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explore

WINTER IN THE

2026

Blast away winter blues

*Keep your kids
moving this
winter*

*A collector's
guide*

*Top 25 Events in
the Hudson Valley*

*Valentine's Day
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Five area kids' experiences

Suggestions for family wintertime destinations



PHYLLIS McCABE

Penelope, age 2 of Kingston, making a dunk.

by Cloey Callahan

NOW THAT we are into late January, winter has fully settled in and the cold, gray and unpredictable days can make keeping the little ones entertained feel like a full-time job. Bundling everyone into



multiple layers, tracking mittens and hats, and bracing for complaints before you even leave the house is often enough to make parents reconsider an outing altogether. Still, cabin fever sets in quickly, and kids need space to move, explore and burn

Fun at the FASNY Museum of Firefighting.

off energy. The good news is that the Hudson Valley offers plenty of indoor and low-stress options that make winter outings manageable and enjoyable. From hands-on play spaces, to creative escapes and warm places to climb, imagine and discover, there are destinations designed with young children in mind which will

leave most parents' sanity intact.

Here are five of the best places I know of to bring your little ones to in the middle of winter.

FASNY Museum of Firefighting

This hands-on museum celebrates three centuries of firefighting with over

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60 engines, apparatus and art. It's the world's largest and most comprehensive museum dedicated to the history, culture and science of firefighting. As one of the only year-round public spaces in Hudson, this museum thrives in the colder months by offering many hands-on interactives for families.

"We take the best qualities from both

history and children's museums to provide a space that allows family members to explore, discover and learn," said Jamie Quinn, executive director. It best serves five-to-eight-year-olds, but also provides activities for younger children.

"Our space has taught us that every person has wanted to be a firefighter at some point in their life and that the kid

Kids' activities



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Please spread the word and we look forward to seeing you all there!

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- Youth Expo Saturday June 13, 2026. Lippman Park Rt. 209 Wawarsing 9 am - 3 pm. Contact Natalie Buley (845) 594-4471. Fishing, Archery Daisy BB Gun Range
- Ulster County Fair August 4 - August 9, 2026. Come visit us at the UC Fair Grounds. FREE Live-Fishing & Our Daisy BB Gun Range Contact Kriss Walsh (845) 399-5749
- Town of Olive September 2026 (no date yet). FSCUC's Daisy BB Gun Range. Town's Website
- Youth Pheasant Hunt Saturday September 26, 2026. 710 Springtown Rd Tillson NY. Contact Lance DuBois (845) 399-2981. Pre-register & License Required.

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FSCUC Fishing Charter Dates

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<https://fscuc.org> charter fishing info & club events

NYSDEC Summer Camps March 22nd, 2026

Visit website for more info

<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/summer-camps>

Member Clubs

Bushkill Rod & Gun Club, 4161 State Route 28A, West Shokan, NY 12494
Dwarkill Rod & Gun Club, Rt. 208 Wallkill NY
Esopus Township Sportsmen, Rt. 9W West Park NY
Glasco Sportsmen's Club, Glasco NY
Hidden Valley Lodge Club, Ulster County NY
Highwoods Sportsmen's Club, 870 Zena-Highwoods Rd Saugerties NY
Kyserike Gun Club, Kyserike NY
Lake Hill Rod & Gun Club, Lake Hill NY
Lake Katrine Rod & Gun Club, 5 Van Wagner Rd Ulster Park NY 12487
Landowners & Sportsmen's Assn., 50 Quarry Rd Saugerties NY 12477
Lloyd Rod & Gun Club, 65 Clearwater Rd Highland NY 12528
Marbletown Sportsmen's Club, 105 Scarawan Rd Stone Ridge NY 12484
Morgan Hill Game Assn., Dug Rd Hurley NY
New Paltz Rod & Gun Club, Gun Club Rd New Paltz NY 12561
Phoenicia Rod & Gun Club, Rt. 28 Phoenicia NY
Plattekill Rod & Gun Club, Plattekill NY
Plutarch Sportsmen's Club, Plutarch Rd. New Paltz

