and more. Your go-to stop if you’ve forgotten that extra important something on your trip. For the holidays, they carry cards, stocking stuffers, candy, holiday decorations, and a wide variety of reasonably-priced gifts for men, women, and children.

The Gilded Carriage
95 Tinker St.
Woodstock, NY 12498
845 679 2607
gildedcarriage.com

We are A to Z for the holidays! Aprons, All-Clad, Bath Towels, Candles, Chocolates, Cookware, Cocktail shakers, Chemex, Cuisinart, Dinnerware, European bath products, Flasks, French Soaps, Gifts & free wrapping, Gloves, Hand soap, ILLY coffee, Jacquard linens, Kitchen tools & accessories, Le Creuset, Lamps, Microplane, Napkins, Olive wood. Paper Plates & napkins, Platters, Quiche pans, Rolling pins, Römertopf clay cookers, Stonewall Kitchen, SodaStream, Scarves, Salad Spinners, Toys, Turkish mosaic lighting, Teak furniture, Umbrellas, Vietri Italian ceramics, Wüsthof knives, X!!, Yards of ribbons, Zyliss kitchen tools. Call for private shopping, curbside pick up & local delivery.
Hickory Hill Market
5200 NY-23
Windham, NY 12496
hickoryhillmarket.com
518 734 6300
A must-stop on the way to the mountain, or to pick up that last minute item you forgot for your Holiday dinner. Featuring a beer cave with nearly 200 varieties of brews and micro-brews; all of your grocery and convenience needs, including fresh vegetables and produce; a full deli counter with a full line of Boars Head products for all your deli needs; sandwiches, salads and personal pizzas to go; hand-dipped ice cream and milkshakes; and of course gasoline for the ride home. Visit our website for daily specials and online ordering.

Kenco
1000 Hurley Mountain Rd.
Kingston, NY 12401
atkenco.com
845 340 0552
A locally owned and operated family business, Kenco is committed to the proposition that hard workers need clothing and gear to match their ambition. Since then we have applied the same principle and grown to include clothing and footwear for working, outdoor adventure, and casual living. Kenco is the place to go to for knowledge and gear for your next outdoor Catskills adventure.
Lily’s Boutique has been in Woodstock for 25 years! We keep evolving to stay fresh and fun! We are now offering handcrafted cozy cotton reversible quilts, beautiful tablecloths, napkins, rag rugs and embroidered pillows for your home. Great gift items for all special occasions! Luscious warm socks, scarves, hats, sweaters, leggings, jewels, local skincare, yummy chocolates, local designers and fun childrenswear! Lily’s always has a fantastic line of partywear! So if you want to look and feel fantastic, come to Lily’s and treat yourself!

Maverick Road celebrates the artistic & maverick spirit of Woodstock with curated items from small makers and Faire trade merchants. Our mission is to create a space that celebrates beauty, humor and the natural world. We offer a selection of unique house plants, pottery, prints, housewares, greeting cards & gifts. Our customers have described Maverick Road as a “Toy Store for Adults”. We take great care to create an uplifting, cheerful, visual, sensory & inspiring experience. Located in the heart of Woodstock, next to Tannery Brook. We look forward to meeting you.

Moose Crossing
1 Reservoir Rd.
Shokan, NY 12481
845 657 9792
rustic-cabin.com
Casual, rustic and country Adirondack-style furniture, home furnishings, home decor, accessories, gifts and collectibles. Hand-crafted, Made-In-America sold wood furniture and furnishings for your home, lodge or cabin. Jewelry, blankets, pillows, rugs and clothing in Native American, Western and country motifs and styles. The best selection of nature-inspired items hand crafted from artisanal craftsmen located locally and from around the country.
The Nest Egg
84 Main Street
Phoenicia, NY 12464
tenesteggcountrystore.com
nesteggshop.com
845 688 5851
An old-fashioned country store in the heart of the Catskill Mountains, offering relaxed shopping and mountain hospitality. You’ll find a little bit of everything here: Minnetonka Moccasins, t-shirts & sweatshirts, local area books and hiking maps, candles, soaps, incense, jewelry, local maple syrup and honey, nostalgic candies, toys, puzzles, games and souvenirs ... and home-made delicious fudge! Owner Robin Kirk’s family has owned The Nest Egg since 1968.

Olives Country Store & Cafe
3110 State Route 28
Shokan, NY 12481
olivescountrystorereandcafe.com
845 657 8959
Olives is the place to stop on the way up the mountain for your coffee & fresh made to order breakfast, to take with you or eat in the Café, for your travel back home and Late Lunch on the way down the mountain, clean rest rooms, Mobil Gas & Diesel, and our unique Catskill Mountain & Ashokan Reservoir logo.

Check out our December Events!!

Wreath Making Workshop
December 5 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
CFA OFFICE, 43469 State Highway 28
Arkville, NY 12406

Deer Processing Workshop
December 19 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
CFA OFFICE, 43469 State Highway 28
Arkville, NY 12406

Keep an eye out for our 2021 events on our website!
catskillforest.org

Chalet Fondue

The finest in German, Swiss, and continental cuisine in a charming European atmosphere.
Fondues • Fresh Fish • Steaks • Lamb
Candle-light dining & Fireplace
Reservations suggested
Kid’s menu available
Open 4 pm daily • Closed Tuesday

Rte. 209 • Windham, NY
518-734-4650 • www.chaletfondue.com

Nunzio’s Pizza

Located inside Chalet Fondue
Gourmet pizzas made from scratch by Chef Nunzio of Naples, Italy.
Fresh dough, sauce & mozzarella cheese.
Gluten-free pizza available.
Curbside pickup • Call 518 734 4686
Open at 11 am • Closed on Tuesday
See full menu at www.chaletfondue.com

Woodstock, NY
merchandise along with the expanded one-of-a-kind Gift Shop. Awarded the 2018 Ulster County Small Business of Year!

**The Sheep’s Nest**
45 West Main St.
Hobart, NY 13788
607 214 0050
thesheepsnest.com
Modeled after a cozy cottage in the Cotswolds, The Sheep’s Nest is more than just a boutique style gift shop, it’s a place where one can escape into a different world brimming with beautiful, carefully crafted items. From holiday wreaths and ornaments to jewelry; baby items to scarves—we offer you the opportunity to indulge with us in the beauty of careful complexity. So pop in and chat with the owner, make a cup of coffee and watch through the windows as the snow falls while you shop.

**Woodsock**
97 Tinker Street
Woodstock, NY 12498
woodsockinc.com
845 684 5988
Socks have long been a gift-giving staple at the holidays, but this year you can pick socks that truly reflect the personality of everyone on your list. Woodsock offers a thoughtfully curated collection of funny, silly, irreverent and beautiful socks. Our selection also includes premium organic cotton, merino wool and bamboo socks. Just say NO to ordinary socks!

**Catskill Center for Conservation & Development**
43355 Route 28
Arkville, NY 12406
catskillcenter.org
845 586 2611
Since 1969, the Catskill Center has led the effort to protect the more than 700,000 acres of the Catskill Park and Catskill Forest Preserve. Their mission is to protect and foster the environmental, cultural, and economic well-being of the Catskill Region.
We are a membership-based, nonprofit organization that provides forestry education and services to private Catskill landowners. Now caring for over 77,000 acres worth of private properties across Delaware, Greene, Otsego, Schuyler, Sullivan, and Ulster Counties.

**Catskill Mountain Printing Services**
7970 Main Street
Hunter, NY 12442
518 263 2072
Your one-stop shop for fast, personal service for all of your printing needs. Graphic design services are available, and we can print green!

**Greene County Economic Development Corporation**
411 Main Street
Catskill, NY 12414
greenecountyedc.com
518 719 3290
The Greene County Economic Development Corporation is your gateway to establishing your business in any of the 14 Catskill Mountain, rural valley, and historic Hudson River towns. Their team connects entrepreneurs, developers, site selectors, and corporate leadership with resources, municipalities, and investment incentives for job-creating businesses.

