



The NORTHERN WESTCHESTER Examiner

Covering Yorktown, Somers, Cortlandt, Croton-on-Hudson, Buchanan, Ossining and Peekskill

COVID-19 Breakdown:

Village of Ossining 1,636 (270)

Peekskill 1,492 (156)

Cortlandt 1,293 (137)

Yorktown 1,226 (158)

Somers 656 (96)

Croton-on-Hudson

277 (30)

Town of Ossining

216 (23)

Buchanan 75 (13)

FREE

December 1 - December 7, 2020

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 571



PHOTO CREDIT COURTESY OF FEEDING WESTCHESTER

Food Farmacy Program Kicks Off

NewYork-Presbyterian is working with Feeding Westchester to provide at-risk families in Peekskill with healthy food. The two organizations launched the Food Farmacy Program in November, which provides bags of nourishing, healthy food and staples to 120 families. The 20-pound bag includes whole grains, low-sodium and low-sugar shelf-stable products, and fresh produce. In addition to receiving the healthy food items, participants will receive ongoing nutrition education and access to resources to assist them in working towards food security. The pilot program runs through the spring, with a goal to become a permanent program. NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital is facilitating the food distribution program with Sun River Health in Peekskill.

Teen Dies, Two Injured in Stabbing Altercation

By Anna Young

Community members are mourning the loss of a Peekskill teen who died after being stabbed during an altercation Saturday night.

According to Peekskill police, resident Joaquin Salazar, 18, succumbed to his injuries soon after friends dropped him off at NewYork Presbyterian/Hudson Valley Hospital Center to receive emergency medical attention Saturday night.

"This is no doubt a difficult and sad day for Peekskill," Mayor Andre Rainey said in a Facebook post Sunday. "Violence in Peekskill is unacceptable, and we will not allow it to pull us apart, particularly in these difficult times."

On Saturday, at approximately 9:30 p.m., Peekskill police responded to the hospital after receiving reports two males had arrived with apparent stab wounds to the torso area, police said in a press release.

Potential witnesses at the hospital notified police that a group had gathered in the parking lot at China Pier on Louisa Street in Peekskill, where the individuals engaged in a physical altercation. During the dispute, two men had been stabbed, police said, and were driven to the hospital by friends.

Due to the severity of the injuries, the two men were transported to Westchester Medical Center in Hawthorne, where Salazar died. The other male, also an 18-year-old from Peekskill, is still being treated for his injuries, according to police.

During the investigation, police learned that a third male, who had also sustained injuries during the fight, was taken to the Cortlandt-based hospital, police said. Based on the information received at the hospital,

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Yorktown to Host Drive-Thru Holiday Lights Attraction

By Rick Pezzullo

The coronavirus pandemic has forced the Town of Yorktown to pivot and stage its holiday traditions in a different fashion.

Instead of marching down Commerce Street to the applause of residents lined up on both sides, the 2020 Holiday Lights Parade will take place Saturday, December 5 at FDR State Park from 7 p.m. until 8 p.m. The free event will feature more than 30 holiday floats that will be placed in the park so that the public can drive through the attraction.

The entrance to the attraction

will be through the FDR State Park's exit from the northbound Taconic State Parkway and vehicles will drive through parking lots 4, 3, 2 and 1, with an option to drive through the loop a second time. Visitors to the attraction are required to remain in their vehicles while driving through the attraction. Tickets and reservations are not required.

"We're trying to find new ways—safe ways—to instill that additional holiday spirit, to show our compassion, our understanding, our love for our community," said Supervisor Matt Slater. "These are a few ways that we're

going to be engaging in the next weeks."

Yorktown's virtual menorah lighting will be produced by Chabad of Yorktown. The event is on December 10 at 6 p.m. in Veterans' Memorial Field & Track.

Yorktown's virtual tree lighting will be December 12 at 7 p.m. in Veterans' Memorial Field & Track. Both lighting events will be broadcast on the town's Facebook page.

As part of the virtual tree lighting, Yorktown is launching Ornaments of Hope, a community art

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PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF YORKTOWN

Supervisor Matt Slater and other local officials held a press conference Friday about Yorktown's holiday events.



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Peekskill Teen Dies, Two Injured in Stabbing Altercation

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the man was later taken into custody for his role in the fight, though charges are still pending.

Rainey said the city will launch a weekly "teen convo" Zoom session for Peekskill youth to stay better connected and coordinated. With the area shut down due to the pandemic, Rainey stressed the importance of giving youngsters a consistent platform to express themselves.

Rainey added plans to work with parents throughout the city to listen and talk about ways to prevent further tragedies from hap-

pening. Families are encouraged to provide input on what the community can do to give youth members more healthy outlets to express themselves, solve disputes and grow.

"On a personal note, as a father of three, it's critical that as parents, we stay vigilant in providing guidance and supervision not only for our children but all of Peekskill's children," Rainey said. "That is our responsibility to all of our children."

Salazar graduated from Peekskill High School last year and was a prominent varsity soccer player. Superintendent of Schools Dr. David Mauricio said the district has

created a support line for students, alumni, teachers, and staff affected by this loss. The support line, which can be used via call or text, is available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 914-522-0624.

In addition, Peekskill High School and Peekskill Middle School support staff will be available virtually on Monday and Tuesday from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. for SEL counseling. No appointment is necessary, with students encouraged to drop-in at any time.

Parents should contact the school social worker or school psychologist if additional support or resources is needed, Mauricio

said.

"Our hearts and prayers are with the family and friends of these alumni during this difficult time," Mauricio said. "In these challenging times, let us remember to work together as a community and support each other."

The Peekskill Police Department continues to investigate the stabbing. Anyone with information is urged to contact the Detective Division at 914-737-8000 or email jgalusha@peekskillpolice.com. Anonymous tips may also be made at www.cityof-peekskill.com under the crime tips section.

Peekskill Schools Shift to Virtual Learning Through 2021

By Anna Young

With elected officials warning Peekskill is on track to be labeled an orange or red zone as COVID-19 case rapidly rise, the Peekskill City School District has opted to close and go fully remote through the new year.

In a letter to the community last Wednesday, Superintendent of Schools Dr. David Mauricio announced all students will transition to full virtual learning through January 4, explaining the district felt it necessary to act quickly to ensure the safety and health of all.

"In uncertain times, it is important that we continue to focus on positives and embrace opportunities with gratitude," Mauricio said. "After meeting with multiple stakeholders, including elected officials, Department of Health leaders, our District Physician, our administrative team and our Board of Education, Peekskill City Schools must now act in the best interest of our students and staff."

He added a strong possibility the district could extend virtual learning through January 19, depending on the data and zone designation. Currently, Peekskill

is labeled a yellow zone due to its high COVID-19 infection rates.

The designation, which was made two weeks ago by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, is part of a three-tier, color-coded system that tracks the infection rate per municipality. To mitigate any micro-clusters, the label applies more stringent restrictions on gatherings, activities, businesses, and schools, in addition to the current mandates in place.

To be classified as a yellow zone, the lowest of the three-tier system, an area would need a seven-day rolling average positivity rate above 2.5% for 10 days and

the addition of 10 or more new daily cases per 100,000 residents on a seven-day average.

Current restrictions force schools to test 20 percent of students and staff within the district to remain open for in-person learning. An increase to an orange zone would force the district to go fully remote until the infection rate is lowered.

Despite the decision to go remote, Mauricio said Wednesday's Grab & Go meal pick-up and delivery will continue.

Mauricio urged everyone to do their part to ensure the district can soon resume in-person

learning, noting that the actions of a community can slow the spread of the virus. He added the decisions made over the holiday season will certainly determine what happens as we head into the new year.

"As the governor has stated, there is no predetermined result for our situation as we move forward, and what happens over the next few weeks will be a result of our own actions," Mauricio said. "I urge everyone to do their part to stop the spread of COVID-19 by wearing a mask, washing your hands frequently and socially distancing as much as possible."

Peekskill Council Approves 2021 Budget with 3.4% Tax Hike

By Rick Pezzullo

The Peekskill Common Council unanimously approved a 2021 city budget last week that increases taxes 3.46%.

In October, City Manager Andrew Stewart unveiled a tentative budget that only called for a slight 0.67% tax hike. However, a loss of \$450,000 in state aid and a projected decrease in parking revenues of \$600,000 caused city officials to go back to the drawing board.

As a result, the average single-family home assessed at \$8,000 in the city will experience an increase in taxes next year of \$83.44, or less than \$7 per month.

"While the increase may seem minor for some, the City Council and City Manager are keenly aware of the necessity of keep-

ing the tax burden on struggling families and businesses as low as possible, while promoting investment in the city so that the tax burden is shared across a larger tax base," Stewart stated in a budget message to the Council.

"The City of Peekskill has consistently adopted tax cap-compliant budgets and appeared able to do so again for 2021 until more information became available indicating that parking and other revenues were not rebounding as hoped, that the federal government is not likely to provide funding to local governments, and that the economic effects of the pandemic are likely to continue through 2021," Stewart stated.

Personnel costs account for almost 80% of expenses in the city budget. The city employs approximately 203 full-time and 22

part-time workers, down from 268 in 2012. In recent months, Peekskill has had a lot of turnover in leadership positions due to retirement or voluntary separation, including the city manager, city clerk, superintendent of recreation, assessor and comptroller.

The tentative budget only proposes adding one full-time position, an assistant planner in the Planning Department. No salary increases are included for any staff, other than positions mandated by previous union

contract settlements.

To balance the budget, \$1 million in unassigned fund balance was utilized, drawing \$250,000 from the Tax Stabilization Fund and \$750,000 from the Unreserved Undesignated Fund. It is almost twice the amount of fund balance used in 2019. The fund balance at the end of 2020 is projected to be \$4.38 million. The budget forecasts ending 2021 with an unassigned fund balance of \$3.5 million.

Yorktown to Host Drive-Thru Holiday Lights Attraction

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project that encourages residents to create their own Christmas ornaments with messages of hope, love or kindness. The ornaments should be delivered by December 10 to the recreation office at Sparkle Lake, 176 Granite Springs Road. The town will also accept ornaments delivered after December 10 and they will be placed on the tree

after the tree lighting.

Ornaments of Hope was an idea proposed by Jim Poulin, president of the Yorktown Lions.

"We want families out there to make their own decorations," said Poulin. "It will be your chance to give back to the community with something that you can't buy. Just a simple message of kindness and love."

State DOT to Recalibrate Route 202 traffic lights

The New York Department of Transportation will recalibrate traffic lights on Route 202 to improve the signal operation on the corridor near the Taconic State Parkway.

On Thursday, state officials contacted Supervisor Matt Slater and Highway Superintendent Dave Paganelli to inform them that state DOT will make the changes by mid-December. The state examined traffic lights along the corridor after receiving an Oct. 20 letter from the two elected officials about a general mistiming of lights in the area. The mistimed lights prompted messages to Town Hall from residents.

"I'm thankful to our residents who brought this problem to our attention," said Slater. "We try to have eyes everywhere but it is important for our residents to tell us about

problems they are witnessing. In this case we are all pleased with the outcome."

Paganelli added, "Since Route 202 is a state thoroughfare and not a local road we needed to work with our partners at the Department of Transportation to address this issue."

The recalibration of the traffic lights on Route 202 is the latest road improvement this year.

In August, the town completed the Mohegan Avenue retaining wall. In September town crews replaced 1,000 feet of drainage along town roads, paved Forest Court, Sycamore Lane, Braddock Court, Sheila Court, Spillway Road, Dale Street, Knollwood Road, Slyvan Road, Mogul Road and Bunney Court.

The town is on its way to resurfacing nearly nine miles of road, 18% of which included milling.

Cuomo Focuses on Hospital Capacity, Health Care Resources as Virus Surges

By Martin Wilbur

The spiraling number of COVID-19 cases in New York State prompted Gov. Andrew Cuomo Monday to announce strategies focused on ensuring adequate hospital capacity, staff and testing while keeping schools open as much as possible.

On Sunday, the state reported 3,532 positive COVID-19 statewide, a nearly 250 percent increase from Oct. 29 and up from 429 on Aug. 29. Health officials expect an even greater post-Thanksgiving and holiday season virus surge that may last into mid-January.

"We are now worried about overwhelming the hospital system, and if these numbers continue to increase, which we expect they will, you will see serious stress on the hospital system," Cuomo said.

The governor said the state will extend its yellow, orange and red zone designations to include hospital rates, death rates, ICU capacity and personal protection equipment.

