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OUR ENVIRONMENT



A wetlands area is being built to process animal waste for the new Dutchess County Society of Prevention Cruelty to Animals building. PHOTOS BY DARRYL BAUTISTA/POUGHKEEPSIE JOURNAL

New SPCA wetlands give pet waste royal treatment

Artificial system helps protect land

By John Ferro
Poughkeepsie Journal

HYDE PARK — When officials at the Dutchess County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals decided to build a new adoption and education center, they knew the site's aging septic system could not handle the added load.

So the Dutchess SPCA chose a system that uses man-made wetlands to treat wastewater.

Complicating the matter was the physical nature of the 32.6-acre site. Most of the property contains state and federally regulated wetlands. But thanks to some creative engineering, the project is moving forward.

"We are really excited



Dorothy Swab of the Dutchess County Society of Prevention Cruelty to Animals with Maya, a Chihuahua mix, Wednesday in front of artificial wetlands on the facility's grounds in Hyde Park.

because it fits our mission," Dutchess SPCA Development Director Catherine Forbes said. "It fits who we are, how we want to be as neighbors and how we want to protect the wildlife."

Two small beds of common reeds and grasses are in place. Three other beds are under construc-

tion. The system was designed by New England Waste Systems, based in Leeds, Mass. It seeks to replicate the water purification process that occurs in natural wetlands. Only two other systems have received permits from the state Department of Environmental Conserva-

ONLINE

To view a video of the Dutchess County Society of Prevention Cruelty to Animals's wastewater treatment system, go to www.poughkeepsiejournal.com.

COMING SUNDAY

Pick up Sunday's Poughkeepsie Journal for a My Valley article on how to have a green Valentine's Day.

tion — the Omega Institute in the Town of Clinton and the Fishkill-East Fishkill Joint Landfill.

Waste travels first to large tanks, where most solids settle and are eventually pumped out. Next stop is a vegetated sand bed. Bacteria-laden gravel traps and treats waste. Clays and peat moss add a polishing process.

See **FILTER**, Page 2B

/// DOLLARS AND SENSE

Beacon PBA will proceed to mediation

2nd union, city reach accord on health insurance

By Nina Schutzman
Poughkeepsie Journal

BEACON — As the Beacon Patrolmen's Benevolent Association heads into a mediation session with the city Tuesday, another union reached a cooperative agreement with the Common Council.

The Civil Service Employee Union has been negotiating with the city since the health insurance clause in the contract it had expired Dec. 31, 2009.

On Wednesday, City Administrator Meredith Robson and CSEA representatives signed a memorandum of agree-

"For us, the health insurance was the main sticking point and we finally got to a place where we can bring an agreement back to our members for them to vote on," said Jessica Ladlee, CSEA communications specialist.

There are about 50 CSEA members, 30 PBA members and 12 members in the City of Beacon Professional Firefighters, the third union that needs to vote on health insurance policies, Robson said.

"I expect the firefighters union and the CSEA to vote on the options by the end of next week," Robson said. "It still has to be ratified by both parties for it to be completely official."

Union health care is through the New York

See **DOLLARS**, Page 2B

Beekman meeting devoid of fireworks

Board focuses on water fix, not supervisor fight

By Michael Cahill
Poughkeepsie Journal

POUGHQUAG — Beekman Town Board members kept a civil tone during the workshop portion of Wednesday night's meeting, the first since a controversial meeting in January.

The atmosphere was in contrast to the last meeting of the board in January, when some

ONLINE

For further coverage from the meeting, go to www.poughkeepsiejournal.com

members sought a vote of no confidence for Supervisor Matthew Kennedy, a Democrat.

About 40 people filled the room at Town Hall. Board members and the public focused on the workshop on proposed improvements to the Dover Ridge water and sewer

See **MEETING**, Page 2B

SpeakUp

WEDNESDAY'S QUESTION
Will the Town of Hyde Park save taxpayers money with its own dog-control officer?

71 Yes
114 No
185 responses.

TODAY'S QUESTION
Do you plan your day to avoid traffic? See story, Page 1A.

