

# The MILLERTON NEWS

Covering Northeastern Dutchess County And Its Environs

Thursday, September 24, 2020  
Volume 89 Number 35 • 22 Pages in 2 Sections



**MILLERTON**  
Deadline Looming For Arts Funding **A2**



**AMENIA**  
Lions Club Community Car Show **A3**

Small Business Spotlight **A3**  
**SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE**  
Tri-Corner Real Estate

**COMPASS**  
Clay Way Studio Tour; Posey, Parker & Cronin Art At Hunt Library; And More **A8-9**

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No matter their age, local residents from all walks of life visited Fountain Square in Amenia on Saturday, Sept. 19, to pay tribute to the life and work of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

## Amenia holds vigil for Ruth Bader Ginsburg

By **WHITNEY JOSEPH**  
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AMENIA — In honor of the passing of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who died on Friday, Sept. 18, local residents came together at Fountain Square in Amenia on Saturday evening, Sept. 19, to pay tribute to the liberal's 27 years on this nation's highest court through a socially distanced candlelight vigil.

Ginsburg passed away at the age of 87 due to complications of metastatic pancreatic cancer. She was appointed to the Supreme Court by President Bill Clinton in 1993 and quickly became an icon for women's rights, ruling on issues from equal pay for women to allowing female cadets into military academies like the Virginia Military Institute.

See **RUTH BADER GINSBURG, A7**

## Millerton teens lead reading on racism

By **CAROL KNEELAND**  
Special to The Millerton News

MILLERTON — A small group of teenagers is the driving force behind an October Wednesday night virtual multi-generational Community Book Group, which will focus on issues of racism and its history beginning Wednesday, Oct. 7, at 7 p.m.

Co-sponsored by the North East Community Center (NECC) and the NorthEast-Millerton Library, the event is an outgrowth of a summer teen NECC reading group in which members determined that the experience was a valuable one they would like to share with members of the

community.

The two organizations announced the event jointly, saying, "Our society is struggling to come to grips with and to resolve a long history of racial inequality and disparity. The shared reading of 'Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You,' by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi, is an effort to generate a brave space for open and honest discussion about where we have been as a society, where we are today, and where we want to go."

Webutuck sophomore Aeriana O'Halloran, daughter of Erin O'Halloran and a 15 year old member

See **READING ON RACISM, A7**

*The path is paved!*

## Trail to Train links Wassaic station to hamlet's center

By **KAITLIN LYLE**  
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WASSAIC — More than a decade since the idea of extending the Harlem Valley Rail Trail from the Wassaic Metro-North Train Station into the hamlet of Wassaic was first conceived, the town of Amenia's long-awaited Trail to the Train project has been completed, marking a milestone for the town and one of the region's most beloved assets.

According to Wassaic resident Tonia Shoumatoff, the project started around her kitchen table in 2000, when she and her colleagues of the Trail to the Train Committee asked Metro-North to pay for a trail next to the train station.

"We as a community wanted access by a bike and hiking path," Shoumatoff said, adding that the original idea was to have a boardwalk that would go through the wetlands behind the Amenia firehouse.

Totalling a distance of approximately 3,500 linear feet on lands owned by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), the town of Amenia and other private property owners, it was proposed that the multi-use path would extend from the Wassaic Train Station into the hamlet of Wassaic, establishing a new start for the Harlem Valley Rail Trail (HVRT). Considering that commuters were disembarking



PHOTO BY KAITLIN LYLE

Visiting from Stockbridge, Mass., Linda Russell and Liz Hazen rode their bikes with their husbands (not pictured) along the new bicycle path leading into the hamlet of Wassaic on Saturday, Sept. 12.

the train and either walking along busy Route 22 or on the train tracks to get into Wassaic, Amenia town Supervisor Victoria Perotti said one reason for the trail extension was safety. On top of that, she said the trail could help economic development in the hamlet of Wassaic and add amenities like walking and cycling paths.

### Finding funding

To get the project off the ground, Shoumatoff wrote the first three grant applications for the trail in conjunction with Amenia Grant Writer Mike Hagerty and Amenia Councilwoman

Vicki Doyle. One was for a \$600,000 transportation enhancement grant signed by former town Supervisor Wayne Euvrard that required a 20% match; the town received \$480,000 with a \$120,000 match. Altogether, Shoumatoff said the Trail to the Train Committee had more than 36 meetings during a three-year period with all the permitting agencies involved in the project, including (among others) the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT), the New

See **TRAIL TO TRAIN, A7**

## Michael Woods named new head of Cornell Cooperative Extension

By **JUDITH O'HARA BALFE**  
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MILLBROOK — A new executive director has been named at Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County (CCEDC), following the retirement of long-time Executive Director Ruth A. Moore, Esq., on Aug. 14, 2020. The CCEDC thanked Moore for her seven years as executive director, and for her dedication, passion, compassion and visionary leadership.

