

# Learning from a tragedy

BY CATHERINE FORBES

A few weeks ago, Hyde Park lost two of our citizens in a domestic violence murder-suicide. The shocking news brought sadness and soul-searching. Many of us have dedicated years of our lives to prevent just this kind of thing from happening. A partial list includes Hyde Park Police officers, Chief Charles Broe, Judge David Steinberg and the hundreds of advocates, nurses, members of faith communities and hair stylists who have learned to detect the signs of abuse and how to help victims. But, Anthony Riccardulli was the only person who knew he would murder Linda Riccardulli that morning. Only he knew if and how her murder could have been prevented.

That doesn't mean Hyde Park is helpless to stop domestic violence. It means we have to re-double our efforts. It means our police officers must have our support so they receive domestic violence training every year. It means more of us need to be trained to confront abusers and to serve as a resource for victims and survivors. We need to look at the feasibility of having the same Domestic Abuse Response Team other communities have in place. It means more of us need to reach out to our vulnerable neighbors. It means all of us need to call the police when we see evidence of abuse.

This last bit of advice might seem radical, yet people routinely call 911

when they see signs of a break-in. Domestic violence is a crime and it deserves the same vigilance. One of the many advantages to having a local police department is the relationships that can be built between officers and citizens. Another is that response times are shorter. If we call, they will come.

One disadvantage for Hyde Park is the building we rent for our officers. It is not a comfortable place to speak with victims and witnesses. There is no room for a victim advocate. Many people believe that experienced officers leave Hyde Park in part because of the deteriorated facilities. When officers leave, they take with them their experience, domestic violence training and their knowledge of and relationships with residents.

I cried when I read the details of Linda Riccardulli's murder. I didn't want her death to be just another story. I wanted it to be a call to action. So, I spoke with Sgt. Robert Benson about officer training. I made a donation to Grace Smith House. I support Judge David Steinberg for Dutchess County Court and I will continue to support efforts to build a new police station. These may not be the ways you choose to respond. I just hope you do.

*Respond to this column at editorial@thehudsonvalleynews.com.*

# Relive tradition

BY CAROL A. LENT

"First settled in 1710 as the 'East Camp' by some 1,200 Palatine refugees from the Rhineland, the District of Germantown was created in April 1775, only weeks before the start of the American Revolution, and became a township in 1788, the year after the drafting of the U.S. Constitution.

"The Columbia County Township, with a population of about 2,020 today, is located some 100 miles north of New York City and about 50 miles south of Albany. Its dimensions are 8,000 acres or 12.5 square miles. Its western border is the shoreline of the Hudson River. "About 200 feet above the river, bordered by wooded hills, orchards and small farms, is Germantown's community center. Germantown's Palatine Park provides recreational facilities and a host of other amenities. The town park in northern Germantown provides river access for boaters."

This excerpt is taken from the Town of Germantown's web page, no doubt written by Germantown's History Committee. This year, it will celebrate its 300th anniversary! Germantown plans to do this with a Palatine Oktoberfest on Oct. 8, 9 and 10. The Town of Germantown held this successful event for 20 years at Palatine Park. My husband and I took our Belgian Draft horses and

wagon to give rides around the lake on Sunday, the last day of this three-day event, for many years.

What is a Palatine Oktoberfest, you ask? Well, it is literally a two-week beer festival held annually in Munich, Germany, ending on the first Sunday of October, or a similar festival held elsewhere about the same time. Germantown keeps in sync by having some native German beers, mouth-watering German foods, an authentic German oompah band and lots of German history. This festival also has been Americanized to include a petting zoo, fireworks, teen dance, farm exhibits and so many things for everyone to enjoy.

The Town of Germantown has been working to put this massive event together for approximately one year, strictly with volunteers. The effort, thought and hard work is endless. The devotion of these volunteers is more than commendable, it is admirable. I am sure this 300th anniversary Oktoberfest will be a success.

