

My Gym Children's Fitness Center.



See Page 11

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Samuels Drops 31, Ossining Repeats as State Champs!...



See Page 19

March 18 - March 24, 2014

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 6, Issue 223

Bomb Ingredients Found in High School Student's Home

By Rick Pezullo

Ingredients used in incendiary devices were found at the home of a sophomore at Walter Panas High School Friday morning after a two-hour search in the school that caused an emergency evacuation of students and staff.

Westchester County Police, which led the investigation that included bomb sniffing dogs and the bomb squad, confirmed some comments made on social media relating to explosive materials belonging to the unidentified student, who is on the football and wrestling teams at Panas, triggered the large law enforcement presence and closed campus.

However, Kieran O'Leary, a Westchester County Police spokesperson, stressed Monday nothing was found in the student's locker and no direct threats were made to the school.

"As caution we had the school evacu-

ated," O'Leary said. "There was nothing in his locker that wouldn't normally be in a student's locker."

O'Leary explained police also erred on the side of caution since the student did not attend school on Friday. He was later located at his home on Winthrop Drive in Cortlandt, where water bottles filled with powder from fireworks and fuses were reportedly discovered, along with napalm, a mixture of a thickening/gelling agent and petroleum or a similar fuel. Police declined to reveal what evidence they recovered.

The student, who is under 16, was charged with juvenile delinquency and will have to appear in Westchester County Family Court. O'Leary said if the student were an adult he would have been facing criminal charges. An investigation is continuing.

Lakeland Superintendent of Schools
continued on page 10



Panas students were forced to wait outside during evacuation.

Peekskill Councilman Caught Up in East Harlem Building Explosion

By Rick Pezullo

It was anything but a typical work day last Wednesday for Peekskill Councilman Darren Rigger.

Rigger was en route to his job at Dynamic SRG, a political fundraising consulting firm, in East Harlem at 119th Street and Lenox Avenue aboard a Metro-North Railroad train when two buildings collapsed from an apparent gas line explosion on 116th Street and Park Avenue, just a few blocks from his office.

Normally at work about 9 a.m.,

Rigger didn't arrive in the devastated area until about 10:30 a.m. since the raging fire forced his train to evacuate at Marble Hill and then he had to hop on a subway. He said the billowing smoke and police officers wearing masks were eerily similar to the scenes on the street when the World Trade Center was felled by terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

"It was very reminiscent, but nothing near what happened on 9/11," Rigger said. "After 9/11

continued on page 10



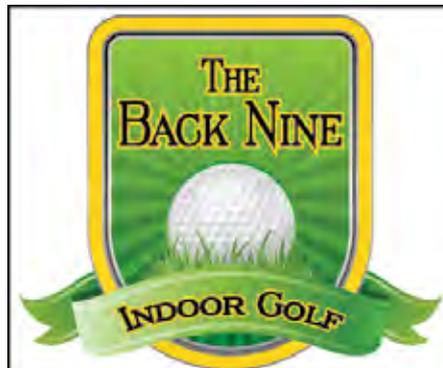
Darren Rigger



EVAN LEFKOWITZ PHOTO

Irish Eyes Were Smiling

Hundreds of spectators lined the streets of Peekskill Saturday to enjoy the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade. See page 13 for more photos.



Golf Meet & Greet

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Saturday, March 22
Noon to 2 P.M.

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ysaleagues.com/golf



Peekskill Would Have to Foot Revaluation Bill Alone

By Rick Pezzullo

If the City of Peekskill decides to go forward with the first revaluation of city properties in 61 years, it will likely have to pay the entire \$1 million expense alone.

During a joint meeting of the Common Council and Board of Education at City Hall last week, Mayor Frank Catalina put school officials on the spot about sharing the cost of an outside firm to study the assessments of all residential and commercial properties in the city.

"The city is not committed to doing this revaluation. What we're concerned about is the cost. The city doesn't have it. We would have to bond it," Catalina said. "We're looking for some shared expense here."

City Assessor Michele Jordan has been

pushing the city to join the City of Yonkers, and towns of Greenburgh and Ossining in getting a cheaper group rate from Tyler Technologies to correct what she believes have been decades of "inequities" of either over assessed or under assessed parcels.

Over the last six years, Jordan said tax certioraris have cost Peekskill \$3.4 million and the Peekskill School District \$6.6 million.

"With assessments now we're not capturing the fluctuations in different neighborhoods," Jordan said. "We would have a fair assessment roll."

With a revaluation, the rule of thumb is one-third of property owners will see no change to their taxes, one-third will pay less and one-third will pay more.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Lorenzo Licopoli said the district is financially strapped and just recently cut \$1.8 million in operating expenses in its proposed 2014-15 budget to come within the state mandated tax cap. However, he agreed with Jordan about the potential benefits of revaluation.

"There's no doubt a revaluation would be a benefit for the district with tax certioraris and future budgets," Licopoli said. "It's just a new thing for us to think about. That would be something we would have to budget for. We wouldn't have reserves for it. Ultimately it still comes from the taxpayers no matter what way we do it."

At an earlier meeting, Jordan said the city could bond the money over five years and would be refunded over time

by the drop in tax challenges that would occur. If the city agrees to take part in the study this year, reassessment would be completed by June 2016 and would affect the April 2017 tax bills.

"Maybe the city can put the money up front and the district can pay later once the tax certioraris decrease," commented school trustee Joseph Urbanowicz.

Catalina said Urbanowicz's suggestion was something the city could consider but asked the Board of Education to ponder giving the city a financial hand.

"We're just asking that you discuss it. I think I know what the answer will be," Catalina remarked.

Meanwhile, the Common Council and Board of Education may also explore a Pre-K partnership in the near future.

Fourth Annual Gateway Consumer Experience Saturday in Cortlandt

The Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce is presenting the Fourth Annual Gateway Consumer Experience at the Mansion at Colonial Terrace in Cortlandt on Saturday, March 22, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$5; children under 12 are admitted free.

In attendance will be 100 Hudson Valley businesses representing many industries including: travel, contracting, jewelry and

accessories, restaurants, auto dealers, energy companies, senior care facilities, hotels, salons, arts, history, health and fitness, insurance, real estate and many more.

"This year's theme is 'Got Questions? Experience is the Answer!'" said Deb Milone, Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce Executive Director. "Consumers need to know they don't have to travel very far to find qualified assistance

with their consumer needs. Our local business experts are eagerly awaiting this opportunity to demonstrate their services and answer questions."

This year's Experience features gourmet food samples, beer and wine tastings, and cooking demonstrations from three of the region's top chefs: Chef March Walker of the Birdsell House at 12:15 p.m. Chef Dennis Cruz, fresh from his appear-

ance on the TV Food Network, from 12 Grapes Music and Wind Bar at 1:15 p.m. and Chef Tom Costello from Thyme Restaurant at 2:15 p.m.

All Gateway Experience attendees will have the opportunity to enter a raffle to win Yankees/Mets tickets for May 15 and a sports bag filled with goodies, as well as a chance to win \$25,000 at the Franzoso Contracting booth.

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Yorktown Trash Hauler Seeks Fueling Option for Truck Lot

By Rick Pezzullo

The fate of an application by the Town of Yorktown's trash hauler to park garbage trucks on a town-owned piece of land off Front Street could hinge on fueling options.

Competition Carting has been illegally parking its trucks on Richard Place since it was awarded garbage pickup services from the Town Board in January 2013. It was later issued a violation notice from the town and has been seeking a special use permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals for more than a year.

At a ZBA public hearing last month, representatives for Competition Carting, whose main office is in Jefferson Valley, were told there should be no fueling of trucks on the site since they don't have a required permit from the state Department of Environmental Conservation and a building permit.

As part of its revised site plan, a



RICK PEZZULLO PHOTO

Competition Carting has been illegally parking trucks on Richard Place.

500-gallon, above-ground tank is proposed to service the 19 garbage trucks

Competition is looking to legally park on the property.

"At least two meetings ago we said fueling had to stop," ZBA Chairman Gordon Fine asserted.

Joseph Spiezio said without fueling on site there was "no reason to move forward." He later said he would explore bringing fuel to the site in a "wet fuel" truck.

"I do it in the city. I do it in other areas," he said. "It's already a standard routine done probably in 50 places in Yorktown."

The ZBA is requiring Competition Carting to complete a full Environmental Assessment Form, despite objections from the hauler's engineer, Dan Ciarcia.

"I don't think it will shed any light on environmental issues. We're essentially not doing any alterations to the site," Ciarcia said. "It's a parking lot that happens to have garbage trucks."

Competition Carting's application is slated to appear again on the ZBA's March 27 meeting at Town Hall.

Yorktown Deli to Host Cash Mob Event Sunday

The Yorktown Small Business Association is planning a "cash mob event" Sunday, March 23 from 9 a.m. to noon at Yorktown Deli, which offers unique Mediterranean Food and American Food at 2043 Saw Mill River Road in Yorktown.

Proprietors Gino and Tanner will be offering samples of all their creative Mediterranean and American foods, including gyros, Guvec, Mousaka, and Schwarma to mention a few, along with numerous salads, grilled items and hot

and cold sandwiches. Be daring and bring an appetite.

The Yorktown Deli is open seven days a week from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. There will be raffles including Boars Head promotional items and entertainment. All pur-

chases will be discounted 10% during the event and each purchaser will receive a free raffle ticket for the drawing which will be in 30-minute intervals. Gift certificates are available. Come support your Local Businesses.

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Bill Primavera and The Home Guru Team Adopt Physicians Against World Hunger



L to R, Bill Primavera, "The Home Guru," Tom Costello, Chef/Owner of Thyme in Yorktown Heights and new board member of Physicians Against World Hunger, and Dr. Michael Altamura, Founder and Executive Director.

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We have adopted Physicians Against World Hunger. Founded by local physician Dr. Michael Altamura in 1991, it gives funding to the Westchester Coalition for the Hungry and Homeless.

Because The Home Guru's former career was in food and restaurant promotion, this is the area in which we will help Dr. Altamura raise money.

Joining me in this endeavor is Tom Costello, Chef/Owner of Thyme in Yorktown Heights, who will help me plan:

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Local Forum Focuses on Ways to Tackle Drug Epidemic

By Janine Bowen

With heroin use rampant in Westchester over the past few years, Phoenix House, a rehabilitation center in Shrub Oak, partnered with Drug Crisis in Our Backyard to host a forum on how to tackle this difficult trend last week.

"The USA is facing the worst drug epidemic in its history. In the next 12 months...it is possible that there will be more deaths in the country from drug overdoses than deaths at the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis," said Phoenix House CEO, Howard Meitiner.