Other specific steps outlined by Cuomo calls for hospital systems, such as Northwell, Montefiore and others around the state, to shift patients to its other locations to avoid overwhelming a single facility. He warned that if a hospital gets overwhelmed, there will be a state investigation, and if it is found a hospital system failed to redistribute patients, it will be cited for malpractice.

Additional steps call for health care systems to prepare emergency field hospitals and be prepared to staff them, plan to increase bed capacity by 50 percent and confirm personal protection equipment stockpiles.

This Friday, the state will stop all elective surgery in Erie County because of a surge in cases in western New York State. The halt in elective surgeries will be considered elsewhere throughout the state should that become necessary.

Hospital systems are also being asked to identify retired doctors and nurses to have on standby to supplement current staff.

Cuomo said the state must make these preparations to avoid the acute overload the health care system experienced in the spring.

"In the new battlefield, hospital capacity is the top concern - period," he said. "It's about hospital beds, it's about ICUs and it's about having enough staff and enough equipment. That is the effect and that is what we're going to have to deal with."

While cases continue to explode in Westchester, County Executive George Latimer said Monday that COVID-19-related hospitalizations are currently manageable. He spoke with hospital administrators throughout the county on Monday, and they were confident that COVID-19 hospitalizations at this point were under control.

On Saturday, there were 244 virus patients in Westchester hospitals. While that number has doubled in the past two weeks, it represents less than 10 percent of the roughly 3,000 hospital beds within the county, Latimer said.

However, the county executive said other numbers are worrisome. As of Sunday, there were 6,117 active cases in Westchester, a number that has more than quadrupled from 1,393 since Oct. 30. During the last week, 15 people died of the virus, placing the county death toll since the start of the pandemic at 1,515. For the month of November there were 42 COVID-19-related deaths in Westchester.

"As these numbers continue to increase, it's going to be a concern how we're going to have to deal with it," Latimer said.

In addition to the state's strategies to manage hospitalizations, Cuomo also disclosed other measures to try and limit the spread of the disease. He said the state continue to look to increase overall testing, and target it more effectively to health care workers, nursing homes, schools and essential workers. The key is to have it targeted to the proper populations but also have a fair distribution of tests so it is most effective.

The emphasis on testing for schools is to maintain as much in-person learning as possible, particularly for grades K-8 and

special education students, Cuomo said. Schools that are in designated orange zones will not automatically shut down, he said. If a school is located in an orange zone, it will be expected to test 20 percent of its students over a month and maintain a low enough positivity rate to continue in-person instruction. If a school is in a red zone, it would have to test 30 percent of its students in a month.

Officials also plan to run a public information campaign stressing the importance of limiting gatherings and avoiding holiday celebrations at home other than with members of your immediate household. The state estimates that there has been close to a 98 percent compliance rate with masks, and it is hoped

that repeating information about the need to avoid social gatherings can be similarly effective, Cuomo said.

He said it is estimated that 65 percent of the latest wave of transmissions has been a result of small gatherings, dwarfing the rate of infections at workplaces and schools.

"We have to communicate this to people the way we communicate about masks," Cuomo said.

The governor also announced that the state will develop an equitable vaccine distribution plan, but did not expect widespread inoculations until at least late spring or early summer because of the complicated nature of the operation.

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Farber Says Goodbye to Village Board After Decade of Service

By Martin Wilbur

Village Board colleagues of Mount Kisco Deputy Mayor Jean Farber paid tribute to her 10 years of service to municipal government, praising her efforts to elevate the arts and local historical society while always providing a voice of reason.

Farber, a Democrat, who has completed her fifth two-year term on the board, decided against running for re-election this year. She is being replaced by former trustee Anthony Markus, who had previously served on the board for 14 years before losing his seat in 2017. He will be sworn in along with returning Trustee Karen Schleimer, who both ran unopposed on the Democratic ticket last month.

Farber thanked a long list of current and former village officials at her last board meeting on Nov. 16 as well as residents for having provided her the privilege to serve.

"I have been so fortunate to have met so many of you," said Farber, 72, a real estate broker. "Thank you all for the most amazing 10 years of my life. Please stay the course, be safe, give a shout-out when you can. Thank you, thank you, thank you very much."

She mentioned in early March and again at her last meeting, which once again was

a virtual meeting, that she thought it was time someone else had the opportunity to serve on the board.

Board members sent a photo album and a small desktop sculpture to Farber's home, both of which bear her name followed by the phrase "10 years of service."

Her colleagues recognized her efforts working alongside the Mount Kisco Arts Council to bring a variety of arts programming to the village during her tenure, including free concerts in the public space between the library and Village Hall, art exhibits at the library and pop-up exhibits. Farber was also credited with working with the Kirby Commons developers to have them provide a public arts space for the council within its proposed development.

In addition, she worked with the Mount Kisco Historical Society to move the organization to its new home at 40 Green St., using a portion of the former village police department's home.

Mayor Gina Picinich said along with her accomplishments, finding common ground was one of the hallmarks of Farber's time on the board.

"You always listen and work to seek compromise to find the best, most effective solutions for the community, and you

always represent our village and yourself with grace and class," Picinich said.

Trustee Peter Grunthal echoed those sentiments.

"(You've) been a tremendously important person on our board," he said. "She has brought a light touch, a lovely smile and an impressive balance and stability to her decisions. I've always enjoyed working with her and I will miss her presence on the board."

Trustee Karen Schleimer, who was Farber's running mate four times from 2012 to 2018, called her "my mentor."

"To spearhead the arts and music, these programs and what that has meant for everyone; it's available to everyone without charge. This is just the most wonderful thing everyone could ever bring to Mount Kisco," Schleimer said.

Trustee David Squirrell, who has known Farber for about 25 years, said he was certain that she would find a way to contribute to the community without being on the Village Board.

"We will miss you. We will definitely miss you, but you love this town so much and you love to serve so much that I definitely feel that we're going to be seeing a lot of you going forward," he said.



Jean Farber, who has completed her five terms of service on the Mount Kisco Village Board.

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Croton Trio Ensures Everyone is Protected with Homemade Face Masks

By Anna Young

With COVID-19 fatigue setting in for most, it can be easy to forget the mass panic and fear so many felt at the start of the pandemic when face masks were at one point inaccessible.

Knowing hospitals, front line workers and residents were reeling from the shortage of face masks in March, three Croton-on-Hudson residents, Liz Poling-Hiraldo, Jayne Grant and Khamla Erskine, launched Croton Face Mask Makers to ensure those in need would never have to feel unsafe at work or when leaving their home.

Since March, the local group, which produces free homemade cloth face masks, has recruited about 140 residents across Westchester and Putnam counties to generate more than 36,000 masks and coverings to more than 160 hospitals, shelters, schools and organizations across the state and nation.

"What keeps this going is that there is a need out there and it makes me feel good that we can address that need," Poling-Hiraldo said. "It is a really incredible thing to be able to help those who have been forgotten and places that aren't necessarily being helped by the government."

On March 21, just days after New York went into lockdown due to rising coronavirus cases, the trio launched a Facebook page, imploring friends to make masks for those in need after Erskine issued concern that family members in the medical field were experiencing a shortage of PPE.

The trio and group members immediately



Collection of masks created by Croton Face Mask Makers.

went to work after contacting area medical professionals and hospitals that might need additional PPE, Poling-Hiraldo said. Within days of launching, hundreds of masks were produced to fulfill orders made by New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Children's Hospital at Montefiore, and Westchester Medical Center.

Other orders included, NYU Medical Center, Bethel Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center, and Sing Sing Correctional Facility.

By April 1, the group had made over 1,000 masks to donate, Poling-Hiraldo said, with requests coming in from all over through outreach and word of mouth. In August, the group had surpassed 25,000 masks donated, with the number exceeding 36,000 last month.

But what started off as an effort to support hospitals and first responders soon expanded to homeless shelters, schools, nursing homes,

post offices, military bases, food pantries, farmers, tribal nations, local community groups, and area prisons.

"It really took off on its own, and as people heard about us, we just started taking in more and more requests," Poling-Hiraldo said. "It just kept evolving overtime, and every time I thought we were going to wind down, someone else came in with an order."

With so many masks being created at one time, Poling-Hiraldo eventually created a depot outside her home for folks to pick up fabric and drop off masks. She and her kids would then bag the masks in personalized kits and fulfill the order.

The depot was also available to those wanting a mask for themselves or to make donations. Poling-Hiraldo said people often felt bad they couldn't sew and would donate money, fabric or necessary sewing items, asserting how they wanted to help.

"We've gotten donations of sewing machines and fabric, so anything people could do to empower us because we were the people who could sew, they would do," she said. "As time went on, people wanted to help and we created other jobs for them to do, like manage the depot, and we had people volunteering to drive and deliver orders for us."

As the group continued to grow over the months, Poling-Hiraldo said they began incorporating scrub caps, headbands, buttons, and ear savers into the fold after several requests for them were made. Ear savers were made available via 3D printer or crochet, she said.

"We found some simple patterns and they all took off," she said. "Now we're making window masks for the hard of hearing."

While the local group has been fortunate to help those in need, Poling-Hiraldo said it's also given community members a feeling a purpose and friendship during a very isolated and stressful time. It makes you feel good to help people and give back in a meaningful way, she said.

Even though the group launched nine months ago, Poling-Hiraldo explained how people continually carve time out of their day to sew, crochet or help in some way.

"They're taking time out of their day where they could be doing something else, and they're conscientiously making the time because they want to," Poling-Hiraldo said. "It gives them a purpose and this whole COVID thing makes everyone feel out of control and this is one of those things that gives people a sense of control."

As coronavirus cases continue to surge statewide, Poling-Hiraldo acknowledged that many are suffering from COVID fatigue. But she pressed that as Croton Face Mask Makers continue to help the community, she takes solace knowing people are masked and safe.

"Making masks is a sign of love. If I'm putting a mask on someone else's face, I can help slow the spread," Poling-Hiraldo said. "There are nurses and doctors who are working long hours, so if I can make their lives a little bit more comfortable, then I'll have done something."

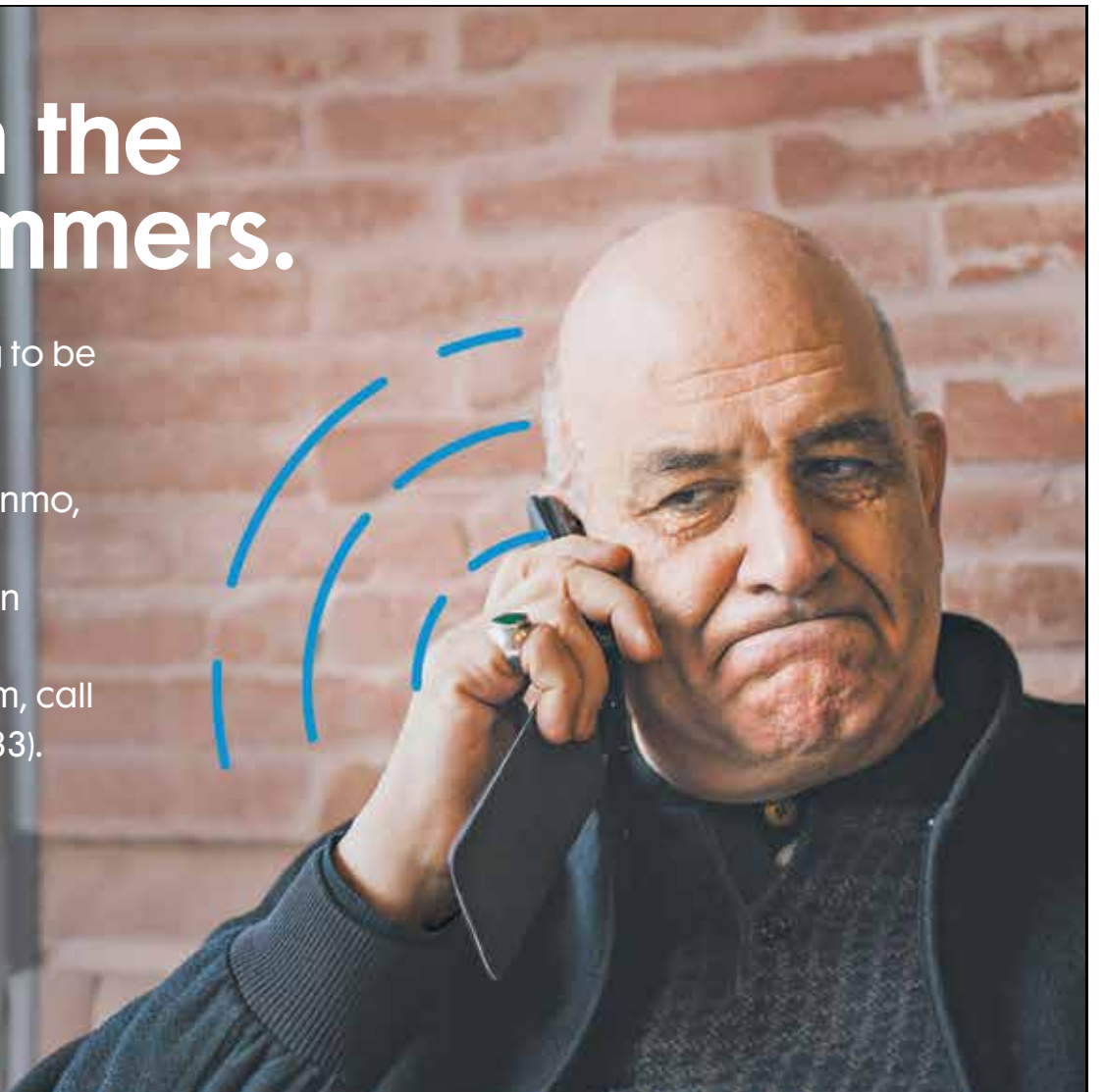
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Childhood Education Center Makes its Westchester Debut

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester offers plenty of choices for early childhood and afterschool programs for working parents, but there's a new option locally that parents of young children might find appealing.

