



# The Vestal Town Crier

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Vol. 35 No. 19 NEWSTAND PRICE \$1.00 Friday, December 29, 2023 SUBSCRIBE at [Publisher@TiersNews.com](mailto:Publisher@TiersNews.com)



**December 30 - End of Bicentennial Year  
Fireworks Display Only 7:00 p.m. -- Arnold Park**

**“Golden Bears Top  
Wildcats for Metro  
Win” On Page 3!**

**“History and  
Traditions of New  
Year’s Eve and  
New Year’s Day”  
On Page 6**

## GOODBYE December

Photos Courtesy Of The Vestal School District

**PET OF THE  
WEEK:**

**Bubito**



Hola, I’m Bu-  
bito! My butt  
wiggles are  
majestic and  
my toots are  
poisonous. I  
like to read but  
unfortunately I  
am illiterate.

Send in a photo  
of your pet with  
a short bio to:  
[kirsten@tier-  
news.com](mailto:kirsten@tier-<br/>news.com) to  
have your pet in  
the paper!

THE KINDERGARTEN  
HOLIDAY TRADITION



UPK (CUB CARE) GINGERBREAD HOUSES



VHE TOYS FOR TOTS DRIVE



VHS HOLIDAY SWEATER DAY







# Calendar



# VESTAL POLICE REPORT

## Vestal Fire Department Responses

vestalfire.com

by Walt Schlundt, Public Information Officer

12/19 00:42	Groveland Avenue	Mutual aid
	to Endwell for a chimney fire	
12/20 02:07	Glendale Drive	Mutual aid
	to West Corners for a house fire	
12/20 05:26	Vestal Parkway E.	Commercial fire alarm
12/20 11:55	Glenwood Road	Vehicle into a house - extrication needed
12/20 11:58	West Drive	Fire alarm
12/20 18:00	Kilmer Road	Residential fire alarm
12/22 09:13	Vestal Parkway E.	Commercial fire alarm
12/22 12:56	Route 201 off ramp	Vehicle fire after accident
12/22 23:30	Noyes Road	General fire alarm
12/23 14:35	Noyes Road	General fire alarm
12/25 10:20	Vestal Parkway E.	Carbon monoxide alarm



Laila Johnson, 33, Binghamton, arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from Wal-Mart.

Jason Stewart, 52, Binghamton, arrested for Petit Larceny and Burglary 3rd Degree for shoplifting from Lowe's after previously being banned from the location.

Karesma Shivers, 42, Johnson City, arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from Wal-Mart.

Manish Batra, 44, Vestal, arrested for Grand Larceny 4th Degree for shoplifting merchandise valued at more than \$1000 from Wal-Mart.

Kymberly Eynard-Bozzi, 52, Endicott, arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from Wal-Mart.

Olivia Powell, 20, Endicott, arrested for Criminal Possession of a Weapon 4th Degree for possessing a switchblade when arrested on a warrant.

Crystal Torres, 43, Windsor, arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from Wal-Mart.

Myasia Williams, 27, Binghamton, arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from Wal-Mart.

Tanya Lemon, 44, Syracuse, arrested for Grand Larceny 4th Degree for shoplifting merchandise valued at more than \$1000 from Kohl's.

Tanya Lemon, 44, Syracuse, arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from TJ Maxx.

Kyle Kasmarcik, 35, Windsor, arrested for Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 7th Degree, Aggravated Unlicensed Operation 2nd Degree, Unlicensed Operator, Uninsured Motor Vehicle, Unregistered Motor Vehicle, Inadequate Muffler, Inadequate Stop Lights, Improper Plate and Misuse of a Dealer Plate for possessing Clonazepam during a traffic stop.

Robert Spoonhower, 37, Vestal, arrested for Harassment 2nd Degree, and two counts of Criminal Obstruction of Breathing for covering the nose and mouth of the victim, impeding breathing and slapping the victim during a domestic incident.

Michael Godbay, 22, Endicott, arrested for Bail Jumping 3rd Degree for failing to appear in court for a scheduled court date or within 30 days thereafter.

Matthew Lozada, 31, Binghamton, arrested for Bail Jumping 3rd Degree for failing to appear in court for a scheduled court date or within 30 days thereafter.

Gerald Flynn Jr., 42, Ballston Lake, NY arrested for three counts of Grand Larceny 4th Degree for shoplifting merchandise valued at over \$1000 from Lowe's on three separate dates.