The current crisis encompasses the use of heroin as well as opioid pills, including Vicodin and Oxycodone. Abuse of opio-

ids is currently the number three killer in the country, behind heart disease and cancer, and is predominately affecting the white population.

Heroin overdoses are most common amongst the younger white population, between the ages of 20 to 34, but older users actually have a higher overall death rate due to abuse of pain pills prescribed by doctors.

"We now have defacto legalization of heroin," said Doctor Andrew Kolodny, who stated that pills such as Vicodin are essentially "heroin pills".

Kolodny blamed the current opioid epidemic on the overprescribing of pain pills by doctors in situations where they

are not warranted. He wants to fight the epidemic by enacting more stringent restrictions for prescribing the pills, which over 60 percent of patients admit to using for purposes other than pain.

"My son is dead due to a local trusted doctor who prescribed oxy to my son for back pain. From January 2011 to his death on June 9 2012, this doctor continued to give my son 180 to 240 pills a month knowing that this amount is addictive. This has to stop," said Carol Christiansen, who co-founded the Drug Crisis in Our Backyard, a foundation that aims to bring awareness to the opioid epidemic.

To restrict the prescribing of opioids would not only limit access to drug seekers, but would reduce the black market for the drugs, which can be sold for as much as \$30 per pill.

Similarly to Christiansen's son, filmmaker Greg Williams, who spoke at the forum, became addicted to pills after being prescribed oxycodone for back pain.

Williams's new film, Anonymous People, focuses on the 23 million recovering addicts in this country who often live in silence. He, along with A Drug Crisis in Our Backyard and the other panelists at the event, want to get the public talking about addiction issues, and urged people to give to addiction foundations the in same way they may give to cancer causes.

The goal is to remove the stigma and stereotyping surrounding addiction, so that those who suffer will not be embarrassed to seek help.

David Sheff, whose new book, "Clean," attempts to understand the current drug crisis, reminded the audience that drug addiction can happen to anybody.

"We think about addicts. We have images of what they look like. We see them when we walk down the streets, in alleys...the isolated and the derelict, the homeless, in some cases, the psychotic; those are addicts, not our children. It could never happen to me, we think," said Sheff, whose son, Nick Sheff, suffered with addiction.

A large portion of the forum focused on the idea that the public needs to place less emphasis on punishing addicts and more on helping to find treatment options for them. Instead of prosecuting those suffering from addiction, panelists stated that the underlying cause of the drug use must be addressed.

Almost two-thirds of patients treated at Phoenix House for drug addiction has a co-existing psychological disorder, and turned to drugs in place of therapy. In addition, other factors, such as past trauma or even stress, which high school students stated as their number one reason for doing drugs, can lead to addiction.

Kolodny also stressed the fact that addiction is a disease, and that most people who become addicted to opioids are not simply taking the drugs for recreation.

"Most people, once addicted, do not take heroin or pain killers because they're having a ball. They're taking the pills and heroin, in many cases, just to try and feel normal," he said.

Panelists at Thursday's forum did not only want to encourage addicts to seek treatment, but to reform current treatment programs. Currently, 90% of drug rehabilitation programs do not rely on evidence based treatment. In addition, addiction treatment was not covered by most insurance companies, prior to the affordable care act.

One woman in the audience shared her story about how her son was denied inpatient detox by his insurance company four days before dying of an overdose in 2012. Denial of addiction treatment is a common occurrence, which is actually against the Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act, enacted in 2008. Currently, groups are attempting to take insurance companies for the wrongful use of this law.

This woman was far from the only one in attendance whose life was touched by drug abuse. To end the forum, Williams asked all of those who knew someone who suffered from addiction to stand up. Almost half of the people in attendance rose to their feet.



D.A.R.E. graduation was held at Crompond Elementary School in Yorktown. (L-R:) Crompond Principal Lori Roberts, Councilman Vishnu Patel, D.A.R.E. 2014 Student of the Year Giovanna Phipps and D.A.R.E. officer Rich Finn.

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HV Hospital Recognized for Excellence for Older Adults

Hudson Valley Hospital Center's program for hospitalized older adults has been recognized by the prestigious NYU College of Nursing program as one of the top NICHE hospitals in the nation.

Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) recently released a list of nine hospitals that have achieved Exemplar status for the progress of their nurse-driven programs in raising the level of quality in care of older adult patients, and Hudson Valley Hospital Center (HVHC) was the only hospital in the region to receive the honor.

Suzanne Mateo, chair of HVHC's NICHE team, said the hospital has worked hard for the designation by educating the public and the entire nursing staff on geriatric care and incorporating NICHE philosophy into all departments.

"We made a commitment as part of our Magnet designation to elevate our practice," said Mateo, MA, BSN, RN. "We worked hard to bring NICHE practice into all aspects of care here at HVHC and are very proud to be recognized for this accomplishment."

People over 65 are the fastest growing age group in the nation, making up

12.9% of the population or about one in eight people in the United States. By 2030, estimates are there will be about 72.1 million older adults, according to U.S. Census data.

The Exemplar hospitals will be honored at the national NICHE conference in San Diego in early April.

"These hospitals showed a tremendous commitment to meet one of the most critical challenges of our times---quality care of older adults," said Linda Bub, MSN, RN, GCNS-BC, director, education and program development. "The hospitals' dedication to drive continuous improvement processes and enhance care marks them as leaders in the field."



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Furnace Woods Elementary School recently held its annual Science Expo, showcasing a collection of work for third, fourth and fifth graders. Fourth grade teacher Greta Sieverding organized the expo.

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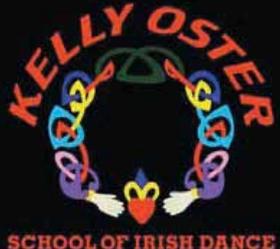


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HOORAY! The awning is up, the heaters are on and the patio is open!

Friday, March 21st Starting at 7:30
Cross Wind -
Mike Mongero - Drums; Roy Sokol - Bass Guitar; Rob Kreiser - Vocals; Bob Philipps - Lead Guitar; James Davis - Keyboard; Reenie Lennon - Vocals; Sal Lagonia - Trumpet

Saturday, March 22nd Starting at 7:30
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This weekend's events

Police Blotter

Yorktown Police

March 1 - 2:21 p.m. - Jaqueline Broughton, 19, of Montrose, was charged with petit larceny after allegedly leaving Sears at the Jefferson Valley Mall without paying for clothing valued at \$87.98.

March 9 - 3:20 p.m. - An unidentified 16-year-old Mamaroneck male was charged with falsely reporting an incident and making a punishable false written statement for reporting on January 24 that he was sexually abused by two male residents while attending Phoenix Academy in Mohegan Lake.

6:42 p.m. - Harold Quintero, 35, of Queens, was charged with petit larceny after allegedly stealing an LG stereo valued at \$479.99 from Sears at the Jefferson Valley Mall.

March 10 - 11:15 a.m. - George Oglesby, 48, of Peekskill, was charged with grand larceny in the fourth degree after allegedly finding a wallet containing credit cards and personal identification from a Yorktown victim on March 1 and using the stolen credit cards to make unauthorized purchases from stores in Mohegan Lake. He was released on \$500 bail.

3:18 p.m. - David Vazquez, 26, of Jefferson Valley, was charged with two counts of grand larceny in the fourth degree, criminal

possession of a controlled substance and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. Police allege Vazquez took a debit/credit card from a purse and made unauthorized withdrawals from the victim's bank accounts, totaling \$1,180. Police further allege Vazquez was in possession of heroin. He was remanded to Westchester County Jail in lieu of \$10,000 bail.

March 11 - 11:43 p.m. - Jesse Jewell, 20, of Yorktown, was charged with criminal possession of marijuana in the fifth degree. A police officer on patrol observed a 2013 Honda Civic packed and occupied by several youths in the parking lot of 240 Underhill Ave. The officer also allegedly observed Jewell rolling marijuana in a cigar wrapper.

March 12 - 8:31 p.m. - Keith Broughal, 45, of Yorktown, was charged with driving while intoxicated and multiple traffic infractions following an accident on Route 35.

State Police

March 6 - 3:29 a.m. - Errol Fernandez, 23, of Yorktown, was charged with driving while intoxicated following an accident investigation on Mahopac Avenue. He was remanded to Westchester County Jail in lieu of \$10,000 bail.

March 13

Brian Barber, 47, of Mahopac, was charged with menacing during a road rage incident on Route 35 in Somers. A complaint was filed against Barber the day before when he was reported to have followed

a female driver, forced her to stop on Route 35 and attempted to open her door while verbally threatening her. His alleged actions were reported to have occurred after he believed he was "cut off" by the female driver.



The Croton Community Coalition's Marijuana Prevention Tool Kit for Parents recently won the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions in America Innovation Award for Ideas at the group's National Leadership Forum in Washington D.C.

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Obituaries

Antoinette D'Andraia

Antoinette D'Andraia, a resident of Yorktown, died March 12. She was 93.

She was born in Yonkers to Lino Di-Francesco and Anna Maria (nee De-Filice). She was the beloved wife of Rocco, who predeceased her in 1994. She was the loving mother of Diana Rodano (Phil, deceased) of Hackensack, NJ, Anna Maria (Elio) Mazzella of Yorktown, Jeanette of Yorktown and Anthony (Donna) of Yorktown. She was the adored grandmother of eight grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren who all cherished her. She was the beloved older sister of Raymond (Barbara), Romolo, Lena, Norma Carozza (Armando), and Helen Antenucci (Dario deceased) and predeceased by brother Renato (Frances, as well as aunt to many nieces and nephews.

Mrs. D'Andraia was active in her community for years as President of PTA's in Yonkers and was the first President of ACIM. She will be greatly missed by family and friends. A Mass of Christian Burial was held at St Patrick's Church in Yorktown. Interment followed at Gate of Heaven in Hawthorne. Contributions can be made to The United Cerebral Palsy Association.

Carol Ann Romano Sales

Carol Ann Romano Sales, a resident of Beacon and formerly of Yorktown, died on March 4 surrounded by her loving family. She was 73.

She was born August 28, 1940 in the Bronx. On October 1, 1960, she married Nicholas Sales and they later made their home in Yorktown. Carol and Nick were happily married for over 53 years and were true partners. She had many interests and was a ballet dancer until she married. She played the piano and would entertain residents of nursing homes and old age facilities with her music on a volunteer

basis. She especially wanted to bring joy to those people who had no family to visit them during the Holiday Seasons. Her other interests included gardening, reading, studying the bible at Graymore Monastery, and being with friends.

