

Remembering
9/11...
pages 15-19



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The NORTHERN WESTCHESTER Examiner

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

COVID-19 Breakdown:
Village of Ossining 1,102 (6)
Peekskill 1,052 (13)
Cortlandt 949 (18)
Yorktown 760 (17)
Somers 414 (7)
Croton-on-Hudson 212 (0)
Town of Ossining 160 (2)
Buchanan 43 (2)

FREE

September 8 - September 14, 2020

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 559



Deserving Free Massages

Ed and Carol Lachterman, owners of Elements Massage in White Plains, last week honored White Plains healthcare workers, first responders and essential workers with free massages. About 200 massages, half from members and half from the Lachtermans, were given out to honor the local heroes.

Disbarred Yorktown Attorney Charged with Stealing 9/11 Victim Funds

By Rick Pezzullo

A disbarred attorney from Yorktown was charged Thursday with stealing approximately \$1 million that had been awarded to a September 11, 2001 first responder that he represented.

Gustavo Vila, 62, could face up to 10 years in prison if convicted of the charge of theft of government funds. The complaint was unsealed September 3 in White Plains federal court before United States Magistrate Judge Paul E. Davison by Audrey Strauss, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and Kenneth R. Dieffenbach, Special Agent in Charge of the Fraud Detection Office of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspec-

tor General.

"Vila allegedly attempted to profit off of the suffering of a retired NYPD officer who risked his life at Ground Zero," Dieffenbach stated. "Because of Vila's alleged greed, the victim never received about \$1 million he was awarded from the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund."

In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, Congress created the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) to provide compensation with federal government funds to any individual who suffered physical harm or was killed as a result of the terrorist attacks, or as a result of the debris removal efforts that took place in the immediate aftermath of those

continued on page 2

Yorktown PD First to Join Hope Not Handcuffs Program

By Rick Pezzullo

The Yorktown Police Department is the first Westchester County law enforcement agency to join the Hope Not Handcuffs addiction recovery program that steers substance abusers into treatment.

"It's for people who are struggling with addiction who really have nowhere else to turn," Yorktown Police Chief Robert Noble said last week at police headquarters during a press conference. "They need to know that there's a place of safety for everybody in our community, and that's your

police department."

Hope Not Handcuffs-Hudson Valley is a pre-arrest diversion program of the Tri-County Community Partnership, which runs the program in several Hudson Valley counties. It started about a year-and-a-half ago in Orange County and it has expanded to about 25 police departments with another six departments in the process of joining. The group has placed more than 350 people into treatment through police departments.

The program's goal is to foster collaboration among law enforcement, community organizations,

volunteers and health care providers to find viable treatment options for anyone seeking to reduce a substance dependency.

"We are thrilled and excited to be able to expand throughout Westchester and build our angel volunteers," said Annette Kahrs, Hope Not Handcuffs-Hudson Valley's program director. "We have relationships with treatment facilities all over the mid-Hudson region and we have been able to get everyone who has asked for help successfully placed."

Anyone seeking help with a substance addiction can visit

continued on page 2



Yorktown Police Chief Robert Noble holds a Hope Not Handcuffs bin and Supervisor Matt Slater a sign at the launch of Yorktown's participation in the addiction recovery program on September 1.

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Two New Partners Join Wind Energy Hub Project in Cortlandt

By Rick Pezzullo

The team proposing a wind turbine manufacturing facility on property owned by the Town of Cortlandt just south of Indian Point has received two new partners.

Port Cortlandt Development, LLC announced last week that National Resources, a prominent New York metro-area real estate developer, has been tapped as the development lead, and Waterson Terminal Services has been chosen as the port's day-to-day operator.

"We're thrilled to welcome these creative, experienced and trusted development and port management firms to the project team," said Michael P. Lee, President of AKRF, a consulting firm contributing to the project. "These partners share our vision for creating immediate economic and community benefits in the Hudson Valley region, and their expertise will help Port Cortlandt succeed in attracting public and

private investment, creating green jobs, and securing New York's renewable energy future for generations to come."

National Resources and Waterson Terminal Services will be joining Port Cortlandt's bid to redevelop a 54-acre portion of Cortlandt-owned waterfront property as part of a \$400 million public/private partnership opportunity from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to support Governor Andrew Cuomo's plan for generating 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind energy by 2035.

As development lead for the project, National Resources will acquire, design and build a site suitable for vital manufacturing and fabrication facilities. National Resources is widely known for transforming underused and vacant sites into vibrant workspaces, most notably redevelopment projects like the former IBM East Campus in East Fishkill and the former Lockheed

Martin 94-acre complex in Lake Success.

A certified "Green Marine" company, Waterson Terminal Services is joining the project consortium as the day-to-day port operator. Waterson operated and managed the construction port for the Block Island Wind Farm, the first operational offshore wind farm in the nation, and is recognized as an industry leader in terminal management, cargo handling, and security services.

Before the facility can be built, the developers have filed an application for an amendment to the Zoning Code by the Cortlandt Town Board since no provisions currently exist for a wind port.

During a Zoom work session last week, Town Board members discussed the project. Councilman James Creighton expressed enthusiasm for the economic development opportunity being presented to the town.

"This is something every town in the state would beg to have. We're really lucky,"

Creighton said. "I think this is huge for our community. This could be perfect."

Councilman Dr. Richard Becker and Supervisor Linda Puglisi said town officials needed more information on what the proposal entailed.

"It's intriguing. The devil will be in the details," Becker said. "I have an open mind, but I'm not sure how I feel about this project."

"There's still a lot of loose ends for me, a lot of unanswered questions," Puglisi said. "I'm considering it. What does the town get out of it?"

With the Indian Point nuclear power plants set to close in April 2021, leaving the community with a tax revenue hole of millions of dollars annually, Port Cortlandt is being viewed as a much needed source of funding, and a generator of new jobs in the region.

Port Cortlandt's brain trust is slated to meet with the Town Board September 14.

Disbarred Attorney Charged with Stealing 9/11 Victim Funds

continued from page 1

attacks. The original VCF operated from 2001-2004. President Obama and President Trump reactivated the VCF, authorizing it to operate through October 2016, and December 2020, respectively. Claimants seeking compensation from the VCF were authorized to work with an attorney and have the attorney, on the claimant's behalf, submit a claim to, and receive the claimant's award from, the VCF.

According to the complaint, from about 2012 to 2019, Vila represented a retired New York City Police Department Officer in connection with the victim's claim for compensation from VCF. The officer was diagnosed with, and suffered from, serious, life-threatening medical conditions, including cancer, as a result of rescue and recovery work he performed at Ground Zero. Throughout his representation, Vila held himself out as an attorney, despite the fact

that in 2015, Vila was disbarred.

In May 2013, Vila submitted a claim to VCF on behalf of the officer. Vila also submitted forms to the VCF authorizing the VCF to deposit the officer's compensation award directly into a bank account controlled by Vila's law firm. On September 13, 2016, the VCF authorized an award to the officer of approximately \$1,030,622.04.

On October 12, 2016, the VCF deposited the full amount of the officer's award into the bank ac-

count. According to Strauss, Vila was required to distribute all of the money, less 10% for his purported attorney's fees, to officer. However, Vila allegedly did not distribute any of the money to officer or otherwise inform him about this deposit. Instead, Vila allegedly kept almost the entire amount of that award for himself and used that money for his own personal benefit, including to pay his own taxes.

From October 2016 to Febru-

ary 2020, Vila falsely represented to his client that the VCF had not yet released the majority of the VCF award, when in fact, the entire award had been released.

"Vila allegedly lied to his client, telling the client for more than three years that the money Vila stole had yet to be released by the Fund," Strauss stated. "Further, Vila lied to his client about his standing, continuing to hold himself out as an attorney even after he had been disbarred."

Yorktown PD First to Join Hope Not Handcuffs Program

continued from page 1

the Yorktown Police Department at 2281 Crompond Road and ask for help from the Hope Not Handcuffs program. A call will be made to a program volunteer, known as an angel, who will come to the police station and work with the individual requesting help to find addiction resources and treatment.

However, Noble warned drug dealers that Hope Not Handcuffs is not a get-out-of-jail-free card.

"If you're out here dealing or if you're out here doing something illegal with narcotics and pushing this poison, the men

and women behind me in uniforms, they will continue to do their jobs to keep this community as clean and as safe as we can," said Noble.

Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater thanked the police department for making its offices available to people struggling with substance abuse.

"When I worked in the State Senate, I traveled the state as part of the task force on heroin and opioid addiction," Slater said. "People needed a safe haven to go to in that small window they have when they are seeking help. Now we're going to have it right here in the Town of Yorktown."

Man Killed After Being Struck on GSP

By Rick Pezzullo

An Ossining man was killed Saturday night while standing outside his car on the Garden State Parkway in New Jersey.

According to multiple reports, Daniel Cintron, 50, was pronounced dead after being hit by a southbound SUV in Toms River on the shoulder of the parkway

about 11:15 p.m. A 21-year-old Staten Island man was also injured in the mishap.

The SUV was driven by an unidentified Toms River resident, who was not injured. No charges have been filed, but State Police are still investigating. Two lanes of the parkway were closed for about five hours.

Somers Sewer District Hearing to Resume on Thursday

By Martin Wilbur

Resumption of the public hearing on the potential creation of Somers Sewer District #2 will be held this Thursday evening, a project that would serve close to 1,000 parcels in Lake Shenorock and Lake Lincolndale.

An in-person hearing was last held on Aug. 20 at Reis Park; however, this week's hearing will be via Zoom only.

Last month Supervisor Rick Morrissey said the Town Board hopes to close the hearing in time to hold a referendum for parcel owners before the end of the year. Any referendum must be scheduled 60 to 75 days after the hearing's closure, he said.

The controversial \$62.2 million project has spurred angry debate among sewer opponents, with some arguing that the Town Board has been trying to push through the plan to make future development easier in the long term. Some opponents also said it's

an unnecessary expense since many residents have well-functioning septic systems or have recently upgraded their systems.

Others at the Aug. 20 hearing applauded the move to protect the lakes by planning a much-needed infrastructure improvement while protecting the environment.

Last week, sewer opponent Linda Luciano of Lake Shenorock criticized the Town Board for scheduling Thursday's hearing as a virtual forum instead of also taking in-person comments similar to what was done last month. She said some residents either don't have or don't use computers or are unfamiliar with Zoom and how to use it.

Luciano suggested that it was another attempt by town officials to limit opposition to the project.

"The problem with Zoom is you can't have a dialogue easily," she said. "It's just not right what's going here for the last year."

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914-864-0878

Public Schools to Report COVID-19 Cases to State on Daily Basis

By Martin Wilbur

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced last Thursday that the state's 700-plus school districts will be required to provide the Department of Health with daily data on the number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19.

The requirement for each school begins this Tuesday, Sept. 8, and the information will be available for the public to access on a new online dashboard developed by the Department of Health. Information will be available for viewing starting Wednesday.

"Many of the school districts have testing protocols that will be in place as part of their plans, but as I've said from the beginning, those plans are only as good as their implementation," Cuomo said. "Parents and teachers are understandably concerned about schools reopening. (Health Commissioner) Dr. (Howard) Zucker and the state Department of Health will set up a dashboard for teachers and parents, so they know exactly what's happening in their schools."

Also announced last week was the launch of a system-wide SUNY COVID-19 case tracker dashboard. The centralized dashboard will provide real time, up-to-date information on COVID-19 cases, testing and quarantine and isolation space availability across the 64 colleges and universities. It is expected to provide health and school officials a greater ability to monitor, respond to and contain the virus.

The unveiling of the SUNY dashboard comes after a spiraling number of cases at SUNY Oneonta forced administrators to send home students from the campus for the remainder of the fall semester. There were about 600 positive cases at Oneonta.

Creation of the two dashboards and the cluster of cases at SUNY Oneonta was followed by Monday's announcement that the state has recorded 31 consecutive days of COVID-19 transmission rates of less than 1 percent.

On Sunday, there were 520 positive results from 58,865 tests administered for a transmission rate of 0.88 percent.

Locally, the Mid-Hudson region reported a 1.2 percent positive rate on Sunday, but has remained mainly between 0.8 and 1.3 percent each day for the entire summer. On Sunday, Westchester had a 0.9 positivity rate while Putnam had three positive results from 240 tests.

COVID-19-related hospitalizations in the state fell to 410 over the weekend, the lowest since Mar. 16. As of last Wednesday, the last day where figures were available, Westchester saw 25 hospitalizations.