Rondout Valley Rod & Gun Club, 492 Samsonville Rd Kerhonkson NY 12446
Rosendale Sportsmen's Club, Springtown Rd Tillson NY
Ruby Rod & Gun Club, Main St Ruby NY
Saugerties Fish & Game Club, 168 Fish Creek Rd Saugerties NY 12477
Shawangunk Long Beards, Pine Bush NY
Southside Rod & Gun Club, 41 Baker Rd West Hurley NY 12491
Ulster County Trappers, Napanoch NY
Ulster Heights Rod & Game Club, 244 Sherman Rd Ellenville NY 12428
Upper Esopus Fish & Game Assn., Big Indian NY
Vly Sportsmen's Club, Sarawan Rd Stone Ridge NY
Walker Valley Sportsmen's Assn, Frontier Dr. Pine Bush NY,
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Whortlekill Rod & Gun Club, Rt 376 Hopewell Junction NY 12433
Wittenberg Sportsmen's Club, 90 Montoma Lane Woodstock NY 12498

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in every adult still wants to experience that feeling,” said Quinn. “We often find adults in fire gear playing firefighter with their kids and that is great.”

Visitors can find a collection that includes everything from ornate hand-drawn hose carts of the eighteenth century to brawny 1000-gallon diesel-powered tankers of the 1970s. Stop in any time between 10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday to take a look. Admission fees include \$15 for adults, \$10 for children two to 17 years old. Those under two years old get in free. Call 518-822-1875.

Mid-Hudson Discovery Museum

A family-favorite in the Hudson Valley, MHDM offers hours of hands-on fun with exhibits and programs that focus

on early literacy, art, early STEM, health and the local community.

“We show that science is fun and engaging and can make a difference in our daily lives,” said Christine Bissen, campaign administrator. “We encourage children to make observations, experiment, think critically and formulate conclusions.”

Some exhibit areas include a play-pretend market and cafe, a marker studio, and a play room with a train track, foam blocks and more. There’s also a rock-climbing wall and a dynamic floor section that promotes physical activity, coordination and movement while weaving in fun and educational themes.

“MHDM takes a holistic approach to learning by presenting families and their children with a broad range of learning activities and experiences,” said Bissen.

That’s why there are in addition to the exhibits plenty of programs at this Poughkeepsie facility that keep kids excited and curious. That includes a Museum Melodies program, a NextGen STEAM program, a Toddler & Me Dance and Movement program and a Homeschool STEAM Club.

Stop in Tuesday through Saturday between 9:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., or Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Adult and child admission is \$15. Babies under a year old get in free.

Call 845-471-0589,

Hudson Highlands Nature Center

Bundling up for this one is worth it. HHNC offers nature-based experiences that invite children to explore, imagine and learn through play. For example, children might climb, crawl and explore naturalistic structures, investigate animal artifacts, or build and create using loose parts.

“Everything is designed to be welcoming, engaging and developmentally appropriate, encouraging curiosity and care about the natural world while supporting creativity and

movement,” said Joanna Marvel, communications and marketing manager.

Many of its programs are ideal for children ages two to twelve, but there are other opportunities for youth up to age 18. Special programming, including a Meet the Animal presentation at the wildlife education campus, is offered every Saturday and Sunday at 1 and 2:30 p.m.

In the colder months, the Nature Center is a unique blend of both an indoor and an outdoor destination where families can stay active and connected to nature year-round.

“As we like to say, ‘there is no bad weather, only bad clothing,’ and getting outdoors even when it’s cold out is very important,” said Marvel.

Hiking trails are open daily from dawn to dusk, and we encourage snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and winter bird-watching are encouraged. The Wildlife Education campus is also open year-round for engaging indoor activities.

“We’re continually inspired by how families make the space their own,” said Marvel.

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PHOTOS BY PHYLLIS McCABE

Left, Ellie, age 1¾ of Port Ewen, stopped to smile for the camera; Evie, age 1½ of Kingston, throwing a ball; Kam, age 3 of Kingston, makes a touchdown.

middle schoolers, take on an escape room for a fun mental challenge that everyone can enjoy. Located in Wappingers Falls and open Wednesday through Sunday, these games offer a break from the day-to-day and are a great opportunity for families to bond.

With six game room experiences, there are several adventures to choose from, including Dragon's Curse, Voodoo Swamp, The Lost Tomb and more.

"ETA is an all-indoor space which offers a warm and immersive experience to help with winter blues," said Kelly Dillon, co-

manager. "Players can escape the cold by reserving an adventure with us."

