

Mother & Child Look-A-Like Contest

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITES INSIDE!

VOTE see photos, ballot and voting instructions inside...

ANCRAM

Black bear sighting reported in Ancram

By John Mason
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

A large black bear was recently seen in the Fox Hill Road area of Ancram, off East Ancram Road, Town Supervisor Art Bassin reported in an email to his constituents.

Bassin went on to caution not to leave garbage out, which can attract bears, and to

take down bird feeders.

"Bears can be dangerous," he stated. "If you see a black bear, leave it alone and go the other way. If you come across bear cubs, do not approach them — the mother bear will be close by and may not be too happy if you get near her cubs.

"If you are in a car or

inside your home when you see a bear, stay there until the bears leave," Bassin wrote. "If you are on foot, get to a house or a car, and get inside."

Bassin told the Register-Star the town has at least five or six bear sightings every year.

Please see Bear, page A15



AP Photo/Mark Thiessen
A black bear, like the one seen above in Anchorage, Alaska on Sunday, April 21, was reportedly spotted roaming in Ancram.

GREENPORT

Holmquest Farm to unveil new, state-of-the-art greenhouse

By David Lee
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

The Holmquest Farm on Spook Rock Road in Greenport will reveal its new greenhouse at a ribbon-cutting Wednesday afternoon.

Familiars of the produce and flowers farmstand will see a new, larger and taller entirely translucent state-of-the-art structure.

According to Tom Holmes they will provide the same products they did from the greenhouses that stood on the site previously--annuals perennials and vegetables, but with much more space.

The building, construction of which began last October, encloses 15,000 square feet with much wider aisles making it more retail-friendly, and a taller roof that allows for more air volume and gradual temperature changes, which is better for the plants. The roof line is in three peaks and when it rains, water is collected and diverted to a storage pond that is used to water the plants. The rain provides 9,000 gallons of water to the storage pond.

The greenhouse, designed by the Nexus Greenhouse Systems of Colorado, has a computerized climate-control system that automatically opens and closes vents and keeps the air temperature and humidity constant.

The sound of gears are heard when standing in the middle of the greenhouse with warm sun shining brightly through the glass, which turn as the peak of the roof automatically opens a few inches to allow heat to escape. The sides of the building automatically open and close, as well.

Please see Farm, page A15



Photos by David Lee/Hudson-Catskill Newspapers
Top, Tom Holmes waters the geraniums on Friday afternoon. Left, Thomas Michael, Tom, Terri and Richard were all working in the fields haying Aug. 31, 2012.

HUDSON

Mendolia to run for council president

By John Mason
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

Victor Mendolia, former chairman of the Hudson Democratic Committee, announced Friday he is running for president of the Common Council.

In doing so, Mendolia is challenging incumbent Don Moore. Mendolia said he is seeking the Democratic, Working Families and Green Party lines.

"I am putting forward an agenda which I believe a broad coalition of Hudsonians can get behind and can garner wide support on the Common Council," Mendolia said. "The council must shift to a proactive stance to better express the hopes and dreams of our residents, unlike the current course which allows outside interests to impose their will on our city. We have to begin to better bridge the divides



Victor Mendolia

Please see Run, page A15

HUDSON

Council removes some fowl from proposed law allowing residents to raise chickens

By Joe Gentile
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

The Common Council's Legal Committee cried foul Wednesday night, removing guinea hens from draft legislation to allow Hudson resi-

dents raise chickens. Committee members added the birds to a list of other objectionable fowl, not including turkeys, geese, peacocks and ducks.

The legislation to amend the city's code already had a strict ban on roosters.

"You could limit it by size too, if you want," First Ward Alderman Nick Haddad said.

Third Ward Alderman John Friedman previously reminded members Hudson's designation as a food desert implies there are no or limited outlets for fresh food in

the City of Hudson. However, the legislation bans the slaughter of chickens.

If the law is adopted, homeowners, tenants and occupants of single or multi-family homes may apply for a permit at City Hall to raise up to five hens. Permits are to be

issued within 30 days of the receipt of a completed application by the Code Enforcement Department for a \$20 fee.

Chickens are required by law to be surrounded fenced enclosure at all times, which is high enough to prevent

their escape. Chicken coops and enclosures are to also be at least 5 feet from property lines, and at least 15 feet from the nearest residence other than the property owner's.

Please see Fowl, page A15

WATERTOWN

CEO of Hudson-Catskill Newspapers' parent company to step down

John B. Johnson, Jr., CEO of Johnson Newspapers and the editor and co-publisher of the Watertown Daily Times, has announced he will step down from daily oversight of the companies.

Johnson Newspapers is the parent company of Hudson-Catskill Newspapers Corp. which includes the daily Register-Star and The Daily Mail, as well as the weekly Chatham Courier, Windham Journal, The Mountain Eagle, Ravena News-Herald and Greene

County News.

