

Southern Dutchess News

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Fishkill, East Fishkill, Wappingers Falls, Town of Wappinger, Town and City of Poughkeepsie

May 10-16, 2023

Take a walk around Mesier Park filled with artwork of local students

Annual Festival of the Arts May 13 in Wappinger Falls



Artwork of Wappingers Central School District students will be on display during the 73rd annual Festival of the Arts in Mesier Park in Wappingers Falls on May 13.

Pictured are "Birth" by Mary Elizabeth Boatey and "Goodness Gracious" by Jaime O'Neill.

-Courtesy images

By Kristine Coulter

The Wappingers Central School District (WCSD) Fine & Performing Arts Department will present the 73rd Annual Festival of the Arts. This year's festival will take place on Saturday, May 13 in Mesier Park in Wappingers Falls from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. The inclement weather date is Sunday, May 14 from noon - 4 p.m.

Organizers stated the artwork of thousands of WCSD students (elementary through high school) will be on exhibit throughout the park.

Dr. Dwight Bonk, Superintendent of WCSD, said, "This event serves as one of our District Capstone Programs. Artwork that was created by thousands of our students will be on display throughout the

park as we are pleased to have this opportunity to showcase and recognize the many talents of our students from our 15 schools. In addition, the park will be filled with the music of our choral and instrumental ensembles and will feature student demonstrations and a variety of art-making activities."

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Four seek BOE seats in Wappingers school district

By Kristine Coulter

Registered voters in the Wappingers Central School District (WCSD) will have the opportunity to vote for Board of Education (BOE) members on May 16. They will also vote on the 2023-24 Budget and a Bus proposition. Polls are open from 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.

The four candidates are Anthony Ciro DiLullo, John C. Lumia, Peggy Kelland and Keith Odums. There are three seats (three-year terms from July 1 - June 30, 2026) that are open this year.

The four candidates who are running for the WCSD BOE were asked the following questions via email by Southern Dutchess News. The questions were:

1. Why are you running for the WCSD BOE?
2. What are your top 3 priorities?
3. What experiences will you bring if elected?

The candidates' responses follow, in alphabetical order, starting with those currently on the BOE.

Peggy Kelland, current Board of Education member

Why are you running for the WCSD BOE?

"I am running for reelection to the Wappingers School Board because I want to continue to provide a high-quality education in a fiscally responsible manner. Since I was first elected to the Board, we have reduced class sizes, upgraded facilities, improved scores on state exams, initiated career and technical programs, enhanced social/emotional support, and expanded extra-curricular offerings. All this was done with never exceeding the tax cap, and bringing in the last two budgets well below the tax cap."

What are your top 3 priorities?

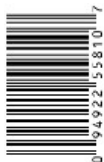
"My priorities are: first, to ensure a safe and welcoming school environment for everyone. Second, to offer the best academic and career training for all students, whatever their different talents and interests. Third, to encourage participation by all students in the school community through a wide range of athletic and extra-curricular activities."

What experiences will you bring if elected?

"After earning my BA (Smith College) and MA (Teachers College,

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Your News



Winning ways keep Renegades atop division in early going

The Hudson Valley Renegades are finding all kinds of ways to win and maintaining their hold on first place in the division.

The Renegades scored single runs in the 7th, 8th, and 9th innings on Friday night, and beat Wilmington, 3-2, plus wins of 3-1 on Saturday to take four of the six games in the home series.

Alexander Vargas clubbed a go-ahead three-run home run in the seventh inning helping the Renegades down the Blue Rocks 3-1 on Saturday night.

The Renegades own first place in the North Division of the South Atlantic League with a 18-9 record.

On Friday, the winning run came home on a wild pitch.

In the ninth inning, after Aaron Palensky opened up

the frame with a leadoff single, Spencer Henson reached base on a fielder's choice. Henson advanced to second on a throwing error by Yoander Rivero on a fielder's choice groundball hit by Rafael Flores, who reached at first.

Jack Sinclair (2-1) struck out Grant Richardson for the second out of the inning before Henson stole third after Onix Vega threw down to second base on a pick-off attempt. Two pitches later, Henson dashed home on a wild pitch to win the game for the Renegades. It was the first walk-off win of the season for Hudson Valley.

Wilmington had tied the game in the ninth with a sacrifice fly from Vega against Juan Carela after James Wood tripled on a ball lost in the lights in the outfield.

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WCSD's annual Festival of the Arts May 13

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Christine Bunt, a teacher at Roy C. Ketcham High School, teaches Photography and Advanced Photography-Digital and Darkroom.

"Each year the Festival of the Arts brings together a community that covers 110-square miles and serves a suburban community with a population of approximately 75,000. We are one of the largest school districts in the state. This showcase of our students' work brings together our community and creates a culturally rich and diverse atmosphere. From pre-k to seniors in high school, our students are so proud to see their work on display and enjoyed by the public," remarked Bunt to Southern Dutchess News recently.

Jaime O'Neill, who is a junior, stated, "For this project I was experimenting with reflections and found fire to be a good object of study. Using a crystal photography ball, I enjoyed changing the angles and the level of contrast in order to build up the image. Through various trial and error attempts, I was able to take a picture which reflected the object at hand while changing the viewpoint it was seen at."

Jaime said, "Students hold an immense amount of pride toward the work they portray and are always grateful for the amount of support shown by the community. Students can use this opportunity to take inspiration from one another, but the festival especially allows for a look into the classroom that the community doesn't get to see every day."

