

Hen Hud Board Votes to Implement Princeton Plan

By Rick Pezzullo and Martin Wilbur

The Hendrick Hudson Board of Education last week laid the groundwork for the controversial Princeton Plan to be implemented at the elementary level for the 2022-2023 school year.

During an often-contentious meeting where one trustee called her colleagues “cowardly,” the board voted 5-2 to realign the district’s three elementary schools as K-1, 2-3, and 4-5 buildings rather than the K-5 arrangement currently in place.

“This new alignment will sustainably address variable student enrollment in each grade level across the district. It will also afford greater flexibility and specificity of educational experiences for all of our students, whether they are general education students, special education students, or

advanced learners,” board President Carol Abraham stated in a letter to the community after the meeting.

“We understand that this is a very big change for our district,” she continued. “This decision was not an easy one for the board trustees to make, and it is an emotional decision for many parents in the district. There have been heated arguments on both sides. The board strongly believes this is the right decision for our students and our taxpayers. We hope that our Sailor community will be able to come together and put our differences aside to make this transition a successful one for our children.”

In recent weeks, Superintendent of Schools Joseph Hochreiter and other district officials have held a series of community forums to inform parents and residents of

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MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Protestors who gathered outside Hendrick Hudson High School last week.

Apartments, Hotel, Retail Proposed Near Train in Peekskill

By Rick Pezzullo

Prominent developer Martin Ginsburg is looking to make a splash near the waterfront in Peekskill with an ambitious mixed-use development across from the Metro-North Train Station.

During a Common Council work session last week, Ginsburg, 86, who has completed several housing projects in the city, unveiled a plan to transform an existing municipal parking lot on the corner of Railroad Avenue and Requa Street into a multi-story rental apartment complex with hotel rooms, retail space and a parking garage.

“We’re not new in town. I think we have done some important projects,” said Ginsburg, who mentioned Chapel Hill, Riverbend, Gateway on Main Street, Fort Hill apartments and The Abbey Inn & Spa as some of his previous work in Peekskill.

“We’re doing something that we think will make a difference in this area. It’s not an easy task,” he remarked. “I’m not interested if I can’t do the whole project because it won’t do the job. This is your railroad. It should make a statement. If you don’t want a statement, you have the wrong

guy.”

Two separate concepts were presented to the Council. One would consist of two, nine-story towers that would contain 196 market rate rental units, 40 hotel rooms, 5,000 square feet of retail and 263 parking spaces in an attached garage. The second would be a five-story structure with 165 units, 40 hotel rooms, the same square footage of retail and 202 parking spaces.

For the project to move forward, the Council would have to vote to sell the parking lot to Ginsburg, increase the height for structures now allowed in the zoning district and add hotels in the City Code as a permitted use in the district.

Ginsburg is also proposing to redesign and upgrade Railroad Avenue and have the city make Requa Street one-way.

“Our secret of success is our total commitment to completing all necessary details,” Ginsburg said. “This will be my seventh and final project in Peekskill and it has to be my most important. Peekskill is a city I believe of major potential. It does not have a history of market rate development and none on the waterfront. I’m a pioneer. I go where nobody else goes. I’m a little bit of

a Hudson River nut trying to create Hudson River towns that are tourist focused.”

The discussion then turned to affordable housing, with Ginsburg contending regulations for setting aside a certain percentage of units in developments for so-called affordable housing were often cumbersome and did not yield the intended results.

“We build market rate housing. That’s what we do,” he stressed. “I’ve built affordable housing and got very little satisfaction from it.”

He noted when he constructed the Gateway townhouses on Main Street, none of the 38 people who applied for the two affordable units were Peekskill residents. Ginsburg said Peekskill

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Developer Martin Ginsburg (inset) has big plans for Peekskill waterfront.

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Dilapidated Gas Station in Shrub Oak to be Demolished

By Rick Pezzullo

The long-closed Getty gas station on the corner of Route 6 and Barger Street in Shrub Oak is slated to be demolished Tuesday (April 13) to make way for a new CoCo Farms convenience store and fueling station.

The former Getty station closed in 2016 and then was used as an auto body shop. The location will become the Elmsford-based CoCo Farms' 11th location in Westchester and Rockland counties.

"Our community's economic recovery from the pandemic depends on projects like the new CoCo Farms convenience store and many others, which send a positive signal to investors both inside and outside our community that we're open for business and interested in new approaches to long

under-utilized, underperforming sites in our business districts," said Supervisor Matt Slater. "Particularly in the case of properties large and small that are at our major highway entry points, it is energizing and exciting to see new, improved uses emerge. These gateways are the front doors to our community, and we want them to be clean and active."

The new half-acre location will feature a 2,000-square-foot traditional-style building, four double-sided fuel pump islands and attractive landscaping. Work may begin in the coming weeks as soon as CoCo Farms obtains the proper demolition and construction permits.

"As a native of Shrub Oak, I am very pleased to see this project move forward and improve one of the gateways of our

community," said Councilman Tom Diana.

"This is one of many projects that show a renewed interest in doing business with the Town of Yorktown," said Councilman Ed Lachterman. "Having a town board that understands that they are the facilitator between the needs of the community and the projects coming into town is a large part of this renewed process."

The CoCo Farms project is one of many local renewal projects completed, underway or planned for empty buildings and lots in locations across Yorktown including:

- In January, Oster Properties of Englewood Cliffs, N.J. unveiled concepts for a residential-retail complex at the Yorktown Green shopping center that would include the demolition of an empty Kmart and re-tenanting the long vacant Food Emporium

supermarket.

- Also, in January, the Town Board approved a flex-space use for a lot at 1600 Front St. that will allow the construction of a research and development facility for green technology by SK Energy Holdings.
- Last June the Ohio-based CST Kitchens & Baths received approval to convert a former M&T Bank building at 1961 Commerce St. in Yorktown Heights to a kitchen and bath design showroom. The bank had been vacant for about three years.
- Last May, Nestle Waters was approved to convert a former Verizon building at 3775 Crompond Road (Route 202) into a distribution center and offices bringing 60 jobs.

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what the Princeton Plan entails.

Since Entergy announced in January 2017 that it would be departing from the nuclear facility in Buchanan, Hendrick Hudson officials have been exploring ways to make up the \$25 million it will be losing annually from Indian Point. For years, Indian Point has been supplying funding for almost one-third of the district's operating budget.

If implemented, Hochreiter said switching to the Princeton Plan could save the district an estimated \$2 million annually and result in a 4.5% property tax avoidance. One of the downsides is 14 staff positions in kindergarten through fifth grade would be eliminated.

Before the Board of Education's decision, about 30 to 40 parents protested implementation of the Princeton Plan last Wednesday afternoon on Route 9A in front of Hendrick Hudson High School. They argued that the process was rushed with inadequate input and important details missing.

Meanwhile, children will face constant upheaval by having to transition between buildings every two years at a time after having had severe disruptions because of COVID-19. Some families would also have three children each in different school buildings.

Parent Edward Alcocer, who currently

has a seven- and nine-year-old at Furnace Woods Elementary School with another child entering kindergarten in the fall, said the plan is simply to save a relatively modest amount of money.

"There are no proven educational benefits to this plan; it's simply dollars, and the dollars aren't that much," Alcocer said. "The dollars are \$1.5 to \$2 million in savings, and that's on the backs of laying off teachers. So we're going to get less teachers, we're going to save minimally on taxes, education benefits are nil or negative and there's no opportunity to have a vote."

Dana Goyer, a member of the stakeholders committee and membership chair of the Frank G. Lindsey Elementary School PTA, said many parents felt the process was rushed, even though they were told they would have a full year to do the work. The committee began meeting about five months ago and there hadn't been completed analysis on savings and transportation costs.

She said the public would have had much more confidence in the decision had the analysis been completed.

"We didn't receive the proper support or the proper leadership to do what we were asked to do, which is really analyze," Goyer said. "We went through it very quickly. We didn't have a chance to look over the material because it was presented to the board and we

didn't have the financial analysis, discussions about the impact."

Christine Archacki, another member of the stakeholder's group and co-president of the Frank G. Lindsey Elementary School PTA, said the amount of savings realized kept shifting and the district is looking to add other programs that will offset the costs. Archacki also wondered whether the district is trying to eliminate the inequity between the three elementary schools by coming up with this plan.

"We don't feel (the board) is getting the full picture, which is a big part of the problem," Archacki said. "If they could see the future and know what it's going to look like, and then they can vote, then obviously it would be perfect. I don't know that they're being given the full picture."

Another parent, Nicole Dinis, who has two children at Furnace Woods, said parents aren't even aware of the transition plan or which schools will serve which grades.

"It's just a little disconcerting as parents," Dinis said. "We don't know what's happening and it could be within a year's time."

School trustees Laurie Ryan and Mary-Pat Briggi vehemently argued the community deserved more transparency and more information from the district.

Ryan made a motion to table the vote and send out an informational mailer to all

14,000 registered voters in the district, but her effort failed by a 5-2 vote, with only Briggi siding with her.

"Our community members do not know about this," Ryan stressed. "This is too big of an issue to throw our community into an upheaval when we're not doing this next year. It is changing the entire district."

"Right now, there is a lot of unknowns," Briggi said. "I haven't seen any data that (switching to the Princeton Plan) could provide better results or outcomes and at the end of the day that is our goal---to get better outcomes."

During its review of the Princeton Plan, Hendrick Hudson reached out to Somers, Ossining and Tarrytown to learn how those districts have fared with the same learning model.

Trustees Cory Notrica and Bill Oricchio maintained the Princeton Plan had been sufficiently studied.

"I see no need to kick the can down the road and cause further pain," Oricchio said.

"We were all elected to make decisions and it's not an easy decision," Notrica remarked. "There is no silver bullet that will make everyone feel better."

Briggi couldn't withhold her disappointment, labeling the five trustees who supported the change "cowardly," adding, "I'm so ashamed. Such a disgrace."

Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce Foundation Scholarship Deadline Approaching

The application deadlines for the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce Foundation 2021 Scholarship applications are approaching. The \$1,000 scholarship awards are given to high school seniors pursuing an advanced-level education. Graduating seniors from **Croton-Harmon, Hendrick Hudson, Lakeland, Peekskill, Putnam Valley, and Walter Panas** High Schools are eligible to apply. Applications are available at www.hvgatewaychamber.com or individual school guidance counselor offices.

"We want to encourage the next generation

of business owners and community leaders by supporting their higher education goals. Year after year, our scholarship winners are emblematic of our bright future, and as business leaders, we look forward to awarding six scholarships to deserving high school students from our region," said Deb Milone, President, Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce.

The deadline for application submission is Friday, April 23, 2021. Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Recipients are selected based on

academic record, leadership, extracurricular activities in school and/or community, honors, awards, or recognition and work experience. Scholarships are awarded on a non-discriminatory basis.

The online application can be downloaded and completed from the chamber's website by clicking on the Gateway Foundation logo on the left side of the chamber's home page. Applications are also available in each high school's guidance office. New this year is a short online video tutorial demonstrating how to complete the application.

The scholarships are funded from proceeds from The Tommy Bertoline Scholarship Golf Outing, which was established to support the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber Foundation Scholarship Fund. The event is named after Tommy Bertoline, a past board member of the Chamber and golf committee member who dedicated his life to the community and to youth sports. He was also an executive at D. Bertoline & Sons.

For questions, please email dmlone@hvgatewaychamber.com.

Apartments, Hotel, Retail Proposed Near Train in Peekskill

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would benefit more from a neighborhood improvement program.

Councilwoman Vanessa Agudelo said she would be open to different strategies but stressed there was already "a housing

crisis" in Peekskill, with more than one-third of city residents using 50 percent of their income for housing costs.

"I would require that there will be affordability built into this project that Peekskill residents can afford," Agudelo

said. "I think we have seen developers can and are willing to build affordable housing in Peekskill."

Mayor Andre Rainey concurred, saying, "The idea is to make sure the residents of Peekskill are taken care of."

Councilman Dwight Douglas offered his support for the project, commenting, "Your proposal is interesting. Adding a hotel is good. It would clean up one of the ugliest sites. I think it's worth considering."