Vote on today's question and see what others are saying at poughkeepsiejournal.com. Find SpeakUp on the right column just below the "Don't Miss" module.

LOCAL NEWS ON YOUR CELLPHONE

Text **PJNEWS** to **44636** (4INFO).

Get weather alerts

To receive mid-Hudson Valley severe weather alerts on your cellphone, text **pjweather** to **4INFO** (44636). Message and data rates may apply.

In brief

Marlborough home invasion investigated; 2 men sought

MARLBORO — Town police are investigating a home invasion that occurred Tuesday night on Church Street, police said.

According to the police account, two black men wearing dark clothes approached a visitor to the residence while he was outside on the front porch around 9:30 p.m.

The men asked the visitor if he would give them a ride.

When the visitor went inside the house, the two men followed and accosted him with a pistol, police said.

One shot was fired at this time, police said. Residents of the house pushed the intruders outside, after which they

took off on foot eastbound on Church Street, police said.

State police at Highland, the Town of Lloyd Police Department and the Ulster County Sheriff's Department assisted Marlborough police at the scene.

Anyone with information is urged to call Detective Lofaro at the Town of Marlborough Police Department at 845-795-2181.

Research center: January was warmer than average

NEW PALTZ — January was warmer and drier than average this year, according to data released Wednesday by the Mohonk Preserve's Daniel Smiley Research Center.

The average temperature last month was 28.5 degrees at the Mohonk Lake Cooperative Weather

Station, almost four degrees warmer than the 117-year average of 24.8 degrees.

There were 2.72 inches of precipitation, about three-quarters of an inch less than the 117-year average of 3.48 inches.

The high temperature for the month was 55 degrees, on Jan. 31. The low temperature was minus 2 degrees, on Jan. 3.

Check the Journal's online searchable databases

The Poughkeepsie Journal has created an interactive website with deep, searchable databases. You can search salaries paid to county employees in Dutchess and Ulster and more. Go to www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/section/data to view and search the databases.

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www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/weather

Five-Day Forecast for the Mid-Hudson Valley

| Today | Friday | Saturday | Sunday | Monday |
|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|
| | | | | |
| 28° 24° | 35° 22° | 29° 3° | 36° 20° | 43° 32° |

Forecast Today

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Temperature high/low | 28°/24° |
| RealFeel Temperature high/low | 34°/9° |
| Chance of precipitation | 10% |
| Relative humidity (4 p.m.) | 44% |
| Wind chill (4 p.m.) | 24° |
| Wind (4 p.m.) | VAR at 3 mph |
| Barometric pressure (4 p.m.) | 30.46" |
| Visibility (4 p.m.) | 10 miles |

The patented AccuWeather.com RealFeel Temperature® is an exclusive index of effective temperature based on eight weather factors.

Almanac

TODAY

Sun and Moon rise set

Sun 7:01 a.m. 5:19 p.m.

Moon 4:39 a.m. 2:40 p.m.

Tides first second

High 9:56 a.m. 10:28 p.m.

Low 3:59 a.m. 4:42 p.m.

Temperature records

High: 53° (2005) Low: -10° (1966)

YESTERDAY

(Dutchess Airport through 4 p.m.)

Temperatures High/Low 39°/21°

Precipitation (in inches) Trace

24 hours through 4 p.m. yest. Trace

Month to date Trace

Year to date 2.05"

Environment

Air Quality Today: 43

Air Quality yesterday: 48 (Good)

0-50, Good; 51-100, Moderate; 101-150, Unhealthy for sensitive groups; 151-200, Unhealthy; 201-300, Very unhealthy; 301-500, Hazardous

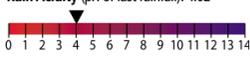
Source: NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Rain Acidity (pH of last rainfall): 4.02

pH of previous rainfall February 3: 4.55

The pH is a measure of acidity or alkalinity. On a scale of 0 to 14, vinegar has a pH of 3; neutral is 7. Normal rain is a bit acidic at 5.