**Friday, December 29th**  
**Bowling And Pizza Party**  
 12PM; Midway Lanes; To RSVP visit:  
<https://forms.gle/r55vKMAhJnpBB5ZG9>

**Tuesday, January 2nd**  
 School resumes

**Thursday, January 4th**  
**IB/AP Parent Information Night**  
 6PM, VHS

**Saturday, January 6th**  
**BCMEA Auditions for students in Grades 10 - 12**  
**for Orchestra, Band, and Chorus**  
 Location: Binghamton West M.S.

**Tuesday, January 9th**  
 School Board Meeting/Spotlight at VHS; 6PM

**Wednesday, January 10th**  
**Eighth Grade Student Orientation**  
 6:30 PM, VHS Auditorium

**Thursday, January 11th**  
**Chorus Concert (Grs. 7 & 8)**  
 7PM; African Road Auditorium

**Friday, January 12th**  
 Early Release Day  
 More info on page 7

## Vestal Town Crier

**NEWS/ADVERTISING DEADLINE**  
 The Vestal Town Crier goes to press on Wednesdays. Deadline for news and advertising is the Friday before the desired week of publication.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
 Subscription rates to The Vestal Town Crier are \$35 a year in Broome County, \$100 outside of Broome County, and papers are mailed every Thursday from Conklin.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**  
 All letters to the editor are welcomed. All letters must be signed and include the phone number of the writer, to be used for verification of authenticity, not for publication. The editor reserves the right to refuse to publish letters which contain potentially libelous or erroneous statements. Also, letters endorsing political candidates are considered advertisements and should be prepaid as is all political advertising. No letters to the editor regarding political candidates will be accepted.

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 Call us today: 607 755 0472 E-mail: [news@tiersnews.com](mailto:news@tiersnews.com)



# Golden Bears Top Wildcats for Metro Win

By Hal Ehrhardt

The Golden Bear's second trip to Johnson City was more important and successful than their recent competition at the JC Relay Invitational. In last week's dual meet, Vestal picked up their first Metro division win and evened their dual meet record at 2-2 with a 96-83 victory. Vestal's depth was key to this win as the Golden Bears and Wildcats each won 6 events. The Medley relay team of Logan Kim, Adi Banerjee Ben Hutchings and Ben Elie put the Bears on top to stay in the first event. The 200 Free relay win by Hutchings, Sayum Singhal, Harrison Cappellett and Elie put the win in sight. A pair of wins by Logan Kim in the Fly and Back were key contributions. It was the 1-2-3 sweep of the 50 Free by Elie, Hutchings and Ocean Sun that provided the Golden Bears a comfortable lead. A 2-3-4 finish in the 200 Free by Cappellett, Sun and Gavin Hantsch offset JC's first win, while Sayum Singh and Lucas Matt went 2-3 in the IM with season best times.

Elie hit a career best in the diving to jump into the #7 spot on the All-Time Vestal Top 10 for 6 dives, the first top 10 diving score in more than 20 years. Adi Banerjee won a tight race in the 100 Free with a career best time, as Hutchings also swam a career best to finish 3rd. Third place finishes by the B Medley relay team of Daniel Li, Cameron Smith, Luke Sobel and Ananta Banerjee and the B 200 Free relay team of Sobel, Matt, Hantsch and Li were key depth points for Vestal. Matt had a career best to lead another 2-3-4 Golden Bear finish with Hantsch and Li in the 500 Free, while Adi Banerjee was runner-up in the 100 Breast to finish the Vestal scoring. Jayden Kim finished 3rd with his best time behind his brother Logan in the 100 Back.

## Vestal 96 – JC 83

- Medley Relay: 1st L. Kim, Adi Banerjee, Hutchings, Elie (1:52.74); 3rd Li, Smith, Sobel, Ana Banerjee;
- 200 Free: 1st Penney (JC 2:08.00); 2nd Cappellett (2:13.98); 3rd Sun; 4th Hantsch;
- 200 IM: 1st Sturek (JC 2:22.87); 2nd Singhal (2:26.78); 3rd Matt;
- 50 Free: 1st Elie (25.41); 2nd Hutchings; 3rd Sun;
- Diving (6): 1st Rigal (JC 254.50); 2nd Elie (247.25);
- 100 Fly: 1st L. Kim (1:00.24); 3rd Singhal; 5th Sobel;
- 100 Free: 1st Adi Banerjee (55.14); 3rd Hutchings; 4th Cappellett;
- 500 Free: 1st Sturek (JC 5:58.31); 2nd Matt (6:07.41); 3rd Hantsch; 4th Li;
- 200 Free Relay: 1st Hutchings, Singhal, Cappellett, Elie (1:46.50); 3rd Sobel, Matt, Hantsch, Li;
- 100 Back: 1st L. Kim (1:01.54); 3rd J. Kim;
- 100 Breast: 1st Perry (JC 1:11.19); 2nd Adi Banerjee (1:12.22); EXH: 3rd Smith; 4th Michael Xue;
- 400 Free Relay: 1st JC (4:05.46); EXH: 2nd Matt, Sobel, Hantsch, Smith (4:45.97);

