



# DOBBS FERRY

— Coming Up This Week —

## Lunar New Year Celebration

Saturday, Feb. 7, 2–4 p.m.

Dobbs Ferry Public Library

Traditional food, activities, and shadow puppets by Chinese Theatre Works

## Blood Drive

Sunday, Feb. 8, 9 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Greenburgh Hebrew Center, 515 Broadway

Schedule an appointment at

[donate.nybc.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/330075](https://donate.nybc.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/330075)

## Galentine's Craft & Sip Night

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 6–8 p.m.

Dobbs Ferry Public Library

\$10 suggested donation

Registration required: [president@dflfriends.org](mailto:president@dflfriends.org)

## School Board Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 7 p.m.

Middle/high school library

## Board of Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m.

Village Hall

## Comedy Open Mic

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 8 p.m.; sign-up starts at

7:30. Divino's Speakeasy, 524 Warburton

Ave., Hastings. For ages 18 and up.

One-drink minimum for performers

## Virtual Town and Gown Literary Discussion Group

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m.

Discuss "Ethan Frome" and "Summer"

by Edith Wharton

Register: [sbramble@dobbsferrylibrary.org](mailto:sbramble@dobbsferrylibrary.org)

## Library Board Meeting

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m.

Dobbs Ferry Public Library

## Zoning Board Meeting

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 8 p.m.

Village Hall

## Valentine's Cookie Party for Kids & Teens

Friday, Feb. 13, 4–6 p.m.

Dobbs Ferry Public Library

\$5 suggested donation

Registration required: [president@dflfriends.org](mailto:president@dflfriends.org)

## Got news?

Email staff writer Julian Michael Caldwell at

[julian@rivertownsdispatch.com](mailto:julian@rivertownsdispatch.com)



Tom Mooney

# Sounds of Valor taps musicians who served

*Project to culminate with concert and documentary*

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Dobbs Ferry resident Tom Mooney is looking for Westchester musicians who have served in the military to play in an all-veteran band that will be the subject of a documentary and headline a performance at the Irvington Theater in April.

The band, called Sounds of Valor, will perform and record all original music written by the group, with video of the entire process — including auditions — being recorded for the documentary. The project calls for a variety of musicians, including vocalists, drummers, percussionists, pianists, guitarists, bassists, and horn and banjo players.

The collaboration is the brainchild of Mooney, who served in the Army and was stationed in Vietnam from 1967–68. Mooney is also a drummer, singer, and songwriter who has been making music since his early teens.

"This is about a joyful meeting of a great community of men and women who wore the uniform and served their country," Mooney told the Dispatch. "This isn't a hero's story. Anybody who wore a uniform was a hero, whether you were in combat or not, because you gave up time in your life for your country."

Mooney, who grew up in Brooklyn and moved to Dobbs Ferry from Boston three years ago, began his career as a drummer several years before being drafted at age 19. After returning home from Vietnam, he spent more than a decade as a front man in blues-rock bands and performing in clubs throughout New York City.

Though he pivoted to a career in media

production in his 30s, Mooney had multiple shots at record deals, when he was paid by record labels to record a demo, but was never signed. Sounds of Valor aims to find veterans of all ages with a similar passion for music, who are looking to build community through song and the special bond they share as veterans.

"You wore a uniform and you want to be around people who understand that, and how it affected your family," Mooney said. "It's an amazing feeling to talk to people like that and connect so quickly because you have something so important in common. And you put a band around it, and it takes it to another level."

Thirty-five years ago, while Mooney was running a production company, he met Michael Campbell, who was an advertising creative director in New York City. The business relationship turned into a friendship that has endured even as Campbell now lives in New Mexico, where, having retired from advertising, he runs a nonprofit called Docufilms. Docufilms is an Emmy-winning company that produces projects on behalf of charitable organizations or for groups that have a societal benefit Docufilms believes in. During a visit to New York in November, Campbell caught up with Mooney and was inspired by his friend's idea for Sounds of Valor.

"He's telling me this," Campbell told the Dispatch, "and I just say, 'Tommy, this is a documentary. It has stories of people who served and have come back and are living their lives. And there's music, the behind-the-scenes aspect of rehearsing and recording an album, and then there's the live performance. And this is a joyful opportunity to showcase veterans in a positive light.'"

Interested veterans must register online for an audition slot, and send a video of themselves playing their instrument and/or singing, if possible.

Mooney is excited to showcase the power that the arts can have in helping veterans return to civilian life.

