

**Former Local
Highway Chief
Arrested
...page 8**



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COVID-19 Breakdown:
Village of Ossining 3,166 (New: 97)
Peekskill 3,075 (77)
Yorktown 3,017 (88)
Cortlandt 2,663 (77)
Somers 1,393 (46)
Croton 595 (9)
Town of Ossining 447 (12)
Buchanan 195 (9)

The NORTHERN WESTCHESTER Examiner

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

January 26 - February 1, 2021

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 13, Issue 579

Prominent Peekskill Landscaper Facing Lawsuit For Role Foreman Probed for Alleged Illegal Dumping Scheme

By Rick Pezzullo

A longtime Town of Cortlandt employee and a Peekskill-based landscaping company are being investigated by federal and county authorities for an alleged scheme involving illegal dumping on town property and the submission of fraudulent invoices totaling more than \$100,000 for work not performed.

**Examiner
Media
Exclusive**

"The only way this worked is because there was someone on the inside," said Cortlandt Town Attorney Thomas Wood.

"There was someone in management."

At the center of the probe, which is being conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the U.S. Attorney General's Office and the Westchester County District Attorney's Office, is Robert Dyckman, 49, who was employed for 28 years in Cortlandt before submitting a letter of resignation on January 12, 2021 that was accepted by the Town Board.

His resignation as Assistant General Foreman in the Department of Environmental Service Highway Division, a position he held since July 2012, was effective as of October 22, 2019, which was about



PHOTO BY RICK PEZZULLO

Large piles of material on town property at end of Arlo Lane in Cortlandt that was allegedly illegally dumped by a Peekskill contractor with the assistance of a now former town employee.

two months after town officials discovered suspicious activity had taken place on land behind the town's salt dome at the end of Arlo Lane.

According to Wood, eyebrows were first raised when another employee was sifting through material that had been unloaded on

the site at the end of August in 2019 and it appeared to be more than was anticipated. Surveillance video allegedly showed trucks from Griffin's Landscaping Corporation, and other unmarked vehicles, entering the property and dumping building and other material from non-town contracted projects.

The video footage, according to Wood, also allegedly showed Dyckman being present when Griffin trucks were there. Wood said Dyckman would sometimes leave the gate to the site unlocked or arrive on weekends with his own vehicle to oversee the illegal activity.

Wood said town officials later discovered improperly billed invoices for repairs to approximately 100 catch basins throughout town that were submitted by Griffin's and signed off by Dyckman. Most of the repairs, according to Wood, were not done.

At that point, Wood said Supervisor Linda Puglisi suggested turning the matter over to law enforcement since it seemed like criminal activity. Wood contacted the District Attorney's Office, which then brought in the FBI and U.S. Attorney General.

Dyckman, who is the Deputy Chairman of the Verplanck Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners, was then suspended without pay. The Employee's Union, AFSCME Council 66 Local 2343, filed a grievance with the town requesting that Dyckman be reinstated with back pay. In his resignation letter, Dyckman waived and renounced any claim to retiree health care benefits that he may have been eligible to receive.

Andrew C. Quinn, Dyckman's attorney

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Board Infuriated over Charges of Special Treatment for Builder

By Rick Pezzullo

Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater and other members of the Town Board last week refuted assertions they were taking measures to benefit a proposed project for 165 units of market rate housing on the former Soundview Preparatory School on Underhill Avenue.

Former supervisors Susan Siegel and Ilan Gilbert were among those who dominated the Courtesy of the Floor portion of the Zoom meeting on January 19 with sharp criticism regarding the board's support of Planned Design District Overlay Zones.

The Underhill Farms development, which is being proposed by Unicorn Contracting and will be discussed by the board dur-

ing a work session on January 26, is one of dozens of properties throughout the town that the Planning Department has determined would be suitable to be placed in an overlay zone.

"It's very obvious that the overlay concept zone is being used as a back door or de-facto way to rezone the Soundview property without going through the regular zoning process," Siegel contended. "Why is the Soundview parcel being treated differently? Is there some reason that developer is being given special treatment?"

"There should not be a situation where a particular applicant got an advantage knowing the zoning would be different and that's why they purchased the property," remarked Gilbert,



ED LACHTERMAN

who was nominated by the town's Democratic Committee last week to seek a seat on the Town Board in November. "That would be like inside trading."

Underhill Farms is envisioned to appeal in large part to an older population, with 135 of the units being considered senior-friendly and 75 specifically designed for

senior citizens. Also planned is 20,000 square feet of retail and office space and 300 parking spaces. Official plans were submitted to the town on January 22, according to Slater, who noted Yorktown had an opportunity to buy the property for \$3 million after Soundview announced in February they were closing.

Slater said innuendos of inside deals between the town and Unicorn Contracting "couldn't be further from the truth." He pointed out Planned Design District Overlay Zones were included in the town's Comprehensive Plan.

"I don't think it should be a surprise. Any accusations of nefarious wrongdoing is just unacceptable in my eyes," Slater said. "Everyone will go through a transparent process to make

sure that it fits for the town and adheres to the law. We're not letting anyone cut corners on the requirements that already in the Town Code. Unfortunately, our community has a long history of turning away or reacting negatively to proposals."

Councilmen Ed Lachterman and Tom Diana also took offense with some of the allegations made against the board.

"Whether real or implied, there is nothing nefarious that we are bringing forward here," Diana said. "That something is underlying here is insulting."

"There's a lot of crap being flung against the wall and I think it's very inappropriate," Lachterman remarked. "If there was something nefarious, why would

continued on page 2

Gilbert Looking to Make Comeback on Yorktown Town Board

By Rick Pezzullo

Thirteen months after leaving office, former Yorktown Supervisor Ilan Gilbert is looking to make a comeback as a member of the Town Board.

The Yorktown Democratic Committee announced over the weekend it had endorsed Gilbert and five-term incumbent Councilman Vishnu Patel to run for two available seats in November. Councilwoman Alice Roker has decided not to seek reelection when her four-year term ends this year.

"The Yorktown Democratic Committee is proud to announce a strong slate of candidates for this 2021 campaign season, including both current and former incumbents to local politics. All are experienced, tested, and highly active members of the Yorktown community," the Democrats stated in a release. "Recognizing the current balanced representation on the Yorktown Town Board, the Yorktown Democratic Committee has selected candidates with the critical experience and sense of community necessary to move forward from COVID isolation to normalcy."

Gilbert, who served one two-year term before being ousted by current Supervisor Matt Slater in 2019, said he felt the need to get back into public service.

"Already, my decision has met with enormous support from people all over town. I'm ready for the challenges of our town and look forward to working collaboratively with the other members of the Town Board," he said. "I've lived and raised my family in Yorktown for the past 29 years.



ILAN GILBERT

And I love the town and because of that love and commitment I have served the community in many different ways. Most recently as Town Supervisor I was able to implement infrastructure improvements, increase our sources of income, bring transparency, address the town's economic vibrancy while caring for the environment, parks, and future branding of the town."

"Many of my initiatives have moved forward this year and yet there is still more to do. More so with the devastation brought down on us by the COVID-19 pandemic," he added. "We can still grow our business and residential base, continue to reduce our carbon footprint and maintain the beauty and quality of life for all."

When asked if he considered a rematch



VISHNU PATEL

with Slater, Gilbert said his commitments as an Administrative Law Judge for the Westchester County Health Department and a Commissioner for the New York State Bridge Authority would prevent him from being able to be a full-time supervisor.

"The Yorktown Council seat enables me to continue to be of service to the town I love while meeting my commitments to the county and state," Gilbert said.

Mark Lieberman, co-chair of the Yorktown Democratic Committee, explained the party's decision not to nominate a challenger to Slater.

"The YDC decided that, in this time of division and uncertainty, consistency in the leadership of the town seemed a wise course," he stated.

Meanwhile, Patel, who has been a mainstay on the board for the last 20 years, is looking to continue his service to the town.

A resident of the town for 48 years, Patel was a decorated scientist at IBM for 36 years who played an integral role in the creation of the Watson robot. In 2011, he was honored as Inventor of the Year by the Eastern New York Intellectual Property Law Association.

He is proud of his work advising local science students with their projects and is an active volunteer with local Scout groups.

"Both Gilbert and Patel are compassionate, thoughtful, and driven. They both believe that residents need to be provided with as much information as possible, and that everyone deserves to have their voices heard," the Democratic Committee stated.

Lieberman said Roker, who spent 25 years as town clerk in Yorktown before retiring in 2015, wanted to thank the community for its support and said she was looking forward to her next "big adventure."

Slater, a Republican, said he was disappointed Roker would be leaving the board.

"She's been a great partner. Very helpful to me in my first term," he said.

The Democrats also nominated Aviah Cohen Pierson to run for town justice. If elected, she would be the first woman to serve as town justice in Yorktown. Currently the Chief Legal Officer at ENT and Allergy Associates, Cohen Pierson unsuccessfully sought the position in 2017.

Slater said the Republican Committee is expected to release its slate of candidates in early February.

Foreman Probed for Alleged Illegal Dumping Scheme

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who notarized his resignation letter, declined to comment when reached last Thursday.

Wood said FBI forensic agents were in Cortlandt two weeks ago looking at catch basins. The coronavirus pandemic delayed the proceedings for months, but Wood said he expects an indictment and formal charges to be filed against Dyckman and Griffin's Landscaping in the near future.

The town has filed a lawsuit against Griffin's seeking what is projected to be as much as \$1 million to clean up the site where the materials were dumped.

Stephen G. McCarthy, Jr., an attorney for Griffin's Landscaping, issued a statement Thursday, ensuring his client's cooperation in the ongoing probe.

"As one of the dozens of private contractors who have worked with the Town of Cortlandt to provide municipal services over the

past five years, Griffin's Landscaping Corporation has been part of an ongoing investigation, offering to provide full and complete assistance so that the town may successfully complete its investigation and resolve the matter fairly and completely," McCarthy said.

Cortlandt Councilman Dr. Richard Becker said Monday the board was "surprised and shocked" by what allegedly occurred but is confident town officials have implemented safe-

guards to try to ensure such activity could not be repeated.

"As an employer you give employees a level of confidence and trust, but whenever an employee betrays that trust, you feel taken advantage of," Becker said.

Wood and Becker said they will push to prosecute anyone found guilty of wrongdoing in the case to the fullest extent of the law.

"It's a big deal," Wood said.

Meanwhile, Dyckman is apparently facing more legal problems

as he was arrested January 22 at his Verplanck home after State Police responded to a call of a domestic issue at about 3:55 a.m.

Reading from a police report, Wood said Dyckman was charged with one count of assault in the third degree with the intention of causing physical injury, two counts of criminal obstruction and one count of endangering incompetent. He was arraigned in Cortlandt Town Court and could face up to seven years in prison if convicted.

Board Infuriated over Charges of Special Treatment

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we give it to planning? It doesn't make sense."

The stated purpose and intent of the Planned Design District Overlay Zones is to provide the town with "flexibility in land uses which bolster economic development by providing not only a diverse array of commercial businesses, but mixed-use residential and commercial parcels to both provide abundant job opportunities and

contribute to the local tax base."

Another property in the Yorktown Heights business hamlet that is included in the overlay zone is the Yorktown Green Shopping Center, where Kmart and Pathmark once stood. Representatives of Oster Realty, owners of the Yorktown Green, are also scheduled to appear at the Town Board's January 26 work session with a mixed-use proposal for the site.



Mrs. McNamee's kindergarten class at Brookside Elementary School did a collection drive and made cards for the Troops.

County Health Officials, School Districts to Decide on High-Risk Sports

By Anna Young

As two more cases of the United Kingdom variant of COVID-19 were confirmed in Westchester County, the Department of Health in conjunction with local school districts are determining if high-risk athletics can resume next month.

Last Friday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo made known that Westchester had its third case of what's deemed a more contagious strain of the virus. To date, there are 25 confirmed cases of the variant in New York State.

Health officials warn the new variant is up to 70 percent more transmissible than earlier versions of the virus, but there is currently no evidence showing the new variant causes more severe illness or increased risk of death. The U.K. variant may become the dominant strain circulating domestically by March.

However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) asserts that an increase in cases will put more strain on health care resources, lead to more hospitalizations and potentially more deaths. Officials are also wary of other strains from South Africa and Brazil.

Despite Cuomo referring to these new strains as "frightening," he announced high-risk high school sports can resume Feb. 1. He initially postponed them when COVID-19 rates began to surge late last year.

Sports, including basketball, football, ice hockey, competitive cheerleading, volleyball, wrestling and boy's lacrosse, can only proceed if county health departments believe they can be played in compliance with safety protocols.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said local health officials are working with school superintendents and other county executives in the Hudson Valley to reach a decision that would ensure testing, protective gear and other protective resources are provided if approved.

"It's quite a decision but we're happy to have the responsibility in these areas," Latimer said during his Monday briefing. "We have tasked the schools with coming back to us with a plan."

If athletics resume, he anticipates testing will increase significantly and sanitation protocols will need to be heightened. Latimer added that he expects a joint statement will be released later this week.

"Westchester can't act unilaterally," Latimer said. "We want to make sure that if we open this up that we do it in a safe fashion."

COVID-19 Update

As active cases of COVID-19 slowly decline in Westchester and Putnam counties, both areas continue to see the fatality rate rise and daily testing remain in the thousands.

Coronavirus cases in Westchester increased by 804 on Monday, bringing the total number of positive cases to 90,029 since the start of the pandemic. There are now 11,495 active cases, a decrease of 163 over last week.

"We were getting roughly the same amount of positives two weeks ago as we are now," Latimer said. "I now think we're starting to see the end of the spike that we got during the holiday season."

The county's daily positivity rate is 6.5 percent, with 12,366 tests administered on Saturday. Overall, more than 1.71 million COVID tests have been taken in Westchester since March.

The county reported five more deaths, bringing the COVID-19-related death toll to 1,851. In the last week, 54 people have died from the virus in Westchester, with 176 fatalities since the start of the new year.

"The number of those we lost have been growing in a more significant fashion compared to going through long periods of time where we had no fatalities during the summer," Latimer said. "Both the fatality number and hospitalizations are still significant, and we continue to look at the outbreaks as one that is very serious because now we're dealing with the U.K. variant."

As of Monday, there are 550 virus patients in Westchester hospitals, a decrease of 17 since last Thursday. Latimer said hospitalizations,

while sizable, are still less than half of what the peak number of hospitalizations was during the height of the pandemic last spring.

As of Monday, the county government has directly administered 16,165 vaccines to eligible residents, Latimer said, with 12,838 individuals inoculated since the County Center became a distribution site on Jan. 13. The county health department has immunized 3,327 people, he said.

