Candidates Insist Peekskill is Facing a ‘Housing Crisis’

By Rick Pezzullo

The ‘Progress 4 Peekskill’ slate of Democratic candidates that is gearing up for a June 22 primary insist the city is facing a housing affordability crisis that is creating financial hardships for residents and pricing out many others.

During a rally Thursday on a vacant lot on Central Avenue where city officials have entered into an agreement to sell to a developer to build primarily high-end rental apartments, the ‘Progress 4 Peekskill’ mayoral and Common Council hopefuls outlined measures they would take to help working and middle-class individuals.

“Housing is the issue that keeps coming up time and time again. Make no mistake about it, Peekskill is facing a housing crisis,” said Conor Greene, who is running for mayor. “People are being forced out of Peekskill and out of their community. Demand is skyrocketing, and supply is not keeping pace, which means rising tents and housing prices, speculation, and ultimately displacement. Unfortunately, there is a narrative that there is enough affordable housing already in Peekskill and we need high-end, luxury housing. I don’t believe that.”

According to Councilwoman Vanessa Agudelo, who was not endorsed by Democratic leaders for reelection with three other incumbents, six out of 10 residents in Peekskill are living in housing they can’t afford. She also noted Peekskill has the highest rate of foreclosures in Westchester since 2018.

“It’s no news to any of us that we are facing a housing crisis. It’s an issue that has long been overlooked,” Agudelo said. “This is true for the entire Hudson Valley, but especially true for the City of Peekskill. Housing should be viewed, not...”

New Bathhouse, Snack Bar Dedicated at Cortlandt Pool

By Rick Pezzullo

On a sultry Saturday afternoon with temperatures approaching 90 degrees and residents strolling nearby in swimwear, Cortlandt officials dedicated a new bathhouse, snack bar and check-in office at Charles J. Cook Pool.

Planning for the $3,675,000 project began more than two years ago and was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, along with higher than anticipated bids and other hurdles.

“We did it! We made it!” exclaimed Supervisor Linda Puglisi, who was credited with spearheading the pool enhancements.

“There’s so much here for our families. That’s what it’s all about.”

“What a wonderful day,” said Councilman James Creighton.

The pool was closed last year because of the pandemic. As a result, the Cortlandt Town Board decided to freeze pool passes at the same rates as 2019. John Palmiotto, Department of Recreation Superintendent, said town officials were hopeful of getting the go-ahead from the Westchester Health Department to open the water spray park at the pool in a few weeks.


“This has been such a great team effort,” Palmiotto said.

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Roof of Kathleen’s Tea Room in Peekskill Collapses

By Samuel Rowland

Six people escaped injury Wednesday afternoon after the roof of a popular café in Peekskill collapsed. According to Peekskill Police, the incident at Kathleen’s Tea Room on Main Street occurred at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Reportedly, six people were inside the establishment, including the owner, Peeskill Deputy Mayor Vivian C. McKenzie, when a loud noise was heard, and they decided to evacuate the building. The roof collapsed shortly after everyone had evacuated. It is not currently known why the roof collapsed.

Peekskill City Manager Andrew Stewart noted in a statement made to Examiner Media that it was “this understanding” that there was also water leaking from the ceiling, along with the initial noises, that triggered the evacuation.

As is standard protocol, the gas, electricity, and water supply were all shut off for the café and the neighboring buildings, to prevent potential leaks and resulting accidents. The sidewalk in front of the café and other adjacent street areas were also blocked off.

“The Building Department closed the building and conducted a preliminary assessment of the status of the structure...and determined that the protective measures were adequate,” Stewart stated.

“A structural engineer has been on site today [June 3] to make a further determination as to whether or not the building is a risk for further collapse, or what further measures need to be taken for safety’s sake.”

Kathleen’s Tea Room is an English-style restaurant focused entirely on mid-day meals like lunch and afternoon tea-time. McKenzie has owned and operated the business since 2010, even continuing to work there part-time while serving on the Peekskill City Council, starting in 2013 and later being appointed Deputy Mayor in January 2020. She is currently running for mayor.

A GoFundMe was organized on the day after the incident by the Family Resource Center of Peekskill, Inc – a private non-profit social work agency with a headquarters in the same Business Improvement District as Kathleen’s Tea Room. It managed to raise $4,016 before it was shut down on the same day at McKenzie’s request, with all donations set to be refunded.

The update on the GoFundMe by Elizabeth McCorvey, the organizer, cited the business’s need to “sort out its insurance issues” first. However, there may have been ethical issues if it went forward, as McKenzie is a candidate in the June 22 Democratic primary for mayor of Peekskill as well as a current government official.

“I’m humbled and grateful that so many of you have reached out to offer your support and compassion to me, my family and the employees of Kathleen’s Tea Room,” a statement on the Peekskill Democratic City Committee (her PAC) Facebook Page read. “I must however inform you that I did not authorize, nor can I accept donations…via GoFundMe or otherwise.”

McKenzie could not be reached for comment.

John Donadio, owner of Nourish Hair and Body hair salon and spa on Main Street, is a frequent customer of Kathleen’s Tea Room. He first heard about the incident from a customer at 3 p.m. on June 2 who had walked past the scene. When asked, he said that the accumulation of water on flat-roofed buildings of Peekskill Historic District buildings like Kathleen’s Tea Room could be to blame.

Completion of Dale Cemetery Cottage Renovation in Ossining Marked

By Rick Pezzullo

Ossining officials celebrated the completion of the renovation of the superintendent’s cottage at historic Dale Cemetery Friday.

The cottage will now be used as the main office for the cemetery, as well as an area to showcase the cemetery’s history and artifacts collected by the Ossining Historic Cemeteries Conservancy. The town hopes to open the interior space to the public in the near future.

“It is critically important that we do our best to preserve the great historic assets we have at Dale Cemetery,” said Supervisor Dana Levenberg. “I am so proud that our team, our taxpayers and our community, raised $4,016 before it was shut down on the same day at McKenzie’s request, with all donations set to be refunded.”

The pending project on Central Avenue, which needs a special permit vote from the council to proceed, would have one-bedroom units with monthly rents of $2,700 and two-bedroom units at $3,200.

Amy Perlow, who is also on the ticket, pointed out the Area Median Income (AMI) in Peekskill is $36,500, as compared to $117,000 in Croton as a whole. “Everyone deserves a clean, safe, and affordable place to live, and the time has come to make that a reality in Peekskill,” she said.

Steven Dillard said he move to Peekskill 17 years ago when he was priced out of nearby Ossining but is finding it difficult now to find an affordable place to live in Peekskill.

“I don’t want to put everything I make into housing,” he said. “Peekskill needs change before Peekskill changes. We need progress. We have a Democratic Party (majority) here in Peekskill, but nothing has changed.”

“Progress 4 Peekskill,” which also includes Amy Yele, is proposing a platform that calls for legislation requiring at least 20 percent of units in new private development be designated workforce and affordable. Currently there is no requirement for developers to set aside any units lower than market-rate.

It also would require builders to contribute to a fund to help pay for the creation of new affordable housing on city land and take required steps to expand the state Emergency Tenant Protection Act to include Peekskill, which would provide rent-control for tenants in buildings built before 1974 with six or more units.

The Democratic Committee-endorsed slate is headed by Councilwoman Vivian McKenzie for mayor. Council candidates are incumbents Ramon Fernandez and Dwight Douglas, and PK Blendz Juice Bar owner Rob Scott.

Croton Man Sentenced to 17 Years in Jail for Sexually Abusing Girl

By Rick Pezzullo

A Croton-on-Hudson man will spend 17 years in prison for fathering a child with a 12-year-old girl after sexually abusing her for years.

According to the Westchester District Attorney’s Office, Pablo Dure was sentenced June 1 to 17 years in prison, followed by 15 years of post-release supervision after he pled guilty earlier this year to a felony count of course of sexual conduct against a child.

Dure is barred from having contact with his victim and their daughter until 2046.

Dure had been accused of engaging in sexual intercourse on a regular basis with the girl between Dec. 1, 2017, and Nov. 1, 2019, during the time she was between the ages of 10 and 12.

The allegations came to light in January 2020 when Dure’s victim’s mother discovered her 12-year-old child was approximately 33 weeks pregnant. She later gave birth to a baby girl, and through DNA analysis, it was determined that Dure was the father of the child.

The case was investigated by the Special Prosecutions Division with the assistance of the FBI and the Croton Police Department. Dure was ultimately located in Mineola and arrested on April 9, 2020, by Croton Police. He has been remanded to the Westchester County Jail since.

‘Housing Crisis’ continued...
New York Close to Fully Reopening as Vaccinations Approach 70%

By Martin Wilbur

New York State is on the verge of removing virtually all COVID-19 restrictions as the percentage of fully vaccinated adults approaches 70 percent.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Monday that once the percentage of all adults reaches that threshold there will only be certain institutional restrictions that will remain in place. Through Sunday, 68.6 percent of the 18-and-older population had been inoculated by being at least two weeks removed from their last shot.

“The light at the end of the tunnel is to remove the remaining COVID restrictions, right, get to a point where COVID is not inhibiting our society, not inhibiting our growth,” Cuomo said.

“When we hit 70 percent, then I feel comfortable saying to the people of this state, we can relax virtually all restrictions,” he added.

While neither Cuomo nor state Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker would be pinned down on when the lifting of the restrictions might occur, it is a near certainty that it will happen this month

Through Sunday, 9,429,290 state residents 18 and older had been fully vaccinated, according to the state tracker. With more than 10.9 million people having received at least one dose, that means nearly 1.5 million more will be getting a second dose within the next two weeks. Tack on an extra two weeks following a second shot of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines to be considered fully vaccinated, and the state is no more than four weeks away, and most likely less, to add another 1.4 percent of the population to the fully vaccinated rolls.

Cuomo said after the restrictions are lifted masks will only be required as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Large venues, public transportation, homeless shelters, prisons, all health facilities and being inside a school will still require people to mask up, he said.

“But we hit 70 percent, we’ll be back to life as normal, or as normal as you can be,” Cuomo said.

The state’s attention, however, will be to zero in on zip codes throughout the state that have significantly lagging vaccination rates. The bottom 10 percent of the state’s 1,755 zip codes are below a 36.3 percent vaccination rate, Cuomo said.

As a result, some resources at the state vaccination sites will be redeployed into areas that have a rate that is roughly half or less of the entire state’s current rate. There are five New York zip codes that are at less than 30 percent vaccination rate, including Monsey, Rockland County, which has the lowest in the state at 17.8 percent of those 18 years old and up. There are no communities in Westchester or Putnam that were among the lowest two dozen zip codes.

Cuomo said in the remaining two weeks of the school year, secondary schools should encourage as many of their 12- to 17-year-old students to get vaccinated and try to arrange for their building to be a vaccination site. He called it a “golden opportunity” before the students head off to summer vacation, camp, travel or work.