State to Allocate Doses to Colleges as Young Adult Positivity Rates Rise

By Martin Wilbur

New York State will allocate 35,000 vaccination doses to public and private colleges throughout the state to help inoculate the student population before the end of the spring semester, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Monday.

With a recent spike in COVID-19 positivity rates among the 18-to-24 population in New York, Cuomo said colleges and their students must not be transmitters of the virus. The state university system will take the lead in the initiative, he said.

"We will be giving direct allocations to schools, colleges, universities so they can vaccinate their students in their facilities and let's stomp this beast to death while we can," Cuomo said.

Recent results have shown that young people in the 18-to-24 age group are now testing at a 14 percent positivity rate, up from about 9 percent earlier in the school year.

The state plans to provide 21,000 doses to public colleges only for residential non-commuter students. The remaining 14,000 doses will be distributed to private colleges.

Deputy Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins said the doses for the students will be the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which requires just one shot for full vaccination, as opposed to the Pfizer and Moderna shots that requires a two-dose regimen. However, any college student who has not yet turned 18 cannot receive the vaccine. Only Pfizer's vaccine has been approved by the FDA for 16- and 17-year-olds.

State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said by vaccinating college students not only should it limit COVID-19 transmission among the college population but it will help protect the students' families and communities when they return home for the summer break.

"It's never been more important to act smart and quickly and vaccinating college students statewide before they return to their hometown communities at the end of the semester is the next step in this methodical process," Zucker said. "It is the best way for students to protect themselves, their families and their communities."

Neither Cuomo nor Zucker addressed whether there will be enough Johnson & Johnson doses available to supply the colleges since there has been a sharp decline in vaccine allotment from the company in the past few weeks since there was a mix-up at the pharmaceutical firm's Baltimore plant. Reports have stated that this week's allotments of the one-shot vaccine are expected to decline nationwide by as much as 85 percent.

Progress on Cases, Hospitalizations Locally

For the first time in several weeks, Westchester County Executive George Latimer reported Monday a noticeable decline in active COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations while the number of virus-related fatalities has been slowly diminishing.

As of Sunday, the county reported 5,333 current cases, a decline of nearly 400 since last Wednesday and about 600 cases from one week earlier.

Hospitalizations dipped below 200 – it was at 192 on Saturday – for the first time since

shortly after the start of last fall's spike. There were three fatalities on Saturday and Sunday and 17 for the past week, Latimer said.

He said the data is headed in the right direction but tempered his enthusiasm.

"The numbers are encouraging, they're continuing to be encouraging, but they are not dramatic," Latimer said.

On vaccinations, the county now has about 28 percent of its population fully vaccinated, and about 42 percent of its residents have at least one dose. Latimer said that there have now been 253,000 doses administered in the four largest venues, the County Center (180,352), the two county clinics in White Plains and at Westchester Community College (38,637)

and the Yonkers Armory (36,030).

He expects to have a majority of Westchester's nearly one million residents vaccinated before the end of next month. That number should accelerate now that everyone 16 years old and up is eligible for the vaccine.

"Obviously, we hope they get better and I hope that by the end of May we'll see our numbers reach the 50 percent mark, perhaps the 60 percent mark, and reach that point where every person that wants a vaccination will be able to get one here in Westchester County," Latimer said last Thursday.

On Sunday, the Mid-Hudson region registered a 4.4 percent positivity rate. In

recent weeks, the region, which includes Westchester and Putnam counties had been the highest in the state.

However, on Sunday Western New York, which includes Buffalo, reported a startling 8.1 percent positivity rate from 6,016 tests, by far the highest in the state. That was followed by Finger Lakes at 5.5 percent, Long Island at 4.6 percent and Mid-Hudson.

The Sunday data showed Westchester had a 3.7 percent positivity rate, Putnam at 2.5 percent and Rockland at 4.9 percent.

In its weekly update as of last Thursday, Putnam County had 200 active cases, six COVID-19-related hospitalizations and one death during the week, raising the county's death toll to 91.



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State to Allow School Graduation Ceremonies With Limited Capacity

By Martin Wilbur

New guidelines issued late Monday by New York State for graduation and commencement ceremonies will allow limited capacity for both indoor and outdoor events.

Effective May 1, the capacity will be determined on the event size and the venue, according to state health officials. All schools, colleges and universities and the venues hosting the ceremonies must follow the state's health and safety protocols, which mandate face masks, social distancing, health screenings and collection of contact tracing information.

"We're once again approaching the end of the academic year, which means we need strict rules in place to ensure commencement

ceremonies are done safely in the context of the ongoing pandemic," Gov. Andrew Cuomo said. "With more people getting vaccinated every day, we are so close to the light at the end of the tunnel, but we all need to continue being vigilant and I am urging everyone to celebrate smart."

For events that exceed the social gathering limits of 100 people indoors or 200 people outdoors, event organizers and venues must notify the local health department and require attendees to show proof of a recent negative test result or proof of completed immunization prior to entry. The requirements are consistent with state guidance for other social activities, including catered receptions, the performing arts and sporting events.

For outdoor events, ceremonies of more

than 500 people at outdoor venues will be limited to 20 percent capacity, applicable to venues with a total capacity of at least 2,500. Ceremonies of 201 to 500 people at outdoor venues will be limited to 33 percent capacity.

Small-scale ceremonies of up to 200 people or two attendees per student at outdoor venues will be limited to 50 percent capacity. Proof of recent negative test result or proof of completed immunization is optional.

For indoor ceremonies, those attended by more than 150 people will be limited to 10 percent capacity for venues with capacity of at least 1,500. Ceremonies of 101 to 150 people indoors will be limited to 33 percent capacity and ceremonies of up to 100 people or two attendees per student at indoor venues will be capped at 50 percent capacity.

Likewise, proof of recent negative test results or proof of completed immunization is optional.

Distance Requirements Eased in Schools

The state announced last Friday that students in grades K-12 to reduce social distancing to three feet if the pupils are wearing masks and the school is in a county with a low or moderate transmission risk.

In counties where infection rates are high, middle schools and high schools should continue six feet of distancing unless they can maintain cohorting, where groups of students remain together throughout the day.

New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) President Andy Pallotta said that the new guidelines are in line with Centers for Disease

Control (CDC) recommendations, but also makes clear that distancing is one factor in a multilevel approach. He said in addition to mandated mask wearing, ventilation, hygiene and contact tracing requirement are important measures that must still be followed. Community input is essential as well.

"Before districts make changes, school communities, including parents and educators, must be given an opportunity to provide input on updates to reopening plans," Pallotta said. "That has always been and must continue to be essential to the reopening process."

No Updates on Vaccine Charges

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said Monday there were no updates on accusations leveled more than a week ago that certain northern Westchester pharmacies were charging members of the public \$20 for the COVID-19 vaccine. Last week, Latimer and other officials stressed that the vaccine is free to everyone regardless of their health insurance.

New York Attorney General Letitia James issued a consumer alert last Friday to warn the public against the scam.

"As we continue to make progress in recovering from this public health crisis, it is vital that every individual has access to this free, lifesaving vaccine and that there are no barriers to New Yorkers receiving their dose," James said.

Anyone who has been charged a fee for vaccination is encouraged to file a complaint online with the Attorney General's office or call 1-800-771-7755.

Jump for Joy

Open Door Family Medical Centers recently administered its 20,000th COVID-19 vaccine dose at its six locations throughout Westchester and Putnam counties. This celebration by Open Door staff members occurred outside its Ossining office last week.



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Local State Lawmakers Encouraged By Priorities in \$212B State Budget

By Martin Wilbur

Several local state legislators expressed optimism last week following the passage of the \$212 billion New York State budget for Fiscal Year 2022, which addresses multiple issues that arose as a result of the COVID-19.

While the spending plan represents a \$17 billion increase in spending over the previous budget, it also includes more than \$12 billion in one-time spending from the federal government to help various industries and residents hard hit by the pandemic get back on their feet.

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) said the final package that was approved last Wednesday was very similar to the one-house budget that was agreed to by a majority of the Senate and Assembly last month.

"We made a point that we put together all the pieces of the puzzle, including education, with sustainable state revenues," Harckham said. "So we're not funding anything that is operating (expenses) with one-shots."

Perhaps the biggest piece to the budget was the \$1.4 billion increase in Foundation Aid for the state's public schools. Over the next three years, the state will phase in full funding for public education. This year all school districts will receive at least 60 percent of its Foundation Aid under the state's formula, said Assemblywoman Sandra Galef (D-Ossining). That level will rise to at least 80 percent next year and 100 percent by Fiscal Year 2024.

That will help higher-needs districts such as Ossining, which will receive an additional \$3.8 million, and Peekskill, which is slated to get a \$2.9 million increase in Foundation Aid, Galef said.

State Sen. Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers), chair of the Senate Education Committee, said despite the many challenges posed by COVID-19, the budget invests in the future.

"This is a budget that puts people at its center, and takes its role as a moral document seriously," Mayer said. "As a public servant, I am grateful for that and will continue to work hard to make sure that the people of New York, and especially the people of the 37th District, are well served by this budget and all our actions."

It also includes funding for Universal Pre-Kindergarten for 210 districts outside of New York City. In the 40th Senate District alone, the state will fund 854 slots. The funding will help Brewster (64 slots), Carmel (77) and Mahopac (68) in Putnam and Croton-Harmon (36), Hendrick Hudson (34), Lakeland (113), Mount Pleasant (45), Pleasantville (36), Somers (44), Valhalla (33) and Yorktown (88) in Westchester.

Assemblyman Chris Burdick (D-Bedford) explained that through the past year the state faced the prospect of massive cuts in education, a decimated restaurant industry and pain experienced by those who lost their livelihoods through no fault of their own.

"I am thrilled with the fact that we were successful in restoring funding for areas that would have been out, everything from



Assemblywoman Sandra Galef said she was pleased that a property tax circuit breaker, which she fought for over the past decade, was included in the state's \$212 billion budget.

education to people with disabilities," Burdick said.

The legislature and Gov. Andrew Cuomo agreed to a small business grant program worth \$800 million, \$25 million toward the New York Restaurant Resiliency Fund, a \$35 million tax credit for restaurants to hire back workers and \$40 million to help nonprofit arts organizations, including \$1 million for ArtsWestchester. In all, about \$4 billion in total spending was approved toward helping

small businesses.

In addition, there will be a \$4.2 billion middle class tax break, which will reduce state taxes for those earning less than \$250,000 but targets those on the lower end of the scale.

Galef said she was pleased with the maintenance of the current STAR Program and a property tax circuit breaker program, which she had worked on for more than a decade, that helps homeowners who pay more than 6 percent of their income on property taxes earning less than \$75,000. They will receive checks for up to \$350, she said.

The state also agreed to fund the \$2.1 billion excluded workers fund. While many of the workers are undocumented, they had been earning money and paying taxes and providing services, in many cases front-facing workers.

"These are folks that are going to be putting it right back into the economy, buying basic necessities or otherwise using these funds that will go right back into our small businesses and improving the economy," Burdick said.

The state has also fully funded the Electric Generation Facility Cessation Mitigation Program at \$140 million because of the approaching closure of Indian Point later this month, Harckham said. That money will benefit Hendrick Hudson School District, the Village of Buchanan and the Town of Cortlandt taxpayers, assistance that phases out over a seven-year period, he said.

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Pleasantville Schools Names New Bedford Road School Principal

By Abby Luby

Bedford Road School Assistant Principal Rachel Hunger was approved last week to become the school's new principal.

The Pleasantville Board of Education unanimously agreed to promote Hunger, who has been assistant principal at the school for the last three years. She will take over on July 1, replacing Peggy Galotti, who is retiring at the end of the current school year.

"I just couldn't be happier to recommend her tonight to this Board of Education and to this community for her to be the next principal for our beloved Bedford Road School," Superintendent of Schools Mary Fox-Alter said of Hunger.

Hunger began her career as an elementary school teacher in the Bronx where she eventually rose to become an assistant principal for four years before coming to Pleasantville at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year.

Board President Larry Boes congratulated Hunger on her appointment last Tuesday.