In addition to her adoring husband, she is survived by her beloved daughter Catherine (Eric Gustin). She also leaves behind many family members and friends, especially her dearest cousin Diane L. Sack. She was devoted to her family members as well as a regular contributor to various charitable organizations and was always there to lend a hand to people in need. She will be greatly missed and will be remembered as a giving, gentle soul who loved her family, nature, and animals. A funeral service will be held at St. Patrick's Church in Yorktown on March 22 at 11 a.m. Donations can be made to a local food pantry or ASPCA in her name.

Francis Scaramellino

Francis J. Scaramellino, a resident of Yorktown and formerly of Peekskill, died March 8. He was 88. With his family, he owned and operated "Sorrento's" Restaurant at the riverfront in Peekskill for many years. He was born February 5, 1926 in Brooklyn to Agnello and Rafaela Scaramellino. He proudly served in the U.S. Navy during WWII. On November 19, 1950, he married Lillian Margarita at the Assumption Church in Peekskill. He dedicated 56 years of volunteer service to the Peekskill Fire Patrol; he was also a past member of the Elks Lodge 744 and the Christopher Columbus Society of Peekskill.

A husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, he is survived by four children, Lina Amisson of Hopewell Junction, Clara Scaramellino of Yorktown, Linda (Raj) Kanojia of Cortlandt and Francis (Patricia) Scaramellino of Fishkill, four grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. Also surviving are two brothers and a sister, Michael

Scaramellino of Granite Springs, Salvatore Scaramellino of Cortlandt and Helen Christian of Granite Springs. He was predeceased by his wife Lillian (Jan., 2012), a brother, Anthony Scaramellino killed in action during WWII (Battle of Iwo Jima) and a sister, Louise Emery.

Charles Jones, Jr.

Charles E. Jones, Jr., a resident of Cortlandt, died March 12. He was 50.

He worked for Nardone Brothers Furniture Store in Peekskill. He was born April 5, 1963 in White Plains, to Charles E. Jones, Sr. and Adeline Jones. On May 9, 1987, he married Donna Fairchild.

He is survived by his wife; four children, Christopher, Christina, Ashley and Brian; seven grandchildren, Tyler, Aiden, Nana, Lyly, Bryan, Gi and Givanni; a brother, George and a niece, Amber. He was predeceased by his parents and five sisters.

John Gantt

John H. Gantt, a resident of Peekskill since 1960, died March 8. He was 77.

He served in the U.S. Army from 1958 to 1960. He worked as a custodian for 25 years in the Peekskill City School District until retiring in 1998. He is survived by his wife Martha (Poole) Gantt; and his two sons, Michael and Maurice Gantt. He is also survived by his sister, Sarah Warren and his four grandchildren, Sydney and Savannah Gantt, and Janessa and Corey Straker; and also several nieces and nephews.

Joseph Outhouse

Joseph W. Outhouse, a longtime Cortlandt resident, died March 11. He was 63.

He formerly owned and operated the Van Cortlandt Garage; most recently worked as a plumber for Katonah Plumbing. He is survived by his wife Glenna A. Outhouse; two sons, Daniel and Christo-

pher (Terri) Outhouse; and seven grandchildren: Michael, Ashley, Brittany, Emily, Tyler, Ryan, and Kimberlee. He is also survived by his sister, Elizabeth Busse; his brother-in-law, Gordon Gorley and his sister-in-law, Ellin Trissler.

Stephen Bayer

Stephen Bayer, a resident of Croton-on-Hudson, died March 13. He was 71. He lived his life and faced his illness with courage and grace.

He was the beloved husband of Gale, proud father of Kim Bayer Olthoff (John Henry) and Jesse Bayer (Dori Kavanagh), grandfather to Ruby Aselya Bayer and John Stephen Bayer Olthoff, adored uncle and brother-in-law, son of the late Marge and Bryan Bayer. Family man, extraordinarily kind to all, Doo-Wop King and music man, nature boy and ocean lover, expert tickler, superb gardener, special friend to animals and world traveler. After a successful career in the advertising business including Doyle Dane Bernbach and Chiat Day, a mid-life career transition brought him to Phelps Hospice for 17 years where he became Director of Volunteer Services and developed the Complementary Care Program.



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Editorial

School Districts Can Find Instant Savings Doing Without Superintendents

This is the time of year when school districts struggle to make ends meet and meet the state imposed tax caps and a host of other financial obligations without affecting the quality of education and programs for students.

When cuts become necessary, districts are quick to slash from the so-called bottom, but it's time that districts start considering chopping from the top, the top being the position of superintendent of schools, which weighs down school budgets by anywhere from \$250,000 to \$400,000 with salary and perks.

Under state Education Law, the position of superintendent of schools is not required. There are some functions currently that only the superintendent can carry out, such as recommendations for teacher tenure, but with some lobbying efforts, those duties can be changed by state officials if the goal is truly to have districts continue provid-

ing everything necessary to educate children without bankrupting taxpayers.

Most of the responsibilities of a superintendent are to make recommendations to the Board of Education. It's an extra layer of bureaucracy that school districts can no longer afford. The districts won't miss a beat with the business managers, principals and those in charge of curriculum, personnel, etc. running the show.

If that is too drastic of a change, then neighboring districts need to put their territorial egos aside and start seriously talking about sharing superintendents. There's no reason one administrator can't oversee Lakeland and Yorktown or Hendrick Hudson and Croton. Municipalities have been sharing services for years. The time has come to for school districts to start sharing high priced personnel.

The way the system is now set up

is a superintendent is hired for three to five years, mostly with no previous knowledge of the area. After a year of getting their feet wet, the superintendents hang around for a few years, then get antsy and look for greener pastures. Sometimes an interim superintendent is brought in at top dollar to hold down the fort until a permanent superintendent is found, and the vicious cycle starts all over.

Tough times require tough decisions. School districts are at a breaking point. How much longer will the state be able to afford the STAR program, which has been a life preserver for thousands of homeowners to be able to deal with escalating property taxes, the majority of which are school taxes?

Voters should demand change when they vote on their school budgets and Board of Education members in May. It's a bold move that will pay off in the long run.

Letters

Yorktown Residents to Compass Westchester: Bring It On!

To the Editor:

At the March 4th public meeting, held at Yorktown Town Hall, to discuss the Special Permit for a Substance Abuse (FOR PROFIT) Convalescent Home, in a "Residential/Family" zoned section of Yorktown at 482 Underhill Avenue, Yorktown residents/tax payers/VOTERS sent a clear and strong message to the applicants, their attorney, Supervisor Grace and the Councilmen. "Bring it on" was the reply that was echoed throughout the Public Hearing to Tom McCrossan, one of the applicants who has repeatedly said, that if they don't get an approval to run their proposed facility, they (the applicants) will take whatever measures necessary to achieve their goals.

Mr. McCrossan and his partner, Mr. McGoldrick, the "Moneyman" as he called himself at an earlier meeting with some area residents, have from the start tried to manipulate and control the media ignoring the "meat and potato issues" such as town and county building codes and zoning regulations, surrounding this special permit. They have tried to make

it a "Good versus Evil" issue, with the residents who oppose this plan being the "Bad/Evil Villains" in their latest financial conquest.

At the February 24th Town Informational Meeting, where the applicants were the "host" of the meeting, Mr. McCrossan decided which specific questions he would answer. He refused to address the difficult ones such as their business plan, licensing/qualifications of the staff, especially of his 22-year-old son, Devin, who will be the operational manager of this proposed facility. Neither applicant has any experience or qualifications to run this type of proposed facility. Devin REFUSES to name the NYC facility where he acquired his experience.

As a side note about his latest venture as an "Entrepreneur." Devin McCrossan is listed as one of the founders and COO of LIV Electronic Cigarettes. Any FDA approval of these ECigs and information on the long term effects of he latest "Vaping Craze?"

I don't know but when I was 22 years old I had just finished my student teaching, graduated with my BS in Educa-

tion, obtained my Provisional Teaching Certification, and was an inexperienced Substitute Teacher for over two years until I finally got my first full time teaching position. Then I had to go through a three year, observed, tenure period. After about 10 more years teaching full time, earning my MFA degree, obtaining my NYS Permanent Teaching Certification in three teaching areas, going through TENURE in all three areas I truly felt that I had become a "Master Teacher." I worked my way up the ladder through education and hands on experience.... my family didn't buy a school and make me the Principal.

The Public Hearing Meeting was an excellent example of our local government at work at its most basic level. A different time or place in American History and the slogan at the meeting might have been, "Don't Tread On Me."

Yorktown residents, like all Americans, don't give up without a fight, even in a David and Goliath situation. Our new battle cry...BRING IT ON!!!

JOHN SWETZ JR.
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Guest Commentary

Standardized for Failure

By Emil C. Moussa

Standardized testing is not only a laughable attempt to try and measure the human mind, it's single handedly making the United States of America and our kids less competitive with the other nations of the world. We are using a 20th century method of standardized mass production to try and train our young people for the diversity and complexity of a 21st century world with a whole new range of problems that we as a nation and world have never faced before.

Common Core is another scam or rather "flavor of the week" when it comes to education policy. Standardization will no longer suffice in a 21st century world. But let's think for a moment: Are Americans just standard? We as a nation and people did not journey to where we are now by being standard. Instead, we set the standard for other nations of the world to follow. We are anything but standard. We should not be confined to thinking within the box but instead do what we've been allowed to do in our nation's history and think outside the box, which defines our progress as a nation. These standardized tests and standardized curriculum are the single handed omnipotent judges and ju-

ries to students, educators, administrators, and the school districts. There are better ways to assess besides a flawed statistical number. I'm a firm advocate of the portfolio system. Colleges and universities for the most part already measure their own students using the portfolio system to see actual growth over time and during the course of their studies. This assessment varies from grades given by highly trained and effective professors in rigorous classroom courses, writing samples/term papers and for those in the arts, a large portfolio containing works over the course of a student's time and mentorship under many artists, musicians and other.

This is a critical assessment because it charts growth over a long period of time and not a single exam for a couple of hours in one day. Also, it's important to note that most, if not all, standardized exams only test in two subjects: Math and English/Language Arts. The educational mentality is that all students regardless of race, creed, socio-economic backgrounds, and location learn the same mathematics and English/Language Arts. The real reason is because densely urban areas and far away rural areas cannot compete with the affluent suburbs, which leads to poorly

created exams that go to the lowest common denominator and still manages to not achieve high standards. Instead, we've had the outcome of urban schools commit the unethical act of grade inflation (it's more pronounced in urban schools but make no mistake it occurs in rural and suburban communities as well) and we've also rediscovered that not all students are good at ELA or math. Many students and even you in the past may have abhorred such subjects but excelled in other.

