

Historic Farming Community Moving Forward

Three Candidates Vie for Two Town Justice Positions

By Marie-Claude Stockl

On November 8, 2022 Ancram voters will have the opportunity to cast two votes for two contested Town Justice positions. The candidates are, in alphabetical order:

- Suzan Flamm, Democratic Candidate
- Dick Novik, Republican Candidate
- Cathy Redlich, Incumbent, Democratic and Republican Candidate

In Their Own Words

The Town News asked the candidates to respond to the following question: **Why should Ancram voters cast their ballots for you?** Here's what they had to say.

Suzan Flamm

A town court plays a vital role in our state's judicial system. It's the place we go to resolve matters that arise in town, such as business arrangements gone wrong, landlord-tenant disagreements, criminal allegations, and traffic infractions. Regardless of the dollar amount, or the



Town Justice Candidates (left to right) Suzan Flamm (D); Dick Novik (R), and Cathy Redlich (Incumbent, D and R)

alleged wrongdoing, the results are important for the individuals involved. Consequences can include a criminal record, the loss of a driver's license, the issuance of an order of protection, or the imposition of a money judgement. Fair outcomes in these proceedings are also important to the entire town. Our community is well served when we can rely on professional and unbiased courts at every level of the judiciary, including our local court.

A critical measure of a court is the depth of experience its justices bring to the bench. I am running for Town Justice because, with thirty-five years of legal experience, I have the skills to research applicable laws, apply them impartially to the relevant facts, and reach fair decisions. I gained these skills early in my career, as a civil litigator and then as a prosecutor with the Manhattan District Attorneys' Office. There, I tried cases and learned the importance of weighing the facts, and understanding the law, before reaching conclusions. I sharpened these skills as an attorney with a New York City

investigative agency. While there I was designated a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney to handle a federal inquiry. Later, I was appointed the attorney in charge of a regional office for the New York State Attorney General and, most recently, worked for a non-profit that focused on legal compliance. I've also had the good fortune to teach Courtroom Communication and Investigative Interviewing at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. I ask for your vote so I can now use my legal experience on behalf of Ancram.

I am committed to Ancram and its well-being and have been since my husband and I purchased our home here almost ten years ago. Should I be elected, taking the bench would be the continuation, not the beginning, of my work on behalf of the town. I chaired Ancram's Climate Smart Committee from 2017 until this fall and will continue to contribute as a committee member. Our work resulted in energy-saving measures at town hall, the conversion of the town's streetlights to power-saving LED bulbs, an LED bulb

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Town News Team

Cathy Redlich, *Editor*
Susan Arterian
Joe Brown
Suzan Flamm
Lynne Perrella
Bobbie Slonevsky
Marie-Claude Stockl
Brittany L. Morgan, *Layout*

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Send to Cathy Redlich at

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TOWN JUSTICE

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giveaway program, and a community solar drive to support renewable energy. Based on these accomplishments, the state recently certified Ancram as a bronze-level Climate Smart Community. Last year, I joined Columbia County's climate task force and helped plan the county's first Climate Carnival in July. I also write for the *Ancram Town News*, a job that happily brings me into contact with my neighbors and helps me understand the town and its history. And, I'm a member of Ancram's Strategic Investment Committee.

An experienced and professional court is equipped to protect the rights and interests of the parties that appear before it. These include civil litigants, with or without counsel, criminal defendants, who must be afforded their due process rights, and law enforcement officers and prosecutors, tasked with enforcing our laws. Many who appear in town court are doing so for the first time and are not familiar with court proceedings. Should I be elected, it would be my goal to ensure that all parties are respected and heard and have access to information about the potential outcomes of their cases. It would also be my goal to ensure that, regardless of outcomes, all participants have confidence that the administration of justice is fair.

Dick Novik

I am Dick Novik and I am running for Ancram Town Justice. I have lived in Ancramdale for over 35 years...raised our children here...and now that I have retired from the broadcasting business, want to serve our community. I love it here for the same reasons you do...our Town is very beautiful (especially this time of year)...it's safe...and most importantly it is full of wonderful people! We are so lucky to be living in a mix of original farm families, and the rest of us who wish to live in a historic farm community. And, for the most part...we all get along very well!

Like everyone, I worry about how divided, politically, our Country and State are.

