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# The NORTHERN WESTCHESTER Examiner

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

July 14 - July 20, 2020

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 551

## Community Shocked Over Closure of Seton School

By Rick Pezzullo

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Shrub Oak, a community staple for 54 years, was one of 20 Catholic schools shut down by the Archdiocese of New York last week.

The news took families and students off guard and stunned many parishioners who were unaware the well-respected and educationally thriving school was in any danger of closing.

"It was very surprising news to me," said Yarela Suquisupa, a seventh-grade student who has

attended Seton since she was in first grade. "I was hoping to graduate from Seton."

However, Seton Pastor Father Robert Quarato revealed Monday and during his homily at the 11 a.m. Sunday mass the school had been on the Archdiocese "watch list" since last year when declining enrollment forced Seton to have to combine first and second grade classes.

Seton had 150 students this year but only 103 had enrolled for the 2020-21 school year—a declining trend Quarato said had been



Seton teachers greeted students during a car parade in May.



occurring for the last 20 years. He concurred with Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York, and Michael Deegan, Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese, that the coronavirus pandemic was too much for Seton

and the 19 other schools closing to overcome.

"If the pandemic did not happen, yes, we were on the cusp of turning things around in a positive direction and we would have come out of the danger zone,"

Quarato said. "We hoped this coming year would have been a year to build up and strengthen Seton and some of the other schools as we had planned. However, the

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## Yorktown Celebrates Historic Train Station Renovation

By Rick Pezzullo

A part of the rich history of the Town of Yorktown was reborn last week at a ribbon cutting of the town's only federally designated landmark.

"It's just incredible to bring a piece of our history back to life," Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater proclaimed July 7 during the unveiling of the newly renovated Yorktown Heights Train Station in Railroad Park.

In the 20th century the railroad serving the former Yorktown Heights Station was nicknamed the Old Put. It was abandoned in 1958 due to low ridership. Unlike the existing commuter railroads in Westchester County, the Old Put line lacked a direct connection to New York City's Grand Central Terminal, which hurt ridership throughout its existence.

Planning for the renovation of the station, which was built in 1877, had fallen into disrepair and was close to being demolished, began

in 2004. Under the guidance of Planning Director John Tegeder, the town was awarded a \$295,000 federal grant for the project.

"This is really a very big day for me," Tegeder said. "It is really something that I hold high as a great achievement for the Town of Yorktown. This building really set the stage for the premier hamlet in the Town of Yorktown, which is Yorktown Heights. This train station and the train that came through here started this section of town. We've giving this station

back to the Town of Yorktown to enjoy. I hope it lasts for another 150 years."

Tegeder credited former town assistant planner Lorraine DeSisto, who wrote the initial grant in 2004, and current town planner Robyn Steinberg with playing instrumental roles behind the scenes in pushing the renovation forward.

The total cost of the restoration was

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# Community Shocked over Closure of Seton School

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length of the pandemic sealed all of our fates.”

Five other schools in Westchester—St. Patrick’s School in Bedford, Holy Family School in New Rochelle, Our Lady of Perpetual Health School in Pelham Manor and St. Ann School and St. Paul School in Yonkers—will also be closing.

“The reality of these schools being lost is painful, and it was only accepted reluctantly after a detailed study was conducted of their respective fiscal standing in the wake of the coronavirus public health crisis,” Deegan said. “This is a very sad day for everyone in the extended Catholic school community.”

Quarato explained since the

end of the 2014 school year, Seton, St. Patrick’s School in Yorktown, St. Columbanus School in Cortlandt and St. Patrick’s School in Bedford were no longer parish-based, meaning they received no financial support from their respective parishes. Instead, they were incorporated into a Catholic School Region with its own board of trustees. Funding for those schools came from tuition, the Archdiocese, fundraising and grants.

“All our schools were in dire straits,” said Quarato, noting “strategic location” was a factor in which schools stayed open. “I certainly preached about it many times. Catholic education is an essential today. A once vibrant Catholic education system is crumbling around us. What a loss.”

Blessed Elizabeth Ann Seton School opened its doors on September 12, 1966 as part of the newly formed parish of Blessed Elizabeth Ann Seton. The parish and school name officially changed to Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton when the patroness was canonized in 1975. The school was staffed by the Sisters of Charity, the order of women religious founded by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

Quarato said more than 20 teachers and administrators would lose their jobs as a result of the closing.

One teacher, Valerie Stathis, sent an email to parents stating, “I know this is a very difficult and sad time for you and your children. But I wanted to thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to teach your wonderful chil-

dren. Although it may have only been for one year, they have truly brought so much joy and happiness into my life. Not a day went by that they did not make me laugh. They are a bright, talented, and AMAZING group of kids who will succeed wherever life leads them.”

Quarato stressed Seton students excelled academically, often surpassing other students in area Catholic schools and public schools on standardized tests. The Class of 2020, the 49th graduating class in the school’s history, received \$401,700 in academic scholarships to Catholic high schools.

The pastor said the school building would be utilized to serve the 1,100 children in the parish who receive religious edu-

cation.

The Archdiocese said approximately 2,500 students and 350 staff would be affected by the closure of the 20 schools.

“Children are always the most innocent victims of any crisis, and this COVID-19 pandemic is no exception,” Dolan said. “Too many have lost parents and grandparents to this insidious virus, and now thousands will not see their beloved school again. I’ve kept a hopeful eye on our schools throughout this saga and my prayers are with all of the children and their families who will be affected by this sad news. Given the devastation of this pandemic, I’m grateful more schools didn’t meet this fate, and that Catholic schools nearby are ready to welcome all the kids.”

## Lost Summer for Traditional Local Feasts and Events

By Rick Pezzullo

The summer is normally a time for area residents to enjoy a variety of outdoor feasts, festivals, concerts and other events, but the

coronavirus pandemic has made the summer of 2020 a time to forget.

All of the traditional summer outings in northern Westchester that provide entertainment and, in some cases, raise money for

worthy causes, have been cancelled.

The longest running Italian feast in the Hudson Valley that annually draws thousands of people to the hamlet of Verplanck in mid-July, ending with a spectacular fireworks show over the Hudson River, will not take place.

Members of the Mt. Carmel Society, which runs the feast and donates the proceeds to charitable endeavors, presented a plan for a shorter two-day festival on August 8 and 9 to local and county authorities but were turned down.

The only event from the festival that will be held is the procession through the streets with the Madonna statue following an Italian mass on Sunday, August 9 at 10:15 a.m.

“There are those among us whose ancestors faced challenges traveling to find a new life on these shores. They created this Mt. Carmel Society to pay tribute to their home in Calabria. They taught us perseverance.

They taught us, when life gives you lemons — make sausage and peppers,” the Mt. Carmel Society stated.

Two other popular Italian feasts in the area, at St. Ann’s Church and St. Augustine Church, both in Ossining, that provided sizeable income for the parishes also fell victim to COVID-19.

Meanwhile, last week the Town of Cortlandt announced its summer concert and movie series on the riverfront in Verplanck was cancelled, and Yorktown Councilman Ed Lachterman said the Yorktown Lions Club Summer Concert Series at the Yorktown Community and Cultural Center field was regrettably a no-go as well.

Another community staple, the Hudson Valley Exposition in Peekskill, was also cancelled but Deb Milone, president of the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce, said planning was underway for a 2021 return.



PHOTO BY RICK PEZZULLO

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held for renovated train station last week.

## Yorktown Celebrates Historic Train Station Renovation

*continued from page 1*

\$467,000. The construction on the station was done by Clemco Construction of Ossining. Some of Clemco’s other local historic restorations include the Rye Meeting House and Philipsburg Manor Mill. Walter Sedovic Architects of Irvington oversaw the restoration design. The firm’s clients include Kykuit in Pocantico Hills and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Slater said the town is planning to use the renovated station as a concession stand for walkers and bikers that utilize the North County Trailway. Tourist and historical information will also be available. The station will

likely be open throughout the year, other than winter months.

“Yorktown needs more of this,” said Sergio Esposito, president of the Yorktown Chamber of Commerce. “Just having an outdoors area where you can enjoy the scenery and the history.”

“Yorktown has many jewels,” said Councilman Tom Diana. “This is another one of them.”

Former town supervisors Ilan Gilbert and Michael Grace were also part of the ceremony.

“This can be a symbolic rebirth of the Heights,” Grace said. “Our history is very important. This project can show you what Yorktown’s potential is.”

## Town of Yorktown Launches New Easy to Use Website

The Town Yorktown unveiled a new municipal website this week that is designed for ease of use.

The new town website follows the Parks Department’s recent launch of an online registration page on the Community Pass platform. With the new Community Pass page, residents don’t have to come to the Parks and Recreation Office to enroll their children in recreation programs.

“Since January 1st we have been focused on modernizing our town government to make it easier for residents and business owners to do business with our Town,” said Supervisor Matt Slater. “Whether people are looking for a new home or a place to open a business, our website is our com-

munity’s first introduction. By providing the website’s first facelift in seven years, coupled with implementing the Community Pass Platform, we will be able to provide a welcoming first impression while enhancing civic engagement and improving program accessibility.”

Other ease-of-business initiatives include expedited approval processes and waived fees for stores and restaurants seeking outdoor service in order to help them recover from the New York State on Pause shutdown.

The town’s website was last updated in 2013. In February, the Town Board voted to spend \$5,000 on the update, the same cost as in 2013.

# State Steps Up Enforcement for Out-of-State Travelers at NY Airports

By Martin Wilbur

A requirement to provide information to New York State for all out-of-state travelers who arrive at any of the state's airports goes into effect Tuesday in hopes of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo also announced Monday that the state Department of Health issued an emergency health order that will enforce quarantine restrictions for travelers coming from states where the number of cases has been spiking.

All travelers must hand in a completed form when they disembark an aircraft. The forms will be provided by the airlines when passengers are seated, and enforcement teams will be collecting the forms when travelers arrive in New York. The requirement includes travelers landing at Westchester County Airport.

A \$2,000 fine would be levied against anyone who fails to complete the form. If a traveler leaves the airport without providing the information, they will also be subject to a mandatory 14-day quarantine.

"We can't be in a situation where we have people coming in from other states in the country bringing the virus again," Cuomo said.

The governor said that New York has worked hard to maintain a statewide infection rate of close to 1 percent for more than a month, even after starting the reopening process in May. About three weeks ago, Cuomo jointly announced with New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy and Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont the three states would quarantine travelers for 14 days who are from states where positive COVID-19 cases on a seven-day rolling average exceed 10 percent, or if the positive cases exceed 10 per 100,000 residents.

There are 19 states that currently meet the criteria for required quarantine. In all, 39 states are seeing increases in cases as of Monday, Cuomo said.

The requirement is the latest step that Cuomo is taking to avoid a relapse with spiking COVID-19 cases. He also took the opportunity to deliver blistering attacks on President Donald Trump, calling it "gross negligence" for his administration's failure to contain the virus in the rest of the nation after New York suffered in March and April.

"At the end of the day, science trumps politics; politics does not trump science," Cuomo said. "You don't defeat a virus with politics."

"Trump's COVID scandal makes what Nixon did at Watergate look innocent," he later continued. "Nobody died in the Watergate scandal. Thousands of people are going to die in the COVID scandal."

Cuomo said spread from elsewhere in the country is a continued threat to the state's handling of the crisis. He also said that lack of compliance regarding the wearing of face masks and social distancing along with the inconsistent efforts of local governments to enforce is a threat as well.

While the statistics reported on Monday statewide and on a region-by-region basis continues to be strong, the governor warned that there should be no complacency.

"We have to remain compliant and the local governments have to do their job and enforce

compliance," Cuomo said.

On Sunday, the state reported a 1.08 percent infection rate from the 51,687 tests that were administered. COVID-19-related hospitalizations stood at 792, the lowest level since Mar. 18. There were 10 deaths on Sunday, which was followed by six and five on Friday and Saturday, respectively.

The statewide infection rate has been below 2 percent every day since June 1.

In the Mid-Hudson region, which includes Westchester and Putnam counties, the infection rate has been below 1 percent each day from July 4 through Sunday, July 12.

In Westchester, Sunday's rate was 0.9

## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE



percent with 529 active cases. County Executive George Latimer said the active cases has been consistent for the past couple of weeks with small daily variations despite the cluster of 27 cases stemming from the June 20 Horace Greeley High School graduation and a post-ceremony party.

"We believe that spike has run its course," Latimer said Monday.

None of the cases, 21 of which were from New Castle with the six others from neighboring municipalities, resulted in any hospitalizations, he said.

Putnam County, which has reduced its reporting to once a week, disclosed last

Friday that there were 15 active cases and no COVID-19-related hospitalizations.

## Attendance Strong at Westchester Beaches, Pools

Latimer said that the public continues to make good use of the county's summer recreation facilities despite the required use of face masks, social distancing and 50 percent capacity restrictions.

During last weekend, which was largely reduced to one day because of the threat of inclement weather on Saturday, Croton Point Park beach saw 676 visitors and Playland beach 2,086 people.

The four county pools – Saxon Woods, Sprain Brook, Tibbetts and Willson's Woods – saw a combined attendance of more than 4,400 people.

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# Education Officials Provide Guidelines on How to Re-open Schools

By Lindsay Emery

The New York State Board of Regents disclosed its highly anticipated guidelines and recommendations to school districts in preparation for school re-openings this fall, stressing the need for flexibility, strong communication and helping high-needs students.

During the three-and-a-half-hour live-streamed meeting, the board offered guidance from the statewide task force on reopening New York's schools as well as a discussion about the reopening of higher education.

"We know many students have had a stressful and traumatic experience while isolated from school's friends and communities," said Kathleen DeCataldo, assistant commissioner for the Office of Student Support Services at the state Education Department (SED) "Adults in the school community have also experienced stress, anxiety, grief and trauma. Central to an effective strategy is prioritization of mental health, well-being and social/emotional learning communicated clearly and consistently to staff, students, family and community."

One of the key features of the guidelines is the focus on flexibility regarding the 180-minute per week unit study requirement.

"Each area focus also provides the school with flexibility to develop plans to fit the needs of their communities," DeCataldo said. "For example, with regard to face coverings,

the guidance provides information about face shields as an alternative to cloth face coverings for use by teachers and support staff that work with very young children or certain students with disabilities that need to see the teacher's mouth."

