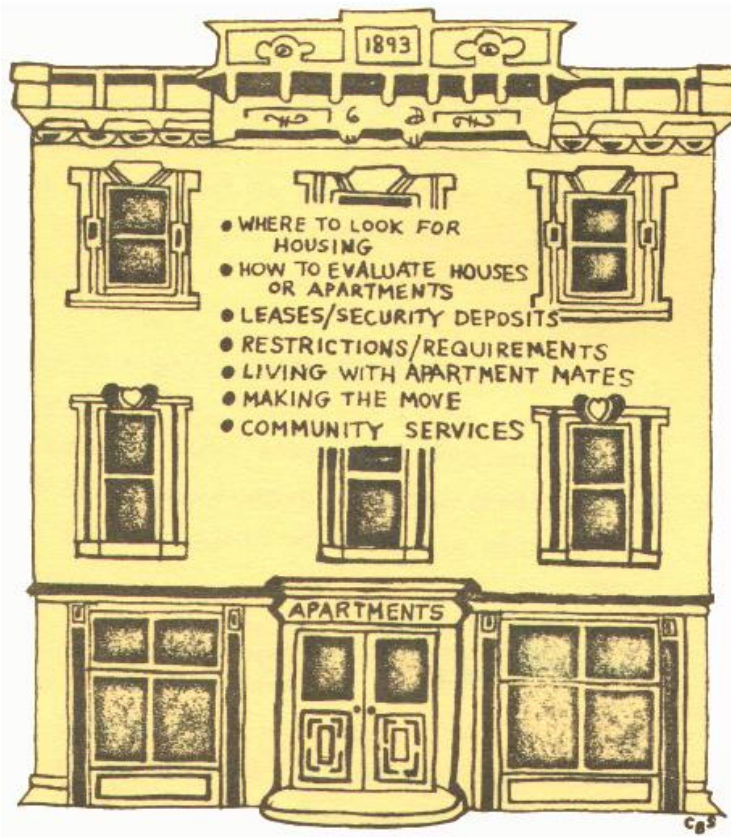


OFF CAMPUS GUIDES 2013-2014



Published by the Office of Residential Life

ATTENTION:

ALL STUDENTS WHO WILL BE LIVING OFF CAMPUS FOR THE UPCOMING ACADEMIC YEAR

Please be sure that your landlord will have your apartment available for you to move before classes begin. It is extremely important that you finalize your moving plans with your landlord because tenants staying for the Saratoga Flat Track racing season may not have vacated the apartment.

WE ADVISE YOU TO CITE YOUR DATES OF OCCUPANCY IN YOUR LEASE.

*We, Skidmore College, will **not** be able to provide temporary housing for off campus students prior to the start of classes.*

You are required to provide a cell phone or land line number and local address to Skidmore College. This information must be received by August 1st, or a hold will be placed on your course registration. Please submit this information to:

**Office of Residential Life
Skidmore College
815 North Broadway
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
Phone: (518) 580-5765
Fax: (518) 580-5792
Email: reslife@skidmore.edu**

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INTRODUCTION

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE MAKING THE MOVE

When deciding to move off campus, either by yourself or with friends, you should know your rights as a tenant as well as your responsibilities in the community.

Living off-campus means living as part of the “real world” community. Your neighbors will not be your friends down the hall, but professionals and families who keep very different hours and lifestyles. We recognize that students are highly motivated to succeed, engaged in numerous co-curricular activities, and generally accepting of institutional rules and regulations. However, the College and the City are also very concerned about the safety and quality of some individuals’ life styles and their effects upon the Saratoga Springs/Skidmore relationship at large. All too frequently, complaints regarding loud noise, intolerable language, fear for one’s personal or child’s safety, vandalism, and drunken behavior danger the trust locals feel toward off-campus students. Skidmore College views living off campus as a privilege for students in good standing. Therefore, for students who violate the Student Code of Conduct, the College reserves the right to withdraw the privilege of living off campus and have them move back on campus into available housing. As part of the sanction, the student may be responsible to their landlord for their lease and certainly responsible for the on campus room and board costs.