Ironically a Judge cannot participate in politics once elected...but has to run through the political system in order to get the job. And as you know, Republicans are outnumbered in our Town...so my only chance for election...my only hope...is that you will be willing to vote for the candidate, not the political party. Last time I ran for election, I lost by just 46 votes...so obviously many of you did vote the candidate, not just the party line...and for that I thank you so very much!

On this November 8th there are two open Town Justice positions on the ballot. My opponents are both lawyers and believe that that gives them the advantage in this race. It is important that you understand that over seventy percent of Town Justices across the State are NOT attorneys...it is clearly not a requirement for the position.

In neighboring Pine Plains, for example, one judge is a banker, the other a former police officer. Once elected, a Town Justice goes to training, passes exams and takes the oath of office. An important fact to keep in mind is that a Town Judge is NOT ALLOWED to give legal advice from the bench. There are always lawyers in attendance in the court... a Public Defender, and the Assistant District Attorney, to give legal advice to the defendant ...but a judge cannot give legal advice. Thus being an attorney is not necessary.

My strength, I believe, is knowing so many people in Town...knowing how hard people here are working to pay their taxes...their electric bills...to send their kids to college...to make ends meet...I have the ability to get along with everyone.

I know I can treat everyone fairly because I am not tied to any special interests. I believe...and this might separate me from my opponents...that we have to keep the balance of interests and opinions level here in Ancram. We have to respect the opinions of others, and respect those offering those

opinions...even if they are different from ours...thus we have to respect our two-party system. Which is exactly what the bench requires!!!

I have the ability to be fair to everyone who comes before me in court...Isn't that what you want in a Town Judge? Please consider voting for me...Dick Novik for Ancram Town Justice. Thank you.

Cathy Redlich

For those who may not know me, I am the current Ancram Town Justice and am honored to have been elected by the voters from our three hamlets. When I was sworn in four years ago, I had no idea that the entire judiciary would be upended by Covid, nor did I know that my co-judge would depart the bench before I was halfway through my term, leaving me to assume the duties of two. Although these challenges were unforeseen, they were manageable because of my legal training, my understanding of the ethical obligations of the judiciary, and my 40 years as a practicing attorney in federal and state courts throughout the country.

My years as Town Justice have taught me that this is not an easy job, especially given the significant changes in the law. Over the course of my term, there have been sweeping changes in criminal procedure and landlord-tenant law, as well as significant criminal justice reforms. While many people think of town courts as the place they go when they get a traffic ticket, the jurisdiction of a town court is far broader, encompassing the initial proceedings in all criminal matters and ongoing responsibility for misdemeanor cases, landlord-tenant matters, small claims cases, and other civil disputes. I cannot overemphasize how essential my legal background has been in performing my duties competently and without the need to turn to outside sources for help. I know how to research the law, apply case precedent, conduct a trial and make evidentiary rulings, write a legal opinion, and most importantly, I know how to ensure that the constitutional rights of defendants are safeguarded in our court. During my term, I have made some changes in the court, starting with a

more robust introduction before court sessions to ensure that everyone understands the process and is properly advised of their rights. In my spare moments, I am rewriting the court page on the town website to provide useful information and resources for anyone needing assistance in a civil or criminal matter. I also meet with other county judges to discuss our mutual concerns and challenges. Perhaps most gratifying, I am approached frequently by town residents with general questions about the legal system or who are anxious about a court appearance in another town. If they cannot afford legal services, I have taken on their representation pro bono if the matter is not in Ancram. For me this means that I have succeeded in spreading the view that our town court and its judge are not something to be feared but a resource to the community.

A bit about my background. I attended the University of Michigan, spent several years in book publishing, and then went on to Harvard law school. Participation in the life of our community has always been important to me. I am president of the board of the Ancram Opera House, editor of the Ancram Town News, a member of the Climate Smart Communities Task Force, a licensed foster parent in Columbia County, and co-founder of a foundation focused on improving outcomes for children impacted by the child welfare system in NY.

I have been nominated to run by both the Democratic and Republican caucuses, and I am grateful for the confidence shown in me. I must emphasize, though, that partisan politics have no place in a judicial election, and personal political views must never influence a judge's conduct. Whatever your party affiliation, I ask that when you cast your votes, you do so based solely on your assessment of my judicial qualifications, as well as my demonstrated commitment to our town and its residents.