The proposed recommendations from SED addressed concerns from the Board of Regents. Whether there are in-person classes, remote learning or a hybrid model, SED requires that each school has plans and appropriate supplies. Regent Roger Tilles raised the idea that art and music classes should also have flexibility.

Teachers must have the ability to tailor their courses to fit the needs of their students in a particular environment.

Communication will be an essential part of planning for the 2020-21 school year. For example, the guidelines suggest that food service directors must be a part of the reopening plans to deliver expertise on how to provide meals while maintaining safety protocols, DeCataldo said. The guidance also highlights the importance of communication with families to provide ample opportunity to apply for free and reduced-price meals and how to access those meals.

Since English Language Learners (ELL) saw their year abruptly end, districts should work to address the losses that have been sustained. Therefore, communication for parents and guardians should be in their preferred language to ensure they have equitable access to critical information about their children's learning, said Elisa Alvarez,

assistant commissioner for the Office of Student Support Services at SED.

Each school building will present its own set of challenges, said Christina Coughlin, another assistant commissioner in the Office of Student Support Services. In addition to districts contemplating whether they should build partitions, they must also consider whether the partitions are obstacles if there were to be an emergency, such as a fire.

School districts might also consider improving the quality of the ventilation in their buildings as well as if they might want to reduce the number of water fixtures. The guidance suggests that sufficient fixtures must still be in the building, since sinks are essential to good handwashing practices. In addition to disinfecting surfaces at school, parents should anticipate bus routing changes to maintain regular cleanings and social distancing guidelines.

The recommendations also propose that schools assign each student an adult who will be responsible for checking in with the student every day.

"Schools are expected to use a variety of interventions to reengage students who have been chronically absent before taking the drastic steps of making a report on educational neglect or initiating a PINS petition," said Coordinator of Technology Policy Shannon Logan.

For special education students, some of the mandatory requirements include access to necessary instructional and technological supports to meet the unique needs of

the students, as well as documentation of programs and services that are communicated to the parents.

Christopher Suriano, assistant commissioner of special education, said although not mandatory, students with high needs and preschoolers with disabilities should be prioritized to receive in-person services. There should be contingency plans for special education to be delivered remotely during intermittent or extended building closures.

Higher Education Committee Director John D'Agati explained that students expressed that they had problems getting to test sites. Many colleges will bring students onto campus to start the school year until the Thanksgiving break and finish the semester online, he said.

William Murphy, deputy commissioner for higher education, said there are still shortcomings digitally.

"For example, the cost of internet access and technology can be prohibitive," Murphy said. "Students may have to share a bandwidth and devices with others in the household. Students may only have a tablet or even a smartphone, which is much more difficult in many cases when you are trying to do research and do courses online when you need a PC or a laptop."

The portal for public school districts and their superintendents to upload their plans will open this Friday, July 17. Plans for all districts must be submitted by July 31 for review.

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# State Sets Parameters for the Reopening of Schools in September

By Martin Wilbur

Schools across New York State will reopen for the 2020-21 academic year if the region where they are located is in Phase 4 and has a daily infection of less than 5 percent on a 14-day rolling average. Gov. Andrew Cuomo also announced Monday that if a regional infection rate increases to more than 9 percent on a seven-day average after Aug. 1, then schools would be shut.

He provided those standards on whether schools in the state's roughly 700 public school districts will reopen at the same time that the state Board of Regents and state Education Department officials provided guidelines on how school districts would accomplish a reopening.

Each district now has a two-week period to submit its reopening plan starting this Friday and extending through July 31. The determination on whether a region's schools are in line to reopen will be made during the first week in August, the governor said.

Cuomo insisted that the decision whether or not to reopen will be based exclusively on data, not emotion or political posturing.

"We're not going to use our children as the litmus test and we're not going to put our children in a place where their health

is in danger. It's that simple," Cuomo said in a thinly-veiled rebuke to comments from President Donald Trump who insisted that all schools throughout the United States must reopen.

"Common sense and intelligence can still determine what we do, even in this crazy environment. We're not going to use our children as guinea pigs."

On Sunday, the seven-county Mid-Hudson region, which includes Westchester and Putnam counties, stood at a 0.8 percent infection rate. The daily tracker has seen the region remain in a narrow range of between 0.6 percent and 1.4 percent each day since June 5, according to the state's website [www.forward.ny.gov](http://www.forward.ny.gov), which has been tracking the statistics for each of New York's 10 regions.

As of July 12, the highest infection rate in the state by region was Long Island at 1.5 percent.

Cuomo said the Reimagine Education Advisory Council comprised of educators through the state devised a set of guidelines, which was also on unveiled on Monday.

Some of the broad guidelines will require districts to submit flexible and innovative plans; to enact safeguards to protect the health and safety of students and staff by requiring the use of masks and social distancing; prioritize in-person



Gov. Andrew Cuomo outlined the data points on Monday that will determine whether schools will reopen in this fall.

person learning is most important; and establish best practices for hybrid and remote learning and collaboration between districts.

There are also guidelines for transportation, food service, afterschool care and extracurricular activities along with requirements for screening and tracing and cleaning of facilities.

New York State United Teachers President Andy Pallotta applauded the intention of the state to predicate reopening and the guidelines on science and facts.

"What we've heard from Gov. Cuomo, Chancellor Rosa and the Board of Regents has us moving in the right direction," Pallotta said. "The fact-based, data-driven approach to reopening outlined today stands in stark contrast to the reckless approach that some other states and the federal government are trying to ram through. We will review in detail the final state health and educational guidance to ensure it does indeed balance the educational needs of our students with the advice of health care experts."

Pallotta warned, however, that federal and state funding will be needed to make the plans that are being developed by districts and communities a reality.

learning for the students who need it most; maximize use of available space in the school buildings as well as elsewhere in the community in hopes of having as much in-person learning as possible; focus on labs, art and other classes where in-

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# Mt. Pleasant Planning Board Accepts North 60 DEIS as Complete

By Martin Wilbur

The North 60 biotech proposal near Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla took another step forward on July 2 after the Mount Pleasant Planning Board accepted the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) as complete.

Action on the \$1.2 billion proposal from Fareri Associates allows for a tentatively scheduled public hearing in September before the Planning Board.

The plan calls for the development of about three million square feet of space, most of which is biotech, research and medical offices, along with a children's

science and education center, retail and restaurants and a hotel on 60 acres of county-owned land that has been leased to the developer.

"Your action will allow this document to be a public document. It will be publicly accessible," said Mount Pleasant's planning consultant Patrick Clearly. "It'll be available in Town Hall and online."

The DEIS came out of the scoping document that was developed following a June 2019 public hearing. The scoping document was adopted last August.

At the time the 99-year lease was signed in January 2019, it was hailed by officials as the biggest development in Westchester in

more than 30 years and promises to solidify the county as a biotech hub.

It is anticipated that development of the project will be done in multiple phases over more than a decade. Work slated for the first phase is the 100,000-square foot hotel, 220,000 square feet of biotech and research space, 100,000 square feet of medical offices and 80,000 square feet of retail. The retail would include neighborhood-style shops and restaurants.

Clearly said that the town and the applicant have agreed to hold an in-person public hearing only. If that can't be accomplished safely, then the hearing would be postponed and the deadline to



An artist's rendering of a portion of the North 60 project proposed near Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla.

## Cortlandt Partners With FDR State Park to Provide Swimming

By Rick Pezzullo

Residents in the Town of Cortlandt will have an opportunity to cool off at a public swimming pool this summer free of charge.

Cortlandt Supervisor Linda Puglisi and the Town Board announced last Thursday a partnership with FDR State Park in Yorktown where starting this week the town will cover entrance fees on weekdays for residents to use the 1.5 million-gallon pool in the park off Route 202.

This arrangement is available to all Cortlandt residents with a Town of Cortlandt Recreation photo ID card Monday to Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. until Aug. 14.

Cortlandt officials were forced to close the town's Charles Cook Pool this summer because the coronavirus pandemic delayed renovation of the bathhouse at the facility.

Town recreation photo ID cards can be purchased through the Cortlandt Recreation Department for \$7 per card. For town residents 60 and up, it will cost \$3.50. Cards are valid for three years from date of purchase. If a Cortlandt resident wants to bring a non-resident as a guest, the non-resident will have to pay the daily rate of \$3 per person.

A vehicle-use fee is required for all visitors to FDR Park. Parking options are less than \$10 per day per vehicle or \$80 for an Empire

Pass card for the season. The pass can be utilized in multiple cars in the same family.

The Empire Pass also allows for unlimited day-use entry at most facilities operated by the New York State Parks Department and the state Department of Environmental Conservation, which includes forests, beaches, trails and more.

The park and pool will be at reduced density this summer to stem coronavirus contagion. Persons coming to the pool facility are required to wear a mask in the public areas. Families are asked to place their blankets 10 feet apart in the vicinity of the pool. There are no floatables or pool toys allowed.

hold it would be extended until a future date, he said.

Several boards in the region have begun or are about to start transitioning back to in-person meetings.

The DEIS can be viewed online on the town's website at <https://www.mtpleasantny.com>.



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# Lowey Announces \$50G Grants for Copland House, Jacob Burns

Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-Harrison), chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee, announced Wednesday that the \$45 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) that she helped secure in the

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act will be awarded to 855 organizations, two of which are based in Westchester.

The Cortlandt-based Copland House the Jacob Burns Film Center in Pleasantville, both nonprofit organizations, are each receiving \$50,000 grants.

The Jacob Burns will use the grant to sustain two staff positions essential to generating revenue, which has been lost during the pandemic. The federal funding will also help Copland House retain employees and continue community engagement efforts.

"The coronavirus epidemic has affected nearly every part of our nation's economy, and this includes the world of arts and culture, which employs more than five million workers across the country," Lowey said. "Keeping staff on and organizations afloat during this time of uncertainty has not been easy, and I'm so glad that these local groups will receive this grant funding."

"We are honored and grateful to the NEA for awarding this generous grant to support jobs and essential operations," said Janet Benton, acting executive director at the Jacob Burns Film Center. "We are so



The Jacob Burns Film Center in Pleasantville, above, along with Copland House each received a \$50,000 federal grant last week.

appreciative of Congresswoman Lowey's longstanding support, especially with The CARES Act funds which will help us preserve our vital and vibrant programs and offset the loss of earned income from the COVID closure."

The film center has been closed since mid-March when Gov. Andrew Cuomo declared a state of emergency causing a shutdown of the economy. Theaters have

not been allowed to reopen. The Copland House has had to cancel all programming scheduled since then.

"In addition to helping Copland House retain key institutional jobs, our emergency CARES Act funding through the National Endowment for the Arts will support our vigorous efforts during this uncertain time to connect with our various communities, from young people through

senior citizens who look to our programs that enlighten, inspire, and energize," said Michael Boriskin, artistic and executive director of Copland House. "This funding provides a tangible bridge to the future, and we are so grateful for this essential assistance during these unpredictable months."

For more information on these grants, please view the NEA announcement linked at <https://www.arts.gov/news/2020/national-endowment-arts-approves-arts-organizations-cares-act-funding>.

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## Obituaries

### Former Mount Kisco Mayor Ferd Vetare Dies at 94

Former Mount Kisco Mayor Ferdinand (Ferd) Carmino Vetare died on July 5. He was 94.

Vetare was born on May 5, 1926, to Frank and Caroline (née Coviello) in Croton Falls, N.Y. He attended grades K-12 in the Brewster schools, and after graduation enlisted in the Navy. He trained as a radioman at the University of Wisconsin where he earned a varsity letter as a Big Ten wrestler. He was assigned to serve on board the USS Olmsted, an attack troop transport, where he served in the Pacific Theater until the end of World War II.

Vetare received his bachelor's degree in English from Middlebury College and his masters at the Breadloaf School of English. He accepted an invitation to teach English at Culver Military Academy in Indiana. Two years later he returned to New York and filled an opening at Valhalla High School where he chaired the English Department and coached the golf, wrestling and girls' tennis teams. He retired from teaching in 1984.

Ferd was an avid and competitive sportsman and played golf, tennis and

platform tennis into his nineties. He was sought after as a partner on the court or the course as much for his congenial nature and life wisdom as for his athletic prowess. Imbued with a sense of civic duty and a desire to help others, Ferd served his beloved Mount Kisco in many ways. He was the mayor and a village trustee; an active member and 2002 Commander of the American Legion Moses Taylor Jr. Post 136; past president of the Mount Kisco Lions Club; a former Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus; a member of the Italian-American Club of Northern Westchester (Man of the Year 1997); former board member of the Mount Kisco Child Care Center; founding member of the Byram Lake Committee; Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year 2003; and coach of Babe Ruth baseball. He was the recipient of numerous prestigious honors and awards throughout his years of service to his community.

Ferd's profound love of God guided all his thoughts and deeds. He was an active parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic church in Mount Kisco, and lent his beautiful



Ferdinand Vetare

tenor voice to the choir for many years. He was also deeply influenced by his family, especially his maternal grandparents, Angelo and Carmela Coviello, whose hard work and generosity to anyone in need

were foundational to his character.

Vetare adored – and inspired – his own family, the light of his life. In addition to his wife of 66 years, Lois (née Tyson, of Pocantico Hills), he leaves behind four daughters, Elaine Matts (Jim), Beth Vetare-Civitello (Dean), Mandy Collins (Billy) and Margaret Vetare; four grandchildren, Dean Civitello Jr. (Nicole), Carey Civitello (Christian Sanjurjo), Kate Angel (Remmy) and Lauren Collins; five great-grandchildren, Zoë, Jackson and Bodhi Sanjurjo and Dean Craig III and Josephine Civitello; three brothers, Fran, Gabe and Dick Vetare; and many beloved nieces and nephews. A sister, Carmela Mazure, predeceased him.

Visitation was at Oelker-Cox & Sinatra Funeral Home in Mount Kisco on July 9. A Mass of Christian Burial took place at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Mount Kisco on July 10. Burial immediately followed at St. Joseph's Cemetery in Somers.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Mount Kisco Lions Club, P.O. Box 187, Mount Kisco, N.Y. 10549 or a charity or organization of your choice.

### Katherine Pagano

Katherine E. Pagano, a lifelong Peekskill resident, died peacefully on July 1 due to complications from COVID-19. She was 65.

