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The NORTHERN WESTCHESTER Examiner

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

July 28 - August 3, 2020 SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS Volume 12, Issue 553

Ossining Makes History with First African American Choice

By Rick Pezzullo

Ossining Mayor Victoria Gearity made history last week by appointing the first African American to serve as Village Historian. Joyce Sharrock Cole, who currently serves on the village's Historic Preservation Commission, will succeed Dana White. White has been Village Historian since January 2015 and is running unopposed for village trustee in the fall. "I have long admired Joyce's work with the Little Bertie County Genealogy Society. As I got to know her better, and collaborated with her on recent projects, I realized she was just the person we need to bring a fresh energy and perspective to local history, one

that feels relevant and current," White said during a small gathering July 21 at Duers Circle, an intersection located on the western side of the double arch bridge that recently received upgrades to improve pedestrian and driver safety. "History is happening now, and Joyce is ready to document it. Her researching ability has helped many people learn about their past and affirm their identities, and I'm excited to see how she applies that talent to the village at large," White added. Cole earned a BS in Organizational Management from Mercy College and certification as a Genealogical Researcher from Boston University. She is a founding member and lead researcher for

the Little Bertie County Genealogical Society, which facilitates the Ancestry Group for the Ossining Public Library. She also serves as the records management and records access officer for the Westchester County Department of Emergency Services. Cole is producing a video of her presentation about Reverend Duers and creating a page on the village's website dedicated to Ossining's history. She said she is looking forward to leveraging her position as Village Historian to galvanize residents and young people to participate in local research efforts by discovering how they and their family have contributed to it. "It is an honor to be appointed



continued on page 2 Joyce Sharrock Cole is Ossining's new Village Historian

Back in Business

The Jefferson Valley Mall celebrated its reopening July 20 with a ribbon cutting ceremony with Yorktown officials.



Plans for Public Space in Downtown Peekskill Approved

By Rick Pezzullo

The Peekskill Common Council voted last week to close Esther Street to traffic through October to enable existing businesses to expand outdoor seating. The move was applauded by the community group Peekskill Walks, which lobbied the council with more than 70 letters as part of its plans to create new public space in the downtown. The Business Improvement District, the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce, Peekskill Arts Alliance, Conservation Advisory Committee, Garden Club, and several business owners and artists also supported the effort. "We are thrilled this idea is moving forward and are excited to create a fun, wel-

coming space for the entire community to enjoy," said Conor Greene, Peekskill Walks co-founder. "A huge thanks to the Mayor and Council, City Manager Stewart, all of the Peekskill Walks members who volunteered their time and energy, and to the many residents who voiced their support for our proposal. We need more room for people in our downtown, and Esther Street has the chance to be an awesome little park in the middle of Peekskill." Peekskill Walks initially proposed this idea in the spring as a way to create more space to allow people to visit downtown while continuing to social distance, and to help nearby businesses adapt to the new COVID health regulations. Local architect Joseph Thompson and

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Two-Bedroom Home Available in Yorktown for \$121,000

By Rick Pezzullo

Sometimes in life things sound too good to be true, but that's not the case in the Town of Yorktown where a two-bedroom, single-family home can currently be bought for \$121,000.

For the first time in about 18 years, a home that originally was part of the town's Affordable Housing Program is on the market.

"This is really a fantastic opportunity," said Ken Belfer, chairman of the Yorktown Community Housing Board. "Where else can you get a two-bedroom home in the Town of Yorktown for \$121,000?"

Built in 1995 as part of Yorktown's pioneering Affordable Housing Program, which no longer exists, the 1,100-square-foot house includes a living room with din-



Affordable home in Yorktown available through a lottery.

ing area, kitchen, one bathroom, deck, and an attached one-car garage.

Amenities include membership in a homeowner's association that maintains a swimming pool and tennis courts.

For 2019, the combined town, county, and Lakeland School District taxes were

\$5,590. Homeowner's Association fees are currently \$125/month.

Under the Program's 2020 guidelines, to be eligible for a two-bedroom house, the maximum household income cannot exceed \$80,560 for a two-person household, \$90,640 for a three-person household, or \$100,640 for a four-person household. The maximum household size for a two-bedroom house is four persons.

Qualifying applicants will need to make a down payment and obtain a mortgage. The house must be purchased as a primary residence and lease and resale restrictions apply. The winning applicant will be chosen through a lottery.

Applications for the house, which must be returned no later than August 14, can be downloaded from the Town of Yorktown's web site, www.yorktownny.org, or by con-

tacting the Town Clerk's office, Yorktown Town Hall, 363 Underhill Avenue, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598, (914) 962-5722, ext. 209, email townclerk@yorktownny.org.

Belfer said applications not selected for this home will remain on Yorktown's affordable housing waiting list for the next opportunity.

Between 1988 and 1995, the program created 13 affordably priced single-family homes. The affordable homes were created through the town's affordable housing law at the time, as well as through the Town Board's rezoning approval process or the Planning Board's subdivision/site plan approval process. Under the program developers were required to either include affordable units in their development or contribute money into a designated affordable housing trust fund.

History is made with First African American Appointment

continued from page 1

in a position that allows me to share my passion for research and sharing local history with my community," Cole said. "This position will afford me the opportunity to highlight the untold histories and contributions of the early minorities of Ossining, as well as capturing, documenting and preserving the same for residents who immi-

grated/migrated more recently."

"I look forward to collaborating with the community to capture and preserve our unique experiences while navigating through these unprecedented times and cultivating an environment of accessibility and openness to our historical records for review by our community and students," she added.

Deputy Mayor Rika Levin, who

is running unopposed for mayor to replace Gearity, who is not seeking reelection, shared her thoughts regarding Cole's appointment.

"History lays the groundwork for strong, resilient communities. No place really becomes a community until it is wrapped in human memory: family stories, tribal traditions, civic commemorations. No place is a community until it

has awareness of its history," she said. "I am confident that Joyce will research and present our shared stories and experiences which will strengthen our understanding of one another and strengthen our community."

Gearity expressed her gratitude for White's service and welcomed Cole.

"Dana's experience as a jour-

nalist inspired her storytelling approach to her service as Village Historian. It is rare that someone so treasured for her service has an opportunity to recommend a successor, and Ossining is fortunate that is the case here," Gearity said. "Today's appointment of Joyce Sharrock Cole reflects the enthusiastic support of every member of the Village Board."

Plans for Public Space in Downtown Peekskill Approved

Continued from page 1

traffic engineer Frank Filiciotto provided Peekskill Walks with pro bono professional assistance for this project, which has been done on a volunteer basis. Members of the community group worked with City Manager Andrew Stewart and business owners over the past weeks to revise the site plan, resolve details, and get the necessary approvals.

"The creation of a park on Esther Street

will help build a greater sense of community for Peekskill's residents and visitors. We sorely need more places to sit and rest or to gather with friends downtown, and this new park will help make our city more welcoming for everyone," said Peekskill Walks member Cathy Martone.

Under the plan, barriers will be placed along the South Division and Brown Street ends of Esther Street. Once the street is closed, the adjacent businesses, including Peekskill Coffee House and BeanRunner

Café, will be able to expand their outdoor seating while still leaving ample space for pedestrians to pass by or relax in the new public area while following social distancing guidelines.

Peekskill Walks will now work with the city and community to build out the public space with benches, landscaping and other basic amenities for the public to enjoy.

Once the city's Department of Public Works closes the street with traffic barriers, Peekskill Walks will work with the city

and business community on fundraisers, events and donations to bring tables, landscaping, lights, art, bike racks and other public amenities to the space. A new loading zone and parking spaces will be created on Brown Street and the new design will improve safety for pedestrians with the elimination of two intersections.

The concept will be reviewed this winter to determine whether Esther Street should be turned into a permanent park.

Yorktown Residents Weigh-In on Solar Law, Battery Storage

By Rick Pezzullo

The Yorktown Town Board held two separate public hearings last week on two proposed amendments to the Zoning Code regarding solar power generation systems and facilities and battery energy storage systems.

Currently, Yorktown's code does not address solar projects other than roof mounted solar panels. The Town Board has been presented with several proposals prompting town officials to consider enacting a solar law, including a Solar Carport at IBM and a similar plan at the Granite Knolls Sports Complex, which could generate revenue for the town.

"If Yorktown wants to participate in society's embrace of renewable energy systems, we need to impose parameters to intelligently govern an approval process," Supervisor Matt Slater said.

Councilmen Vishnu Patel and Tom Diana also stressed the importance of having a regulatory framework to deal with clean, viable energy-producing projects.

"Solar energy and solar power are very important for our nation's survival," said Patel, a retired award-winning IBM research scientist.

"This is to right a wrong, so to speak, to provide guidelines on what we will allow and what we won't allow," Diana said.

Former Supervisor Susan Siegel was among a hefty list of speakers who commented during the lengthy hearings conducted online. She suggested instead of the "any residentially parcel above a certain size" approach used in both proposed laws, parcels seeking rezoning should be dealt with on a case by case basis, which she termed the "floating zone" concept.

"Zoning land use decisions are one of a Town Board's most basic responsibilities. By passing a law that says 'any residentially zoned parcel,' the Town Board is coping out and passing the buck to the Planning Board in order to avoid difficult and politically controversial zoning decisions, letting the

Planning Board take the heat," Siegel argued. "A floating zone approach allows the Town Board to take preferences seriously; to put meaning behind its words."

Resident Jennie Sunshine supported the solar law but raised concerns about the clear cutting of trees.

"It's very important that we have a solar law in Yorktown. It's the future. It's what we should be doing," she said. "(But) once you disturb a tree habitat that has been in place for 100 years, whatever you're doing with it, that's a permanent disruption of an important place in Yorktown, and you can't really mitigate that. We either balance it out now or there

will be consequences."

The battery energy storage systems amendment was widely supported, although some issues were raised about them being permitted in residential areas and the safety of the systems.

Swarnav Pujari, chairman of the town's Climate Smart Communities Task Force, said technological advances have made the risks of fire and explosions of battery energy storage systems rare.

"We have come way past that," he said. "Implementing this in the town will be beneficial. I believe we have all the ducks covered in the technical side of the law."

The Town Board adjourned both hearings.

Region, State Continue to Post Encouraging Data on Limiting Virus

By Martin Wilbur

There were no COVID-19-related deaths in Westchester County for four consecutive days during the past week, the first time that has happened since the earliest days of the crisis.

County Executive George Latimer delivered the encouraging news as part of his now weekly Monday briefing, where rates of infection, hospitalizations and deaths continue to remain under control even after New York State has been opening for more than two months and cases in portions of the south and west spiral out of control.

From Thursday through Sunday, there was not one COVID-19 death in Westchester.

"We're now entering a period of this infection where which the numbers are under control, we're opening bigger chunks of society and that may have an effect on the numbers," Latimer said.

Through Sunday, there were 472 active cases of the virus, a number that has remained in a fairly narrow range between 460 and the low 500s during the past month, he said. There were 47 COVID-19-related hospitalizations, as of Saturday, the last day where figures were available. The death toll has stalled at 1,443.

Latimer said that while the volume of new and active cases can fluctuate the raw numbers don't always tell the story. He said it can be better if a greater number of cases are confined to one area, such as the two weeks following the Horace Greeley High School graduation in Chappaqua where 27 people tested positive, rather than fewer cases spread throughout the county.

"We're going to monitor these things as best we can and we're going to monitor spikes as we see them and we're looking every day at the geographic distribution of the new cases to be sure that we're not looking at an across-the-board trend," Latimer said.

