



HARVARD JOURNEY
From BG to a new home **Pg.15**

BLOOMING GROVE POST

BLOOMING GROVE'S BI-MONTHLY NEWSPAPER



A PLACE TO PLAY
The Lions make a difference **Pg.10**

FREE VOL. 2, NO. 4

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MOFFAT LIBRARY PUBLICATION

FARMER'S HARVEST:

Owner Guy Jones holds up an apple, proud of his produce.
Lily Korba photo



Cultivating a community

The man behind a beloved local farm

By Lily Korba
BG Post Student Reporter

As a lifelong Washingtonville resident, sister to this newspaper's Editor-in-Chief and current Blooming Hill Farm employee, this reporter knows firsthand the importance of local individuals and the impact they have on our town. One such change-maker, Guy Jones, is not just this reporter's boss, but is a beloved member of our community. Whether it's carefully cultivating each crop grown

on the farm or recognizing familiar faces that come by the market, Guy is always thinking of those around him. He spoke to the *Blooming Grove Post* recently and offered valuable insights into his life and business.

Growing up in Ramsey, New Jersey, Guy's childhood was filled with wild adventures and exciting opportunities. He told this reporter with a laugh, "The fifties and sixties were a good time; I'm sorry you missed it." His free time outside of Catholic school was replete with thrilling

quests with his brothers and reading as many books as he could get his hands on. After graduating from high school, Guy sought out a career in which he could help the most people. He attended various colleges and universities, including Cornell, in his fifteen-year journey to become a lawyer. When asked how Blooming Hill Farm came to be, Guy explained, "I wanted a change in my career. I've always been a gardener, my parents were, and they taught me a lot. I needed an honest job and I really couldn't think of anything more honest." And so he got to work. Blooming Hill Farm

Blooming Hill Farm, pg. 8

Vietnam vet recalls comrades

By Luke Broge
BG Post Student Reporter

The history of the Purple Heart Award goes back to General George Washington during the American Revolution. Of course, the award he gave out – the Badge of Military Merit, created at his headquarters in Newburgh in 1782 – is not quite the same as the Purple Heart that exists today. The current Purple Heart award, which has existed in some form since 1932, serves to honor any service member who "has been wounded, killed, or has died after being wounded by enemy action."

In New Windsor – not far from Washington's Headquarters where the Purple Heart has its origins – is the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor. The location serves as a museum and memorial, not just of America's conflicts, but of the estimated 1.8 million service members who have received purple hearts. The most important part of the Hall is the Roll of Honor, a catalog of about 200,000 Purple Heart recip-

George Bates Purple Heart, pg. 9



PURPLE HEART: The Purple Heart medal – a solemn distinction – is presented to service members who have been wounded or killed as a result of enemy action while serving the U.S.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

The Washingtonville Cemetery Committee is currently in need of volunteers on the Washingtonville Cemetery Committee and invite you to join our team to serve the community and help preserve important village history. Some of the responsibilities associated with serving are: operations, fee structure, support for special events (e.g. Wreaths Across America, spring and fall cleanup, Memorial Day), rules and regulations and fundraising. Regular meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at The First Presbyterian Church at 30 Goshen Ave. in Washingtonville. If you or someone you know would like to join the Cemetery Committee, please contact us at **845-391-0822**. We look forward to hearing from you!

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BLOOMING GROVE POST

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Passing the pen forward

Welcome to the “July/August” edition of the *Blooming Grove Post*! In the words of Noah Kahan, an artist whose latest



Caroline Korba

work is covered on a later page in this newspaper, “it’s been a long year.” From its first full cycle of publications to switching Production/Photo Editors and more, the *BG Post* has experienced quite the era. We’ve grown, adapted and moved forward, hopefully creating something worthwhile. Serving as the second ever *BG Post* Editor-in-Chief has been the utmost honor, and as I prepare to leave Washingtonville in the fall, I take with me a sense of gratitude and appreciation for my hometown. To others, this paper might seem like a hobby, or just another pile of pages. But to anyone who has read our work, or, even better, been involved in it, we know that it is a community.

The *Blooming Grove Post* highlights and strengthens the connections we have with each other and our common history. In my role here specifically, I have been so privileged to witness and develop such connections myself. This is why – as I turn to the next chapter in my life at Fordham University – I urge all of our readers to get involved.

The *BG Post* is always seeking photographers, journalists, editors, information and ideas; we would love to see what you

can bring to the table. Our email, **bloom-inggrovepost@gmail.com**, awaits your message. I believe that trying new things is not scary – it is vital. I will be testing that in a few short weeks when I move onto campus for the first time, but in my experience here at *The Post*, the results are worth the effort and initial nerves. I did not have a background or aspirations in journalism before, and now I can say I do. The relationships with the people with whom I’ve worked, and the skills I’ve built along the way will live with me forever.

Prof. Joel R. Solonche, your wit, dedication, humor and unwavering passion for all things literary inspire me in every interaction we have had. Your tribute article could have gone on for far long – and it did, until you did your job and edited it. Ms. Carol McCrossen, your mentorship, patience and kindness have shaped this paper from the ground up, and I am so lucky to have been able to work with you. Mr. Jeremy Joseph and my whole staff of reporters, your positive presence and creativity make the *Post* what it is. Thank you to everyone for the support – it means the world.

No matter where I go in the future – college, law school and beyond, I will always be grateful for this chapter in my life and for the *Blooming Grove Post* for filling many pages in my story. So with that, I pass my pen – Luke Broge, take good care of the *Post*. And to all, Happy Summer!

COMMUNITY SCAVENGER HUNT

The Washingtonville Cemetery Committee is sponsoring a Historical Scavenger Hunt. In each edition of the *BG Post*, you will find a question. You will find the answers throughout the village. You may have seen the answers on your regular walks or drives. Now the fun is remembering where! When you have figured out the answer, email **wvillecemetery@gmail.com**. The first three correct answers will win a prize, and your name will appear in the next edition of the paper. Here is the first question: Two brothers who died on the same day are buried in the Washingtonville Cemetery. What are their names? The answer and story will be printed in the next paper. Have fun and good luck!

A LOOK BACK IN TIME



YESTERDAYS: East Main Street in Washingtonville as it looked in 1975. Moffat Library photo



LIBRARY LEADERSHIP: On left, Moffat Library Board of Trustees. Pictured back row L to R: James Casazza; Chris Fox; Luis Rivera; Dennis Barnett; Beth Fitzpatrick & Matt Davis. Front row L to R: Ruth Manyin; Barbara Koller; Jeanne Versweyveld; Nancy Schneider & Victoria Drake. On right, The Moffat Library board president Dennis Barnett, giving a powerful speech at the 2017 Grand Reopening Ceremony of the historic Moffat Library.

A sanctuary not just from the floodwaters

One trustee's part in Moffat history

By **Luke Broge**
BG Post Student Reporter

The mission of the Moffat Library is – and has been since its origins in 1887 – to be a “source of information, education, enlightenment and entertainment to all members of our community.” There have been many figures in the library’s history who have worked to fulfill this mission. One of the people who has worked for the past 26 years towards that idea is Moffat Library trustee Dennis Barnett.

Dennis is one of nine trustees on the Moffat Library Board. He has been a member of the Board since 2000 and served as its president from 2003 to 2022.

One role of a Board trustee – and someone who believes in the success of the library’s mission in general – is to use outside expertise and experience to better the library. Dennis Barnett is an excellent example of this. He serves as the President of Propinquity Associates, a business and management consulting

company that he founded in 2000. In a recent interview with the *BG Post*, Dennis spoke about a time he was able to use his connections in the business community very directly to help out Moffat Library.

Putting experience to work

Over the years and through various community events, Dennis got to know Jimmy Smith, the CEO of Advanced Testing, a connection that came in handy after the Moffat Library suffered major damage during Hurricane Irene. The library was looking for a place to relocate temporarily, and Smith happened to have an empty building that he offered to Dennis and the Moffat Library to use temporarily, while the town made necessary repairs to the library building. Dennis and the board of trustees accepted Smith’s generous offer of space with “the mindset to be there for maybe about a year, or you know, maybe a year or two; and we were there for six years,” Barnett stated. The library location at the

Advance Testing building off of Rte 208 in Campbell Hall became a haven during the period that the historic library building was undergoing a major renovation.

How Dennis kept the library going in the aftermath of disaster is important because it shows how he views the library in a broad sense. “Libraries are like a sanctuary, a place you go and be safe,” he said. For him they are places where “regardless of your age, you are able to go and know that consistently you could go to this place, and get the kind of information you need, the calmness you need, [and] the peace you need.”

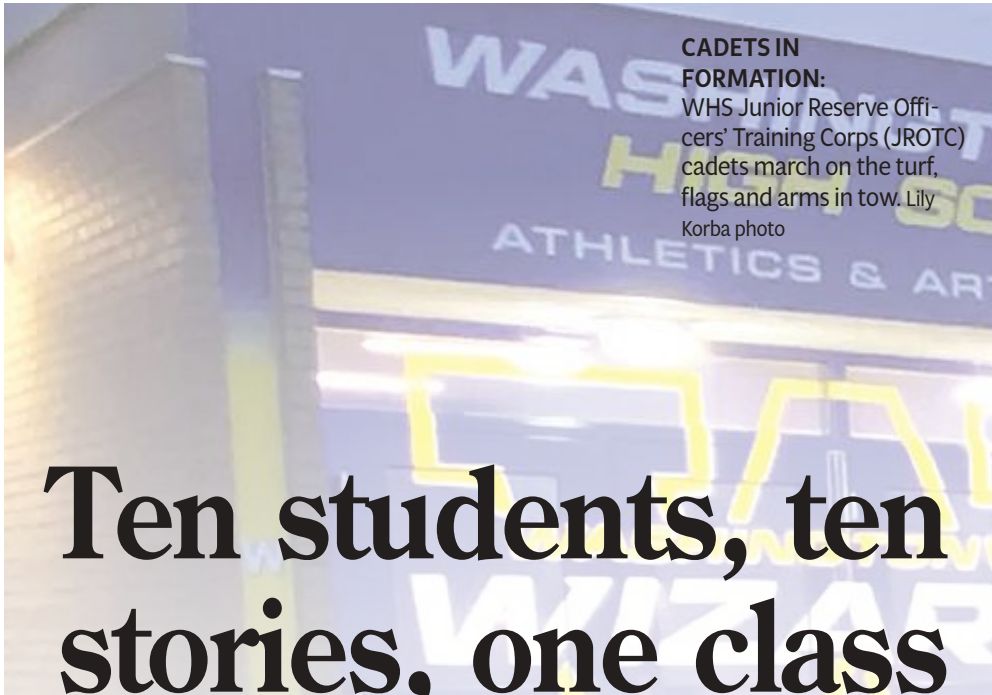
Leading beyond the Library

This perspective on the value of libraries has affected many of the decisions Dennis has made in his life and time as a trustee. He also has served as president of the Ramapo Catskill Library System Board of Trustees, where his reach could be even wider, and played an integral role in the development of the Friends of Moffat Library group when they began.