Lightbridge Academy, which was established more than 20 years ago in New Jersey and has expanded to locations throughout the Northeast, opened its first location in Westchester on Oct. 5 in Elmsford's new mixed-used building The Elm at 35 Valley Ave., off of Exit 21 on the Saw Mill Parkway.

Director Maureen Gioio, who has 36 years of early childhood care experience, said Lightbridge Academy is more than just daycare, serving as an early childhood education center that is not only convenient for parents but recognizes that each child learns differently.

"What they do is they have taken the really great parts of all the early childhood programs and developed their own curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for each age group," said Gioio. "They also teach to the whole child. So every child learns differently."

The Elmsford location, which has about 10,000 square feet with 11 classrooms, a large multipurpose room and two outdoor play areas, is owned by Ramkumar Jagadeesan and Joanne McKay, a couple who sent their three children, now between the ages four and eight, to Lightbridge. Gioio



The entrance to Lightbridge Academy's new 10,000-square-foot space at The Elm, a mixed-use building in Elmsford.

said they had such a great experience with their own kids that they wanted to bring the program to Westchester.

"They see a need for quality childcare so this is why they decided to come in," Gioio said. "They had such a great experience and they wanted to share it with Westchester families."

Lightbridge Academy takes children from six weeks old through the preschool ages for half- and full-day programs from two to five days a week. Gioio said drop-in service is also offered in the event parents need an option to watch their children on

short notice; however, she recommends that families provide staff at least 24 hours' notice so Lightbridge has appropriate staffing levels on hand.

As of mid-November, there were seven full-time teachers and assistants that oversee a little more than 20 children enrolled in its early childhood programs. Gioio said additional children are ready to come on board after the holidays and next spring, as parents prefer to take a wait-and-see approach regarding COVID-19.

Afterschool programs are available for school-age children up to 12 years old.



An outdoor play space at Lightbridge Academy in Elmsford.

The Lightbridge program is based on helping each child reach its different development appropriate milestones, she said.

"We also believe in play, she said. "I say it's the child's work."

The teachers encourage problem-solving with other children, a critically important skill to learn from a young age, Gioio said. Lightbridge also provides sign language instruction to every child along with Spanish. The curriculum is often influenced by an appropriate theme of the week or month, she said.

It is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Gioio said that the center has attracted families from the Bronx and southern Westchester as well as northern Westchester and as far away as Brewster who work in the White Plains area and central Westchester.

There is also a contingent of parents

continued on page 12

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Harckham Declares Victory Over Astorino in 40th Senate District

By Anna Young

Exactly three weeks after Election Day, state Sen. Pete Harckham secured victory to continue serving the 40th state Senate District for a second term.

Following a heated race, Harckham declared victory last Tuesday over Republican challenger and former Westchester County executive Rob Astorino. While Astorino led the race by more than 8,000 votes at the close of Election night, Harckham was able to start quickly reduce the lead once officials began tallying thousands of absentee ballots.

As of the close of last week, with most absentee ballots in the three-county district tallied, Harckham forged to the lead by nearly 6,000 votes: 82,765-76,788. A small number of ballots have yet to be tabulated after they had been challenged by the Astorino camp but there aren't enough outstanding ballots remaining to change the outcome, Harckham spokesman Thomas Staudter said.

"I am humbled and grateful for all of the tremendous support I have received during this campaign and thank all of the voters in Senate District 40 for participating in this historic election," Harckham said. "The confidence and trust that residents have placed in me once again will continue to guide my intentions. These are challenging times, though, and I look forward to being engaged in the hard work necessary to ensure a better future for all."

After the absentee ballots were counted in Dutchess and Putnam Counties, two

Republican strongholds, Harckham had reduced Astorino's lead to 5,896 votes, with the process to begin counting Westchester's roughly 25,000 absentee ballots getting underway on Nov. 20.

In total, the absentee ballots in the race amounted to about 25 percent of the entire vote.

Astorino conceded last Tuesday, with both men congratulating each other on a hard-fought race.

"Mr. Astorino called Sen. Harckham this morning to congratulate him on his victory and to offer him his support in any way," Astorino's

spokesperson William O'Reilly said. "This was a close, close race, but we respect the will of the voters and wish Sen. Harckham the best in his new term."

Two years ago, Harckham became the first Democrat to serve northern Westchester and Putnam County in the state Senate since 1914 after ousting Republican Terrence Murphy. Harckham will begin his second term in January. His win secures a Democratic supermajority in the Senate.

"I'm thrilled to welcome my good friend Sen. Peter Harckham back to the state Senate," said Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

"Sen. Harckham has worked tirelessly to deliver results to the people of Westchester, Dutchess and Putnam counties and earned this re-election. I look forward to continuing to partner with Sen. Harckham as we tackle the many challenges ahead of us."

The 40th District covers the villages of Sleepy Hollow, Pleasantville, Briarcliff Manor, Croton-on-Hudson, Buchanan and Mount Kisco, the towns of Cortlandt, Lewisboro, Mount Pleasant, New Castle, North Salem, Pound Ridge, Somers and Yorktown, the City of Peekskill and parts of Putnam and Dutchess counties.

Slater Joins Business Council of Westchester's Economic Recovery Task Force

Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater has joined the Business Council of Westchester's Economic Recovery Task Force.

Economic Recovery Task Force is developing a comprehensive plan to provide specific recovery measures for Westchester's diverse business and not-for-profit sectors. Supervisor Slater will share his perspective and help the group formulate initiatives that include northern Westchester's special needs.

"I'm grateful to the Business Council of Westchester for their invitation to join this critical group. As we inch closer to a Covid-19 vaccine, our county's governments, businesses and institutions must work together to forge a recovery that benefits all

our residents," Slater said. "Throughout the pandemic downturn, Yorktown aggressively pursued a recovery agenda that has already borne fruit in terms of new investments and redevelopment of languishing properties."

The Task Force, comprised of more than 40 leaders from a broad spectrum of economic sectors across Westchester, first met in May to begin development of a strategic plan for providing coordinated assistance to businesses as the County's economy reemerges from the unprecedented pandemic.

"As we emerge from this crisis it is critically important that we have the strategies and plans in place that will let us hit the ground running," said BCW President and CEO

Marsha Gordon. "We are thrilled to have Supervisor Slater join our group and we are eager to learn about his revitalization efforts for Yorktown."

The county's largest and most influential business membership organization, The Business Council of Westchester is committed to helping businesses market, learn, advocate and grow. In addition, The Business Council of Westchester is actively involved in reviewing federal, state and county legislation and regulations in order to assess the potential impact on the business community and to influence the outcomes through advocacy when the business community's interests may be affected.

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Editorial

On This Thanksgiving, More Grateful to You Than Ever

From the Publisher

By Adam Stone

It was the type of text that rocks your world, triggering a thousand thoughts at once. "My diagnostic test came back positive this afternoon," my longtime colleague and friend Martin Wilbur, The Examiner's Editor-in-Chief and founding journalistic voice, wrote me on Nov. 11, delivering the news that he contracted COVID-19.

Gratitude can be a complicated emotion, because it's too often a byproduct of unpleasant developments in our lives.

In the wrenching weeks that have followed Martin's diagnosis, as he continued to keep me posted about his family's battle with this vicious, indiscriminating, apolitical but politicized beast of a virus in the lead up to Thanksgiving, I kept reminding myself of all I had to be thankful for during this admittedly vexing year.

Setting aside personal gratitude to family, friends and staff for the purpose of this thank you note, let me first say I've never been more acutely aware of just how much Examiner Media's success is inextricably linked to your readership and support. Our readers and advertisers are our oxygen, and, improbably, we're now breathing as comfortably as ever thanks to you.

In March, as the world was turned on its head by a global pandemic, our small local news publishing company was shook to its core, forcing layoffs and a fundamental restructuring of how we operate. In the days, weeks and months that followed, we turned to you for assistance. The result was hundreds of small donations totaling more than thirty-thousand critical dollars. And, just as fortifying, a seemingly endless stream of

messages expressing your admiration and appreciation of the professionally reported local journalism we've been producing for the past 13 years.

As the founder and publisher, you might assume I always possessed a precise idea of the depth of appreciation the community holds for our publications. It's not to say I was entirely unfamiliar. It's to say I already knew the appreciation was deep and profound but, as I learned, the appreciation ran far deeper than I previously understood. In fact, the truth of the matter is, your insistence that we continue, recover and return strong was deeper than even my own initial response. As I wrote once before, there was a fleeting moment in March — and I promise it was literally just a moment — when I allowed myself to imagine a different professional future, one where I permitted the virus' roaring waves to wash our newspapers away. You, on the other hand, didn't flinch. You immediately demanded our continued long-term presence covering your town board meetings, your school board work sessions, your homecoming games, your local parades. You demanded it in deed and in words, and here we are, thanks to you.

Let me also say a word about this virus as we enter the holiday season. We have been covering the impact of COVID-19 since the beginning, hour-to-hour, day-to-day, and this moment in time worries me as much as any. With something of a finish line finally within sight, with the development of several promising and seemingly miraculous vaccines on their way, let's redouble efforts to remain safe, and not fall victim to the ill effects of an understandable but fatally dangerous COVID safety fatigue. While we can take some genuine comfort knowing how far we've come with treatments, the daily decisions we face are no ordinary exercise

in risk assessment, like the patently absurd comparisons to our logical willingness to risk the flu in our pre-pandemic lives. There's a reason the expression "avoid it like the plague" exists as the ultimate expression of caution.

As I can now personally conclude, based on Martin's experience, you genuinely wouldn't — or shouldn't — wish a bad case of this virus on your worst enemy. That's the best way to process how much it could flatten you and your loved ones. Wear a mask, social distance and wash your hands with the same appropriate level of zeal you exhibited in March for your safety and the safety of those you love — and even for those you don't. These months ahead promise to be a challenge but there's very real, shining light glimmering on the warmer end of this 2020-2021 tunnel. Let's make it there safely and prudently, controlling what we can control.

As I write this thank you note on Nov. 25, on the eve of our great American holiday, Martin, for his part, returned to work for the first time today, having endured hell, prepared to return to serve you with his impeccable brand of high quality community coverage. All of us at Examiner Media are that much more sympathetic and personally attuned to the havoc wrought by this yet-to-be-tamed beast. And in a very real sense, we are here, ready and poised to cover this next chapter, due to your generosity of spirit and deep appreciation for community journalism.

From all of us to all of you, thank you again. Happy Thanksgiving (in the rearview when you read this) and wishing you and yours a joyful holiday season. Please also make it a safe one so we can avoid more texts that rock our worlds.