Your Vote Matters!

Vote Tuesday, November 8, at the Ancram Town Hall, 1416 County Rd 7. Polls are open from 6 am-9pm.

Climate Smart Communities Task Force Spins Off Resilient Garden and Farm Group

By Joe Brown



The Resilient Garden and Farm Group hopes to attract Ancram residents who would like to learn more about climate-resilient gardening practices. Here, Rob Horwitz of Ancramdale tends to his kitchen garden

Everyone sees and feels global warming through the increasingly erratic weather, but this is especially true in a rural community like Ancram. And as any community member will tell you, plants and crops experience these changes too. Agriculture, both personal and professional, is such a central aspect of the community that the town's Climate Smart Task Force is sponsoring the creation of a standalone group to help residents manage these changes.

The Resilient Garden and Farm Group, organized by town residents Michael Roberts, Susan Arterian, and Jay Lorenz, will help connect community members interested in learning about and implementing resilient growing practices—from kitchen gardens on up. “We are by no means experts, and in fact we welcome the label of amateurs,” says Group member Michael Roberts. “But we are confident that the depth of knowledge that exists in our community will provide a valuable resource for all of us.”

Initial meetings will gauge the interests, concerns, and expertise of those who attend. Over time, the Group plans to identify opportunities to distribute

information and resources to the larger community. Through its affiliation with the Climate Smart Communities Task Force, the Group hopes to emphasize the importance of regenerative land use in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

“We’re going to support this group any way we can,” says Task Force co-chair Colleen Lutz. This support could include organizational support and even help securing funding.

The Climate Smart Communities Task Force hopes to sponsor more groups in a similar way. “This is a new model for us, and we’re excited about it,” says Lutz. “There are so many climate-related issues facing every town, and we believe that our Ancram neighbors have the motivation and expertise to help all of us address them.” The Climate Smart Task Force invites any resident interested in forming their own sub-group to contact the Climate Smart Task Force and join a meeting to explore the possibility.

And anyone interested in attending the first meeting of the Resilient Garden and Farm Group is welcome to email michaelroberts101@gmail.com.

Media Mainstay, Information Source, Social Hub: The Little Library That Could

By Bobbie Slonevsky

This November marks the 12th anniversary of the opening of the Roe Jan Community Library building on NY-22. Just about a year ago, on the occasion of its 11th anniversary, the Town of Ancram gave it a much appreciated birthday present. Residents voted to support the RJCL with a modest annual tax allotment.

It wasn't a sure thing. Copake and Hillsdale, the two other locales served by the library, had voted their funding support some years before, while Ancram had hesitated. But, somewhere along the way, Ancramites realized the breadth and depth of the facility's contribution to the community... and that it was one of the best investments they could make for themselves and their families.

Why? What does the library do that's so special? According to Tammy Gaskell, MLIS and PhD, Director of the RJCL, libraries in general have evolved. Yes, they provide resources such as books and digital media—their core competence, you might say. But today, Gaskell notes,

they are also engines for “gathering and disseminating information and connecting people to each other.” And our library, with a staff of just five and some 50 volunteers who help at events and on committees, performs at a level far beyond expectations.

This is not an accident. Pat Placona, President of the Board of Trustees, who works very closely with Director Gaskell, notes that Gaskell won the 2022 New York Library Association's award for innovative library director of the year. It is she who can be credited with hiring the library's outstanding staff and creating comprehensive programming that leaves no one out.

An Embarrassment of Riches

In the resource category alone, members can check out print books, DVDs, CDs, audiobooks and magazines. Multiple online programs expand their access to include e-books, videos, music, newspapers, reference material (such as the Encyclopedia Britannica, Mango language-learning and more

than 500 continuing education courses), plus career help (résumé writing and interview skills) and databases of businesses and health topics. And those are just the basic, routine offerings.

Did you know you can also borrow WiFi hot spots, camping gear, a variety of cake pans, local museum passes and Empire passes for entry into New York State parks? Or take seeds from the seed library in exchange for letting the resulting plants go to seed and returning a quantity to the collection?

It's this sort of “above-and-beyond” service specific to its patrons that makes the library a standout. And nowhere is this more true than in the connection of people with information.

