

# THE CHAMBER CHRONICLE

News, Notes, and Business from Hyde Park



March 2026 Edition

Issue #2

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER PRESIDENT

Hello everyone,

Spring is getting closer, inching its way toward us...

but don't put those shovels away just yet. It's been years since we've had a winter this cold with this much snow. Great news if you plow for a living, ski, snowboard, or work at a resort – not so great for the rest of us. As the saying goes, "One man's misery is another man's fortune."



Still, there *is* a bright side. Snow acts as insulation, protecting plants and soil from harsh temperatures, and when it melts, it provides a slow, steady release of water. And here's a fun fact: every snowflake has six sides and forms in a hexagonal shape. Their structure and formation can even influence the type of snowfall we get, creating patterns that are surprisingly beautiful when you stop to notice them.

You're probably wondering why I'm talking so much about snow. Truth is, I'm not a big fan of it – so I'm trying to find something positive while we wait for warmer days.

And those warmer days are coming. Soon we'll be celebrating St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, our Business of the Year Dinner, honoring our Hyde Park Scholarship recipients, marching in the Memorial Day Parade, opening the Hyde Park Farmers Market, enjoying the Fourth of July Parade and Town fireworks, hosting the Hyde Park Chamber Car Show, and so much more throughout our vibrant community.

These events bring us together – and they also create tremendous opportunities for local businesses to join the Chamber and benefit from increased visibility, networking, and promotion.



## Monthly Breakfast Meeting

**THE HYDE PARK CHAMBER of COMMERCE**

Thursday, March 12, 2026  
Location: Eveready Diner Time: 7:30-9:00 am  
Speaker: Jef Urban, FDR Home & Library  
Sponsor: Sweets Funeral Home

## Seasonal Eating:

By Shannon Lasher

*Cozy Winter Soups as We Look Toward Spring*



February is a time when winter lingers, but signs of the coming season are just around the corner. It's the perfect month to lean into warming, nourishing meals made with local ingredients that store well through the colder months—like locally-grown winter squash, onions, garlic, herbs, and locally produced broths and dairy.

Even in the off-season, choosing locally sourced foods continues to support farmers as they care for animals, repair equipment, and plan for the year ahead. These winter purchases play an important role in keeping our local food system strong and resilient.

Warm up with this comforting soup made from simple, winter-friendly ingredients.

Paul's Hyde Park Farmers Market returns for the season on Saturday, June 6, running every Saturday through October 31. We look forward to welcoming the community back soon for another summer of fresh food, local farms, and friendly faces.

## Winter Squash Soup

### Ingredients:

- 1 medium winter squash (butternut or acorn), peeled and cubed
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons butter or olive oil
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- ½ cup cream or milk (optional)
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste
- Dried Thyme to taste

### Directions:

In a large pot, sauté onion and garlic in butter or olive oil until soft. Add squash and broth, bring to a gentle boil, then simmer for 20-25 minutes until squash is tender. Purée until smooth. Stir in cream if using, season to taste, and heat through before serving.



## BREAKFAST SPONSOR



## BOARDROOM ODDITIES AND BLUNDERS

Business likes to pretend it's all spreadsheets and straight faces—charts pointing somewhere important, forecasts whispered like prophecy, and meetings where everyone nods very seriously. But tucked behind every immaculate PowerPoint slide is a tiny circus of delightful blunders reminding us that the workplace isn't just human... it's gloriously, irresistibly silly.

### The Quarterly Report That Wouldn't Open

During a high-stakes investor meeting, a CFO proudly announced, "Everything you need is in this PDF." The PDF, however, was password-protected. No one knew the password. The CFO blamed "cybersecurity best practices." IT blamed "the CFO." Investors blamed "the universe."



### The CEO Who Tried to Unmute the Conference Table

In a hybrid meeting, the CEO kept tapping the conference table, saying, "Why isn't this thing unmuted?" Turns out he was pressing a coaster. A very nice coaster. The actual microphone was three feet away, blinking in silent judgment.