Gratefully yours,
Adam Stone, Publisher of Examiner Media

Letters to the Editor

Yorktown PD is a Model for Other Communities to Emulate

This past fall the Town of Yorktown has engaged in a meaningful conversation about the state of the Yorktown Police Department. Multiple presentations have been made which have provided clarity on current policing policies as well as meaningful data on the performance of our police department. These presentations, which were made by Police Chief Robert Noble, clearly displayed the superior level our police department has and continues to operate on. This should come as no surprise to any informed resident. The Yorktown Police Department has been consistently accredited by New York State for

nearly 30 years. I was involved when they were first accredited and applaud their continued commitment to this cause. We are truly blessed to have someone with the integrity and caliber of Chief Noble who oversees the day to day operations of the department. Just like in the military, Chief Noble has three very capable lieutenants who assist with the ongoing responsibilities and duties to ensure the Yorktown Police Department operates at the high level this community has come to expect. Lastly, we have a very capable Board of Commissioners, the Yorktown Town Board, who the residents have elected. This process,

which in my eyes has been superbly crafted and executed by Supervisor Matt Slater, has reestablished the Yorktown Police Department as a model for communities near and far. The Yorktown community should be proud of this Police Department, applaud our Town Supervisor and members of the Coalition for their ability to manage an emotionally charged issue and take the time to watch the meetings to understand how lucky we are to live in this great town.

Anthony (Tony) Grasso
Yorktown

Thanks to State DOT for Repaving Greenburgh Roads

In recent years The Examiner has published a number of letters and articles about the condition of NYS owned roads located within the Town of Greenburgh. Many residents complained about potholes, craters - - unsafe conditions on state roads. And, in 2018, 36 Greenburgh student interns organized a

lobbying effort to persuade the state to repave roads within our town. The last time a NYS road located in the town was repaved was over five years ago. The students met with state Department of Transportation officials, state lawmakers. They organized petition drives.

I am very thankful that the New York State

Transportation Department was responsive to our concerns. This past week they completed repaving Dobbs Ferry Road from Sprain Parkway to Route 119 --one of the most pothole filled roads in the town. Earlier this summer the state repaved Hillside Ave in

Continued on next page

Annual Yorktown Funeral Home Tree Lighting to be Held Virtual

Yorktown Funeral Home in Shrub Oak will hold its 10th Anniversary Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony -- this year virtually and safely during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic -- on Sunday, December 6, at 6:15 p.m., according to Anthony Guarino, Funeral Director.

At that time, family members and friends of those whose lives were celebrated at the home since

its founding in 2011 are invited to link remotely into the Home's event.

(<https://client.tribucast.com/tcid/36348081>)

"The holidays are a particularly difficult time of year for those who are grieving the loss of a loved one," said Guarino, "and this year, when many of us must isolate during the Covid-19 pandemic, we feel that celebrating in this way can

bring comfort to family members and friends of the deceased.

"It gives us the opportunity to remember what's important about our lives and what we've shared with others who are no longer with us," Guarino continued.

Guarino added that anyone who wants to join in the ceremony to remember a lost friend or family member, even if they were not served by Yorktown Funeral

Home, is welcome to participate. "Interest in this event has grown each year, and it convinces us that the need is there for people to participate in this way," he said. "Even when person-to-person social distancing is necessary."

Additionally, the public is invited to visit the Home individually anytime during the month of December, after the 6th, to place an ornament on the tree.

Yorktown Funeral Home is located at 945 E Main Street in Shrub Oak. Its website is www.yorktownfuneralhome.com.

The Guarino family also owns Yannantuono, Burr, Davis, Sharpe Funeral Home in Mt. Vernon.

To contact us with any comments or questions at Yorktown Funeral Home, please call (914) 962-0700 or write at YFH945@gmail.com.

Letters to the Editor

Holtec Will Help Restore Indian Point Site and Benefit the Community

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff approval of the sale of Indian Point to Holtec should be welcome news to

everyone who cares about our environment and economy in the Hudson Valley.

Indian Point's 24/7 carbon-free baseload

power, and the millions in tax revenues it pays, will be missed after operations cease in April -- and we need a plan to make our communities whole. Holtec has that plan and the proven capabilities to carry it out.

The NRC staff are highly trained and experienced public servants who take their responsibilities seriously, examining facts without bias. They know Holtec well: the company's already been managing the spent fuel at Indian Point for years and will continue to do so whether the property is sold to it or not.

Those who seek to hinder the sale are the same people who, for years, leveled baseless charges -- exceedingly useful as fodder for fundraising or political maneuvering -- against Indian Point's operators.

Now they tell us to ignore NRC experts in favor of self-appointed gadflies.

While it is sadly easy to guess at the naysayers' ultimate goals, it's also sadly true that once Indian Point closes, the clock starts ticking for our future.

The choice is clear: between a site fully restored by Holtec by the early 2030s, or an industrial carbuncle on the shores of the Hudson that will sit untouched for the next 60 years. Our communities deserve the safest and timeliest decommissioning, and everyone should welcome the NRC staff's bringing that bright future one step closer.

Deborah Milone

President, Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce

Thanks to State DOT for Repaving Greenburgh Roads

continued from previous page

Greenburgh (near Town Hall) and Saw Mill River Road in Ardsley.

A big thank you to NYS officials for the excellent job they did with milling and repaving these important roads. There are still many roads in Greenburgh and in our villages that need repaving. But - what NYS did in 2020 was a great start. And, their work is appreciated. I was also impressed with the team that the

state assigned to the work within Greenburgh. Dina Colavito, Engineer in charge of the NYS Department of Transportation kept town officials informed of the status of the work they were doing, responded to calls and did a fabulous job. Thank you.

Paul Feiner

Greenburgh Town Supervisor

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Obituaries

Ralph Purdy

Ralph Martin Purdy, a native of Ossining and current resident of Tarrytown, died November 23. He was 84.

He was born November 10, 1936 in Ossining, to Stanley and Mary (Grady) Purdy. He was a graduate of Ossining High School and then went on to serve active and reserve duty with the United States Army while attaining the rank of Sergeant. In 1958, he began his law enforcement career as a security guard with the New York Division of Military and Naval Affairs.

In 1960, he was appointed a police officer with the Town of Greenburgh and in 1967 was named "Police Officer of the Year," by the Hartsdale Exchange Club. He was later promoted to Detective, then to Detective Sergeant. Mr. Purdy served as the President of the Greenburgh Police Association for 10 years, as well as the Westchester County Police Conference, Inc; the Tri-County Federation of Police, Inc. and the United

Federation of Special Police & Security Officers, Inc. He negotiated the first police contract in the State of New York under the Taylor Law, in 1967.

Mr. Purdy had a passion for golf and was an active member of Knollwood Country Club where he served as a past president.

In 2017, in recognition of his contributions to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, Ralph was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from former United States Attorney General John Ashcroft in Washington, DC.

He was preceded in death by his father, Stanley, his mother, Mary, his brother, Stanley, and his sister, Pearl Mastrantone. He is survived by his wife Karen M. Purdy, his sister Maureen Mekeel, his daughters, Shawn Antonaglia and Danielle Spaeth and his five grandchildren - Emerson, Luca, Lucy, Seth and Danica and his many nieces and nephews.

Joan Fratianni

Joan Katherine (Bernstein) Fratianni, a longtime resident of White Plains, died November 23. She was 87.

Born in Ossining to Daniel and Gertrude Luby, she worked in data entry for Lord & Burnham in Irvington for many years. She

was regularly active in the White Plains Senior Citizens.

She is survived by her close friends who will miss her. She was predeceased by her first husband Robert Bernstein and by her second husband Rick Fratianni.

Theresa K. Vollmer

Theresa K. Vollmer, a resident of Mahopac, died November 24. She was 94.

She was born in Nagytevel, Hungary on August 11, 1926, to Frank and Theresia Presing. On May 24, 1952 she married the love of her life, Karl W. Vollmer in Groetzingen, Germany. They came to the United States in 1959 with their oldest son Hubert. They lived in New York City and had two more children (twins) Claudia and Karl. In 1965, they moved to Mahopac. She worked at Union Carbide in Tarrytown as a file clerk until her retirement in 1992. She

was an avid gardener and loved cooking and baking. Her greatest loves were her grandchildren.

She was predeceased by her husband Karl, who died October 5, 2003. She is survived by her daughter Claudia Lefurgy of Carmel, her sons Karl of Hopewell Junction, and Hubert (Sandy) of Tracy CA; her brother Anthony Presing of Virginia; her grandchildren Kristin, Kayla (Jim), Brandon, Karl, Kevin and Kelleigh and her great-grandchildren, Jaxson and Hunter.

Yorktown Democratic Committee Begins Scheduling Interviews

The Yorktown Democratic Committee is interviewing candidates for the November 2021 election for supervisor, highway supervisor, town judge, and two Town Board seats.

"We have identified several potential candidates with whom we are talking, but we always are looking for more people to get involved and bring new strengths to our town government," said Mark Lieberman, chair of the

Nominations & Candidate Development Committee.

If anyone is interested, they should contact Lieberman no later than January 6 at mark@yorktowndemocrats.com.

Next year's election will be held on Nov. 2, 2021, with a primary, if there was to be one, on the third Tuesday in June. The Yorktown Democratic Committee will be considering endorsements at its January or February meeting.

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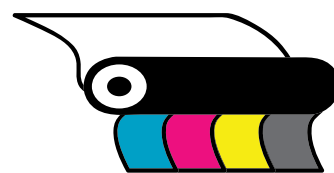
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Mount Pleasant Chamber Launches “Be A Star” Drive to Help Needy

During a year when those in need require a bit more support, a group of Mount Pleasant restaurants and merchants will donate a percentage of their sales to benefit the local food pantry this month.

The “Be A Star” Drive will take place on December 8. The campaign is organized by the Mount Pleasant Chamber of Commerce in coordination with the Mount Pleasant Food Pantry, which is now assisted by the Thornwood Knights of Columbus.

“The Food Pantry is the brainstem of Laurie and Pete Smalley who saw a need when the pandemic hit,” said Tom Milliot,

president of the Chamber of Commerce. “They started by providing meals to the senior population and quickly expanded when they discovered over two dozen families within the town that struggled to put food on the table.”

Laurie Smalley currently serves on the Mount Pleasant Town Board.

Following a chamber-sponsored dinner Smalley organized last month, the organization felt a food drive would be the best way to support those in need during the holiday season, while also aiding in driving customers to local businesses.

“It is very rewarding when so many people come together for a great cause,” Milliot said. “The Chamber Board members are all pitching in to get the word out.”

Key participants will include The Barley House, Silvio’s, and Valhalla Crossing. McCarthy Insurance will also make a generous donation to ensure that any cost to run the food drive would not stem from the events proceeds.

John Taxter of JT Graphics in Thornwood has also donated flyers and posters for the event.

Smalley, who was instrumental in working with ShopRite of Thornwood, has been donating food for many months. ShopRite is really one of many “Shining Stars” in this effort, Milliot stated.

“What our program needs now is a way to supplement the dry goods with other important nutrients and perishables,” Milliot said. “This event is really a win-win as it will not only raise needed funds to keep the program going strong into 2021 but will also help the local participating merchants.”

For more information, visit <https://www.mtpleasantchamberofcommerce.org/>

Childhood Education Center Makes its Westchester Debut

continued from page 6

who are working from home who need to concentrate without interruption and want their children to have healthy interaction with their peers.

“Especially a child that’s beginning to walk or a toddler that needs one-on-one attention because toddlers are just beginning to explore, they’re climbing, they’re jumping, so a lot of the parents are working from home but they need to get work done, and they want their children to have social interaction and not just see mom and dad,” Gioio said.

Like all schools Lightbridge Academy is focused on secure facilities and providing health safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a double set of doors with a face scanner to keep track of all

visitors.

All staff and children who are old enough wear masks. There is emphasis on frequent handwashing and the center regularly sanitizes surfaces throughout the day. Lightbridge also is employing a professional cleaning service that comes in every evening, Gioio said.

The school is also refraining from mixing classes and teachers and it is capping its capacity until the end of the pandemic at 122 children.

Gioio said that Lightbridge Academy is a facility that she would have sent her own children to.

“I have a daughter that went through childcare. I’m a grandmother of three. I would only work in an environment that I would want my grandchildren in,” she said.



One of Lightbridge Academy’s 11 classrooms at its new Elmsford location, the center’s first site in Westchester.

For more information about Lightbridge Academy’s programs, call 914-347-1500 or visit www.LightbridgeAcademy.com.

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Chappaqua Church Adds Outdoor Holiday Market to Annual Tree Sale

By Lindsay Emery

Even though the weather is getting cooler and people are gearing up to search for gifts for loved ones, holiday shopping is different this year because of the pandemic.

