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

COVID-19 Breakdown:

Village of Ossining: 3,378 (217)

Yorktown 3,328 (316)

Peekskill: 3,287 (219)

Cortlandt: 2,869 (207)

Somers: 1,540 (149)

Croton-on-Hudson: 638 (46)

Town of Ossining:

493 (46)

Buchanan: 203 (10)

FREE

February 9 - February 15, 2021

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 13, Issue 581



Reaching World Record Heights

Cortlandt resident Chris Spell, 25, set a Guinness World Record Sunday for the highest standing jump. Spell, a personal trainer who had set the record in July 2019 but later had it broken, leaped 67 inches high at Team Moljo Strength and Conditioning in Shrub Oak to once again claim the title.

Report on Police Reform in Ossining Completed

By Rick Pezzullo

A draft report on the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative in the Village of Ossining has been submitted with a variety of recommendations.

The panel of community leaders and residents was established last year in accordance with an Executive Order issued by Governor Andrew Cuomo in June 2020. That order required every local government entity statewide which has a police agency operating with police officers must perform a comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and develop a plan to make improvements for the purposes of addressing the particular needs of the communities.

The review was also mandated to "promote community engagement to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color."

Each panel was ordered to adopt a plan no later than April 1, 2021.

Ossining hired Matrix Consulting Group to oversee the effort, which included several public listening sessions and an online survey, in both English and Spanish, that garnered more than 800 responses.

Some of the key themes that arose were the need to address bias in policing and accountability to the public.

In the draft plan, policy recommendations made for the Ossining Police Department were: adopting bias-free policing policies; requiring the reporting of misconduct by department personnel; developing a multi-year training plan that includes greater emphasis on anti-racism, implicit bias, procedural justice, cultural competency, and crisis intervention training.

On the government side, it was suggested changing the Village Charter and Westchester County Police Act to create a new police board of commissioners that is comprised of five community members and two Board of Trustees members.

Initially, it was recommended that the

continued on page 2

Residents Request Targeted Study for Heights Hamlet

By Rick Pezzullo

The Committee for a Sound Plan for Soundview is continuing to apply pressure on the Yorktown Town Board to remove a proposed mixed-use project on the former Soundview Preparatory School site on Underhill Avenue from a potential Planned Design District Overlay Zone.

The Underhill Farms development is one of dozens of properties throughout the town that the Planning Department has

determined would be suitable to be placed in a Planned Design District Overlay Zone. The stated purpose and intent of the Planned Design District Overlay Zone, which the Town Board is currently considering, is to provide the town with "flexibility in land uses which bolster economic development by providing not only a diverse array of commercial businesses, but mixed-use residential and commercial parcels to both provide abundant job opportunities and contribute to the local tax

base."

Underhill Farms, being sought by Unicorn Contracting, is slated to consist of 165 units of market rate housing and 20,000 square feet on retail and office space.

But with 150 rental apartments and a new supermarket being proposed at the nearby Yorktown Green shopping center and a small hotel on Commerce Street, the Committee for a Sound Plan for Soundview feels the Town Board should take "a holistic approach" and do a targeted mini

study on the Yorktown Heights business hamlet.

"Take the time to do the study, put in the hard work, adjust the Comprehensive Plan and draw the Overlay Zones accordingly, with input from the community and with time for our town experts to do their due diligence—based upon what is in the long-term interest of the current and future residents of the Town of Yorktown," Dr. Regina Kaishian told the board during a meeting last week.

Planning Director John Tegeder has stressed the concept of enacting overlay zones to spur development was first proposed more than 17 years ago, and, in 2011, were adopted as part of the town's Comprehensive Plan.

"It is a perfect property to be considered for this overlay," Tegeder reiterated last week. "It begs to have the flexibility that the law as currently written will provide."

continued on page 2



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New Bathhouse, Snack Bar at Cortlandt Pool Approved

By Rick Pezzullo

If swimming is allowed at Cortlandt's only public pool this summer, residents will enjoy a new bathhouse and snack bar.

The Cortlandt Town Board approved \$3.5 million to construct a new state-of-the-art bathhouse and a snack bar at Charles Cook Pool, which town officials reluctantly chose not to open last summer as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The construction of the bathhouse, which started last year but was halted because of the pandemic, has been completed. Work on the snack bar is expected to begin soon.

"Both of these new needed amenities replace a bathhouse and snack bar built 30 years ago," said Cortlandt Supervisor Linda Puglisi. "This investment is for the next 30 to 50 years for our community."

Puglisi, who is retiring at the

end of the year, said she considers the enhancement of the pool campus as one of her major accomplishments during her 30-year tenure in improving the quality of life for Cortlandt families.

Besides the renovation of the pool several years ago, Puglisi mentioned attractions and features that have been added to the location over the years, including a water spray park, new tennis courts, a soon-to-be constructed

basketball court, a nine-hole mini golf course with town features at each hole, a ballfield and a nature trail nestled in the woods behind the Nor-West Regional Special Services building.

Meanwhile, town officials are in search of a new bus company for Cortlandt's summer day camp program, which also was cancelled last year.

The Town Board has put out a bid after the Hudson Valley Bus

Company notified Parks and Recreation Department supervisors it would be unable to continue serving the town.

Parks and Recreation Director John Palmietto told the Town Board during several work sessions in January busing "is a vital component to our camps," and without busing camp fees would have to be reduced. 2019, the town utilized 12 buses for its various camp programs.

NewYork-Presbyterian HV Hospital Opens Maternal & Newborn Care Unit

NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital recently celebrated the opening of its Maternal & Newborn Care Unit, designed to enhance the care and comfort of expectant moms and their newborns and provide the best patient experience before, during and after childbirth.

Located on the second floor of the Cortlandt-based hospital, the center features bright, private postpartum rooms, each with a bathroom, shower, and a comfortable bed for a partner to sleep that allows for family-focused support and bonding. The center also has spacious labor and delivery rooms with a soaking tub for use during labor, state-of-the-art surgical suites, a dedicated triage suite, and a Level II neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for newborns who need additional medical support.

"Our hospital has over 100 years of experience delivering babies in our community, and we're proud of that legacy of care," said Stacey Petrower, president of NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital. "The new Maternal & Newborn Care Unit reflects NewYork-Presbyterian's ongoing commitment to providing exceptional care to expectant mothers, their newborns, and the entire family."

"Our patients and their families will feel cared for every step of the way in our new unit," said Dr. Meera Garcia, division chief of general obstetrics and gynecology at NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, and



Front Row: John Chip Holmes, Director of Critical Care; Dr. Meera Garcia, Division Chief of General Obstetrics and Gynecology; Stacey Petrower, President; Naixi Li, Director of Dept of Anesthesiology; Back Row: Dr. Bobby Janda, Chief Medical Officer; Angela Gonzalez-Perez, Vice President, Operations; Dr. Matthew Cantor, OB/GYN; Ophelia M. Byers, Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer.

regional director of women's health services for NewYork-Presbyterian Medical Group Hudson Valley. "Most members of the leadership team and design committee are moms themselves, and we put the patient first in every element of the design."

The obstetrics and gynecology division has certified nurse-midwives and physicians experienced in the management of

complex deliveries, and the hospital provides a full range of services patients may need before, during and after birth, including birthing classes and breastfeeding support groups.

Patients can begin their pregnancy care with the skilled obstetricians at NewYork-Presbyterian Medical Group Hudson Valley, and those physicians follow them through their pregnancy journey. Physicians in the obstetrics and gynecology division at NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital have academic appoint-

ments in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Columbia University Irving Medical Center, a national leader in maternity care. This relationship gives mothers and their newborns access to subspecialty physicians at NewYork-Presbyterian and Columbia University Irving Medical Center. Specialty teams, including obstetricians-gynecologists, maternal-fetal medicine specialists and neonatologists, work collaboratively to provide a healthy journey from prenatal care to childbirth, newborn care and postpartum follow-up.

Draft Report on Police Reform in Completed

continued from page 1

mayor nominate and the Village Board approve appointments to the police board of commissioners. Following a first full term, the members would then be directly elected.

From an oversight perspective with the Police Department, the hiring of an outside investigator to review complaint cases was recommended, as was increasing the maximum amount of time an individual has to file a complaint from 90 to 120 days, and specifying an investigation of complaints will begin within 10 business days of the complaint being filed, and will be completed

ed within 30 days.

The next public session on the draft plan, which will focus on the African American community, is scheduled for Saturday, February 20. Another session in Spanish will be held on Saturday, February 27. Comments on the plan can be emailed to Ossining@matrixcg.net.

A revised report will be sent to the Village Board of Trustees on March 5 and a board work session on the report will be held on March 10. The report is expected to be adopted by the board on March 17 and submitted to the Governor's Office by April 1.

Residents Request Targeted Study for Heights Hamlet

continued from page 1

Supervisor Matt Slater appeared open Monday to considering the idea of a mini study.

"Clearly, the time has come to explore ways to reimagine and reinvigorate the Yorktown Heights Hamlet business district," Slater said. "Creation of the hamlet overlay district provides a practical and expeditious way to foster creative thinking on how to address an expanding problem.

The COVID-19 pandemic only adds to the urgency."

"Now is the time to vet and implement needed new approaches to assure a bright future for the town and one of its signature areas," he added. "The Town Board is committed to a fully transparent and robust review of all concepts and ideas and will rigorously follow all state and municipal environmental and planning guidelines, rules, and regulations."

COVID-19 Vaccinations to Include Residents With Co-Morbidities

By Anna Young

New York residents living with underlying health conditions ranging from cancer to diabetes will become eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine starting Monday, Feb. 15.

For the second time last week, Gov. Andrew Cuomo expanded the list of individuals allowed to be immunized, despite warning for weeks how more than seven million currently eligible New Yorkers heavily outweighs the vaccine supply the state receives from the federal government.

"We're committed to vaccinating vulnerable populations that have suffered the most as we distribute a strictly limited supply of vaccines, and people with co-morbidities are 94 percent of the state's COVID deaths," Cuomo said. "That's why we'll open eligibility to people with co-morbidities starting Feb. 15 and give hospitals the ability to use extra doses they have to address that population."

Underlying health conditions include cancer (current or in remission, including 9/11-related cancers); chronic kidney disease; pulmonary disease, including but not limited to COPD, asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, cystic fibrosis and 9/11-related illness; intellectual and developmental disabilities, including Down syndrome; heart conditions; liver disease; Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes mellitus; and pregnancy.

Also included are the immunocompromised. That list includes those with solid organ, blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, use of other immune weakening medicines or other causes; severe obesity; sickle cell disease or thalassemia; cerebrovascular disease; and neurological conditions such as Alzheimer's or dementia.

Residents with underlying conditions can register for appointments starting Sunday, Cuomo said. They must show proof of their condition through a doctor's note, signed certification or providing other evidence of a co-morbidity.

With the announcement, Cuomo warned local governments to prepare serving the new wave of eligible recipients, which makes up a reported four million people.

But Westchester County is already scrambling to ensure those already eligible are inoculated, with appointments booked for weeks and months at county facilities.

After announcing the state would see a 20 percent bump in its supply allocation in the coming weeks, Cuomo also granted local governments the power to authorize restaurant workers, taxi drivers and facilities that serve the developmentally disabled to receive the vaccine.

Currently police, firefighters, public safety workers, educators, transit personnel and people 65 and up are eligible for the vaccination. Health care workers have been eligible since the vaccine rolled out in December.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said that officials are working to survey how many people in each eligible occupational group want to be immunized to organize a system that gets them vaccinated more efficiently when the supply is available.

COVID-19 Case Update

As active coronavirus cases continue to decline in Westchester, Latimer issued concern that a mini spike could arise depending on how residents handled their Super Bowl celebrations.

Coronavirus cases in Westchester increased by 537 on Monday. There are now 8,416 active cases, a decrease of 1,862 since last week.

Latimer said that sometime with the next week, the county will surpass 100,000 people who have tested positive since last year. That would represent about 10 percent of Westchester's population have tested positive for COVID-19 at some point.

The county's daily positivity rate is 5.56 percent, with 9,660 tests administered Saturday. Overall, more than 1.86 million COVID-19 tests have been dispensed in Westchester since March.

The county reported five more deaths on Monday, bringing the COVID-19-related death toll to 1,976. Over the last week there have been 59 virus deaths, with 301 fatalities since Jan. 1.

As of Saturday, there are 491 virus patients

in Westchester hospitals, a 10 percent decrease from two weeks ago, Latimer said.

"We're hopeful that this slight downward trend will continue. We will see what the aftermath of Super Bowl Sunday is," Latimer said. "We hope that people used common sense in their gatherings, but we'll see if there is a spike that follows and if it reverses this downward trend."

The county government has directly administered 38,668 vaccines to eligible residents, with 31,453 individuals inoculated since the County Center became a distribution site on Jan. 13. The county health department has immunized 6,344 people and 560 people have been inoculated at Westchester Community College.

Putnam County's total caseload reached 7,625, with 33 additional positive cases recorded on Monday. The county's daily

positivity rate is 4.10 percent, with 805 tests administered on Saturday.

Putnam currently has 621 active cases, a decrease of 316 over last week.

There have been 82 coronavirus-related deaths in Putnam County since March, state data shows. One person died from the virus last week, with 15 fatalities in 2021.

Statewide there were 8,448 new positive cases on Monday, with the daily positivity rate clocking in at 4.28 percent.

There were 143 additional COVID-19-related fatalities, bringing the death toll to 36,339.

Statewide hospitalizations stood at 7,716, a decrease of 67 over the previous day. Across New York there have been 1,479,220 positive coronavirus cases since the start of the pandemic.

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Harckham Small Business Grant Program Looks to Help Small Owners

By Martin Wilbur

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) introduced legislation Monday to create an emergency small business grant program that would set aside up to \$100 million in federal disaster relief funds to help business owners imperiled by the pandemic.

The new bill would use a fraction of the next coronavirus pandemic disaster relief funds that Congress and the Biden administration are expected to disburse to the states. Gov. Andrew Cuomo has requested New York receive \$15 billion.

Once New York receives the federal funds, Harckham's proposal would authorize the state to establish the parameters for the grant program. The legislation would focus on businesses that had been asked by the state to remain closed during the pandemic, according to the proposed measure.

"The financial situation for small businesses across the state right now is dire, and we cannot wait any longer to give them the help they need to survive," Harckham said. "Giving businesses access to emergency grants so they can pay bills and remain open is a must."

Harckham said that not only would the legislation, which was introduced in the Assembly by Assemblyman Steven Otis (D-Rye), save thousands of businesses but it would protect the jobs for thousands more New Yorkers.

