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Some interesting events this winter



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

MY OCTOPUS TEACHER

Mamakating Environmental Education Center will be hosting a movie on January 7 at 1 P.M. The education center is located at 762 South Rd, Wurtsboro. The movie is titled My Octopus Teacher and is for the whole family to enjoy. Now that the holidays are over, time to hunker down and relax. Join us for this beautifully moving and intimate look at the amazing octopus. Make an octopus snack/craft, followed by this Academy Award winning movie. Bring your blankets and PJ's and cozy up! First in our movie series. (FYI, the subject of death is covered in this film.) Refreshments available. Cost \$5/person with a \$20 cap/ family. Please call to register 845-644-5014.

NATURE TOTS

Mamakating Environmental Education Center is hosting a new nature program from January 27 to March 3 at 10 - 10:45 A.M in which children can learn about the wonders of nature. The education center is located at 762 South Rd, Wurtsboro. MEEC is proud to announce the start of our new Nature Tots program for 2-4 year olds with an adult. This weekly class is designed to introduce children to the joys of nature at a young age and cultivate a life-long love of the natural world. Every Friday, toddlers and their care-giver will learn about nature through outdoor exploration, songs, stories, crafts and other activities. Learn all about animals, plants, seasons and weather in a fun and hands-on way! FEE: 6 week registration: \$72 for members, \$90 for non-members. Child must be 2 years of age to enroll. Kindly make other arrangements for siblings over 9 months. This is a special time for caregivers and toddlers. Pre-registration is required, please call 845-644-5014.

WINTER PLANT WALK

Mamakating Environmental Education Center will be hosting a winter

plant walk on Saturday, January 28 from 1 - 2:30 P.M. Identifying plants during the wintertime often requires us to slow down and pay attention to the more subtle characteristics of the plants. We'll explore the area around MEEC, focusing on trees and shrubs and paying attention to bark, buds, twigs, as well as the green plants that persist throughout the winter (pines and other conifers, evergreen ferns and other plants, and mosses). Between the botanizing we'll delve into winter ecology. Dress warm! And bring a loupe or lens if you have one (I will have extra to share). Richard Mandelbaum RH is an herbalist and teacher of botany and herbal medicine, with a background in



both Chinese and Western herbal traditions. He has been studying our native, local flora for over 25 years, and teaches on the subjects of clinical herbalism and botany at the ArborVitae School of Traditional Herbalism and the Center for Herbal Studies. He has also taught botany courses at Tri-State College of Acupuncture and the Won Institute of Graduate Studies. He lives with his family in Forestburgh, NY (Sullivan Co.). Cost \$5/person. Please call to register 845-644-5014.

COMMON BIRDS AT THE FEEDERS

Mamakating Environmental Education Center is hosting a bird feeding event on January 15 at 1 P.M. The education center is located at 762 South Rd, Wurtsboro. Common Birds at Your Feeder. Basic identification and information about the common birds at your winter feeder, with a short identification quiz at the end. We will also identify seeds that attract these birds, then create a feeder to take home for your bird friends. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Cost is \$5 per person with a \$20 cap/ family. Feeder Kit: \$5. Please call to register 845-644-5014.



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Getting outdoors this winter



Metro Creative Services photo

Snowmobiling can be a great source of winter fun.

BY ANTHONY MORGANO

The temperatures are dropping and snow and ice are settling in on the trees and the roads. That means it is almost time to start with the winter activities.

Snowshoeing local hiking trails is always a great way to spend time on the more mild winter days. With the leaves replaced by snow and ice, the forests take on a different look and feel, and exploring them can lead to some beautiful scenes in nature.

Along that same line, snowmobiling around local trails, with permission of course, can be a great way to get out and explore with friends. The heat radiating off the engine while the cold air surrounds you is such a surreal feeling, and it's something that you can only experience this time of the year.

Maybe the trails aren't your forte. Fishing is a major attraction in

Sullivan County, and once the ice gets thick enough, plenty of local bodies of water become great ice fishing spots. There are even different ice fishing competitions, like the King of the Ice, where you can compete with other winter anglers for prizes.

Another great outdoor treat in the Catskills is eagle watching. With the leaves off the trees, you may catch the glorious Bald Eagle tending to their nest or out searching for food. No matter what they're up to, it's always neat to watch them in their natural element.

The winter months get a bad reputation for all the new chores that they introduce, like shoveling and salting your driveways and sidewalks. Despite that, there are still ways to get out and make the winter months great, like building a snowman or a good old fashioned snowball fight.