"Our numbers have continued to remain stable even as we reach new milestones in our phased, data-driven reopening," Cuomo said. "As we close out this Labor Day Weekend, I urge everyone to remain smart so we can continue to celebrate our progress in the weeks and months ahead."

He urged residents to continue to wash hands, wear masks and social distance.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said he expected that cases will increase within the county from last week's COVID-19 cluster at Holy Innocents Church in Pleasantville. Two

priests tested positive last week after leading multiple Masses and a First Communion between Aug. 24 and Aug. 30. A church staff member also tested positive.

"We are going to see most likely a rise in the number of active cases and a rise in the number of positives, whatever that number is," Latimer said.

Results from last weekend's drive-through testing site at Phelps Hospital should be known this week.

Casinos Given Green Light to



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Reopen

Those who want to try their hand at one of the state's casinos are back in luck. Last Wednesday, Cuomo announced casinos and video lottery terminal facilities will be allowed to reopen starting Sept. 9 with a 25 percent occupancy limit.

Any casino that chooses to reopen will be subject to strict safety protocols, including face coverings, except when eating or drinking. Social distancing, additional staff to control occupancy, traffic flow and seating to avoid crowding and enhanced

cleaning and disinfection are also required.

In addition, casinos must install enhanced air filtration, ventilation and purification standards in order to operate.

There must be at least six feet between slot machines, and no table games will be allowed unless casinos install physical barriers between players and the venue receives Gaming Commission approval. No beverage or food service will be allowed on the gaming floor.

The commission will monitor casinos to ensure enforcement.

Empire Casino in Yonkers has not made a formal announcement when it plans to reopen to the public.

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Verizon, Wireless Company Submit Mt. Kisco Cell Tower Application

By Martin Wilbur

Homeland Towers and Verizon Wireless have submitted an application to the Village of Mount Kisco for a 145-foot monopole on a parcel near the Bedford border to bring better wireless service to the area.

An accompanying letter dated Aug. 18 from attorney Robert Gaudio, representing the applicants, stated that his clients are seeking a special use permit, a steep slopes permit and site plan approval to erect the pole at 180 S. Bedford Rd. The location is part of the same 25-acre parcel near Sarles Street where a 2.5-million-kilowatt ground-mounted solar panel array has also been proposed.

The issue has been placed on the agenda for Tuesday evening's Planning Board meeting.

Gaudio stated in the Aug. 18 letter to the Planning Board that although the tower would be about 5,500 feet outside the Personal Wireless Service Facilities Overlay District, the application meets several requirements that should allow for its passage.

"Therefore, because the Applicants have demonstrated that the proposed Facility satisfies the four enumerated requirements...for a personal wireless facility located outside of the Overlay

District, we respectfully submit that the application has met all applicable special permit criteria and that the special use permit should approved," a portion of Gaudio's letter read.

The four criteria includes that the facility is needed to provide coverage to an area of the village that has inadequate service and is of minimum height and intrusion to provide the service; that the service cannot be provided within the overlay district; that all steps to find a place for the monopole within the overlay district has been exhausted; and that technical or space limitations prevents the structure from being collocated within the district.

Verizon has an existing tower at 304 Lexington Ave. but that site as well as other locations in the overlay district will not solve the gaps in service elsewhere in the village.

The application is certain to spark additional backlash from neighbors in Mount Kisco and Bedford. It was revealed at the July 14 public hearing on the solar farm as well as in the pre-meeting packet that was posted online several days earlier that the owner of the property, Skull Island Partners, was also looking to lease another portion of the site for the cell tower.

Residents who spoke at the hearing urged the board that the two applications

have to be considered in tandem with respect to impacts on the neighborhood.

Mount Kisco Conservation Advisory Council Chairman John Rhodes said that the CAC has serious concerns about both applications whether such a high-impact use is suitable for the Conservation Development District and a residential neighborhood.

"We also believe that the two applications should be reviewed together for the purposes of environmental impact analysis, since they would have a significant cumulative negative impact on the local environment," Rhodes said. "We also believe that the Planning Board should issue a positive declaration and require the preparation of a Full Environmental Impact Statement, and independent experts should be called upon to review all the applicants' claims and submissions."

There has been no determination by the village whether the two applications should be reviewed together or segmented.

William Null, the attorney for Sunrise Community Solar, which is looking to install the solar farm at the site, contended at the July 14 hearing that the applications should be reviewed separately because the "only similarity between the two actions is they are located adjacent to one another, yet they are distinctly different."

However, an attorney for the 86 homeowners at the nearby Mount Kisco Chase Homeowners Association said segmented review is inconsistent with the state Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the municipality's zoning ordinance.

A Aug. 29 letter from residents Gerard and Beth Ronski argued that when Mount Kisco Chase was built it required a full environmental review under SEQRA, and that should be required for both applications. Removal of close to 700 trees on the property will be needed to accommodate the solar farm.

"How anyone with even a basic knowledge of SEQRA, can ignore this clear and obvious distinction and argue with a straight face that the solar plant applications – with all their significant negative impacts – should receive a Negative Declaration, is simply remarkable and demonstrates how far the Applicant and its counsel will to mislead the public," the Ronskis' letter stated.

The Planning Board meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m. Meetings have been televised as well as live-streamed on the Village of Mount Kisco Facebook page.

The hearing on the solar farm is scheduled to resume at the board's Sept. 22 meeting.

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Mt. Pleasant Entertains Solar Panel Request at Gate of Heaven Cemetery

By Martin Wilbur

Mount Pleasant Planning Board members asked for additional information last week before moving ahead with a public hearing for a proposed solar array on a portion of Gate of Heaven Cemetery's land in Hawthorne.

CES Hawthorne Solar, LLC is asking the town to consider a ground-mounted array of about 15,000 panels on 32 unused acres of the grounds that would produce 7.5 million kilowatts of green energy a year. That would be enough to power about 1,000 residential homes each year.

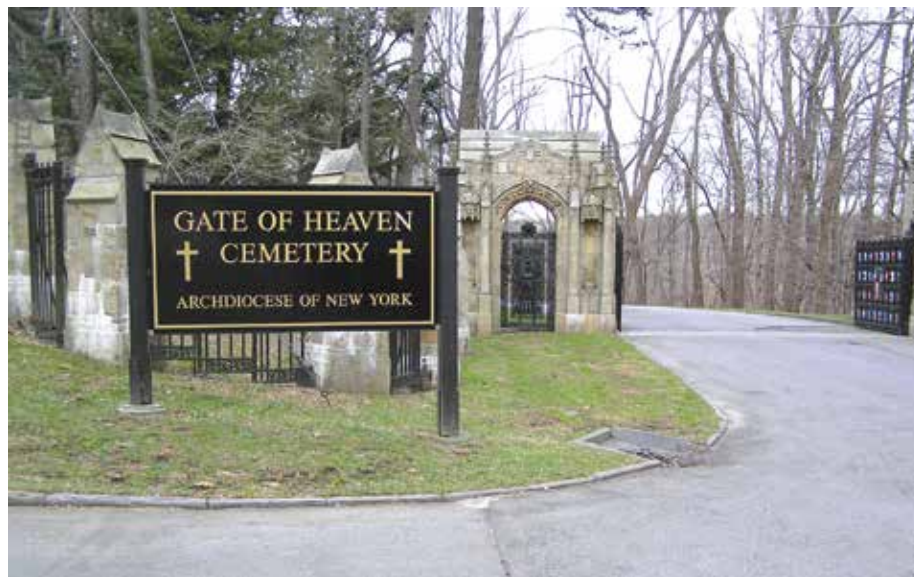
Steven Onidshin, project manager for CES Hawthorne Solar, said the land would be leased for 25 years on a piece of the cemetery that is not expected to be used for decades. It would also generate revenue for town since the cemetery is in trust for St. Patrick's Cathedral, which does not get taxed.

There would be a payment in lieu of taxes agreement that is currently being negotiated by the town's tax assessor but is expected to provide \$55,000 to \$60,000 a year in revenue for the duration of the lease, said project engineer Mark Zelina.

"This is a direct benefit to the tax rolls and does not place a drain on school districts or infrastructure," Onidshin said.

The cemetery, which measures more than 200 acres, would carve out 46 acres for the array, although the panels would be spread over 32 acres.

The board rejected a request by the



Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Hawthorne could be home to a 7.5-million-kilowatt ground-mounted solar panel array if applicant CES Hawthorne Solar receives town approval.

applicant's representatives to schedule a public hearing because there were key pieces of information missing from its presentation. Board members asked CES Hawthorne Solar to return with information on how it plans to maintain the site where the panels would be installed and for the removal of the equipment and restoration of the land once the lease expires.

Members also asked for the fire department to weigh in on how it would fight

a blaze should one occur as well as input from the building inspector and the town engineer.

"I don't think we have enough here to schedule a public hearing," said board member James Collins. "These are not minor items, they're huge items."

He also wanted to learn more about a comment made during the presentation by the applicant's attorney, James Kirkpatrick, that raised eyebrows. Kirkpatrick said the

power generated would provide lower-cost electricity to parishes and qualified town residents.

Board member Joan Lederman said while the additional revenue would be beneficial to the community, she was highly skeptical of the current effectiveness of solar power.

"We're clear-cutting 30 acres of trees and destabilizing the slopes for solar panels," Lederman said. "Solar panels are ineffective and very expensive, that's why most people don't have them on their homes because the government, both state and federal, pay them to do that, and federal and state governments are no doubt paying Con Edison to do this too, which is one of the reasons why they're doing it."

Board Chairman Michael McLaughlin wanted to learn from the assessor's office how much the acreage that will be used for the panels would generate if the land was taxed. He said he hoped the Town Board won't be negotiating away a benefit that is well below what the town might derive in taxes.

Another board member, Jane Abbate, offered that the proposed screening of 150 trees and plants seems thin considering the panels will be over 32 acres.

McLaughlin explained the board needs direction from its professionals on staff before it would move forward.

"The Planning Board does not schedule a public hearing until we have gotten from the building inspector and the town engineer a written statement that they think it's ready," he said.



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Chappaqua Fire Extinguished at Cable Company Location; No Injuries Reported

The Chappaqua Fire Department extinguished a structure fire early last Tuesday morning at a location a cable company occupied at 25 Memorial Drive.

It took firefighters about a half-hour to knock down the main body of the fire and about another 90 minutes to open all the walls and ceilings to ensure there were no hidden pockets of fire, said Chief Russell Maitland. The building, used by a cable company apparently for storage, was unoccupied by anyone at the time of the fire.

"The cause of the fire is currently being investigated with no conclusions yet," Maitland stated in an e-mail interview.

"It was a residential structure that looked like [it] was converted," he added. "It was a cable company based in Wisconsin and the entire first floor was filled with cable set-top boxes."

The Chappaqua Fire Department was dispatched to the scene at 12:56 a.m. after New Castle police reported the blaze.

Firefighters from Thornwood, Pleasantville, Millwood and Mount Kisco responded as well. The Chappaqua Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Westchester EMS Paramedics and the Pleasantville Volunteer Ambulance were also on hand. The Armonk Fire Department staffed Chappaqua Fire Department headquarters



CHAPPAQUA FIRE DEPARTMENT PHOTO

The Chappaqua Fire Department was called to a fire on Memorial Drive early on the morning of Sept. 1.

as the other neighboring departments battled the flames.

"The team work and coordination at this fire was extremely well-coordinated and helped bring this event to a quick conclusion, and most importantly, with no injuries," Maitland said.

Police Blotter

North Castle Police Department

Aug. 28: A caller reported at 2:01 p.m. that her vehicle appears to have been rummaged through sometime in the past while parked in the driveway of her Tripp Lane residence. The responding officer reported speaking with the homeowner, who stated that no items were taken from her vehicle and that it was undamaged.

Aug. 28: Police received a call at 10:27 p.m. reporting an unknown individual banging on a door on Limestone Road. The caller stated that no one was observed in the area after canvassing.

Aug. 29: Report of a verbal dispute between a male and a female on Reservoir Road at 10:46 a.m. The responding officers reported that the parties were separated and that the male party gathered his belongings with no further incident prior to leaving the scene. Assistance rendered with a report to follow.

Aug. 29: A complainant arrived at headquarters at 3:24 p.m. to report that he is receiving unwanted Snapchat messages from an ex-friend and would like to report them. The report was taken at the dispatch desk.

Aug. 30: A Hallock Road resident reported at 4:08 p.m. that his propane

tank was on fire in his backyard and the neighboring trees were also on fire. The call was transferred to 60 Control. The responding officers stated that the fire was extinguished and firefighters cleared the scene.