However, when Dennis was asked what library programs he thinks are most

valuable, he spoke of the programs for teens and children. After all, his perspective came from his own experience as a child at the library. He spoke proudly about the summer reading program for children, saying “they are engaged in something that’s useful for them to develop their learning skills for the future.” He carried the same sentiment to programs like the Teen Advisory Board and *Blooming Grove Post* that provide opportunities for middle and high school students.

The history of the Moffat Library is long and full of setbacks and opportunities. The reason the library has continued to grow and develop is through the passion of community members like Dennis Barnett. Whether it is finding a temporary home after a hurricane, keeping patrons connected during covid, or brainstorming new ways to use the Moffat carriage house building, Barnett’s focus has always been on keeping the library a sanctuary for the people of Blooming Grove. We, here at the *BG Post*, thank him for his 26 years of dedicated service!



CADETS IN FORMATION:
WHS Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) cadets march on the turf, flags and arms in tow. Lily Korba photo



Ten students, ten stories, one class

Recognizing the achievements of BG's top students

The *Blooming Grove Post* is proud to acknowledge and congratulate the Washingtonville High School Class of 2026. These seniors graduated on June 25, 2026, and we here at the *Blooming Grove Post* would like to wish them the best of luck and great success in their future endeavors!

We asked the Top 10 graduates about their plans for the future and for some of their favorite memories growing up around the Washingtonville/Blooming Grove area. Here's what each of them had to say, and needless to say their futures seem promising!



Joseph Mullan, Valedictorian, #1:
My name is Joseph Mullan, and I will be attending the University of Notre Dame in the fall with a major in finance. My favorite memory from growing up in the Washingtonville area was attending the annual Round Hill Family Fun Day with my friends and family.



Caroline Korba, Salutatorian, #2:
My name is Caroline Korba, and I will be attending Fordham University at Rose Hill, as a prestigious Fordham Scholar. I plan on majoring in History and minoring in Spanish on a pre-law track, with the ultimate goal of attending law school and becoming an attorney. Growing up in the Washingtonville area has been an amazing experience, with all of the holiday events and whatnot, but – although I'm definitely biased – my favorite part has been my involvement with the *Blooming Grove Post*. I've gotten to meet so many people I never would've met before this newspaper; it truly helped me appreciate how special my hometown is. I'll miss it a lot when I'm off to college.



Lila Sinacori, #3:
My name is Lila Sinacori, and I will be attending the United States Military Academy at West Point. I would like to study life sciences on a pre-medical track, with the goal of eventually being a surgeon for the Army. My favorite memory from growing up in Washingtonville has definitely been Whoville and the yearly Christmas parade!



Owen Vinarub, #4:
I am Owen Vinarub, the #4 senior in the Class of 2026. In the fall, I will attend Hamilton College to study physics. Utilizing Hamilton's open curriculum, I also will continue focusing on my art and expanding my curiosity to all the subjects I'm interested in. Growing up in this area, the most important things to me are the moments I struggle to remember, the moments hanging out with my friends in or outside school.



Isabella Meyer, #5:
My name is Isabella Meyer, and I will be attending Florida State University. I am majoring in chemistry on a pre-medical track, eventually becoming an anesthesiologist. My favorite memory from growing up in Washingtonville is being on the Unified Basketball team my senior year.





GRADUATES EMBRACE: On left, BG Post Student Reporter Katie Kornfeld and BG Post Editor-in-Chief Caroline Korba share an embrace after receiving their diplomas and crossing the stage. Below, A sea of freshly-minted graduates sit, hands on caps, waiting to toss them into the air. Lily Korba photo



Gianna Perez, #6:

As of Fall 2026, I will be attending Florida Atlantic University, earning a bachelor's degree in Neuroscience. I will be participating in the FAU Honors College as well as pursuing their undergraduate research program. My favorite memory growing up in the Blooming Grove is the yearly Knights of Columbus carnival. I look forward every year to being able to have a local, fun fair for a weekend. Growing up, the carnival was especially always fun because it is not something we get to do every day. I think that the carnival provides such a good opportunity to have some fun, especially over Memorial Day weekend. I can go on rides, hang out with my friends, play games and just enjoy living life as a teenager.



Riley Butler, #7:

I will be attending Monmouth University in the fall of 2026 where I will major in nursing. In the future, I hope to become a neonatal nurse. My favorite memory from growing up in Blooming Grove is spending time with my friends at the Knights of Columbus Carnival. I have attended the carnival for many years and always enjoy the rides and games. Those nights are memories that I will cherish because they brought my friends and my community together.



Lucas Robles, #8:

I'm Lucas Robles, the eighth-ranked senior in Washingtonville High School. I plan on going to Rochester Institute of Technology to study Business Administration, with plans of pursuing law school later on. Roughly a year ago, I participated in one of the many festivals in Washingtonville for the first time. It was cozy. Everyone knows everyone. Once or twice a month, I went down with my family on Friday nights to try the local diner. It's nice, and the neighbors actually wave back. It's small and feels like home in the best way.



Megan Bushey, #9:

I'm Megan Bushey, and I'm graduating ninth in the Washingtonville High School Class of 2026. Next year, I'll be attending the University of Tennessee Knoxville to study biology, pursuing a career in ophthalmology. My favorite memories growing up in Washingtonville are Little Britain Elementary School field days and playing softball in Washingtonville Little League.



Sophia Zupancic, #10:

I, Sophia Zupancic, daughter of Michelle and Anthony Zupancic, will be attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute this coming Fall where I will be majoring in Biomedical Engineering. One of my favorite parts of growing up in Washingtonville was going to Weir's with my family after lacrosse games and school events.

Theatre on Main Street's spring production

Washingtonville takes on a classic

By Joel Solonche

BG Post Associate Editor

Now in its second year in its home at 6 Depot Street in Washingtonville, Theatre on Main Street continues to thrill audiences with innovative, immersive productions of musicals and dramas. The Spring production was no exception. From June 5th through the 14th, the company celebrated the 50th anniversary of the 1975 film, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," the role for which Jack Nicholson won his long overdue Best Actor Oscar.

In this brilliant stage adaptation of the 1963 novel by Ken Kesey, the company vividly created the recreation room of the psychiatric ward of a hospital in Salem, Oregon. With "hospital gowns" and "meds," audience members were welcomed – checked in – to the world of the domineering, authoritarian and



BEHIND THE SCENES:

The cast at a rehearsal of "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest." From left to right: Fidel Fonteboa as Dale Harding, Michael E. Boyle, Jr. as Randle P. McMurphy, Meghan Farrell as Dr. Spivey, Jessica Jaber as Nurse Ratched, Jeremy Kim as Billy Bibbitt, Emilia Riggs as Scanlon, Chantal Martineau as Cheswick and Lisa DiBlasi as Martini. Photo provided by Theatre on Main Street

humorless Nurse Ratched. The boundary between audience and actor disappeared, and they were not watching a play – they were patients. The immersive staging put the dramatic power struggles between Nurse Ratched and the rebellious troublemaker, Randle McMurphy, squarely in the audience's lap.

This is just one typical review of many: "It was really gripping... and surreal to be in the middle of it all (having worked in mental health)... I loved the immersive touch with wearing the gowns and the humor sprinkled

throughout... it was a delight to be in the audience. Bravo to everyone!"

And a special *Bravo!* to the cast: Mario Andrés as Chief Bromden; Michael E. Boyle, Jr. as Randle McMurphy; Ryan Danahy as Ruckly; Lisa DiBlasi as Martini; Meghan Farrell as Dr. Sandra Spivey; Sydnee Ferretti as Nurse Williams; Fidel Fonteboa as Dale Harding; Jessica Jaber as Nurse Ratched; Jeremy Kim as Billy Bibbitt; Rheonna Koss as Nurse Warren; Chantal Martineau as Cheswick; Theresa Murphy as Nurse Flinn; Angela Pepe as Candy Starr and Emilia Suarez-Riggs

as Scanlon.

Theatre on Main Street has more great things in store for us. November's featured production will be the high octane rock musical "American Idiot." Based on Green Day's iconic 2004 album, "American Idiot," it tells the story "of three friends navigating love, loss, rage and identity in a fractured, post-9/11 world." Put the dates on your calendar – November 6 through 15 – for a show not-to-be-missed!

For more information on upcoming events, go to: www.theatreonmain-street.com.

Energy drinks in the classroom

By Rhea Trapnell

BG Post Student Reporter

Washingtonville High School has displayed posters and decals for energy drinks and related beverages across campus for several years now, including multiple placements in the cafeteria. The advertisements appear in high traffic areas such as the lunch line, seating sections and hallways, and are positioned near vending machines that sell these products.

The ads feature branding for energy drink giant Celsius, wellness beverage company Bloom and soda alternative brand Poppi. Many emphasize focus,

energy and alertness during the school day, linking the products to academic performance and productivity.