“Get those 12- to 17-year-old-vaccinated now; it will make reopening the schools much safer and much easier and I think every school should be doing that now,” Cuomo said.

For the first time since last Aug. 19, each of the state’s 10 regions recorded a positivity rate of less than 1 percent on the seven-day rolling average on Sunday. Mid Hudson, which includes Westchester and Putnam, and Long Island came in at 0.46 percent each while New York City had the lowest in the state at 0.43. The highest New York region was Finger Lakes, which recorded a 0.98 percent positivity rate.

“New York’s progress is extraordinary and exceptional,” Cuomo said. “It has one of the lowest levels of positivity of any state in the United States, so that is saying something.”

Locally, the numbers are similarly strong. Westchester recorded 19 positives on Sunday from 3,335 tests, a little less than 0.6 percent. The seven-day rolling average stands at about 0.3 percent.

County Executive George Latimer said Monday that Westchester had dropped to 328 active cases, the lowest level since shortly after the start of the pandemic in March 2020. COVID-19 hospitalizations have fallen to 30 and there were two deaths in the county from the virus over the last week.

All indicators are strong but Latimer warned the county isn’t in the clear yet.

“We’re hoping to go through the week without any fatalities and that will also be a sign of the reduction in the depth of the infection,” he said.

Putnam County had four positives results from 314 tests, a 1.3 percent rate, on Sunday. On the seven-day average, Putnam stood at 0.9 percent.
**Harckham Bill to Advance Yorktown Park Solar Project**

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) and his Senate colleagues approved special legislation on Monday that will allow the Town of Yorktown to use property at its Granite Knolls Park for the construction of a solar power facility and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

“The inclusion of a solar power plant at the proposed Granite Knolls Sports and Recreation Complex is a smart use of land that will benefit Yorktown residents financially in the years ahead,” said Harckham, who sponsored the Senate bill.

Adding charging stations for electric vehicles also shows that town officials are looking ahead to future needs. I am pleased this legislation has passed and look forward to the project moving forward.”

The newly-approved legislation authorizes the Town of Yorktown to alienate certain parklands – in this case a portion of the property located within Granite Knolls Park – and lease it to HESP Solar LLC for the construction of a solar power plant and electric vehicle charging stations.

The lease of the Granite Knolls Park property, which will be at fair-market value, is for 25 years. Proceeds from the lease will go toward the acquisition of new parkland or capital improvements to existing park and recreation facilities within the Town of Yorktown.

If the parkland that is alienated ceases to be used for solar energy or EV charging stations, the lease shall be terminated and the land will revert to the Town of Yorktown.

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“With the support of our partners in the state legislature, this legislation will allow Yorktown to embark on a transformational project that will significantly reduce our carbon footprint and provide a much-needed source of revenue to enhance our local parks without raising local taxes,” Town Supervisor Matt Slater said.

“It makes sense to utilize some of the land at Granite Knolls for solar panels and electric vehicle charging, so I’m grateful to the state Senate for approving the authorization,” said County Legislator Vedat Gashi (D-Yorktown). “We need to expand alternative energy sources whenever possible, and this project will also provide Yorktown with guaranteed income and lessen the tax burden for residents.”

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**Masks Still Required in Schools But Can Be Ditched By Students Outside**

By Martin Wilbur

Face masks will continue to be required inside school buildings but districts may choose to let their students take them off if they are outside on school grounds for recess or other outdoor activities.

On Monday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo clarified confusing correspondence issued late last week involving state Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker and the state Education Department (SED) that had some parents, students and even education officials believing that face masks at school would no longer be required starting this week.

Cuomo said the state had asked the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) last Friday to modify its guidelines that would not require students to wear masks if they are outside on school grounds and to have the guidelines regarding summer camps and schools be consistent.

The governor insisted that on Friday his administration was expecting an answer from CDC by Monday; not that there would have been immediate wholesale changes through the state use public school facilities.

The disconnect had families scratching their heads just before the start of the weekend.

Last Friday, Zucker sent a letter to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that indicated that the state wanted to revise its mask requirements in public schools and have them match the state’s requirements for summer camp, which set off confusion.

It even prompted New York State United Teachers President Andrew Pallotta to send off a statement after 4 p.m. last Friday, calling the state’s sudden changes “whiplash-inducing news.”

On Sunday, SED fired off a release stating that the intent of Zucker’s June 4 letter “was to obtain a response from the Centers for Disease Control regarding differing standards for summer camps and schools; it had not changed any existing arrangements. Therefore, schools should continue to operate under their existing procedures until further notice.”

At his Monday briefing, Cuomo then announced the change for students who are outdoors, but masks would still be needed inside school buildings.

He said it was important that there be consistency in the guidance and that it makes sense.

“If people don’t think the rules are logical, then they’re not going to want to follow the rules,” he said.

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Walter Panas Grad a Contestant on New Season of ‘The Bachelorette’

By Rick Pezzullo

A 2011 Walter Panas High School graduate is one of the 29 male contestants on the new season of “The Bachelorette,” which airs locally on Channel 7.

David Scott, 27, who grew up in Cortlandt but now lives in Nashville, will be competing for the affection of Katie Thurston, a 30-year-old bank marketing manager from Lynwood, Wash.

The new season, the program’s 17th, was filmed in New Mexico and kicked off Monday night. It will run throughout the summer.

Scott, who was prohibited by strict rules set by the show from doing media interviews, was on the varsity soccer team at Panas. He graduated from St. Bonaventure University. His favorite food is New York City pizza and ‘N Sync is his favorite boy band.

The son of Jamaican parents, Scott is “looking for a woman who is intelligent and driven to succeed,” according to his biography on the show’s website.

“He is extremely attracted to women who exude a quiet confidence! Synchronicity in life is of the utmost importance for David, and he hopes to find a partner that is as passionate about building a successful life, both professionally and romantically, as he is,” his biography stated.

“David wants a wife who will be proud to stand next to him for the rest of their lives, and he hopes to find that with the Bachelorette!”

Maloney Leads Push to Get Hesitant Putnam Residents Vaccinated

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-Cold Spring) joined Putnam County health officials and other representatives at the Philipstown Recreation Department vaccine distribution site in Garrison last week, the third stop on his vaccine awareness tour and part of his ongoing effort to combat vaccine hesitancy.

“Putnam County has done a stand-up job getting so many folks vaccinated in the last few months,” Maloney said. “Nearly 70 percent of the population ages 18 and up have at least one shot. That’s good progress, but we’ve got more work to do to reach herd immunity.”

County Executive MaryEllen Odell said that through mass vaccination PODs by county health officials, along with the efforts of local providers and pharmacies, have ensured that Putnam residents have easy access to vaccines. About half of the county has completed it vaccination series, and because of less demand for mass events, the vaccine efforts have begun to shift toward office-based health care providers, she said.

“We are proud of the tremendous efforts of our local health department, the dedicated volunteers and community partners in all they have done to help us get vaccinated and get back to life,” Odell said.

Consensus among public health experts is that the county will not reach herd immunity until at least 70 percent of the total population is immunized. COVID-19 vaccine sites continue to see a steady decline in those who are willing to be vaccinated.

As supply of the vaccine outpaces demand, it is imperative to focus outreach on under-vaccinated communities and encourage every New Yorker to get their shot.

Maloney said vaccine hesitancy is the major roadblock to New York achieving herd immunity. He is visiting communities and partnering with local leaders and organizations in his district to promote the safety and efficiency of vaccines. Previously, he has held events in Orange and Dutchess counties.
P’ville Garden Founder, Family Honored for Combatting Food Insecurity

By Abby Luby

The Pleasantville Community Garden is known as a beacon of collaborative effort to grow and give food to those in need.

Last Saturday, about 30 people gathered at the garden at St. John’s Episcopal Church to honor Devin Juros and his family for starting the garden project seven years ago. The garden was the brainchild of Juros when he was in middle school.

Devin’s father, David, recalled when his then-seventh-grade son came home from school after hearing someone speaking about food insecurity. His son told him that something had to be done.

Over four months, Devin outlined a plan to build a garden and wrote a detailed list of what would be needed.

“He had a passion about it and it was something that was bigger than ourselves,” David Juros said.

The family followed their son’s lead and reached out to the community for help and found residents ready to donate their time. St. John’s Episcopal donated the 600-square-foot plot to grow organic vegetables as well as reusing and recycling materials.

Unbeknownst to Devin and his parents, the garden’s board of directors unveiled a special plaque honoring the family for “Growing, Gathering and Giving since 2014.”

“A special plaque was unveiled by the board…honor Devin Juros and his family for starting the garden at St. John’s Episcopal Church to grow and give food to those in need,” said Robert Scherer, a trustee and member of the board of directors.

The plaque honoring the Juros family at the Pleasantville Community Garden.

Volunteers not only plant and harvest vegetables they also pick up food donations from the Pleasantville Farmers Market and local bakeries and deliver food to Hillside Food Outreach, an Elmsford-based nonprofit organization that distributes food more than 2,000 people in Westchester, Putnam and Fairfield counties who are unable to visit pantries on their own.

Garden Volunteers also deliver food to Neighbors Link in Mount Kisco, a group working with immigrants to help integrate them into the community. During the summer the garden donates garden-fresh vegetables to a local A-Home resident each week.

Ashly Juskus, a Pleasantville resident since 2016, said she was one of the truck drivers picking up donations and delivering food to pantries.

“It was different during COVID because the farmers market had folks pre-order online and the amount of donated food was lower,” she said. “But it’s great to give back to the community and help as much as we do.”

Pictured, from left, are David, Margot and Devin Juros in front of the Pleasantville Community Garden.

Since Devin Juros launched the garden in 2014 while in seventh grade, nearly 100,000 pounds of food have been donated to local food pantries and organizations.

“Also honoring Juros was Mayor Peter Scherer, who shared local lore about 18th century farmer Daniel Earle who owned an orchard near where the community garden is today.

“It brought back the idea that a piece of agrarian life is one we haven’t yet lost,” Scherer said.

Devin Juros said it was great to see everyone together again after life was interrupted by COVID-19.

“The pandemic showed us how much we all rely on each other, how life is chaotic and we don’t know what will happen next,” he said.

Juros, a junior at Brown University majoring in biology and philosophy (his favorites philosopher is Immanuel Kant), said that during the past 15 months, the garden became even more essential. He noted that his experience creating and building the garden with like-minded community members heightened his interest in medical and biological research and treatment for prevalent diseases.

Before presenting the plaque, former village trustee Steve Lord recalled his surprise when his son came home from school and announced “I’m going to garden with Devin.”

“What that meant was an eighth-grader was inspired to take part in a cause that was greater than himself,” Lord said.

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Hendrick Hudson Free Library Receives Major Gift

The Hendrick Hudson Free Library has received a generous gift from the estate of John B. Gedney.

Gedney first reached out to the library in late 2018 to discuss his intention to name it as a beneficiary of his estate.