**The Emerson Resort & Spa**
5340 Route 28
Mt. Tremper, NY 12457
emersonresort.com
845 688 2828
Welcome to a harmonious blend of nature, balance and restoration. It is our pleasure to introduce you to spa therapies inspired by the earth’s elements and the tranquility of the Catskills. The Emerson Spa provides a serene experience that combines our natural surroundings with the deep relaxation effects of stone therapy and custom design treatments to suit the health, lifestyle and desire of every guest. The Emerson Spa is open Thursday through Monday from 10am to 5pm: please call for a reservation.
Elevated Wine & Spirits
7261 Route 23A
Hunter, NY 12442
518 263 4184
Hunter Village Wines & Liquors has been Elevated! We’re always expanding our selection of traditional, organic, biodynamic, and natural wines, plus bartender-selected spirits including single village mezcals and small batch bourbons. From Barefoot Chardonnay to Cru Beaujolais, from Fireball to Fred #5. A wine & spirits shop for anyone at any budget. Lots of local spirits too. For more information, please see the article on page 41.

Town & Country Liquors
330 Route 12
Saugerties, NY 12477
townandcountryliquorstore.com
845 246 8931
Over the years our selection of wines and spirits has developed into the best in the Hudson Valley. Our friendly helpful staff is here to assist you in finding the right beverage: we have a huge selection of wines and spirits from all over the world. In-store service is available, and pre-call curbside service is encouraged. Please see our inventory online.

Windham Wine & Liquors
5448 State Route 23
Windham, NY 12496
518 734 3474
Windham Wine & Liquors is the Mountaintop’s premier destination for the best offerings of wines and spirits since 2003. Our ever-expanding selection is sure to please every palate and price range. Let us help with your special event or gift. Visit us at the west end of town. Open every day of the year except Christmas Day.

The Wine Hutch
936 State Route 28
Kingston, NY 12401
thewinehutch.net
On Facebook: thewinehutch
thewinehutch@gmail.com
845 334 9463
Whether you’re hosting an intimate dinner with your closest family or joining a boisterous Zoom celebration, let The Wine Hutch help you make the most of this year’s unique holiday season! We offer an exceptional selection of wines and spirits—from local to global— for every occasion. And don’t forget the bubbly! We carry Champagne, Prosecco and Cava, perfect for every celebration. Distinctive specialty items, gift baskets and gift cards, too! Open every day (except Christmas Day). Curbside pick-up available for your convenience and safety.

Images of the Northern Catskills  By Francis X. Driscoll

The largest selection of my work is now available at
Tannersville Antiques And Artisans
6045 Main Street • Tannersville, NY 12485 • 518-589-5600
Open 11AM - 5PM Friday through Sunday
For more information visit www.francisxdriscoll.com
A Greene County Garden in December

By Margaret Donsbach Tomlinson

For many, winter is a season of gift-giving, and few things delight a gardener’s heart more than the gift of a superior garden tool. Of course, what makes a garden tool superior is not necessarily the same for all gardeners. A tool that thrills a long-experienced gardener with an acre of vegetables may look mysterious and slightly threatening to a weekend gardener with a simple flower bed by the front door.

People have been using garden tools as long as they’ve had gardens. Native Americans cultivated medicinal herbs by using deer antlers to poke holes in the ground and then dropping seeds in with buffalo horn spoons. From prehistoric times, Europeans have coppiced trees, cutting them down just above ground level to stimulate the growth of long, straight shoots needed for tools like hoes, pitchforks and rakes.

Before mechanized agriculture, hand tools had to be strong and sturdy to withstand heavy use. Too often, today’s mass-produced tools have plastic parts that quickly fail or rough handles that rub blisters after an hour. Religious settlements, like the Shakers and Amish, which cherished self-sufficient communities and avoided dependence on electricity and gas-powered machines, crafted their own agricultural tools long into modern times. These can still sometimes be found in antique shops and secondhand stores, along with other old tools made before plastic became king.

High quality new tools are still being made by manufacturers who appreciate the needs of gardeners. Generally, they are worth the extra price. Some personal favorites: a stainless steel digging fork with tines that slip easily into heavy clay soil and don’t bend out of shape; an old pair of pruning shears and a new set of hones to keep them sharp; a wooden-handled dandelion weeder that is comfortable to hold and useful for a lot more than pulling dandelions, such as loosening compacted soil at the bottom of a planting hole.

Whatever your individual needs, winter is a great time for cleaning tools after a year of use, taking stock of what you have, and deciding what is missing or needs replacing. In the slower, more reflective season of winter, you may want to take time to browse in a secondhand shop. Perhaps you’ll discover a trowel whose silky-smooth wooden handle testifies to the many times someone’s hand gripped it while making a garden of wonder and beauty.
No need for reminders: 2020 has been an extraordinarily difficult year. Remember back in March when quarantine was a new thing? Cooking was fun, then: we learned how to bake bread and make a sourdough starter, we learned how to cook dried beans, we learned how to properly stock a pantry, and we learned how to make substitutions based on what our local markets had (or didn’t have) and what was left in said pantry. In the early days of quarantine, we had nothing but time to experiment in the kitchen, in between naps and 2,000-piece jigsaw puzzles.

Six months later ... fatigue, grief, and anxiety have us tied up in knots. The unfortunate reality is that more Americans are suffering from food insecurity now than they were six months ago. For those fortunate enough to have enough money and access to good food, cooking may not bring us the joy it did back in March. NPR’s Weekend Edition declared “Months into the coronavirus pandemic, the initial novelty of whipping up more homemade meals is fading.” The author and speaker Luvvie Ajayi Jones put it a bit more bluntly: “I’m sick of food.” I believe, though, that with a few small tweaks to our approach and mindset, there are ways for those of us who have lost our passion to reinvigorate our love of food and cooking.

We can start by trying some new things in the kitchen and exploring new possibilities for the food we put on our tables. If we want to go a little deeper, perhaps we can look at our relationship to the act of cooking: do we see it as just a chore, or could we view it as an act of self-care and expression of love for the people we live with? With the holidays fast approaching, the likelihood that we’ll be able to celebrate with extended family has started to dwindle. Taking care of ourselves—and the family we’re quarantined with—has taken on a new level of significance. We need to take care of ourselves and each other.

We encourage you to try some of these recipes from some of the region’s best chefs. There’s probably something new here that you haven’t tried before! We’ve also profiled two Catskills chefs and food producers whose love of food and cooking just might inspire you and renew your desire to get back in the kitchen.

Finally, if you can support local food producers and restaurants by ordering from them, please do so. And if you can, consider donating to your local food bank. To find one in the Catskills, visit cagcny.org (Greene County), ulstercorps.org (Ulster County), ulstercountyny.gov (Ulster County), or delawareopportunities.org (Delaware County).

—Sarah Taft, Editor
CHEF PROFILE: CAROLANN RANSAW

Carolann Ransaw was born in White Salmon, WA and raised in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. She developed her cooking skills at a young age in her mother’s kitchen, where everything was made from scratch. Growing up as a vegetarian in the days when it was not so popular, she was very conscious of the food she consumed at a young age: she remembers going to the farmers market every Saturday with her family to select fresh produce for the week and to meet the farmers who grew the food. When she became a teenager, she started eating meat, seafood and poultry … always organic and always carefully chosen. Edmonton’s diverse community gave her a vast exposure to cuisine from a wide variety of cultures. After becoming a latchkey kid at the age of 12 and craving the cuisine her mother exposed her to, she started cooking for herself and her friends, whose mothers were all at work as well.