What about the arts? We're creating students who don't know how to create or appreciate beautiful works of art that humanity has produced to true master pieces of music that stand the test of time. What of Social Studies? Most students are completely oblivious to our nation's own history let alone another's. And many students lack the basic understanding of how a republican form of government works, which puts our own republican democracy at tremendous risk. How about science? Our nation is falling behind at a rapid pace. The 21st century skills require science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Although math is a commonly tested subject, substantial evidence shows American students are not per-

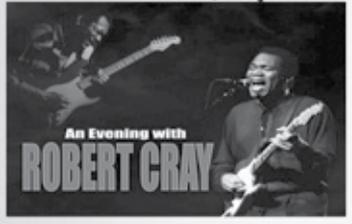
forming on-par with the other nations of the world. Standardized tests are in part to blame because it forces teachers to teach to the test and not for attaining critical thinking skills in math. Even physical education! Is anybody else concerned that we are the most obese nation on the planet? Maybe the kids should spend less time cramming for high stakes exams and take more time to be outside getting physically fit, de-stressing from sessions of school and creating social skills and team building with classmates, which are real world skills needed in the workplace.

The fact of the matter is that everybody is different and learns differently and likes to learn different things and goes about their life in different ways. There is nothing standard about humans let alone the human mind. We're not machines to be programmed. We, as a populace, need to force our elected officials to reform the testing culture that is failing our schools, communities, and nation. The only people who are going to lose from this are the testing companies that make millions of dollars in profit from creating, selling, and distributing test material and for the most part never taught in a classroom to begin

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PARAMOUNT EVENTS

HUDSON VALLEY THEATER Music, Movies and More!

<p>The Real New York Doo Wopp Show March 21st, 8pm</p>  <p>The REAL, ORIGINAL New York DOO WOPP SHOW featuring Judy Mann & the CHIFFONS, Eugene Pitt & the JIVE FIVE Jay Siegel's TOKENS, All groups with their original lead singers and acappella by CLASSIC SOUNDS & THE SHEPS.</p>	<p>An Evening with Robert Cray March 30th, 8pm</p>  <p>Touring regularly with the likes of Eric Clapton and Bob Dylan, Cray stays active in the studio as well. He is the guitarist who brought blues back to the charts in the '80s via songs that defined blues themes but added modern and personal twists. His Kevin Shirley-produced Nothin But Love, a strong outing featuring narrative songs that circle around the trials and tribulations of love, appeared in 2012.</p>	<p>The Righteous Brothers' Bill Medley April 11th, 8pm</p>  <p>The Righteous Brothers' raw emotional R&B sound not only created the genre "Blue-Eyed Soul", but the very term was coined specifically for them. Combining the density of Phil Spector's "Wall of Sound" production with Bill Medley's deep, rich, powerful baritone created a totally original sound that still resonates today. BMI ranked "YOU'VE LOST THAT LOVIN' FEELIN'" as having had more television and radio airplay than any other song in history!</p>	<p>Kim Russo The Happy Medium May 16th, 8pm</p>  <p>Kim is the host of the popular TV Show, "The Haunting Of..." currently airing on A&E's Lifetime Movie Network Channel. For two astonishing hours, Kim will bridge the gap between the worlds of the living and the departed. After introducing the audience to her gift, Kim will walk the room, feeling the energy and listening to the spirits of the deceased. Kim will gather information from those who have passed and their loved ones in the audience. Those in the audience may get an exclusive opportunity to communicate with their loved ones on the other side, an experience not many on this planet are able to have.</p>
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Peekskill Councilman Caught Up in East Harlem Building Explosion

continued from page 1

when you walked downtown you smelled the burning rubble. This time you had that weird type of industrial smell, like a rubber burning. You could hear the sirens and see the helicopters.”

The same train, which Rigger was not on, had to evacuate the day before at Marble Hill due to a suicide on the tracks. Rigger said none of the passengers on his train were aware of the explosion until they came to an unexpected halt.

“The minute the train stopped everyone was on Twitter and Facebook,” Rigger said. “It didn’t take long until everyone on the train was talking about it.”

Eight people were killed in the explosion and about 70 were injured. Trains weren’t running for hours, resuming for the evening rush hour. Rigger decided to avoid the hassle and spent the night in his office.

“It was definitely going all night,” Rigger said of the emergency response to the fire. “The deli where I get my sandwiches was surprised to see me at night. My God, how trying for all those people? It just really makes you feel so lucky because bad things happen to good people. You never know.”

Following the explosion, Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-Westchester/Rockland) called on Con Edison and other utility companies to keep a closer watch on gas leaks.

“Protecting the health and safety of local residents is paramount,” Lowey said. “As the investigation continues in East Harlem, prevention is essential to ensure that no more lives are lost in explosions resulting from gas leaks. From more training and education of consumers and construction workers to faster action to address existing leaks, we can and must do more to protect the public.”

Bomb Ingredients Found in High School Student’s Home

continued from page 1

Dr. George Stone posted on the district’s website that Westchester County Police requested Panas be evacuated as part of an “off-campus investigation.”

“At no time were students or staff in danger. The investigation was done as a precautionary measure by the police agencies,” Stone stated.

Sean Petersen, 18, a senior at Panas, said he was in his third period class at about 9:30 a.m. when Principal Susan Strauss announced an emergency evacuation drill over the loud speaker. Students were

directed into the parking lot where some waited in their cars, while others sat in school buses, for nearly two hours before they were allowed back inside.

Students were prevented from leaving school grounds. When some students managed to exit on Croton Avenue, they were stopped by police and ushered back to Panas.

“It was an eventful day,” Petersen said. “Nobody really knew for sure what was going on. Nobody had the same story. I thought the (school) day was over. Kids were joking about it later. I had a blast.”

Standardized for Failure

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with.

Another solution that is simple to the testing problem is this: let the teachers, administrators, school boards, and you, the residents and parents of the school district set the standards and benchmarks for your local schools. Teachers and administrators have staked their entire careers on education in their content areas as well as methodology of teaching and assessments plus countless hours

spent with students 187 days of the year teaching. Furthermore, as a populace we directly elect school board members to oversee our districts. Pay more attention to who you elect. Those board members have more influence on local education policy than you think. Finally, who better knows your kids and how they learn and what they’re interested in than you, the parent. If you’re not already involved in your child’s education, start now.

Emil Moussa is a resident of the Town of Cortlandt.

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Businesses
of the Week

My Gym Children's Fitness Center Yorktown

By Neal Rentz

Anthony Chavez has a passion for working with children.

"I can honestly say kids are the reason why I wake up in the morning," Chavez said last week. "They give you so much to look forward to. When you work with kids it is the most rewarding experience. You understand that you're actually implementing something that's going to build their future."

Chavez, who lives in Harlem, said he has the right profession to utilize his love of children. He is the new owner of My Gym Children's Learning Center in Yorktown.

Chavez has been working at My Gym franchises since he was 19 and living in California. He took over as owner and director of the Triangle Shopping Center location on February 1.

All of the classes take place in the facility's full gymnastics set up. "We have everything from parallel bars to a rock climbing wall. We have a trampoline. We have a zip line ride," Chavez explained. "We have pretty much everything a kid needs to have fun and go wild here."

The gym provides classes for children



NEAL RENTZ PHOTO

Anthony Chavez, owner and director of My Gym Children's Fitness Center in Yorktown.

for six months to age 11. "They are all tailored to meet their (parents) kids' development needs," he said.

Chavez said after purchasing My Gym, "We kind of gave the place a big makeover," including repainting it.

He said he derives great satisfaction in working with children. "When you see a kid who let's say does a forward roll who couldn't do that before they had taken your class, that's the most rewarding

thing," he said.

"The great thing about this program is that kids are playing," Chavez continued. "They don't understand that they're actually building physical strength, building upper body strength, they're working on cognitive development (and) their basic motor skills are improving and it's all done through play and music and dance."

My Gym offers weekly classes, which

include a focus on healthy eating habits, and free play time throughout the week. Birthday parties are also offered at the facility.

My Gym's clients come from various local communities, including Yorktown, Cortlandt, Mahopac and Ossining, Chavez said.

"Our goal is to become a part of this community," Chavez said. "We want to be integrated with these kids. We want to be integrated with the parents here and we want to see their kids grow."

Chavez added that he wants to have his business, the first he has owned, to be part of the community through events and the promotion of healthy living.

My Gym will be hosting free open houses for all ages on April 4 from 3 to 7 p.m. and on April 5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Health related vendors from the area will take part in the open houses, Chavez said.

My Gym Children's Learning Center is located at 42 Triangle Center (in the Triangle Shopping Center North) in Yorktown. For more information call 914-302-7705 or visit <https://www.mygym.com/yorktownheights>.

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Ragtime Shines on Westchester Broadway Theatre Stage

By Colette Connolly

Standing Ovation Studios, under the direction of John Fanelli, has taken on its biggest production ever with the staging of "Ragtime the Musical," which opened at the Westchester Broadway Theatre Feb. 27.

The show, based on the 1975 E.L. Doctorow novel "Ragtime," is the quintessential immigrant story, beautifully retold on the Elmsford stage with the help of powerful voice and dance talent that matches anything you'll find on Broadway.

It tells the tale of three distinct socio-economic groups living in turn-of-the-century New York between 1904 and 1906 and their struggle to adapt. The story depicts characters living in very different places, New Rochelle, Harlem, and the immigrant melting pot of the Lower East Side.

"This is a very large piece of musical theater in so many ways," said Fanelli, who has spent the past 17 years directing, teaching and creating programs for young people in the theater arts.

"Between its powerful and varied musical score, large cast across three ethnic groups, set designs that include a working Model-T automobile and an intricate story anchored to historical events and figures of its time, we are raising the bar for our local audiences, which is both exciting and challenging."

The main characters include Tateh (Joey Sanzaro), who plays the Latvian immigrant expecting to find riches in America, but then sees his dreams quickly dashed; Coalhouse Walker, Jr., (Fatye), a black Harlem piano player who is trying to fit into a society that is prejudiced



JOHN VECCHIOLA PHOTOS

The large ensemble cast of "Ragtime the Musical," now on stage at the Westchester Broadway Theatre through May 4.

against him, but still hoping to build a life with Sarah and their young son; and the upper class New Rochelle family, led by Mother and Father (Victoria Lazun and Craig Waletzko), who are fearful

of the social change that is taking place around them.

