

Chosen family
(Continued from page B1)

ticket. Another read: "What the F\$%K IS GOING ON HUDSON VALLEY" with a smiley face.

While they loved making it, releasing an entirely free, high-quality, jam-packed monthly zine every month while Amari was presenting shows and Singer ran a venue was too much work. The announcement stated that they had not been able to put the time and energy into it that they would have liked this year. Amari took a couple of years off and, in 2022, slowly started presenting shows again — many outdoors during his three seasons at Opus 40, where Chosen Family began to evolve: "It became less about putting on the biggest or 'best' bands, but filling gaps that I didn't see the other venues in the area fulfilling: bringing bands from West Africa, Latin America, and even 'elderly' artists who maybe were seen as less relevant at the time but were being rediscovered by new generations." Examples include global artists from Beverly Glenn-Copeland to Etran de L'Air to Y La Bamba. He incorporated visual artists into the shows, like artist B.A. Miale, a live video artist who projected lights onto the sculpture during the shows.

Amari left Opus 40 and stopped doing the zine at the same time, taking a year off from putting on any shows and making the zine — a period of time he

the
Scene

A compendium of local arts & entertainment for the coming month

April show-ers

20 Ulster County event picks for the start of spring

by Zac Shaw

Ulster County has a magical blend of interesting, creative people, world-class venues, bars, breweries and restaurants, art galleries, movie houses, theaters and other recreation spots. In April, you'll find it all coming alive like the landscape around us, and a few dozen events stand out above the rest, whether by novelty, underratedness or simple mass appeal. This is your spring mix...

Music



Tubby's (Kingston) - Don't worry if you slept on the several sold-out shows this month, there's still many options including Daniel Villarreal on Wed., April 8. He's a Chicago drummer / percussionist / composer that exists where Latin American folk collides with psychedelic funk, soul and jazz. If you're looking for something more locally-grown, Lara Hope Band brings professional-grade rockabilly stylings

alongside the very danceable El Arsis, also from the Hudson Valley, on Sat., April 25.

Tempo (Kingston) - Tempo continues to awe local audiences with an incredibly unique mix of musical events, including a Threshold by Candlelight offering. By literal candlelight, the non-denominational Mid-Hudson Valley Threshold Choir will sing in a ceremony of sorts to "collectively tend grief and receive comfort for song" on Sun., April 19.

Colony (Woodstock) - Somehow between all the cover bands, Americana acts, national names, burlesque nights, reggae shows and dance parties, Colony has time to embrace a punk night, platforming longtime local heart-on-sleeve pop punk legends Nightmares for a Week on Thu., April 16. They'll play a bill with ska-punk group Stacked Like Pancakes and local riot grrl act Mona Freaka.

The Local (Saugerties) - Palestinian-American musician Simon Shahaen brings a master class in Arabic sonic traditions on Fri., April 24, with a set built around the oud, an ancient stringed instrument.

High Falls Cafe (High Falls) - As a Hudson Valley singer with classical training and experience in blues, R&B, and jazz, Nancy Donnelly is known for a warm, flexible style that has taken her to venues including Birdland and the Blue Note, as well as major jazz festivals. Her group plays April 16.

Green Kill (Kingston) - Venture Lift brings its hazy, space-rock sound to Green Kill on April 12 for an intimate release show tied to songwriter Stanton Warren-Jones' new album, *Chamber of*

Dreams.

Levon Helm Studios (Woodstock) - Chris Smither brings his longtime blend of folk and blues to Woodstock for an intimate show. The veteran singer-songwriter is touring behind *All About the Bones*, his recent album of spare, reflective songs.

Snug Harbor (New Paltz) - This dive can be a rowdy dive for punk and jam bands, so it's fun to see things take a more sophisticated but no less passionate turn with Ellen Pieroni & the Encyclopedia of Soul. The Buffalo-based saxophonist and multi-instrumentalist is driven by catchy melodies, steady pocket rhythms, and plenty of room for experimentation.

Pearl Moon (Woodstock) - Brian Mitchell brings his band for a dinner show built on blues, rock, and New Orleans-style R&B on April 18. A five-time Grammy winner, he has played with artists including Levon Helm, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Little Feat, and Dolly Parton.