Discomfort surrounding shopping indoors has forced retailers to look elsewhere to make consumers feel safe.

The First Congregational Church of Chappaqua is trying to ease local residents' worries by adding an outdoor holiday market to their annual Christmas tree sales.

Rev. Dr. Martha Jacobs, the church's senior minister, visited farmers markets this summer and found that some vendors struggled through the summer and fall because of the lack of events. Jacobs thought that the church could supplement selling its Christmas trees with an outdoor Christmas market to support local vendors into the winter season.

"We've sold Christmas trees here for years and years and years and thought it would be a wonderful opportunity to give vendors a chance to have a place to continue to sell their wares," Jacobs said.

The church's congregants were supportive of supporting local merchants who lost opportunities to sell their products last summer when events were canceled. Jacobs said as a church, it is important to collectively support people, especially during the pandemic.

Jacobs' discussions with sellers led to more than 10 vendors agreeing to sell their merchandise, ranging from chocolates to health and beauty products. All vendors are required to bring their own tents, since the

outdoor holiday market will be held rain or shine.

The market will also require patrons to wear masks and the retailers must follow social distancing protocols with tables and tents set up at least six feet apart. Jacobs also hopes that the church can provide an alternative outdoor activity for families, couples and individuals looking for a gift.

"They [the vendors] will require the people they deal with to wear a mask as well so we're really trying hard to make sure everyone is safe and also have an opportunity to kind of

do something a little different maybe than just going for a walk in a park," Jacobs said.

Ultimately, Jacobs wants the tree sale and market to drive patrons not only to the local vendors, but also the stores in nearby downtown Chappaqua.

Even though the holidays will be unusual compared to prior years, First Congregational Church is adapting to meet the needs of the community.

"Something may be a little different because our holidays are not going to be what they have been in the past this year," she said. "Hopefully

people will be smart and will have smaller gatherings and a smaller Christmas, perhaps so that next year can be that much better and hopefully people are here for next year."

The Christmas tree sale and outdoor market is open during weekends through Sunday, Dec. 20. It is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays. For more information, call 914-238-4411 or visit www.fcc-chappaqua.org.

The First Congregational Church of Chappaqua is located at 210 Orchard Ridge Rd. in Chappaqua.

Westchester Winter Wonderland Drive-Thru Light Extravaganza

Westchester Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins joined with Westchester Parks Foundation (WPF), and the Westchester County Parks Department at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla on Friday, November 27 to celebrate the opening of NEW Westchester's Winter Wonderland Drive-Thru Holiday Light Extravaganza.

Thanks to the event's presenting sponsor, Westchester Medical Center Health Network, Jenkins and Westchester Parks Foundation welcomed a special child to help him light the tree, nine-year-old Mt Vernon resident Jorden Hutchens, who made a miraculous recovery after contracting COVID-19 and

suffering from a life-threatening complication of the virus. Jorden was treated at Maria Fareri Children's Hospital in May for Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome, an illness seen in pediatric patients related to the coronavirus infection. Robison Oil was the sponsor the tree lighting ceremony.

Proceeds from this event benefit WPF and allow the organization to further its mission to advocate for and invest in the preservation, conservation, use and enjoyment of the 18,000 acres of parks, trails and open spaces within the Westchester County Parks system. For more information, visit <http://www.wwinterwonderland.com>.



WESTCHESTER PARKS FOUNDATION PHOTO

MWestchester Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins joined nine-year-old Mt Vernon Resident Jorden Hutchens for the official opening and tree lighting celebration at Kensico Dam Plaza.

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SUNY Purchase, WCC Successfully Navigate COVID-19 Crisis

By Joan Gaylord

How does the nation's largest public higher education system respond to a global pandemic? How do they protect the community while also continuing to fulfill its mission to educate its student body? And how is it that they have consistently had virus testing rates lower than the national averages?

Dr. Jim Malatras, chancellor of the State University of New York, as well as Dr. Milagros Pena, president of Purchase College, and Dr. Belinda Miles, president of Westchester Community College, shared their experiences during an online event sponsored by the Business Council of Westchester KeyBank Program.

"We saw this train coming," said Malatras, recalling his actions last spring. "But it came upon us so quickly. In March, we didn't know how it was going to play out, but we adapted as a system."

WCC quickly collaborated with the Westchester County Department of Health after the community became aware of the impending pandemic, Miles noted. She said officials followed scientific, evidence-based practices that would both protect the WCC community and allow them to continue offering classes.

"There is no playbook for this," Miles said. "We have had to be extremely nimble and learn fast."

One step that WCC administrators pursued was moving most classes online.

Over the summer, 100 percent of the faculty became certified in online learning in just two weeks. And while this has allowed the school to resume classes, it has also created new challenges.

One of the most glaring tasks each school has faced, the educators each said, has been the disparity in resources available to their students. Shifting to online learning revealed the unequal access to technology such including the availability of high-speed internet service, they said.

It has also removed a safety net that colleges provide for some students, including the availability of healthy food, a situation exacerbated by the economic devastation brought on by the pandemic.

"This has not been easy," said Pena. "College, for many students, provides a haven."

Pena added that SUNY officials have worked toward a change in policy for SNAP recipients. Students have been able to use their time spent in classes to meet the usual work requirements necessary to receive the benefits that allow them access to healthy food.

The SUNY system has also expanded mental wellness services for their students in response to the emotional impact of the pandemic.

Both Westchester campuses have continued to provide limited in-person

learning, a step they realized would require careful planning and a lot of on-campus COVID testing. Their vigilance has resulted in one of the lowest positive test rates in the nation, Malatras said.

"Our students have done a phenomenal job," he added.

And to protect the students' families, each student who has spent this past fall on campus will be tested before returning home for Thanksgiving.

Educators said schools are now in the process of planning for next semester, a step made more challenging by the exhaustion so many are feeling after spending the last year adapting to necessary restrictions.

Before returning to campus, students must first provide a negative COVID test result. Calendars have also been adjusted to resume classes the first week of February, with spring break eliminated to minimize travel that could result in spreading the virus.

Furthermore, students will continue to get tested regularly while on campus.

Pena said much of the SUNY Purchase population has been willing to abide by regulations, such as wearing masks and social distancing, steps that have allowed the school to safely continue providing educational services.

"It really showcases our future leaders," she said.

Chanukah Car Parade in Yorktown Slated

Chabad of Yorktown is proud to host a Chanukah Car Parade on Thursday, December 10, the first night of Chanukah.

All participants will receive a free party bag to enjoy during the parade. The parade will meet at the Chabad Center at 5:20 p.m., and will begin the car parade at 5:45 p.m. culminating at Jack Devito

Memorial Field for the Yorktown Public Menorah Lighting at 6 p.m.

Please maintain social distancing and wear a mask during the Menorah Lighting ceremony. For more information, to join the parade or to reserve a car decorating kit, visit www.ChabadYorktown.com, or call 914-962-1111. Reserve your car decorating kit by December 8.

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Country Star Jessica Lynn to Stage Virtual Christmas Show Dec. 10

By Anna Young

Following months of anguish and unease, rising country star Jessica Lynn knows just how important it is to put folks in the holiday spirit this year.

With so many in need of joy, hope and a distraction, Lynn said she didn't want to let audiences down by canceling her annual Christmas event, which usually includes several local dance troupes, choirs and musicians joining her on stage throughout her two-hour show at The Paramount in Peekskill.

While she admitted canceling almost became inevitable, her love of Christmas, giving back to the community, and honoring tradition prevailed.

"I was holding on all this year hoping this show would happen and we tried every option and there was not a single option that would allow us to put on our show," said Lynn, a Yorktown resident. "I realized that we have to keep this tradition alive because it's been such a big deal for the last five years and a tradition for so many families."

With the current health crisis derailing plans to return to The Paramount, Lynn and her seven-member band, which includes her father, mother, and husband, will

transition to a virtual platform to spread the holiday cheer. Her show will be free and live streamed from Daryl's House in Pawling on December 10.

The show can be accessed via Facebook or YouTube.

Unlike previous years, the show will be free to all, though Lynn said the event will accept virtual donations in lieu of tickets, with contributions split between Lynn's band and Daryl's House.

"I feel like this year more than ever people need something and maybe not everybody can afford a ticket," the 30-year-old singer said. "I wanted to make it's available to everybody."

Donations can also be made to Toys for Tots, which Lynn regularly supports during her annual show.

While Lynn is excited to perform this month, her admittedly favorite show to play comes after a year full of sadness and change. Like many who have lost their jobs or been forced to put plans on hold due to COVID-19, Lynn had to quickly adapt after her five-month long international tour was cancelled in March.

The tour, which she performs yearly, spanned 12 countries and 80 cities, with the Christmas show her final stop. Lynn said the tour, along with other local shows,

makes up the revenue her band needs to sustain, perform, and support themselves individually.

When everything was canceled, Lynn said she spent a lot of time crying and wondering what the future held for the career she had spent half her life building.

"Our stages are gone, our work is gone, our shows are gone, and you just feel very lost and you don't know where to turn or what to do," Lynn said. "But then I realized early on that you have to have this mindset that everything will be ok, and as soon as I dried off my tears I decided to fight back."

With motivation to maintain a positive outlook, Lynn upped her social media presence and transitioned to the most high-quality technology that would allow her to host daily live stream performances on her Facebook page. She also reached out to radio stations and media outlets across the United States and internationally to schedule live virtual concerts and interviews.

As a result of her determination to press on and fight back against the virus, her audience has grown from thousands to millions in months with people tuning in to hear her sing from all over the world. She hopes the same will happen with her Christmas show.



"I miss performing so much and it's really where I feel most alive in life," Lynn said. "For me, starting our rehearsal now, I'm so thrilled to do that and feel some sense of normalcy and get on a stage again even if there's nobody there and be able to perform and do what I love."

Throughout the hour-long show,

audiences can expect to hear Lynn's Christmas songs "It's Just Not Christmas" and "Santa You can Skip Our House," along with other traditional holiday classics.

"A Very Merry Country Christmas" is scheduled for 8 p.m. on Dec. 10. For more information on the show or how to donate, visit <https://rb.gy/pnreix>

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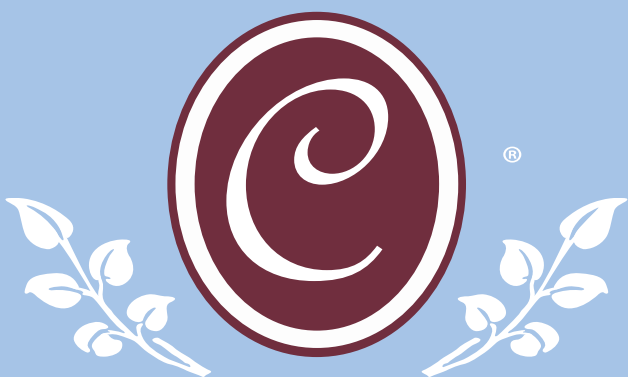
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Where and How to Celebrate the Holidays, Part I

It will be a holiday season like no other as we navigate COVID-19. Some towns and villages have put up lights and decorations early. We do deserve some delicious fun. So, whether you've been naughty or nice, it's time to make plans with friends and family.

If you are planning a remote ZOOM gathering, that's preferred. If you are planning to gather with friends and family, make sure you follow the latest COVID protocols. If you are dining out, restaurants have been trying their best to adhere to the guidelines. Take-out and delivery from your favorite eatery is a fine option, too.

Here are some festive suggestions for every palate, each offering a good dose of holiday cheer. Seasoned greetings!

Mulino's Holiday Fest

The show will go on at Mulino's of Westchester in White Plains. Begin with the bright glittering lights at the entranceway along Court Street. The annual Christmas Holiday Fest lasts through the season and it's a sight to behold for the whole family! The fountain garden is beautiful as is the lavish dining room and bar and lounge.

General Manager Jimmy Cavagna and his staff are keeping the premises spiffy as ever – gesticulating Christmas decorations



By Morris Gut

galore, holiday carolers, life-size toy soldiers, the bursting colorful floral displays and the handsome multilevel seating area. A special holiday menu is served. Open seven days. Valet parking. COVID-19 protocols will be in place. Time slot reservations advised.

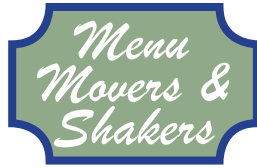
Mulino's of Westchester is located at 99 Court St. in White Plains. Info: 914-761-1818 or visit www.mulinosny.com.