### The Supply Chain Mix-Up of the Century

A company ordered 500 ergonomic office chairs. They received 500 inflatable pool loungers. HR tried to spin it as "a new wellness initiative." Employees loved it. Productivity plummeted.

### The Team-Building Exercise That Backfired

A manager brought in a 5,000-piece puzzle for "collaboration and bonding." By noon, two departments were in open conflict over edge pieces. By 3 PM, someone hid the puzzle box "for the good of the company." By 5 PM, the manager quietly removed the puzzle and replaced it with donuts.

### The Intern Who Fixed Everything

During a system outage, executives panicked, IT scrambled, and consultants were called. The intern walked in, unplugged the router, plugged it back in, and restored the entire network. The consultants still billed \$12,000.

### The Great Juice Debacle

A VP tried to boost morale by replacing the office coffee station with a "hydration hub" featuring artisanal juices. Day one: employees were confused. Day two: someone spiked the beet juice with espresso. Day three: the CFO demanded coffee "for budgetary clarity." Day four: the hydration hub quietly became a coffee station again. The VP now refers to it as "a failed innovation sprint."

## CRUMWOLD HALL FIRE UNITES HYDE PARK COMMUNITY

HYDE PARK, N.Y. — On New Year's morning, Hyde Park awoke to the sight of smoke rising from one of its most storied landmarks: **Crumwold Hall**, the 19th-century estate long woven into the town's architectural and cultural identity. By 8 a.m., flames had overtaken the mansion's ground floor, triggering a massive emergency response that would stretch more than 12 hours and draw fire crews from across Dutchess County — and even from neighboring Connecticut.

The 74-room Gilded Age mansion, built in 1889 for Archibald Rogers and later home to the Millennial Kingdom Family Church, housed **11 residents**, all of whom escaped without injury thanks to swift action by first responders. One police officer even pulled a resident from a first-floor bathroom, underscoring the urgency and bravery that defined the day's events.

### A Battle Against Fire — and the Elements

Firefighters confronted not only the blaze itself but also the bitter January cold. Nearly **500,000 gallons of water** were deployed to contain the fire, straining the Hyde Park Region Water System and prompting an emergency conservation advisory for several neighborhoods, including Harbour Hills, Pinebrook Estates, Zone L, and Staatsburg.

As water poured over the burning structure, it froze on contact, creating treacherous sheets of ice around the estate. The town's highway department worked continuously to salt the area so crews could operate safely.

Despite the intense effort, the fire continued into the next day as a controlled burn. Town Supervisor Alfred Torreggiani noted that, given the extent of the damage, there is a "99% chance" the building will be condemned once inspectors can safely enter the site.

For many Hyde Park residents, the destruction of Crumwold Hall is more than the loss of a historic structure. It is the loss of a familiar landmark — a quiet sentinel of the town's past, connected to the Roosevelt era and the region's Gilded Age heritage.

Neighbors expressed heartbreak not only for the building but for the displaced residents, who were active members of the Millennial Kingdom Family Church. The American Red Cross quickly stepped in to provide temporary shelter and support.

### A Community That Shows Up

If there is a silver lining, it is the extraordinary cooperation displayed by the region's volunteer fire departments. Crews from Hyde Park, Rhinebeck, Staatsburg, and many more worked side by side through the holiday, demonstrating the strength of Dutchess County's emergency network. "They did a tremendous job... They all worked together as a team," Supervisor Torreggiani said, praising the responders' professionalism and endurance.

### What Comes Next

The cause of the fire remains under investigation. Once the site cools enough for forensic teams to enter, officials hope to determine what sparked the blaze and assess the full extent of the damage.

For now, Hyde Park is left with a mix of gratitude and grief — thankful for the lives saved, yet mourning the likely loss of a historic treasure. And as always, the town does what it does best: it rallies, supports, and looks ahead together.