It is unknown at this time the maximum size a business can be to be eligible for participation in the program or what would happen if New



State Sen. Peter Harckham with Nick Crecco, who co-owns Villa Barone Hilltop Manor in Mahopac with his brother John, in the catering hall's empty ballroom.

York State receives less than the requested \$15 billion.

The legislation is part of a package that includes two previously introduced bills that will offer small businesses and nonprofit organizations additional financial resources to help keep them going while grappling with the financial devastation caused by the pandemic.

The first bill would establish a state

of emergency loan program and will also guarantee loan repayment to the financial institutions that eligible small businesses statewide have been using for help.

A second bill would allow small businesses and small landlords to defer certain taxes during the COVID-19 state of emergency and repay those expenses through an installment plan later on.

For small businesses that have been decimated by the mandated shutdown through policies designed to protect public health, the need for help is dire. John Crecco, who co-owns Villa Barone Hilltop Manor, a Mahopac catering hall, with his brother Nick, said that without help from the state and federal government very soon there may not be a way for them to survive much longer.

Crecco said there has been no chance for him to operate for nearly an entire year because New York State prohibits gatherings of more than 50 people. Virtually all of Village Barone's business, much like any caterer, is derived from parties of more than 50 guests.

During the past year, he has taken out loans totaling about \$750,000 to try and stay afloat, but until now few have seemed to care, Crecco said. He's hoping that with the proposal from the state and last week's introduction of the federal RESTAURANTS Act in Congress, that perhaps they can survive.

Property taxes, mortgage and electric costs about \$50,000 a month. Villa Barone laid off all of its 75 employees at the outset of the pandemic.

"I'm doing everything in my power, from selling my house to selling everything I own because I believe my business is a much-needed business in Mahopac," Crecco said. "I've been there 20 years growing and growing and growing, so I'm betting everything I own and there's not much left on staying in business, but at this point there's no hope."

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Republican Lawmakers Pressure Cuomo on Nursing Home Death Data

By Martin Wilbur

Republican state lawmakers are demanding that Gov. Andrew Cuomo release all data involving COVID-19-related nursing home deaths following the recent attorney general inquiry that revealed fatalities may have been grossly underreported.

A group of GOP legislators, including state Sen. Sue Serino (R-Hyde Park) and Assemblyman Kevin Byrne (R-Mahopac), last week called on Democrats who control the legislature and its appropriate committees to agree to an independent commission with subpoena powers if the governor's office or Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker fail to provide the information being sought.

On Jan. 28, New York Attorney General Letitia James released a report stating that the state Department of Health may have undercounted nursing home COVID-19 deaths by as much as 50 percent. In many instances, nursing home residents who fell seriously ill from the virus were transferred to hospitals, where they died but that data was not recorded in the nursing home fatality total.

The Department of Health data reported at least 6,645 nursing home resident deaths in New York State as of Nov. 16, 2020, with the vast majority of those (6,420) occurring by Aug. 3.

"This is a historic pandemic and no one was asking for perfection, but when you make a mistake, you have to admit it to start doing better," Serino said in a live-streamed press conference. "We have a chance to do right by these New Yorkers, but we need partners in

the (legislative) majority to do that. Now is the time."

Another key issue Republican legislators want investigated is the rationale behind Cuomo issuing his Mar. 25, 2020, order that required the admission of COVID-19-positive residents to nursing homes. Serino said not only must documents from the governor's and health commissioner's offices be turned over to the legislature, but e-mails, texts and any correspondence that was sent or received by Cuomo and Zucker must be examined.

Other issues that James' report uncovered were the failure by facilities to comply with infection control protocols, thus placing residents at greater risk; facilities with lower staffing ratings from the U.S. Medicaid and Medicare Services experiencing higher COVID-19 infection rates; and inadequate personal protection equipment and a lack of testing in the pandemic's early stages, thereby putting residents in greater danger.

The attorney general's report used a sample of data from 62 nursing homes, about 10 percent of the state's total.

Byrne said the report highlighted many of the concerns voiced not only by his colleagues but by thousands of families across the state who lost relatives in nursing homes during the pandemic or went months without seeing their loved ones.

Last summer the legislature held hearings into the nursing home death toll but about six months later no questions have been answered, Byrne said. He added that legislators demanding answers have been portrayed as "ugly" and "political" by Cuomo

and his surrogates but they will not rest until the information that has been sought has been delivered.

"The AG's report went over many different things, including the state and federal response into COVID-19 in nursing homes," Byrne said. "But one of the most significant things that it did was it validated our concerns that we've been voicing for many, many months."

Last Wednesday's press conference also featured Cindy Lizzi and her brothers Phil and Ted Minnisale, who lost their 93-year-old mother, Agnes, last April, a resident of Teresian House Center for the Elderly in Albany.

"We felt totally out of control and we felt no one was listening to us, including the nursing home" Lizzi said.

Two local Democratic legislators said they

are also deeply troubled by the governor's response to the nursing home deaths but are willing to wait for the scheduled Feb. 25 appearance by Zucker before the legislature before taking additional action.

State Sen. Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers) and Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) said they expect the information to be delivered by that date.

"With respect to nursing home deaths, get the data, let's analyze and decide how to move forward," Mayer said. "That to me is the responsible way. I'm not in a partisan fight, I'm in a fight for my constituents to get the information they need."

The investigation by the attorney general's office into the issue is continuing.

All Smiles

This February, Touro Dental Health in Hawthorne will celebrate its annual Give Kids a Smile with a variety of fun virtual programs to educate children and teens on the importance of good oral hygiene. From Feb. 16-26, youngsters 16 and under can also receive free dental screenings, cleanings, x-rays, fluoride, sealants and some preventative restorations, including fillings, at Touro Dental Health. Space is limited and exclusions may apply. Multiple appointments may be required to complete treatment. To schedule an appointment for free dental care, call 914-594-2700 or visit www.dental.touro.edu/GKAS.



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Jan. 29: A Rock Hill Road resident reported at 11:24 a.m. being notified via mail that an unknown person has filed for unemployment in his name in the states of Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Jan. 31: At 11:40 a.m., there was a report of a 61-year-old man who swallowed a vitamin earlier this morning, which appears to still be lodged in his throat causing him difficulty breathing. The caller advised that her husband is conscious and alert at this time. The call was transferred to County Fire Control. The responding officer stated that the subject was transported by Armonk Fire Department to Northern Westchester Hospital.

Jan. 31: A passerby arrived at headquarters at 12:51 p.m. to inform officers of three to five kids observed skating on the ice at Wampus Pond. County police were dispatched to respond. The skaters were directed off the ice.

State Police/Somers

Jan. 31: Benjamin J. Deurso, 26, of Somers, was arrested and charged with two counts of second-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a Class A-II felony, first-degree possession of marijuana, a Class C felony, three counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and second-degree

criminal use of drug paraphernalia, both Class A misdemeanors. At about 11:45 p.m., troopers stopped a 2020 Chevrolet Equinox on I-684 in Bedford for a vehicle and traffic violation. Deurso, the driver, was found to be in possession of about 2.4 grams of Lysergic acid diethylamide, 4.1 pounds of psilocybin mushrooms, 15.9 pounds of marijuana, boxes of THC edibles and oil and \$4,000 in cash. He was issued an appearance ticket returnable to Town of Bedford Court on Feb. 17.

Putnam Sheriff's Department

Jan. 20: At 8:40 a.m., in the vicinity of Route 6 and Simpson Road in Carmel, Deputy Shane Rossiter pulled over a 2008 Dodge Charger for an expired inspection. Upon further investigation, it was determined that the driver, Todd Carmody, 39, possessed cocaine, Suboxone and marijuana. Carmody was charged with two misdemeanor counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and unlawful possession of marijuana. He was also issued a summons for an uninspected vehicle. Carmody was issued an appearance ticket for the Town of Southeast Court on Feb. 26.

Jan. 23: Deputy Matthew Shelters discovered a vehicle stopped in the middle of Route 6 in the Town of Southeast, blocking the south bound lane of traffic, at about 10:35 p.m. Upon further investigation, the



State troopers stand with the cache of drugs and illegal substances and paraphernalia they seized from a car they pulled over on I-684 on Jan. 31.

deputy determined that the driver, Perfecto Lopez-Garcia, 39, was the sole occupant of the vehicle. Shelters approached Lopez-Garcia and based on his observations suspected that he was intoxicated. Further

investigation revealed that Lopez-Garcia had a blood-alcohol content of .11. He was arrested and charged with two Driving While Intoxicated misdemeanor counts and two traffic violations.

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No. Castle Hearing to Open on Fewer Affordable Units at Old Lumberyard

By Martin Wilbur

The North Castle Town Board will hold a public hearing Wednesday evening on a proposed local law that would reduce the percentage of affordable housing units for a revised condominium project at the old lumberyard site in Armonk.

Town officials are weighing whether to allow developer Michael Fareri to provide 10 percent affordable housing units instead of 20 percent for his reconstituted proposal at 162 Bedford Rd. In exchange for lowering the density from 36 to 22 units, he would be required to provide two units of affordable housing rather than six.

However, Fareri has until June 30, 2022, to complete construction to be able to obtain the zoning text amendment unless there are extenuating circumstances. The town approved the 36-unit plan more than five years ago, but Fareri then balked at complying with the 20 percent requirement, saying it was financially impractical for him to build the project.

Most of the Town Board signaled that it is prepared to approve the text amendment that would lower the affordable housing requirement in the R-MF-SS zone that is at the site, which is a special residential multifamily senior housing designation. The town's affordable housing ordinance requires 10 percent on all other residential parcels throughout North Castle.

Supervisor Michael Schiliro said he was comfortable with what is in the proposed text change.

"The responsibility is on the applicant to get the project finished by that date, or pretty close to being finished," Schiliro said. "But we are serious about that date."

Should Fareri receive the approval from the Town Board, he would still need subdivision and a revised site plan approval from the Planning Board. He said he hoped to begin site work by next month to be able to construct the building by November, then work in the interior of the structure during next winter to make the deadline.

However, that would require quick approvals from both boards and a building permit from the Building Department.

"Once I get in the ground, the faster I get the job completed, the better it is for the town and certainly better for me," Fareri said.

"If you're giving me a timeframe of 16 months to build 22 units, we're going to have to work together to get the project done in a fast-track manner," he later added.

At the Town Board's last meeting, Fareri verbally sparred with Councilman Jose Berra who has grown impatient with the developer's pledges to build the project while constantly seeking changes.

Berra told Fareri that the change "works better when there's a lot of trust."



Armonk developer Michael Fareri is hoping the North Castle Town Board will approve a zoning text amendment that would allow him to reduce the percentage of affordable units for his proposed condominium project from 20 to 10 percent.

The comment irked Fareri who repeatedly asked Berra whether he didn't trust him.

"I have built in this town for 50 years," he said. "I have an impeccable reputation. 'I've built just about every condominium in this town and probably an additional 100 houses, and never once did I not complete

a job."

But Berra reiterated previous comments he made, calling the text change "misguided." He said while the main motivation for Fareri has been economic, the realities of the housing market in the area have changed over the past year.

"We know that pricing has gone up for housing in this area since COVID," Berra said. "So leave it at that, Mike, no offense intended. I don't want to rehash old histories (but) that's my view and I'm trying to look out for my town just like everybody else is on the board."

Councilwoman Barbara DiGiacinto said that the board should clarify what would constitute close enough to being finished with construction for Fareri to avoid losing the proposed affordable housing unit reduction. She said it would make sense for Fareri to start construction and dawdle.

Schiliro said the town will consult with Building Inspector Robert Melillo to make sure everyone's in agreement.

"We want this project built and completed and we know there's a certain amount of time that's needed to do it," Schiliro said. "We are focused on you getting it done as quickly as you can, but we'll make sure we're covering all our bases before the hearing."

The public hearing is part of Wednesday's North Castle Town Board meeting that begins at 7:30 p.m.

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Tip #1: Create a space in your home where you can start putting items you no longer want or need.

Tip #2: Using 4 Boxes or Bins Method

- ◆ **Box 1: Trash** - Any items you want to get rid of that aren't worth donating or selling.
- ◆ **Box 2: Give Away/Sell** - Items that are still in OK condition, but that your household could do without - like old books, toys.
- ◆ **Box 3: Storage** - Things that you can't or don't want to get rid of, but don't need on a day-to-day basis (seasonal decorations).
- ◆ **Box 4: Put Away** - Any items that need to be kept in your house, but relocated to their proper place.

Tip #3: Start with something easy. You will feel a sense of accomplishment and be motivated to do more.

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Legal Notice

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

COMBINED NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION, NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE OF DRAFT ENVIRONMEN- TAL IMPACT STATEMENT, NOTICE OF PUBLIC COM- MENT HEARING AND PUB- LIC COMMENT PERIOD

APPLICANT: New York City
Department of Environmental
Protection (NYCDEP) 59-17
Junction Blvd. Flushing, NY
11373

NYSDEC APPLICATIONS AND ID NUMBERS:

Article 17, State Pollutant Dis-
charge Elimination System (SP-
DES) Permit Modification DEC
#3-9909-00023/00006 (SPDES #
NY)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

A Draft Environmental Impact
Statement (Draft EIS) was pre-
pared to evaluate the proposed
modification of NYCDEP's
Catskill Aqueduct Influent
Chamber State Pollutant Dis-
charge Elimination System Per-
mit (Catalum SPDES Permit).
An Order on Consent (NYS-
DEC Case No. D007-001-11.01)
was executed by the New York
State Department of Environ-
mental Conservation (NYS-
DEC) on October 4, 2013, and
was amended in 2018 (2018
Modification) and in 2020 (2020
Modification) (collectively as
modified, the Consent Order).
Among other provisions, the
Consent Order includes specif-
ic requirements and timeframes
for carrying out a State Envi-
ronmental Quality Review Act
review, including the prepara-
tion of an EIS for the Proposed
Action (a modification of the
Catalum SPDES Permit). Pur-
suant to the Consent Order, the
Proposed Action would modify
the Catalum SPDES Permit to
incorporate the following:

1. Turbidity control measures,
including operation of Ashokan

Reservoir in accordance with
the Interim Ashokan Release
Protocol (IRP); and

2. Delay of dredging accumu-
lated material (alum floc) from
Kensico Reservoir until the com-
pletion of certain infrastructure
projects.

Implementation of the turbidi-
ty control measures analyzed in
the Draft EIS would allow NY-
CDEP to continue to provide
reliable, clean, and safe drinking
water while reducing reliance on
chemical treatment of the water
supply, specifically the use of
alum, during episodic turbidity
events.