She was born Sept. 2, 1954, to Joseph T. and Emma (Mackey) Pagano. She attended Peekskill schools and graduated from Peekskill High School in 1973. Since she was a young child, she was a proud member of the Empire Drum and Bugle Corps, which was started by her father. She performed with the corps as a baton twirler in many parades each year in the area. She was also a twirler with the Peekskill High School marching band.

Although she worked for a time after graduation as a hairdresser, she spent most of her adult years in the health care field. She worked as a nurse's aide at Cortlandt Nursing Home in Cortlandt, and also at the VA hospital in Montrose. She spent the last 12 years working as a patient care technician at New York-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital in Cortlandt. She was a highly regarded member of the staff, not only for

her clinical skills but also for the care and compassion she extended to every patient in her care. Even in the midst of a pandemic, her dedication was so strong that she continued to work and provide the utmost care to every patient who needed her until she contracted COVID-19 herself.

While health care was Kathy's professional calling, she got the most joy in her life from spending time with her family and her friends. She is survived by her loving daughter, Stephanie (Pagano) Ungaro and son-in-law Frank; her cherished granddaughters, Francesca and Gabriella; her sister, Nancy (Walter) Brovarski; her brother, Joseph (Linda) Pagano; and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents; sisters Diana Pagano and Barbara Bizzaro; brother-in-law Mickey Bizzaro; and her aunt, Helen Kingsley.

A memorial service celebrating her life will be held at a later date due to restrictions and risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Mary Owens

Mary Eileen Owens passed away from complications from COVID-19 on July 9. She was 91.

Owens was born in Mobile, Ala. on Dec. 6, 1928, to Calvin and Helena Adams. She was predeceased by her husband, Richard Owens, whom she met while attending nurses training at Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola, Fla. and he was in Navy flight school. They met on a blind date, and she said she was "smitten once she heard him sing."

From there she followed him north and eventually settled in Mahopac and raised a family. Primarily a homemaker, she became active in the garden club and bridge club. She returned south for retirement to Gulf

Shores, Ala., then to Fuquay Varina, N.C. to be near their daughter.

In addition to her husband of 68 years, Owens is predeceased by her son, Robert Owens. She is survived by daughters Helen Arena of Pennsylvania and Beth Loehfelm of Apex, N.C.; grandchildren Andrew Arena, Brenda Menard, Philip Arena, Thomas Arena and Katherine Arena; and great-grandchildren Allison and Anthony Arena and Bora Menard.

The family would like to thank Dr. Lalita Sidana and the staff at Windsor Point for their caregiving these past few years for both Eileen and her husband.

Wake Funeral and Cremation handled the arrangements.

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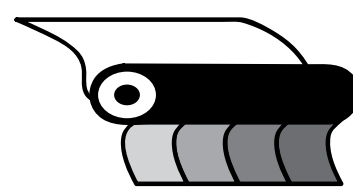
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# Burdick Wins 93rd Assembly District; Abinanti on Way to Victory

By Martin Wilbur

Bedford Supervisor Chris Burdick captured the Democratic primary in the 93rd Assembly District, edging Chappaqua attorney Kristen Browde by 347 votes in the five-candidate race.

The count was completed late Saturday afternoon, shortly before Browde announced on her Facebook page that she congratulated Burdick on his victory.

According to the unofficial tallies, Burdick totaled 4,879 votes to Browde's 4,532. Following the early voting and in-person voting on June 23, Burdick led by 195 votes, and added to his margin after Westchester County Board of Elections finished counting the 8,767 absentee ballots.

They were followed by Jeremiah Freiperson (2,748), Alex Roithmayr (1,211) and Mark Jaffe (1,078).

Burdick, who has served as supervisor since 2014 and has been on the Bedford Town Board since 2008, said he learned of victory from a text from Browde. He said having held elected office, a record of accomplishment, endorsements from officials in neighboring towns and a great team helped him to victory.

"I do feel that the electorate responded favorably to the fact that I do have experience as an elected official," Burdick said. "I do think that that did matter to the electorate and I think they felt that my

record of accomplishment was real and that they felt was significant."

Burdick will be a prohibitive favorite in November to defeat Republican John Nuculovic, a fellow Bedford resident who was easily defeated by outgoing Assemblyman David Buchwald in the predominantly Democratic district in 2018.

Burdick said he wasn't taking the race for granted.

"I'm running against a candidate who's run before and this is an open seat and he's run in a general election before and I, obviously, have not run in a general election for the seat before," he said. "So I take nothing for granted and I will be working tirelessly to get elected in November."

Browde thanked her supporters for helping her in the race and congratulated Burdick and the other opponent in the race.

"While this isn't the result I'd hoped for, we all know that we have a lot more to do this election cycle...and every election cycle," Browde stated on her Facebook page "And that we're all in this together."

The 93rd Assembly District stretches from a portion of White Plains and includes Harrison, North Castle, New Castle, Mount Kisco, Bedford, Lewisboro, Pound Ridge and North Salem.

## Abinanti Moves Closer to Victory

In the 92nd Assembly District race, five-term incumbent Thomas Abinanti has put



Chris Burdick took a significant step towards serving in Albany last weekend when he was declared the winner in the 93rd Assembly District's Democratic primary.

distance between himself and challenger Jennifer Williams.

Abinanti has opened up a 1,729-vote lead after all but about 2,900 of the more than 12,000 absentee ballots were tallied. After in-person and early voting, Abinanti held a razor-thin 25-vote advantage but has received 60 percent of the absentee ballot

votes.

The remaining ballots that have yet to be counted are from 19 election districts in Hastings-on-Hudson, Ardsley, Hartsdale and Edgemont, all in the 16th Congressional District. Those ballots have been impounded because Rep. Eliot Engel, who is trailing his primary challenger Jamaal Bowman, is suing the New York City and Westchester County Boards of Elections in hopes of recanting the absentee ballots. Engel trails Bowman by about 10,000 votes with 40,000 absentee ballots to be counted.

Abinanti said the two sides in that race were due back in state Supreme Court in the Bronx on Monday.

"We're expecting it's going to be Monday," Abinanti said of a decision in his race. "The Board of Elections is planning on counting this on Monday but it's going to be up to the judge in the Bronx as to exactly when they're going to do it."

There have been no final results from the Board of Elections in the Westchester District Attorney primary, with challenger Mimi Rocah leading incumbent Anthony Scarpino by more than a 2-to-1 margin. Close to 60,000 absentee ballots needed to be counted countywide.

Similarly, there has been no official call in the Democratic 17th Congressional District primary. Mondaire Jones has a more than 7,000-vote lead over Adam Schleifer.

## Primary Voting Nightmares Detailed During BOL's Task Force Meeting

By Lindsay Emery

Westchester residents spent about two and a half hours last Wednesday evening reciting a litany of harrowing stories about their experiences trying to vote during the June 23 primary.

Residents participated in the Board of Legislators' Election Information Task Force virtual meeting Wednesday night to discuss what the Westchester County Board of Elections could do to improve voting for the November general election. Concerns are also expected in the fall about how to protect the health of poll workers and voters and how to manage a large turnout.

"I went by to take a look that evening because I heard there were extraordinary lines," Dobbs Ferry resident Sandra Herman said. "When I arrived at 8 o'clock, I counted over 130 people waiting on line. I've sent in a video of that line. At nine o'clock, there were over 160 people waiting in line to vote, once voters could no longer join the line to vote."

Herman described how she witnessed multiple cars pull into the Ardsley Middle School parking lot only to turn around and leave once drivers saw how long they would have to wait to vote.

While some residents detailed

problems at the polls, others described an absentee ballot system riddled with flaws. Fred Silverman noticed that the envelope for returning his absentee ballot was already sealed when it arrived at his home and wondered if his signature on his ballot matched previous ones. Many speakers pointed out discrepancies in postmarking ballot envelopes and that there was no way to track absentee ballots. They were unsure whether their ballots even made it to the Board of Elections, let alone counted in the primary.

"The number of absentee ballots that are floating around is a security nightmare," said Allegra Dinger, a board member for Citizens for Voter Integrity New York. "There needs to be a lot more tracking."

Dinger explained that the Board of Elections website needs to be upgraded so the public can check on the status of their absentee ballot. Other voters said that the website is in such desperate need of an upgrade that it might make more sense to create another site with relevant information regarding registration and how to vote.

Another concern was the location change of many polling sites, prompting others to ask why they weren't alerted sooner.

"There were many problems

during the primary," said Myra Saul of the Concerned Voters of Westchester coalition. "The most egregious one: the Board of Elections violated the election law related to timely notice of poll sites and changes in poll sites. This left voters scrambling for alternatives and led to long lines."

The Board of Elections should adhere to communications guidelines and attempt to reach voters through social media and print, Saul added.

In addition to the changes in poll sites, Saul and others pointed to a lack of training for voting inspectors and an insufficient number of poll workers.

"Several members of our committee were told that their services were not needed to be poll workers for this election and those people were standing on long lines," said Janice Griffith, president of the White Plains/Greenburgh branch of the NAACP.

Voters who shared their experiences at polling sites and representatives of various organizations said their experiences could help the Board of Elections achieve a successful presidential election.

Others pointed to a larger systemic problem with the way elections are handled in the county. Lulu Friesdat, executive

director of SMART Elections, an organization dedicated to reforming elections nationwide, explained how Westchester's election commissioners do not emphasize voters' priorities and run the risk of major problems as a result of having bought the hybrid voting machine Dominion ICE.

"That machine has a very specific security vulnerability in that it is able to print additional votes on the ballot after the voter casts it," Friesdat said. "This is such an extraordinary risk that the New York State Board of Elections has now required that any jurisdiction using the Dominion ICE machine must reconcile the number of times the printer prints and the number of assisted voting sessions, which is the only time the machine is supposed to print."

Friesdat said that the commissioners should be replaced by administrators who can focus on running an efficient and secure election, instead of two people that have direct conflicts of interest by leading their respective political parties.

Even though many voters brought up creative solutions, including a hotline for poll workers to answer questions in a timely manner, the public expressed how discouraged they were by the Board of Elections' handling of

the primary. Lisa Best, a Mount Vernon poll worker, described how she felt when she received a card in the mail with an incorrect polling location.

"This is very disheartening and very concerning because if these kinds of things are happening in a primary, it is very, very worrisome for what may happen in November that will take away the fair voting process for the voters who worked very hard for their right to vote," Best said.

Last Friday, County Executive George Latimer wrote a letter to Reginald LaFayette, the Democratic Board of Elections commissioner, proposing several steps to help ease the crush of a potential record turnout for the general election. Those recommendations include making Election Day, Nov. 3, a scheduled county holiday to encourage county employees to serve as additional polling place inspectors, identifying larger venues as alternate polling sites, hiring temporary workers to help with the anticipated deluge of absentee ballots and the possibility of allowing residents to vote early at any location in the county.

The full Board of Legislators will continue discussions on the issue at a meeting sometime next week with Board of Elections commissioners and staff.

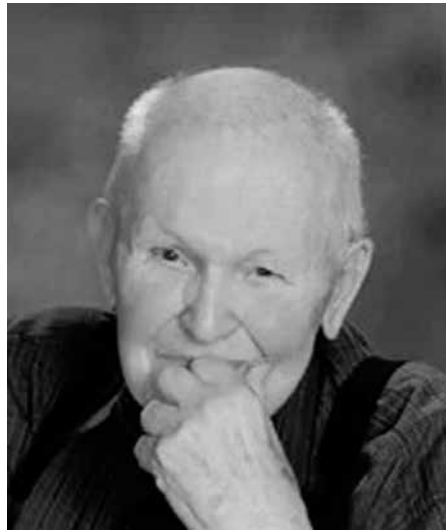
# Obituaries

## Donald Hoffmann

Donald H. Hoffmann, a Cortlandt resident, died July 6. He was 87.

Hoffman was born in Queens on Nov. 9, 1932, to Henry and Katherine Hoffmann. He served honorably in the United States Army during the Korean War. After his time in the Army, he returned to Queens where he married Marilyn Bub in May 1956. For eight years he was employed at the Brooklyn Navy Yard while attending NYU at night to earn his bachelor's degree in civil engineering. In 1964, he and Marilyn moved to the Peekskill/Cortlandt area where he worked as a civil engineer at AT&T in White Plains for 30 years.

Don (Pops) was the most generous, kind, loving and considerate person you could ever meet. Anyone who got the chance to meet him adored him. His life revolved around his family, faith, friends and volunteer work. He enjoyed playing golf, going to the movies, watching the Mets, spending time with his grandchildren, volunteering for the Boy Scouts of America and serving as a Road to Recovery volunteer. After retirement, he dedicated a majority of his life serving on various committees for the United Methodist Church in Shrub Oak. One of his favorite annual traditions was hosting a



Donald Hoffmann

family vacation at Woodloch Pines. He will be missed by all but never forgotten.

Hoffmann is survived by his daughter, Deborah Speedling, and her husband, Gary; his son, Donald, and his wife, Deborah; his son, Dwayne, and his wife, Denise; and his grandchildren, Stephanie, Jennifer, Steven, Eric, Troy and Quinn. He was predeceased by his wife, Marilyn, in 2013.

## Samantha Shores-Alessi

Samantha L. Shores-Alessi, a Putnam Valley resident, died July 5. She was 29.

Shores-Alessi was born Mar. 4, 1991, in White Plains to Edward and Donna Shores. She graduated Lakeland High School in 2009, and later Westchester Community College, and was completing a bachelor's degree in materials management administration at Mercy College. Most recently, she was nominated for the National Honor Society in social sciences and the International Honor Society in psychology. She worked as an operating room/materials management specialist at NYP-Hudson Valley Hospital.

She was engaged to Salvatore Alessi. Their wedding was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to her fiancé and parents, she is survived by one brother, Ryan; her grandmother, Arlene



Samantha Shores-Alessi

Pisanelli; and her loving dogs, Toby, Gunner and Winslow.

## Harry Phillips

Harry S. (Hal) Phillips passed away on July 2. He was 95.

Phillips was born in New York City on Oct. 20, 1924, and lived in the Armonk, Chappaqua and Mount Kisco area for over 60 years.

After being drafted at age 19 during World War II, he went on to become a first lieutenant, Infantry and served in the Pacific Theater. Following a recall to active duty during the Korean War, he served as a psychological warfare officer in the Far East.

Phillips was a journalism graduate of the University of Wisconsin, where he was a member of Chi Psi fraternity. In 1949, he was sports editor of The Daily Cardinal.