During numerous conversations, Gedney expressed his desire to leave a lasting legacy to organizations dedicated to making a difference in the communities which helped shape him. The board is grateful that the Hendrick Hudson Free Library met his standards and welcomes Gedney’s extraordinary generosity in joining the family of supporters.

The motivation for Gedney’s gift began right around the corner. He was raised in Buchanan and graduated from Hendrick Hudson High School in 1958. Four years later he graduated from Alfred University and went on to work for the Burroughs Corporation and Lockheed Martin as a ceramic engineer. He spent his later years in Cape Canaveral, Fla., where he passed away last May.

While Gedney directed that the library not use the gift for administrative expenses, in honoring his wishes, the library will use the funds to elevate the scope and quality of the services it offers to the community, goals toward which the Hendrick Hudson Free Library continually strives. In keeping with his directive, the library is developing a plan of action that will accomplish that.
Police Blotter

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

May 25: A resident reported at 8:13 p.m. that while walking on Cleveland Drive, a vehicle passed by and hit him in the face with some type of clear liquid from the passenger side of the vehicle. The vehicle did not stop, and the caller could only describe the vehicle as a gray/silver midsize SUV.

May 26: Patrol responded to an area on Lexington Drive at 2:35 p.m. on a report of a person yelling, having possibly mooned a resident. The party was warned and admonished.

May 27: Report of a person yelling and scaring residents on Lexington Drive at 8:33 a.m. The party was warned and admonished.

May 28: Patrol responded to Lexington Drive at 12:06 p.m. on a report of a person yelling at a mail carrier. The party was warned and admonished.

May 30: Patrols responded to North Riverside Avenue at 10:51 p.m. for a motor vehicle accident. After an investigation, a 43-year-old village resident was taken into custody for aggravated DWI with a passenger less than 16 years old and DWI.

May 30: A caller reported at 10:58 a.m. that she believed she saw what may have been a noose as she was driving on Virginia Road. She described the item as being hung from a street sign pole at eye level. The responding officer located a small rope intended as a noose or any other threat or type of intimidation. The rope was removed from the scene and discarded.

North Castle Police Department

May 29: Complainant arrived at police headquarters at 4:57 p.m. to report receiving an alarming text message on his cell phone from an unknown party who demanded money. The complainant acknowledged that it is probably a scam, but that he wanted to document the incident. He forwarded a screenshot of the message and he blocked the sender from his phone.

May 29: Multiple 911 callers reported a single vehicle rollover accident on Route 22 at 7:50 p.m. with the operator out of the vehicle. County Fire Control was notified for ambulance dispatch. The responding officer reported the subject was transported to the Westchester Medical Center emergency room by Westchester EMS. Empire Towing removed the vehicle.

May 30: A caller reported at 10:28 p.m. that while walking on Cleveland Drive, a vehicle passed by and hit him in the face with some type of clear liquid from the passenger side of the vehicle. The vehicle did not stop, and the caller could only describe the vehicle as a gray/silver midsize SUV. The responding officer located a small rope intended as a noose or any other threat or type of intimidation. The rope was removed from the scene and discarded.

Putnam Sheriff’s Department

May 21: While traveling eastbound on Route 6 in the Town of Southeast, Deputy Robert Weinberg observed a 2000 Chevrolet Trailblazer commit multiple traffic infractions in the area of the I-684 northbound on-ramp at 12:41 a.m. Weinberg initiated a traffic stop on Route 22 and made contact with the driver, 32-year-old William A. Madrid-Vasquez. After a subsequent investigation, the deputy determined Madrid-Vasquez was driving while intoxicated and placed him under arrest without incident. He was also issued several traffic tickets.

White Plains Police Department

June 2: A 40-year-old man was arrested in connection with a burglary that occurred at 173 E. Post Rd.

Last week, the White Plains Police Department conducted an undercover sting on businesses that sell alcohol by having minors attempt to buy beer from them. All three tested establishments passed. The White Plains Mobil at 174 Westchester Ave., Andreas Food Market at 41 Lake St, and the 7-11 at 307 Central Ave, identified the minors and refused to sell to them.

Yorktown Police Department

May 28: Jahsir Doughty, 21, of Montrose, was arrested at 10:01 a.m. and charged with aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and passing a steady red signal on Route 6 in the area of Sunnyside Street in Shrub Oak. An investigation revealed Doughty’s driving privileges had been suspended for failing to answer previous summonses.

June 2: Todd Johnson, 41, of Poughkeepsie, was arrested on two arrest warrants issued by the Yorktown Justice Court for failing to appear at 2:31 p.m. Yorktown was notified by the Putnam Sheriff’s office that they had Johnson in custody. The suspect had been previously arrested for petty larceny and criminal possession of stolen property. It was also learned he had an active warrant in Orange County.

Obituary

Frank Maliszewski

Frank S. Maliszewski, a loving husband, father and grandfather, passed away on May 31 surrounded by family at 93 years old.

Born in Yonkers on May 1,1928, to Joseph and Antonina Maliszewski, Frank grew up in a family of two brothers, Charles and Chester, and two sisters, Agnes and Adele, who have all preceded him in death. Frank lived his life with passion and love. He served as a cook in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He then worked as a firefighter for the Greenville Fire Department where his hard work was recognized with a promotion to deputy chief; he remained a member of the New York Police and Fire Retiree Association until his passing.

He married the love of his life, Dolores (Schafer) Maliszewski, on Apr. 20, 1963, at St. Casimir’s Roman Catholic Church in Yonkers. Together, they had three wonderful children, Mark Maliszewski, Kerri Barton and Donna Maliszewski, who Frank raised to be strong, quick-witted and compassionate.

Frank was proud of his Polish heritage. He was an avid member of the Pulaski Association and acted as treasurer for many years. He was also a member of the Kosciuszko Foundation. A devout Catholic, Frank attended daily Mass into his 90s, occasionally even standing in as an altar boy, if needed.

He is survived by his wife; three children; daughter-in-law Maria Maliszewski and son-in-law Steve Barton; six granddaughters, Meagan and Madalyn Meldrim, Sarah (Barton) Lodewyek and Michaela Barton and Breanne and Kaleigh Maliszewski; as well as nieces, nephews and many friends.

Visitations will be at Beecher-Flooks Funeral Home in Pleasantville on Saturday, June 12 at 9:30 a.m., followed by a requiem mass at Holy Innocents Church in Pleasantville at 12:30 p.m. Interment will follow at Kensico Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Kids’ Food Basket at www.kidsfoodbasket.org.
Feeding Westchester Gears Up to Meet Summer Child Hunger Demand

At the end of a school year that looked and felt like no other, children across the country are eagerly awaiting summer recess. For millions of youths, however, summer too often means missing meals that they would have otherwise received during the school year.

Feeding Westchester, the county’s largest nonprofit hunger-relief organization, is gearing up for an increase in demand among families with school-aged children and challenges the community to get involved by participating in its Summer Help From Home Bags program. Hunger affects the human body in many ways, including making it hard to think clearly and increasing the risk for chronic diseases. In children, growling stomachs result in a higher risk of behavioral and cognitive issues, mental disorders, as well as long-term health threats like asthma.

“Proper nutrition is crucial for a child’s mental, emotional and physical development,” said Kelly Pearson, nutrition resource manager at Feeding Westchester. “In addition to children who don’t get enough to eat, low nutrient dense diets can also lead to poor health outcomes, such as nutrient deficiencies, malnutrition, anemia and risk for developing obesity.”

During the school year, 22 million U.S. children have access to free or reduced-cost meals at school. Surprisingly, fewer than four million children nationally receive similar meals through USDA Summer Food Service programs, leaving a gap of 18 million children.

To help meet the increased summertime need, Feeding Westchester will continue to assemble and deliver free meals and food through organizations like the United Way of Westchester & Putnam, the Boys & Girls Club of Mount Vernon and theOssining and Elmsford school districts.

“Last summer, Feeding Westchester provided more than 5.6 million meals to children and families facing hunger,” said Karen C. Erren, the nonprofit’s president and CEO. “This summer, we continue on our commitment to ensure that youth in every corner of Westchester have access to the meals they need to thrive during and out of school. We are looking to the community to join us in our fight against hunger.”

While in-person opportunities continue to be limited due to the pandemic, Feeding Westchester has several Meals 4 Neighbors virtual volunteering projects and community projects that can be done from the comfort of one’s home.

For more information, visit https://pleasantvillefoodpantry.org.

Interfaith Emergency Food Pantry in Need of Donations Through June 16

The Interfaith Emergency Food Pantry, now located in Thornwood, needs your help. The pantry’s shelves are almost depleted of some of the most useful shelf-stable items. Requests for food have not declined as there are still many in need due to the lingering effects of the pandemic.

If you would like to help, some residents have offered to be a drop-off point to collect the items, making it convenient to donate. Among the items that are most needed are two- and five-pound bags of rice; beans (all kinds); tuna fish; macaroni and cheese; pasta; jelly; canned or jarred tomatoes and tomato sauce; and coffee, tea or boxed milk (Parmalat). Other shelf-stable foods are also welcome.

Local residents may bring their donations to one of five locations in Pleasantville and Hawthorne though Wednesday, June 16. Donation sites are:

- 208 Fairview Drive, Pleasantville, near Pace (front porch, bin provided)
- 317 Broadway, Pleasantville (top of driveway, side door, under awning)
- 21 Guion St., Pleasantville, near Bedford Road School (front porch, bin provided)
- 139 Marietta Ave., Hawthorne, off Stevens Avenue (front porch, bin provided)
- 254 Sherman Ave., Hawthorne, off Franklin Street (front steps, bin provided)

For more information, visit https://pleasantvillefoodpantry.org.

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Letters to the Editor

United New Castle Slate Mischaracterizes Form Based Code

The ironically named “Unite” New Castle slate, with the silent support of the local Republican party, is trying its hardest to torpedo a zoning change that has been in the planning stages for eight years. Although their candidate for town supervisor, Lisa Katz, is now leading the charge against it, she was one of the original architects of the Form Based Code until it better suited her political ambitions to become the flag-bearer for a group of residents who, despite their protests to the contrary, appear to be mostly fearful of the threat of a more diverse community.

One hardly knows where to start. On a fundamental level, their op-ed continually characterizes it as a development plan, when in fact, it’s simply a change in the building code, and even then, only for several blocks currently filled with dilapidated and vacant buildings. The authors only finally admit the actual scale of the plan after trotting out all their original fear-mongering talking points about a hypothetical maximum build-out of the original 72-acre zoning plan which is no longer on the table.

They disingenuously characterize that change as a “hust and switch” instead of a Democratic Town Board responsive to community input. They caution that a future Town Board could unilaterally rezone the whole 72-acre area, when this is blatantly false; any rezoning requires public hearings.

In an effort to frighten voters, they threaten fictional tax consequences, but anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of math knows that additional residents and businesses would actually lighten the overall tax burden for everyone else. They reference Chappaqua Board of Education concerns about the original 72-acre proposal, hoping that no one will notice that a zoning change of that proportion no longer exists. Quite ironically, they warn of potential lawsuits, when the only ones planning to sue are the anti-Form Based Code group that makes up their core constituency.