In Putnam County, the numbers continue to remain low with only seven active cases and no hospitalizations as of last Thursday. Several weeks ago, Putnam officials decreased the frequency of reporting its statistics to once a week. The death toll in Putnam has remained at 63.

In the local region and statewide, the infection rate remains constant at about 1 percent. In the Mid-Hudson region, which includes Westchester and Putnam counties, the infection rate stayed from 0.7 percent to 1.2 percent in the seven-day period from July 20-26. Statewide it has been between 1 and 1.3 percent during that same timeframe.

Latimer said that the county and the state remain wary of how summer routines and habits might affect infections. With summer weather and many public swimming pools open, more people are outside, and despite the pandemic, there are still some people who are traveling.

Westchester County Airport, however, remains closed to commercial flights, which can help control infections in the county, he said. Still, there are risks.

"But many people travel by car and there's no way to interdict people that are coming over the George Washington Bridge or come

in from Rockland over the Hudson (River) to know whether or not they have a Florida plate on their car," Latimer said.

As of Monday, there were 31 states where travelers to New York must quarantine for 14 days because they have a seven-day rolling average of positive tests over 10 percent or they exceed 10 cases per 100,000 residents, according to the state's tracking. The closest state to New York that appears on that list is Delaware.

Westchester, CUNY Partner on

COVID Study

The Westchester County Department of Environmental Facilities (DEF) is partnering with the City University of New York (CUNY) to study the wastewater at county treatment plants to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on large urban areas.

Recently, it has been discovered that traces of the SARS-CoV-2 virus can be detected in fecal matter, and therefore, in sewage collected at

wastewater treatment plants. The study will take random samples from various treatment

plants to find evidence of varying infection rates among different communities.

"In Westchester, we pride ourselves on being a leader for the nation when it comes to what county government can do," Latimer said. This partnership is another example of the innovative techniques we can use to advance our community – and encourage others around the country to do the same."



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Mt. Pleasant Pool Reopens Monday Following COVID-19 Closing

By Martin Wilbur

The Town of Mount Pleasant announced that it reopened the town pool on Monday after officials closed the Valhalla facility for four days once it was learned that two lifeguards tested positive for COVID-19.

Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi said the town immediately contacted county health officials last Wednesday evening after the tests for the two individuals, who are siblings, came back positive.

He did not recall what days the lifeguards last worked but the county Department of Health stated in an advisory on Friday that at least one of the individuals had not been at the pool since July 19. A message left by The Examiner with the Department of Health for more information was not immediately returned Friday afternoon.

The town confirmed that the lifeguards were unaware that they had contracted COVID-19 when they last reported for work and didn't know they were positive until they received their test results. They immediately contacted their supervisor once they found out they had the virus.

Both lifeguards, who Fulgenzi described as young people, had socially distanced and had been wearing face coverings while they have been at the pool this summer, he said. The town issued a statement Saturday reading that "only a small number of employees came into direct contact with the affected employees."

The process of contact tracing was put



A photo of the Mount Pleasant town pool from 2018.

into place shortly after the town notified the county.

"They (the lifeguards) did everything they were supposed to do so I'm very confident that this is a very limited involvement here," Fulgenzi said.

As of Saturday, there were no additional known positives that have been traced to the lifeguards. They have been at home and are quarantining for 14 days since their test results. The small number of other employees who had contact with the pair are also quarantining for that same

period of time.

The pool was cleared to reopen Friday night after the town completed disinfection of the area. However, the town needed to meet minimum staffing requirements, which delayed the reopening until Monday.

"They want us to open as soon as possible," Fulgenzi said. "They feel that because of the weather the way that it is, it's safer for people to have a place to cool off than it is to be dying in the heat."

The pool opened on July 6 and has been operating with morning and afternoon

sessions and with limited capacity that adheres to state health guidelines. An early session has been held daily from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. followed by an hour of cleaning and a late session from 3 to 7 p.m.

Fulgenzi said that while attendance has been much more sparse than usual, residents visiting the pool have been following the protocols, including social distancing and wearing face masks. He estimated that attendance has been about one-third of what it would be in a typical summer during the first two and a half weeks of the swim season.

It was not known when the community center, located at the same complex on Lozza Drive and which was also closed late last week as a precaution, will be operating again.

Fulgenzi urged the public to remain vigilant and to stay home if they have any questions about their health.

"If they have the symptoms they have to stay away from people," he said. "If you're sick, you stay home. That's the way it should be. You have to be responsible."

Closure of the Mount Pleasant pool wasn't the only swim facility that was forced to stop operations last week. The Department of Health reported that the county is also working with staff and municipal officials at Mamaroneck's Hommocks Pool to identify those who may have been in close proximity to a person who tested positive for COVID-19 and to assure they quarantine and are tested.



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Octogenarian Protester Rekindles Spirit of the '60s to Fight for Change

By Martin Wilbur

In the 1960s, when Judith Schmidt was living in Greenwich Village, she protested every Saturday in support of the civil rights movement and against the Vietnam War.

She would stand on Sixth Avenue in lower Manhattan with countless others holding signs, trying to make a difference with her silence and her presence.

Schmidt, now 86 years old, doesn't have the strength and endurance to participate in today's protests for racial equality. But she can still stand and send a message.

Reaching back more than a half-century, she has recently started a mostly silent hour-long vigil in the median on Bedford Road in Katonah halfway across the street from the Katonah Village Library from 2 to 3 p.m. every Saturday regardless of the weather.

"What I'm really hoping for is I'd like to reach out to Antioch Baptist Church and have black and white people stand there together and to make a visible statement for taking up the unfinished work during the civil rights days," said Schmidt with a handmade sign draped around her neck that read "Justice Justice Justice."

On July 18, about 15 to 20 people joined Schmidt. Last Saturday, on a near 90-degree day that was made relatively comfortable by the shade from trees, a less robust five or six people showed up.

She has reached out to Rev. Melissa Boyer, the pastor at the Katonah United Methodist Church, who plans on getting some of her parishioners involved and to contact other area houses of worship in hopes of attracting members of the faith community to participate.

While Schmidt intends to protest every Saturday until at least Election Day, Boyer said that she's not tying the vigil to this year's campaign. There's too much work to accomplish on deep-seated problems to be solved with the outcome of one election.

"This is an ongoing struggle for racial equality," said Boyer who spent most of last week holding an "End White Silence" sign. "It started long before us and it will continue long after the election. I think a well-informed active population is what makes a democracy. So I'm not hanging my hopes on the election."

During the hour vigil last Saturday, several passing motorists honked horns or gave a thumbs up

sign. One young man stopped to ask Boyer what she meant by End White Silence.

While Schmidt, who worked with emotionally disturbed children before becoming a psychotherapist, said the impetus for her rekindled devotion to protests was the killing of George Floyd in late May.

"If I was the age I was during the civil rights movement I'd be out there in the Black Lives Matter protests, but this is what I can offer now," she said, "and (on July 18) there was some younger people and that was beautiful."

But another goal of the protest is recognizing and righting injustices in society whatever and wherever those may be.

Pleasantville resident Jim Zimmerman, who has known Schmidt for many years, also protested during the Vietnam War era, but by 1968 had grown disillusioned.

During the past couple of months, with many students and young adults taking to the streets, he has felt a renewed sense of belief that perhaps there can be meaningful change. He plans to attend as many Saturdays as possible not only to support a friend try to expand the effort but to initiate dialogue with anyone



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Judith Schmidt, center, stands with several participants who have come to her silent vigils on Saturday afternoons in Katonah to spread the message of racial justice.

who might listen.

"It's only been recently, where I feel like there was any hope," Zimmerman said. "I tend to be really cynical, but this is starting to feel like there's some hope that can pass some of the destructiveness and frankly insanity that we have in this country right now."

Dale and Ellen Saltzman of Somers have been regular participants after hearing about Schmidt's efforts. Similar to Schmidt, it's not feasible to travel

distance to go to large rallies, but they feel like they can do their part by being part of a very local effort.

"I really feel connected to everybody, everywhere and it's part of that weaving of that thread of caring, of loving of taking a risk," she said. If I can't go to Portland, well I can certainly be here and I do feel we're all connected and that's sacred to me, and I can spare some time to let other people know that, too."

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Announcing the All-New iHeart Hudson Valley Market

iHeart Hudson Valley is proud to announce a new marketplace addition to their Hudson Valley lifestyle website, www.ihearthudsonvalley.com.

The iHeart Hudson Valley Market is an online portal focused exclusively on the Hudson Valley and the richness of its creative talent. It is a one-stop market where shoppers can find beautiful, unique buys and know they were all created or produced in the Hudson Valley region.

"In this new age of COVID-19 and the immense disruption it has caused to so many local businesses, I am so happy that iHeart Hudson Valley can provide an alternate method for our local artists, crafters, producers and makers from the Hudson Valley to get their products to the people who are interested in them," said Robbie O'Quinn, president at iHeart Hudson Valley. "With our focus only on the Hudson Valley, it feels good to be able to give back to this beautiful region

I have called home for over 20 years."

The iHeart Hudson Valley Market adds to the other services of business listings promoting the many great local businesses in the Hudson Valley, showcases local events and happenings around the area and articles on amazing local spots worth visiting.

The iHeart Hudson Valley Market is open for business and will be continually adding new vendors as they become available. It will be celebrating its launch with a string

of giveaways this summer. Sign up for the newsletter at <https://ihearthudsonvalley.com/signup-for-eclub/> to be informed of giveaways.

Also, visit the market at www.ihearthudsonvalley.com/shop.

iHeart Hudson Valley's mission is to inspire users to find new places to explore things to love while meeting new people and having fun. Come explore the Hudson Valley with us!

Flood-Prone Saw Mill Parkway Stretch Part of Flood Mitigation Effort

By Martin Wilbur

The state Department of Transportation (DOT) announced last week that it will build two new bridges over a troubled section of the the Saw Mill Parkway in Pleasantville to address a long-standing flooding issue.

The newly-constructed roadway over a 1.3-mile stretch of the parkway over the Saw Mill River will be elevated to meet 100-year flood projections. It will also be stabilized to divert water from the road and mitigate settling. During construction, lane closures will be required on the parkway.

Field preparation, surveying and utility work will begin this summer, with project construction beginning in the fall, according to the DOT. The \$115 million project, which also includes the replacement of the East

Lincoln Avenue Bridge over the Hutchison River Parkway and the U.S. Route 1 stone arch bridge over the Mamaroneck River in Mamaroneck, is scheduled for completion in fall 2022.

"Replacing and updating these bridges in Westchester County will help reduce highway flooding and the congestion and inconvenience it causes, easing travel, ensuring reliability and improving the quality of life for decades to come," said DOT Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez.

For many years, the section roadway between Manville Road and Marble Avenue in Thornwood has often flooded during heavy rains, forcing closure of the parkway and snarling traffic on local streets. There has been periodic work that temporarily alleviates some of the flooding.

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La Quinta Inn Vacates Armonk Site, Leaves No. Castle With No Lodging

By Martin Wilbur

The Town of North Castle recently lost its only lodging facility after the lease for La Quinta Inn & Suites was not renewed.

The two-story, 140-room motor lodge at 94 Business Park Drive ceased operations and vacated the premises following the expiration of its lease on June 30, said town Supervisor Michael Schiliro. He said he wasn't certain of the factors behind the chain leaving town.

"My sense is that it may have been mutual," Schiliro said. "That La Quinta wasn't interested in continuing, and you could see a lot of the deferred maintenance on the property, and the property owner wasn't interested in renewing that lease if La Quinta wasn't interested in keeping that property in the right condition."

According to town records, the property owner of record is Armonk Fairview LLC.

Attempts to reach the communications department at Wyndham Hotels & Resorts,



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

The vacant facility that housed La Quinta Inn & Suites until the end of June.