Olive Free Library (West Shokan) - Square dancing has deep roots in participatory folk tradition, and this Square Dance Hootinanny plays to that spirit, inviting first-timers and seasoned dancers alike to join the floor and support the library on April 11.

Art

The Lace Mill (Kingston) - *Aperire: A Spring Art Show* has its opening reception also on April 4, and celebrates all things blooming and blossoming. Various resident and community artists will contribute to this group show.

Arts Society of Kingston (Kingston) - Take a quick tour through landscape,

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High Falls Cafe
EST. 2005

April line-up

2 Marbletown Boys	7pm
4 Oxford Station Band	7:30pm
9 Open Mic Benefit for WISE	7pm
11 The TRAPPS	7:30pm
16 The Nancy Donnelly Trio	7pm
18 Soul City Groove	7:30pm
23 Trivia Night	7pm
25 The West Road Band	7:30pm
30 Jim Pospisil	7pm

845-687-2699 | www.highfallscfe.com

At the Olive Free Library

Thursday, April 2 • 5:30 – 6:30pm
Choosing Sides, Ulster County During the American Revolution
a lecture by Ulster County Historian Eddie Moran

Saturday, April 11 • 11am–12pm
Building Foundations of Caregiving with Alzheimer's Assoc.

Saturday, April 11 • 5:30 – 8pm
Square Dance Hootenanny

Saturday, April 25 • 12–2pm
Soil-Blocking Workshop & Seed Swap

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COLONY
This Week at The Colony!

EVERY MONDAY!
The World Famous Colony Open Mic!
Hosted by Brendan O'Shea!

Naked Wed., April 1

Sonny Rock's Pro Jam Thurs., April 2

Big Yellow Taxi Fri., April 3

Bowie Iggy Lou Show Sat., April 4

A Tribute to Bobby Weir Sun., April 5

The Niall Connolly Band Wed., April 8

Blonde Sabbath Thurs., April 9

The Mallett Brothers Band w/ Pressing Strings Fri., April 10

Chris Knight w/ Jacob Paul Allen Sat., April 11

The Marshalls / Brendan O'Shea / Mick Lynch Sun., April 12

Nightmares For a Week / Stacked Like Pancakes / Mona Freaka Thurs., April 16

Spring Fever Sirens Burlesque & Cabaret Show! Fri., April 17

DJ Tryst Fri., April 17

Peter Tosh Tribute Sat., April 18

Stevie Nicks / Fleetwood Mac Tribute Sun., April 19

Club d'Elf Thurs., April 23

Lloyd Cole Fri., April 24

The Mountain Jam Band Sat., April 25

22 Rock City Road Woodstock, NY 12498



The Sketchbook Gallery (Saugerties) - *Trash Chic!* is a group exhibition at The Sketchbook Gallery that brings together artists using discarded and overlooked materials to question ideas of value, beauty, and permanence. Presented in conjunction with *Matter Out of Place* at Jane St. Art, the show asks viewers to see “trash” as raw material for something striking and new. Opening reception is April 4.

abstraction, sculpture, and mixed media, with works spanning multiple galleries by Lynn Margileth, O’Neil Edwards, Eileen Power, Ted Dixon and Wayne Montecalvo alongside a juried group exhibition of more than 20 regional artists. Opening reception is April 4 – maybe you can hit all of the above in one ambitious art adventure!

Comedy



Assembly (Kingston) - New York-based, Midwest-influenced comedian, actor, and writer Chloe Radcliffe, whose credits include *The Tonight Show*, *Comedy Central*, and Steven Soderbergh’s *Command Z*, will split sides on Sat., April 11.

Woodstock Byrdcliffe Guild (Woodstock) - Aaron Foster leans into edgy, dark humor, personal stories and the uneasy comedy of midlife. He’s a former HGTV host and longtime artist who returned to stand-up in recent years, and he stops by our neck of the woods on April 15.

Blue Duck Brewing Co. (Kingston) - This up-and-coming comedy slate is

headlined by comedian and podcaster Shawn Barnes, who hails from further upstate. He’ll be joined by Dave Bailey, Michael “Salty” Saltz and Holly Viggiano.

Laugh it Up Comedy Club (Poughkeepsie) - Rich Vos performs his blunt, veteran stand-up that has made him a regular on Comedy Central, popular comedy podcasts, and roast-writing gigs. The Jersey comic is also known for *My Wife Hates Me*, his long-running show with comedian Bonnie McFarlane.

