

HRVI



YOUR GATEWAY TO THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY

# Hudson River Valley Institute

The Academic Arm of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area

## Clear Sailing on the Hudson River

The year was 1966. American folk singer and musician, [Pete Seeger](#), had just shifted his environmental efforts from Civil Rights and Vietnam War rallies to more local issues of the Hudson River. At the time, the river was polluted with raw sewage and toxic chemicals dumped by businesses and factories. It became so polluted from this open disposal of toxic waste that it was uninhabitable by its native species.

To raise awareness from the people of the Hudson River Valley, Seeger and other environmental activists helped to erect the sloop known as [Clearwater](#). The idea was to build a vessel that replicated a classic mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Hudson River sloop in order to entice the public to the river and to witness firsthand the pollution and how to help preserve it in the future. In 1969, over 2,000 people supported the launch of *Clearwater* in South Bristol, Maine.

Seeger continued to raise awareness about the increasing damage to the Hudson River and was a key member in drafting the Clean Water Act of 1972, which stated that no longer could any toxic substances be disposed in the

Hudson. Since then, the members of Clearwater have been working to revive and protect the Hudson River. Until recently, the Hudson was the number one cleanup site of the environmental Superfund, a federal program charged with the allocation of funds to clean hazardous waste in the environment. Now, the Hudson



River has shed itself of the polluted reputation and is becoming more habitable for natural life and human usage.

Today, *Clearwater* still sails from Albany to as far as New Jersey to raise awareness about the Hudson River. The sloop even holds [educational sessions](#) as well as

conducts scientific studies. The staff of Clearwater is dedicated to the Hudson's restoration in conducting research and informing the public about its various threats, as well as what the community of the Hudson River Valley can do to [aid](#) the river that provides them with historical wealth.

Recent events for *Clearwater* and the staff was the launch of *Clearwater* for the spring season, celebrated April 7<sup>th</sup> at Lynch's Marina in Poughkeepsie. Coming soon is the [Clearwater Festival](#) on June 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. This event hosts over 15,000 people a year and has been held for over three decades. Musicians, speakers, vendors, environmental exhibitionists, displays, and grassroots activist booths are presented to educate those that attend, as well as to raise funds for the restoration of both *Clearwater* and the Hudson River. For more information, contact the Clearwater office in Poughkeepsie, NY at (845) 454-7673 or visit their [website](#).

RJ Langlois

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- Coverage of the anniversary of Washington's arrival to Newburg in page 4
- Meet more of HRVI's current interns on page 4

## Meet the Historian —

When I ask people how they feel about their jobs, most usually reply with a long pause or the overly enthusiastic, “Eh.” When I asked Thom Usher about his job as the Beekman Town Historian, he said: “I enjoy it very much. It’s something I love.”

By the end of our phone conversation, I was not only convinced that Mr. Usher was passionate about the history of Beekman, but also that I should visit the wealth of historical sites that Beekman has to offer.

Thanks to efforts from Mr. Usher and others dedicated to promoting and preserving Beekman history, I can explore the [Town Hall](#), constructed just prior to America’s entrance into World War II, and the last W.P.A project that Franklin D. Roosevelt funded. I can arrange for a tour of the [Old Upper Road](#), an Indian path used to transfer goods and military supplies from Fishkill to Hartford during the Revolutionary War, which has changed little in route over the past 225 years. Also to be

explored is the [Beekman Furnace](#) built by Clove Spring Iron Works in 1873, and the nearby Dalton Farm’s Roosevelt House in Poughquag, recreated by the Friends of Beekman History to look more like FDR’s office when he was in residence. Mr. Usher’s most recent project is the renovation of the [Grist Mill](#) at the junction of Poughquag and Beekman off the Old Upper Road. Mr. Usher hopes that this can one day house a town museum and tourist and visitor center.

Mr. Usher also oversees the [Town of Beekman history website](#), maintaining the online newsletter, and compiling data to flesh out the town’s history. He is committed to documenting the oral history of Beekman and is working on collecting recordings of speeches made from the Town Hall during events such as the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the town (1988). Though he is relatively new to the historian post (he was appointed in 2004), he has been an active member of

the community since moving to Beekman from Brooklyn in 1976. Sharing his lifetime interest in history with others, Mr. Usher joined the [Beekman](#) and [Dutchess](#) County Historical Societies, [the Dutchess County Municipal Historians](#), and the Dutchess and New York State Genealogy Associations. After his retirement from IBM, he became the president of the Beekman Historical Society from 2003-2004 until accepting the position as the Town Historian.

