

helmet required; participants may bring their own or use the Y's.

To sign up, visit the YMCA Membership Office, Monday through Thursday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. or Friday, 9am to 3pm. The instructor, Tom Polk, may be contacted with questions at (845) 338-3810, ext. 105 or at tpolk@ymcaulster.org.

For more information and to get involved with Bike-Friendly Kingston, visit BikeFriendlyKingston.org or www.facebook.com/groups/bikefriendlykingstonny.

Register now for SUNY Ulster summer session

Registration is underway at SUNY Ulster for two summer sessions with day, evening and online courses. Summer Session I begins May 23 and runs through July 5. Summer Session II begins July 11 and runs through August 12. More than 60 online courses are being offered, open to SUNY Ulster students as well as visiting students who may transfer credits back to their institution. Classroom courses are offered at the college's Stone Ridge campus and the Kingston Center of SUNY Ulster. Course offerings are available at www.sunyulster.edu/summer.

Troop 8 plans runs for May 15

"Run to the Hills," a 10K run, 5K run/walk, family 1-mile fun run event put on by Sawkill Boy Scout Troop 8 to promote fitness and support Troop activities, will be held Sunday, May 15 starting at 10 a.m. at the Sawkill Firehouse, 906 Sawkill Road.

Runners will traverse gently rolling courses along the scenic Sawkill Creek on tree lined roads through residential neighborhoods. All courses will be well marked with water stations approximately every two miles.

Sponsors are welcome — visit www.troop0008.org/r2h for more information.

Provoke with art

The Dutchess-based Omega Institute is offering scholarships and tiered pricing for its new workshop, "Art & Activism: Agent-Provocateurs," to be held May 27-30. The scholarship application deadline is April 29.

Participants will spend the weekend making and experiencing activist art—including visual art, music, performance, and improv. Together the group will

share their passions for change, push creative boundaries, and connect creativity to action.

The workshop is being led by Joe Raiola and Patty Goodwin. To learn more, visit eOmega.org, or call 800.944.1001.

La cage aux film

The Bardavon will conclude its eighth season of presenting classic films on the big screen at UPAC in Kingston with the 1996 comedy *The Birdcage* on Friday April 22 at 7:30 p.m. All seats are just \$6 (come in drag, get in free). These screenings are made possible with support from the *Daily Freeman* and Rondout Savings Bank.

Directed by Mike Nichols and written by Elaine May, the remake of the phenomenally popular French musical farce *La Cage aux Folles* stars Robin Williams, Nathan Lane, Gene Hackman and Diane Wiest as two dramatically disparate couples who manage to reconcile their vast differences for the sake of their children who are getting married.

Tickets are available in person at the UPAC Box Office, 601 Broadway, Kingston (339-6088). Tickets are also available through

Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000 or www.ticketmaster.com. UPAC is handicapped accessible and offers secure and convenient parking. For more information, go to www.bardavon.org.

Arts funding opportunities

The Ulster County Cultural Services & Promotion Fund (UCCSPF) is dedicated to maintaining the artistic and cultural assets of Ulster County. Awards are available for capacity building, programmatic support and strategic collaborations for the arts community. The deadline to apply is May 12.

The program promotes Ulster County through cultural and artistic activities that add to the economy and quality of life for county residents. Financial resources are made available by the county Legislature and administered by Arts Mid-Hudson. Awards for capacity building initiatives will range from \$2,500 to \$9,500 and can be used for administrative or programmatic capacity building and institutional advancement projects. Awards for programmatic support will range from \$1,000 to 4,000 and can be used for arts and cultural programs and other activities that

increase participation in the arts in Ulster County. Appointments for individualized feedback on potential initiatives are available. Complete guidelines are available at www.artsmidhudson.org/for-organizations/ulster-county-funds/. Reservations may be made by calling (845) 454-3222 ext. 16 or visit www.goo.gl/forms/GjhBZcw-wid or email grants@artsmidhudson.org. Se habla Español.

Nursing program info session

SUNY Ulster will hold an information session about the nursing program on Tuesday, May 5 at 4 p.m. at the Stone Ridge Campus, Hardenbergh Hall, Nursing Lab (HAR 134). The requirement that nursing students reside in Ulster County has been eliminated.

The session will provide information on the admissions process, program curriculum (including prerequisites and co-requisite) as well as new testing requirements. All sessions are led by Lisa Moruzzi, RN, MSN – nursing department chair and Lucia Pecore, assistant director of admissions. More information is available by calling (845) 687-5022. RSVP online at www.sunyulster.edu/

to further restore the building. "If we stabilize the building and somebody approached us about buying the building, that would be the easiest thing. If it was registered as a National Historic Landmark, the buyer could get tax credits for restoring it."