"Your candidacy definitely rose through the process and that's a testament to you and all the work you've done," Boes said. "We couldn't be happier as a group to recommend your appointment."

Galotti announced her retirement in February, capping off a 32-year career in Pleasantville. Several Bedford Road School staff members attended the Zoom meeting to congratulate Hunger.

"She is simply the best and I feel very fortunate," said Galotti, who announced her retirement in February after 32 years in the district. "I'm sure she has great plans moving the school forward in the post-COVID school year."

Hunger, who was joined by her husband and parents, said she was lucky to have worked with Galotti. She thanked Fox-Alter and the Board of Education for showing confidence in her to lead the school.

"The interview process was incredibly thoughtful; it helped me to reflect on where education currently is," Hunger said. "I'm excited about where we are going in the future. I've loved working in Pleasantville and I feel very fortunate to work with an amazing group of educators."



Outgoing Bedford Road Principal Peggy Galotti, left, with Assistant Principal Rachel Hunger. Hunger will be the school's new leader starting July 1.

Examiner Wins Trio of Honors at NY Press Awards Contest

Examiner Media was honored three times at this year's New York Press Association Better Newspaper contest.

The annual spring conference and industry awards contest was held virtually for the second straight year due to COVID-19.

An article written by Examiner Publisher Adam Stone with reporting help from summer intern Ariel Markowski won third place for its division in the contest's spot news category.

"An interesting read with some good

quotes from the teens and not just the school and law enforcement," the judges stated about the piece, published on June 2, 2020, and headlined "Instagram Deactivates Hateful Account Created by Somers Student."

The quotes from the teens noted by the judges were obtained thanks to Markowski's reporting.

Examiner Editor-in-Chief Martin Wilbur, who won first place the previous two years for his editorials, received an honorable mention in this year's contest in

the news article category. The honorable mention was for a Sept. 1, 2020 article headlined "New Castle Battles Against Hate Incidents, Offers Reward."

"Very well written and with very effective use of quotes," the judges observed.

Examiner Media also received an honorable mention in the special sections category for a June 23, 2020, tribute produced in partnership with the Fox Lane High School Association titled "FLHSA Salutes the BCSD Classes of 2020."

"I know a section like this can be a challenging jigsaw puzzle and I feel like this turned out very well," the judges remarked.

The contest was for work published during the 2020 calendar year.

In all, 151 newspapers from across New York State participated in the contest, held remotely on Apr. 8 and 9. There were 2,440 entries competing for awards in 64 categories. The Southampton Press-Eastern Edition snagged the contest's top honor, being named Newspaper of the Year.



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SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2021
10:00 am - 12:00 noon

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REGISTRATION: Sign up in advance is required to Supervisor's Office
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Incoming Lane Sought off Washington Ave. for Chappaqua Station Parking

By Martin Wilbur

New Castle officials are considering converting the vehicular exit from the train station parking lot that feeds onto Washington Avenue into a two-way road in hopes of easing congestion around the area.

Under the proposal there would be a 12-foot-wide lane that would allow for ingress into the train station parking lot and two 11-foot-side lanes for exiting vehicles, one for cars turning left and the other for motorists turning right, said Town Engineer Robert Cioli. The town would have to widen the area where the right

edge of the incoming lane would be about 12 to 18 inches for a 90-foot stretch, an in-house job that would have minimal costs, Cioli said.

There would be a loss of about 15 parallel parking spaces that are closest to the Washington Avenue side in order to accommodate the extra lane, he said.

Town officials are poised to give it a try while most commuters who had been using the train station on a daily basis before the pandemic have yet to return.

Deputy Supervisor Jeremy Saland said he thinks it could be more beneficial for the morning rush rather than the afternoon

commute as drivers could avoid the crush of cars heading into the station parking area and circle off of South Greeley Avenue. He said the extra entrance could be beneficial for people coming to the station from anywhere off of Route 117, giving them a second option.

"I don't see the downside," Saland said. "You have this big parking lot of nothingness. You might as well start doing something with it, at least looking at it."

Councilwoman Lisa Katz said she wasn't convinced that it would help the situation at the train station. Commuters she has spoken to about the idea said they didn't anticipate

using the new entrance. Katz also said she didn't see the advantages of losing spaces and views a potential turnaround area as potentially dangerous with the loss of another handful of spaces.

"We're going to lose about 20 spots," she said. "It makes me nervous."

Supervisor Ivy Pool said the town should speak to people who use the train station parking lot to get their feedback but agreed with Saland that now would be the time to experiment. However, she said the right turn lane out of the station that send traffic toward Pleasantville may be underutilized.

"If it doesn't work, you're talking minimal dollars," Saland said.

P'ville Event to Help Fight Hate Against Asian Americans

By Martin Wilbur

Raghav Joshi may only be 16 years old but he's seen more of the world than many people decades older than him.

Born in New Delhi, India, he's already lived in six different countries, including Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Mauritius and for the last three-and-a-half years in the United States, moving with his parents multiple times because of their work in the corporate world.

But it has been at Blind Brook High School in Rye Brook where he has found his voice, becoming a self-described activist and standing up for those who he feels have been marginalized.

"When I got here, this country is one of the few countries where you can have a voice and you can really make a difference even if

you're an immigrant, a 16-year-old at a small school in Westchester County," Joshi said.

He has used his resolve to help organize Westchester Against AAPI Hate this Sunday, Apr. 18 in Pleasantville. The event will be held at 1 p.m. on Memorial Plaza by the gazebo and will feature various guest speakers, including congressional representatives Mondaire Jones and Sean Patrick Maloney and County Executive George Latimer, who will address the rash of attacks across the nation against Asian Americans.

Joshi said as an immigrant who has experienced more subtle forms of bias in his travels, he said he is committed to advocating for the Asian American Pacific Island community, particularly since the sharp rise in attacks after the start of the pandemic.

"We're going to have officials speak, what

they're going to do with the issue, what they're going to do right now and, obviously, we're going to have a lot of AAPI students, a lot of youth activists, the future of this movement, and have the current leaders of this movement right now in this area," Joshi said. "This is to kind of show our story. This is really to get our voice across to tell people what we've done."

Pleasantville Mayor Peter Scherer said when Joshi approached the village, there was no hesitation to help combat a serious and disturbing issue facing the United States. The main concern is making sure everyone who attends maintains safe social distancing, he said.

"We have the obligation as well as the intent to help people shine a light on these kinds of issues," Scherer said.

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Obituaries

Kathleen Makrakis

Kathleen Brooks Makrakis, a caring daughter, mother, grandmother, sister and friend, broke her earthly bonds on Apr. 1 at the age of 69.

Kathy was born on Mar. 11, 1952, at Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco. She was raised by loving parents Albert and Evelyn Brooks in Pleasantville with her five siblings. After graduating Pleasantville High School in 1970, she worked her way through college at a pizzeria to ultimately earn her master's degree at Pace University and became a CPA. She later gave birth to two children, then went on to head investor relations teams for several companies. She resided

in several places over the years including Port Chester, Mount Kisco, Pound Ridge and Stamford, Conn.

Kathy is survived by her children, Alex and Christina; her grandson, Antonio Noel; and her five siblings, Judy, Marilyn, Karin, John and Charles. There is a visitation scheduled at Beecher Flooks Funeral Home this Saturday, Apr. 17 at 10 a.m. followed by a memorial mass at noon at Holy Innocents Church in Pleasantville.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her memory to the Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville, N.Y. 10570.

Virginia Peduzzi

Virginia Fucile Peduzzi, a lifelong White Plains resident, died Apr. 7. She was 100.

Peduzzi was born Nov. 17, 1920, to Sam and Louise Fucile. In July 1942 she married Edward Peduzzi at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in White Plains. He predeceased her.

Virginia was a member of the ROMA AC Club in White Plains and also was a member of the Good Counsel Guild. She loved traveling and spending time in Puerto Rico and was an avid gardener and

reader.

She is survived by her children, Edward Peduzzi of White Plains, Louise (Joseph) Monticelli of North White Plains, Richard Peduzzi of White Plains and Robin (Larry) Orsini of Carmel; a daughter-in-law, Suzanne Peduzzi, of White Plains; her sister, Susan; brother John; seven grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. She is predeceased by her son, Robert, and siblings Rose, Frank, Mike and Velia.

Judith Moore

Judith Moore passed away peacefully on Easter morning due to complications from Alzheimer's disease.

Born in Beverly, Mass on Jan. 3, 1941, she was the daughter of the late Leslie and Marjorie McGeoghegan of Hamilton, Mass.

Judi spent most of her life in Massachusetts prior to moving to New York to be closer to her grandchildren. She was a CNA in both Massachusetts and New York and was a resident at Beaveridge in Yorktown for many years.

Judi was a devoted and loving mother and grandmother, which meant more to her than anything else. Always a New Englander at heart, she was at her happiest traveling back there to eat fried clams with her extended family and friends.

She is survived by her son, Bobby Ulfsson, of Peekskill; her daughter and son-in-law, Susan and Michael Marshall, of North Salem; her cherished grandchildren, Samantha and Brenton Marshall; as well as her sisters and brothers-in-law, Darleen and Bruce Nye of St. Petersburg, Fla. and



Judith Moore

Joan and Robert Emerson of Hernando, Fla. She is also survived by her cousin, Sandy, of Chelmsford, Mass. and by her devoted cat, Mickey.

A celebration of Judi's life will be held at a later date in Beverly, Mass.

Margaret Tiburzi

Margaret (Peggy) H. Tiburzi, a White Plains resident, died Apr. 5 after a recent battle with cancer and suffering a series of strokes. She was 92.

Tiburzi was born in 1928 and had a special love for all those around her, especially family and friends who were available for dinner. No one enjoyed dining out more than Peggy. She valued her time spent with family and friends and the friendships she developed over the years with many restaurant waiters and owners. Her quick wit and fun-loving manner made her a favorite of all who knew her.

Peggy was born in the Bronx to Edward and Rose Ecker. Her sister, Gloria Falk Daderian, predeceased her in 2018. She grew up in White Plains and graduated from Green Mountain College. She began her career as a dental assistant in Manhattan and ultimately worked as a broker for Gains Realty in White Plains. For many years, Peggy was a member of the White Plains Human Rights Commission.

Peggy married Robert (Bert) V. Tiburzi in 1956. They were both graduates of White Plains High School, and together

they raised their three sons in White Plains. As Bert and her three sons proudly said, "there was no better wife or mother."

Peggy was always there in times of need and, of course, celebration. She kept a calendar of family and friends' life events that came to be known as "Peggy's Legendary Calendar." Ultimately, almost every day had some event. Some of her legendary feats included driving her Cadillac onto the White Plains High School field during a football game to pick up her injured son. Every Monday until her early 90s, Peggy filled her Cadillac with friends for their weekly venture to Sir John's for chicken parmigiana.

Peggy and Bert were devoted to each other and true partners in everything they did. Bert predeceased her in 2013, and she never, even for a day, stopped missing the love of her life.

Peggy is survived by her three sons, Robert V. Tiburzi Jr., and his wife, Joan, Edward P. Tiburzi and his wife, Patricia, and John H. Tiburzi and his wife, June, and her grandchildren, Laura, Jillian, Anna, Robert, Jessica, Victoria, Joseph and John.

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Lincoln Society 2021 Virtual Fundraising Event Set for April 24

The Lincoln Society in Peekskill will host a virtual dinnertime event and fundraiser via Zoom on Saturday, Apr. 24 at 7 p.m.

Unlike other Zoom-based programs, the event will include an auction, chat rooms, video presentations and a discussion with author and featured speaker Dr. Ted Widmer. It will be hosted by Lincoln Society President Robert E. McFarlane. Registrants will also be eligible to purchase a signed copy of Widmer's new book, "Lincoln on the Verge: Thirteen Days to Washington," at a discounted price.

Widmer's book is a gripping account of Abraham Lincoln's 13-day train journey from Springfield, Ill. to his inauguration in Washington, D.C. in 1861, which included a famous speaking stop at the train depot in Peekskill. According to Widmer, Lincoln was "on the verge of greatness" as he prepared to assume the presidency in the midst of the secession crisis that led to the Civil War.