The presence of these advertisements in student spaces has raised questions among some about the role of marketing in schools. A single can of Celsius contains about 200 milligrams of caffeine, while Bloom contains roughly 180 milligrams. For context, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that adolescents between 12 and 18 consume no more than 100 milligrams of caffeine per day.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse has stated that "the adolescent brain is uniquely vulnerable to substance use, which can interfere with brain development and increase the risk of addiction later in life." Health experts commonly cite many risks associated with energy drink consumption, including sleep disruption, increased anxiety, elevated heart rate and reduced concentration.

One student, Liz Montroy, said she has noticed frequent consumption among peers. "I have friends who are drinking three or four energy drinks a day," she said. She also pointed to the visibility of the drinks in school vending machines. "I only ever see kids with energy drinks sold at the vending machines," she said.

School officials declined to comment when asked about the advertisements or how decisions regarding commercial messaging on campus are made.



BOOK NOOK: (From L to R): trustee Dennis Barnett; director Carol McCrossen; Friends of Moffat President Christine Frisbee; Friends board member Mary Ann Marrero; former Moffat librarian Matt Thorenz and board president James Amend at the March 5, 2026 unveiling of the Denise Terzian's Book Nook at Moffat Library.

Honoring Denise Terzian

By Carol McCrossen

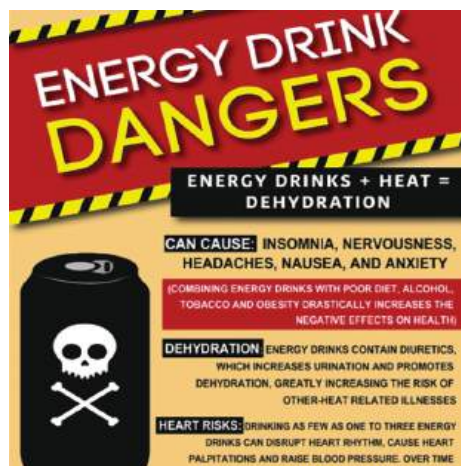
BG Post Community Reporter

On March 5, 2026, the Friends of Moffat Library dedicated the new Book Nook in memory of 28-year veteran staff member, Denise Terzian. Following her passing in 2024, donations from countless community members came in to the Friends of Moffat Library in memory of Denise, a beloved and dedicated staff member who volunteered countless hours for the library's Friends group over the last decade of her life.

After discussions between the Friends and library staff, it was decided that Denise, who was an avid reader herself, would love to have some of

her favorite authors and books to share with other community members, as she had done for so many years with patrons while working at the library. A set of books and a bookshelf were purchased with the donated funds and a plaque was installed in the Moffat Library main hall.

The March 5th unveiling ceremony included speeches from Moffat Library trustees Dennis Barnett and James Amend, Friends board members Christine Frisbee and Mary Ann Marrero, and Moffat Library director Carol McCrossen, as well as former librarian Matt Thorenz. It was a truly fitting tribute to our dear friend whose memory will live on at Moffat.



SELLING ENERGY AT SCHOOL: A frightening graphic revealing some of the adverse health effects experts relate to energy drinks

Two artists: the old and the new

By Rhea Trapnell

BG Post Student Reporter

Noah Kahan's 2026 album, *The Great Divide*, and Daniel Johnston's 1982 album, are separated by decades, genres and wildly different levels of fame. However, both albums are ultimately concerned with the same central idea: struggling to exist within the expectations of the outside world. While

REVIEW

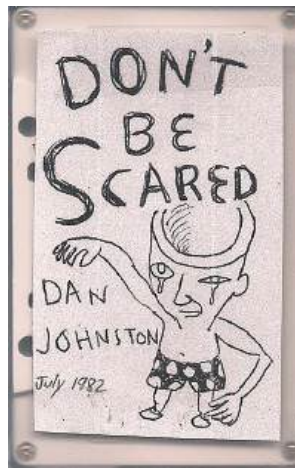
Noah Kahan approaches this conflict through modern folk storytelling, Daniel Johnston presents it through raw simplicity and emotional vulnerability. Together, the two records form an interesting conversation about isolation, authenticity and the emotional cost of being an artist.

Johnston's *Don't Be Scared* presents the artist as an outsider observing a world that does not quite understand him. In songs like "The Story of an Artist," creativity is treated less as a career than as a form of separation from ordinary life. He contrasts simple, almost childlike attention to the natural world, with the indifference of everyday routines, suggesting that height-

ened sensitivity comes at the cost of belonging. The production itself reinforces this distance. Tape hiss, uneven vocals and fragile delivery make the record feel immediate and unfiltered, as though it were never intended for public release. The result is a listening experience that feels less like performance and more like overhearing private thoughts.

Kahan's *The Great Divide* explores isolation from the opposite direction. Rather than obscurity, the pressure comes from visibility. Across the album, he shifts between perspectives, sometimes speaking as himself

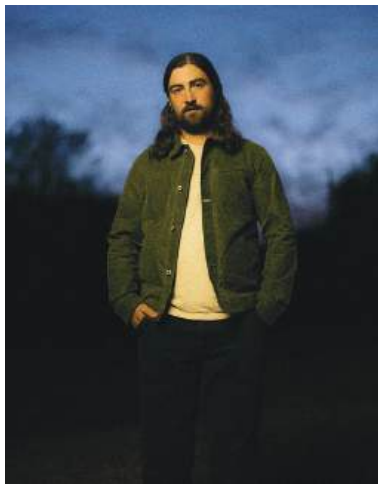
and sometimes through imagined voices, building a fractured emotional landscape shaped by guilt, distance and misunderstanding. In the title track, he reflects on relationships strained by change, singing, "I think about you all the time," a line that captures the lingering weight of connection that refuses to



fade. Elsewhere, he frames emotional separation as something almost physical, describing a "great divide" that people cross, leaving others behind.

Despite these differences, both albums reject the idea that success automatically leads to happiness. Johnston's narrator remains emotionally wounded despite his devotion to art, while Kahan struggles to balance public success with personal fulfillment. However, neither album becomes completely hopeless. Johnston finds beauty in nature and small moments of sincerity, while Kahan ultimately accepts his changing life without entirely abandoning his roots or relationships.

What makes both records resonate is their honesty. Neither artist hides insecurity, loneliness, or confusion behind irony or excessive metaphor. Instead, both albums present emotional vulnerability directly, allowing listeners to connect not through technical perfection, but through sincerity. In different ways, both *Don't Be Scared* and *The Great Divide* argue that art is valuable not because it guarantees fame or understanding, but because it allows people to express the parts of themselves that the outside world often struggles to accept.



HISTORIC: Stefanie Barrett (left), President of The Mid-Hudson Valley Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. & Linda Melton-Mann (right), Alumnae member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. at the unveiling of the Naomi Sewell Richardson historic marker. Jean Galli photo.

SORORITY FOUNDER RECEIVES HISTORIC MARKER

On the morning of March 28, 2026, community members, members of the Sewell family and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and Village Mayor Tom Devinko and Historian Jeanne Versweyvel gathered at the Village Hall in Washingtonville for the unveiling of the historic marker in honor of Naomi Sewell Richardson. Richardson was a Washingtonville native, who co-founded the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in 1913 as a student at Howard University, which was the second sorority founded for and by African American women.

The marker will make its way down to the soon-to-be park on West Main Street named for her this fall when the formal dedication and opening of the park is expected to take place. The park is located on the site of her original home. For more information on Naomi, check out our feature story on her in our March/April 2025 issue of the *BG Post* or take a look at the book, "A Life of Quiet Dignity: Naomi Sewell Richardson," available for loan at Moffat Library.



Howard University

Everyone likes a pickle until they're in one

By Emelia DeCarvalho

BG Post Student Reporter

Whether it be chips or spears, pickles are a perfect pair to a cold sandwich on a hot summer day. The common dill pickle, in particular, provides a refreshing tangy crunch loved by all. But did you ever wonder how pickles became – pickles?

The art of pickling was introduced to the Americas by Dutch settlers in the seventeenth century. Dill had become a popular herb growing in Europe, and its flavor had matched a classic pickled cucumber. The term pickle is derived from the German word *pökel*, meaning salt or brine, the same ingredients used in the pickling process. The pickle industry slowly expanded as new varieties of pickles were introduced to the public causing an increase in their popularity amongst Americans. Soon enough, a jar of pickles could be found in just about every house on the block!

RECIPE

Why pickles last — and crunch

What made pickles so desirable was the unique flavor profile, as well as the lengthy shelf life resulting from the

preservation process. The pickle brine – usually including salt and/or vinegar – is acidic, meaning that harmful bacteria struggle to survive in a pickled environment, which prevents the pickles from becoming spoiled. What's more, the chemical tannins in the cucumber combined with the salty brine prevent them from going soft, giving pickles their trademark crunch. Aside from their delectable flavor, pickles offer a strong source of electrolytes that were absorbed during the brining period. In fact, high performance endurance athletes recommend drinking pickle juice to help prevent dehydration as the high salt content replenishes electrolytes lost by the body through sweat.

While not everyone is a fan of pickles, they can be found in many classic American dishes: sandwiches, hamburgers, relish, appetizers, even in salads! Pickle flavorings have made their way into the snack industry with pickle flavored crackers or chips. It may seem hard to imagine that a preserved cucumber could have a large impact on society, but what once started as a tradition to prevent spoilage, has manifested into a common commodity that is widely appreciated.

Pickle recipe

- 1 cup of water
- 1 cup of distilled white vinegar
- 1 tbsp of white cane sugar
- 1 tbsp salt
- Fresh dill (preferred but dry dill can be used as well)
- 1 clove fresh garlic (can used chopped if necessary)
- 1 tbsp of mustard seed
- 1 large Kirby cucumber OR 2 to 3 small pickling cucumbers (washed)

Instructions:

In a small pan, heat the water, vinegar, salt and sugar on medium heat until completely dissolved

Place washed pickle(s) into a glass jar; there should be enough room for the cucumbers to move around in the jar

In the jar, add fresh Dill to desired amount, mustard seed and garlic

Once the sugar and salt have dissolved into the liquids, remove from heat and pour over the seasoned cucumbers

Close the jar to seal and let cool until room temperature. Then place in the refrigerator; pickles should develop the best flavor at around 2 weeks of pickling.

