



FREE

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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

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Village of Ossining Wins \$10M for Downtown Revitalization

By Rick Pezzullo

The Village of Ossining has been named one of two \$10 million Mid-Hudson region winners as part of New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

Ossining, along with the Town of Haverstraw in Rockland County, received the good news from Governor Kathy Hochul last week.

"Our downtowns are the hubs for communities to connect and thrive, and as a former local official I know personally how transformative this funding can be to boost quality of life," Hochul said. "Through our Downtown Revitalization Initiative, we will continue to give communities, like Ossining and Haverstraw, across the state the extra boost they need to recover from the pandemic and create more viable, livable, walkable downtowns."

Like past DRI rounds, each selected community will develop a strategic plan through a community-based planning process that articulates a vision for the revitalization of its downtown and identifies a list of signature projects that have the potential to transform the downtown and leverage further private and public investments. DRI funds will then be awarded for selected projects that have the greatest potential to jumpstart revitalization and realize the community's vision for the downtown. The DRI was launched in 2016.

Ossining's DRI will focus on the Waterfront District. With a downtown that is on both the State and the National Historic Registers, Ossining is looking to use existing assets, including a rich history, public amenities, engaged residents, and an innovative business community, to build on

previous successes and strengthen their downtown to have the greatest economic impact.

Previous successes cited by village officials include a mixed-use development with a waterfront park, promenade, beach, and fishing pier on a former brownfield; the Sing Sing Kill Greenway; and the ongoing Sing Sing Prison Museum project.

"This is an exciting day for Ossining, and a testament to the hard work of so many people here in the village," said Ossining Mayor Rika Levin. "Thank you, Governor Hochul, for delivering this \$10 million commitment to our community. We look forward to the great projects and progress that this funding supports."

"Today's announcement is a win for Ossining, and I couldn't be more excited to share the news with Governor Hochul," said Assemblywoman Sandy Galef, who represents Ossining. "The Downtown Revitalization Initiative has been helping municipalities throughout the region jumpstart economic growth, and I'm thrilled to



Ossining Mayor Rika Levin (right) poses next to Gov. Kathy Hochul.

see the projects and improvements that result from this \$10 million award come to fruition. Congratulations!"

State Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick (D-Rockland/Westchester), who also

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Peekskill Council, Residents Still Split on Pot Shops

By Rick Pezzullo

With the deadline looming for municipalities to make a decision, the Peekskill Common Council and several outspoken residents remain split on allowing retail cannabis dispensaries and/or consumption sites to set up shop in the city.

In September, the majority of the Council informally expressed support for opting into the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA) enacted in New York State on March 31 that legalized pot and gave the green light for dispensaries and lounges.

However, on Nov. 22, the Council held a public hearing on potentially opting out of the law, which all municipalities must do by Dec. 31 or else they are automatically opted in. Once opted in, municipalities can't reverse course, but officials can pass legislation that governs the hours and location of the businesses.

"I believe in this Council and administration that they will do what is best

for this community," said outgoing Mayor Andre Rainey, who has been in favor of opting in.

Tina Volz-Bongar, who noted she lost a son at the age of 36 in a drug treatment program, wholeheartedly urged the Council to opt-in during last week's hearing.

"This is a wonderful state law. I think this is really an opportunity to see Peekskill grow in a very creative way," she said. "The more this is regulated the better off our children really are."

Lisa Hoffman also was squarely behind Peekskill embracing dispensaries and lounges.

"The refer madness that is happening in this room is horrifying," she remarked. "I don't see why people are so hateful towards a plant. This city deserves to have what the best cannabis has to offer. Weed is not evil. Dispensaries are not evil. Consumption lounges are not evil. Misinformation is really dangerous."

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Fitz Like a Glove!

Somers Suits up for NYSPHSAA Title Bid



Somers QB Matt Fitzsimons basks in the glory of the Tuskers' 14-7 NYSPHSAA Class A semifinal win over Rye last Friday night at Middletown High School where the state-ranked (No.7) Tuskers advanced to their second NYS title tilt since winning it all in 2016... see Sports Pull-Out

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represents Ossining, extended his congratulations as well.

"This is a historic day for Ossining, for 10 million reasons. Today's announcement by Governor Kathy Hochul that Ossining has been selected as one of the two winners of this year's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) in the Hudson Valley is an outstanding celebration of Ossining's vibrant downtown, and a huge vote of confidence in the village's bright future," he stated. "I'm beyond excited for the village, and look forward to continuing to work with Mayor Rika Levin and other local leaders to sustain New York's investment in Ossining."

Led by the Department of State, an

interagency team of state experts will now work with Ossining officials to begin the process of developing a Strategic Investment Plan to revitalize the downtown with up to \$300,000 in planning funds from the \$10 million DRI grant. Local Planning Committees made up of municipal representatives, community leaders, and other stakeholders will lead the effort, supported by a team of private sector experts and state planners. Plans for the DRI's fifth round will be complete in 2022.

Ossining and Haverstraw join the cities of Peekskill, Middletown, Kingston and New Rochelle, which were the Mid-Hudson Region's winners in the first four DRI rounds, respectively.

Yorktown Approves Reuse of Former Kia Dealership

By Rick Pezzullo

The Yorktown Planning Board approved an application last week to convert the former Taconic Kia dealership on Route 202 into a school bus dealership.

Bird Bus Sales & Service asked the Planning Board to approve the reuse of the 2.71-acre property at 3805 Crompond Road. Founded in 2010, Bird Bus sells, services, and supplies parts of Blue Bird Buses. The company supplies the Blue Bird brand to school districts and contractors locally and nationally.

"As our local and national economies

continue to evolve, we are challenged to find new uses for empty retail properties," said Supervisor Matt Slater. "Bird Bus's application is a logical use for a site that already serviced and stored vehicles. We are excited to welcome a company with a national profile that has demonstrated a decade of growth. We are excited to witness Bird Bus's future success."

According to documents filed with the Planning Board, Bird Bus will store 48 new vehicles on the site. All bus storage will be located on a paved surface that is screened. The property will also have 18 customer parking spots and 10 employee spaces.



Making History



Yorktown High School freshman Sharik Bose recently made history as the youngest scout in Yorktown to achieve the ranking of Eagle Scout. Congratulating Bose were Councilman Vishnu Patel and Supervisor Matt Slater.

Peekskill Council, Residents Still Split on Pot Shops

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Others implored the Council to pump the brakes on opening up the city to such businesses.

"All money isn't good money," said Leesther Brown, who ran for Council this year and described herself as a former drug addict. "Don't think it's not a gateway drug. It is. We already have a problem with other drugs with our youth."

John Donahue, a retired police officer and local veteran leader, said even though dispensaries and lounges would be restricted to customers 21 and over, employees can be as young as 18.

"It's stupid to get into marijuana," he said. "I've been at accidents many times where people have died from marijuana."

The Council will be discussing the issue at its next Committee of the Whole meeting on Dec. 6 and are expected to take a vote on Dec. 13.

After the hearing was closed, councilwomen Vanessa Agudelo and Kathie Talbot reiterated their stances that Peekskill should opt-in.

"The legalization of marijuana is here to stay," said Agudelo, who maintained it was "hypocritical" for any councilmembers to support liquor stores but not cannabis dispensaries and lounges.

"Staying opted in gives us more options," contended Talbot, who revealed she smoked

marijuana in the past and has visited dispensaries in other states. "In the end we will find this will be more normalized."

Councilman Dwight Douglas has been strongly in favor of opting in, but refrained last week from giving his current opinion.

Meanwhile, councilwoman and mayor-elect Vivian McKenzie stressed the Council should opt-out until the state unveils all the rules and regulations governing cannabis businesses.

"I've seen what marijuana has done. I have seen it take people down to the ground," she said. "If this is going to be big business for some conglomerate how is that going to help our community?"

Any tax revenues on local sales of marijuana and other products would be distributed as a 9% excise tax to the state, 3% to the municipality and 1% to the county.

Councilwoman Patricia Riley, who has argued Peekskill should join the growing list of municipalities in Westchester that have opted out, and Councilman Ramon Fernandez did not reveal what side they are on last week.

In the spring, the city sent an online survey to residents seeking input. As of September 8, the city revealed there were 1,191 responses, with 71% supporting dispensaries and 65% supporting café lounges.

The Beginning of Hanukkah



Yorktown Town Board members and other town officials took part in a menorah lighting Sunday at Veterans Field in Yorktown.

New COVID-19 Variant Has Officials Wary, Urge Health Precautions

By Martin Wilbur

Gov. Kathy Hochul said Monday it is only a matter of time before the new COVID-19 variant Omicron appears in New York State but was optimistic that if residents take common-sense precautions, they will be protected.

Last Friday, Hochul declared a state of emergency shortly after it was reported that the new variant likely originated in southern Africa and has been confirmed in about 15 countries as of Monday afternoon, including Canada and the province of Ontario, which borders western New York State.

"We are fully monitoring this," Hochul said during her Nov. 29 briefing. "We have some ways to defend against this. We're not defenseless like we were one year ago and we all know what exactly has to happen."

Dr. Kirsten St. George, director of virology and chief of the Laboratory of Viral Diseases at the state's Wadsworth Center, said Monday afternoon that there have been no cases of the Omicron variant found yet in New York State or the United States. Virologists at labs around the country and internationally are monitoring the progression of the variant, she said.

However, the governor said that will almost certainly change in the coming days or weeks.

Hochul urged any residents who have not taken the COVID-19 vaccine to do so as quickly as possible, to get a booster shot if they are eligible, which would be at least six months after completing the initial series, wear masks inside public spaces, social distance when possible and wash hands frequently.

The state of emergency enables health officials to limit elective surgeries at hospitals with diminishing patient capacity because of a surge in COVID-19 cases, helps the state acquire more tests and makes sure that nursing homes have enough staff this winter. Hochul said she would call on the National Guard to assist at nursing homes as well as tapping foreign countries and nursing and medical schools to provide personnel, if necessary.

Hospital capacity, which is diminishing to worrisome levels in some areas of upstate New York as active cases surge, is one of the chief concerns for the governor. Capacity stands at 9 percent in the Finger Lakes region and 11 percent in Western New York, she said.

By comparison, the Mid Hudson region, which includes Westchester and Putnam counties, has the greatest capacity at 31 percent, followed closely by New York City (28 percent) and Long Island (27 percent).

"This is what keeps me up at night, making sure our hospitals have the capacity to handle the influx of patients, whether it's from COVID or otherwise," Hochul said.

She expects a further spike in cases and hospitalizations in about 10 days resulting from family gatherings over the Thanksgiving weekend.

High vaccination rates seem to correlate to comfortable hospital capacity throughout the state, Hochul added.

As of Monday, there were 2,829 COVID-19-related hospitalizations statewide, with another 41 fatalities recorded on Sunday.