Widmer is currently a distinguished scholar at the Macaulay Honors College at the City University of New York. He is a renowned historian and writer who earned his doctorate at Harvard University and previously served as director of the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress.

Access to the annual event is open to

all with a tax-deductible contribution of \$25 to support the work of the Lincoln Society in Peekskill. In return, registrants will receive a \$10 gift certificate to a Peekskill-area restaurant provided by a generous anonymous donor. Registration can be completed by visiting www.lincolnsocietyinpeekskill.com.

Founded in 1903, the Lincoln Society in Peekskill is one of the oldest Lincoln groups in the United States. It was established 19 years before the Lincoln Memorial was constructed in Washington in 1922. Next year marks the centennial of the formal dedication of America's shrine to its 16th President. Today, the Lincoln Depot Museum in Peekskill commemorates Lincoln's only speaking event in Westchester County.

"This event will be a wonderful opportunity to learn more about America's greatest President, support our local restaurants during a worldwide pandemic and establish a personal connection with those who share an interest in American history, so everyone is welcome to join us on Apr. 24," McFarlane said.

The Lincoln Society in Peekskill is a nonpartisan and nonprofit historical society that is dedicated to promoting a greater awareness of the life and legacy of President Lincoln.

Man Dies in Fatal Taconic Parkway Motorcycle Crash



DAVE ROCCO PHOTO

Emergency responders try to save the life of Julio Diaz of Queens after a motorcycle accident last Saturday on the Taconic Parkway in Yorktown. Diaz was pronounced dead at New York-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital.

On Apr. 10, state police from the Hawthorne barracks investigated a fatal motorcycle accident on the Taconic State Parkway in Yorktown.

At about 2:10 p.m., troopers were dispatched to the area of mile marker 15.5 on the southbound of the Taconic Parkway to respond to motor vehicle crash with injuries. As troopers arrived, Yorktown Emergency Medical Services personnel were already performing lifesaving measures on the operator of a 2009 Yamaha

motorcycle, Julio T. Diaz, 32, of Queens. Diaz was transported by Yorktown EMS to the New York-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

A preliminary investigation indicated that Diaz was traveling at a high rate of speed and sideswiped a 2007 BMW M5 that was changing lanes. The Yorktown Fire Department and the Troop K Collision Reconstruction Unit responded to the scene. This investigation is ongoing.

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Police Blotter

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

Mar. 29: Police responded to an area on South Riverside Avenue at 7:11 p.m. after a caller reported their two-year-old dog jumped out of the car and ran off. Patrol, with the assistance of a local resident, canvassed the area and located the canine. After a short foot pursuit and some enticement with an officer's personal meal, the dog was reunited with its owner.

Mar. 31: A Farrington Road resident reported at 8:38 a.m. that a tree fell on her property, which she believes may have been done intentionally. The issue was resolved.

Mar. 31: Police were notified by a High Street resident at 11:31 a.m. who reported receiving calls from a party stating he is with the IRS and claiming she will have a warrant issued for her arrest if money isn't paid. The resident also indicated that someone attempted to open a BJ's card in her name. The complainant has not had any financial loss at this time.

Apr. 2: Police were notified by a Mount Airy Road resident at 2:09 p.m. that someone was attempting to hack into her computer. Patrol assisted the resident who has had no financial loss at this time.

Apr. 2: Report of a domestic dispute on Half Moon Bay Drive at 8:15 p.m. The

parties were interviewed and a report filed.

Apr. 3: Police responded to a commercial area on Croton Point Avenue at 9:17 p.m. after a resident reported she was harassed. The party stated she was followed by a vehicle to the police station. She then drove out of the police station down Grand Street where an occupant may have thrown something at her car. That vehicle was described as a black sedan occupied by a male and female. The area was canvassed with negative results.

North Castle Police Department

Apr. 2: A caller reported at 5:24 p.m. being involved in a motor vehicle accident on North Broadway. The responding officer reported that the operator of the other vehicle had revoked driving privileges and was processed on scene for aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle. The subject was issued an appearance ticket for North Castle Town Court.

Apr. 4: A complainant reported at 3:16 p.m. that her husband and brother-in-law are attempting to retrieve mail at the listed location and the sister is not allowing them to. The caller said there is a verbal dispute taking place outside the residence. The responding officers completed a domestic incident report and depositions were

completed on the scene. The parties left the residence.

Apr. 4: Report of criminal mischief on Hidden Oak Road at 3:52 p.m. A caller reported that her mother's tire was "slashed" in her driveway, observing the incident on Apr. 2 when her mother reported to her that she could not leave their house due to a flat tire. The responding officer reported that photos were secured; a report will follow.

Apr. 6: A Jackson Road resident reported at 11:37 a.m. that he recently learned that a check he had written and mailed was stolen and then altered and cashed.

Yorktown Police Department

Apr. 2: Thomas Crawford III, 50, of Peekskill, was charged at 4:34 p.m. with dumping, a Town Code violation, stemming from a Feb. 20 incident on Decatur Road. Police said an investigation determined Crawford and another subject, who was previously served with a criminal summons in connection with the incident, dumped a large broken desk.

Apr. 6: Olivier Loudig, 48, of Yorktown, was issued a summons for harassment at 7:50 p.m. after police responded to a Yorktown residence on Mar. 20 for an altercation between the suspect and the victim.

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FAMILY COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER

In the Matter of

**ROSARIO ESQUIVEL-GARCIA
ANGEL ESQUIVEL-GARCIA**

A Children Under Eighteen Years of
Age Alleged to be Neglected by

ANGEL ESQUIVEL-MANCILLA,
Respondent.

NOTICE: PLACEMENT OF YOUR CHILD IN FOSTER CARE MAY RESULT IN YOUR LOSS OF YOUR RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD. IF YOUR CHILD STAYS IN FOSTER CARE FOR 15 OF THE MOST RECENT 22 MONTHS, THE AGENCY MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO FILE A PETITION TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND COMMITMENT OF GUARDIANSHIP AND CUSTODY OF THE CHILD FOR THE PURPOSES OF ADOPTION, AND MAY FILE BEFORE THE END OF THE 15-MONTH PERIOD. IF SEVERE OR REPEATED ABUSE IS PROVEN BY CLEAR AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE, THIS FINDING MAY CONSTITUTE THE BASIS TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS.

UPON GOOD CAUSE, THE COURT MAY ORDER AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE NON-RESPONDENT PARENT(S) SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A RESPONDENT; IF THE COURT DETERMINES THE CHILD SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM HIS/HER HOME, THE COURT MAY ORDER AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE NON-RESPONDENT PARENT(S) SHOULD BE SUITABLE CUSTODIANS FOR THE CHILD; IF THE CHILD IS PLACED AND REMAINS IN FOSTER CARE FOR FIFTEEN OF THE MOST RECENT TWENTY-TWO MONTHS, THE AGENCY MAY BE REQUIRED TO FILE A PETITION FOR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS OF THE PARENT(S) AND COMMITMENT OF GUARDIANSHIP AND CUSTODY OF THE CHILD FOR THE PURPOSES OF ADOPTION, EVEN IF THE PARENT(S) WERE NOT NAMED AS RESPONDENTS IN THE CHILD NEGLECT OR ABUSE PROCEEDING.

A NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT HAS THE RIGHT TO REQUEST TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT CUSTODY OF THE CHILD AND TO SEEK ENFORCEMENT OF VISITATION RIGHTS WITH THE CHILD.

TO: ANGEL ESQUIVEL-MANCILLA

SUMMONS

Docket No. NN-07345-20
NN -07346-20

F/U No. 143336

The petition under Article 10 of the Family Court Act having been filed with this Court alleging that the above-named children are neglected children;

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to appear before this Court at 111 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., 3rd Floor Annex, White Plains, New York, on the **10th day of MAY, 2021, at 2:30PM**, in the forenoon of said day for the purposes of a an Inquest hearing to answer the petition and to show cause why said children should not be adjudicated to be a neglected children and why you should not be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Article 10 of the Family Court Act.

PRIOR TO YOUR COURT APPEARANCE, please contact White Plains Family Court at (914) 824-5500 for confirmation that the matter will still be heard virtually and not in-person at that time OR for further instructions on how to appear virtually.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that you have the right to be represented by a lawyer, and if the Court finds you are unable to pay for a lawyer, you have the right to have a lawyer assigned by the Court.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that if you fail to appear at the time and place noted above, the Court will moved forward with the Inquest Hearing and determine the petition as provided by law.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that Federal and State law may require the Commissioner of Social Services to file petitions to terminate parental rights when children have been in foster care for fifteen (15) of the most recent twenty-two (22) months.

Dated: March 16, 2021

BY ORDER OF THE COURT

/s/
CLERK OF THE COURT

Rocah, Moms Demand Action Urge Senate to Support Background Checks

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County District Attorney Mimi Rocah joined volunteers from Moms Demand Action last Thursday morning in White Plains, calling on the U.S. Senate to approve legislation requiring background checks as the nation continues to experience mass shootings.

The Moms Demand Action representatives stopped in front of the Westchester County Courthouse as part of the Road Trip for Background Checks, a 10-day series of seven different road trips from around the country that will converge in Washington by next week and hand-deliver murals with messages and photos from advocates and victims' families.

"We're doing this because it's been 25 years since the federal government has passed meaningful legislation on gun violence," said Barry Graubart, a volunteer leader for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. "That's 25 years of gun violence survivors watching their loved ones be killed. It's 25 years of advocates fighting day after day after day to get common-sense gun laws passed. It's 25 years of incidents like we've seen in Colorado, in Atlanta and in the streets of every community every single day in America. But that can stop now."

Expanded background checks to buy firearms should be achievable because it enjoys support from more than 90 percent of all Americans, including gun owners, and about 85 percent of Republicans, Rocah said.



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Westchester County District Attorney Mimi Rocah stands with volunteers from Moms Demand Action in White Plains last Thursday urging the U.S. Senate to approve background checks for gun purchases. The measure has been passed twice by the House of Representatives.

Although New York and some other states have strong gun laws, the state-by-state approach is ineffective because guns are transported across borders and find their way into hands of people who shouldn't have access to them, she said.

What has been missing until now has been federal leadership on the issue, Rocah mentioned.

"We need to prevent moms from losing more children, dads losing children, children losing parents, death by suicide," Rocah said.

"We're the only country in the world that has this gun violence problem because we don't treat guns like something that needs to be regulated as much as a car and it needs to be."

The stop in White Plains on Thursday came on the same day that President Joe Biden signed six executive actions designed to curb gun violence, including restricting "ghost guns," weapons that can be built by purchasing pieces online that are untraceable.

Also on hand was Nadine McKenzie, the mother of 13-year-old Shamoya McKenzie, a budding basketball star who was killed by a stray bullet fired by a gang member in Mount Vernon in 2016. The younger McKenzie was sitting in the front passenger seat while her mother was driving when she was killed.

McKenzie, who signed the Moms Demand Action mural, said no parent or family member should have to go through what she experienced with the death of her daughter. She thinks about Shamoya's life being cut short virtually every day and urged the Senate to take action.

"This is very important that another mother doesn't feel the pain that I'm going through," McKenzie said.

Background checks for gun purchases should be the first part of federal legislation that also includes two other effective steps – red flag laws that confiscate guns from people who are deemed by a court to be a threat to themselves and others, and cracking down on ghost guns, Rocah added.

Graubart said while tighter gun legislation may appear to be an uphill fight, 20 years ago few would have imagined that marriage equality would become increasingly popular throughout the United States. He sees the gradual acceptance of tighter federal gun laws as something that will eventually be accepted.

"We hope the Senate will act on it, and if not, we know we will be there in the voting booth next time," Graubart said.

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Letters to the Editor

There Are Alternatives to Mount Kisco's Kirby Commons Proposal

The Kirby Commons development consisting of two high-rise apartment buildings and a multilevel parking structure to replace the two commuter parking lots for Metro-North in Mount Kisco, is scheduled for a vote by the Village Board at its next public meeting.