"I was in Vietnam, and within 72 hours I was back in Brooklyn," Mooney recalled about his return. "That's a big adjustment in life. No matter where you were stationed, you get recruited and you don't get 'de-cruited.'"

All proceeds from ticket and album sales will go to De-cruit, an organization that uses exploration of classical theater and narrative writing practice to support military veterans living through trauma, and The Headstrong Project, which provides mental health care for veterans living with PTSD.

Mooney and Campbell have begun receiving submissions from vets performing, and sharing songs they've written. Mooney emphasizes that Sounds of Valor is not a cover band project, and that all of the music performed will be of various genres, composed by the veterans in the band. It will also provide the first opportunity for Mooney, whose music falls within the blues-rock genre, to release his own music.

"Some of the songs are stories of war, but most of them are stories of love," Mooney explained, describing his own music and the music he's begun receiving. "It's all about us, and that's why we wanted to do original material."

Mooney will select musicians from the online submissions for in-person auditions, which will take place in Dobbs Ferry in mid-March. From day one, cameras will capture in-person auditions, the two-week

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# Opinion

The Dispatch welcomes letters to the editor about subjects related to the Rivertowns. Letters must be no more than 300 words, submitted by Monday at noon for that week's issue, and include the names, home addresses, and phone numbers of their writers. No letter is guaranteed publication. To submit a letter, visit [rivertownsdspatch.com/contact-us](http://rivertownsdspatch.com/contact-us).

## Seek state funds to establish universal pre-K in Ardsley

To the Editor:

Ardsley has always been a community that invests in its families and plans for the future. As a parent, resident, and local official, I believe the next step in that tradition is clear — universal pre-K should be a priority for our village, with implementation targeted for 2026-2027.

The timing could not be better. Albany is moving forward with legislation to significantly expand funding for universal pre-K statewide. Programs that were once financially out of reach for communities like ours are now achievable. If Ardsley acts now, we can secure state support that makes UPK financially responsible and sustainable.

This matters because the cost of raising

a family here is real. Childcare in our area often exceeds \$2,000 per month per child. Even families with two six-figure incomes struggle to afford housing and childcare simultaneously. Universal pre-K would provide meaningful relief while ensuring every child enters school ready to learn.

There is also opportunity cost to inaction. Albany will fund UPK programs across New York. If Ardsley does not pursue these funds, they will go elsewhere — supporting families in neighboring towns while our residents continue to pay full freight. We should ensure state resources are invested close to home.

Failing to act also carries long-term consequences. If nearby communities offer universal pre-K and Ardsley does not, the disparity will affect where families choose to live and, ultimately, property values.

Westchester is where families come to raise children in peace and prosperity. Ardsley prides itself on educational excellence. Affordable, accessible, high-quality universal

pre-K is the logical next step.

*Zack Sheingold*

ARDSLEY

*The writer is a physician, father, and member of the Ardsley Democratic Committee.*

## Sons of the American Legion Squadron welcomes members

To the Editor:

On behalf of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 1195, based at the Admiral Farragut American Legion Post 1195, I want to thank everyone who participated in our sixth annual holiday raffle. The drawing was held on Jan. 1, 2026, at the Legion Hall on Farragut Avenue, and streamed live on our Facebook page. We sold all the tickets that were printed, ensuring that we raised the necessary funds to help fund our initiatives

this year. We truly appreciate the generous show of support from Rivertowns residents.

The Sons of the American Legion was established in 1932 as an organization through which the descendants of veterans could continue the legacy of their parents and grandparents. Along with the American Legion and the Auxiliary, we make up The Legion Family. Our purpose, as sourced from the Sons of the American Legion website is, “preserving our American traditions and values, improving the quality of life for our nation’s children, caring for veterans and their families, and perhaps most importantly, teaching the fundamentals of good citizenship.”

I invite those reading this letter to consider joining the Sons of the American Legion if our purpose sounds like something you would be interested in helping to accomplish. Members from throughout the Rivertowns are most welcome. Please reach out to me at [bthinhoh@aol.com](mailto:bthinhoh@aol.com) or 914-762-3037 for more information.

*Bryan Healy, BRIARCLIFF MANOR*

## Locals condemn federal actions

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charged move the Town should avoid. Feiner expressed concern that the killings of Good and Pretti signal that the rights of citizens to speak up about any issue aren’t being protected. While Feiner disagrees with the immigration policies of President Trump, he stated that citizens across the political spectrum should be able to voice their opinions.