Aug. 31: A Lafayette Avenue resident reported at 12:53 p.m. that a check was stolen out of his mailbox and cashed. The responding officer gathered witness depositions.

White Plains Police Department

Aug. 26: Police arrested Luis Doce-Herrera for third-degree burglary. He was found with items from a burglary of a grocery store at 144 Mamaroneck Ave. on July 13.

Aug. 28: A 2020 Porsche 911 was stolen in front of 34 S. Lexington Ave. when the owner left the keys in the unattended vehicle that had its ignition on. When police entered the car into their database, state police observed the vehicle and attempted to stop it. The vehicle was ultimately recovered by the Croton-on-Hudson Police Department after it was left unattended and the owners were notified. The investigation is still ongoing to find who stole the car.

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Westchester Moving Forward With Food Scrap Recycling Program

Westchester County is moving forward with two food scrap recycling programs to create a more environmentally sustainable Westchester while saving taxpayer money for local municipalities.

After soliciting bids for its Residential Food Scrap Transportation and Disposal (RFSTAD) program, the county's Department of Environmental Facilities (DEF) recently awarded a contract to Suburban Carting. This partnership will allow the county to coordinate the transportation and disposal of residential food scraps collected through local municipal programs.

Municipalities will be able to deliver food scraps collected through either curbside collection or municipal drop-off programs to Suburban Carting's transfer station in Mamaroneck.

"Food scrap recycling has been a priority for my administration since we first took office," said County Executive George Latimer. "These two initiatives, the Food Scrap Transportation and Disposal program and the Compost & Education Center, will provide a tremendous boost to the county's food scrap recycling efforts and ensure that Westchester stays in the forefront of municipal sustainability."

A municipality unable to deliver the material can have its designated drop-off area serviced by Suburban under the RFSTAD program. DEF will offer this program to Refuse Disposal District municipalities at the same rate as garbage disposal, or even less to any municipality bringing the food scraps to Suburban's transfer station.

These rates are considerably less than municipalities are currently paying for comparable food scrap recycling services because the County Refuse Disposal District will be subsidizing the cost, saving participating municipalities a significant amount of money. The lower cost will also allow for municipalities that were unable to afford to offer food scrap recycling to launch programs.

At the same time, DEF is moving forward with the design and construction of a Compost & Education Center (CompostED) that will be located next to the county's Household-Material Recovery Facility. The small-scale compost facility will act as a demonstration site for local municipalities on the composting process, and offer educational programs for residents, municipal officials and students.

The county is currently considering different methods for collecting the two tons of food scraps that will be processed at the facility each week, including partnering with municipal farmers markets to set up collection bins, or working with institutions located nearby on the Grasslands campus.

"The goal for the Compost & Education Center is to demonstrate to municipalities and other organizations how they can integrate local composting into their waste management plans and ultimately save money and reduce greenhouse gasses by doing so," said Deputy DEF Commissioner Louis Vetrone. "The department is also excited for the opportunity to educate residents and students about the environmental benefits of composting."

According to the county's recently completed Food Waste Study, 22 percent of Westchester's residential waste stream is comprised of food scraps, while food waste comprises 21 percent of the commercial waste stream. Currently, only 22,000 tons of commercial food waste are recycled annually, mostly at supermarkets. It is difficult to estimate the amount of residential food scraps being recycled since many residents compost in their backyards.

Job Well Done



State Sen. Peter Harchham presented a proclamation to Chief Russell Harper of the Croton-on-Hudson Police Department thanking Harper for his 40 years of service on his last day of work on Friday, Aug. 28. Also pictured is Croton-on-Hudson Mayor Brian Pugh.



Patrick J. McNulty Jr.



Daniel J. McNulty

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Editorial

Maximum Transparency is a Must in Review of Major Projects

On the surface, there is little in common between the ongoing public hearings connected with the proposed creation of Somers Sewer District #2 and separate applications in Mount Kisco for a solar farm and cell tower.

In Somers, the town is moving toward holding a referendum, possibly before the end of the year, asking the owners of 986 parcels in Lake Lincolndale and Lake Shenorock to create a sewer district projected to cost \$62.2 million. The hearings have been underway since last year, with a multi-month hiatus because of the coronavirus.

In Mount Kisco, the Village Board in late 2018 approved allowing the Conservation Development District to include solar arrays. Two separate applications have appeared this summer for the Planning Board to now consider — a solar farm, and most recently, a cell tower for a vacant 25-acre parcel at 180 S. Bedford Rd.

The projects are at very different stages and with different methods of approval, but both have sizeable opposition, which is to be expected. And, of course, there are obvious merits for each. Septic systems

can and do fail, and in close proximity to the New York City watershed can turn into disaster.

Who doesn't want more renewable energy to limit carbon emissions and combat climate change?

However, what is unsettling about each situation are the charges of lack of transparency. Somers sewer opponents have bitterly argued that questions have gone unanswered or are skirted.

What's been more suspect is where the full \$62.2 million is coming from. Currently, there is \$10 million from the East of Hudson Fund, part of the \$50 million Westchester County received from New York City in 1997 to fund water protection projects in the watershed. There's another \$1.3 million that has been secured from the Army Corps of Engineers. Another \$16 million would be borrowed.

That still leaves nearly \$35 million unaccounted for, and the vagueness of town officials about potential grants and state and federal funding should worry everyone.

In Mount Kisco, neighbors near the proposed solar farm were more or less

resigned to the fact that about seven of the 25 acres would be for the solar array. Despite the need to clear-cut close to 700 trees, they could find some solace that the panels would only be about eight feet high, and with proper screening could be obstructed.

But days before the July 14 hearing on the solar farm, it was learned that the property owner, an entity called Skull Island Partners, was also planning to lease about 4,000 square feet northeast of where the panels would sit to install a wireless antenna facility. So much for the screening; the monopole will reach 145 feet, which would include its four branches.

The neighbors have a valid argument in calling for the Planning Board to review the projects together. Whatever the legal arguments may be, common sense dictates that two applications with potential significant impacts on the same parcel must be studied in tandem.

While nearly all projects have pros and cons, questions that go unanswered for a year and eleventh-hour surprises is no way to foster confidence from constituents.

Letters to the Editor

For Equality, Racial Justice, Decency, Support Senator Harckham

As Election Day nears, Putnam County residents have much to consider besides voting for president. Locally, voters face a choice between incumbent state Sen. Pete Harckham and his opponent, Rob Astorino. For those who believe in equality, racial justice and basic human decency, the choice should not be difficult.

As the founder of Putnam Pride, I monitor candidates' records on LGBTQ+ rights closely. Sen. Harckham has voted for legislation prohibiting gender identity or expression discrimination and the addition of transgender protections to New York's Hate Crimes Law. He voted to ban conversion therapy and to abolish "gay

panic" as an excuse for assault and murder. He established the LGBTQ Youth and Young Adult Suicide Prevention Task Force. In June he spoke at Putnam Pride's march with Putnam for Black Lives — the first public pride event in Putnam County — and has been a staunch ally while in office.

Rob Astorino is on record opposing same-sex marriage. He received \$85,000 in donations from an anti-LGBTQ+ advocate who believes LGBTQ parents should not have equal rights. Astorino is also one of Donald Trump's key supporters and admitted to signing a non-disclosure agreement preventing him from "disparaging" the president.

He's a failed gubernatorial candidate more concerned with his career than the needs of the Hudson Valley.

If you know or love any LGBTQ+ person, if you believe in fighting the opioid crisis — one of Pete's core platforms — having clean water or believe that schools and veterans' programs deserve more funding, please vote for Pete Harckham.

Eileen McDermott
Putnam Pride
Brewster

Astorino's Additional Ballot Line is Meant to Trick Voters

As reported in the Yorktown News on Aug. 27, Rob Astorino has filed for an additional ballot line in his campaign for the state Senate, in a disingenuous move to appear "bipartisan."

Astorino will be running on his Rebuild Our State ballot line, while simultaneously running on the Republican and Conservative ballot lines. However, Rebuild Our State has no membership and no platform, and it serves only to try to get unsuspecting unaffiliated voters to support him.

This is not the first time that Astorino has used this shameful tactic, and unfortunately it is not unique to him. Nationwide, local Republican candidates are attempting to minimize widespread disapproval of Trump policies with empty shell ballot lines.

On Feb. 17, 2015, Astorino created the

Reform Party. At that time, the Conservative Party of New York State complained about that move. The Reform Party sounded like a progressive movement. For voters it was another empty shell.

Traditional Republicans should also be dismayed by this attempt by Astorino to distance himself from the GOP. Astorino must feel that he won't get enough support from his own party because he is acting as if he was never a part of the Trump sphere. In fact, he was a member of Trump's 2020 Re-election Advisory Council. And, Astorino has been a paid CNN contributor who has appeared defending the President's policies.

As a career Republican official, it would be more appropriate if he demonstrated some integrity by standing up and running solely on the Republican line, as the representative

of a party whose values of rejecting climate change, the impact of COVID-19, women's rights, social justice and expanded economic opportunities clearly are most aligned with his own.

In contrast, incumbent state Sen. Pete Harckham has a real record of bipartisan bills that were passed in support of clean drinking water, law enforcement, women's rights and lower taxes. And, he is helping to lead a bipartisan task force that is charged with combating New York's opioid epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sen. Harckham doesn't have to hide from his record. He's proud of his accomplishments for the people of the Hudson Valley.

Francine DiBernardo
Yorktown Heights

Guest Column

How Local Native Americans React to Hate Language, Crimes

By Michael Gold

Hate crimes happen here.

Despite the generally serene and quiet joy emanating from the sidewalks and storefronts of the towns in this part of Westchester, the local police have recently recorded a number of painful incidents of hate crimes, including:

- Racist and anti-Semitic graffiti found at the Chappaqua train station the last week of August. One sentence read, “Ann (sic) Frank should have worn a TAC mask.” The TAC mask reference is to a type of mask worn during a video game, to shield the user from a type of gas used to poison the player during the game. Anne Frank died in a concentration camp, killed by the Nazis, along with millions of others, from Zyklon B gas.
- In early August, someone painted a 200-foot-long noose on the road in front of a Black family’s home in Chappaqua.
- “Black Lives Matter” signs have been stolen from the Presbyterian and First Congregational Churches in Chappaqua.
- A swastika and racist language were spray-painted on a dugout at Scout Field, a Westchester County park in Bronxville, this past May.

I haven’t heard of this happening here, but it’s important to note that people of color are often insulted around the nation by the repugnant sentence: “Go back to your own country!” A man in Fairfax County, Va. was recorded saying this in late July to some women sitting on a blanket in a park.

Last year, The New York Times asked readers to write about their experiences of being told to go back to their own country. There were 16,000 responses, including African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans and Jewish Americans.

I don’t know why, but I’m still shocked by these incidents.

And I find it sad that the people saying this are so ignorant or uncaring about their own country’s history that outside of Native Americans we are all immigrants to this land. And the ancestors of African Americans did not come here willingly.

So, I reached out to a few Native Americans who live in Westchester, Rockland and Queens to find out what they thought of these incidents.

Dwaine Perry, chief of the Ramapough-Lenape Nation, the leader of about 3,500 members in New York and New Jersey with headquarters in Mahwah, N.J., educated me on some history we generally don’t learn in school.

The Ramapough-Lenape allowed George Washington to use their footpaths to transport soldiers and equipment to fight the British during the Revolutionary War.

Also, the cannonballs, bullets and the chain used to block the Hudson River near West Point from British ships came from Ramapough-Lenape iron deposits.

“Without us, there would be no country,” Perry said.

Petra Thombs, the executive director of the Ramapough-Lenape Center, is of Cherokee and African American heritage.

The ancestral lands of the Ramapough-Lenape include New York below Albany, western Connecticut, Delaware and eastern Pennsylvania.

She said if she heard someone tell her, “Go back to her own country,” she would say, “You first.”

Referring to her Cherokee ancestors, she said, “My people have always been here.”

Of her African American heritage, she said, “My ancestors built this country with their blood, sweat and tears. I will not turn my back on them.”

Vida Landron, a teacher and assistant director of the Children’s Cultural Center of Native America, located in the Church of the Intercession on 155th Street in Manhattan, has Powhatan, Taino and African American ancestors.

The Powhatan, from Virginia, were Pocahontas’s people, the woman who possibly saved colonist John Smith from execution. The Taino, living on islands in the Caribbean, were enslaved and massacred by Columbus and successive Spanish conquerors.