Putnam County's total caseload has reached 7,004, with 77 additional positive cases recorded on Monday. The county's daily positivity rate is 6.57 percent, with 1,172 tests administered Saturday.

Putnam currently has 1,160 active cases, a decrease of 125 over last week.

There have been 76 coronavirus-related deaths in Putnam since the start of the pandemic. There were two virus-related deaths last week and nine since the start of 2021.

Statewide there were 12,003 new positive cases on Monday. The daily positivity rate is 5.47 percent.

The state recorded 167 additional COVID-19-related fatalities, bringing the death toll to 34,242 since last March.

Statewide hospitalizations stand at 8,730, an increase of 117 over the previous day. Across New York there have been 1,338,990 positive coronavirus cases since the start of the pandemic.

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Yorktown, Mt. Pleasant Request Hosting COVID-19 Vaccine Sites

By Rick Pezzullo

Yorktown and Mount Pleasant officials have asked Westchester County and the state to host a vaccine distribution center within their towns to make it more convenient for residents.

Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater and Town Clerk Diana Quast have proposed that the Albert Capellini Community and Cultural Center gym and the Jefferson Village Senior community room to be potential sites.

Mount Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi said last week he has proposed that the town's community center on Lozza Drive in Valhalla is an "ideal location." Fulgenzi said that the community center, which hosts the town's senior programs, is spacious, easily accessible for older residents and the disabled, has ample parking and allows drivers to drop off visitors just outside the front doors.

"We happen to have an ideal facility and central location," he said. "So we felt it would be very helpful for Westchester County given our central location, instead of people having to go to White Plains or further south, they would be able to come to Mount Pleasant."

In a letter to state and county elected officials, Slater and Quast maintained that Yorktown has several senior living facilities, nursing homes, veterans' halls, pharmacists, firehouses, ambulance corps and town buildings that can also be utilized



The gymnasium at the Mount Pleasant Community Center in Valhalla. Town Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi has asked Westchester County and New York State to consider the site for vaccine distribution.

to handle residents eligible to receive the vaccine.

"We are prepared to facilitate any number of locations within our community to fulfill the needs and get as many people vaccinated as possible," Slater and Quast stated in a Jan. 15 letter. "Having locations from Yorktown to White Plains to Yorktown would provide perfect regional locations in lower, mid and upper Westchester County. Additionally, establishing a vaccine distribution center within centrally located

Yorktown will eliminate the need for many seniors and elderly to find ways to travel in order to be vaccinated."

They noted both locations have been used as polling places for elections and were easily accessible for seniors with no stairs and plentiful parking. The Jefferson Village building, they added, was close to major roadways and could function as a multicounty center for Putnam and Dutchess as well.

"Please consider this request with

the utmost expediency so that we may begin preparing our facilities and move quickly to do our part in getting residents vaccinated," they concluded.

There have been numerous complaints about long lines at the County Center in White Plains to receive the vaccination as well as difficulties for some residents to register for appointments.

New York State makes the final call on where vaccination sites are located, said state Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro). Harckham said he has received several requests from municipalities in the district that would like to house vaccination sites, and passes them on to the state Department of Health.

The biggest obstacle right now is the lack of vaccine supply and the disorganized manner in which to sign up for an appointment, he said.

"We could set up hubs in every community tomorrow and there's just not the (vaccine) supply from the federal government, but the rollout from the state has been confusing, our municipal partners are confused, actually individuals wanting vaccines are confused," Harckham said.

"We get calls from senior citizens in our office. Many are not tech savvy, so to ask a 92-year-old woman to go on the web and schedule her appointment that way, and then hop in a cab or get someone to drive her down to the County Center is not really feasible."



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Croton-on-Hudson Ups Face Mask Law Penalty to \$1,000

By Anna Young

Those found violating Croton-on-Hudson's face mask law will face a fine of up to \$1,000, but officials say the likelihood of fines being imposed is minimal.

After the Village Board approved an emergency face mask mandate in November, the state Department of Health advised that the local law must mirror the same stipulations set forth by the state. Officials unanimously approved two new changes to the legislation last Tuesday.

Prior to the change, violators were subject to a \$100 penalty for the first infringement, and a fine of up to \$250 for any subsequent offense within a one-year period. Now wrongdoers will be subject to a maximum fine of \$1,000 for each infraction.

The Croton-on-Hudson Police Department is responsible for enforcing the law.

Officials, who stressed they don't agree with raising the fine and only changed the law to comply with a state recommendation, said any penalties will be at the discretion of the court. Village Manager Janine King had said previously it's unlikely village justices will impose a fine exceeding \$250.

"We are raising the maximum but the actual fine will be at the discretion of the court," Mayor Brian Pugh said at the Jan. 19 meeting. "Our preference was to set the maximum lower, but the state was adamant that we set the maximum higher."

Another amendment to the law will now require individuals playing sports, participating in fitness classes or recreational activities to wear a mask or face covering. Police officers, firefighters, ambulance personnel and other first responders engaged in public safety situations must also be masked.

Both were previously exempt from the law.

The board approved the village's emergency mask measure on Nov. 16 as

COVID-19 cases were significantly rising in Westchester County. At that time, there were only 24 active coronavirus cases within the village, but that number neared triple digits during the holiday season.

The law is only in effect if the village declares a public health emergency, and King made the declaration on Dec. 14. Legislation ceases when the public health emergency expires.

The law requires face masks and coverings be worn on public, private and

commercial properties when unable to maintain a six-foot distance from another person who is not a member of the same household.

Residential property is exempt from the law.

Other exemptions to the law are children under the age of two, anyone who is unable to medically tolerate a face covering and drivers traveling alone or exclusively with members of their household in a car.

Mask Up

The Rotary Club of Cortlandt Manor recently stopped by Cortlandt Town Hall to donate masks as a part of Rotary's Million Mask Challenge to stop the spread of COVID-19. Supervisor Linda Puglisi, fourth from left, and Purchasing Director Peter McMillan, fourth from right, thanked everyone for their generosity and the important work in the community. Also pictured, from left, are Mary Worstell, Anna Hawley, Gladys Pillcurima, Rita Sharples, Larry Sharples and Sue Radzilowicz. Masks will be distributed at the town's purchasing building Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 914-736-1046 upon arrival and the masks will be brought to your vehicle.



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Mt. Kisco, Homeland Towers to Agree on Cell Tower Review Extension

By Martin Wilbur

The Mount Kisco Village Board agreed to an extension of the application period for the controversial Homeland Towers cell tower proposal for a portion of a 25-acre parcel on South Bedford Road.

Mutual consent is needed to extend the time the village has to consider the application. Under federal telecommunications law, there is a 150-day "shot clock" for a municipality to make a

determination on a cell tower application from the time of the complete submission, said Village Attorney Whitney Singleton.

By approving to extend the deadline by about a month, the village would now have until Apr. 14 to complete its review of the matter as long as the applicant agrees to the change.

Singleton said the complicated nature of the application, and a separate but related proposal for a solar farm by Sunrise Solar Solutions on the same parcel at

180 S. Bedford Rd., along with problems coordinating the review with the two entities, has necessitated additional time.

"Both the Planning Board and the Zoning Board are duly processing the application," Singleton told the Village Board last week. "We have talked about the possibility of special meetings. We're moving as best we can and we have regular (staff) meetings every Friday to go over this application. So I can say the Planning Board and the Zoning Board are not sitting on their hands."

The Planning Board decided last September to hold a joint environmental review of the two applications because of the potential cumulative impacts of both projects. It is not yet clear whether the board will issue a negative or positive declaration under the state Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

During ongoing public hearings, neighboring residents and environmentally-minded residents in both Mount Kisco and Bedford have urged the planners to make a positive declaration, which means they would recognize the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts, which would require more robust study.

In addition to the joint review, there have been multiple recusals from the Planning Board and the village's staff, which has also contributed to slowing

down the process, Singleton said.

Village Trustee Karen Schleimer asked whether it would make sense for the board to consider a longer extension given the likelihood that review of the cell tower project could go beyond mid-April.

But Singleton said that at this time Apr. 14 is what Homeland Towers has agreed to. If more time is needed, there could be additional extensions requested.

The working relationship between the village and Homeland Towers has been strained during recent meetings. Most notably, there have been sharp disagreements between the two sides over whether there is any chance that Homeland Towers can move the location of the proposed 145-foot monopole to another spot on the property to lessen impacts on the surrounding area.

Homeland Towers has argued it cannot choose another site on the property under the lease it signed with landlord Skull Island Partners.

In 2009, the federal government passed legislation to institute a time limit for a determination on cell towers because municipalities were believed to be elongating the approval process as a strategy to try and discourage them from being sited within their borders.

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Cassidy-Flynn Funeral Home, Inc. in Mount Kisco is one of nearly 1,000 exclusive Veterans & Family Memorial Care funeral home providers across America who are sponsoring the 12th annual OPERATION VALENTINE initiative. The project is simple and meaningful, said John G. Flynn, CEO and president at Cassidy-Flynn.

"Students and individuals throughout

the community write messages to the troops and veterans on Valentine cards, cut-put hearts or whatever they like, and we make sure that they are delivered to our brave men and women serving overseas," Flynn said.

Cards cannot include glitter, food or candy, but there are still many ways to personalize a handmade card. Write a message on them and say "Thank You," tell them about yourself and wish them a Happy Valentine's Day.

Valentine cards may be dropped off now through Feb. 5 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at Cassidy-Flynn Funeral Home, Inc., located at 288 E. Main St. in Mount Kisco.

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RETRO CANDY

Concerns Over West Patent Solar Farm Proposal Raised to Board of Ed

By Martin Wilbur

Homeowners living near West Patent Elementary School along with other members of the community recently expressed concern regarding the Bedford School District's consideration of a solar farm on vacant space behind the school.

Several speakers at the Board of Education's Jan. 13 meeting appealed to district officials to consider the potential drawbacks of installing solar panels on 30 unused acres of the school's property, including disturbance to the land, neighbors and daily operation of the school.

"It very much seems like a massive industrial project in the middle of a very residential area," said nearby resident Tom White. "Taking out 30 acres of beautiful forest that this area is known for...it's hard to get comfortable with despite the school district receiving some revenue for it."

Last month, the board listened to a presentation by representatives from the Armonk-based Brightcore Energy, LLC where they proposed paying the district \$13 million over 25 years for use of the property. There would be no outlay on the part of the district.

The solar array would generate 8.6-million kilowatt hours of energy, which

could power 1,000 homes. Local residents would be able to sign on to receive electricity at lower rates.

A smaller piece of the project would be carports constructed over the parking lots and West Patent and Mount Kisco elementary schools to allow additional panels to be installed on top of the structures.

Caroline MacGill, a Bedford Hills resident and a mother of four children, said renewable energy sources need to be developed but allowing for acres of solar panels behind a school and into forested land is wrong.

"I'm surprised we're even considering chopping down trees in order to build larger-scale solar projects, and I wonder if the board has investigated competitive quotes from rooftop and parking lot solar opportunities rather than putting the 30 acres into a new project," MacGill said.

Board Vice President Edward Reder said the reason why only West Patent and Mount Kisco elementary schools are being considered for the program is because those are the only buildings that are in Con Edison territory, which is aggressively pushing forward with renewable projects. The district's remaining three elementary schools and the Fox Lane campus are in

NYSEG areas.

Another neighboring resident, Gerardo Mendez, said he disagreed with the concept of using the land simply for financial gain.

"At least from my perspective I really think using our natural resources, sort of squandering our natural resources for basically financial gain in a kind of a very direct way kind of puts us in a Third World mentality, where we're basically monetizing natural resources," Mendez said. "There is an irreversibility to this project. Once we do this, these trees are gone, there's not going to be kind of a restoration project."

Meanwhile, Bedford Town Historian John Stockbridge said given the town's agrarian history and its commitment to open space, district officials should give the proposal careful consideration before making any decision to move forward.

The area has nearby horse-riding lanes and walking trails that are used by the public.

Board member Jessica Cambareri said she was torn between the preserving the woods while also doing what's best fiscally for the district.

But Reder said the area that is being considered for the solar farm is far from pristine.

"I've walked that property back there.

There are riding lanes back there. I wouldn't term it as very safe land. There are trees that have fallen, no one's maintaining it. There are riding lanes, there are rocks, there are rock walls," he said. "So I understand there's greenspace, and there's protected space or its preserved space, but I wouldn't necessarily say it's greenspace that's navigable or walkable."

The board will address the issue again after Brightcore Energy representatives return. There are various approvals at the state level that the company would need to obtain before the Board of Education can make a decision.

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Obituaries

Rosemarie Wheeler

Rosemarie Wheeler (Shubert), 88, of Peekskill passed away on Jan. 17 due to complications from COVID-19.

Rosemarie worked hard all her life to raise her two children, Robert (Barbara) Wheeler of Peekskill and Janet Orman of Valrico, Fla. She was a wonderful mother and friend. Although she had limited means, she always got great pleasure out of giving to others. She spent many years working in Standard Brands and Texas Instruments, among other places. She

enjoyed her Bingo nights at St. Columbanus and Wednesday night Bingo at River Pointe. She also enjoyed many friendships with the residents of River Pointe.

In addition to her children, she is survived by a grandson (Kevin), a niece (Linda Davis) and three nephews, Robert Shubert, Thomas Shubert and Kenneth Jackson. She is also survived by many cousins and friends.

Interment was at St. Patrick's Cemetery in Verplanck, where a private service was held. Arrangements were handled by O'Mara & Carpentieri Funeral Home in Verplanck.

Former Yorktown Highway Super Facing Grand Larceny Charges

By Rick Pezzullo

Former Yorktown Highway superintendent and ex-Yorktown Chamber of Commerce president Eric DiBartolo has been accused of acting in conjunction with a Home Depot employee to obtain about \$15,000 worth of merchandise without paying for it.

DiBartolo, 59, of Underhill Avenue in Yorktown, was arrested Jan. 6 by Westchester County police and charged with 19 separate counts of petty larceny, a misdemeanor, four counts of fourth-degree grand larceny, a felony, and one count of second-degree scheme to defraud, also a misdemeanor.

Tyrone Bass, 58, of Fairview Place in Cortlandt, a Home Depot cashier, is facing the same charges as DiBartolo. He was arrested on Dec. 16.

According to police, on 23 separate occasions, DiBartolo went to Home Depot at the Cortlandt Town Center and always went to Bass, who only rang up a small portion of the items. The items were primarily construction materials and tools.

On one occasion, DiBartolo was suspected of failing to pay for \$1,200 worth of merchandise while being billed \$89 for a few items in his cart, said Westchester County police spokesman Kieran O'Leary.