With the holiday school break underway Coach Joe Shore will be counting on the full team's participation in the holiday break practices along with the first few weeks in January. The team's next meet will be when they travel to Ithaca on Tuesday, January 16th. Across the STAC, Horseheads and Corning look to be the top teams in the West, while ME and UE lead the Metro Division. Chenango Valley who recently beat all the top STAC teams at the Elmira Invitational lead the Central division while Oneonta appears to be the team to beat in the East.

# The Commemorative Blood Drive Marking The Ninth Year In Memory Of New York State Trooper Christopher Skinner Took Place.

The Five Mile Point Fire Company hosted the ninth annual blood drive on Tuesday afternoon, commemorating New York State Trooper Christopher Skinner, who tragically lost his life in 2014 during a traffic stop when he was struck by a vehicle. Shawn Skinner, Trooper Skinner's brother, highlighted the significance of the event in honoring his brother's commitment to community service. He expressed that his brother always aspired to play a significant role in the community and assist anyone in need. After his untimely death on duty, they initiated this blood drive in his memory. It's a meaningful way to preserve his legacy and remind the community of the values associated with his name. The annual drive, typically held around Christmas, draws 50 to 100 donors each year, inspired by the generosity of the holiday season. Shawn Skinner noted that the Christmas spirit encourages people to embrace the giving season, creating a positive and lasting memory for his brother. Shawn Skinner urged those hesitant about donating blood, emphasizing the critical role such contributions play in saving lives during emergencies. Donating blood is essential to aiding hospital patients in critical situations, such as trauma. If you're unsure, I encourage you to come down and give it a try, he said. Year after year, numerous members of the Skinner Family participate in the event, ensuring their contributions serve as a heartfelt tribute to Christopher's memory.



## NYS 1,4-Dioxane Law - Public Comment Period

Effective December 31, 2023, personal care and household cleansing products containing 1,4-dioxane in concentrations greater than one part per million (ppm) cannot be sold or offered for sale in New York State. In addition, cosmetic products containing 1,4-dioxane in concentrations greater than ten ppm cannot be sold or offered for sale in New York State.

### About Dioxane

Since 1979 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have conducted tests on cosmetic raw materials and finished products for the levels of 1,4-dioxane. Dioxane is classified by the National Toxicology Program as "reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen" because it is a known carcinogen in other animals. It is irritating to the eyes and respiratory tract, and exposure may cause damage to the central nervous system, liver and kidneys. As a byproduct of the ethoxylation process, a route to some ingredients found in cleansing and moisturizing products, dioxane can contaminate cosmetics and personal care products such as deodorants, perfumes, shampoos, toothpastes and mouthwashes. (The ethoxylation process makes the cleansing agents less abrasive and offers enhanced foaming characteristics.) The Environmental Working Group (EWG) found that 97% of hair relaxers, 57% of baby soaps and 22 percent of all products in Skin Deep, their database for cosmetic products, are contaminated with 1,4-dioxane.

### Waiver Requests

The law allows a manufacturer to apply for a one-year waiver from compliance, up to two times. The DEC Program Policy DMM-21-02 sets forth the process for manufacturers to submit a waiver request and clarifies the proof the Department will require to grant a waiver. The Department will respond to applications in a timely manner and

will take no longer than six months to approve or deny an application.

### Regulations

The Department has filed a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking with the New York State Department of State. This rulemaking will implement the amendments to Article 35 and Article 37 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL), adopted in 2019, which establish limits on the amount of 1,4-dioxane that can be present in household cleansing, personal care, and cosmetic products sold in the State.

The public is invited to submit written comments on the proposed rulemaking through February 12, 2024.

### Written comments can be submitted as follows:

By email to 1-4D.HCPCCPproducts@dec.ny.gov Please include "Comments on Proposed Subpart 352-1" in the subject line of the email; or

By mail to Attention: Carmelle Sanders, NYS DEC - Division of Materials Management, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-7253.