The following information is intended to help you in your search, to raise questions that should be answered **prior** to your commitment, and to advise you of your rights. Please note that this information is **not** a substitute for legal advice. It is recommended that you consult a lawyer regarding any legal issues.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

Before you begin your search, you should make a list of your needs and wants. Things to think about:

- number of bedrooms/bathrooms
- location
- your budget
- other “options” (i.e. furnishings, parking, laundry, pets)

As you make this list, keep in mind that a long list of “requirements” is likely to raise the cost of your rental, and may make your house/apartment more difficult to locate.

A. NEWSPAPERS

Our local newspaper, the *Saratogian* includes lists of available rentals in the Saratoga area in their “classified” section.

B. RESIDENTIAL LIFE

The Office of Residential Life maintains a file of available apartments and houses to rent, as well as requests for roommates. The bulletin board outside our office also lists rental advertisements. If you have any questions regarding rentals, please stop in or call our office at (518) 580-5765.

C. REALTORS

There are numerous Realtors in Saratoga Springs who may handle rental properties. The agent will arrange a showing, accompany you to view the rental, and take care of the other details involved.

The Saratoga County Board of Realtors, located on Saratoga Avenue, Ballston Spa (telephone (518)-885-4748), has a list of realty agencies belonging to its organization available upon request. There should be no charge to you for utilizing a Realtor.

As you begin negotiating with a Realtor/landlord, it is highly recommended that you designate one member of your group to serve as a spokesperson. This will be sure to save time and to keep your group more organized.

D. OTHER STUDENTS

Students who currently live off campus can be a great source of information. If you see an apartment/house that you like, ask who their landlord is.

AVAILABLE COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Chamber of Commerce, 28 Clinton Street, Saratoga Springs, 518-584-3255.

The Chamber of Commerce mainly provides information for tourists by supplying literature about activities in Saratoga Springs; however, they can also help out in your search for an apartment/house by furnishing a list of Realtors that are in Saratoga Springs.

CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING A RENTAL PROPERTY

For the apartment/house hunter who is careful and thoughtful, many problems can be avoided. A few things to look for:

A. LEASES

Before signing a lease **READ IT** and make sure that you understand it. Any agreements which you have made verbally with the landlord should be written into the lease. For example, if the landlord has agreed to make repairs, specify what is to be done and by what date. Be aware that both you and the landlord are contracted to follow the agreements written into the lease. Be sure that you have a duplicate original copy of the lease (not a photocopy). It is common for landlords/realtors to ask students who are not self-sufficient for a parents' guarantee. If there is a secured party (i.e. parent(s)), they should also have an original copy of the lease.

Understand that when you sign a lease, you are accepting responsibility for the **full** amount of the rent for the duration of the lease. If your roommate suddenly leaves, you would be held responsible for their portion of the rent. Signing a lease is a legal and financial commitment which should be taken seriously.

B. COST

Figure out the rent per person and see if it is within your financial range. Be sure to find out any other additions to the rent. The most common extras are:

1. Utilities (gas, heat, electricity, water)

Be sure to ask the landlord to estimate the approximate utility charges per month. To get a better idea of your estimated expenses, ask the tenants now occupying the residence what they pay. National Grid (800-642-4272) may be able to establish a budget plan, whereby they would estimate your entire utility costs for the period that

you will be in the apartment/house and arrange for you to pay the same amount each month. Electric heat tends to be more expensive than gas or oil. Landlords may include some or all of the utility charges in the rental figure. For further information and addresses on utility costs, see page 10.

2. Trash and Snow Removal

Some landlords may charge for trash removal. This may cost as much as \$35 a month. As a Saratoga resident, you must comply with recycling laws. It is possible that your trash won't be taken if not sorted properly. Do not assume that your landlord will pay for plowing a driveway or shoveling walkways. The cost for plowing a driveway may range from \$10 to \$30 per visit.

3. Parking

Some landlords have their own parking facilities. Be sure to find out if there is some charge for the use of such space. Clarify whether a specific space is part of your lease, or whether you will have to share available parking with neighbors or other tenants.