It is alleged that DiBartolo would then give Bass a small payment in exchange for undercharging him. County police began an



Eric DiBartolo and another suspect each face 24 criminal counts in connection with a scheme they ran to defraud Home Depot at the Cortlandt Town Center. DiBartolo served as Yorktown's highway superintendent for 18 years.

investigation at the request of Home Depot's loss prevention personnel.

Both suspects have future court dates in Cortlandt Town Court.

DiBartolo served as highway superintendent from 1995 to 2013. He was a co-owner of Yorktown Funeral Home in Shrub Oak and opened Rainbow Bridge Pet Crematory with his wife on Front Street in Yorktown.

Kenneth Harbolic Jr.

Kenneth Harbolic Jr., of 5th Street in Verplanck, died on Jan. 15 at New York-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital in Peekskill due to complications of COVID-19 at the age of 72.

Born Apr. 10, 1948, he was the son of Kenneth and Carmen (Bleakley) Harbolic. A lifelong Verplanck resident, Kenny retired from the Town of Cortlandt Water Department. He was a member of Buchanan Engine Co. No. 1.

Kenny is survived by his wife and the love of his life, Diane (Foster) Harbolic; his son, Patrick (Joanna) Harbolic, of Montrose; daughter Christine (Joseph) Calabro of Verplanck; John (Marci) Keon of Hopewell Junction; his sisters, Joanne Harbolic of



Kenneth Harbolic Jr.

Montrose and Cheryl (James) Gilmore of Buchanan; brother Gary Harbolic of Verplanck; grandchildren Brendon, Jeremy, Connor, Brianna, Samantha, Tyler and Jimmy; and his baby, his dog Chester.

Kenny was inducted into the Hendrick Hudson High School Athletic Hall of Fame. He was an outstanding athlete and voted the #1 pitcher on the All-Section team in 1965. One of his greatest pleasures was to attend his grandchildren's sports games and cheer them on, and to

see his granddaughter dance. He was a total prankster and life of the party. He loved being with family and friends, golfing, fishing, telling fish stories and hunting. He especially loved spending time at the Foxes Den, his home in Cherry Valley, N.Y.

Jesse Winn

Jesse James Winn of Tarrytown, and formerly of Cortlandt Manor, passed away on Jan. 8 at Westchester Medical Center after a lengthy illness. He was 69 years old.

Jesse was born on Apr. 29, 1951, at St. John's Hospital in Yonkers to Inez Hayes and Allen Winn. At an early age he moved to Ossining and was raised and cared for by his foster mother, Mrs. Suluter Nelson-Smith. He spent the majority of his life in Ossining and Peekskill where he had extended family and friends and touched many lives.

Jesse was a gentle and kind soul who enjoyed visiting and spending holidays with his families. In addition, he loved animals, including the cats and dog Mojo, who were the family pets at his residence in Tarrytown.

Jesse was a very talented artist who loved drawing with colored pencils and also liked completing 500-piece jigsaw puzzles. He enjoyed sports, especially basketball and



Jesse Winn

football, and was an avid Knicks and Giants fan; however, he would switch teams many times when his favorites were losing. Jesse was also a "news junkie" and read the newspapers and watched TV news daily. He could always fill you in on what was happening in the world.

Bowling and dancing were activities he took pleasure in. A people person, Jesse had many friends whom he cherished and who cherished his friendship. Although faced with many health issues over the years, Jesse had a positive outlook and always brought fun and laughter to any occasion. He will be missed by all who had the pleasure to know him.

Jesse leaves behind to cherish fond memories who will forever remain in their hearts his loving families, including the Whites, Nelsons, Pagans, Browns, Masons and Wilkins. In addition, he leaves behind Debbie Melillo and her family and staff at his most recent home in Tarrytown. The family will be forever grateful for the loving care and kindness given to Jesse by Debbie.

A private cremation was held. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

Peekskill Man Indicted for Fatal Stabbing at China Pier

By Rick Pezzullo

A Peekskill man who violently stabbed two 18-year-old males and killing one during a fight at China Pier on Louisa Street in November was indicted last Thursday on manslaughter and assault charges.

Matthew Torres, who was 17 at the time of the Nov. 28 melee, is being detained pending a trial before state Supreme Court Justice Helen Blackwood, according to Westchester District Attorney Mimi Rocah.

"During the course of a violent fight, the defendant intentionally stabbed two young men, killing one and seriously injuring the other. These charges are the first step in holding him accountable," Rocah said. "My condolences go out to the victims' families,

who lost their son and family member due to this senseless violence."

An investigation by the Peekskill Police Department and district attorney revealed a dispute on social media led to the deadly fight. During the course of the brawl, Torres allegedly stabbed Joaquin Salazar multiple times and Alexis Leon once in the torso area. Torres then fled the scene.

Salazar, a prominent soccer player, succumbed to his injuries at Westchester Medical Center after friends dropped him off at New York Presbyterian-Hudson Valley Hospital Center to receive emergency medical attention.

"This is no doubt a difficult and sad day for Peekskill," Mayor Andre Rainey said.



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Cunzio, Gashi Will Run for Re-election on Board of Legislators

By Martin Wilbur

County legislators Margaret Cunzio (C-Mount Pleasant) and Vedat Gashi (D-Yorktown) will be running for re-election later this year, joining a growing list of elected officials and candidates who are finalizing their plans for this year’s election cycle.

Cunzio, who represents the towns of North Castle, Mount Pleasant and part of Greenburgh in District 3, will be seeking her fourth term on the Board of Legislators, while Gashi is going for a second term after replacing longtime legislator Michael Kaplowitz for the District 4 seat. District 4 includes Yorktown, New Castle and part of Somers.

Despite being the board’s only non-Democrat, Cunzio has sought to remain non-partisan as the minority caucus has dwindled to just herself during her time on the board. She said her colleagues, facing multiple of a pandemic and fiscal pressures, haven’t been distracted by politics and have remained professional and collegial.

“The Board of Legislators never took a hiatus. We’ve continued to work and I think everyone is extremely busy and I think we have the same goal in mind, which is really to help the county,” Cunzio said. “This is not a year where people have been talking about politics. They’re trying to get things going and moving in the right direction.”

Cunzio, a 22-year Thornwood resident, said she hopes to continue to work on projects to help volunteer emergency responders and safety issues such as the improvement of the

intersection of Commerce Street and Elwood Avenue in Hawthorne.

Late last year, Cunzio helped forge an agreement with Westchester County Health Care Corporation, the owner of Westchester Medical Center, to provide ambulance services for five facilities on the county’s Grasslands property, alleviating the burden on the Valhalla Volunteer Ambulance Corps. After Medicaid reimbursement, the contract has no net cost to Westchester taxpayers.

She said she’s also proud of having supported five balanced budgets that once again reduced the county’s tax levy for 2021.

The legislator said she hopes to help bring more affordable senior housing to the area and work to get eligible local residents, particularly veterans and retirees, to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

“I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished since then,” said Cunzio who has represented the district since 2016. “We have truly made government work for the people of Westchester County. More work remains as we recover from the effects of the pandemic in the months and years to come. I look forward to always providing a voice to the residents of our community.”

Gaashi, who will officially kick off his candidacy for re-election on Feb. 18, said his first year in office changed dramatically about two months into 2020 with the onset of the pandemic. He said despite the immense challenges, he felt “incredibly proud and privileged to serve during this time.”

“It feels like things were thrown into



County lawmakers Margaret Cunzio and Vedat Gashi, representing districts 3 and 4 on the Board of Legislators, respectively, will each be running for another term later this year.

disarray, but maybe they always are and different than what you expected exactly, and the benefit of being a public official right now is that this is a time when you really do need the government,” Gashi said. “This is a time when the stuff you’re doing has real meaning for everyone.”

Key measures that were approved during the past year were temporary property tax relief that allowed certain homeowners to delay their payments because of COVID-19, increasing the county’s share of child care contributions and eliminating the need for a referendum when capital projects of more than \$10 million need to be bonded, he said.

Gashi said she has enjoyed public service

and helping constituents.

“In something like this, you realize the stuff you’re working on today, right now, is necessary and important and has the possibility of improving someone else’s life,” Gashi said. “That’s what you do it for.”

Neither legislator was aware yet of an opponent for November. The petition period for candidates begins late next month and extends into early April.

Last week, District 2 legislator Kitley Covill (D-Katonah) confirmed she wasn’t running for re-election and will leave after serving for four years. All seats on the Board of Legislators are two-year terms.



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Letters to the Editor

Yorktown Town Board's Treatment of Public Was Disgraceful

The courtesy of the floor portion of the Jan. 19 Yorktown Town Board meeting disturbed and disgusted me. Not because of any of the community members who spoke out against the Design District Overlay Zone legislation and the Underhill property development, but because of the childish and demeaning way in which members of the Town Board responded to them.

Members of this, or any community have every right to criticize the positions of our elected officials. That's something taught in a grade school civics class, an essential cornerstone of our American democracy.

You don't get elected to public office and become immediately infallible and immune to questioning. The Town Board and supervisor are elected officials with a duty to serve the community. That means actively listening to the concerns of every community member, especially when they bring those concerns to a public forum such as a Town Board meeting.

That is the essence of a democratic government. To watch board members immediately turn around and demean and disrespect those community members, while many of them were still on the Zoom

call, sickens me to my core. This kind of bullying has no place in our government. Board members should hold themselves to at least a standard of decency and respect.

I can understand their outrage at insinuations of wrongdoing; anyone would share that sentiment. However, outrage doesn't dispel the feeling that something untoward is happening. When such allegations like this are leveled against elected officials, the burden of proof is on them. There's a reason Presidents put their business interests in blind trusts, and judges recuse themselves from cases on occasion: not because they would do anything wrong, but to reassure the public that their actions are unbiased by personal interest.

A Town Board meeting is intended to be an open and honest discourse between elected representatives and the people they represent. It is the responsibility of those representatives to prove to their constituents that they are acting in the best interests of the community.

Instead, on Jan. 19, the Town Board spent almost 20 minutes complaining about the lack of respect they were shown. That time might have been better used

asking themselves why members of the community would assume they're involved in unsavory deals. Could it possibly be that their plans and actions surrounding the Underhill development and Design District Overlay Zone legislation have not been anywhere near as transparent as they could have been? Did they ever stop to think that allegations of backroom deals might crop up because residents feel they have been deliberately kept in the dark while decisions that could irreparably alter their communities are being made without their input?

Yorktown, we deserve better and we must demand better. We as a community should not be content with elected officials who demand our respect while failing to communicate with us. We are not sheep to be herded along while politicians decide our fates. We must remind our elected officials that their jobs are to serve the public trust and not belittle their constituents, live on camera.

Michael Hickins
Yorktown

Cuomo Must Be Ousted for His Handling of Vaccines, State's Finances

With a new president taking office last week and finally turning the page on a horrific year, we New Yorkers are stuck with perhaps the worst governor in the country. Everything done well is because of him and everything done wrong is someone else's fault. Just blame Trump! We have a vaccine so let's royally screw up the distribution of it. From Day One, the federal government left distribution up to the states. What a mistake.

How can one man in Albany screw up distribution?

1. Dictate everything. Bring no one from the other side of the aisle to even try to appear bipartisan, just dictate from your little bunker in Albany and go on your brother's TV program and be lauded for what a great job he thinks you're doing.
2. Waste precious time because in your warped mind Trump cannot get any credit at all for the vaccine, so pompously announce that New York will not accept any vaccines approved by Washington until it undergoes vetting to ensure that it's safe and effective. What a crock. Has anyone found out what Cuomo's minions did with this so-called state testing? Have the results of King Cuomo's independent testing ever been made public? Or was it even done? Don't hold your breath; grandstanding never comes with any follow-up disclosure.
3. Cuomo's single greatest fear is having an immigrant or person of color coming out of a facility after getting the vaccine and claiming a white person got in and

vaccinated 15 minutes sooner or that they didn't have to wait as long because of some imagined privilege.

His insanity carries over to closing thousands of New York City restaurants and other businesses for little or no reason at all. I was in Florida and saw how the press tortured a governor simply because he kept his state open, and everyone is getting vaccinated "in due course," not because of their nationality or skin color or political affiliation. Florida didn't run up billions in deficits. Nor did Florida cities burn all summer. Who's kidding whom?

This sad-sack excuse for a governor literally begs someone – ANYONE – to step up and run against Cuomo when his term is over.

Now, watch the fiscal blame game begin.

Cuomo's bankrupted our great state and demands Washington bail us out. Without transparency (let's start with the nursing home deaths) and accountability, from the guy who demands accountability from everyone else, he ducks and hides from his own culpability.

So what can we do? Find someone willing to run in opposition and support him or her. If I cannot find someone, I'll just run myself. No joke! He cannot be re-elected based on his record and this doomsday duo of incompetence – Cuomo and DeBlasio – who have ruined this state. Don't believe me? Just travel to Florida, North Dakota or any southern state.

Frank A. Catalina
Shrub Oak

Galef Should Concentrate on More Important Issues Than Renaming Park

With respect to Assemblywoman Sandy Galef's objection to the name of park property originally intended by the Trump Organization to be a golf course ("Galef Calls for Removal of Trump Name From State Park," Jan. 19-25) described by her as "just abandoned buildings and some wetlands," the property could not be developed because of local government objections, not because it couldn't be used as a golf course. Significant expense was incurred to show how that development could occur. It is now part of a conservation easement.

Everyone loves open space, even Ms. Galef. Maybe the contribution was

conditioned on it bearing the Trump name? Why would Mr. Pataki or the late Pete Seeger want the honor Ms. Galef suggests of having their names attached to some abandoned buildings and some wetlands? Me thinks it's Trump derangement syndrome.

I think Ms. Galef should concentrate on reducing the size of state government and reducing state income taxes for the diminishing number of people who continue to legally reside here.

Paul Jaffe
Chappaqua

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Mt. Kisco Facility Serving Disabled Proposes Site Upgrades

By Martin Wilbur

A Mount Kisco multigenerational daycare center that provides programs to intellectually and developmentally disabled adults has plans to upgrade its building, make site improvements and expand its parking lot.

Representatives for Arc Westchester's Ann Manzi Center have proposed to construct a new entrance vestibule and covered drop-off area, build an outdoor patio, develop an on-site trail and walking system and update the lighting and landscaping on its 4.1-acre property at 699 E. Main St.

Arc Westchester must obtain site plan approval and a steep slopes permit from the Planning Board as well as approval from the village's Architectural Review Board.

Ian Mueller, the applicant's architect, said the planned work is needed because a few years ago Arc Westchester wanted to find a way to improve the organization's programs to support its senior population and to provide services to people who age out of the programs. In particular, the outdoor patio and walking trails will allow participants to have more time outdoors in good weather.

"This has become important during the COVID-19 pandemic where spending time outdoors has truly become a critical need for them to service the individuals and their program," Mueller said.