He noted that Kingston Preservation plans to pursue the landmark designation — and has the expertise to assist homeowners in the city to do this as well, given that the two other people so far appointed to the board represent a wealth of historic preservation experience: Weston Davey, who serves on the city's Historic Landmarks Preservation board, has worked at Historic Huguenot Street, the New York State Historic Preservation Office and FDR Presidential Library and Museum. Kitty McCullough has more than 40 years of experience in non-profit management and historic preservation, including serving as director of a Main Street program, and has prepared numerous successful National Register of Historic Places nominations, including the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater. (McEvoy himself also has extensive experience listing properties on the National Register.)

The Booth House, whose building material is unusual — "rubble stone" left over from the cuttings of the massive bluestone slabs rather than the usual neatly cut blocks of bluestone — has become a subject of fascination and debate among local preservationists. A special March 26 presentation on the house at City Hall that featured numerous speakers, including architectural historian and author William Rhoads and Kingston historian Edwin Ford. Presenter Mark Yallum, an expert on the area's vernacular architecture (he founded and hosts the Facebook group *Written in Stone: Ulster County's Historical Legacy*), said that the bluestone walls cover a much older limestone house.

Indeed, when McEvoy researched the city and county records he discovered the property dated back to 1770. According to Marius Schoonmaker's *The History of Kingston, New York*, the property belonged to the Dewitt family, which owned a house on the spot adjacent to a millpond fed by the Twaalfskill Brook, which parallels Wilbur Avenue and once powered a number of grist mills. (Edwin Ford's book *Street Whys* describes a flour mill that was built along the brook in 1863; the three-story building measured 47 by 32 feet and had a 12-foot-high water wheel and two mill stones.)

THE HAMLET OF WILBUR IS KNOWN AS THE epicenter of the bluestone industry, but limestone also played a significant role in its history, McEvoy noted. Nearby was a former limestone quarry, which is marked on an 1858 map as "Kingston Lime and Cement" and whose remains are located near the railroad trestle over Rondout Creek. The limestone bluffs along the creek were mined after construction began on the Delaware & Hudson Canal, which connected the creek and Hudson River to the Pennsylvania coalfields, in the mid 1820s.

McEvoy, who hasn't yet been inside the house, said its Greek Revival style pointed to construction in the mid-19th century, when the canal traffic was at its height and the bluestone and cement industries were booming; he speculated it replaced an older limestone house. He looks forward to testing Yallum's theory "as soon as I take title. I'll take a small section of wall and see if it's limestone underneath."

Preservationists are also divided as to whether Nathaniel Booth, a bluestone dealer in Wilbur whose colorful diary sheds light on 19th-century life in Kingston and elsewhere, lived in the house. Geoffrey Miller, Ulster County's newly appointed historian and an expert on the diaries who also spoke at the Booth House forum at City Hall, said Booth owned a dry goods store next to the Twaalfskill firehouse just down the road. Yallum speculated that Booth would have been motivated to cover the old limestone house in bluestone since that was the stone he would want to promote to the hundreds of bluestone-laden wagons passing by on what was known as the "bluestone toll road" (which Miller noted are vividly chronicled in Booth's diary).

Whatever the house's exact provenance, Rhoads noted that the Booth House "deserves preservation and listing on the Register of Historic Places" as a landmark of "one of the industrial roots of today's Kingston."

The preservation of the building by Kingston Preservation sets a precedent that bodes well for other historic properties at risk of being torn down. The incorporation papers of the new nonprofit delineate its wider purpose to preserve historic and architecturally significant buildings in the area, specifically through the "acquisition, restoration and re-transfer of such properties to new owners as well as providing additional services with respect to such properties, informing the public regarding the benefits of historic preservation and working with governmental agencies, community groups, businesses and other non profits on historic preservation matters."

When the bylaws are drafted, "we'll make sure we have all the policies and procedures in place," McEvoy said. He added that the new organization might also partner with either Friends of Historic Kingston (FHK) or Kingston Land Trust for a specific project or purpose, noting that neither organization — contrary to the expectations of some in the community — have the means to take the Booth House on.

Actually, Kingston Preservation revives a program FHK initiated back in the late 1960s and 1970s, when the fledgling preservation group purchased houses threatened by the wrecking ball from urban renewal or from neglect and then restored and sold them to private owners. Today, the organization, which has only one paid staff member, no longer has the resources to do that, McEvoy said. "One reason the Friends got out of this is there's no profit for the nonprofit, since the purchase price was less than what the Friends invested. This is not a real estate development."

After the initial stabilization, Kingston Preservation envisions marketing the property and possibly doing further restoration. "We'll need to frequently monitor the property, given its location right on the road, where there's been some vandalism," McEvoy said.

While acquiring and saving an abandoned building over 150 years old is a complex process the precise outcome of which cannot yet be foreseen, Kingston Preservation has taken the most important first step. McEvoy credited that success to the collective effort made by numerous individuals. "The first person we want to thank is Mayor Noble for having the political courage to take this on," McEvoy said. "The family member of the owner of the building was also wonderful throughout the process. I also want to thank Alderman Brad Will and Mark Yallum as well as [Kingston] assistant corporation counsel Dan Gartenstein for being cooperative. The Common Council also stepped forward. My aim in forming Kingston Preservation was to show this could be done."

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