C. CONDITION OF THE APARTMENT/HOUSE

When you are looking at a rental property, you should take into consideration the following items:

1. Are all major appliances that the landlord will supply to you (stove, refrigerator) in good working condition?
2. How well are utilities supplied to the apartment/house? Try running the hot and cold water in the kitchen and bathroom sinks and in the shower and/or bathtub, and note the size of the hot water heater in proportion to the number of people in your group. Is adequate heat provided? The current tenants may be able to provide valuable information on this subject. Are there two electrical outlets in every room? Is every room, including halls and stairwells, adequately lit?
3. Check the condition of the windows, floors and ceilings. How soundproof are the walls? The tenants will be able to tell you about any problems with soundproofing.

4. If the property is listed as “furnished,” ask the landlord to specify exactly what pieces of furniture belong to the apartment/house and are to be included in the rental. A list of furnishings that are to be included in the apartment/house should be added to the lease to give you further protection.
5. Check the safety features of the property. Are locks on all doors secured? You might ask for peepholes, dead bolts, and/or chain locks for additional protection. If you are living on the first floor of a building, ask your landlord about providing locks and/or heavy screens for your windows. Does your apartment/house have a nearby exit and/or fire escape? Are smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers provided? For further information on safety, see page 7.
6. It is strongly recommended that you use the checklist at the back of this booklet when inspecting a property and just prior to moving in. See page 16.

D. LOCATION

Is your apartment/house convenient to a shopping area? If the landlord does not provide laundry equipment, are laundry facilities nearby? Is the neighborhood safe? Is the nearby area well lit? If you do not have a car, is the apartment/house within reasonable walking distance from the Skidmore campus, or close to the bus route?

E. RESTRICTIONS

Are there any restrictions on such things as noise levels, subletting, pets, length of time visitors can stay, or decorating the apartment/house that the landlord wants written into the lease? These seemingly minor items can cause annoyance and conflict later on. Pay particular attention to a subletting restriction if you are not planning on occupying the apartment/house for the entire duration of the lease.

As you are inspecting a property, keep in mind that a landlord has certain standards that he/she must uphold. The Saratoga Springs Department of Public Safety is located in the Town Hall (across from the Post Office) on Broadway. They provide a sanitation code or minimum housing standard code, which the structure of a building and its utilities must legally meet. If you do find violations of health standards, act immediately. Either do not rent or make demands on the landlord that are stated in the lease.

MINIMUM HOUSING STANDARDS

Department of Public Safety 587-3550

Minimum requirements can vary from structure to structure. By providing specific information about the property you are interested in renting, you may obtain exact housing standards from the Department of Public Safety.

A. MINIMUM SPACE

Bedrooms, if occupied by one person, must be 70 square feet. If occupied by two or more people, they must have 50 square feet per occupant.

B. VENTILATION

All habitable areas must have a window. Bathrooms and kitchens are not considered habitable areas, but they must have some type of artificial ventilation.

C. ROOMS

An apartment/house must have its own bathroom and kitchen; if not, it is called a “rooming house.”

D. SAFETY

Depending on the size of the building and the date of construction/renovation, your landlord may be required to provide some or all of the following: smoke detectors, self-locking entrance locks, peepholes, a two way intercom, elevator mirrors, and secured mailboxes. The newer the property, the more standards! Common areas must be well-lit. If you wish to install any locks on your own, you should check with the landlord first. You must provide the landlord with a copy of the key.

E. TEMPERATURE

Check with the landlord as to whether you can regulate your own heat, as well as the temperature of the water. In some instances, landlords are required to keep the apartment at a minimum of 68 degrees Fahrenheit from 6am - 10pm and at least 55 degrees between 10pm - 6am. You may wish to add a minimum temperature to your lease, if you are unable to regulate your heat.

SECURITY DEPOSITS

A security deposit is commonly required and should be specified in the lease. It is usually in the amount of one month's rent, payable before the tenant moves in. A landlord can ask for no more than two months rent as a security. If the building has over four units (apartments), the landlord must hold this security deposit in an escrow account and credit it to the tenant at a minimum annual interest rate.

FINAL CHECKLIST BEFORE SIGNING A LEASE

Below is a checklist of items that should be in writing before your commitment is made final:

A. MONEY

- When and where the rent is due.
- What the security deposit covers, its amount, the conditions for its refund.
- When it will be returned and interest on the deposit.
- What the conditions are for subletting.