Their opponents, Holly McCall, Lori Morton, Michael Weinberg and Jennifer Bounds, collectively known as Democrats for New Castle 2021, are endorsed by Nita Lowey, George Latimer, Ken Jenkins, Pete Harckham, Chris Burdick and Vedat Gashi – virtually every mayor Westchester County Democratic leader. Being that this is a Democratic primary, that’s very revealing.

The Democrats for New Castle have a vision for our town and the skills to address the many challenges we face. Voters shouldn’t be fooled into casting their ballots for a one-issue reactionary slate, and a disingenuous one at that.

Andrew Dorfman
Chappaqua

Levenberg Merits Public Support Because of Record of Accomplishments

Not long ago, a neighbor introduced my wife and me to Dana Levenberg as her friend who serves Ossining. I innocently asked what do you do? My neighbor answered for her. She is the town supervisor. Embarrassed by our ignorance, we resolved to check her out.

We noted that she held the line on tax increases in her six years in office. But any conservative can do that by simply voting no. What really impressed us was her initiatives, which garnered $1.2 million in grants for 13 local projects, ranging from benefiting nutrition for senior citizens, improving utilities for users of our local parks and a vision for our town and the skills to address the many challenges we face.

We think you will agree that she has already accomplished the most important work of her six years as the town supervisor. Embarrassed by our ignorance, we resolved to check her out.

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Levenberg Merits Public Support Because of Record of Accomplishments

Fossil Fuel Interests Using Scare Tactics to Sink Important State Bill

A recent letter to this newspaper claimed that the Climate and Community Investment Act ($4264A/A6967) is nothing more than a disguise for a gas tax to be levied on our region (“Proposed Carbon Tax Would Be Harshness for New York’s Drivers,” May 25-31). Kudos to the fossil fuel companies and their allies for once again misrepresenting the facts in order to confuse the issue.

What the CCIA will do is charge companies for the damage they have caused for decades (pollution and severe health impacts on disadvantaged communities, for example) and use that money for positive changes throughout our region. More green jobs supporting New York’s changeover to a 100 percent renewable energy platform and a just transition for our frontline communities.

The claim is that the fossil fuel industry will simply pass these new costs to the end consumers, hence a new tax. However, this is where the old-school fear-mongering tactic occurs. Built into the CCIA Act are provisions to counteract such a move. One-third of the money raised would be used to provide direct assistance to low-and moderate-income families via transit vouchers, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program credits or direct cash benefits. Even if energy companies try to raise costs, the rebate program would ensure the lowest-earning 60 percent of New Yorkers will come out the same or ahead.

The fossil fuel companies just want to protect their profits to the very end. As the reality of climate change impacts our everyday lives, isn’t it time to start working toward a better future for all?

Ira Rosh
Mount Kisco

Let the Voters Decide Whether Cuomo Deserves a Fourth Term

The governor of New York was not elected to meet or exceed a political party’s moral standard. Andrew Cuomo was elected three times by the people of New York. He did so based on his performance and character.

If we are a democracy then the people should have the final say next year when he runs for a fourth term. If the Democrats control the legislature and want to get rid of him sooner, then they should go on record and impeach him. He should not be forced to resign because he doesn’t meet the party’s “moral standard.”

We are a country of law, not of men or women. Let’s follow the law, not the standards of the Me Too movement, which assumes a person is guilty until proven innocent. That is not the way our system works.

Mario Falsi
White Plains
By Martin Wilbur

Assemblyman Kevin Byrne (R-Mahopac) is sounding the alarm to get a proposed bill passed in Albany that would allow volunteer fire departments that operate ambulance services to recover costs from insurance companies.

Last Friday, Byrne stood with emergency responders throughout the Hudson Valley outside the Brewster Fire Department, pressing his Assembly colleagues to pass a measure that would treat fire department ambulance services the same. Currently volunteer ambulance corps are allowed to bill for the costs of transporting a patient but not if the service is part of a volunteer fire department.

New York’s current policy, which affects about 400 departments statewide, is the only one like it in the United States, he said. “I just want again to say that for all these men and women behind me that have been doing their job selflessly because they care about our community; they don’t ask who you are, they don’t care where you came from when you call 911, they’re there to help,” said Byrne, a co-sponsor of the Assembly bill that was introduced by Assemblyman Billy Jones (D-Plattsburgh). “They need resources and support. This bill will do that but it needs to pass.”

Byrne said the legislature has wide-ranging bipartisan support after similar measures have passed in Albany that would allow volunteer ambulance services the same. Currently, when you call 911, they're there to help,” said Byrne, a co-sponsor of the Assembly bill that was introduced by Assemblyman Billy Jones (D-Plattsburgh). They need resources and support. This bill will do that but it needs to pass.

Byrne said Yorktown has a volunteer ambulance corps, which is nearby their service and operates independently, but they can bill for service.

“The hardship is really on the taxpayers because we’ve had to raise our tax levy the last several years because the volume of EMS calls continues to go up and up and up,” Fitzpatrick said. “We’re just buying our fourth ambulance to help us answer all those calls.”

In Putnam County there were 7,779 EMS calls in 2020, said Ken Clair, the county’s deputy commissioner of the Bureau of Emergency Services. The Putnam fire departments within the 94th Assembly District that have ambulance services, Brewster, Mahopac and Mahopac Falls, accounted for nearly 3,200 of those calls, he said. Those statistics don’t include the Kent Fire Department, which also has EMS.

Byrne said the inability for fire departments to bill for their ambulance runs is forcing some departments to split the service, something that Lake Mohhegan in Westchester did years ago. However, when that occurs other efficiencies are lost, he said. However, some opponents of the bill have argued that volunteer responders might be competing with professional departments for funds, Byrne said.

“The existing policy is counterintuitive to the whole idea of sharing services,” Byrne said. “When you have someone doing it already, you’re incentivizing duplicate layers of government, which will probably cost more. This makes no sense.”
Stream, Wetlands Restoration Completed at Old Armonk Bowling Alley Site

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) last Friday announced the completion of a $5.5 million project to rebuild a stream and wetlands on the site of a former bowling alley in Armonk.

The work expands a natural area that protects a vital source of unfiltered drinking water for the metropolitan region.

The project restored the 3.13-acre parcel where Armonk Bowl stood before it closed in 1999. The DEP purchased the land in 2008 through its land acquisition program, which seeks to preserve sensitive lands around the unfiltered portions of its reservoir system.

The facility was demolished in 2011, setting the stage for a multi-year project that would restore the neighboring creek and establish wetlands to protect water quality and support native wildlife.

“Our project at the former Armonk bowling alley is a great example of our programs at work,” said DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza. “Our experts harnessed sound science and careful engineering to transform a vast swath of pavement into a preserved area of streams, wetlands and trees that will protect a critical source of drinking water for more than nine million New Yorkers.”

The former Armonk Bowl off Route 22 was located about two miles north of Kensico Reservoir, a vital source of unfiltered drinking water for New York City and roughly half of Westchester County. When the bowling alley was built in the 1960s, the neighboring Bear Gutter Creek was pushed aside and confined to a ditch, making room for a large parking lot. Aerial photos suggested the parking lot and building were likely constructed on a former wetland.

Demolition of the parking lot and restoration work began at the site in 2019 and finished earlier this year. Experts rerouted Bear Gutter Creek and gave it a more natural design with meanders and grade controls, taking it out of the ditch that confined it for more than 50 years. Wetland habitat was constructed in the creek’s floodplain.

The wetland complex includes small pools that, in their first spring season, have already become a home for American toads, spring peepers and other native species.

Hundreds of native trees and bushes were also planted in the area, including willow and red maple trees and chokeberry bushes. DEP scientists will monitor the site for the next five years to ensure the native plantings grow well and remain healthy.

As part of the project, the DEP also constructed a small parking lot that will be turned over to the Town of North Castle and used to support local businesses along Old Route 22.

The newly restored area adjoins a four-acre wetland complex that DEP previously constructed in the 2010s. Engineers on the latest project studied elevation maps and carefully designed the new wetlands to ensure they matched the hydrology of the previously restored site. These restored streams and wetlands, along with the Town of New Castle’s 169-acre Whippoorwill Park, establish a natural buffer upstream of Kensico Reservoir that will continue to protect the region’s drinking water for decades to come.

Before and after photos of the former parking lot at the old Armonk Bowl site on Route 22. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection restored a stream and wetland that had been built upon in the 1960s.
DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY TUESDAY, JUNE 22
EARLY VOTING STARTS JUNE 12

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STATE SENATOR PETE HARCKHAM

ASSEMBLY MEMBER CHRIS BURDICK
COUNTY BOARD CHAIR MIKE KAPLOWITZ
COUNTY LEGISLATOR VEDAT GASHI
TOWN COUNCIL MEMBER JEREMY SALAND

NEW CASTLE DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE
CHAIRS RANDEE GLAZER & JANE SILVERMAN
STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF HUDSON VALLEY
HISPANIC DEMOCRATS OF WESTCHESTER

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Kennedy Seniors Are Going Places!
Notable 2021 Acceptances to Top Schools

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<th>College</th>
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Trailblazing Female Scout Soars to New Heights in Pursuit of Eagle

By Alexa Jindal

For more than a century since its 1910 inception, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) was exclusively for boys 10 to 18 years old. In February 2019 that changed, following an announcement the previous year that girls would be able to join in separate groups based on gender.

Now Rebecca Glider, an 18-year-old White Plains resident, is poised to do something that no other young woman in Westchester has likely achieved. It is believed that Glider would be the first female in the county to attain the rank of Eagle Scout. She needs requirements for two remaining merit badges, which she expects to complete this summer before heading off to college.

Glider, however, is seemingly taking it all in stride.

"I know it’s a great deal and it’s a great accomplishment, but for me, I’ve been surrounded by scouting even before I was in (Boy Scouts),” she said. “I’ve been involved in scouting since my brother joined when I was in second grade, so it kind of just feels like the next step. It doesn’t feel that major, it’s just the next step.”

Like many girls, Glider started in Girl Scouts when she was young and was a member until she turned 14. Seeking greater rigor, she left to join the Venturing Program, a co-ed Boy Scouts initiative for 14- to 20-year-olds.

About two years later, at 16, BSA officially adopted the policy to join the Venturing Program, a co-ed Boy Scouts initiative for 14- to 20-year-olds.

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"I really want to finish this off strong,” Glider said of his mindset when he made the commitment. "I’ve completed like nine-tenths of the scouting trek...obviously that’s the hard part, the last part, but why would I not complete it? I would have been so disappointed in myself and I would have regretted it for a long time.”

One of the lessons that his scoutmaster at Chappaqua’s Troop 2, Tom Keane, regularly stressed, was to make sure he had no regrets. It’s a lesson that Coffino took to heart. As it turned out, the additional incentive came in handy.