While the statewide vaccination rate of 90.3 percent – the percentage of adults 18 and up who have received at least one dose of one of the three vaccines – is strong, there are upstate counties that have rates in the 50s and 60s.

Meanwhile, Westchester, at a 92.2 percent vaccination rate, has the fourth highest percentage in New York, and is one of only four counties that have surpassed 90 percent. The others are Queens (97.3), Nassau County (96.6) and Manhattan (94.4). Putnam County stands at 86.9 percent.

County Executive George Latimer said while there are still many unknowns regarding the Omicron variant, at this point a strong vaccination rate helps to keep most

people out of the hospital and prevents them from dying.

"Vaccinations are the key to fighting this COVID virus," Latimer said. "That is, it doesn't mean we rest on our laurels, but it does mean we understand where we are in the degree of urgency compared to other places and it is the urgency that leads us to take additional action."

Despite active cases in the county now reaching 2,127 as of last Thursday, just over three-quarters from the high of about 2,800 cases in August, COVID-19-related hospitalizations as of Monday stood at 52, less than half the summer high of 108.


Additionally, there has been an average of just one fatality a week over the past three

weeks.

County Health Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler listed a number of concerns about the latest variant that will likely be answered over the next few weeks. Key questions include whether Omicron is more transmissible than the Delta variant, will it evade the vaccines and how accurately will it be picked up by the current COVID tests?

Social distancing, mask wearing in large gatherings and conscientious hand washing should be followed, Amler said.


"I think the best thing that we can do besides vaccines is the things that we've been doing for the last two years," she said.



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Pleasantville Music Festival a Go for Next July

By Abby Luby

When world class live rock 'n' roll shakes the ground at the Pleasantville Music Festival next summer, audiences will enthusiastically embrace an event they have missed the past two years.

Last week the Pleasantville Village Board approved a resolution authorizing the festival to be held on Saturday, July 9, 2022, at Parkway Field on Marble Avenue. The last festival was held in 2019, which at the time marked 15 consecutive years of the village's signature event of day-long musical performances.

Due to COVID-19 in 2020 and crowd restrictions last year, the festival had to be canceled.

"As you all know we were COVID-canceled this year, but we're back," said Pleasantville Mayor Peter Scherer after the board unanimously voted in favor last week of holding the festival.

Festival Executive Director Bruce Figler said he expects to receive commitments from bands over the next few months and the final lineup will be announced in the spring.

"Currently we have offers out and we are getting closer to (deciding on) various bands," said Figler.

Since many groups had to cancel concerts booked over the last two years, some have had time to book other dates.

"Those bands are way ahead of the booking curve," Figler explained. "But most bands will not be booked until next month, January at the latest."

Figler noted that some are still on the fence about touring and are concerned that their members might get sick.

The pandemic still looms as the key litmus test when deciding on festival policies. Figler said all rules are subject to change.

"Nothing is set in stone," he said. "As of today, we are not going to insist on mask-wearing at an outdoor event, but it is possible that if things start ticking up in the community, we might reconsider."

At this point, festival organizers are considering proof of a COVID vaccination required for entry and to offer free COVID-19 tests to those not vaccinated.

"We are not closing you out if you are not vaccinated," Figler said. "We will offer the option of getting a rapid test. It keeps the festival inclusive to everyone. We will also be outside where transmittal is much less frequent."

Some prior festivals, including the 2017 renewal, attracted some 5,000 music fans. Figler said there are currently no plans to cap the number of guests; however, that could be a possibility depending on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by the time next summer arrives.

Last year the state revised crowd guidelines that allowed for 33 percent capacity. After police officers, volunteers, vendors, the stage crew and musicians, the number of paying patrons wouldn't have made holding the festival financially feasible.

As usual, festival vendors will sell an array of products and offer food and drink. "Previous



The Psychedelic Furs performing at the 2018 Pleasantville Music Festival. The festival is scheduled to return for the first time in three years on July 9.

vendors get first dibs," said Figler. "We have X amount of space and it depends on what product they are selling for those who want to come. We may ask them to space out a little."

The hours will remain the same as past festivals, from noon to about 9:30 p.m. Eighteen bands will be heard on three stages – the Chill Tent and the Party Tent, while headliner bands will play on the Main Stage. Headliners at recent festivals have included Soul Asylum, The Psychedelic Furs, Blues Traveler and the Gin Blossoms.

Next year there will once again be a Battle of the Bands competition, with the winner

performing at the festival as well.

"As the day goes on the performer names become bigger and more famous as a general rule," Figler said.

Ticket prices have not been decided for the 2022 festival. Figler said they are considering charging slightly more than in prior years. Previously, tickets were \$35 each through Ticketmaster and the Pleasantville Recreation Department. By the end of April, prices rose to \$40 and later \$45. Tickets at the door on the day of the event cost \$55.

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Christmas Tree Shortage Leaves Church With None to Sell

By Martin Wilbur

A Chappaqua church has been forced to cancel its annual Christmas tree sale after the company it typically receives its supply from and a backup vendor were unable to deliver the stock.

For the first time since starting its tree sale about 20 years ago, the First Congregational Church of Chappaqua will be without inventory this holiday season, said Rev. Dr. Martha Jacobs, the senior minister at the Orchard Ridge Road church.

Not only will the sale's cancellation likely put a crimp into the plans of many local families who stop by First Congregational starting around Thanksgiving weekend to pick out their own tree, but the church lost one key revenue source, Jacobs said. On average, the church is able to raise about \$10,000 each holiday season, much of it used toward contributing to causes such as helping the needy.

"We do all we can not just to keep the doors open, but to provide to others," Jacobs said.

There have been many problems that have been caused directly or otherwise by the pandemic during the past 19 months, a shortage of Christmas trees has been one added hurdle. Reports of shortages of real trees have surfaced across the United States as supply chain disruptions continue to plague domestic and international commerce.

Combined with stronger consumer spending and families holding a greater number of traditional holiday gatherings this year, the demand for trees have spiked, according to a

Nov. 16 report by CNBC.

First Congregational Church placed its order with its usual supplier in Vermont in July, but was told in early October that the order could not be filled this year. Jacobs said the church then partnered with Rosedale Nursery in Hawthorne, which they have worked with on other occasions in the past, to find a new company to get their trees.

With the help of Rosedale, First Congregational located Cedar Grove Christmas Trees in New Jersey and placed an order for \$14,800, which covered the price for the trees and nearly \$4,000 in shipping costs, Jacobs said. They were told to expect the shipment by about Nov. 15, but it never arrived, which placed the scheduled Nov. 20 start of the tree sale in doubt.

When the church tried to contact the company to check up on the status of the delivery, they either received no answer or were given erroneous information, leading Jacobs and others to believe they may have been scammed.

"(We were told) the trees were somewhere in Nova Scotia and the guy who's our delivery (person), who watches over our deliveries quit, so we don't know how to reach the truck. He's somewhere but he will eventually show up," Jacobs said.

Jacobs said she contacted New Castle police to file a report last week. Last Friday, she received an e-mail from Cedar Grove confirming that the trees would not be coming.

Police helped the church get in contact with a company representative, who assured First

Congregational will receive a refund, she said.

"It is unfortunate because it is what we use to help other people," Jacobs said. "We still have wreaths to sell, but we do not have trees."

Wreaths will be sold while supplies last following Sunday services and on Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. when the church office is open.

The Christmas tree shortage will also cause First Congregational to forgo a tree for its own property this year, Jacobs said.

"We're just going to have a holiday decorated something or other," she said.



Look Who's in Town!

The Westchester Parks Foundation and the Westchester County Parks Department celebrated the opening of Westchester's Winter Wonderland Drive-Thru Holiday Light Extravaganza at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla last Friday, with Santa coming in for the event. Winter Wonderland is being presented every night through Jan. 2 except for Dec. 24 and 25.



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Mt. Pleasant Passes Commercial Vehicle Law on Roads Near Amazon Site

By Martin Wilbur

The Mount Pleasant Town Board unanimously approved a commercial vehicle restriction on three key roads that are used as a shortcut, but many residents are also pressing for the town to consider closing off those streets to through traffic.

Town officials agreed last Tuesday night that vehicles of at least 8,000 pounds will be prohibited on Belmont Road, Pythian Avenue and West Stevens Avenue, residential streets that experience heavy traffic volume in large part because they serve as a connection between Bradhurst Avenue and Route 9A.

Concerns were raised by residents of the three roads and nearby side streets shortly after it was learned that the new 153,000-square-foot warehouse and distribution center currently under construction on Route 9A would be an Amazon operation. While those roads have been used as a shortcut by motorists for years, residents fear as development increases, the situation will become unbearable.

In addition to the Amazon distribution center, which is scheduled for completion in the second half of 2023, expansions at the Westchester Medical Center campus and the medical building at 19 Bradhurst Ave. have already caused an impact, according to some residents last week.

Then there is the proposed North 60 project on the Grasslands campus that could add up to three million square feet of medical and science-related uses along with retail space and a hotel.

"By cutting off Belmont, by cutting of Pythian and by cutting off Stevens, you can't get through the area," Town Engineer David Smyth explained. "So it eliminates trucks going through those areas."

Along with the weight restrictions, the town will also install signage at key points along the streets, he said.

While most residents who spoke at the Nov. 23 public hearing were appreciative of officials' efforts, they also urged the Town Board to weigh the closures of those three streets to through traffic except for local residents and deliveries.

Pythian Avenue resident Katherine Ciano said that the weight restriction would only eliminate about 20 percent of the traffic from the streets based on the types of vehicles that were recorded in the town's recent traffic study. Furthermore, vans used by Amazon are well under the 8,000-pound limit as are many other delivery vehicles, she said.

"Our street is not an extension of (Route) 9A or Bradhurst (Avenue), nor is it a service road to a highway," Ciano said. "Please, this needs to stop."

Shutting off the streets would redirect much of the traffic onto Route 9A and

Bradhurst (which is Route 100), roads that motorists should be using anyway, which would add only a few minutes to their drive, said Theresa Gray, another Pythian Avenue resident.

"Drivers choose to take the path of least resistance and the shortest route will always continue to be used, which at the moment is Joyce, Pythian and Belmont," Gray told Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi and the councilmembers.

Others said there are numerous school bus stops along those streets, and it has become increasingly common for drivers to ignore the required stops for buses that are picking up or discharging children.

Mark Zulli, who also lives on Pythian Avenue, said residents face dangers not just because of the volume but because of speeding and other driving infractions by motorists. When one of his three sons was younger, he was nearly struck by a car when crossing the street to board his school bus.

"If you don't take the steps to safeguard the residents of this area, your constituents, then I will be back here to blame some of you should there be a tragedy due to inadequate safety measures," Zulli said.

Philip Place resident Richard Wisniewski said a key problem has been that the review of various developments and impact on traffic have been looked in a "disjointed manner" rather than as a regional issue. That has happened again with the ongoing

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for North 60 and more attention should have been paid to the Amazon facility traffic.