Modern Italian Vintage Diner

Chef-owner and personable host Dean Vivolo of Trattoria Vivolo in Harrison serves his robust regional Italian cuisine out of a vintage diner just across from the Harrison Metro-North station. Sit at the counter, tuck into a booth or take a table in the rear greenhouse and enjoy the surprising contemporary and traditional flavors emanating from his kitchen: tasty thin-crust pizza; fresh old-fashioned meatballs and sausage; rabbit cacciatore; Crostino di Polenta topped with

wild mushrooms, gorgonzola and tomato sauce; Lasagna Bolognese al Forno; osso buco; occasional roasted porchetta; and warm fresh Zabaglione with fresh fruit for dessert.

There's a good wine list. Sparkling lights evenings. Take-out and delivery are available. Free parking.



A view of the dining room at Freebird Kitchen & Bar in White Plains.

Trattoria Vivolo is located at 301 Halstead Ave. in Harrison. Info: 914-835-6199 or visit www.trattoriavivolo.com.

Southern Comfort

I have been enjoying my visits to Freebird Kitchen & Bar. There have been delicious offerings of succulent half-racks of baby back ribs, Cobb salad, spicy chicken wings and crispy Brussels sprouts, all reasonably priced. There are shrimp and grits and braised short ribs, too. The cooking here is satisfying and

quite good, all done with a southern theme. Portions are ample and shareable. The seasonal lighting and artsy birds hanging from the ceiling in the dining room create a charming atmosphere.

Freebird has made special physical COVID-19 guideline changes to the bar and dining room area. There is seating outdoors along Mamaroneck Avenue and its rooftop is open as well. Happy hours are back: Tuesday

continued on next page

12-8-2020

Participating restaurants and shops all over Mt. Pleasant will donate a percentage of their sales to the "Be A Star Fund".

Coordinated by the Mt. Pleasant Chamber of Commerce, with most donations going to help the Mt. Pleasant Food Bank at the Thornwood Knights of Columbus, which dispenses food for those in need in our community.

For more information on participating merchants visit:

[**mtplesantchamberofcommerce.org**](http://mtplesantchamberofcommerce.org)

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Where and How to Celebrate the Holidays, Part I

continued from previous page

through Thursday from 4 to 6 p.m. and Fridays from 2 to 6 p.m.

Freebird Kitchen & Bar is located at 161 Mamaroneck Ave. in White Plains. Open daily. Take-out and delivery. Info: 914-607-2476 or visit www.freebirdkitchenandbar.com.

Creatively Festive at The 808 Bistro

Marking its 10th year, this eclectic Italian-American eatery on Scarsdale Avenue in Scarsdale, glows nightly in a rainbow of alternating colors. Glistening ceramic and metal tiles highlight the 50-seat dining room and ceiling. There is modern artwork, and the lighting and silver metal chairs softened by stressed leather seats offer comfort, as does the friendly staff. It's a Manhattan vibe and it's all kept properly casual.

Chef-owner Sal Cucullo Jr. is a Culinary Institute of America graduate who practically grew up in restaurants, working kitchens owned by his family as well venues of every stripe. In short, he knows how to cook Italian, but for as long as I have known him his creativity has never been bound by culinary borders. He can knock out a delicious version of Grandma's gnocchi in a basil-pomodoro sauce one moment and prepare a decadent baked macaroni and cheese with chunks of lobster and shrimp infused with truffle oil that will propel you to foodie heaven.

The 808 Bistro is located at 808 Scarsdale Ave. in Scarsdale. Info: 914-722-0808 or visit www.the808bistro.com.

Feliz Navidad at Cantina

Cantina Taqueria & Tequila Bar is always



Guarding the dining room at Mulino's of Westchester, one of many area restaurants that transform their spaces into delightful seasonal themes.

festive. While most patrons concentrate on the tasty tacos, I also enjoy the crispy Mango-Jerk chicken wings and additional Tex-Mex treats.

Professional actor, proprietor and host John Solo has created a sprawling rustic multilevel interior dining room and long bar. This management operates several other restaurants in New York City: two in Harlem, and The Grand in Astoria, Queens.

Tempting specialties include Modelo beer-battered fish tacos, garlic shrimp and chicken-lime bowl, served with rice, peppers, black

beans, sliced avocado and fresh corn. The restaurant is open seven days a week.

Cantina Taueria & Tequila Bar is located at 166 Mamaroneck Ave. in White Plains. Info: 914-601-1697 or visit www.cantinany.com.

Aged Steaks, Chops at Alex's Bar & Grille

Proprietor Alex Ahmetaj, a veteran of the restaurant and hospitality field, updated the menu at Alex's Bar & Grille offering big cuts of aged steaks and chops along with generously served Northern Italian and Continental fare. The handsome dining room is split into cozy sections with white tablecloths, colorful deVilleneuve impressionist paintings and warming candlelight. Mediterranean clay-colored banquetts and chairs complement wooden walls and plush beige curtained windows.

Check out specialties such as pan-fried calamari with hot cherry peppers; Linguini alla Vongole (a delicious fresh Branzino prepared tableside); classic veal parmigiana; grilled filet mignon; New York sirloin or rib-eye steak; and pork chops.

Alex's Bar & Grille is located at 577 N. Broadway in North White Plains. Open daily. Free parking. Info: 914-358-1444 or visit www.alexsbargrille.com.

As a reminder, during ongoing pandemic, restaurants have been stepping up take-out and delivery service during prescribed hours. At this writing, restaurants are required to close by 10 p.m., though pick-up and delivery can continue. Some establishments offer in-house delivery and curbside pick-up.



The Mango jerk chicken wings at Cantina Taco & Tequila.

Also, many restaurants subscribe to larger online delivery services you can check in your area. They include Uber Eats: www.uber.com; GrubHub: www.grubhub.com; Door Dash: www.doordash.com; Seamless: www.seamless.com; and www.resy.com.

Morris Gut is a restaurant marketing consultant and former restaurant trade magazine editor. He has been tracking and writing about the food and dining scene in greater Westchester for 30 years. He may be reached at 914-235-6591 or at gutreaactions@optonline.net.

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The Impact of DNA Research on Traditional Winemaking



By Nick Antonaccio

Since the Romans began planting vines throughout their empire in the centuries before the birth of Christ, man has had to adapt to environmental issues and problems.

Since the European monks began toiling in their sophisticated vineyards and wineries in the Medieval and Renaissance eras, man has had to deal with the vagaries of weather and natural disasters.

Today's vineyard owners and winemakers have been dealing with these centuries-old issues in a manner similar to the trial-and-error methods of their predecessors – until recently.

The research and success in dealing with nature's proclivities and calamities is beginning to shift from artisans in disheveled, stained work clothes in field laboratories to trained scientists in crisp, spotless lab coats in science laboratories. Jeans research and genes research, if you'll forgive the alliteration.

Throughout history, winemakers have relied on traditional means of developing, hybridizing and grafting grapevines to produce more disease-resistant rootstock and grapes with unique traits. By unraveling the DNA of grapevines and grapes, the future impact of science on the wine industry seems destined to overcome many of the issues that have plagued winemakers for millennia.



For centuries, winemakers realized that developing the best grapevines was the function of two factors. First, the need for strong rootstock that withstands diseases such as fungus and mildew, and predators such as insects. Second, the hybridization of growth shoots, grafted onto rootstock, that produce the optimal quality fruit for a particular environment.

Let's review several instances in which man persevered, utilizing trial-and-error methods over a protracted period and at significant unrealized profits. A question looms large: Is DNA-altering a radical divergence from nature or a logical progression of man's interaction with it?

1. Before the advent of evolving DNA discoveries, winemakers across nations were continual victims of nature. In the late 19th century, French winemakers, in an effort to improve their grapevines, imported rootstock from the United States. Unfortunately, these hybridized clones

harbored an insect (Phylloxera) that, while not harmful to American rootstocks, were devastating to European plants. Thousands of acres throughout Europe were wiped out in a matter of a few years.

Belatedly, the desperate French wine industry discovered that the American rootstock was immune to the Phylloxera. What a vicious circle: American rootstock unknowingly spread the disease and then was discovered to be the cure.

In the 21st century, similar circumstances are resolved in a science laboratory, producing immeasurable time and financial savings. Is DNA altering a radical divergence from nature or a logical progression of man's interaction with it?

2. Before DNA research, regional producers dependent on traditional grape varieties were victims of changing consumer palates. In Tuscany, sales of Chianti Classico wines began declining in the 1990s as consumers' preferences for more balanced, less acidic, wines emerged, relegating Chianti Classicos to also-rans.

Growers in the region reacted by investing significant research dollars over a number of years to develop hundreds of clones of their signature Sangiovese grape. Winemakers then conducted their own experiments to determine which of the new clones were best suited for their unique terroir.

Today the quality and popularity of Chianti Classico wines is at an all-time high. Is DNA

altering a radical divergence from nature or a logical progression of man's interaction with it?

3. In the United States, winegrowers have gone one step further than the Tuscans. Rather than seeking a singular clone that meets a particular profile, they have selected, even created, clones that optimize grape quality and quantity in small plots within a single vineyard.

I've visited one such winery, Siduri Winery in California, which plants clones to meet specific terroirs of plots of several acres in size or several rows of vines. All in the name of manipulating nature to meet their objectives.

Is DNA altering a radical divergence from nature or a logical progression of man's interaction with it?

Science is stepping in to replace the timeworn efforts of winegrowers experimenting in their vineyards. The science of genomics is rising

in popularity; stay tuned for further developments.

Nick Antonaccio is a 45-year Pleasantville resident. For over 25 years, he has conducted wine tastings and lectures. Nick is a member and Program Director of the Wine Media Guild of wine journalists. He also offers personalized wine tastings and wine travel services. Nick's credo: continuous experimenting results in instinctive behavior. You can reach him at nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com or on Twitter @sharingwine.

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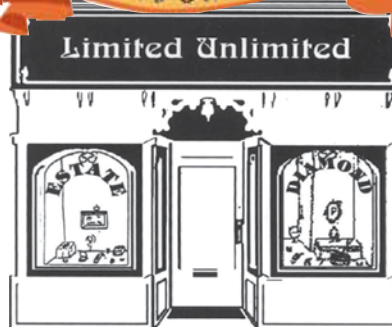
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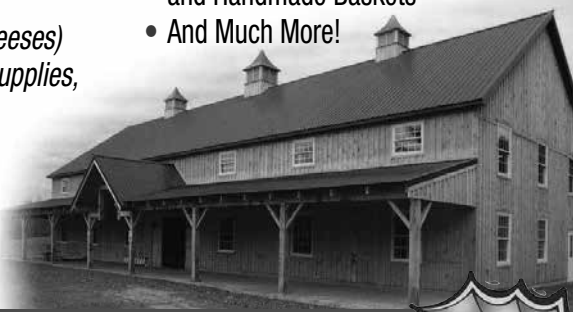
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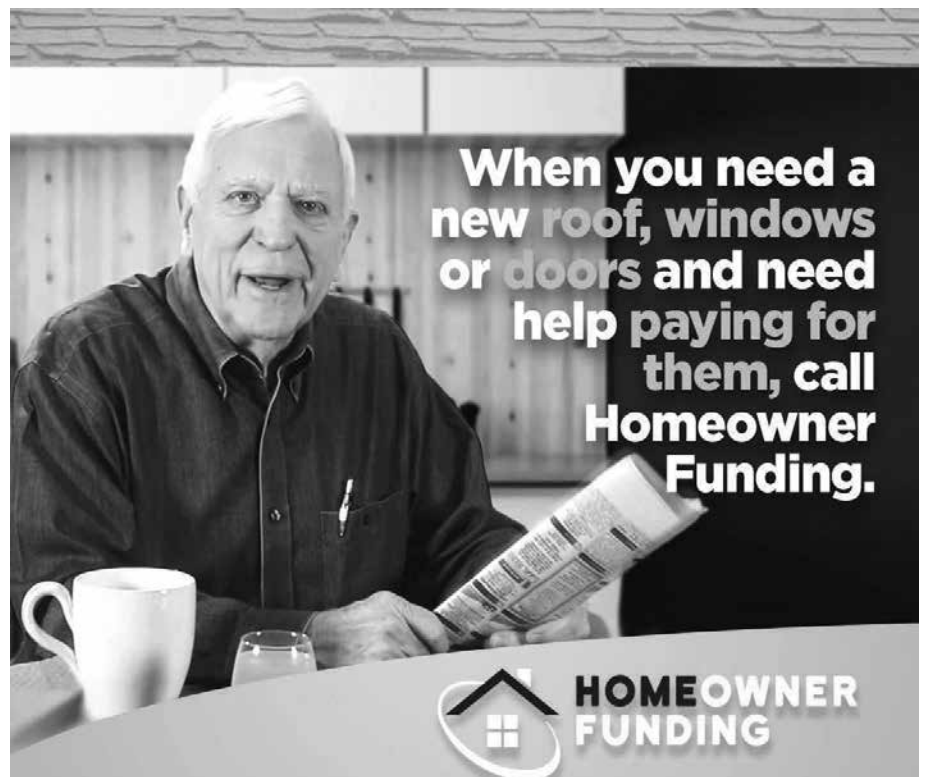
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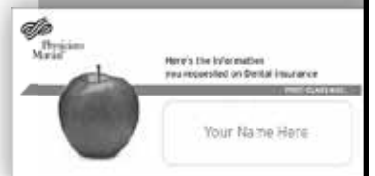
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The Top Half-Dozen Home Updates That Pay Off

Like most people, I'm stuck at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, contemplating the ceiling, floor and walls, along with all they encompass. Other people might be using this downtime to consider upgrades they could be incorporating into their homes, but thank God I live in a relatively new home where no updates are needed.