The age minimum for players is eight to participate, and the advanced-level game rooms are recommended for ages over ten. One adult player per game room is required to participate and supervise any minors.

"Families with big kids find our games to be an exciting activity that can engage the whole family," said Dillon.

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www.hudsonvalleyone.com

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Call 845-592-0348.

Andy Murphy Neighborhood Center

The City of Kingston indoor playground program at the Andy Murphy Neighborhood Center is perfect for families unsure of where to bring their kids this time of year. It's generally designed for toddlers and the pre-k age group, but all children are welcome.

"It serves as an alternative option for little ones to stay warm and play during the colder months," said Lynsey Timbrouck, Kingston's director of parks and recreation. "One of the amazing things we've noticed throughout the years, especially more recently, is that this program has also created a sense of camaraderie among parents and caregivers within the community, leading to many new friendships."

It's intended to offer a similar experience to families visiting an outdoor

playground, which does not require an instructor. Parents and guardians are required to supervise their children whenever attending the program.

The free indoor play space is open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays through March 27.
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That empty space needs filling

Your complete winter collecting guide

by Sparrow

IT'S WINTER, TIME to work on our collections. Let's face it, a lot of us here in the cinematic Hudson Valley have too many spaces: sheds – outbuildings, damp basements, attics – areas crying out for rows of autographed baseballs or vintage ceramic ashtrays. (I myself have a two-car garage and only one car.)

Not every group of similar objects is a collection. I call these haphazard groupings “selections.” Most of us have a selection of spices on a rack (mine is craftily concealed on a Lazy Susan in a cabinet), shirts and pants hanging in a closet, books lounging in bookcases. We have accumulations, aggregations, piles of similar objects. But I wouldn't call them collections. A collection, to my mind, should be useless.

I realize many people reading this have collections of Grateful Dead tee shirts, which are technically usable but so rarely worn by us to be essentially decorative.

One definition of a collection is “too many of the same thing.” We all need a salt shaker, but if you have 45 salt dispensers – some in the shape of the pyramid at Machu Picchu or the Taj Mahal – you probably have a collection.

You know it's a collection if you acquire items you don't really like because they're necessary to the integrity of



The author with his collection of bookmarks.

VIOLET SNOW

your display. Usually a collection has a “prize” item.

When I was twelve years old in 1965, I was a true collector: I had binders full of stamps from Burma, Mozambique, Italy; a coin collection; a mineral collection; a leather case full of marbles; a tower of comic books; a battalion of toy soldiers (almost all plastic); a winsome display of “Disneykins” – miniature Disney characters that cost 59 cents each.

At some point in adolescence, I casually cast aside all my collections – around the same time I began inhaling the enticing fumes of the marijuana plant. Now I have mostly “anti-collections”: items I’m perfectly willing to give away. For example, I still read comic books – perhaps more now than when I was a child (and I don’t mean those pretentious “graphic novels”). I’ve been blessed with friends who work in the comics industry, who are happy to lay some of their extra illustrated treasures on me. (Lately I’m particularly fond of *Savage Dragon*.) But when I’m done with them, I pass them on to nine-year-old kids I know, or set them on the counter at Family of Woodstock.

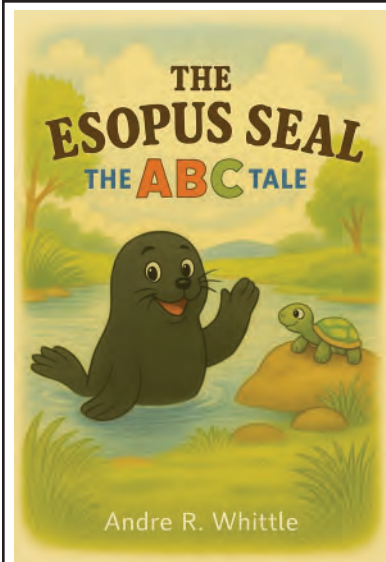
I want others to read these literary gems. Why should they grow moldy in my garage?

When my wife and I used to rent out our house on Airbnb, some of our guests praised my record collection. I was literally stunned to read this term. I didn’t have a collection, just albums I found at Formerly Yours (the thrift shop here in Phoenicia, with a generous “free table”), some platters I stole from my father (including *the fabulous bird*, a Charlie Parker compilation from 1955), and a few records my sister didn’t commandeer when I went off to college. When you’re staying at an Airbnb, a disparate stack of 33 RPM recordings looks like “a collection,” I suppose.