"If you're going to do the study, Mr. Fulgenzi, do it right and do it in a holistic way with all that's been going on in the southwest corner of Mount Pleasant, which is really the issue," Wisniewski said.

Fulgenzi repeatedly said the weight restrictions and signage is just the first step in trying to find solutions.

"We're going to do this right," Fulgenzi said. "Not doing this right would be to throw up signs and walk away. That's not what we're doing here. Like I said before, this is the first step."

Smyth said the town will study what effect closing Belmont, Pythian and West Stevens would have on other area roads. He said the state Environmental Quality Review Act process does not permit the town to take an unsafe condition and shift it to another area.

"Our task is to take the traffic, analyze the traffic, notify the state that we are going to be impacted by this traffic to see how much the level of service has changed to see how the operations are," Smyth said.

As part of the Amazon warehouse and distribution center, the Planning Board required a traffic signal to be installed at Belmont Road and Route 9A.

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Jones Highlights Build Back Better's Wins for Westchester

By Bailey Hosfelt

In March, Rep. Mondaire Jones (D-White Plains) stood outside Greenburgh resident Ayeshah Parker's family home and promised to fight to lift the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction cap from \$10,000.

Nine months later, Jones, alongside elected officials and community leaders, held a press conference in the same location to highlight key victories of the Build Back Better Act, which recently passed in Congress.

Among those victories were increasing the SALT deduction cap to \$80,000, universal childcare and preschool and an extension of the expanded Child Tax Credit.

"By increasing the SALT deduction to \$80,000 for the years 2021 through 2030, this bill will provide much-needed tax relief to many thousands of families in my district, where we pay the highest property taxes in the entire nation," Jones said. "The Build Back Better Act will invest in a truly universal childcare program for the first time in our nation's history, catching us up to the rest of the developed world."

Together, Jones said, these programs will be transformative for Westchester families, many of whom have struggled throughout the pandemic due to high costs of living, unmet childcare needs and challenges reentering the workforce.

Under the Build Back Better Act, low-income and some middle-income families will qualify for high-quality childcare for



TALIA MARCUS PHOTO

Congressman Mondaire Jones, center, speaks to Westchester County Executive George Latimer. They were joined by Assemblyman Tom Abinanti, left.

free. In New York, families making under \$250,000 as a household will not pay more than 7 percent of their yearly income on childcare.

"By passing this bill, which will ensure that high-quality childcare is affordable

for every family in America, I'm proud to be providing a lifeline for hundreds of thousands of families," Jones said.

Passing the Build Back Better Act represents a once-in-a-generation socioeconomic investment in the American people, he added. With the bill now in the Senate, Jones said he will work alongside his Democratic colleagues and Majority Leader Chuck Schumer to ensure it passes and is implemented expeditiously.

"When we have a nationwide crisis, we need Congress to respond," said Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville), who represents Greenburgh and Mount Pleasant. "And they did, they came through when we needed them most."

Westchester County Executive George Latimer thanked Jones for his leadership in getting the Build Back Better Act passed in the House and highlighted how the latest move to raise the SALT deduction cap will have a positive impact on Westchester's working middle-class homeowners.

"When you look at all the different programs that are involved in this bill, you see not just social ideas being implemented," Latimer said. "You see the kind of economic development that will make this country's economy grow coming out of COVID. This bill and the policies within it are intelligent economic development."

White Plains Teachers' Association President Kara McCormick-Lyons underscored that quality childcare

and universal pre-K are both a win for Westchester's children and families.

"They provide opportunities for our children to develop the academic skills that they need to thrive throughout their entire lives," McCormick-Lyons said. "Now families can breathe a sigh of relief knowing that their children will have access to these vital steps toward a secure and bright future thanks to the Build Back Better Act."

Parker, who is raising her four young children in the same house where her husband's grandparents lived 50 years ago, shared how crucial the Child Tax Credit was in supporting her family.

"As much joy as having a large family brings, it's a constant negotiation of how are we going to make sure that we can provide the quality of life that we know our kids deserve while remaining in a community that we feel very strongly that we belong in," Parker said. "The Child Tax Credit hands down was the only way that we were able to place our youngest child in day care this year."

Board of Legislators Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky (D-Dobbs Ferry) said Congress passing the Build Back Better Act, along with the bipartisan infrastructure bill, is crucial for not only families countywide but also the nation.

"These are going to be the pieces of transformational legislation that we need to become competitive in the world economy," Shimsky said.

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Obituaries

Marion Ruddy

Marion T. Ruddy, a lifelong Pleasantville resident, died peacefully of natural causes on Nov. 19.

Marion was born Jan. 3, 1937, in the house which her father built in Pleasantville. Her parents, Placido and Catherine Cundari, immigrated to America around 1920. Marion was the youngest of four children; her older siblings, Rose, Angelina and Charles, all predeceased her.

Marion graduated from Pleasantville High School in 1954 and was most proud of being captain of the cheerleading team during her time in school. Upon graduation, Marion began work at AT&T in White Plains in the secretarial pool. There she met her future husband, Francis ("Rex") Ruddy from New York City. The couple married in 1957. After living briefly in White Plains, the couple moved back to the family home in Pleasantville.

It was there that Marion, by then a fulltime homemaker, would tell you that her greatest accomplishment was being a mom, raising her two sons, Michael and Thomas. Marion watched and agonized over her two sons playing football at Westlake High School and lived through all the injuries and doctor visits. She epitomized being a "football mom."

Her husband, Rex, died at the young age of 59 in 1992. Marion then decided to embark on the next phase of her life and reentered the workforce. She worked at Holy Innocents



Marion Ruddy

Church in Pleasantville as a receptionist and later as an administrative assistant at the Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA), a residential treatment facility for troubled youths. Marion retired from JCCA around 2005.

Up until her last days, Marion was an avid and passionate Yankee fan. Frugal beyond compare, that didn't stop her from purchasing the cable sports package so she could watch EVERY Yankee game. She was

very opinionated on which players she liked and didn't like and would make her opinions known to anybody who would listen, especially her granddaughter, another avid Yankee fan.

Marion loved being kept apprised of all the academic, athletic and theatrical developments of her six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Her cheerleading roots were passed down to two granddaughters and now a great-granddaughter. She loved getting pictures on her cell phone so she could share with friends.

Ante Predovan

If the legend is to be believed, in the late 1960s a 16-year-old Ante "Tony" Predovan was sent out into the world with nothing but the shirt on his back and a whole leg of prsut (Croatian cured ham) slung over his shoulder on a rope. He left behind his parents' small sheep farm and likely limited prospects in communist Yugoslavia. He crossed an ocean, settled in a new land and over the next 50 years built a life for himself that would have been nearly impossible to imagine in the single-room farmhouse he grew up in.

He was blessed with other gifts that served him well along the way. With a herculean (and perhaps at times stubborn) work ethic, he forged his own successful construction business. He used his folksy but undeniable charm to woo a devoted clientele and a beautiful young woman, Ann Cucurullo. They wed in 1980, forming a loving partnership that would last the rest of his life.

With his own bare hands of steel, he built the house in Hawthorne, where together they made a home for their five children and at various times their spouses, four grandchildren and many other relatives. It burst with loved ones on Christmas, Thanksgiving and countless Cucurullo clan birthdays, where with his warm smile,

Marion is survived by her two sons, Michael and Thomas; their respective spouses, Jennifer and Patricia; six grandchildren (in order of age), Caitlin, Christian, James, Callista, Elizabeth and Lucas; and six great-grandchildren (in order of age), Madison, Sophia, Mason, Thomas, McKinley and Luna.

Marion's life will be celebrated at Beecher Flocks Funeral Home in Pleasantville on Dec. 1 and at mass at Holy Innocents Church on Dec. 2.

Tony surveyed everything from the head of the dining room table. An endless Italian feast laid out for all by Ann and her sisters, giving way to Crazy Eights or Po-Ke-No or LCR for the real gamblers – and a well-earned nap on the couch for Tata.

He was born on June 5, 1951, and departed this life surrounded by his family on Nov. 21. He is survived by his wife Ann and children and their spouses John (Rebecca), Mary Brady (Dan), Anna Gavin (Brian), Ante Jr. (Lauren) and Michael. Also surviving their Dido are his true favorites, grandchildren Brian Brady, Eleanor Brady, Naomi Predovan and William Predovan, who wish him laku noc (good night) in heaven. Tony is also survived by his brothers, Josip, Marijan and Ivo, and a large extended family of in-laws, whose homes, nearly every one, he improved at some point or other and for whom Easter will never be the same.

The family received friends at Beecher Flocks Funeral Home in Pleasantville on Nov. 23 from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 24 at 10 a.m. at Holy Rosary Church in Hawthorne. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.





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Yorktown Remembers Edwin Pell

The Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission (YHPC) and anyone in town who cares about Yorktown's history suffered a great loss last summer when longtime resident and tireless preservationist Dr. Edwin Pell died at 90 years old at his summer home in Deer Isle, Maine.

Sporting an impressive beard and long gray hair, Pell cut a striking figure. He was omnipresent at town events – especially those of an historic nature where he often appeared in period costume. He was a frequent and vocal presence at meetings with his worries about the Hyatt Cemetery on Route 132, and his concerns over the fate of the Hyatt House on Route 6. The town even honored him with a 2018 proclamation, citing his determination and refusal to back down on issues he felt were important to preserving the character of our community.

He lived simply and his correspondence with people usually concluded with the phrase "no e-mail no computer no telephone" after his signature, yet he managed to remain in contact with so many.

His headquarters during most days was the John C. Hart Memorial Library, where he utilized in-house computers as well as library Wi-Fi. His messages were usually signed "Ed Pell, PhD." and, his credentials were impressive, including a master's degree from Ohio State and a doctorate from the University of Connecticut.

Pell was born on a dairy farm in Somers, Conn. on Nov. 27, 1930, at the beginning of the Great Depression. After graduation from college and graduate school, he worked as a science teacher in Scarsdale and later as an art teacher at an outreach school in Manhattan.



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Guest Column

In Defense of Public Servants Who Believe in the Common Good

By Nicole Asquith

Recently, at a meeting of my book club, I found myself making an impassioned defense of politicians.

Who would have thought? But here's the thing, when I woke up the next morning, I realized I really meant it.

The conversation was sparked when a couple of the women in my book club said, in passing, that they believed all politicians were corrupt liars. Of course, they are hardly alone. This has become a commonly-held view.

Having now served on the Pleasantville Village Board for nearly five years, I have gained a different perspective, and I want to share this perspective with you because I think what we believe about politicians – individually and in the aggregate – really matters.

I have discovered that, on a very local level, where holding public office is a

glorified version of volunteerism, people who do this, like the mayor of Pleasantville, Peter Scherer, who has worked tirelessly for our village for many years now, are involved in public service, an expression that seems almost quaint nowadays, but which I think is terribly important. (Other related expressions, such as the public good, are also worth holding onto.)