Source: Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies <http://www.caryinstitute.org/emp.html>

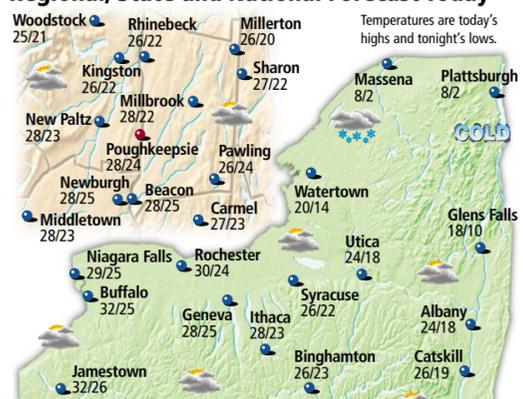


For a 5-day forecast in your area, send a text message with W and your CITY (i.e., W Poughkeepsie) or ZIP CODE (i.e., W 12603) to 4INFO (44636).



Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2013

Regional, State and National Forecast Today



| Location | Today | Fri. |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| Albany | 24/18/pc | 29/17/sn |
| Beacon | 28/25/pc | 37/22/sn |
| Binghamton | 26/23/pc | 34/12/sn |
| Buffalo | 32/25/sn | 29/12/sn |
| Carmel | 27/23/pc | 34/20/sn |
| Catskill | 26/19/pc | 32/19/sn |
| Ithaca | 28/23/c | 34/12/sn |
| Kingston | 26/22/pc | 34/20/sn |
| Middletown | 28/23/pc | 35/21/sn |
| Millerton | 26/20/pc | 33/19/sn |
| New Paltz | 28/23/pc | 34/21/sn |
| New York City | 34/31/pc | 40/28/sn |
| Newburgh | 28/25/pc | 37/22/sn |
| Pawling | 26/24/pc | 35/21/sn |
| Poughkeepsie | 28/24/pc | 35/22/sn |
| Rhinebeck | 26/22/pc | 34/20/sn |
| Rochester | 30/24/sn | 30/12/sn |
| Stewart Airport | 28/25/pc | 37/21/sn |
| Syracuse | 26/22/c | 32/11/sn |
| Utica | 24/18/pc | 28/9/sn |
| White Plains | 32/27/pc | 38/24/sn |
| Woodstock | 25/21/pc | 33/19/sn |

In the Sky

Today the moon is at perigee, its closest approach to Earth during this orbit.



Maya, a Chihuahua mix, walks in front of a constructed wetland on the grounds of the Dutchess County Society of Prevention Cruelty to Animals, in Hyde Park. This constructed wetland processes waste from the existing shelter.

DARRYL BAUTISTA/POUGHKEEPSIE JOURNAL

Filter

Continued from Page 1B

Cattails, reeds and other plants further filter solids by taking up nutrients, metals and other substances. Other living processes — from protozoa to frogs and birds — consume and otherwise break down waste.

What's left is water that is clean, albeit not potable. At the Dutchess SPCA, the water was the problem. Engineers wanted to discharge the treated effluent into the wetland. The DEC said no.

So engineers have designed a piggyback infiltration system, similar to a conventional leach field, underneath the artificial wetlands. The purified water will drain through a synthetic membrane liner into the infiltration network and then percolate back into the groundwater.

"It's the first piggyback system that we have built like this," said Ron Lavigne, president of New England Waste Systems.

Stuart Findlay, an aquatic ecologist at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, cautioned that artificial wetlands often use some

invasive species such as the common reed (*Phragmites australis*). At least one of the Dutchess SPCA's beds has this species.

But Findlay noted the common reed is already present in the mid-Hudson Valley and Lavigne said the reed is already growing in the wetlands on the Dutchess SPCA property.

"We try to be sensitive of the wishes of conservation ... people," Lavigne said. "I don't get too excited over *Phragmites* because it is nowhere near as invasive as people would have you believe. Most of the seeds are non-fertile, and they won't

spread by normal seed propagation."

Artificial wetlands offer several advantages, including reduced chemical and energy use. They also take less maintenance and have some habitat value, Findlay said.