“The was a huge inspiration who stayed on top of me and (I) couldn’t be where I am today without him,” Coffino said.

Like most Eagle Scouts, there were plenty of hurdles, perhaps made steeper by the emergence of COVID-19 last year.

Before the pandemic, Coffino decided on his project to focus on educating community members on the importance of keeping one’s blood pressure in check and how best to achieve that. The problem is that once the shutdown began, there were no more in-person scout meetings and little to no chance to interact with the public.

Coffino said he continually tweaked the project until he received the go-ahead to pursue it. He created the Blood Pressure Counts Facebook page, which contains a variety of health and blood pressure-related topics.

He also published and distributed informational pamphlets, both in English and in Spanish, to connect with both the general population and members of the immigrant community who are often more difficult to reach. Coffino worked with Neighbors Link in Mount Kisco and Antioch Baptist Church in Bedford to distribute the pamphlets containing tips such as healthy diets, the need to exercise and lower stress and how to regularly track blood pressure.

He added information on what the consequences of high blood pressure could be. It’s dubbed the silent killer because there are typically no symptoms until it causes other health problems, Coffino said.

"The problem is, obviously, to help people understand their blood pressure and help to lower it or control it and why this is so important is because we want to help younger people understand their blood pressure and understand what will affect it in the future,” said Coffino, who will attend the University of South Carolina in the fall and is participating in exercise science with a possible pre-med track.

Coffino said he stayed with scouting because of the adventures that captured his imagination as a young man. Camping upstate, canoeing and meeting new kids was a big draw, as well as learning about teamwork and cooperation.

“I fell in love with it, I fell in love with the activities that we did, and the adventures and just the friendships that I made,” Coffino recalled. “I wanted to continue in Boy Scouts because that was going to take me to new heights.”

Coffino’s mother, Deborah, said seeing her son work as hard as he did to earn the 21 required merit badges to become an Eagle Scout – and many more beyond that – was inspiring.

"I was overwhelmed by what it is to reach this, and it’s not about a project,” she said.

“It’s a great project, but do you have any idea – and I didn’t – what it takes to get there?"

“I went with him to complete some of these (merit badges), I was awestruck by how much work goes into this little badge.”

Following graduation this month and before heading to college in August, Coffino will serve as a dive coach at Willowbrook Swim & Tennis Club, work on an e-book he is developing related to health issues and hopes to visit Camp Read in the Adirondacks, knowing he finished the job at hand.

"I think what kept me at it were the opportunities I found in Scouting," Coffino said. “I couldn’t replace that anywhere else.”

Greeley Senior Reaches Scouting’s Pinnacle Through a Pandemic

By Martin Wilbur

Rafe Coffino recently joined the small slice of all Boy Scouts who reach the pinnacle – becoming an Eagle Scout.

Despite being a swimmer, preoccupied with college applications and maintaining a challenging schedule of classes into his senior year at Chappaqua’s Horace Greeley High School, Coffino was determined to attain scouting’s highest rank.

Before the pandemic, Coffino decided on his project to focus on educating community members on the importance of keeping one’s blood pressure in check and how best to achieve that.

The project also allowed her to explore her personal interests. A self-described bookworm and lover of literature, Glider was on a family camping trip in the Adirondacks, knowing he finished the job at hand.

"I think what kept me at it were the opportunities I found in Scouting," Coffino said. "I couldn’t replace that anywhere else.”

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**Community Newsletter**  
June/July 2021

**“The Safest Place to Have My Surgery”— One Patient’s Journey Through Bariatric Surgery at Phelps Hospital**  
Author: Dr. Glenn Forrester, Bariatric Surgeon

Healthcare professionals can be even more particular than you and me about their own healthcare. With their personal perspective on the inner workings of hospitals, hearing their opinions on where to get specific procedures can provide helpful insights.

One patient, an employee at Phelps Hospital, Northwell Health, knew she didn’t need to go any further than her home hospital to have her bariatric surgery procedure with Dr. Glenn Forrester, a bariatric surgeon at Phelps Hospital.

“I was really impressed with Dr. Forrester’s energy. I could tell he enjoys what he does and it just felt right,” she said. “I had consulted with other doctors and they weren’t a good match. But Dr. Forrester was warm and welcoming and answered all of the questions I had, and he took the time to follow up with me after the surgery.”

Phelps Hospital has a nationally recognized bariatric team, including a surgeon, registered dietician, and patient care coordinator, that specialize in many different types of weight loss surgeries, including minimally-invasive procedures and even some robotic surgeries. At Phelps, the goal is to find out what procedure is a best match for each individual patient. Depending on health status, weight loss goals, and lifestyle, Phelps is confident they have a bariatric procedure for you.

In order to be considered for a bariatric procedure, one must have a body mass index (BMI) of at least 40, or a BMI of over 35 if one is experiencing health-related problems associated with weight.

This procedure is not for everyone and involves an extensive screening process to ensure the procedure is safe and effective for the patient.

“The goals of bariatric surgery are not just to lose weight but to maintain that weight loss,” said Dr. Forrester. “These procedures also help improve or resolve obesity-related diseases. They can also help decrease the risk of developing future diseases such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and coronary artery disease. With this surgery, patients are able to live a longer and healthier life.”

Following the procedures, patients will see significant weight loss in the early postoperative period and typically achieve a stable weight within 12 months. While the surgery itself is not a single solution to a patient’s weight journey, weight loss from this procedure is often sustained long term.

Undergoing a bariatric procedure is only the beginning of your journey with the Phelps bariatric team.

A team of post-surgery support professionals help keep your weight off through lifestyle changes, including a diet and exercise plan with a Phelps dietician. The team also offers monthly support groups to both pre- and post-op patients.

“I did all of my online seminars, before the surgery, through Northwell. Then, in August, I got the surgery done,” said the patient. “At the time, the majority of my visits were done through telehealth due to COVID-19. As someone who actually works in healthcare myself, I felt this was the safest place to have my surgery. In the end, I’m grateful to the whole team and I wouldn’t go anywhere else.”

To see if bariatric surgery is right for you or a loved one, contact Dr. Forrester and the Phelps Hospital bariatric team at (914) 269-1870.

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**Community Events for June/July**

Phelps Hospital offers the community a wide range of programs on health and wellness subjects as well as numerous health screenings and support groups. All events are free and will be virtual for the time being.

**Lectures and Seminars**

Virtual Lecture Series  
To stay up to date on our monthly virtual lectures and other community programs, scan here:

or visit this site:  
https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/duZPBfj/newsletter

**Cancer Institute Support Groups**

These support group sessions are open to anyone with cancer as well as family, friends, caregivers, and anyone else interested in attending. You do not have to be a Phelps Hospital cancer patient to join, all are welcome.

**Cancer Patient & Family Support Group**

Mondays: June 14, June 28, July 12, July 26  
1:30pm – 3:00pm  
To register, please reach out to Carol Greiner at cgreiner2@northwell.edu or 914-366-1661

**Breast Cancer Support Group**

Thursdays: June 10, June 24, July 8, July 22  
6:00pm – 7:00pm  
To register, please reach out to Carol Greiner at cgreiner2@northwell.edu or 914-366-1661

**Nutrition For Cancer Survivors**

Tuesdays: July 13  
1:00pm – 2:00pm  
To register, please reach out to Amy Hendler at ahendler@northwell.edu or (914) 366-1611

**Stretch and Strength for Cancer Survivors**

Wednesdays: June 9 and July 14  
7:00pm – 8:00pm  
To register, please reach out to Jane Hearty at jhearty@northwell.edu or (914) 366-5495

**Coeds Kicking Cancer Together**

Wednesdays: June 16 and July 21  
1:00pm – 2:00pm  
To register, please reach out to Jane Hearty at jhearty@northwell.edu or (914) 366-5495

**Warrior Sisters Women’s Survivorship Group**

Wednesdays: June 2, July 7  
12:00pm – 1:00pm  
To register, please reach out to Jane Hearty at jhearty@northwell.edu or (914) 366-5495

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**Phelps Hospital**  
Northwell Health  
phelps.northwell.edu
Most strokes are preventable

Author: Dr. Serullle, Interventional Neuroradiology and Neuroendovascular Surgery, Phelps Hospital Northwell Health

What is a stroke?
Your brain needs oxygen to function, and it receives oxygen in the blood. If something like a clot deprives your brain of the oxygen it needs, your brain cells will die, along with the functions they control, such as memory, movement, or speech. This is a stroke.

According to the American Stroke Association, stroke is the leading cause of adult disability and the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S., affecting 800,000 people annually. The good news is that up to 80 percent of strokes are preventable. The sooner you receive a diagnosis and begin treatment, the greater are your chances for recovery.

Types of stroke
There are two types of stroke. Ischemic stroke, which accounts for about 87% of all events, occurs when a clot blocks a vessel carrying blood to the brain. Hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel bursts and spills blood into or around the brain, causing swelling and pressure, and damaging cells and surrounding tissues. Although less than 15% of strokes are hemorrhagic, they comprise 40% of all stroke deaths.

A transient ischemic attack (TIA), whose stroke-like symptoms last fewer than 24 hours before disappearing, results from a briefly disrupted blood flow to the brain. TIsAs generally do not cause permanent brain damage but are a serious warning sign of a potential stroke.

Know your risks
Preventing stroke starts with knowing the risk factors:
- High blood pressure
- Atrial fibrillation or irregular heartbeat
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Smoking
- Overweight
- Sedentary lifestyle

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle—eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, quitting smoking, limiting alcohol consumption, and exercising regularly—is the best way to reduce your stroke risk. Some risk factors are uncontrollable but knowing them can help you understand your risk.

Treatment
Ischemic stroke – Since these strokes are caused by a blood clot blocking an artery, the goal of therapy is to recanalize the occluded vessel.

Clot-breaking drugs – These drugs can be used to break up clots. One such drug is tissue plasminogen activator (tPA), which works by dissolving blood clots quickly, and can be used when given within 3 to 4.5 hours after stroke symptoms began.

Mechanical thrombectomy – This is the standard of care for patients have large clots. During this procedure, the doctor inserts a catheter into a large blood vessel inside the patient’s head and uses different tools to retrieve the clot. This surgery may be performed up to 24 hours after stroke symptoms began.

Hemorrhagic stroke – These strokes are caused by bleeds and may require different treatments.

Endovascular treatment – If the bleed is caused by a ruptured aneurysm, a catheter may be navigated to the area of the bleed-through a blood vessel, and block the area of bleeding using a variety of devices.

Surgery – Sometimes open surgery is needed in which a craniotomy is needed to either evacuate the blood or clip an aneurysm.

Rewards of rehabilitation
Complete recovery following a stroke is possible. Nevertheless, more than two-thirds of survivors emerge with some disability. The type of disability depends on where in the brain the stroke occurs and how much damage results. A small stroke may cause temporary weakness in an arm or leg, while a large stroke may cause loss of speech or permanent paralysis on one side of the body.

