

# HUDSON VALLEY NEWS

AUGUST 5-11, 2009

YOUR SOURCE FOR LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS.

PRICE: \$1.00



{P.2} HYDE PARK  
REPUBLICANS PICK  
THEIR TEAM



{P.6} COMMUNITY COMES  
OUT FOR FRANKIE FLORA

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- **LANCE LAVENDER HAS THE WEEK OFF**

## THIS WEEK'S WEATHER:

RICHIE HAVENS IS SINGIN'



Annie Leibovitz.  
Photo by Robert  
Scoble. Courtesy  
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wikimedia.org.

## OUT OF FOCUS FAMED PHOTOGRAPHER FACING CASH CRUNCH

BY JIM LANGAN

Rhinebeck resident and internationally renowned photographer Annie Leibovitz is the subject of a lawsuit that could force her to sell her magnificent residence on River Road.

An art finance company, Art Capital, entered into an agreement with Leibovitz in September 2007 in which Art Capital lent the artist \$24 million against the rights to her photographs and properties, including her homes in Greenwich Village and Rhinebeck.

While Leibovitz reportedly earns more than \$3 million a year for her work at *Vanity Fair* magazine and other commercial endeavors, it appears her finances have been negatively impacted by a number of factors. She has been involved in a lengthy and expensive renovation

of three townhouses in Greenwich Village, including several tax liens and lawsuits filed by contractors. She is also being sued by a lighting company and stylist for more than \$700,000.

At issue currently is her obligation to pay back Art Capital by Sept. 8 or face foreclosure. A spokesman for Leibovitz claims the lawsuit is "false ... and part of Art Capital's harassment and attention-getting efforts." The spokesman did not address whether Leibovitz is in a position to pay off the loan by Sept. 8.

Leibovitz has been an active and generous benefactor here in the Hudson Valley, often making her home available for local charities and causes.

Her property was part of the original Astor estate and includes the barn and creamery from that property. The creamery was the site of an interview with Oprah Winfrey for her syndicated

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## HUDSON VALLEY weekend

CELEBRATING LOCAL: MUSIC, THEATER, ART, FILM AND MORE

### WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WEEK:

- {P. 9} WOODSTOCK FRINGE'S 2009 FESTIVAL OPENS
- {P.10} RHINEBECK CAMP HOSTS A ONE-WEEK TRY-OUT
- {PLUS} PHIL D. GLASS, WEEKEND GOES POP AND MUCH MORE...



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# HV weekend living

## New arcade offers vintage appeal

BY TRACI L. SUPPA

Smiling, Fred Bobrow approaches the couple circling the 1970 “Sega Gun Fight” game. “If you stand on both ends, you can have a shooting match,” he advises. “Actually,” his patron responds, “I’m just trying to get a good angle to take a picture of it.”

It’s a dilemma faced by nearly everyone who spends time at the Retro Arcade Museum, the business Bobrow opened in downtown Beacon in April. His own personal collection of over 40 vintage machines, dating from 1954 to 1976, is operational and available to play. Once his customers find their childhood favorite, they vacillate between wanting to play it and wanting a photo to preserve the memory.

Stroll the aisles, and you’ll find nearly every kind of game belonging to the electromechanical genre, which pre-dates the chip-based computer technology used in the “Pac-Man” heyday of the ’80s. There are driving, shooting, flying and space-themed games, as well as several classic pinball machines – all in good condition.

Bobrow points out that there are only about three spots in the country with such a large collection of games you can actually play, since most collections on exhibit are only for show.

Word about the arcade is spreading, mostly via the arcade’s online presence on Facebook, Myspace, Craigslist, and KLOV.com, the “Killer List of Videogames.” The guest book already includes notes from patrons hailing from New Zealand and Japan. “We have a guest coming in from Reno this week just to play our collection,” he says.

Bobrow, 45, is a lifelong arcade game enthusiast, and has been amassing his collection for eight years. He now owns 160 machines, purchased from points as far away as Canada, the United Kingdom and even Australia. The collection reflects manufacturers long since gone, like Allied Leisure Industries, the Chicago Coin Company and MCI. The 45 machines in the museum will be rotated with the rest in storage.

While he has been able to procure most of his wish list, there are a few items which remain elusive, either due to scarcity or price. One day he hopes to obtain the 3D imager accessory for his 1982 “Vectrex” tabletop video game, but current online auction prices are in the prohibitive \$700 to \$800 range.

While he has some machines dating from the 1940s, the oldest currently at the museum is the 1954 “Drive Yourself Drivemobile” by Mutoscope. It’s an early facsimile of a modern driving simulator game like the “NASCAR Racing Motion Cabinet,” where the player sits in a driver’s seat and steers the car, minus power steering. While all the action of today’s driving games is shown on a flat video screen, this jaunt takes place on a panel just beyond the steering wheel. It’s a depiction of a curvy street, painted on the exterior of a revolving drum. You’ll see that cluster of trees more than once during play.

“These games were feats of engineering,” he adds. “An artist needed to design original, pre-CAD (computer-aided design) artwork and an electrical engineer needed to take the concept to reality.” The panel displays on many of the machines, such as the 1970 “Sea Devil,” depict detailed story-telling scenes. They get noticed by his artist-type patrons, who appreciate the complex use of full spectrum color and detailed line-drawing.

The “youngest” games are, on average, 35 to 40 years old, such as the Atari machines from 1974 and 1975. “Tank” has the familiar elements of an evasive military exercise: The player steers his tank through a maze on the black-and-white screen as he tries to outrun enemy shell blasts.

While the colors, lights and sounds emanating from the scores of machines is stimulating enough, the museum’s time warp is enhanced by oversized TV screens showing programs from the ’60s and ’70s (like “Welcome Back Kotter”) and over 35,000 era-appropriate songs in the digital jukebox.

There’s a party room in the back dubbed “Grandma’s Kitchen,” decorated to fit the image which springs to mind, complete with an old dishwasher and a Heinz Warmer from the ’50s, a microwave precursor which dispenses cans of food, opened and warmed with rudimentary attachments.

The arcade offers “no-token” free play, meaning customers pay one price for admission with unlimited use of the machines. It’s open during regular hours Friday through Sunday, and by appointment only Monday through Thursday. Most of the museum’s clientele is within the 35 to 55 age group; the minimum age for unsupervised entry is 18. However, many parents bring their teenage children.

It’s difficult to pin down Bobrow’s favorite game, but he’s partial to the ones he used to play as a kid. “My high score on ‘SuperShifter’ is 123.9 miles per hour, which, to my knowledge, no one has ever beaten.” Without a computer chip to save the game’s high scores, Fred’s “SuperShifter” title remains uncontested.



Courtesy photos.



**Retro Arcade Museum**  
412 Main Street, Beacon  
6-10 p.m. | Friday  
Noon-10 p.m. | Saturday  
Noon-8 p.m. | Sunday  
And by appointment  
845-440-8494  
Admission: \$9.95 per person per hour  
[www.retroarcademuseum.com](http://www.retroarcademuseum.com)