Additional parking containing room for another 40 cars would be provided by expanding the current lot to the west, said the project's landscape architect Dawn McKenzie. She said not only does Arc Westchester need more parking but the zoning requires it. There are days when the current lot is inadequate.

As many as 75 individuals and 30 staff members can be on site at one time.

"If you go there during the day, you'll find there are cars pulled in here and parked along the driveway to the site," McKenzie said.

Four mature oak trees located along the existing driveway that are showing signs of decline will be removed, she said.

McKenzie explained that to supplement the evergreens and deciduous plantings, the applicant plans to add more evergreen trees and shrubs in the southern portion of the lot closest to the residences that will serve as screening for the neighbors.

The new site lighting in the parking lot will be not be allowed to remain on throughout the night, she said.

During the Jan. 12 public hearing, several residents along neighboring Farway Drive expressed concern that the efforts by Arc Westchester to mitigate impacts may not be enough without intruding on their privacy and affecting their quality of life.

A few residents questioned why the additional parking couldn't be moved toward the front where there appears to be more space, which would lessen the



The opening of The Senior Connection at Westchester Arc's Ann Manzi Center in Mount Kisco a few years ago. There is now a plan to make various site improvements including a vestibule for the front entrance, expanded parking and an outdoor patio and a walking trail.

impact on neighbors.

"I'm not an architect, but it would give us some privacy and maintain what we've been used to," Mullen said. "It's really been impactful on our homes, our neighborhood, our privacy and it's a very dramatic change. Not that change can't be good but it just seems it can be put in an area that doesn't affect our lives and our property values."

Another resident, Randi Sperber, also remarked about the amount of space available toward the front of the property.

"We were just wondering why the

parking lot had to be built up to our backyards when there's all that space in the front and on the sides without houses," she said.

John Bainlardi was one of the boards members who suggested to the applicant's representatives that in addition to the plantings there could be a solid fence that could help shield the parking lot more effectively for the neighbors.

The public hearing is scheduled to resume during this week's Planning Board meeting, scheduled for Tuesday evening at 7:30 p.m.

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State Files Lawsuit Against NRC Over Indian Point Snub

By Rick Pezzullo

New York Attorney General Letitia James filed a lawsuit last week against the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for denying a petition from the state to hold a public hearing on the decommissioning of the Indian Point nuclear power plants.

The legal action also challenges the NRC's decision to allow Holtec International, which is overseeing the decommissioning of the Buchanan facility after it closes in April, to use more than \$630 million of the plant's dedicated decommissioning trust funds for spent fuel management costs. James maintains the costs are the legal and financial responsibility of the federal government.

"For the health and safety of New Yorkers, it's imperative that Indian Point be safely, rapidly and thoroughly dismantled," James said. "The NRC is attempting to bypass critical transparency and accountability steps, and also is seeking to make New Yorkers pay for the job. The NRC's unwillingness to hear New York's valid concerns is a slap in the face to all New Yorkers. I am committed to fighting back against the NRC's misguided and illegal actions and ensuring that Indian Point is decommissioned in a responsible way."

In 2017, Entergy, the owners of Indian Point, announced, to the surprise of local municipalities, that it was closing the two remaining operating units at the site. Unit 2 powered down last April, and Unit 3 is



New York Attorney General Letitia James

scheduled to cease operations in three months.

On Jan. 23, 2020, the NRC announced that it was considering approval of an application by Entergy to transfer the Indian Point license, and the facility's decommissioning trust funds, to Holtec for decommissioning.

Holtec obtained the NRC's approval to use the trust money, not only to conduct the required radiological decommissioning, but also to fund spent fuel management. Of the roughly \$2.1 billion of aggregated trust funds intended to decommission the facility, Holtec intends to spend more than \$630 million for spent fuel management alone, raising concerns among some regarding the sufficiency of the remaining funds to conduct a safe and comprehensive decommissioning.

Last Feb. 12, James filed a petition for the state to intervene in the license transfer, arguing that it violates the NRC's rules for approving a nuclear facility license transfer. James also requested that the NRC hold a public hearing on whether the proposed Holtec licensees have demonstrated financial qualification, whether they have shown adequate decommissioning financial assurance and whether its decommissioning plans will actually ensure adequate funding for decommissioning and the other activities for which Holtec sought to use the decommissioning trusts, particularly spent fuel management.

On Mar. 24, 2020, and again last Oct. 7, the state opposed Holtec's request for an exemption from the NRC's regulations that prohibit the use of trust funds for non-

decommissioning activities.

"The NRC has once again failed to prioritize the real and substantive concerns of Lower Hudson Valley residents by denying the public hearing requests by the Town of Cortlandt, Village of Buchanan, Hendrick Hudson School District and New York Attorney General's Office that were submitted almost a year ago," said U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer. "Allowing Indian Point to change hands without a proper public hearing is a slap in the face to all who live and work in the communities surrounding Indian Point, and I urge the NRC to immediately reverse this decision."

"Westchester residents deserve to have their voices heard on whether or not Holtec is right for our community," added Westchester County Executive George Latimer. "Indian Point is in our backyard and the decommissioning process is one that will impact our region for generations. We need answers on Holtec's plans for protecting local jobs and restoring the site environment while also seeing adequate proof of sufficient financial responsibility. I applaud and support the attorney general's suit and look forward to results that will benefit Westchester residents now and for years to come."

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Ossining, Briarcliff Ready to Launch Home Energy-Efficiency Program

By Martin Wilbur

Energy efficiency, reducing heating and electric costs and limiting one's carbon footprint have become increasingly critical for a growing number of Westchester residents.

For homeowners in the town and village of Ossining and the Village of Briarcliff Manor, that mission is about to get a major boost this week.

The three municipalities are set to collaborate with Sustainable Westchester to launch the EnergySmart HOMES program, an effort to promote residential fossil-fuel free heating and cooling solutions. They were among more than a dozen communities throughout the county to apply for acceptance into the program that will include reduced-cost home energy-efficiency assessments.

Residents in the three communities can log onto a virtual kickoff this Thursday evening at 7 p.m. to get more information on the program by visiting the Sustainable Westchester website, www.sustainablewestchester.org.

"A lot of people don't realize that our homes certainly generate a huge amount of our carbon emissions and together we can change the way we heat and cool our homes and the way they're insulated to make them more energy efficient," said Lauren Brois, director of the EnergySmart HOMES program for Sustainable Westchester.

Partnering with the Briarcliff Sustainability Committee and Green Ossining, the program

will help connect residents to sign up for an assessment to learn how energy use can be reduced while making their homes more comfortable year-round and saving money on utility bills, Brois said.

If a homeowner decides to move forward in making improvements to their home energy systems, whether that's installing geothermal, air pumps, energy-efficiency products or simply replacing a house's insulation, they can be put in contact with a contractor participating in the program to have a reduced price for the work, she said.

Funding for the program is through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

Village of Ossining Mayor Rika Levin said being selected for the program is crucial for her community because about 70 percent of the homes in the village were built in the 1970s or earlier, suggesting that there is a significant opportunity for energy-efficiency savings. There are about 26,000 residents in the village.

"I think it's great for the residents," Levin said. "We have a lot of older homes. They were built at a time when we were not thinking about carbon footprints. So the work (Sustainable Westchester) is doing with the municipalities, I think will be great for the residents."

Pradma Sridhar, a member of the Briarcliff Sustainability Committee, said the committee was startled to learn that the combined zip codes of Ossining and Briarcliff have some of the highest greenhouse gas



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Ossining and Briarcliff Manor officials stand with representatives of Sustainable Westchester, including Lauren Brois, at podium, at the Ossining Farmers Market last Saturday to announce the launch of EnergySmart Homes. Residents of those communities can learn about reduced-cost energy assessments and improvements to their homes.

emissions in the entire county.

"So we figured it's really important for residents to understand all the options that we have to reduce their household emissions of greenhouse gases," Sridhar said.

As a prelude to this Thursday's online kick off, Ossining and Briarcliff officials joined Brois and others from Sustainable Westchester at last Saturday's Ossining Farmers Market to start familiarizing the communities' residents about the program.

Ossining Supervisor Dana Levenberg said she looked forward to the latest sustainability initiative the town is participating in. The

town's food scrap recycling and participation in the community choice aggregation program were all well-received and she hoped residents will want to learn about how to improve their homes this Thursday evening.

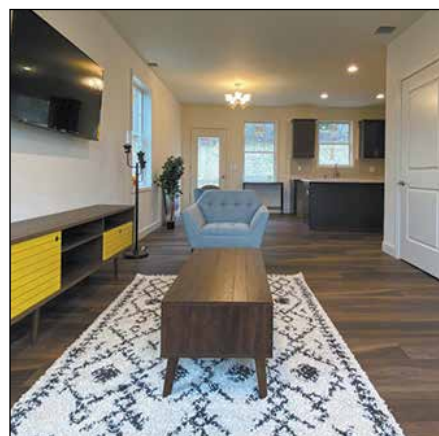
"It will be a great opportunity for everybody to learn about the contractors who are going to be working with us, whether it's geothermal or an air pump system that works best for your home, what you can do, how much you can save, what kind of initiatives are going to be available for you as well as your home could actually be more comfortable and save energy and reduce carbon emissions at the same time," Levenberg said.

Reducing carbon emissions is an international effort, said Dorian Burden, a member of Green Ossining. However, it must start at the local level.

"Climate change is a global issue but it needs to be addressed community by community and household by household," Burden said.

For any community member that misses this Thursday's online kick off, there will be a second opportunity on Feb. 23 at 6 p.m. Visit www.sustainablewestchester.org for more details.

While homeowners outside Ossining and Briarcliff Manor won't be eligible for the low-cost benefits of the program, anyone in the county can contact Sustainable Westchester to get more information on making their home more energy efficient, Brois said.



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Paulin Announces Measure Repealing ‘Walking While Trans’ Law

Assemblywoman Amy Paulin (D-Scarsdale) announced Monday the passage of legislation that repeals the section of the New York State Penal Law establishing the crime of loitering for the purposes of prostitution, commonly known as the “Walking While Trans” law.

The bill now awaits Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s signature.

The current law was enacted in 1976 and permits police to arrest persons based on an assumption that they are occupying a public space with the purpose of engaging in prostitution, even if the assumption is not evidence-based.

The statute allows arbitrary observations such as one’s dress or appearance as grounds for arrest. Police reports cite “wearing a skirt,” “waving at a car” and “standing somewhere other than a bus stop or taxi stand” as reasons to make an arrest under the law.

The law disproportionately affects trans women, particularly trans women of color. In a 2016 class-action lawsuit brought by the Legal Aid Society challenging the law, five of the eight named plaintiffs were transgender

women of color arrested for simply standing outside, speaking to one another or walking home from the subway or grocery store.

“A woman can be improperly arrested and detained simply because an officer takes issue with her clothing or appearance,” the Legal Aid Society wrote in its lawsuit.

The suit lists examples of women who have been targeted: “women assumed to be loitering for prostitution because they were wearing a ‘short dress,’ ‘a skirt and high heels,’ ‘tight black pants’ or ‘a black dress.’”

In 2019, 57 people were arrested under the statute, of which 53 percent were in Queens and 23 percent in Brooklyn, according to data from the New York Department of Criminal Justice Service (DCJS).

Of the 152 people arrested under the statute in 2018, 80 percent were women, 49 percent were African-American and 42 percent were Latino, according to the DCJS data. More than half of the arrests in New York City occurred in Queens.

In 2013 and 2014, the advocacy group Red Umbrella Project found that in one Brooklyn

court 94 percent of the defendants charged under the law were African-American.

In 2020, there were only six arrests made under the current statute – further underlining the archaic nature of the law and need for its repeal.

Compounding the problem of discriminatory and arbitrary arrest, transgender people frequently experience physical, sexual and verbal abuse at the hands of police. Sixty-one percent of transgender New Yorkers recently surveyed were subjected to police misconduct, including incidences of sexual assault, while a similar number of respondents reported that their experiences of police harassment discouraged them from seeking the assistance of law enforcement altogether.

“The harassment prompted by the current law has been borne heavily by victims of human trafficking and abused and exploited women and does not reflect the reality that these victims deserve our help and support to escape their harmful environments, rather than submit them to further harm and degradation,” Paulin said. “The legislature’s



Assemblywoman Amy Paulin was a staunch supporter of repealing a loitering law that critics argued had heavily targeted women of color and transgender women.

passage of this bill will thankfully repeal our draconian and deeply harmful current law”

State Sen. Brad Hoylman (D-Manhattan) sponsored the bill in the Senate.



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50%	\$44,050	\$50,350	\$56,650	\$62,900
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Local Cantor, Colleagues From Coast to Coast Join for Virtual Benefit

By Martin Wilbur

After the COVID-19 pandemic seemed to consume the world last March, Elizabeth Sternlieb was looking for a way that she could use her talents to help people in need.

Sternlieb, the cantor at Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester in Chappaqua, came up with the answer after watching food lines grow, many with people who had never needed help before: she would bring together cantorial colleagues and Jewish musicians from around the United States to present a concert to help those in need.

In December, Sternlieb organized the first concert that included nine cantors and musicians for a virtual concert that helped raise more than \$5,500 for the non-profit organization Mazon, which fights hunger in some of the neediest communities in the United States and Israel. (The word mazon, pronounced mah-ZONE, is Hebrew for meal.)

Sternlieb said although Mazon is a Jewish organization, it helps anyone regardless of faith.

"Our synagogue, obviously, we always try to do whatever we can with food drives and pajama drives and different drives and whatever we can think of to offer assistance to those in need," Sternlieb said. "Then around November we were seeing these food lines growing and growing and people who had never needed assistance were all of a sudden finding themselves in a position

that they were really desperate."

This Sunday at 8 p.m., Sternlieb has organized a second virtual concert, Cantors Coast to Coast: Songs of Sustenance for COVID Relief, with an all-star group of 11 cantors, Jewish spiritual leaders, music directors and musicians from around the United States looking to do their part to help those hit hard by hunger, made worse for many by the pandemic.

For a contribution of \$18, the anticipated 75-minute concert not only looks to make another contribution to Mazon to help feed the nation's hungry, but also provide a stipend to performers, many of whom saw their sources of income disappear overnight.

"Those of us who have a synagogue job, some of us have taken pay cuts just because of circumstances in synagogues," Sternlieb said. "But people who are hand to mouth, everything dried up quickly. So that group of people, the musicians, it was important to me to include them and also they get paid for the work."

The concert will feature mainly original works with Jewish themes written by many of the participants, Sternlieb said. Much of the music will be in English, although there will be some prayers that will be interspersed, she said. Sternlieb will be introducing each performer.

"It's done in a sensitive enough way that I think anyone of any faith would find it inspiring," Sternlieb said.