If I had to characterize the type of people that I see pursuing public office on the local level, I would say we tend to be nerds, of one sort or another. We're the kind of people who enjoy learning where our water comes from, what it takes to pave the roads and fix the potholes and thinking about how to fix a parking problem, make the roads safer for pedestrians or protect the local environment.

As people who enjoy this kind of work, we do get something out of it for ourselves. In my case, having abandoned an academic career when I moved to New York with

my family, I have enjoyed learning how government works and finding new problems to occupy my brain. And I like meeting with my fellow policy nerds on a regular basis.

This experience has also taught me more about the individuals who represent us at higher levels of government. To my book club friends, I wanted to say what about Mondaire Jones? Peter Harcham? George Latimer? But then I realized, most people don't know very much about the people who represent us.

That was true of me for much of my life. We're busy. We learn the bare minimum to make decisions at the polls. How many of my friends, I wondered, know, for example, that our congressman is a guy who was raised by a single mother in Spring Valley; who went to Stanford and Harvard law; that he's one of the two first openly gay Black members of Congress? Or that he's one of the people who helped pass the Build Back Better Act in the House of Representatives, which includes the most important legislation on fighting climate change to date?

lies shamelessly on a regular basis, we can dismiss this behavior as typical of all politicians, rather than seeing it for what it is – a betrayal of the public trust.

Moreover, if we think all politicians are bad guys, who's going to want to become a politician? Who's going to want their children to become politicians?

My daughter and her friends have recently become obsessed with "Hamilton." I'm delighted that "Hamilton" has given them the opportunity to learn about American history and the ideals on which this country was founded – ideals that we continue to strive to live up to. I want her and others like her to feel invested in the defense of the American experiment in democracy and I want them to be the next leaders.

I want some of my friends' kids who are smart as heck and thoughtful and kind to be the next generation of politicians, because goodness knows there will be many problems to solve, and we want the best to be the representatives of the people.

To make that possible, we have to teach our children about government and to teach them that public service is a worthy undertaking. To do that, we will need to believe that, at the very least, it is possible to be an honest politician.

Nicole Asquith was elected to the Pleasantville Village Board in 2017.

Letter to the Editor

Diminishing Number of Debates in Local Political Races Shortchanges Public

There was a time when political candidates were willing to face the voters in forums, no matter the party they belong to. It was expected of them. How else would people know what their platforms were, what made them different from the other candidates running for the same position?

Now it is impossible to get both parties on the dais together. Why is that? Are they afraid of the questions that might be asked of them, that they might not appeal to voters as well as their opponent does?

As the situation stands, we, the voters, don't have a choice but to vote the party line. We really know very little about the

candidates who are running, so we play it safe and stay with the party we are registered with, even though we might not like all the candidates. Alas, "crossover voting" seems to be a thing of the past, and that is sad.

If we were educated by both parties, we could choose the person who seems best suited for the position. Isn't that how democracy should work?

Phyllis Hoenig
Vice President
League of Women Voters, Putnam County

Calendar Submissions

We're happy to help spread the word about your community event. Please submit your information at least three weeks prior to your event and include the words "Calendar Submission" in your email subject line. Entries should be sent to Abby Luby at aluby@theexaminernews.com.com.

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Column

This Year We Ask for Subscriptions to Examiner+ Digital Newsmagazine

By Adam Stone

Inside the suffocatingly crowded work session meeting room in Peekskill City Hall, a fellow weekly newspaper reporter plopped down next to me on the comfortable seat where my jacket was sitting. He motions to the narrow doorway where a daily newspaper reporter, radio journalist and TV broadcaster are mingling, showing me we had additional media people gathering.

"We've got company," he snorted.

A controversial land deal was on the agenda, generating a little extra attention, but it wasn't an especially remarkable sight. It was just a random Tuesday night in November in the early 2000s.

It was a good three years before social media companies began to unleash a final industry-crushing sledgehammer to an already tired business model. It was a time when a collection of several competing reporters at one municipal meeting was an unremarkable image, although not as ordinary as it would have been a decade earlier. A time when a half-dozen full-time news journalists might be on the payroll of a small weekly to cover a half-dozen towns instead of, say, a half-dozen or less to cover two counties.

News Deserts

Since that time, a quarter of U.S. newspapers have withered away and died while countless others exist only as a shell of their former selves. So-called news deserts deprive more than 1,300 communities across America of the bountiful local journalism that had once quenched their thirst for quality community reporting, a study by the

University of North Carolina School of Media found.

Although Examiner Media is something of an industry success story, we remain a scratch-and-claw company, employing just enough staff to produce the weekly miracle. There are countless stories going untold as a result of our inability to staff a newspaper of the size of yesteryear.

But I can't tell you how grateful we are as a company to have navigated the pandemic's choppiest waters and emerge on the other side in one solid enough piece, thanks to your support.

In spring 2020, as the world melted down, you supplied the rescue boat, with readers contributing more than \$30,000 to support our cause, asking nothing in return other than us staying afloat and delivering on our journalistic pledge. Today, on #GivingTuesday, I'm grateful to be asking for something else entirely.

Subscriptions, Not Donations

While it was donations that we asked for last year, this year it's subscriptions. This year, we can give you something in return over and above the award-winning local newspaper journalism you've come to count on since 2007.

This year we can give you Examiner+, a premium digital newsmagazine with in-depth news and lifestyle coverage delivered in sections straight to your inbox through the emerging Substack platform. While our newspapers and website continue to serve our audience with town-by-town beats, on Examiner+ we're feeding our readers countywide and regional magazine journalism

for Westchester, Putnam and the broader Hudson Valley to complement our hyperlocal news delivery systems.

This year, with your support, we're able to provide you with more community value than ever.

Subscribing to Examiner+ gives our audience the avenue to support the broader Examiner Media mission and receive some of the highest quality local journalism being produced in the area today.

In our unique Weekend + Edition section on Saturdays, Examiner+ is jam-packed with content goodies, from musical interludes, local historical photos, funny cartoons and a Westchester stat of the week, not to mention all our great in-depth news features and lifestyle articles from throughout the week. Food, local culture, events, Q&As, first-person essays and much more.

It's important to realize that each one of your subscriptions matters to us deeply. Our initial goal is to generate 1,000 paid subscribers and eventually eclipse 2,000 to have genuinely discovered a new, sustainable business model that truly enhances the ability of community newspapers to employ more local journalists. We've been chipping away at our subscriber goal, but we do need your support to make this project sing. (For those of you who have already taken the plunge and joined our Examiner+ community as paid members, a profound thanks.)

Here's the Deal

And, hey, everyone loves a deal, right? You can purchase an annual Examiner+ subscription for just \$30 through Tuesday, Nov. 30, the date of this print edition's publication. But we'll also continue with a holiday offer throughout December, giving readers the option to subscribe for only \$39 instead of our normal \$49 price tag.

So, if you're game, here's that link to subscribe:

www.examiner-plus.com/subscribe

You might need another affordable stocking stuffer as well. A paid subscription to Examiner+ makes for a great, thoughtful gift for your friends, family and colleagues who share our passion for local journalism – especially those in your circle who value quality reporting and those who produce it.

Additionally, there's a premium tier, Examiner+ Ambassador, for \$99 a year (or more, if you choose), aimed at people (and companies and organizations) who want to support our work at a higher level. On top of full access to our premium content, E+ Ambassadors will enjoy occasional perks and surprise bonuses throughout the year. In fact, this past weekend we began publishing their favorite pet photos as a token of appreciation.

We'd also be honored if you share our articles over e-mail and social media with friends, and encourage them to subscribe as well.

And as I think back to my days as a cub reporter, holed up in that Peekskill work session room, I'm more optimistic than I have been in years that one day, with enough support, news outlets across the country and the world can make town meetings packed with reporters a common sight on random Tuesday evenings of the future. Your \$30-plus packs a stronger and more significant punch than I can convey. You're buying a subscription and investing in something greater, for Examiner Media and for community journalism writ large.

Gratefully,
Adam Stone, Publisher
astone@theexaminernews.com

Guest Column

Putnam County Should Continue to Support Our Second Amendment

By Assemblyman Kevin Byrne

It's one thing for politicians and candidates to say they "support the Second Amendment." It's another thing for candidates to demonstrate they support the Second Amendment and the rights of law-abiding gun owners.

As an assemblyman, I didn't just talk the talk – I walked the walk. I didn't bow down to the pressures from radical gun-grabbing special interests who seek to chip away at our constitutional rights.

I stood firm and defended our Second Amendment when I introduced legislation that would have repealed the so-called SAFE Act (A.5599, 2018); opposed the state's red flag law (A.2689, 2019) that ignored due process and provided zero support via mental health services; opposed legislation that unfairly extended delays for law-abiding gun owners to legally purchase firearms (A.2690, 2019); and helped pass legislation to amend the state's safe storage law to ensure youth shooting programs could continue in New York, and more (Chap. 133, 2019).

In every election, I have always run with the support of the National Rifle Association and the New York State Rifle & Pistol Association. I'm a proud gun owner, pistol

permit holder and member of the NRA.

As Putnam's next county executive, I'll continue to stand up for our rights as Americans and as law-abiding gun owners. I'll carry on the good work of our county officials and will work with our county clerk and other county partners to do all we can to protect pistol permit holders' information from unsafe or inappropriate disclosure. I will oppose proposals that further infringe on our constitutional rights and will work with our county legislature to make Putnam County a constitutional county.

It's not enough to simply raise our right hand and take the oath of office where we swear to uphold the constitution. It's time our county re-declares its support of our U.S. Constitution and all it stands for.

Our campaign to bring a new generation of leadership to Putnam County is built on many new, bold ideas. Learn more about me, my background and management experience, and how I'll stand up for our families and our rights at www.Byrne4Putnam.com.

Assemblyman Kevin Byrne is a lifelong Putnam County resident and resides in Mahopac with his wife, Briana (Messina) Byrne and their young son Braeden. He is a 2022 Republican candidate for county executive.



Police Blotter

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

Nov. 8: Patrol responded to Old Post Road South at 11:02 a.m. on a report of a larceny of a catalytic converter from a parked car. The part was estimated at about \$1,000. Patrol canvassed the area with negative results. A report was filed and an investigation is ongoing.

Nov. 8: Patrol responded to ShopRite on South Riverside Avenue at 5:31 p.m. following a report of a larceny of \$150 worth of items from the store. Two parties were interviewed and another fled the scene on foot prior to the officers' arrival. The two parties were released and no arrests were made. There will be a report filed; an investigation is ongoing.

Nov. 11: Patrol responded to Sunset Trail at 6:21 p.m. after a resident reported someone had just attempted to enter their

home. The resident heard a noise in their garage and when they checked there was nothing out of the ordinary. A short time later they heard an exterior doorknob being turned. Again, they did not observe anybody. The area was checked as well as the house with negative results. There did not appear to be any signs of attempted or forced entry.