First, there are the numerous educational and fun programs held at the library or available online. Science, history, music, literature, kids' projects and stories, even homework help and English as a second language. A look at the website (www.roejanlibrary.org) reveals an impressive schedule of circles, seminars,



Fourth grader Malachi found a comfy spot in the aisles of the Children's Room to explore the books on offer. Malachi, who lives in Copake, reports that he "really likes the library," a common sentiment amongst library patrons entering its brightly lit, welcoming space.



Tammy Gaskell, Director of the Roe Jan Library, which serves Ancram, Copake, and Hillsdale, won the 2022 New York Library Association's award for innovative library director of the year. She has worked to develop comprehensive, imaginative, and accessible programming that takes into account the needs of everyone the library serves.

workshops, and webinars for everyone—from Children's Librarian Tia Maggio's offerings for toddlers and school-age kids, right up through adults and seniors (health topics, wills and estates). And they are all FREE (in some cases, you may make a voluntary donation in the amount of your choosing).

But then there is another type of information: answers to inquiries from patrons needing assistance. Roe Jan librarians regularly identify and furnish contacts for social services, mental health and homeless resources, government-related allowances for such things as winter heating or paying for Internet service, notary services, and even specific types of businesses. As Gaskell comments, "The library is becoming a fallback for information searches."

As a purpose-built structure, the library building anticipated its social role. A community room and conference room offer great space for bringing people together, whether it's for entertainments such as concerts and competitions, or group activities such as workshopping prose, writing poetry, meeting other home schoolers, or even playing mahjong. Gaskell points out that the

rooms are often booked privately for in-person or Zoom meetings. And the library even inspires socializing outdoors. Functions like the annual Gala, or Golf Tournament, or Community Picnic are attractive opportunities for seeing old friends and meeting new ones.

The Pandemic Pays a Dividend

Like everyone and every facility everywhere, the library and its patrons were faced with stringent restrictions during the Covid crisis. Much of book borrowing was done via curbside pick-up. Only a limited number of people were allowed inside the building at one time and masks and appropriate distancing were de rigueur. Not unexpectedly, the volume of borrowed print materials fell. In addition, all the in-person programs on the premises had to be canceled in favor of virtual offerings. Today, the Director is happy to report, circulation of print materials has rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. Better yet, the pandemic-inspired use of digital resources has more than doubled since 2019.

"Though we now have in-person programs again, we continue to hold many programs online and will continue to do so," she adds. This virtual compo-

nent allows the library to collaborate with other libraries and partners in order to offer a wider range of programs. And it's a good thing! Because, continuing another Covid-era trend, this summer saw a record number of new members.

The future will likely bring additional changes. In 2019, before the disruption caused by Covid, the library held a series of Community Conversations. The goal was to elicit from various demographic groups what they needed or wanted from the library. The consensus was "greater community." Library staff are now pondering how to expand ways of connecting residents with one another (more social programs? some group effort in which individuals can work together?) and how to communicate about community (include community topics in the library newsletter? include a community calendar on the website?). There are likely to be more programs for seniors and the attempt to probe local opinion will now be reinstated under the aegis of a new Outreach Committee.

The Hard Work of Fundraising

Like any enterprise, the RJCL runs on funding. It's what supports a great staff, extensive resources and quality programming. No surprise—the required fundraising takes an enormous amount of work. So many people and so many hours go into the annual Gala, the National Library Week Appeal in April and the end-of-year appeal. Ditto for the Friends of the Library who run the bookstore and host a cookies, soup and book sale in December.

Side by side with these initiatives are business partnerships that provide financial support in exchange for mention in print, on the website and at events. These sponsorships are painstakingly solicited and negotiated by the Development Committee, which, currently understaffed, would welcome any volunteers with fundraising expertise (as would the Finance Committee if finance is your background).

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LITTLE LIBRARY

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And finally there are the grants—numerous grants, each one applied for separately, that together pay for most of the library's programming. To her credit, Gaskell has managed to double the amount of grant money awarded to the library.