Inc., the company which operates La Quinta Inn & Suites, were not successful.

Schiliro said that when he moved to town in 1999, the site was a Ramada Inn, and switched to La Quinta about 15 years ago. The facility was built in 1974 and was remodeled in 2007, according to the online

site Hotel Planner.

Of immediate concern to the town, aside from losing its only hotel or motor lodge, is the loss of revenue. In 2019, the 3 percent hotel occupancy tax generated \$83,820 for the town, said Town Administrator Kevin Hay.

Town officials had been hopeful that the proposed Eagle Ridge project on a nearby 32-acre parcel that had once been part of the IBM campus would include a hotel. However, last week, the applicant met with the Town Board and requested changing plans from a hotel with apartments and a townhouse component to an all-residential project.



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The board is expected in the coming weeks to inform the developer whether it should pursue the all-residential plan.

Important Info About Reaching Social Security During COVID-19

By Vincent J. Scocozza

During the current coronavirus pandemic, Social Security continues to provide help to you and other people in your communities.

While the offices are not providing service to walk-in visitors due to COVID-19, it remains ready and able to help the public by phone with most Social Security business.

You can speak with a representative by

calling your local Social Security office or the national 800 number. You can find local office phone numbers online by using the Social Security office locator at www.ssa.gov/locator.

There are many secure and convenient online services at www.ssa.gov/onlineservices including the ability to apply for retirement, disability and Medicare benefits; check the status of an application or

appeal; request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas); and print a benefit verification letter, among other services.

Although you can do most of your Social Security business online, that service channel isn't right for everyone. You can still count on Social Security Administration by phone. If you have a critical situation and we cannot help you with by phone or online, we may be able to schedule an appointment for you.

If you need help, don't wait until we can see you in person. Call us now and get the help you need. We also understand that getting medical and other documentation can be difficult due to the pandemic, so we are continuing to extend certain deadlines wherever possible.

Vincent J. Scocozza is a Social Security public affairs specialist in Westchester County.

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Obituaries

Charity Co-founder, Armonk Resident Christy Saltstein Dies at 46

By Martin Wilbur

For the past seven years, Christy Saltstein worked tirelessly with her good friend Michele Berliner to show their deep appreciation to area first responders who helped save their husbands' lives.

They co-founded the Stayin' Alive charity that has presented about \$200,000 in grants to local police and fire departments and ambulance corps for equipment that their budgets have not included. Much of that money was raised through the nonprofit organization's annual 5K race.

Saltstein died suddenly on July 17 while on vacation with her family in North Carolina. She was 46 years old. A cause of death was not released.

"She was a force to be reckoned with," Berliner said. "She talked a straight talk but had a lot of love for her friends and family. She was passionate about the work that we did and passionate about all of our friendships."

The charity that Saltstein launched with Berliner was several months following the night of Superstorm Sandy in 2012. Their husbands were struck by a utility pole near their homes in Armonk's Windmill Farm. Local first responders along with the North Castle Highway Department rushed their stricken husbands to Northern Westchester Hospital despite roads blocked by trees and power lines.



Christy Saltstein, right, pictured with friend Michele Berliner who co-founded Stayin' Alive, passed away suddenly on July 17. The charity has presented grants to local police and fire departments and ambulance corps.

North Castle Supervisor said Saltstein's passing is a tremendous loss for the town. She was a constant source of energy and inspiration.

"This one's not easy," Schiliro said. "Christy touched so many people. For them, thank you wasn't enough and they needed to put words into action."

Police Chief Peter Simonsen said the efforts of Saltstein and Berliner have been deeply appreciated by departments in the area. In 2015, North Castle police received a new Jaws of Life that cost about \$16,500, according to the Stayin' Alive website.

"To have gone through that experience and then to spend an enormous amount of time and effort to give back to these first responders as well as helping out the other first responders in our geographic area, I just can't say enough positive, complimentary things about Michele and Christy," Simonsen said.

Born in Baltimore to Richard and Linda Beck Roth, Saltstein was married to her husband Douglas, for 21 years. They have two children, Fred and Ella.

After graduating from Johnson & Wales University, she began a long career with Hyatt Hotels, working in the IT department at many of their properties. In addition to her work in co-founding Stayin' Alive, Saltstein raised money for and traveled with Bridges to Community to build schools in La Guama

in the Dominican Republic.

In addition to her husband, children and parents, Saltstein is survived by her sister, Karen Roth Newell and her husband, Craig, of Ellicott City, Md.; her brother, Richard Roth Jr. and his wife, Megan, of Annapolis, Md.; and many nieces, nephews, extended family and numerous friends.

The family held a private service and interment last Friday. There will be a live-streamed service on Aug. 8 at 7:15 p.m. to celebrate her life, spirit and love for all.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in her memory may be made to Stayin' Alive, P.O. Box 104, Armonk, N.Y. 10504-0104 or by visiting www.stayinalive.org. Also visit the website to learn about this year's virtual 5K from Aug. 29 to Sept. 7 that will be run in Saltstein's memory.

Susan Richards

Susan L. Richards of Granite Springs, N.Y. died July 15 at the age of 74 after a courageous battle with leukemia.

Born in Joliet, Ill. on Mar. 8, 1946, she was the daughter of William D. Richards and Carolyn (O'Brien) Richards. She earned a bachelor's degree in classics, with a minor in voice, from Illinois State University-Normal, and later completed a master's degree at Boston University.

Despite her intention of becoming a teacher of Latin and Greek, Richards' early career involved working for Girl Scouts of the USA on the local, national and international levels. Her last post with the Girl Scouts' Troops on Foreign Soil program was in High Wycombe, England.

Returning to the states, she became a certified financial planner, working for several firms, most recently Round Rock Advisors in Wilton, Conn. Her clients appreciated her common-sense approach to her fiduciary responsibilities and told her she could never retire – which she didn't.

An avid amateur carpenter, Sue loved working with wood but was also willing to learn any of the skills necessary for homeownership, from plumbing to tiling. She was a member of the American Association of University Women for close to 50 years.



Susan Richards

Sue enjoyed researching her Welsh, Irish and German roots and was especially active in the Welsh North American Association (WNAA).

Richards is survived by her mother; her brother, Thom Richards (Debi), of Boulder, Colo.; her sister, Patti Kwasigroch (Richard), of Joliet, Ill.; several nieces and nephews; and numerous friends and colleagues. Memorial donations to the WNAA in her name may be made online at <http://festivalofwales.org/contribute.html> or via mail at WNAA, P.O. Box 1054, Trumansburg, N.Y. 14886.

Raymond Giantelli

Raymond L. Giantelli of Shrub Oak passed away on July 17. He was 88.

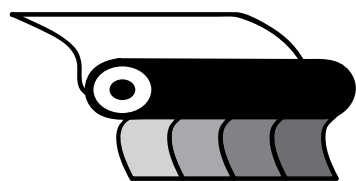
Giantelli was born on May 9, 1932, in Mount Vernon to Guido and Antonietta (Jeanette) Giantelli. He served honorably for the United States Air Force. Raymond was married to Joan Santopietro on Nov. 30, 1957, and were happily married for 62 years.

Raymond enjoyed coaching Little League and appreciated the opportunity to coach so many young talented players. Throughout the years he enjoyed listening to his oldest son, Raymond, and beloved brother, Guido, play in a band together.

Giantelli's favorite destination was Yonkers Raceway; the "Trumpet Fanfare

Horse Race" held a special place in his heart. His comedic personality always made his family and friends smile. He would often joke that he only drank socially, he only drank when he was alone or with someone. Ray will always be remembered for making the best meatballs and (as his grandchildren called it) "Grandpa Pizza!"

Giantelli is survived by his devoted wife, Joan; loving children Mary Ostrander (Alfred) and Patricia Righetti (Louis); 13 grandchildren; and 15 great-grandchildren. Raymond was preceded in death by his children, Raymond L. Jr. (Carol), Joseph Michael (Adelaide) and Antoinetta James (Dave).



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Girl Scout Dedicates Gold Award Project to Social-Emotional Health

By Martin Wilbur

Almost anyone who has spent more than a few days in high school knows those years can be fraught with stress and anxiety.

For rising Horace Greeley High School senior Cate Coffino, she wanted to find a way to gear her Girl Scout Gold Award project toward helping girls at her school deal with the pressures and what can be a suffocating environment.

“Everyone already goes through some sort of anxiety when they go through high school, whether it be social anxiety, dealing with friendships or school stress or trying to reach grades to get into that perfect college,” she said.

As part of her project Coffino established a support group for female students at Greeley called For Girls By Girls. The support group’s members meet as a club on days when the school’s clubs are scheduled to meet and to help build a community of trust for girls, she said.

For her project, Coffino, spoke with Dr. Richard Catanazaro, the chief of psychiatry at Northern Westchester Hospital, and her guidance counselor, Annalise Curtin. She wanted to reach out to younger high school girls, preferably in their freshman year before they encounter too many of the stresses that can occur at school.

“I created this project not to cure depression or to cure anxiety or bring down suicide rates,” Coffino said. “I created it to really stop the problem before it begins. It’s



really being able to process your emotions before going further into high school and before it becomes a bad habit.”

The group had four meetings via Zoom during the latter stages of the 2019-20 school year. Topics revolved around school stress and how COVID-19 has been affecting their lives. There were just a few girls in the meetings, and early on the participants were slow to open up as everyone was growing accustomed with one another.

But Coffino said as the meetings progressed, some of those natural barriers began to dissipate. The sessions were also attended by Curtin.

It was apparent to Coffino that when she started working on the project how much was lacking in helping students deal with the social and emotional issues connected with



Cate Coffino, who will be entering her senior year at Horace Greeley High School this fall, completed her Girl Scout Gold Award project by starting a support group at school to help other girls.

high school. She also wasn’t discouraged by the low turnout, preferring to start small.

“Even though it was maybe two or three girls that showed up to the meeting, I was still helping two or three girls who could go

to their friends and talk to their two or three friends,” she said. “I believe this project can have a butterfly effect. Even bringing it to a few girls suffering or dealing with problems going on at home or with friends, I find that’s really important because I know how important it is to me to talk about my problems.”

Undertaking the project to launch For Girls By Girls, has also helped Coffino – and not just to achieve her Gold Award, which she completed early last week. One of the issues that Coffino has stressed over was what she was planning to major in when she reached college, even though she still has another year of high school to complete.

Now, there’s the possibility that the project has given her the drive to possibly study mental health and work in the field in some capacity.

“I could never find my passion before I started working on this project,” Coffino said.


Coffino joined Girl Scouts when she was in kindergarten and has stuck with it even as many of her peers moved on to other pursuits by the time they reached middle school. She credited her best friend’s mother who was a troop leader, which made it easy to continue.

And it was Girl Scouts that helped reinforce how critical it is to help others.

“I’ve always had a passion for helping people and Girl Scouts has really emphasized that,” Coffino said.



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Obituaries

John Fay

John Patrick Fay Jr. passed away on July 18 in Cortlandt Manor. He was 76.

Fay was born on Feb. 16, 1944, in the Bronx to John and Helen Fay. He was a 1964 graduate of Christopher Columbus High School in the Bronx. On Sept. 17, 1967, he married Helen Smith. John served in the Vietnam War, First Infantry. He was a lifetime member of Plumbers Local 1 and Local 2 for over 50 years, where his son, John, followed in his footsteps.

In 1987, John and Helen and their three children moved to Cortlandt Manor from the Bronx. After retiring in 2008, Fay enjoyed



John Fay

spending time and forming bonds with fellow veterans at the Montrose VA.