After writing for the Wisconsin State Journal, he embarked on a career in corporate communications, retiring in 1989 as a senior vice president of the Irving Trust Company and member of the senior management committee.

He and his wife, Mary, were members of the Whippoorwill Club in Armonk for over 50 years.

Hal is survived by four children, Dr. Katharine Phillips, Barbara Phillips, Carol Phillips Ewin (and her husband, Ed Ewin), and his son, William Phillips. His wife, Mary, passed away on Apr. 21, 2014.

All funeral arrangements were private. Arrangements were handled by Beecher Flooks Funeral Home in Pleasantville.

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## Police Blotter

### North Castle Police Department

**July 3:** An Agnew Farm Road resident reported at 1:41 a.m. that her 18-year-old son is refusing to give her back her car keys and stated she doesn't want him to leave the house due to COVID-19. She then stated that her son gave her the keys and no longer needs our assistance. Officers responded anyway due to a potential dispute. Matter adjusted.

**July 4:** Report of a larceny from a vehicle on Intervale Avenue at 9:53 a.m. The caller stated that his wife's wallet was taken from a vehicle parked in their driveway overnight. The responding officer reported depositions were secured; a report to follow.

**July 4:** A complainant reported at 12:57 p.m. that there have been fireworks set off on Banksville Road for three consecutive nights and he is concerned with the noise and dangers they pose to him and his neighbors' homes.

**July 5:** A caller reported observing four males at 9:40 p.m. running through his neighbor's backyard on Rockwood Place with flashlights, then running through the woods toward Briggs Lane. The caller also stated that a gray Toyota Camry parked on Rockwood Place may belong to those parties. Officers responded and located the vehicle in question. They reported locating the parties who were playing the "assassin" game and will be leaving the area.



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# Westchester Sees Mixed Results So Far in 2020 Census Initiative

By Martin Wilbur

There is still another three and a half months for anyone who hasn't responded to the 2020 Census to participate.

Westchester County, which has run an aggressive public information initiative since last year to advertise the importance of responding to the once-a-decade count, had a 63 percent response rate through July 8, according to the county Planning Department's regularly updated tallies.

By contrast, New York State stood at 57.5 percent while nationwide it was 62 percent.

"Westchester County is trying very hard to make sure that everyone who legitimately lives here is counted in the Census," said County Executive George Latimer.

Many municipalities have formed or appointed a Complete Count Committee, consisting of one or more community members whose responsibility is to encourage as many residents to respond.

DaMia Harris-Madden, part of the Village of Pleasantville's Complete Count Committee, said last week while the overarching goal is to have a 100 percent response rate, most communities would be happy with exceeding their 2010 participation.

Pleasantville's 72.3 percent response rate now exceeds its 72 percent participation 10 years ago, but most of the county still trails its 2010 numbers as of last week. However, with participation having been

extended until Oct. 31, there is still time for communities to get a strong response.

"I feel very confident we'll be okay," Harris-Madden said. "I'm more concerned about the communities that are under (the 2010 response rate), and I'm not sure what their communities are doing to engage people to respond. I just think there's this overarching concern about information."

Some communities may be more susceptible to being undercounted, she said. Young adults who 10 years ago were dependents in their parents' home may not be aware they need to respond. Areas where fewer people have computers, whether it's because it's poorer community or one with an older population, is another reason.

Communities with a high concentration of immigrants is another population that can be leery of participating.

Harris-Madden said convincing people that information will not be used by authorities is a challenge. The Census is simply to count people.

"This reporting should not trigger any other investigation," she said. "People still have this impression that will happen if they have someone who may be living in their home helping with their child care. That's the population that we're missing."

Earlier this year, Blanca Lopez, an adviser to Latimer on strategic initiatives for the 2020 Census, explained why the Census is so critical to communities.

"Every person who responds to the Census is contributing to the community,"



Lopez said. "Money that comes from the federal government is going towards our county, our communities, our school districts, our state, our first responders, our infrastructure. So we want to make sure people understand how they are contributing and making our communities better."

Pleasantville is one of seven communities in the county that have now exceeded their 2010 totals. They are joined by North Salem (66.3 percent), Lewisboro (75 percent), Hastings-on-Hudson (76.6 percent), Croton-on-Hudson (76.8 percent), New Castle (77.6

percent) and Pelham Manor (77.8 percent).

The highest participation rate is Scarsdale at 78.7, about 0.3 percent behind their total from 10 years ago.

While another 12 communities are within 2 percent of matching their 2010 responses, there are some communities that are far behind. The worst response rate in the county is Mount Vernon at 49.3 percent. Port Chester is next at 50.3 percent, a whopping 12.3 percent behind its 2010 totals, the largest gap in the county.

Those municipalities are followed by Yonkers, Elmsford, Peekskill, Sleepy Hollow and the Village of Ossining.

The second largest deficit is the Village of Buchanan, which is currently at 68.7 percent participation but more than 10 percent behind 2010.

Harris-Madden said the pandemic has also played a factor in some communities as many households have other concerns. While residents have until Oct. 31 to respond online if they haven't already, there will be counters who will start going door to door on Aug. 11.

"I don't now if we're going to be successful with that kind of outreach," Harris-Madden said. "People are not going to want to stand there and talk to someone at this time because of the virus."

For those who haven't responded and still have the card they received in the mail earlier this year, visit [www.my2020census.gov](http://www.my2020census.gov). For more information or receive help, call 844-330-2020.

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# P’ville Misses Vibe of Music Festival After COVID-19 Postponement

By Martin Wilbur

It wasn’t lost on Bruce Figler that there was a gaping void in downtown Pleasantville last Saturday.

Figler, the executive director of the Pleasantville Music Festival, couldn’t help avoid thinking about the likelihood of 5,000 to 7,000 music lovers that would have congregated at Parkway Field on Marble Avenue for a day of continuous performances.

For the first time since the event was established in 2005, the Pleasantville Music Festival was canceled, and not because of bad weather, which always saw organizers obsessing over the forecast in the final days leading up to the festival. It was because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figler admitted that he and some of his volunteers were feeling low last weekend, even though it was three months ago that the decision was made to cancel.

“I was actually down there for a couple of hours with some of my staff, just sort of bemoaning and toasting to next year,” he said.

With the help of Pleasantville Community Television, which tapes the festival every year, they were able to present 12 hours of performances from the first 15 years on Saturday on the public access station and on the festival’s website and Facebook page. That took a little bit of the sting out of missing what is probably the village’s signature event.

While watching old performances

sufficed for a day, it doesn’t come close to replacing what was lost in terms of bringing people into the village and the good will that it creates. Mayor Peter Scherer said in his travels throughout the county, people often remark to him about the festival.

In fact, he’s aware of a couple of current residents who were introduced to Pleasantville by attending the event.

“It’s a great day for the village,” Scherer said. “Not only is it a nice day, but a lot of people come to Pleasantville annually for the first time and go home with a very positive experience. Every year, somebody says to me ‘Wow, this is such a great thing and it’s especially impressive because it’s run by such a small place.’”

While its loss this year does not impact the village’s bottom line much – there are some years it’s in the red, other times the festival is in the black, Scherer noted – there are some businesses in the village’s downtown that look forward to the festival.

Pleasantville Chamber of Commerce President Bill Flooks said the eateries, convenience stores and probably Key Food likely missed the influx of visitors. In many cases, those businesses would sell food, sandwiches, drinks and other goodies to people headed to the field.

He estimated that for one day at least their business might be off as much as 50 percent if there had been a festival last Saturday.

“It’s a significant blow to the economy, especially when we don’t need another blow to the economy,” Flooks said.



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTOS

Parkway Field was packed on July 13, 2019, inset, for the 15th annual Pleasantville Music Festival. Last Saturday, when the festival was scheduled to return, the field was deserted.

Figler mentioned that everyone is looking forward to next year, but with the nation and the world in uncharted territory, it’s anybody’s guess what 2021 might look like in the age of COVID-19. The festival will probably be planned with fingers crossed, and they’ll see what the situation looks like late next winter.

At least there won’t be a shortage of performers, Figler said. Bands have already been in touch about playing next

year.

“We might just plan it and then have to pull the plug on it like we did this year,” Figler said.

The only advantage to this year was not having to fret about the weather. It would have been an agonizing decision with heavy rains on Friday and thunderstorms popping up late in the day on Saturday.

“Believe me, that did not escape my notice,” Scherer said. “I’m hoping we used up our bad karma.”

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# P'ville Grad Battles Through Leukemia, Hopes for Bone Marrow Match

By Martin Wilbur

Many people are waiting and hoping for a vaccine or medical treatments to put an end to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Andrew Tom is waiting to be notified of a match to have a bone marrow transplant.

Tom recently returned to his native Pleasantville with his fiancée to be near family as he wages a battle against mixed phenotype acute leukemia (MPAL), a rare and aggressive form of the disease. He was diagnosed in May in San Francisco, where he had lived for the past four years working for a hedge fund, after experiencing swollen lymph nodes, followed by nose bleeds, sensitivity to bright light and migraines.

"It was a tough thing to accept and even though so much has happened, I feel like, even reflecting on it now, not a lot of time has actually passed," said Tom, 29, a 2009 Pleasantville High School graduate. "It's only really like a month or so."

While Tom had undergone chemotherapy during a 40-day stay at UCSF Medical Center in San Francisco, his best chance at not only survival but long-term health is to receive a bone marrow transplant. His brother and sister are half-matches, which is not ideal and would expose him to risks that a full match would not.

Even if everything works out well and a full match is found, Tom faces a potentially physically challenging road ahead. Last week he received a bone marrow biopsy; if the biopsy reveals that there's still

leukemia, he would need another round of chemotherapy. If the disease is in remission, then Tom and his doctors at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center can start the search for a match and hopefully begin the procurement process, he said.

"I need to wipe out all of my bone marrow in order to supplant it with a healthy person's bone marrow," explained Tom.

Should a match be found, it would require four days of radiation therapy and three days of chemotherapy in order to do that, he said. Then the doctors would start with the transplant intravenously. There will be a period of time that his red and white blood cells will essentially be at zero, which would require blood transfusions for several weeks.

Following that, there will be outpatient visits about three times a week to Sloan Kettering. The idea is to increase the potential of the bone marrow taking over the next one to two years, after which success increases dramatically.

The schedule assumes there aren't any disruptions to schedules because of a re-emergence of COVID-19 cases in the region, he said.

Tom's youth and good health before he was diagnosed signaled to him and his doctors that he would be able to handle the transplant and the most aggressive approach as opposed to an older person, who would likely be treated through chemotherapy.

"These are short-term issues that you have to work through, which creates



Andrew Tom is fighting against mixed phenotype acute leukemia (MPAL), a rare and aggressive form of the disease and needs a bone marrow transplant to ensure long-term health.

long-term probability, even by a few percentage points," Tom said. "It's just an unfortunate tradeoff that my doctors and I philosophically agree with."

His sister, Jessica, said Andrew's prognosis is good since he is young, has no other underlying health issues and the cancer hasn't spread.

The large unknown is how long he will be able to wait for a transplant. She said Andrew is currently in remission and can be sustained through therapies until a donor is found.

"However, this is merely treading water and a bone marrow transplant is the best and surest way to cure him," Jessica said.

A hurdle for Tom to overcome is that the chance for patients of Chinese descent finding a suitable match is lower than Caucasian people, she said. Only 0.7 percent of the national registry for donors is Chinese.

While a donor does not have to be Chinese, there is a greater chance of a match with someone from the same ethnic group, Jessica said. That stresses the importance of having as many people register as possible with the National Bone Marrow Donor Program by getting their cheek swabbed.

Despite all of the challenges, including losing his hair and being tethered to tubes, Tom remains upbeat.

"It's unfortunate but I like to think I've done my homework, I've set myself up with the best doctors at the best facilities," Tom said. "I have good insurance coverage; I have family infrastructure to help support me."

For information about registered with the National Bone Marrow Donor Program, visit [join.bethematch.org/swabforandrew](http://join.bethematch.org/swabforandrew). For more information on Andrew Tom, visit [www.swabforandrew.com](http://www.swabforandrew.com).

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## Letters to the Editor

### Districts Withholding Coaches' Pay for Spring Sports is Wrong

Everyone knows the devastation to education that the coronavirus has caused and the burdens it has placed upon educators. Since nobody knows how long the pandemic may last, certain measures had to be taken to ensure instruction would continue. Teachers had to resort to digital instruction to keep their students up to date on curriculum, especially because in the early days of the pandemic it was unknown when schools might reopen.

This also involved changes in coaching of spring sports. What if schools were to reopen in a month and full sports schedules would be resumed? Those students involved in sports would have to be well-conditioned to maintain their physical stamina in order to be able to compete.

Do you think they would have done that on their own? No, most likely not. So how could this maintenance be accomplished? I think I know! Let's have the coaches keep in touch with their teams, encourage them to keep up morale, instruct them how to maintain their mental and physical strength

in order to be able to compete, if necessary, and let them know they are not alone in their sadness. The seniors receive most of my sympathy, since they would be the most likely affected by being unable to complete their varsity careers.

Were coaches advised that their salaries were in peril in March or April? Were they instructed that they should not be in contact with their teams? I doubt it very seriously or we would have read about it much earlier than last week.

Coaches are very aware of their students' feelings and have to deal with the very high highs and very low lows that they experience. They do that while caring deeply for them and sharing their emotions. Coaches received the first half of their stipends and continued to instruct their students, leading them to believe they would continue to be paid. So why are they being denied the rest of their payment when they continued to do their jobs?

Coaching salaries were approved in the budget that was voted on and passed in

spring 2019. Funds were allocated for these purposes and should not be withheld or commingled with any other budget area, especially if the coaches were not told to cease instructional contact with students. Teachers were being paid for their work during this time; otherwise, the unions would have been up in arms.

Coaches do not seem to have that support behind them, but they shouldn't need it. It should have been understood that full stipends would have been paid to them. It has come to my attention that neighboring Westlake did the right thing and paid their coaches their full stipends.

As a former board member and vice president of a neighboring school district, I therefore request that you reconsider your decision and restore payment to our valued, hardworking coaches.

**Toni Ford**  
Pleasantville

### Astorino's Poor Fiscal Record Should Disqualify Him From State Senate

It is both ironic and grotesque that Rob Astorino would attempt to run on his record for state Senate against Pete Harchuk. In fact, his campaign is entirely based on the hope that voters will have forgotten the scope of his reckless mismanagement of Westchester County.

