

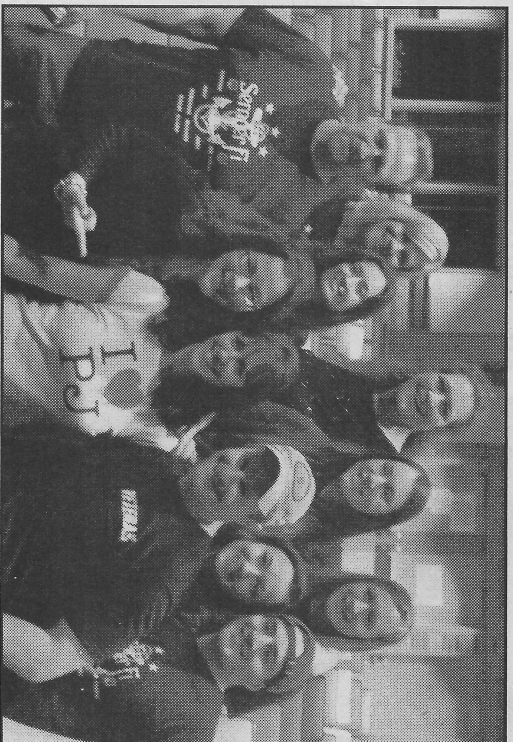
# Veterans' Benefit Comedy Show Wows Packed Crowd in Brewster

One of Putnam County's jewels, Brewster High School's Performing Arts Center, was packed for the June 27 Wounded Veterans Benefit Comedy Show with PJ Walsh and Friends as hundreds of people from Connecticut, New Jersey, New York City, Putnam, Dutchess, Westchester and Orange counties and beyond came together to honor and support Brewster veteran-led programs for fellow veterans.

Kim Blacklock, president of H.G. Fairfield Arts – the host and producer of the event – echoed feature comedian PJ Walsh's Facebook post after the event: "We packed that place and did some good for heroes. That is what last night was all about!"

There are three beneficiaries of the comedy show and the outpouring of community support: the 75-year strong Brewster VFW Post 672's (Emergency) Relief Fund; Semper Fi Odyssey's transition program for all military branches' discharged wounded or ill veterans in the mountains of Pennsylvania; and Semper Fi students of Brewster High School with their work helping local veterans, service personnel, and their families.

Rob Gallacher, whose father is a veteran, is a BHS faculty advisor for Semper Fi students, and had this to say online after the event: "Thank you, PJ. Great job everyone involved – from the great Brewster kids/families to the pros. This was something special and I feel privileged to be part of it! It's a labor of love; helping our service members, friends and family! Let's do it again!"



Following the Wounded Veterans Benefit Comedy Show in Brewster, Semper Fi students joined Advisor Rob Gallacher, comedians PJ Walsh and Mary Dimino, a friend of PJ's from high school and guest singer Dr. Angelina Mendes of Carmel Central School District, and H.G. Fairfield Arts President Kim Blacklock for a photo.

Art Hanley of Brewster VFW Post 672 wrote straight to the point: "I would like to thank PJ Walsh's family for providing the fodder for his jokes. I haven't laughed that hard in quite a while."

Veterans from the Montrose VA Health Center were able to attend, thanks to the generosity of Common Ground, which paid for their discounted tickets and a driver.

PJ Walsh, a graduate of the Brewster Class of 1990 and a Navy veteran, wrote of the amazing turnout: "Last night was one for the record books. So much went into it that was unseen.

Thank you very, very much Rob Gallacher...your BHS Semper Fi Club students are tremendous! Katie Freston, Kim Blacklock and everyone at H.G. Fairfield Arts Center for the Environment,

Inc., your dedication and work paid off big time! Ann Marie Chalmers and the crew of (tech) students – unreal!...

"Fellow alumni Lou Milano, you made a huge impact on stage and on air at 195 WRKI. Thanks

brotha...And (after) 20 years of friendship with Mary Dimino... thank you so much for joining me. Of course the people of Brewster – friends, parents of friends, kids of friends, strangers, teachers...my parents and of course Brewster High School!"

Join the 15 local businesses who have helped sponsor the benefit by sending donations marked "Semper Fi Brewster" to H.G. Fairfield Arts, 31 Sodom

Road, Brewster, NY 10509. For more information about the merchant sponsors or the benefit, visit [www/HGFairfieldArts.org](http://www/HGFairfieldArts.org) or call 845-363-1559.

# Get Ready for 'Battle of the Books'

Twenty-four libraries from the five counties of the Mid-Hudson Library System are recruiting students entering grades six through nine in September to participate in the 10th annual Battle of the Books, a nationally recognized literature contest in which young people answer trivia questions based on specific books they have read during the summer.

The goal of the program is to promote a love of reading in middle school-age students, to expose them to titles and authors they might not encounter in school, and to inspire teamwork and good sportsmanship.

Consideration is given to the range in ages of the participants so books are chosen that are appropriate for all.

Libraries from Putnam, Dutchess, Columbia, Greene and Ulster counties are beginning to register students for the 2014 Battle of the Books, and students will participate in

coaching activities and practice battles throughout the summer. Participating libraries will supply the books and team T-shirts.

On Saturday, Sept. 6, all 24 teams will participate in the regional Battle of the Books at Columbia-Greene Community College in Hudson. The Regional Battle is held as a bracketed competition requiring double elimination for each team. During each round of the Battle, the teams are asked 25 trivia questions based on the eight books they have all read. The 2014 champions will be determined after all other teams have been eliminated.

The Beacon Bees from Howland Public Library in Beacon reign as the 2013 champions.

Like most public library programs, there is no fee for participants. Check with your local library for the list of books and program details, and whether they are participating.

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