In making the announcement to department heads and newsroom staff this morning, Johnson said he will continue as chairman of the Board of Directors of the corporation. "I will also start a new chapter by writing editorials for The Times and will continue my community work," he wrote in an email to the entire staff.

"My brother Harold B. Johnson will become vice-chairman. He will continue



John B. Johnson, Jr., center, is stepping down from day-to-day operations of the Watertown Daily Times and Johnson Newspapers. Harold B. Johnson, right, will continue as vice chairman of the company and co-publisher of the Times. John Johnson, left, will become Chief Executive Officer and co-publisher of the Times.

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TODAY'S FORECAST High 68 Low 39 Mostly sunny

For a complete report, see page A2

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Good morning Gloria Kearney. Thank you for subscribing to the Register-Star!

DID YOU KNOW...

The Ramp Fest kicking off on May 4 in Hudson, page A15

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HUDSON

Ramp Fest kicking off on May 4 in Hudson

By Joe Gentile
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

Culinary artists from the Hudson Valley, and beyond, have sprung into action to celebrate the first vegetable of spring. Ramp Fest, Swoon Kitchenbar chef Jeff Gimmel boasted, returns to Basilica Hudson on Saturday, May 4, bigger than ever before.

Twenty chefs and restaurants from New York City, Woodstock and the streets of Hudson are invited to create original dishes from the edible, springtime symbol. In addition to Swoon Kitchenbar, other participating Hud-

son eateries include Ca'Mea, Club Helsinki, Fish and Game, The Crimson Sparrow, and The Red Dot. New Lebanon's Blueberry Hill Market Cafe and The Farmer's Wife, of Ancramdale, are also involved.

Now in its third year, Ramp Fest initially sprouted from Gimmel's enthusiasm for the leafy green's garlicky aroma and flavorful, onion taste.

"They're so delicious, and they're only available for such a short time each year," Gimmel said.

Ramps, Gimmel indicated, are only available for harvest

four to six weeks a year, but enjoy a lifespan of about eight years.

Central Appalachian Mountain folklore has historically treated ramp as a sign of winter's retreat. Better known as "wild leeks," or "wild onions," ramp was rumored to be a tonic that could sap the last of winter's ailments.

"If you could get them year-round, they'd be just another vegetable," Gimmel said.

Shaped similarly to scallions, the ramp's flat leaves may grow to be two to three inches in length.

Ticket sales for last year's

Ramp Fest, Gimmel said, doubled, putting the number of attendees at about 600. He hoped to see 1,000 foodies at this year's event.

Gimmel credited Ramp Fest's growing popularity to the ambience and charm of their host venue, Basilica Hudson. Its proximity to the Amtrak station, and free parking, made it an obvious choice for him promoting Hudson as "a food destination."

"It's probably the premier venue in the mid-Hudson Valley," Gimmel said.

Relatively abundant in upstate New York, ramp has all but disappeared from the conti-

nent's other forested areas. Ramp patches are being protected in Quebec, and labeled by states, such as Maine and Rhode Island, as cause for special concern. Now, Gimmel said, should be the time for promoting sustainability, before their numbers here dwindle.

Gimmel recommended, rather than uproot it, a ramp plant's leaves should be trimmed so as to leave one leaf behind.

Dishes at next weekend Ramp Fest range from maple ramp sausage, stuffed into a wild blueberry flapjack sandwich, to ramp pesto and a Carolina rice custard flavored with

charred ramp.

"It's like you get a 20-course tasting menu from the best chef's around," Gimmel said. "It's a real bargain."

Scheduled to last from noon to 4:00 p.m., tickets to Ramp Fest at Basilica Hudson can be bought in advance for \$30 online at rampfesthudson.com, or for \$35 at the door. Children, younger than 12-years-old, are admitted for \$10.

Only 1,000 tickets will be sold.

To reach reporter Joe Gentile, call (518) 828-1616, ext. 2495, or email at jgentile@registerstar.com.

WASHINGTON

Obama backs Planned Parenthood in political fight

By Darlene Superville
The Associated Press

President Barack Obama vowed Friday to join Planned Parenthood in fighting against what he said are efforts by states to turn women's health back to the 1950s, before the Supreme Court legalized abortion nationwide, and singled out the GOP-governed

states of North Dakota and Mississippi for criticism.

"When politicians try to turn Planned Parenthood into a punching bag, they're not just talking about you," Obama said, becoming the first sitting president to address the abortion-rights group in person. "They're talking about the millions of women who you serve."

Obama asserted that "an assault on women's rights" is underway across the country, with bills introduced in more than 40 states to limit or ban abortion or restrict access to birth control or other services.