B. OPERATING AGREEMENTS

- When the landlord will enter the unit.
- What the house rules are, if any (e.g. guests, children, animals, etc.).
- What furniture, if any, will be provided. Its condition should be noted in writing for both the landlord and the tenant.
- What the landlord will furnish: heat, water, utilities, garbage disposal, etc.
- Who is responsible for repairs and maintenance and what his/her phone number is.
- If you make additions/improvements to the property (i.e. installing shelves), do they become a permanent part of the property? You may be required to leave them.

C. PHYSICAL CONDITION

- What is the current physical condition of the dwelling unit and what needs to be done before you move in (painting, plumbing repairs, electrical work, etc.)?

D. SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS

- Know where the fire escape or fire exit is located.
- Know if the electrical wiring and lighting is adequate and if the number of outlets is sufficient.
- Know where the fire extinguishers are located. In multiple residences they should be located on each floor in readily accessible places and in full view. **Smoke detectors that are battery operated are recommended and should be tested regularly.**
- Know if the heating and water systems are acceptable. Ask current residents whether there is sufficient heat and hot water both day and night.
- Due to the energy costs, it is advisable to practice energy conservation. Be aware that the temperature in your apartment/house should never fall below the minimum standards.
- Know the community emergency number (911). If you have questions about fire safety, call the Fire Department at (518) 587-3599.

MAKING THE MOVE

There may be a period of several months between when you last inspected the property and when you actually move in. It is a wise idea to do an inventory of the house just before, or as soon as possible after your move in. Have the list signed and dated by all the tenants and the landlord. This may prevent many hassles when you move out regarding missing items, etc. Also do an apartment inspection, noting all damages in the house and have that signed and dated by all the housemates and the landlord. It is recommended that you utilize the checklist in the back of this booklet. This may seem tedious, but in actuality, it is an excellent safeguard against being charged for damages that may have been incurred by the previous renters.

It is also recommended that you videotape or photograph your apartment upon moving in. This will act as a safeguard in documenting the condition of the property, as well as for insurance purposes. Be sure to keep the video/photos in a separate location. **You should check with your family to see if their insurance will cover your apartment/house in the event of theft or fire. If not, you should obtain a renter's insurance policy.**

HOOKING UP YOUR UTILITIES

A. NATIONAL GRID

You can reach Customer Service at 800-642-4272 or Automated Account Services at 888-932-0301 (both toll free numbers). To have the electricity turned on you should call National Grid at least a week in advance. A deposit is required a couple of days before an order for the power to be turned on. The amount of the deposit required will vary according to where you are planning to live and how much the bills usually are. Billing inside Saratoga Springs is monthly. It is helpful to find out the former tenant from your landlord. National Grid often cannot find the account by the address, and will ask for this information. To disconnect your service you should call National Grid a few days in advance of your departure.

B. CABLE TV/WIFI

Time Warner Cable, 866-321-2225 (toll free number). They can supply a range of television service options and also high speed internet. Wireless internet service is also available through Time Warner.

LANDLORD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Your landlord is required to provide you with a livable, safe and sanitary environment. In addition to providing the basic necessities of heat and hot water, he/she must maintain all permanent appliances. Electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, and ventilation systems must be in good working order. Common areas must be in good repair. Trash receptacles must be provided.

Make sure that you know your landlord's telephone number and address in case of an emergency. Also, make sure that you have a fixed process to follow when repairs are needed (i.e. who calls the repair person, who will pay, etc.). If your landlord does not live in the area, there should be a building manager or local contact person who you may easily reach.

A landlord may enter your apartment/house when:

1) Reasonable notice has been given to enter at a reasonable hour, 2) to provide necessary or agreed-upon repairs or services, 3) to show the property to prospective buyers/tenants, 4) in the event of an emergency. The landlord may not abuse the right to enter the apartment/house.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

A. BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Skidmore College values its positive relationship with the city and residents of the Saratoga Springs area, and expects you to contribute to that tradition while living in the community. Most Skidmore students living off campus have had very good relationships with their neighbors, but there have been complaints about large late-night parties and other disruptive behaviors. Remember, you must keep the premises as clean and safe as their condition permits. You must take out the trash and not willingly destroy any part of the premises. Remember you have neighbors and you must respect their rights too. Loud noise has been a prevalent complaint in the past. Remember that the City of Saratoga Springs has ordinances against improper noise levels. The Ordinance states, “It shall be unlawful for any person to make any unreasonable noise within the boundaries of the City of Saratoga Springs. Unreasonable noise shall mean any noise which is of such character that a reasonable person of normal sensitivities would not tolerate under the circumstances, or is detrimental to the life or welfare of any individual, or causes a risk of public inconvenience or alarm.”