Years later, she moved to New York City to become a makeup artist and continued to test her skills at home. In 2008 she moved to Italy for five years and studied Italian cuisine through private lessons and courses. When she returned to New York, she worked as a private chef for a family and catered private parties for various clients. Now her journey has brought her to the Catskills, where she is starting a pierogi company using locally sourced ingredients from the Hudson Valley.

Carolann discovered upstate New York several years ago: “My dad passed from cancer five years ago and his dying wish was to visit Woodstock for the first time. We rented a car in May and it was an absolutely beautiful drive and so close to the city. We first stopped in Kingston and sat by the river to eat the sandwiches I made. He told me if I ever bought land to make sure I had a spring fed pond and a fresh water stream near the house. He told me to have water near your home was a good sign. So I did just that and found a beautiful piece of land on the side of the mountain with my husband Jimmy and two dogs Choppa and Charlie.”

Carolann has been inspired by the food producers and farmers in the Catskills. “The ingredients up here are beyond fresh,” she says, “and the celebration of seasonal food is apparent. You can taste the difference from the city vegetables. The tap water up here tastes pure and refreshing, which comes through in the farmed goods. … Everything tastes happy, including the produce. They experience sunshine and good food that allowed them to grow into something delicious. Just like when we were kids.”

“I decided to make pierogi because they] are what you got when you went to Baba’s house growing up in Edmonton. There is a huge European population up there and Baba always had bags in her freezer she would cook up for you very quickly. After being outside all day in the cold or being at school all day, this is something you could come home to that warmed your soul. The potatoes, butter, sour cream and sautéed onions … they all scream comfort and happiness. And she would always have a bag for you to take home. And when she finally sat me down and taught me how to make them, it was a huge honor. And I will make these pockets of love for whomever would like them.”

Carolann’s approach to food is simple: “My style of cooking is very clean as I prefer to cook from scratch, to allow you to know exactly what is in the food I prepare. I am also very health conscious myself and I have done a lot of research on food. … Living in Italy taught me to love food and embrace the food, when it is given to you by season. And celebrate it, cook it and eat it with joy and gratitude, until you never want to see it until the following year.”

Catskills Pierogis currently offers one sweet and three savory varieties: sweet potato (vegan and sweet); potato and cheddar (savory); potato, onion and chive (savory); and potato, feta and dill (savory and vegan). Catskills Pierogis will be sold on December 12-13, noon to 3 pm both days, at a pop-up at Liza Belle Kitchen, 785 Main Street in Margaretville, NY. Carolann will also be working with Delaware County FoodWorks+ for local distribution. For more information, visit carolannscuisine.com or on Instagram @carolannscuisines and @catskillsperogis

See Carolann’s recipe for Sweet Potato Pierogi on page 39.
LOADED POTATO SOUP
—Chef Nicole Haroldson, Binnekill Tavern, Margaretville, NY
binnekilltavern.com

12 slices of bacon
½ lb butter
2/3 cup all-purpose flour
4 cups milk
3 cups heavy cream
2 lb Yukon Gold potatoes, cut into small cubes

4 green onions, chopped
1 ½ cup shredded Cheddar cheese
1 tsp salt
1 ½ tsp ground black pepper

Cut potatoes into small cubes. Place in a pot with water and boil until tender. Drain and set aside.

Place bacon in a large pot. Cook until crispy. Remove bacon from pot and pat dry with paper towels. Crumble the bacon and set aside. Do not discard the bacon fat.

Add the butter to the bacon fat in the pot. When melted, slowly add the flour while whisking vigorously to avoid clumps. Gradually add the milk while whisking until thickened. Add the chopped green onion and bring to a slow simmer. Cook on low until the green onions are tender.

Add the cooked potatoes, bacon, cheese, salt, and pepper. Simmer slowly while stirring frequently until the cheese is melted.

For a thicker or thinner soup, adjust milk as desired. Garnish with chopped chives or bacon crumbles.

FRUIT MINCE PIES
—Chef Radha Tabak, personal chef radhatabak.com

Traditional fruit mince pies are served during the Christmas season. Their ingredients are traceable to the 13th century, when returning European Crusaders brought with them Middle Eastern recipes containing meats, fruits and spices. The addition of spices such as cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg was “in token of the offerings of the Eastern Magi”.

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/3 cup white sugar
6 oz unsalted butter
pinch of salt
1 egg yolk
3 Tbs iced water
1 1/2 jars fruit mince meat*
1 egg for brushing pastry
mini muffin tin (makes 24)
2 1/2” round pastry cutter
small star shaped cookie cutter

To make the pastry, place the flour, sugar, salt and butter in the bowl of a food processor and process until mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Mix together the egg yolk and water, add to food processor and process until the mixture just starts to come together in large clumps. Don’t over-process or your pastry will be tough. Turn onto a clean work surface. Shape into a disc. Cover with plastic wrap. Place in the fridge for 20 minutes to rest.

Preheat oven to 400F. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface until 1/8”-1/4” thick. Use a 2 1/2” round pastry cutter to cut 20 discs from the pastry. From the remaining pastry, cut 20 stars.

Line muffin pan with the pastry disks by pressing discs neatly into the edge of each pan. Divide the fruit mince among the pastry cases. Top with pastry stars. Brush the stars lightly with a beaten egg and sprinkle with white sugar. Bake for 20 minutes or until light golden. Set aside in the pans for 5 minutes to cool before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

*I like the ‘Wilkin & Sons Tiptree Mince Meat’ brand best.
**BRAISED DUCK LEGS WITH ORANGE AND CRANBERRY**  
—Mary Anne Erickson, Blue Mountain Bistro-to-Go, Kingston, NY  
bluemountainbistro.com

*This is a simpler take on the classic, canard à l’orange, which is made with just the legs. Faster and less messy than roasting a whole duck, it’s also a festive holiday dish to make when cranberries are plentiful. Cage-free Moulard ducks from Hudson Valley Duck Farm are widely available frozen and more tasty and larger than their commercially raised counterparts, but this recipe works equally well for regular Pekin-style duck legs.*

4 whole duck legs  
1/4 cup canola oil  
1/3 cup sugar  
1/2 cup sherry wine vinegar or red wine vinegar  
1 cup red wine  
2 cups Chicken Stock  
2 bay leaves  
2 large sprigs fresh thyme  

a few whole cloves or star anise  
1 tablespoon whole black peppercorns  
2 medium oranges  
1/4 cup fresh cranberries  
2 tablespoons orange marmalade, Grand Marnier, or other orange liqueur (optional)  
salt  
pepper

Preheat oven to 375°F. Trim and season duck legs with salt and pepper and cook on medium-low heat, skin side down, in a large skillet with canola oil. Continue cooking until some of the fat is rendered and the skin takes on a rich mahogany color, 8–10 minutes, or more. Turn and cook 2–3 minutes longer. Remove legs to a plate; strain and reserve the tasty rendered duck fat for another use.

Place sugar and vinegar in a saucepan and cook over medium heat until the sugar caramelizes and becomes a rich amber color, about 5 minutes. Watch carefully so the sugar does not burn. To the same pan, add wine, stock, bay leaves, thyme, whole cloves, and peppercorns. Zest and juice 1 orange, add them to the saucepan, and bring to a simmer.

Place duck in an ovenproof casserole dish and carefully pour liquid around the legs. The liquid should reach halfway up but not cover the legs. Place in the oven and cook, uncovered, 15 minutes. Lower heat to 325°F and continue cooking for another hour if using larger Moulard duck legs, a bit less for regular duck legs. Check the braising liquid after 30 minutes, adding a bit of water if it seems too low. The legs are done when a paring knife pierces the thigh with little resistance. Allow legs to cool in liquid for a few minutes, then remove to a platter and strain braising liquid, allowing it to stand for a few minutes so fat that rises to the top can easily be skimmed. Over high heat, cook remaining liquid until reduced to about 1 cup, 8–10 minutes, adding the cranberries at the end and taking care not to let them burst. (Dried cranberries may be used although they are often sweetened and lack the sour contrast.) Whisk in the marmalade or liqueur, if using. Trim the peel and white pith from the remaining orange and cut it into slices, adding them briefly to the sauce and then as garnish on plates or serving platter.