Nov. 13: Report of criminal mischief to landscaping at the Hudson National Golf Course on Arrowhead Drive at 9:36 a.m.

Nov. 14: Report of an intoxicated subject rolling around in a large pile of leaves on Gerstein Street at 8:10 p.m. The area was checked with negative results.

Kent Police Department

Nov. 23: Officers were dispatched to Smalley Corners Road on a report of a domestic dispute between a mother and

son. When officers arrived, the located Justin Gherardi, 27, and Susan Debernardi, 66, both Carmel residents. Debernardi advised that during a verbal argument with her son, he grabbed her iPhone and threw it on the floor causing it to shatter. Debernardi also stated she was shoved against a wall during the argument. Gherardi was arrested for fourth-degree criminal mischief as well as second-degree harassment. Gherardi was processed at headquarters and arraigned before Judge Curtiss. He must return to the Town of Kent Justice Court at a later date.

Nov. 24: Report of a pedestrian struck at the intersection of Route 311 and Terry Hill Road. Responding officers located Brian Ahearn, 35, of Carmel. Ahearn advised he was turning onto Terry Hill Road when he struck a pedestrian that he did not see. An investigation into Ahearn's license revealed that his license had been revoked. He was arrested and charged with third-degree aggravated unauthorized operation of a motor vehicle and issued an appearance ticket to return to Town of Kent Court at a later date. The pedestrian was transported to Putnam Hospital Center with minor injuries.

North Castle Police Department

Nov. 19: Caller reported at 5:17 p.m. observing three teenagers apparently soliciting customers for money at the southernmost entrance of Stop & Shop on

North Broadway near the bottle returns. The caller described the parties involved as three male Blacks, wearing dark-colored clothing, and one male was carrying a clipboard. The responding officer reported that the individuals agreed to leave the area and were advised that management no longer wants them on the property.

Nov. 20: Report of an attempted larceny on Round House Road at 4:48 a.m. The caller stated that she received a notification on her phone for motion in her driveway. She observed two male parties attempting to open the doors to two of her vehicles that were located in her driveway. Both vehicles were locked. Parties then fled up the driveway in an unknown direction. One party was described to be wearing a camouflage hooded sweatshirt with jeans. The vehicle that was at the top of the driveway possibly fled toward Hobby Lane. No vehicle description provided. The responding officer reported information secured; units continued canvassing.

Nov. 20: A caller reported at 8:59 a.m. that money was taken from her vehicle parked on Carey Drive. The responding officer gathered the information; a report will follow.

Nov. 21: A caller reported at 2:37 p.m. that he had a domestic dispute with his wife at their Woodland Road home and she used a knife to cut his face. 60 Control notified to stay away until the scene is safe.



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Pleasantville Opts Out of Cannabis Sales, On-Site Consumption Lounges

By Abby Luby

The Pleasantville Village Board voted unanimously last week to prohibit the operation of retail cannabis dispensaries and consumption lounges in the village.

At the required public hearing prior to voting on the opt-out resolution, Mayor Peter Scherer noted the board has held extensive public meetings over the past few months, participated in multiple discussions and received extensive feedback on the long-range impact of retail pot stores in the village.

"As a result, I think I can speak for the board that we are unanimously of the view that we should opt out of retail dispensaries and consumption establishments," Scherer said. "There are many conflicting views about this but it is a rapidly changing world. Our decision to opt out is reversible in the future if some future Village Board should see it otherwise, but the failure to opt out now is not reversible."

New York State gave municipalities until Dec. 31 to pass a law to opt out of allowing retail cannabis establishments and weed lounges. Anyone favoring retail marijuana sales in the village would have to submit a petition for a permissive referendum, which would require 1,041 signatures or 20 percent of enrolled village voters, to trigger a vote.

About a dozen people attended last

week's regular board meeting but none offered comments. The resolution was read by Trustee Paul Alvarez followed by a roll call vote where all trustees voted in favor of the new law. That was followed by a round of applause.

Scherer mentioned that the law can be challenged at a later date.

"But that seems highly unlikely in the circumstance but remains a legal possibility," he said.

One of the biggest concerns voiced by the public was how on-site lounges could negatively impact youngsters. Many have overconsumed cannabis candy such as the popular marijuana gummies.

Advocating for the law to opt out was Laura Moore, coalition coordinator of Pleasantville STRONG, a group that works to prevent drug and alcohol use among youth, and Pleasantville Superintendent of Schools Mary Fox-Alter.

Many claimed that retail marijuana sales within the village would lead to increased use and drug addiction, while legal dispensaries posed challenges for local police.

Pleasantville Police Chief Erik Grutzner said there were no reliable tests for consumed cannabis and if someone was driving under the influence of pot it would be difficult to measure the level of intoxicants.

The local opt out goes into effect 30 days after adoption of the resolution.

Something's Cooking



Bedford Playhouse will reopen the Playhouse Café this Friday, Dec. 3, just in time for the holiday season. Acclaimed Westchester Chef Matthew Safarowic, pictured left, has been cooking in kitchens throughout the county for 20 years and has joined the café as the featured guest culinary artist.

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SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY: Santa Claus!

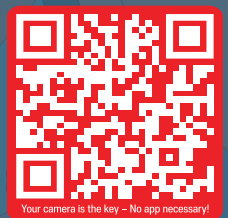
Sorry, no meet and greet with Santa.

Be sure to pick up your Peekskill Makes Me Merry button at the tree lighting.

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Armonk Celebrates the Return of Frosty the Snowman to Town

By Martin Wilbur

Families and residents turned out in droves on Sunday to welcome Frosty the Snowman home to Armonk, kicking off the holiday season in style.

The highly anticipated Frosty Day, made more special following the cancellation of the 2019 parade due to a snowstorm while the entire event was called off last year because of the pandemic, seemed to help swell the crowds by mid-afternoon. By the time the parade stepped off, hundreds, if not thousands of people, from throughout the area lined the route along Main Street and Maple Avenue all the way to Wampus Brook Park for the tree lighting.

Frank Porreca and his wife, Rosemary, make sure to come to Armonk every Frosty Day to visit their grandchildren who live in town to experience the festivities. Their enjoyment of the parade transports the couple from Purchase back to a more innocent time.

"It brings me back to when I was a kid, and it's like a holiday tradition," Frank Porreca said. "I remember as a kid growing up, we had parades for almost everything – Fourth of July, Memorial Day. It seems to have been a vanishing custom these days."

For more than three hours before the parade there were activities for children, holiday music played by a variety of bands throughout the downtown, treats to eat, train rides, and of course, pictures with Frosty.

No matter how many have made attending Frosty Day, scheduled for the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend, an annual tradition that dates back to 2009, there are those who experience it for the first time.

Jennifer Bruno came with her husband and infant son from Mount Kisco after reading how the Frosty celebration came about.

"This is my first year coming down," Bruno said. "I read all about it and the story of how it became Frosty the Snowman, and now I have a four-month-old, so it's his first year and we'll be coming for many years."

Armonk claimed Frosty as its own when it was learned that Steven Nelson, the lyricist for the song "Frosty the Snowman," lived in Armonk for about 30 years until his death in 1981. The song was originally recorded by Gene Autry in 1950 and has since been



released by numerous artists through the decades.

North Castle Supervisor Michael Schiliro said he wasn't surprised that the downtown was teeming with people, particularly as the afternoon progressed and the parade approached.

"Frosty brings them out," Schiliro said. "No one really has parades this time of year, but it's great, it's great for a lot of different reasons. People are happy and have great food."

Armonk resident Danielle Leston, who took in Frosty Day with her husband and children, has been a regular at the event.

"It's just fun to get out," Leston said.

Frosty Day Committee member Ed Woodyard said the celebration represents what is best about the community.

"This is like a Hallmark movie. The difference is it's real," he said.



ART NELSON PHOTOS



The Front Door is the Window to a Home's Soul

With every listing I've ever taken as a realtor, I follow a checklist of musts to recommend to seller clients as they prepare their homes for sale.

First among these recommendations is consideration of the front door. A couple of weeks ago, just when I thought I had finished my checklist of things my clients had to do prior to the listing of their home and before the brokers' open house, the husband mentioned that he would paint the front door, which he thought was in need of refreshing. I said, oh yes, embarrassed that it was one item I hadn't thought was really needed. But then, my client is even more a perfectionist than I.

But, wait, what color would he paint it, I asked? White, he responded, the same color it already was.

Then it dawned on me. Why hadn't I thought of it?

Color pundits and feng shui consultants say that a front door should never, ever be painted white. It's a cardinal rule. The theory is that the door should relate to the landscape in some way, and pure white is rarely found in nature. Who ever thought about that?

Would you consider making a big change with that, I asked?

I suggested a color that I always



By Bill Primavera

recommend to my clients: red and a specific red, Benjamin Moore Burgundy. I've done much research on the psychology and the feng shui of painting a front door red that could take several articles to relate, but let me give you the rundown here in abbreviated form.

The psychology of the color red is that it conveys passion, interest, vitality and welcomeness. There is a long-forgotten tradition in early American travel that bears this out. When lodging was sparse in the days of the horse and carriage, families who were willing to welcome traveling families into their homes to

spend the night would signify that message by painting their doors red.

In Biblical times, the Hebrew slaves were instructed to smear blood of a lamb on their front doors to protect their first born from the angel of death. And in early Catholic churches, doors were painted red to represent the blood of Christ; passing through the door meant that you were on holy ground.

In Scotland, homeowners paint their front door red to signify that they had paid off their mortgage. And someplace I read that a study revealed that people who live behind a red door are the happiest. (Is that skewed in my mind in some way to those who had paid off their mortgage, I wonder?)



Of course, all this reflection about a front door's color is only academic if the door itself is not in good condition.

The front door can be the key to a home's personality, either reflecting the condition of the space within or contradicting it. A beautiful, sturdy door with quality hardware greets the visitor with a confident hello; a weathered door, perhaps out of alignment, with old or poorly functioning hardware, conveys something quite different about the house, something unappealing.

Just as a person is judged within a few seconds of a first meeting, a house is judged in great part by the condition, functionality and look of its front door. When showing

properties to prospective buyers, I'm always surprised to find when owners have upgraded an older home, but have not paid proper attention to the front door and its hardware.

If the door is warped and if the hardware is tarnished and in poor working order, the entire house can seem outdated. Just slapping a fresh coat of paint on it won't solve the problem. So consider the door first, then the color.

While the front door serves to withstand the elements and help provide energy efficiency and protection for the home, visitors react to it aesthetically, or even psychologically. If the door is attractive and in good shape, that perception extends to the entire household – and to its owner as well.

For those of you with a bent toward feng shui, you know that the front door is the main source of a house's energy. But practically and simply put for both curb appeal and resale value, spruce up the front door and, in a sense, you have a new home. Paint it red, and you've hit a home run on every level.