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dbergerattorney@gmail.com    301 N. Stage Rd., Vestal

## Highway Department Has Job Opening: Seeking Motor Equipment Operator

### PLEASE NOTE:

- MUST HAVE a clean CDL – A or B license
- Must be able to pass a pre-employment drug & alcohol screening
- References will be checked
- Union Job
- Salary for 2024: \$24.50 per hour

Visit [www.townofbinghamton.com](http://www.townofbinghamton.com) for more info or to download an application. You can return the application in person or mail to:

Town of Binghamton Highway Dept.  
 865 Hawleyton Road  
 Binghamton, NY 13903

If you prefer, you can email your application to:  
[highway@townofbinghamton.com](mailto:highway@townofbinghamton.com)





# A RAILROAD LECTURE SERIES

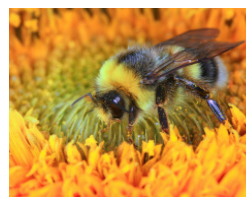
Presented by  
The Susquehanna Valley Railroad Historical Society

- Saturday January 13th 2024, 1:00pm- Bob Pastorkey will present *Railway Memories, A Salute to Phoebe Snow* at the **Vestal Public Library**
- Saturday February 10th, 1:00pm-Tom McEnteer will present *Railroads of the Southern Tier* at the **Vestal Public Library**
- Saturday February 17th 2024, 1:00pm -John Goodnough will present *Overview of Regional Railroad History* at **The Vestal Museum**

Hosted by The Vestal Museum



## Catskill Mountainkeeper



Governor Hochul signed the Birds and Bees Protection Act into law. We've all been working together to advance the Birds and Bees Protection Act in New York State for many years, and today is a day to celebrate.

Please, email the Governor now to say "thanks." The new law will ban the use of seeds coated with toxic insecticides called neonicotinoids or "neonics" and prohibits neonic use for ornamental and turf applications. This is a huge step toward protecting our bees, butterflies, and birds from being poisoned by toxic neonics and it would not have been possible without your help--thank you for sending thousands of emails, calling your representatives, and organizing in your communities to promote the bill.

Mountainkeeper staff have been tirelessly advocating for the measure in the Capitol and across the state, and today we hope you'll join us in sending Governor Hochul a thank you note.

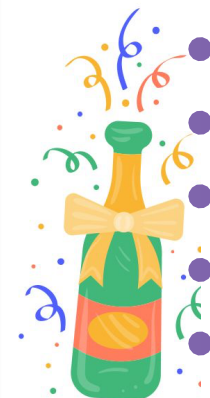


I know we've been asking you to send a lot of emails lately, and we appreciate your ongoing actions--your time and efforts are meaningful, and today's victory demonstrates that with these quick actions you're making a tangible difference. Please send this thank you today--it's so important that our representatives here from us when we're excited about their work, not only when we're calling on them to act. On behalf of Dr. Kathy Nolan, Kate Hagerman, and the entire Mountainkeeper team, thank you for all you do to protect pollinators.

# Happy New Year!



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



## Third Annual Bugs Veteran's Gala

Well today we began our planning and have a date approved for our 3rd annual Bugs Memorial event. This event is in memory of our Brother and friend who tragically left us too early from a motorcycle accident. In his memory we have worked to establish an event to support our local veteran needs.

Well last year we raised \$5500.00 dollars to support clear path for veterans in Vestal NY and the event outgrew the space we had rented. The 2024 event we are planning to be our largest event yet! This time we have partnered with Clear Path for Veterans in Vestal NY to have the event at a larger venue, live music, cocktail hour and of course raffles!

We are changing the name slightly to the Bugs Veterans Gala and get it on your calendar for March 9, 2024! This will be a served dinner with a lot of fun times and all the proceeds raised will go to support the mission and programs that Clear Path continues to offer local veterans. The event will be a formal event with the opportunity for us to dress up, and dance until the music stops!

Event tickets are forthcoming and will be excited to see everyone there this year!

NEW YEARS EVE NEW YEARS DAY DECEMBER CALENDAR DANCING LAUGHTER  
 FUN MUSIC PARTY POPPERS KISS FAMILY FRIENDS BIG BEN HOGMANAY  
 NEW YEAR COUNTDOWN SINGING OLD NEW BEGINNING PROMISES  
 AULD LANG SYNE BELLS RESOLUTION CELEBRATION JANUARY FIREWORKS  
 CHAMPAGNE PARTY MIDNIGHT

Flyer On Page 8!





# Vestal Public Library Events!

Looking for an interactive and engaging activity? Try

**FUNshop** ages 16+

Wednesdays 6:15 - 8PM

**mad for art**

new project every second tuesday @ 6PM

**YIN YOGA**

THURSDAYS AT 6PM

All yogis welcome, new or experienced!