Fay is survived by his wife, Helen; his children, Helen (Michael) Peters of Cortlandt Manor, Patricia Fay (Brett Baker) of Peekskill and John (Alison) Fay of Putnam Valley; his adored grandchildren, Stephen, Daniel and Mikela Peters and JJ and Riley Rae Fay; his sister, Helen (Peter) Kelleher; and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his sister, Madeline Sheerin.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City.

William Kelly

William Hutchins Kelly died at Westchester Medical Center on July 23. He was 80.

Kelly was born Mar. 18, 1940, in Peekskill to William F. and Myrtle Hutchins Kelly and was a lifelong Cortlandt resident. He attended Lakeland schools and graduated from Ossining High School. He was the owner of Sunnyside Antiques Shop in Shrub Oak for 18 years and was a longtime employee of the New York Power Authority.

Kelly was a past member of the Mohegan Fire Department; treasurer and co-founder of the Nuclear Security Officers Benevolent Union; belonged to

the Roe Park Skeet & Trap Club; founder of the Putchester Trail Rider Association; and was a member of the Lost Wheel Motorcycle Club, Patriot Guard Riders, Riders Club of America, Old Guard Riders and the Rolling Thunder Riders. He was also a past member of the Hudson Valley Yacht Club, past commodore of the Peekskill Yacht Club and a member of many other yacht clubs on the Hudson River and Long Island Sound.

He leaves behind his wife, Jackie; three sons, William H., Michael T. and Patrick S. (Kristen) Kelly; four cherished grandchildren, William H., Madison, Sierra and Elizabeth; three sisters, Ruth (Albe) Corn, Win (Vince) Rossitto and Gyneth Mascalino; and many nieces and nephews.

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Somers Man Receives Probation on Child Pornography Charges

A Somers man was sentenced last week to 10 years sex offender probation after being charged in 2019 with possessing child pornography on his computer.

As part of the sentence handed down by Westchester County Judge Susan Cacace, Michael Gagliardi, 52, will have to register as a sex offender under New York's Sex Offender Registration Act.

Last July, Westchester County District Attorney Anthony Scarpino's office received notification from another law enforcement agency that someone

downloaded pornographic images of children where Gagliardi lived.

Search warrants served by the district attorney's criminal investigators led to the discovery of explicit images of a girl between the ages of four and six years old on Gagliardi's home computer, according to Scarpino.

Gagliardi was arrested at his home by investigators and state police from the Somers barracks on July 10, 2019, after investigators seized computers and

other devices. He was charged with possessing an obscene sexual performance by a child and promoting an obscene sexual performance by a child, both felonies.

—Rick Pezzullo



Michael Gagliardi







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COVID-19 Forces Cancellation of 2020 Armonk Outdoor Art Show

By Martin Wilbur

The Armonk Outdoor Art Show has been canceled for this fall because of safety concerns and challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Announcement of the organizers' decision was made at Wednesday evening's North Castle Town Board meeting and on the art show's website. This year's show, which would have been the 59th annual, was scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 3 and 4 at Community Park.

"After weeks of alternative planning, assisted by town officials and staff with the hope of presenting a high-quality art experience in a safe environment, we had to reconsider based on New York State guidelines limiting attendance, current conditions of the pandemic and unknown future developments," Anne Curran, the show's executive director, said in a statement that was read last week by Town Clerk Alison Simon. "While this is disappointing, we know this decision is necessary to preserve the health and safety of artists, volunteers, patrons and sponsors."

More than 160 artists and thousands of visitors would have converged for the nationally acclaimed juried show that is held on an early autumn weekend every year.

In May, Curran had told the Town Board that the art show would need more room than is typically afforded on the smaller track field at Community Park if it was to be held safely this year. Organizers proposed using the outfield portion of Field 1 and the area



There will be no Armonk Outdoor Art Show this year, the latest in a long list of cancellations as a result of COVID-19.

between Fields 1 and 2 to have maximum spacing. However, that would have displaced youth sports for the weekend of the show, causing pushback from community members who argued that children needed recreation after the scrapping of virtually all spring sports seasons and many summer opportunities.

Ultimately, town officials said they couldn't take a chance of risking spread of the virus by patrons and artists coming to town from across the United States.

"It would have been much more unfortunate to expose the town to the risks that would have been exposed to them, I think, if we would have continued with the art show, so I think it's the right decision," Councilman Saleem Hussain said.

Councilman Jose Berra added that there was the potential for "a disaster" for the community, the visitors and artists had the town pressed ahead with the event.

Curran said that supporters can view and buy the works of the artists who would have been at the show this year or they can make a donation on the website at www.armonkoutdoorartshow.org. Proceeds from the art show are donated for programs at the North Castle Public Library. Over the past five years more than \$700,000 has been raised for the library, Curran noted this spring.

Supervisor Michael Schiliro said cancellation of the show is a major disappointment but it will return better than ever in 2021. Next year's show is scheduled for Sept. 25-26.

"The art show is so personal to everybody and is such a big part of life in this town," said Supervisor Michael Schiliro. "So the show will go on and they'll resume next year."

Yorktown Grange Fair Canceled; Virtual Fair Offered as Alternative

By Rick Pezzullo

One of Yorktown's community staples has fallen victim to the coronavirus.

The Grange Fair Board of Directors announced last Friday that the 96-year-old event has been cancelled as scheduled on the fairgrounds, but will be held instead as a virtual fair.

"This decision was not made lightly," the Board of Directors stated in a release. "The board is cognizant of the importance of bringing the community together every year to celebrate local artisans, farmers and livestock raisers. Following guidance from state and local authorities regarding public safety, the Board determined that holding an in-person fair this year could be detrimental to public health."

As an alternative, The Virtual Grange Fair is currently taking submissions. Individuals are invited to send in videos and photos of

art, livestock, Legos, veggies and cakes. Judges will peruse the entries and choose the winners.

Galleries are available on the Grange Fair website for everyone to enjoy. Competitions include baking, entertainment, Legos, gardening, livestock, needlework, photography, pet costume contest, rabbit costume contest and woodworking. There are multiple age groups within many of the contests.

"While the Grange Board realizes that a Virtual Fair isn't quite the same as holding an in-person fair, they hope that the community will embrace the possibilities and participate in any way they can. This is just one step in honoring the resilience of the local community, and other options are being considered, including a Drive-Thru Fair."

For more information on the Virtual Grange Fair, visit www.yorktowngrangefair.org.

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Letters to the Editor

Regularly Scheduled Doctors' Visits Can Save Your Life

For months, we all stayed home to keep Putnam County safe and healthy during the coronavirus pandemic. Our efforts worked, we helped contain the spread of the virus.

Now that the infection rate is low, it's a good time to schedule a visit with your doctor for wellness checks and any other care you may have skipped.

State Sen. Sue Serino (R-Hyde Park) gave us a brave reminder of how important preventative care is when she announced this month that a recent mammogram found that she had early stage breast cancer.

"Like many women, I was a person who

routinely rescheduled my mammograms, never thinking twice about putting my work or family schedule ahead of my health," Serino said in a press release. "When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, I was looking for any excuse to reschedule this last one, but that nagging voice in my head told me to keep it, and thank God I did."

I was so glad to hear that Sen. Serino's cancer was found early and is considered non-invasive. I am also really proud of the senator for being so forthright about her diagnosis. Her personal story will resonate with many women in the 41st Senate District

and beyond. Who knows how many lives her openness might help save?

I, for one, followed her example and scheduled my mammogram right away, and I urge all of you to schedule routine physicals, colonoscopies, prostate exams and other important wellness checks.

While we continue to take care of our community by wearing masks, social distancing and washing hands, don't forget to also take care of yourself.

MaryEllen Odell
Putnam County Executive

Sound Judgment Shown in Peekskill By Selling City Land to Builder

To the Peekskill Common Council:

I fully support the majority vote to approve the sale of city land on Central Avenue to a developer who will bring new apartments, construction jobs and more tax revenue to our city.

Despite the many obstacles against this project constructed by an ideology-driven minority who want to keep Peekskill impoverished, Mayor Rainey, Deputy Mayor McKenzie and council members Kathy Talbot, Patricia Riley and Dwight Douglas exercised mature judgment based on the facts and voted yes for a blend of market-rate

and affordable housing units.

Anyone not willfully blinded by their political agenda knows the city needs more market-rate housing to bring a better balance of tax revenue to Peekskill. We cannot remain a poor city and ever hope to rebuild the community.

Declaring that this project should not move forward because the challenge of raising a family of five children with an income below \$70,000 will be solved by voting no reveals an unbelievable lack of knowledge about the economics of New York state.

Radical politics disguised as support for the middle class is childish and

counterproductive to Peekskill's future. Private capital aided in some cases with public money will rebuild Peekskill, not a workers' paradise fantasy.

As a third-generation Peekskill resident, I am well aware of the many misguided people over the years who seek to keep Peekskill from developing its true potential. Thank you to the majority of this council who are willing to act in the interest of all Peekskill residents and not just a vocal minority with a political ideology harmful to our city.

Jim Roberts
Peekskill

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Pete Harckham is a real altruist.

The reason I'm calling Sen. Pete Harckham an altruist is his unwavering support of our day-to-day needs. I'm not talking about complicated issues and politics.

Pete cares for us. Let me give you a few examples that warm the heart because they are basic, essential necessities of everyday people, adults and children.

In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, Pete secured \$250,000 in state funds for an adaptive use playground for children. This is a playground for those who need a wheelchair, ADA accessible and multisensory or developmentally-friendly equipment. It was the first of its kind in northern Westchester.

This wasn't the first of Pete's projects for children needing facilities with more accessibility. He provided grants to the Yorktown Community Nursery School to make walkways and entrances and for an indoor playground in the Lakeland School District for special needs students.

Pete has also done so much for people suffering from substance abuse. He helped lead the way to increase inpatient substance abuse treatment from 14 to 28 days. Recognizing that addiction is an illness that doesn't get enough attention, it was critical to overcome previous insurance limitations that left patients without sufficient treatment. Addiction is a disease. With proper attention, patients can be cured rather than criminalized.

In 2019, the Trump administration rolled back protections in the Clean Water Act. This travesty affected about 50 percent of the streams within New York State. Harckham's bill ensures proper access to waterways that are used for drinking water, fishing and recreation.

And I haven't enough space to cover the many COVID-19 activities Harckham has sponsored, such as the food banks in Bedford, Peekskill, Yorktown and elsewhere along with fighting for unemployment benefits and essential safety protocols.

Pete Harckham is a caring and thoughtful man helping us through hard times.

Andrea Black Jeffries
Yorktown

The Future of Women's Reproductive Health Hangs in the Balance This Fall

Medical decisions should be made between a patient and their doctor. Employers should have nothing to do with it.

Yet, the July 15 Supreme Court ruling has allowed employers to push their own religious agenda in the workplace by denying employees coverage for birth control. Now, more than 75,000 people are at risk of losing access to birth control, further reducing health care coverage during a global health crisis. Women in every state are at a higher risk for unintended pregnancies without the ability to make reproductive decisions such as family planning and lack the social and economic support to care for a child following delivery.

This abhorrent ruling gives employers far too much control over the health decisions of their employees. It is a blatant attack on American women and their bodies to allow organizations and businesses to overrule personal choice and freedom. It is a blow to our hard-earned progress to advance reproductive rights and access to birth control, which are both basic human rights. Lack of access only furthers racial and socioeconomic health disparities. Without widespread contraceptive coverage, women are left behind.

This decision can't be allowed to stand. The courts hang in the balance in this year's November election, so it is critical that

we vote Trump out of office. Last year the state Senate Democratic majority passed a long-blocked Reproductive Health Act, Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act and Boss Bill, which strives in the right direction.