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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Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Students Build Dog Toy Crates for SPCA

By Martin Wilbur

Two days before Thanksgiving, the SPCA of Westchester had plenty of reasons to be thankful.

On Nov. 23, students from the Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Union Free School District delivered two crates that will be used to store the dogs' toys in two of the shelter and rescue organization's four outdoor play yards.

Industrial technology teacher James Brunner said he reached out to representatives at the SPCA to see what their needs were. Initially, they proposed building a doghouse but staff said they don't really use one.

Instead, they suggested storage bins for the toys that are used in the outside yards. While two of the

Made out of recycled wood pallets, the crates were painted and are weatherproof. There's a door on top that can stay open while a staff member reaches in to retrieve the toys and it won't slam shut on someone's arm or hand, or at least until someone closes the top.

Brunner said it's important for the students to create something that a person or organization would find useful.

"We contacted them (the SPCA) about a month-and-a-half ago and we started slowly, depending on attendance and things like that," Brunner said. "Some days it sat idle for a while."



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Hawthorne Cedar Knolls industrial technology teacher James Brunner, in red jacket next to the crate, stands with several of his students who helped build two dog toy chests for the SPCA of Westchester. The bins were delivered by the school to the SPCA on Nov. 23.

The day before it was delivered to the SPCA's refurbished Briarcliff Manor campus, the youngsters put the finishing touches on their gift, stenciling paw prints

and dog bones onto the exterior of the crates.

Sofia Rocha, the director of animal services at the SPCA, said the bins serve

an important and practical purpose for the organization. Currently, staff either must store the toys inside the building and carry them to the play yards each day and then bring them back inside, or the objects would sit outside deteriorating in the elements, she said.

The toys aren't just used for play, which by itself would serve a critical purpose, but also helps them socialize. That's an important skill some dogs need to learn if they are going to be adopted by a perspective owner or family.

"Getting them out and giving them different things to do, it all makes a difference," Rocha said. "They're all playing with a Frisbee, playing with circular toys, tug toys, it teaches them different behaviors, different ways of playing, helps them prepare for their new home. It's such a good thing to have."

The SPCA moved back into its remodeled building on North State Road in mid-summer after more than a year in temporary quarters in Cortlandt.

It's quite helpful to have a local school or community organization build something from scratch that is needed, Rocha said.

"To see the community come together to help the organization and the animals is heartwarming," she said. It's important. It's important to work with our community and involve our community for educational purposes as well."

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Steffi Nossen to Feature Special Program This Weekend in Ossining

The Steffi Nossen Dance Foundation will present its fall showcase An Immersive Dance Experience at Bethany Arts Community in Ossining this Saturday, Dec. 4.

Highlighting choreography by six diverse artists and debuting a new work choreographed for the Steffi Nossen Dance Company by Hannah Garner, the audience will be guided through various locations within Bethany to see six live performances while having the opportunity to see the art displayed in the galleries. The Board of Directors will be hosting a festive reflection

reception where participants can enjoy a seasonal treat and the beautiful grounds.

Brewster choreographer and Steffi Nossen Dance Foundation Artistic Director Jessica DiMauro will present "Love, Kisses and Such..." Created 20 years ago to reveal the physical experience of emotional neglect as a female solo to live viola, it has been recreated to recorded sound and through the lens of this unique time in history.

DiMauro, a Steffi Nossen alum, holds an MFA in choreography from Jacksonville University and a BFA in dance from

Marymount Manhattan College. She has taught and choreographed works extensively for both pre-professional and professional dance companies in the metropolitan area and is currently on the dance faculties at Marymount Manhattan and Montclair State University.

Garner, a graduate of the Purchase Dance Conservatory who has been named recipient of the Dance Magazine's 25 to Watch in 2020, has recently been selected as emerging choreographer by Springboard Danse Montreal 2020.

Performances on Saturday will take



The Steffi Nossen Dance Foundation is presenting its fall showcase on Saturday at Bethany Arts Community.

place every hour from 2 to 7 p.m. in groups of 25 audience members per showing. All COVID-19 safety guidelines will be followed.

For more information, call 914-328-1900 or visit www.steffinossen.org. Tickets are \$50 for adults and \$30 for students and seniors. Bethany Arts Community is located at 40 Somerstown Rd. in Ossining.

To order tickets, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fall-showcase-an-immersive-dance-experience-tickets-201093856137>.

Galef to Host Virtual Senior Forum This Wednesday

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) will host a Virtual Senior Forum from 10 a.m. to noon, this Wednesday, Dec. 1.

It was announced last week that Peter Grannis, first Deputy to state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, will be joining panelists from various agencies in the region who will discuss different services that are available to seniors and review the state retirement system and unclaimed funds.

The other panelists are:

- Gary Brown, Assistant Attorney General in Charge, Westchester Office, who will highlight scams targeting seniors;
- David Cutner, senior law attorney who will discuss wills, estates and long-term

care;

- Beth Finkel, the state director at AARP, who will give an update on new programs and regulations;
- Roberta Goodman of the Pace Women's Justice Center, who will elaborate on how the center services seniors; and
- Leslie Bailey, director of training at the Community Service Society's Benefits Plus Learning Center, who will address the benefits available to seniors.

"Seniors face a unique set of issues and challenges and it's important we come together to discuss how we can advocate for ourselves and take advantage of opportunities and services tailored to our needs," Galef said. "My senior forums are

always a fun way for us all to get together, catch up and learn how to be the best advocates for ourselves."

The meeting can be accessed with video on the web via a Zoom link. The meeting can also be accessed over the phone with a dial-in number. Either way, those joining the meeting will be able to make comments and ask questions. Those who wish to join the meeting should contact Assemblywoman Galef's office to obtain the Zoom link or phone number by calling 914-941-1111 or e-mailing galefs@nyassembly.gov.

Those who subscribe to the assemblywoman's e-mails will have these details delivered to their inboxes leading up to the virtual meeting.

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Local CAC Chair Receives Key Award From Municipal Planning Group

By Martin Wilbur

A longtime Mount Pleasant Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) member received one of the most prestigious planning awards that can be presented to a local resident.

Steven Kavee, who has served on the CAC for close to 30 years, including the last 10 years as its chair, was honored Monday night with the Distinguished Citizen Planner by the Westchester Municipal Planning Federation. The award is given to one county resident each year who has made outstanding contributions to planning in Westchester.

Kavee said he was attracted to planning, particularly from an environmental perspective, early on as an adult. A Long Island native, he moved to the Briarcliff Manor portion of Mount Pleasant more than 30 years ago and first served on that village's Conservation Advisory Council before moving on to serve with the town.

"I always believed that if there are things that need to get done to right the things that are wrong, you need to be active and involved, and in your community that's the best place to start," Kavee said of his interest in conservation issues. "It has to start local and what I discovered was land use was basically one of the best things you could do as an individual where you could actually have impact on people's lives and how the world could be a better place."

While protection of the environment is a top priority, he said a CAC member shouldn't be dogmatic in opposing all development.



Steven Kavee, seated at the far end of the table, converses with the Mount Pleasant Town Board earlier this year.

There are times when a project is clearly wrong for a location or the town, but Kavee said his approach is to present the Planning Board or the Town Board with facts to help a board reach an informed decision.

"If a Conservation Advisory Council can provide factual, science-based, objective analysis, they can be a support service for the planning person and for the Planning Board and they can work in partnership," Kavee explained. "The CAC has to be complementary in its approach and part of that means you can't go in and say you can't

build this."

There are exceptions, of course, such as the CAC's strong opposition this past summer to the proposed solar farm on a portion of Gate of Heaven Cemetery. After initially being receptive to it, the town's Planning Board objected to the application, citing, in large part, the multiple acres of trees that would have had to be cleared and the potential consequences related to runoff.

While Kavee seemed a bit sheepish to talk about his award and contributions to Mount Pleasant, Mary Hegarty, a former Mt.

Pleasant CAC member and environmental professor at Westchester Community College, was a driving force behind his consideration.

In a cover letter to the federation, Hegarty wrote that Kavee is a model for how an advisory board member should present recommendations, by speaking precisely and methodically while doing his homework beforehand.

She said that she composed the letter because Kavee is exceedingly humble and shuns the limelight, but his contributions have helped the Town of Mount Pleasant.

"He's not anti-development," Hegarty said of an assumption some residents make about CACs. "Development is going to happen so how can we do it smart, in a smart way? How can we do it requesting that the applicant plants only native plants, for example?"

Kavee said municipal officials of all backgrounds and points of view are sitting up and taking notice that they must consider impacts of climate change as severe storms occur more frequently. He said nature can be an ally.

"Nature can be a zero-cost ally in creating a neutral form of infrastructure that provides for protection from stormwater impact," Kavee explained. "Not 100 percent, but when you have woodlands and wetlands, you have the environmental services that they provide, and when you have them, they're an adjunct, an auxiliary to the infrastructure that may exist now."



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Q: What is Immunotherapy?

A: Your immune system is a network of cells, tissues, and organs that work together to keep you healthy by defending your body against harmful invaders. Immunotherapy is a cancer treatment that uses your immune system to thwart cancer cells. Immunotherapies are often used in combination with traditional chemotherapy medications to boost the effectiveness of those regimens.

Q: Are there different types of immunotherapy treatments?

A: Yes. The first, called "checkpoint inhibitors," are drugs that help your immune system respond more strongly to a tumor by blocking the proteins that keep T-cells from killing cancer cells.

Another type of immunotherapy, "adoptive cell transfer," boosts the natural ability of your T-cells to fight cancer. In this treatment, T-cells are taken from your tumor, and those that are found to be most active against your cancer are grown in large batches in the lab, and then eventually returned to your body to fight off the cancer.

Next are "monoclonal antibodies," which are immune-system proteins produced in a lab. These antibodies are designed to attach to specific targets found on cancer cells. Some monoclonal antibodies mark cancer cells so they will be better seen and destroyed by the immune

system. Another immunotherapy agent is a vaccine called "BCG" that is instilled directly into the bladder to attack very early bladder cancer.

Who is a good candidate for immunotherapy?

A: The best candidates for immunotherapy are patients whose disease may have a genetic component. We test for a number of things to see whether a patient's particular tumor may be due to a genetic cancer syndrome. Those types of tumors seem to have better susceptibility to immunotherapies. Whether or not immunotherapy is used alone or with other treatments is determined on a case-by-case basis.

What are treatments like?

A: Immunotherapy can be administered intravenously, orally, topically (for very early skin cancers), or intravesically (directly into the bladder). How often and how long the patient receives immunotherapy depends on the type of cancer and how advanced it is, the immunotherapy agents themselves, and how the patient tolerates and responds to the medications. Exciting new uses of immunotherapy agents are seen on a regular basis, says the doctor. They're really making their way through the treatment of many different types of cancers now. This is the cutting edge of oncological care.



Opt In or Opt Out?

Municipalities under the gun to decide on marijuana law.