LLAMASTE



**Don't Have a New Year's Resolution Yet? Here are Some Ideas!**

## VESTAL RECREATION NEW YEAR UPDATES

### A few interesting facts from 2023...

- 105** Kids played in the T-Ball League.
  - 201** Different groups picnicked at Arnold Park.
  - 185** Kids learned to play Tennis.
  - 699** Kids learned/perfected new skills in eleven different Sports Camps.
  - 565** Kids played for six weeks at three free supervised playground sites.
  - 1800** Attended the Summer Celebration.
  - 60** Girls played in the Field Hockey League.
  - 700** Attended the concerts at the gazebo.
  - 800** Attended the Vestal Community Band Concerts.
  - 150** Watched a free outdoor movie ,Puss in Boots
  - 175** Watched a free outdoor movie, Encanto
  - 61** Santa Letters written
  - 400** Attended the Tree Lighting & Sing-a-long
- \$62,496.00** Collected in revenue as of 12-15-23.

*Thanks for your support!  
We hope you had a blast!  
See you in 2024!*

### Family Swim at Vestal High School

Have fun this winter with the entire family at the Vestal Sr. High School pool, Woodlawn Dr., Vestal. No registration necessary. Cost is \$1.00 for kids and \$2.00 for adults (includes observers), payable to the staff. Exact change is appreciated. An adult must accompany children under 10 years. Registration not required. Enter the High school through the front doors. Follow discs to pool.

**Saturdays: January 6 - March 23**  
**Noon - 3:00 PM - Open Swim**  
**3:00 - 4:15 PM - Lap Swim**  
**Closed 1/13, 1/20, 2/17**



- 1. Meet New People**
- 2. Do one thing each day you don't want to**
- 3. Rekindle a long-lost hobby**
- 4. Plan your meals each week**
- 5. Write in a daily gratitude journal**
- 6. Do one daily act of kindness**
- 7. Commit to the three basics: sleep, nutrition and exercise**
- 8. Clean up your social media**

### Free Waterman Day Camp

**Surviving the Winter Woods: Could you survive a night in the winter woods?**

**Both sessions are the same, please choose one date**

“Day Camp” at the Waterman Conservation Center is an exciting adventure filled program, open when school is closed. Spend the day at Waterman's nature center learning how plants and animals stay alive through winter. The day will include crafts, lessons on the science of winter as well as winter survival skills, and an expedition through our frozen forest in search of winter's secrets! Win a prize for completing a winter adaptation scavenger hunt! Be sure to bring warm clothes, boots, lunch, and a water bottle. Program presented outside unless extreme temperatures are expected.

**Monday, January 15 - Act. #WAT-01**  
or

**Monday, February 19 - Act. #WAT-02**

**Times: Both dates run 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM**

**Ages: Open to boys & girls in 3rd and 4th Grade**

**Location: Waterman Center, Hilton Rd., Apalachin**

**To Register:** Use form on page # 7 or go to Vestalny.myrec.com and login or create an account.

**Interested in a Seasonal Job?**

The holidays are one of the best times to get a new seasonal job in New York State. Whether you're looking for a part-time gig to give you a little more gift-giving cash, a second job to support your family, or you're looking for a fresh start in a new career field, there are so many seasonal jobs that are hiring right now.

To find seasonal jobs in your area, visit seasonalworks.labor.ny.gov.



# How to Manage Seasonal Depression

Coping with seasonal affective disorder.

By Teyhou Smyth Ph.D., LMFT

It is that time of year again; the days are getting shorter, and the temperatures are beginning to drop. For people with seasonal depression, this time of year is often the beginning of a long, emotionally draining series of months. Decreased daylight can mean an increase in symptoms, including fatigue, sadness, and loss of interest in activities.

Changes in sleep and eating patterns, along with withdrawal from social engagement, can also impact people with seasonal depression, making the fall and winter months nearly intolerable for the three million people in the U.S. who struggle with this condition.

While nothing can be done about the changing seasons, we can take steps to decrease our depressive responses during the long autumn equinox and winter solstice seasons. Some people who are particularly vulnerable to seasonal depression opt to move to an area of the world in which the seasonal changes are not as severe.

Despite that the geographical solution does not work for many types of depression and other emotional health challenges, it can work wonders for seasonal depression. If moving to a new location is not an option for you, there are other strategies you can try.

- Prescription medications: Many antidepressants work well for seasonal depression. Your medical provider can help you determine which class of medication would work best for your specific symptoms.
- Over-the-counter supplements: If you prefer non-medical remedies, there are plenty of options such as St. John's Wort, SAME, vitamins D and B, magnesium, saffron, and Rhodiola. Before starting any medication or supplement, whether prescribed or OTC, ask your pharmacist for contraindications with any existing meds or conditions.