And yet, it's no secret that the RJCL's most fervent wish is for increased financial help. Costs keep rising, but public funding does not. Director Gaskell explains that just under 40% of Roe Jan's revenue comes from tax sources as compared with an average of 87% for all the libraries in the Mid-Hudson Library System. Wouldn't it be wonderful, she and President Placona muse, to have enough funding to pay off the mortgage and be able to use that money for new materials and programming!

For those who have yet to visit, the RJCL is located at 9091 NY- 22 (about 3/4 of a mile south of the junction with Route 23). It is marked by a giant-sized green chair sculpture on the lawn, donated by the late sculptor Leon Smith. The scale of the chair is a fitting symbol: our humble library has grown and gathered force, developing into a tremendous asset that has enriched—and will continue to enrich—Ancram lives.



The big green chair donated by the late Leon Smith, beloved Ancramdale resident and sculptor, greets visitors to the library.

A Great Winter Destination: The NECC Farmers' Market

By Marie-Claude Stockl



Dan Sternberg (l) of Boston Corner is a regular on Saturday mornings at The Baker's Wife, a micro bakery and mill specializing in naturally leavened, handmade bread using fresh-milled regional flour. Baker Martin Wilson (r) embarked on a second career baking bread after leaving the corporate world.

Hear, hear! The Millerton Farmers' Market will continue to operate through the winter. That's good news for Ancram residents who frequent the market on Saturdays to purchase seasonal produce, pasture-raised meats, fruit, cheeses, baked goods and prepared foods from local vendors who use sustainable and ethical growing practices. Shopping at the market is a pleasant experience, with cheerful farmers who happily share the provenance of their bounty.

The Farmers Market, sponsored and managed by the North East Community Center (NECC), and supported in part by Dutchess County and the Hudson River Bank & Trust Company, takes place every Saturday through December 31st, 2022. Hours are 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. It is located at the corner of

Dutchess Avenue and Main Street in Millerton. It moves to the adjacent indoor building when the weather gets cold in November, and is open every weekend until January. After January, the schedule goes to every other weekend.

For those not familiar with NECC, the organization provides a wide range of programs and services to address the needs of rural towns in northeast Dutchess County. Ties between the NECC Farmers' Market and the Ancram farming community run deep. Dozens of products from Ancram are offered every weekend, including cheeses from Chaseholm Farm on the Pine Plains/Ancramdale line, a vast selection of artisanal European style charcuterie from JACUTERIE, and, on occasion, wood-crafted cutting boards, salad bowls, and toys from Ancram

resident John Roccanova, who was featured in the Town News Summer issue. The Market enables area residents and visitors to buy and eat fresh, locally grown produce; helps farmers find markets for their produce; and creates educational and training opportunities for young people.

A recent visit to the market, filled with neighborly hellos from shoppers, suggests that many are residents of the area. An informal count by Francesco (Frannie) Paeaz, Market Manager, puts the number of local shoppers at 60%, a percentage that increases as the summer tourist season comes to an end. Paeaz recently stepped into the role John Nowack held for four years, when he moved to the area from Brooklyn during the pandemic. It's evident to anyone who meets him that his background in food service and restaurants is second only to his enthusiasm for the market.

One of the market's first vendors was Jerry Peele, president of the 250-acre Herondale Farm in Ancram, and the father of Jack Peele, founder of the aptly named JACUTERIE, whose products at the market include such local

favorites as Saucisson Provençal, Fuet and Alpine Cervelat. When asked about the impact of the market on the community, Peele notes that he likes the involvement of teens in NECC's Teen Jobs Program, who help in various ways in the operation of the market and man the NECC information table, gaining entry-level job experience along the way. In addition, Teens in NECC's Farm and Food Education program work each summer at the market and provide help to many of the participating farms. The teens also have the opportunity to run their own entrepreneurial business, creating farm-made products to sell.

It takes a village, if not a whole region, to bring the benefits of the Farmers' Market to Millerton. Paeaz credits the Field & Fork Network for sponsoring the Double Up Food Bucks nutrition incentive program, which matches SNAP purchases at participating farmers markets. The market is also supported by the Berkshire Agricultural Ventures' Market Match Fund, which offers a \$1-for-\$1 SNAP match up to \$30. This means that

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants can double their buying power up to \$60 while supporting local farmers. And for all shoppers, Paeaz says, many of the vendor prices are comparable or competitive with local supermarkets. The NECC Farmers' Market accepts EBT/Food Stamps, Senior & WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program Checks, and Health Bucks.