Serve with wild rice pilaf or fingerling potatoes roasted in the reserved duck fat for a sublime dinner. Roasted brussels sprouts or butternut squash puree adds a seasonal accent to the meal.
A fundamental part of Korean food, culture and heritage, kimchee has played a vital role in Madalyn Warren’s family as long as she can remember. “My mom is from Busan, so she’s been making kimchee most of her life,” she says. “And one of my first jobs as a child was peeling garlic for the kimchee ... my mom always made her own.” A desire to feed people nutritious, wholesome food led Madalyn to the Catskills first to farm, then to create Kimchee Harvest, which is now available at the farmstand in Roxbury, at various farmers markets, and in nine markets in New York City.

Madalyn grew up in the Adirondacks, near Speculator, where her family owned and operated a resort. “In 2003, I visited the Catskills with a friend and we went to an organic vegetable farm—it was in August—and I was really impressed with all of the food that one can grow. I’ve always had a leaning toward justice issues, and so the idea of growing food in an organic way, feeding people, satisfied my leanings. So I made trips to the farm that fall and then decided that I would like to dive in and spend a season growing vegetables ... and I haven’t stopped.”

In the early years of the farm, Madalyn started off growing for market and wholesale orders, which included a huge diversity of plants. The purpose initially was not to produce kimchee, but simply to farm. “I’ve been at this (new) location for six years, and my mom is here now. It was a few years after she arrived that we started fermenting the idea of making kimchee as a business, and that has been the main event for the past few years. The nature of what the farm is doing now has led me to grow a bit more of the brassica types: the Napa (cabbage), turnips, radishes, scallions, garlic.” She still does a CSA program, though, “and those folks want diversity. Diversity is important to me, so I do try to grow a little bit of everything.”

Once making kimchee became part of the program, Madalyn found it essential to have an added value product to put some shelf life on the vegetables. “Most vegetable farms want to stretch out the shelf life of their crops,” she explains, “to minimize the perishable time. It’s a tremendous amount of pressure to handle fresh food. It doesn’t serve us to hold on to any of it: you bring it to market and you don’t know what’s going to happen there. Any way that we can bring our vegetables into a kitchen and make a product that we can hold is a good thing.”

Kimchee is a naturally fermented, traditional Korean side-dish enjoyed with every meal. “Napa is the most popular type of kimchee,” says Madalyn, “but pretty much all of the brassicas can be turned into a kimchee. I just made a really terrific batch of escarole—which isn’t a brassica, but it has a thick enough rib that it can withstand the fermentation process to where there’s still something to chew on. We make a lot of rhubarb, sunchoke, we’re doing tons of turnip right now, radish. The one thing that I love about our kimchee and that our customers love is that it does taste different. Because I have a foundation in market growing and getting things to market straight out of the ground—I think it’s important that people get the product as the plant is from the field—I’ve carried that into our kimchee making process. It’s important that things get harvested and turned into kimchee right away. The microbes that are in the environment of a kimchee start on the vegetable. So making sure that the vegetable is closest as it is in the field into the kimchee barrel is really important to me. In that way, our kimchee is always going to be a little different from someone who’s not growing the vegetables.”

Kimchee is loaded with Vitamins A, B, C and K2, minerals calcium and iron, and “gut healthy bacteria” called lactobacilli. The beneficial microbes in kimchee, both probiotics and prebiotics, are your large intestine’s best friend. Ask your doctor how important gut health is for your mood, immune system and your overall well-being ... and give this superfood a try!

East Branch Farms is located at 52234 Route 30, Roxbury, New York, 12474. For more information, please visit straighoutoftheground.com.
1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, dissolve the yeast in the warm water. Whisk to combine and let sit about ten minutes to ensure that the yeast is fully dissolved.

2. Combine the flour, salt and 1/4 cup chopped herbs. Add to the mixing bowl along with the vegetable oil.

3. Mix on low speed for about 2 minutes until the flour and water fully combine to form a dough, and then increase the speed to medium and mix for another 2-3 minutes until the dough is smooth.

4. Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl and cover with a sheet of plastic or a clean kitchen towel. Set aside in a warm place to rise for about 1 hour, or until doubled in volume.

5. Once it has doubled in size, punch down the dough and re-round into a smooth ball. Place back in the bowl to rest for 15 minutes.

6. Turn the rested dough out onto a clean work surface. Using a knife, portion dough into 16 evenly sized pieces. Roll each piece into a ball, using either a pinch of flour or a light sprinkle of water if needed.

7. Combine the melted butter, garlic, remaining chopped herbs, and salt in a small bowl. Combine the cheddar and parmesan cheese in another small bowl and set aside.

8. To assemble the monkey bread: dip each dough ball into the melted herb butter to coat, and then roll in the cheese. Place side by side into a large cast iron pan, or any large ovensafe pan. You do not need to leave any room between the balls of dough, but if there is a little space between them in the pan that is fine! You may need to use more than one, depending on the size of your pan. Alternatively, you can make these into several small pans as well!

9. Cover with a sheet of plastic and set aside for about 20-30 minutes or until almost doubled in size.

10. Meanwhile, preheat your oven to 375 degrees.

11. Once your pan of monkey bread has risen, place it in your preheated oven and bake for about 30 minutes. Each piece of monkey bread should look golden brown, they should have filled the pan up well and risen even more, and should feel only a slight give when touching the innermost piece.

12. Remove from the oven and brush with any remaining herb butter! I like to sprinkle a little coarse sea salt and any extra chopped herbs on top at this time as well, just for a little added flavor. If you ran out of herb butter, you can brush with plain melted butter instead.

13. Enjoy while they are still warm! They won’t last more than a few minutes ;)

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**Cheesy Garlic & Herb Monkey Bread**

—Andrew Spielberg, Co-Founder - Gracie’s Luncheonette, Leeds, NY
graciesny.com

I once served a cheeseburger to a woman who, after taking several bites, approached me at my food truck window in tears. She explained to me that the burger I made for her reminded her of her late father. I was blown away that such a little thing as a cheeseburger could produce such a powerful emotion. Eating, as it turns out, is a uniquely immersive experience which has a way of embedding its memory deep into our psyche and flavor is the ultimate nostalgia. I’m sharing one of my favorite recipes to make with family and friends during the holidays: cheesy garlic and herb monkey bread. This rich, buttery bread will fill your kitchen with nostalgic aromas and certainly draw everyone to the table. It’s called monkey bread because of the way it’s prepared; the rolls are placed in a baking pan close together so that they bake into each other, which creates a sharable bread that is pulled apart one roll at a time. This soft, pillowy, savory monkey bread is perfect for sharing with family and friends during the holiday season. Here’s to the little things and to making new memories with the people we love.

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**Ingredients**

1 1/2 cups water, warm (between 100-110 degrees)  
2 1/4 tsp active dry yeast  
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 tsp salt  
1/4 cup + 2 Tbsp (divided) fresh herbs, finely chopped  
(dill, chives, parsley, rosemary or a combination—whatever you have will work great!)  
2 Tbsp vegetable oil  
1 cup cheddar cheese, finely grated  
1/2 cup parmesan cheese, finely grated  
1/4 cup butter, melted  
1-2 cloves garlic, minced  
1/2 tsp salt
MEXICAN SPIKED HOT CHOCOLATE
—Tito Bandito’s Taco & Tequila Bar, Pine Hill, NY
titobanditos.com

1 cup milk
¼ cup sweetened condensed milk
¼ cup heavy cream
1 ounce good quality sweetened chocolate
½ teaspoon cocoa
½ teaspoon ancho powder
½ teaspoon cinnamon
2 ounces Kahlua
1 ounce mezcal tequila
½ cup small marshmallows
Drizzle of chocolate syrup

Roughly chop the chocolate.