## BUSINESS SPARKS

### From Frustration to Fortune: The Spanx Story

Sara Blakely was selling fax machines door-to-door when she got tired of uncomfortable undergarments. With \$5,000 in savings and no fashion background, she created Spanx in her apartment. Her prototype reshaped an industry—and her net worth. Lesson: Solving your own problem can unlock a market no one else sees.

### From One Store to Global Ritual: Starbucks

Howard Schultz visited Italy and was captivated by the espresso bar culture. Back home, he transformed a small Seattle coffee shop into a global brand by selling not just coffee, but community. Lesson: Sometimes the real product isn't what's in the cup—it's the experience around it.

### From Gamble to Overnight Empire: FedEx

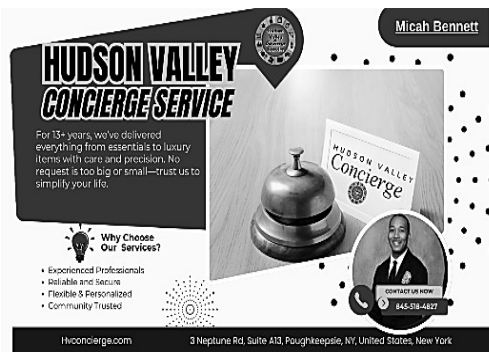
Fred Smith wrote a college paper proposing overnight delivery. His professor gave it a mediocre grade. Years later, Smith launched FedEx—and when funds ran low, he famously gambled in Vegas to keep the company afloat. Lesson: A bold idea and a bolder risk can rewrite the rules of an industry.

### From Cupcakes to Conglomerate: Magnolia Bakery

Magnolia Bakery started as a cozy New York shop with vintage charm and classic cupcakes. A cameo on "Sex and the City" turned it into a tourist magnet. Today, it's a global brand with locations from Dubai to Tokyo. Lesson: A little sweetness, paired with the right spotlight, can go a long way.



## New Member Spotlight



Founded by Micah Bennet, HV Concierge began servicing clients in 2012. It was created to fill a growing need across the Hudson Valley for personal and transportation services for busy individuals, businesses and families alike. Their mission is to provide 3 exceptional services: Transportation, Delivery and Personal. Their premise is to give clients their day back being in 2 places at 1 time. Their concierge team can pick up your groceries, wait on line for a new item release, package delivery as well provide medical and airport transportation. They are a full service business that covers Dutchess, Orange and Ulster Counties as well as the surrounding area. Learn more about our services by visiting HV Concierge on [The DPVN Network](#).

### Micah Bennet

Every entrepreneur has a moment that stands out. Micah’s moment came after connecting his innate skills with opportunity by helping others in his community with miscellaneous tasks. “I didn’t even know the whole time I was doing concierge work. Literally clients made a request and I got it done. That was my “Ahh Ha moment” and Hudson Valley Concierge Service was born.”



Micah started out with personal services and delivery/courier clients. In 2015 Micah added Hudson Valley Concierge Service Transportation. “Clients loved that they could now get driven to the store or somewhere local without riding in a taxicab with it smelling like smoke, driving with poor driving experience, drug habits, etc. What we provide is peace of mind and assurance that you are safe and going to have a world class experience.” As a business owner, how would you describe your management and leadership style? “I would describe my management and leadership style with these 3 styles - Laissez-faire, Charismatic, and a Pacesetter. I have a hands-off approach; I do not like to micromanage unless I have too. But I like to have team members that are free thinkers and include me when the time is needed. Pick up the task and go. We know the vision, the plan, the goal. I lead with love, charm, build relationships amongst my team, listen, and learn their internal goals and external goals so we all achieve together. I expect my team to continuously to be working in the sense building the brand. Even though I have high benchmarks for our team to attain.”

