The Problems of Poughkeepsie
by
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All photos taken by the author unless otherwise noted.
Poughkeepsie, NY, is a town located on the east side of the Hudson River, just an hour and a half north of New York City. Founded in 1687 by the Dutch, the city was known for several hundred years as a fairly industrial place, home to Vassar College. The surrounding town of Poughkeepsie was founded in 1788, paving the way for a larger population and more diverse role in the community. While many respected business and entities remain in the city, the Poughkeepsie that exists today is not quite as prosperous.

Photo Courtesy of http://www.shorpy.com/node/9369
Over the past ten years, violent crime in Poughkeepsie has climbed from near the national average of 600 crimes in 2001 to more than triple the national and state amounts in 2010 (upwards of 1400). This year, there will be a projected 17 rapings, 700 thefts, 6 murders, and nearly 300 cases of aggravated assault.
The violence prevalent in the Poughkeepsie community is also present in the public schools. A few years ago, an English teacher in the high school was accused of stabbing a female colleague in the head and neck with a screwdriver, intending to kill her. While it was a student who broke up the fight, students in the community are being exposed to intense violence early, and are being “educated” by criminals.
Drug usage and related violence has caused severe disorder in the darkest alleys of Poughkeepsie. Organized, Mafia-style drug gangs work together to sell their stock to a community whose population is known for drug usage.

One case involved 13 members of a gang called “Partners N Crime” who competed with local drug deals and executed rivals. The gang sold self-made rap music about themselfs to those in Poughkeepsie. Such dealing could be occuring in homes like this, just hundereds of feet from the High School.

Photo to left courtesy of .poughkeepsiejournal.com/article/20061116/NEWS05/611160348/
In 1873, the Hudson River State Hospital began operating just north of the Marist College campus. It is known as a landmark due to its unique "High Victorian Gothic" design. Unfortunately, the complex was struck by lightning in 2007, completely destroying the infrastructure. The building now stands eerily abandoned on 162 acres of unused land. Although trespassing is prohibited, local residents have found ways to enter the ruined building.
Warning
This property is patrolled. Trespassers will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.
In 2011, there were over 600 homeless people in the Poughkeepsie area. The average listing price of a home in March of 2013 was around $235,000 dollars, while the average income was just under $30,000. The most recent census shows that more than one out of every five people in Poughkeepsie live below the poverty line.
The violent crime rate for Poughkeepsie is nearly triple the rate for the entire state of New York. The amount of crime per square mile is 5 times that of the state average.
Despite the many problems the Poughkeepsie area faces, the community is well known for its “college-town” feel, with multiple music, entertainment, and social venues. It is necessary to keep in mind the real issues that affect this city, so its residents can be aware of these dangers and avoid them.
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