COVER STORY

BLOOMING HILL: A glimpse of the interior of the Blooming Hill Farmstand. Lily Korba photo



Meet the man behind Blooming Hill Farm

From pg. 1

came to be over thirty years ago. Guy and his team have been feeding stomachs and filling hearts since then. The local business has gained much notoriety beyond the borders of the town in which it resides. In the early days of the farm, *Sesame Street* spotlighted the family-run business in a special episode called “Big Bird Goes to the Farm,” where they went through a typical day of work at the farm.

Farming is a lifestyle, and when you run your own business, there are no days off. Still, Guy wouldn’t change any of it, even if he could. To Guy, the most challenging part about his job is working with nature and being respectful to all elements of your life. Nature is unpredictable, as there are “so many things that can affect [the business] that you can’t control, but you’re just living your life and it’ll all work out in the end.” The key is understanding what will benefit both the customers and the business, and having the flexibility to change those elements.

Guy believes that working with

the earth, respecting it and taking care of its needs is the most rewarding part of his job; and it keeps him righteous. “When someone visits the farm, I want them to feel like they are a part of our community. I hope they remember me as an honest farmer because that’s what ties me to my whole life,” Guy says.

Clearly, Mr. Jones believes that in order to be helped, you must first put in the effort to do the helping. His daily work day includes whatever odd jobs he must complete to help maintain or improve the farm and market. Guy noted that he felt a certain satisfaction in seeing his own work directly affecting the family business.

Mr. Jones closed the interview by stating, “We need help.” The farm stand is always on the lookout for dedicated workers. If you are interested, contact Blooming Hill Farm management at bloominghill.farm or stop by the farm for more information. The Blooming Hill Farmstand is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is located at 1251 Rte. 208, Monroe, NY.



SIGNS OF BLOOMING: The rustic sign featuring daily changing quotes, this one in June. Lily Korba photo

COVER STORY

Blooming Grove veteran shares his story

From pg. 1

ients. The *Blooming Grove Post* was able to speak to one veteran included in that catalog about his experiences and why he believes this preservation is so important.

George Bates is a Vietnam War veteran who is also a longtime resident of Blooming Grove. He joined the army in 1968 after being drafted, although he makes clear he was proud and ready to serve. He was part of an infantry unit that saw active duty in 1969 in the Iron Triangle Region, a fortified stronghold of approximately 300 square kilometers in South Vietnam, where Viet Cong forces maintained bases for launching attacks on the capital. It was for two events that occurred here, one on March 5 and one on March 25, that George received his Purple Hearts.

The events of March 25th were recorded, and a typed account is included in the Roll of Honor. It describes the ride George and soldiers were on when they came under enemy fire. He was operating "the 50," a tracked vehicle with large rifles and was sweeping the area when they came across enemy soldiers. One combatant came from a hole in the ground – Viet Cong soldiers often used holes and tunnels – and fired an RPG, a large grenade launcher, at George's vehicle. The account is harrowing to read and goes on to describe how George and other soldiers exchanged fire with the enemy and how he watched one fellow soldier get stuck too close to the enemy hole, only to lose his life. Eventually, George leaves the scene and describes how the next thing he remembers is being loaded into a chopper to receive medical attention.

This story, like many experiences from Vietnam, is intense to learn about and incredibly difficult to relive. That is why it took George until the mid-2000s to talk about his experience during the war at all. He did not even speak about it with



PRESERVING HISTORY: The outside of the Purple Heart Museum in New Windsor. Wikimedia Commons

his wife of 56 years, Carol. Carol, who also spoke to the *BG Post*, explained that she knew George since he was sixteen. This meant she saw him before and after the war and explained that he came back a changed man. However, George lived with the experiences that changed him quietly. He continued on with his life, volunteering with the Blooming Grove Ambulance Corps and Washingtonville

Fire Department, working at AT&T and later Washingtonville Schools and raising two kids. For most of his life, his experience as a veteran remained silent, something he kept inside.

Now, however, things have changed. George spoke to the *BG Post* about his belief in the importance of keeping stories like his alive. George gave his account to the Purple Heart Hall of Honor and keeps a typed copy of that account folded in his wallet.

One special way George got to remember his Purple Heart Story was as a 2026 Purple Heart Patriot Project honoree. This was a group of 50 Purple Heart recipients – one from each state – that gathered from April 27 until May 1, 2026 to remember and share their stories. The group visited the United States Military Academy at West Point, the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, Washington's Headquarters and the 9/11 Memorial in Manhattan. George explains that the visits to each location were mostly

quiet and gave each recipient a chance to explore the museums and reflect.

This experience fits with George's view of what it means to be a veteran. He explained that the most meaningful things to him are the remembrances of those who were lost. That is why he treasures his Combat Infantry Badge, an award given only to soldiers who see active combat. It represents the experiences he had while actually in combat, including what was lost there.

It is because of George and many other veterans willing to tell their stories that the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor has grown to such a large Roll of Honor today. The catalog can be accessed online at thepurpleheart.com/roll-of-honor and Purple Heart Recipients can submit their stories through the website as well. As George explained, these stories may be hard to relive and difficult to tell, but if they fade away, the things that happened and the people who were lost will be forgotten.

'If they fade away, the things that happened and the people who were lost will be forgotten.'

George Bates
Purple Heart recipient

VIETNAM VETERAN:

George Bates in South Vietnam.

Photo courtesy of George Bates



Small but mighty lions

Roaring for the good of the community

By Joel Solonche
BG Post Associate Editor

You’ve seen them all over town – at Moffat Library, Blooming Grove Post Office, Washingtonville Post Office, Brookside Auto, just to name a few – the used eyeglass collection boxes with the two gold lion heads on either side of a big “L,” the emblem of Lions International. But what is the Lions Club? What does it do? Who are its members? To get the answers, the *Blooming Grove Post* sat down with Celina Rofer, President of the Greater Washingtonville Lions Club and Lynne Royer, its Secretary, along with Kathy Spear, Chair of Sight and Hearing.

But first, a little background. Lions Clubs International is a world-wide service organization, currently headquartered in Oak Brook, Illinois. It has over 50,000 local clubs and more than 1.4 million members in more than 200 geographic areas globally. It was established in 1917 in Chicago, Illinois, by Melvin Jones, a 38-year-old Chicago business leader who wanted to reach beyond just business issues and address the betterment of the community as a whole. After convincing the Business Circle of Chicago to join him, Jones soon got other groups involved and organized a national convention in Dallas, Texas, where they adopted a constitution, bylaws, a code of ethics and an emblem and coined their motto, “We Serve.” Local Lions Club programs that serve the community include sight conservation, hearing and

speech conservation, diabetes awareness, youth outreach, international relations, environmental issues and many others. The discussion of partisan politics and sectarian religion is forbidden. It should be noted that the LIONS acronym also stands for Liberty, Intelligence, Our Nation’s Safety.

Chartered in 2008, the Greater Washingtonville Lions is, in the words of President Rofer, “small but mighty.” Even though there are presently only six members, all are motivated by “passion and patience” and are dedicated to serving the community in various ways. Probably the most visible evidence of that service takes the form of the familiar collection boxes for used eyeglasses strategically located around town. But according to Kathy Spear, Chair of Sight and Hearing, there’s a lot more to the Club’s primary mission than collecting used eyeglasses to distribute to those who need but cannot afford them. It offers free eye tests in the elementary schools using a state-of-the-art digital camera, and if anomalies are found, the technician will make a referral to an optometrist. The Club also administers free hearing tests to kids in pre-K through second grade.

The Club is also very active in other ways. Providing new equipment for the children’s playground, which is affectionately named the “Lions Den,” at Memorial Park in Washingtonville has been an ongoing project. “We wanted adaptive equipment so kids of all abili-



LITTLE LIONS AT PLAY : Toddlers enjoying a ride at the Lions Den playground in Memorial Park, Washingtonville. Photo courtesy of the Washingtonville Lions Club

ties can play together and not have to sit on the sidelines and watch,” explained Rofer. The main fundraiser for purchasing the equipment is the Club’s recycling program. To date, “we’ve collected more than 600,000 bottles and cans. The drop-off is the Knights of Columbus parking lot,” Rofer said. “But they must be five-cent deposit bottles and cans,” added Secretary Royer. The Club organizes two food drives every year – one for Country Kids Food Pantry in Washingtonville and one for Orange County Regional Food Bank. Every Christmas, the Club adopts a senior from the Orange County Office

for the Aging, collects care packages for deployed local service members and sponsors local soup drives. The Greater Washingtonville Lions Club may be small, but as you can see, it does mighty good work. They, as well as we at the *Blooming Grove Post*, encourage you to consider becoming a member of this wonderful organization and be true to their motto – “We Serve.” For more information, email the Club at gtrwashingtonvillelions@gmail.com. You can also follow them on social media: facebook.com/WashingtonvilleLions & instagram.com/washingtonvillelionsclub.

PUZZLES

Pete’s puzzlers

Here’s another brain-teasing puzzle from our friend, postman Pete Devitt. You’ll remember that when we stopped by the Blooming Grove Post Office in January to drop off copies of our first issue of the *Blooming Grove Post*, Pete offered us a set of puzzles for our March/April issue. This is his latest brainteaser and, once again, can you guess what the initials mean?