- Light therapy: Using a lightbox that emits 10,000 lux can help reduce depressive symptoms, even in the dark days of winter. Chemical changes are elicited in the brain as a result of the lightbox, and this reduces fatigue, sadness, and other symptoms.
- Exercise: When we exercise, our endorphins spike, serotonin levels increase, and our minds and bodies respond favorably. Getting outside for a walk or going for a bike ride can do wonders for seasonal depression. Skiing and building snowmen are additional cold-weather activities that may be fun and provide symptom relief.
- Cognitive behavioral therapy: CBT is an evidence-based treatment modality that works well for reducing depression. Talk therapy cannot solve the biochemical aspects of depression but may help you untangle some of your automatic thoughts and assumptions about seasonal changes as well as identifying solutions.
- Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS): In studies, patients with seasonal depression have responded well to TMS treatment. TMS is a non-invasive, effective treatment that involves the use of powerful magnets to activate brain cells to release hormones that reduce depression.
- Hypnotherapy: Professionals who are trained in hypnosis have been using this treatment modality to help alleviate depressive symptoms and other emotional health challenges for centuries. Hypnosis can be used for a wide range of symptoms and may be an effective treatment for seasonal depression.



# New York State Workers' Compensation Minimum Weekly Benefit Rate Increases

In accordance with legislation signed into law by Governor Kathy Hochul on September 6, 2023, New York State will increase the minimum weekly benefit rate for workers' compensation indemnity benefits effective January 1, 2024.

The minimum weekly benefit has been \$150 per week since 2013. Starting January 1, 2024, the minimum weekly benefit will increase annually. For the first two years, the increase will be a specified dollar amount. Starting July 1, 2026, the minimum weekly benefit will be indexed to the New York State Average Weekly Wage (NYSAWW). The institution of annual increases in the minimum weekly benefit, and eventual indexing to the NYSAWW, will ensure the minimum weekly benefit is more equitable to injured workers going forward.



# Celebrating Time: A Journey Through the History and Traditions of New Year's Eve and New Year's Day

As the final moments of the year tick away, people around the world come together to celebrate the transition from the old to the new, bidding farewell to the past and embracing the possibilities of the future. New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are universally recognized occasions that mark the end of one chapter and the beginning of another. In this article, we will explore the rich history and fascinating traditions that surround these global festivities.

## The Origins of New Year's Celebrations

The celebration of the new year is deeply rooted in history, with its origins dating back thousands of years. The earliest recorded festivities can be traced to ancient Babylon around 4,000 years ago. The Babylonians marked the new year with an 11-day festival called Akitu, during which they engaged in religious rituals, made resolutions, and crowned a new king. Similar celebrations occurred in other ancient cultures, such as the Egyptians and the Greeks, each with their unique customs.

## The Roman Calendar and January 1st

The adoption of the Julian calendar by the Romans in 45 BCE played a crucial role in shaping the date of New Year's Day. Julius Caesar declared January 1st as the first day of the year, aligning it with the solar year. The month of January was named after Janus, the Roman god

of doors and gates, who had two faces—one looking back at the old year and the other facing forward to the new. This symbolism of transition and reflection persists in the modern celebration of New Year's Eve and Day.

## Medieval and Renaissance Celebrations

Throughout the Middle Ages, the celebration of the new year varied across cultures and regions. In medieval Europe, the date of the new year fluctuated, sometimes aligning with significant religious events like Christmas or the Feast of the Annunciation. However, with the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII, January 1st became the standardized start of the new year.

## Modern Traditions: New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve is often celebrated with grand festivities and various customs worldwide. Fireworks have become an iconic part of the celebration, symbolizing the joy and excitement of the coming year. Countdowns to midnight, parties, and the singing of "Auld Lang Syne," a traditional Scottish song, are common activities during this global celebration.

In major cities around the world, people gather to witness spectacular fireworks displays, such as the one in Sydney, Australia, which is renowned for its breathtaking pyrotechnics over the Sydney Harbour.

## New Year's Day Traditions

New Year's Day is a time for reflection, resolutions, and a fresh start. Many cultures have unique traditions to ensure good luck and prosperity for the upcoming year.

In the Southern United States, eating black-eyed peas and collard greens on New Year's Day is believed to bring good fortune. In Japan, people participate in the ritual of Hatsumode, the first shrine visit of the year, seeking blessings for the months ahead.