For some, staying indoors and avoiding the below freezing temperatures is better than being outside in the snow. There are also plenty of ways to pass the time indoors during the winter months

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that will keep you satiated until the warmer weather comes along.

Putting puzzles together, watching the snow fall from the warmth of your couch or drinking hot chocolate and playing board games are great ways to keep the cold at bay.

Ice skating has grown in popularity throughout Sullivan County in the past few years, and there are a couple different places that have rinks for you to learn or practice.

Whether you go out in the winter because you want to or you have to, wearing the proper attire is a key to extending your time outdoors and generally improving your time. Gloves and hats are typically underutilized, but are a great addition for the days where the cold winds sweep through the area. Especially if you go skiing or snowboarding and you find yourself at the top of the hill with no trees to break up those icy gusts.

Winters in New York are something that you'll have to deal with as long as you live here, you might as well make the best of it by finding some fun winter activities that you enjoy.



Matt Shortall | Democrat

The King of the Ice draws a number of anglers to White Lake every year. Whether you wish to compete or enjoy some quiet time in nature, ice fishing can be a fun experience.



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Escape the hustle and bustle of home life and treat yourself or a friend to a stay at Kenoza Hall. It's a wonderful place to unplug. Take a trip to the relaxation room, filled with native plants, and inspired by German priest Sebastian Kneipp.



What if you could send someone you loved on a vacation right here at home? It's a question that's been on my mind since venturing to the Hemlock Spa in Kenoza Lake with the Democrat's photo editor in late November. If the name isn't familiar, perhaps you've heard of the spa's parent company? Foster Supply has made its name in the hospitality

industry with its boutique hotel experiences dotting the landscape of Sullivan County. Its revival of an old Kenoza Lake boarding house has breathed life into the small western Sullivan community. It's there, high atop a hill overlooking the lake that gives the hamlet its name that Foster Supply opened Hemlock Spa in 2020, offering what the brand calls "earthy luxury" to Kenoza Hall guests and the surrounding community. Yes — the surrounding community. As a lifelong residents of the county who has driven past the Hall numerous times since its opening, I'd long assumed that the amenities atop the hill were for guests and guests only. But I couldn't have been more wrong. From yoga classes — both gentle and aerial — to an outdoor hot tub and barrel sauna that are open all year long plus massages, facials, and more, the spa is open to all. Best of all, a weekday visit during the county tourism industry's quiet season allows you to feel like you've headed through the Narnia cupboard and landed on your own private island of relaxation. The spa's body treatments and relaxation room filled with native plants draws its inspiration from Sebastian Kneipp, a German priest known for his pioneering work in naturopathy and holistic medicine. Slip into a robe, throw on

a pair of spa-offered flip flops (they feel like you're walking on a cloud), and you can head out into a glass-encased nature room to enjoy lunch hand-delivered from the kitchen down the hill at Kenoza Hall's main restaurant — all while enjoying the nature around you in the comfort of a toasty room. Slip off your flip flops and take a "Kneipp walk," exploring textures of nature with your feet (don't worry, it ends in a chance to wash them). Don't worry about being late to your treatments — a massage therapist or aesthetician will come find you and talk you through your specific needs of the day. Neck sore from too much time spent on your computer or shoveling snow? Consider a hair treatment that's paired with deep tissue work around your neck and shoulders. Feeling like your skin has been dried out by the winter weather? Opt for a clay mask that will coat your body in luxurious white clay — which you can clean off in a private shower just outside the door. Best of all, though, is the feeling that you've somehow left your world behind, even if it is just for an afternoon. In fact, when we emerged from this warm cocoon with full bellies and pampered skin, we realized the sun had dropped from its highest point and was slipping toward the horizon. We'd somehow passed an after-

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY JEANNE SAGER



FILE PHOTO



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

noon away without the interruptions of phones, kids, or the worries of daily life. Curious about the spa? Appointments can be made directly online at <https://www.kenozahall.com/hemlockspa> or gift cards can be purchased so your loved one can choose their own adventure.



Let your muscles relax with a massage. Spend some time in the barrel sauna. Take a Kneipp Walk and learn about its founder's treatments based on naturopathy and holistic medicine. In addition to the treatments offered, visitors should also take a trip to the main restaurant to enjoy the terrific cuisine that is offered. After all, food is important in nourishing the body.