You have the right to host parties at your house, but you must also recognize that large gatherings can disturb your neighbors. The college expects you and your guests to respect the character of the neighborhood you live in, local standards of decorum, and to represent Skidmore in a positive manner.

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To keep your parties safe and a positive experience for you, your guests, and neighbors, here are some tips:

1. Make a list of whom you want to come and how many.

2. When inviting your friends specify if you are inviting them individually or if they can invite one, two, or three etc... guests (you want to specify, because **you** will be responsible if the numbers get out of hand).
3. Ask friends to car pool. This simple step can save you the potential grief of having your neighbors understandably complain about a sudden invasion of cars on their community street. There is often no need to have several parked cars, and there should be a designated driver always.
4. Set a time frame. The party will start at 9pm, for example, and end by 12am. Stick to the time frame!
5. Talk with your neighbors. Let them know in advance if you plan to have a party and ask if it's an OK night. Follow up the next day to ask if everything was alright. Asking demonstrates a concern beyond your own interest, which is an important aspect of living in any community, especially one with individuals in different stages of their lives.
6. Clean Up! After your party, walk around the surrounding area and pick up any litter, trash, or cans. It's important to take a moment to show your neighbors that when you do hold a party you do not allow it to disrupt the community.

B. OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition, you clearly have a financial obligation to the landlord for the full amount of the rent for the duration of the lease.

VACATING AN APARTMENT/HOUSE

When moving out of the apartment/house tenants should be advised to clean up as well as possible, or the landlord can charge for cleaning. The apartment should be as clean or cleaner than when you moved in. Renters and landlord should review together the original checklist of conditions and come to a signed agreement regarding damages. If no damages are found, make sure that you receive your security deposit back before you leave town or make sure that you leave an address where it can be sent. The date for return of the security deposit should be specified in your lease.

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The only instances in which a landlord may keep all or part of your security deposit are: 1) if it is needed to pay to repair damage caused by you, or 2) to cover unpaid rent. If an amount is deducted from your security deposit for repairs or cleaning, you should ask to

see receipts for that service. The landlord should only deduct what it actually cost him/her in time and materials.

TERMINATION OF A LEASE
(other than its agreed end)

A landlord is permitted to terminate a lease:

1. After a notice of the tenant's unresolved break of certain "material" obligations (failure to repaint, repair, etc.).
2. By court order if the tenant wrongfully refuses to let the landlord enter the dwelling unit.
3. If the tenant does not abide by any of the conditions of the lease (i.e. pets, subletting, noise level, etc.).

Termination by the tenant is permitted:

1. After notice of the landlord's unresolved break of certain "material" obligations.
2. By court order if the landlord makes unreasonable or harassing use of his/her right to enter the dwelling unit.
3. If the landlord has willfully failed to supply essential utility services.
4. Upon substantial impairment of the premises due to fire or other casualty.

Finally, if you do get into a legal dispute with your landlord, you should consult a lawyer. The Student Government Association retains a lawyer from whom students may seek legal counsel on a one consultation, no fee basis. For further information, contact the Student Activities/Leadership Office at extension (518) 580-5778.

MEDIATION SERVICES

Off-campus living often presents challenges, even legal disputes. Conflicts may arise between housemates, especially with regard to obligations of a lease. Issues may also arise between landlords and tenants. Should you need assistance with dispute resolution, we have trained student mediators who work with Mediation Services of Saratoga. Call the Office of Residential Life at 518-580-5765 for more information or contact Mediation Services at 518-584-6361.