“If someone said go back to your own country, I say, ‘Let me introduce you to it,’” Landron said.

She pointed out that Broadway in Manhattan started out as a Native American footpath, as an example of the often-forgotten part the original people living here had in the history of the country.

Bedford Road was once a Native American footpath, called the Succabonk Trail. A plaque commemorating the trail is located on

property at the corner of Bedford Road and Great Oak Lane in Pleasantville. It states, “Here passed the Succabonk Trail over which the Litchfield Indians carried their furs to trade with the Dutch at the mouth of the Neperhan.” The Neperhan is now known as the Saw Mill River.

Before Europeans arrived, the natives in this area grew corn, beans, hickory, nuts, walnuts, chestnuts, squash and berries. They also hunted bear, elk, white-tailed deer, rabbits, turkey, river otter, raccoons, woodchucks and waterfowl.

Landron said that First Nations is the preferred name for the descendants of the people living here when white people arrived here for the first time.

Once a bartender, Landron got into a conversation with a customer, who said, “You got the casinos,” as if that is supposed to settle all arguments about who owns the land now.

“I wanted to say, if you got removed from your house, would you be happy?”

“On paper, this country is absolutely beautiful,” Landron said. “We can prosper, but you must respect an individual’s right to live.”

We must focus, she said, on “character over color.”

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

Letters to the Editor

Byrne’s Support of Veterans Has Earned Him a Strong Case for Re-election

As a third-generation veteran and someone who served our armed forces for three decades before retiring as a master sergeant, supporting candidates for public office who support our military veterans is something I remain focused on.

We are truly blessed to live in an amazing community that shows strong support for our military, but that was not always the case. I can recall a time in the 1960s and ‘70s when our veterans were not always

supported. That’s why I feel it is important to support people like Assemblyman Kevin Byrne for office this November.

Kevin, while not a military veteran himself, has demonstrated his commitment to supporting our veterans. He was born and raised right here in our community. His direct connection to our veterans is his brother, who has served a 17-plus-year career in the U.S. Air Force, serving our nation all over the world including Afghanistan, Libya,

Qatar and Okinawa – a reality that brings military service close to home.

Long before destruction of monuments became a political issue, our Putnam County Veterans Memorial Park was vandalized on Memorial Day weekend by a group of lowlifes who hurled paint on our precious monuments. Since then, our VFW, American Legion, Scouts and local groups such as the Elks have stood guard overnight on Memorial Day weekend to ensure that doesn’t happen again.

Kevin would come back every year as a college student, and for years after, to assist the scouts (being an Eagle Scout himself) and stand guard alongside us. At the beginning, political candidates who participated were a rarity, but Kevin was always there – long before he held elected office.

Currently, Assemblyman Byrne has never forgotten his roots and has served us well; the proof is in the results during his time in elected office. He has coordinated with local veterans’ organizations and has worked with both Republican and Democratic state representatives to support our military. He hosted a Voices for Veterans tour for the ranking member of the Assembly Veterans Affairs Committee and his other Assembly colleagues who have military experience.

He successfully fought to restore funding the Pfc. Joseph P. Dwyer Vet to Vet Programs in Westchester and Putnam counties as well as the Helmets to Hardhats program to assist post-9/11 veterans transition into the building trades – both which had been eliminated in Gov. Cuomo’s initial budget proposal.

Assemblyman Byrne also co-sponsored and supported legislation that expanded benefits for our combat veterans that enabled municipalities to establish specialty courts for veterans, which assured all state benefits were afforded to our veterans from the LGBT community for their military service. This is in addition to being a loud voice in the Assembly to pressure the governor’s administration to expand its tuition assistance program to assist our Gold Star families that we are forever in debt to.

Kevin truly brings a voice to Albany for our veterans, and I thank him. He has earned our support and I encourage our neighbors and fellow veterans to support him this November.

**Jack Duncan MSG (Ret.)
Brewster**

Harckham’s Vote Supporting Reproductive Health Act Should Disqualify Him

In evaluating the candidates for state Senate, a key vote by Sen. Harckham in favor of the Reproductive Health Act (RHA) allowing abortions up to the moment of birth for any reason would disqualify him from office in my opinion. The RHA goes far beyond Roe v. Wade, dispensing with the need to have a doctor perform an abortion in many instances.

Further, the legal requirement to provide life-saving measures to babies that survive the abortion has been removed. That is just so cruel. It completely disregards

the old standard held by many pro-choice politicians of making abortions safe, legal and rare. Even those who are pro-choice should be horrified by Sen. Harckham’s vote to eliminate common-sense protections for babies in the third trimester and just after birth.

It’s wrong and it’s immoral. I’m voting for Rob Astorino.

**Dick DeLorenzo
Crompond**

Letters to the Editor

A Solar Farm and Cell Town in a Residential Area? Seriously?

For those of you residing in Mount Kisco and Bedford who may not be aware, there is a proposal before the Mount Kisco Planning Board to permit the installation of a 267-solar panel farm on property near the corner of South Bedford Road and Sarles Street.

This site is on the Mount Kisco-Bedford border, and is adjacent to Marsh Sanctuary, the Mount Kisco Chase development and other private homes. Why THIS particular piece of property? That's a good question.

Were you aware that this specific Conservation District property was amended back in November 2018 to allow for Tier 3 ground-mounted solar panels with a special use permit? No? Well, neither were the owners of property and homes adjacent to this site until this July, 20 months after the

fact. Apparently, the village does not require individual notice to owners of contiguous property prior to making a zoning change. Because we were unaware, we never had a chance to voice our opinions.

Why would the Village Board and/or Planning Board entertain a proposal for a solar power plant in a densely-wooded area that clearly adds to the beauty of our Big Little Village that is home to numerous wildlife (some of which are endangered or threatened) and a variety of deciduous and specimen trees? It's mind-boggling.

This proposal, if approved, lays out a plan to cut down about 700 trees. If this is in support of clean energy and "going green," doesn't that sound hypocritical to you? Equally alarming is finding out that the

owner of this property (a Florida-based LLC) intends to lease the space to the applicant for the solar farm and is also intending to lease another section of the property for the installation of a 145-foot cell tower! This nearly 14-story structure would dominate the Mount Kisco skyline.

There's a reason why many solar panels and cell towers are located near highways, commercial or municipal lots and near water towers. They are an eyesore, they're noisy and potentially carcinogenic. Installing a solar farm and a cell tower would essentially turn this residential and conservation property into an industrial site. Clearly, our neighbor, the Town of Bedford, is equally impacted by this.

Another concern is the connection

between this property and this project with two current Planning Board members. And the decision is apparently in their hands. SMH.

Be informed. Speak up. Preserve the beauty and protect the environment of Mount Kisco and Bedford. The solar farm public hearing is scheduled to continue before the Mount Kisco Planning Board on Sept. 22 at 7:30 p.m. It can be viewed on Cablevision channel 20, Fios channel 40 or on the Village of Mount Kisco Facebook page. Public comments will be heard via call-in at 914-420-0383.

Maryann Tarnok
Mount Kisco

In First Term, Harckham Has Left His Mark on Key Legislation

I'll be straight with you. When Pete Harckham announced for the New York Senate in 2018, I had no idea who he was and I did not support his candidacy. But when he won his primary, I joined his campaign and worked for his election. For he was certainly superior to his Republican predecessors, many of whom operated under an ethical cloud, and one even ended up in the slammer for corruption.

When Pete took his seat in Albany, I began to follow his activities closely and I got to know him personally. And now, two years later, I've become a true believer.

Although a freshman lawmaker, Pete leapt right into the fray and has left his mark on a multitude of legislation that has greatly benefited us all. Whether controlling the opioid epidemic, supporting our public schools, protecting our environment, ensuring women's reproductive health, fostering gun safety, combating child abuse, ensuring the safe decommissioning of Indian Point or limiting our taxes, Pete was there, acting to ensure our interests were

advanced. And he still found time to meet with us and listen to our concerns.

There is no question that Pete Harckham has truly earned another term in the Senate.

And what of Rob Astorino, ignominiously defeated in his last two elections? All you really need to know is that he's a buddy of Donald Trump and one of Trump's most ardent supporters.

Want more? Recall that during his tenure as county executive, Astorino drastically slashed funding for the Department of Health, Community Health Centers, mental health services, child care, food pantries and more. The very agencies we so desperately need during the coronavirus pandemic.

So on Nov. 3, join with me and let's send Pete Harckham back to Albany to continue the vital work he's been doing for the past two years. And, of course, don't forget to cast your vote for Joe Biden as well.

Joel E. Gingold
Croton-on-Hudson

Harckham on the Right Side of Pressing Issues of the Day

This is a confession: before 2016, I sometimes voted only for the top of the ticket and occasionally even skipped an off-year election. Today, I know better. If you're like I used to be, please change your ways, as I have. Keep your fingers moving and vote in all the races, including the contest for New York State Senate. Re-elect Pete Harckham.

What I understand now and failed to think about back then is shared values. I'm proud of the accomplishments of the state legislature since Pete was elected. In particular, I'm delighted with his vote to protect a woman's right to choose. He's also led the fight to curb the opioid crisis. In fact, he chairs the Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. What's more, he obtained more than \$27 million

for us – our district – for infrastructure, schools, first responders, parks, libraries and clinics. In Brewster alone, where I live, he secured \$200,000 toward the renovation of our historic theater.

If we get a new president in Washington, I'd like the reasonableness Joe Biden will bring with him to be mirrored in our bit of the state through Democratic-elected officials like Pete Harckham. And if there is no change at the top, it will be even more important for sanity to reign here. I prize honesty, hard work and commitment to our community. That's what we'll have when he gets back in.

Gail Carson Levine
Brewster

Astorino's Record in Westchester Makes Him Difficult to Support

A letter to the editor in The Examiner last week claimed that Rob Astorino is best suited to take us forward. But let's not forget that as a far-right county executive, all he did was take us in reverse.

Under Astorino's tenure, Westchester's credit rating was lowered twice, leaving taxpayers with a \$32 million deficit, according to independent auditors. He cut the number of county employees by 14 percent and decimated crucial departments by slashing budgets and postponing needed infrastructure projects.

And while Astorino said that better mental health systems were needed to prevent mass shootings, he closed county mental health clinics and cut funding for mental health services by \$10 million.

In addition, Astorino made several gimmicky one-shot budget deals to sell

county assets in order to meet operating costs and pension obligations, creating a fiscal disaster.

He also cost Westchester communities \$25 million in Community Development Block Grants. As a result, young people, seniors on fixed income and first responders find it difficult to live in our communities.

Accordingly, Astorino was defeated for re-election by a resounding majority in 2017. Despite being rejected by the voters, he's running as Trump's choice for New York State Senate.

The real way for Westchester to move forward is to re-elect Sen. Pete Harckham, who has done so much good for all of us!

Joanne Scutero
Hawthorne

Somers' Refusal to Allow Absentee Ballots in Sewer Vote is Devious

Concerning the proposed and ill-advised Somers Sewer District, our Somers Town Board members seem to be rigging to their advantage as many factors as they can.

For example, I lived in Lake Lindale for 22 years and still own a house there, on which I pay high taxes, though I am not currently residing there. Because of this, I am not allowed to vote against the unnecessary sewers unless I drive to Somers on the day of the vote. Because of personal circumstances, I am unable to do this. Thus, like the colonists who fought our Revolutionary War, I am being taxed – but without representation – as in being able to voice my opinion through my right to freely vote. Why are absentee ballots being prohibited by the Town Board?

How is this logical, fair, and most

important, legal? Clearly, it is not right and should not be allowed. The town attorney cannot explain this injustice and the board is obviously unconcerned about this overt threat to our constitutional right to vote, and there are numerous other people in the same situation as myself.

This is underhanded, devious politics at its worst, as the Town Board tries to force its agenda upon us, using whatever unethical strategy they can devise. Their plan is absolutely wrong for both Lindale and Shenorock, and the board needs to be voted out – along with their sewers.

Bruce Rath
Lake Lindale

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Obituaries

Scott Rails

Scott Allan Rails, a Cortlandt resident, died Sept. 3. He was 56.

Rails was born on Mar. 24, 1964, in Herrin Ill. and was raised in Benton, Ill. by his mother Donna K. Smith and Charles Smith. He graduated from Murray State University in Kentucky. On Apr. 22, 1995, he married Andrea Durr in Benton.