You can never be too prepared for winter

BY JOSEPH ABRAHAM

While we are officially in winter and eagerly await what Puxatawny Phil will predict come February, you can expect a lot of the season is left here in the Catskills. Here are just a few safety tips to keep in mind!

Cars

A lot of us have already equipped our vehicles with snow tires, or at the very least, a good pair of all-seasons. However, if you haven't and the thread is starting to wear, a good pair of winter tires is



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

PHOTOS

Having good snow tires will aid your winter commute in rough weather.

always a solid investment.

Even if you're a more careful driver and choose to not risk traveling in snow, you never know when a sudden squall or fast moving system will sweep in. It's always good to be prepared.

Other winter tips involving your vehicle according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) include: Servicing the radiator and maintaining antifreeze level; Keeping the gas tank full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines; Using a wintertime formula in your windshield washer; and preparing a winter emergency kit to keep in your car in case you become stranded.

That kit, according to the CDC, should include a cell phone, portable charger, and extra batteries. Items to stay warm, such as extra hats, coats, mittens, blankets, or sleeping bags.

Food and water. Booster cables, flares, tire pump, and a bag of sand or cat litter (for traction). Compass and maps. Flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries. And finally, a first-aid kit; and plastic bags (for sanitation).

Homes

We spent many quality hours of our lives in our homes and making sure it's ready to stand the test of winter is important, as is ensuring its a comfortable environment for ourselves and any guests we invite over.

The CDC recommends winterizing your home, which can include installing weather stripping, insulation, and storm windows. They also suggest insulating water lines that run along exterior walls, cleaning out gutters and repairing roof leaks.


Making sure your heating system is professionally serviced, cleaned, ventilated and working properly is another must. You should also inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys.

In case of emergency, it's also a good idea to have an alternate heating source and/or fuels available.

Having working smoke detectors in each bedroom, outside of sleeping areas and on every is also crucial, as is having carbon monoxide detectors.

And finally, while some may laugh at folks in shows like Doomsday Preppers, it isn't a bad idea to have extra supplies and foods that do not need refrigeration in case you are in a situation without power for a number of days. In recent years we had a couple of storms devastate certain townships, tearing down trees and causing long outages.

At the end of the day, even those that are the most prepared may be faced with a winter emergency. Luckily, there are several great small and local businesses that can assist with just about every issue and are ready to help!



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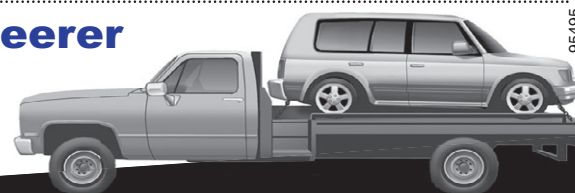
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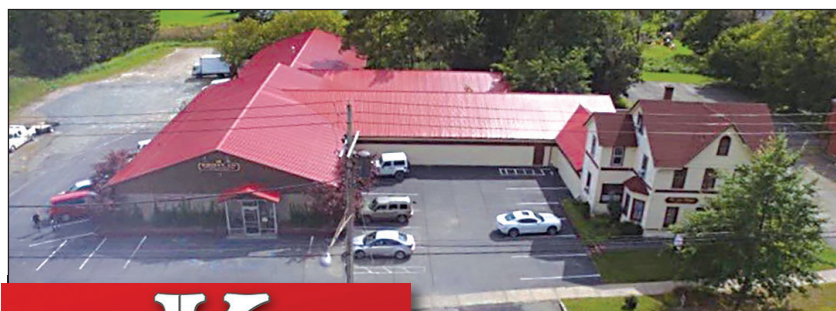
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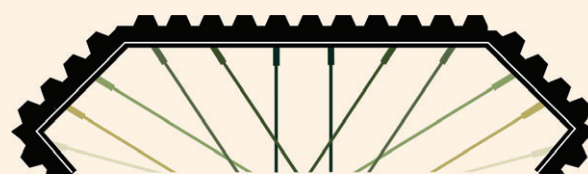
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STORY AND PHOTOS
BY DEREK KIRK

For many in Sullivan County, the winter weather brings more than just the festive feelings of the holiday season. Skiers, snowboarders,

and other winter outdoor enthusiasts know that despite the holidays coming to pass, the magical time of riding down the mountains is still in full swing.

But of course, it's hard to find a way to make tracks in fresh snow without



Guenther's Ski Haus Honesdale location is located at 945 Main St. Honesdale, PA, and the Elk Mountain location is at 165 PA-374, Clifford, PA.