And so my life remained, until 2009, when I discovered a cache of bookmarks in a white wire rack in my “study,” in between scrap paper and postage stamps. “This will be a collection – my last collection,” I decided.

This array of book markers was not intentional. It accumulated over time, incrementally, inconspicuously, and now I have 48!

When I just counted them I discovered that I have one set of “doubles,” from the *London Review of Books*. “Doubles” was the word we used for duplicate baseball



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cards when I was a kid. That's another collection I had, come to think of it!) And I follow my principles. I never use these bookmarks to actually mark a book.

I guess my favorite is the one with a photo of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, and the line: "I met the best minds of my generation and they all turned out to be dumb..." (I'm not encouraged to use the last word in this magazine.)

Now we've reached the part of the essay where I advise you how to become a collector. There are four factors: time, space, money, passion.

If you have lots of money, lots of space, but no time, I suggest you invest in Air-stream trailers, those bulbous, silvery, distinctly American living spaces first manufactured in 1936. (I guess I've always secretly wanted to own a fleet of them.)

If you have a fair amount of money, lots of time, and almost no space, start



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buying pocket watches, which must be elaborately cleaned, polished, and even repaired.

If you have no money, no time, no space, gather the silver foil inside discarded

cigarette packs you find on the street. (I once saw a picture of Ken Kesey's massive aluminum-foil collection, shaped into a ball, on his porch, in *People* magazine. That may be inspiring me here.)

Or collect bookmarks! Write to me care of this newspaper and I'll send you my extra *London Review of Books* marker to get you started. It's an appealing maroon color, and essentially brand-new!

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Break the ice

25 don't-miss area events to warm up your winter

by Zac Shaw

G. Love & Special Sauce – Lemonade 20th Anniversary Tour

Fri, 1/23 • 8 pm

Bearsville Theater, 291 Tinker St, Woodstock.

Break out your cold beverages. The venerable G. Love brings a laid-back blend of blues, hip-hop swagger, and stanky funk. Sing-along hooks and head-nod beats might just be enough to get a 2026 crowd to look up from their phones and start dancing.



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- Home Bakers Meet Up — Saturday, Feb. 14 (visit Glynwood.org for info)


DON'T FORGET!

RYE Day — Sat, Feb. 28

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Paranormal Mixer

Thu, 1/29 • 7 pm

Kestrel Tavern, 21 O'Neill Street, Kingston.

Things are about to get spirited at one of Kingston's newest bars. This free and casual meet-up for ghost buffs, skeptics, and the just-plain-curious is hosted by Full Moon Paranormal. Mingle with local investigators and fans of the supernatural. Keep an eye out for Bigfoot.

Ian Hendrickson-Smith & Grease Patrol

Fri, 1/30 • 7:30 pm

The Falcon, 1348 Route 9W, Marlboro.

A high-voltage night for anyone who likes their music tight and brassy. This is a band built for momentum. Big horns. Deep groove. Fast pivots. It is the kind of set that starts classy, then turns sweaty. Dinner service runs early, so you can make a full night of it.

Labiahead

Fri, 1/30 • 8 pm

Assembly, 236 Wall St., 3rd Floor, Kingston.

Yes, it's exactly what it sounds like – an

all-girl Radiohead tribute act full of "powerhouse femme musicians" rightfully obsessed with one of the most beloved bands of our generation. The lineup features stars from Broadway and television.

13th Annual Winter Hoot

Fri, 1/30-Sun. 2/1 • 11:45 am

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Swan Lake, Feb. 7 at UPAC.

feels like a cozy fireside jam with old friends, playing music, dancing, crafting, and sharing in community spirit. This down-to-earth weekend features a VIP donor reception and concert by Jay

Ungar & Molly Mason to kick things off Friday, followed by lively sets from The Mammals and more, plus Colonial craft demos, mini-concerts, a kids' zone, square dancing, local bites and drinks,

Sunday morning yoga, and a heartfelt farewell singalong.

Wingfest

Sat. 1/31 • 5-8:30 pm

MJN Center, 41 Civic Center Plaza, Poughkeepsie.