Place all ingredients except the Kahlua, marshmallows and chocolate syrup into a small crockpot.

Stir until cocoa and seasonings have dissolved.

Cook on low for 2 hours.

Pour into two mugs and add Kahlua and Tequila.

Top with marshmallows and drizzle the chocolate syrup.

Enjoy.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH RAVIOLI
—Chef Michele Ragussis, personal chef
chefmicheleragussis.com

I love fresh fresh pasta on Christmas Eve…it is super easy.
Butternut squash is one of my favorites and makes me think of Thanksgiving and the holidays

Pasta Dough
2 cups 00 /ap flour
3 whole eggs
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon water
pinch salt

Filling
1/2 butternut squash
1/2 cup whole milk ricotta
1 cup fresh grated parmesan
salt and pepper to taste

Sauce
1 stick butter
1 clove garlic
1/2 shallot
1/2 bunch fresh sage
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

Pasta: in a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, mix flour, water, salt and olive oil. With the mixer on medium, add one egg at a time and let knead for about ten minutes until a ball forms. Wrap and refrigerate 30 minutes.

Filling: Roast squash at 400 degrees until tender 15-20 min smash with a fork and add ricotta, parmesan and salt and pepper

To assemble ravioli: Roll out pasta very thin, or use a pasta machine set at 1-2. Pipe or spoon filling an inch apart and brush all sides with a lightly beaten egg. Top with another sheet of pasta and cut out your ravioli. Place on a floured tray.

To cook ravioli: Boil in salted water for 3-5 minutes

Sauce: Heat a sauté pan on medium heat and add butter, the chopped garlic, and shallot, and let brown about 3 minutes. Add balsamic vinegar, sage and 2 tablespoons of pasta water. Add ravioli to sauce, toss and serve.
GRANDMA’S SWEET POTATO PIEROGI

—Chef Carolann Ransaw, personal chef & founder, Catskills Pierogis
carolannscuisine.com • instagram.com/carolannscuisines

Pierogi are boiled dumplings. They can be filled with a number of savory or sweet stuffings, including potato and cheese, sauerkraut, cabbage, spiced meats, and even fruits and berries. Because pierogi freeze well, they make quick, satisfying last-minute meals or accompaniments. They can be premade for those cold winter nights while stuck indoors. Pierogi take you back to visiting baba or grandma’s house with the sweet smell of onions, butter and love.

Filling:
1 medium onion, chopped
1 1/2 Tbsp. butter, vegan butter or olive oil
3/4 lb. mild cheddar cheese, farmers cheese or vegan cheddar shreds
3 Tbsp. butter or vegan butter
1 1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
2 medium potatoes, boiled and mashed
4 sweet potatoes, baked and scooped out

Dough:
4 cups flour
1 cup cooled potato water
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp baking powder
2 tablespoons of potato starch (or use the boiled potato that settles to the bottom of the pot after you’ve boiled the potatoes)

Set aside cooled potato water to add to dough if dough needs more moisture for kneading.

To Assemble:
Fill circles with 1 Tbsp of filling. Fold dough in half and seal the edges well.

At this point the pierogi can be frozen for up to 4 weeks, or refrigerated overnight, or cooked in a large stockpot of boiling salted water. Only cook about 10 pierogi at a time, so that they have room to float without sticking. When the pierogi float, they’re done. The time will vary depending on whether they are fresh or frozen.

Sauté with shallots or onion in the butter/olive oil in a large skillet until the onion begins to brown. Add the drained pierogi and cook until browned and crisped. Serve hot with additional sour cream and sautéed onions.

I like to add a few twists of fresh cracked black pepper for color and an added kick.

Sweet potato prep
1. Wash ’em clean. The worst way to ruin a dish is with a gritty texture. Scrub the skins lightly to get rid of any dirt and soil.
2. Line your baking sheet with parchment. Sweet potatoes tend to get a little juicy while baking. Line the baking sheet parchment paper easier clean up.
3. Poke holes! The pricking technique is always used when baking regular or sweet potatoes—the holes help to reduce baking time and ensure the potatoes won’t burst by providing steam vents.
4. Bake until tender. How can you tell when they’re done? Stick a fork into the thickest part of the potato. If there’s no resistance, it’s good to go.
5. Keep them dry. A lot of recipes call for rubbing the sweet potatoes in olive oil after pricking, but we find that it’s not necessary—unless you intend on eating the potato with the skin on! Oil will help the skin crisp up a bit during the baking process and develop a more delicious flavor.

How To Freeze Pierogi:
Generously dust a baking sheet with flour and arrange pierogi so they are not touching then cover loosely with plastic wrap and place in the freezer. Once frozen, transfer to a large zip-loc bag. Pre-freezing in a single layer keeps them from sticking together in the freezer.
GOLDEN NUGGET SQUASH SOUP
—Chef Josh Kroner, Terrapin Restaurant, Bistro & Bar, Rhinebeck, NY terrapinrestaurant.com

2 tablespoons garlic, chopped
2 tablespoons ginger, chopped
1 pound Spanish onions, chopped
2 tablespoons safflower oil
7 pounds golden nugget squash
1 cup white wine
1 - 14 ounce can coconut milk
2 stalks lemongrass, finely chopped
& wrapped in a cheesecloth bundle
1 teaspoon ground galangal
(you can substitute ground ginger)
2 quarts vegetable stock
(you can substitute chicken stock)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut squash in half widthwise and place open side down on a sheet pan or cookie sheet. Pour one cup of water into the pan with the squash and carefully place in oven. Cook for approximately 45 minutes, or until a knife passes easily through the squash. Remove from oven and let cool. With a large metal spoon, scrape the flesh of the squash out of the rind. Place into a large bowl and reserve.

Heat a large stock pot over medium heat. Add the oil, then the onions, garlic and ginger. Cook until onions are soft, add wine and continue cooking until almost evaporated.

Add the reserved squash and remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook for two hours, stirring frequently. Remove lemongrass bundles and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Blend in batches (be careful with hot soup in a blender!) until smooth.

Serve hot with a dollop of sour cream if desired.

BUDINO DI CIOCCOLATO
(CHOCOLATE PUDDING)
—Chef Gianni Scappin, Cucina Restaurant, Woodstock, NY cucinawoodstock.com

200 g chocolate (60-69%), good quality such as Valrhona or any good brand, roughly chopped
100 g sugar
40 g unsweetened cocoa powder
30 g cornstarch
1000 g milk
50 g unsalted butter, to be added at the end

Optional garnishes: raspberries, whipped cream, peanut butter or other cookies, sea salt

Warm milk in a 3 qt saucepan, (preferably stainless steel) for a couple of minutes. Do not let it come to a boil.

Separately mix all the dry ingredients together and add to warm milk. Once added to milk, using a whisk make sure you stir consistency until it gets to a simmer.

Let simmer for at least 5-10 seconds, just enough so that the corn starch activates and get denser/thicker. Do not remove the budino before it gets to a simmer.

Remove from heat and incorporate the butter. Mix well and while still very hot immediately pour into the proper cups, ramekins, bowls or glasses you will serve in (make sure they can bear the heat). Do not leave the pan on the heat: it burns very easily.

Let cool for 30 minutes, then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least one hour or more, up to one day in the refrigerator. They can also be served room temperature.

Before serving sprinkle few grains of good salt, such as Maldon or any pure clean salt if desired. Garnish with berries or simply unsweetened whipped cream. Serve with cookies of your preference.