"I am a big fan of these things," Findlay said. "Compared to building a little (treatment) plant — and given that the effluent coming in is just pet poop, and not horrible stuff — it seems like a good use."

John Ferro: 845-437-4816; jferro@poughkeepsiejournal.com; Twitter: @PoJoEnviro

Dollars

Continued from Page 1B

State Health Insurance Program for State and Local Government and MVP Health Care.

Robson said there are three new Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance plan choices, two for active employees and one for retirees.

The high deductible plan charges the city monthly premiums of \$385.28 for an individual and \$1,077.51 for a fam-

ily. A single person is charged a yearly deductible of \$1,250. A family is charged \$2,500.

The city will pay half of that deductible per year, Robson said.

"Basically, you pay up to that amount and after that you're covered in full or there's a minor co-pay," Robson said. "If you're single, you'll pay \$625 a year because the city will pay half."

A vision benefit of \$250 and a wellness benefit of \$150 a year are included, she said.

The other active plan is the Deluxe PPO plan.

"It's similar to NYSHIP, there are co-pays," Robson said.

That plan costs the city \$673.73 for a single person or \$1,593.24 for a family per month.

The MediBlue Freedom PPO is for retirees.

"It's a full plan that covers you completely, not really different than what they have now," Robson said.

Many union members pay 25 percent of that premium.

"The significant pre-

mium difference between the plans is why we save money," Robson said.

"We estimated the \$300,000 savings on the low side, with 30 union members switching to the high deductible plan. Anything after is additional savings," Robson said.

"Dollars and Sense" explores fiscal or financial issues that affect the public. Nina Schutzman: nschutzman@poughkeepsiejournal.com, 845-451-4518 Twitter: @pojonschutzman

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Meeting

Continued from Page 1B

systems. At the Jan. 23 meeting, board member Ron Mangeri asked the board for a vote of "no confidence" in Kennedy and to launch an ethics probe. The motion failed, with Mangeri's only support coming from board member Peter Barton, a member of the Independence Party, who resigned from his post as

deputy superintendent at the meeting.

Kennedy and Republican board member Barbara Zulauf voted against the measure. Republican board member Michael Moran was absent from the meeting, and would have been the tie-breaking vote.

Mangeri's no confidence vote request alleged that Kennedy was intoxicated at a Dec. 19 Town Board meeting, that he used town materials and staff to mail thank-you notes to political do-

nors, and that he settled a federal wrongful-termination lawsuit without board approval.

Kennedy denied having a drinking problem and is contesting a Dec. 22 misdemeanor charge of driving while intoxicated from state police in Greene County.

While Kennedy did acknowledge he used town resources to mail the political thank-you notes, he has since apologized and reimbursed the town.

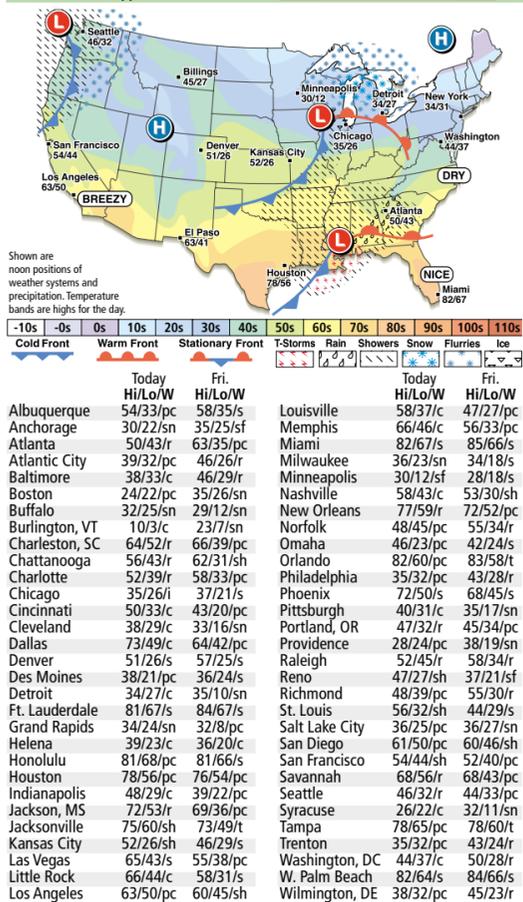
According to meeting minutes, Kennedy was au-

thorized by the board on March 7 to provide consent to the town's insurance company to settle a lawsuit.