Join this finger-lickin' celebration of all things spicy, saucy, and downright delicious. Now in its 19th year, this crowd-favorite food fest returns with its biggest lineup yet, featuring local wing joints, food trucks, and caterers battling for the crown of "King of the Wings." This will sell out, so get your tickets early.

Cornelia Murr

Sat. 1/31 • 8 pm

Levon Helm Studios, 160 Plochmann Lane, Woodstock.

This London-born singer-songwriter plays hypnotic and introspective pop and digs into life's big questions with sonic layers that are as dreamy as they are urgent. Riding the momentum of her expansive 2025 LP *Run To The Center*, Murr blends ethereal vocals with nuanced production and reflective lyricism that explores desire, purpose and self-discovery.

Rudolph Valentino in *The Sheik* (silent film screening)

Sun, 2/1 • 2 pm

Rosendale Theatre, 408 Main St.

The Sheik is peak silent-era melodrama, built for big emotions and bigger close-ups. It is a fun time capsule, especially on a theater screen with a crowd.

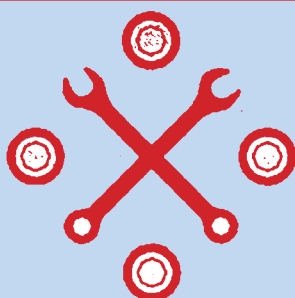
Jeff Beck Celebration with The Mahavishnu Project

Thu, 2/5 • 7:30 pm

The Falcon, 1348 Route 9W, Marlboro.

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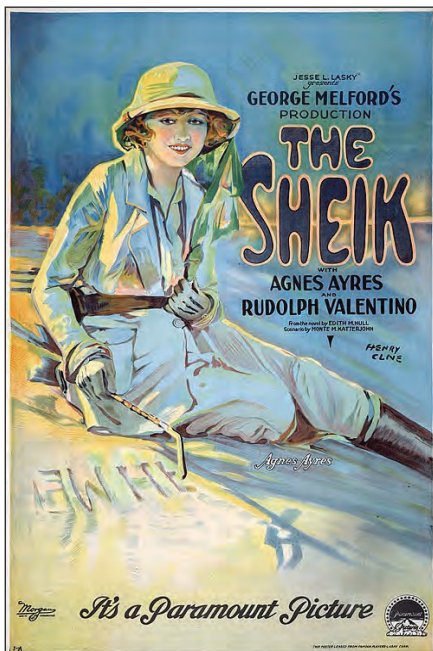
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The Sheik is peak silent-era melodrama, showing Feb. 1 at Rosendale Theatre.

undeniable volume, and head-spinning solos are in store.

Swan Lake
Sat, 2/7 • 7 pm

Ulster Performing Arts Center (UPAC), 601 Broadway, Kingston.

This winter classic never fails to cast a spell at UPAC with sweeping music, crisp

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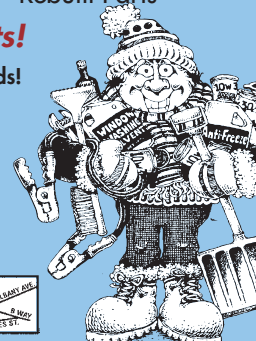
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Hudson Valley Artists: Terrestrial Extra

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This exhibition explores how materials drawn from the earth—such as stone, clay, glass, and steel—reveal the enduring impact of industry on our environment and imagination.



Shari Mendelson, *Mirage in the Hills*, 2025, courtesy the artist

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WFF Presents: The Knife (screening + conversation)

Sat, 2/7 • 4 pm

Upstate Films Orpheum Theatre, 156 Main Street, Saugerties.

This taut psychological thriller slices deep into family, fear, and the fragile idea of safety. Directed by Nnamdi Asomugha and starring Aja Naomi King and Academy Award-winner Melissa Leo, the film follows a young family's American dream as it unravels one suspense-filled night when a mysterious intruder appears in their home. Leo will be on hand to speak.

FACS / Open Head

Wed, 2/11 • 8 pm

Tubby's, 586 Broadway, Kingston.

Chicago art-rock trio FACS returns to Kingston in support of their introspective sixth album, *Wish Defense*. The band crafts heavy, abstract rock with sideways force. Joining them is Open Head, a no-wave-influenced quartet delivering jagged, rhythmically dense tracks that stretch punk and rock into sprawling, unpredictable shapes.