Timely rehabilitation after a stroke can help you regain independence and improve your quality of life. Rehabilitation may include physical, speech, or occupational therapy, nutritional counseling, psychological counseling, and medical interventions to control risk factors such as diabetes and hypertension. The sooner you begin, the more fully you are likely to recover.

Visit Phelps.northwell.edu to learn more about the Stroke Center at Phelps, which has received the Gold Plus Performance Achievement Award from the American Heart and American Stroke Associations every year since 2009.
Common-Sense Steps to Take to Feel Safe at Home

Never will I forget that early morning when my wife and I woke up, and she said that she felt that someone had been in our bedroom, looking at us in bed. At first, I thought that she had just had a weird dream. But when she went downstairs to the kitchen, she found that our back door had been removed from its hinges and that someone had entered our home.

Upon investigation, we found that nearly every book in our library had been handled, obviously in the search for inserted cash. Most horrible to us though was discovering that our two-year-old daughter’s piggy bank had been taken and realizing that the thief had been in her room. Obviously, the intruder had spent considerable time in our home, even helping himself to a snack of crackers in our kitchen!

I did what I could by calling the police to investigate and later helping myself to a snack of crackers in our kitchen! This incident was one of the reasons why was discovering that our library had been handled, obviously in the search for inserted cash. Most horrible to us though was discovering that our two-year-old daughter’s piggy bank had been taken and realizing that the thief had been in her room. Obviously, the intruder had spent considerable time in our home, even helping himself to a snack of crackers in our kitchen!

Never had I felt so personally and helplessly violated. I did what I could by calling the police to investigate and later installing security gates over our windows and doors. Even though our loss was minimal, my feeling of well-being had been helplessly violated. I did what I could by calling the police to investigate and later installing security gates over our windows and doors. Even though our loss was minimal, my feeling of well-being had been helplessly violated.

Inside, you can keep low lights on even in the lesser-used parts of the house. At night, turn on nightlights, especially near windows, so your house doesn’t appear completely dark.

2. Shut out the night. Before it gets dark outside, close your blinds and curtains. Even though you can’t see outside, people outside can see you very clearly at night if your windows are exposed.

3. Avoid dark, overgrown corners in your landscaping. My first home in the suburbs was fronted by an overgrown hedge, which blocked the view of the rest of my property. Your own yard could be a source of fear if you see dark shadows outside. I first trimmed back those hedges which obscured the rest of my property and eventually removed them.

4. Fix the creaks and groans. On an unusually windy day, you may hear a few extra sounds from your home and yard. You might have a back door that thumps with the wind or tree branches that scrape your siding or windows. Find the sources of these noises and take care of them so you can ease your nerves on those blustery days.

I had a bit of a problem because I lived in a home that was built in the 18th century, and my young daughter complained of the squeaky noises the floorboards would make when she walked across them. I had to convince her that they were “friendly” noises and just the house’s way of saying hello.

5. Play music or turn on the television at night. Blocking out the normal outside noises may help you feel less worried about your safety. However, this should be done only if you have a security system in place that will clearly notify you and the authorities when there really is a danger.

6. Know your neighbors. It’s a good way to build community, make friends and get help when you feel unsafe. Exchange phone numbers so you can text or call to check in or ask for help.

7. Use a security system. Definitely your best aid to feeling safe. A properly installed and functioning security system helps improve your actual safety, which then helps you feel safer. It can also help satisfy you both visually and aurally because you can have security cameras that allow you to see what is happening around your house, and you can have alarms that sound to alert you of intruders. I happen to live in a condo building where security is taken very seriously. There is a 24-hour doorman/security person and all hallways and public spaces are monitored electronically.

The best way to feel safe varies from person to person. It’s important that you identify what in your house causes you to feel insecure and frightened, and then do your best to resolve those issues.

Bill Primavera, while a writer and editor, is also a realtor associated with William Raves Real Estate and founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc. (www.PrimaveraPR.com). His real estate site is www.PrimaveraRealEstate.com. To engage the talents and services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.
Shanae’s Plan for Westchester

✓ Transparency
Connecting the Clerk’s office to the people it serves with proactive, transparent leadership and 21st century tools to ensure our government is truly accountable to the people.

✓ Equity
Ensuring that government services are accessible to every community and every family in Westchester, no matter their race, income or ZIP code.

✓ Accessibility
Bringing the Clerk’s office to the people, through community outreach to ensure everyone in Westchester can get the resources they need, regardless of immigration status.

✓ Progressive Leadership
Moving Westchester County forward through progressive leadership, using the County Clerk’s office as a force for lasting social change.

Meet Shanae Williams

A qualified leader and dedicated to public service, Shanae is a progressive Yonkers City Councilmember and Democratic District Leader.

On the Yonkers City Council, Shanae has advocated for the health and safety of our community by chairing the Community & Mental Health Services Committee and the Women & Children Committee.

A first-generation American, Shanae was born in Kingston, Jamaica. She immigrated to the United States with her family when she was nine years old and grew up in a one-bedroom apartment in Yonkers. Shanae is a graduate of Yonkers Public Schools, Hastings High School, and SUNY Albany. She holds a Masters degree in Business Administration from Walden University.

PAID FOR BY SHANAE FOR THE PEOPLE
Students’ Project Seeks to Find Solutions to Narrow the Political Divide

By Martin Wilbur

Not even a high school cafeteria provides a respite from today’s political polarization.

Byram Hills High School students Gina Schiliro and Jacob Levy have decided to take on the task of trying to bridge the political divide after each had their own experiences of being confronted by classmates or friends or hearing how conversations deteriorated between those with opposing views.

The two juniors partnered on a project for their Global Scholars Program that sought to give people may differ on issues to listen to one another.

“Just watching the news is enough to make us want to take action,” Schiliro said. “More recently, with the past election, there’s a lot more tension between the parties, so it just kind of seemed right to want to take action on this topic.”

The three-year elective, which started in their sophomore year, requires students to choose a topic, map out an action plan and try to make a difference. They first interviewed stakeholders, conducted research, identified the problem area and designed a plan to address the problem.

It resulted this year in Schiliro and Levy completing a two-and-a-half-minute public service announcement that is being distributed to students, various media outlets and organizations.

They also created an Instagram post called Fight the Divide, which is distributing the PSA to many other Instagram accounts. For next year, they will be launching a podcast that will feature participants with divergent political views engaging in conversation.

Levy said the increasing isolation among those with differing opinions has sometimes led to sad consequences. It is one of the things that has affected him the most but has also inspired him to continue with the project.

“The most surprising thing that I’ve found is how this political divide has affected people, like families are breaking up, friends are breaking up over this political divide,” Levy said. “That was something that pulled me in when I researched this initially. I said to myself that shouldn’t be happening, it’s crazy.”

Through their research Schiliro and Levy learned what has led to where society is today, with various media platforms having changed how people obtain their information, the differences between the various media outlets and the elimination of the Federal Communications Commission’s Fairness Doctrine in the 1980s, which no longer required media companies to provide opposing views when reporting news.

“These factors present daunting challenges, ones that aren’t easily solvable.

“The biggest and most challenging part of this project is how do we get these people to become more open-minded and see things from two perspectives instead of one perspective,” Levy said.

Schiliro said there are going to be people with opposing views and strong opinions, so it’s an issue that can be rectified quickly. She hopes that next year’s podcast will provide a forum where people can discuss various issues passionately but civilly.

“The best outcome of this is just making people listen, really, before they just talk, and we can provide that through our podcast, just trying to give people the skills that they need to have a conversation with someone or to be more mindful of where they’re getting their news from,” Schiliro said.

How divided society has also been a bit of a deflating experience for Schiliro. It’s a reminder how hard work and patience is required to make a difference on the issue.

“They’ve really been humbled, I guess, about the world and how people see things, how it can be so different than mine and how to understand their views before coming to a conclusion,” she said.

To view their public service announcement, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2NmxAaytioY.

Friends of Chappaqua Library Recognize Young Writers in Annual Contest

By Martin Wilbur

An ongoing pandemic couldn’t dim the enthusiasm of about 200 young writers in Chappaqua.

Last week, the Friends of the Chappaqua Library held the awards ceremony for the top contributors to its 41st annual Young Writers Contest, a vehicle for wordsmiths in middle school and high school to express themselves through fiction and non-fiction writing as well as poetry.

Richard Ma, who organizes the competition for the Friends, said so many of the students take the contest seriously despite all the other activities many of them are involved in.

“It’s really great because you see some of the kids really want to the last minute to submit during the entry period because they want to put as much time into it to finesse it and get it kind of all the way there, which is really great to see,” Ma said.

“It’s a great way to encourage and promote writing and the benefits of getting some monetary prize out if it and recognition. It’s really great to see.”

There were about 30 writers recognized in two separate award ceremonies, one for the middle school entrants and another for the high school writers. The ceremony was held late last Wednesday afternoon outdoors behind the Chappaqua Library. First-, second- and third-place winners were announced in each of the three categories for both middle school and high school students.

There were also several honorable mentions in each category.

The Friends provided prizes of $100 to each winner, $75 for second, $50 for third and $25 for each honorable mention.

Friends President Katherine Whymark said while last year’s competition suffered because of COVID-19, participation returned to pre-pandemic levels this year.

“We were pleasantly surprised that we had gotten as many as we had gotten pre-pandemic, which was really heartening to everybody,” she said.

For much of the contest’s history, the Chappaqua schools took the initiative to encourage students to participate, Whymark said.

When the district stopped, the Friends decided to take on the task themselves, which they promote through the library and in the schools, she said.

Each January, they reach out to let the youngsters know about the contest, Ma said. Typically, the entry period runs through March and judging is done in April. Ma said he compiles the judges’ scores and the winners are announced at a ceremony in late May.

The originally scheduled May 26 ceremony had to be postponed because of the threat of rain for the outdoor event.

In addition to the winners, Horace Greeley High School senior Erica Dunne was recognized with the Linda J. Zhang Award for Writing Achievement. The award, sponsored by the Linda Z. Zhang Foundation, created by Zhang’s parents in memory of their daughter.

The award is given to a gifted Chappaqua student that has shown a special dedication to writing as well as writing achievement consistently showcased in the Young Writers Contest over the years. Dunne has won multiple awards in all three categories.

To see a full listing of this year’s contest winners, visit the Friends page of the Chappaqua Public Library website at http://chappaquelibrary.org/friends.
Westchester to Host First 2021 Household Recycling Day at FDR Park

Westchester County’s Department of Environmental Facilities (DEF) will be conducting a Household Recycling Day (HRD) event on Saturday, June 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at FDR State Park, located at 2097 Crompond Rd. (Route 202) in Yorktown.

COVID-19 precautions are in place to allow DEF to once again host these events for county residents. Residents should place items in their trunk or backseat, remain in their vehicles, and must wear masks while in the drop-off area.