Mr. Usher recently self-published two books chronicling Beekman’s history: “The History of Beekman” (2003) and “The Spirit of Beekman” (2005). For more information, Thom Usher can be contacted at 845-724-5364 or at [beekmanhistory@aol.com](mailto:beekmanhistory@aol.com).

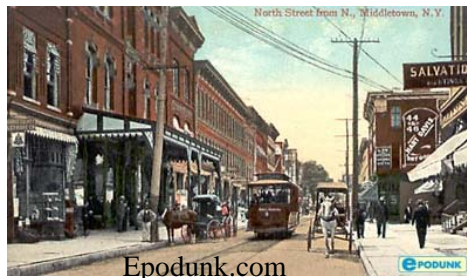
Amanda Hurlburt

## Featured Historic Town — Middletown

Originally part of the Town of Wallkill (established in 1772), Middletown became an autonomous village in 1848. Though an 1872 charter, this rural community established its police department in which eight chief officers patrolled the newly created wards. By 1888, Middletown evolved into a city, augmenting the size of its law enforcement and relocating the station to City Hall on James Street. Since 1972, it has been in its present location at the U.S. Postal Office. To protect the force from partisan politics, a Middletown Police Commission was instituted in the early 1940s and today the five-member Commission serves as an advisory role.

In 1866, Elisha Pearl Wheeler envisioned a railroad that linked the Great Lake lines of Oswego and Erie with those of northern New Jersey and of New York Harbor. Middletown then functioned as a major stopping point before the rail line turned due west towards Oswego. The following year he served as a trustee member of the Middletown, Unionville and Water Gap Railroad and was affiliated with a Wallkill commission for the New York and

Oswego Midland Railroad. He achieved his goal of a united railroad system in 1873, when he drove the final stake at the Westfield flats in Oswego. Wheeler also contributed to the building of Middletown’s Grace Episcopal Church and served as president of the city’s Board of Education. He later became the director of the Middletown and Crawford Railroad and was appointed a trustee of The Middletown State Homeopathic Hospital.



One of the most famous Middletown homes is the Webb Horton House constructed by Frank J. Lindsey from 1902-1906, a well respected oil and textile magnate who had also established the Webb Memorial Hospital and the Webb Horton Presbyterian Church. The last Horton to live in the house was Eugene Horton, who had bequeathed the estate to a cousin and employee, John Morrison. Morrison maintained

of the property until his death in 1947, when he willed it to the hospital. The hospital sold the grounds to facilitate the development of Orange County Community College in 1950. Today, the Webb Horton House is known as Morrison Hall, serving as a place for educational, administrative and maintenance purposes and is on the United States National Register of Historic Places.

In the heart of Middletown stands the Middletown Paramount Theatre. Its doors first opened on Tuesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> 1927 featuring the film *The Big Pond*. Unfortunately, the theatre closed in 1978 following failures of numerous operators to draw business. The Arts Council of Orange County purchased the building in 1981 and restored the theatre, reopening it in September 1985. In April 2002 it was put on the National Register of Historic Places. Mayor Joseph De Stefano received credit for his vision of restoring the seventy-two year old Paramount to its former days.

Paul Contarino

## Featured Historic Site — Storm King Art Center

As industrial and residential construction encroaches on forested fields and woodlands, the [Storm King Art Center](http://www.stormking.org) in Mountainville, New York celebrates postwar American and European abstract sculpture in the context of the majestic Hudson Highlands. Panoramic views of the Hudson River Valley envelop this permanent collection of stainless steel, bronze, granite, stone and wood abstract sculptures from the 1960s to the present. The large abstract works of David Smith, Henry Moore and Louise Nevelson are dwarfed by the grandeur of the landscape; the pieces, unobstructed by the walls of traditional indoor museums, punctuate the large open space.

The Storm King Art Center was founded in 1960 by Ralph E. Ogden and H. Peter Stern. Inspired by the outdoor art display of sculpture artist David Smith, the museum bought thirteen of Smith's sculptures for the Mountainville landscape in 1967 and opened a permanent collection five years later.