The Bob Cats - Rock 'n' Roll Salute to Bob Dylan

Thu, 2/12 • 7:30 pm

The Falcon, 1348 Route 9W, Marlboro

Dylan, but with muscle and fire. This is not a quiet, reverent tribute. It is a rock-forward run through the songbook with a band that plays like it means it.

Pete Francis

Fri, 2/13 • 8 pm

Bearsville Theater, 291 Tinker St, Woodstock.

A warm, lyric-forward show that feels close even in a big room. Pete Francis brings songwriter craft with enough rhythm to keep it moving. It is a solid pick for a winter Friday when you want something intimate but still alive.

Glen David Andrews

Fri, 2/13 • 7:30 pm

The Falcon, 1348 Route 9W, Marlboro.

New Orleans energy is just what the doctor ordered on a frigid Hudson Valley night. Glen David Andrews will dish out brass-band spirit and big-stage charisma, the kind that turns a room into a party without asking permission.

The Weight Band

Sat, 2/14 • 8 pm

Bearsville Theater, 291 Tinker St, Woodstock.

Roots-rock romantics should hit this Valentine's night with live Americana that's groovy, soulful, road-tested, and built for big harmonies.

Vasen & The Fretless

Fri, 2/13 • 8:00 pm

Tempo Performing Arts Center, 63 Wurts Street, Kingston.

Kingston's newest venue must be heard to be believed. Primo sound in an old church perfectly matches the "playful and intense music" that Vasen and the Fretless performs.

The CD Players / FOC

Sat, 2/21 • 8 pm

Keegan Ales, 20 St. James St., Kingston.

Alt-rock radio hits from the 1990s (think "Semi-Charmed Life" and "Hey Jealousy") take center stage as this new five-piece tribute act makes its live debut, fronted by the dynamic Frank McGinnis. FOC's retro-futuristic, atmospheric indie rock is eminently danceable, so bring some shoes you can move in.

Mystery Weekend: Act I of "Murder by the Book"

Fri, 2/27 • 9 pm

Mohonk Mountain House, 1000 Mountain Rest Road, New Paltz.

A live mystery in a castle hotel, at night, in winter. Act I kicks off the weekend's story, and the setting does half the work. You watch scenes play out, then spend the rest of the weekend hunting clues and comparing theories.

Clearwater Winter Open Boats

Sat, 2/28 • 1 pm

Hudson River Maritime Museum, 50 Rondout Landing, Kingston.

A rare kind of Hudson Valley winter outing: hands-on and right on the water. Tour the Hudson River Sloop *Clearwater*, meet the crew, and get up close with a working vessel. It is part history, part

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community hang, and part “I didn’t know this existed” moment.

Meet the Artists Reception: Mohonk Preserve Volunteer Photographers

Sat, Feb 28 • 3 pm

Mohonk Preserve Visitor Center Gallery,
3197 Route 44/55, Gardiner.

A calm, beautiful counter-program to winter chaos. This reception is a chance to see Shawangunk Ridge photography up close and actually meet the people behind the images.

Cat Power Sings Dylan: The 1966 Royal Albert Hall Concert

Tue, 3/3 • 8 pm

Ulster Performing Arts Center (UPAC),
601 Broadway, Kingston.

A legendary set, reimagined with intention. Indie rock darlings Cat Power take on Dylan’s 1966 concert material, which means folk intimacy and electric edge in the same night. It is both tribute and transformation.

Tophouse

Fri, 3/6 • 7:45 pm

Bearsville Theater, 291 Tinker St, Woodstock.

A crisp, modern band night with momentum and melody. Tophouse plays tight, upbeat songs that land fast and stick.

Cinema Ephemera Presents:

The Human Machine

Sun, 3/8 • 7 pm

Orpheum Theatre, 198 Main Street, Saugerties.

A strange, satisfying film event for people who like the edges of cinema. Cinema Ephemera curates nights that feel like discovering a secret channel. Expect a thoughtful crowd, an offbeat program, and a post-show brain buzz that lasts longer than the credits.

Animation Fundamentals

Mon, 3/9 • 6 pm

Midtown Kingston Arts District and the D.R.A.W., 20 Cedar Street.

A practical, skill-building winter series for anyone who wants to literally set things in motion. This session focuses on core animation concepts for those just starting their journey through bringing images to life.