The stage comes alive in the opening scene with the company's large cast making their introductions and performing the title song that is also the prologue. It is then that the audience gets a hint of what's to come in this large, sweeping show, a production that includes a cast of 40, including local, national and New York City talent.

Elements of early 20th century culture are woven throughout the musical, including the vaudeville theater scenes featuring the famous beauty Evelyn Nesbitt (Cali Laspina) and Henry Ford's assembly line, where the first cars are being produced.

Among the powerful voices that emanate from this grand production are Fayte, no stranger to WBT, having performed in "Big River," "Hairspray," "In The Heights" and other Fanelli-directed shows.

Other strong performances include Brittney Johnson (Sarah). Johnson has an outstanding voice, and coupled with Fayte, their rendition of "The Wheels of a Dream" and "Sarah Brown Eyes" overflow with emotion.

Sanzaro, a Pleasantville native, delivers a fine performance as the immigrant

Tateh, with a tenor voice that easily fills the stage. Sarah's friend, played by Raena White, also makes a formidable appearance, belting out "Till We Reach That Day" with force, before being accompanied by the show's other main characters.

A number of historical, bigger-than-life personalities are incorporated into the story making this a truly fascinating show. The anarchist Emma Goldman (Nadine Zahr); Henry Ford (Todd Allan Little); Harry Houdini (Joey Barreiro); J.P. Morgan (Steven Stein-Grainger); architect Stanford White (Evan Mayer); and African-American educator, author and orator Booker T. Washington (Antoine L. Smith) are all woven into the story.

Performances of "Ragtime the Musical" are Thursday through Sunday evenings as well as Thursday and Sunday matinees through May 4. A special ticket price of \$67 plus tax is offered for all performances, with additional discounts for seniors, children and groups. The price includes the show, a three-course meal and parking.

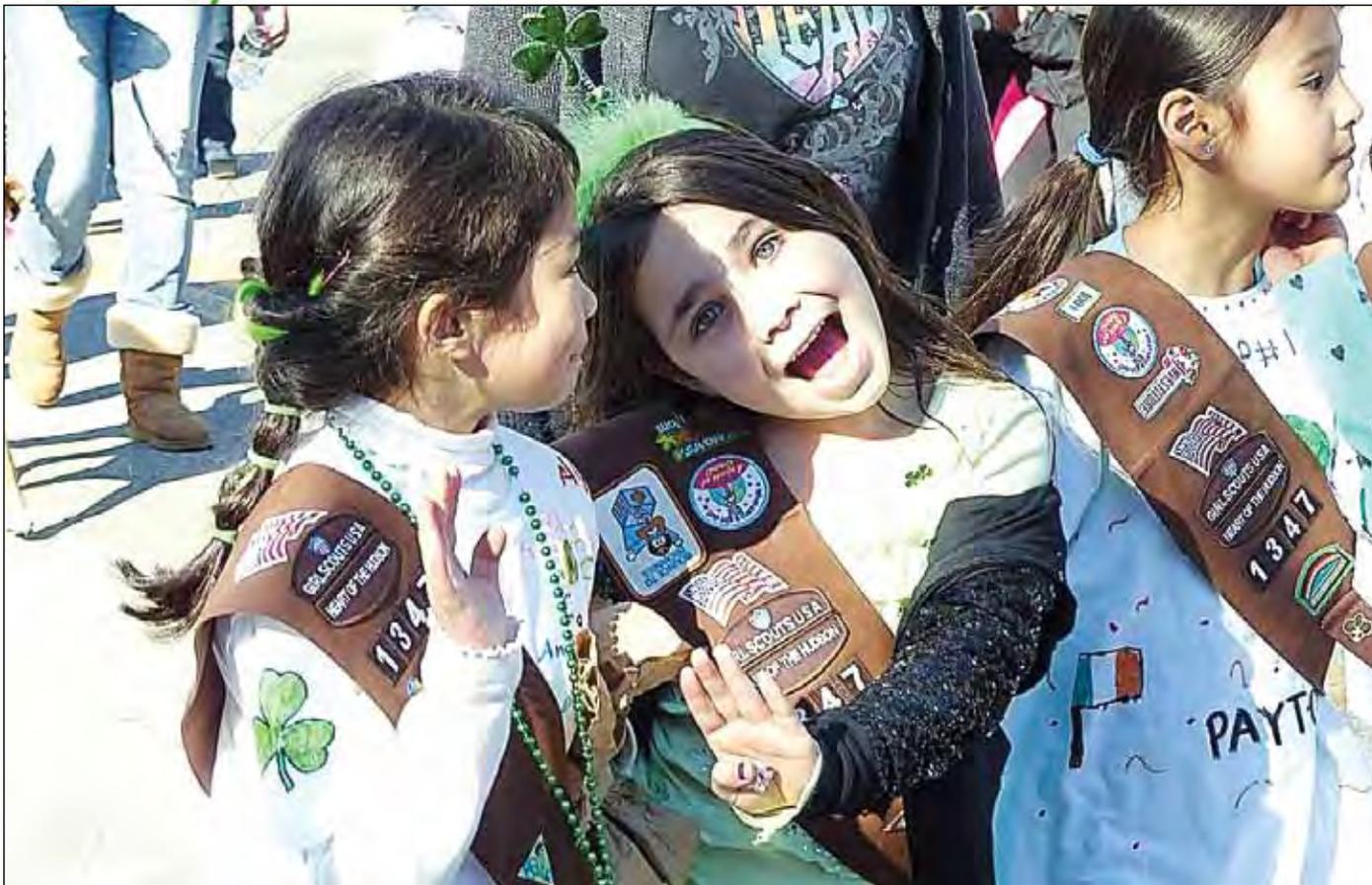
For tickets, call the Westchester Broadway Theatre at 914-592-2222 or visit www.RagtimeWestchester.com. The theater is located at 1 Broadway Plaza in Elmsford.



Coalhouse Walker, Jr. (Fatye) and Sarah (Brittany Johnson) are two of the impressive cast members who make "Ragtime the Musical" such an enjoyable theater experience.



St. Patrick's Day Parade in Peekskill



EVAN LEFKOWITZ PHOTOS

People of all ages enjoyed the warmer weather and fun festivities.



After a Lot of Promises, the Home Guru Finally Gets a New Home

Buyers are liars and sellers are storytellers is the first adage I heard when I got into real estate.

While I got the gist of what the second phrase meant, I couldn't quite grasp what agents meant when they called buyers liars. Then I caught on when I would hear such things as, "let me talk to my husband, I'll get right back to you."

In my own case, I have a completely different interpretation of the expression. I was a liar, but only to myself, in what I said I wanted as a buyer because what I ended up buying just last week is completely different.

After some years of promising--or threatening--to move from the home in which I have been ensconced for 43 years, The Home Guru is moving. After having utilized my beloved and historic Ebenezer White House for a broad range of articles as I prepared it for sale, the odd thing is that I'm not even selling it in order to move.

Besides being a realtor, I am the owner of Westchester's longest-running public relations firm, headquartered in these historic digs. When a new client came along to sign contracts, management fell in love with the house and decided it would be perfect as their new offices.

This offers me the opportunity to be-

come a landlord of a professional office building that can be expanded upon and maintained as a profit center for life. Of course there are responsibilities, but my investment in restoring and maintaining this property that I had always felt was above and beyond what I should spend to get a reasonable return has paid off for me and I'm thrilled.

Now let me tell you what I have in store for The Home Guru's new lifestyle, the one to which I will eventually retire, but I promise, not any time soon. It all started with the urging of Mrs. Home Guru, Margaret. Our property here is gorgeous but did require a lot of outside work, which when I was younger, was my domain and I loved it.

However, it became more challenging as I got busier and downright burdensome physically as I got older. I'm still in good shape but admit that my stamina has its limits compared to when I was in my thirties.

I had always expected to downsize to a quaint cottage in the woods in some rarified elevation, perhaps with a small

pond or on a lake. But my wife has always been more gregarious than I and she had other ideas. She first looked at attached townhouses, then condos, and finally convinced me to visit Trump Park in my hometown of Yorktown in Shrub Oak. Since first built in 2002, I had thought they were beautifully done, but I preferred a place where I could swing open my doors and walk directly into the great outdoors.

"If I wanted to live in a building that's like apartments in the city," I'd say, "I'd live in the city. I don't want to walk down a hallway to get to my home."

But my wife was determined and told me to contact Nancy Kennedy, the exclusive agent at Houlihan Lawrence, for a

showing.

From the first time I met Kennedy and experienced her skill, knowledge and manner with her clients, I thought if I were not me I'd want to be her. When she was walking us through the building to the unit Margaret had identified as perfect for us, a resident walking in the opposite direction, a man about my age on

his way to the gym with his duffel bag, leaned into her and whispered with a smile, "Did you tell them that really bad people live on this floor?"

It's amazing how one comment, that one small thing, can change the whole paradigm about where and how you want to live. This was the prelude to a kiss with my new life.

After more than 40 years of living in isolation, separated on an island of streets and trees from any other living soul, I wanted to know who this fellow was. I wanted to know where he came from and whether we could be friends. I wanted to go with him to the gym. I wanted to be close neighbors and friends. I wanted to belong.

Next week, I will tell you how my new lifestyle unfolded before me.

Bill Primavera is a Realtor® associated with William Raveis Real Estate and Founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc., the longest running public relations agency in Westchester (www.PrimaveraPR.com, specializing in lifestyles, real estate and development. His real estate site is: www.PrimaveraRealEstate.com and his blog is: www.TheHomeGuru.com. To engage the services of The Home Guru and his team to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.