At the Storm King Art Center, nature and art are in a tug of war for attention; the imposing statues of David Smith, George



[www.stormking.org](http://www.stormking.org)

Ricky and Barbara Hepworth, among many others, have finally found their match. The Hudson Highlands couch dramatic modern structures in 500 acres of preserved landscape. Still, the collection profits from its host. Changing light and weather patterns accentuate and highlight the modern sculpture within the cycle of nature. Where modern art intrudes on wilderness, it succumbs to its force. The Storm King Art Center offers magnificent views of the Valley and an intriguing environment for modern sculpture art. The Center is a nonprofit educational organization governed by a board of trustees. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$9 for senior citizens and students. More information is available at <http://www.stormking.org>

Igor Volsky

## Featured Historic Website — Boscobel Museum

Completed in 1808, Boscobel has stood as a testament of early American artistry and elegance. The house, designed by States Dyckman and completed by his wife Elizabeth, has had several different owners until the estate was purchased by the government in the 1950s. At that time, a veteran's hospital was built on the site and Boscobel was declared an "excess." The house was sold for thirty-five dollars and was slated for destruction. However, with the help of local historians, Boscobel was recognized for its fantastic example of early-American architecture and decoration and reconstructed in Garrison, New York, fifteen miles north from its original location.

Located on a bluff overlooking the Hudson River, Boscobel is well known for its [breathtaking views of the Hudson River Valley and surrounding area](http://www.boscobel.org). The unique history and character of the "house museum of the



[www.boscobel.org](http://www.boscobel.org)

Federal period" are also captured on the Boscobel website. Visitors to the website can explore not only a detailed [history of the site](http://www.boscobel.org), but can also look at [highlights of the collections](http://www.boscobel.org) of the home, such as the early-American furniture. Also, the [grounds](http://www.boscobel.org) and [museum gift shop](http://www.boscobel.org) can be examined through photos and the diverse selection of [events](http://www.boscobel.org) is detailed. Boscobel is most well known for its distinguished Federal architecture and wide collection of Federal-style arts and furniture, all available online. The website offers the [most recent press-releases](http://www.boscobel.org), as well as information on becoming a member of the [Friends of Boscobel](http://www.boscobel.org) organization.

There are many different events held at Boscobel throughout the year, all of which are detailed on their website. Events include seminars sponsored by the Friends of Boscobel, such as "Hudson River Painters of the 1825-1875 Period" and "Fashion in the Federal Period," both in April. From June to September Boscobel serves as home to the annual Hudson Valley Shakespeare festival. The grounds of the site are opened free of charge to artists in order to capture the beautiful landscape and scenery on the second Tuesday of every month. Group and house tours are also offered to the public and the site is open to school trips as well as receptions and weddings.

Admission to Boscobel ranges from \$12 for adults to \$5 for children, and is open April through December. Boscobel is closed May 20, 2007, all Tuesdays and Thanksgiving and Christmas. For more information, visit [www.boscobel.org](http://www.boscobel.org).

Maria Zandri

## Patriot's Weekend 2007 — Washington's Arrival to Newburg

Overlooking the blooming banks of the mid-Hudson, an 18<sup>th</sup> century stone farmhouse stands proudly, guarding the property that once welcomed the nation's most esteemed general and his troops during a crucial moment in the American Revolution. On Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, [Washington's Headquarters State Historic Site](#) will embrace the return of its general in a magnificent ceremony; the event marks the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Washington's stay at Newburgh, using the strategically-situated Hasbrouck House as his military headquarters from April 1782 until August 1783.

The event officially commences at midday with the Brigade of the American Revolution's display of military regalia, and afterward, author Thomas Fleming will present his latest written work, "[The Perils of Peace: America's Struggle for Survival after Yorktown](#)," due this fall.

Following the lecture, Washington's guests will share in the excitement of their general's glorious entrance amidst cannon-fire and musical fanfare. A reenactment battle and retreat ceremony will mark the conclusion of the presentation and allow visitors to



Hasbrouck House, Newburgh NY (courtesy Wikipedia.com)

tour the museum and grounds.

Built in 1750 and employed as a gristmill by a Huguenot couple, the Jonathan Hasbrouck property was acquired by the State of New York a century later and was the first pub-

licly operated historic site in the nation. Furnished to reflect its condition during the Revolutionary War, the house still includes the separate kitchen that was constructed specifically to accommodate the slaves and troops of Washington's stay. While stationed at the house, General Washington rejected the idea of an American monarchy and successfully neutralized a mutiny among his men. There, he also created the [Badge of Military Merit](#), a forerunner of the Purple Heart, and on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1783, issued the "cessation of hostilities," thus ending the Revolutionary War.

Admission to the program on the grounds is free; for information regarding guided tours and ticket prices, please contact Washington's Headquarters State Historic Site by calling 845-562-1195.

