

STANDING TALLEST

Ulster County Edition



Freeman photo by Tania Barricklo

Artist Maria Reidelbach measures her giant gnome on Thursday at Kelder's Farm.

Gnome man is an island among garden-variety lawn sculptures

■ Gnome Chomsky, at Kelder's Farm in southern Ulster County, cements his place in the world record book.

By **JOSHUA M. RINALDI**
Freeman staff

KERHONKSON — A 13.5-foot yard gnome off U.S. Route 209 should soon grace the pages of "Guinness World Records."

The gnome, called Chomsky, will hold the record for the world's largest yard gnome. It stands sentry over Gnome on the Grange, a mini-golf course at Kelder's Farm.

Chris Kelder, whose family has owned the farm for more than 200 years, said it's nice to have such an attraction.

"It's a lot like having the world's largest ball of string," he said. "We used to say we're right across from NAPA (Auto Parts). Now we'll say we're right next to the gnome."

The gnome was the brainchild of Maria Reidelbach, who also built the mini-golf course on Kelder's Farm. The record-setting gnome is actually Chomsky II, Reidelbach explains. The original Chomsky was built in 2003, but was made out of the wrong mater-

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Father and son go with the flow

Kingston calls them after ocean crossings

■ Jim and Troy Samuels plan their years of shore duty before returning to West Africa.

By **KEVIN WONG**
Freeman staff

KINGSTON — It's one thing to take a 5-hour ocean crossing. It's another matter to take a trans-Atlantic voyage from West Africa to the United States.

Jim, 46, and Troy Samuels, 27, are on their way home from a 10-month deployment in West Africa. They returned to Kingston on Monday, making their last voyage.

The father and son belong to the 10th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) (A) in the 3rd Marine Division (3rd MARDIV) at Camp Pendleton, Calif., which are on their way home from a 10-month deployment in West Africa. They returned to Kingston on Monday, making their last voyage.

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Hospital moves to cut jobs

Columbia Memorial deficit \$1.7 million

■ Manufacturing plant opens to reduce operating costs by \$2 million.

By **FRANCIS DODDY**
Freeman staff

ELIZONDA — Columbia Memorial Hospital will move its manufacturing plant to a new location to reduce operating costs by \$2 million.

The hospital's board of directors approved the move on Thursday. The new plant will be located on the site of the old plant, which was closed in 2003.

The move is part of a larger effort to reduce the hospital's operating expenses by \$15 million.

"We're in the red right now," said the hospital's CEO, Michael J. O'Connell. "We need to do whatever it takes to get us back to black."

The move is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Under the plan, the hospital has closed its 10th floor and is moving its manufacturing plant to the 11th floor.

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Police seeking clues about woman's death

By **HEATHER A. RINALDI**
Freeman staff

PURCHASE — Thursday evening, a group of about 100 people gathered at the home of a woman who was found dead in her car on Thursday.

The woman, identified as Jennifer Matthews, was found dead in her car on Thursday. The car was found on the side of the road near the intersection of Route 209 and Route 28.

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See Gnome, page A2

City parking debate shifts to pay kiosks

Majority leader suggests an alternative to meters

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Gnome hopes to stand tall in world records book

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to be qualified for the world record.

Guinness said that for Chomsky to be record-setting, he would have to be built out of the same materials as other yard gnomes: cement. Reidelbach said she was committed to making the world's biggest gnome and enlisted artist Ken Hutchinson to craft Chomsky II out of cement, straw and chicken wire.

Reidelbach said Chomsky didn't dethrone any other big yard gnomes. Guinness did not have a previous record in this category.

So, building a gnome for a mini-golf course is historically appropriate, Reidelbach said. The first mini-golf course built had gnomes on it. Building a gnome of Chomsky's size just fulfilled an old desire of hers, Reidelbach said.

"It's been a dream of mine for about 10 years to build a roadside attraction," she said.

The measurements were ceremoniously taken with an oversized ruler Thursday evening. As part of the rules of Guinness, Reidelbach assembled a board of "local luminaries" that included Ulster County Legislator Rich Parete, Rochester Town Supervisor Pamela Duke and Mark Brown, leader of a local country-rock band, to witness the event.

Brown, who wrote a song about U.S. Route 209, said the gnome is in a very fitting place.

"If you were going to find it, it would be on 209 or at least in this part of the world," he said.

Also among the luminaries was David Work, a local mushroom enthusiast with the Mid-Hudson Mycological Association. He said the history of gnomes and mushrooms is a lengthy one, which is why he was invited to attend the event. Reidelbach said she is considering adding an oversized mushroom next to the gnome in the future.