The Home Guru



By Bill Primavera

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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Dashboard abbr.
- 4 Sch. group sans kids
- 7 Spa sounds
- 10 Historian's specialty
- 11 Musical aptitude
- 12 Roman number
- 13 Boring
- 16 Teeny bits
- 17 Swearing-in words
- 18 Tevye from "Fiddler on the Roof" would dine at this Somers restaurant
- 21 Lively energy
- 22 Large sofas
- 29 Farm outbuilding
- 30 Hipbone related
- 31 Cosset
- 34 Tokyo, formerly
- 35 Chit
- 36 Something for Annie to get?
- 37 Water-logged
- 38 Board room votes
- 39 Westchester clock setting

DOWN

- 1 Send the bill
- 2 Earlier
- 3 S.A. cloak
- 4 Dreamy
- 5 Greek T
- 6 Pitcher's asset
- 7 Birdy
- 8 Some people can't take them
- 9 Audible relief
- 14 June honoree
- 15 "My ___" by Usher
- 19 Metal
- 20 Undutiful
- 22 Electron tube
- 23 Parcel out
- 24 Remote abbreviation
- 25 Mature
- 26 Putnam or Thunder
- 27 Anklebone
- 28 Lilac, e.g.
- 29 Flying diver
- 32 Dark and feminine (Chinese)
- 33 Dove murmur

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See solution on page 16



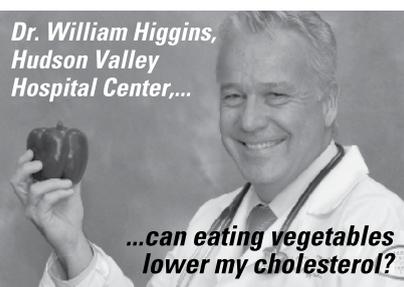
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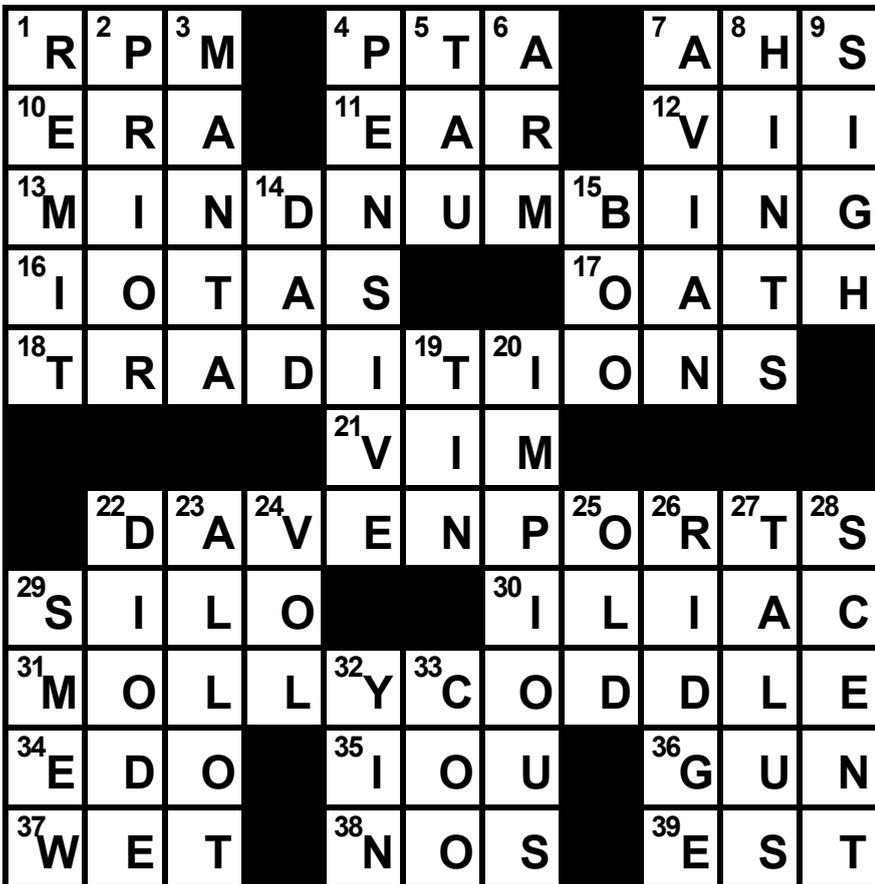


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Happenings

The Northern Westchester Examiner We're happy to help spread the word about your community event. Please submit your information at least three weeks prior to your event and include the words "Happenings Calendar Submission" in your email subject line. Entries should be sent to Neal Rentz at nrentz@theexaminernews.com.com.

Tuesday, March 18

Adult Education: A series of class for adults are being held at the York town Jewish Center, 2966 Crompond Rd .Mishneh Torah---Every Tuesday, between 7:30 and 9 p.m. there will be a discussion for those who want to delve deeply into Jewish practice, philosophy, history, culture and related matters. The test used will be Maimonides' MISHNEH TORAH, in English.Pirkei Avot--At 11 a.m. on the first and third Monday of every month, Rabbi Urbas will teach a classic text on ethical thinking, combined with practical tips on Jewish living. This Talmudic test is a popular work for everyone. Understanding Hebrew Prayer--- On Mondays, at 7 p.m. Cantor Isabel Kopstein will explore the Siddur. She will help students already somewhat familiar with Hebrew to advance in the knowledge of the meanings of prayers. almod and the Law--- On Thursdays, at 10:30 a.m., Wendy Segal will discuss Ethics, Talmud and Jewish law. Cases from a text book, the news, and even Judge Judy will help in understanding the wisdom of the Jewish sages and how to apply that wisdom applies to today's problems. Info: 914-245-2324 or info@yorktownjewishcenter.org.

Free Medicare Counseling: Get help understanding your Medicare benefits and coverage on Tuesdays year-round (except holidays) at the John C. Hart Memorial Library in Shrub Oak, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Field Library in Peekskill. No appointments are necessary for the free service. Meet with a trained counselor for information about Medicare Parts A, B and D, Medicare Advantage Plans, Medicare Savings Plans, Extra Help and EPIC. You can also call the Senior Benefits Information Center helpline with your questions at 914-231-3260 and a counselor will return your call within two business days. For a listing of all eight SBIC centers in Westchester libraries, go to <http://www.westchesterlibraries.org/senior-benefits-information-centers/>.

Farmers' Market: The Putnam Valley Grange Farmers' Market is held every Tuesday from 3 to 7 p.m. at the corner of Mill Street and Peekskill Hollow Road (Adams Corners).

Senior Benefits Information: Trained volunteer counselors help older adults and their caregivers find information about government benefits to help them stretch their budgets every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the John C. Hart Memorial Library, 1130 E. Main St., Shrub Oak. Get information on Medicare health and prescription plans, nutrition assistance, the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), tax relief programs, and much more. Info: 914-245-5262 Ext.227 or <http://www.westchesterlibraries.org/sbic>.

Checkmate: A chess program is held every Tuesday at 4 p.m. at the Ossining Public Library, 53 Croton Ave. It is held in the second floor conference room. Info: 914-941-2416 Ext. 336.

Wednesday, March 19

Business Network: New Vistas, the Mahopac Chapter of Business Network International (BNI), will hold its weekly meeting at 7 a.m. at the Olympic Diner, on Route 6 in Mahopac. The following professions: physical therapist, plumber, web design, are welcome to join us as our guests. For additional information call Clayton at 845-656-4321 or Donna at 845-282-0514.

Jewish Ethics: What makes Jewish ethics 'Jewish'? This class, led by First Hebrew's Rabbi Lee Paskind, will study interpersonal and business ethics according to Jewish tradition. The free class will be held March 19 and 26, at 7:30 p.m. at First Hebrew, 1821 Main St., Peekskill, just west of the Beach Shopping Center. Info: 914-739-0500; rabbi@firsthebrew.org. or www.firsthebrew.org.

Bingo Wednesdays: Come to First Hebrew for \$2,000 in total guaranteed bingo prizes, plus an average of \$1,000 awarded in specialty games. Doors open 5 p.m. and games begin 7:15 p.m. every Wednesday (except holidays - check First Hebrew's website calendar.) First Hebrew is just west of the Beach Shopping Center at 1821 Main St., Peekskill. Info: 914 -739-0500 of www.firsthebrew.org.

Thursday, March 20

Holocaust Commission: The Somers Memorial Holocaust Commission is planning its annual Holocaust program, which is an evening of reflection and remembrance. Our purpose is twofold: to educate children so that they will never forget the horrors of the Holocaust and other genocide, and to promote the teaching of human rights in our school. Our yearly program, held at a local high school, includes many inspirational projects submitted by high school students. The program will also feature a keynote speaker, a choir, and student singing and dancing to help make it a memorable evening. Everyone is welcome, and if you are interested in meeting and/or joining our group, please contact Ruth Rosenberg at 914-248-5149.

Friday, March 21

Free Play Dates: A free play date program is being held every Friday from 11 a.m. to noon at the Rosenthal JCC Early Childhood Center at the Yorktown Jewish Center, 2966 Crompond Rd. The program is intended for children between the ages of 16 and 36 months and their parents or caregivers. Children can play, do art and socialize all under the direction of an experienced

early childhood teacher .Pre-registration is suggested. Contact Jennifer at 914-962-8430 or e-mail her at Jennifer@rosenthaljcc.org.

JCC Open House: Open houses will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Rosenthal JCC Yorktown Branch, 2966 Crompond Rd. (Route 202) in the Yorktown Jewish Center. Enjoy a slice of pizza on us and learn about all our programs for youths. For more information contact Jennifer at 914-962-8430 or e-mail jconstantino@rosenthaljcc.org. Find us on the web at www.rosenthaljcc.org/preschoolyorktown or our Facebook page, Rosenthal JCC Yorktown. The RJCC welcomes children of all religions and ethnicities.

Family Shabbat: Young children will enjoy this monthly Friday night Shabbat service designed specifically for them with special books and activities, which will be held on March 21, April 11, May 2 and June 6 at 6:30 p.m. at First Hebrew Congregation, 1821 Main St., Peekskill (just west of Beach Shopping Center). Info: 914-739-0500, rabbi@firsthebrew.org or www.firsthebrew.org.

Spring Services: During the spring months, Sabbath services will begin at 8 p.m. on Friday evenings and at 9:15 a.m. on Saturday mornings at the Yorktown Jewish Center, 2966 Crompond Rd. Info: 914 -245 -2324 or www.info@yorktownjewishcenter.org.

Saturday, March 22

Women's History Exhibit: In celebration of spring and Women's History Month, Pratt Parallels; a study of the works of Somers residents and Pratt Institute students 1902 - 2015, are being exhibited at the Wright Reis Homestead, 92 Primrose St. (entrance off Sunderland Lane). The artist reception will be held today from 3 to 6 p.m. and the exhibit will be open on March 23, 29 and 30 from 2 to 4 p.m. The featured artists include Caroline Wright Reis (Pratt Institute, Class of 1902) Laura Birdsall (Pratt Institute, Class of 2013) and Simone Kurtz (Pratt Institute, Class of 2015). The exhibition is presented by Somers Historical Society and funded in part by Astoria Bank, Billingsley Realty, The Mexican Shack and Putnam County Savings Bank. It concludes Somers @ 225, the Society's year-long celebration of events commemorating the Town's incorporation as Stephenstown in 1788.

Vine Cutting: Groundwork Hudson Valley's Saw Mill River Coalition and eight partner organizations are "SWARMing" again to attack invasive vines from Croton Point Park, from 10 a.m. to 3p.m. Info: 914-375-2151.