I recommend checking out the website for the latest information at [www.germantownny.org](http://www.germantownny.org) and click on Oktoberfest. Mark your October calendar and take a scenic drive right up Route 9G and don't miss this experience.

# IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

BY JIM LANGAN

• This guy should be easy to spot. New Paltz police are looking for a white male, 6 feet tall, in his 50s or 60s, who is wanted in connection with giving obscene material to a teenage girl. He has medium-length white hair, a mustache and was wearing a T-shirt, shorts and blue suede shoes. Quite an ensemble there, creepy old guy!

• Only Albany could finagle a way to tax a bagel. A new law now considers a sliced bagel or one you eat in a deli "prepared food" and taxes them. If you simply buy a whole bagel, no tax.

• If you think traffic is bad around here, try China. In northern China, they're into day 10 of the world's worst traffic jam. Drivers have been stuck in a 60-mile gridlock due to road construction. It's taking cars a full day to move half a mile. Locals are cleaning up by selling noodles and water from bicycles weaving between cars. I'd be looking to buy a gun.

• Last week's primary returns have incumbent Democrats and Republicans running scared. Voters are holding Republicans accountable for the mess we're in and Democrats for exacerbating the economic problems. They're not leaving much room for the usual baloney from the political class. Look for a lot of new faces next year.

• It sounds like that 21-year-old drunken moron who slashed a cab driver because he was Muslim picked a bad time to go ballistic. With all the controversy about the mosque, you can be sure the DA will throw the book at this guy.

• Nice to see Jimmy Carter getting back to his peeps in North Korea. Carter traveled there to secure the release of a Boston man serving eight years of hard labor for being in the country illegally. I wonder if we'll see him in Arizona.

• How about the 33 Chilean miners found alive in a mine after 17 days? It looks like it might be Christmas before rescuers can get them out. The problem now is keeping them healthy and sane until then. They're confined to a 540-square-foot room. Miners will have to get down to a minimum 35" waist in order to ascend the rescue shaft. Good thing Pamela Anderson isn't down there.

• Color me insensitive, but why are we still kvetching about Hurricane Katrina after five long years? We rebuilt Europe after World War II in less time. Move on, people.

• Interesting to hear the chatter about former Bush 2004 campaign chief Ken Mehlman announcing he was gay. Is that really newsworthy? These types of things will really be news when they're not news.

• Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s soon-to-be second ex-wife was arrested in Pleasant Valley last week for driving while impaired by prescription drugs. It follows a DUI conviction earlier in the year. Good to see she takes being a Kennedy seriously. She was on her way to yoga at the Omega Institute.

• Let's hope none of the fine men and women in local law enforcement read this. Peter Noonan, the police chief in the Long Island town of Clarkson, made \$301,534 last year and his 168 officers averaged \$146,067 in salary. Noonan was not in the Monkees.

# Non-profit to rehab 10 foreclosed properties

BY HV NEWS STAFF

Hudson River Housing is working to rehabilitate a number of foreclosed properties in the City of Poughkeepsie. The rehabilitated homes will be used to provide more affordable housing in the city.

Last year, Hudson River Housing received more than \$2.5 million in funding from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to provide assistance to Poughkeepsie neighborhoods suffering high foreclosure rates.

Hudson River Housing plans to rehabilitate a total of 10 single- and two-family homes and multi-family buildings.

The single- and two-family homes will be sold to income-eligible first-time homebuyers, and the multi-family buildings will be retained by Hudson River

Housing and used as affordable rental properties. Sales of the single- and two-family homes will be managed by HRH's HomeOwnership Center, which will host a public information session when homes become available, likely in early 2011. Details will be provided at [www.hudsonriverhousing.org](http://www.hudsonriverhousing.org).

"We are taking an important step towards remediating the effects foreclosure has had on our neighborhoods," said Executive Director Gail Webster in a press release. "We don't want to have properties sitting vacant, which can then become sources of blight. We want to keep people in these neighborhoods and continue working towards a stronger, more vibrant community."