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT (SEQRA):

The project is a Type I Action
as designated by 6 NYCRR
§617.4(b)(6)(i). The Consent
Order required the preparation
of a Draft EIS. A Draft EIS has
been prepared and the NYSDEC,
as lead agency, has determined
that the Draft EIS is adequate
for public review and comment.
As noted below, written public
comments will be accepted on
the Draft EIS until March 16,
2021. In addition, pursuant to 6
NYCRR §617.9(a)(4), NYSDEC
has made the determination to
hold a public comment hearing,
the details of which are provid-
ed below in the legislative public
comment hearing section of this
notice.

NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION:

The NYSDEC has determined
that the permit application filed
for the proposed SPDES permit
modification is complete for
purposes of further NYSDEC
review and public comment
pursuant to the Uniform Pro-
cedures Act (UPA) 6 NYCRR
§621.7. NYSDEC permit juris-
diction includes the State Pol-
lutant Discharge Elimination
System (SPDES) permit (ECL
Article 17). As noted below,
written public comments will
also be accepted on the applica-
tion and Draft SPDES Permit,

including the Proposed Revised
Operating Protocol and Revised
Monitoring Plan, until March
16, 2021.

ADDITIONAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS:

State Historic Preservation Act
("SHPA") Determination:
The New York State Office of
Parks, Recreation, and Historic
Preservation (NYSOPRHP) was
consulted and their determina-
tion indicated that the Proposed
Action would have no impact
on archaeological or historic re-
sources within the study area.

Coastal Zone Management: This
project is not located in a Coast-
al Management Area and, there-
fore, is not subject to the Water-
front Revitalization and Coastal
Resources Act.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:

The Draft EIS, which includes
permit application materials
are available for public review
on the internet at the following
websites: NYCDEP Website:
[https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dep/
about/catskill-influent-chamber/
page](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dep/about/catskill-influent-chamber/page) NYSDEC Website: [https://
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/79771.
html](https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/79771.html). Hard Copies of these
documents can also be request-
ed from NYCDEP by emailing
catalumeis@dep.nyc.gov or
calling 718-595-4614.

LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING:

A legislative public comment
hearing on the permit applica-
tion and the Draft EIS will be
held before Administrative Law
Judge (ALJ) Michele M. Stefa-
nucci to receive unsworn state-
ments from the public at 4:00
P.M. on Wednesday, March 3,
2021, through the Webex Events
electronic webinar platform. All
persons, organizations, corpo-
rations or government agencies
that may be affected by the pro-
posed project are invited to at-
tend the legislative public com-
ment hearing and to submit oral
comments on the Draft EIS, ap-
plications and draft permits. In-
structions on how to "join" the

hearing webinar and provide an
oral statement may be accessed
at the NYSDEC webpage for the
Ashokan Reservoir at [https://
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/79771.
html](https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/79771.html). Persons who wish to re-
ceive the instructions by mail
or telephone may call the NYS-
DEC at 518- 402-9003. Please
provide your first and last name,
address, and telephone num-
ber and reference the NYCDEP
Catalum SPDES Permit pub-
lic comment hearing. The ALJ
may restrict the time available
for each person, to ensure that
all persons will have an oppor-
tunity to be heard. It is recom-
mended that lengthy comments
be summarized at the hearing
and submitted in writing as in-
dicated below. Equal weight will
be given to both oral and written
comments.

Interpreter services shall be
made available to deaf persons,
and English language translator
service shall be made available
to persons with limited En-
glish-language proficiency, at no
charge upon written request to
the ALJ identified above, at least
ten (10) business days prior to
the hearing. The written request
must be addressed to ALJ Stefa-
nucci, NYSDEC Office of Hear-
ings and Mediation Services, 625
Broadway, 1st Floor, Albany, NY
12233-1550 or emailed to ALJ
Stefanucci at ohms@dec.ny.gov.

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS:

All interested parties may
submit written comment
concerning the Draft EIS and
permit applications to the DEC
Contact Person listed below by
March 16, 2021. Comments sent
by regular mail must be post-
marked no later than March 16,
2021. E-mail comments must be
received by 5:00 p.m. March 16,
2021.

DEC CONTACT PERSON:

**Kristen Cady-Poulin, Environ-
mental Analyst, 625 Broadway,
Albany, NY 12233, Phone: 518-
402-9167, E-mail [DEPPermit-
ting@dec.ny.gov](mailto:DEPPermitting@dec.ny.gov)**

White Plains Music Therapist Helps Others By Writing Anthem for Change

By Sophia Spiegel

It took just one conversation in a New York City subway station for White Plains resident Donald Stevens to develop an even greater appreciation for music and the positive impact it can have on others.

Stevens recently created a new anthem for change while participating in the online show “Date While You Wait.”

Set in New York City subway stations, this social experiment was created by Thomas Knox, who invites commuters to play board games while they wait on the platform for their train. He connects with busy New Yorkers on a more intimate level to help empower personal connections.

In October, Stevens, a White Plains resident who works at the Music Conservatory of Westchester, appeared on the show and talked with Knox about his experiences working with children and adults with disabilities.

In the midst of their conversation, Stevens began creating what would be an original song, “You Can Change the World.” Within moments, Knox began singing along with Stevens, as the two connected over the joyous tune that was inspired by their conversation.

“I was honored to do this with him. It’s great that he’s giving hope through music,” Knox said.

After the episode was filmed, “Date While You Wait” Executive Producer David Harris Katz encouraged Stevens to

finish the song and shoot a music video to celebrate the premise of the show and the positive impact one conversation between strangers can have on the world.

“In our world of distance and isolation, the message of personal connection and the reminder that we all have the power to make positive change rings out,” said Lisa Sandagata, director of outreach services of the Music Therapy Institute at the Music Conservatory of Westchester.

Stevens said even if the change isn’t monumental, it can potentially alter a person’s life for the better, which in turn, can change another life.

Growing up in White Plains, Stevens was always surrounded by music. His father is a musician and singer, his three sisters are all singers and he even has family members in England who are pop stars.

“Music runs real deep in our family, so I have been around music and playing in church my whole life,” said Stevens, one of the few Black American men to earn a master’s degree in music therapy from New York University.

Stevens was inspired to become a music therapist after serving as a mental health worker at New York-Presbyterian Hospital.

As a music therapist, Stevens works to create an environment that is comfortable for his students, clients and patients so that they can freely express themselves. Over the past 10 years, he has worked in



Donald Stevens, a music therapist at the Music Conservatory of Westchester, created a new anthem for change called “You Can Change the World.”

Heroes program. Many of the veterans he serves suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and use music therapy to help with their cognitive, psychological and physical recovery.

“It’s not just the music that we talk about, we talk about life and how we can apply it,” Stevens explained. “I understand the differences between people, have conversations with them, and then turn it into a song, which is one of my philosophies that every conversation is a song.”

The transition to virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has posed extensive challenges for Stevens’ work, which he acknowledges is more effective in person. Stevens said he hopes he can provide his students and clients with a positive way to cope with the pandemic’s stress. The world needs more hope than ever right now, which is his motivation to create an album this year that will be focused on hope and confidence, he said.

Stevens’ one conversation with Knox changed his life. On May 3, Stevens will be performing virtually with The New York Songwriters Circle, a community of songwriters who collaborate by sharing and performing their music. He will be singing “You Can Change the World” and two other songs he has written.

“Whatever you have in mind to do, whatever your passion is, whatever your talent is, use it because whatever you have is going to change the world,” Stevens said.

numerous local school districts, engaging weekly with more than 120 students from elementary school to high school. Stevens works closely with teachers, speech pathologists and other medical professionals to help patients cope through music.

He also works with military veterans in the tristate area through the Healing Our



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Obituaries

Eleanor Kwap

Eleanor Kwap, 94, of Brewster died Feb. 1.

Kwap was born and raised in Yonkers to Stephen and Rose Kranko on Apr. 27, 1926.

After graduation from Yonkers High School of Commerce, she worked as a secretary. Theodore and Eleanor married in 1950. They moved to Brewster with their children, Patricia and Richard, in 1958.

Eleanor's avocation was gardening and

neighbors could often find her outside in her garden. She had a smile and kind word for all she knew. For 30 years she volunteered at Putnam Hospital's Brewster Eagle Eye Thrift Store. Eleanor worked at Grolier Educational Corp. in Danbury.

Candlewood Lake, Conn. was a big part of their family's life. For over 35 years, they were members of the Candlewood Power Squadron and Danbury Yacht Club. Eleanor and Theodore enjoyed travel with the Southeast Seniors and IBM where

Theodore worked. She was a member of the Brewster Senior Center. They enjoyed wintering in Florida after Theodore retired.

The family wishes to thank all her aides and neighbors for her care at home. Eleanor is predeceased by husband, Theodore; son Richard, her sister, Florence O'Connell; brother-in-law Joseph O'Connell; and recently nephew Warren O'Connell. She is survived by her daughter Patricia (Bruce) Kemble; granddaughter Cheryl (Eric) Kozlowski of New Fairfield, Conn.; grandson David Kemble of North Carolina; great-grandchildren Shawn Kemble and Emma, Abigail and Leah Kozlowski; daughter-in-law Kathy Feeney Kwap; and cousins in Connecticut.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Putnam Hospital, Volunteer Office, 670 Stoneleigh Ave., Carmel, N.Y. 10512.

Visitation is Wednesday, Feb. 10 at Beecher Funeral Home in Brewster from 4 to 8 p.m. A funeral service will be held on Thursday, Feb. 11 at St. Lawrence O'Toole Church in Brewster at 10 a.m.



Eleanor Kwap

Angela Ericson

Angela F. Ericson (nee Cammarasana), 84, of Dingmans Ferry, Pa. passed away on Feb. 2 at St. Clare's Dover Hospital in Dover, N.J.

Angela graduated from Boys and Girls High School in Brooklyn and attended Queens College, majoring in accounting. She began her career at Blue Cross Blue Shield in New York City, where she was a head administrator for claims. She became a stay-at-home mom in 1970 and took some part-time positions outside of the home. In Ozone Park, Queens, she worked at Markette, a variety store, for a number of years before moving to Dingmans Ferry, where she worked as a cashier at Weis Supermarket for a short time. She loved interacting with customers and thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it.

The daughter of the late Dorothea (Agate) and Matteo Cammarasana, Ericson was born on May 29, 1936. She met her husband,

Eugene, on a blind date on June 26, 1965, and they were married on Nov. 6, 1965. Her husband predeceased her on Nov. 18, 2020, at the age of 89.

She was the loving mother to Loretta (her spouse, Chris) Marengo of Pleasantville and Steven (his spouse, Jackie) Ericson and Robert Ericson, both of Dingmans Ferry. She is also survived by her grandchildren Shannon, Megan, Jessica, Isabella and Makayla and grand-dog, Snickers.

The family received friends on Feb. 8 at Beecher Flocks Funeral Home in Pleasantville. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Holy Innocents R.C. Church on Feb. 9 at 10 a.m. Burial followed at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Coram, N.Y.

Donations to her memory may be made to the American Diabetes Association at <https://www.diabetes.org>.

Thomas Pomposello Sr.

It is with love and great sadness that the family of Thomas J. Pomposello Sr. announces his passing on Feb. 5 at the age of 73.

Tom was a longtime Westchester resident and a retired ironworker from Local 580 with more than 30 years on the job.

The youngest son of Concetta Pomposello (née Bellafatto) and Arthur Pomposello Sr., Tom was born on Sept. 3, 1947, in New York City. Growing up in the Bronx, he spent his childhood cheering on Mickey Mantle's Yankees, often occupying the bleachers as the team won eight World Series titles in the 1950s and '60s. Before settling down and starting his career and family, Tom served his country in the U.S. Army.

In addition to baseball, Tom also had a passion for hockey, which included a stint moonlighting on the New York Rangers' equipment staff in the 1970s. Year in and year out, he watched hundreds of NHL games per season, not supporting any one favorite team in particular but always rooting for a well-played game on the ice.

He made it a point to travel the world throughout his life, exploring places such as

Italy, Egypt, Israel and the Caribbean, often alongside family members. In later years, Tom developed an appreciation for golf, dancing, wine and cigars, and he served as captain for the annual Feast of San Gennaro in Yorktown Heights.

Tom is survived by his eldest brother, Arthur Pomposello Jr., of New York City, as well as his children, Laura Walz of Hughsonville, Dutchess County, and her husband, John, Thomas J. Pomposello Jr. of Mohegan Lake, Michael Pomposello of Pleasantville and Tara Pomposello of Peekskill; three grandchildren, Nicholas Walz of Fishkill, Ryan Walz of Croton-on-Hudson and Cody Pomposello of Yorktown Heights; two great-grandchildren, Bianca Walz and Aidan Walz; and many extended family members who knew Tom in life to be gregarious at holidays and get-togethers with those he loved, and rarely at a loss for words.

He is also survived by his lifelong best friend, Craig Williams, as well as his loving companion, Sylvia Adorno, affectionately referred to as "Cha Cha," and his little four-legged buddy JayB ("Fuzzy").

State Police Nab Cortlandt Man in Montrose Burglary

A Cortlandt man was arrested last week after breaking into a Montrose home while the residents were sleeping.

Darius McCallop, 32, was charged by state police on Jan. 27 with second-degree burglary and fourth-degree criminal possession of stolen property, both felonies.

Troopers were dispatched to a home on James Street at 3:07 a.m. on that date after the occupants were awakened by

the sounds of a break-in and dialed 911. McCallop fled the residence and was tracked by the responding troopers in the freshly fallen snow.

He was located on Catherine Street and was found to be in possession of a stolen wallet containing about \$782.

McCallop was arraigned in Town of Cortlandt Court and remanded to Westchester County Jail without bail.

—Rick Pezzullo



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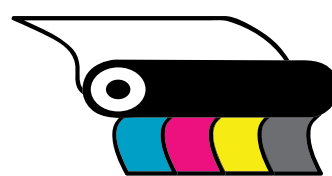
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It's Elementary: Bedford School Mentor Program Persists in Pandemic

By Lindsay Emery

Tommy Rozgonyi is following in his brother's footsteps by leading student mentorship program It's Elementary – Giving Back to Where It All Started.

But with distanced learning amid COVID-19 restrictions, the program has had to adapt and become a fully virtual experience.

The Bedford School District program, now in its sixth year, provides guidance and friendship to children who need extra support as they navigate their way through the primary grades. The program pairs Fox Lane High School mentors with children in grades 2-5 at Mount Kisco Elementary School, and within the past two years, Bedford Hills Elementary School.

Despite the absence of in-person meetings, Rozgonyi adjusted many of the activities so that they could be completed in the young students' homes. Games like scavenger hunts were altered so the children could find all the objects in their house instead of at school, he said.

"I think they need it more now than ever with the pandemic being especially hard on students," Rozgonyi said. "A lot of them are fully remote and don't go into school so they don't have a lot of social interaction, so we provide a good deal of that for them."