Michael Woods was named to the post after an exhaustive search by a committee made up of the CCEDC Board of Directors, stakeholders and members of the community.

"I am humbled and honored by the opportunity to work with the CCEDC board, staff and volunteers to continue our efforts to advance our highly effective mission-driven programming,"

Woods said in an interview this week.

Coming to the area from Michigan, where he amassed an enviable amount of experience in agribusiness, research and university leadership, Woods served as county director of a University of Illinois Extension program. He has held numerous business leadership and university positions. He holds a PhD in agricultural/extension education, administration and agricultural marketing communication. Most recently, Woods was the agribusiness management assistant professor and program director at Illinois College in Jacksonville, Ill.

Woods takes a collaborative approach to leadership, melding business and fiscal expertise with skills in program planning, and his oversight abilities will likely be much appreciated

See **MICHAEL WOODS, A7**



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Michael Woods is the new executive director of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County in Millbrook.



Millerton.....A2    Legal Notices.....A5  
Amenia.....A3    Opinion.....A6  
Millbrook/Pine Plains.....A4    Compass.....A8-9  
Obituaries.....A2 & A5    Classifieds.....A9-10

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### OPINION

Dont' Miss Your Last Shot At The Census; Columns; Letters **A6**

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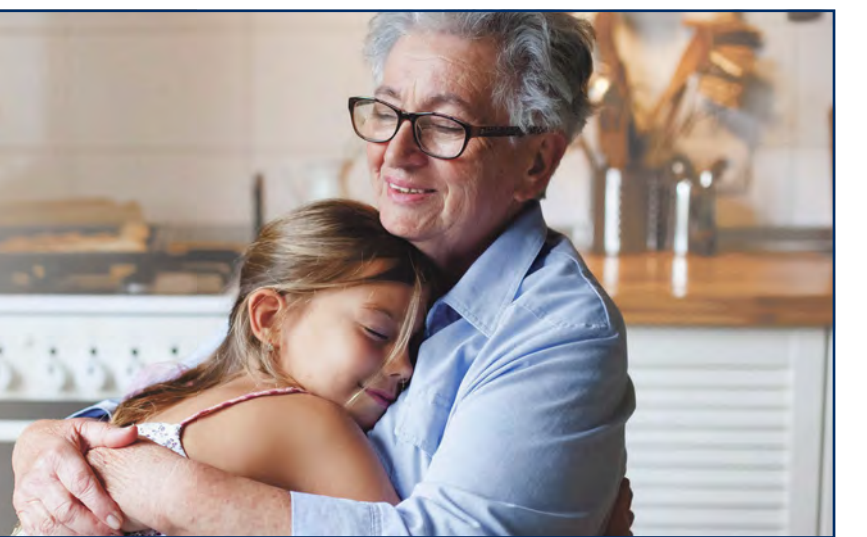
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# MILLERTON

## Art grants available till Oct. 28

By KAITLIN LYLE  
kaitlinl@millertonnews.com

DUTCHESS COUNTY — Artists, nonprofits, libraries and municipalities interested in creating new works of art and instituting new arts and cultural activities in 2021 have been invited by Arts Mid-Hudson to apply for valuable funding through the 2021 Decentralization Grant Program.

A re-grant program of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), the Decentralization Grant Program is designed to support community-based arts activities to make quality arts programming available and support local cultural expression.

"We see these grants as seed funding to try an idea or foster a new program," Arts Mid-Hudson Grants and Programs Manager Lilia Pérez said, adding that Arts Mid-Hudson offers free technical assistance to applicants, including working one-on-one with applicants to help them develop strong proposals. In turn, she said, many of the applicants who are awarded the grants leverage the funding to seek sponsorships or additional funding opportunities.

Arts Mid-Hudson typically administers three categories of the Decentralization Grant Program, including Community Arts Grants, Individual Artist Commissions and Arts Learning Grants.