Included in the program is a tribute to Meir Finkelstein, the cantor at Congregation Beth Yeshurun in Houston. Over the years, he has been one of the most prolific composers of Jewish liturgical music in addition to writing scores for television and documentaries. Finkelstein was one of the youngest people to become a cantor at 14 years old, Sternlieb said.

The finale will be a choral production with each performer having recorded his or her part separately, and then mixed by a sound engineer to make it appear as though they are singing as one group.

Another first is how there will be representation from each of the five branches of Judaism, which is not a small feat. Sternlieb said it is against tradition in the Orthodox Jewish community for men to sing with women. But one of the performers, the acclaimed Cantor Netanel Hershtik of Hampton Synagogue, an Orthodox congregation in Westhampton, N.Y.

However, since Hershtik is "commandment minded," he agreed to participate, Sternlieb explained.

"It is the most important thing, always, to save a life, so I believe he heeded this as an opportunity to fulfill that commandment, and so he was very excited about being part of this," she said.

Registration to view the concert or for more information, visit the Temple Beth El website, www.bethelnw.org/concert.



Cantor Elizabeth Sternlieb of Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester in Chappaqua is coordinating and producing a virtual concert of cantors and Jewish musicians from across the United States to help raise money to feed the hungry. The concert is this Sunday evening at 8 p.m.

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Assemblyman Supports Effort for WiFi in State-Run Group Homes

By Martin Wilbur

Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) joined a group of legislators in Albany on Monday to call on the state Office of People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to provide internet access for residents of state-run group homes.

Abinanti, chairman of the Assembly Committee on Disabilities, was joined by several lawmakers from around the state, including Sen. James Skoufis (D-Woodbury). Skoufis was contacted by a constituent who had been unable to communicate with his adult daughter for nearly 10 months because of COVID-19 restrictions. The woman's family recently pulled the daughter out of the home.

Skoufis then learned that it wasn't an isolated issue or a problem with the individual facility, but rather a state-wide policy.

As a result, since the onset of the pandemic and tight guidelines being imposed regarding group homes visitor, many families have been cut off from their loved ones who are among the most vulnerable population.

"In a COVID world, internet access is the lifeblood for people with disabilities to be part of the rest of the world," Abinanti said. "The Internet gives not just access



Assemblyman Tom Abinanti joined some of his colleagues from around the state on Monday to demand the Office of People With Developmental Disabilities be required to provide group home residents with Internet access. If the agency fails to grant the service, legislation is likely to be introduced.

to information but contact with loved ones and vital remote services that cannot now

be provided in person safely."

Skoufis said with many of doctors' visits having gone virtual, thousands of residents have been unable to receive the health care they need.

If OPWDD fails to rectify the matter, he and some of his colleagues will introduce legislation requiring all state group homes provide free WiFi to developmentally disabled residents.

"The past 10 months these residents have been as isolated as ever," Skoufis said. "They have not been able to see their parents, their families at all. They need Facetime, they need internet, they need WiFi to get the health care that they need, telemedicine that they need. They can't leave the home. They need it for educational purposes to engage with their teachers and go to school, so it is unthinkable that OPWDD has not provided internet to the thousands that they're supposed to service and care for."

Doug Hovey, president and CEO of Independent Living, Inc. in Orange County, said there are about 38,000 group home residents in state-operated facilities that have been cut off from the outside world since last March.

He said while it's laudable that Gov. Andrew Cuomo has made providing affordable WiFi access to low-income New Yorkers a priority, but it's time to

start using the same standard for group home residents. Hovey mentioned that most private group homes, such as the ones operated by his organization, provide internet access.

"Communication is a right, not a privilege," Hovey said.

Skoufis said he contacted OPWDD to find out its rationale for failing to provide the service across the board. While that question wasn't answered, he was told that providing internet for all group home residents in state facilities would cost about \$900,000.

He called the expense is "a speck in the \$190 billion state budget that we have here in New York."

"For some reason this was kept a secret and it's a shameful secret," Skoufis said.

Sen. John Mannion (D-Geddes), chairman of the Senate Disabilities Committee, said in a world where more and more services are online, it is an injustice for group home residents to not have that access.

"The pandemic has shown that Internet access is as vital to modern life as electricity, yet Wifi is considered a luxury by New York State if you have a disability and live in a group facility," Mannion said. "This has to change."

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Mahopac HS Senior Leads Cancer Fight in Nationwide Competition

By Sydney Stoller

While most Americans are trying their best to defeat the coronavirus, Mahopac High School senior Max Semegran is focusing his efforts on another deadly disease: Hodgkin's lymphoma.

This year, Semegran will become Mahopac's first participant in the nationwide Students of the Year competition hosted by the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS).

But raising money for the largest nonprofit that fights blood cancer is a personal battle for Semegran. His older brother Ben was diagnosed with the disease in 2019.

"It was such a shock to me to see my older brother, someone who I see as such a strong person, ravaged by Hodgkin's lymphoma," Semegran said. "Throughout this experience I realized the importance of informing people about blood cancers and the impact that they have, while also raising money and awareness to improve the treatments for this disease."

To honor his brother, Semegran named his Students of the Year campaign Team Ben. Ben is recently cancer free after conquering the disease on two separate occasions, although the effects of his illness still haunt his

family to this day.

Knowing firsthand the horrible way that cancer affects loved ones, Semegran said he is determined to do whatever he can to support LLS. In turn, the nonprofit allocates any funds raised toward finding cures, research and supporting families who need help affording treatment.

To become a competitor, high school students are nominated by friends, family, or in Semegran's case, a teacher. Students then participate in a fundraising contest for LLS, which started on Jan. 21 and extends through Mar. 11.

The contestant who can offer the largest donation on behalf of their team is named Student of the Year.

To further achieve his goal of eliminating blood cancer, Semegran and his fellow contestants must also come up with unique ways to fundraise. Semegran said he plans to organize a scavenger hunt to mobilize the town and raise money.

During the scavenger hunt, participants will answer clues and solve riddles to win a prize. Community members can buy a ticket to participate and the prize money will consist of a portion of the money made from ticket sales. The rest will be donated to LLS, he said.

Semegran has also approached

local businesses interested in buying ads in the program distributed at the Students of the Year banquet. The banquet is attended by thousands of people, which means invaluable exposure with the bonus of supporting a good cause.

In addition to buying an ad, the virtual end-of-contest banquet will feature an auction where businesses can donate items that attendees can bid on. These can range from restaurant vouchers to luxury items, Semegran said.

Along with the medical benefits the Students of the Year contest brings, it also aims to help entrants develop interpersonal skills, like public speaking, networking and financial planning. Although Semegran has exhibited these attributes in many aspects of his life, he's eager to build on this foundation and learn as the contest continues.

Devin O'Toole, the LLS representative for Connecticut and the Hudson Valley, said Semegran exemplifies the ideal high school student to get involved in this campaign.

"He is extremely driven, gives his all in everything he commits to and has outstanding leadership skills," O'Toole said. "He is finishing out his high school



Mahopac High School senior Max Semegran, left with his brother Ben, who was diagnosed with blood cancer in 2019. Max Semegran is participating in the nationwide Students of the Year competition hosted by the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

career as the first student to ever represent the Mahopac community and we could not be more honored to have him involved in this campaign."

While Semegran is proud to be a leader in the fight against cancer at his school, he hopes that the fight will continue once he graduates. However, his optimism remains high after the Mahopac Students Against Cancer Club was formed at the high school last fall.

"Many of the people on Team Ben are from the club because I knew that all of the members would be interested in the fight against cancer," Semegran said. "I am hoping that in the future they can continue doing this program and it would become a part of their club and it would be a yearly thing."

To donate to Team Ben, visit <https://events.lls.org/ctwhv/CTWHVSOY21/tmaxandmah>.

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Pandemic Spawns Home Projects, But Please Be Careful

It's been 18 years since I first started writing The Home Guru column and about all the chores that go along with improving and maintaining a home. During that time, I haven't gotten any younger. The frequency and complexity of my do-it-yourself projects around the house have diminished significantly with age – my age.

In fact, especially during COVID-19, even though I live in a relatively chore-free condo, I've spent days, weeks and even months just staring at my four walls, embarrassed to admit that there are three overhead lights that need to be replaced, but I'm only capable of reminding myself that the chore needs to be done.

With 10-foot ceilings, the task just seems too daunting. But then, all I have to do is call condo management to get the job completed.

Here's a little scary history. Years ago, a neighbor of mine was making a repair on his roof when he lost his footing, fell off and hit his head, knocking himself unconscious. Incredibly enough, when he gained consciousness, he suddenly no longer wanted to be married to his wife. It just came out of the blue following his near-death experience.

That experience offered a good excuse to me – and my wife – that I should never do anything around the house that is either

dangerous or for which I am unqualified.

But we guys are a stubborn lot, we are. And women are right up there with us when it comes to the satisfaction we derive from doing ourselves what we might hand over to others for a price. There are other factors involved, both practical and psychological.

For one, not all of us are moneybags. When I first moved to the suburbs as a young husband and father, I could barely scrape together the money needed for the mortgage, utilities and taxes each month, much less even considering whether I could afford a service to have my lawn cut or my

shrubbery pruned.

On the other hand, with a young family and a stressful job, I was grateful for the therapeutic element that came with building my own bookshelves, applying my own wallpaper and doing my own foundation plantings. I would step back and say, "Wow, that's some heck of a job; no one could possibly do it better."

And you know what? Except for some really skilled artisans I have found along the way, like a carpenter who is an artist with wood and a painter who can do faux work that should be in a museum, my handiwork from years past stood up very well indeed.



In my former antique home, I would marvel when stepping into my bedroom, and almost compulsively, I would look at the perfectly matched pattern on the papered walls and marvel at how each corner is miraculously matched to the other. When I was in my dining room, I couldn't stop myself from observing the stenciling along the top of the walls, the swag and leaf pattern on which I labored for weeks on end when my back and neck were supple enough to endure the physical effort required.

But the years do take their toll. As soon as the snow of winter melted each spring, I would start my first home ritual of redressing my driveway and parking area by leveling the mounds of crushed bluestone created by the snowplows.

Of course, I would soon hear a window open, my wife admonishing me to stop immediately, warning that the chore is as taxing as shoveling snow and that I was too old to do it anymore. I would respond that it was good, healthy exercise for me. We went

back and forth. She would win, but only because I always try to be a good husband and don't want to worry her.

Today, it's a different time of life and I must face the reality that it's time to be a different kind of homeowner with a different kind of to-do list, mainly one of who to call to get the various jobs done that need to be done.

According to a Consumer Products Safety Commission report, nearly 250,000 people have to visit emergency rooms each year simply because they fall off a ladder. This is the most dangerous chore around the house.

In descending order, the next most dangerous home improvement chores are lawnmower accidents; power tool accidents; chemical-related accidents (pool chemicals, paints, lubricants, solvents and other household or workshop cleaning agents, so read those labels carefully!); chainsaw accidents (I was always afraid to even own one); and finally, electric shock. (Always assume a wire is "hot," unless you know for sure that the power has been turned off.)

It's wonderful to do it yourself, but be careful which chores you choose.

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

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A Glance at Some Recent Releases Worth Watching

It has been a difficult year for the movie industry, but as we look toward 2021, many studios are putting an increasing amount of quality content onto the multitude of streaming services available. Here are a few recent releases that you may want to check out.

Wonder Woman 1984

The newest installment to the DC cinematic universe looks to build off the success of its critically-acclaimed predecessor. The story revolves around Diana Prince as she lives her life without her lost love, Steve Trevor. She meets Barbara Minerva, an insecure, but brilliant geologist at the museum where she works and they develop an unlikely friendship amidst the discovery of a mysterious stone.

Pedro Pascal portrays Maxwell Lord, a power-hungry businessman who is much worse off than he lets on and wants to harness the power of the stone for his own personal gain.

Set in the 1980s, those born in that era will appreciate the nostalgia that comes with the fashion and culture that the film does an excellent job of utilizing. However, as the film progresses, the plot becomes riddled with holes and frankly ridiculous

even for a superhero movie. You'll find yourself with many questions that are left unexplained and wondering how that is possible given the lengthy run time of two-and-a-half hours.

Although the actors do their best with a flawed script, I found Pascal to be overacting at times, which is a shame considering his recent success as the lead in the *Mandalorian*. Gal Gadot and Chris Pine rekindle their chemistry and Kristen Wiig is able to put in a solid effort in a role that didn't seem suited to her at first glance.

I was entertained enough to get through the movie, but it certainly did not live up to the expectations brought on by the original.

Rating: 6.5/10

Where to Watch: HBO Max



Hillbilly Elegy

Based on The New York Times best-selling memoir and directed by Ron Howard, "Hillbilly Elegy" centers around the life of J.D. Vance, an aspiring lawyer who looks to escape the impoverished and troubled past he endured growing up in rural Ohio.

J.D.'s mother, portrayed by Amy Adams, struggles with drug addiction and failed relationships that leave her unfit to be a

parent to two children. His grandmother, played by Glenn Close, steps in multiple times to try and lead J.D. down a more fortuitous path in life.

As J.D. grows older, despite his success, he feels a moral obligation to his family and tries to juggle graduating from school and taking care of his family, who desperately need his support.

Although the cliché escape poverty storyline may be overdone in Hollywood, this film does a great job of encapsulating real emotional conflict along with societal barriers that are ever-present in today's America. The acting, as you would expect, is top notch from two of Hollywood's leading actresses, and Gabriel Lasso puts in a solid performance as Vance.

Despite poor reviews and as someone who read the memoir, I found "Hillbilly Elegy" to be an emotionally fulfilling film that is certainly worthy of a watch.

Rating: 8/10

Where to Watch: Netflix

Sylvie's Love

Set in the late 1950s and early '60s, "Sylvie's Love" is an old-fashioned love



By Rick M. Pezzullo

story revolving around Sylvie Parker, played by Tessa Thompson, and Robert Halloway, played by Nnamdi Asomugha.

Robert is a talented jazz musician who works at the record store owned by Sylvie and her family. They have a natural connection and chemistry that makes the situation difficult for Sylvie as she is already engaged to a man serving in the military during the Korean War.

Thompson puts in an excellent performance that we've come to expect

from the budding star and Asomugha is surprisingly exceptional as well, considering he was best known for being an All-Pro cornerback for the Oakland Raiders. Although the acting is excellent, there are certain unexplained plot holes that may leave you confused and unsatisfied.

"Sylvie's Love" is a solid date night film that will pull at your romantic heartstrings and long for the booming jazz culture from decades ago.