Since its inception, It's Elementary has grown from seven students to more than 40 mentors and mentees. Rozgonyi said he and the other high school mentors plan the 30-minute sessions every month.

Mount Kisco Elementary School Assistant Principal Angelique Johnson ensures that everybody has the link for the Google Meet, since the students can't gather on school grounds due to coronavirus restrictions.

Johnson, who has seen the program's development, praised the commitment from the Rozgonyi family and the mission that they set out to accomplish from the outset.

"Because they had a vision for a mentor program, where the kids from high school could give back to Mount Kisco, and that's still happening," she said.

Johnson said the program is important because it provides a sense of pride to the students, noting an instance where an elementary school student expressed enthusiasm to reach high school so they could become a mentor one day.

"I can't say enough about the high school students," Johnson said. "They love working with our students and they've built some great relationships with them and they encourage them and they support them and I do guide them."

The program's framework allows for



ANGELIQUE JOHNSON PHOTO

A group of Mount Kisco Elementary School students with their mentors from Fox Lane High School. The program has had to adapt through the pandemic as the students must now connect virtually.

both the mentors and the younger children to determine what is needed at any given time, whether that be a fun activity or just

someone to talk to.

Before the pandemic, the program developed connections through one-on-one time and interpersonal team building. Now, previous physical outlets like playing sports outside are replaced with traditional games with a twist, such as online charades.

However, Rozgonyi is optimistic the mentors will get to meet their mentees in the spring and gather outside with masks while socially distanced. He's also hopeful of a future where in-person activities can resume without issue.

"Hopefully next year, we'll be able to do all the fun things, like building gingerbread houses is one of the (activities) they loved," Rozgonyi said.

Despite the challenges, Rozgonyi said It's Elementary is filling a void that many students have been missing since last March.

"During the pandemic, I would say at least in my experience, it's definitely much harder to get the social interaction that we used to have," Rozgonyi said. "Because a lot of kids aren't going into school when I go in, I don't see many friends. So I'm sure the kids are feeling the same way, but it's really nice to get the kids together to have some friends to talk to consistently after school."

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Guest Column

Victory Gardens: A Great Food Source That Helps Build Community

By Emil Moussa

Whether you enjoy the winter season or not, spring is around the corner. Because of this, the gardener must always have a plan of action to tackle the necessities of having a successful harvest of his or her goods and bounty from the earth.

With that being said, I recently started to think about gardening as a whole. Although I am a self-admitted novice at this fun and endearing hobby, I feel that the garden is one of the great assets one can have when residing in suburbia.

I also started to think about the interesting history of the Victory Garden, what it means and what it stands for, and if you don't have one already, why you should create your own version of the Victory Garden.

Victory Gardens are truly what they are – a garden to help declare victory. The concept has been around since World War I and continued into the second World War when foods were rationed. I couldn't think of a more appropriate time to revive such a great idea.

The world we live in now has seen a stark increase in the cost of food, especially the ones that are better for us while the healthier foods remain cheaper to buy and consume. What's been going on the past year has also played out on our television screens – long lines across America for those that, through no fault of their own, have fallen into despair as the current crisis has been trying the

American spirit.

Times were difficult enough with the long economic recovery following the Great Recession; it's now gotten worse the past year and the cracks of the facade of American prosperity are showing for the world to see. Who would have thought that one of the richest, most powerful, freedom loving people on Earth could succumb to such a tragic fate? Who would have guessed that a continental power, let alone a global power, could see food lines stretch across our great cities? No one, that's who.

Let's take care of one another. With all that's happening in our world right now, a Victory Garden is but a small contribution you can make for the greater good. By no means will it solve all our problems. But it's something we can do to help us contribute in a sort of national service (national in the scope of your local community at least).

You can start one of your own growing herbs and nutritious fruits and vegetables. Use it as an opportunity to give yourself and your family some nutritious foods in your diet. Take the kids out to work on it so they can actually know where their food comes from and a little extra work outside might actually be good for them. Nothing is a better confidence booster than seeing the fruits of your labor literally come out and knowing that it was because of you.

Use the excess to give or share with your neighbors, some you may not even know. This is how we build a community. We live so close together but remain so far apart. This is but a small gesture in

rebuilding our suburban communities.

Perhaps your town has vacant lots and unused land. Why keep them vacant? What good does the empty land do? Why wait for a developer to come along and put another box store where we don't need, and for that matter, even want one?

Create a group of fellow citizens to approach your local government to turn these once vacant lots into flourishing gardens that the community owns. A small piece of land everyone can work on and produce some extra food for themselves. Give the excess food to a local food pantry, letting your fellow citizens know that they are not forgotten and they shan't be lost.

Some of us have forgotten how to take care of one another in this country. This is an effort to remind us of who we are. The Victory Garden is a way to bring back a uniquely American idea of growing one's own food source in a patriotic and community-oriented way while still remaining an individualistic, self-reliant person.

I would encourage you to, at the very least, consider this idea and find a path to creating a Victory Garden that best fits you and your community. No two Victory Gardens will be the same, but they will have the same purpose.

Happy gardening!

Emil Moussa is a public school teacher and is a member of the Town of Cortlandt Conservation Advisory Council.

Letter to the Editor

Have Your Say on Putnam Police Reform on February 17

On June 12, 2020, Gov. Cuomo issued an executive order requiring a Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative for all police jurisdictions in New York state. The stated purpose of the order is to "address racial bias and disproportionate policing in communities of color," recognizing that there has been a "long and painful history in New York State of discrimination and mistreatment of Black and African-American citizens."

In response, Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell created a lead panel of legislators, county employees and police officers in early August, and later formed nine subgroups from a pool of applicants. These subgroups only included two groups focused on people of color. The groups were invited to form in November with a January deadline for proposals.

The limited timeframe provided to formulate recommendations did not allow for a complete review. The resulting Draft Police Policy Comprehensive Review released by the county (available at <https://www.putnamcountyny.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Putnam-County-Police-Policy-Comprehensive-Review.pdf>)

contains contradicting recommendations and needs more clarity on implementation. The Draft Police Policy Comprehensive Review includes a Stakeholder Addendum explaining our views on page 31.

In an acknowledgement of this, the county recently met with the People of Color Subcommittee and offered to allow a permanent, community-appointed Public Accountability Committee composed primarily of people of color to provide ongoing input on policing throughout Putnam County.

This committee should be provided access to materials reviewed by the Protective Services and other relevant committees of the legislature and the Sheriff's Department and invited into the decision-making process on substantive issues of policing in order to foster the mandated collaboration with the community.

On Feb. 17, Putnam County will hold the first public meeting of the Police Policy Review Panel in which the broader community will be invited to comment. We ask that Putnam residents, and specifically people of color, attend and urge the county

to follow through on its plan to work with the Public Accountability Committee. It is important that residents of color have proper representation in this process and that there is a mechanism for ongoing stakeholder participation and revision.

We are encouraged by the county's commitment to establish this Public Accountability Committee and urge the public to voice their support for it on Feb. 17. Comments may also be submitted via e-mail to PoliceReviewPanel@putnamcountyny.gov.

Scott Rhodes (Brewster), Jenie Fu (Putnam Valley), Ron Reid (Patterson), Joelle DePaola (Brewster), People of Color Subcommittee

Sean Conway (Philipstown), Eileen McDermott (Brewster), LGBTQIA+ Subcommittee

Lou Riolo (Brewster), Education Subcommittee

Baila Lemonik (Mahopac), Mental Health Subcommittee

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Staying Grounded Through Pandemic With Yoga – and for a Good Cause

By Martin Wilbur

Like so many other aspects of life during the past year, the pandemic has brought havoc to those who love yoga and their instructors. Many studios have been forced to close, whether it be temporarily or permanently and move online.

One local yoga instructor has found a way not only to continue providing virtual classes for her students, but has also been collaborating with colleagues to raise money for important causes and organizations.

This Saturday at noon, Alka Kaminer will be the lead instructor for the fourth in a series of Yoga for Charity events she helped create since the middle of last year under the collaborative banner of Present Wisdom Community. This weekend's roughly 90-minute virtual experience will raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

"We were trying just to get our word out there and what we are doing and there are so many people that are also in need and how could we serve them as well, and we realized that it could be used for a charity event," said Kaminer, an Armonk resident.

On Saturday, the online yoga event will feature five different instructors leading their portion of the class for about 12 to 13 minutes each. Kaminer will take a bit longer since she will be introducing the class and others. The event will also feature an appearance by St. Jude representatives who will talk about the work they do and perhaps include a conversation with a family helped by the hospital.

Last June, Kaminer had spoken to a friend who has relatives in Minnesota affected by the protests following the death of George



Alka Kaminer will be the lead teacher in Saturday's virtual yoga benefit to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. This is the fourth yoga fundraiser Kaminer has been part of since last June.

Floyd. She and her friend held an online class, which doubled as a charity event for Reclaim the Block, an organization that supports communities in Minneapolis.

That initial effort was popular enough that Kaminer concluded that she should bring the followers of her yoga and meditation classes to help other causes, including some closer to home.

A second event was held to support Neighbors Link, the Mount Kisco-based organization that helps to acclimate immigrants to their new community and country, followed by another that benefitted the Alzheimer's Association.

Now the thought is to hold a Yoga for

Charity event about every other month to help not only those who enjoy yoga make it through the pandemic but to assist organizations that depend on donations.

"Our intention is to work with large organizations as well as local organizations and we're giving back, not only nationally and globally, but also to our community as well," said Kaminer, who for several years has led yoga and meditation classes at the North Castle Public Library in Armonk two days a week. She has continued those classes online since last year as well.

"We're like so many other people, we've just been involved, our consciousness has been increased through the events of 2020

and seeing which ways you could further and be of service to the greater community," added Kaminer's husband, Brian.

He said that through the first three fundraisers they were able to donate a combined \$3,000 to the designated charities. As word begins to filter out and the events are better publicized, the totals have slowly increased. As of last week, Brian Kaminer estimated that they had already come close to matching their previous combined total with Saturday's class.

For the upcoming event, instructors will lead participants through several different yoga styles, Alka Kaminer said. Anyone can register for the class, even those who are novices. If someone wants to join but decides to observe for part of the program, that is fine as well, she said.

Alka and Brian agreed that yoga sessions, even when virtual, provide people with a way to manage through difficult times.

"Every day, it giving them a way to stay connected with friends, with their community," she said. "It's bringing them back into their bodies and achieve a sense of being present as opposed to letting their minds take them away into anxiety or fear or worry."

"I think the higher levels of anxiety in society attracted people to it, and my understanding with my own practice – I'm not an instructor but personal experience – it really helps reset your anxiety levels," Brian Kaminer said.

Registration for Saturday Charity for Yoga is \$10 a person. Participants are free to donate more if they choose. For more information about the event and to register, visit www.presentwisdom.com.

PCTV Holding Virtual Talent Contest; Entries Due By Feb. 28

By Martin Wilbur

If you have any type of performance talent, Pleasantville Community Television (PCTV) would like to hear from you this month.

The local access television station is running a virtual talent contest, where anyone who can sing, dance, play a musical instrument, do a quick standup routine or any other form of entertainment can forward a two-minute video of themselves via e-mail to PCTV by Feb. 28. All residents of New York State are eligible to enter, not just Pleasantville residents, said PCTV Board President GG Kopilak.

"We can't have the (annual) gala and we discussed what we should do. Should we have a virtual gala, and this idea came up and we liked it," Kopilak said. "We thought it was fun, it would be great during COVID, get people excited."

Contestants of all ages may enter. There will be three categories: those who are 12 years old and under; another for 13- to 19-year-olds; and the 20-and-up group. Kopilak said contestants who are under 18 must have a parent or guardian sign their entry form, that can be found on the station's website at www.PCTV76.org.

There may be solo performances or groups, Kopilak said.

The first-place finishers in each age category will split a cash prize that amounts to 45 percent of the total entry fees collected. The fee is \$20 for each entrant. PCTV certificates

will be given to the contestants who finish in second place in each category and those who earn honorable mention. All those who are awarded first or second place and honorable mentions will have their videos aired on the station and on its website.

Judges for the contest will be Adam Cohen, co-founder and the artistic director of Arc Stages in Pleasantville, County Legislator Margaret Cunzio and Pleasantville High School

alumnus and Broadway actor Ali Ewoldt.

The performers will be judged on ability, creativity and performance, Kopilak said.

Once the PCTV staff initially sifts through the videos after they are received, the three judges will watch and rate each performance. It is expected that the winners will be announced on Mar. 15, she said.

"Everybody will be on TV, but of course we will mention the winners, the second-place

(finishers) and honorable mention," Kopilak said.

All videos must be recorded with an mp4 or MOV and must not be more than two minutes.

For an entry form and all official rules of the contest, visit <https://www.pctv76.org/wp-content/uploads/PCTV-Entry-Form-Final-2.pdf>.

Westchester County Historical Society Appoints Co-Director

The Board of Trustees of the Westchester County Historical Society announced late last month that Barbara Davis of New Rochelle is joining Susanne Pandich in the shared position of co-director of the organization.

Most recently the community relations coordinator for the New Rochelle Public Library, Davis earned a bachelor's degree in education from Goddard College and is the author and producer of dozens of articles and media presentations chronicling the history and features of Westchester County including "New Rochelle: Images of America: New York."

Davis managed the New Rochelle Tricentennial events, instituted a local history archive at the New Rochelle Public Library, developed a New Rochelle Walk of Fame to recognize outstanding residents, and created a Downtown History Hop tour

for mobile devices. Besides serving as New Rochelle's city historian, Davis has served two six-year terms as a trustee of the Westchester County Historical Society and was its president from 1991 to 1993.

She also served as chair of the Westchester County Historic Preservation Advisory Council from 2000 to 2010 and 2018 to the present and has worked for Westchester County, the Westchester Library System and the Hudson River Museum.

"It is an honor and privilege to work with the expert staff, and dedicated Board and volunteers, in preserving and promoting the extraordinary, diverse heritage of Westchester," Davis said.

Davis will share responsibilities for fundraising, overseeing the production of the "Westchester Historian," the organization's quarterly journal; managing communications in print, on the website and in person;



Susanne Pandich and Barbara Davis, co-directors of the Westchester County Historical Society.

providing advice on preservation projects in the county; supervising the acquisition of collections and historical materials; and fostering relationships with agencies and organizations that contribute to an understanding of county history.

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The Mudroom and the Foyer: Those Important 'In-Between' Spaces

What the decompression chamber is to astronauts and what the hyperbaric chamber is to deep sea divers, so the foyer, traditionally at the front of a house, and the mudroom, typically around back, are to homeowners.