The mayor and a Village Board member, who have reached their final decision to unilaterally support the Kirby Commons development, have stated the following:

1. This is a project that has been "worked on" for two years, and no further delay is justifiable.
2. This "transit-oriented" development is the only way to ensure the long-term prosperity of the Mount Kisco downtown business community, and the town/village overall.

My response is as follows:

1. We are talking about a 99-year lease of public property to a Manhattan developer, which generations will have to deal with. There is no reason we could not wait six more months to have a vote on the November ballot

regarding this development, allowing all residents to voice their opinion.

2. I do not believe Kirby Commons is either the only way, or maybe even the way at all, to ensure the long-term prosperity of the Mount Kisco downtown business community and the town/village.

There is another idea.

Mount Kisco should have a branch of Westchester Community College downtown. We have the train and the bus. The college would bring people walking to town to shop and eat. It would be a great place for tech and medical certificate training programs.

We have a lot of space, including the empty movie theater. This would also provide opportunities for our adult immigrant population, approximately 48 percent of our town, to grow or enhance skills. Local families needing to postpone university plans for their kids due to the COVID economy would also benefit. And community colleges are very important to the President and First Lady. So there likely is money out there.

There will be far less impact upon the environment if we use an existing building, instead of building two high-rise apartment buildings, to bring people downtown to shop and eat. And we can avoid giving a Manhattan developer, as bad as or worse than the one who has a monopoly on Moger Avenue, a 99-year lease that future generations will have to live with. We can still turn some of our parking lot into a park or promenade to further enhance our downtown and attract visitors. This plan could even live up to the mayor's favorite term, re her vision of the village, a way to make Mount Kisco "vibrant."

Here is the link to an article about President Biden's planned investment in community colleges as an investment in our economy <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/04/01/what's-2-trillion-infrastructure-plan-higher-ed>.

Thank you for your consideration.

Judith Sage
Mount Kisco

CDC Should Study New Data, Allow Cruises to Resume This Summer

As the owner of Chris Caulfield-CruiseOne based in Croton-on-Hudson, and directly affected by the CDC order to suspend cruises, I feel it is time to restart cruises in U.S. waters.

The long-awaited instructions issued on Apr. 2 by the CDC continues an outdated, overly complex process for resumption of U.S. cruise operations. There is no clear timeline or path forward and it is at odds with the approach the CDC and governments in other parts of the world apply to all other travel and tourism segments in mitigating

the risk of COVID-19.

Nearly a half-million Americans across the country depend on a functioning cruise industry and are at risk of being excluded from participating in the economic recovery from the pandemic. Those impacted include longshoremen, ground transportation operators, travel agents, hotel, restaurant and retail workers, as well as the tens of thousands of businesses that service cruise ships.

The cruise community is ready to work with the CDC to adopt a new approach to

resumption in the U.S. that reflects current conditions and incorporates what's been learned from cruises that have occurred in other parts of the world.

I implore all to take a moment to contact their members of Congress today to make resumption of cruising in the U.S. by July an urgent priority.

Chris Caulfield
Cruise Consultant, Caulfield-CruiseOne
Croton-on-Hudson

Carmel Residents Need to Know Their Water Supply is in Top Condition

It has been two years since Carmel approved a bond for our water supply. And I welcome cleaner water coming out of our taps. What I, as a Carmel resident, want to know is how sure is the Town Board that they are solving all our needs?

It took years of complaints before the tuberculation of water districts was investigated in 2017. It has taken years for consultation, financing and action to begin.

Ever since the April forum of two years ago, we haven't been asked what our other water quality needs are.

It must change. I think our community deserves to be asked what we desire in our town water supply. And I think that a Community Needs Assessment is how we should be asked.

I know that I'd like regular cleaning of our entire pipeline. I also think home

water tests should be free to any town resident. And our neighbors should be free to inspect our treatment plant's records.

But these are only my opinions. In truth, until all 34,000 residents of our town can offer their opinions, I don't believe we'll enjoy a responsible solution.

James Carmody
Carmel Town Board Candidate

Here's Yet Another Strange But True Post Office Horror Story

I can relate to Michael Gold's guest column last week, "Thanks to the U.S. Postal Service, the Check is in the Twilight Zone." While I cannot answer his question as to where his letter is, I can perhaps provide a few useful insights.

On Mar. 10, a small Priority Mail Premium Forwarding Service package was sent out by the Mount Kisco post office, properly addressed to a private

home in Naples, Fla. It arrived on Mar. 29. However, unlike Mr. Gold, I had the pleasure of tracking the "progress" of my package (for which I paid a total of \$34.12 in application and shipment fees).

After leaving Mount Kisco, the package went to White Plains, and then to New Jersey, White Plains, New Jersey, White Plains and New Jersey, whereupon, perhaps following Horace Greeley's advice, it

inexplicably headed off to Minnesota! From there it meandered for an additional five days until it reached Naples.

Mr. Gold, if you have no success finding your letter in Las Vegas, try Minnesota. I hear it's beautiful this time of year.

Steven R. Biren
New Castle

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

A Dream Come True: Hawthorne Man Wins Nearly \$6,800 on Jeopardy!

By Martin Wilbur

Nothing was going to stop Pasquale Palumbo from appearing on his favorite game show Jeopardy!

Since being contacted in late 2019 by the show's producers following a successful online test and audition in Manhattan, the Hawthorne resident had been given a date to come to Los Angeles on three separate occasions for a taping of the show.

Between the COVID-19 pandemic, the health issues of longtime host Alex Trebek, who would pass away in November, and the Feb. 1 blizzard that stranded Palumbo in New York, it would have been easy for him to conclude that it wasn't meant to be.

But for Palumbo, 45, the wait turned out to be worth it. He finally made it to California for the Feb. 17 taping after arriving from New York the previous day. Last Thursday, he appeared on the first of two episodes with guest host Aaron Rodgers, the Green Bay Packers quarterback, outlasting his two opponents, Abbey Copeland of North Haven, Conn. and three-time winner Brandon Deutsch of Long Beach, Calif.

"I still don't think it was real," Palumbo said. "Having been on the show and coming home, it still doesn't seem real."

Although all three contestants missed on Final Jeopardy – none were able to come up with two of the three South American capitals that had at least 10 million people

in its metro area (Bueno Aires, Sao Paulo and Lima) – a conservative wager allowed Palumbo to win.

Appearing on Jeopardy! was a dream come true for Palumbo, a financial services professional with New York Life and vice president of the Mount Pleasant Chamber of Commerce. He had been watching Jeopardy! since he was a kid in the 1980s while growing up in Queens.

In recent years, Palumbo had contacted Jeopardy! asking what he needed to do to be considered as a contestant. He signed up to periodically receive online tests to see if he had the requisite knowledge to be competitive on the show. Finally, in the summer of 2019, Palumbo opened an e-mail asking if he would like to come to Manhattan to audition for a potential appearance.

The audition included a game of Jeopardy! competing against other hopefuls. He was told that if he was going to be in contention someone would contact him within 18 months. In February 2020, Palumbo received the call.

"I'm at the office, we're all getting a little queasy because we're all hearing about this crazy virus that's coming," Palumbo recalled. "I keep getting this phone call from the 310 area code. Who the heck is calling me from L.A.? I don't know anybody in L.A."

It was a Jeopardy! producer who was wanting to know if he was interested in



Pasquale Palumbo of Hawthorne on the set of Jeopardy! in Los Angeles in February. He won his first game and \$6,799 in last Thursday's game, before being defeated in Friday's episode.

flying out to be on the show last April. But just several weeks later, the pandemic canceled tapings indefinitely.

Several months go by, and Palumbo once again hears from Jeopardy! to come out in

the fall. But then Trebek had emergency surgery and another taping was canceled.

Palumbo was rescheduled for the week of Feb. 1, but most flights from New York were canceled that day after about a foot-and-a-half of snow paralyzed the northeastern U.S.

Finally, he was rescheduled for Feb. 17.

"My wife said you've been wanting to do this since I've known you. We'll be celebrating our 15th anniversary this summer, it's like you have to go," Palumbo remembered his wife telling him.

Prior to the taping, the contestants played warm-up rounds before heading into the main studio. Palumbo was ecstatic to hear who the guest host would be.

"Once they told us it would be Aaron Rodgers, I was thrilled," he said. "I both played and coached football and I'm a big fan of the NFL. So if I can't have Alex and if I can't have Ken Jennings because I wasn't there when he was there, I get to meet Aaron Rodgers, which is pretty awesome."

Although he was defeated in the next game, which aired last Friday, Palumbo said it was the greatest experience of his life, aside from his marriage and the birth of his two children.

"When it was my time to play, I was as calm as a pond on a windless day, and I just played to the best of my ability," said Palumbo of the experience under the television lights. "That's all I ever wanted to do."

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The illustration above is an artist's depiction of the Indian Point property after the completion of major decommissioning work.

Indian Point Energy Center



Mt. Kisco Plans on Holding SeptemberFest This Year After Cancellation

By Martin Wilbur

Organizers are moving forward with plans to hold this year's Mount Kisco SeptemberFest with the understanding that the trajectory of infections and guidance from public health officials will dictate whether the event can be held.

Portions of the three-day celebration, which include sidewalk sales on South Moger Avenue, a carnival in the Shoppers Park parking lot and a beer garden, food court and entertainment behind Village Hall, could also be curtailed or changed depending on how much the virus is under control. Last year's SeptemberFest was canceled because of the pandemic.

Mount Kisco Chamber of Commerce Co-executive Directors Loretta Brooks and Beth Vetare-Civitello asked village officials last week to reserve the weekend of September 17-19. They also requested that the sales portion of the event, which is usually held on the sidewalk along South Moger Avenue, be moved into the street to allow for more space and greater distancing.

"We would love to have (South Moger Avenue) closed off and hold the street fair," Vetare-Civitello said. "Depending on how the carnival goes and how the CDC (guidelines) go, the carnival, we hope, is at a point where we can do it in the same place as we had the last time, not 2020 but 2018 and 2019, in the center of the village lot."

She said the chamber hopes to accommodate as many people as possible, but the priority is safety.

Mayor Gina Picinich said she would like to

see the village be able to hold SeptemberFest while acknowledging there are many details that would need to be resolved, including costs. A police officer would likely be needed to direct traffic in the vicinity of South Moger Avenue to keep the flow of vehicles moving around the closure.

"We are looking to get the village back to some more normal activities and excited to be downtown again and having this going on," Picinich said. "I think we'll have to figure out the best way to do that, obviously, and what is most cost-effective and what it's going to cost us."

The Village Board agreed to block out the weekend with the hope that the needed planning won't be wasted. Trustee Peter Grunthal said while there is a certain amount of anxiety related to the scheduling of any event that may draw crowds, the hope is that by the end of the summer a large percentage of the population will be vaccinated and the village will be able to hold SeptemberFest unless a virus variant causes a spike in infections.

Trustee Karen Schleimer said she wondered what guidelines would be used to control crowds.

"I have no problem in blocking out the time but whether we can actually do this, I don't even know what the guidelines are now for such an event, so I need more information, but in terms of setting aside the time, with the hope we can do that, I have not problems with the idea," she said.

Picinich responded that Westchester County is planning on opening Playland by late June, so the village could get some ideas



Mount Kisco is hopeful that the 2021 SeptemberFest, which includes a carnival, entertainment, sidewalk sales and a food and beer garden, can be held this year after it was canceled in 2020 because of COVID-19.

regarding attendance and how to operate in a carnival situation.

Summer Concerts to Return

Mount Kisco is also planning to resume its free outdoor summer concert series starting in June at Fountain Park, which is the area between the library and Village Hall.

Lisa Abzun, of the village's Arts Council, said the plan is to hold the early Wednesday evening concerts starting June 2 and schedule the performances every other week through Sept. 8. A rain date will be held open for Sept. 15.

She said she has spoken to many residents who desperately want the concert series to return after it had to be canceled last year.

"As much as the community wants the arts back again in a very visible way, artists are also trying to be part of the community again and performing for us," Abzun said. "That's a big part of being a musician, a performing artist, so we're looking forward to that."

Picinich said the village had set aside \$10,000 for costs associated with the concerts and is looking forward to its resumption.