Rating: 8/10

Where to Watch: Amazon Prime Video

continued on page 20

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Community Engagement Sought for Chappaqua Library Strategic Plan

The Chappaqua Central School District (CSD) Public Library is excited to announce an upcoming public engagement opportunity, the 2021 Strategic Plan. The 2021 Strategic Plan will outline a systematic process for moving toward an agreed-upon, community-wide vision. The plan involves the development and prioritization of strategic goals and measurable strategies.

The mission of the Chappaqua CSD Public Library is to be a welcoming community center for human interaction, intellectual stimulation and cultural enrichment for people of all ages; to provide, through books and other informational, educational and cultural materials, including non-print resources, events and programs, a place where the experience of the past can meet

the needs of the present and future; to provide access to its own materials and to sources beyond its collections for people on-site and in other locations; and to work with institutions, organizations and individuals within the community in the pursuit of these goals.

To prepare, the committee will gather information from library staff and the community relating to library services and materials, identify our strengths and weaknesses, determine any external threats, identify long-term trends in the library field and determine the future goals for the library.

Anyone interested in participating, may e-mail a letter of interest and a resume to afarber@wlsmail.org.

A Glance at Some Recent Releases Worth Watching

continued from page 19

Let Them All Talk

This comedy/drama, directed by Steven Soderbergh, centers around Alice Hughes (Meryl Streep), a famous author working on a new manuscript. She is being honored with an award in England, but cannot fly due to health reasons. Her agent, Karen, suggests that she take a ship instead in order to receive her award, while also trying to find information on her next work.

Alice invites two old college friends whom she's lost touch with as well as her nephew, Tyler. During the trip, old wounds resurface and new love emerges, which results in many awkward social encounters.

The acting, led by Streep and Lucas Hedges, is outstanding as one would expect. The plot, however, becomes a little difficult to follow as you try to understand pieces of the characters' past. At the end of the film, you might find yourself wondering what you're supposed to take away. I was expecting a little more substance from a film with this type of star power, but I was still interested enough to enjoy it.

If you like Streep, you'll enjoy "Let

Them All Talk," but it may leave you unsatisfied if you're expecting an Oscar contender.

Rating: 7/10

Where to Watch: HBO Max

Soul

The newest Disney/Pixar film follows middle school teacher Joe Gardner, an aspiring jazz musician who falls in an open manhole right before he's about to get his big break.

Joe's soul and body are separated and he tries desperately to return to Earth to fulfill his life's passion. Through his journey with an unborn soul, known as 22, Joe learns lessons about himself and his purpose in life while developing an unlikely friendship in the process.

"Soul" is funny, heartwarming and has meaningful lessons that transcend all ages. It does have similarities to a previous Disney film, "Inside Out" in terms of character style, so it does lack originality in that regard, but "Soul" is an excellent addition to the Disney library and has likeable characters and plenty of wit to keep all ages interested.

Rating: 8.75/10

Where to Watch: Disney+

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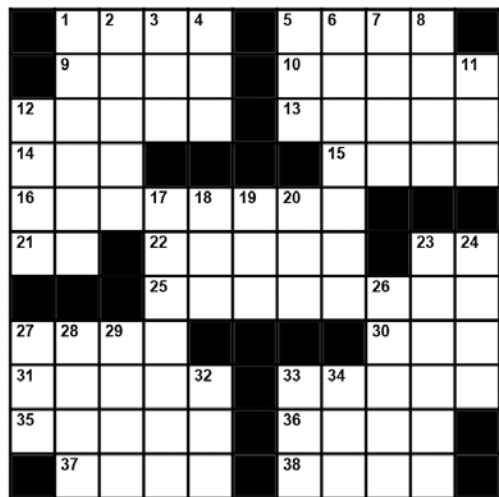
Crossword

Across

- Current
- Memorial Day solo
- People waiting to get into a show form one
- Once more
- Dropped sharply
- Place for target practice
- Life duration
- "__ She Lovely" Stevei Wonder song
- Menace
- Word indicating a location
- Regions
- Exist
- Surprised
- Leave off
- It's hunted at Easter
- Became fainter
- Symbol of authority
- Hot-tempered
- Motivate, in a way
- Road division
- Real estate document

Down

- Escape
- Meat eaten with onions
- "__ Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest"
- Formed a union
- Material for roofs and roads
- Opposed to
- Cookware items
- Token



- Safety item for a tightrope walker
- Material to be input
- Washington D.C. time
- Sculpture and painting, e.g.
- Peppermint drink
- Hearing organ
- Pleaded
- Gradually move sideways
- Projection
- Taking a personal day, perhaps
- Daily delivery
- "What's the __?!"
- Salon supply
- Stage of bloom
- "We __ family"

Answers on page 22

A Spiritual View

By Cantor Lilah Sugarman

"It is the Tree of life to all who hold fast to it and all of its supporters are happy."
Proverbs 3:17.

This week the Jewish community celebrates Tu B'shevat, the new year of the trees. For this holiday, we honor nature, trees and the fruit they give us.

Also, this last week, in the Torah, the Hebrew bible we have the last of the 10 plagues, and in this part of the story, it says, God hardened Pharaoh's heart. I read this as God hardened Pharaoh's heart since the intention was already there for his heart to be hardened.

I think we often let so many things get in our way of connecting with others. Ultimately, our own selves, our own hardening of our hearts get in our way of connecting most true to ourselves and, ultimately, others. I invite us to work on opening our hearts for inner exploration and further connection with others. I lift up the words of Amanda Gorman, our first youth poet laureate:

And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us

but what stands before us

We close the divide because we know, to put our future first, we must first put our differences aside We lay down our arms so we can reach out our arms to one another

My blessings for this week are

that we, like trees rooted in the earth, are grounded in tradition, in those who have come before us. May we be grounded in an inner connection to ourselves and, like the tree's branches, reach toward the skies, reaching out

toward others and a future of hope and unity.

Lilah Sugarman is the rabbi 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.



Camp Study: Adherence to CDC Guidance Proved Successful

The American Camp Association (ACA) celebrated a study released last August from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that identifies how four overnight summer camps in Maine were able to operate safely and successfully without the spread of COVID-19 last year.

Integral to these camps' success was employing a multilayered nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPI) strategy, reflecting adherence to measures outlined in ACA's educational resource, a Field Guide for Camps on Implementation of CDC Guidance. Each of the NPIs provided a limited layer of protection, but when implemented collectively in a consistent and diligent manner by a camp's entire community – campers, staff members and camp parents/guardians – they created a culture of compliance that can prevent and mitigate transmission of disease.

"This study of more than 1,000 camp attendees shows promising data that overnight camps can operate safely in the era of COVID-19," said lead study author Dr. Laura Blaisdell. "With this foundational information we look forward to ACA convening wider studies investigating the experience of more diverse camp experiences this year."

President and CEO of the American Camp Association Tom Rosenberg said that while safety was the foundation for a successful summer last year, the camp



experience teaches children social-emotional skills for 21st-century learning and leadership.

"These skills are paramount to persevering in a time of pandemic and beyond," Rosenberg said.

Blaisdell highlighted the four participant camps did not restrict attendance from any part of the country or globally. The study's findings demonstrated that a multilayered public health prevention and

mitigation strategy in an overnight camp setting can identify and control COVID-19 transmission, regardless of the prevalence of the virus in campers and staff arriving from various communities.

Rosenberg emphasized the importance of the report.

"(Last) summer, more than 3,000 day and overnight camps ran, serving kids and families in need of fun and engaging time outdoors with friends," he said.

"Camp provided much-needed time away from technology, with opportunities to thrive socially, emotionally and physically in a year marked with isolation and unprecedented challenges for every family. Camp was truly the unsung hero of summer 2020 for every kid able to attend."

Rosenberg said ACA's upcoming four research studies focused on camp practices and programs that continued to provide safe and engaging camp experiences last summer by following the organization's Field Guide for Camps on Implementation of CDC Guidance.

The research supports educators and after-school programs adhering to ACA's Field Guide's suggested practices, Rosenberg said. Applying multiple layers of NPIs and leaning into a culture of compliance, even without testing and bubbling, can help any school or organization that brings children together while mitigating spread of the virus, he said.

Rosenberg said the report is positive news for the upcoming summer.

"The primary goal of this research is to identify effective practices so that more camps will offer in-person day and overnight programming for summer 2021, ensuring children receive the life-changing camp experiences they need and deserve," Rosenberg said.

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Teatown Kicks Off 17th Annual EagleFest This Saturday

Teatown’s Hudson River EagleFest, the annual festival celebrating the bald eagle’s winter migration to the Hudson Valley, will kick for the 17th time this Saturday, Jan. 30 with a week of exciting virtual programs and limited in-person activities for children, families and birding enthusiasts.

From Jan. 30 through Sunday, Feb. 7, Teatown will host a series of virtual programs featuring Connecticut falconer and wildlife rehabilitator Christine Peyreigne of Christine’s Critters; Anne Swaim, executive director of Saw Mill River Audubon; programs by Zeiss Sports Optics; and Teatown’s own animal ambassadors.

New this year will be the highly-anticipated presentation on the healing nature of bird watching by Holly Merker, a cancer survivor who credits “ornithotherapy” as a tool in her recovery.

To make the programming accessible to all, Teatown is charging a minimal registration fee of \$5 for members and \$7 for non-members per program.

Teatown also plans to host limited in-person family fun activities including the “Golden Feather” treasure hunt, with Teatown swag bags as prizes. Adding some “virtual reality” to the virtual world will be a new map of viewing sites and virtual visits to select viewing locations developed in collaboration with virtual reality company A&R360.

“Last year’s EagleFest had the highest attendance ever so we know that there is



EagleFest returns for the 17th time starting Saturday for a weeklong celebration of the bald eagle’s annual migration to the Hudson Valley. This year it will be a mainly virtual event.

great enthusiasm for the bald eagle and wildlife conservation programming that Teatown provides to families throughout the Hudson Valley and beyond,” said Kevin Carter, Teatown’s executive director. “While COVID is preventing the in-person festival at Croton Point Park this year, we have extended EagleFest to include an entire week of really exciting hybrid programming we hope will inspire families and bird enthusiasts until we can

return to Croton Point Park next year.”

Bird photographers may be interested in entering a bird-of-prey photography contest, with the top prize sponsored by Zeiss Sports Optics. The contest is in memory of nature photographer and longtime Teatown supporter Ed Mertz, who died last year. Entry into the contest is free.

Teatown is also collaborating this year with Pleasantville-based brewing company

Soul Brewing. A percentage of the sales of Blonde and Marzen beers at Soul Brewing’s Pleasantville location during EagleFest will go to support Teatown.

Teatown is selling “Eagle Bundles” gift sets on its e-store. It includes a special eaglet bundle with unique learning activities for children created by Teatown educators.

For more information, including details about the bird-of-prey photography contest, and a complete schedule of programs, visit www.teatown.org.

Crossword Answers

	1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8						
		F	L	O	W		T	A	P	S					
	9						10				11				
12							13								
14		A	G	E						15		I	S	N	T
16						17		18	19	20					
21		A	T			22						23		24	
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31					32					33	34				
35															
					37					38					

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Don't Let Heartburn Sideline You During the Big Game

It is hard to imagine the Super Bowl without hot wings, zesty delivery pizza or homemade buffalo chicken dip, despite the anticipated heartburn that might follow.

On top of all your favorite rich and spicy foods is the anxiety you may get from the game itself, not to mention the built-up stress associated with the past year.

With stress increasingly being recognized as a contributing factor to heartburn, taking steps to mitigate symptoms can help you better enjoy the game, especially as this year is shaping up to be more unpredictable – and therefore more stressful – than ever.

“This unprecedented year is generating anxiety and stress for all those involved in the planning leading up to the big game, from event coordinators to the players, advertisers and fans,” said Kenny White, a sports analyst and legendary oddsmaker known as the “Wizard of Odds.” “But die-hard football fans and casual viewers alike could use some of this uncertainty to actually enjoy the whole Big Game experience even more than in previous years.”

De-Stress With a Little Fun

To stress less, look for ways to have a bit of extra fun. For example, TUMS, the brand that celebrated “TUMSworthy” moments during the game last year, will be launching a new bingo experience on Feb. 1. To participate, download your game board at @TUMSOfficial and follow



it during the game. Delivery pizza arrives with the wrong toppings? Out of chicken wings? Fumble on the field? Scorching dip? Examples such as these could represent a #TUMSworthy moment on your bingo board. Players who complete B-I-N-G-O by the end of the game are entered into a drawing to win up to \$55,000 in prizes.

“While the Big Game will once again be full of uncertainties, creative propositions

such as the #TUMSBingoSweepstakes can make the whole experience more fun for fans and non-fans alike,” White said.

Beat Symptoms

Generally characterized by a burning sensation in the chest, other signs of heartburn include acid indigestion, sour stomach and upset stomach associated with these symptoms. But you can take action to reduce this discomfort, whether

ordering from your favorite restaurant or testing out that new buffalo chicken dip recipe that you have been eager to try.

Because eating too fast can contribute to heartburn, one of the most effective ways to alleviate symptoms is to take time to savor all those tasty snacks. Also, consider mixing up your spread with a few items you know are not heartburn triggers.

You might also want to make spectating more active. When you lie flat, your esophagus and stomach are on an even plane, making it easy for stomach acids to flow into your esophagus, which can cause heartburn. Sitting at a 45-degree angle could compress your stomach and make things worse. So, try to get up and move around between plays.

You can also turn to America's top heartburn brand TUMS and have some TUMS Chewy Bites on hand. With a main ingredient of calcium carbonate, delivering fast-acting multi-symptom relief, and neutralizing acid on contact to treat the signs of heartburn, TUMS goes to work in seconds to deliver heartburn relief. To learn more, and for more heartburn relief tips, visit tums.com.

This Super Bowl Sunday, relax and have fun. With a smart game plan, there is no need to be sidelined by heartburn.

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Light Pollution is Worse Than Just Preventing Us From Seeing the Stars

About 12 years ago, not long after we moved up from Brooklyn, I carried my daughter into the night and looked up. I was amazed. With no trouble at all I could see the delicate arch of six stars that form Orion's shield! I could see the Milky Way!

In the years since, I've watched as more and more lights have sprung up in my neighborhood and around Westchester. They're on driveways and doorsteps. They light up empty street corners, deserted sports fields and low-hanging tree branches. One neighbor sometimes sees fit to point his SUV at his house and turn on his headlights at midnight. The light bounces everywhere, and trespasses into other houses.

As the sky cleared last week, I realized I can't see Orion's shield anymore. It's slowly disappeared into the night, pushed back and retreated, like a frightened bear hiding in the woods. Have you noticed, too? Most people around the world say they can't see the Milky Way at all. We've dirtied the skies with light and let that piece of humanity slip away.

At its simplest, light pollution is the unnecessary, wasteful use of light, brightening nighttime skies. To many people, this sounds like a joke, but it is a

serious problem, far beyond "dark skies are cool."