We need New Yorkers to head to the polls to elect officials who will stand up for the health, empowerment and rights of everyone, everywhere. We need to #FightforHER.

Sarina Abraham
Cortlandt Manor

Guest Column

Spate of Policing Bills in Albany a Detriment to Effective Law Enforcement

By Ed Lachterman

This is an open letter to state Sen. Peter Harkham and Assemblyman Kevin Byrne.

As the state representatives for Yorktown, I am writing to you to voice my deep concerns regarding the current crop of legislation being proposed to address the current hysteria to curtail law enforcement. In particular, the bill numbers are A10651, A10666, A10671, S8621, S8583, S8577, S8601, S8612 and S8668.

Collectively, these bills, I assume, are being introduced hastily to address perceived problems in law enforcement in the wake of the current political hyperbole. Legislation written in haste and in reaction to inarticulate mob demands usually results in adverse and counterproductive consequences.

To illustrate, the mobs' demand to eliminate the concept of qualified immunity as a defense in excessive force cases is counterproductive. Eliminating the concept of qualified immunity will only hamper law enforcement, not enhance the existing protections and recourses for cases of actual excessive force.

Qualified immunity by its very terms is not absolute immunity. Any public official, police officers included, under the present law are liable for the unconstitutional application of excessive force and/or unreasonable searches and seizures. The immunity provided by the doctrine of qualified immunity applies only when under the particular facts a police officer's actions are deemed reasonable. Police often must react in a matter of split seconds when faced with situations that threaten their lives or the lives of the public they serve. Doing away with the already limited qualified immunity defense will render policing to post-criminal act investigations and deter effective crime prevention.

In reading the synopsis of these bills, I find the language to be vague in most, and I question their intention. While we all want to ensure our police departments to be perfect, there will always be room for improvement. To introduce bills that strip away the long-standing protections of our police when they are acting within agency guidelines and in good faith, does nothing to help keep anyone safe, especially when

the police are not involved in the process. It endangers our law enforcement officers and it endangers the public. It leads to reactive instead of proactive policing.

The current crop of bills is political pandering to the mob; its actual consideration an example of the cowardice and lack of leadership of our political class. It seems our state legislature has bought into the perpetrated falsehoods of the mob. Where is our much-needed leadership that at the very least should be questioning the false assumptions to which the current proposed legislation is paying homage?

There exists a very dangerous portrayal of law enforcement that is achieving its goal to cause a virulent political riff. It is now accepted behavior to brazenly attack uniformed police in New York City. It is at the point that Westchester police officers have been asked not to go to New York City for any law enforcement activities due to the hastily passed and ill-conceived laws passed by the City Council.

There are groups that have turned a mantra feigning concern for the Black community while pressing an alternative

political agenda. True concern for the Black community would be to support and demand greater police protections, because absent a sense of personal security, no community can thrive.

There is an extremely small fraction of police interactions, .05 percent out of the 55 million per year, that garner complaints and only about 8 percent of the complaints are sustained, according to figures collected by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. To say that this translates into this systemic policing problem makes me question the motivation and the integrity of anyone that would introduce or vote for these bills.

I encourage both of you to ask your peers to pump the breaks on these bills and, if the chambers want to revisit these laws, have a constructive conversation with our police departments to make sure that we are working inclusively to solve the problem and not create greater riffs between the police and our communities.

Ed Lachterman is a Yorktown town councilman.

Letters to the Editor

Astorino's Divisive Politics, Policies Would Be a Disaster for New York

Rob Astorino is working hard to revitalize his political career after defeats in runs for governor and re-election as county executive. In his campaign launch, Mr. Astorino makes claims of being inclusive, saving taxpayers money with his budgets and enormous successes. Granted all written by his public relations team and not investigative journalists, so few, if any, of his claims would be born out with fact checking.

The Astorino years eviscerated Westchester County, erasing essential services for those most in need, forcing local governments to raise taxes to

cover former county services and a gross deterioration of needed infrastructure. Rob Astorino bullied his opponents and county workers, as well as his fellow citizens. He boasted about being Trump before Trump.

During the Astorino years Westchester paid or lost millions of dollars in lawsuits on affordable housing and didn't apply for grants that could have brought funds and services to the county. His failed policies and antagonistic behaviors divided people, created polarization on a level rarely seen in this county and introduced the divisive politics we see at the national level to Westchester.

Rob Astorino isn't running to be a freshman New York state senator in the Republican minority; he is running to gum up the system for his own political aggrandizement with a plan to run again for higher office. His ambition, if for good, would be welcome, but his history proves he does this for self-serving reasons that benefit no one but Rob Astorino.

Could our state use change? Yes. Could our state benefit from serious reform? Yes. Should we do things that benefit all New Yorkers? Absolutely. Can politicians like Rob Astorino with his history of slash and burn accomplish any of this? No.

Robert Kesten
South Salem

New Smoking, Vaping Laws Helps New Yorkers Live a Healthier Life

While so many of our health efforts this year have been focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, I wanted to share some important new health regulations related to tobacco and vape products that became law this month.

A bill that I introduced in the Assembly banning the sale of cigarettes, e-cigarettes and vaping products in pharmacies passed in this year's budget. This law ensures that pharmacies remain a place where people buy products and pick up prescriptions that

make them healthier. Selling cigarettes and vape products undermine the hard work of pharmacists who are trying to keep New Yorkers healthy.

Other smoking regulations that are now law include a ban on the public advertisement of tobacco and vapor products near schools; a ban on the sale of flavored e-cigarettes and vape products unless given FDA pre-market approval; restrictions on the delivery of e-liquid products only to state-licensed vapor retailers; a requirement that vape

manufactures disclose information about ingredients, by-products and contaminants in vapor products to the state Department of Health; and increased penalties for illegally selling tobacco products to minors.

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. The risks of smoking are well-known: smokers have a much higher likelihood of developing cancer, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and heart disease. These new laws are particularly important as we

continue fighting against the deadly novel coronavirus. There has been evidence to show that smokers are at increased risk of more severe illness or death from COVID-19.

These new regulations are critical if we are going to make a meaningful impact on the rate of preventable smoking-related disease in our state and make smoking less appealing to our students.

Sincerely,
Assemblywoman Sandy Galef

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Financial Benefits Versus Pollution Costs of New P'ville Projects

By Michael Gold

Downtown Pleasantville may change dramatically with three new apartment buildings: 39 Washington Ave., which is complete and has renters, 70 Memorial Plaza, currently under construction, and 52 Depew St., still in the pre-construction stage.

The village will enjoy increased tax revenues from the three buildings, as well as the likely potential to improve business for the local restaurants and stores, from the new residents who will live in, or close to, the center of town. Downtown Pleasantville promises to become a more vibrant place, with more pedestrians, shoppers and diners.

Along with these benefits, however, will come some costs, which can't currently be measured.

Pleasantville will have 173 new apartments, with 365 new parking spaces downtown – 23 apartments at the Washington Avenue site, 71 apartments at Depew Street and 79 apartments at Memorial Plaza.

Air pollution will likely increase, as a result of possibly having 173 more cars in town, and so will carbon dioxide emissions.

A search through the environmental assessments of the impact of the three projects reveals no mention of either the potential increase in air pollution or carbon emissions from the new automobiles in town.

The village and the state Department

of Environmental Conservation (DEC) do not require developers to disclose possible carbon emissions from new vehicles at local residential developments.

"We don't have the means to determine carbon emissions," Mayor Pete Scherer said in an interview. But he added, "There is an ecological benefit for downtown living. Many downtown residents are less car-dependent."

All three developments will be within walking distance to mass transit.

"It's reasonable to assume that many of the new residents will be train commuters to White Plains or New York City," the mayor said.

Scherer also points out that "Many of the cars that will be parked in these locations are already here."

For instance, employees of the businesses near 39 Washington Ave. will now be able to park at that location instead of a municipal lot or elsewhere on local streets.

An added benefit of the 52 Depew St. development is the clean-up of the contaminated soil at the site.

Also, there is the possibility that some of the new residents' cars will be electric.

There will be four electric vehicle charging stations at 39 Washington Ave. while 70 Memorial Plaza will have six charging stations, with capacity to expand to 38 stations in all. The 52 Depew St. project may have some charging stations, but it is unclear how many. The developer, Lighthouse Living, did not return repeated



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTOS

The 70 Memorial Plaza site that is under construction. When completed, it will include 79 apartments.

phone calls.

With all these unknowns, there may well be more air pollution and carbon emissions coming from the new vehicles in town.

Pleasantville also has an indeterminate number of cars and trucks idling around town. On any given day, there may be up to a half-dozen people sitting in their cars with the engines on as they wait for take-

out food from the local restaurants or a friend to arrive, or they're just running the motor to keep the air conditioning on to stay cool on a hot afternoon, or for some other reasons.

Tailpipe emissions include nitrous oxide, ozone, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, benzene and particulate matter.

continued on next page

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Financial Benefits Versus Pollution Costs of New P'ville Projects

continued from previous page

They can cause heart and lung damage and breathing difficulties. Benzene is a known carcinogen.

The American Lung Association has given Westchester County an “F” for its high level of ozone.

According to the EPA, “Breathing ozone can trigger...chest pain, coughing and throat irritation. It can worsen bronchitis, emphysema and asthma.” It can hurt the functioning of your lungs.

If you consider a worst-case scenario of 173 additional internal combustion vehicles in town, that would generate about 782 tons of carbon dioxide per year, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), an environmental preservation nonprofit organization. The same number of electric vehicles would generate about 191 tons of carbon dioxide per year, the NRDC stated.

This calculation assumes that Pleasantville’s grid feeding electricity to power the electric cars contains a mix of fossil fuels and renewable energy. If an electric vehicle owner used wind or solar energy in their home and used that energy to charge their car, then of course, the vehicle would generate no carbon emissions.

This isn’t to suggest that we shouldn’t build. A municipality needs to build its

tax base and enhance its livability. But we should try to understand how these developments will affect local air quality and the carbon impact of our actions.

If we knew how much air pollution and carbon emissions new developments would incur, municipalities could effectively plan to attempt to prevent or mitigate the impacts.

One straightforward strategy to mitigate carbon impact is to plant more trees. My Tree Planet, a tree-planting nonprofit operating in the U.S., Canada and Africa, claims that six trees would need to be planted to offset the carbon emissions for every internal combustion vehicle. every year. That would mean planting 1,056 trees every year in Pleasantville to offset the possible 173 new internal combustion vehicles from the three new developments.

That’s clearly unrealistic. But more trees could and should be planted in order to create more shade in this warming world, help store carbon, absorb pollution and further beautify the village. More trees might also improve property values.

Trees absorb tailpipe emissions, including nitrous oxide, ozone and sulfur dioxide. They also help pull dangerous particulates from the air.

It would take 100 trees to remove 52 pounds of carbon dioxide and 430 pounds of



The new mixed-used development at 39 Washington Ave. in Pleasantville.

other air pollutants every year, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

Also, the town could purchase carbon offsets through a certified provider, such as Green Mountain Energy, which invests in clean energy projects and environmental preservation activities around the world in order to reduce carbon emissions.

Why not start with buying carbon offsets and planting more trees?

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

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Poison Ivy: Man's Foe or Earth's Friend?

Where or how my wife Margaret could have gotten a bad case of poison ivy is a puzzlement.

She's far from the outdoors type, which I discovered early in our marriage when I suggested we take a hike together. No sooner were we on a woodsy path when, negotiating a fallen branch, she tripped and dislocated her jaw. Since that time, we have confined our walks to more reliable sidewalks.