Robyn Talbot-Howard teaches four levels of Photo Media at John Jay High School (JJHS).

"My students have learned a variety of technical skills involving shooting and editing strong imagery, but also a great deal about craftsmanship, artistic intent, working in a series, and how to discuss other's artwork in a safe environment," stated Talbot-Howard.

Madison Rodriguez, a student at JJHS, said about her artwork piece that will be

in the festival, "I particularly enjoy this photo because of the subtle patterns. In the background, you could see Earth's spots and dots on the rock and the millipede's black and red stripes on its body. If you take a closer look, you could even see its dozens of legs or possibly arms. Although it may seem like a gross bug to some, I hope they are given a reminder of our planet and the beauty of its creatures."

Madison, who is a junior, noted, "The Festival of Arts provides an insight into people's identities articulated through their work. I think there's something special and valuable about getting to know another being by scrutinizing their canvas."

Talbot-Howard was asked about what her students have learned from choosing pieces for the festival.

"My students have learned a variety of technical skills involving shooting and editing strong imagery, but also a great deal about craftsmanship, artistic intent, working in a series, and how to discuss other's artwork in a safe environment," said Talbot-Howard.

Mary Elizabeth Boatey is another student in one of Talbot-Howard's classes.

"My photograph 'Birth' is in conjunction with a series of other photographs in a portfolio titled 'Stains of Sentiment.' It's a very personal and symbolic piece as you're able to see the conjoinment of several pairs of hands that all surround a ripened pomegranate. That pomegranate holds two meanings as a symbol in literature referring to both Birth and Death," Mary Elizabeth explained.

Mary Elizabeth, who is a senior, said, "The Festival of the Arts is a joyful celebration of the work created by our dearest students throughout the district. Accompanied by music, several activities, and the beautiful area, it makes a beautiful representation of our district's art department and an enjoyable afternoon!"

Bunt remarked, "We encourage our students to not solely focus on the creation



The above picture is titled "Milipede" by Madison Rodriguez.

-Courtesy image

of their art but explore the art making process through analyzing and interpreting to enhance their awareness and understanding of the visual world."

"My favorite part about the Festival of the Arts is how many people come out to support young and growing artists from the Wappingers community. It is always a beautiful day, rain or shine, and is such a nice opportunity to learn about and take inspiration from pieces of work created by students you work side by side with on a daily basis," Jaime said.

Bunt also noted that the day brings the community together.

"Our younger students catch a glimpse of what they can look forward to in high school. Our seniors display years of hard

work and dedication to the Arts and our teachers connect with families, alumni and community members. Our courses are diverse and range from Ceramics to Darkroom Photography to Sculpture to Studio Art. It's nothing short of inspiring to see the levels of talent and creativity that our Wappingers students have," said Bunt.

Talbot-Howard added, "There are hundreds of different projects using a huge array of materials that are unique, charming, and contemplative. The scope of Kindergarten Art through advanced & AP (Advanced Placement) Artwork shows the journey these amazing students take involving both self and material exploration in addition to skill building."

Dr. Bonk remarked that he hopes "to see everyone there!"

Meat processing expansion grants now available through HVADC

The Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corporation (HVADC) is now administering the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets' Meat Processing Expansion Grant Program. Applications are now open for this program, and producers state-wide may apply through HVADC.

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Grant program helps to fund projects to support the expansion or retention of existing USDA inspected meat processing facilities and the establishment of new USDA inspected meat processing facilities in the state to increase the capacity of New York State sourced meat. This addresses the nationwide shortage of affordable meat available to consumers, including the availability of protein sources for schools and institutional facilities in the state. The grant program will make it easier for beef, pork, lamb, goats, poultry, and seafood farmers to process their products and get

affordable, local meat into a variety markets, strengthening New York's food supply chain and rural economies.

"Across the state, and in particularly here in the Hudson Valley, we have seen an increased demand for meat processing services as consumer demand for more locally sourced products has increased in the past three to five years," said Todd Erling, Executive Director, HVADC. "At times it has been difficult for farmers to find capacity at USDA inspected meat processing facilities, which has restricted getting product to market. This grant program will go a long way in bolstering market viability for livestock farmers across the state," he added.

For meat processors, this grant program is available for capital projects that can range from \$50,000 to \$250,000 on a reimbursement basis. For grants of less than \$100,000, a 10% recipient match is required. For grants of \$100,000 to \$250,000, a 20% recipient match is required. Grant funds may be used

for the acquisition and installation of machinery, equipment and fixtures, or installation, renovation/leasehold improvements to an existing building. Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis, and funding will be awarded on a competitive basis. Funds will be available until state funds have been exhausted.

To be eligible for the grant program applicants must be involved in the processing of meat products and be a legally recognized business entity organization in New York State in good standing. Those with current USDA inspection status or seeking to become a USDA-inspected processor may

apply. Applicants must submit a detailed project plan or proposal that outlines the expansion, retention or establishment of a USDA inspected meat processing facility in New York State, including a detailed budget and timeline for the project. They must also demonstrate how their proposed project will increase the capacity of New York State sourced meat.

To learn more about the Meat Processing Expansion Grant program, or to apply, visit <https://www.hvadc.org/nys-meat-processing-grant> or contact Duane Stanton, HVADC Business Services Coordinator at dstanton@hvadc.org.

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