Light pollution affects the well-being and life cycles of plants and animals. It causes illness, injury and problems with migratory and reproductive patterns. It disrupts astronomical research. The loss of dark skies is believed to contribute to stress, burn-out, loneliness and disconnection from other people.

Studies have shown links between light pollution and sleep problems in humans, which, in turn, are linked to breast and other types of cancer. Light pollution contributes to global climate change by using more energy to run these lights.

Safety isn't the answer either. Statistics suggest an increase in crime in over-lit areas because we're giving steady and consistent light to the criminals, free of charge. Who hasn't

been blinded by overly bright streetlights while driving?

Most important to some: it wastes money. We're spending more and more to power these lights so we can, ever so slightly, light the undersides of passing airplanes.

But all is not lost. People and communities are committing themselves to the cause. A dark sky tourism industry is growing with the help of organizations like the International Dark Sky Association. Here are five easy things any of us can do:

1. Simplest and most effective, turn off unnecessary outdoor lights. We don't need to light up everything around us.
2. Shield the outdoor lights you do need and direct their light downward at



By Scott Levine

the specific area you need to light, rather than upward toward the sky.

3. Use amber lights and put them on motion sensors and timers so they're only on when necessary.

4. Use blinds and curtains to reduce the light leaving your house and shut the lights when you leave rooms.

5. Talk to your friends and neighbors about

the problem. I've been in touch with local officials and hope to speak with them again soon.

We need dark skies. They're part of who we are, where we've been and where we're going. Thanks for your help.

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

Clear Skies



Last Quarter
January 6



New Moon
January 13



First Quarter
January 20



Full Moon
January 28

The upcoming phases of the moon.

Three Area Students Named National Finalists for Science Competition

Three students, two from Westchester and one from Putnam County, are among the 40 national finalists for the 80th Regeneron Science Talent Search for 2021, the nation's oldest and most prestigious science and mathematics competition for high school seniors.

The local finalists are Jared Ilan of Byram Hills High School, Michael Pavelchek of Ossining High School and Rebecca Monge of Carmel High School.

They were selected from 1,760 highly qualified entrants based on their projects' scientific rigor and potential to become a world-changing scientist and leader. Earlier this month, the Society for Science and Regeneron named the top 300 student scholars.

The finalists are each awarded at least \$25,000, and the top 10 awards range from \$40,000 to \$250,000. The top 10 Regeneron Science Talent Search 2021 winners will be announced during a live-streamed virtual awards ceremony on Mar. 17.

More than \$3 million in awards will be distributed throughout the Regeneron Science Talent Search, which includes awards to finalists as well as \$2,000 provided to each of the top 300 scholars and their schools.

They will also have an opportunity to interact with leading scientists and display their projects to the public during a virtual event on Mar. 14. Usually held in person



The three local finalists of the Regeneron Science Talent Search: Michael Pavelchek of Ossining High School, above, Rebecca Monge of Carmel High School, right, and Jared Ilan of Byram Hills High School, far right. The students were among 40 finalists nationwide from an original group of 1,760 entrants.

in Washington, D.C., the 2021 competition will take place virtually in order to keep the finalists and their families safe during the ongoing pandemic.

"It's an honor to welcome the Regeneron Science Talent Search 2021 finalists to the community of alumni who share a drive and passion for science," said Dr. George D. Yancopoulos, co-founder, president and chief scientific officer of Regeneron and among the top winners of the 1976 Science Talent Search.



"This year's finalists represent many of our nation's most promising young scientists who, even during a global pandemic, are using their ingenuity, resourcefulness and STEM skills to work toward a better future. I can only hope that their STS experience further inspires them to take on and help solve the biggest challenges facing mankind – from climate change to disease and future pandemics."

The finalists' projects cover behavioral and social sciences, biochemistry,



bioengineering, cellular and molecular biology, chemistry, computational biology and bioinformatics, computer science, earth and planetary sciences, engineering, environmental science, genomics, materials science, mathematics, medicine and health, physics, plant sciences and space science.

For a complete list of this year's finalists and their projects, visit <https://www.societyforscience.org/regeneron-sts/2021-finalists>.

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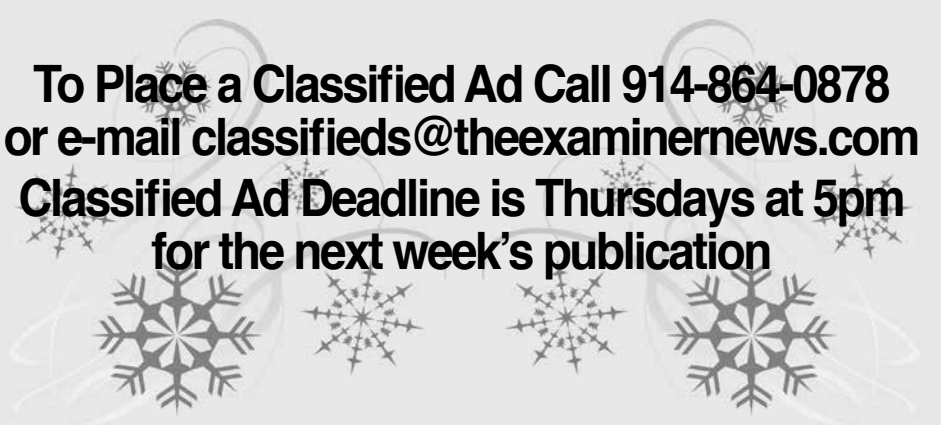
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Adding Water to Wine? The Art (?) of Dilution



By Nick Antonaccio

In previous columns, I explored the intertwined history of wine and water. Throughout ancient times it was a common practice to dilute wine with copious amounts of water in order to reduce the level of alcohol and to diffuse the off-putting aroma and taste of the inferior quality of wine produced in those times.

In modern times, water has taken on a contradictory persona. On the one hand, it is loathed as a dilutive agent that spoils the essence of a wine. On the other hand, it is added during the winemaking process by a number of winemakers to produce an acceptable product low in alcohol.

I received several responses on my reporting of this phenomenon. The ones that intrigued me the most were the self-confessions of readers who have practiced the art of dilution.

Readers admitted to adding club soda or ice cubes to their favorite quaffing wines. They also offered additional insights into the use of water that I had not mentioned due to lack of space in my column.

I felt a column focusing on these consumer practices was warranted. If you have additional experiences you would like to share, send them to my e-mail address.

1. For first-generation children of Western European immigrants, wine was an integral part of most weeknight dinners and every Sunday marathon feast. How many of you were offered wine diluted by water or soda at an early age?

This was a generations-old practice brought to the United States, considered a simple way to share the experience of a traditional "old country" meal with the entire family. In addition, it gradually introduced children to a mealtime beverage considered a healthy component of the Mediterranean diet.

2. Remember the first time you raided mom and dad's wine or liquor cabinet? They would never notice a few ounces missing from a bottle of wine or vodka/gin/scotch. Remember the first time you were caught and then devised the foolproof method of adding an equal amount of water to replace the alcohol you had consumed?

Diluted wine or alcohol tasted the same to a teenager. Remember when your parents tossed the diluted bottles in the trash after they next tasted the contents of

the bottles? Remember you could never again find any bottles of alcohol anywhere in the house, or the key to the new locking device they may have placed on the wine and liquor cabinets?

3. Who would have thought that adding a bit of water to liquor would be de rigueur as an adult? The first time I ordered a single malt scotch and was offered a splash of water with it, I cringed. I was finally able to afford a rather expensive, and envied, whiskey. Why would I want it diluted?

A wise bartender informed me that adding water to scotch is rooted in science.

His insights: High levels of alcohol overpower aromas, and therefore our olfactory senses. Adding water accelerates the evaporation of alcohol molecules and releases the aroma molecules attached to them.

As I sniffed and tasted the diluted single malt, I felt less of a burning sensation (fewer alcoholic molecules) and more of the aroma (more aromatic molecules wafting up from the glass). I've ordered my single malts with a side (not a splash) of water ever since, which allows me to add water incrementally



to match my particular palate.

Having received these inputs from readers, I now confess to the following:

1. As a youth, I was served wine at home mixed with ginger ale before graduating to wine mixed with 7UP lemon-lime soda.

2. As a young adult, of legal age, I ordered "top-shelf" scotch with club soda because it (and therefore, I) was cool to do so.

3. In the eighties, my go-to summer drink was Sangria – watered down with club soda.

But I never stooped to diluting the vodka in the bottle I drank from in my parents' liquor cabinet.

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

**You Heard It
Through the
Grapevine**

Battling Prostate Cancer With a Pinch of Humor

Born in Warsaw, Poland, Andrzej Krakowski is an award-winning film producer, director, screenwriter, cartoonist and professor of film and digital media.

Despite his busy schedule, the 74-year-old diligently keeps up with his health, including going for a prostate cancer screening every year.

And while his past tests were normal – meaning he had no indication of a high prostate-specific antigen (PSA) level or enlarged prostate gland – Krakowski still made a point to go to his most recent screening, even though it was during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

That decision to tend to his routine care may have saved his life.

During the screening, which is a standard digital rectal exam, internist Dr. Michael Wein noted that his prostate "feels different." Wein advised a consultation with a urologist, who, after ordering an MRI, a CAT scan and biopsy, officially diagnosed Krakowski with prostate cancer.

He was referred for treatment to Dr. Ashwatha Narayana, chair of radiation medicine at the Cancer Institute at Northern Westchester Hospital.

Narayana explained that because the cancer was detected early, the treatment options were better and would result in fewer side effects and complications.

"From the moment I met Dr. Narayana, I knew he'd be my doctor," Krakowski recalled. "He walked me and my wife, Majka, through each treatment option logically and clearly. He made drawings for us, took his time and was humane and warm. He alleviated my fear."

Together, they decided on a treatment plan consisting of hormonal therapy followed by radiation treatment. Krakowski would also receive SpaceOAR Hydrogel, which protects the healthy rectal tissue directly behind the prostate from radiation.

Throughout nine weeks of cancer treatment, Krakowski never lost his sense of humor. Each time he sat in the waiting room before getting radiation, he drew cartoons about his experience to lift his own spirits – and the spirits of others.

"Because of COVID-19, everyone in the waiting room was in masks, sitting silently in different corners," Krakowski said.

But as he drew, people took interest and he invited them over



Determined to keep laughing, Andrzej Krakowski turned his battle with cancer into a book of cartoons. Krakowski, right, is seated with Dr. Ashwatha Narayana, chair of radiation medicine at Northern Westchester Hospital's Cancer Institute.

to take a look.

"An elderly woman whose face had looked so sad took a peek and laughed," he recalled. Another patient would always excitedly announce, "Rembrandt is here today!"

Krakowski self-published a book of his cartoons titled "Prostate Cancer with a Pinch of Humor (Sketches from the Treatment)" and gave out copies to others undergoing treatment.

"For the patients, even one

ounce of humor is priceless," he said.

On the last day of his radiation, his wife brought in cakes.

"We had a little party outside," Krakowski said. "Today I feel great. But the first day I didn't have to go for radiation, I felt kind of lost. I missed my pals."

The special bond he developed with his fellow patients, Narayana and his entire care team helped him feel at home at Northern Westchester Hospital.

"I could have gone to New York City for care, but I found my place 10 minutes from home," he said. "I liked these people; they liked me. We laughed from the moment I walked in. On a scale of 1 to 10, the care I received was a 12."

Narayana urges others to follow Krakowski's example and keep up with their health, despite the pandemic.

"Had Andrzej waited longer to get screened, there's a good chance the cancer would have gone into his bones," Narayana said. "Then, our approach would have been limited to trying to slow down the process. In other words, a delay in screening and treatment would have made a huge difference in the outcome."

Krakowski knows that, too, which is why he urges others not to wait to get the care they need.

"Medicine has progressed so far; where there's science, there's hope," he said. "So go to medical checkups. Have your screenings. Don't put anything off. Think of where you want to be one year from now. The choice is yours to make sure you get there."

To learn more about cancer care at Northern Westchester Hospital, visit nwh.northwell.edu/cancer-institute.

Examiner Sports

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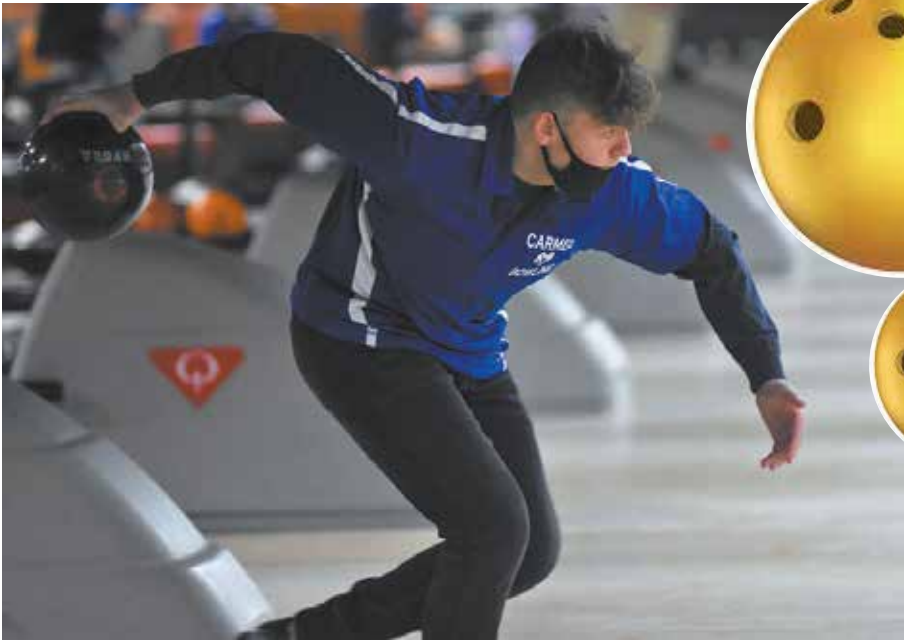


RAY GALLAGHER PHOTO

As is he were playing at the YMCA, Carmel junior Michael Youngman lofts one toward the pins as part of his 3-set 536 series, including a 188 high game, in the Rams' 7-0 sweep of rival Mahopac last Tuesday at Spins Bowl in Carmel where Carmel senior Spencer Dicembrino, as usual, was all business and paced the Rams with a match-high 581 3-game series and a match-high game of 203 (193.6 average). Mahopac seventh-grader Austin Arzaga equaled that high game (203) and fired a 567 3-game series in a solid varsity debut. The Mahopac girls answered in kind with an impressive 7-0 sweep of Carmel behind Gabby Marino's match-high 213 game (boys or girls), part of an impressive 525 3-game series... see Bowling Notebook

Sports

Bowling Notebook



Carmel Boys, Mahopac Girls Sweep Alleys

Carmel’s Ryan Terwilliger eyes up his pins in Rams’ 7-0 win over Mahopac last Tuesday.



