In Brief

Senior Center open in Highland Falls

The Highland Falls Senior Citizens Center, located at 15 Drew Ave., is open most weekdays with scheduled events for community residents age 55 and over. For a complete list of events, email Highlanders25 26@yahoo.com.

Among the weekly events are 'Coffee and Tea' sessions from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesdays; 'Creativity' sessions on Wednesdays; 'Games' from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursdays; and movies several Fridays a month.

There are some special events coming up too, including an April 17 (self-pay) lunch at Hacienda Restaurant at 11 a.m.; Highlanders Senior Citizens Club meetings on April 21 (with Orange County Office of the Aging) and May 12 (with local Highlanders elections); a May 8 (self-pay) breakfast at Andy's Restaurant at 10 a.m.; a May 13 trip to Silver Birches for Give My Regards to Broadway; and a May 29 picnic at Roe Park (bring your own lunch).

Fort Montgomery opens for the season

Fort Montgomery State Historic Site Manager Peter Cutul has announced that the battlesite's museum will be opening for the season on Wednesday, April 15. Hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5p.m. and Sunday 1-5 p.m.

"Although the main portion of the Fort ruins will be closed for a Pathways Improvement Project (for more information visit parks.ny.gov/visit/historic-sites/fort-montgomery-state-historic-site), the ever-popular Twin Forts Trail to the pedestrian footbridge and Trailside Museums and Zoo is open with a fresh, new surface, and the west side of our site (West and Round Hill Redoubts) remains open.

Free programs will run at Fort Montgomery through October – May's include:

Saturday, May 2: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m., Battoes and 18th Century Maritime Carpentry. In the 18th Century, watercraft were the primary means that armies transported men and supplies whenever possible. The main craft on inland waterways was the bateau or battoe, a simply designed boat built of pine with oak stems and sterns. Using his 30 ft battoe replica as a talking piece, shipwright/carpenter Scott Lance will demonstrate construction techniques, design, and explain the tools of a shipwright. Program family-friendly with a hands-on component for kids.

Saturday, May 9, 1 p.m.: A Revolutionary Revelation: The Complex Story of Peggy Shippen Arnold. Margaret Arnold better known by her childhood name Peggy Shippen, has been portrayed through history as either a total innocent or the scheming mastermind behind Benedict Arnold's treason. Based entirely on primary sources, Char Weigel brings to life this complex and nuanced woman with a riveting and revealing first-person dramatic portrayal of the woman some credit with convincing Benedict Arnold to turn coat.

Saturday, May 23, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.: 18th Century Games and Toys. Guest Presenter Tom Hunt will guide children and families through popular toys and games of the Colonial Period including whirly-gigs, ball & cup, hoop & stick, the game of goose, nine pins, bilbo catchers, stilts, nine-men's-Morris, and more! Most suitable for children ages 6 and older.

McCue presents 'Pier 54 stories'

On the occasion of the 114th anniversary of the RMS Carpathia's arrival in New York with the Titanic survivors, Cornwall's Bob McCue will host a history presentation on that topic on Saturday, April 18 at Painter's Tavern (266 Hudson St.) in Cornwall-on-Hudson. RMS Carpathia was a transatlantic passenger steamship which, in April 1912, became famous for rescuing survivors of the rival White Star Line's RMS Titanic after it struck an iceberg and sank in the North Atlantic Ocean. Carpathia navigated the ice fields to arrive two hours after Titanic had sunk, and the crew rescued 712 survivors from the ship's lifeboats.

He's excited to present. "Also, the beginning of May is the anniversary of the Lustainia being sunk," he said. "I have a friend coming to the show who has a steamer trunk for which there is a real good chance it was on the Lusitania or her sister ship. Painters will be having coffee (and a cake because McCue's birthday is April 20!) I'll also have replica dishware of what used on the Titanic."

(The RMS Lusitania was a British luxury ocean liner, once the world's largest and fastest ship, sunk by a German U-boat during World War I. Torpedoed off the Irish coast, that killed 1197 people – including 128 Americans – a pivotal event that significantly increased U.S. pressure to enter the war.)

Black Rock Forest awards three grants

Black Rock Forest announced the recipients of its 2026 David Redden Conservation Science Fund Small Grants. This year, Black Rock Forest is awarding a combined $26,850 to three research groups.

The fund celebrates the legacy of a long-time board member and chair, David Redden and supports research projects in Black Rock Forest with applications to conservation. Projects can focus on any scale, from molecules to ecosystems. Since 2019,

Corina Vernon, one of last year's Black Rock Forest grant recipients.

Black Rock Forest has distributed 37 David Redden Conservation Science grants totaling more than $197,000. Many of these awards have supported high school, college, and graduate student investigations into the natural world.

"The David Redden Conservation Science Fund continues to increase our understanding of the forest by supporting dozens of visiting researchers, greatly increasing our organization's science and conservation capacities. Managing this program, particularly the student researchers that it supports, is one of my most rewarding responsibilities at Black Rock Forest," said Dr. Scott LaPoint, Director of Research at Black Rock Forest.

The 2026 recipients of the David Redden Fund Awards are:

- Drs. Danny Gentile and Rachel Cox of Lisman Laboratories at the Riverdale Country School for "Fish Species Diversity as indicated by eDNA monitoring in Black Rock Forest",

- Ms. Kaitlin Karl and Dr. Mark Davis of the Illinois Natural History Survey at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign for "Integrating population genomics and disease surveillance to assess the health of the Timber Rattlesnake (Crotalus horridus) at Black Rock Forest, Cornwall, New York",

- Dr. Mustafa Saifuddin of New York University for "Characterizing forest soil microbial biodiversity and activity".

Black Rock Forest is looking forward to hosting the research groups and supporting their work over the next year. Results will be shared with the public through forest events, newsletters, and scientific publications.