Rails dedicated his entire professional life to providing growth opportunities to children and young adults. Along with his wife, he was the founder, owner and director of Southwoods, a premiere four-week residential camp in upstate New York and owner of Summer Trails Day Camp in Somers.

He began his career in youth development

after his first summer working with Amy and Morry Stein at Camp Echo Lake more than 30 years ago. During his career, Rails was a true leader in the camping industry. He served for many years on the American Camp Association, New York and New Jersey board, including a term as president. He was a board member for the New York State Camp Directors Association and the American Camp Association National Board. Rails was a founding board member and had served on the Project Morry board continuously for 21 years, including in the role of president.

He is the founder and CEO of the Donna Kaye Smith Scholarship Fund, an organization that provides four-year college scholarships to those who otherwise might not be able to attend.

Rails has always been a champion for the

camp industry and worked hard to make sure that all children had the opportunity to attend camp. He earned many awards and accolades along the way, but was most proud of his relationship with his wife Andrea and his three daughters, Emma, Sydney and Bailey. Family was everything to Scott and being a father was his most important achievement and greatest blessing. The impact he has had on his many camp colleagues, friends and family is far and wide. Scott's legacy will live on in those of us whose lives he touched.

Rails is survived by his wife and three



Scott Rails

daughters; one sister, Valarie Durham; his aunt, Carolyn South; cousins Lex and Cathy Turner (Chelsea, Eric), Kim and Bill Reynolds (Ryan and Ross), Josh and Lora Smith (Zadok, Aletta, Tamsin), Alex and Amanda Smith (Alivia) and Anna and Randy Lane (Oliver); mother-in-law Sandra Durr; father-in-law Paul Durr II; brother and sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews Alissa and Chris Simmons (Ethan, Ainsley, Rowan, Finn), Shannon and Kicke Gomez (Giovanni), Paul and Cindy Durr (Anna and Adam); and countless friends who have become family.

Nicholas Bellomo

Nicholas Bellomo, 24, a Yorktown Heights resident and son of Rudolph and Rosalia Bellomo, passed unexpectedly on Aug. 8.

He was a 2014 honors student graduate of Lakeland High School. He went on to excel at Westchester Community College, graduating with honors and achieving a 3.5 GPA, and was a member of the Alpha Beta Gamma Honor Society. In 2016, he continued his studies at Pace University where he excelled as a journalism and communications major. While at Pace, Bellomo was a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and graduated cum laude in May 2019, receiving a bachelor's degree from the Dyson College of Arts & Sciences.

In 2016, Bellomo received a scholarship from Penske Automotive Group for Excellence in Academic Achievement. In May 2014, Nicholas was one of four students, in Westchester to receive a scholarship by Student Advocacy for Outstanding Educational and Personal Achievements despite battling the day-to-day difficulties of a neuromuscular disease.



Nicholas Bellomo

In July 2017, Nicholas achieved the rank of Eagle Scout as a member of Troop 165 in Yorktown. As part of his Eagle project, he made repairs to the facilities at the SPCA of Westchester and held a fundraiser and pet adoption event. For this effort, Nicholas was awarded the Humane Education and Youth Service Award by the SPCA of Westchester.

Nicholas was a kind and gentle person who had a passion for advocating for animal rights. He loved all sports and was a very ardent motor sports fan, particularly NASCAR. With the help of the Make-a-Wish Foundation, he was able to go to Atlanta Motor Speedway and meet all of the top drivers and teams, as well as having a personal meeting with NASCAR legends Jeff Gordon and Richard Petty.

Nicholas was an exemplary person, he managed to charm and inspire everyone he met and leaves behind a legacy of educational excellence, kindness, selflessness, a hard work ethic and love for his family, friends, teachers and animals.

He is survived by his parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandmother, godfather and friends who will miss him dearly. Although he has gone too soon, his impact on everyone he met will last for many years to come.

Josephine Castaldo

Made in Italy 100 years ago and aged to perfection, Josephine Castaldo of Mohegan Lake died Aug. 31.

Castaldo was born on Mar. 8, 1920, in Bruscianno, Italy to Luigi and Adelina Ambra. She married Joseph Castaldo on Oct. 2, 1947, in Italy. In 1954, they came to the United States with their son, Anthony, and settled in East Harlem. In 1970, she and her family moved to the Bronx where she lived until 2005. She then moved to Mohegan Lake where she happily lived out



Josephine Castaldo

her days spending time with her family.

Castaldo worked as a seamstress and was a proud member of the I.L.G.W.U. for 30 years.

She was predeceased by husband, daughter Mary and great-grandson Alex. She is survived by her son, Anthony, and his wife, Rosemarie, and son Carmine and his wife, Teresa. She was a proud and loving grandmother to Joseph Frank, Lisa, Susan and husband Shon, Joseph William and wife Erica and Elizabeth, and great-grandmother to Cameron Joseph.

Lloyd Reed

Lloyd Hubert Reed, a Somers resident, died Sept. 1 at home. He had celebrated his 98th birthday on July 31.

Reed was born and raised in Washington D.C. He came from a long lineage of academics who were on the cutting edge of medicine, as well as agricultural and space science. He attended Dunbar High School and earned his undergraduate degree in political science at Howard University. He served in Italy in the Army during World War II.

After his Army service, he was accepted to and enrolled in Harvard Law School, graduating in 1949. As an attorney, Reed was employed by the Mutual of New York Insurance Company and worked in the real estate department in New York City. He retired as a senior vice president.

Reed was a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity and a lifetime member of the NAACP. In his younger days, he was an active community member, serving on the Board of Education in Greenburgh, where he and his family lived, and many other organizations, including the Urban League. As a Heritage Hills resident for 31 years, he was a founding member of At Home in Somers, a group dedicated to helping town residents remain in their homes as they age. He was also involved with his condominium

board in the past.

Reed was a lifelong learner and an avid reader until becoming legally blind. He loved classical literature and studying birds and nature. He also took many courses through The Great Courses company on a variety of subjects including physics, music and the universe. Lloyd also enjoyed gardening and plants. He loved all kinds of music – classical, jazz, big band and blues. Politics was a strong interest of his and he followed the news closely.

Reed, who was affectionately known as Poppy to family members, was adored. He was very family oriented, loving and generous. The family considers him a role model.

He was predeceased by his parents, Eleanor and George Reed; his sister, Phyllis; his brother, George Jr.; and his wife of 64 years, June. Left to cherish his memory are his children Rebecca Colby Walker (Jerry) and Lloyd Allan Reed (Karyn); his grandchildren, Jerome, Safiya, Leisa (Gaetan), Devin (Frehiwot), David (Lee-Sean), Jared and Olivia (Aaron); his great-grandchildren, Byron, Cynthia (Stephen), Jasmin, Imani, Jamil, Jayla, Jade, Angela, Tania, James, Jahai, Nyah and his youngest great-grandchild, Cameron; several nieces and nephews; and some special friends. He was greatly loved and will be greatly missed.



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Support Connection to Hold Virtual Team Captains Meeting Wednesday

By Rick Pezzullo

Support Connection will be hosting a virtual meeting for anyone interested in forming a team for the 2020 Support-A-Walk for Breast and Ovarian Cancer on Sunday, Oct. 4.

The virtual Team Captains Meeting will be held via Zoom this Wednesday, Sept. 9 at 7 p.m.

The theme of this year's Support-A-Walk is "Walk With Us, Wherever You Are." In lieu of gathering by the thousands at FDR State Park in Yorktown, Support Connection is inviting people to walk wherever they may be, near and far.

During Wednesday's Zoom meeting, Support Connection will share information about what the walk will look like this year and how to form or join a team. There will be announcements about new and exciting activities geared toward enhancing virtual participation. There will also be ideas and tips about ways to stay connected and raise funds.

The Support-A-Walk is Support Connection's most important annual fundraiser. Proceeds provide funding for its year-round breast and ovarian cancer support services, which have helped thousands of people since the organization was founded in 1996.

A few weeks ago, Support Connection kicked off The Team Spirit Campaign, which encourages friends, family members, co-workers and neighbors to "team up" for the Support-A-Walk. Teams decide how to



Cancer survivors Kathleen Michel, left, and Kendra Ekelund will be this year's walk ambassadors for Support Connection's Oct. 4 Support-A-Walk, which will be held virtually this year.



participate. Activities can include seeking donations, planning fundraising activities, inviting others to participate or spreading the word about the walk. Teams can create their own t-shirts and signs or banners to express their inspiration for participating.

Team members can live close to one another or far away. Those who can't be in one place can make plans to walk at the same time in different locations. It's an opportunity to connect with loved ones to work for a common cause during this time when staying connected is vital.

Team Spirit Awards will be presented as part of the campaign. Awards will go to the three teams that raise the most money, the three teams with the most donors and the most creative team sign or banner.

This year's walk ambassadors are Kendra Ekelund and Kathleen Michel, both cancer survivors.

Ekelund was just 31 years old and married for only two years, when she was diagnosed with a rare form of uterine cancer in 2012. Her diagnosis came after a long and frustrating period filled with

pain that no one could explain, followed by multiple surgeries and hospitalizations and numerous complications. When she finally received an answer, she had to undergo a complete hysterectomy.

"Having a hysterectomy at 31 was a hard thing to come to grips with, but at the very least, it ended my painful symptoms," Ekelund said.

After the surgery, there was no other treatment available for the type of cancer Ekelund had, so she found herself in a "watch-and-wait" situation, which inevitably leads to anxiety and fear.

A close friend, a breast cancer survivor, told her about Support Connection and encouraged her to call, but Ekelund was hesitant.

"I didn't want to take services away from others who I thought needed it more. I wasn't used to asking for help for myself," she said.

One day, after an especially difficult night, Ekelund decided to reach out.

"I remember holding the phone for several minutes trying to decide what I would say. When I finally called and was connected to a counselor, I just blurted out 'I have cancer.' That's all I had to say. Robin took it from there, answered all my questions and encouraged me to take advantage of the different services Support Connection offered."

Ekelund said joining one of Support Connection's monthly support groups was the best thing she did for herself. Initially,

continued on page 14

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ACCOMPANIMENTS (All Included)

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1 qt. Fresh-Cut Cole Slaw • 1 qt. Carrot Tsimmes
Round Challah

SIDES (Choose Two)

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Sweet Potato Pudding • Noodle Pudding

Potato Pudding

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APPETIZER

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1.5 pts. Chopped Liver

SOUP

2 qts. Chicken Noodle Soup & 7 Matzo Balls

ENTREE (Choose One)

3 Roast Chickens with Tray of Stuffing

2.5 lbs. Fresh Turkey Breast

2.5 lbs. Fresh Brisket

ACCOMPANIMENTS (All Included)

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1.5 pts. Fresh-Cut Cole Slaw

Round Challah

SIDES (Choose Two)

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Support Connection to Hold Virtual Team Captains Meeting Wednesday

continued from page 13

she was reluctant and worried about sharing her story, especially because no one else had the same rare type of cancer she had. But she quickly felt at ease and reassured by listening to other women who had coped with similar challenges.

Michel was not surprised in late 2012 when she had to go for further testing after her annual mammogram. It had happened before and was never an issue. But this time, Michel got the news she hoped she'd never get – breast cancer.

"I couldn't believe it. It was devastating,"

she said.

The next few weeks were filled with tests and appointments, and in January 2013 Michel underwent two lumpectomies two weeks apart.

"I thought that was it, that the worst was over," she said.

However, when Michel's pathology report came back at the end of that month, there was more bad news: the lumpectomies could not get all the cancer cells, so she'd need more surgery.

Michel was scheduled for a bilateral mastectomy on Feb. 28, 2013. She had learned about Support Connection the

day after she was diagnosed from her daughter's friend, a longtime volunteer for the organization. But she never picked up the phone until the day before her mastectomies.

"My daughter called to check on me. I hadn't slept, and she said to me, now's the time to make that call," Michel recalled.

She remembers that saying "I have breast cancer" on that call was one of the hardest things she'd ever done. But she also remembers that Marlene spoke to her for more than an hour and that her calming words gave her the confidence she needed to head into surgery the next day.

"She told me what to expect and made me feel I could do it," Michel said.

More than seven years later, Michel still calls Marlene each year on the anniversary of that first call.

"There's nothing I wouldn't do for Support Connection. It is a great organization that helps so many women and families," Michel said.

To learn more about Support Connection or to receive login information about Wednesday evening's Team Captains Meeting, contact Melissa Higgins at 914-962-6402 or e-mail walk@supportconnection.org.