I bought my condo new just five years ago and only had to add my personal touches, such as adding professional woodworking of fine furniture quality in each room.

Had the pandemic visited us a few years ago when I was living in a 275-year-old farmhouse, it would have been a totally different story. From the time my wife and I moved in more than 40 years ago, until we downsized to our new home, we were in constant updating mode. While we always loved our surroundings, we never quite finished the job.

If we were still living in our old home, I would be going nuts right now, making lists of the remodeling and upgrade work that needed to be done while sidelined by the pandemic. During the entire time I lived there, I was never able to just sit back and relax.

Now, however, with an almost perverse delight, I checked in with HGTV for the first time in years to see what other homeowners were up to in upgrading their homes and how

much money they were doling out to get the projects done.

HGTV offered 15 top projects with the biggest returns on investment, but my mind would have exploded to consider all 15. I think a good half-dozen is all my brain can accommodate, even when it's strictly for editorial consideration.

1. Minor Bathroom Remodel Average return at resale: 102 percent

It costs about \$10,500 to replace the tub, tile surrounds, floor, toilet, sink, vanity and fixtures. Remove dated wall coverings and apply a fresh coat of paint. For damaged walls, spray-on texture provides quick coverage. The removal of old shower doors or replacing them with clear glass creates the illusion of space.

2. Landscaping

Average return at resale: 100 percent

The average homeowner spends about \$3,502 for landscaping and \$1,465 on a designer, according to the American Nursery Landscape Association. Local garden centers often offer free design services. Sod costs about 30 to 35 cents a square foot, so a 5,000-square-foot yard would cost about \$1,500 to sod.

3. Minor Kitchen Remodel

Average return at resale: 98.5 percent

A minor kitchen remodel averages \$14,913 for \$14,691 at resale, a recoup rate of 98.5

percent. Do a minor remodel when your kitchen needs a cosmetic update and not a drastically different floor plan. A \$15,000 kitchen update covers 30 feet of re-facing for cabinets and drawers, a new wall oven, cooktop, sink and fixtures, laminate countertops and resilient flooring.

4. Exterior Improvements (including vinyl siding, paint, updated front entry)

Average return at resale: 95.5 percent

The average national cost to replace 1,250 square feet of vinyl siding: \$7,239. Average return: \$6,914, with a recoup rate of 95.5 percent. A gallon of paint covers 400 square feet of house. Upscale, fiber-cement siding costs \$10,393 and returns \$10,771 at resale, an even better recoup rate of 103.6 percent.

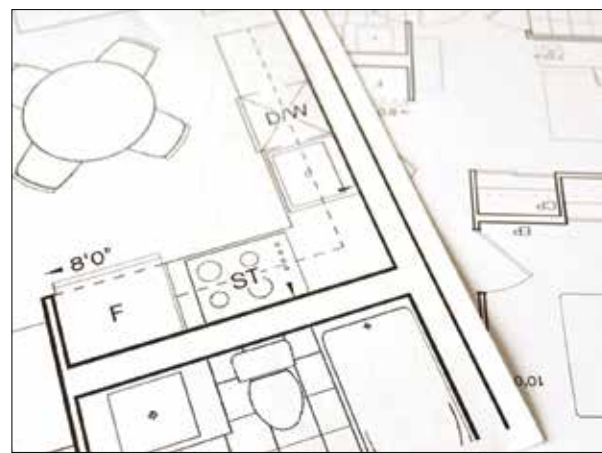
5. Attic Bedroom Conversion

Average return at resale: 93.5 percent

The average attic bedroom in a two- or three-bedroom house costs \$39,188 and returns \$36,649 at resale. Adding attic insulation lowers utility bills, making sure the foil vapor barrier is installed down toward the ceiling to prevent moisture from seeping up. A solar-powered attic fan is an efficient way to save on cooling costs.

6. Major Bathroom Remodel

Average return at resale: 93.2 percent



A major bathroom remodel involves expanding an existing 5-foot by 7-foot bathroom, relocating and replacing the tub and toilet and adding designer sinks and faucets, a linen closet, lighting, a ceramic tile floor and exhaust fan for \$26,052, which brings in \$24,286 at resale.

These are just some of the ideas for upgrading the home that pay off best. If you're fully upgraded as I am, the pandemic can offer the welcome excuse to just sit back, relax and gain weight from the lack of physical activity, as I'm doing.

Bill Primavera, while a writer and public relations practitioner, is also a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate. To engage the talents and services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.



By Bill Primavera

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What You Shouldn't Neglect in Your Estate Plan

An estate planning consultation is your opportunity to learn how to protect your assets and make life easier for your loved ones. There is a tendency to focus on documents like "Wills," "Trusts," and "Power of Attorney," as universal remedies for planning issues. For many clients, proper estate planning requires more nuanced decision-making and preparation. To give some examples, proper titling of assets and designation of beneficiaries are as important as any document drafting. Neglect it and an estate plan may come undone. If a bank account is titled only in one person's name with no beneficiaries, then that asset will pass through the Will. Accounts with a joint account holder or beneficiary will pass directly to that person and will not reach the probate estate through the Will. Real property that has a single name on the deed without a joint tenancy will likewise pass through the Will. Deeds with joint tenants with rights of survivorship

will pass directly to the survivor. Tenants-in-common will still be required to have that asset pass through their Will.

Asset titling overrides Will planning and any inconsistency with those asset provisions in your Will may adversely impact your entire estate plan. It is important that you look at each asset and map out the best ways to utilize, protect, and ultimately distribute the asset as part of your plan. Real estate, qualified retirement accounts, non-qualified accounts, life insurance, and emerging digital assets can be titled accordingly or designated for a beneficiary so that upon your passing they are passed to the person, people or entity of your choice.

One asset class always seems to be overlooked in an estate plan – motor vehicles. The car, motorcycle, or RV that you currently own will be someone else's problem after you pass away. That person will have to deal with the Department

of Motor Vehicles, the insurance company, potential buyers or family members and even Surrogate's Court. An organized estate planner may have every asset set to pass outside of probate, but if their car remains titled in just their name and there is no surviving spouse then a small estate proceeding would have to be initiated. These are the practical, legal implications. Family dynamics also come into play as the car becomes a bargaining chip. Overeager family members strategize on whether to sell the car and distribute the proceeds or present the car to the family member who could use the car the most and equalize the estate shares. The neat and tidy legacy that you crafted over time may devolve into months of squabbling over a 1997



By Alan D. Feller, Esq.

Toyota Camry with the ABBA CD jammed into the stereo.

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Alan D. Feller, Esq. is managing partner of Sloan & Feller Attorneys at Law, located at 625 Route 6 in Mahopac. He can be reached at alandfeller@sloanandfeller.com.

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Bronxville Delivers Knockout Blow to Pleasantville; Panthers Fall, 3-1, in South. Westchester Regional Final

By Rob DiAntonio
Examiner News Writer

Pleasantville's girls' soccer team fell into an early hole and the top-seeded Panthers weren't able dig out of it in a 3-1 loss to second-seeded Bronxville in the Southern Westchester small school regional final on Monday, Nov. 23. It was a rematch of last year's Section 1 Class B final, which was won by the Panthers, on their way to a state championship.

Lily Jebejian scored a pair of first-half goals to get the Broncos out to a quick lead. Her first goal came with 31:21 left in the first half when she curved in a corner that deflected off a Panthers defender and into the net. Pleasantville had a chance to tie it up right away when Katie Moses broke loose but Bronxville goalie Milly Koenig made the sliding save.

Jebejian extended Bronxville's lead to 2-0 when she blasted a deep shot that went off the outstretched hands of Panther keeper Lila Donohue and into the net with 24 minutes left in the opening half.

"They're well coached and disciplined," Pleasantville Coach Chris Osterhoudt said of Bronxville. "They have a high I.Q. and are very skilled as well. Year after year they put such a good product out on the field."

The Panthers continued to get their chances but

couldn't capitalize. Isabelle Kapoor just missed on a breakaway with 18 minutes left in the first half. Mary Grace O'Neill crossed a pass to Jessica Beck but she couldn't get enough on the shot as the game went into

halftime with the Panthers still trailing 2-0.

"For the chances that we did have, we just didn't connect on them," Osterhoudt said. "Against a team like that, we can't assume that we're going to have many more after

that. We have to take advantage of the opportunities that we get and unfortunately we just didn't connect on too many of them."

With the wind at their back in the second half, Pleasantville knew it had an opportunity at a comeback. The Panthers began their comeback attempt when O'Neill sent a blast of a shot off the crossbar and into the net just over five minutes into the second half to cut the deficit to 2-1.

"We knew that the wind was certainly going to help us in certain opportunities, and we took advantage on the one goal," Osterhoudt said. "But, like I said, we just didn't take advantage of the early opportunities in the first half that we had. There were two or three times where we had a potential chance and it just didn't go our way."

"Bronxville kept the ball alive and we just couldn't get it out," Osterhoudt added. "They were there at the right place, right time. We didn't do an overly good job of getting the balls out."

Pleasantville's run to the finals included a quarterfinal win with the majority of its starters in quarantine. The JV squad was called up and helped the Panthers advance past Blind Brook on penalty kicks.



ROB DIANTONIO PHOTOS

Despite a bunch of tough jabs landed by distraught Pleasantville sharpshooter Izzy Kapoor (20), the top-seeded Panthers (12-1) failed to land the knockout blow last Monday when the stunned former NYS Class B champions (inset) came up short in a 3-1 Southern Westchester regional final setback to second-seeded Bronxville (12-2-1) in a rematch of the 2019 Section 1 Class B title tilt... see Girls Soccer Notebook

Sports

Girls' Soccer Notebook

Byram, Mahopac, Somers Copped 2020 Regional Titles

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor@Directrays

There was a ton of heartache, some drama and mixed emotions behind the scenes for many Examiner-area girls' soccer teams due to Coronavirus, including a co-championship situation between Mahopac and Somers in the Putnam-Northern Westchester Large School Regional Tournament; an unforeseen forfeit by Briarcliff that handed Byram Hills the Putnam-Northern Westchester Small School title, and a mega upset of former NYS Class B champion Pleasantville in the Southern Westchester Small School Regional Tournament.

So, while the 2020 climax left some programs with a sense of bathos (with the subsequent quarantines and the cancellation of the state tournament), we still managed to get our girls to the finish line thanks to the hard work -- both on and off the field -- by players, coaches and administrators, who juggled schedules due to COVID-19.

MAHOPAC'S (8-3-2) run to the Putnam-Northern Westchester large school finals as the No.4 seed was a credit to Coach Casey Carroll's wherewithal to juggle her lineup down the stretch. With key players like All-NYS senior Mia Klammer (6G, 2A) plus Amanda Beberman and Alyssa Chiulli quarantined, Carroll had to move her pieces into different positions, using her versatile players in a host of ways. Junior goalkeeper Maddy McCrosson and junior defenders Maddy DeCola (All-Section HM) and Marissa McCarney (All-League HM) were mainstays on the back line, and Bryant-bound senior F Hailey Pereira and All-League sopho-



RAY GALLAGHER/ROB DIANTONIO PHOTOS/BOB CASTNER

Mahopac senior Hailey Pereira (8) and Somers senior Dahlia Pepe both earned All-Section honors during superb 2020 campaigns.

more Piper Klammer came up huge in key moments. Pereira (7G, 9A), who earned an All-Section nod, had the game-tying PK in the second half after Piper Klammer (10G, 2A) was fouled before Pereira converted the final PK to ice the semifinal win over

top-seeded Yorktown where McCrosson began a torrid stretch between the pipes.