In 2020, DEF hosted two Household Recycling Day events and residents delivered nearly 275,000 pounds of household waste and about 37,000 pounds of documents for shredding.

In addition to properly labelling household chemicals, tires, scrap metal, electronics, appliances and other special wastes found in a typical household, residents can bring documents for shredding and expired or unwanted medications.

Generally, the following items are accepted for safe disposal or recycling:
- Household cleaning products
- Most automotive fluids (antifreeze, brake fluid, gasoline, but not motor oil)
- Flammable liquids (kerosene, lighter fluid, turpentine)
- Metal, jewelry, and furniture polishes and waxes; wood preservatives
- Fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, herbicides
- Photographic and swimming pool chemicals

Items that will not be accepted and should not be brought to Household Recycling Day include paint (both latex and oil), non-rechargeable alkaline and carbon zinc batteries, which can be safely discarded in the trash; motor oil, smoke detectors, cell phones, explosives (flares, fireworks, ammunition), construction debris and hypodermic needles. Also, waste from businesses, schools, or other institutions will not be accepted.

If unable to attend Household Recycling Day, you can still dispose of your hard-to-get-rid-of household waste by making a convenient appointment for the county’s Household-Material Recycling Facility (H-MRF), located at 15 Woods Rd. in Valhalla. The H-MRF is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. by appointment. It accepts the same items that are accepted at the household recycling events.

For more information on what to bring to Household Recycling Day, call 914-813-5425 or visit www.westchestergov.com/recycling.

For more information on Westchester County environmental programs and events, follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WestchesterCountyDEF.

Films on Purpose, New Collaborative to Hold Outdoor Movie Screening

Films on Purpose will be holding an outdoor movie screening of “The Biggest Little Farm” this Thursday evening, June 10 at Co-Lab, formerly the United Methodist Church at 70 Bedford Rd. in Pleasantville.

“The Biggest Little Farm” is an award-winning documentary about bringing a farm back to life after years of neglect. New farmers, the Chester family, work with nature – not against it – to create a living system of biodiversity where each plant, animal and insect contributes to the health of the land.

The CO-LABorative community garden is a venture of Co-Lab, a new community space in Pleasantville for connection, contemplation and collaboration. At the garden, friends and neighbors come together to grow food for themselves and for others. Local residents have been working since March, digging a terraced garden, laying wood chip paths and adding compost to the garden beds for the hundreds of seedlings that will be planted soon.

Gates open at 7:15 p.m. with introductory remarks at 7:45 p.m. The screening will start at 8 p.m. Social distancing and masks are required if you are not vaccinated. Please bring a chair if you can, but there are extras if needed.

For more information, visit www.filmsonpurpose.org or https://villagecolab.org.

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- Karen B

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The plan will provide hundreds of local jobs. It means opportunity for redevelopment of the land decades sooner. And it results in predictable tax revenue for local schools and governments.

Indian Point will close soon after operating for nearly 60 years. We don’t have to wait another 60 years for it to be dismantled.

Learn about the smarter plan at indianpointdecommissioning.com

The illustration above is an artist’s depiction of the Indian Point property after the completion of major decommissioning work.
The Pleasantville Garden Club honored one of its own last week, paying special tribute to a longtime member who has helped to beautify multiple areas throughout Mount Pleasant.

At its annual luncheon last Thursday in Briarcliff Manor, the club honored Senta Stich, a Valhalla resident and former school principal who has directed the planning and coordination of projects throughout the town. Stich, a master gardener, has served as chair of the club’s Beautification Committee before retiring from that role following the event.

Club President Helen Krasnow said because of Stich’s dedication in helping to lead the volunteers, Mount Pleasant is a more attractive place.

“They do the planting, they do the maintenance, they do the trimming and the town is beautiful really because of Senta’s work, plus she’s a wonderful person and knowledgeable, so knowledgeable,” Krasnow said. “But Beautification came into its own under her leadership.”

Mount Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi designated June 3 to be Senta Stich Day in the town, recognizing the volume of work she has done for the club and Mount Pleasant. He presented her with a plaque recognizing her efforts through the years.

Among the gardens that were developed under Stich’s direction is the Rose Project, a series of six gardens in Mount Pleasant and Pleasantville – three along the median on Columbus Avenue, one at the Broadway Bridge near the Hawthorne post office and in Pleasantville near the current recreation building and at Christmas Tree Island on Manville Road.

There is also the Chelsea Roadside Garden at the corner of Elwood Avenue and Chelsea Street in Hawthorne and the Butterfly Garden at the Bradhurst Avenue park and field.

In addition, the club’s Beautification Committee under Stich’s direction also maintains the flowers and plants that beautify the hamlet and Town Hall signs in Mount Pleasant, the Four Corners in Thornwood, the post offices throughout town and many other areas.

“I am overwhelmed,” Stich said of the honor after Fulgenzi presented her with a plaque. “This has been a wonderful experience for me the last seven, eight years that I have been doing this.”

Stich was principal at the Daniel Webster magnet school in New Rochelle. She and her husband have three children and three grandchildren.

Fulgenzi said that the Pleasantville Garden Club and the efforts of all the volunteers have made the town a prettier place.

“You’re all special,” he said. “You’re responsible for making Mount Pleasant bloom and I really appreciate that.”

Club members work closely with Mount Pleasant Parks Superintendents Jon Petruzelli and parks foreman Scott Naylor. Petruzelli and Naylor help them prepare garden beds, water the plantings and add mulch to the gardens.

The club, which has been meeting virtually since the start of the pandemic last year, gathers the first Thursday of the month from October through June. To learn more about the Pleasantville Garden Club, visit www.pleasantvillegardenclub.org.

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Red-fronted Macaw: Straight Outta South Central (Bolivia)

By Brian Kluepfel

I began last week writing a doom-and-gloom blog about the red-fronted Macaw, which exists only in a small area of Bolivia’s Andean foothills and dry river valleys, between the cities of Cochabamba, Sucre and Santa Cruz.

Che Guevara breathed his last near here, and my fear was that the red-fronted macaw was in the same mortal danger. And unlike Che, it was not only up against guns, but pesticides, too.

The story is one of inevitable conflict borne of human settlement (or encroachment); people moved into this region and began farming. They cleared existing shrubbery and trees upon which the macaws depended. They planted corn and other crops, so instead of eating seeds of the soto (hardwood tree in the cashew family), pica pica, palo borracho (ceiba or silk floss tree) and culque, the macaws began to supplement their diet with corn and peanuts.

Another continuing setback to the macaw’s survival is the illegal pet trade. A hundred bucks in the hands of a poor farmer can be irresistible.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, which is an often-depressing listing of species in decline, last reported on the red-fronted Macaw in 2018, and the stats were alarming. At most, according to IUCN, there were about 600 remaining in the wild; realistically, perhaps closer to 300. Yikes! That means a species listed officially as CR – critically endangered.

But folks doing the boots-on-the-ground research in Bolivia promised me a new survey soon, and numbers which aren’t nearly as depressing as the IUCN’s. In this day and age, one should consider multiple sources when making judgments, especially “the sky is falling” sort of proclamations involved in species extinction.

It may be that newer studies and more advanced science show a greater number of red-fronted macaws than we thought existed. Some sources, other than the IUCN, estimated between 1,000 and 2,000. Data can be used for different purposes and political reasons, so it’s worthwhile to uncover accurate assessments, which are discovered through proper scientific diligence.

The red-fronted macaw is also part of the ongoing debate about bird names. Short summary: many in the birding community would like to get rid of Euro-centric honorific bird names (i.e., McCown’s Longspur, named for a Confederate soldier) altogether. Well, the red-fronted macaw has a completely logical name because its forehead, ear patches and upper legs are red.

The bird was first recorded by western science by a late 18th century or early 19th century French nobleman named Frédéric de Lafresnaye, and is sometimes, but rarely, called LaFresnaye’s Macaw. I have no evidence that LaFresnaye was either a good or bad man, but I vote for the Quechua name (Quechua is an indigenous highland language and Bolivia’s official second tongue): Qa Qa (or Q’aca).

Loro, or “parrot of the rocks,” because it lives in cliff dwellings. And Qa Qa is a pretty cool name, isn’t it?

This lovely loro is a natural redistribution center. By cracking open cacti fruits and other seeds and eating them, it disperses them now – or later. Poop is the great equalizer in nature.

Having more cacti and native plants, which require little water, is less of a drain on these fragile river valleys. The birds can be an ambassador for the region, bringing in tourists (and birders can see this bird in the wild only in this small corner of the world) and rebalancing the regional flora by moving the seeds around.

There are many lessons in the tale of the red-fronted macaw:

• Humans and birds can co-exist, if there is incentive on part of the humans (capitalism leading to eco-tourism).
• We should be careful what we call things and remember that the oldest names might be the wisest.
• Keeping birds in captivity – whether they are bred or illegally trafficked – is unnatural and it teaches the next generation that it’s okay to keep animals that are born to fly in cages.
• We should take care in forming judgments based on just one data set (or news channel), because there’s a lot of noise, and not all of its news.

Brian Kluepfel writes for the Lonely Planet travel guide series and is a proud member of Saw Mill River Audubon (SMRA). He encourages you to get involved in local birding with SMRA, and when you travel, to support community and eco-tourism wherever you can. Find him at www.birdmanwalking.com.
Continued from page 24

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Sloan & Feller Helps Families Plan for the Future

By Erin Maher

What do you do when a family member falls ill or you need to find care for an aging relative?

The team at Sloan & Feller, a Mahopac-based law firm, is there to help.

Managing partner Alan Feller has more than 20 years’ experience and insight working in elder law to assist families with legal issues they may encounter with an aging relative.

“In every family, when there is a loved one or parent, there is always the question of how you protect them, how do you pay for long-term care,” Feller said. “It’s the hardest thing to figure out. What do you do when a family member gets sick? They go into a hospital and everyone panics. There is no template for that.”

Feller, a Rockland County native, had seen firsthand the importance of elder law. In 1996, his grandfather passed away while he was attending Brooklyn Law School.

“I saw that there was a real need to help families and help people,” he said.

Three years later, Feller graduated law school and went to work with Leslie Sloan, then a Manhattan elder care attorney. In 2002, Feller became a partner, and the next year after Feller moved to Brewster, the firm moved to Mahopac, where it has been ever since.

Sloan has since retired, but Feller and the firm’s staff of six have served the tristate area and beyond. Its services include Medicaid advisement, advance directives, guardianship, disability, wills, trusts and caregiving assistance. Taking a proactive approach ensures that family members and their assets are protected in the years to come.

“Elder law helps preserve the assets of the family so that maybe a kid can afford to go to college, or that someone can start their life and buy a house,” Feller said.

In addition to legal counsel at Sloan & Feller, the firm also has three Medicaid service coordinators on staff who understand the complexities of Medicare and Medicaid. The coordinators can leverage those services to pay for care for a client’s loved one.

“It’s good to have other types of professionals who have real experience handling families, understanding health care and the logistics,” Feller said.