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YOUR SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY

POLICE DEPARTMENT

EMERGENCY NUMBER
Dial 911

- To the Saratoga Springs Police Department (518-584-1800), students living off campus are no different than any other Saratoga Springs resident. Security is up to the individual.
- According to the Police Department, when you call to report an incident, you do not have to leave your name. You should feel free to report suspicious people of any age (including students) to them.
- Students should not hitch hike.
- Always have someone with them when using laundry facilities in a Laundromat.
- Be sure that the landlord provides ample parking space. Police have had to tow students' cars during and after snowstorms due to improper parking. When students leave for vacation they should remember to park their cars in a long-term parking area.
- Due to burglaries, it is important to remember to leave lights on, a radio playing, and make sure windows are locked and that the locks on your doors are secure when you are not at home. Always lock your car.

Kitchen	Condition In	Condition Out
Floor		
Walls/Ceiling		
Refrigerator		
Stove/Oven		
Cabinets/Doors		
Table/Chairs		
Curtains/Blinds		
Sink		
Counter Top		
Light Fixtures		

Bathroom	Condition In	Condition Out
Floor		
Walls/Ceiling		
Tub/Shower		
Shower Curtain		
Sink		
Toilet		
Mirror		
Towel Rack		
Cabinet		
Light Fixture		

Bedroom(s)	Condition In	Condition Out
Floor		
Walls/Ceiling		
Doors		
Curtain/Blinds		
Bed/Mattress		
Dresser/Desk		
Light Fixture		

Living Room	Condition In	Condition Out
Floor/Carpet		
Walls/Ceiling		
Curtains/Blinds		
Couch		
Chairs		
Tables		
Lamps		
Light Fixtures		

Comments:

Landlord Signature/Date Upon Check In

Tenant Signature/Date Upon Check In

Landlord Signature/Date Upon Check Out

Tenant Signature/Date Upon Check Out

An Added Resource:

The Office of Residential Life has a copy of **Tenants Rights in New York** written by Brette McWhorter Sember (Attorney at Law). Please feel free to stop by and check it out.

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VOTING

The Skidmore Voting Project in conjunction with the Saratoga Board of Elections, Dean of Students Pat Oles, Associate Dean Don Hastings, and the Skidmore Government Department have been working to assist student voters. In past years, all Skidmore students registered to vote used the Skidmore College mailing address. However, due to a recent legal decision, off-campus students will no longer be able to use this address. Please familiarize yourself with the procedure to ensure that as you move into the town of Saratoga Springs, you may continue to vote, or register to vote, as part of the community.

1. Fill out Voter Registration form and mail it in when you have established the off-campus address where you will be residing at next fall.

- Residential address: Address of off campus housing
- Mailing address: 815 N. Broadway, Saratoga Springs, 12866

Note: Students previously registered in Saratoga Springs or elsewhere in New York State should check “change address” in box 2. All other students should check “new registration.”

2. Determine where you will be voting on Election Day. You may call the Saratoga Board of Elections to confirm this information: (518) 885-2249.

- 1: Embury Apts., 133 Lawrence St. (West Tower)
- 2: Embury Apts., 133 Lawrence St. (East Tower)
- 3, 4, 8, 9, 25: City Center Lobby, 522 Broadway
- 5: St. Clements Center, 231 Lake Ave.
- 6, 10: Senior Citizens Center, 5 Williams St.
- 7: City Garage, Division St./ 29 Van Rensselaer St.
- 11, 21: Firehouse, West Ave. (Emergency Corp Rm)
- 12: Presbyterian N.E. Church, 24 Circular St.
- 13: Canfield Casino, Congress Park
- 14: William H. Ford Neighborhood Center 37 Fenlon St.
- 15: Caroline St. School, 310 Caroline St.
- 16, 20: Geyser Rd. School, 61 Geyser Rd.
- 17, 22: United Methodist Church, 175 Fifth Ave.
- 18: Abundant Life Church, Hutchins Rd./ 2325 Rt. 50
- 19: Division St. School, 220 Division St.
- 23: Interlaken Community Center, 75 Sarazen St.
- 24: Skidmore College Campus

3. Feel Free to email the Voting Project with any questions or concerns:
vproject@skidmore.edu, or contact the Board of Elections:

50 West High Street
Ballston Spa, NY 12020
(518) 885-2249

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