But here she is this week, suffering from an ugly and uncomfortable case of poison ivy, with deep red blotches and terrible itchiness.

When I was a bachelor living in Manhattan, I had an acquaintance who would occasionally visit friends living in "the country" over summer weekends. Maybe I was a little jealous about not knowing anybody outside the reaches of the steamy city because I found myself having little patience when he called me one day to complain about having contracted poison ivy in his friend's garden during his last visit. I just didn't want to pay much attention to his whining.

The next day he called again and this time he upbraided me for not showing any sympathy about his itchy plight. Instead of apologizing and showing some concern, I made the mistake of marginalizing his condition by saying that I frequently had



By Bill Primavera

poison ivy when I was a country boy before moving to the city. While I found it uncomfortable for a day or two, I would address it by taking a hot shower, then treat it with calamine lotion. Was it really that big a deal, I asked?

From there, the tone of the conversation degenerated rapidly to the point where I was asked to apologize for my lack of sympathy. I apologized.

Not long after that incident many years ago, I married, moved to the country and since that time, have had countless opportunities to suffer the effects of poison ivy myself, regardless of the care I take in recognizing the plant and trying to avoid it.

Living on a property that has been gardened since the early 18th century, I had been aware that it was riddled with poison ivy, but I never did a thing to discourage its growth. Call me crazy, but I rather liked its dark waxy leaves growing on vines in the areas of my property that were not cultivated, and, from what I understand, although I don't remember from which source, it may have served some useful purpose to bind together the mortar-less stone walls our forefathers built to delineate properties and contain livestock.

About two out of three people are allergic to poison ivy and its relatives, poison oak and poison sumac. For some, the reaction can be



severe enough to require hospitalization. Treatment for poison ivy is most effective if addressed immediately after exposure.

Invariably, I always get it on my wrists and lower arms. When I do, I wash the affected area with strong soap and very hot water, and then apply calamine lotion to relieve the itching. Literature suggests applying rubbing alcohol, but I've never tried that. It is also suggested that clothing that has been worn when poison ivy has been contracted be washed separately from other laundry, but I've never found that to be necessary. Perhaps that would apply to individuals with extreme sensitivity to the allergens.

Everyone knows how to recognize poison ivy, right? The leaves are three-parted, often drooping, with shiny smooth, toothed or lobed edges. The oily resin is called urushiol and causes the contact dermatitis. This binds with skin proteins, causing an allergic reaction. The rash is characterized by linear streaks, which may

last several weeks.

Treatment depends on the severity of the episodes, but systemic steroids have the most dramatic therapeutic effects. New barrier creams are effective in preventing the dermatitis if applied before contact, especially products like Ivyblock.

As a side note, I looked for anything that could justify God's plan for placing something so nasty in Earth's garden, if not in the Garden of Eden, and I found it!

According to a report in Weed Science and subsequently reported in The Wall Street Journal, poison ivy has gotten much nastier since the 1950s in leaf size and oil content. But at the same time, it was reported that the plant absorbs much more than its fair share of CO2 in the atmosphere.

With CO2 having increased 33 percent in the environment in the past half century, poison ivy has risen to the challenge as Earth's friend in helping to combat climate change. So, leave it, I say. There is something to love about poison ivy.

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

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Maloney, Jones Pledge Support for Local Journalism Sustainability Act

By Adam Stone

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, as well as Mondaire Jones, the winner of last month's Democratic primary in the 17th Congressional District, have pledged support for the Local Journalism Sustainability Act, a bill designed to aid the embattled newspaper industry.

The proposed legislation includes a trio of tax credits aimed at bolstering local media outlets. It is designed to encourage businesses and readers to subscribe to local newspapers and publishers to hire journalists for their newspapers.

Maloney said in a statement that "local news is irreplaceable."

"Folks across the Hudson Valley rely on our local newspapers for the information and news that matters most to them and their families," Maloney added. "This pandemic has put a major economic strain on our news providers, and more needs to be done to support them before it's too late. I'm proud to fight for efforts in Washington to protect our local news, and will continue to advocate for our outlets and the jobs they support."

Jones, who prevailed in a crowded Democratic field in the recent primary, committed to joining the bill as a co-sponsor if he wins the general election this fall. How fast the bill may move this year remains an open question.

"Local journalism is the lifeblood of our democracy," Jones said. "But thanks to the encroachment of digital media, the industry has long been imperiled, and

the COVID pandemic has made things dire for local media outlets across the country. Congress must take action to ensure the ongoing viability of local media. The Local Journalism Sustainability Act is a good start, and if I were in Congress today, I would happily add my name as a co-sponsor."

Maureen McArdle Schulman, the winner of last month's Republican primary in the 17th Congressional District, could not yet be reached for comment. Jones is considered the heavy favorite to win the race and replace the retiring Lowey.

The COVID-19 pandemic has wrought peril for an already beleaguered industry and newspaper leaders are seeking new solutions as many publications across the country shrink, subsist on life-support or shut down. Thousands of newspapers across the country have closed over the past 15-plus years, leaving many towns and even counties across the country without professional journalists to cover their communities. The problem has become so prevalent that a term has developed in recent years to characterize regions without professional local coverage: news deserts.

There is bipartisan support for the bill that was introduced on July 16 by representatives Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.) and Ann Kirkpatrick (D-Ariz.). The bill enjoys at least 18 bipartisan co-sponsors, with some counting as many as 30 supporters.

The tax credits proposed in the bill include:

Credit for Advertising in Local Newspapers and Local Media. This five-year



Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney said he would support recently introduced legislation that would create incentives for businesses and citizens to advertise and subscribe to local newspapers.

non-refundable credit provides businesses with less than 1,000 employees up to \$5,000 in the first year and up to \$2,500 in the subsequent four years to spend with local newspapers and local media.

Credit for Local Newspaper Subscriptions. This five-year non-refundable credit provides every taxpayer up to \$250 a year to spend on subscriptions to local newspapers, defined as print and online publications that primarily produce content related to news and current events and which have a majority of their readership within the publication's state of operation or within 200 miles.

Payroll Credit for Compensation of Journalists. This five-year refundable credit provides local newspapers (utilizing the same definition as above) a credit to use for the compensation of journalists. The credit may be used on compensation up to \$50,000 a year.

"We have an opportunity for this effort to be understood by lawmakers now and over the next few weeks as the stimulus package discussions occur," said Dean Ridings, the CEO of America's Newspapers, an organization that advocates for the industry, posted on the group's website. "With united efforts and voices in concert, we will ensure that your newspaper – and local journalism in general – has the best chance to succeed as an independent institution to help provide oversight the way our founding fathers intended...essentially staying true to its principles and our founding documents."

Michelle K. Rea, the executive director of the New York Press Association, said in an e-mail interview that "this legislation will help newspapers and local business address longstanding economic challenges that have been accentuated by the coronavirus pandemic."

"Democracy depends on informed citizens to make it work, and local news organizations are the only entities that provide verified, factual, local information to keep citizens up to date on important local issues," Rea added. "Newspapers also enable commerce, providing cost-effective local advertising to businesses that depend on local in-store traffic."

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Byram Hills Sophs Step Up to Captain W'chester Alzheimer's Walk Team

Emily Stangel and Remi Matza, both sophomores at Byram Hills High School in Armonk, recently became team captains for Team GAGA in the Westchester Walk to End Alzheimer's.

This will be their first year as team captains after former captain Hallie Remnitz stepped down after holding the position for two years.

Matza is going to be participating in the walk for the first time. Stangel has previously been part of Team GAGA, the official team for Byram Hills High School. The team name is an acronym that stands for Growth and Awareness Group for Alzheimer's.

Traditionally, the team has been among the top fundraising groups for the Westchester walk. It was created by former Byram Hills student Max Levy in 2011 after the passing of his grandmother.

Stangel has a personal connection to Alzheimer's through her grandfather, who is now in the late stages of the disease.

Stangel and Matza, who hope to get other students from their school to join the effort, recently created a Team GAGA Instagram page, @bhhs.gaga2020, to raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease and their team fundraising efforts. On the page, they have created the #Making_Memz_Challenge, where they encourage others to make funny videos that will create a lasting memory and to challenge their friends to do the same. They started the hashtag chain with a video of themselves throwing pies at each other.



Emily Stangel and Remi Matza, co-captains of Byram Hills High School's Team GAGA. Since the team's inception in 2011, it is one of the most successful groups that raise money each year at the Westchester Walk to End Alzheimer's.

"The idea behind the hashtag is to make memories for those that no longer have the ability to do so," Matza said. "We hope to create a chain with this hashtag and get users to donate just a small amount."

This year's Westchester Walk to End Alzheimer's will be held on Sunday, Oct. 4, but will be quite different. While the event normally draws large crowds to the SUNY Purchase campus, steps are being taken to protect the health and safety of participants and volunteers. There will be

no large gathering. Instead, participants will be walking at various locations in their communities with their teams or family members. To register, visit WestchesterWalk.org

Stangel and Matza said they are excited to participate.

"We are happy it can still occur despite the pandemic," Stangel said.

To join Team GAGA or make a donation, visit www.TeamGaga.com. To register for the Walk to End Alzheimer's, visit HudsonValleyWalks.org

Held annually in more than 600 communities nationwide, the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's® is the world's largest event to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's care, support and research.

The Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter serves families living with dementia in seven counties: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester. To learn more about the programs and services offered locally, visit alz.org/hudsonvalley.

Wedding Bells Ring



Wedding bells were supposed to ring for hundreds of Westchester County couples during what would have been 2020's wedding season, but then came COVID-19 and hopes were dashed for those who dreamed of their big day. PIX 11 news reporter and Westchester resident Rebecca Soloman had planned a wedding reception for this year, but made the difficult decision to postpone her big day until 2021. However, last Friday, standing on the front steps of the Michaelian Office Building in White Plains, County Executive George Latimer stepped in to officiate the wedding of Soloman and Eitan Ahimor.



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No Camp, No Problem: Salvation Army Connects Kids to Summer Fun

By Logan Schiciano

Although the pandemic quashed many traditional summer camp plans, The Salvation Army's Greater New York Division remains committed to supporting families in need.

Through its Camp in a Box program, over 1,000 boxes were filled with arts and crafts, toys, camp apparel, snacks and other "silly things" that are being delivered to children from seven to 12 years old across the New York metropolitan area by summer's end, said Capt. Antonio Rosamilia, who is spearheading the operation. Camp in a Box, in its fourth of six weeks, includes daily Zoom activity sessions led by camp counselors.

There are 71 children from Westchester who have been signed up for Camp in a Box, most for multiple sessions, said Maj. Jenny Alarcon, core officer at The Salvation Army in White Plains. She is grateful that they can connect with one another for an hour each day – whether it be sharing their favorite ice cream flavor or having a dance party.

"I've seen how the pandemic has affected my own kids emotionally. On top of that, we work very closely with families throughout the year; the kids who attend The Salvation Army are like family," she said. "It's really about providing something for them so that they're not just glued to the internet."

White Plains resident Kristin Rivero, whose daughter participated in the program last week, expressed a similar sentiment.

"At home it's just me and her," Rivero said. "For my daughter to have the opportunity



One of The Salvation Army's volunteers shows a child some of the items that are included in its Camp in a Box program, which brings activities to children at home which they can also share through daily Zoom sessions.

to see other kids and interact with them – something she hasn't had since March – was really important."

The Salvation Army typically runs Camp Star Lake in Bloomingdale, N.J. but canceled this summer due to coronavirus concerns. Nevertheless, Rosamilia is proud of the alternate offering.

"It was the best choice we could've made for this summer," he said. "We've made it very personal for them. We let them know that they're not forgotten, and we want the best for them."