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day have evolved over centuries, encompassing a rich tapestry of traditions and customs that reflect the diverse cultures of the world. Whether it's the ancient rituals of the Babylonians or the contemporary revelry in Times Square, the celebration of the new year continues to be a universal phenomenon, uniting people in hope, reflection, and anticipation for the journey ahead. As the clock strikes midnight, let us join hands in welcoming the new year, full of promise and possibility.





# Governor Hochul Signs Legislation to Expand Patient Access and Tackle the Rising Cost of Prescription Drugs

Legislation S.599-A/A.1707 Requires Manufacturers of Certain Prescription Drugs to Notify the Department of Financial Services of Any Proposed Wholesale Increase Costs for Prescription Drugs

Legislation A.6779-A/S.6337-A Expands Administration of Medications for Treatment of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder and by a Pharmacist; Requires the Administering Pharmacist to Notify the Prescribing Physician of the Administration of the Medication

Governor Kathy Hochul today signed two pieces of legislation aimed at lowering the price of prescription drugs and making the administration of pharmaceutical drugs safer. Legislation S.599-A/A.1707 increases the transparency requirements concerning prescription drug costs. Legislation A.6779-A/S.6337-A makes the administration of drugs by pharmacists safer and more accessible to patients by authorizing administering of additional medications for treatment of mental health and substance

use disorder and requiring communication of the administration between the pharmacist and the prescribing physician.

“Too many New Yorkers are struggling with the high cost of prescription drugs – and I am committed to doing everything in my power to help,” Governor Hochul said. “This legislation will increase transparency and safety for all New Yorkers.”

Legislation S.599-A/A.1707 increases price transparency by ensuring that price increases are reported to the State through the Department of Financial Services. Legislation A.6779-A/S.6337-A expands the universe of injectable medications available to patients through pharmacies and addresses medical transparency as it relates to pharmacists and prescribing physicians. By requiring pharmacists to notify prescribing physicians of the administration of medication, New York is requiring a layer of communication that will keep patients safe.

Assemblymember John T. McDonald III, RPh said, “Allowing patients to receive their long acting injectable medications for mental health and/or substance use disease at their local pharmacy with patient consent is a meaningful effort to reduce barriers for patients who are looking to live their life and manage their disease. Thanks to the signing of this legislation by Governor Hochul, New York State is ensuring that patients have greater access to medication and care and this is critical in underserved areas such as the urban and rural areas that are turning into health care deserts. I appreciate the Governor’s recognition that we need to meet patients where they are at and this legislation is yet another example of meeting that need.”

## Reminder:

**Friday, January 12, is an Early Release Day. Dismissal Times are VMS at 10:45 a.m. / VHS at 11:05 a.m. / Elementary at 11:45 a.m.**

## BROOME COUNTY LEGISLATORS

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## NEW YEARS FUN FACTS!

1. Over 50 tons of trash are left in Times Square after New Year’s Eve celebrations. About 3,000 pounds of that is confetti.
2. New Year’s Eve ranks fourth on Americans’ list of favorite holidays, with 41% of the population calling it their favorite.
3. The NYC ball weighs 11,875 pounds, and is covered in 2,688 Waterford crystal triangles.
4. The ball has been dropped annually since 1907, with two notable exceptions – due to World War II light restrictions, Times Square remained dark in 1942 and 1943.
5. More than 360 million glasses of sparkling wine are consumed on December 31.
6. Eighty percent of resolutions fail by February.
7. The island nation Kiribati in the Central Pacific is the first location to ring in the new year each year.
8. The ball is illuminated by 32,256 LEDs (light-emitting diodes) and can display a palette of more than 16 million vibrant colors and billions of patterns that create a spectacular kaleidoscope effect.
9. This is the seventh version of the ball. The first New Year’s Eve Ball, made of iron and wood and adorned with one hundred 25-watt light bulbs, was 5 feet in diameter and weighed 700 pounds.

## Vestal Senior Center

Open Monday - Friday 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
Old Vestal Central Jr. High School, Main St.  
Lunches served Monday - Friday at 11:30 AM

The Vestal Senior Citizens offer exciting events throughout the year along with hot nutritious lunches provided by the **Broome County Office for Aging**. **Reservations for meals must be made one day in advance by 1:00 PM. Eat in or To-Go Meals.** Cost for lunch is \$4.00 for 60 years and older and \$5.00 for those younger than 60. It is a great opportunity to get together with friends and participate in many fun-filled activities.