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Family Britches to Host Author Signing on New Pete Sampras Book

Family Britches in Chappaqua is hosting a book signing by tennis journalist and International Tennis Hall of Fame member Steve Flink on the legendary Pete Sampras on Saturday, Sept. 19, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Flink, a Katonah resident, will sign copies of "Pete Sampras, Greatness Revisited," published by New Chapter Press. Flink has covered more than

120 major tennis tournaments and currently serves as a columnist for Tennis Channel and Tennis.com.

For more details, visit www.familybritches.com. Family Britches is located at 70 King St. in Chappaqua and can be reached at 914-238-8017. Its New Canaan, Conn. store is located at 99 Main St. and can be contacted at 203-966-0518.

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Westchester 9/11 Ceremonies Curtailed Due to COVID-19

This year most ceremonies commemorating the 19th anniversary of the September 11 attacks will be held virtually or in person with limited attendance.

Westchester County's 2020 September 11th Ceremony will be held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The online ceremony will honor the thousands of lives lost during the September 11 attacks,

and those we have been lost in the years following.

The ceremony can be viewed on the Facebook.com/westchestergov page at 3 p.m. on Friday.

The county had reached out to family members of those who were killed on 9/11 and those who have died of 9/11-related illnesses to read the names of their loved

ones during the virtual ceremony.

North Castle

The town's September 11 memorial ceremony will be held on Friday at the Wampus Brook Park gazebo on Maple Avenue in Armonk at 5:30 p.m. All COVID-19 safety guidelines will be in place, with masks required and areas marked for social distancing.

White Plains

The September 11th Remembrance Service at Liberty Park can be viewed on Optimum Channel 75 and FIOS Channel 47 or online at <http://whiteplainsny.swagit.com/specialty> beginning at 8 a.m. this Friday. The ceremony will include a message from the mayor, a wreath laying, reflections and reminiscences of previous years.

There will also be the annual 9/11 blood drive from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Slater Center, located at 2 Fisher Court. To register, visit RedCrossBlood.org and use sponsor code CityofWP.

Yorktown

Yorktown's annual 9/11 commemoration will be held outdoors, online and on television. The event is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. at the Yorktown 9/11 monument next to the John C. Hart Memorial Library at 1130



Ceremonies for this week's 9/11 commemoration will look very different than in past years. Many towns are holding virtual ceremonies to adhere to safety restrictions imposed because of COVID-19.

E. Main St. in Shrub Oak.

Five Yorktown residents died in the terrorist attack. The commemoration ceremony will be simultaneously webcast on the town's Facebook page. Yorktown officials are also preparing a pre-recorded commemoration that will air on Sept. 11 on the town's cable access channel. The pre-recorded commemoration is expected to run on cable access throughout the day.

Contact other municipalities are doing to commemorate September 11 this year.

Putnam County to Live-Stream Sept. 11 Candlelight Vigil

Putnam County's annual September 11 candlelight vigil will be held on Friday, Sept. 11 at the Putnam Heroes Memorial located at Cornerstone Park in Carmel.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential health hazards, the Putnam Heroes Memorial Committee has decided to live-stream this year's ceremony. The ceremony will start at 8 p.m.

Cornerstone Park will be closed and only be open to those involved in the ceremony and its production. It is estimated that Cornerstone Park will be closed from 6 p.m. until the event's conclusion.

This year one name will be added to the county's memorial: Commissioner Robert McMahon, Putnam County Bureau of Emergency Services. The committee will also be dedicating a tree that was a seedling from the World Trade Center Survivor Tree to the health care workers, emergency

responders, essential services workers and the volunteers who worked so hard to keep us healthy, safe and sustained. Those who have passed as a result of this pandemic will also be remembered.

St. James the Apostle Church will be having its September 11 Mass of Remembrance at 7 p.m. The Mass will also be live-streamed, with no congregants at the service.

The site to view the vigil is www.putnamcountyny.com/911candlelightvigil.

For more information on viewing the Mass of Remembrance, call St. James the Apostle Church at 845-225-2079 or visit www.stjamesapostle.org.

It is recommended members of the public visit the sites prior to the start of the events.

In case of any technical difficulties, the candlelight vigil will be available for viewing on www.putnamcountyny.com/911candlelightvigil after its conclusion.



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Hunger, Food Insecurity the Focus of This Year's 9/11 Day of Service

By Martin Wilbur

For the past decade, Westchester County has partnered with Volunteer New York! to commemorate the anniversary of September 11 by encouraging residents to donate their time to a wide variety of nonprofit organizations and charities.

With much of that curtailed this year because of the coronavirus, Volunteer New York!, an organization that inspires individuals to support nonprofits, will be focusing its efforts for the 19th anniversary of the terrorist attacks by helping to ease food insecurity.

Volunteer New York! Executive Director Jeanette Gisbert said the issues of hunger and food shortages have been exacerbated in communities across the region as a result of the shutdown and the loss of thousands of jobs in various industries as a result of the pandemic. Over the past five to six months it is an issue that has been repeatedly highlighted by representatives from scores of community organizations that Volunteer New York! has partnered with, she said.

Gisbert said this year's 9/11: Serve + Remember initiative, the #911day COVID-19 Relief Healthy Food Drive, is a safe way to help those in need.

"Through these conversations, the issue of food insecurity started to bubble up, not only from the traditional food pantries and soup kitchens you might expect but also from organizations that provide more wraparound services as well," she said.



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Volunteer New York! Executive Director Jeanette Gisbert spoke last week about the organization's Sept. 11 Day of Service initiative for this year, the #911day COVID-19 Relief Healthy Food Drive, as County Executive George Latimer looks on.

The pandemic has caused an unprecedented spike in food insecurity in Westchester, with some local pantries having seen a 300 to 900 percent increase in people requesting food, according to Feeding Westchester.

Residents in Westchester, Putnam and

Rockland counties looking to help should visit the Volunteer New York! website, www.volunteernewyork.org/service, and sign up to donate food items to one of 11 pantries or organizations in the region, including nine in Westchester. Once a person registers, they will be sent an e-mail with instructions,

which includes the items that are in short supply for each organization.

Speaking in front of Westchester's 9/11 memorial "The Rising" Wednesday morning at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla, County Executive George Latimer said the tragedy the nation experienced 19 years ago has motivated people to help others in their communities.

"The volunteerism that came out of working on the pile, the volunteer spirit that took people up the towers to save lives is what you gain out of this experience," Latimer said. "That is something you can build on, something good, and we're happy to focus on that element, that element of volunteerism that was in effect that day and in the aftermath of that day, and now can also symbolize for us what 9/11 is."

The Westchester-based organizations that are participating in the #911day COVID-19 Relief Healthy Food Drive are Caring for the Hungry and Homeless of Peekskill (CHHOP)/Fred's Pantry, Peekskill; Hope Community Services, New Rochelle; Community Food Pantry of Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown; the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry, Mount Kisco; the Don Bosco Community Center, Port Chester; United Community Center of Westchester, New Rochelle; the Thomas H. Slater Center, White Plains; Life Progressive Services Group, Inc., Mount Vernon; and the Ossining Food Pantry, Ossining.

Putnam Community Action of Brewster is also participating in the drive.



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A Spiritual View

By Lilah Sugarman

We are now in the month of Elul. In the Jewish calendar, the month of Elul is designated as a time of introspection. This month leads up to the High Holidays – Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

A source from the 14th century states that the Hebrew word Elul is an acronym for the phrase “Ani L’dodi V’dodi li” – I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine. This acronym supports the idea that Elul

is seen as a time to search one’s heart to draw close to God.

During this month, our tradition encourages us to engage in cheshbon hanefesh, accounting of the soul. We look back on the year we have had, the things that have gone wonderfully, the things we are grateful for and also the things we would like to have done differently. We look forward to the year to come and set intentions for areas of growth in the coming year. We engage

in returning to the most important things in our lives and returning to the best versions of ourselves.

During the month of Elul there are specific rituals to aid in this accounting of the soul. One of these is that traditionally, we blow a shofar,

a ram’s horn, daily throughout the month of Elul to awaken our souls.

Whether you are engaging in cheshbon hanefesh leading up to the new Jewish year, starting a new school year or continuing into this year, may you set aside time to check

in, an accounting of the soul. How are you physically, spiritually and emotionally, and then set intentions for the upcoming months and year?

Lilah Sugarman is the cantor at Congregation B’Nai Yisrael in Armonk and is part of the Armonk Faith Alliance. The alliance also comprises Hillside Church, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, St. Patrick’s RC Church and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.



Harckham to Hold Food Drive This Saturday in Pleasantville

State Sen. Pete Harckham (D-Lewisboro) will be holding a food drive from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. this Saturday, Sept. 12 in the parking lot of the United Methodist Church, located at 70 Bedford Rd. in Pleasantville.

Along with members of his team and a group of volunteers, Harckham will be collecting food that will be donated to the Pleasantville Food Pantry, which helps feed some of the neediest members of the community, including many seniors.

Harckham has held six food drives in the past few weeks – in Sleepy Hollow, Peekskill, Mount Kisco, Mohegan Lake, Brewster and Bedford – and collected about 30,000 pounds of food and more than \$9,500 in cash donations so far. Hundreds

of residents from the 40th Senate District have volunteered to help at the food drives as well, a “real grassroots show of support,” said Harckham.

Please note that this will be a drive-through, drop-off event. No food will be distributed; it will only be collected. Volunteers wearing face masks will collect the food from each car. There is no need to get out of the vehicle.

Anyone interested in donating food, the items most needed include cereal; dried and canned beans; dried and canned fruit; canned tuna and salmon; Parmalat milk; jelly; soup; canned vegetables; oil; coffee; granola bars; rice in bags; and spaghetti sauce in jars. Expired food will not be accepted.

Mt. Pleasant to Unveil War on Terror Monument This Saturday

The New York State Medal of Honor Committee is scheduled to dedicate its War on Terror Monument this Saturday at 1 p.m. with a ceremony at Mount Pleasant Town Hall in Valhalla. Emmy Award-winning Rita Cosby television host Rita Cosby and state Supreme

Court Judge David Everett will be the grand marshals. Tow Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi, Westchester County Executive George Latimer and Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell are expected to attend.



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Five Ways to Prep for Back-to-School Without Stress

Whether the new school year means your kids will be heading back to the classroom, learning remotely or a mix of both, back to school will most likely be stressful. Thinking ahead can help prepare everyone for a new way of learning, and simplify the transition from the slow ease of summertime to the bustle of the school year.

Follow these tips so that everyone is ready when the first bell rings.

1. Resume the Routine. Summertime schedules are often lax, but a more structured routine is important during the school year. Reestablish set bedtimes and mealtimes to ease everyone back into school year habits. Even if children

are remote learning this fall, keep first day of school traditions alive with their favorite breakfast, pictures and a first day of school outfit.

2. Set Up a Homework Station. A dedicated space to store supplies and paperwork is key to staying organized. Let kids take pride in this space so they want to spend time studying there by having them create their own accessories and decorating them to their liking. Customize desk organizers and décor with cool on-trend colors or craft one-of-a-kind creations, like pencil pouches and tablet covers. There's something to suit any kid's style.

3. Stick to the Schedule.

Once the hustle and bustle of the school year kicks into high gear, it's important that students, parents and teachers stay on track. Find a unique way to display activities, homework or personal messages to your children like a quote of the day. You can use colored tape and chalkboard tape to outline a fun activity chart on a dry erase board or chalkboard easel. In addition to to-do lists and homework assignments, make sure to include outdoor time for recess and opportunities for arts and crafts. At the end of each day, sit together to check off everything that's been completed and help your kids update the schedule for the next day to stay engaged and excited for what's to come.

4. Simplify Shopping. Create a checklist of items you'll need to buy, as well as plan where you'll make purchases. In addition to the usual supplies, stock up on extra face masks, personal tissues and hand sanitizer. If your child will be learning virtually, you may want to consider adding items to the list like extra USB chargers and ports, noise-cancelling headphones – to help older siblings concentrate – and even blue light filtering glasses for kids that will be in front of a computer or tablet more

than usual.

5. Label Supplies. Children are forgetful and it's easy for supplies to become misplaced or swapped with other children. To ease your mind about your child sharing pencils or accidentally grabbing the wrong backpack, have a night where you sit down and label supplies. Your child can select favorite colors and customize folders for each subject. If learning from home, this is also great way to prevent he-stole-my-pencil arguments amongst siblings.

For more back-to-school craft projects and DIY inspiration, visit duckbrand.com.