NOTE: I would suggest when ready to pour the hot mixture into the proper cups, to use a water pitcher or a measurement cups for easy pouring.
For some people, the Hunter area conjures up images of skiing, hiking, and possibly bears. But even before the pandemic led a wave of fresh visitors to appreciate the area’s natural beauty and peace, Hunter was on the upswing—with new businesses opening up and old favorites getting a fresh look. And though there are plenty of nearby crumbling 130 year-old boarding houses from the first golden age of Catskills tourism to remind you that the winds of change up here can be fickle, it truly appears that a new era of growth is finding its way up the mountain.

And as they say: in truth, there is wine. Hunter Village Wines & Liquor, located right next to the Hunter Mountain Brewery at 7261 Route 23A, has been newly renovated, re-stocked, and reimagined as Elevated Wine & Spirits, with all your old favorites and a robust new selection of organic, biodynamic, and natural/low-intervention wines, as well as tons of small-batch spirits and ciders—many from New York and New England.

With years of restaurant, bar, & hospitality experience in New York City, the Catskills, and beyond, the staff at Elevated has created a wine shop stocked like the extensive wine list at your favorite West Village restaurant, but priced like your neighborhood liquor store. The shop features selections that are serious, thoughtful, and refined, and also playful, easy-drinking, and experimental.

At Elevated they know that sometimes the perfect bottle of wine should be beloved and familiar, and sometimes it’s a step into the unknown, an experiment with a new flavor, varietal, region, or style. The staff at Elevated is there to offer encouragement and information to anyone looking to try something new, whether that means leaving your comfort zone or curling up with an old favorite. If you’ve been drinking Yellowtail, they recommend trying Gulp Hablo or La Boutanche: both 1 liter, organic, and offered at a similar, reasonable price. If you’re thinking of celebrating with Veuve Clicquot this month, you’ll love luxurious Billecart-Salmon Brut Réserve, or the 100% organic Jean-Velut, Blanc de Blancs Lumiere et Craie, which uses a solera system that blends older vintages together, leading to a champagne that is all white flowers, citrus, mineral, and remarkable.

Elevated Wine & Spirits is also passionate about supporting local spirit-makers operating at even the smallest scale; the shop carries a number of self-distributed local spirits, including wildly aromatic absinthe—and sometimes apple brandy—made by Cheryl Lins of Delaware Phoenix Distillery in Walton, NY, a shockingly bright and balanced Italian-style grappa made by Luckey Spirits in Greenwich, NY, and home-cocktail-perfect Isolation Proof gin made in nearby Bovina.

Elevated sells wine and spirits catered to anyone’s tastes on any budget. Though the name has changed, they still stock the bottles that regulars have been enjoying for years. They’re just happily devoted to expanding, diversifying, and—dare they say—elevating their selection in the interest of quality, sustainability, and the pure joy of sipping a glass of wine, a homemade cocktail, or a nice pour of craft bourbon by the fire.

Elevated Wine & Spirits is located at 7261 Route 23A in Hunter. For more information, please call them at 518 263 4184.
The Catskill Mountain Foundation’s Piano Performance Museum reopens to the public on Fridays and Saturdays, from 11am to 3pm by appointment only. Please call the CMF Reservation Line at 518 263 2063, to make an appointment to visit the museum. We will return your call as soon as possible to confirm your appointment.

The docent tour is approximately 30 minutes. Appointments are available for a maximum of three people at a time. Masks are required and temperatures will be recorded at the door and visitors will be asked to answer a short questionnaire related to Covid 19. During the pandemic, visitors will be asked not to touch the pianos or other artifacts on display in the museum. CMF staff have established healthful guidelines for your visit to the museum to provide as safe an environment as possible for visitors and staff. We welcome you and look forward to showing you our extraordinary collection of historical pianos from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

Doctorow Center for the Arts
7971 Main Street, Route 23A, Hunter, New York • www.catskillmtn.org

Hours: By Appointment Only, Fridays & Saturdays 11am-3pm. Please call 518 263 2063 to request an appointment

The CMF Piano Performance Museum is funded in part by the Jarvis and Constance Doctorow Family Foundation
Often, good solutions come from unexpected places. Thinking creatively can involve considering two previously disparate concepts and reimagining them realigned and put together… like, the milkman and our excessive use of plastics.

Sixty years ago, one-third of American families were getting their milk from the milkman. Then came the convenience of the plastic jug of milk. Lighter, unbreakable and see-through. What a great idea … except for the milkman, who became obsolete, and the ocean….

Plastics are expected to outweigh fish in the ocean by 2050. Microplastics are getting into our soil, air, water and our bodies with health consequences that we don’t yet understand. His is very dangerous. We have so much plastic waste that we don’t know what to do with it and it threatens the health of our planet. Maybe recycling isn’t the only answer…

“Procter & Gamble, Unilever, Nestlé, PepsiCo, Danone, Mars Petcare, Mondelez International and others—some of the world’s largest consumer goods companies—are partnering on a potential solution to limit future waste. They’re working together on a project known as Loop, announced at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland last year. It offers consumers an alternative to recycling …

“Loop is a new way to shop, offering about 300 items—from Tide detergent to Pantene shampoo, Häagen-Dazs ice cream to Crest mouthwash—all in reusable packaging. After using the products, customers put the empty containers in a Loop tote on their doorstep. The containers are then picked up by a delivery service, cleaned and refilled, and shipped out to consumers again.”

—How to solve the world’s plastics problem: Bring back the milk man
Story by Danielle Wiener-Bronner, CNN Business

Maybe reinventing the milkman will contribute to ending our dependency on plastics, allowing us to build more sustainable practices that will foster respect for the planet that nurtures us.

But let’s ask — what actions have you taken to reduce your use of plastics? I’d like to suggest that you begin with never again buying any beverage in a plastic bottle. Millions and millions of one-time use plastic bottles end up in land fills every single day. You have the power to stop this. (Just do it!) This is how our actions today build a better tomorrow.
the catskill mountain foundation’s kaaterskill fine arts gallery presents

CHOIRS

DARLA BJORK

THROUGH DECEMBER 26, 2020

KAATERSKILL FINE ARTS GALLERY
Hunter Village Square
7950 Main Street, Village of Hunter

518 263 2060 • www.catskillmtn.org • on Facebook: KaaterskillFineArtsGallery

Exhibition Hours:
Saturday 11am-6pm or by appointment; please call 518 263 2060 to make an appointment
In an interview before his death, Mark Rothko stated that he wanted to make art that was as good as music. He admired the depth and mystery he found in classical composition and performance.

Can a painting sing?

I’ve been looking at and admiring Darla Bjork’s paintings for the last three years. Her use of oil sticks on wood creates an urgency, fluidity and solidity that is highly unusual in contemporary abstraction. Many of her larger pieces are door size, inviting the viewer to walk up close to it and be emotionally enveloped in or through them. This is how a painting can be both strong and delicate at the same time.

Prior to the Covid outbreak the colors in her paintings were bright, almost cheerful and consistently on a white background which gave them a bright buoyancy. Enduring the pandemic isolation that has swept the land, Bjork has fostered a darker, more private view of our current circumstances: a window into a grief-filled world of uncertainty.

These paintings have a reference to urban structures, tall buildings grouped together, where stacked windows appear to be ladders reaching upward through the darkness, forming an unexpected tribe that is shedding its collective horror and reaching for something more hopeful.

Can a painting sing? Yes. This why we named Bjork’s exhibit, Choirs. I hope you’ll come to the gallery to look and listen.

—Robert Tomlinson
Director, Kaaterskill Fine Arts Gallery
ARTIST’S STATEMENT
One of the first things that I do when I get in my studio is turn on music. Usually classical—Bach or Beethoven, sometimes jazz—Miles Davis or Bill Evans. The music often puts me in an most trancelike state so that I am more focused on the sounds than on the painting. I will start work on a painting that I have gotten “stuck” on but sometimes I find myself picking up an old wood panel that has been sitting around waiting to get scraped down and reworked. I work with layers of oil stick and often etch back to the underlying wax.