In terms of fiscal irresponsibility, voters need to remember that Astorino left Westchester with an \$81 million deficit the last five years he was county executive, and that the county's debt had grown to \$1.6 billion.

And those zero percent tax increases Astorino boasts about? They were paid for

with increased debt, over \$200 million in withdrawals from the county's emergency savings fund and sales of county properties. In fact, Astorino's relentless borrowing for operating expenses in the annual budgets – what he calls “kicking the can down the road” – caused the county's credit ratings to drop four times.

Astorino's fiscal fiascos also extended to failed sweetheart deals with bigshot hedge fund investors to privatize Playland and Westchester County Airport, and rightfully so: the taxpayer-funded investments should not be brokered away to simply pay bills. Meanwhile, Astorino's fight with the federal

government over affordable housing cost county taxpayers another \$25 million at least.

With that record, I'm dumbfounded that Rob Astorino would even consider running for office again. Voters would be smart to factor in Astorino's strong support for President Trump's corrosive politics and failed leadership as well when considering his worthiness as decision-maker and advocate in these challenging times.

**Francesca Hagadus-McHale**  
Pleasantville

### Proposed Yorktown Solar Law is Wrong for the Town, Environment

The Yorktown Town Board is planning a public hearing for Tuesday, July 21 on a revised law on solar power systems. I support the installation of solar power. However, I find some provisions of the solar law to be disturbing. The proposed law provides for the installation of large commercial solar arrays, but exclusively in residential districts. This provision is to the profit of an out-of-state corporation, but not for the benefit of Yorktown homeowners.

We do not have to wait for the passage of the solar law to know what its effects will be. The out-of-state corporation has already presented plans for large solar power arrays in northern Yorktown between Foothill and Lockwood, and also along Underhill Avenue. The solar developer plans to clear-cut forested areas of their trees over 29 acres. When a substantially identical solar law was presented at a public hearing a year ago, there was significant public criticism. The Town Board declined to take action then. Now, here we are again.

Solar farms are said to offset 10 times as much carbon dioxide as forests do. What about clearing forests for solar panels? If we destroy a 100-year-old forest, liberating its stored carbon and then replace it with solar panels, it will be 10 years before we break even.

However, climate scientists say that 10 years is all that we have.

We have sufficient commercial zones, rooftops, parking lots, deforested agricultural land and dormant recreational sites that may be used for large-scale solar installations. There are already solar installations on the Jefferson Valley Mall roof and others being built in parking lots at Granite Knolls and IBM. I applaud these projects.

I plan on speaking at the July 21 public hearing in opposition to the solar proposal as it is written. It will permit environmental

damage, supposedly in the name of clean energy. I urge others to attend these hearings and to state their opinions.

To register to speak via Zoom, please e-mail the town clerk at dquast@yorktownny.org or call 914-962-8152. Or you may write to the Town Board: mslater@yorktownny.org; alicia@yorktownny.org; tdiana@yorktownny.org; elachterman@yorktownny.org; and vishnuv@optonline.net.

**Paul Moskowitz**  
Yorktown Heights

### Tearing Down Statues Will Not Rewrite History

Recent news regarding Christopher Columbus' statue in Mount Kisco is very upsetting. History cannot be erased. Removing or destroying statues does not change people's hearts. Rather, let us learn from and respect the past of our ancestors and former citizens of the village.

Notice that the Columbus statue is directly across from Chief Kisco, a statue that has stood in the heart of the village for decades, honoring the memory of the first residents of this land. The Columbus statue represents all the immigrants that

followed, the people that worked to create this beautiful Village of Mount Kisco.

I am a proud native of Mount Kisco. My family and those of many others have deep roots in the village. Although I now reside in Yorktown, I have never left Mount Kisco! Let us always strive to maintain our little corner of the world as a safe, just community for all citizens to live peacefully.

**Philomena Cardillo Poli**  
Yorktown Heights



## Guest Column

### Recycling is the Best Solution to All the Lonely Litter on the Roadside

By Michael Gold

One thousand years is a long time to be lonely.

Sitting by the side of the road, abandoned after an all-too-brief encounter with their owners, often flattened by automobiles, lying in the dirt, they silently judge our indifference to their fate.

On a recent two-mile walk through Pleasantville, my daughter and I discovered 24 pieces of various species of litter, including plastic bottles and aluminum cans, plastic and paper coffee cups, three straws, a plastic knife, two ice cream cups and spoons, a Wendy's Frosty cup and a morose-looking bottle of Fireball Whisky.

They were all reposing quietly on the ground, yet I could hear their needful, gnawing pleas to be adopted by a human again.

I wanted to pick them up and take them home to our recycling box, but my daughter won't let me until we get a vaccine for COVID-19. This might take a bit of time.

Tompkins Avenue by the railroad line seems to be a special magnet for these forlorn souls. We found Poland Spring and Fanta soda bottles there, and cans of Budweiser, San Pellegrino and White Claw Hard Seltzer.

On Manville Road, around the bridge over the railroad tracks, we saw two Cold Stone Creamery cups and spoons, an empty can of Modelo beer, a plastic Dunkin' Donuts cup with about four ounces of coffee still in it, a flattened Heineken can and a plastic knife.

On Parkway Terrace, in the scrubby grass by the Saw Mill Parkway, we discovered a can of Arizona Iced Tea underneath a tree, a

plastic lid, a plastic straw and an empty pack of Marlboro cigarettes.

Do the residents of Pleasantville really want to leave these abandoned, lonely creatures to rot on their own?

In the case of plastic bottles, that could take 450 to 1,000 years. Aluminum cans can survive for 80 to 200 years in the wild. Paper cups have the easiest time – only 20 years to crumble into decomposed bits.

What can Pleasantville residents do about these degraded, yet still salvageable souls?

We could hire a talented vocalist to sing Frank Sinatra songs to all the discarded items left around town. That might make them feel a bit less unloved. Probably wouldn't work, though.

The most obvious answer is not to litter around town. But maybe we should question why we're buying some of these products in the first place.

For instance, why are we buying bottled water? It's often no purer or higher quality than tap water. Why not just buy a metal water bottle and fill it at home? It can take four to six ounces of oil to manufacture one plastic bottle. It adds up to about 17 million barrels of oil a year to make all the bottles we consume, according to the Pacific Institute.

Countless lonesome bottles end up struggling to swim in our world's oceans. About eight million tons of plastic go in the ocean every year (source: oceanconservancy.org).

Concerning aluminum, all our unrecycled aluminum cans waste 16 million barrels of oil annually. American consumers throw out \$700 million worth of aluminum cans every year.



MIRIAM GOLD PHOTO

If you take a hard look, the streets, roadsides and public spaces are full of litter and recyclables that don't have to be there.

Recycling what we consume is important, and too few people do it. But there are alternatives.

One possibility is to purchase recycling boxes, similar to the ones on the Metro-North train platform. A basic concrete, two-bin receptacle with one side taking plastic, glass and aluminum and the other side taking trash costs less than \$1,000 from Belson Outdoors. One recycling box could be placed in the municipal parking lot off Manville Road near Washington Avenue. Another box could go on the grass by

Parkway Field facing Marble Avenue.

We also need to do more to educate our young about this issue, with more curriculum time devoted to why it's important to cut down on our use of disposable cans and bottles, and to recycle far more than we are currently doing.

Finally, the village can contact the big producers of these goods, who, after all, are some of the biggest culprits in the degradation of the planet. An organization of producers and sellers of plastic and aluminum products have invested in the Closed Loop Infrastructure Fund (CLIF), which exists to help communities fund recycling projects around the country. With funding from PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, Nestle, Starbucks, Amazon and other companies, CLIF provides money for recycling infrastructure and other environmental programs.

Additionally, Coke and Pepsi provide funding for community recycling, including receptable bins for recyclable products, as well as community education programs.

Of course, the companies use these efforts to market and sell their products and image, so the village residents need to vigorously debate the usefulness of these corporate programs as well as the possible disadvantages.

If we cut the amount of litter that could be recycled by 50 percent, then we're halfway to heaven. Unless I have my math wrong.

*Pleasantville resident Michael Gold has published articles in The Washington Post, The New York Daily News and The Albany Times-Union. Miriam Gold provided research assistance for this article.*

## Letters to the Editor

### Do You Want a Commercial Facility in Your Neighborhood?

Are large scale, commercial solar farms appropriate in residential neighborhoods? Possibly your neighborhood?

Don't get me wrong. I'm a strong supporter of solar energy and I believe Yorktown should do what it can to encourage more solar facilities, both rooftop and ground installations, in residential and commercial districts. But they must be on appropriate sites.

A large solar farm is an ideal location for undeveloped land that has already been cleared, like former pasture land. But not when the solar farm will result in changing the character of a neighborhood by clear-cutting large swaths of woodlands and replacing mature trees with acre upon acre upon acre upon acre of solar panels.

That's why the Yorktown Town Board should consider allowing solar facilities (as well as battery storage facilities) by rezoning parcels for special energy uses on a case-by-case basis instead of the "okay-on-any-parcel" approach that's in the proposed law.

Like the first version of the solar law that was the subject of a public hearing last July,

the latest version, Draft #5 that will be the subject of a public hearing on July 21, would allow large-scale solar farms in any residential district on at least two acres. The facility could cover 80 percent of the site.

But unlike the earlier version, this new version prohibits large-scale solar farms on commercially zoned property. That's right. A commercial use is being allowed in a residential zone. But a commercial use is being prohibited in a commercial zone.

What do you think? What's your vision for Yorktown? Do you agree with allowing large-scale commercial solar farms on any residential parcel as small as two acres?

Share your thoughts with the Town Board – the elected officials who are supposed to be looking out for and protecting your interests. Check the town website for their e-mail addresses. Register with the town clerk to participate in the July 21 Zoom public hearing.

Yorktown is YOUR town. Make your voice heard.

**Susan Siegel  
Yorktown Heights**

### Board of Elections Has Time to Rebuild Trust Among Voters

Eligible voters need to trust that their ballot will be available in time and without question whether they request it by mail or at a polling place. They need to trust that their vote will be counted accurately as they cast it. And they need to trust that the total vote count will be accurate.

Like all Boards of Elections in New York, the Westchester Board of Elections is still working to improve implementation of many new procedures required by legislative reforms in 2019 and 2020. These are big challenges.

On top of this is the pandemic, imposing many more challenges such as sanitation of polling places for Election Day and early voting, vastly increased absentee balloting and the need to inform voters of how to participate in voting in the face of new laws and COVID-19.

After the June primary election, many people felt that the Westchester Board of Elections was overwhelmed by all this. They worry that this situation has lowered voters' trust in the election system. Lowered trust could lead to lower turnout.

The promise of all the voting reforms would be lost.

There is still time to change this situation before the Nov. 3 general election, and the early voting period from Oct. 24 to Nov. 1.

One way the Westchester Board of Elections could build trust would be to communicate more openly with and seek input from the voting public. Public meetings would offer opportunities to build trust in two ways. Through information distributed before meetings and presentations at meetings, the Board of Elections would have the opportunity to explain the complexity of running elections, especially during COVID.

With greater understanding, voters could contribute more meaningfully, offering input and working with the board to develop solutions. The time is short, but the possibility of building trust and improving voters' experience is there.

**Catherine Ray  
Ossining**

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# Hope's Door to Host Virtual Concerts to Help Domestic Violence Victims

Hope's Door is holding two virtual concerts, on July 23 and Oct. 1, to raise money to help victims of domestic violence.

NYS PAUSE, while intended to make it safer for most residents, has unfortunately also increased danger for the many victims of domestic violence who may be in quarantine or lockdown with their abusers. Hope's Door provides hotline, shelter, counseling and legal services free of charge to victims of intimate partner violence and domestic violence. They need Hope's Door services now more than ever.

Due to COVID-19, Hope's Door, like many other nonprofit organizations, was forced to cancel its Spring Gala and Fall Luncheon. The value of these special events is immeasurable due to the ability to bring together the board, staff and supporters in beautiful locations to enjoy each other's company while raising funds for the agency.

The loss of personal contact with donors and friends is distressing, but the loss in revenue that supports our programs and services is devastating. Thus, Hope's Door will host the two virtual concerts.

On July 23, Hope's Door has joined forces with the Music Conservatory of Westchester to raise funds to end

domestic violence. The concert will include musical performances by conservatory protégés and faculty and features special guest, Tony-Award nominee Melissa Errico.

The concert also includes a raffle and a presentation about the Hope's Door Youth Prevention Program, which works to help young people build healthy relationships and engages them in efforts to end domestic violence. Alexa Kauffman, Hope's Door's youth prevention coordinator, Michelle Walker, director of the Westchester County Family Justice Center and Tuesday McDonald, executive director of the Peekskill Youth Bureau, will each speak about Hope's Door programs. Participants will have the chance to connect with others who support our mission and help with fundraising for the agency.

Hope's Door has also created recipes for orange juice-based mocktails and cocktails for participants to enjoy, to complement the theme of the event, Orange Juice for the Ears. The theme derives from a quote by Dr. Oliver Sacks, who famously said, "Music can lift us out of depression or move us to tears – it is a remedy, a tonic, ORANGE JUICE FOR THE EAR."

Sacks was a noted physician, best-selling author and a professor



Tony Award-nominated actress and singer Melissa Errico will perform on July 23 in the first of two virtual concerts to benefit Hope's Door, a nonprofit organization that assists victims of domestic violence.

of neurology at NYU School of Medicine.

On Oct. 1, the virtual concert will feature New York City-based musicians and bands. The featured speaker will be Leslie Morgan Steiner, nationally acclaimed author and TED Talk speaker.

The proceeds from both concerts will support the Hope's Door Shelter, Hotline and Community Services, including group and individual counseling programs, the Youth Prevention Program and

the and the Next Step: Economic Empowerment Program. For 40 years, Hope's Door has worked to end domestic violence, and empowers victims to achieve safety, independence and healing from the trauma of abuse.

For more information on the July 23 event, visit <https://app.mobilecause.com/e/VsgOkg>.

Founded in 1980, Hope's Door operates a 24/7 free and confidential hotline for victims of domestic violence, at 888-438-8700, providing

individual and group counseling, maintaining an emergency shelter for women, children and men, conducts teen dating abuse prevention programs in many schools throughout Westchester County and provides guidance for survivors of abuse seeking economic independence. The Hope's Door Legal Center offers clients legal support in seeking order of protection, child custody and divorce proceedings, among other legal remedies.