"The fact is, after decades of progress, there's still those who want to turn back the clock to policies more suited

to the 1950s than the 21st century," he said. "And they've been involved in an orchestrated and historic effort to roll back basic rights when it comes to women's health."

Last month, North Dakota Republican Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a law that bans abortions as early as six weeks, or when a fetal heart-

beat is detected, making the state the most restrictive in the nation in which to get the procedure.

Obama said "a woman may not even know that she's pregnant at six weeks."

More than a year ago in Mississippi, a "personhood" ballot initiative that would have defined life as beginning at fertilization was defeated

by 58 percent of voters in November 2011, the same election in which staunch abortion opponent Phil Bryant, a Republican, was elected governor. Bryant had campaigned for the initiative. Abortion opponents are expected to soon begin a signature-drive to get a similar initiative on the ballot in 2014 or 2015.

Fowl

Continued from page A1

According to the draft legislation, "Chickens shall be kept as pets and for personal

use only. No person shall sell eggs or meat or engage in chicken breeding or fertilizer

production for commercial purposes."

It also forbids any fighting

for "amusement, sport or financial gain," as chickens are to be kept in conditions that "limit

odors, waste and noise."

To reach reporter Joe Gen-

tile, call (518) 828-1616, ext. 2495, or email at jgentile@registerstar.com.

Bear

Continued from page A1

"They're common around here," he said. "People expect it; most of them are seen on East Ancram Road near the Taconic range." Much of the Taconic range is in an area of protected forest land.

"Bears come down from the mountain, to where there are a lot of bird feeders and garbage cans," he said.

The bear on Fox Hill Road was first spotted by a dog, who was "barking like crazy," Bassin said. The dog's owners had already taken in their bird feeders, he said.

Supervisor Jeff Braley of Austerlitz said bears have

been reported in his town as well, sometimes coming in as far as Spencertown, where "one or two were messing with bird feeders."

"They're not causing any problems," he said. "Nothing big we've heard of."

He said bears have increased over the years, but on a slow scale.

"It's a regular occurrence," Braley said. "Sort of like when the moose appears. O.K., big deal."

Supervisor Art Baer, R-Hillsdale, said there have been no bear sightings in his town this year, to his knowl-

edge.

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, black bears "will take advantage of almost any readily available food source ... To prevent encounters between bears and humans, people should never intentionally feed bears and should take every precaution to discourage bears from seeking out food sources in neighborhoods and other residential areas."

For instance, about a dozen years ago, a black bear was found in broad daylight

helping itself to the day-after leftovers of a Brooks Barbecue at the First Presbyterian Church in downtown Hudson.

"Typically, black bears are timid and will avoid all contact with humans," states the DEC. "However, bears will become a nuisance and can cause significant damage if they believe they can obtain an easy meal from bird feeders, garbage cans, dumpsters, barbecue grills, tents, vehicles, out-buildings or houses. It is not only illegal to intentionally feed bears, it is also illegal to inadvertently feed

them."

The DEC advises residents to stop feeding birds as soon as the snow melts, and to keep meat scraps, bones and melon rinds out of compost piles. Barbecue grills should be cleaned before nightfall, and pets should be fed indoors.

"It is in the best interest of both bears and people for bears to get their food solely from wild sources," states the DEC. "Once a bear learns to associate certain structures with food, it can become a serious nuisance to people and a threat to itself. Bears

that lose their natural fear of humans are much more likely to be illegally shot, hit by an automobile or destroyed under a DEC nuisance permit. Some studies suggest that when a bear is fed, either directly or indirectly, its life expectancy is cut by as much as 50 percent."

Bear relocation is seldom a good solution, due to the mobility and homing abilities of bears.

To reach reporter John Mason, call 518-828-1616, ext. 2500, or e-mail jmason@registerstar.com.

Run

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that exist and instead find the sensible things that we agree on and move them forward."

Mendolia, who also hosts the interview show "At Issue" on WGXC-FM, told the Register-Star he thinks the city is going in the wrong direction.

"The last straw was the Holcim deal," he said. "It's crazy that we're constantly on the defensive. We have to get proactive and decide what we want, instead of reacting to what other interests want. There are very sensible things

we can do that would make this a better place, instead of reacting to larger interests."

Moore said, "I'm disappointed that Victor has chosen to challenge me, since there seems to be little basis for challenging my record. I've been an activist for the city; I have made the job full-time. I have a record of accomplishment I'm ready to detail and defend.

"I'm surprised that someone who spent the better part of six years defending the

principle that incumbent Democrats should not be challenged without good reason now decides that his interests are best served by reversing that principle and casting it aside," Moore said. "If there were some good reason to suggest I had not lived up to my pledge to represent the entire city as the elected official who has the responsibility of presiding over the entire city, I might feel differently. I feel I have a lot to offer the city, which is what I have tried to do

over the last four years."

Mendolia provided a list of issues on which he is basing his run for office.