For the past few years I have been making grid-like structures that evolved into my weaving series. These consciously evoke the warp and weft of the woven rugs that as a child I watched my maternal grandmother make on her large loom in her basement.

The “Crossroads Series” are about the same size as many of her rugs but where her lines were rigid and uniform, mine are seemingly random crossings and overlapping color. These were done pre-Covid when the world seemed brighter and full of promise.

After the Covid shutdown I along with most people struggled to readjust and learn new coping skills, some as simple as wearing a mask. I switched back to my favorite color—blue—and found by chance an indigo blue that seemed right during this crisis. While I was luckily sheltering in place in Woodstock for what seemed like years, I tried to imagine how people in the large cities trapped in small apartments were coping and started the Covid Windows series as a tribute to whose people but also to those who did not survive the virus. These paintings are a tribute to those who sang or played trumpets from their balconies, clapped at 7pm each night for the first line workers, and even produced zoom choirs.

Darla Bjork
Darla Bjork is a painter who has exhibited in the United States and Europe. Her work has evolved from abstract portraits that reflected her “other life” as a psychiatrist when she was working with people in mental institutions to her present weaving series influenced by her childhood in rural Minnesota and now by the view of the Catskill Mountains from her studio in Woodstock, NY.
“Crossroads 1,” 65”x36”, 2019
Oil stick on wood panel
Each year since December of 2015, the Catskill Mountain Foundation’s Orpheum Dance Program has proudly presented its annual production of the beloved holiday favorite, The Nutcracker. With the pandemic swirling and cancellations continuing, Orpheum Dance Program Director Victoria Rinaldi has created a new version of this magical story. A Victorian Nutcracker Remembrance is a virtual performance that tells the story of The Nutcracker through the lens of archival video footage from previous Orpheum Dance Program productions, combined with scenes filmed this December in iconic locations in Hunter, Tannersville, and Windham.
YOUR SAFETY IS OUR TOP PRIORITY!

- Wearing a mask is required—we have extra if you need one.
- Hand sanitizer and gloves available for your comfort and safety.
  - No more than 6 people in the store at one time.
  - Credit card / check are preferred but not mandatory.
- We have instituted enhanced cleaning protocols throughout the day.
- We have set aside 11 am to noon as a special “seniors only” shopping hour.

SHOP LOCAL THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

6042 Main St, Tannersville, NY 12485
(next to the Orpheum Film & Performing Arts Center)

Hours starting December 3: Thursday 11 am to 6 pm;
Friday & Saturday, 11 am to 7 pm & Sunday 11 am to 6 pm
(special shopping hours for seniors and the immune-compromised: 11 am to noon on Fridays)

Phone: (518) 589-7500 • KaaterskillFineArtsGallery

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kaatart.catskillmtn.org
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(And Don’t Forget the Chocolate!)
As the year comes to an end, this is a good time to think back on adventures you’ve enjoyed in the Catskills and think about all of the hard work that has gone into making your experience more enjoyable in the great outdoors. In addition to the land management staff for our major landowners, there is an army of volunteers who spend thousands of hours every year maintaining the trails, fire towers and lean-tos of the Catskills. These hard-working volunteers partner with land managers such as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and many smaller landowners who open their lands to public recreation.

Many of the organizations that help manage these volunteers and work towards improving the Catskills are small nonprofits that rely on donations and gifts from individuals who care about the Catskills. That support translates directly into the protection and preservation of the Catskills!

Hikers, Walkers and Mountain Bikers, Be Alert During Seasonal Hunting Seasons
Regular (rifle) season for deer hunting in the Catskill Park began on November 21 and runs through December 13. There are also seasons for turkey, bear, bobcat and other small mammals. For all the details about hunting seasons, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation maintains a website at dec.ny.gov/outdoor/65231.html with extensive seasonal information on all of the different hunting seasons, their geographic areas and additional information for both hunters and those who wish to recreate during the fall hunting season.

Hikers, walkers and anyone planning on being in the woods should always be aware of the hunting regulations in the area where they are recreating and should always wear blaze orange during hunting seasons to reduce the risk of any incidents. Don’t forget to watch your pets too! Dogs should be wearing blaze orange when they are in the woods with you and should always remain under your control to avoid incidents.

Catskill Park Day Coming in February Help Support the Catskills!
Organized annually by the Catskill Park Coalition, which is co-chaired by the Catskill Center, the 2021 Catskill Park Day will be held on Tuesday, February 2, 2021. This day is an opportunity for supporters of the Catskills to have their voices heard in Albany and to make a difference in the support and funding that the Park receives. For more information visit catskillcenter.org/advocacy or call 845 586 2611.
Catskill Center Named Member of Advisory Group to Find Ways to Balance Public Use with Natural Resource Protection in the Catskill Park

With the recent announcement by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to establish an advisory group to address high use and overuse in the Catskills, the Catskill Center is excited and ready to work alongside this highly motivated group of representatives. The effort is to be known as the Catskills Strategic Planning Advisory Group (CAG). The group’s charge is to study how the increased use has impacted the staff, facilities, and resources within the Catskill Forest Preserve and to find solutions that protect natural resources, support local economies and provide a safe, quality recreational experience for the Park’s visitors and residents.

The Catskill Center’s Executive Director, Jeff Senterman, will represent the Catskill Center on the CAG. In line with the mission and strategic goals of the Catskill Center, Jeff will be working to ensure the continued protection of natural resources, communities, and character of the Catskill Park.

“The increasing numbers of visitors to the Catskill Park represents both a challenge and an opportunity,” said Catskill Center’s Executive Director Jeff Senterman, “while we must ensure that our natural resources remain protected and that use is appropriately managed, we must also ensure that we take this opportunity to engage with visitors to help them understand the beauty and value of the extraordinary Forest Preserve lands of the Catskill Park, and find ways for them to robustly participate in our local economies. We look forward to working with the other members of the CAG to learn about, explore and implement the solutions that will work for our Catskill Park.”

The Catskill Center has been keenly aware of the increased use of trails and hot spots across the region for a number of years. Advocating for more resources as
the leader of the Catskill Park Coalition, introducing visitor experience programs in the Park, and leading on the ground stewardship efforts have been a central mission of the organization over the last decade.

As the leader of the Catskill Park Coalition, the Catskill Center has led the effort at introducing the Catskill Park to legislators and advocating for increased resources. Results of that advocacy have included millions of dollars in funding being directed to the Catskill Park for efforts to repair trails, improve parking, open and operate the Catskills Visitor Center, fund stewardship efforts, improve state campgrounds and more. Each year the Catskill Center organizes and leads the more than 30 members of the coalition to educate and advocate for these resources. That work culminates in the annual Catskill Park Day, where organizations and volunteers visit with elected officials and agency personnel to advocate for the Catskill Park.

As part of the CAG, the Catskill Center will give voice to the need to protect unique natural resources, for better and more facilities, for appropriate DEC planning and enforcement staffing, increased visitor interpretive services and increased educational programs. Alongside regulation and new facilities, it will be central to offer visitors educational opportunities focusing on responsible outdoor recreation. Effective education will help enable visitors to make safe and smart decisions on the trail, which will protect their experience and the natural resources of the Forest Preserve. It will also be important to ensure that visitors have the tools to enjoy, visit and spend time in the communities of the Catskill Park, to ensure that our economies also benefit from this increasing number of visitors.

Visit the Catskill Park’s Visitor Center

Located at 5096 Route 28 in Mount Tremper, NY, the Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey Catskills Visitor Center (CVC) is the official visitor center for the Catskill Park. Operated and managed by the Catskill Center, staff are available at the CVC with information, maps and all the advice needed to plan a Catskill adventure. A walk-up service window at the building is now open every day from 10 am to 3 pm except for Wednesdays. Visitors who wear a mask and follow social distancing protocols can get their Catskill questions answered in person, receive tourism literature and make purchases at the CVC’s shop. The CVC building, including the restrooms inside, are not yet open to the public, but a port-a-john is available in the parking area.