Domestic violence affects people of all genders, sexual orientations, races, religions, economic and education levels. One in four women and one in seven men are affected by domestic violence.

Please join Hope's Door on July 23 and Oct. 1 to help make a positive, and often life-saving, difference to its clients and help it end domestic violence.

For information regarding sponsoring the events, to purchase tickets, make a donation or to volunteer, call Barbara Turk, director of development and community relations at 914-747-0828 ext. 1016 or visit [www.hopesdoorny.org](http://www.hopesdoorny.org).

If you or someone you know feels unsafe, call the free and confidential 24/7 bilingual hotline at 888-438-8700.

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# The New Cocooning and the Home Features it Inspires

Like most people, I'm stuck at home thinking about what is going on outside of the safety and isolation of my home.

Life as we knew it has changed dramatically during this pandemic. Many questions and scenarios run through my mind. As a realtor, I think about my Yorktown home and its value, both financial and emotional. How will that change as time passes? How will we be living in our homes in the future? Right now, my home primarily means good health and safety for my wife and me. I'll worry about the value later.

As my thoughts wander, I remember an article I wrote nearly 10 years ago about thought leader and futurist Faith Popcorn. If you're part of Gen X or a boomer, you might recall that she coined the term "cocooning." Her book, *The Popcorn Report*, came out in 1991 and described a movement where humans would evolve by living and working from home.

Cocooning was not a just a fad, but a certain and constantly evolving trend. Having identified it in the 1980s, she has proven to be spot-on correct. Cocooning, she said, was the impulse to go inside when it just gets too tough and scary outside, pulling a shell of safety around yourself so you're not at the mercy of a mean, unpredictable world – from rude waiters and noise pollution to crime, recession and now



By Bill Primavera

COVID-19. Cocooning is about insulation and avoidance, peace and protection, coziness and control, a sort of hyper-nesting.

The trend toward cocooning surfaced in many facets of our lives. For example, there were businesses like Blockbuster. Instead of going to the movies, we brought them home. Take-out and fast food became even more prevalent.

In the '90s, the internet only intensified cocooning. We started online banking, online shopping, online dating, online everything! Thanks to the web, we can do almost anything from the comfort of our homes. Also, alternative work schedules and working from home evolved from pilot programs. Working from home now, if we have that luxury, is no longer a lifestyle choice, it's a necessity.

In 2020, cocooning is critically important in prevailing over the coronavirus. We are all forced to be home for our health. Only essential employees can venture out into the world. Zoom and Webex have skyrocketed in popularity. Most every child has some video-conferencing app set up on a phone or computer. We don't know how many months this will continue and how long we will be staying at home.

Will we continue to be home-focused when this is over? Or will we all stay out more, with our new-found freedom? My

prediction is high levels of cocooning will continue.

Now that I'm sheltered in place, I notice more what I really like about my home. My wife and I have spent our lives perfecting it as a source of utmost utility, comfort and visual beauty.

Home is where the heart is, they say. But now home is also where the head is and the rest of your body, too, almost all the time. Home is everything during a pandemic, which is impacting the way our homes look and function.

Popcorn's forecast was for a home-centered lifestyle to be supported with gadgets, furnishings and accessories to make one's abode a more welcoming entertainment and work hub. She even projected the advent of shopping at home through technology long before the concept was developed. In fact, the re-emergence of the lifestyles trend is aided and abetted by 21st century technology. The trend today might be renamed e-cocooning.

Did the world change or did we ourselves change? The pandemic has rapidly accelerated the change, and we must change along with it to survive.

This lifestyles phenomenon will be leading to the design of official home offices, not just spare bedrooms, and designated entertainment rooms fashioned as theaters and gaming rooms. We will see more flat screen TVs in living rooms, hot tubs in garden rooms, more home gyms and more open kitchens where homeowners can

entertain guests and cook at the same time.

We're also more likely to be community-centric as big city entertainment reaches out to the stay-at-home crowd in the suburbs. Rather than traveling to the city for the kind of entertainment I enjoy, I'm more likely to stay in Westchester. When they reopen, I'll visit Westchester Broadway Theatre in Elmsford, the Jacob Burns

Film Center in Pleasantville or Yorktown Stage in my own town.

In answer to any argument that the new cocooning will cause less spending outside the home and stall the economy's recovery, just consider all the new technology, accessories and furnishings we'll need to turn our homes into work and social hubs.

While writing this column on my new iMac laptop, I'm lounging in my pajamas in a comfortable easy chair in my bedroom and intermittently watching TCM on my large screen TV. In my leftover brain space, I'm enjoying Bette Midler streaming from Netflix on my iPad while periodically checking e-mails and voicemails on my iPhone. Case closed.

*Bill Primavera, while a writer and public relations practitioner, is also a licensed realtor (PrimaveraHomes.com), affiliated with William Raveis and a marketing practitioner (PrimaveraPR.com). Anyone considering selling or buying a home can reach him directly at 914-522-2076.*

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# New Castle Historical Society Project Collects COVID-19 Stories, Photos

By Martin Wilbur

It might be a surprise to some that a local historical society would be active during a global pandemic.

For New Castle Historical Society Executive Director Jennifer Plick, 2020 may be the most important year to be hard at work.

Last month, the organization started a new project, "Collecting Community Stories: Images and Impact of COVID-19," which encourages local residents of all ages to send photos, writings, poetry, artwork and other items to record local residents' impressions and personal feelings through this unprecedented time.

Plick said the information collected now will be used by future generations, who will want to look back and research what it was like to live through COVID-19.

"I tell everybody we are making history at this point," Plick said. "We are part of it at this very time."

Residents have been sending Plick their personal stories and well as photographs from around the community via e-mail. Those images have included masks and gloves littering the ground and residents helping to collect personal protection equipment to donate to local hospitals' and

medical organizations' frontline workers.

Others have been writing journal entries about what they have been going through and sending those onto the historical society, Plick said.

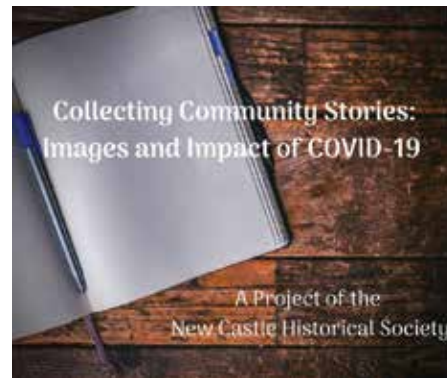
"This is something that will go into our archives and will be available to people in the future to research so they could really help educate future generations," she said.

The project has seemingly connected with the public, along with keeping Plick busy since shortly after she arrived in New Castle in May. In-person programming, like virtually all other events, was discontinued in March. It isn't known when those events might resume.

"It's afforded me time to sort of research things and get into sort of the history of the organization and of the area before we really start to open up again and hopefully get going with some programming at some point," said Plick, currently a White Plains resident.

A lifelong Westchester resident, Plick is a veteran of area historical organizations. A graduate of Yorktown High School and Mercy College, she was hooked into the historical and museum world after taking a job one summer as a tour guide at John Jay Homestead in Katonah.

Plick worked for Historic Hudson Valley



New Castle Historical Society Executive Director Jennifer Plick is spearheading the organization's new project, "Collecting Community Stories: Images and Impact of COVID-19."



for a short time before moving onto the Greenwich Historical Society. That was followed by 12 years of service at the Rye Historical Society, where Plick started out as the education director and worked her way up to assistant director.

Most recently, Plick worked at the Historical Society of Rockland County.

For anyone who would like to contribute to "Collecting Community Stories: Images and Impact of COVID-19," e-mail writings

in PDF format or jpeg photos to [info@newcastlehs.org](mailto:info@newcastlehs.org). Include your full name, contact information and descriptions of the materials being sent.

Other items that cannot be sent by e-mail will be reviewed when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

For more information, contact Plick at 914-238-4666 or [director@newcastlehs.org](mailto:director@newcastlehs.org).

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# Open Door, Star of Bethlehem Church to Host Health Fair on Saturday

Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church and Open Door Family Medical Center are joining forces to hold a community health event this Saturday, July 18 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the church's parking lot at 304 Spring St. in Ossining.

The event, which will be available to the public at no charge, will include COVID-19 testing, rapid HIV testing and distribution of educational materials, in addition to various giveaways, including face masks. There will be opportunities for attendees to make appointments for additional services, to be linked with other resources and to register

for antibody testing at Open Door's Ossining site.

"We've done COVID-19 testing at our sites since March, but this is an opportunity to move the testing into the community," said Andrea Ruggiero, vice president, community health at Open Door. "We also will have our experts there to provide answers to any questions people may have about COVID-19 and how best to care for themselves and their families."

Volunteer nurses from the church will participate, along with Open Door providers, to ensure that masks are available and safety

protocols maintained.

"Open Door has always been a viable resource for our community, providing exceptional service for those who may not have access to insurance or health care, which is a human right," said Rev. Shaun Ellison Jones, senior pastor of Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church. "In light of how the virus has disproportionately affected people of color, I thought it was important for our congregants and others in the community to get tested and know of their status and how to protect themselves and their families. I know Open Door has been conducting testing at their

sites for some time, but this will be the first large-scale community testing site from Sleepy Hollow to Cortlandt that I am aware of."

To pre-register for the Community Health Fair, call 914-620-9641 or visit [www.starbethehc.org](http://www.starbethehc.org). Walk-ins will be accommodated with COVID-19 testing, based on availability.

Star of Bethlehem has been a staple of the Ossining community for 130 years. The church provides a wide range of services and ministries for its more than 300 congregants and the communities it serves in northern Westchester County through its food ministry, mobile pantry and homeless outreach.

Open Door Family Medical Center's mission has remained consistent since 1972, to provide high quality health care that's affordable, accessible and efficient.

Today, the federally qualified health center cares for nearly 1,000 adults and children every day in Westchester, Putnam and Ulster counties – with more than 300,000 patient visits and over 400 babies delivered annually – regardless of one's ability to pay.

In addition to medical, dental, pediatric, women's, podiatry and behavioral health care offered in its Ossining, Port Chester, Sleepy Hollow, Mount Kisco, Brewster and Mamaroneck sites, eight school-based health centers in the Ossining and Port Chester school districts and a mobile dental and dental practice in Saugerties, Open Door promotes wellness, good nutrition, stress reduction and physical activity to help families stay healthy.

## Ossining Schools Providing Free Breakfast, Lunch for Children

The Ossining School District is participating in the Summer Food Service Program, which provides free breakfast and lunch each weekday to children 18 and under.

Families can pick up grab-and-go meals between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. weekdays at Park School, located at 22 Edward St. There are no income requirements for the Ossining meals program, which runs through Aug. 21.

The Summer Food Service Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered by the state Education Department (SED), with assistance from Hunger Solutions New York. SED anticipates serving more than 20 million nutritious meals to about 400,000 children this summer.

"The state Education Department has worked with our partners across the state throughout the COVID-19 emergency to ensure that all students have access to consistent, healthy meals throughout the school shutdown," Interim Education Commissioner Shannon Tahoe said. "Thanks to our work with the USDA, we are able to also fill the gap in the summer months and provide kids with much-needed, nutritious meals and a sense of security for families and communities."

For more information about Ossining's program, call 914-941-7700 ext. 1338 or visit [www.oufsdbolt.com](http://www.oufsdbolt.com).

To locate other sites, call 211, 866-3-HUNGRY, text "food" or "comida" to 877-877 or visit [SummerMealsNY.org](http://SummerMealsNY.org) or

the USDA online map at [www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids](http://www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids). Program information may be available in languages other than English.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact the USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Persons with disabilities who require alternate means of communication for information can contact the state Education Department or the Ossining School District.

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# 'I Feel a Little Bit of Normalcy': Mt. Kisco LL Swings Into Action

By Madeline Rosenberg

Scoreboards lit up with balls, strikes and outs, parents cheered from behind the outfield and fly balls soared in Leonard Park.

After a canceled spring season, Mount Kisco Little League returned Saturday with some coronavirus caveats: no high-fives, no sunflower seeds, no shared baseball gear. This year's opening day came without a parade and with six-foot markers taped to bleachers.

But players and parents were thrilled to be back after months without baseball. As storm clouds hung over the fields early in the weekend, it was the rain that delayed the baseball games this time.

Rasheen Merritt watched his 11-year-old son Ahmad warm up in the outfield for a game against the Elks Club team on Saturday afternoon. He said he was relieved that his son, who plays for the Exit 4 Food Hall squad, was back with his team.

"I feel like doing a backflip," Merritt said before the game. "I'm just so happy and excited."

Merritt's excitement grew as warmup winded down; his wife, Denise DePass, was throwing the ceremonial first pitch. The

Mount Kisco mayor normally hurls the first pitch on opening day, but Mayor Gina Picinich said she wanted to honor an essential worker this year.

DePass, a nurse at Greenwich Hospital, learned minutes before game time that she would throw the first pitch of the summer season that is making up for the lost spring. Merritt watched with their four-year-old daughter, who cheered for her mom from a pink camping chair.

"It's pressure," Merritt said of DePass's ceremonial pitch as he smiled. "I want her to make a good pitch. She's representing the family."

As the Exit 4 team took the field and the Elks stepped up to bat, parents and siblings distanced across the grass in camping chairs. They wore masks and shielded under umbrellas during scattered rain showers.

Picinich said she was glad spectators were "being smart" about social distancing, instructed to scatter behind the outfield instead of watching from their usual spot near the dugouts.

Coaches have also become social distancing monitors for their teams. While the players don't wear masks on the field, they're required to mask up in

the dugout. Coaches followed up calls to "bring it in" with "masks on!"

In between cheers, parents chatted about their children's summer reading and caught up after months at home. Siblings played together in the grass. Teachers compared their school reopening plans while they watched their sons run the bases.

One of the parents, Audrey Weiner, said she was grateful to see the town's commitment to making baseball happen this year. Heavy rain on Friday left Opening Day games in limbo, but Weiner said the teams got the green light about two hours before start time.

Though the league's Major League games happened on Saturday, Minor League matches were pushed to late Sunday morning. Commissioner Bob Byrns and volunteers arrived at Leonard Park early on Saturday to rake the fields, making sure they were dry enough to play, Picinich said.