Gabriela Ochoa, 20, one of the program's counselors, said devotions are incorporated into each session and that one of her jobs is to



Volunteers from The Salvation Army put together packages so hundreds of children throughout the metropolitan area, including Westchester, can have some fun this summer through its Camp in a Box program.

help the children understand their meaning.

"I've really enjoyed getting to know the campers and it's been great to see them grow and get closer to Christ," Ochoa said. "One of my campers actually started crying because she had so much fun and didn't want camp to end."

Rosamilia explained that every Monday since mid-June members of The Salvation Army corps and roughly 30 volunteers from New York Cares have gathered at the organization's East Harlem facility to package the boxes, which are then shipped to Salvation

Army locations throughout the metropolitan area including those in Westchester: White Plains, New Rochelle, Tarrytown, Port Chester and Yonkers.

Rivero is appreciative of all the work that went into Camp in a Box – from the leadership, to the volunteers, to the counselors.

"Although it's called Camp in a Box, it's thinking outside the box. I just want to thank them for thinking of the children and investing their time into this," Rivero said. "In spite of all the hard times we've been going through, it was something that made us smile."

A Spiritual View

By Rev. Beth Graham

What were the first two questions recorded in the Bible?

The first, in Genesis 3, was the serpent asking Eve, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" A little later, after Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, the second question came from God as he was looking for them: "Where are you?"

The same two questions are asked of each of us all the time. The serpent – that devil, that voice of evil – is always asking us, "Can you really trust God?" There's some deception in the devil's question; God didn't say they must not eat from ANY of the trees, only from one. The serpent twisted God's words to plant that seed of doubt. So, too, do we



sometimes question God when we have not fully understood his great love and care for us.

The second question is more personal: God asks, "Where are you?" This reveals the desire of God to be close to us, to have the fellowship and communion of walking together in the garden. He asks us that question today: Where are you? Can we walk together? Can we get to know each other?

God is always pursuing a relationship with us; it only remains for us to answer, "Here I am!"

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.

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Comets Provide Some of the Most Spectacular Sky Shows

Through July, most of the space news has been full of extraordinary stories and gorgeous photos of the alluringly named comet C/2020 F3 (NEOWISE), which was visible with the naked eye even in Westchester's skies.

Comets are balls of dirt and rock, held together by water and other exotic ices that spend their time speeding through the solar system in orbits that are long, like a stretched rubber band. These paths take them very far from the sun at one end, and extremely close at the other. As they near the sun, some of the material in them heats up – or outgasses – and creates that long tail we all think of.

Comet NEOWISE is on its way out of view now, and it won't be back to our part of the solar system for more than 6,500 years. But that might not be the end of its story.

As comets thaw, they also leave behind a trail of rocks and dust. We call these leftovers meteoroids as they travel through space. Several times a year, Earth passes through these trails where our orbits cross. Some of those bits, mostly about the size of grains of sand, burn up and streak across the upper reaches of our atmosphere, what we call meteors or shooting stars. If one

manages to make it all the way to the ground, we call it a meteorite. They're the same thing, but with different names for where they are and how we experience them.

Every summer, we catch up with the leftovers from Comet Swift-Tuttle, which last passed through our neighborhood in 1992. As we do, we're treated to the famous Perseid meteor shower, which peaks around Aug. 11 each year.

Clear Skies

Meteor showers are named for their radiant, the region of the sky most of the meteors appear to emanate from. In the case of the Perseids, that's the constellation Perseus, which rises into the northeast late at night. They don't all come from that area, but it's a helpful starting point. That said, the later you

can stay awake, the higher in the sky Perseus will be, and the easier it will be to see more meteors.

To watch, simply head out to a comfortable north-facing spot once the stars are out. Bring a chair, give your eyes a chance to adjust to the dark and look up. No telescope or binoculars are needed; in fact, they'll get in the way, but of course you can use them to look at other things.

Perseus's stars might be a little hard to find, so if you can spot the Big Dipper toward the northwest, and then just turn your chair toward the right, you'll be facing the right direction.

These showers are unpredictable, but this year, there's a chance for



By Scott Levine

a good show. Twenty meteors per hour isn't out of the question. The night of the peak, the moon will be at its last-quarter phase (its left-hand side lit), and won't rise until around 1 a.m. on Aug. 12. So, its light might not interfere too much. Time will tell, and it's certainly worth a try.

Comets like NEOWISE are few and far between, but maybe we'll see it again as a meteor shower sometime. I hope you'll take a look.

Scott Levine (astroscott@yahoo.com) is an astronomy writer and speaker from Croton-on-Hudson. He is also a member of the Westchester Amateur Astronomers, which is dedicated to astronomy outreach in our area. For information about the club, including membership, newsletters, upcoming meetings and lectures at Pace University and star parties at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, visit westchesterastronomers.org. Events are free and open to the public. Please note: All in-person club activities are suspended until further notice due to COVID-19.



Full Moon
August 3



Last Quarter
August 11



New Moon
August 18



First Quarter
August 25

The August moon-phase chart

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Developing Instinctive Wine-Pairing Skills in These Novel Times



By Nick Antonaccio

Cooking at home has become popular during our months-old sheltering-in-place lifestyle. And so has consuming wine, often at table while enjoying the latest inspired meal we've self-created or re-created from the many media sources

available to us.

Enjoying this new (for some) culinary experience has created a conundrum at times. What wine to pair with a particular dish? Or, on a broader plane, how to develop an intuitive sense of matching the aromas and flavors of a particular dish with those of a particular style of wine?

Pairing wine and food is a favorite experience for me. Finding a complementary match creates a culinary experience that is invariably greater than the sum of its parts. A food dish on its own may be an exhilarating experience, tantalizing our taste buds with a unique combination of flavors – and aromas. It may start with a simple summer salad of vegetables purchased on the spur of the moment from

the local farmers market – spicy baby Asian greens, baby yellow and red beets, dressed with freshly made orange citrus vinaigrette and topped with morsels of organic goat cheese.

As delicious and refreshing as it is on its own, the salad is beautifully enhanced with a glass of Grüner Veltliner, the crisp white Austrian wine with full acidity and a touch of pepper and minerality.

When consumed together, the crispness of the lettuce and dressing become more pronounced with a sip of the Grüner. The wine's distinct flavors explode in one's mouth. The peppery taste of the salad is much more discernable when complemented by the peppery taste of the wine. It is as if a new dish has been created, one that is at once bold and sensual, simple and exotic.

With practice, this form of pairing is not difficult to achieve. And, if one is preparing a meal for someone with similar tastes and dietary preferences (or restrictions), a mutual sensory pleasure is inevitable.

But clearly, we don't all have compatible dietary preferences or tolerances. Twenty years ago, carnivores dominated the culinary planet. Hefty steaks and juicy burgers were de rigueur. Today, there is a growing

proliferation of omnivores, herbivores and locavores. Each may have a specific diet to match with wine: high protein, low calorie and low fat are just a few, not to mention those ubiquitous fad diets.

At the other end of the spectrum are the allergy diets: gluten-, lactose- and nut-free. And don't forget the "earth-friendly" diets growing in popularity: organic, vegetarian and vegan.

Challenges arise when attempting to pair wines with the proliferation of diets that abound. Compounding this is the difficulty we now encounter when planning a dinner gathering. Vegans and Keto diet proponents tend not to dine together well at a communal table.

As difficult as it may be to satisfy these conflicting culinary preferences/mandates, it is less difficult to pair these meals with wine. A number of wines can coexist with varied menus. These are wines that tend to be well balanced. Their fruit and acidity live in harmony and are compatible with – and an enhancement to – a broad range of ingredients. A Burgundian-style Pinot Noir tends to be medium-bodied and balanced, with a mild fruit and spice profile. These characteristics make it as ideal for mild meat courses as for robust vegetable dishes.

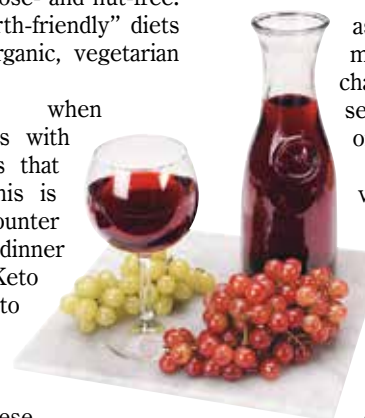
The rule of thumb I generally follow is to match the wine with the dominant flavor of the dish. A balanced Pinot Noir will be the perfect foil to a peppercorn-encrusted grilled salmon with roasted Brussels sprouts – or a pungent, classic ratatouille.

An Italian Barolo will pair as well with a roasted organic mushroom fricassee as with a chargrilled porterhouse steak served with caramelized onions.

The carnivore and the vegan can feast in harmony at the dinner table with these congenial pairings.

Wine is the great mediator of all food diets. Take advantage of this unique characteristic for your next gastronomically diverse meal.

Nick Antonaccio is a 40-year Pleasantville resident. For over 25 years, he has conducted numerous wine tastings and lectures. Nick is a member and Program Director of the Wine Media Guild of wine journalists. He also offers personalized wine tastings and wine travel services. Nick's credo: continuous experimenting results in instinctive behavior. You can reach him at nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com or on Twitter @sharingwine.



You Heard It Through the Grapevine

A Foot in Two Countries, a Harp in His Hand and Homage From a King

In a recent issue we spoke of the cláirseach, or harp, as a musical instrument immediately and passionately identified with Ireland, and Turlough O'Carolan, the most famous of Irish harpers.

But Ireland is not the only country in the Celtic Fringe to embrace the harp. Equally enamored of the instrument were the Scots, especially prior to the introduction of the rousing music of the bagpipe, which began edging out the harp during the 16th and 17th centuries. Though relegated to second place, the harp never lost favor completely, especially for music to be played within courts and castles and as entertainment for Scot noblemen and women.

But trust it to an Irishman to rise to preeminence upon arriving on Scotland's shores. Rory Dall O'Cathain (O'Kane), was born about 1580, and died in 1653, 19 years before O'Carolan's birth. O'Cathain's major gift to us is the immortal composition "Tabhair Domh Do Lamh," translated as "Give Me Your Hand," one of the most widely recorded traditional tunes.

O'Cathain, unlike O'Carolan, was of the native Irish nobility, related to the O'Neills, rulers of Ulster, who at one time were likely candidates to rule all of Ireland. Also blind (dall, in Irish), he traveled often between Ulster and Scotland, which are parted at their closest points by the 13-mile wide stretch of water called the North Channel,



separating the Mull of Kintyre in Scotland from Torr Head in Northern Ireland. Spending more and more time in Scotland, O'Cathain eventually became a fixture at the Scottish royal court and was judged one of the masters of his art.

Much of O'Carolan's repertoire has come down to us. O'Cathain's tunes, sadly, are far less well-preserved, and amount only to a handful.

Perhaps his patrons were less indulgent than O'Carolan's. There are tales told of O'Cathain that reveal a haughtiness that might not have sat well with the wealthy of his time, not to mention a penchant for "pushing the envelope."

Highly insulted when mistaken by a Scot noblewoman to be "just another harper" and commanded by her to play a tune, he flew off in a huff. When the offending lady discovered his preeminence, she quickly sought forgiveness, offering him her hand and unwittingly gave the name to the tune O'Cathain composed, possibly on the spot, to show there were no bad feelings left between them. And the result is one of the most popular tunes in the Celtic traditional music repertoire.

Called to play for the Scottish King James VI (who ultimately assumed the throne of England as well, with a numbering change to James I), his playing captivated the king, who placed his hand upon the harper's shoulder in a fond embrace.