CVC staff are also available to answer questions about the Catskills and the Catskill Park via e-mail at info@catskillcenter.org or phone at 845 688 3369.

In addition to the walk-up service window, 1.5 miles of trails on the CVC’s grounds, including the (roughly) 0.5 mile ADA accessible Interpretive Loop Trail, are open to the public daily. The 80-foot tall Upper Esopus Fire Tower, which was constructed and opened last fall, will also be open daily to visitors. Picnic tables are available on site for those who wish to enjoy a picnic lunch.

Visitors can explore the ever expanding resources available online for the CVC on the web at catskillsvisitorcenter.org and on the CVC’s Facebook page at facebook.com/catskillsvisitorcenter.
Release of Greater Catskill Region Comprehensive Recreation Plan Marks Completion of Catskill Master Plan and Stewardship Planning Project

The Catskill Watershed Corporation recently announced the release of the much-anticipated Greater Catskill Region Comprehensive Recreation Plan. A result of the Catskill Center’s advocacy efforts leading the Catskill Park Coalition, the plan offers a strategic vision with actionable steps to increase public recreational access in the Catskill Park. The planning team included the Catskill Center, Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Senator James L. Seward and Senator George A. Amedore, Jr., were instrumental in obtaining the funding for the plan in the 2015-2016 New York State Budget, which included $500,000 directed towards the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation under the Aid to Localities budget for Catskill Master Plan Stewardship and Planning. The NYSDEC, NYCDEP, CWC and the Catskill Center assisted in the implementation of the funding, including the identification and management of projects. The CWC was tasked with the administration of all funding as well as all reporting obligations.

“The Catskill Center is thrilled to have the Greater Catskill Region Comprehensive Recreation Plan complete,” said Jeff Senterman, the Executive Director of the Catskill Center. “This plan provides all involved with a broad view of recreational resources and opportunities both in the Catskill Park and the NYC watershed area. The plan will help agencies, organizations, and communities work together in the future towards enhanced recreational opportunities, better user management, a more welcoming and inclusive region, and improved coordination amongst all parties. We look forward to seeing even more improvements to the natural resources, infrastructure, and management of the Catskill Park and surrounding watershed lands thanks to the Greater Catskill Region Comprehensive Recreation Plan.”

Since Aid to Localities funds were made available, they have been used for the creation of the Recreation Plan, as well as for additional planning and construction projects. Planning work also included a contract with Tahawus Trails LLC to provide a preliminary design for a mountain bike trail system on recently acquired state land in the Shandaken Wild Forest. This plan has subsequently been incorporated into the Shandaken Wild Forest Unit Management Plan and is awaiting construction.

Several much-needed trailhead parking areas were built to help with increasing use and road congestion. In Ulster County, funding was used to purchase materials for DEC to construct a parking lot for the Mead’s Meadow – Overlook Mountain trailhead and for kiosk and trail construction. Additionally, materials were purchased for DEC to construct parking lots at the Kanape Brook Trailhead, the Shandaken Wild Forest Sawmill Access, the Red Hill Fire Tower trailhead and Vernooy Kill trailheads.

The Willow trailhead parking lot and kiosk were built on DEP land to access DEC hiking trails. This project was contracted to Delaware Bulldozing Corporation. The Sundown Wild Forest Upper Cherrytown Road parking lot was constructed by Rock Mountain Farms. In Greene County, the Elm Ridge parking lot expansion, kiosk and trail were constructed by Lefever Excavating Inc. These projects resulted in an additional 142 parking spaces at these locations.

Additionally, funds were used to complete the Catskill Park Wayfinding Signage project, which provides informational sig-

#RecreateResponsibly in the Catskills

As the Catskills get busier, it can be confusing to navigate this “new normal” in terms of how to recreate responsibly in the era of COVID-19. The #RecreateResponsibly guidelines give some sound advice on how to get outdoors right now.

When you choose to recreate responsibly, you are doing your part to keep yourself and others safe and healthy.

Know Before you Go: Check the status of the place you want to visit. If it is closed, don’t go. If it’s crowded, have a plan B.

Plan Ahead: Prepare for facilities to be closed, pack lunch and bring essentials like hand sanitizer and a mask.

Stay Close to Home: This is not the time to travel long distances to recreate. Most places are only open for day use.

Practice Physical Distancing: Adventure only with your immediate household.

Be prepared to cover your nose and mouth and give others space. If you are sick, stay home.

Play It Safe: Slow down and choose lower-risk activities to reduce your risk of injury.

Search and rescue operations and health care resources are both strained.

Leave No Trace: Respect public lands and communities and take your garbage with you, including disposable gloves, and masks.

We all have a shared responsibility to care for these places and ensure they remain for future generations to enjoy.

Lead by example and join the Catskill Center and the Catskills Visitor Center in learning how to

#RecreateResponsibly at recreateresponsibly.org.
It has been exciting to see the advocacy of the Catskill Park Coalition turn into funding and that funding then turn into concrete results for a better Catskill Park,” said Senterman. “We are very grateful for the hard work and support from Senator James L. Seward and Senator George A. Amedore, Jr. to secure these monies for the Catskill Park. We look forward to continuing to work with members of the NYS Legislature and Governor’s Office to build on the success of this funding with continued infrastructure improvements and the implementation of items presented in the planning studies.

Copies of the Greater Catskill Region Comprehensive Recreation Plan can be found for review at regional libraries and by visiting cwconline.org/catskill-recreation-plan to download a copy.

Catskill Park Updates Now Available for the Catskills Online
Local recreational opportunities are always changing and by visiting the Catskills Visitor Center’s Trail Conditions blog you can now see updates related to the Catskill Park, Catskill trails, Catskill campgrounds and camping, Catskill boating, skiing, and more at catskillvisitorcenter.org.

Catskill Park Advisory Committee
The Catskill Park Advisory Committee (CPAC) was established by the Catskill Center in consultation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) several years ago. Currently chaired by the Catskill Center, the CPAC is a group of representatives from local governments and organizations that provides a forum for communities, user groups and stakeholders of the Catskill Park and the Catskill Watershed to discuss issues of regional importance. The purpose of the Committee is to provide assistance, advice and guidance to the DEC, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and other land managers in the management of the New York State Forest Preserve, the Catskill Park and the Catskill Watershed.

Meetings are held quarterly and are open to the public. If you’d like to learn more, join the mailing list or attend the next meeting, please contact the Catskill Center at 845 586 2611 or e-mail them at cccd@catskillcenter.org with CPAC in the subject line, and ask to be added to the mailing list. Please note that for at least the remainder of 2020, CPAC meetings will be held virtually. You must be on the mailing list to receive the e-mail to register for the virtual meeting.

Give Back to the Catskills
The natural beauty, the majesty of the mountains, the protection of the Catskill Forest Preserve, the region’s natural and cultural resources, all need your help! By supporting the work of the Catskill Center, you support: stewardship of our Catskill Park and its vast natural resources; the Center’s collaborative spirit as we convene, create partnerships and facilitate discussions that benefit the region; and the Center’s work to support education, arts and culture throughout the Catskills.

To support the work of the Catskill Center, make a donation online at catskillcenter.org/donate or donate by mail with a check made out to the “Catskill Center” and mailed to Catskill Center, PO Box 504, Arkville, NY 12406.

Jeff Senterman is the Executive Director of the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development in Arkville, NY, a member of the Board of Directors for the American Hiking Society, the Catskill Watershed Corporation and the Central Catskills Chamber of Commerce. Jeff graduated with a degree in Environmental Science from Lyndon State College and worked for many years as an Environmental Planner in New England before coming back to New York and the Catskills in the nonprofit sector. To learn more about the work of the Catskill Center in the Catskills, visit catskillcenter.org.
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