- 1. 1 S.S. for M. _____
- 2. 2 H are B.T.O. _____
- 3. 3 L. on a T. _____
- 4. 4 B. in a W. _____
- 5. 5 S. on a P. _____
- 6. 6 S. on a C. _____
- 7. 7 C. on P.E. _____
- 8. 8 L. on a S. _____
- 9. 9 L. of a C. _____
- 10. 10 F. in a G. of B. _____

U U Z S X P D V R V I W J G X D I E G L
S O S S S W W O S A F P I B A Z O H F I
F F A C E G V H T H I T F S V P K K I A
N P N D H I U K U E H A O W F Z W D H F
J L D M D M X Y H H W V T A H I L U O I
U M C B T L W L D G C M H T O N L Y I R
Z T A N S N O U G S A Y S E T D B H D E
W W S N J J H J S K F B S R D E H V N W
R U T T W T C V S W G Z E M O P F U E O
E C L S U R R K E Q N G S E G E L E E R
D B E F P E D Y A T I A S L S N I D R K
W A V X D A L F S X M H A O F D P A C S
H R P I T N R C H L M C L N F E F N S N
I B L Q K Z L K E R I A G R S N L O N O
T E I M U H M Z L F W E N H F C O M U I
E Q T P O D P L L E S B U D J E P E S T
B U H S C J Q D S A R B S Q R K S L R A
L E Z V W O V Z S U N S H I N E Q H W C
U I C E C R E A M E K X A U G U S T U A
E K A Q S D M F X E A N F Q P Y L S O V

WORD SEARCH

Find this month’s words

- Sparklers
- Hotdogs
- Fireworks
- Independence
- July
- Sunshine
- August
- Lemonade
- Sunscreen
- Redwhiteblue
- Barbeque
- Icecream
- Swimming
- Beach
- Watermelon
- Flipflops
- Sandcastle
- Vacation
- Sunglasses
- Seashells

Stuck? Find the answers to the puzzles on pages 14 & 15.

HEALTH

Benefits of chiropractic care for athletes

Better health, better performance

By George Thompson, DC
BG Post Community Reporter

Approximately eight million students play high school sports and millions of younger kids participate in sports before the age of thirteen. Participation in a sport helps teach children discipline, respect and the importance of time management. They also have the opportunity to develop leadership skills and problem-solving techniques. On the negative side is the occasion for aches, pains and injuries. Many student athletes experience spinal issues that impact their participation and performance; and it is here where your family chiropractor can help.

In recent years, recognition of the impact of chiropractic care on the performance of athletes has grown significantly. Chiropractors help athletes perform their best by correcting their body's imbalances and improving how their muscles and nerves work together. When the athlete's spine is misaligned, it may create symptoms such as dizziness, balance issues, limited range of motion in the neck, back or legs or tingling in the legs, arms or hands that may impact their

performance in their sport. Regardless of whether or not the sport is low or high impact, here are several ways that chiropractic care can help.

■ **Chiropractic care can prevent injuries before they occur.** Many people wait until an injury occurs to seek care, but the truth is an athlete can and should seek chiropractic care before pain strikes. Many student athletes continue participating in sports even when they know something is wrong. This is dangerous, as a child may mistake a serious injury for a simple sprain or strain and cause further damage. Regular checkups allow chiropractors to spot and correct imbalances before they lead to sprains, strains or overuse injuries which can sideline the young athlete.

■ **Chiropractic care can provide pain relief.** As a parent or young athlete, you may feel uncomfortable with the notion of prescription pain medication. Instead of masking pain with medication, chiropractic looks for the cause of the problem and focuses the treatment there. This approach is especially valuable for athletes who want to avoid dependence on and side effects of pain relievers. Treatments can help reduce swelling and

inflammation and promote healthy blood flow in the athlete's body, all of which can lessen pain.

■ **Chiropractic care can improve biomechanics.** Biomechanics, put simply, is the way our body moves naturally. Chiropractors are trained to assess the athlete and identify areas of dysfunction. Sports often require constant movement and physical stress, but it's difficult to make that game-winning shot or intercept a pass if your body isn't functioning properly. With regular chiropractic care and corrective exercises, athletes can notice increased flexibility, improved joint mobility and range of motion and reduced muscle stiffness – all of which can allow them to bend, twist and stretch without restriction as well as decrease the risk of injury. Chiropractic treatment has also been proven to improve communication between the mind and body, which sharpens reflexes and makes muscles respond better. Athletes receiving chiropractic care often notice increased power, coordination and endurance. Proper spinal alignment also supports restful sleep, reduces stress and promotes better recovery overall.

■ **Chiropractic care can provide pre-event preparation.** It's very important for the student athlete to stay game-ready and to ensure their bodies are in optimal

Dr. George W. Thompson is a chiropractic doctor and owner of Blooming Grove Chiropractic in Washingtonville. He graduated with honors from New York Chiropractic College and has over 34 years of experience.

condition. Athletes often visit a chiropractor before important events to ready themselves to compete by reducing or eliminating pain and improving balance and relaxation thus allowing them to perform at their best and keeping them mentally prepared to compete at any level.

■ **Chiropractic care is not just for back and neck pain.** It extends beyond this and can address various health concerns by focusing on spinal alignment and optimizing nervous system function. Chiropractic care is truly a holistic approach to health, supporting patients of all ages in achieving their health goals, whether they are athletes aiming for peak performance or just people seeking to improve their general well-being. People who incorporate chiropractic care into their lives definitely feel the benefits. The overall health benefits of chiropractic care have been researched and today millions of people of all ages visit chiropractors to feel and live better lives.

Woof! The BG Post celebrates National Dog Month

Do you have a dog? If so, then yours is one of the more than 87 million dogs in the U.S. in 2025. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), dogs are the most popular pet with 51% of households owning at least one. If you don't have a dog and would like one, or if you would like to have another, we strongly encourage you to adopt a dog from the Humane Society of Blooming Grove. The four dogs pictured here are currently available for adoption. For more info, please go to their website at: humane-societybg.com/dogs-available-for-adoption.html, or call them at 845-496-6199, to see which dog is right for you and your family and to print an application. And you don't have to do so only in August – any time is the best time to welcome "man's best friend" into your life!

Dogs currently up for adoption from the Humane Society



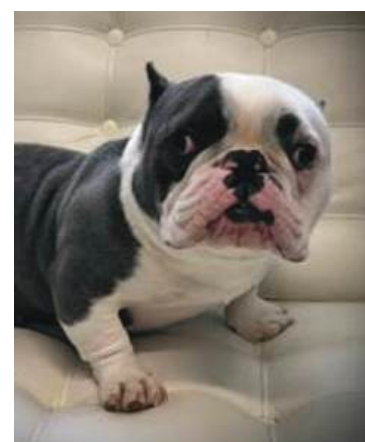
Chico is the typical Chihuahua with lots of energy and tons of personality. He can be a bit shy with new people but we are sure once he finds his person he is going to be as loyal as they come. He gets along with other dogs his size; he has not been tested with cats.



Milo is a young energetic fun loving boy. He is friendly and gets along well with other dogs. He knows some basics but would benefit from some puppy training classes. He would be a great addition to an active family.



Manolo was surrendered to the shelter by his owners who couldn't give him the time & attention he deserved. He is very sweet and friendly but he can be a bit shy when he meets new people. He warms up quickly and is a guy who loves his toys. He knows basic commands but would benefit from having a routine and some basic training.



Pudge is an adult Bully mix. He was found as a stray and never claimed. He is very sweet and playful and gets along with other dogs. He will have some special needs going forward because of his breeding so he will need a home with someone who has verified experience with a special needs dog. He is good with children but will need a home with children who understand his limitations.

From throwback trends to contemporary styles

Washingtonville gets its fashion on

By Olivia Hanratty
BG Post Student Reporter

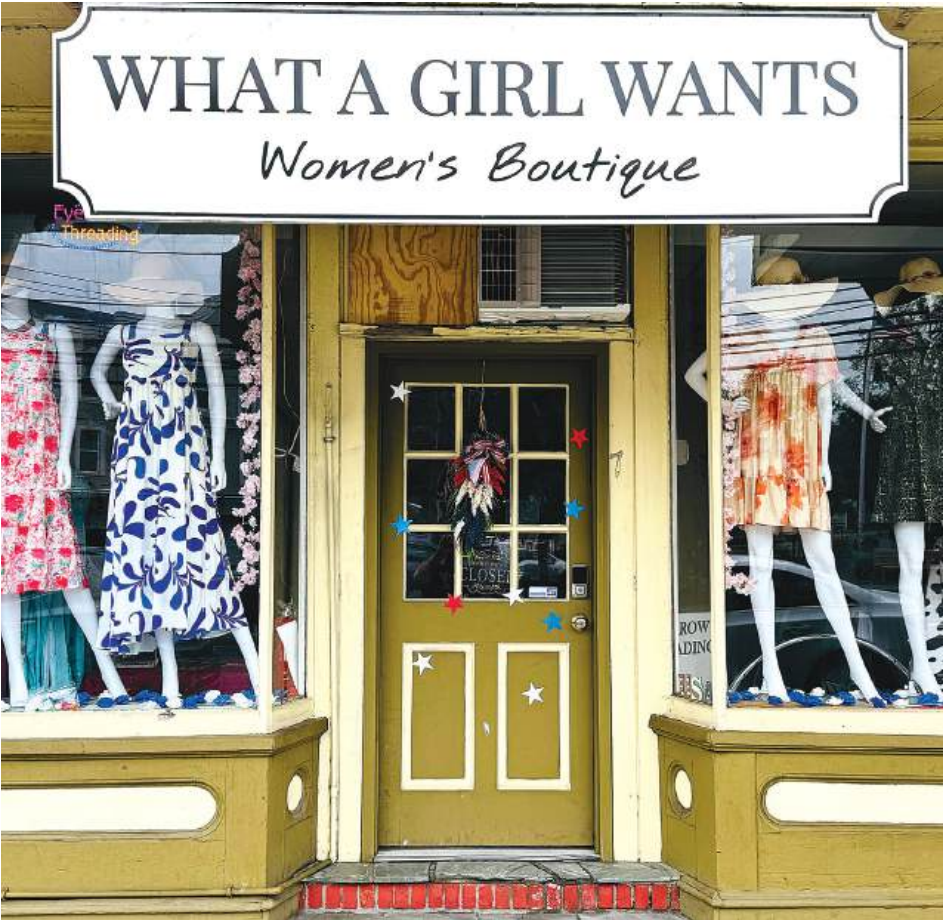
First celebrated in 2016, National Fashion Day, July 9, is a recent one on the American cultural calendar. It might have emerged as a popular day via social media or through the efforts of an anonymous group with a passion to celebrate everyday fashion choices made by Americans across the country. No matter how it got started, Fashion Day has gained a lot of traction since its creation in 2016.