## NEW CHAMBER MEMBERS



## Chamber Board Member Focus

### Dot Chenevert

Dot Chenevert served as the President of the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce, where she played a central role in championing local businesses and strengthening the economic heartbeat of the community. A steady, collaborative leader, Dot is known for bringing people together - business owners, civic partners, and community organizations to create opportunities that support growth, visibility, and long-term success for Hyde Park.



Re-elected to lead the Chamber’s 2025 Board of Directors, Dot continued to guide a diverse team of professionals who share her commitment to community engagement and business

advocacy. Her leadership has helped the Chamber expand its outreach, modernize its communication efforts, and support major development initiatives that promise to shape Hyde Park’s future. Among these is the transformative Bellefield at Historic Hyde Park project, a large-scale hospitality and agri-tourism destination that stands to bring new energy, jobs, and visitors to the region. Stepping down in 2026, Dot is still a force in the Chamber, lending her voice on the Board of Directors, as they continue to advocate for the Hyde Park Business Community.

Dot is widely recognized for her warm, approachable style and her ability to listen deeply to the needs of local entrepreneurs. Whether she’s coordinating community events, supporting new business openings, or representing Hyde Park in regional conversations, she brings a sense of pride, professionalism, and genuine care to everything she does.



## Hyde Park Lions Club: A Quiet Force for Good in Our Community

The Hyde Park Lions Club has long been one of our town’s most steadfast service organizations, working quietly and consistently to make life better for residents of every age. As part of Lions Clubs International – the world’s largest volunteer service network – the Hyde Park chapter carries forward a mission built on compassion, civic responsibility, and hands-on community support.

Here in Hyde Park, the Lions are known for rolling up their sleeves and getting things done. Their work ranges from collecting eyeglasses for those in need to supporting youth scholarships, assisting families through local food programs, and lending a hand at community events throughout the year. Their efforts often happen behind the scenes, but their impact is felt everywhere – in our schools, our parks, and our neighborhoods.

The Club’s strength comes from its dedicated members, including **John Reynolds, Maria DeLuca, Thomas “Tom” Barrett, Linda Carver, and Joseph Romano**, who each bring their own talents and heart for service. Together, they embody the Lions’ motto: **“We Serve.”**

In an era when volunteerism is more important than ever, the Hyde Park Lions Club continues to be a shining example of what happens when neighbors come together with purpose. Their commitment reminds us that community isn’t just a place – it’s something we build, nurture, and protect.



## Hyde Park American Legion: Serving Those Who Served

The Hyde Park American Legion, **Post 1303**, has been a steady and respected presence in our town for decades, offering support, camaraderie, and community leadership from its home at **830 Violet Avenue**. As part of one of the nation’s most enduring veterans’ organizations, the Post provides a welcoming space where veterans can connect, share experiences, and access the resources they’ve earned through their service.

Post 1303 plays a meaningful role in Hyde Park’s civic life. Each year, members help organize and participate in Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies, ensuring that our community continues to honor the sacrifices of those who served. Volunteers like **Mike Athanas** and others work behind the scenes to coordinate these events, preserving traditions that bring Hyde Park together in reflection and gratitude.

Beyond ceremonies, the Legion supports a wide range of initiatives that strengthen the community. The Post assists veterans navigating benefits and healthcare, offers guidance to families, and participates in youth programs that promote leadership, patriotism, and civic responsibility. Their involvement in scholarship efforts and flag etiquette programs helps instill values that carry forward to the next generation.

The Legion is also a place of belonging. For many veterans, Post 1303 provides a sense of connection and purpose — a place where shared experience becomes shared strength. Whether through social gatherings, volunteer projects, or simply being there for one another, the Post continues to embody the spirit of service long after uniforms are hung up.

With its commitment to honoring the past and supporting the present, the Hyde Park American Legion remains a cornerstone of community life. Those interested in learning more, volunteering, or joining the Post can reach them at **(845) 229-7945**.