"We had to switch positions around from about the midpoint of the season on," Coach Carroll said. "Piper Klammer had to move up top when we lost Mia, who is just such a dynamic player you immediately notice when she's not on the field. So, now Hailey's gotta stay on one side of the field, and Maddy DeCola would've played more center mid for us. And we had JV players come up and play the back line for us. But our three quarantined players help us get to where we are now, going all the way back to last year and my heart breaks for them."

"We were so happy to have any type of season this year, but in true 2020 fashion

it didn't come without its challenges," she added. "I am so happy we were able to have such a successful run in the postseason."

SOMERS (11-3-1) got hot when it counted and turned its season around after a slow start -- opening at 3-3 -- but continued its strong soccer tradition under first-year Coach Kelci Hegg, who transitioned in a new style with similar winning results, including the shared regional title with Mahopac after 110 minutes of scoreless action.

An eight-game winning streak ensued, in which the second-seeded Tuskies outscored their opponents 40-3 behind a combined 20 goals from All-Section seniors Dahlia Pepe (14G, 4) and Ella Kittredge (12G, 7A), producing a thrilling run to the finals. All-Leaguer sophomore Ava Giudice (6G, 5A) provided a third legit scoring threat.

Senior Kayli McMorro was named All-Section HM while senior Noelle DeMarinis and junior Tori Righetti were tabbed All-League.

"I can't say enough about these girls and all they did to turn this season around," Hegg said. "Under the circumstances, including a new coach, a new style of play and a pandemic, I could not be any prouder of our season."

YORKTOWN (10-1-1) performed one of their greatest starts in program history and went unbeaten during the regular season before falling to Mahopac in the regional semis on PK's. Coach Rich Armstrong's top-seeded Huskers unleashed sophomore F Julianna Vano (11G, 5A) on Section 1 and she responded with an All-Section HM campaign, scoring a team-high 16 points. Freshman F Drita Tinaj (4G, 8A) had a monster rookie campaign and will combine with

Vano next season to pose as one of the top dual threats in the section. Senior M Chayce Buono and Caitlin Ward each secured All-Section honors to cap their brilliant careers. Sophia Spallone (5G), Emily Ward (4G, 4A), Samantha Paglino, Abby Passarella and Grace Pearce were all named All-League.

"From the first day of practice, the senior class of seven have set the tone, led by example and set their sights on a league title," Armstrong said. "When we were finally about to kick-off at Somers, as a team we weren't sure how many games we would play. We said to each other, 'play like today is it, play like tomorrow is a Covid outbreak', so from the first game to the last, each and everyone of these girls played with grit and determination to be the best they could be."

No.4 **LAKELAND** (6-6) was shut down after a quarterfinal win over No.5 **PUTNAM VALLEY** (4-6-1), reaching the semifinals before the unexpected, COVID-related halt. The Hornets' would-be semifinal opponent, Briarcliff, had to forfeit its championship game last Monday against Byram Hills for similar reasons. All the associated teams deserved a better conclusion to this whacky season.

"We are so grateful that we had a season," Lakeland Coach Shawn Sullivan said. "While the team's season got cut short by COVID, after we advanced in the playoffs, just having our team back together made this year a huge success. The season was highlighted by wins over local rivals: Panas, Hen Hud and Putnam Valley. This group was an absolute pleasure to coach. They arrived willing and eager to learn and showed constant improvement throughout the year."

Hornet M Linda Daly earned a second All-Section honor as a junior while Francesca Gerbasi (5G, 8A) was All-Section HM and both Ava Pagliaro (7G) and Nadia Parisi (3G, 5A) were tabbed as All-Leaguers.

BYRAM HILLS (7-2) would be crowned champs via a forfeit win over **BRIARCLIFF** (11-3) after the Bears were bitten by the COVID bug on the day of the title tilt. Neither team was happy with the unfortunate decision. The Bobcats reached the finals after a 2-1 semifinal win over North Salem with All-Section senior F Alexa Jindal (8G, 4A) scoring a big goal to finish up. The Bobcats overcame a regular season quarantine to rise above it all. Junior Reese Ertel was named All-Section HM while Olivia Tedesco (6G, 2A) came up strong all season and in the playoffs, and All-League junior Sara Grguvoric (3G, 2A) was steady throughout. Sophomore Syndey Nichols earned All-League as well.

"They could have done really well in the finals," Bobcat Coach Julianne Marinero said. "To be honest, due to our 14 day shut-down, we didn't even reach our potential. This was a very talented team and we were all disappointed with the ending."

Briarcliff was led offensively by All-League junior F Arianna Vizcaino (9G, 3A), gifted Buffalo-bound All-Section senior Ashleigh Fortunate (10G, 2A) and All-Section F/M Caitlyn Dornau (5G, 3A), an extremely versatile senior. Sophomore G

continued on next page



Byram Hills senior Alexa Jindal earned an All-Section nod.

Sports

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Pleasantville senior F Katie Moses earned an All-Section nod for 2020 regional runner-up Panthers.

Dylan Zednick secured All-Section honors to begin what should be a superb career between the pipes.

HORACE GREELEY (4-6-2) was eliminated by Mahopac in the quarters of the large school Putnam-N.West. tourney but saw Ramsey Edson (8G, 3A) post All-Section numbers. Abigail Hanlon also secured an All-Section nod while All-League honors went to Jillian Gordon and Sydney Mikesell.

"The girls were led by senior captains Ellie Handwerger and Abigail Hanlon," Quaker Coach Erin Tracy said. "In addition to those seniors, Grace Byrne, Emily Nordberg, Jessie Greenstein, Riley Card and Jessica Kratz were big for us. Our leading scorer was Ramsey Edson who scored 85% of our goals. We had a new addition Sydney Mikesell who helped solidify the defensive back line. This was an incredibly talented group whose record doesn't quite show how talented they were."

No.6 **WALTER PANAS** (5-8), despite losing to Byram Hills in the opening round, displayed tremendous heart, resiliency, and work ethic throughout the season, according to Coach Kyle Pierce. "Whether it was practice, games, or time with the team, it was always an enjoyable experience for players and coaches."

The Panther's offense was led by junior Kayla Guevara who chalked-up five goals and added four assists to become the team's high scorer and secure an All-League nod. Freshman Kaylie Mellars recorded four goals and three assists, and sophomore

Molly Muller scored three goals while adding an assist.

Captains Amanda Cohen and Alex Sudol displayed steadfast leadership on the defensive end for Panas, each earning All-League honors. Senior G Natalia Londono recorded 101 saves, keeping the Panthers in most games this season. Ella Yaeger served a vital role as the team's marking fullback and was able to shutdown most opposing teams' offensive threats, earning her HM All-League.

"Despite all the obstacles, this season was fun, successful, and an overall great experience for coaches and players alike," Pierce said.

No.8 **HEN HUD** (5-7) eliminated No.9 **PEEK-SKILL** (2-10-1) before falling to Briarcliff in the quarters. Sailor senior Kira Varada (12G, 4A) chalked up her second All-Section honor and finished her career as one of the top scorers in school history with 44 career goals. She averaged 1.25 goals per game for her career.

All-League sophomore Lena Johnsen (9G, 6A) had an amazing rookie season while All-Section junior Sabrina Byrne (5G, 2A) was one of the most improved players who established herself as potentially one of the top returning players for next year. The two should be dynamite next season but 2020 was a season for character building, according to Sailor Coach Bill Pagel.

"The most important win this season was to be able to have a season," Hagel said. "We had a team with 11 seniors and for them to be able to play a 12 game season was a huge success. Our senior captains Elizabeth McDowell, Molly Gibson, Maddy O'Hara and Kira Varada did an amazing job leading the team through a difficult season filled with many unknowns."

Honorable Mention All-Section honors went to senior Maddy O'Hara while All-League merits went to seniors Elizabeth McDowell, Molly Gibson and sophomore Katherine Couch.

Pagel cited special acknowledgement to senior G Iliana Done. "She has been a steady, reliable presence for us the past three seasons and her final season was her best season."

PLEASANTVILLE (12-1), the No.1 seed, was shocked in the small school Southern Westchester Regional finals by No.3 Bronxville, 3-1 (see game story). All-Section senior F Katie Moses (7G, 10A) was named the Player of the Year in the league. All-Section HM senior F Izzy Kapoor (9G, 5A), All-Section HM senior M Amber Nanaj (7G, 3A) and All-League HM freshman M



Yorktown sophomore Julianna Vano earned a 2020 All-Section HM nod after leading Huskers in scoring.

Jess Beck (4G, 4A) also led the attack. The stalwart defense featured seniors G Lila Donohue (All-League HM), All-Section D Carolyn Lee and All-Section D Analese Picart. Grace Capko and Mary Grace O'Neill were named All-League as well.

The Panthers will graduate a talented senior group of 15 players.

"We've had so many of them as part of the program since their freshman year," said Panther Coach Chris Osterhoudt, the league's Coach of the Year. "They pretty much put Pleasantville on the map during their four years. This is definitely a class that went down in history, especially with the state championship last year. They kind of cemented what they meant to the program, the coaching staff and the school as well."

"When the kids had to quarantine for those two weeks, for us it was early enough in the year that we were able to get out of it," Osterhoudt added. "Just crazy situations. We just tried to keep the girls positive and hoping for the best. They worked so hard to get that quarterfinal win with a lot of the JV call-ups. It's certainly a season we're never going to forget. That's for sure."

No.7 **WHITE PLAINS** (6-7), which was knocked out of the playoffs by No.2 Rye, was led offensively by All-Section HM Katie McAteer (7G, 12A), All-League Julieth Valesquez (9G), All-League Melissa Soto (6G) and All-League Alexa Galligani (5G, 1A). Kristen Russo was also named All-League while All-League HM honors went to Sofia Andrade, Shannon Larkin, Natasha Mendez, Jade Palmer and Anneliese Reggio.

"I am so incredibly proud of the 2020 girls' soccer program," White Plains Coach Meaghan Chase said. "It goes without saying how difficult this year has been, and my players truly blew me away by how strong they remained during the entire season. Even when we were losing against the team that won the section by three goals in the last five minutes of the game, every single one of my players fought until the very end."

I could not have asked for anything more."

PUTNAM VALLEY (4-5-1) turned things around this year and saw Lindsey Cohen secure All-Section HM honors while Danna Jadan, Arianna Stockinger, Karol Noguera and Amanda Orlando were named All-League under Coach Nicole Ryan, who was named Coach of the Year in their league.

"To go from not a single win last season, to 4-5-1 during such a complicated and short season, shows the great dedication, effort, and teamwork on this team," Ryan said. "What's more remarkable than progress since last season, is progress within this season alone. To have the girls' resilience, improvement and overall attitudes commended by other coaches is even more meaningful to me than what's in the record books. As coaches we were so very proud to see the girls take the little aspects of the game on the individual level and piece them together on the team level. It's been a beautiful thing to watch them grow as student athletes and to watch them perform at the varsity level. We take great pride in this season."

No.10 **WESTLAKE** (4-10-2) knocked off Leffell in the opening round but was bounced in the semis by eventual champ Bronxville. All-Section sniper Jennifer Straface (8G, 1A), who had two goals in a 5-1 quarterfinal playoff win over Tuckahoe, led the club in scoring in what could only be considered a solid playoff showing.

No.8 **CARMEL** (1-8) was eliminated in the first round of the playoffs by Yorktown.

Sixth-seeded **OSSINING** (4-6) ended the season with a loss to John Jay CR in the Put.-N.West. large school regional with Marlee Pottillo (6G, 3A) leading the way.

No.7 **FOX LANE** (2-9) was eliminated by Somers.

No.10 **CROTON-HARMON** (5-7) knocked off No.10 **HALDANE** (1-10-1) and was led by Maliha Ravelo (10G, 1A) this season.

No.11 **VALHALLA** (0-10-1) was eliminated by Dobbs in the opening round.

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