By Rick Pezzullo

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The clock is ticking on municipalities throughout New York State to take a stand on welcoming marijuana dispensaries and/or consumption lounges or kicking them to the curb.

The Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA) was enacted in New York State on March 31 and legalized recreational pot. It also gave the green light for retail cannabis dispensaries and consumption sites to locate in all communities.

In addition, the bill established the Office of Cannabis Management to implement a comprehensive regulatory framework that covers medical, adult-use, and cannabinoid hemp and expands

the state's existing medical marijuana and cannabinoid hemp programs.

Each municipality has until December 31 to adopt a local law that prohibits such businesses, which is referred to as opting out of the regulations. If elected officials take no action, municipalities are automatically opted in, but they can pass legislation that governs the hours and location of the businesses.

One wrinkle to the legislation is if a municipality opts in, it can't change its mind. However, if a municipality opts out, officials can later choose to reverse course. Reportedly, more than 100 jurisdictions in New York State have voted to opt out.

"It's a tough call. There are two sides to it," said Cortlandt Supervisor Linda Puglisi. "I'm torn."

The two villages within the Town of Cortlandt have taken different stances. Croton-on-Hudson is opting in, while Buchanan has opted out.

The Cortlandt Town Board held a public hearing in early November and like



most other municipalities where citizens have had a chance to speak out, residents expressed differing views.

"This idea is lousy. I just don't think this is what the town should be going after," John DeBenedictis of Montrose remarked. "Drug addicts all started with marijuana. This stuff on the market is marijuana on steroids. Why do it? Why entice kids? We're just opening up another can of worms."

Others, such as Dominick Saladino, encouraged the board to opt in, reasoning, "It's going to come into our borders anyway..."

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Kenneth Branagh's 'Belfast,' a Tale of Innocence Stolen

Celebrating the slow but steady progress on the road to post-COVID normalcy, my wife and I happily sat through Kenneth Branagh's semiautobiographical film "Belfast" on a recent Friday night at the Jacob Burns Film Center.

Astounding is the only adjective to describe the power and impact of this coming-of-age memoir. Based on Branagh's early years growing up in Belfast, a city that became a war-torn urban battleground, the film surprises at every turn.

It is August 1969. "The Troubles," almost 30 years of sectarian conflict, have descended upon the streets of Belfast. The film begins its journey into Branagh's past, conveyed in the charming character of eight-year-old Buddy, played by newcomer to film Jude Hill. The soundtrack, featuring fellow Belfast native Van Morrison, will not disappoint either.

The cast is a marvelous ensemble. Ciarán Hinds plays Pop, a retired coal miner. He is the quintessential grandfather figure, loved and respected by all, especially his grandson, Buddy.

Judi Dench displays again the talents of a versatile master, able to play any role. She is "Granny," Pop's wife of many years, a sage voice of reason and stability to the rest

of the family.

Jamie Dornan plays their son, referred to only as "Pa," a reasonable man in unreasonable times, who, to make ends meet, must travel back and forth to London where he works in construction. He comes home on the odd weekend, leaving his wife to raise their two sons. Played brilliantly by Caitríona Balfe, this defiant mother and sometimes troublesome wife dominates the pack. It is a performance that should make her a serious contender for an Oscar. Alternately furious, alluring, loyal, emotional, proactive, reactive, headstrong and fiercely brave, she grapples emotionally with the slow and steady destruction of the world she thought she and her family could live peacefully in forever.

The characters in "Belfast" are eminently believable, but especially Buddy. His response to the chaos surrounding him ranges from disbelief and avoidance, to unwitting participation in a riot and the vicious looting of a grocery store. He is innocence personified, and innocence cruelly violated.

Nor is the family's working-class street what we would expect to see in the city of Belfast, given the polarization that occurred during The Troubles, when neighbor was

turned against neighbor and friend against friend. Little of this is explained in the film, a credit to Branagh, for any attempt to explain the centuries-long trail that led to the explosion of Belfast's streets in 1969 would have been futile.

Nor is the family what we would expect from the standard fare of films and documentaries seeking to explain Northern Ireland. They are not downtrodden Catholics, but Protestants, though as economically stretched as any of their Catholic neighbors. They are tolerant, fair-minded and relatively bias-free. And their love for their gritty city is palpable, especially Ma and Buddy, as they react to Pa's continued urging that they flee the danger they are in the midst of and move elsewhere.

A major strength of the film is its refusal to make a political statement on The Troubles. There is no us-versus-them posturing. The subject is families, on both sides of a chasm foisted upon them by forces beyond their control. "Belfast" masterfully depicts how they are stretched and strained, both from within and without, as they struggle to adjust to a startling new reality that has descended upon their working-



By Brian McGowan

class street, where Catholic and Protestant once lived in amicable accord.

The stereotypical bitter, single-minded Unionist image is shattered. Pa, a Protestant who numbers many Catholics among friends and acquaintances, is continually accosted by Billy Clanton, menacingly played by Colin Morgan. He is the ringleader of the Protestant gang seeking to oust all Catholics from the neighborhood.

"Be a good Protestant," Clanton admonishes Pa, "and join us."

"You're not a good Protestant," Pa replies. "You're just a gangster."

Rated PG-13, and running 97 minutes, "Belfast" is currently playing at the Jacob Burns (through this Thursday) and other theaters.

Pleasantville resident Brian McGowan was born and raised in the Bronx and is a second-, third- and fifth-generation Irish-American/Canadian, as his immigrant ancestors followed several paths to the New World. Reach

him at brian.m.mcgowan1952@gmail.com or on Twitter (@Bmcgowan52M). He is the author of two books, "Thunder at Noon," about the battle of Waterloo, and "Love, Son John," about World War II. Both are available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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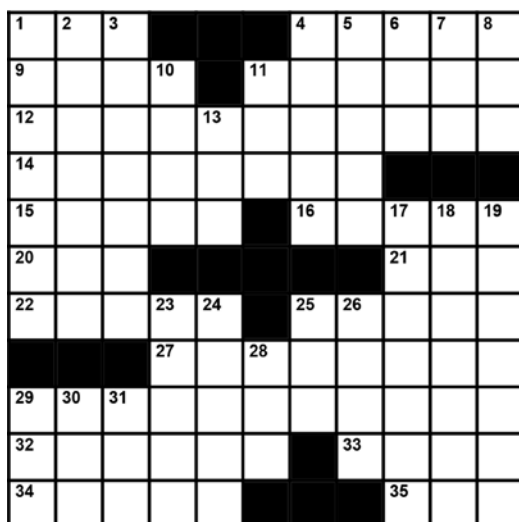
Crossword

Across

1. Business connections
4. Kosovo citizens
9. Atlantic alliance, for short
11. Extinct, clumsy birds
12. James Watt invention
14. Shopping at this kitchen and bath store in Bedford Hills will make you very happy
15. Back of a horse
16. Shady resting place
20. Mark of perfection
21. Future embryos
22. Rest period
25. "Two Women" Oscar winner
27. Burrowing, nocturnal animal or Thornwood pet supply store
29. Preposterous
32. Amount more than what was needed
33. They're spotted in casinos
34. Barnyard honker
35. Pennies: Abbr.

Down

1. Raid targets
2. Au ___ (cooked simply)
3. Starting place
4. Sotomayor of the Supreme Court
5. First name in horror
6. King of France
7. "___ Hur" classic movie
8. Compass point
10. Island near Kauai



11. ___ Spiegel (German magazine)
13. Unruly head of hair
17. Related to an element occurring in hard black crystal
18. Make too dramatic?
19. Causes resentment
23. Makes comfortable
24. Bel ___ cheese
25. Mormons, initially
26. "Metamorphoses" poet
28. I.C.U. personnel, abbr.
29. Item in a photog's file
30. Useless tic-tac-toe row
31. Officer, abbr.

Answers on page 26

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Tilly Foster Farm Becomes Important Putnam County Hotspot

When change happens slowly, it's easy to miss the big picture.

The changes at Tilly Foster Farm and Educational Institute since Putnam County took over its management in 2014 have transformed a money-losing property with very little public access into a profitable farm that's buzzing with visitors and pollinators.

Tilly Foster is now a place where tourists and locals visit farm animals, see art exhibits, listen to concerts and dine. It's a place with a garden that helps educate students and feed senior citizens and where a barn/event space has become so popular it's booked a year out.

"We knew this was going to be good when we started," Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell said. "But every year, it has just gotten better. There is so much energy and creative talent working here. Tilly is now a huge draw for tourism, and it establishes Putnam County as the gateway to the Hudson Valley with its embrace of all things farm-to-table, local, sustainable, all of which have become even more attractive during COVID."

And more is coming to the farm in 2022.

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) will be moving its operations into the Cantina, the red building just beyond the llamas and the farm stand, which visitors see when they pull into the farm.

CCE is renovating the building at no cost to the county and will host its 4-H Youth and master gardener programs there along with many other community programs. It also helped secure a grant for a creamery and plans to use the commercial kitchen to jar vegetables and honey.

The group's Pollinator Pathway at the farm has already helped keep the county blooming, and it has increased production in the newly-expanded garden by 40 percent. That boost enabled the county to open a farm stand to the public this year, in addition to providing produce to Tilly's Table restaurant and to the lunch program at the county's Office for Senior Resources.

The Putnam County Economic Development Corporation is working to bring film and television production to the site.

The Putnam County Tourism office relocated to the farm in June, giving the department a face on the east side of the county. The tourism office's presence at the farm enabled it to entice the Hudson Valley Restaurant Week Kick Off Event to Tilly Foster in October.

"The event was extremely successful and surpassed all our wildest expectations," said Tracey Walsh, director of tourism for the county. "It far surpassed all metrics for the event. We hosted 27 vendors and over 150 attendees, including the largest group of bloggers and influencers ever gathered in Putnam County. The weather was perfect and showed Putnam County in all its fall glory."

An outdoor sculpture show hosted by Collaborative Concepts encouraged the crowd to wander around the farm's 199 acres, with more than enough space for social distancing.

And that's not the only art at the farm.

The county has partnered with the Putnam Arts Council, which now has exclusive rights to display art in Tilly's Table. This arrangement helps promote local artists.

Tilly's Table also operates an event space in the barn. The space is so popular for weddings, bridal showers and other events that all but two Saturdays in 2022 are already booked.

To educate the next generation in sustainable practices, the county has partnered with Putnam-Northern Westchester BOCES, creating an Animal Care program for high school students, and building a commercial kitchen that students in the Culinary Arts Program

use.

Just because the farm is moving forward doesn't mean the county has forgotten its past. Historic images of Putnam County farms have been displayed at Tilly Foster and the farm was a stop on Putnam County's recent self-guided history tour.

While all of these events are popular, nothing compares with the concert series that has brought more than 7,000 people to the farm.

So far, seven of the farm's nine buildings have been renovated or updated and the property produces \$60,000 in annual revenue for the county.

With the strictest standards in mind,

the county has started a rural enterprise project.