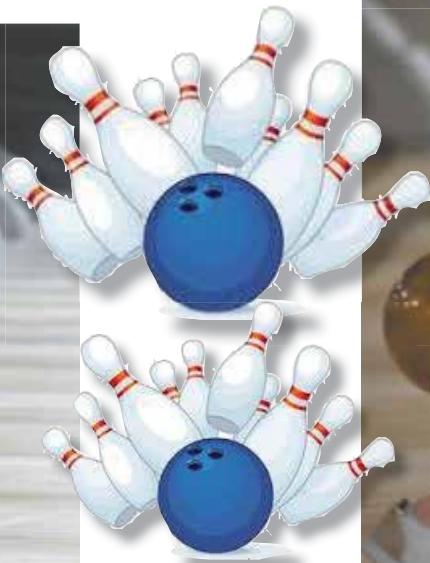
Carmel’s Spencer Dicembrino was wrecking pins in his 581 3-game series, including a match-high 203 in 7-0 win over Mahopac.



Mahopac’s Alyssa Arzaga spun a 470 3-game series, including a high of 160 in Indians’ 7-0 win over Carmel last Tuesday.



Mahopac’s Gabby Marino staged a 523 3-game series including a match-high 213 in Indians’ 7-0 win over Carmel last Tuesday.



Mahopac’s Krista Dietz fired a 461 3-game series, including a 177 in Indians’ 7-0 win over Carmel last Tuesday.

Castrataro Takes Three Events, All-Around in Mahopac Opener

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor@Directrays

Mahopac senior Jamison Castrataro stole the show at Odyssey Gymnastics last Wednesday in the host Indians' rout of Suffern and Ossining during Section 1's opening day on the gymnastics circuit, and the only event she didn't dominate (balance beam), her sister, Lexi, a seventh-grader, did.

Jamison won vault (9.3), uneven bars (9.0) and floor (9.4) while placing second on beam (9.0) to run away with the all-around competition (36.7). Lexi Castrataro, a promising upstart, staked her claim by winning beam (9.2) in her first varsity competition while taking third in vault (8.3), 6th on bars (7.15) and fifth on floor (8.75).

"It was a nice start to the season and a great team effort," Mahopac Coach Vinny Collins said of the Indians' 163.6 team score, far ahead of Suffern (149.7) and Ossining (86.15). "Jamison picked up where she finished last season and it was a solid effort all the way around. We had great efforts from Lexi and Kaitlyn (Palange), a couple of



Mahopac freshman Jadyn Suni competes in uneven bars last Wednesday in Indians' win over Suffern and Ossining.



Mahopac senior Rachel Romero competed on beam in Indians' win over Suffern and Ossining Wednesday.



Mahopac senior Jamison Castrataro tore it up on opening day to win the all-around.

our rookies, in their first high school competition. All of our veterans - Lia, Rachel, Kaylie Ann and Jade -- were solid throughout the entire competition and two more of our rookies - Cecylia, Jadyn - had competitive efforts as well."

Mahopac will continue to gear up for the three-headed monster that is Lakeland/Panas/Put Valley, the reigning sectional champion, on Feb.10 at Dynamic Gymnastics.



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2.Kaitlyn Palange	M	8.45	2.Ava Greenhut	S	8.45	2.Jamison Castrataro	M	9.00	2.Nina Mori	O	9.35
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4.Lia Graap	M	8.25	4.Nina Mori	O	7.80	4.Nina Mori	O	8.70	4.Alexa Ditore	S	9.05
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6.Nina Mori	O	8.00	6.Lexi Castrataro	M	7.15	6.Alyssa Miller	S	8.20	5.Alyssa Miller	S	8.75
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8.Alyssa Miller	S	7.80	8.Alexa Ditore	S	6.45	8.Ashley Lavastik	O	8.00	7.Lia Graap	M	8.35
9.Samantha Cooper	S	7.30	9.Jadyn Suni	M	6.40	9.Cruz Vernon	O	7.95	9.Adelina Iaquinto	S	8.20
10.Adelina Iaquinto	S	7.25	10.Cecylia Haberling	M	6.30	10.Carolena Thompson	O	7.80	10.Jadyn Suni	M	7.45
11.Jadyn Suni	M	6.85	11.Adelina Iaquinto	S	5.95	11.Alexa Ditore	S	7.70	11.Cecylia Haberling	M	7.15
12.Meagan Ryan	S	6.60	12.Kaylie Ann Hammond	M	5.90	12.Jadyn Suni	M	7.45	12.Kaylie Ann Hammond	M	6.45
12.Claudia Czygier	S	6.60	13.Casey McQuillen	S	3.70	13.Adelina Iaquinto	S	7.25	13.Casey McQuillen	S	5.80
14.Cecylia Haberling	M	6.50	14.Meagan Ryan	O	3.30	14.Casey McQuillen	S	7.20	14.Meagan Ryan	O	4.90
			15.Ariana Switnicki	O	3.00	15.Rachel Romero	M	7.10	15.Arianna Switnicki	O	4.55
						16.Jade Paciullo	M	6.85	16.Carolena Thompson	O	4.50
						17.Meagan Ryan	O	6.30			
						18.Arianna Switnicki	O	3.90			

Sports

Might Carmel Reinstate Legendary Grid Coach Cayea?

High-Risk Sports Green-Lit by Cuomo, Student Athletes Await Local Decisions



By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports
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All any professional ever wants to do is give an honest day's work and, in the end, go out on their own, dignified terms. Twenty-five years tenured, after feeling slighted by the Carmel School District in the winter of 2020, rumor has it legendary football Coach Todd Cayea could (emphasis on could) soon be reinstated as the lead dog on the Rams' sideline.

As usual, personnel decisions like this come with a two-sided gag order, so NOBODY would confirm or deny the rumors until an official announcement, but where there's smoke one can only assume there's fire, or the egg will never come off my face. Living in town, I hear things I simply can't ignore.

Forget the malarkey that went down in January of 2020, just two months after Cayea, a P.E. teacher and 2019 Section 1 Coach of

the Year at Carmel High, led the Rams to the Class AA title game in November of 2019. Because none of that matters now if the band should get back together, as hope would have it. It appears we might soon have a clean slate after lawyers on behalf of Cayea, and attorneys representing the school district, recently reconciled, leading to newly-minted Superintendent Mary-Margaret Zehr's potential sign-off on the impending return of Coach Cayea. The lead-up to a potential reinstatement was a long time coming for Cayea, his wife Debra (a newly elected Carmel school board member) and his kids. The Cayea name, as respected as any in Carmel, was disparaged during what some would call a witch hunt while the Carmel School District simultaneously dealt with a mass exodus -- from its beleaguered superintendent, Andy Irvin, to its beloved director of health, athletics and physical education, Susan Reid Dullea.

A once tight-knit, fun-loving district was suddenly and inexplicably down in the dumps,

but has since rebounded with typical vim and vigor. Teachers, coaches, families and administrators wondered about the direction of the Putnam County-based school district. Heck, even Mahopac felt bad for Carmel (as if!), but was happy to have the heat on the other side of the West Branch Reservoir for a change.

Getting Coach Cayea back on board would do wonders for morale, which received an additional boost with Friday's announcement from the governor's office that COVID-19-suspended high-risk sports have cleared their biggest hurdle. NYS Gov. Andrew Cuomo officially passed the torch to local health officials and school superintendents to reinstate sports like football, hoops and lax as of

Feb.1, fueling hope for some form of normalcy for student athletes across the state.

They could potentially celebrate Cayea and these other announcements at Our Lady of the Lakes Knights of Columbus Council when the district officially rolls this info out in the days ahead, probably upon conclusion of the Feb. 9 Carmel Board of Education meeting #Bravo! Unless the BOE meets sooner for an emergency session (out of necessity) to iron out the coaching staffs for what could be a wild, five-month ride through June, for schools across NYS.

No matter how you slice it, getting Coach Cayea back on the Carmel sidelines -- should it come to fruition -- is tantamount to Billy Martin returning to manage George Steinbrenner's Yankees: No matter how crazy it seems after all the bullshit, it just feels right...

I cannot imagine a scenario whereby high-ranking health department officials in the Section 1 counties of Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess and Rockland can't get on the same page with school superintendents regarding the installation of NYSPHSAA-sanctioned high-risk sports beginning Feb. 1. I mean, yeah, I CAN envision something going wrong, because so much has since COVID-19's affliction last March, but seriously, it's time to push on, time to burst the bubble and #LetThemPlay.

Under serious pressure from a handful of NYS politicians, outspoken coaches, undaunted parents and student athletes, NYS Gov. Andrew Cuomo finally relented last Friday and gave the go-ahead (passed the buck, actually) for high-risk sport to begin practicing on Feb.1., thus opening the door for winter sports, 'Phase 2' fall sports and spring sports.

Mahopac football Dominick DeMatteo has been on the front lines of this fight, advocating on behalf of student athletes across the state. Complacency is something he warned against and many in the know agree.

"It's a major first step," DeMatteo said. "I was speechless when I first heard it, but today I'm ready for 'Phase 2' (fall sports) to begin. That said, there's still much work to be done."

Local athletic directors backed Cuomo's decision and hoped NYSPHSAA and their supers would get on board.

"It's great news, obviously," Hen Hud A.D. Tom Baker said. "But we need to hear from the state athletic association. We need approval from them. We still need department of health approval from the county. Lots more we still need, but a huge hurdle here."

Yorktown A.D. Rob Barrett has expressed similar optimism, but understands we haven't cleared the final hurdle.

"Fingers crossed it isn't a smoke screen," said Barrett. "I'm optimistic that it will happen. I think we are ready for any protocols that are put in place and I think athletes are understanding and accepting of any protocols. I hope winter sports can go. My teams have been doing winter workouts safely, so I think they are ready to go."

Since the day he took over last summer, Mahopac A.D. Stephen Luciani, the former Pelham High A.D., has been hamstrung by COVID-19 limitations, so he's admittedly stoked for the return of all sports.

"This is what I've been waiting for," Luciani said. "I can't wait."

Tell your wives, tell your moms and dads... we'll see you in June when all is said and done because it's go-time, boys and girls. #Continue2Advocate because there are still many hoops to jump through.

Direct Rays



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTO

Rumor has it former Carmel grid Coach Todd Cayea could be bringing the band back together in early Feb. for a spring tour.



White Plains junior Mia Priore won the 1500 meter walk in 8:06.08, which would have been a school record if the race had been held indoors.

"The most difficult part of running winter track outside during the pandemic is the uncertainty of knowing whether the weather will cooperate and allow practices to go forth, and whether we will be able to have the meets that we have scheduled," White Plains Coach Fred Singleton said. "By far, the easier part is watching the athletes practice each day, knowing that they are pleased to be around their teammates and friends, doing what they love to do - run."



White Plains captain Jade Palmer-Johnson won the long jump at 13' in recent meet against New Rochelle.

Cool Beans!

Fox Lane, Somers Get Dose of 'New Normal': Indoor Track, Outdoors



Somers' Corryn Watt won the girls 55-meter hurdles Thursday at Somers.



Somers' Patrick Eames leaps a hurdle on his way to first place at Fox Lane.



Somers' Brian Luciano won the weight throw (pictured) and shot put in Thursday's meet at Fox Lane.



Somers' Liam Palmieri won the long jump with a 17' leap against host Fox Lane Thursday.



Somers' Lawrence Weinberg clears a hurdle Thursday at Fox Lane. ROB DIANTONIO PHOTOS

Boys 55-Meter Dash

1. Samuel Rivilis (Somers) - 7.19
2. Lawrence Weinberg (Somers) - 7.2
3. Jaden Abreu (Somers) - 7.45

Girls 55-Meter Dash

1. Eugenia Kaltsas (Fox Lane) - 7.5
2. Abby Charles (Fox Lane) - 7.98
3. Isabella Viscovich (Somers) - 8.13

Boys Triple Jump

1. Liam Palmieri (Somers) - 33-03
2. Jaden Abreu (Somers) - 30-03

Girls Triple Jump

1. Karen Sasakura (Fox Lane) - 26-07
2. Kaitlyn Krug (Somers) - 24-10

Boys 600 Meters

1. Hayden Klein (Somers) - 1:31.61
2. Arjuna Cabera (Fox Lane) - 1:34.42
3. Erick Morales (Fox Lane) - 1:37.44

Girls 600 Meters

1. Nieve Mahood (Somers) - 1:47.36
2. Lauren McCartin (Somers) - 1:51.42
3. Ella Kittredge (Somers) - 1:52.86

Boys 55-Meter Hurdles

1. Patrick Eames (Somers) - 8.23
2. Brian Halper (Somers) - 9.36

Girls 55-Meter Hurdles

1. Corryn Watt (Somers) - 11.11
2. Isabella Milojevic (Somers) - 11.46

Boys 300-Meter Dash

1. Brian Halper (Somers) - 40.65
2. Evan Newberg (Fox Lane) - 40.97
3. Lawrence Weinberg (Somers) - 41.17

Girls 300-Meter Dash

1. Isabella Viscovich (Somers) - 44.96
2. Abby Charles (Fox Lane) - 45.66
3. Maddie Broghammer (Fox Lane) - 49.68

Boys Shot Put

1. Brian Luciano (Somers) - 44-09 3/4
2. Samuel Rivilis (Somers) - 36-06

Girls Shot Put

1. Megan Spencer (Somers) - 31-04 1/2
2. Lauren D'Agostino (Somers) - 21-01

Boys 3,200 Meters

1. Bruce Lenes (Fox Lane) - 10:15.98
2. Harry Griff (Fox Lane) - 10:19.26
3. Noah Bender (Fox Lane) - 10:21.55

Girls 3,000 Meters

1. Victoria Olsen (Somers) - 11:54.05
2. Willie Cuono (Fox Lane) - 11:54.27
3. Rachel Akinla (Fox Lane) - 11:58.69

Boys Long Jump

1. Liam Palmieri (Somers) - 17-00
2. Nolan Kavanagh (Somers) - 14-11

Girls Long Jump

1. Maggie Broghammer (Fox Lane) - 13-01
2. Lexington Quigley (Somers) - 13-00

Girls 1,500-Meter Race Walk

1. Jordan Han (Somers) - 9:01
2. Avni Madhwesh (Somers) - 9:23

Boys Weight Throw

1. Brian Luciano (Somers) - 52-01 3/4
2. Samuel Rivilis (Somers) - 41-04 3/4

Girls Weight Throw

1. Megan Spencer (Somers) - 37-07
2. Lauren D'Agostino (Somers) - 17-03 1/2



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