Mangeri and Barton allege the settlement increased the town's insurance premiums.

According to town documents, the insurance premiums have increased. Kennedy said he is not to blame.

Michael Cahill: mcahill@poughkeepsiejournal.com, 845-437-4809, Twitter: @PoJoMikeCahill



GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

Town of Amenia Planning Board meeting — Town Clerk, 36 Mechanic St. # B, Amenia. 7 p.m. Feb. 7. The Amenia Planning Board meets the first and fourth Thursday of the month. 845-373-8860 ext. 105.

Town of Union Vale Town Board meeting — Town Hall, 249 Duncan Road, LaGrangeville. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 7. The Town Board meets on the first and second Thursday of each month. 845-724-5600.

Village of Wappingers Falls Planning Board meeting — American Legion, 7 Spring St., Wappingers Falls. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 7. The Planning board meets the first Thursday of each month. 845-297-5277.

HAPPENINGS

Fireside Chats series — St. James' Chapel, 10 E. Market St., Hyde Park. 7 p.m. Feb. 7. Series of lectures on local history presented by St. James Episcopal Church, Hyde Park. Local author Anthony Musso will discuss his book, "Hidden Treasures of the Hudson Valley." Reception follows program. Copies of the book will be available for purchase. 845-229-2820.

Library book club meets — Gardiner Library, 133 Farmers Turnpike, Gardiner. 3 p.m. Feb. 7. Group will discuss "Mrs.

Daily Planner



Queen Takes the Train," by William Kuhn. For directions or further information, call 255-1255 or visit www.gardiner-library.org

Needlecrafters group meets — Tivoli Free Library, 86 Broadway, Tivoli. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Feb. 7. Informal gathering of Hooks & Needles, Yarns & Threads needle crafting group. \$1 donation will help purchase resource materials for the library collection. Group meets the first and third Thursdays of the month. 845-757-3771.

NIDO Italian culture club meets — The Italian Center, 227 Mill St., Poughkeepsie. 7 p.m. Feb. 7. Meeting of Noi Italiani D'Oggi, a Poughkeepsie-based Italian culture and language community group. Juliet Harrison will discuss her series of black and white photographs she took in Milan at the Monument Cemetery. A selection of these pictures were exhibited in Red Hook in November. She also will display

some of her photos of the horses of San Marco. NIDO meets the first Thursday of the month. Visitors welcome. 845-471-0313.

Opera lecture series — Woodstock Jewish Congregation, 1682 Glasco Turnpike, Woodstock. 7 p.m. Feb. 7. Opera commentator Robert Levine presents the last program in his his "More Opera ... Alive and Well" series. \$20, adults; \$10, ages 13-18. For more information, call 845-679-2218. www.wjcsul.org

Poetry open mic — The Crafted Cup Coffeehouse, 44 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie. 7 p.m. Feb. 7. Dutchess Peace will host a poetry competition featuring Highland High School students, Veterans for Peace and college students. Free. 845-876-7906. www.dutchess-peace.org

Vassar College Modfest: music and readings — Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, 124

Raymond Ave, Poughkeepsie. 7 p.m. Feb. 7. Chamber music and readings of original prose by students from the classes of Eduardo Navega, chamber music director, and Amitava Kumar, English professor. Free. Part of 11th annual festival celebrating the performing, visual and literary arts of the 20th and 21st centuries. For details, call 845-437-5370 or visit <http://arts.vassar.edu>

FARMERS MARKETS

Amenia winter market — Town Hall, 4988 Route 22. Winter market held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. first and third Saturdays through April. Remaining dates for this season are Feb. 16; March 2 and 16; April 6 and 20. In May, market moves back outdoors to the Town Hall parking lot and is open from 3 to 7 p.m. Fridays. For details, visit www.amenia-farmersmarket.com.