"We have the bee project producing honey, a new shop on site selling locally made candles is coming soon and a local distiller wants to bring a pop-up distillery to the farm," Odell said. "We have brought in more animals, including new Percheron horses named Diesel and Truman, pygmy goats and donkeys."

For those who haven't visited the farm recently, there's much to do and see, and the breathtaking views of the Hudson Valley alone make it worth the trip.



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Now is the Time to Take in the Wonders of the Orion Constellation

With all the festivities this time of year, candles, turkeys or trees, this is the most festive time in the skies, too. Welcome to Orion season.

Recorded references to the constellation Orion go back close to 40,000 years. Different peoples have seen it as a bird, a messenger or any number of other things important to them. We take our view of it from the Greeks and Romans; a mighty hunter who spends his nights fighting Taurus the bull, while his two dogs, Canis Major and Canis Minor, cheer him on.

The first thing most of us spot is the line of three stars that form his famous belt. With those as our jumping-off point, Orion becomes an amazing place to explore.

First, toward the left or above the beltline, let's visit bright orange Betelgeuse, his left shoulder. This is an old and enormous star, whose light left for our eyes around 600 years ago.

Now, draw a line diagonally across and through the belt to icy blue-white Rigel, at his right foot. Rigel is the fifth brightest star we can see in Westchester's nights. That one dot in the black is a system of four stars

gravitationally tied to each other.

I love to stop and stare at this pair. Can you notice their colors? They signify that they're different types of stars, but both are among types that will one day die in tremendous explosions called a supernova. It's unlikely, but it may have already happened. With the incredible distances their light must travel, it would take about 600 years for us to learn if Betelgeuse did, around 800 for Rigel.

Clear Skies

These two stars are incredible, but they have nothing on Alnilam. The belt's middle star is one of the most distant and luminous we can see with the naked eye. Astronomers believe it puts out around 500,000 times more light than our sun. It's truly powerful, and it almost hurts to think what it must be like close up.



New Moon
December 4



First Quarter
December 10



Full Moon
December 18



Last Quarter
December 26

December's phases of the moon chart.

I mention these three because they are relatively far away as these things go. If we widen our gaze a bit, we can see that Orion is cordoned off from the rest of the sky by a ring of six other very bright stars often called the Winter Hexagon, which we'll talk about again later.

The Hexagon's stars all happen to be much closer to us than Orion's more distant stars. The farthest is only a tenth of Betelgeuse's distance to us. This gives us a great chance to see that the sky isn't just a flat sheet but has depth and texture.

Seen this way, Orion's stars aren't just within the Hexagon, but behind it,



By Scott Levine

with its stars drawing our eye deeper and deeper into our galaxy. First, we reach Betelgeuse, then Rigel, and then, much farther beyond, Alnilam. If you can, take some time to soak in this scene, the cold, the smells, the depth, the stars' colors, the entire corner of the sky twinkling like holiday lights on our friends' houses.

These stars will guide us through the nights until they vanish again in the spring. This is a great time to start exploring. Happy holidays and thanks for reading this year. Clear skies, everyone!

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.



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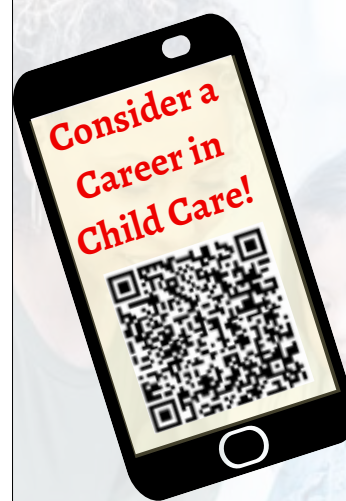
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Let the Debate Continue: The Beatles or The Stones?

The debate between The Beatles and The Rolling Stones has been going on ever since they first crossed paths on the charts 55 years ago.

The argument at the time, and one that still persists, was that The Beatles were a pop group and The Stones were a rock band: the boys next door versus the bad boys of rock.

So who's better? These two legendary bands will engage in an on-stage, throwdown – a musical showdown, if you will – this Saturday, Dec. 4 at the Paramount Hudson Valley Theater in Peekskill, courtesy of tribute bands Abbey Road and Satisfaction – The International Rolling Stones Show. The show played to a capacity crowd at the Paramount in 2017.

Taking the side of the Fab Four is Abbey Road, one of the county's top Beatles tribute bands. With brilliant musicianship and authentic costumes and gear, Abbey Road plays beloved songs spanning the Beatles' career.

They face off against renowned Stones tribute band Satisfaction – The International Rolling Stones Show, who offer a faithful rendition of the music and style of Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and the bad boys of the British Invasion.

Where did the idea for the show come from?

"Music fans never had a chance to see The Beatles and The Rolling Stones perform on the same marquee," said Chris LeGrand, who plays Mick Jagger in the show. "Now, music



The Paramount Hudson Valley Theater in Peekskill will be hosting a musical showdown for the ages when two of the best Beatles and Rolling Stones tribute bands square off this Saturday night.

aficionados can watch this debate play out on stage."

The show is part of a 125-stop tour of the U.S., Australia and Canada and has been touring since 2011. The show also has long-term residencies for a number of the Harrah's Casino properties. The production includes some of the more popular songs from the two rock pioneers and covers the scope of their musical careers, although the set list for

Satisfaction usually includes Rolling Stones songs up to the 1980s.

"They certainly have more pop songs but we're a really great live show. The fans are in for an incredible night of music," LeGrand said.

During the two-hour show, the bands perform three sets each, trading places in quick set changes and ending the night with an all-out encore involving both bands. The members have their outfits custom-made, since avid fans know exactly what The Beatles and The Stones wore onstage during different time periods in their careers. There's a lot of good-natured jabbing between the bands as well.

"Without Beatlemania, The Stones might still be a cover band in London," said Chris Overall, who plays Paul. "There's no question that The Beatles set the standard."

The audience naturally enjoys top-shelf tributes to two legendary bands in the same evening.

"If you see only one tribute show, see this one...smart and loads of fun," a review in The Idaho Statesman read.

"It's just a fun time and a cool back-and-forth nonstop show," Overall said.

"We're going to bring it all. It's going to be an evening of high-energy music," LeGrand added.

Saturday's performance is scheduled for 8 p.m. at the Paramount Hudson Valley Theater. Tickets range from \$30 to \$60, plus applicable fees, and may be purchased online at www.paramounthudsonvalley.com.

[paramounthudsonvalley.com](http://www.paramounthudsonvalley.com).

The Paramount Hudson Valley Theater is located at 1008 Brown St. in Peekskill. The box office is open Tuesday through Friday from 12 to 7 p.m. and on Saturday from 12 to 6 p.m.

All adult guests must be fully vaccinated or show proof of a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours to enter the theater and must present digital or physical proof at the door. At-home rapid tests are acceptable; please bring in a picture of the negative test with your name and date of test clearly written in the picture. Children under 12 will be able to be admitted with a vaccinated guardian.

Crossword Answers

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8
I	N	S		S	E	R	B	S
9	N	A	T	O		D	O	D
12	S	T	E	A	M	E	N	G
14	E	U	P	H	O	R	I	A
15	C	R	O	U	P		A	R
20	T	E	N				O	V
22	S	L	E	E	P		L	O
							R	E
27	A	A	R	D	V	A	R	K
29	N	O	N	S	E	N	S	I
32	E	X	C	E	S	S	D	I
34	G	O	O	S	E		C	T

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Could This Be Your Next New Favorite Wine?



By Nick Antonaccio

Readers have been taking my advice and are experimenting with the profusion of new and different wines being produced in the ever-expanding world of wine.

I've exhorted you to seek out your "new favorite wine" and you've become wine explorers, finding Grüner Veltliners from Austria, Sauvignon Blancs from Chile, a plethora of red and whites from Spain and great whites from Italy.

So when recently asked for the next potential "new favorite wine," I considered numerous options. And then I remembered a wine I was enamored with a number of years ago, but then lost interest in: Beaujolais (Bo-zhol-AY).

First, a primer. Beaujolais is a wine subregion in the famous Burgundy region of France. It has traditionally been a stepchild because it does not fit the definition of any of its brethren Burgundy wines. It is defined by a unique terroir and a unique grape. The Beaujolais terroir is more rugged (more granite than topsoil) and the Beaujolais grape – Gamay – is distinctly different. Herein lies the uniqueness of Beaujolais.

Gamay is a red hybrid of Pinot Noir. Its appeal: it's easier to grow than a traditional

Pinot, enabling growers to extract a fruity aspect not readily apparent in many Pinots; its heritage provides the traditional Pinot characteristics – velvety and finessed; and its fermentation typically results in low tannins. The result is a dark purple, fruit-forward wine with a touch of acidity and soft tannins. Just the way many Americans like their red wines.

The flavor profile ranges from strawberry to plum to cherry to earthy. The wines have a heady, perfumed aroma and an alcohol level typically no higher than 12.5 percent. If you like fruit-forward (not "fruit bombs"), lighter style, elegant red wines with soft tannins and mild acid (Pinots? Merlots?), I recommend Beaujolais.

There are three quality classifications: Beaujolais (the common wines, not generally appealing); Beaujolais Villages (the next step up in the quality ladder, with several high quality-to-price offerings); and the Cru Beaujolais (10 geographic areas of production, producing the highest quality wines at affordable prices).

The Crus are the wines to seek out. My favorites are from the Morgon (cherry flavors), Moulin-a-Vent (earthy, spicy) and Cote de Brouilly (plum flavors) areas. An important note: these wines are far removed from the vapid Beaujolais Nouveau wines that are the subject of a media marketing blitz every Thanksgiving.

For a long time, Beaujolais enjoyed a

'Beaujolais is an exciting alternative.'

popularity in the United States as a quality wine at a bargain price. But the wines took a turn for the worse in the late 1990s. In the last three to five years, there has been a resurgence in their quality and even an improvement over the older, highly regarded bottlings.

A new generation of winemakers has taken over the vineyards and production facilities, employing new techniques and practicing organic farming. They are extracting the best qualities from the Gamay grape and have succeeded in producing a very unique wine that is slowly making its way to the States and into wine shops.

All in all, Beaujolais is an exciting alternative for consumers looking for affordable quaffing wines that also pair well with food. Try one with roasts, pork dishes and barbecued meats.

In a survey of local wine merchants, it became evident that the new style of Beaujolais is still not very popular. Although the available choices are high caliber, and the price points are generally in the \$25 range (higher for the acclaimed Crus), choices are limited. How to change this? Try one of the wines and, if you enjoy it and want to further



explore the world of Beaujolais, ask your merchant to stock a few more. Then spread the word and watch what happens.

As discussed in a previous column, you may rely on highly regarded importers for trustworthy wines. For Beaujolais, the go-to importers (printed on the rear label) are Serge Doré Selections and Louis/Dressner.

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

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