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With the purchase of my first home in Westchester some years ago, that process was topsy-turvy. I selected a home without knowing anything about its neighborhood, town or county! It is not anything I would recommend to anyone else.

But, just by dumb luck, I picked a home in a location that would prove eventually to serve all my long-term lifestyle desires. From an ad in The New York Times, it

seemed as though all my criteria would be met.

We were looking for a large home that could also support a part-time business, that of an antiques shop, as well as an accessory apartment. I always liked the idea of having a home help support me, as my grandfather did, operating a soda water bottling business in the basement of his South Philadelphia home.

Another example of that was the situation with a home we previously had owned in Brooklyn Heights. It featured an antiques shop on the first floor, our living quarters on the second floor and a two-floor rental

above that. The location and features of the home supported our lifestyles for several years.

But because of a job opportunity, my wife and I had to move to the suburbs. Yes, I "had" to move because I didn't like the idea at all. At that time, I found that my new environs did not support the sophisticated environment I enjoyed in the city.

I still remember that first weekend in my new location many years ago. The first time I decided to enjoy a lunch out, I found the options very limited. I went to a McDonald's and sat there depressed, thinking that I had made a horrible mistake by leaving my big city haunts.

Forced to adapt, I eventually began to appreciate country living and all the benefits it offers in raising a family. I was reminded of that just this week when, in the mail, I received a publication from my town's Parks and Recreation Department with the tag line, "Creating Community Through People, Parks and Programs." And, indeed, my suburban experience did exactly that.

Our first week here, I delighted in allowing my three-year-old daughter to run free on our front lawn and in the nearby park, without fear of her getting hurt in traffic.

I made good use of a nearby lake with a sandy beach where we enjoyed meeting

neighbors and the beauty of nature.

I capitalized on a house which proved to be too large to not have it produce an income. With an accessory apartment and a part-time antiques business, it served that purpose.

Even when the antiques business didn't work out, we adapted that space for a public relations business, which became successful and well-known nationally. Local law permitted us to run that business from the house (as long as we lived on the same premises), so several needs were met, almost accidentally.

As it turned out, I grew to love my neighborhood, my neighbors, the school system and all the services offered by the town. And all of that was linked to the particular home I had chosen almost by accident.


But wait, isn't there a saying that there is no such thing as an accident?

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



By Bill Primavera

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THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

What Spring's to Mind. Spring is definitely here. In this season our thoughts turn to all sorts of new possibilities and renewal. The quiz this week may offer the possibility of adding new words to your vocabulary or renewing your familiarity with a few you haven't used in a while.

1. fettle (n.)	A) a tuft of hair	B) a restraint	C) state of health
2. waggish (adj.)	A) absurdly eccentric	B) humorous	C) small and thin
3. eschew (v.)	A) to abstain from something	B) support	C) take a chance
4. redivivus (adj.)	A) of special significance	B) extremely popular	C) come back to life
5. obnubilate (v.)	A) to bind legally	B) obscure	C) oppose
6. asterism (n.)	A) a group of stars	B) distorted understanding	C) confidence
7. nodus (n.)	A) a problem	B) a particular way	C) recognition
8. trouvaille (n.)	A) a valuable collection	B) personal possessions	C) a lucky find

ANSWERS:

1. C. State or condition of health, fitness, whole-
ness, spirit or form; often used in the phrase "in
fine fettle"
2. B. Humorous in a playful, mischievous, or face-
tious manner
3. A. To avoid as a point of habit; to shun or
abstain from something for moral reasons
4. C. Come back to life; reborn
5. B. To darken, dim, or cover with or as if with a
cloud; obscure
6. A. A prominent pattern or group of stars, typi-
cally having a popular name, but smaller than a
constellation
7. A. A problem, difficulty, or complication
8. C. A lucky find

Local Puppy Raiser Helps Provide Independence for the Visually Impaired

By Sophia Spiegel

Chances are Yorktown residents may have spotted Alissa Phillips walking around town training Molly, a 13-month-old yellow Lab.

What locals may not realize is that behind the endearing disposition and warm, brown eyes, Molly is much more than just a friendly playmate. She is the fifth puppy Phillips has raised to become a guide dog for the visually impaired.

Phillips has been volunteering as a puppy raiser since 2016 for Guiding Eyes for the Blind, a Yorktown Heights-based nonprofit organization that connects dogs with visually impaired people to help them achieve greater independence and freedom.

Operating out of its headquarters and training center on Granite Springs Road and Canine Development Center in Patterson in Putnam County, Guiding Eyes breeds, raises and trains puppies to aid those with vision loss. Guiding Eyes is an accredited member of the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF), the organization that establishes worldwide standards for the breeding and training of guide dogs.

Growing up, Phillips always had a dog in her home, and would most certainly classify herself as “a dog person.” She volunteered as a kennel intern for Guiding Eyes as part of an internship program during her senior year of high school.

After graduating, Phillips wanted to continue volunteering for the organization,



Yorktown resident Alissa Phillips, with Molly, the yellow Lab that she volunteered to raise to become a guide dog with Guiding Eyes for the Blind.

but needed an option that would fit into her busy college schedule. Phillips chose to become a puppy raiser after considering the plethora of opportunities Guiding Eyes offers volunteers.

After graduating from Iona College in 2019, Phillips was appointed Westchester region coordinator, a source of support for

puppy raisers in the area as well as a resource for volunteers and aspiring applicants.

“Our puppy raisers are absolutely essential in nurturing our puppies for their willingness to learn, confidence, responsiveness and good manners necessary to become a guide dog,” said Andrea Martine, a guide dog mobility instructor at Guiding Eyes.

In her role, Phillips is assigned an eight-week-old puppy to bring into her home and teach basic obedience and house manners while socializing the pup to the outside world.

Guiding Eyes uses a relationship-based approach to raising and training puppies, using positive rewards to build a spirit of cooperation and willingness. The training comes naturally to Phillips, treating dogs with kindness and praise.

To integrate Molly into the world, Phillips feeds her treats while near traffic to calm her nerves and praises her after completing a task. According to Guiding Eyes, dogs raised through this program display significantly increased confidence and focus.

Guide dogs offer an alternative to the traditional white canes visually impaired people often use. Instead of sliding the cane back and forth to scan surroundings, guide dogs walk their owners around obstacles, giving them the opportunity to “walk with freedom and independence,” Phillips said.

The dogs also use what is called intelligent disobedience to determine when there is a possible hazard, such as an oncoming car

when crossing the street, that a white cane is unable to detect.

Guiding Eyes holds monthly graduation ceremonies for dog guide teams that have completed their training. Here, members, supporters and volunteers gather to celebrate the accomplishment, and puppy raisers can meet their dog’s new handler. At one of the ceremonies, Phillips had the opportunity to meet the handler of a puppy she raised.

“It was such a rewarding feeling to meet them, share stories about the dog and see the end result,” she said.

Training programs for Guiding Eyes haven’t gone untouched by COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, in-person classes would be held at the training school in Yorktown, but due to social distancing guidelines and other restrictions, Guiding Eyes had to adapt to virtual sessions using Google Meet, and socializing the dogs became a far more difficult task.

“One of the things that I would seek out as a puppy raiser before COVID was big groups of people or very busy grocery stores, but that’s something I am personally looking to avoid because of the pandemic,” Phillips shared.

Recently, Guiding Eyes started hosting puppy classes in person again, but with modifications to ensure the safety of their volunteers and dogs. Classes are held outside, participants are spaced 12 feet apart

continued on page 18

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Putnam County Officials Seek to Boost Organ Donation

Putnam County Clerk Michael C. Bartolotti and County Executive MaryEllen Odell will be partnering with Donate Life NYS and LiveOnNY during Donate Life Month to increase enrollment in the New York State Donate Life Registry.

Donate Life Month is a national month-long observance aimed at raising public awareness of the critical need for organ, eye and tissue donation, as nearly 9,000 New Yorkers currently wait for transplants.

"April is National Donate Life month, and we are delighted to continue working with Donate Life NYS and LiveOnNY on a countywide basis to encourage residents to become an organ or tissue donor," Bartolotti said. "Putnam County is proud to be one of the many counties



Putnam County is urging everyone to sign up and become an organ donor. More than 400 New Yorkers die every year awaiting a lifesaving organ.

throughout the state participating in this important program and I am pleased to partner with County Executive Odell in bringing this program to the attention of our residents."

There are more than 19 million New Yorkers, yet only 43 percent of adults in the state are registered donors, compared to the national average of more than 60 percent.

"While we are extremely proud that 50 percent of Putnam County residents are registered donors, we believe we can do better," Bartolotti said.

During the entire month of April, the Putnam County Department of Motor Vehicle office in Brewster will be encouraging New Yorkers to learn more about organ, eye and tissue donation and the impact it has on thousands of New Yorkers. Bartolotti will be filling the office with promotional items that urge New Yorkers

to make a difference and give the gift of life by registering as donors.

Enrolling in the New York State Donate Life Registry is a way to ensure that an individual's wishes about donation will be known at the time of their death.

"Over 400 New Yorkers die every year due to the lack of available organs. Ninety-eight percent of New Yorkers enroll in the New York State Donate Life Registry through local DMV offices, which makes our efforts on this behalf even more important," Odell said. "We can make a significant difference in increasing the numbers of donors through our constant contact with residents, and I am happy to work alongside County Clerk Bartolotti and Donate Life NYS to make their goal of a significantly increased registry a reality."

Local Puppy Raiser Helps Provide Independence for the Visually Impaired

continued from page 17

and masks are required. While puppy raisers used to share equipment and interact with other dogs and volunteers, classes are now limited to group activities with physical separation.

Due to the challenges caused by the pandemic, puppies may take longer to graduate, but the volunteers at Guiding Eyes have shown resilience to the community they serve. It takes up to three years and costs about \$50,000 to breed, raise and train a guide dog.

Once Molly completes her training, she will be paired with a visually impaired person at no cost to the recipient.

Phillips encourages anyone fond of dogs to explore the possibility of puppy raising.

"I think it is a great way for people to learn and grow as well as have a positive experience with dogs and with their community," she said.

Puppy raisers can come from any walk of life as long as they can fit the training program into their lifestyle.

For more information on Guiding Eyes for the Blind, including how to volunteer or donate to the organization, visit <https://www.guidingeyes.org>.

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Center Offering Autism Support Services Opens in Westchester

Amid a global pandemic, the Long Island-based The Nicholas Center has completed preparations to expand services to Westchester County, opening in Pleasantville and offering opportunity and promoting inclusion to individuals with autism and related disabilities.

The Nicholas Center, a nonprofit organization specializing in autism support, vocational training, community partnership and peer connection has experienced a meteoric rise from its early days where the idea took root in a small barn at co-founder Stella Spanakos' Long Island home.

Today, the organization works with more than 100 individuals in its two locations and offers virtual programming launched during the COVID-19 shutdown in 2020. The organization has forged meaningful partnerships with non-profits and businesses in their communities. The potential for advancement is limitless.

"We are proud to have expanded our services to Westchester County and to partner with myriad organizations, businesses and neighbors in the region to further our mission," said Executive Director Nicole Sugrue, a co-founder of the organization.

"For 10 years, working with our partners at Spectrum Designs Foundation, we have addressed some of the most pressing issues facing the autism community and developed innovative solutions to drive transformational change, even during the greatest health crisis of our time. We have worked to advance inclusion, bridge gaps in

service disparities and support the needs of people with autism across Long Island and now in Westchester."

The statistics are daunting. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that one in 54 children have been identified with autism spectrum disorder. When school-based services end at age 21, families find themselves at a loss for what comes next in terms of opportunity, support and employment.

The Nicholas Center has revolutionized continuing education and care for these exceptional adults, who face 80 percent under-engagement once school ends. Offering challenging and stimulating programming, the center allows and encourages individuals to follow their passions and interests, hone social and vocational skills and gives them a chance to live fulfilling lives.

The Nicholas Center began after the sudden death of Paul Kitsos, husband of co-founder Stella Spanakos. Prior to his death, they had been discussing options for their 18-year-old son Nicholas, who was preparing to transition to life after high school.