Community Arts Grants are designed to provide project support for arts and cultural activities to make quality arts programming available to all residents looking to engage with the arts. This may



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Located at 51 South Center St. in Millerton, the North East Community Center (NECC) has received funding through Arts Mid-Hudson in the past to host events like the annual Kinship Circle Hispanic Heritage Festival, shown above.

include exhibitions, workshops, performances, festivals, virtual and public programming and screenings.

Nonprofits, unincorporated groups and individuals located in Dutchess, Orange or Ulster Counties are eligible to apply as are individuals and unincorporated groups fiscally sponsored by a nonprofit located in the aforementioned counties. Grant requests can range from \$500 to \$5,000 with no cash

match required for 2021, and the grant awards will be determined by a peer review panel comprised of community members. All funded activities must be open to the general public for participation and take place between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2021 in the three counties.

The Individual Artist Commission reflects an investment in the region's local artists by supporting the creation of new work. For this year, up to seven Individual

Artist Commissions are available for Dutchess, Orange and Ulster Counties. Individuals artists ages 18 and older who reside in any of the three counties and aren't enrolled full-time in a degree program are eligible to apply.

Open to visual, performing, written, digital, traditional and experimental art mediums, the artist's new work requires a public component in the form of either a small-scale public presentation or community involvement in the artist's creative process. The seven potential commissions are eligible for a grant amount of \$1,500 each, with no required cash match. All funded projects must take place between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2021, and the grant awards will be determined by a peer review panel comprised of artists.

The deadline to apply for both grants has been set for Wednesday, Oct. 28.

"We are so grateful to be able to administer these funds on behalf of the New York State Council on the Arts," Pérez said. "We know there is a great need, especially during this pandemic, which has been particularly hard on artists and arts organizations. Most arts organizations are completely reimagining how they do business and artists are leading, as they often do, in coming up with new ways to create and share their work."

Pérez added that Arts Mid-Hudson is looking forward to "funding innovative ways of presenting arts and cultural programming in 2021."

For more information, go to [www.artsmidhudson.org](http://www.artsmidhudson.org).

## Two incumbents return to office in village elections

By KAITLIN LYLE  
kaitlinl@millertonnews.com

MILLERTON — The votes are in: With support from the village's registered voters during the 2020 Village Election on Tuesday, Sept. 15, incumbent candidates Matthew Hartzog and Alicia Sartori will be soon moving forward, both serving their second terms on the Village Board of Trustees. Both Hartzog and Sartori are registered Democrats, though Sartori was cross-endorsed by the Republican party as well.

"I appreciate people taking the time to come out and vote, especially during COVID times," Sartori said, "and I look forward to continuing my role as a trustee."

"I'm just very glad to be reelected and to have the opportunity to continue helping out," Hartzog said.

Running from noon to 9 p.m., this year's election was held at the Village Hall building, located at 5933 North Elm Ave. (Route 22) in Millerton.

There were two open seats on the Village Board, each

with a two-year term.

Voters were advised by village officials to wear a mask when entering the Village Hall building and to remain 6 feet apart while going up to register to vote, due to the coronavirus pandemic. A table with extra disposable masks and hand sanitizer was also made available to the public during the election.

This year's election saw very few voters, which wasn't a great surprise considering the pandemic and the fact that many residents are still self-quarantining at home to avoid catching the virus.

Throughout the election's entirety, Village Clerk Kelly Kilmer reported that only 17 residents physically came out to vote; there were no absentee ballots or write-ins recorded this year. Calculating the votes, she said Hartzog received 15 votes while Sartori received 14 votes.

Starting Thursday, Oct. 1, Hartzog and Sartori will begin their second terms on the Village Board of Trustees; both will run until June 30, 2022.

## OBITUARY

### Jean Secor Valentine

MILLERTON — Jean Secor Valentine, 59, of New Paltz, N.Y., and formerly of Millerton, died Jan. 19, 2020, at Health Alliance Hospital in Kingston, N.Y., following a courageous battle with cancer.

Born Feb. 8, 1960, in Sharon, she was the daughter of Priscilla (Newman) and Richard L. Valentine.

A graduate of Webutuck Central School, Jean also attended Goucher College in Maryland and Alfred University in New York. She was a graduate of Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, N.Y., where she earned an associate's degree in Mortuary Science and became a New York State licensed funeral director and embalmer.