Somers Library Exhibit: Lynn Shulman is exhibiting a collection of her watercolor paintings and drawings at the Somers Library, located in Reis Park off Route 138,

in March. The exhibit includes landscapes, figures, still life subjects and drawings in multi-media. You can contact Shulman at lynsplace29@aol.com. For library hours call 914 232-5717 or visit www.somerslibrary.org.

Ossining Farmers Market: The Ossining Down to Earth Farmers Market is held year-round on Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the corner of Main and Spring Streets. Info: 914-923-4837 Ext. 202.

Overeaters Anony-mous: Worried about the way you eat? If food rules your life, Overeaters Anony-mous may have the answer for you. There is no weigh-ins, dues or fees. The group meets on Saturdays from 8:30 to 9:30 am at the fourth floor conference at the Graymoor Spiritual Life Center, 1350 Route 9, Garrison. Info: call/text Lisa at 917-716-2488.

Sunday, March 23

Words & Music: The Martha Redbone Roots Project will take the stage at the Budarz Theater as the Ossining Library Foundation's Words & Music Concert Series, presented by TD Bank, returns for its spring concert season at 2 p.m. The Words & Music series brings well known singer-songwriters and recording artists to the library's 200-seat Budarz Theater for free Sunday afternoon concerts. The doors open at 1:30 p.m. and seating is on a first come, first served basis. The Ossining Public Library is located at 53 Croton Ave. For more information, call 914- 941-2416 Ext. 327 or visit <http://ossininglibrary.org>.

Great Shrubs: Great Shrubs for Your Landscape will be held from 2 to 3 p.m. at Lasdon Park, which is located off Route 35 in Somers. A slide program highlighting shrubs that will add interest to your landscape all year long. For more information, go to westchstergov.com/parks or call 914-864-7268.

Bingo: Bingo will be played tonight and on April 6 and May 4 at the Yorktown Jewish Center, 2966 Crompond Rd. The doors will open at 5 p.m. and play begins at 6:30 p.m. There will be \$3,000 in prizes awarded during each Sunday session. Food will be available. Info: 914-245-2324 or yorktownjewishcenter.org.

Jewish Adult Education: A discussion of Jewish current affairs and history led by Rabbi Fred Schwalb will be held at 10:30 a.m. at the Hebrew Congregation of Somers, located at Cypress Lane and Mervin Drive. Info: 914-248-9532.

Ossining Art Exhibit: The works of Cesar Winston Vera are being displayed during the month of March at the Ossining Public Library, 53 Croton Ave. The native New Yorker has produced large scale, mixed media paintings on canvas and wood. For more information about the artist, visit www.cwvera.com.

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March 18- March 24, 2014

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

SPORTS SECTION

O So Grand!

Ossining Repeats
 as State Champs;
 Slim Shadeen
 Erupts for 31,
 Leads Charge
 to Federation



BRENDA KNOWLES/KAICE SCARDUZIO PHOTOS

Ossining High, or The O as they are often referred to, saw sophomore G/F Shadeen Samuels score a career-high 31 points to lead the four-time defending Section 1 champion Pride to its second-straight NYSPHSAA Class AA girls' basketball championship with a 74-59 win over Section III champion Cicero-North Syracuse last Saturday night at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, NY, where they partied like it was 1999... See Girls' Hoops Notebook

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Sports

Girls' Hoops Notebook

Ossining Captures NYS Class AA Crown for 2nd Straight Year

Samuels Blows up in Finals; Haldane Falls in Class C State Semis

By A.J. Martelli & Ray Gallagher

Last year the Ossining Pride won their first New York State title in school history, led by the legendary UConn-star Saniya Chong and team of motivated girls eager to show the world they were the best of the best. Upon the graduation of Chong and nine others, and the loss of up-and-coming sharpshooter Andra Espinoza-Hunter to transfer, a lot of folks thought last year's state championship was a once-in-a-lifetime deal for the Pride, and they would struggle this year to duplicate the success 2013 brought.

Actually, that never happened, not even close. The state-ranked (No.2) Pride won the Section 1 title with ease, and advanced to the regional finals with similar comfort before reaching the NYS Final Four for the third consecutive year.

And after a 69-62 win over state-ranked (No.13) Section V champion Gates-Chili on Friday night in the state semis, the Pride beat state-ranked (No.7) Section III Cicero-North Syracuse 74-59 Saturday night at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy to repeat as New York State Class AA champions behind a career-best 31-point effort from sophomore Shadeen Samuels. Head Coach Dan Ricci was impressed his girls were able to repeat after graduating an array of talent from last season.

"It's an amazing thing," he said. "There have been teams that have repeated and even three-peated before, but usually it's with the same corps of players, and one outstanding player. For us to win it two years in a row – and not have a big name player the second time around and not have any seniors – I think it is a testament to our program.

"People don't realize how far this team came," he added. "We never could've done this if we didn't do our year-round AAU; we had to start from scratch. It took a long time – a lot of growing pains – and people see the end result now and they



Ossining girls revel in 2nd NYS championship.

KACIE SCARDUZIO PHOTOS

think we didn't miss a beat, but they don't realize how we had to take a step back to get to this point."

Though he had to press the reset button, Ricci mentioned that his squad this year was the most balanced team he has ever coached, and that couldn't have been more evident this past weekend. In Friday night's semifinal win over Gates-Chili, top Pride players Jalay Knowles, Abby Squirrell and Samuels were in foul trouble early. Ricci didn't panic, however, and allowed Stef Svoboda and first-year varsity standout Jenna Lividini to take over.

Lividini finished with a career-high 19 points while Svoboda ended with 16. Battling the foul trouble, Knowles was able to eke out 13 points and eight rebounds to contribute.

"Stefanie Svoboda was the most consistent player all weekend," Ricci said. "Jenna Lividini comes in off the bench and scores 19 points; I mean, teams don't have kids that come in off the bench and score 19 points. That just tells you the balance of our team."

Ossining was tied with Chili 26-26 at halftime and 42-42 at the end of three, but the Pride were able to pull away for the victory late in the fourth on account of some scrappy play; offensive boards and masterful free throw shooting.

Winning the state semifinal by seven points only tipped the

scales in Ossining's favor, giving it all the confidence it needed to win huge in the finals. The Pride sprung out to a 6-0 lead in the early going vs. Cicero-North

Syracuse and never looked back, though it was the work of Samuels that put them over the top.

Samuels erupted for 31 points, in the process showing off her outside skills with six 3-point field goals – matching the record for 3-pointers in a championship game. Ricci couldn't help but notice how this year's tournament played out nearly the same way it did in 2013.

"It was very similar to last year," he said. "We only won the semifinal by eight last year; won the final by 17. This year we won the semifinal by seven, won the final by 15. We felt that Friday we played against the best player (Cierra Dillard of Gates-Chili), but we had a more balanced team. Saturday we felt we had the best players and were playing against a good team (Cicero-North Syracuse), but Shadeen really stepped up and showed who she is."

What also played out similarly this year was the Pride's overwhelming support. Last year the community came together to root the team on, and it received the same type of love this year. Fans, alumni



Ossining girls came, saw and conquered.



Ossining girls return home.



Ossining girls await state plaque presentation at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy.

Sports

Girls' Hoops Notebook



Ossining grads were on hand representing, including Daniella Ferrao, Alexandra Cristello and Saniya Chong.

including Chong and others from last year's team, and school officials from Westchester flocked up to Troy to fill the stands.

"It was awesome," Ricci said. "Saniya was there; Alex Cristello and Daniella Ferrao from last year were there. Before the game I got about seven or eight texts

Ossining (24-2) now moves on to the NYS Federation tournament, and will square off with St. Anthony's of the CHSAA Friday afternoon. Last year the Pride fell to Bishop Ford in the Federation tourney. Whatever the outcome may be vs. St. Anthony's, Ricci is content knowing everybody will be back next year - and



Ossining fans line the streets upon the team's arrival back home after winning states for 2nd year in a row.

from kids like Danielle Gervacio, Lydia Davis from last year - they were all keeping an eye on what was going on.

"This program isn't just about the kids that are playing; it's the kids that came before. There were a lot of alumni in the stands and it's a program where kids keep coming back, so we must be doing something right."

Fire trucks and a police escort were on hand to greet the Pride back to town Sunday, a homecoming fitting for state champs. According to Ricci, the early word is the Pride will get their own float in the Ossining Memorial Day Parade, with champions from last year's state title-winning team and this year's winners on board for the ride.

hopes the state titles keep on racking up.

"We are 24-2, that's a great year, and the whole thing is, everybody returns next year," he said. "This year the goal was to win a section championship; you pretty much have to say the goal (next year) is to win a state championship, because we've already done it. You don't want to go backwards, always try to go forwards."

While Ossining had its glory this past weekend, HALDANE came up a bit short in the Class C semis Saturday, losing 61-39 to Section 4's Chautauqua Lake, the eventual NYS champion. Jess Harrison was given the sportsmanship award, and Sam Lisikatos was named to the NYSPHSAA all-star team.

The state-ranked (No.4) Blue Devils



Ossining Coach Dan Ricci called Steph Svoboda the most consistent player in the NYS Final 4

finished 16-7, and have a lot to be proud of, winning a Section 1 gold ball for the 21st time since 1989 and their seventh in Class C in 11 years, and beating undefeated Tri-Valley in the regionals to reach the NYS final four despite starting the season at a dreadful 3-6.

"What a remarkable season for us," said Haldane Coach Tyrone Searight, winner of two gold balls at Haldane. "Being 3-6 at the holiday break was tough but we just kept on believing that we, as a team would get better and better. Each day, my girls

bought in to what I was teaching them, and that Lakeland game was the turning point. After that three-point lost to them we went on a tear."

Veterans Sammi Lisikatos and Allie Monteleone were the lynchpins that held it all together.

"My point guard Sammi Lisikatos has been on Varsity since eighth grade and she was the floor general for me five years and then I have Allie

Monteleone, which is my top gun and go-to girl," Searight said. "That did a lot for us throughout this year, and what was good about this year my girls new there roles on this team and everyone else did their part. That's why Haldane girls' basketball got back on track. The future look mighty good for us. Seadogs Blue Devils are barking once again."

And the roar has been deafening for Section 1 Class C foes who can expect more of the same in the future.

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Sports

Boys' Hoops Notebook

All Putnam/N. Westchester Examiner-area Boys' Hoops Team



Walter Panas MVP Timmy McCauley.



Mahopac G R.J. Martinez.



Mahopac F Ryan Simone.