Overall, fashion plays a vital role in how individuals express themselves, and the fashion back then in 2016 can be categorized into women’s and men’s micro trends. Women’s fashion was very diverse, while men’s fashion differed in fewer ways, such as distressed skinny jeans and bomber jackets. The many micro trends in women’s fashion included skinny jeans, knee-high boots, haltered tops, fringe accents on clothing and accessories, patterns such as polka dots and stripes, ballet flats, and statement jewelry pieces such as chunky necklaces and lace chokers. Today in 2026, some of these trends have reemerged, including polka dots and skinny jeans. Polka dots are making a significant comeback and are prominent in much of women’s clothing, especially in spring fashion. For many years fol-

lowing 2016, skinny jeans were unpopular as trends turned to “mom jeans” or more loose and baggy jeans and pants in general. However, now skinny jeans are making a comeback in current fashion, to the dismay of many.

But whether you’re interested in the “Ten Year Cycle” phenomenon or here for another local shout-out, readers, *The Blooming Grove Post* has you covered – and for this issue, we celebrated fashion by interviewing Sonia Sawhney, owner of the clothing boutique “What A Girl Wants Boutique By Sonia” in the Village of Washingtonville.

Sonia Sawhney opened her boutique in Washingtonville eighteen years ago, and since then the business has continued to grow. Sawhney was introduced to the concepts of fashion and business from watching her father create and manage his own business during her childhood years in India. “Over time, that early exposure evolved into my own journey starting my boutique business at a young age and eventually turning it into the career I have today. My father’s work not only inspired my love for the industry but also shaped my work ethic and entrepreneurial mindset, which continues to guide me every day,” she said. Sawhney is one of many individuals inspired by the hardworking people such as her father who have come



LOCAL THREADS: What A Girl Wants boutique in Washingtonville. Olivia Hanratty photo

before her and have made memorable marks in the fashion industry. Sawhney loves being in the fashion industry and being an entrepreneur, but she also recognizes the challenges of staying up to date with changing trends while staying true to her brand. “Not every trend resonates locally, so finding that balance between what’s in style and what my customers will actually love can be difficult,” she confesses. “Fashion allows me to express individuality while

constantly evolving,” Sawhney continued. “What I enjoy most is helping my clients feel their absolute best through the way they dress and accessorize; it’s so rewarding to see their confidence shine.” For many people, fashion is a way to express themselves. If you’re one of these people, visit “What a Girl Wants Boutique by Sonia” located at 7 East Main Street in Washingtonville, where you’ll find exactly what you need to express yourself.

MOFFAT MAD LIBS

SENIOR SEND-OFF: CLASS OF 2026 WALKS THE STAGE

By Katherine Kornfeld
BG Post (Senior) Reporter

After spending roughly RIDICULOUS NUMBER days completing assignments, taking tests and pretending to understand SCHOOL SUBJECT , the Class of 2026 has officially graduated.

The ceremony began when Principal FAMOUS PERSON OR TEACHER’S NAME gave a(n) ADJECTIVE speech about following your PLURAL NOUN and never being afraid to VERB . Many students were moved to tears, while others were mostly thinking about FOOD .

Valedictorian PERSON’S NAME encouraged classmates to always remember the important lessons learned in high school, such as how to VERB before a test and how to survive on only NUMBER hours of sleep. Not that anyone was actually listening; they were too busy VERB-ING in 100-degree weather while wearing their gowns.

Following the ceremony, graduates celebrated by throwing PLURAL NOUN into the air and taking approximately NUMBER selfies. One graduate was overheard saying, “I can’t believe I finally made it! Now I can spend all summer VERB ENDING IN -ING .”

As the school year comes to a close, everyone agrees it has been a truly ADJECTIVE 13 years filled with memories, friendships and way too much NOUN . Congratulations, graduates! We wish you a future full of PLURAL NOUN , PLURAL NOUN and absolutely no SCHOOL-RELATED NOUN !



dreamstime.com photo

Summer safety

By Giada DeGiglio
BG Post Student Reporter

Summer is a time for sunshine, adventure and long days spent outdoors — but staying safe should always be part of the plan. Whether you're heading to the beach, hanging out with friends or simply enjoying the warm weather, a few simple precautions can make all the difference.

The sun can be one of the biggest risks during summer. Too much exposure can lead to sunburn, dehydration, or even heat exhaustion. Make it a habit to apply sunscreen regularly, such as Neutrogena or Supergoop! with a minimum SPF of 30. Even on cloudy days, UV rays can still affect your skin, so protection is always important. Be sure to drink plenty of water and take breaks in the shade.

Water activities are another highlight of the season, but they come with their own risks. Always swim in designated areas, avoid going in alone and pay attention to lifeguards and posted warnings. Monitor conditions and pay attention to signs denoting the safety of the water. If you're not a strong swimmer, wearing a life jacket is a smart choice for anyone.

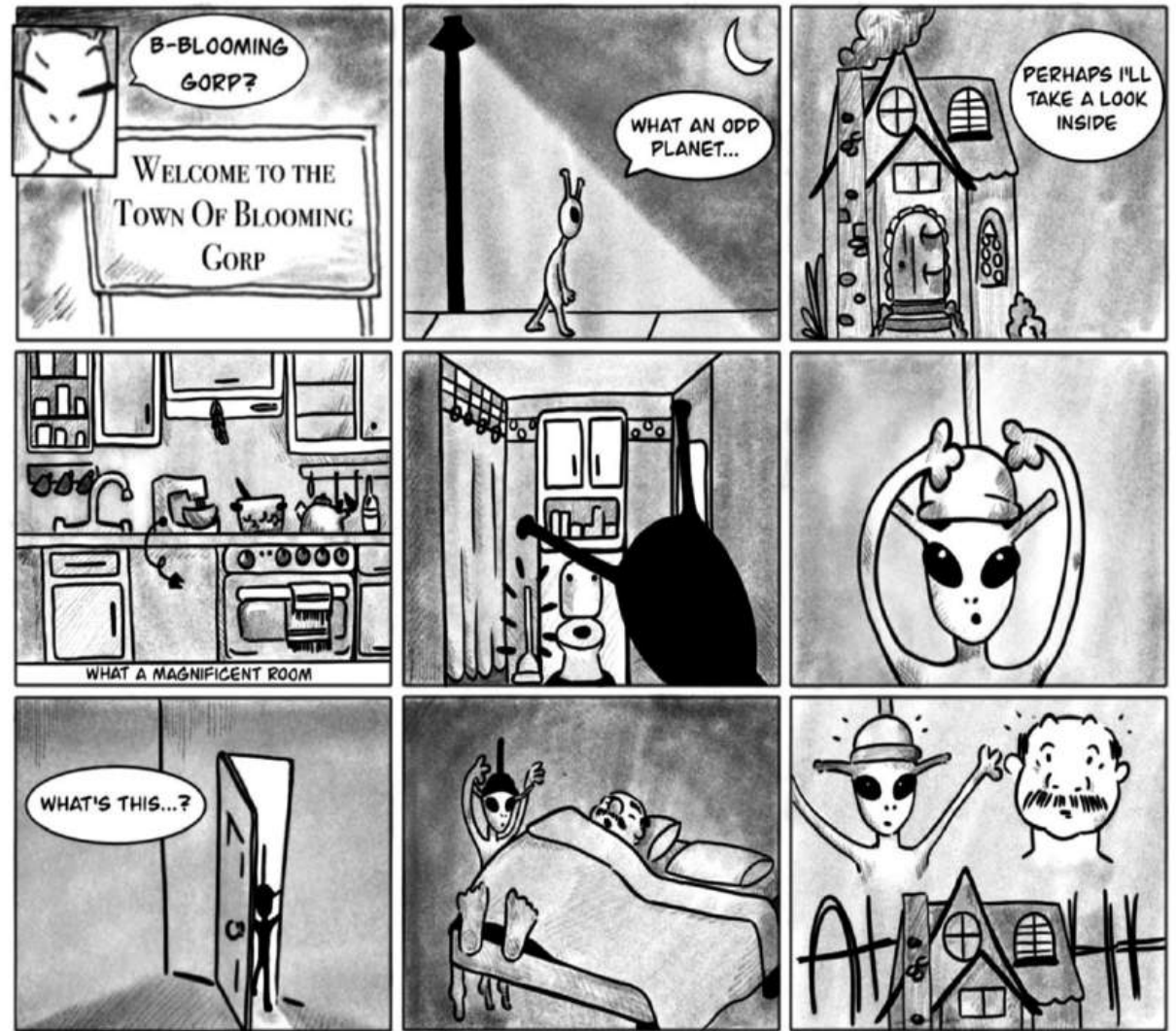
Here are a few quick tips to keep in mind:

- Stay hydrated by drinking water throughout the day.
- Wear sunscreen and reapply every 2 hours.
- Never leave pets or people in parked cars.
- Be aware of your surroundings, especially in crowds.

Summer safety doesn't mean limiting your fun — it just means being prepared. By taking a few extra steps, you can enjoy everything the season has to offer while keeping yourself and others safe. Have a great summer, and check out: [prevention.com/beauty/skin-care/g64839865/best-sunscreens-2025](https://www.prevention.com/beauty/skin-care/g64839865/best-sunscreens-2025) for more information.

THE ADVENTURES OF GORP (to be continued)

By Isabella Briceno



PLACES OF WORSHIP

Please note: Check with the place of worship for updated information. Email listings to bloominggrovepost@gmail.com.