Jean's concern for those in mourning while working at the former Valentine Funeral Home in Millerton and Amenia will be remembered by many. She worked tirelessly with her father in the monument business, especially in the completion of the Millerton, Amenia and Sharon veterans' memorials.

Jean also owned and operated the Village Toggery, a clothing store in Millerton, for several years. She also served the community with active involvement in the Millerton Fire Department Rescue Squad and served as chairwoman of the Town of

North East Planning Board. She will be remembered for her care and respect of the great outdoors and for her love of her Vizsla pet dogs.

Jean is survived by her mother, Priscilla Poucher and her husband, Claude, of Jessup, Ga.; and her father, Richard L. "Dick" Valentine and his wife, Helen, of Millerton. She leaves her sister Olivia "Libby" Markonic and her brother Bruce Valentine, also of

Millerton. Also surviving are her nieces, Claire, Jane and Caroline Markonic; and several cousins. She leaves many caring friends who were especially kind during Jean's illness. Jean was predeceased by her loving brother, Richard Valentine.

A graveside memorial service will take place on Saturday, Oct. 3, at 11 a.m. at Irontdale Cemetery in Millerton, the Rev. William Mayhew



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More obituaries appear on Page A5.

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• CVS

## Jessica Deister fills open seat on Board of Ed

By KAITLIN LYLE  
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WEBUTUCK — Ready to take an active role in the North East (Webutuck) Central School District, Amenia resident Jessica Deister was recently sworn in as the newest member of Webutuck Board of Education (BOE), filling the open seat left by former BOE member Steve Abad.

When Abad suddenly resigned in July, the district posted a notice about the open seat on its website, www.webutuckschools.org, inviting all interested candidates to apply.

Reflecting on what motivated her to apply, Deister said her primary focus was on the children — both her own and the students enrolled in the district — and on making sure they have a strong education. When she saw the notice for the open seat, she said she thought it would be a great way to get involved and generate positive change.

"I want to make sure they have the resources they need and have the opportunity to have a really good school experience," Deister said.

As far as what she considers essential for "a really good school experience," she said, "I think that we need to have supportive teachers and supportive staff. I want to make sure they have access to enriching clubs, competitive sports and challenging academics. We're a small district so I think, at times, it's challenging to offer something for everybody."

Though she's heard complaints from others about the district's small size, Deister said she likes the small size as it allows children an opportunity to shine and get that one-on-one experience with their teachers.

That being said, she said the school board needs to find activities that will appeal to a lot of students and get both the students and the community involved in district activities. Her ultimate goal, Deister said, would be to increase enrollment.

"I think it would be nice to have new families," she remarked, "so I think having a district with strong clubs, strong sports and a challenging education program will ultimately draw families into the area."

Along with her passion for making sure students receive a strong education, Deister mentioned her familiarity with making hard decisions that will help lead to improvements as one of her strengths, which she gained through her work as a property manager. In addition to running the property managing company, Wilson Fields, with her husband, Matt, Deister works as a veterinary technician at Millerton Veterinary Practice.

Her son, Cody, 6, is currently enrolled as a first-grader at Webutuck Elementary School (WES) and her son, Connor, 3, will be starting pre-k at WES next year.

Applying and interviewing for the open seat in August, Deister was appointed to the BOE and sworn in on Wednesday, Sept. 9. She will serve on the school board until May 18, 2021, during which time the district will hold its annual school board election. At that time, Deister said she'll re-evaluate and see if she wants to commit to BOE for another three years.

In the meantime, she said, "I'm really excited to be a part of the board and I look forward to taking an active role in the district."

## Lions Club Car Show steers residents toward a good cause at largest show to date

By KAITLIN LYLE  
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AMENIA — Given the fantastic flurry of spectators and vehicles in attendance, members of the Amenia Lions Club and car enthusiasts alike agreed that the eighth annual Community Car Show on Sunday, Sept. 20, was the club's largest show to date.

Typically held on the Maplebrook School campus just up the road, this year's show was set up at the Four Brothers Drive-In Theatre from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

### Back to school, face to face

Dover students were excited to start school in person this year, especially after many months of isolation following an abrupt stop to school in mid-March of 2020 due to the coronavirus. The Dover Union Free School District is one of the few school districts in the Harlem Valley to allow students to return to campus in person this fall. Classes began Monday, Sept. 14, under its Slow Start hybrid model.

By day's end, the Amenia Lions Club counted more than 80 cars on display.