Ancram entrepreneurs interested in selling their farm-made products at the Market can apply for a spot by filling out an application on the NECC website: neccmillerton.org/farmers-market. Vendors must grow what they bring – they may not “carry” or resell produce purchased from others. And priority is given to farmers within a 35-mile radius of Millerton, which is good news for Ancram vendors. In addition, whenever possible, the vendor selection process will promote beginning and minority farmers within our local area.

Of note, the NECC food pantry serves Ancram. While the food pantry of Neighbors Helping Neighbors in

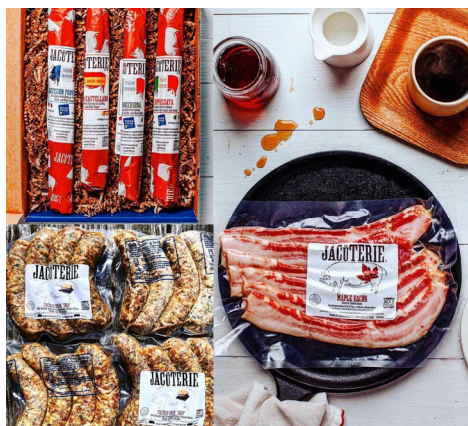
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On a recent October day, Farmer Dominic Palumbo (l) of Moon in the Pond Farm displays an abundance of locally grown organic vegetables fresher than what's on offer in the supermarket produce aisle.

FARMERS' MARKET

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Ancramdale's own JACUTERIE sells its array of artisanal charcuterie at the Market.

Ancramdale is a well-established resource, Jordan Schmidt, the Food Program Director at NECC, remarks that food insecurity is on the rise in the area.

"Rents have gone up, there is a steady increase even above the numbers we were seeing during the pandemic. The need for the food pantry has increased a lot and it is stressful for people," she says. "The majority of participants are working families. Anyone is always welcome at NECC food pantry in Millerton, and we also need volunteers!" Schmidt adds. The food pantry is located in the NECC main building on the first and third Thursday of the month, year round. The address is 51 S Center St, Millerton.

Closer to home, Ancram Neighbors Helping Neighbors prepares Thanksgiving boxes for 20+ families, some delivered to families, and some picked up. While they are set up for this Thanksgiving, look for the mid-December appeal letter to help support the program for 2023. If you want to contribute, contact Jack Lindsey at 518-329-7306.

As Thanksgiving approaches, we can be grateful for the dedication of our farmers' who are bringing wholesome products to the community, and support them by visiting the NECC Farmers Market through the winter.

Ancram Hamlet Water Survey Will Yield Vital Data to Protect Residents' Groundwater Resources

By Cathy Redlich

The hamlet of Ancram has begun a three-phase process to determine the adequacy of its groundwater supplies, which hamlet dwellers rely on heavily for their drinking water. Ancram resident James Kennedy spearheaded the project last May when he proposed to the Town Board that it conduct a detailed survey of the low-yielding aquifer in the Ancram hamlet and develop water management recommendations based on the information developed.

According to Kennedy, the idea for the survey morphed out of initial concerns about the impact the proposed Iron Star retreat off Route 82 might have on neighboring wells. Kennedy says, "Hamlet residents have been complaining for years about low yields. I felt it was important to gather data to determine the extent of the problem." Phase One, a survey sent in September to Ancram residents in the area defined, is intended to gather vital information on the hamlet's groundwater resources, specifically the quality and quantity of water, water use, and the nature of water-supply issues in the hamlet. Steve Winkley of the Rural Water Association, who developed Ancram's initial Ground Water Protection Plan in 2008, provided an initial template for the survey which was then revised for Ancram. Kennedy gives especially high praise to consultant Nan Stolzenberg, founder of Community Planning & Environmental Associates, whom he describes as "my guiding light in all of this."