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
1520 Rte. 94, New Windsor
Denomination: Presbyterian
Services: Sunday, 11 a.m.
845-496-9187

BG United Church of Christ
2 Old Dominion Rd., Blooming Grove
Denomination: Protestant
Services: Sunday, 10:30 a.m.
845-496-9311

Echo Grace Church
(Formerly Grace Community Church)
2839 Rte. 94, Washingtonville
Denomination: Non-denominational
Services: Saturday, 5 p.m.; Sunday, 8 a.m.,
9:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m.
845-576-0730

El Shaddai Christian Church
26 Hallock Dr., Washingtonville
Denomination: Assemblies of God
Services: Sunday, 9:30 a.m. (English),
10 a.m. (first Sunday of the month),
11:30 a.m. (Spanish)
845-496-3756

Encounter Church
647 Station Rd., Rock Tavern
Denomination: Non-denominational
Services: Sunday, 10:30 a.m.
845-497-0142

Hope Chapel Mission Church
40 Clove Rd., Salisbury Mills
Denomination: Non-denominational
Services: Sunday, 11 a.m.
Phone: 845-496-2475

Korean Buddhist Temple Wonkaksa
260 Clove Rd., Salisbury Mills
Denomination: Buddhist
Services: Sunday, 11:30 am (in Korean)
845-497-2229

St. Mary’s Church
42 Goshen Ave., Washingtonville
Denomination: Catholic
Services: Daily, 9 a.m.; Saturday, 4 p.m.;
Sunday, 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., noon.
845-496-3730

Unitarian Universalist Congregation
9 Vance Rd., Rock Tavern
Denomination: Unitarian
Services: Sunday, 10:30 a.m.
845-496-9696

Westminster Presbyterian Church
560 Station Rd., Rock Tavern
Denomination: Presbyterian
Services: Sunday, 10 a.m., 2 p.m. (first
Sunday of the month only), 6 p.m. (other
Sundays only)
845-496-7971

SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

BG Volunteer Ambulance Corps
Services: The BG Volunteer Ambulance Corps provides prompt, compassionate & high-quality emergency medical services to the residents and visitors of our community. We are committed to saving lives, supporting public health, and serving with integrity, professionalism, and volunteer spirit, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is a non-profit organization, consisting of volunteer members and paid staff.
Location: The Corps operates out of its station at 7 North Street in the Village of Washingtonville. BGVAC covers over 35.3 square miles of territory.
To volunteer: The BG Ambulance Corps is always looking for mature people to drive our certified ambulances, help provide first aid, or become an EMT. Please go to their website for details:

www.bloominggroveambulance.org
Blooming Grove Chamber of Commerce
Services: The chamber is a group that's dedicated to protecting and promoting the local business community by: helping local business owners network and grow; keeping business owners on top of important ever-changing issues and trends within their community and local marketplace; making new connections in the community.

Where: The Blooming Grove Chamber meets at various locations in the town of Blooming Grove in order to highlight the businesses and services that are available in our community.
Info: For more info on becoming a Chamber member or to find out more about how the Chamber can help you, email them at: **membership@bloominggrovechamberofcommerce.org** or go to their website at: **bloominggrovechamberofcommerce.org**.

Blooming Grove Community Garden
Services: Coordinated by Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener volunteers, the BG Community Garden provides plots for local community members to rent, so that they can grow their own plants and vegetables and donate most of the output to the Country Kids Food Pantry in Washingtonville to help feed our community members.

Where: The BG Community Garden is located at 6 Old Dominion Road in Blooming Grove (behind the Blooming Grove United Church of Christ)
Info: For more information or to see how you can help, contact Joseph Sciortino at: **jsciortino49@gmail.com** or via text at **845-774-9993**.

Blooming Grove Senior Bus Program
Services: The BG Senior Bus services all residents over 60 years of age within the Town, including those in the Villages of South Blooming Grove and Washingtonville. The Bus will pick up passengers at home at the time scheduled when reservations are made. All services require reservations with 24-hours notice which can be made by calling **845-496-4411** Monday through Friday. Seniors are requested to donate \$1.00 upon entering the bus (each way). Please note that all trips are subject to change and trips can be canceled due to lack of ridership.

Schedule: Wednesdays: Monroe Shopping to Walmart; Target Shopping Area; Woodbury Commons; Shoprite and Stop & Shop and other area stores. Thursdays: Vails Gate/Newburgh Shopping including Price Chopper; Walgreens; Shoprite; Walmart; Kohls; Adam's Fairacre Farm; other area stores. Fridays: Monroe Shopping to Walmart; Target Shopping Area; Woodbury Commons; Shoprite and Stop & Shop and other area stores
Info: For more info or to make a reservation, call **845-496-4411** or go to: **townofbloominggroveny.com/Departments/Senior-Bus**
Country Kids Food Pantry
Services: Providing food to families within the Washingtonville Central School District experiencing food insecurity since 1988.

Where: The Country Kids Food Pantry is located at 2 Father Tierney Circle in Washingtonville.
When: Food is distributed on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 3-6 pm.
To donate: Non-perishable foods that have not reached an expiration date can be placed in the blue or red box on our front porch to the right of our door. For perishable items, such as turkeys, please bring them on a distribution day so they can be frozen or refrigerated.

Volunteering: If you are an adult or teen interested in volunteering to help out at the pantry, please go to: **countrykidsfoodpantry.com/how-to-volunteer**
To register: Contact Val Palmer at **845-496-2119**.
FISH of Blooming Grove
Services: FISH of Blooming Grove is a nonprofit volunteer organization that is dedicated to providing residents of Blooming Grove with free medical equipment, such as wheelchairs, walkers and crutches, commodes and other medical items to homebound patients.

To donate or volunteer: Call **845-496-7744**
Info: Call **845-496-7744** or write: FISH of Blooming Grove, PO Box 58, Washingtonville, NY 10992.
Humane Society of Blooming Grove
Services: The Humane Society of BG is a nonprofit animal shelter located in Washingtonville NY and serving the town of Blooming Grove, including the villages of Washingtonville and South Blooming Grove.
Where: Located at 2741 Rte 94, Washingtonville
Hours: The shelter is open: Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sundays 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Info: Call **845-496-6199**, e-mail: **bghumane-society@gmail.com** or go to their website at **humanesocietybg.com**

To volunteer or donate: **humanesocietybg.com/how-you-can-help.html**
Kiwanis Club of Washingtonville
Services: Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world, one child and one community at a time.
Where: Meetings are held at the BG Senior Center located at 6 Horton Dr., Blooming Grove
When: Meetings take place on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 7pm at the Blooming Grove Senior Center.
Info: For more information: email Kiwanis at: **kiwanisclubofwashingtonville@gmail.com** or call/text: **845-728-1376**

BG Neighbors For Neighbors Program
Services: Jewish Family Services of Orange partners with the town of Town of BG and OC Office for the Aging to provide local transportation, help with grocery shopping and wellness calls and friendly visits to residents of Blooming Grove, Washingtonville, Salisbury Mills and South Blooming Grove who are over 60.
Info: Call **845-325-8775**

To volunteer: Call **845-341-1173 ext. 305** or email **volunteer@jfsorange.org**
WHS Community Service Club
Services: Cultivates a collaborative environment of student volunteers focused on improving school and local community through events such as Adopt-A-Family, Coffeehouse, weekly recycling, drives for food and other activities.
When: Monthly afterschool meeting dates announced on Google Classroom (code - giwcuup5)
To volunteer: Every student is welcome; email advisor at: **efrey@wcsdk12.org** or president at: **ckorb07@wcsdk12.org**

GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

Town of Blooming Grove
Town Board meets on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 7 p.m. Town Planning Board meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 8 p.m. Meetings take place at Blooming Grove Town Hall, 6 Horton Rd., Blooming GroveFor information and

updates, **845-496-5223**; **bloominggrove-ny.gov**
Village of South Blooming Grove
Village Board meets on the second and fourth Mondays of the month at 8 p.m. Village Planning Board meets on the fourth Friday of the month at 10 a.m. Meetings take place at South Blooming Grove Village Hall, 811 Rte. 208, Monroe For information and updates, **845-782-2600**; **villageofsouth-bloominggrove.com**
Village of Washingtonville
Village Board meets on the first and third Mondays of the month at 7 p.m. Village Planning Board meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. Meetings take place at Washingtonville Village Hall, 9 Fairlawn Dr., Washingtonville For information and updates, **845-496-3221**; **washingtonville-ny.gov**

PUZZLE ANSWERS

PETE’S PUZZLER
The answers to the puzzle on page 13. How many did you solve? Let us know how you like Pete's puzzles at **bloominggrovepost@gmail.com**.

- 1. 1 Small Step for Man
- 2. 2 Heads are Better Than One
- 3. 3 Legs on a Tripod
- 4. 4 Balls in a Walk
- 5. 5 Sides on a Pentagon
- 6. 6 Sides on a Cube
- 7. 7 Continents on Planet Earth
- 8. 8 Legs on a Spider
- 9. 9 Lives of a Cat
- 10. 10 Frames in a Game of Bowling

BLOOMING GROVE POST

BG POST LOOKING FOR ORGANIZATIONS
For the benefit of our readers, we are planning to create a list of local nonprofit organizations and the services they provide. If you are a member or know of an organization in our area, please send all pertinent information including full name of organization; contact name, phone, email; services they provide; and any other information to **bloominggrovepost@gmail.com**.

CRIMSON BEGINNINGS:
Avery Upeslakis in front of Winthrop House, one of twelve upperclassmen houses at Harvard. Photo Avery Upeslakis



Update from Upeslakis

Finding my purpose at Harvard

By Avery Upeslakis
BG Post Community Reporter

When you get into a place like Harvard, you often get asked about your hook: “How did you do it?” The truth is, I never planned my life around a specific college, let alone Harvard. Instead, I just followed my interests and said *yes* to opportunities that came from that. One door opened another, and before I knew it, I was opening the door to my dorm room in Wigglesworth Hall, my new home for the school year. Soon enough, the incessant ‘hook’ question no longer mattered when we gathered in Harvard Yard for our first day. All that mattered was we made it, and a new question emerged: *Now what?*

What many freshmen discover the first week of college is that the slate has been washed clean. You get a do-over because no one cares about your high school GPA or what club you founded. It’s actually a liberating feeling not to be defined by your past. Inspired by this clean slate, I set off on a mission, one where I was determined to discover my place at Harvard.