Simple preparations can help your family adjust to a new schedule and new school year.

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Going Back to School Safely: How Parents Can Help

As children return to classes throughout the region, they'll no doubt experience the mix of excitement and apprehension that often accompanies back-to-school days.

This year, however, children and parents have the added stress brought on by COVID-19, so it's important for parents to know how to support their children so they can enjoy a successful school year.

While some might be fearful of attending school in-person, what we do know is that keeping children separated from their peers for prolonged periods of time can lead to depression, social anxiety and general anxiety. The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that children learn best when they are physically present in the classroom, where they also gain social and emotional skills, receive healthy meals, exercise and have mental health support and other services that cannot be easily replicated online.

In making the decision about whether or not to send your child to school, I recommend consulting with your pediatrician to weigh the risks versus the benefits, based on the child's health and family circumstances. Then, be honest with your child about what's going on in the world and how the school day will be

different. It's important for children to take ownership of their health, and knowing how to follow safety protocols is part of that.

Here are some tips to help support a smooth transition back to classrooms:

- **Masks:** Children are not used to wearing masks all day, so choosing the right mask is important. I recommend surgical masks because they are light, disposable and don't tug on little ears. The best mask is the one your child will not take off, can breathe in, that covers the nose and mouth and goes over the chin properly. Alternatively, I also suggest a reusable mask with a filter that can be replaced daily without needing to wash the covering every day.



- **Anxiety:** It's important to provide appropriate guidance to children on how to manage themselves safely at school while not making them nervous. Try to get as many facts as you can and communicate them in a calm, age-appropriate way.
- **Safety protocols:** Explain what will be different and what will be the same this year. Make sure children understand what being socially distanced means and why it is important. Confirm that they are



By Dr. Samantha Lowe

clear on bathroom and lunch protocols, too.

- **Prioritize exercise:** To limit exposure, children may be placed in small groups or pods and remain in the same classroom all day. In many districts, physical education classes are still a question.

I advise parents to ask schools what they will do to

ensure that children get adequate movement and brain rest every day, which is essential to keeping hyperactivity at bay. Then, when kids get home, prioritize exercise over screen time.

With clear communication, a little preparation and a lot of exercise at home to burn off steam, children will adjust to their new routines and have a safe and successful transition to in-person learning this fall.

Dr. Samantha Lowe is a pediatrician with White Plains Hospital Physician Associates.



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On the Move: Catch the Hawks and Songbirds Heading South

By Brian Kluepfel

In my opinion autumn is the most beautiful season. Not for me, the icy winter winds nor the summer's oppressive heat and humidity. Not even spring's allergy-inducing flowers! Give me the slow, resplendent dying of a New England autumn anytime.

Of course, for birders in the Northeast, it's a special time too. After an often-desultory summer (once the nestlings have fledged), we are treated to the reverse of the spring migration, as colorful songbirds head to their wintering grounds in the Caribbean and Central and South America. It's a chance not to be missed, and it's recommended you get out there and catch it during September and October.

Lesser known, but just as spectacular, is the seasonal migration of raptors, happening right now. Because of its unique positioning near the Long Island Sound, this area is rich with birds of prey funneling inland on the warmer air above our land mass. Sometimes thousands of hawks can pass in a single day, and true aerial spectacles are within mere miles of where we live.

Our sister chapter, Bedford Audubon, hosts a hawk watch high above Route I-684 in Butler Sanctuary, a Nature Conservancy property, in Bedford, just east of Mount Kisco. They've even built special bleachers for raptor fans.

Tait Johansson leads the efforts at Chestnut Ridge, where various forms of soaring, sliding, kiting and hovering are undertaken by accipiters (Coopers and sharp-shinned hawks and the occasional goshawk), the



SUE O'ROURKE PHOTO

The Coopers Hawk

chunkier buteos (red-tailed, red-shouldered and broad-winged hawks) and even some eagles. Johansson said in a recent Audubon Zoom chat that getting used to counting these various species involves "being wrong a lot of times." So, no pressure, folks. There are usually some experienced birders up there to guide you.

Another great site is just across the bridge at Nyack's Hook Mountain. Judy Battally and Drew Panko have been tallying red-tails and others for decades. Although counts were at record lows for many birds here in 2019, the duo are optimistic that 2020 could turn things

around. Counting has been done at Hook Mountain since 1971, and progress in nature is often measured in decades, not years.

The excitement of Hook is some birds flying by at eye-level – near enough where you sometimes feel they will collide with your camera or binoculars.

Meanwhile, just across the border in Greenwich, Sharon Bruce and Ryan MacLean rally the tally troops at Quaker Ridge, which has also been a hawk-watching pilgrimage (Dare I say "peregrination?") since the 1970s. Since the ridge line there tends to

create uplift and thermals, meaning migrating hawks are free to glide without expending energy, this is also an amazing vantage point to spy these birds of prey.

And don't forget, folks, the garbage scows of the sky, the scavenging birds of prey we call vultures. International Vulture Awareness Day was Sept. 5, and we have to remember the important role these birds play in the cleanup of our environment, including the reduced spread of disease. So even though they may not be the best-looking birds, give some respect to our local species, the turkey vulture and the black vulture.

Here is information on local hawk watches:

Hook Mountain: <http://www.battally.com/hook/directions.htm>

Chestnut Ridge: <https://bedfordaudubon.org/chestnut-ridge-hawkwatch/>

Quaker Ridge: <https://greenwich.audubon.org/quaker-ridge-hawk-watch>

Saw Mill River Audubon: <https://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/>

Please remember to support Saw Mill River Audubon's annual seed sale this weekend. Stock up on your supply for the winter.

Brian Kluepfel is a guidebook author for Lonely Planet and has written for Birdwatching Magazine as well as Westchester Magazine, Guitar Player and The Irish Herald. He loves to watch the ospreys fly over the Hudson. He is a proud member of Saw Mill River Audubon and encourages anyone to join.

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Mt. Kisco to Celebrate September Each Weekend This Month

While COVID-19 has dramatically changed our lives for the past six months and will for continue to do so for an uncertain time into the future, how we interact with others has come to a near standstill.

The Mount Kisco Chamber of Commerce and the Village of Mount Kisco have mindfully crafted safe, socially distanced Saturdays in September, during which it will celebrate hometown heroes, encourage the community to shop in beautiful stores and service-oriented businesses and relax and enjoy numerous diverse restaurants.

"Although our numbers in Mount Kisco are down significantly, we must remain vigilant," said Chamber of Commerce President Matt Grasso. "However, we also need to safely move forward, restart our lives, our economy and bolster our mental fatigue. So much of the joy in life we experience is through entertainment and socializing with family and friends, going to a ballgame, movie, meeting and shopping in our village or simply sharing a meal."

Loretta Brooks, the chamber's co-executive director, reiterated the call for safety with the added hope of continuing to open and add more social events.

"The current challenges will not prevent our village from celebrating and enjoying our longstanding

traditions," said Mount Kisco Mayor Gina Picinich. "I applaud the chamber for providing the opportunity for our community to come together in a smart and socially distant way."

Each Saturday in Mount Kisco will highlight the Village in varying ways. Masks are mandated, along with social distancing. Please respect your neighbors so we can stay healthy.

Sept. 12 Celebrate Our Hometown Heroes, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Mount Kisco Arts Council, with a special debt of gratitude to Lisa Abzun and Elizabeth Gourlay and the chamber, is creating a Hometown Heroes Photo Gallery on Main Street and South Moger Avenue so that some of the faces of our heroes can be seen. The village and the chamber will be gathering their essential workers on South Moger Avenue by the gazebo and in the South Moger parking lot to say thank you in person.

"If we did not realize it before, we all now know that we have many heroes in our midst," Brooks said. "They come in many different forms – nurses, grocery store clerks, DPW workers, government leaders, doctors, bus drivers, restaurant employees, delivery drivers, firefighters, mail carriers, EMS, all those supporting the medical field,

bankers, child care and the police. We are here to send out a Thank You to all the essential workers who put themselves at risk so that we could shelter in place, quarantine, receive medical care, feed our families and allow our community to stay safe."

Live Music, sponsored by the Arts Council and featuring Mount Kisco's own Dan Blake and the Digging (Jay Anderson and Rogerio Boccato), will be at the gazebo from 12 to 2 p.m.

Other activities will include:

- The Mount Kisco Fire Department conducting its annual boot drive. (Please be generous.)
- The chamber will have a tent with information on village activities, shops and businesses.
- The village will be sponsoring a table where anyone who has not yet filled out the Census can do so.

Mount Kisco Chevrolet & Cadillac will provide the truck for the Fill a Truck to benefit the Interfaith Food Pantry. Items needed include pasta, two-pound bags of rice, oatmeal, cereal, shelf stable milk, cans of black beans, corn, tuna or salmon.

Sept. 19 Buy Local Shop & Stroll, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Love antique cars? Come down to the South Moger parking lot and take a look at the gorgeous and pristine cars. The event will be sponsored by



Instead of large crowds, a carnival and food trucks, the Mount Kisco Chamber of Commerce has altered its SeptemberFest plans this year in favor of a safe, socially distanced celebration each weekend this month.

Rivera Toyota.

The chamber will have a tent with information about local business and organizations. Learn how and where you can help support Mount Kisco by buying local.

There will be live music with the Mt. Airy Trio (featuring Joyce Hamman, Debbie Assael and Bari Mort) at the gazebo from 12 to 2 p.m. Their sounds will create a festive atmosphere while relaxing and enjoying downtown. Sponsored by the Mount Kisco Arts Council and Daniel Blake, music director.

Join a fun and historical afternoon stroll. The Iron Horse Gallops to Mount Kisco 1847" tour, curated by

the Mount Kisco Historical Society, will guide you through downtown Mount Kisco with stories of what it was like a time long ago and providing information you may have never know. Meet at Fountain Park by the library at 5 p.m.

Sept. 26-27

Fit Kisco Wellness Weekend

The gyms are open for business – and they mean business! The local studios and gyms listed below are offering a free open air or in-studio class. Call them directly to book.

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- Pure Barre: 914-218-3706
- Club Pilates: 914-362-8414
- Skinny Buddha: 914-358-1660
- F45: 914-598-1666
- Athlete's Warehouse: 914-741-1802
- CrossFit: 914-318-7353
- Modern Martial Arts: 914-244-8888
- Lex Ave Gym: 914-241-2657
- Stretch Lab: 914-400-0334
- Next Level Martial Arts: 914-244-0040

Brooks and chamber Co-Executive Director Beth Vetare-Civitello stressed that this is not SeptemberFest as it has been in the past. This is the 2020 version – smaller, with no carnival or vendors, but still with the small-town community feel. Stop by and see what we are capable of creating.

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Have You Become a More Informed Pandemic Wine Buyer?



By Nick Antonaccio

I owe you an apology. At the end of last week's column, I fear I may have left you bewildered and befuddled in my presentation of the factors that influence our wine buying decisions.

So here you are. What thought process do you go through in your pandemic-induced wine buying experiences? The research study I referred to last week analyzed the factors that many wine shoppers consider when confronted with a purchase decision.

Do I perceive a tectonic shift in the future of consumer purchasing habits? No. However, if we can better understand our wine psyche, we all will be making more informed choices. And this process will enhance, perhaps even refine, our individual palates.

I'd like to believe that in a post-pandemic era we will have benefited from an enhanced awareness of how we relate to our instinctive preferences and choices.

Here is my assessment of the criteria presented last week in a study by The American Association of Wine Economists (AAWE), which narrowed our purchasing criteria to quality, price and packaging.

1. Quality. The perception of quality wines

has changed dramatically since the dawn of the 21st century. Consumers were likely to equate quality to price. The new perception, rightly so in many cases, is that a) quality wines are being produced in ever-greater abundance and b) price competition is more prevalent than ever before. This bodes well for your wallet. But how to discern one perceived quality wine from another?

My recommendation: Follow my personal mantra. "Continuous experimentation results in instinctive behavior." Seek out new wines; develop a mental "likes and dislikes" profile for a number of wine regions, grape varieties, even vintages. By building a personalized sensory database, your choices can be more selective and your purchases more reliable.

2. Pricing. Many quality producers were forced to lower their prices during the Great

Recession, and continue that practice today – to the benefit of bargain-hunting consumers. A friend of mine is waging a one-man campaign to promote the wines sold in Trader Joe outlets. His premise: the buying power of Trader Joe enables it to purchase

and bottle the oversupply of excellent wines harvested during highly regarded vintages. Unique bottlings of lesser-known grape varieties, from specific vineyard plots, has resulted in significant bargains under \$10 (but higher than "Two Bucks").