The list is topped by open government: Mendolia favors posting all proposed resolutions, local laws and supporting documentation on line prior to meetings and votes; requiring that councilmembers have time to study resolutions before voting on them; and posting meeting minutes in a timely way.

He favors a Phase 2 environmental study before trans-

ferring any land from Holcim to the city.

He favors city ownership of the port and the dock rather than land which Holcim doesn't want and the city wont be able to develop.

He favors creating a new commercial strip on Columbia Street, and hyper-enforcement of the existing traffic rules on the truck route.

He would work with state legislators to find a long-term solution to the truck route.

He would work for tenants'

rights and enforcement of building codes.

He said the city should begin using social media to communicate with residents and the website should be modernized.

And he would commit to the installation of solar power and other green initiatives.

To reach reporter John Mason, call 518-828-1616, ext. 2500, or e-mail jmason@registerstar.com.

Farm

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In the evening, as the sun sets and the outside air begins to cool, a heat curtain, like an attic, closes and keeps the warm air down next to the plants.

Walking through the aisles, Holmes points out the flood tables. For certain of the flowers, the roots will be flooded for a short period of time, allowing the roots to get water and preventing damage to the delicate flower petals that overhead watering would cause.

As the water is drained back, the fertilizer is carried

with it, stored and reused at the next watering. The greenhouse is powered by an array of solar panels purchased from Sundog Solar and installed in November 2011. The panels provide 15 kilowatts, any excess being sold back to the grid in the form of energy credits.

Holmquest Farm is not only a greenhouse, it stands on about 450 contiguous acres of fertile farmland along Spook Rock Road.

Tom Holmes, 41, works the farm with his wife Terri, whose partnership in the business is indispensable, his father

Richard, 75, and his son Thomas Michael who is 14 and is the fourth generation of the Holmes family to work on the land.

Going through some old things recently, Tom Holmes discovered a clipping from the Hudson Daily Star dated April 25, 1941 that reported "'Holmquest' is the newly selected herd prefix name which will be used by Richard Holmes, Jr., Hudson, in registering his purebred dairy cattle. Exclusive use of this trademark for identifying his herd has been certified and recorded by

the Holstein-Friesian Association of America, Brattleboro, VT."

This was Tom Holmes' grandfather who had acquired and started working the land on Spook Rock Road decades earlier.

"He bought the land from C.H. Evans who used it to grow the hops for making beer," he said.

The farm stopped peration as a dairy back in the late 1970s and the farmstand was established by Tom's father.

"We sell retail here at wholesale prices. I like to see

people be able to afford to enjoy the benefits of fresh produce."

Sweet corn, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, beets, peas, berries, melons, cabbage, in addition to the flowers and vegetables they raise about six pigs every year, some chickens for eggs and meat, ducks and some beef cattle.

Thomas Michael takes care of the animals.

"It's hard work and I love it, I love to watch the sun coming up in the morning. Not that many people see the sunrise," Holmes said. "Take a little seed

you have all you could do just to see it in your hand, and watch it grow into healthy food.

"I love to be able to show my son that this life is ... well, I wouldn't choose anything else. But I try not to push him too hard so he doesn't like it."

But Thomas Michael has no doubt that he will continue with the work of his father, his grandfather and his great-grandfather.

"Absolutely! I think farming is an interesting business. One day I will take this over," he said.

CEO

Continued from page A1

as president of the company and co-publisher of The Times. His career experience will be crucial as the leadership team adapts to the changing media marketplace and positions the company for sustainable growth.

"My son John will assume the role of chief executive officer and the co-publisher of The Times. The leaders of the

newspapers in Malone, Hudson and Batavia will report to him as will department heads in the North Country.

"We are pleased to announce Harold's son Alec has been elected a director of the company. Alec is an award winning reporter for the Waterbury Republican American with a master's degree in journalism from

Columbia University. His experience positions us well for growth and for the change in the rapidly changing media marketplace. We look forward to his guidance as a director of the company.

"The north country has provided an exciting place for me to practice my love of journalism," Mr. Johnson wrote in his email. "I am very,

very proud what we have accomplished, the stories we have told, the lives we have helped improve through our reporting and the reputation we have all earned."

Mr. Johnson's role in the community is being noted today by several leaders.

"John Johnson Jr. has always maintained the highest professional standards, which

is recognized not only regionally but also in the state's and nation's capitols," said James W. Wright, executive director of the Development Authority of the North County (DANC). "The Watertown Daily Times has always been recognized as an exceptional daily newspaper. I know the new leadership will continue the family's commitment to excellence."

Mr. Johnson is a long-time member of the DANC board and will continue his work there.

"John has also placed the interests of the North Country first," said Mr. Wright. "I look forward to continuing to work with him in the community and as a member of the Development Authority's Board."