It's those in-between areas that allow one to transition with impunity from one environment that may be dusty, dirty, muddy or wet into a cleaner space.

Just by their names, one may assume that the mudroom is a dirtier, more utilitarian kind of space, while the foyer may be grand in appearance, putting a home's best foot forward, so to speak, to the visitor.

The mudroom, mostly as a lean-to shed or an enclosed porch attached to the back of the house, was popular from the 18th century to the 1920s. But as our society shifted from farming to less physical endeavors, mudrooms were banished to the back to give way to the foyer in front.

But in the 1950s, perhaps because Americans started to collect more "stuff" in a more prosperous time following World War II, the mudroom regained popularity, adding storage space to the function of housing coats and shoes. In the 1970s, it morphed into a combo storage/laundry room when homeowners demanded that washers and dryers make their way up from the basement. Eventually designers questioned the wisdom



By Bill Primavera

of combining a place for shedding dirt with laundering, and washers and dryers made their way up to the more convenient second-story bedroom level.

Today the mudroom serves many individualized needs of the homeowner. Most times it's now incorporated into the footprint of the house, taking space from the kitchen and most often situated as an entry from an attached garage.

As a realtor, I've listed homes where the mudroom has featured a pantry as an extension to the kitchen, an office, a hobby center, a sports equipment storage facility, a potting room for the garden and a changing room for the pool, the

latter of which was the case with my mudroom when I owned an 18th century farmhouse.

When I found that home, it featured a motley mudroom that had been tacked on to the back of the house sometime after 1860. All but abandoned in terms of maintenance, it was just a loosely framed lean-to with a cracked cement floor, and the ceiling was just the raw rafters of the roof, overlaid with wood shingles. There was no insulation and only wood shelves on one wall suggesting that the structure may have doubled as a potting shed.

Because it was the direct access from our driveway to the kitchen, it was hardly an attractive entrance to the house.

In my boldest construction project before or since, I chipped away the broken cement



and hand-poured a new concrete foundation from a number of mixings in my wheelbarrow. I insulated the walls and created a nice closet and space for a half-bath. Other than the installation of the bathroom fixtures and a new windowed door that replaced one with decaying solid wood, I did all the work myself. My work in that house from long ago gave me a great sense of satisfaction every time I entered or left the house.

When designing a mudroom and selecting its finishes, it's well to remember that there's a reason that the word "mud" lingers in its name. Materials for flooring should therefore be durable, easy to clean and water resistant. This is not the space for wall-to-wall carpeting, but tile, vinyl, natural slate or

porcelain tile are excellent flooring choices.

Wall treatments also should not be delicate. They might be a solid vinyl covering, which can be scrubbed without damage, or paneling that will be more forgiving when visitors lean against the wall to remove their soiled shoes or boots.

One design trick is to use the same cabinetry in the mudroom that's used in the kitchen, which gives the impression that both rooms are bigger than they actually are.

Many times, mudrooms don't have windows, although it's ideal if they do. If not, overhead lighting is preferred, rather than wall fixtures that protrude into cramped space or standing lamps that could interfere with cleaning the floor.

A modern mudroom might best include closed storage areas and a large closet organized in a way to separate clothing and equipment for the outside. Lacking a closet, the mudroom can accommodate an armoire for storage purposes.

Now that I live in a spanking new condo, my mudroom has been replaced with an entrance foyer which is far less utilitarian. It features only a thigh-high decorative column that serves as a catch-all for newspapers and mail, and a large mirror with which to check our personal appearance on the way out. And, of course, that's important too!

Bill Primavera, while a writer and public relations practitioner, is also a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate. To engage the talents and services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.

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Some collectors collect one type of item they are passionate about while others have room in their hearts – and homes – for more numerous types of pieces.

For decades, a Brooklyn couple collected vintage radios and phonographs, Roseville pottery, Asian porcelain, blue and white china, “Gone with the Wind” lamps and much more.

The kitchen was a veritable sea of whimsical and kitschy red items from cherry red bowls to pots and even the toaster oven. Their home was chock-full of the antiques they loved, and the living room, for example, looked like a Victorian parlor on steroids with red velvet chairs and a large cathedral radio. The home was tidy and neatly organized, however, with everything in place.

After their passing, their collection is now going to new homes with the first grouping of highlights from their collections crossing the block at The Benefit Shop Foundation, Inc. at a Red Carpet auction on Wednesday, Feb. 24 at 10 a.m. The couple had so many items they are still being cataloged and their estate will spill over into a March auction as well.

“They collected everything under the sun and never threw anything out,” said Pam Stone, owner and founder of The Benefit Shop Foundation, Inc. “You could describe this as a curated kitsch collection, featuring vintage radios from the 1920s through the 1980s.”

Radios are an iconic piece of Americana, and before the age of television, families would gather around the radio to hear music and stories, the news of the day or follow their favorite sports team. Indeed, the vintage radios come in all forms with tubes or transistors and made of different materials, from Bakelite and Catalin to wood.

Spanning decades and styles, the featured radios ranged from small tabletop models to larger cathedral-style models and even one that looks like a fireplace mantel. Many are from companies that once were industry leaders but are now history footnotes, such as Zephyr, Crosley, Majestic, Emerson and Sentinel.

Highlights include an RCA Victor fireplace radio with intricate wooden detail and measuring 50-by-60 inches by 25 inches. It comes with accessories and fireplace tools (\$500 to \$1,500) and a vintage Zenith stereophonic record player and radio console table (\$200 to \$2,000) built into a cabinet, offered with several vintage records.

Catalin cabinet radios are highly desirable and perhaps none are more iconic than a FADA Model 1000, which debuted in 1941, epitomizing the Art Deco streamlined design of its era. There will also be two FADA Model 1000 Bullet radios in butterscotch and red that are among the top design icons of the 20th century and highly prized by radio collectors.

While the Benefit Shop Foundation offers across-the-board auctions, artwork is a specialty and a staple of most sales. This auction boasts fine etchings, bronzes and contemporary art. Offered are two signed lithographs by Keith Haring, one depicting a figure riding a fish (\$200 to \$800) and a

limited edition lithograph of two dancing figures holding up a heart (\$200 to \$600).

The couple’s Roseville pottery for auction includes a 15-inch Freesia floor vase (\$100 to \$250), a Poppy basket vase/planter (\$100 to \$200), 8.5 inches wide, and a Magnolia centerpiece vase (\$200 to \$500), which is 16.5 inches tall.

A last-minute addition to the auction and still being unpacked is a collection of Lord & Taylor perfume bottles, all salesman samples and animatronic puppets from the store’s window displays. These will be sprinkled into several auctions, from February through April.

Rounding out the auction will be a 2000s La D de Dior diamond watch featuring

mother of pearl (\$2,500 to \$10,000), a pair of Hazorfim Bugatti sterling candlesticks (\$1,000 to \$2,000), 16 inches tall, and a pair of antique French-mirrored wall sconces by Carlos de la Puente (\$1,000 to \$3,000) with two S-curved brass arms, each 18.5 inches tall.

The Benefit Shop Foundation is a nonprofit organization with auction proceeds supporting community organizations. Consignors get a tax deduction; the buyer gets a great deal and local nonprofits receive much-needed funds.

The auction gallery is at 185 Kisco Ave, Suite 201, in Mount Kisco. For more information, call 914-864-0707 or visit www.thebenefitshop.org.



This RCA Victor fireplace radio comes with a set of fireplace tools and accessories. It will be part of The Benefit Shop Foundation’s next Red Carpet auction as part of an estate sale on Feb. 24.



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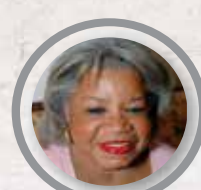
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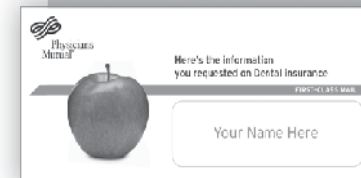
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Wine Thoughts in the Middle of Our Pandemic Winter



By Nick Antonaccio

So, here we are in the middle of COVID winter. We've been trying to cope with the effects and reactions (both real and contrived) of this persistent, ever-present pandemic. My prayers go out to those afflicted with the virus. For those

of us more fortunate, we've been coping as best we can.

Some are able to diligently pursue their careers, others have engaged in de-cluttering projects, binge watching or binge reading and any number of other means to fill our days.

Through it all a number of us have been riding a roller coaster of alcohol consumption in an attempt to cope with – or escape – the trials and tribulations of this pandemic. For me, my consumption steadily increased before I tempered my indulgence. That period was followed by a self-imposed (and successful) Dry January.

Through these difficult months, my beliefs and principles have prevailed. Wine, consumed responsibly, well-worn but sage advice, deftly breaks down barriers, builds warm emotions and introduces a “mellow

‘Its impact on our psychological well-being is immeasurable.’

factor” that permeates the air, making for a subtle stress reliever.

There's been much talk (and several of my columns) discussing the medicinal value of wine, but I believe its overall health value can be greater than any physiological interaction we have with a poured glass. Its impact on our psychological well-being is immeasurable. It can add years to our lives simply by slowing us down a bit, forcing us to stop and smell the roses (in this case the subtle facets of wine – and life). Under wine's influence, we fall into an ethereal state of peace – with ourselves and with those around us.

Having stated my coda for a balanced lifestyle, I offer two maxims that I live by when drinking wine to keep my perspective on a practical plane and which function as an operations manual. Let them be your guide as you navigate the media-laden world of wine.

First, always view wine as an enjoyable, positive experience. Never reduce wine to a status symbol or elevate it to the status

of the Holy Grail. Don't become a wine snob (or a wine geek for that matter); wine is an agricultural product, not a rare gem. It is meant to be consumed with food and preferably with like-minded friends in an atmosphere of geniality. It enhances our dining and social experiences. It shouldn't be the focal point of those encounters.

Second, the appreciation of a particular wine is an individual experience. A great wine is a wine that you enjoy. Each of us has unique palates, unique olfactory senses and time-tested individual experiences in discerning good from bad. Don't rely on others for anything more than general guidance. Continue experimenting and finding new favorite wines.

I'm frequently asked to recommend wines for meals, for special occasions, for hanging out in the kitchen or sitting in front of the fireplace. My response is always the same. Think of a recent wine that you especially enjoyed, one that stood out from others. Recreate that experience in the moment.

It is likely that as much as you enjoyed the particular producer, your palate was simpatico with the grape varietal or the wine region. Experiment with:

1. Other wines from that producer (each producer has an individualistic style for creating wines); or
2. Other wines produced from the same grape or blend of grapes (chances are your palate is sensitive to a flavor profile that can be matched to other producers' offerings); or



3. Other wines from the same wine region. In the vast sea of Cabernet Sauvignons, if you find a special bottle from Chile and prefer it over those you've sampled from California or South Africa, explore the multiple Chilean offerings currently available.

In short order you'll expand your wine horizons and find new “favorite wines” that will become sure-fire crowd-pleasers – in every sense of the word.

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

You Heard It Through the Grapevine

The Claddagh Ring: A Classic Design, and a Worthy Badge

In another month we'll be in the throes of St. Patrick's Day, typically the “Holy Season” of grand parades, festivities, spiritual worship, quiet reflection and general celebration of all things Irish – or not – depending upon the state of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When will we see our return to days of glory? I am thinking this year might not be it. No green hair, no shamrock tattoos, no buttons spouting phrases like “Kiss me, I'm Irish.”

But the day will still dawn, and the good Saint will still be with us. And, with the hope that vaccination and subsequent herd immunity offers, a trip to Ireland with good friends, derailed last year by COVID-19, once again graces my drawing board.

One destination I would like to see is a small fishing village in County Galway. Now, there are many small fishing villages throughout Ireland, and this precise one I might search for has no familial connection to me. This particular village I am reminded of every day when I glance down at the ring finger of my left hand – Claddagh.



The Claddagh Ring

Today, awareness or possession of a Claddagh ring is fairly widespread. To me it is a far better badge than many. But what of the village that gave the ring its name? What of the ringsmith who first crafted its beautiful design?

While its popularity has skyrocketed in the last 60 or 70 years, the ring has been in existence since the 1600s, and has a fascinating story behind it. No less than four jewelers, all of whom worked near Galway, are variously credited with development of the distinctive style, though the concept of the clasped hands is one that dates from Roman times.

One of the four, Richard Joyce, is usually credited with creating the Claddagh's distinctive design, combining the clasped hands around a heart with a crown atop it.

Joyce's story is also fascinating. A native of Claddagh, he set off for the West Indies in the late 1600s to seek his fortune. While en route, he was captured by Algerian pirates and sold into slavery. In Algeria, he became the possession of a goldsmith who taught him his craft.

While so engaged, Joyce fashioned a ring that he hoped he would one day be able to give to the proverbial “girl he left behind.” Fortune smiled upon him, and after 14 years, Joyce was freed, returned to Ireland, married the waiting lass and set out his shingle as a ringsmith of particular talent.

A visitor trying to find Claddagh today would be hard-pressed. The small village suffered a tuberculosis outbreak in the 1920s, and all the structures were razed and the villagers

relocated, a fate shared in those days by many more remote locales.

But Joyce's design had become extremely popular well before then as a symbol of Irish heritage and pride, with its three symbols of the heart, the hands and the crown. But what do they signify? Quite simply, the hands represent friendship, the heart represents a loved one and the crown represents loyalty to that loved one.

While there are a variety of traditions on the significance of how the wearer chooses to display the ring, most of these seem to be of more recent concoction, and are by no means rooted in legend or lore. But they are worth a mention, so here they are: if worn on the right hand and the heart points to the tip of the finger, the wearer is single and unattached; right hand again, heart pointed toward the arm, the wearer is in a relationship



By Brian McGowan

with someone, serious or otherwise; on the left hand, heart pointed to the tip, the wearer is engaged; left hand, heart toward the arm, the wearer is married.

Believe whatever you may, it's a beautiful design,

with a beautiful tale behind it, and far better than a button worn once a year.

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.

Irish Eclectic

White Plains Playwright Tries Hand at Putting His Work on Film

By Martin Wilbur

For Richard Cirulli, it was time to try something different.

The playwright, author and retired professor had written and produced four plays for the troupe he established in 2016, the nonprofit organization The Demitasse Players, all performed at the White Plains Performing Arts Center or at Whippoorwill Hall in Armonk.

But on a weekend getaway last summer to the Catskills, Cirulli had the inspiration for his next work, not a play or a novel, but a short movie. The film, "An Existential Date" was shot mostly at the Wolf and Warrior Brewing Co. on East Post Road in White Plains on Jan. 30 and 31.

It's the story of two aging philosophy professors meeting at a local café for their first date. Cirulli's first draft of the story was written in one night, on a pad with pen and paper sitting poolside.