Unhappy with the options available, they began discussing a social service agency to support individuals with autism and related disabilities that would encompass vocational training, community-based experiences and opportunities. Eighty-five percent of individuals with disabilities are unemployed, which led to the decision to create a social enterprise to offer vocational opportunities and employment with real wages.

As a tribute and legacy to Kitsos, Spanakos,



The Nicholas Center, the Long Island-based nonprofit organization serving those with autism, recently opened its second location in Pleasantville.

Sugrue and a third co-founder, Patrick Bardsley, rolled up their sleeves and went to work. Ten years of amazing milestones have been achieved. Of note, a documentary film, "This Business of Autism," chronicled the story and was screened at the Capitol Theatre in Washington, D.C.

With the onset of the pandemic, The Nicholas Center pivoted to virtual programming, offering a continuum of

services and peer connection. Along with their partner Spectrum Designs, it expanded services to a second location at 199 Tompkins Ave. in Pleasantville. In actions and words, the center exemplifies inclusion and opportunity to an underserved population.

It was awarded the New York State Senate Empire Business Award as "the most impactful and socially innovative agency of its kind in New York State."

The breadth and scope of the organization's programming and reach is impressive – from daily virtual sessions, a weekly online news program, community engagement opportunities to help neighbors and businesses to hands-on pre-vocational training and employment.

"I am proud of the ground-breaking work and innovative achievements of our staff and participants," said The Nicholas Center Board President Amy Beyer. "The secret sauce? Focus on the individual, meeting each person where they are and assisting with what they need. This has been a winning combination. I have seen the difference firsthand in the lives of individuals with autism."

The Nicholas Center is making connections in Westchester, already partnering with local groups in need of extra help. The team has worked with United Way, Isa Marrs Speech Pathology, Hillside Food Outreach, AYFA Foundation, NAMI and Spectrum Designs.

For more information or to support The Nicholas Center, visit www.tncnewyork.org.

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As part of New York State's novel coronavirus (COVID -19) response, events such as these run by the Putnam County Department of Health, all staff, vendors and attendees must follow all applicable COVID-19 guidance at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home> and <https://esd.ny.gov/>.

The following will be required:

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Financial Literacy Begins With Children: How to Have Early Conversations

Next Thursday, Apr. 22 marks National Teach Children to Save Day, a “holiday” I’d advocate more families learn about.

As a mother of two children, ages 11 and 14, as well as a banking professional, I know the reasons it’s called out on the calendar and the importance of talking about financial literacy sooner rather than later.

While the approach may vary from family to family, below are a few short tips that have worked for my own family.

Go small, think big

As children get older, opt for smaller presents and more monetary ones and talk with your own family and extended family as a rule of gift giving. These open-ended gifts allow children to make choices and reduce a glut of toys, gadgets and gizmos.

Let them see savings

From an early age, my kids have had bank accounts. They got to see their own savings statements and “see” how their savings have grown since they were little.

Money talks

My husband and I have financial conversations in front of the children – not the heavy talks, as these are best left to adults – but ones that allow me to show them how I write a check to pay my bill,



By Sue Musumeci

or how I log onto the internet to see my account balances. This way the concept is not new to them.

Put credit cards into the convos

Talk about why credit cards are borrowed money and that they need to be paid every month. Discuss interest and the real costs of commitments deferred, as well as impulse buying.

Introduce the 30/30/40 rule

When monetary gifts are received or a child receives payment for a job done, such as yard work or babysitting, teach them the 30/30/40 rule. For example,

if they get \$100, ask them to save \$30 for future needs, such as getting a friend a gift (this also helps to teach them to ask critical questions such as, “Do I really want to spend this much on junk?” or “Is it worth it?”); put \$30 toward future college tuition (this gets given to me and put it into their 529 or savings account); and keep \$40 to spend on whatever they wish or hold onto for a fun day.

Familiarize them with a 529 college savings plan

Have the kids ask for a small gift and request that grandparents contribute to their 529 plan instead of buying all the latest must-have gifts.

Start small

Let them redeem bottles for recycling and keep the change they get back.

Play a game

Teach them with Monopoly money what things cost. Give them a budgeted amount of Monopoly money and have them put a tag on things in their room what they think the item would cost. Then have the kids go “shopping” in their room to see the things that they would want to buy, and explain why those purchases make sense.

Do the math

When my daughter wants to go clothes shopping, there is a set dollar amount given for her to spend and we look at the price tags together. This practice helps her with her math (calculating percentages off) and allows her to see the dollar savings and consider if that outfit is really worth the cost.

Bring it into the real world

When dining out in a restaurant, my son loves to try new foods, and we have him look at the difference between ordering many little items instead of a meal that may come with a soup or salad (and bonus for him if it includes dessert!). This helps him to make better choices and reduce impulse ordering.

It’s never too early to help youngsters gain a better understanding of saving for the future and of healthy ways to spend, save and enjoy money. Habits formed now will stay with them into adulthood.

Sue Musumeci is a Carmel resident and branch manager and vice president at Tompkins Mahopac Bank’s Mahopac Falls and Southeast locations.



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Birding Close to Home: FOY and Other Funny Acronyms

By Brian Kluepfel

I work in a profession dominated by acronyms. And to be honest, I don't know WTF people around me are talking about half the time. I don't know whether to cry or LOL, frankly. I get some sort of electronic message and just SMH.

A recently introduced acronym in my world is FOY: First of the Year. It's usually reserved for the first sighting of a species that has returned to its local breeding ground. It's kind of exciting to see the reports: FOY osprey, FOY kestrel. (There was some controversy over who actually saw the first osprey; however, I'll let them sort that out.)

Things get more exciting when people use nicknames of which you're uncertain. Like this one: "FOY Louie Waterthrush singing..." What's a "Louie Waterthrush?"

It took me a minute to puzzle out that the reported bird was a Louisiana Waterthrush. Anyhow, the "Louies" are an early neotropical arrival, after wintering in Central America or the West Indies. They also return to the tropics early, heading south as soon as July. I imagine they sing "Louie Louie, me gotta go now," as they stretch their flight feathers and head for southern climes. (Please submit to Worst Pun of the Year Contest.)

What I'd like to emphasize in these times of diminished long-range travel opportunities is that there is plenty to do and see right here in the lower Hudson Valley, including birding. There have been more than 250 avian species recorded in Westchester County, and there are a variety of habitats, including Saw Mill River Audubon's eight sanctuaries, which

comprise 300 acres alone.

Perhaps you'll be able to report the FOY Baltimore oriole, one of our more colorful songbirds. As George Bird Grinnell, founder of the original Audubon Society, wrote of this black and orange wonder: "it comes to us from the South in early Spring. It passes the winter in Mexico, Central America, and Cuba...the journey northward is performed rather slowly, and usually it is the 9th or 10th of May before Orioles are seen in southern New York or Connecticut."

Mark your calendars, folks, keeping in mind Mr. Bird Grinnell wrote that in 1887, before global warming kicked in. Your oriole's mileage may vary.

In addition to scouring our forests and wetlands for FOYs, you can join the Saw Mill River Audubon (SMRA) on one of its regular birding strolls or upcoming family nature walks. Just remember that you have to pre-register and that some COVID restrictions may still be in place.

But one of the best ways to learn about birding, in my



For The Birds

experience, is being out in the field with enthusiastic and knowledgeable spotters and listeners, and SMRA is chock-full of them – and they're darned nice people, too.

Some other things you can do to support local organizations and wildlife:

- Stock up your feeders at SMRA's Apr. 17 seed sale at Pruyn Sanctuary.
- Learn how to use the eBird app, start up a life list, and contribute to citizen science at SMRA's Zoom class on Apr. 20.
- Plant bird-friendly native species in your garden this spring. We've got info on our website about that – and you can see an example of a great native plant garden

when you visit Pruyn Sanctuary.

- Celebrate the conclusion of Earth Day celebrations on Apr. 28 with Scott Craven, Ossining town historian, and his Zoom talk on the natural history of the Hudson River Valley. (Visit www.ossininglibrary.org for details.)

We are inundated with challenging, often infuriating news on a daily, even hourly basis. There's a way to shut it off, though. An hour of birding, or just quiet walking in the forest, is absolutely, positively restorative. As Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "In the woods we return to reason and faith." I'll see you there.

Brian Kluepfel is a writer for the Lonely Planet guidebook series and has seen the world's biggest bird – the Andean condor – as well as the smallest (Cuba's bee hummingbird). He lives in Ossining and loves the Hudson Valley's natural, and human, wonder. Read more of him at www.birdmanwalking.com or visit IG @ brianekluepfel.

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The Joys of Being a Grandparent, Even From Afar During a Pandemic

By Gloria Raskin

The days are long and the kids are easily bored while the pandemic goes on...and on...and on.

We live in Westchester County and our two youngest grandkids live in Washington, D.C. and until we got our vaccines in late February, we stayed home. We stay in touch via FaceTime and we send gifts of toys and books to keep the boys, ages six and eight, interested and amused.

These are but weak attempts to grandparent them from afar and often do not do the trick. Face to face works with grandchildren, but this is not allowed in these circumstances.

Something almost as good as face-to-face interaction took place in our home recently. My daughter was on the telephone relating how Jason, the eight-year-old, played chess online with several of his friends and on one glorious day he beat five of his buddies. My husband, Dick, with a little wifely urging, volunteered to play chess online with him.

First a name had to be picked for my husband and it had to be written down to make sure it was remembered. We are seniors after all! Then, the game started and I hovered nearby, watching but not really understanding the complexities of the game. My husband won the first game, Jason took the second and the third was now in progress.

I kept whispering to my husband, "Make a mistake" and repeated it often. Eventually, Jason won the third game. My husband said that Jason did very well in chess and I cheered silently.

The next morning, before we even had breakfast, the phone rang and it was Jason. I predicted he would call early but he beat me by a few hours. Of course, he wanted to play chess with "Pop." Pop was ready to eat, not play chess, and told Jason to give him a half-hour and soon they were playing chess again. Jason is a bright second-grader and most competitive as we realized quickly. We recruited more family members to challenge him.

Being a grandparent is a joy and privilege, and we cannot let a pandemic get in the way of enjoying our grandchildren, and with the wonder of the computer, we can almost get together for a game of chess. I am waiting for a game that I am really good at, to be available online, so I can challenge Jason or his little brother, Andrew. Do you think Old Maid will ever make it?

Until we can snuggle with our grandkids, hug them non-stop, and silently creep into their worlds, we have little choice except interacting via the computer, but we are lucky to have that and luckier still to be grandparents.

Gloria Raskin is a Mount Kisco resident.

Earth Day Poster Celebration for K-6 Schoolchildren

State Sen. Peter Harckham invites school children in grades K- 6 to submit original posters to commemorate the Senate's annual Earth Day Celebration, which is designed to help children develop an awareness of the environment.

"Teaching tomorrow's leaders about the importance of recycling and waste reduction benefits us all, and this celebration makes it fun as well,"

Harckham said.

This year's theme – "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" – is designed to engage students and stimulate creative problem solving on waste reduction. Students are asked to create a poster that could be used as part of the campaign.

All submissions must be uploaded to the Earth Day page on Harckham's Senate website page at nysenate.gov/eform/submit/earth-day by Apr. 19.



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Five Ways to Spark Your Child's Interest in Science

The past year has revealed many things, and among them is the extent to which we rely on science to solve problems that impact our lives.

Scientists everywhere are making science cool and are an inspiration to kids. Children represent the future and are tomorrow's scientists, so it's in all our interests that they develop a love of science.

As kids continue to learn virtually, however, the lack of connection to their teachers and peers can make it challenging for parents to find new and exciting ways to keep kids engaged.

These challenges come at a time when it's never been more important to encourage kids to lean in to science. According to an independent research study, the 3M State of Science Index, 74 percent of people are more inclined to believe that the world needs more people to pursue STEM-related careers to benefit our future society.

To get there, children need a strong STEM foundation. Here are five tips to help you inspire initial interest in science in your children that can bloom right in your own home.