“I’ve never censored anybody,” Feiner said. “I believe that whether you’re for Trump or against him you have a right to express yourself. That’s what democracy is about. To me, if every community in the country would put the flags at half-staff, it would send a message to national leaders that we don’t support the fact that there could be a peaceful protest and innocent people could be shot at and killed just for speaking out.”

The Irvington Police Department’s policy, which was established in 2017, states that its officers will not “engage in the enforcement of federal immigration law.” If a request from

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is presented with a judicial warrant, police may detain or transfer an individual for immigration enforcement or investigation purposes. A judicial warrant isn’t required in the case that there is “probable cause” to believe the person has been convicted of a

**“I think it’s important for people to know that we care about keeping them safe.”**

**Irvington Mayor Arlene Burgos**

serious crime and re-entered the country illegally, or has engaged in terrorist activity.

“I think it’s important for people to know that we care about keeping them safe,” Burgos said. “I think that there’s really no place for immigration enforcement that’s looked the way that it’s looked in certain places,

days to do it.”

Mooney is aiming for the size of the band to land anywhere between five and a dozen members, depending on who and what instrumentation fits best. He makes it a point to get on a phone call with every veteran who submits, regardless of whether or not they make the cut.

“It’s tough to say ‘no’ to a vet,” Mooney admitted. “I’m going to tell them, ‘You got my number and I’ll jam with you anytime.’”

To audition for Sounds of Valor, visit [soundsofvalor.com](http://soundsofvalor.com) and complete the submission by March 10.

where if you’re brown, look a certain way, or have an accent, you’re going to be asked to prove you’re a citizen.”

In an email newsletter to village residents on Friday, Jan. 30, Dobbs Ferry Mayor Christy Knell reiterated a statement the board of trustees made in February 2025 that village’s police department would cooperate with immigration officers in “cases that involve serious crimes” and with “constitutional detainer requests accompanied by judicial warrants,” but that “it has not been and will not be the role of our police officers to enforce federal immigration laws.”

In the same newsletter, Knell denounced recent actions by federal agents, as she did during a board of trustees meeting on Jan. 27.

“I personally find that this level of aggression on behalf of our government is not right,” Knell wrote. “It’s reckless and unacceptable, and it is not how I would hope any level of government behaves toward its own people.”

During their respective public meetings on Feb. 2 and Feb. 3, the Ardsley and Hastings boards of trustees passed identical

resolutions denouncing the deployment of ICE and CBP agents throughout the United States that has resulted in the use of “excessive” and “deadly” force. Their resolutions petitioned the federal government to conduct an independent investigation of ICE and CBP tactics and practices; adopt procedures to prevent abusive tactics and practices, including more rigorous and enhanced training; and consider restructuring the agencies.

Rivertowns elected officials have been discussing establishing a united protocol if there is ICE activity in their communities, according to Burgos. They are considering providing training for residents to help them understand their rights if they’re stopped by federal agents, or observe and record their activity.

“I’m having a lot of conversations with residents who feel a lot of anxiety about this,” Burgos said. “Not because of their immigration status, but because of what’s happening in communities. They feel it’s not an orderly thing, it’s not necessarily justified, and it’s gotten out of control in more than one instance.”

## Sounds of Valor

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rehearsal process, and the Irvington Theater performance. If time permits, there will be a separate studio recording session, but if not, audio from rehearsals and the concert will be recorded for the album. The entire process will last around one month.

“That’s part of the fun of this,” Campbell said of the condensed timeline. “This documentary is going to be a bit of ‘America’s Got Talent,’ a bit of those shows where they do a renovation and only have so many

## Dobbs Ferry pre-K

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Hebrew Center’s Early Childhood Center, the Alcott School, the Little Village, and the Learning Experience. Throughout Ardsley, Hastings, and Irvington, there are similar facilities.

The first year of the proposed district-run pre-K is being considered a pilot program, with hopes that it can continue.

“One of the big questions was, ‘Will we be able to sustain the program?’” Stinchcomb said. “Depending on funding, we do have to

put forward a budget. The plan is to grow the program the following year to add another section, and so on and so forth. But that all depends on budgeting, that depends on additional funding, that depends on space in the building at Springhurst as well.”

Before finalizing that there will be free pre-K launching in the fall, the district has to further develop the details of the program and complete an application with New York State to establish a preschool. After the application is approved, the district will hold meetings for parents to learn more, and launch the lottery to fill the 20 slots.