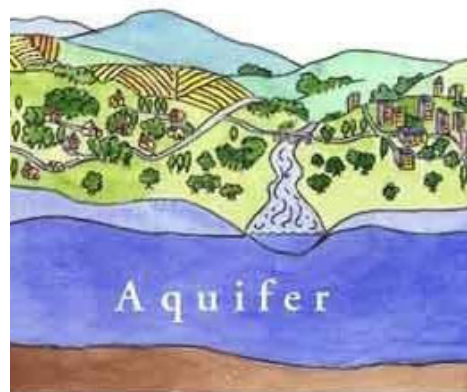
Phase Two of the project will be an analysis by a hydrologist of the initial data collected in the survey, and a determination as to whether further data or well testing is needed. This could involve the placement of approximately six transducers in selected wells, which would be monitored remotely by Bluetooth

or other technology to gather data on pressure in the wells. Depending on the data collected and its analysis, Phase 3 would result in a hydrologist report suggesting mitigation methods to protect the hamlet's critical groundwater resources. The town may also consider having the New York Rural Water Association perform another water study.

Your Response Is Critically Important

The current response rate for the survey is 45 %. Given the vital importance of protecting the hamlet's drinking water supply, residents in the identified area are strongly encouraged to take a moment to complete the survey, which is intended to be a critical first step in safeguarding their drinking water. If you live in the designated study area, which is bounded by Route 82 E/W, County Route 7 N/S, Doodletown Road and Poole Hill Road in Ancram hamlet, please participate. The survey is anonymous and completely confidential, and can be filled in on-line at surveymonkey.com/r/Ancramwatersurvey.

It can also be filled out in hard copy and mailed to: Water Survey, Ancram Town Hall, 1416 County Route 7, Ancram, NY 12502. Alternatively, you can bring the completed survey to the drop box at Ancram Town Hall. If you have difficulty accessing the survey, or are unsure if you are in the study area, please contact Art Bassin at abassin@townofancram.org.



Ancram Opera House Wraps up Fall 2022 Season

By Cathy Redlich

The challenges of keeping a rural theatre operating during Covid—in fact, any theatre as the dark lights on Broadway demonstrated—make the persistence and commitment of the Ancram Opera House directors, Jeffrey Mousseau and Paul Ricciardi, especially notable. AOH's 2022 offerings were as varied, intelligent and creative as any theatre goer could hope. In addition to the perennially popular Real People Real Stories, a twice annual presentation of personal narratives told by storytellers residing in our region, and Crystal Radio Upstate, which is curated by writer Ashley Mayne and features actors reading works by emerging and established Hudson Valley writers, AOH presented two full-length dramatic productions.

INVASION!, by award-winning Swedish playwright Jonas Hassen Khemiri, had audiences talking, enthusing, some scratching their heads, but definitely feeling they had seen a fascinating piece of theatre. Berkshire On Stage's review

called it "A play that delivers a barrage of themes, witty dialogue, questions and challenges..., a true theatrical experience by a small company that brings life and excitement to an ambitious piece of work." The fall season at AOH featured Still Life, by Emily Mann, a documentary play based on interviews conducted by the playwright in the aftermath of the Vietnam conflict and focusing on three characters, including a former marine and his wife, trying to come to terms with their experience of war on the front and the homefront.

For those new to the area or unfamiliar with the Ancram Opera House, the first thing to know is that AOH does not put on opera. That may be a disappointment to some, and a relief to others, but the name was acquired with the building when Ricciardi and Mousseau took over in 2016. As part of an exciting new chapter in the life of AOH, its name will be changed to the Ancram Center for the Arts during the 2023 season, with the

Opera House still designating the theatre space. The new name captures the breadth of the performances one can see at AOH, including contemporary theatre, cabaret, musical performances—An Evening With the Bengsons quickly sold out this summer—as well as the Summer Play Lab Residency for artists which serves as an incubator of new and innovative works and culminates with work-in-progress showings offered to the public.

The last performance of the 2022 season is yet to come, an edition of Real People Real Stories, live at the Opera House on November 13, at 2 pm. If you haven't seen a production yet, Real People provides a good introduction to the community flavor of AOH as local audiences are entranced, amused, or moved as local storytellers share their authentic narratives. For tickets and more information, go to www.ancramoperahouse.org/. You will not be disappointed.



The four dynamic, shape-shifting actors in the Obie-award-winning play INVASION! created an absorbing and often riveting theatre experience for AOH audiences.