"I just really wanted to challenge myself," Cirulli explained about turning his latest project into a film rather than for the stage. "When I wrote it, I kept

looking at the script and I kept saying to myself I think it would work better as a movie than a play. The interaction would get lost in a play."

With the world still in the throes of COVID-19, there's also no telling when local venues will reopen to audiences – or when audiences might feel comfortable to return. But with social distancing achievable during filming with only a three-member cast for what is expected to be a 40- to 45-minute film, Cirulli expects to have final editing done this spring and ready for public consumption by summer.

"An Existential Date" also represents a departure for Cirulli in that he created a comedy with gallows humor. His four productions with the Demitasse Players were productions addressing heavy topics that had some connection to mental health, an issue that Cirulli cares deeply about.

Cirulli said with troupe members prodding him to feature his sense of humor, he tried a comedy to provide some welcome relief in a difficult time.



Cast members of The Demitasse Players' "An Existential Date," a short film written and produced by Richard Cirulli. Pictured, from left, are actors Robert Ansbro and Michelle Osojnak, Cirulli, Chris Casaburi, the film's director of cinematography, and cast member Dona L. White.

"Let's take some very philosophical language and turn it into hilarious conversation, and also to prove that the youth don't have a monopoly on romance," Cirulli said of the story.

While not autobiographical, Cirulli drew upon his years as a

philosophy professor to make the film as realistic as possible.

It features Robert Ansbro as Camu, Dona L. White as Neisky and Michelle Osojnak as the waitress.

"The two actors are very good once they get into it and I think

they get into the romance part," Cirulli said. "I'm having fun with it. I thought that two professors, existential performers on a date and you have to strategize how is this going to go."

Director of cinematography Chris Casaburi has been aware what Cirulli's been trying to do with The Demitasse Players, raising awareness for mental health. Proceeds from a planned premiere later this year will serve as a fundraiser for organizations related to mental health.

Casaburi said he met Cirulli while filming another short movie through a mutual acquaintance.

"I love the story, I love what he's doing for the community, so I kind of hopped on board with it," Casaburi said.

There's also a musical score that was written and performed by Drew Caico.

Cirulli is hopeful that later this year he can have the premiere when it is safe to do so, whether it be in White Plains or somewhere else in the county.

To learn more about The Demitasse Players, visit www.demitasseplayers.com.

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Appreciating the Birds of Winter in Difficult Times

By Brian Kluepfel

On Feb. 7, 2020, we were on a plane to South America. A visit with in-laws, wonderful food and weather, a meeting with dear old friends in torrid Cartagena, and an obligatory appearance at the Colombia Bird Fair in Cali.

We saw an incredible array of birds on our trip, from Colombia's nearly-countless colibri (hummingbird) collection to the awe-inspiring Andean condor. Blue-headed parrots. Multicolored tanagers. Green honeycreepers. A yellow-headed caracara from my mother-in-law's porch, even.

Of course, three weeks later we were on a plane back to Westchester descending into a changed America, and world. The weekend after we returned, U.S. airports devolved into chaos and COVID-19 became a household term. On Feb. 28, a Friday, we took Metro-North into Manhattan for a concert. It was the last trip of any sort we'd take.

Flash-forward to February 2021, and

the snow and pandemic keep us locked in place, in a virtual freeze-frame. Despite the fact that we can't flit off to Colombia, or even Florida, we've taken the time to appreciate the winter birds of New York.

A notable visitor earlier this month was Central Park's Snowy Owl. We've had them visit the area in the past, but this was an exceptional one – the first one seen in the park in 130 years! If it's still there today, birders will certainly use their favorite play on words to upset the day's dominant paradigm: Superb Owl Sunday. It would be if you saw a snowy, I'm sure.

(Owls have been on the urban birding brain lately, from the accidental Saw-Whet owl, "Rockefeller," who tumbled out of his namesake's Christmas tree, to Barry the Barred Owl, another recent Central Park discovery.)

Local walks in Ossining have gifted us with the usual wintry mix of cardinals, chickadees, wrens, hawks, crows, jays and even eagles. On a very blustery day, even by Winnie-the-Pooh's standards, I went further south and braved the high winds



of Rockwood Park, adjacent to Phelps Hospital, and was gifted an incredible sight: two indefatigable Carolina wrens, singing their hearts out, while above them on the wildly-swaying branches were two Eastern bluebirds, our state bird, of course, hanging on as we New Yorkers are this year, for dear life.

I'll toss out a handful of seeds on my porch now and again, and revel in the arrival of duos, trios and larger bunches of house sparrows. These are the only birds that seem to notice my munificence – except the occasional starlings, which I wave off. But watching them peck through the seed

mix – the sunflowers are too big for them, so they only eat the small seeds, leaving me to sweep up the rest – is a welcome diversion to my work-at-home day.

(Shameless plug here: you can stock your winter feeders with a variety of seed-stuff from Saw Mill River Audubon. Info is in the ad below.)

I watched a nice YouTube video by LesleytheBirdNerd on the survival mechanisms of northern winter birds. They shiver, they puff up their bodies to twice their size, they cache food in trees and even in their own gullets, they vary their diet, they lower their body temperatures at night and huddle for warmth. In short, they survive. Which is sometimes the best we can do during difficult times like these.

So, on Superb Owl Sunday and beyond, I wish you, and all the birds, survival.

Brian Kluepfel is the editor of Saw Mill River Audubon's newsletter and an author for Birdwatching Magazine and the Lonely Planet and Fodor's series of travel guidebooks. Find him at birdmanwalking.com.

For The Birds

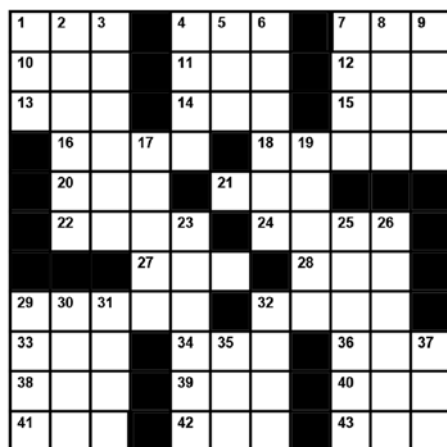
Crossword

Across

1. Trophy
4. That ship
7. Rip off
10. Fire remnant
11. Raw metal in the ground
12. Small bill
13. For each one
14. Glove compartment item
15. Take effect
16. Cab charge
18. Lots of land
20. Wear and tear
21. Furnace fuel
22. Bound
24. Marathon, for example
27. Period
28. Word in many business names
29. Dance craze of the 60's
32. Closed
33. Rowboat equipment
34. Dined
36. Deliver from
38. A while back
39. Last O of O-O-O
40. Give it a whirl
41. Easy chair room
42. Have
43. Date

Down

1. Baseball headgear
2. Beneficial



3. "Wheel of Fortune" category
4. "Where the heart is"
5. Memorable time
6. Fix
7. Surf's sound
8. Fairy tale start word
9. "All ___ are off!"
17. Understands
19. Go at it
23. "Mashed" side order
25. Tennis settings
26. Complete
29. Cousin of a frog
30. Engage in
31. Get the creases out of a shirt
32. Caught sight of
35. Haul
37. Change color

Answers on page 22

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Children Learn 'Literacy of the 21st Century' at Mt. Kisco Code Ninjas

By Lisa Mockel

When eight-year-old Jack Fisher of Ossining showed an interest in animation and began creating his own basic video games, his mom, Tina, took to Google, searching for classes to help take her son's budding passion to the next level.

She was thrilled to find Code Ninjas had recently opened.

Code Ninjas, the world's largest and fastest growing children's coding franchise, was founded in 2016 by professional software developer David Graham. It offers classes in computer coding and problem-solving skills by creating video games using Scratch, Roblox, Minecraft and other platforms.

Utilizing a nine-belt curriculum inspired by the martial arts to teach children ages 7 to 14, Code Ninjas offers flexible online and in-person coding and STEM programs taught by instructors known as "code senseis."

By the time a child finishes the program, they will publish an app in an app store. The new Mount Kisco Code Ninjas dojo is located at 41 S. Moger Ave.

The independently-owned franchise, which launched virtually in September, opened its doors in late November. For owners Caryna Wong, the executive director, and her husband Corwin Yu, the venture made sense. Wong has a

background in information technology and Yu is a cryptocurrency trading systems developer who has coded recreationally for years.

"We hope to provide a fun way for kids to develop their analytical abilities and critical thinking skills as well as coding skills in an environment that fosters community and cooperation," said Wong, who formerly worked at IBM. "Our Code Ninjas is the perfect opportunity for Corwin and I to use our tech backgrounds to help kids enhance these skills and develop resilience in a fun way without the pressure of a grading scale."

Coding has been called "the literacy of the 21st century." There's now a huge need for a generation to not only understand technology but know how it works.

"In 10 years, coding is going to be required, it's going to be literacy," Wong said, adding that about one million U.S. coding jobs go unfilled each year because of

a lack of qualified people. "If (kids) don't understand coding at all, the logic behind it and how to interact with those interfaces, it's going to be a problem. Everybody should be doing it."

Fisher, a major Minecraft fan, is currently taking in-person classes for two hours once a week. His dad, Ron, is pleased with the program.

"He could easily stay there for hours and would be overjoyed if he could go



Left: The owners of Code Ninjas, Corwin Yu and Caryna Wong, along with one of their staff members. Code Ninjas provides fun instruction on coding and STEM programs for local children. Above: Part of the 1,200-square-foot "dojo" at Code Ninjas in Mount Kisco.

more than once a week," Ron Fisher said. "Remote learning has taken over our lives and to say it's challenging to keep our children engaged is an understatement. At Code Ninjas, we feel that Jack is getting a head start in the world of coding and computer design. Since my wife and I know nothing about it, these specialized classes allow us to nurture his interest and provide him with a knowledge base from which he can excel."

"In order to execute an idea, (the students) have to figure it out, they have to draw it, create it. There's a lot of creative problem-solving involved," Wong said of the skills acquired through Code Ninjas' classes. "These are skills they're not teaching in a lot of schools. Some schools have after-school programs in coding but it's not required that we've seen so far."

Another local parent, Suzanne Yeager, said Code Ninjas allows her 10-year-old son Graeme to socialize with his friends online, outside of school. He is currently taking the Introduction to Scratch course via Zoom twice a week.

"We love the convenience," Yeager said. "The instructors make each lesson different and engaging. Sometimes the students learn to design video games and at the holidays they each designed a party complete with décor and music. The students love sharing these builds with each other and the instructors are so knowledgeable and a lot of fun."

The 1,200-square-foot dojo is bright, well-lit and desks are six feet apart. It is regularly de-sanitized. Social distancing and masks are required. While there, students can also participate in other STEM activities including circuit building and robotics.

This month, Code Ninjas will be launching a new in-person, completely visual curriculum, Code Ninjas Jr., for budding readers ages 5-9. It combines storytelling and game-building with hands-on projects.

The Mount Kisco Code Ninjas plans to offer summer and year-round camps, Parents Night Out evenings and birthday parties. It also provides a free first game-building session. There are convenient drop-in hours on weeknights and weekends.

A grand opening was scheduled for Jan. 23, but Wong decided to postpone the event because of COVID-19 concerns. Meanwhile, Code Ninjas will host hackathons and other prize-winning contests and free Hour of Code days, which would have been part of the grand opening activities.

For more information, call 914-920-9898 or visit www.codeninjas.com/ny-mount-kisco.

Business Spotlight

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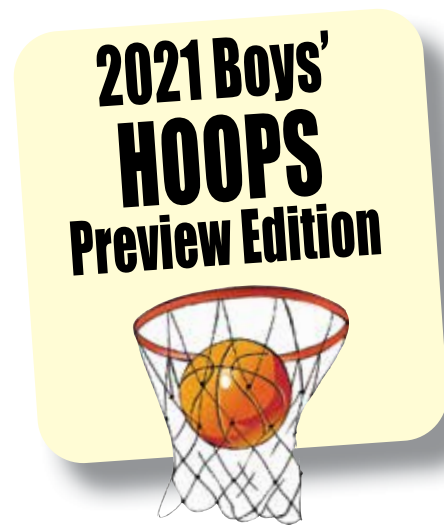
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**SMALL NEWS
IS BIG NEWS**



Examiner Sports

Skies the Limit!

Expect a Big Boys' Buffet on Local Hardwoods

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor@Directrays

It'll be quick, it could be less than pretty early on as teams work into "game shape", find their rhythm and get familiar with their coach's schema, but Section 1 boys' basketball season is finally scheduled to start on Feb.8 after a three-month layoff due to COVID-19 concerns.

The 2020 campaign was a slightly down year by the standards previously set by the Northern Westchester/Putnam based Examiner-area programs, but the Central portion of the region shined with Class AA Horace Greeley pulling an improbable upset when the Quakers rocked then three-time defending champion Mount Vernon, winners of 11 NYS and five Federation titles. Coach Matt Simone's Quakers took an arduous road to the title, taking out a pair of Section 1 heavyweights (New Rochelle, also) along the way. Then, they added a win over Section 9 champion Newburgh before the rest of the postseason was cancelled. The Examiner-area teams were skunked in Class A, going without a Final 4 contender, but Class B saw Westlake reach the County Center for the first time since 1978 while Valhalla lost in the finals.

The 2021 campaign will be unlike anything we've ever seen as the season will come and go in under six weeks with regionalized playoffs and no Final 4 games at the fabled Westchester County Center, which is currently an unrecognizable COVID-19 vaccination center.

Despite losing out on the Section 1 tournaments in Classes AA, A, B, C and D, there will be regionalized culminating events, similar to what the section did in the fall with six tournaments, including Southern Westchester Large and Small Schools, Putnam-Northern Westchester Large and Small Schools, Dutchess and Rockland. The team-by-team breakdowns were expected to come out later this week.

We reached out to every boys' hoops coach in the Examiner region from White Plains to



RAY GALLAGHER/ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

Briarcliff junior F Luke McCann is part of an absolutely stacked Bears front court that features three players 6'6" or bigger.

the Dutchess County border for team-based information, and discovered that while most programs are excited to begin the 2021 season, there is so much work to do before we

see something resembling what we're used to. It could be a few weeks before we see teams in "game shape", playing with tempo and continuity, and before we know it the

season will be over if it ever starts. Strap up, buckle in and accept that it is what it is.

There's a bevy of beastly bigs (Briarcliff has three players 6'6" or bigger, Panas has a 6'9" center and three others 6'3" and Yorktown has a 6'6"), a gaggle of gritty guards and an army of versatile swingmen taking the hardwood near you this week, but you'll have to rely on live streams like LocalLive (@locallivenet), Twitter and local media for results and recaps as the games will be played in fanless gymnasiums across Section 1.