Stage & Screen

Denizen Theatre (New Paltz) - A screening of *No One Cares About Crazy People* presents Gail Freedman’s documentary on severe mental illness alongside a filmmaker Q&A on April 26. Narrated by Bob Odenkirk with music by Jeff Tweedy, the film is geared toward caregivers, advocates and anyone interested in mental health policy and lived experience.

Upstate Films: Orpheum Theatre (Saugerties) - Locally made short *BUY IT!* screens April 4, followed by a discussion with writer-director-actor Sharon Breslau, cast and crew. The 15-minute film follows wealthy Brooklynites scouting a Catskills retirement parcel who instead find a hostile neighbor, political tension and an encounter that turns in an unexpected direction.



UPAC (Kingston) - Ballet is a medium that naturally takes you to a different dimension, and doubly so at UPAC from Fri., April 24 through Sun., April 26, as *Alice in Wonderland* takes the stage, presented by Catskill Ballet Theatre. There are also tickets left for a touring production of Meat Loaf tribute *Bat Out Of Hell - The Musical*, fresh off its run at London’s West End.



Charli XCX at Storm King Art Center.

saw as another reset to reconsider what he wanted to do. He found himself having time and energy that he wanted to invest in something else and asked himself: “Where can I fit into the landscape of the venues and events in the Hudson Valley and bring something meaningful? If I felt like I was redundant, I would just stop doing shows.” He was still trying to reset when his father passed. “He was a radio DJ in the ’70s. He just had a crazy record collection, and we always listened to the radio. He was a real radio lover. He made mixtapes for everything. There was always music playing in our house and driving anywhere.”

A few months after he passed, Wave Farm’s WGXC, Catskill’s local, community, experimental radio station serving Greene and Columbia counties (and beyond online), asked him if he would want to do a radio show and record segments to broadcast on air of him interviewing musicians and people in the music industry. He remembers thinking, “I have to do this,” citing timing and following the natural opportunities and synchronicities.

Both Amari and Wave Farm’s WGXC were looking to offer a platform to showcase local musicians, something they did through Local Waves. An initial open call in late 2024 brought in more than 4,000 tracks from 500-plus artists from the Hudson Valley, Capital Region and western Massachusetts, and is now updated monthly. Amari listens through every album sent in, selects a few tracks to add to the on-air rotation

and tracks each month’s additions with links to stream on the WGXC website. The Local Waves library plays on air twice a week (10 a.m. Thursday and 8 p.m. Friday). As of 2026, there are more than 700 songs in the directory that play on air in shuffles of curated picks. He emphasized the importance of someone actually selecting what you’re hearing, adding to the common thread of going against the direction of technology and smartphones. The goal was to give local bands support and exposure when releasing new material. “If you’re a new, unknown band, it can feel very out of control whether you get on the right playlist or the YouTube algorithm picks you up. The current state of tech and music industry makes it like releasing these songs into a void,” Amari stated.

After such a strong response to Local Waves, both WGXC and Amari wanted to figure out how they could make it continue working. They found their answer in Breaking the Algorithm IRL: an even more analog version to complement the on-air show and desire to showcase and introduce local musicians. On the last Thursday of every month at the Avalon Lounge in Catskill, Amari interviews someone involved with the local music scene. It could be a musician, record label owner or anyone in any behind-the-scenes role that makes the music scene

Near Death Experiences
 with Robert Cornett
 at Phoenicia Library

Please join us for this informative talk. Robert Cornett, MTS will provide an overview of the fascinating research on people who have reported Near Death Experiences and how these have affected their lives. Robert is an end of life doula based in Woodstock.

Saturday, April 11, 11 am
 Phoenicia Library
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COLONY
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EVERY MONDAY!
 The World Famous Colony Open Mic!
 Hosted by Brendan O'Shea!

Wednesday, April 1 | 7pm
Naked

Thursday, April 2 | 7pm
Sonny Rock's Pro Jam #51

Friday, April 3 | 7pm
Big Yellow Taxi - The Music of Joni Mitchell w/Carl Mateo

Saturday, April 4 | 7pm
John Gullo's Bowie Iggy Lou Show

Sunday, April 5 | 7pm
Let the Words Be Yours — A Tribute to Bobby Weir

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