1. Emphasize the impact science has on the world. Encourage children to observe real-world problems and actively think about how STEM skills can address the issues they care most about, whether in their school, community or globally. As they observe, help your child understand the numerous ways STEM already impacts their lives.
2. Connect science to their interests. We often think of science as existing in a silo, but it

can be connected to just about anything. Kids are much more likely to find a "way-in" to science if they can match it to their interests. For example, a love of cooking can easily lead to an interest in food science. A love of cars can inspire the pursuit of automotive engineering. Helping draw these connections will attract children to pursue STEM by making it relevant to their hobbies.

3. Make science social. STEM exploration is inherently social. It helps children develop practical skills like communication, collaboration and decision-making, all while fostering great friendships. Parents can get their kids engaged by enrolling them in science camps and encouraging them to join competitions.
4. Make science accessible and fun. You don't need a lab to be a scientist; STEM is all around us, even at home. Through youngscientistlab.com, children can explore free resources offering science project ideas and directions for grades K-8. With experimentation and exploration, it's simple to make scientific principles more relatable for young minds.
5. Expand your child's world with STEM. STEM is not only found everywhere, but it's also for everyone. Our new virtual normal makes it easy to connect with others to learn, share and problem solve – no matter where you live. STEM exploration also opens up opportunities for kids to learn about and work with peer groups from different backgrounds and cultures, offering



an inclusive environment where success is achieved by working toward a shared goal.

One opportunity on the horizon is the 3M Young Scientist Challenge, held in partnership with Discovery Education, a premier national science competition for grades 5-8 that asks students to identify a problem impacting their school, community or worldwide and come up with a unique innovation to solve it. Young inventors have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work one on one with a 3M scientist, compete for \$25,000 and earn the title of America's Top Young Scientist.

Last year's winner, Anika Chebrolu, 14, collaborated with nine other finalists to solve

problems collectively in a series of fun, group challenges as part of the competition. Anika's individual innovation used molecular research to show how science could reduce the invasion and spread of COVID-19 in the body.

Encourage your budding scientist to get involved and start exploring! To learn more about this year's competition or to enter, visit www.youngscientistlab.com.

The next big invention or discovery could be anywhere. Ignite that spark of passion for science and unleash your child's curiosity.

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A Different Steakhouse Experience Awaits Diners in White Plains

The grand opening of Fogo de Chao in White Plains, the Brazilian-style steakhouse chain with 56 locations, was an extraordinary experience.

If you have never attended this type of dining concept, be ready to consume a great deal of food: tasty appetizers and salads from the extravagant Market Table, a la carte seafood, and for carnivores, skewer after skewer of fire-roasted meats brought to your table. There's bone-in ribeye, lamb chops and the house signature picanha, sliced right onto your plate. You will not leave hungry.

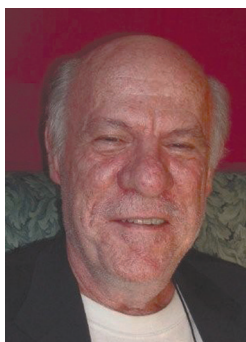
The official opening of this newest Fogo was Apr. 6. It is the third location in the metro New York area, in an historic landmark, a beautifully restored former Bank of New York building on the corner of Main and Church streets. (I recall doing business with that bank years ago.) It had been sitting idle for years until the Fogo group came along and brought its dramatic vintage architecture back to life.

Let General Manager Jorge Almeida and his gaúcho-clad staff take you on a tasty tour. The full churrasco experience is comprised of a prix fixe menu with all premium and classic cuts, plus the fresh seasonal Market Table, the Feijoada Bar and authentic Brazilian side dishes. You must complement your meal with a glass of fine Brazilian wine and/or a Caipirinha, the national cocktail of Brazil.

Indulgent cuts of meat include a 20-ounce Wagyu New York strip, carved tableside on a Himalayan salt block. A decadent dry-aged 32-ounce long-bone Tomahawk ribeye or 24-ounce Wagyu ribeye are also available. There are a range of menu options and prices at lunch and dinner. Children may dine at half-price.

Small plates include braised beef rib sliders, churrasco meat boards, even a picanha burger. The plump seared chicken wings are a delight.

A lavish bar, Bar Fogo, serves an all-



By Morris Gut

day happy hour and sharable snacks.

Fogo de Chao is located at 235 Main St. in White Plains. Open seven days a week for lunch, dinner and weekend brunch. Bar lounge and menu. Full takeout and delivery available. Private party and meeting facilities. Municipal parking available. Reservations suggested for larger groups. Info: 914-697-8600 or visit www.fogodechao.com.

Ace Endico Expands Home Delivery

Ace Endico Marketplace in Brewster, a major supplier of wholesale food, accepts retail customers at its state-of-the-art headquarters in Brewster, just off I-84. Stemming from the coronavirus crisis, Ace Endico to Go was launched with a fleet of new vans for home delivery throughout the metro area. They offer a wide assortment of restaurant-quality products for home cooks – meats, produce, dry goods, dairy, fish, poultry, cheeses, canned goods, imported items and beverages.

Home delivery is available with no minimum, and it's free with orders of \$100 or more. Customers may order up to 5 p.m. for next-day delivery. All deliveries are made Monday through Saturday.

The full line of products and special promotions are posted

daily at www.aceendico.com. Easy-to-use seasonal recipes have been added to the site. There are also personal shoppers ready to help you. It is a customer-friendly experience.

William A. Endico, CEO of Ace Endico, has also announced the acquisition of Sassone Wholesale Grocers of the Bronx. Founded in 1946 by Ralph Sassone Jr., the company became a major supplier to the food service industry over the years, especially pizzerias, throughout the region. According to Ace Endico Marketing Director Laura Endico Verzello, adding Sassone to the family of suppliers is a great match, enhancing the company's service areas.

Ace Endico Marketplace is located at 80 International Blvd. in Brewster. Info: 914-347-3131 or 1-845-230-9886 or visit www.aceendico.com. For home delivery, visit www.aceendicotogo.com.

Wing Weeks Through May 8

Listen up, all you snackers out there. The White Plains Business Improvement District is once again sponsoring Downtown White Plains Wing Weeks through May 8. Participating restaurants and taverns will serve their best chicken wing recipes.

Patrons are encouraged to participate in wing tastings then vote for their favorite. Tickets and a smartphone are required to take part. There are 15 popular eateries participating, including The Banh Mi Shop, Cantina Taco, Freebird Kitchen and Wolf & Warrior. For more information,



The Market Table and Feijoada Bar at Fogo de Chao, the Brazilian-style steakhouse that opened its doors last week.

Right: The Mexican specialty platter at Salsa Piccante in White Plains.

visit <https://wpbid.com/wingweeks>.

Salsa Picante to Open

David Dolores and partners are bringing their casual Mexican dining concept to White Plains. The original Salsa Picante has been operating in Port Chester for seven years. Dolores has taken the former three-story Esposito's Ristorante along Mamaroneck Avenue and given it a big burst of south-of-the-border pizzazz.

The ground-level portion of the restaurant will offer a blackboard menu of casual specialties, the middle level a more formal dining experience, and on the dramatic rooftop there will be signature cocktails and specialties. Watch for special events such as taco days and fajita nights.

Salsa Picante is located at 359 Mamaroneck Ave. in White Plains. Info: Visit www.salsapicantemex.com.

HV Restaurant Week Coming in May

After a false start last year, the 2021 edition of Spring Hudson Valley Restaurant Week will take place May 10-23. It is being touted as "the sequel," an appropriate tag for this popular dining promotion sponsored in the spring and fall by The Valley Table magazine. More than 100 past participants and some new ones from all over the Hudson Valley are promised, with patrons anxious to cash in on the seasonal bounty at reasonable prices.



Restaurants are expected to offer three-course luncheons for \$25.95 and three-course dinners for \$35.95. There are also takeout options. Beverages, tax and tip are not included. Sometimes there are caveats, so be sure to verify the hours and menus that are being served. Reservations are advised.

For additional information and an up-to-date list of participating restaurants, visit www.valleytable.com/hvrw.

Morris Gut is a restaurant marketing consultant and former restaurant trade magazine editor. He has been tracking and writing about the food and dining scene in greater Westchester for 30 years. He may be reached at 914-235-6591 or at gutreactions@optonline.net.



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Raising a Glass of Bordeaux on the Birthday of Thomas Jefferson



By Nick Antonaccio

This week we celebrate the birthday of Thomas Jefferson, Founding Father, President – and acclaimed bon vivant.

The occasion reminds me of a bottle of 1787 Chateau Lafite Bordeaux wine

purported to be owned by him that sold at auction for a record \$156,000. Subsequently it was deemed to be counterfeit and the original seller was arrested for fraud.

This week, as I reported several years ago, I explore the background of the fraud.

Several facts require clarification: How was it that the counterfeiter selected Thomas Jefferson as the focus of the fraud? Why was a wine cellar in Paris presented as the discovery site? Why Bordeaux wines? Why the year 1787?

My research (with acknowledgment to John Hailman's book "Thomas Jefferson on Wine") revealed the answer.

Thomas Jefferson was highly respected for his passion for wine. It seems that this legacy was rife for fraud: simply capitalize on the reputation of an icon of American

history and leverage the notoriety of his obsession with fine wine.

After his historic efforts in helping to secure America's independence, Jefferson spent five years as the American ambassador to France. When he arrived in Paris in 1784, he succeeded Benjamin Franklin in that "political plum" position. In fact, during the ambassadorial transition, Franklin introduced Jefferson to the fine wines of Bordeaux, Burgundy and Champagne from his private cellar of over 1,000 wines.

There are reports of many private parties as Franklin introduced his brethren to the pleasures of fine wines (and the Paris social scene). It would seem that this is when Jefferson acquired his passion for fine wines and became obsessed with learning (firsthand) and memorializing in his journals (in meticulous detail) all that he could about fine wines.

Nestled in the opulent life of Paris, Jefferson embarked on an extravagant lifestyle of entertaining the high

society of continental Europe, many of whom were fascinated with the recent improbable coup perpetrated by a gang of scruffy rebels across the Atlantic.

His excursions to Bordeaux resulted in friendships with the proprietors of elite wineries – many of which produce wines to this day. He eagerly spent numerous

days journalizing each aspect of his trips to wineries and the wines. Wielding his diplomatic position, he acquired wines that were in high demand throughout Europe but in short supply, including the prestigious wines from the excellent 1787 vintage. His reputation as a Francophile and a Bordeaux connoisseur grew with each winery visit.

Returning to the United States in 1789, he eventually became President in 1800, crafting the future of our fledgling democracy – and conducting grand dinners in the White House, replete with fine French wines.

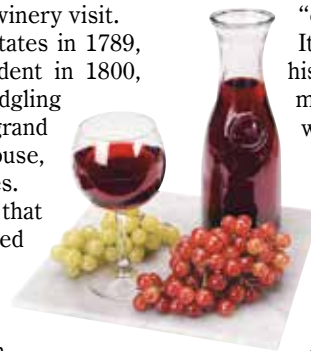
However, Jefferson found that importing wines into the United States presented logistical problems. The long trip by ship from Europe had to be timed to avoid spoilage from temperature extremes in the winter and summer months. Also, theft was a common problem. In the early 19th century, most wines were shipped in barrels (bottles were highly fragile); it was a simple matter for dock thieves to empty barrels and substitute the wine with water, no one being the wiser. Nevertheless, Jefferson prevailed, issuing elaborate, detailed instructions for the transport and safekeeping of his barrels.

I now have a better insight into the premise of the Bordeaux wine caper. All of the elements were in place and executed perfectly, from the reference to the provenance of the wines, to the city of Jefferson's base of operations, even

the vintage. The counterfeiter thoroughly researched his subject, selecting and exploiting the vital components of Jefferson's wine experiences. The buyer, being sophisticated and well-versed in Jefferson's exploits, was easily set up, eagerly purchasing the "esteemed" forged bottles. It's unlikely Jefferson – with his hands-on experience and meticulous research habits – would have fallen for this ruse.

My research led me to another insight: 21st century American wine consumers are becoming more "Jeffersonian." They have an insatiable interest in enhancing their knowledge of food and wine, constantly seeking out new wine producers around the world and enjoying fine wine and food (on occasion, the same producer wines Jefferson drank). Vive le bon vivant.

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



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