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the proper gear and location. A great place to start to gear up is Guenther's Ski Haus, which has two locations - one at 945 Main St., Honesdale, PA, and another located near Elk Mountain at 165 PA-374, Clifford, PA.

Under the ownership of Bill and Lori Hopkins, the ski shop has remained a trusted and experienced place to stop for over 20 years.

Guenther's Ski Haus offers all you need to keep warm from head to toe, and offers not only a variety of clothing, but skis, snowboards, boots, gloves, and much more that will protect and shelter from the winds on the slopes.

In addition to their numerous name-brand products, Guenther's Ski Haus's Elk Mountain location offers services to keep your gear



Guenther's Ski Haus carries numerous clothing items that will serve to keep out the cold, such as jackets and coats, gloves, snowgear, and much more.

There is no shortage of choices when picking out your next set of skis or snowboards.



ship-shape, like tune-ups, major and minor repairs, and sizings. Smaller tune-ups are available at the Honesdale location. Rentals for skis and snowboards are also available.

Little ones looking to make some of their first trips down the mountain alongside their families can find their fresh gear at Guenther's Ski Haus as well. They carry a variety of styles, colors, and sizes for young children who are looking to make some memories this winter.

Not exactly sure what a friend or loved one might need to complete their winter wardrobe? Gift cards are also available for purchase so no matter what, the skier and snowboarder in your life can find the perfect items for their next trip down the mountain.

The January hours for Guenther's Ski Haus are Monday and Tuesday from 10 AM to 4 PM, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 10 AM to 5 PM.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14W

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13W

Friday from 10 AM to 6 PM, and closed on Sunday.

The phone number to contact the Honesdale location is (570) 253-5528. For the Elk Mountain location, dial (570) 222-2754. Reach them by email at guenthersskihaus@gmail.com.

Thankfully, there's still time to get some outdoor adventuring in before the end of the season. Additionally, the Villa Roma Resort offers not only skiing and snowboarding, but many other activities that can keep the whole family busy until the snow melts away.

For updated information on prices and availability, check out the Villa Roma's website at www.villaroma.com.



One size need not fit all at Guenther's Ski Haus, as they carry a wide variety of boot sizes, designs, and colors that will make you stand out while sliding down the slopes.



What to do this Winter

'Great ideas for enjoying winter in the Catskills'

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How to prepare for winter storms

Winter arrives with fanfare as Christmas, Chanukah and New Year's Eve all take place within days of the first of the season. Parties and shopping may distract people from the weather around them, but after resolutions are made and the decorations are packed away, it's not long before it's time to confront winter's wrath.

Storms are commonplace in January and February in this part of the world, and we all know that March storms can get pretty serious as well. Knowing how to prepare for storms can keep people safer and prevent home damage. If a storm is forecasted, follow these guidelines.

- Charge a mobile phone and other electronic devices to full battery in advance of the storm in case power goes out.
- Stock the home with extra batteries for flashlights and battery-powered devices, such as a portable radio.
- Invest in a car charger to charge devices if the power is out for some time.
- Keep a supply of canned or boxed nonperishable items, as well as convenience foods that do not need to be cooked, like granola bars.
- Periodically check to ensure that the first



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In March of 2018 a debilitating winter storm caused the kind of delays, inconveniences, and dangers as with any storms in January or February.

aid kit is stocked with items that have not expired.

- Refill medications so that they are on hand in the event weather makes it challenging to get to the store.
- Keep emergency supplies of bottled water. If you forget this, fill the bathtub up with fresh water. Extra water will be needed for toilet flushing if yours is a septic system.
- Have

warm blankets on hand and sleeping bags for each person in the home.

- Unplug all electronic devices if the power goes out to protect against a surge and damage when the power is restored.
 - Exercise caution when burning candles, opting for flashlights and lanterns instead.
 - If it's very cold outside, move refrigerated and frozen items outdoors so they do not spoil in an unpowered refrigerator.
 - Do not use gas stoves, charcoal grills or other open-flame heat sources for warmth indoors. Carbon monoxide gas can build up inside and prove deadly.
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions when using a backup generator for power.
 - Stock up on gasoline for vehicles and to power gas-driven generators.
 - Use power company websites and apps to report outages and stay apprised of restoration status.
 - Be cautious of downed power lines in the area when driving or walking.
- Winter storms can be beautiful but dangerous without ample preparation.

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