CONFERENCE I-II

LEAGUE C

Ossining, Hen Hud, Peekskill, Lakeland, Panas

Based on last year and what these teams return this year, one could toss a coin to determine a favorite, though Lakeland did have the best regular season, trailed closely by Walter Panas, who has reloaded and is locked in on a league title as the pre-season favorites in the eyes of most. The Panthers are huge up front with four players going 6'3" or better, topping off at 6'9". Should Section 1 implement a regional post-season tournament similar to what we saw in the fall, the Panthers could ultimately challenge, provided skillful sophomore G Alex Tavaréz is ready to take his game to the next level after bursting onto the scene as a freshman in 2020. Ossining is our dark horse, a unit coming off a first-round elimination at the hands of the Class AA champions, Horace Greeley. The Pride are not to be slept on with a slew of key returnees, including Jaeden Carr, and bolstered by a solid core of rookies, including highly touted eighth-grader Kristian Banwa-reesingh, an explosive 6'3" wing.

Hen Hud is coming off a subpar 2020 campaign after reaching the semis in 2019, but the unit that returns has some legit athleticism. Lakeland is coming off a strong season and has lost the majority of its scoring and four starters to graduation, but the gritty Hornets return a strong senior class that

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Sports

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Boys' Hoops Preview



Lakeland senior F Rob Nardelli and Panas senior F Caleb Evans are expected to lead their respective outfits in 2021.



Mahopac senior G Vin Bastone is poised to lead Indians toward league and regional title contention in 2021.



Brewster senior Kobey Hart hopes to get Bears back on track in 2021.

saw plenty of action as juniors. With Brennan Heaven on the wing, Peekskill is a legit challenger this season despite losing a hotshot scorer. The five-time NYS champion Red Devils, who used to burp out league titles prior to 2010, return seven hungry seniors who will take whatever titles they can gather in an effort to restore the once-prideful rep along the river city.

OSSINING

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 8-14, won outbracket as No.15 seed, lost to No.2 Greeley 1st round.

Coach & Record: Mike Casey, 6th Season (league champs 2015-2016)

Key Returning Players: Jaeden Carr, PG, Jr 5'10 All Conference; Khy'leil Hawkins, PG/SG, Sr. 5'9 All League; Griffin Dahle, F, Sr. 6'5; Chris Acosta, G, Sr. 6'0; Hunter Caparelli, G, Sr. 5'11; Vincent Bernardo, F, Jr. 5'10

Key Newcomers: Kristian Banwareesingh, G, 8th, 6'3; Justin Santos, F, Soph, 6'3; Isaiah Ahlers, G, Fr. 6'1; Dominique Bautista, F, So. 6'3; AJ Caparelli, G, Soph, 5'11; Dorian Green, G, Sr. 5'8; Melik Tobee, G, Jr. 5'8

League Favorite: Ossining is returning to a league the Pride were in five years ago. Casey believes the league is up for grabs, but Ossining hopes to be there in the end.

By the Numbers: Carr (22 PPG), Hawkins (17 PPG), Dahle (8 RPG)

Team Goals: To take advantage of every opportunity when we step on the court because we know it could be our last. We will need to defend to get out in transition.

Coach's Comments: Our program is very grateful to everyone involved in giving our student-athletes the opportunity to get on the court. We are all excited to play! The Pride return Jaeden Carr and Khy'leil Hawkins who make for a tough matchup for any backcourt. Griffin Dahle will look to build upon his solid junior year. The addition of Banwareesingh will provide a scoring

boost for the Pride. There are several other players who can fill key roles if the team is going to make a deep run.

WALTER PANAS

2019-20 record & playoff result: 13-8; lost in 1st round at Harrison (70-67, 2OT)

Coach: Mike Auerbach, (4th Season at Panas) 102-84

Key Departures: Robert Ennis, Tom Palmaffy, Lorenzo Santucci

Key Returning Players: Alex Tavarez 6'0" So., G; Caleb Evans 6'3" Sr. F; Rob Simmonds 6'1" Sr. G; Christian Zapata 6'1" Sr. F; Andrew Keefe 6'3" Sr. F

Key Newcomers: Oliver Smith 6'3" Jr. F; Cameron Nicholas 6'1" Jr. G; Dillon Chennard 6'9" So. C

League Favorite: Ossining, maybe, Peekskill.

By the Numbers: Tavarez (10 PPG, 3 APG, 3 RPG); Evans (9 PPG, 9 RPG)

Team Goals: Be excited we might get to play basketball!

Coach's Comments: This is definitely the tallest we've had since I started coaching at Panas. We have a lot of depth up front and like our length and athleticism across the board. We've lost a handful of guards from the program due to various reasons the last couple of years but have a couple of returning starters in the back court, along with a handful of players moving up from the JV who can give us minutes. We'll need to be strong defensively and on the boards to win in a shortened season with limited practice time.

HEN HUD

2019-2020 Record: 5-15 (did not make playoffs)

Coach: Jordan Hirsch (8th Season); Assistant Coaches: Jason Bertoline, Stephen Purcigliotti

Key Returning Players: Nick Hiltley, Sr.; Josh Gillison, Sr.; Jack Kapfer, Sr.; Jeremy Rench, Sr.; Chris Connolly, Sr.; Dean Hiltley, So.

Newcomers: TBD

Coach's Comments: It has been far too long since we have been able to physically be in the same space and I think that is what we are looking forward to most. Our Athletic Department has been incredibly proactive, supportive, and informative through all of the uncertainty of high-risk sports beginning which our coaches and players alike are so thankful for. I'm really proud of our student-athletes for their resilience throughout this seemingly endless off-season and I'm very confident that this year's Sailor team will cherish the opportunity to be able to get this season started, to compete and to play basketball in Donovan Gymnasium.

LAKELAND

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 17-5, lost to Class A champion Poughkeepsie in quarters.

Coach: Steve Fallo, 6th season (48-61)

Key Departures: 4 starters

Key Returning Players: Rob Nardelli, 6'2, sr., F All-League; Aidan Welcome, Sr. 6'1' G; Bryan Cummins, sr., G, 6'; James Apostolou, sr. G, 6'; Reed Thompson, sr. 6'2" F

Key Newcomers: Mark Cummins, sr., G 6'0; Jason Portella, jr., G, 5'11; Logan Shiland, soph., F 6'2"

League Favorite: Panas and Peekskill

By the Numbers: Lakeland lost close to 85% of its scoring. Nardelli averaged 11 PPG.

Team Goals: Keeping everybody healthy and safe and to play as many games as possible. These kids need to just play and have fun.

PEEKSKILL

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 11-11, as No.15 seed lost to No.2 Byram Hills

Coach & Record: Tim Turner

Key Departures: Antonio Taylor, Jaron Reed

Key Returning Players: Brennan Heaven, All-League sr.; Elijah Ritter, sr.; Jayson Tinsley, sr.; Jordan Wilson, sr.; Shemar Bar-

nett, sr.; Jaden Walters, sr.

Key Newcomers: Ezekiel Jones, G, freshman 6'2"; Travis Brown, G, freshman 5'9"

League Favorite: Peekskill, Ossining

By the Numbers: Heaven averaged 15 PPG, Tinsley 10 PPG, 5 RPG

Team Goals: To win the league, exhibit sportsmanship, enjoy the journey and take advantage of the opportunity to play basketball.

Coach's Comments: We have seven returning seniors and many up-and-coming underclassmen. I'm eager to give the players an opportunity to play the game they love and respect some much.

LEAGUE B

Mahopac, Carmel, Somers, Yorktown, Brewster

Despite two Class AA programs -- Carmel and Mahopac -- entering the league this season, there is a ton of familiarity among the foes. The league title is truly up for grabs. The Indians came on strong in the second half of 2020 and they return a seasoned, athletic unit that should seriously challenge for supremacy within. Somers comes off a down year by its standards and should be motivated by the fact that the Tuskers have not won a league title since 1989. They have placed second five times under Coach Chris DiCintio in his nine seasons at Somers. Yorktown has suffered significant losses and leadership but remains a tough out. Carmel has its third different coach in two years, so there's that to contend with. Brewster hasn't had the horses in recent years but the Bears grind defensively.

MAHOPAC

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 10-11 (No.13 seed lost to No.4 Mount Vernon in first round of sectionals)

Coach & Record: Tom McMahon (4th Season)

Key Departures: Matthew McMahon
continued on next page

Sports

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Somers sophomore wing Matt Fitzsimons will take on major responsibility in 2021.

Key Returning Players: Vin Bastone (6'3" Sr., F); John Cosentino (5'11" Sr. G); Luke Syku (6'0" Sr. G); Chris Clark (5'11" Sr., G); Ryan Reilly (6'4" Jr., F); Michael Callahan (6'2" Jr., G); Patrick McMahon (6'1" Jr., G); Colum Ranaghan (6'3" Jr., F)

Key Newcomers: Miles Buckley (6'4" Senior Guard), Anthony DeMatteo (6'1" Junior Guard), Max Gomes (6'0" Junior Guard),

League Favorite: Yorktown, Somers, Carmel, Brewster



Carmel junior G Andrew Fiore is expected to take the necessary steps to lead rebuilding Rams in 2021.

By the Numbers: Bastone (9.4 PPG, 6.4 RPG), Cosentino (8 PPG)

Team Goals: To build on last season, win the league and compete for a championship.

Coach's Comments: This is going to be a unique year and I am hopeful that returning seven of our top eight players from a year ago will help us get going quickly, especially with such little practice time. Vin and John are poised to take over the leadership of this team and for excellent seasons. We also have a transfer, Miles Buckley (Kennedy), who should make an impact. We were young last year with four sophomores getting major minutes. We need them to continue to grow and be major contributors this season. If that happens, I think we can achieve our goals.

SOMERS

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 7-14, No.20 seed lost outbracket to Beacon

Coach: Chris DiCintio, 227-178 (20th year overall, 9th at Somers), sectional Final 4 at Rye (2006 & 2009), Somers (2015)

Key Departures: Dylan Berliner, Drew Lasher

Key Returning Players: Bennett Leitner, jr., PG, 5'10" (extremely athletic and strong with an exceptional handle); Robert Repp, sr., G, 6'2" (tough, athletic, smart); Matt Fitzsimons, soph., 6'4" wing (high I.Q. with outstanding basketball skill and deep range); Ben Germaine, sr., F, 6'2" (strong post player with good moves around the rim); Henry Gilroy, 3-year sr. C, 6'4" (great post defender and tough rebounder that runs the floor well)

Key Newcomers: Jake Riina, Jr., F, 6'2" (very athletic, tough, finishes well); TJ Olifiers, jr., G, 5'10" (great athlete, strong, can shoot the rock); Mike DiFilippo, jr., G, 5'9" (spark plug, great defender that does all the little things on the court)



Byram Hills G Matteo Sinon will look to continue the Bobcats' good fortune in 2021.

League Favorite: Too difficult to tell in this extraordinary time. The title is wide open for the taking.

By the numbers: Leitner (top assists), Gilroy (top rebounder); Fitzsimons (top scorer)

Team Goals: Capture our first league title since 1989.

Coach's Comments: This team has a nice balance of veterans and newcomers. They are an athletic group with good size. They will look to run all game while playing tough, physical defense as always.

YORKTOWN

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 11-11, No.16 seed in Class A lost to No.1 TZ in first round

Coach & Record: Mark Pavella, 3rd season

Key Departures: Roni Brucaj

Key Returning Players: Eddie Brucaj, C, jr., 6'6" All-League; Tony Granitto, F, sr. captain, 6'2"; Jack Prybylski, G, jr., 6'2"; Sam Pincus, G, sr., 5'11"; Antoine Coles, PG, soph., 5'9"; Jared Faivre, G, sr., captain, 5'10"; Dan Trashani, G, sr., 5'10"; David D'Ippolito F sr., 6'

Key Newcomers: TBD

League Favorite: With the new league this year I think all the teams are going to be very competitive.

By the Numbers: Brucaj 12 PPG, 8 RPG

Team Goals: As a team we always look to be competitive in our league, by playing good defense, rebounding the ball, and playing together as a team. We want to be able to get through the season safely, without any interruptions, and we will continue to follow all the protocols and guidelines that have been put in place to do so. We look forward to this opportunity in front of us.

Coach's Comments: The season is going to move really fast, with a lot of games in a short amount of time. I'm excited for all high school athletes to get this chance to play. What we do, and are able to accomplish will only help Fall 2 and the spring season, and we are not going to take that responsibility lightly.

CARMEL

No.18 seed lost to No.15 Ossining in outbracket

Boys' Hoops Preview



Fox Lane All-League senior G Charlie Shevick will lead the charge for Foxes in 2021.

BREWSTER

Did not qualify for playoffs

LEAGUE A

Byram Hills, Fox Lane, Greeley John Jay CR

Every one of these teams -- especially Byram Hills and Greeley -- lost a ton of players to graduation, so picking a favorite is a dart throw to see what sticks. That said, the battles should be feisty, low-scoring affairs between these traditional bordering rivals.

GREELEY

2019-20 record & playoff result: 22-3, Section 1 Class AA champion as No.2 seed

Coach: Matt Simone

Key Departures: Nick Townsend (transfer), Chris Melis, Christoph Sauerborn, Sean Dunleavy

Key Returning Players: Connor Melis, jr., G

BYRAM HILLS

2019-20 record: 18-4, lost to No.7 Pearl River as No.2 seed in Class A quarterfinals

Coach: Ted Repa

Key Departures: Mike Parrotta, Jon Trongone, Benji Hammond, Nic Picca, Sam Goldman

Key Returning Players: Matteo Sinon (All-League, Sr. pg), Justin Gordon (Sr. G), Brady Karp (Sr. G), Daniel Ahern (Sr. F)

League Favorite: unsure

By the numbers: Sinon averaged 7.5 PPG, 3.5 APG, 2 SPG.

Team Goals: Winning Record

Coach's Comments: We are all so excited just to give this season a shot. It's been a long year, and a lot of unknowns exist. We graduated five big-time players that earned the #2 seed in Class A. Our top returning player is All-League senior point guard Matteo Sinon (Clarkson University). He has worked relentlessly in the off-season to improve all facets of his game. The strength of the team should be in the back court, as Sinon will be joined by senior's Justin Gordon and Brady Karp. However the question marks will be interior size. The Bobcats will have to win all the "little" parts of the game in order to be competitive.

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Yorktown junior C Eddie Brucaj, all 6-foot-6 of him, returns with All-League form in 2021.

Sports

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Boys' Hoops Preview



Don't be surprised when Westlake senior G Carter Falkenberg blows up this season.