Weiner added that she was happy to reunite with people she hasn't seen in months. But she said she misses the community spirit of the parade. Her son, who plays for the Elks, wonders what baseball will be like without high-



With the spring season having been wiped out because of the pandemic, there were a lot of smiles to go around last weekend as the Mount Kisco Little League launched a summer season for its players. The region entered Phase 4 last week allowing for low-risk sports to resume.

fives and sunflower seeds. Still, she told him, "at least you get to play."

"Everyone's glad to be back out. I'm happy that the kids have

*continued on page 22*



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# Byram Hills' Behar Recognized as Westchester Scholastic Sports Award

Con Edison honored 26 winners of the Westchester Scholastic Sports Award who were selected as Athlete of the Week during the 2019-20 school year. The winners join 2,624 other students who have received this coveted award since 1951.

The virtual ceremony honored and highlighted the winners' excellence in sports, academics and community service. The virtual event replaced the

annual banquet because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The moderator of the weekly scholastic-athlete program, Rich Leaf, announced the winners. Students received congratulatory messages from Westchester County Executive George Latimer, Con Edison Vice President of Electric Operations Shakira Wilson and Athletic Director of the Public Schools of the Tarrytowns and former Con Edison Scholastic Athlete

Michael Arias.

In addition to the prestige of being named a scholar-athlete of the week, four students were selected to receive scholarships based on their outstanding achievements.

Byram Hills High School's Alexander Behar received the Doc Bland Award and \$5,000. He will attend New York University and continue his wrestling career. He was the featured Athlete of the Week on Feb. 28.

Behar was the Bobcat's wrestling program's all-time wins leader. He was Westchester County champion and placed fourth at the Eastern States tournament. He was the first two-time captain in school history, serving that role for the combined Byram Hills/Westlake/Valhalla squad. Behar received the Bill Snyder Award and was a Columbia University Neuroscience participant.

Since 1951, Con Edison has awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships for this program.

Athlete of the Week winners are selected by an impartial panel of athletic directors and coaches.



Byram Hills High School's Alexander Behar received the Doc Bland Award after being named Con Edison Athlete of the Week on Feb. 28. He was one of 26 winners across the county that was recognized.

## 'I Feel a Little Bit of Normalcy': Mt. Kisco LL Swings Into Action

*continued from page 21*

the experience of playing again," she said. "It's the social connection that we're all missing. I think we all missed people."

Across from the Exit 4-Elks game, the M&R Deli team went up against SWGM. Parents pressed against the outfield fence, cheering "Run, go, go!" and "Nice catch!"

Eliane Fishkind cheered as her son ran for team SWGM.

"The parents are the cheering squad," she said.

Fishkind said she was happy to have baseball back – "it keeps morale up" – but having summer Little League meant more to her. For the first time in five years, her son is spending summer at home instead of at sleepaway camp in Massachusetts. She's glad to have him home.

"If it wasn't [baseball], there would

basically be nothing right now," she said. "This was definitely a happy end to not having any spring sports."

The parents weren't the only ones happy to be back at the park. Jonathan Diorio, 12, said playing with team Exit 4 felt great, though he and some of his teammates said they don't like wearing a mask in the dugout.

Diorio and a few teammates watched some of the remaining SWGM-M&R Deli game, after their team's 11-1 win over the Elks. SWGM ultimately beat M&R 11-4.

Baseball is back, and Fishkind said she hopes it stays that way, wishing for no more rain during games and for the virus to remain under control in the region.

"It feels awesome," DePass said. "We're not stuck in the backyard. I feel a little bit of normalcy."

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# What's in a Name? Birding's Own Confederate Shadow

By Brian Kluepfel

The May confrontation in Central Park between a white woman walking a dog off-leash and a Black birder asking her not to throw into sharp contrast many divisions in our republic.

And it just went to show that no matter how we try to escape – even through a seemingly peaceful birding walk – we cannot get away from the inherent prejudices and problems of the larger society.

While opinions may vary, birders tend to range across the political and social spectrum. I even introduced the notion that our local Audubon chapter not participate in Amazon's Smile program because of the company's questionable business and employment record (I lost).

In 2018 – seemingly eons ago in pandemic time – birding activists led by an East Carolina University ornithology graduate student requested that McCown's longspur, named for a Confederate soldier who was also an amateur birder, be re-named. The concept had precedent in the American Ornithological Society (AOS); a duck once called “old squaw,” under a bit of worldwide pressure, was re-designated as long-tailed duck in 2000.

In response to the McCown controversy, which the AOS initially denied, the organization released a new set of naming guidelines for birds. Its North American

Classification Committee (NACC) included a Special Considerations section in their guidelines, which in part stated:

“At present, 142 English names of NACC bird species are eponyms...some refer to individuals or cultures who held beliefs or engaged in actions that would be considered offensive or unethical by present-day standards.”

But will they change names? This requires a two-thirds vote within NACC. “The NACC will change well-established eponyms only in unusual circumstances, but these situations may occur.” In the case of McCown, the wording of the document gives further clues.

“By itself, affiliation with a now-discredited historical movement or group is likely not sufficient for the NACC to change a long-established eponym.” So being part of the Confederacy maybe gives you a pass.

However: “In contrast, the active engagement of the eponymic namesake in reprehensible events could serve as grounds for changing even long-established eponyms, especially if these actions were associated with the individual's ornithological career.” McCown rose to the rank of general and led troops not only against the Union but against native tribes. He was no bystander to history.

It seems the AOS is a bit stodgy and resistant to change, so name changes will

probably come slowly, if they come at all.

I did my own research in the “Eponym Dictionary of Birds,” one of my favorite resources, and came up with a few examples and decisions of my own. (I'm a committee of one, which makes things simple.)

**Fernandina's Flicker (Cuba).** Named for Jose Maria de Jesus Damiano de Herrera y Herrera, Conde de la Fernandina. Described as an 18th century “nobleman and head of a notable Cuban landowning family,” this guy had to have been a slaveowner if he owned property in Cuba then. Decision: Rename.

**Warszewicz's Rainbow (Rainbow Starfrontlet, Ecuador).** This has to be the greatest bird name of all time, and for that reason alone I hesitate to change it. Josef Warszewicz Ritter von Rawicz was a Lithuanian-Polish botanist who worked at the Berlin Botanical Garden, moved to Guatemala, collected in Peru and Ecuador, caught yellow fever and returned home.

“He is regarded as one of the greatest orchid collectors of all time.” Josef was a poor nobleman who took part in an uprising, was exiled and dedicated his life to science. Decision: Maintain name.

**Laura's Woodland Warbler (Mrs. Boulton's Woodland Warbler, Africa).** Laura Theresa Boulton was the wife of ornithologist Wolfrid Rudyard Boulton,

who named this lovely African bird in her honor. Laura was a noted musicologist who collected musical instruments and compositions, and made field recordings across Africa. She said that her goal was “to capture, absorb, and bring back the world's music; not the music of the concert hall or the opera house, but the music of the people ...” Decision: Very cool woman. Maintain name.

I argue that we should examine these eponyms on a case-by-case basis. And remember that in parts of the globe, dead white person's names aren't used at all: toucan (tukani) and aracari, for example, are indeed original Tupi words from the Amazon.

The world changes as we learn and educate ourselves; hopefully things change for the better. We honor those who deserve honoring, and the ongoing discussion reveals our true intentions and values as a society.

Now who went and changed the Gray Jay to the

Canada Jay?

*Brian Kluepfel is a writer and correspondent for Lonely Planet travel guides, Westchester Magazine and Birdwatching Daily. He lives in Ossining with his lovely wife Paula, who is a much more observant and patient birder than he. For more of Brian's writing, visit [www.thewritingkoop.com](http://www.thewritingkoop.com).*

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# Business Council of Westchester Launches Anti-Racism Educational Series

The Business Council of Westchester (BCW) has started a series of free webinars designed to take action steps against racism as part of its new Anti-Racism Initiative.

The first in the series of programs held last Thursday, "Unconscious Bias," was led by Dr. Gena Yvette Davis, an organizational psychologist, executive coach and corporate trainer.

The series was organized in partnership with Balancing Life's Issues and sponsored by the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors (HGAR); Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce; the New York State Economic Development Council; Westchester-Putnam Workforce Board and the Putnam County Business Council.

"The Business Council of Westchester is committed to standing against racism and to create a call to action for all of our members to make a difference in the communities we all represent," said Marsha Gordon, BCW president and CEO who opened the program along with Board Chairman Heidi Davidson. "We will continue to seek opportunities for the (council) to play a critical role in both advancing the conversation about dismantling racism and also in taking actionable steps to support real change."

The BCW has created an Anti-Racism Resource Center on its website with educational materials including the

webinar series, which will be recorded and can be watched at any time.

Davis' talk was designed to help business leaders raise awareness about their own unconscious biases, how they affect employees and others in the workforce and steps to correct this.

"It has to begin with you," Davis said. "You have to decide that change will happen in your organization. Inclusion, equity and belonging has to begin with you."

Davis said that many unconscious biases stem from fear and the first step is to examine those fears and look within for ways to alleviate them.

"Some unconscious bias can come from fear: we need to get clear on what this is," she said. "If we understand what is driving our fear, we can eradicate it and open up to others."

Davis suggested that leadership create a culture of psychological safety where employees feel free to be their authentic selves. Also key, she said, was to provide educational opportunities such as lunch and learn programs where employees can examine implicit bias and learn about the accomplishments and histories of brown and black peoples to help frame new perceptions.

"We all hold these unconscious biases, and once you identify them, you will be able to uncover them and make different choices," Davis said.



Dr. Gena Yvette Davis was the first speaker last week in the Business Council of Westchester's new Anti-Racism Initiative series.

The series, which is free and open to the public, will continue with Fostering Inclusion in the Workplace on July 16 followed by:

- How to Be an Inclusive Leader, July 23
- What You Need to Know About Demonstrations, July 30
- Coping with Civil Unrest, Aug. 4

- Self-Care in the Face of Trauma, Aug. 11
- Raising Children to Respect Diversity in Your Home, Sept. 1

"The Business Council of Westchester is committed to standing against racism," Davidson said. "We will join forces at the federal, state and local levels with business organizations that share our same desire to create a call to action for all of our collective members to make a difference in the communities we represent. Our goal is to advance the conversation to end racism with actionable steps to support real change."

To register for these programs and to learn more about the Anti-Racism Resource Center, visit [www.thebcw.org](http://www.thebcw.org)

The Business Council of Westchester is the county's largest and most influential business membership organization. It is committed to helping businesses market, learn, advocate and grow. In addition, the BCW 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. It also acts as an information resource for the business community and government leaders at all levels. For more information, visit [www.thebcw.org](http://www.thebcw.org).

## A Spiritual View

By Rev. Beth Graham

One of the characteristics of this time we are living in is uncertainty. We make plans but have to hold them loosely. Sometimes we're staying home, sometimes we're going out. Guidelines keep changing as new information emerges. It requires us to be flexible, to be nimble, to become okay with uncertainty and to be okay with a certain amount of risk.

We can learn something here from an old patriarch from many of our faith traditions: Abraham. At the age of 75, he was called out by God to leave his homeland and his people to go to a place which God would show him. He didn't know where God was leading him. He was given a promise of offspring, which



seemed impossible. He had to go and not know. He did it because he trusted God, and was fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

Sometimes we are called to go and not know. To step out and take a risk. To be okay with the unknown and be open to change. To act without every question answered. To put our lives in God's hands and trust that He knows what He's doing.

When we do, we find that God is trustworthy and our faith is deepened. Let's be like Abraham and have faith in God as we go and not know.

*Rev. Beth Graham is the pastor at Hillside Church in Armonk and is part of the Armonk Faith Alliance. The alliance also comprises Congregation B'nai Yisrael, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, St. Patrick's RC Church and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.*

## Can Taking Advantage of Gift Tax Exclusion Wreck Medicaid Eligibility?

Dear Mr. Di Costanzo,

*Is it true I can gift \$15,000 without jeopardizing Medicaid eligibility for nursing home care?*

This is a question I'm continually asked, so I'm glad I have another opportunity to clear things up. The main thing to remember is that IRS rules are different from Medicaid rules.

Under current IRS rules, you may gift up to \$15,000 to as many people as you'd like in 2020 without needing to file a gift tax return. This is known as the gift tax exclusion, and you can think of gifts that qualify as being excluded from needing to be reported to the IRS. If your gift to someone (other than your spouse) is over \$15,000, you must tell the IRS.

The annual gift tax exclusion, however, does not tie into Medicaid. Under rules concerning Medicaid eligibility for nursing home services, any gifts within the preceding five-year period (often referred to as the look-back period) will be evaluated and may result in a penalty period during which Medicaid will not pay.

It is important to note that currently,



By Salvatore M. Di Costanzo, Esq.

there is no look-back period for community Medicaid when one stays at home, but as of Oct. 1, there will be a new two and a half-year look-back period.

I can't stress this enough: do not try to reduce your assets for Medicaid eligibility purposes by making gifts that you do not need to report to the IRS. You will need to report them to the government for Medicaid purposes, and they can have a detrimental effect on eligibility.

If you're thinking about planning for the future and believe that you may eventually need nursing home care, an elder law, estate planning and special needs planning attorney can help by offering advice based on the law, your specific circumstances and the attorney's professional experience.

*Salvatore M. Di Costanzo is a partner with Maker, Fragale & Di Costanzo, LLP in Rye and Yorktown Heights. He is an attorney and accountant whose main area of practice is elder law and special needs planning. Di Costanzo can be reached at 914-925-1010 or at [smd@mfd-law.com](mailto:smd@mfd-law.com). You may also visit [www.plantodayfortomorrow.com](http://www.plantodayfortomorrow.com).*

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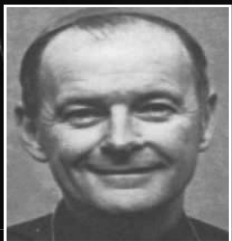
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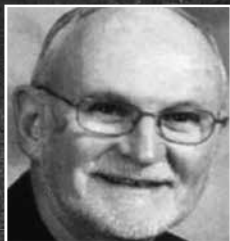
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# Advice on Coping With Pandemic-related Drinking Behavior



By Nick Antonaccio

We've all gone through the difficulties of isolation, sheltering and distancing for the past four months. Many of us have adapted well, including learning to work remotely. Others have been under considerable

stress, whether dealing with unemployment or confronting life-and-death virus cases daily.