**As picked by Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor**

(Selections made from five Putnam County high schools and seven more from N. Westchester, including Lakeland, Yorktown, Croton, Peekskill, Panas, Somers and Hen Hud)

MVP: Timmy McCauley, Walter Panas
Player of the Year: RJ Martinez, Mahopac

Defensive Stalwart: Ryan Simone, Mahopac
1st Team

G, RJ Martinez, Mahopac – What the All-Section senior did against Fox Lane in

the Class AA quarters and the first half of the semifinal loss to Mt. Vernon was the stuff of legend. If RJ had decided to stay at Carmel instead of transferring crosstown, he might have led the Rams to a Final 4; that's how much he means to a program.

G, Zach Coleman, Putnam Valley – The unquestioned "Franchise" of PV hoops, the two-time All-Section standout cemented his place in history as the Valley's benchmark, leading the Tigers to consecutive County Center Final 4's and their first Class B title appearance in 2014.

G, Timmy McCauley, Walter Panas – The two-time All-Section choice was the

central nervous system of Class A's cream of the crop. McCauley would make the squad solely on his will to win. If there was ever an MVP in our neck of the woods this season, this ankle-snapping legend, who just might just be "THE" all-time great at Panas (with all due respect to Scott Ganelas & Laurence Ekperigin), deserves the nod.

F, Ryan Simone, Mahopac – Whether he was inhaling rebounds or beasting the paint, the All-Section senior became the only three-year starter in Indian history to start in three Final 4's at the Westchester County Center

F, Jelani Bell-Isaac,

Putnam Valley – The All-Section senior gave Simone a run for his money as the area's No.1 defensive presence (it was essentially a tie) based on his innate shock-blocking ability. Still an uncommitted diamond-in-the-rough, JBI will make some noise at the next level should he choose to do so.

6th Man, G Peter Hoffmann, Haldane

– The All-Section junior swingman led the Blue Devils to their first title since 2001 with a versatile skill set that could land him at places like Oneonta or SUNY Cortland at the next

level and an encore performance his senior year at Haldane.

Coach of Year, Shawn Sullivan, Panas – Took a group that nobody predicted to win a championship to the Panthers' first gold ball since 1997.

2nd Team**G, Luis Cartagena,**

Yorktown – Another sophomore who will blossom into a top-tier talent in the years ahead.

G, Matt Moros, Somers – Lethal shooter who guided Tuskers to Class A quarters with All-Conference prowess.

G, Teejay Searight, Croton – The All-Section sophomore is going to light it up at Croton the next two seasons.

F, Neorck Brown, Peekskill – All-Conference swingman flat-out beasted and feasted all season.

F, Tyler Mason, Panas – When Panas needed a rebound, Mase usually snagged it.

6th Man, Ryan Basso, Putnam Valley

Will be PV's go-to guy next season.



Put Valley F Jelani Bell-Isaac.



Put Valley G Zach Coleman.



Haldane G Peter Hoffmann.

Sports

Off-Court Craziest at Heart of 2014 Hoops Season

Downes' Departure from Mahopac Final Straw of Some Tumultuous Times



By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor

The 2013-14 basketball season will go down as the craziest one ever in Northern Westchester/Putnam County history, and not because of the actual play on Section

1 hardwoods, but because off the off-court insanity in places like Peekskill, Mahopac and Yorktown where we often heap praise for their on-court exploits.

I call shenanigans! And all this tomfoolery affected some people in high places; people like the recently-retired legendary NYS Hall of Fame Peekskill Coach Lou Panzanaro and Mahopac marvel Kevin Downes, the former Indian coach who called it quits last Friday after the program's whirlwind with the national media for racially-charged Tweets

1 Class AA Final 4 or beyond for the fifth time since the turn of the century.

The ensuing, unwarranted situation came to a head because the race card was pulled from the deck after the Mahopac student body was baited and incensed by fervent Mount Vernon adults, who taunted them from beneath the main grandstand of the Westchester County Center.

Those heated, verbal exchanges culminated in the now-viral tweets by at least eight Mahopac students who enraged the Mount Vernon partisans and their former coach, a proud black man who disgustingly witnessed the hundreds of favorites and retweets of an emotional student body that clearly crossed the line in a wave of lunacy that has embarrassed the entire community.

The thing took on a life of its own before dying a disastrous death two weeks later; whereupon Downes simply couldn't trust that racism wasn't a built-in deal at Mahopac, despite the cries and bemoaning of hundreds of Mahopac fanatics who begged him to believe otherwise.

"I just felt like it would be hard to go back and feel like I was 100 percent supported. It would be tough to go back based on all those things," Downes said. "The comments were tough to read but two things in particular really hurt. One was the lack of outrage over the comments until the news media started to paint the entire community as racist. While I do not think these comments reflect the entire community, I would have liked to see people condemn the comments before the news media showed up and framed the story. The other part that hurt and disappointed me was the fact the comments were liked and retweeted over 200 times. That suggested that those thoughts and feelings go deeper than just the eight students that were suspended."

If nothing else, Mahopac, let this be a teachable moment: a time when we recognize the fact that WE have a long way to go before we gain the necessary ground on racism.

Kevin Downes was half the fun of Mahopac basketball, and the Indians now have a gaping hole at the heart of this prideful program. Assistant Coach Mark Pavella, a brilliant strategist, seems like the likely choice to succeed him, but A.D. John Augusta will hope to make a choice as wise as his predecessor Frank Miele did when he brought Downes on some seven years ago.

Downes won four league titles in the

past four years at Mahopac, doing so with gritty overachievers that went end-to-end for 32 minutes, thriving on defensive ferocity and feeding off the coach's swag. He led the Indians to an unprecedented four-straight Final 4 berths after playing in two in the late '80s, solidifying an unrivaled player/coach legacy. Downes, through his sadness, expressed no regrets about the seven years prior to this detestable termination.

"I have received so much support the last few days and weeks; it has been overwhelming," said Downes, who has two young boys to think

about. "I am so thankful and appreciative to everyone that I have heard from and that I have come in contact with over the last seven years. I have received a lot of support and my family and I are grateful. I am so most proud of my players. I am so proud of what we have accomplished the last seven years. I am just sad that it had to end this way."

And who isn't? Truth be told, Downes was about to bolt the scene last year due to some behind-the-scenes issues, which were further fueled after an incident in December when Downes was followed onto the school bus and threatened by a Mahopac dad over the lack of playing time for his son (it resulted in a restraining order against the dad).

This latest incident was just the final nail in the coffin. And don't be surprised if we see further sanctions imposed by Section 1, who may refuse to head north of the Putnam County line to contest its football championships every fall if we don't hold ourselves accountable up here; whether its racism, bullying or drug abuse. It's time to wise up, gang...

PEEKSKILL will never be the same without Panzanaro on its sideline either. The 67-year-old should have went out with his head held high but the 2014 Red Devils were the first in his three-decade tenure to bail out of the playoffs without qualifying for the field of 16. Panzanaro stated that his team's failure to defeat Sleepy Hollow in an out-bracket game was on him.

"I didn't have them ready, I allowed them to look ahead (to a potential first-round match with No.8 Byram Hills)," Coach P said. "All of us totally underperformed all year."

Truth be told: The season was an aberration, even a powder keg, at times; like the time Coach P was suspended by Peekskill administrators in January over a practice-session scuffle with then-

assistant Coach Tony Jackson, who is no longer with the program because of his actions. Coach P was quickly reinstated after the dust-up, which witnesses say was the result of a disagreement over Jackson's sons playing time.

It was a rough year for local basketball coaches. Panzanaro failed to go out with his head held as high as it should, despite the 10 gold balls, five NYS championships and three Federation crowns he bestowed upon Peekskill. Peekskill has had two coaches in 57 years and all that stability will be difficult to sustain without a lead dog pulling the sled. Peekskill and all of Section 1 awaits his replacement with baited breath.

Might Coach Panzanaro, the Peekskill A.D., reach out to Downes? Might Yorktown or Fox Lane do likewise? I can't imagine Downes will not be on someone's sideline next winter, taking average ball players and making them championship contenders like he did at Mahopac.

"I would definitely like to coach again," Downes said. "But I have not had any conversations with anyone from Fox Lane, Yorktown or Peekskill. If the situation at one of those schools was right, and they thought I was a good fit for them, I would definitely be interested."

His phone should be blowing up this week.

More proof of a tough year for coaches came when former YORKTOWN Coach Chris Caputi was summoned into A.D. Fio Nardone's office and released the night before the Huskers were due to play a Class AA out-bracket game. Peekskill girls' Coach Rodney Headley is currently being investigated and the three-time sectional champion coach could be in danger of losing his position if the rumors are proven true.

Brewster Coach John Martino graciously resigned after a so-so Class A season after a four-decade run with the program, leaving the door open for longtime chum Tom Nelligan to take over the Bears. Meanwhile, Fox Lane Coach Chris Violante unexpectedly stepped down from the Bedford-based Foxes, citing "time with his family" as the primary reason for ending a decade-long tenure that saw the Foxes reach one Class AA Final 4, plus two league titles and 50 wins the last three seasons.

That leaves the Northern Westchester/Putnam region with at least five boys' head coaching vacancies in a 25-mile radius and some pretty big shoes to fill. Whoa, I've never looked more forward to lax/baseball season in my 25 years of covering local sports.



BILL KENNEDY PHOTO

Former Mahopac boys' basketball Coach Kevin Downes resigned last Friday, citing hurtful, racially-charged comments made on social media, which were retweeted and favored by many members of the Mahopac student body.

stemming from its student body, the Mahopac Maniacs back on February 27th.

"I'm heartbroken," Coach Downes repeated upon his breakup from the community he starred in during the late '80s as a multi-sport sensation before returning seven years ago to coach the Mahopac basketball program to Section 1 prominence with four-straight Class AA Final 4 appearances and one championship loss to Mount Vernon, which is at the center of the Mahopac rubble.

The Cliff Notes: On Feb. 27, the basketball team found itself in the throes of a national whirlwind since its 43-40 sectional semifinal loss to nine-time state champion Mount Vernon, in the Section

Downes in the Dumps!



Legendary Mahopac Coach/ Alum Resigns Amidst Racial Tension



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Mahopac boys' basketball Coach Kevin Downes resigned last week amidst a swirling racial mess whereby scores of Mahopac youths retweeted and favorited social media commentary that made derogatory light of African Americans after the Indians were defeated by Mount Vernon on February 27th in the Section 1 Class AA Final 4 for the third time in four years. In seven seasons since his hire, the fiery coach won four-straight league titles and raised Mahopac's level of play to a standard-bearing degree... See Direct Rays

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