My adventures began navigating the bustling Harvard Square. Cambridge is a tourist trap where visitors dressed in Harvard merch stop to take pictures of the buildings we live in or take classes in. I understand the allure; I was once that person waiting for a picture in front of the John Harvard Statue and I will never forget how lucky I am to be here.

Upon my arrival to this historic and beautiful college, I wanted to find a group, my *Blooming Grove Post* of Harvard, that would allow me to make an impact. My passion for Environmental Science and Engineering led me to a group focused on environmental issues and clean energy. I was eager to make a change and learn from them. This took

the form of researching clean energy policy, specifically Section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act, where my team and I got to present our findings to ISO New England’s Consumer Liaison Group. Beyond creating weekly policy briefs, I gained hands-on experience developing a wind turbine with a team of other Harvard students, which we plan on entering into the U.S. Department of Energy Collegiate Wind Competition next fall.

I never imagined that during my first year at Harvard I would one day be buried in federal documents, researching clean energy policies and developing a wind turbine, but that’s what happens when you start to answer that persistent *Now what?* question. School will awaken interests you never even thought about pursuing. For instance, I never saw myself as a football fanatic; however, this past fall I found a new interest: college football. Every Saturday, I found myself dressing in crimson (looking like a proud tourist!) and rooting for my team to bring home a win.

I remember the first home football game against Brown University. The crowd was electric as the entire student section in the colosseum, was filled with cheers and chants. Touchdown after touchdown, Harvard walked away with the win, and as the football players sang, “Ten Thousand Men of Harvard,” per tradition, I walked away with a feeling of belonging. I knew this was the place for me.

As the summer begins, I look forward to reconnecting with people and sharing my journey. I hope everyone enjoys their break and when fall begins, please take that as an opportunity to answer that lingering question: *Now what?*

Avery Upeslakis is a former editor-in-chief of the Blooming Grove Post.

A hopping community

By Rhea Trapnell
BG Post Student Reporter

What was meant to be a dramatic Easter egg helicopter drop on the afternoon of March 28, 2026 turned into something much quieter, when due to cloudy and windy conditions, the promised helicopter was canceled. Despite the change in plans, families from across the community still showed up, determined to celebrate together.

In the weeks leading up to the event, promotional posters emphasized the helicopter drop as the main attraction. Many of them, noticeably created with AI-generated images, centered on spectacle rather than the people the event was meant to bring together. On the day of the event, however, that focus shifted naturally. Bundled in jackets and hats, children and parents filled the space with energy that the weather could not dampen. The sky remained gray and the wind persisted, but the atmosphere on the ground was

lively.

The playground quickly became a hub of excitement, with laughter echoing as children climbed, ran and played at Vern Allen Park in Washingtonville. Nearby, lines formed for unicorn rides, where kids eagerly took turns. Small business food trucks served warm meals and snacks, drawing steady crowds throughout the afternoon.

Without the helicopter, the event relied on what had been there all along: families, local businesses and time together as a community. Children ran between activities, parents gathered in conversation and the space stayed busy despite the cold.

What had been advertised as a spectacle became something simpler, and in many ways, more genuine. It was then that I realized that the strength of local events doesn’t come from attention-grabbing displays, but from the community itself – a theme this reporter was lucky to observe firsthand.



SPRING FUN TAKES FLIGHT:
This AI-generated image was similar to those used to advertise the Washingtonville Egg Drop Extravaganza. Despite the bad weather that pre-empted the helicopter drop, the community gathered and celebrated together for the now-annual spring egg-stravaganza event at Vern Allen Park on March 28th.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

U	U	Z	S	X	P	D	V	R	V	I	W	J	G	X	D	I	E	G	L
S	O	S	S	S	W	W	O	S	A	F	P	I	B	A	Z	O	H	F	I
F	F	A	C	E	G	V	H	T	H	I	T	F	S	V	P	K	K	I	A
N	P	N	D	H	I	U	K	U	E	H	A	O	W	F	Z	W	D	H	F
J	L	D	M	D	M	X	Y	H	H	W	V	T	A	H	I	L	U	O	I
U	M	C	B	T	L	W	L	D	G	C	M	H	T	O	N	L	Y	I	R
Z	T	A	N	S	N	O	U	G	S	A	Y	S	E	T	D	B	H	D	E
W	W	S	N	J	J	H	J	S	K	F	B	S	R	D	E	H	V	N	W
R	U	T	T	W	T	C	V	S	W	G	Z	E	M	O	P	F	U	E	O
E	C	L	S	U	R	R	K	E	Q	N	G	S	E	G	E	L	E	E	R
D	B	E	F	P	E	D	Y	A	T	I	A	S	L	S	N	I	D	R	K
W	A	V	X	D	A	L	F	S	X	M	H	A	O	F	D	P	A	C	S
H	R	P	I	T	N	R	C	H	L	M	C	L	N	F	E	F	N	S	N
I	B	L	Q	K	Z	L	K	E	R	I	A	G	R	S	N	L	O	N	O
T	E	I	M	U	H	M	Z	L	F	W	E	N	H	F	C	O	M	U	I
E	Q	T	P	O	D	P	L	L	E	S	B	U	D	J	E	P	E	S	T
B	U	H	S	C	J	Q	D	S	A	R	B	S	Q	R	K	S	L	R	A
L	E	Z	V	W	O	V	Z	S	U	N	S	H	I	N	E	Q	H	W	C
U	I	C	E	C	R	E	A	M	E	K	X	A	U	G	U	S	T	U	A
E	K	A	Q	S	D	M	F	X	E	A	N	F	Q	P	Y	L	S	O	V



PUZZLE PARTNERS: Mocha Chip is helping Professor Solonche with the *New York Times* crossword puzzle. Emily Solonche photo



BOTTLE SERVICE: Rachel is opening the Jack Daniels, her favorite, as Joel watches. Emily Solonche photo

Honoring the humorous and humble

Solonche named Volunteer of the Year

By Caroline Korba
BG Post Student Reporter

If you know the *Blooming Grove Post*, you know Joel. A forty-six-year local, Joel R. Solonche, Professor Emeritus of English at SUNY Orange, has spent the majority of his life serving his community, whether in the tutoring center of Orange County Community College (OCCC), the Hudson Valley SPCA or at the Moffat Library Friends bookstore. Fortunately for us, his most recent involvement has been with this local newspaper. Since its inception, Joel has been a critical founding member and an associate editor of the *BG Post*.

LIBRARY NEWS

But what brought him here, and what does he do it all for?

A New York native, Joel attended Evander Childs High School in the Bronx. He was accepted into every college to which he applied, and ended up at Herbert H. Lehman College, because as part of the CUNY system, “it was free.” However, after deciding he was “done with the Humanities,” he transferred to the New York College of Music, which went out of business. Lucky for Joel, however, they had a deal with New York University (NYU) so that all students at his former college with a C average or better were automatically accepted into the NYU music program

— and so he was. However, failing an audition at Julliard for the trombone and unable to secure a job teaching music in the public schools, Joel and his wife, Joan Siegel, ventured north. After years of renting apartments, they purchased their Blooming Grove house in 1980. (See the November/December issue of the *BG Post* for a memorial tribute to Professor Siegel who passed in August 2025.)

At this point, Joel made a u-turn, returned to the Humanities, earned his masters in English at New Paltz and started his 25-year career at OCCC. Since then, he’s volunteered at their tutoring center, helped out local pets and aided community members. Perhaps the most rewarding part of his volunteerism, he says, has been the *BG Post*. “I’ve been learning so much about Blooming Grove, things that I wouldn’t have known had I not been doing the research and the writing I’ve been doing.” When asked how he got into volunteering in the first place, Joel admitted he was never really into it. “I have to say, when I was teaching at OCCC, it sometimes felt like I was volunteering, because the pay was so lousy.”

Volunteering started when his daughter, Emily, was in Washingtonville High School herself. Part of the National

Honor Society, she needed a source of service hours to fulfill a monthly requirement, and her dad came to the rescue. Joel, his wife and Emily began volunteering at the Hudson Valley SPCA where they “worked with the cats and walked the dogs.” The Solonche family upheld this commitment for about eight years, becoming Volunteers of the Month and becoming known as “crazy cat people.” Adopting shelter cats is “an addiction. We once had eleven in the house at the same time. We have two now,” he said.

How did Professor Solonche get involved with the library? “I must have come into the Moffat bookstore looking for a blues CD,” Joel recalls. He noticed

a pamphlet advertising membership in the Friends of the Moffat Library (FOML). He filled out the application, turned it into Maryann Marrero and has been manning the

bookstore every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. ever since. One day — again, by happenstance — Joel overheard Moffat Library Director Carol McCrossen brainstorming with a coworker about creating a new local student-driven newspaper to replace the old Orange County Post. Learning that he was a retired English teacher, Director McCrossen promptly made Joel an associate editor, and since

its inception in January 2025, he has helped shape the *Blooming Grove Post* into what it is today: a source of local stories, information and pride. “The newspaper has been a great boon for me,” he said. “It gets me out of the house and gets my brain cells fired up. I’m normally a very pessimistic person, but the optimism of the great teens at the newspaper helps me see the world in a little brighter light,” he said.

For these and many other reasons, Professor Solonche was the perfect recipient for the 2025 Moffat Library Volunteer of the Year Award. “I was surprised and gratified about the award,” he said, noting that it came “right out of the blue.” After being nominated by two individuals and selected unanimously as the awardee, Joel was officially presented with the award during a ceremony this past May. His name now appears on the Volunteer of the Year plaque, located along the left wall of the Moffat entryway.

To close, Joel asked that this reporter include a quote by the ancient Chinese philosopher/poet, Li Lianmo, one which he referenced in his Volunteer of the Year Award acceptance speech and in our interview. He urges readers to consider getting involved at Moffat and to keep this in mind throughout their lives: “A book is a brick in the wall to keep ignorance on the other side.”

‘A book is a brick in the wall to keep ignorance on the other side.’

Joel R. Solonche
Professor at SUNY Orange