Ossining junior G Jaeden Carr will light dudes up in 2021.



Briarcliff's Aidan Murnane (L) and the Bears are set to battle P'Ville and Westlake for league bragging rights in 2021.

FOX LANE

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 8-13 (First Round Playoff Loss)

Coach & Record: Mike Tomassi (84-45, 1 Sectional Championship and 5 League Championships)

Key Departures: Michael Lombardi, Will Crerend, Trey DiCarlo, Chris Bodine

Key Returning Players: Oliver Shevick, sr., G (All-League); Aidan Hicks, sr., G; Aidan Giannelli, jr., G; Charlie Shevick, soph., G; James Dibiasi, sr., C

Key Newcomers : TBD

League Favorite: Greeley and Byram Hills

Team Goals: League and Regional Championship

Coach's Comments: Foxes are excited to get going. Last year we had a very young team that improved each and every day. We will have great balance on the roster this year and are excited to see how it plays out.

Oliver, Aidan and James are seniors who

are ready to take the next step. We have underclassmen Aidan G and Charlie who are primed for big seasons.

CONFERENCE III

CENTRAL

Rye Neck, Blind Brook, Briarcliff, Pleasantville, Valhalla, Westlake

When you get right down to it, the history Between Briarcliff and Pleasantville, is as rich as any two programs in Section 1 history. Only the Saw Mill River Parkway separates two of the most distinguished Class B programs we have; the similarities are enormous when it comes to basketball; tradition-rich, battle-tested and enormous pride. That said, Briarcliff is the team most coaches are touting as league favorites in 2021, but sleep on Westlake at your own peril. The Wildcats have one of the finest players in school history in All-NYS G Carter Falkenberg, the first such Wildcat since 1984. Pleasantville is down some by its standards as the Panthers have zero returning starters.

BRIARCLIFF

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 13-9, second round playoff loss to Valhalla.

Coach & Record: Nick Friedman, asst. Ezra Elliott

Key Departures: AJ Panarese, Nick Reish, Chris Park

Key Returning Players: Aidan Murnane (6'1 sr., going to play D1 Lacrosse at Colgate); Brett Lachtman (5'10 Sr.), Elliot Jones (6'6 Jr.), Luke McCann (6'6 Jr.), Jacob Zednik (6'7 Sr.); Jayden Larregue (6'2 jr., wing)

Key Newcomers: Ben Siegel (5'11 Jr); Blake Smith (6'1 soph.); Ray Hall (5'11 Jr.)

League Favorite: Hastings,

Team Goals: We would have been good enough to compete for a section title this year. Not sure what that will look like in terms of a regional or how it will come together but our talent level is very high.

Coach's Comments: As a program, we are incredibly grateful for all that went into us getting a shot to play. We intend to make the most of the opportunity and compete at the highest possible level for every day we are allowed in a gym.

PLEASANTVILLE

2019-2020 Record & playoff result: 10-12, lost in quarterfinals to Westlake

Key Departures: Aidan Lynch, Christain DeJesus (All-League), Nick Doto

Key Returning Players: Daniel Picart, G, 6-0, fresh.; Tom McPhee, F, 6-3. sr.; Nick Bates, G, 5-9, sr.; Dom Matica, F, 5-11, jr.; Justin Cronk, F, 6-1, sr.

Key Newcomers: Massimo Stinziani, G, 5-10, sr.; Tom d'Erizans, F, 6-0, sr.; Aidan Picart, G, 6-0, fresh.

League Favorite: Briarcliff & Westlake

Coach's Comments: We have a very inexperienced group of players, with no returning starters. The players continue to compete in practice. We feel fortunate to have the opportunity to play this season.

WESTLAKE

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 16-7, No.5 seed lost to Section 1 champion Hastings, 57-52, in Class B semifinal

Coach & Record: Chad Charney, 5th season,, 46-41

Key Departures: Matt Martin, Mike Mancuso

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Peekskill All-League senior F Brennan Heaven will take on a major role in 2021.



Putnam Valley junior G Cole Durocher is ready for a breakout campaign in 2021.

Sports

continued from previous page



Greeley G Connor Melis is set to take on major role in 2021.



Panas sophomore G Alex Tavarez is as slick as they come.



AMY KUBIC PHOTO

Key Returning Players: Carter Falkenberg G, Sr. 6'0, All-State, All-Tournament Class B - first All State Player for Westlake since 1984; Hamad Azhar, F, sr. 6'1 (3-year varsity contributor); Justin Silva, G, jr., 5'11

Key Newcomers: Evan O'Brien, G, sr., 6'1; Tommy Marto, F, sr., 6'2; Vinny Bravo, F, sr., 6'2; Matt Pierro, G, sr., 5'8

League Favorite: Briarcliff

By the Numbers: Falkenberg (18 PPG, 42% FG, 6 RPG)

Team Goals: Section Title

Coach's Comments: We hope to compete at a high level as a program and we hope to build on the success of last year's run to the County Center and the Class B Semi Finals which was the first appearance in the Westchester County Center since 1978.

NORTH

Putnam Valley, Haldane, North Salem, Croton, Pawling

The competition should be fierce as nobody jumps off the page as a clear-cut favorite among the grouping, though, outside of last year, Putnam Valley has recent history on its side. The youthful Tigers took some lumps last season but should be much improved in 2021. Haldane will fight them tooth and nail for supremacy despite losing the bulk of its scoring to graduation.

PUT VALLEY

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 4-16, lost to Pawling in OT first round of Class B playoffs

Coach & Record: Al Morales (2nd season), Asst's. JD Apostolico, Ron King

Key Returning Players: Ethan Mounier Sr. GD 5'7 (All-League); Michael Doebller, Sr. C 6'4; Cole Durocher Jr. PG 5'9; Arthur Holzman Jr. F 6'3; Tommy Calicchio Jr. GD 5'6; Chris Meehan Jr. GD 5'11

Key Newcomers: Sean Holzman So. G 6'2; Hudson Sperrazza So. 6'0 F; Bryson Fritz Jr. G; 5'9, Doug Brown Jr. G 5'11

League Favorite: With all that has taken place the last 10 months and teams just starting in the gym, all will be a surprise and

up for grabs.

By the Numbers: Mounier and Durocher led the club in scoring last season.

Team Goals: Stay safe, follow protocol, and let the players have fun as we try and win our league.

Coach's Comments: We are so very excited to be back together working in the gym. It is a new year, a short season and we are a different team from the last season. The next month is a blank slate with a short-term goal of trying to win our league and new opportunities that will thrive from having already spent a year together through transition. We look to be a very energetic, athletic, and hard-working full court team that will try to create offense from our pressure defense.

HALDANE

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 15-6 lost to Tuckahoe in Class C semifinals

Coach: Joe Virgadamo (15th season) 154-145, 1 state finalist, 2 regional championships, 3 section championships, 2 league championships

Key Departures: Mame Diba; Matt Champlin

Key Returning Players: Daniel Santos, G, 6'1, Sr. (All League); Darrin Santos, 6', Sr.; Matteo Cervone, F, 6'4, Soph. (All League); Soren Holmbo, G, 6'2, Jr.; Vincenzo Scanga, G, 6'2, Sr.; Christian Pezzullo, G, 5'10, Sr.; Jonathon Bradley, G, 5'10, Sr.

Key Newcomers: Ryan Irwin, G, Jr.; 6'2; Robert Viggiano, G, 6'1, Jr.; Soleil Gaines, G, 5'11, Jr.; Julian Forcello, G, Jr., 6'1; Giancarlo Carone, G, Jr., 5'10; Stefano Hammond, 6'1, Jr. F

League Favorite: Croton, North Salem, Putnam Valley

Team Goals: To value every minute of every practice and game, continue to give 100% effort and make memories that will last a lifetime.

Coach's Comments: We're excited to

be back in action. Our gym is full of energy, smiles and excitement. The kids need this more than we will ever know. Let the fun begin!

CONFERENCE I SOUTHEAST

White Plains, Mamaroneck, Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle, Scarsdale

The toughest league in the state rolls on, and, as if often the case (almost always), Section 1 Class AA runnerup Mt. Vernon is the team to beat.

WHITE PLAINS

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 16-6, co-league champs, No.5 seed lost to No.4 Mount Vernon in Class AA quarterfinals

Coach: Spencer Mayfield, 28th Season

Key Departures: Quion Burns, Jayon Norwood, Jonathan Fortes, John Pasquali, Mike Mayeri, Paul Sevcik

Key Returning Players: Joe Carrier 6-3 Sr. F; Tymir Greene 5-11 Sr. G (All-Conference); Mehki Woodbury 5-10 Sr. PG; Jason Giraldo 5-10 Sr. PG; Thomas Sutter 6-3 Jr. F

Key Newcomers: Menzy Cardin 6-2 So. F; James Amodio 6-3 Jr. G; Chez Williams 6-1 Jr. G; Danny Povemba 5-11 Jr. G; Kenny Bardhaj 6-0 Sr. G

League Favorite: Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle

By the Numbers: Greene (11.6 PPG, 3 APG), Carrier (8.9 PPG, 8 RPG), Mehki Woodbury (6 PPG, 4 APG), Sutter (46% 3pt shooter)

Team Goal/Comments: Hard working team that takes pride in getting better through competing everyday. Will have to find success through playing tough defense and unselfish offense at a fast pace. With leadership of the senior class led by Joe Carrier, Tymir Greene and Mehki Woodbury the Tigers can be a fun team to watch. Supported by talented underclassmen who are ready to make their contributions, White Plains can have a successful season.

Boys' Hoops Preview

CHSAA KENNEDY

The Catholic leagues are in shambles since NYC has not passed COVID-19 guidelines to allow city schools to play, which means Kennedy Catholic will be negatively affected in that the Gaels will have only a handful of opponents to challenge. They will see a lot of Salesian and Sacred Heart this year.

2019-20 Record & playoff result: 5-20

Coach: Mike McDonnell (2nd season at Kennedy), 288 career wins, 6 seasons at Put Valley (103-33, 5 league titles in 6 years)

Key Returning Players: senior wings 6'0 Lou Hoinkis and 6'1 Jaden Watkins.

Key Newcomers: junior transfer point guard 5'11 Arturo Macchia

Coach's Comments: The boys have worked diligently since last March and so badly want to compete. The team has a very talented perimeter trio. I feel super blessed to have two of my former Putnam Valley standouts from the 21-3 2016 team; Harrison Deegan and Kevin Gallagher. Deegan just completed four years of excellent play at Oneonta College while Gallagher has sharpened his coaching wares while spending the past three years at the University of Kentucky learning under Coach Calipari.

All three -- Hoinkis, Watkins and Macchia -- have college level potential. Lou led the team in rebounds last year at 5'11 and even covered a 6'7 center from Salesian. 6'4 senior center Brendan Sullivan truly transformed himself this off season with a dedication to body, conditioning and more. The starting power forward position will be a competition amongst junior 6'2 forward Eddie Galvao and 6'1 senior Brian Tolan. Eddie is a key contributor on the baseball team and Brian on the CHSAA championship soccer team. 6'4 senior, Eoin Whalen provides depth in the frontcourt while sophomore rising star, Justin Smith provides backcourt depth.

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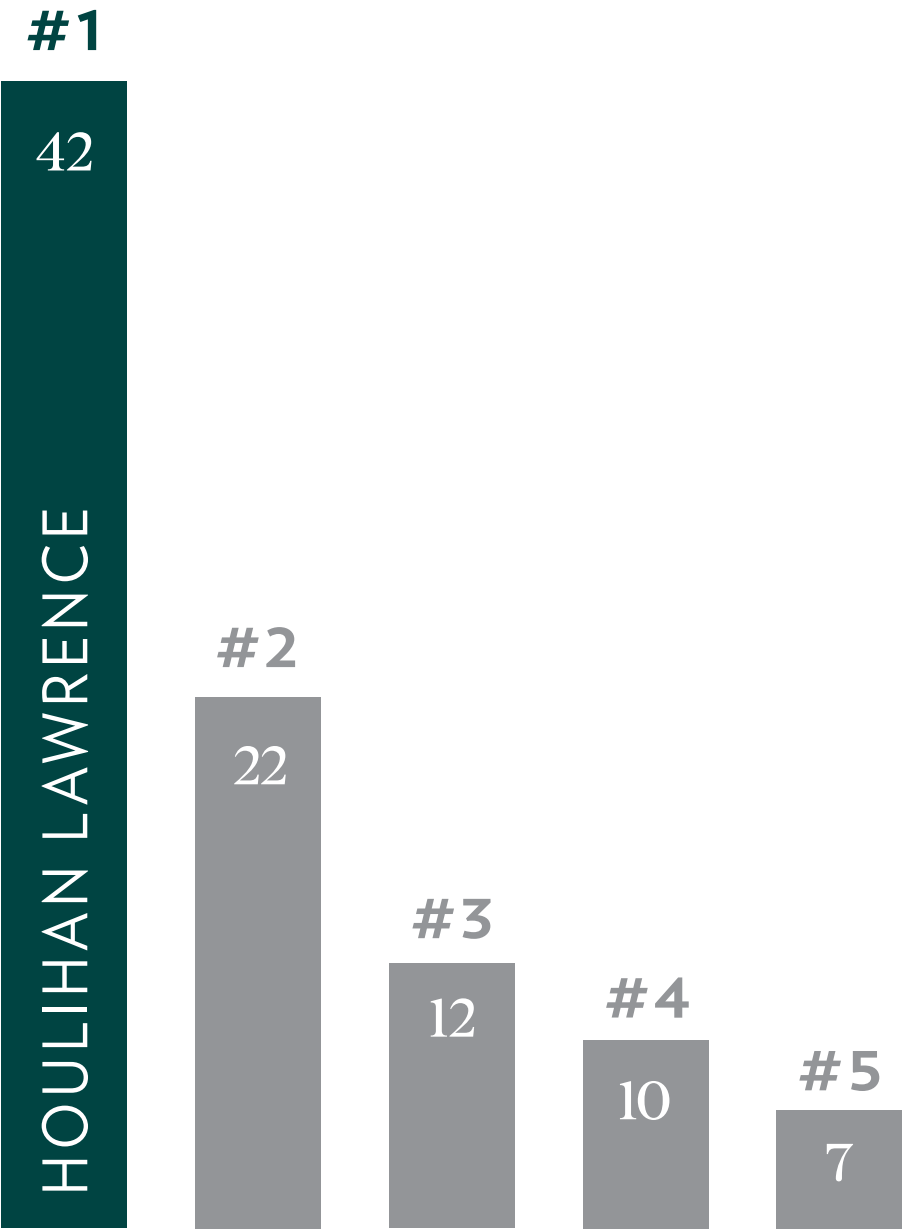
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