Jessica Friedlander

## Meet the Intern — Danny Fatto

Daniel Fatto is a Junior at Marist College with a major in Digital Media and a Minor in Studio Art. Originally from Staten Island, Danny



(as he is more commonly known) left the city life to the city of Poughkeepsie to continue his artistic path in life. Planning on becoming a graphic designer/ animator of some sort, HRVI presented the perfect opportunity to gain some experience and have his work printed profes-

sionally. Thinking outside the box is one of his main specialties and when it comes to being creative and innovative, he's the guy to talk to.

When not worrying about layouts and which colors are right for the mood, Danny likes to snowboard, paint, hunt and play handball. Good movies and old cartoons are always a plus too.

Eventually he plans to be famous and not have to worry about looking for clients and hunting for design jobs, but that people would be knocking down his door for a chance at his designs. Also, he

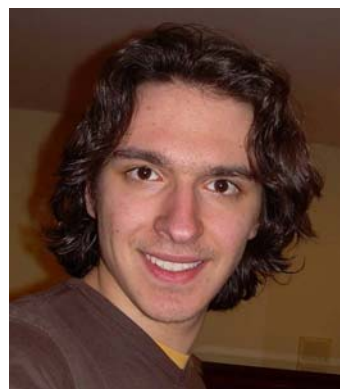
would like to eventually have a gallery of the artwork he has done on the side, when everything is settled after college.

Danny Fatto

## Meet the Intern — Igor Volsky

Igor Volsky is a nomad by nature. Born in the former Soviet Union in January of 1986, Igor was snatched from his crib just three months later. Following the deadly Chernobyl nuclear explosion of April 1986, Igor and his family serendipitously avoided radiation by showing themselves into the last train leaving for Moscow, as its doors were closing. Greater migration followed. To escape the confines and limitations of Russian anti-Semitism, Igor and his family immigrated to Israel in the mid-

dle of the first Gulf War, before finally settling in the United States two years later. After attending a number of different public schools and living in towns across New Jersey, Igor developed an interest in politics, government, and ultimately, history. He is in his third year of studying history at Marist College and is especially interested in the history and politics of American foreign policy and global intervention.



Igor Volsky

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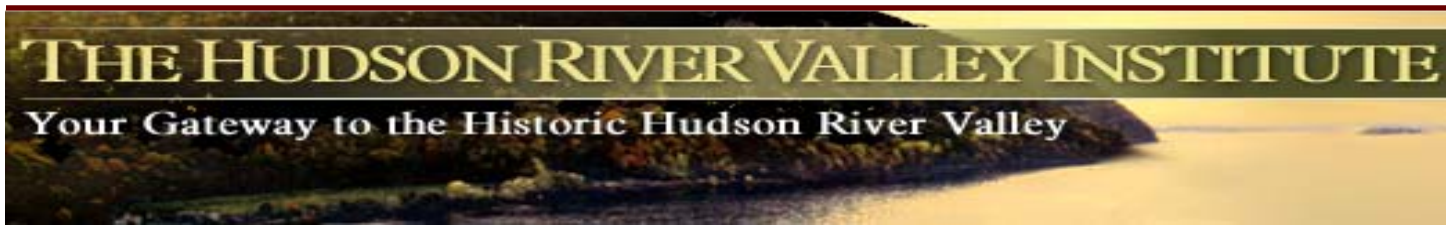
*The Hudson River Valley:  
"The Landscape that Defined America"*

[www.hudsonrivervalley.org](http://www.hudsonrivervalley.org)

The Hudson River Valley is one of only 37 Congressionally designated National Heritage Areas in the United States. As one of the most important regions in the United States, it is the fountainhead of a truly American identity. Recognizing the area's national value, Congress formed the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area in 1996 to recognize, to preserve, to protect, and to interpret the nationally-significant history and resources of the Valley for the benefit of the nation.

The Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College is the academic arm of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Its mission is to study and to promote the Hudson River Valley and to provide educational resources for heritage tourists, scholars, elementary school educators, environmental organizations, the business community, and the general public. Its many projects include the publication of the Hudson River Valley Review and the management of a dynamic digital library and leading regional portal site.

As the center for the study of the Hudson River Valley, the Hudson River Valley Institute (HRVI) at Marist College is the central hub for information about the region. HRVI serves heritage tourists, scholars, elementary and secondary school educators, environmental organizations, the business community, and the general public seeking to know more about the region that Congress called "the Landscape that defined America."



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The newsletter is the production of the interns of HRVI