Generally speaking, foreign wine producers have capitalized on this trend toward lower



prices. As a result, more than ever before, it is unlikely that a blind purchase of a sub-\$20 bottle of wine will wind up down the drain.

3. Packaging. Product placement and marketing are more sophisticated than ever before. Wine marketers and advertisers know how to press our hot buttons to entice us to purchase their wines.

Every American demographic has wines specifically marketed to them. This is most evident in bottle labels. Many of you have seen Fat Bastard and Marilyn Merlot, but how about Evil, Scraping the Barrel, Cardinal Zin, Vampire (red, of course) and The Full Monte

(pulciano). Plus, the esoteric: Educated Guess, Chaos Theory and Debauchery. Which salacious label is most appealing to you?

After all of this analysis by the AAWE, they concluded that the overriding criterion that influences the average consumer is not what's in the bottle or on the label, but what's in his or her wallet. Beyond any ethereal rationalization or sensory overload, price is the driving factor in purchasing wine on our own.

Hopefully, your next trip to your favorite wine shop will be enlightening. A decision cloud has been lifted; your intuition gains a threshold. You see a bottle of Italian Aglianico for \$16. You realize that you've rarely been disappointed with Italian wines, that the new Italian grape varieties coming into the United States have been popular in Italy for centuries and that value-priced wines have always been an Italian hallmark.

As you head to the cash register, walking right past the wine adviser you relied on exclusively in the past, he offers: "Did you find what you were looking for?" "Yes," you answer with your best Cheshire cat grin.

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

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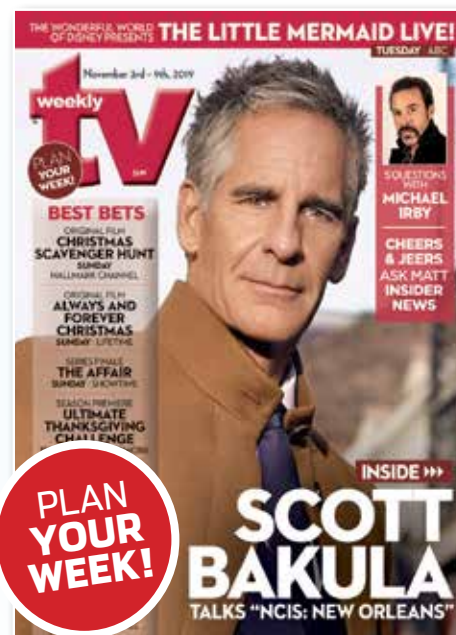
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Westchester Pollinator Garden Tour to Be Held This Sunday

This Sunday, Sept. 13, dozens of gardens throughout Westchester will be open to the public to demonstrate how homeowners and land managers can support pollinators and encourage biodiversity in our backyards.

Organized by the sustainable gardening nonprofit Healthy Yards and Bedford 2030, the Westchester Pollinator Garden Tour is designed to encourage residents to join in climate action now by implementing healthy yard practices that will drive positive environmental change in our community. Landscaping practices that improve the health of land and soil can draw carbon out of the atmosphere and store it in the ground. Healthy land practices also include using less fossil fuels by mowing less and using electric equipment.

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn from experts about maintaining landscapes without the use of toxins, without gas-burning equipment, and with the use of native plants. At each of the public properties and some of the private ones, experienced gardeners will be available to answer questions.

"The point of this tour is not to showcase immaculately manicured gardens," explained Healthy Yards co-founder Philippine Hoogland. "Rather, it is to showcase gardens and meadows that support pollinators and biodiversity, have a small carbon footprint and generally utilize earth-friendly landscaping techniques."

The tour will feature public gardens and preserves, and some may not look aesthetically pleasing in the conventional sense, Hoogland said. But they may offer

another type of beauty, in the form of visitors like birds and butterflies. Additionally, some of the gardens will show what is possible in areas with serious deer impact. The tour will include very small gardens, which, in spite of their size, can offer a valuable food source for pollinators and other beneficial insects.

The tour will feature the renowned Pound Ridge native plant garden created by naturalist Sara Stein and lovingly preserved by owners Ellen and James Best. Another residential sight is Farmer's Garden, also in Pound Ridge, natural land made mostly of herbs and perennials that acts as a bee apiary.

"By showcasing a range of gardens, we hope visitors will understand how the conventional lawn-centric backyards can switch to more sustainable landscaping practices, without a huge investment, and be developed into areas that support pollinators and birds," Hoogland said.

More than 50 properties from tiny postage stamp parcels, storefronts or window boxes, to land trust properties, municipal gardens and large estates will be open on Sunday. Westchester Land Trust's pop-up pollinator display will be at the Pine Croft Meadow, and Karalyn Lamb of the Native Plant Center will be on hand to provide information.

Bedford 2020 is promoting the event as a lead-up to its Climate Week activities as the organization relaunches with new goals, a new plan and new energy as Bedford 2030.

"Cleaner, healthier landscaping is a critical aspect of the community's environmental impact," said Ellen Calves of Bedford 2030. "Our yards are a great place to reduce



More than 50 gardens throughout Westchester featuring landscapes that use native plants, no toxic chemicals and support a healthy ecosystem will be available to tour this Sunday as part of the Westchester Pollinator Garden Tour.

our carbon footprint, and like many of the carbon reducing measures we recommend, healthy yard practices also bring savings, health benefits and joy from the increase in pollinators, butterflies and birds."

The full list of gardens can be accessed at <https://www.healthyyards.org/tour/>.

The gardens will be open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 1 to 4 p.m. Attendees must follow COVID-19 restrictions by wearing a mask and social distancing.

Some private residents do not have much parking, so visitors are asked to be patient and wait for a spot. If there is no parking at one garden, visitors are asked to go to another. Visitors will be reminded that they are attending at their own risk, and during the tour owners may close their yard whenever they feel that safety cannot be maintained. Any closings will be listed on the tour map on the website.



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Sports

High School Sports Unfortunately Low Man on Totem Pole



By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports
Editor@Directrays

Another week, another postponement within the 11-member New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA).

Now, folks in Section 1 are awaiting a Sept. 29 start date for low-risk sports like soccer (as if!), field hockey, cross country and tennis to commence this fall.

Sept. 21 was the original date to reopen practice fields on campuses across the state, but citing the need to focus on reopening schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, Section 1 delayed the start of the fall sports season until Sept. 29. I reckon we must respect that because getting kids back in the classroom is the primary objective.

Team workouts and practices will be prohibited at any Section 1 school prior to that date. Additionally, a district can choose to delay its season beyond that based on its self-standing desire to do so, so saddle up for what should be a bumpy ride to Day 1, if we ever get there.

There are a ton of hurdles to get past first, the major obstacle being if the schools that do return to a hybrid form of in-school sessions can remain open. The first two weeks of in-session schooling should dictate whether or not low-risk sports are in play at the end of the month. Any spike in coronavirus cases would likely slam the door shut on low-risk sports.

"The only thing we're certain of right now are death and taxes," Rye Neck Athletic Di-

rector Joe Ceglia admitted.

Not having any sports this fall and/or winter would certainly be a slow death for our student-athletes, who have been taxed and shafted since Day 1 of this pandemic. Depression is taking its toll on athletes right now as they sit at home moping about, and who can blame them? Athletes, who would normally be toned and fit as a fiddle in Nero's ensemble, have already put on their "Freshman 15" a year before heading off to college.

There are already serious rumblings out there in the NYSPHSAA world that our friends to the north in Section 9 – one of its 11 members representing thousands of student-athletes – is debating a move to postpone all sports through Nov. 30, which would take us past Thanksgiving. Section 11 has previously

canceled all sports until 2021. If Sept. 29 becomes unrealistic for Section 1, my guess is it will follow suit and fold the tent until Nov. 30.

According to several sources, Jan. 4 would then become the next target date should Nov. 30 be deemed unrealistic due to coronavirus spikes, school staffing issues and/or dastardly political influence.

If Nov. 30 becomes the new starting point for fall sports, we might as well stick a fork in it right now. How in the hell are we going to ask our student-athletes to freeze their butts off in late November and early December for an abbreviated campaign while wearing a mask? Makes zero sense.

A radical proposal to condense three seasons starting in January, with winter sports followed by fall and then spring by June graduations, is also on the table. Let's face it, folks, a Sept. 21 start won't give the schools adequate time to prepare as districts are still working on bringing back students to in-person learning, which is the primary goal. Superintendents are not likely to promote a scenario where students are not allowed in classrooms but can suit up for athletics. It's not their M.O.

I suspect local superintendents will begin to look at the prospect of fall sports like a snow day – once one of them pulls the trigger on a cancellation, they will all follow suit #DominoEffect. Unfortunately, athletics are the low man on the totem pole, but please, someone high upon the stanchion needs to make a decision and live with it, so we're not left to speculate week to week. This way, students can find other options, like employment, club sports, other hobbies, anything but sitting around wondering where the next party is or pondering why they're so damn depressed.

Additionally, energy can then be channeled to moving fall sports to late winter/early spring, thus allowing coaches to use the fall as a preseason for workouts while safely adhering to guidelines. With condensed seasons, fall, winter and spring sports might have a puncher's chance, which is what we're praying for.

So, you see the stand-alone photo on this page of Mahopac junior D Sean Masset mashing an opposing player in the Indians' 8-5 Sound Shore Lax Summer League championship win over Putnam Valley last Monday. This is the stuff we missed out on last spring, understandably, due to COVID-19 concerns, and we sure hope to see more of this in the spring of 2021 when Masset and his Indian teammates take aim at the Section 1 title, God willing.

But I fear for both football and lacrosse, should the two sports overlap in the spring due to the potential plan that could push football into the spring season. If Section 1 or NYSPHSAA prohibits players from playing two sports in the same season, it is going to dilute the pool of players if they are forced to choose between sports, and it's going to kill small schools. The crossover among football and lacrosse athletes is as vast as it gets, and this could be a problem, especially among Class B, C and D schools, which rely heavily upon the multi-sport athletes.

Direct Rays

MASS-HIT! Mahopac Knocks off Put Valley to Earn Sound Shore Lax Title

Mahopac junior D Sean Masset, who looks the part of an All-Section pole in the making, puts a lick on his Putnam Valley opponent last Monday at Granite Knolls Park in Yorktown where the Indians brought home the Sound Shore Lacrosse Summer League title courtesy of an 8-5 championship victory over the Tigers. Mahopac defeated 845Lax Club in the semis and also posted victories over Jay and Class A power Mamaroneck to reach the finals. Mahopac Assistant Coach Mike Haddeland noted the efforts of A Mike Harney, A Jake Degnan (5G, 2A vs 845), M Tommy Elliott, M Zach Esteves and defenders Sean Masset, Aidan Martin, John Nolan and goalies Tommy Comeratta and Brett Crecco. "This team would have competed for a sectional championship, it was loaded," Haddeland said. "I haven't seen a team like this since 2015. Hard to replace 17 seniors next spring, but we have a lot of young guns looking to do so." PV defeated two-time defending Section 1 Class B champion John Jay CR in the semis, 12-9, behind solid efforts from Ethan Mounier and Jack Murphy, who combined for nine points.



GIL MCMAHON PHOTO



Front & Center!

With NYS Football Likely Cancelled for 2020, Soccer Gets Top Billing



RAY GALLAGHER/ROB DIANTONIO PHOTOS

Due to COVID-19 and the potential risks of spiking cases, NYS Gov. Andrew Cuomo has essentially forbade competitive high school football this fall, thus opening the door for boys' and girls' soccer to take center stage in late September. And should Section 1 superintendents play along with the plan and permit competitive soccer games, galvanized players and coaches across Section 1 are looking to take full advantage of the circumstances that should yield greater attendance and exposure. The Examiner Media's four editions -- the Westchester Examiner (Briarcliff, Byram Hills, Fox Lane, Greeley, Pleasantville, Valhalla, Westlake); Northern Westchester Examiner (Croton, Hen Hud, Lakeland, Ossining, Peekskill, Somers, Walter Panas, Yorktown); Putnam Examiner (Brewster, Carmel, Haldane, Mahopac, Putnam Valley); and White Plains Examiner -- will be on the case, starting with local previews in our September 15 & 22 editions. **-Examiner-area soccer coaches -- both boys and girls -- are encouraged to send any and all preview information to Raygallaghersports@gmail.com for inclusion in our 2020 Soccer Preview Editions**