"This is a perfect venue for this type of event," Amenia Lions Club member Larry Moore said. "We came to Four Brothers with this idea and they have been gracious in hosting us."

"It's a no-brainer," agreed John Stefanopoulos, one of the owners of the Four Brothers Drive-In Theatre. "We like having our venue being not just a movie theater. It's just in our nature to help people and bring people together."

All while wearing face masks and keeping a respectable social distance from one another due to the coronavirus pandemic, car enthusiasts of all ages ambled across the drive-in grounds, their eyes roaming across the rows of new and vintage vehicles of various models. Propping up the hoods of their cars, participants sat by their cars in clusters or by themselves to watch the show unfold, while others walked around to get a closer look at the vehicles on display.

Keeping spectators engaged throughout the day, the show offered trivia, raffles, food and a selection of golden oldies that was streamed through the theater's speakers. Toasting another terrific turnout, the Amenia Lions Club concluded the show by awarding the first and second place winners of the Pre-War, Post-War, Hot Rods and Contemporary categories as well as the winner of the Best in Show award.

All proceeds from the Com-



PHOTO BY KAITLIN LYLE

Visiting from Brooklyn, Sisi, Charles and Mia Nguyen ambled around the Amenia Lions Club's Community Car Show, stopping to admire the 1960 Triumph owned by Richard Sobielo.

munity Car Show will benefit the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, a cause Moore said is close to the Amenia Lions Club not just on the local level but also to Lions Club international.

"It's been a phenomenal success — we're very excited," said Amenia Lions Club member Paul

Winters.

"We are very surprised by the turnout — it was very unexpected," he added. "As the best kept secret in town, we really appreciate the community coming out to support us. Every penny we raise goes back into the town — we try to help anyone who needs it."

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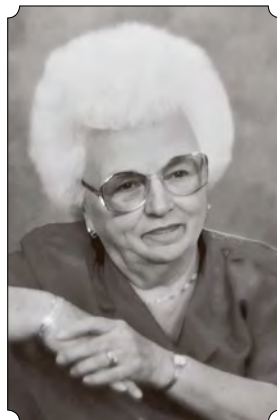
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# COMPASS

Your Guide to Tri-State Events

September 24-30, 2020

CLAY ARTISTS: CYNTHIA HOCHSWENDER

## Clay in all its Fascinating Forms — and the Artists Who Love It

The fourth annual Clay Way Studio Tour of artists who do ceramics and pottery in the Tri-state region will be held on the weekend of Oct. 17 and 18.

As always, some artists will show their work in the studios of other artists, so that there will be a total of 15 artists and nine studios in two states.

The tour is free and self-guided; go to the website at [www.clayway.net](http://www.clayway.net) to see the map. At the northeast corner, in West Cornwall, Conn., is Jane Herrold, easy to spot on the Sharon Goshen Turnpike (Route 128), where she also has a little retail shack near the road. Joining her for the ClayWay will be artist Alexandra Fitzgerald.

Cornwall's Todd Piker is on South Kent Road (Route 7), just a bit north of Christine Owen, who is in Warren, Conn., on the Cornwall Road (also known as Route 45). Joining Owen will be Angelo Estrada and joining Piker will be Shana Petersen.

Joy Brown, possibly the most famous ceramic artist in the region, has her studio open on Segar Mountain Road (Route 7) in Kent, Conn., not far from the studio of Alison Palmer at Stone Fences in Kent, where visitors can also see the work of Missy Stevens.

Palmer is beloved among ceramic artist fans not only for her work, which is quirky and often involves animals (ask about her burial urns), but also because she fires



PHOTOS FROM ANN HEYWOOD

**Ceramic artist Ann Heywood, recently retired from a 30-year career as an art conservator for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, is among the 15 participants in this year's Clay Way Studio Tour. Her one-of-a-kind pieces range from vases and bowls and mugs to soap dishes.**

large soda kilns and wood kilns each year; artists from the region convene, and fire their work with her. Palmer and Stevens are the only artists who will also be in their studios on Friday, Oct. 16 (and Palmer's work can be found online at Shopify).

Swinging north from those Kent artists, look for Brendan Moore on Nodine Pasture Road in Kent (also showing at his studio will be Dan Bellow). Will Talbot is at the far southeastern end of the map, in Washington, Conn.

Over in New York State are two artists in Wingdale: Amy Brenner is on Old Branch Road and Ann

Heywood is just south, on Askins Road.