**Town of
Ancram**
1416 County Route 7
Ancram NY 12502

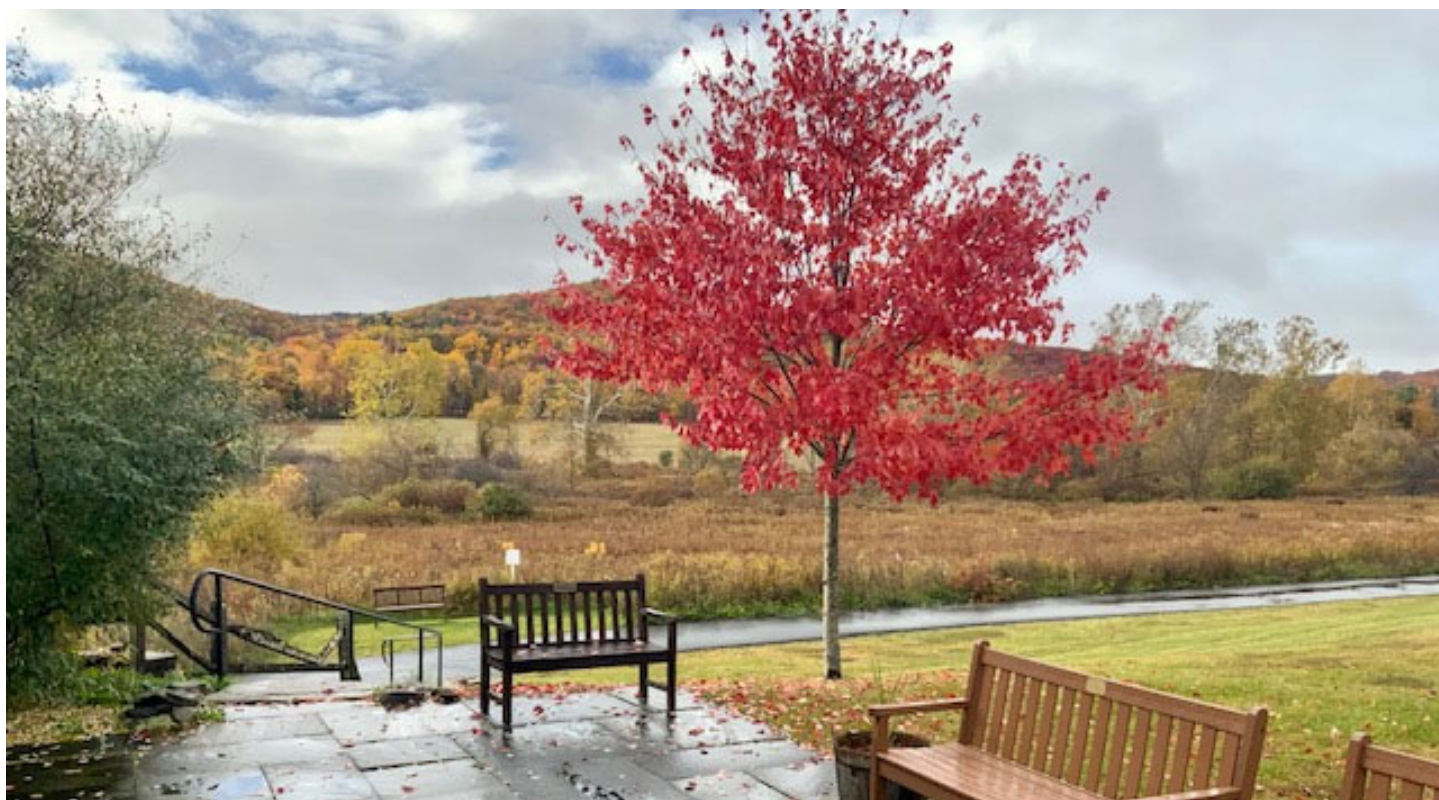


Historic Farming Community Moving Forward

**Neighbors Helping
Neighbors—
If You Live Here,
Please Pitch In**

PRSRT STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM RETAIL

Local
Postal Customer



No matter what the season, the Roeliff Jansen library offers patrons beautiful outdoor and indoor areas to enjoy the panoramic view. Ancram library goes can use their Roe Jan library card to check out books in any library that is a member of the Mid-Hudson Library System, which includes, for example, the Millerton-Northeast Library, the Pine Plains Library, and the Hudson Library.