**Activities include:** monthly bus trips, Pinochle (Tues. at 9 AM) Bridge (Wed. at noon), Bingo (Thurs. at 10 AM), assorted card games daily, Bunko (4<sup>th</sup> Fri. of every month, following lunch), speakers on many interesting subjects, special luncheon events, bake sales and theme parties. Assorted card games daily. There is also a loaning library. Mah-Jong on Mondays at 12 PM.

### Vestal Senior Club

The club meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at 12:15 PM at the Senior Center. Annual dues are \$5.00 for members and \$10.00 for newcomers. The club sponsors trips, dinners, and picnics. The mission of the club is to foster education and fellowship, to have fun, and make contributions to the community. If you are interested in the club, please attend a meeting.

### Oil Painting Classes

Join the Vestal Sr. Citizens and “perfect” your skills in oil painting. Class meets every Wednesday from 1:00 – 3:00 PM, throughout the year at the Vestal Sr. Center. Please bring your own supplies. No classes in August. For further information call the Senior Center.

### Knitting and Crocheting Club

Wednesdays from 9:30 AM. Learn things from others and teach someone else something new.

### Chop and Chat

Every other Monday at 10am. Enjoy conversation as food is prepped and leave with a delicious recipe to cook at home. No cost but donations for the program are welcomed. Reservations are required as spots are limited. Don't miss out on this wonderful program.

**Call the Vestal Senior Center for more details on all programs at 607-754-9596.**

## Update to Vestal Response Statement

In November of this year, Joanna Hallett filed a Personal Injury - Assault/Battery/Defamation lawsuit against Vestal Central School District and Robert Carr, a teacher at Vestal High School. The lawsuit, filed on November 22, 2023, in Broome County Supreme Court located in Broome, New York, falls under the NYS Adult Survivors Act (ASA).

In response to the Personal Injury – Assault/Battery/Defamation lawsuit, the Vestal Central School District released the statement:

“Vestal Central School District was notified that an allegation of staff misconduct had been filed by a former student. We cannot comment on specifics of the case since it pertains to pending litigation of an alleged incident from 20-plus years ago. The District takes every precaution to ensure the safety of our students and staff. This includes following District procedures that involve placing staff members on administrative leave during a legal investigation. Vestal Central School District takes any allegation of this nature seriously and will fully cooperate with the legal process to ensure a thorough and fair examination of the allegations. The District remains committed to following Title IX regulations, maintaining a zero-tolerance policy against sexual misconduct, and ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all students and staff”.



# DEC Wishes Hunters an Enjoyable, Safe, and Successful Hunting Season!

Hunting season, and particularly deer season, evokes many feelings for hunters across New York. With the firearms seasons now open in both the northern and southern zones, hunters are once again enjoying the beauty of our fields and forests pursuing white-tailed deer. Deer are by far the most popular game animal in the state, and over 550,000 people buy licenses each year for an opportunity to hunt them. Hunters from all walks of life will be out looking to fill freezers and capture memories. Some hunters will be headed to a tent camp in the state's wilderness areas or staying with family in a simple cabin on a few acres in farm country. Some hunters will be trying to get a deer in the few hours they have between work shifts and others will be taking advantage of the precious few weekends during the season. Some hunters will be entering their first deer seasons and others will be living their last.

Irrespective of where you hunt or how you hunt, regardless of whether you hold out for a larger buck or take the first deer you see, it's important to enjoy yourself and others around you. While the deer may be the main attraction, it's the people and places you experience that create the memories that stick with us. If you listen to enough "huntin'" stories, you'll quickly realize that giant bucks are often not the main characters in the tale!

Slow down, be safe, follow established hunting regulations, and be in the moment. Visit <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/regulations> for more info on hunting regulations. Hunting is more than filling a tag and DEC hopes you have a great season regardless of how you choose to experience it.

# 3RD ANNUAL BUGS VETERANS GALA



March 9, 2024

**START TIME: 5PM**  
**TIOGA DOWNS CASINO RESORT**

**2384 WEST RIVER ROAD**  
**NICHOLS, NY 13812**



Semi Formal Dress Code  
Tickets Start at \$40



All Proceeds Benefit Local Veterans



## NEW YEARS EVE BALL DROP

# 2024

**STATION 45**  
**Bar Open**  
**6PM-1AM**  
**MUST BE 21 OR**  
**OLDER FOR ENTRY**

**ALL WELCOME**  
**FIREWORKS**  
**& BALL DROP**

**NEW LOCATION**

**45 LEWIS STREET**  
**DOWNTOWN BINGHAMTON**



**Come join us for a night of fun!**



**Sunday, January 14th**  
**STARTS AT 01 PM**



**Drinks and Snacks**

**Vestal United Methodist Church**