A courtier asked Rory if he realized the honor the king had just given him. Replied Rory: "A greater than King James has laid his hand on my shoulder."

"And what man was that?" inquired the King.

"O'Neill, sire," answered Rory.

The fact that O'Cathain kept his head after this interchange is no small testament to the king's regard for the man and his music.

O'Cathain spent most of his time in



By Brian McGowan

Scotland, where he died in 1653 and is buried at Sleat on the Isle of Skye. He has the distinction of having another composition to which lyrics were subsequently placed and became inarguably the most famous Irish song ever. Favorable mention to the first three readers who can tell me what that song is and the name of the underlying tune.

Of O'Cathain's progeny I am unable to find out more.

Perhaps his temper kept him a bachelor.

A listen to O'Cathain's gem, "Tabhair Domh do Lamh," is but a YouTube search away. See how long it is before you are tapping your feet and nodding your head to the rousing tune this son of Ulster has bequeathed to us.

Slainte mhaith!

Pleasantville resident Brian McGowan was born and raised in the Bronx, and is a second-, third- and fifth-generation Irish-American/Canadian, as his immigrant ancestors followed several paths to the New World. Reach him at brian.m.mcgowan1952@gmail.com or on Twitter (@Bmcgowan52M). He is the author of two books, "Thunder at Noon," about the battle of Waterloo, and "Love, Son John," about World War II. Both are available at Amazon.com.

Examiner Sports

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By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor@Directrays

There's a mutual respect brewing between the 10U Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League A-Division rivals Putnam Valley Miners and the Yorktown Spartans. It's evident in the way the players talk each other up. It's obvious in the way the coaches rave about one another between innings and after their hard-nosed scrappy contests, the latest a 7-3 Putnam Valley win last Friday at Granite Knolls Park in Yorktown.

"We couldn't beat them the first two or three times we played them," Miners Coach Mike Quinn said of the Spartans, "but gradually we've improved and we're both on that A-Division level and we expect to have some great game with Yorktown as we lead these kids to their high school careers. We want the people in Putnam Valley to be able to talk about our kids for the next 20, 40 years. They are a great group of committed kids. We've been able to take three of the last four against the guys and every game is a battle."

After taking a 2-1 decision from the Spartans (4-3) the last time the two battled, Putnam Valley broke open Friday's game with three runs in the first. IF/P Logan Moriarty had three RBI and two more from IF/P Matt Quinn, who closed out the win for starter Nick Martinelli. Jack Marinelli added two hits and an RBI while Evan Peterson scored twice for the Miners.

However, the Miners were dealt a huge blow over the weekend when Quinn, who also plays up for the 11U PV Pride Blue, suffered a non-displaced fracture in his left hand, so the depth of this squad was surely to be tested.

The Spartans recovered in Sunday's twin

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NIKKI GALLAGHER PHOTO

Mahopac IF Nate Mascoll eyes the prize as he awaits a pitch in his wheelhouse, which he promptly deposited over the left-center field fence in the 12U Indians' 15-5 Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League win over visiting Byram Hills last Thursday at Crane Field... see Sports

Sports

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Bobcat hurler Spencer Wilk fires pitch in 15-5 loss to Mahopac in 12U GHVBL action Thursday.



Yorktown Spartan Brayden Guss is nipped at 3B by Put Valley's Logan Moriarty in PV's 7-3 GHVBL 10U win Friday.



Putnam Valley 2B Christopher Constantino awaits throw as Yorktown's Niko Masillo sneaks back to 2B in PV's 7-3 GHVBL 10U win Friday.



RAY GALLAGHER/NIKKI GALLAGHER PHOTO

Byram Hills' Cam Silverstein sneak back to 1B as Mahopac's Giovani Segarra takes throw in Bobcats' 15-5 loss to Indians in 12U GHVBL action.



Byram Hills 3B Kevin Malone-Kendall can't get tag down in time on Mahopac's Jake Walpole in Bobcats' 15-5 GHVBL 12U loss to host Indians Thursday.

bill, taking game one by an 8-6 count and the nightcap, 2-0. PV committed five errors and walked a bunch of Spartans, who blew the game open with a seven-run fifth. Frank Ofrias knocked in two runs for the winners while pitcher Christian Maratos whiffed seven Miners (7-3).

Yorktown picked up where it left off in game two, getting a pair of RBI from C.J. Velardo and a solid starting pitcher effort from Niko Masillo, who worked into the fifth inning with seven K's. Moriarty had eight whiffs for PV but ran into some trouble

during a two-run fourth that sealed the deal for the Spartans, who were credited with great pitching by Christian Maratos, Nico Masillo, Jake Sgobbo and Ryan Stevenson.

The New Castle Mustangs (7-1) are right there with the Miners and the Spartans, certainly contenders.

The 16U Yorktown Rebels (8-0) remained undefeated in the A-Division of the GHVBL after taking a pair from the Valley Dutchmen last Saturday at Granite Knolls, 11-9 and 3-2. SS Nick Jacoby had three hits to pace the Rebel attack in the 11-9 win while Frankie Kowal knocked in three runs. Pitchers Brendan Kenneally (8 K's) and Patrick Ryan (4 K's) were the victims of four Rebel errors but pitched out of major damage by whiffing 12.

In the nightcap, Yorktown pitchers Matt Alduino (5 K's) and Vincent Fusco (3 K's) combined to fan eight Dutchmen and scatter six hitters without much wiggle room. The Rebels mustered just three hits in all but got timely RBI from Ryan, Jacoby and Ryan Campobasso.

The 8U Yorktown Huskers (4-2) and Somers Red Storm (4-1) are having solid seasons in their respective A-Division while the Mahopac Wolves are 2-1 in the B. The Yorktown Heat (4-4) are seriously contend-

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Sports

Yorktown Soph Scialdone Headlines Under Armour A-A Lax List



By Ray Gallagher
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It is going to take a lot more than a COVID-19 pandemic or dire family illness to stop Yorktown High sophomore Alexandra Scialdone from achieving her goal of playing Division I lacrosse for a major university.

The 5-foot-5, 130-pound attacker was named an Under Armour All-American Saturday, and the road to that status was jammed-packed with travel between Yorktown and Long Island, where Scialdone competes for the nationally-renown Long Island Yellow Jackets, winners of the 2019 14U national championship.

If we ever have a high school lacrosse season at fabled Yorktown High in 2021, Scialdone will be prepared for it, providing a determined effort reminiscent of the Sarah and Lindsay Scotts, the Alexis Venechanos', the Noelle Mitchells and the Katrina Dowds before her. The kid has been traveling 165 miles round trip three times per week for the past five years to her travel team and

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trainer on Long Island. She never missed a single event, even when her mother was stricken with cancer. (She has since, thankfully, been on the long road to recovery.)

"At this point I am so grateful for my parents and the support of my entire family, as this All-American honor is as much theirs as it is mine," said Scialdone, a 3rd Degree Adult Brown Belt in Okinawan Goju-ryu. "It's all so exciting. I dreamed about being an Under Armour All-American since I was little and seeing all the other girls play in those games just inspired me."

The girls' lax game was spoon-fed to Scialdone since her dad, Craig, simultaneously put a stick in her hand as she started walking, and she'll stop at nothing to represent Section 1 in the mold of former greats like Sammy Jo Tracey (Fox Lane), Casey Bocklet (John Jay), Livy and Gabby Rosenzweig (Somers) and the scores of former stately Cornhuskers.

"Even though this is a tremendous honor I think I have a long way to go," Scialdone said. "This is just one step towards my ultimate goal of playing Division I lacrosse."

I've been fortunate enough to start at such a young age and since that time I have been playing in Long Island. The talent out on Long Island is insane, and I'm so happy and fortunate enough to have played there, and it has definitely changed and improved my game greatly. Section 1 is incredibly talented, and I feel that we can definitely compete with the teams out east on the island."

Scialdone will compete in the Nike 120 and the Under Armour All-American tournaments in August, and she looks forward to the day when she can pull that illustrious Yorktown jersey on after her freshman year was canceled due to the coronavirus.

"I can't wait to see what the future holds for me and all the other girls playing this sport," she said.

Hats off to Yorktown G Vito DeBellis, Byram Hills' Sean Siegel, Mahopac's Michael Harney and Lakeland's Conor Hufnagel on being named Under Armour All-Americans, too. We may have missed out on the Section 1 2020 spring lax season, but it appears we have some talent on the horizon.

RANDOMNESS: Players from the WNBA New York Liberty and Seattle Storm walked off the court during the national anthem last week and, at the very same time, a tree fell in the woods. Like I told y'all time and time again, I can deal with athletes taking a knee before the national anthem in a moment of silence for social justice, racial inequality and any other form of protest you can throw out there, because there's a lot of work to do on these fronts, but you lose a lot folks when you diss the flag of the United States and our national anthem.

I'm not saying I won't watch pro sports again, including the WNBA, or that I don't agree with the need for introspective change in American society. I'm just saying the message gets lost in any affront against Old Glory. There could come a time when school administrators and stadium owners decide to ban the playing of our national anthem prior to the start of games, and that would be a travesty in and of itself when #CancelCulture goes awry.

I can proudly state I've never been to Portland, Ore. and never will. The Washington Football Team should change their name to the All-Skins; this way everybody can and will take offense, accordingly.

Direct Rays



Yorktown's Frankie Ofrias neatly slides in safe at 3B in 7-3 loss to Putnam Valley Friday.



Putnam Valley SS Matt Quinn pegs runner at plate in Miners' 7-3 win over Yorktown Spartans in 10U GHVBL action Friday.



Put Valley P Nick Martinelli fires pitch in 7-3 GHVBL 10U win over Yorktown.

ing the 9U A-Division while the Cortlandt Nationals (5-1), Shrub Oak Storm (4-2), Mahopac Blue (3-2) and Putnam Valley Miners (4-2) are sitting pretty in the B-Division.

The Brewster Crush (4-1) 11U team and White Plains Hit-n-Run (4-3) is tearing up the A-Division while the Somers Red Storm (6-4) and Mahopac Wolves (6-2) are chasing the Putnam Valley Pride Blue (6-0) atop the standings. The Shrub Oak Storm (3-0) have only played three games but won them all.

In 12U action, Mahopac (7-2) handled Armonk (4-8), 15-5, blowing the doors open in an 11-run second behind three RBI from Ryan Sacco and two more from Jack G, Matt Bentivenga, Lou Girau. Mahopac failed to sustain its momentum in a 3-0 loss to Cortlandt United, who made the most of their two hits against Indian hurler Nate Mascoll,

who sent eight batters down K-way. The Briarcliff Bears (9-1) are crushing it in the A-Division with the East Coast Mavs (8-1) on their tails.

The Patterson Pirates (6-0) are undefeated in 13U B-Division action with the Putnam Valley Wild (4-1) giving chase.

GHVBL coaches are encouraged to

send weekly recaps and photos to raygallaghersports@gmail.com for inclusion in our weekly rundown.





YOUR HEALTH IS ESSENTIAL

The last several months have taught us a lot about what's essential. Essential workers. Essential supplies. Essential businesses. Now it's time to attend to another essential – your health. Not getting prompt, proper, regular medical care can have long-term consequences.

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A MEMBER OF THE MONTEFIORE HEALTH SYSTEM

U-Niko!

Yorktown Spartans Bounce Back, Sweep Put Valley in 10U GHVBL



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Yorktown SS Niko Masillo slaps a tag on visiting Putnam Valley's Christopher Constantino in the Spartans' 7-3 loss to the Miners last Friday at Granite Knolls Park, but Yorktown responded in kind and swept a pair of 10U Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League games from host PV by scores of 8-6 and 2-0 in Sunday's double-header at Keating Field... see Sports