The Clay Way tour is a chance to meet the artists in person, and connect a face to beloved work. The work of Joy Brown, for example, is well-known in the area: Her joyful and cuddly ceramic pieces have been on display in the center of Kent and often peek out of the gardens of area residents. She is as warm and welcoming as her clay figures, and her studio is a treasure trove of little hidden corners in which to poke around.

The artists also have pieces for sale, including some that are less perfect and less expensive than some of the pieces they might sell online or at a gallery.

Ann Heywood is opening her Wingdale studio this year for Clay Way for the second time.

She recently retired from 30 years as an art conservator for the Metropolitan



Museum of Art in New York City and has been making one-of-a-kind pieces at her Wingdale studio. Her work has an understated almost Japanese quality.

"I am attracted to simple lines and elegant forms," she said in an email, "and I enjoy playing with the contrast and interaction of glazes with a dark clay body. "I mostly throw on the wheel, but also hand-build some vases, trays and soap dishes. I fire primarily in my own electric kiln, but also in Alison Palmer's soda kiln and her wood kiln."

All the artists participating in the tour are respecting social distance guidelines.

"I will be setting up outdoors on my covered porch this year and will be following safety protocols: One group at a time, one way traffic, and masks will be required," Heywood said.

*Clay Way is on Oct. 17 and 18 (and Alison Palmer and Missy Stevens will also be in the studio on Oct. 16).*

*The map of the studios can be found at [www.clayway.net](http://www.clayway.net), which also has the complete list of participating artists. There are links to many of the artists' websites or Instagram pages, but to learn more about some of the artists you will need to search online.*

### ENVIRONMENTAL LESSONS, AS THE WEST COAST BURNS

The distance from Salisbury, Conn., to the Amazon River is more than 3,000 miles, but the two regions share ecological lessons and concerns.

Many of these are discussed by Mark Plotkin in his book, "The Amazon: What Everyone Needs to Know," published this year by the Oxford University Press.

The safe passage of animals through different landscapes each year, for example, is as relevant to Tri-state region residents (where, the spring migration of amphibians is a topic of concern) as it is in South America.

"Forest fragmentation in much of Amazonia has demonstrated that sizable protected areas play a vital role in the survival of species that cannot exist if they need to commute between widely separated smaller parcels of rainforest," Plotkin notes

in his book.

A conservationist and ethnobotanist, Plotkin studied at Harvard and at the Yale School of Forestry and earned his Ph.D. from Tufts University. Time magazine named him an "Environmental Hero for the Planet" and the Smithsonian included him in its list of "35 Who Made a Difference."

At a time when most of the American West Coast is engulfed in flames, all Americans have an interest in learning how to protect the world around them.

— Cynthia Hochswender

*Plotkin will talk about his new book, and why the lessons of the Amazon matter to residents of the Tri-state region, in a Zoom talk sponsored by Salisbury's Scoville Memorial Library on Thursday, Oct. 8, at 7 p.m. To register, go to [www.scovillelibrary.org](http://www.scovillelibrary.org).*



PHOTO BY SERGEI FEDORJACZENKO

**D. M. Hunt Library Hunt ArtWall chairs Garth Kobal, at left in photo, and Zoe Fedorjaczenko, center, viewed some of the pieces Robert Andrew Parker, an esteemed American artist who lives in Cornwall, Conn., will show at the library from Sept. 25 to Nov. 14.**

### WORKS BY POSEY, PARKER & CRONIN AT HUNT LIBRARY

The D. M. Hunt Library in Falls Village, Conn., presents a new show of paintings of female figures by three renowned area artists: Robert Cronin of Falls Village, Conn., Sam Posey of Sharon, Conn., and Robert Andrew Parker of Cornwall, Conn.

The show opens Sept. 25 and remains on display during library hours through Nov. 14. All visitors to the library are required to wear masks and to register at the door and have their

temperature checked. Social distancing allows for only five people at a time.

To learn more about the artists, go to [www.robertcroninart.com](http://www.robertcroninart.com); [robertandrewparker.wixsite.com](http://robertandrewparker.wixsite.com); and [www.obergallery.com/sam-posey](http://www.obergallery.com/sam-posey).

*For more information, or to make an appointment, call the library at 860-824-7424 or go to [www.huntlibrary.org/art-wall](http://www.huntlibrary.org/art-wall), where the full exhibition can be seen beginning Sept. 25.*

*The library is on Main Street in Falls Village. Hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday from 3 to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

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