And many have found ways to deal with these pandemic times, including increasing our alcohol consumption, significantly for a number of us.

Going forward, as we wend our way back to the new normal (which seems to be redefined and evolving every week), I trust our pandemic drinking habits will subside and revert to the old normal.

This week's column focuses on drinking advice I've espoused in previous columns. Consider it a refresher course as we continue our journey toward some form of guarded normalcy.

Drinking wine in moderation, when exercised responsibly, is beneficial for our minds and bodies. Psychologically, it mellows us, reducing stress and anxiety,

*'The key to successfully balancing the positive and negative factors associated with drinking wine is moderation.'*

resulting in enhanced conviviality. Physiologically, notably with red wine, it promotes cardiovascular health and fights disease.

The key to successfully balancing the positive and negative factors associated with drinking wine is moderation. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, moderate alcoholic drinking is no more than one drink a day for most women and no more than two drinks a day for most men. A standard drink is generally considered to be 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.

Here are a number of ways to control the effects of the alcohol you consume and limit your intake.

1. Sip, don't slurp. Consume no more than one drink per hour. This

gives your circulatory system the requisite time to process the bulk (but not all) of the alcohol. An added bonus: I find that as long as I have a partially full wine glass in my hand and my lips are frequently touching the glass rim, I can (sometimes) nurse one glass of wine for hours. I still enjoy the wine, but

no one is coaxing me for a refill.

2. Pre-set your limit – and don't falter. As a math project, determine your personal limit of alcohol. At a minimum use the government's guidelines above. Space out your refills over the course of the event you're attending. As you are nursing your drink, or during the down time between drinks, drink copious amounts of water. My rule of thumb is one glass of water for each comparable glass of wine.

3. We're all sufficiently experienced to know never to drink on an empty stomach. Without food to absorb alcohol, your circulatory system will speed the alcohol much more quickly to your brain.

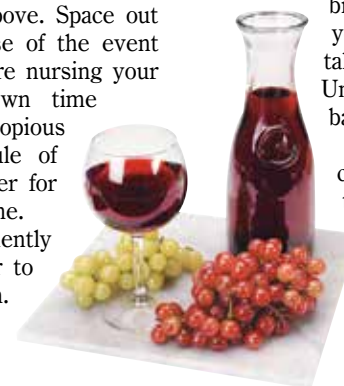
Make the effort to eat about one hour before you expect to drink. Which foods? Those high in protein slow down the rate of alcohol absorption better than carbohydrates. Protein is fattier and will coat your esophagus and stomach lining, slowing the absorption of alcohol. Aging baby boomers heed this: as you get older, the proportion of body fat to water increases. You can't drink like you did in 1979 and you can't party like it's 1999.

Once you begin drinking, follow a similar regimen: protein-based hors d'oeuvres (pigs in a blanket?), cheeses and nuts work very well. By the way, the old-school maxim to consume two teaspoons of olive oil one hour before you begin drinking actually works fairly well.

4. If you can't follow the first three guidelines, make sure you have a designated driver standing by. (An Uber ride is still a bit iffy for some of us). The younger generation has taken this safety tip to heart. Unfortunately, a number of baby boomers still don't get it.

We are all social creatures. Wine can bridge the relationship between family, friends and new acquaintances, fuel comradery and relieve stress. If and when you choose to drink, please do so sensibly and responsibly. Allow wine to enhance your relationships, not impair them.

Nick Antonaccio is a 40-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](mailto:nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com) or on Twitter @sharingwine.



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any bid, and to award the contract to other than the lowest bidder if deemed in the best interest of the Village to do so. *Dated: July 14, 2020 Village of Pleasantville Eric Morrissey, Village Administrator/Clerk*

## MISCELLANEOUS

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# Sports

## 11U PV Pride Blue Deliver Knockouts to PV, Byram Hills, NY Silverbacks

By Ray Gallagher  
Examiner Sports Editor@Directrays

The rumor around the GHVBL 11U B-Division circuit is that Putnam Valley Blue is good enough to play in the A-Division, and some teams, including the visiting Byram Hills Bobcats might concur with that notion after three PV Pride pitchers -- Logan Moriarty, Jack Marinelli and Christian Martin -- combined to pitch the club's first no-hitter of the season in a 10-0 win last

Thursday at Keating Field.

The Pride (3-0) have come out of the gate firing on all cylinders, including a 16-0 opening night win over PV Pride White (1-1) last Tuesday, which included a combined one-hitter by pitchers Christian Martin and Ryan Tagliamonte-Akram (9 K's) and 16 stolen bases.

Against Byram Hills (0-1), the Tagliamonte-Akram brothers, Ryan and Cam, both had a pair of hits for the Pride. Martin knocked in two runs while Matt

Quinn and Nicky Benedetto each drove home a run to support the trio of hurlers who fanned 11 over five frames, allowing just two walks. Moriarty whiffed six of the seven batters he faced.

PV Manager Frank Weller has been impressed with the play of the Pride but cautioned that despite the shortened season due to COVID-19 anything can and always does happen in GHVBL play.

The Pride continued to steamroll Sunday at Keating Field where they launched

an assault on the NY Silverbacks in a 22-0 victory behind three hits and six RBI from Marinelli, who paced an 11-hit attack. Two PV Pride hurlers -- Cam and Ryan Tagliamonte -- allowed just two hits in front of error-free defense.

**All Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League coaches are encouraged to send weekly results and any shareable/printable photos by 7 p.m. Sunday to raygallaghersports@gmail.com.**



Putnam Valley Pride's Christian Martin slides in safe ahead of tag from Byram Hills 3B Guggenheimer in Pride's 10-0 win over Bobcats last Thursday.



Putnam Valley 1B Christian Martin barrels into home as Byram Hills C Jack McNulty awaits throw in PV's 10-0 win over Bobcats last Thursday in GHVBL 11U action.



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Putnam Valley Pride's Matt Quinn tracks his CF bomb in 10-0 win over Armonk in 11U GHVBL action.



Byram Hills P Tyler Anchin takes a rip in 10-0 loss to Putnam Valley in 11U GHVBL action.



## Sports

# Mahopac Wolves Come out Howling in 11U GHVBL Action

By Ray Gallagher  
Examiner Sports Editor@Directrays

Taking a deep dive into the 11U Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League, or any baseball for that matter, was a long time coming. A pair of games from the B-Division revealed a couple of early truths; both the undefeated Putnam Valley Pride Blue (3-0) and the Mahopac Wolves (4-0) looked like a couple of GHVBL contenders out of the

gate.

The Wolves doubled up on the Brewster Crush Green, defeating them three times last week. The Mahopac Wolves secured a 16-2 victory last Tuesday then took both ends of a double-dip on Sunday.

In Sunday's 12-2 win, multi-talented Lorenzo Echandy went yard and drove home two runs to lead the charge. Johnny Keeney (2 RBI) and Alex Girau (2 hits) were also solid contributors. In Mahopac's 10-6 win



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Carmel C Owen Yost slides in safely at 3B in Cubs' 10-1 loss to rival Mahopac in 11U GHVBL action.



Mahopac Wolves P Max Sorrentino delivers in 10-1 win over Carmel Cubs.

over the Crush, P Jake Cotter (RBI) fanned five over four innings of work.

The Wolves got things moving in the first inning, when Jake Cotter got the green light on a 3-0 count, driving home two runs before the Wolves blew things open in a seven-run fourth when Connor Rosolen Max Sorrentino, Tommy Vitello, Johnny Keeney and Enchandy (3-for-4) all drove in runs to support P Enchandy for the win. He went three innings, allowing two runs on three hits while striking out four. Aiden Kugler threw one inning in relief out of the bullpen. Mahopac Wolves Red tallied 12 hits on the day. Echandy, Keeney and Sorrentino each had multiple hits. Echandy went 3-for-4 at the plate.

The Wolves, which hosts a pair of 11U teams (Red/Blue), had picked up where the Mahopac Wolves Blue team had



Carmel's Stephen Luciana is stuck in a run-down between Mahopac's Orion Ortiz and Max Sorrentino in Wolves' 10-1 GHVBL 11U win over Cubs.

*continued on next page*



Mahopac 3B Rocco Spirelli rips single in 11U Wolves' 10-1 GHVBL win over Carmel Cubs last week.



## Sports

# NYS Senator Harckham Shouldn't Mix Politics with Sports, Education



By Ray Gallagher  
Examiner Sports  
Editor @Directrays

Here we go again with the mixing of sports and politics. These guys, many of whom have never tossed a pigskin, just can't stick to their own lane.

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) can take his Senate Bill S8708 and shove it. No thanks, sir, we don't need your political correctness interfering

with our sports lives.

Harckham, who represents the 40th Senate District (which includes portions of Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess counties), submitted his bill to the Senate last week calling to amend state education law to exclude schools with race-based mascots from receiving state funding.



NYS Peter Harckham (D) is coming for all race-based logos with a newly proposed bill in Albany.

This phony, ginned-up bill, which is wholly unnecessary, seeks to add section 3602-g, which includes language that excludes schools with race-based mascots from state appropriation. This act would take effect three years after it becomes law, giving schools that time to abolish their current mascots and budget for everything from new gym floor murals to sports apparel (from modified to varsity), which are just a couple of the extra expenses that districts will incur.

This bill defines a race-based mascot as "any person, animal or object used to represent a school district, which is derived from a specific race or ethnicity or is based on certain characteristics of a specific race or ethnicity."

And, according to Rob Astorino, who is opposing Harckham for state Senate later this year, these are some of the mascots Harckham, in his infinite wisdom, is coming for: Not the just the Indians, but Harckham is set to extinguish the likes of the "Fighting Irish," "Warriors," "Spartans," "Scotties" or "Flying Dutchman," perhaps even the Gypsy Moths. Even the Valhalla Vikings, Mahopac Indians and Horace Greeley Quakers are at risk of being forced to change their mascots or lose state funding.

Pretty soon places like Yorktown, which go by the Cornhuskers, will have offended farmers. We'll be left with toads, weather systems and certain fungi as mascots. May-

be the Yorktown Yeast Bombs would work.

New York is in shambles right now; folks leaving the state in record numbers because they can't afford it any longer and fear the political paradigm. There's a massive, non-sensical increase in antipolice sentiment in our cities, and the notion to defund the NYPD – despite recent reported increases of violent crime – is not only on the table, it's happening to the tune of \$1 billion. The

state is eyeballing a \$13 billion deficit, and hundreds of thousands are still out of work due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Small business owners have seen their life savings go up in flames but Harckham is concerned about the

Spartans having a negative effect on a few squeaky wheels in townships across the state. This is what's on his plate during a global pandemic? Dude's gotta go! It's time the district woke up, voted this guy out and reached across the aisle where a warm, welcoming reception awaits Astorino.

The state and country have been decimated by the lockdowns. Parents have no childcare plan in place to watch their children should teachers, students, aides and administrators be denied entrance to school buildings this fall for a safe reopening. We

still don't know if our kids are going back to school, and we're a month-and-a-half away from the start of the 2020-21 academic year.

And here's Harckham, focused on school mascots. He has some set of stones to throw this kind of tomfoolery in our faces; to mandate such buffoonery on the state level when matters of such concern could and should be handled internally by school districts and local communities. Shame on you, Harckham!

"We don't need a grandstanding politician in Albany threatening to cut even more state funding if they don't bend to his will and whims," Astorino said in a recent post upon Harckham's declaration. "Local school districts are already facing devastating cuts to school aid and have received little to no guidance on how they should safely reopen in the fall. Our state senator should be focused on that – not mascots."

Harckham is the first Democrat to represent the state Senate from northern Westchester and Putnam County since 1914, and politicians that come out firing against longstanding school mascots, cancel culture and political correctness – instead of jobs, education, police and public safety – need to be shown the door. And that goes for anyone in Albany that supports this bill.

Don't let the door hit you in the rear, Pistol Pete! Wake up District 40!

*continued from previous page*

left off the night before in a 10-1 win over visiting Carmel at Sycamore Park.

Mahopac defeated Carmel 10-1 on Monday thanks to six runs in the third inning. Mike Madera, Anthony Blanc, Nick Lucia, Johnny Keeney and Aiden Kugler powered the big inning with RBI.

The Wolves fired up the offense in the first inning when winning P Max Sorrentino singled to support his own cause, scoring two runs.

Mahopac notched six runs in the third inning.

Sorrentino went three innings, allowing one run on two hits and striking out eight. Orion Ortiz threw three innings in relief out of the bullpen, recording the last nine outs to earn the save.

Jake Cotter went 2-for-2 at the plate to lead the Wolves, who stole ten bases. The Wolves didn't commit a single error in the field.

**All Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League coaches are encouraged to send weekly results and any shareable/printable photos by 7 p.m. Sunday to [raygallaghersports@gmail.com](mailto:raygallaghersports@gmail.com)**



Mahopac Wolves slugger Jake Cotter eyes a pitch he would single in 10-1 win over Carmel Cubs in GHVBL 11U action.



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# Cuckoo for Koco!



## Yorktown Reliever Chalks up 6-1 Win in 16U GHVBL Action

RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Yorktown Rebel P Michael "Koco" Kocovic (3 K's) fired the final three innings in relief of starter Ryan Campobasso to chalk up a 6-1 win in GHVBL 16-U A-Division action over visiting Briarcliff last Saturday at Granite Knolls Parks where the two hurlers scattered three hits and allowed just one earned run. The Rebels raked nine hits in all, two apiece from SS Adam Agresti (inset in rundown). Additionally, the Rebels defeated the Cortlandt Nationals, 3-1, when Joseph Lupinacci drove home the winning run and SS Nick Jacoby (inset) flashed some mean leather to support Lupinacci (2IP, 2K's), the winning pitcher. Agresti and Matt Alduino each drove home a run for the winners. The Rebs (4-0) finished out the week by sweeping a double-dip over visiting Brookfield, 10-0 and 10-1. Russell Hunter fanned 12 over six innings of brilliant ball in the shutout win, supported by two hits and two RBI from Campobasso and another from Ryan Devaney, who had three RBI in the two Brookfield wins. Jack Gaurdino (5 K's) and Jacob Krauss combined to strikeout eight batters in the 10-1 win.