“So having both lawyers and Medicaid service coordinators in the firm is beneficial.”

Now for close to 20 years, Sloan & Feller has been thriving, thanks in part to the firm’s personalized approach to every client. Feller greets each client with a smile and friendly demeanor as they navigate the emotionally taxing journey of aiding a sick or aging relative.

“Let’s work through this issue together. This is a relationship; this is a communication and you just build off of that.”

Feller and his firm have served countless families and watch as children grow into adults and become the firm’s newest clients.

“Families just keep coming back. I start with the grandparents, then we have the parents and sometimes even the siblings come in and start to plan,” Feller said. “It’s multigenerational.”

Feller’s top advice for families that are planning a loved one’s future? Make sure to have good communication with the rest of your family.

“You can’t do things alone,” he said. “Everyone needs help and support.”

Sloan & Feller Attorneys at Law has an office at 625 Route 6 in Mahopac. To learn more about the firm, call 845-621-8640 or visit www.sloanandfeller.com.
A rainy Memorial Day weekend had finally cleared last Monday, so a nice drive and meal near the Hudson River seemed like a relaxing destination.

After taking in the lovely view at Hudson RiverWalk in Tarrytown, we headed up West Main Street to RiverMarket Bar & Kitchen. Looked like a lot of people had the same idea. It was bustling when we walked in, both on the patio and inside the main dining room. We took seats at the big wraparound bar with a good view of the proceedings.

To my delight, proprietor Glenn Vogt was on the premises. We go back a long way. Years ago, his father, Harold E. Vogt, was president of the Westchester County Chamber of Commerce, while his son decided to enter the restaurant and hospitality field. Glenn Vogt had been general manager at Windows on the World before the 9/11 disaster; later he brought his extensive experience with food and wine to Crabtree’s Kittle House in Chappaqua under proprietor Richard Crabtree.

Besides being managing partner and founder of RiverMarket for the past eight years, Vogt is also partnering at the Kittle House with Crabtree’s son John Crabtree.

It was a pleasure to chat with him, as he, like too many others in the restaurant industry are finally gaining strength following more than a year surviving the COVID-19 pandemic. He is optimistic about the future.

I decided on the Hemlock Hill Farm grass-fed beef burger with smoked bacon on a brioche bun, fries and house-made butter pickles. I asked for a helping of aged cheddar on top, too. My companion went for a helping of aged cheddar on top, butter pickles. I asked for a crispy buffalo chicken salad featuring a small mountain of romaine lettuce, tomato, red onion, cucumber, scallion and blue cheese dressing. There was more than enough to share, and both dishes were delish.

For dessert we had to have a slice of their cream-cheese-made key lime pie with a dollop of whipped cream. It was exceptional! We savored every morsel.

Southern Table recently received a second coveted Bib Gourmand designation (restaurants that are high quality and represent good value) from this year’s Michelin restaurant guide for New York State. Ownership also operates Wood & Fire pizza in Pleasantville and Scarsdale and O.T.R. Off The Rail in Hawthorne.

Additional specialties include cheddar biscuits, grit bowls, Cajun-style seafood boils and fried chicken. There is seasonal patio dining. Open daily. Pickup and delivery are available.

Southern Table Kitchen & Bar is located at 39 Marble Ave. in Pleasantville. Info: 914-618-3355 or visit www.southern-table.com.

Michelin Publishes New York Restaurant Ratings

It has become an annual rite of the culinary world. The prestigious Michelin restaurant guides have been publishing their ratings internationally, nationally, for New York City, and for the second year, Westchester and the other metropolitan area suburbs.

As always with these guides, there is controversy – who made the list, who didn’t and why? It is all secretive. The Bib Gourmand designations (typically more casual eateries of merit) and stars (for high-end restaurants) can be meaningful to a restaurant’s bottom line. There is a small group of local spots that made the list. Based on my experience, these are deserving finalists.

Bib Gourmand recipients in Westchester include Southern Table Kitchen & Bar, Pleasantville; Baradjian’s Kitchen, Mount Kisco; Shiraz Kitchen & Wine Bar, Elmsford; RaaSa, Elmsford; Maria, New Rochelle; and X20 Xaviars on the Hudson, Yonkers.

By the way, the only star recipient was Blue Hill at Stone Barns. Check out https://guide.michelin.com/en/us/new-york-state/restaurants.

Don’t Eat Cicadas if Allergic to Seafood

Are cicadas on your menu? The brood only shows up every 17 years or so, an uber-seasonal event. But beware, the Food & Drug Administration has issued a warning. Do not eat them if you are allergic to seafood. Apparently, there is a connection.

I have no food allergies that I am aware of. I was looking forward to at least tasting a Cicada Cookie. Check it out at https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cicadas-brood-x-seafood-allergy-fda-warning.

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 gutreactions@optonline.net.
Westchester Land Trust to Present ‘BioBlitz’ Third Weekend in June

With the help of the public, the Westchester Land Trust (WLT) and Healthy Yards are collaborating on an effort to find and identify as many species of plants and wildlife as possible through a series of events to take place from June 18 to June 20.

Nine programs will be featured in the BioBlitz to be held at Westchester Land Trust’s Tom Burke Preserve in Bedford Hills.

With family-friendly events including a nighttime moth hunt, a wetlands walk and “Wings and Stings” to introduce participants to the benefits of misunderstood insects, visitors will help discover plants and wildlife on the preserve, and document as many as possible with photographs. Pictures can be uploaded as observations to iNaturalist, a widely used app from National Geographic and the California Academy of Sciences.

iNaturalist allows users to share observations, which experts can help identify and scientists may use for research.

The varied ecosystems of meadow, forest and wetlands in the 7.5-acre preserve make it an ideal place to document biodiversity and welcome everyone to appreciate nature and support community science.

The preserve has been owned and managed by Westchester Land Trust for nearly 20 years, after the Town of Bedford and more than two dozen generous neighbors donated the funds to acquire the property, named for Burke, who lived nearby and was lost in the World Trade Center attack on 9/11.

“We are thrilled to be offering a wide range of events, including one in Spanish, to introduce everyone to community science; and to share the wonders of biodiversity,” said Gentian Falstrom, conservation easement steward at WLT. “Not only do we want to reinforce the joy of spending time in nature that so many have embraced over the past year, it gives us an opportunity to find out in greater detail what species are living on our land.”

Here is the full schedule of events.

Friday, June 18
Moth Hunt, 9 to 10 p.m.
Enjoy a rare opportunity to visit the preserve after dark. We will shine a light behind a sheet to attract and learn about the moths and other night-flying insects living there.

Saturday, June 19
Community Science, 8 to 9:30 a.m.
Learn how to identify and document the species you spot using common apps. iNaturalist will be the focus, but will also discuss Seek, e-Bird, Merlin and Birdnet.

“BioBlitz” en Español (Spanish language nature walk), 10:30 a.m. to noon.
Vamos a caminar entre el parque y aprender sobre las criaturas—polinizadores, aves, y otros animales—y plantas que viven en nuestra comunidad.

Plants: Native or Invasive? 1 to 2:30 p.m.
In recent years, you may have heard a lot more about invasive species in Westchester. Learn to identify the plants of the preserve and distinguish those native to our region.

Wings and Stings, 3:30 to 5 p.m.
Hymenoptera – bees, wasps, hornets and ants – are some of the most misunderstood, successful and complex animals in the world. Join us to track down and try to identify as many of these elusive and beautiful creatures as possible.

Sunday, June 20
Feathers for Fathers, 7:30 to 9 a.m.
Join Tait Johansson from Bedford Audubon for an early morning bird walk on Father’s Day. The preserve provides forest, canopy and wetland habitat for lots of local bird life.

Wonderful Wetlands, 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Let’s get muddy! Wetland ecosystems are home to a variety of unique plants and animals. Explore the woodland swamp, and spend some time getting to know the tiny creatures that live in the water.

Design like the Wild, 3:30 to 5 p.m.
Nature is an awesome gardener. Instead of buying a book or magazine about gardening, let’s go out and see what cues nature can give us about mulch, seeding and planting. This workshop is especially meant for people who are interested in welcoming more nature and wildlife in their yard, and want to learn how to do so, while remaining friends with their neighbors.

Thursday, July 1
Project Summary and Celebration, 7 to 8 p.m.
Gather virtually to review the number and variety of species discovered during the BioBlitz, along with noteworthy finds. Small prizes will be awarded to the observers with the most plant and animal species reported, as well as the best photo and the rarest discovery.

All events require pre-registration, and space is limited. There will also be opportunities for people who visit outside of these events to participate. For more information or to register, visit www.westchesterlandtrust.org/bioblitz.
The Benefits of Chiropractic Preventative and Maintenance Care

Growing up with a grandfather, who was not only a chiropractor but lived and breathed chiropractic care, the idea of preventative medicine was always second nature to me.

In America, we encourage dental health and hygiene, blood screenings and non-stop testing, yet the idea of preventative treatment for the spine eludes us. Chiropractors may call this maintenance care, but spinal hygiene is important to ensure our backs function at their full potential.

Back pain is usually reoccurring or chronic, and most patients are symptom-guided, which means they seek care when and only when they feel pain. However, why must we wait until we feel paralyzing pain from the low back if studies show regular maintenance care can prevent us from experiencing these symptoms?

A 2018 study set out to study the benefits, if any, of maintenance care for low back pain, compared to symptom-guided therapy, essentially examining preventative care and spinal hygiene. The conclusion noted maintenance care was more effective than symptom-guided treatment in reducing the total number of days over a year’s time with bothersome non-specific low back pain. By taking care of our spines, like we do with so many aspects of our body; we can reduce pain.

Those who have had debilitating low back pain can appreciate how important that is. Furthermore, patients who respond well to the initial course of chiropractic treatment will respond even better to maintenance care.

We have heard the complaints made by some – “once you go to a chiropractor you have to keep going” is one – yet the same argument isn’t made about the dentist or optometrist or other specialists.

One of the biggest risk factors of having low back pain is a history of back pain. Considering that 90 percent of the population will at one point experience low back pain, this leaves the overwhelming majority of us at higher risk of experiencing it again.

So what are our options when we first experience back pain or any pain? Some will head to their primary care physician or orthopedic who will prescribe muscle relaxers and pain medication. This will dull our pain until the body eventually heals and the pain ultimately subsides. Some will get prescriptions for physical therapy as well, which will help the patient stabilize and strengthen the back for a number of visits. The patient will feel better and think they are cured but will return to their regular day-to-day activities, usually no longer continuing the rehab exercises.

Since a history of low back pain is a leading indicator of future low back pain, most patients will have recurring discomfort. The underlying issues of the spine have not been addressed and corrected, the stabilizing rehabilitative exercises have stopped and it will be only a matter of time before the back pain returns.

Some patients will go to the chiropractor when they initially feel low back pain for the first time. They will be treated and the spine will be addressed, pain will disappear and they will be given stabilizing exercises for the low back.

At this point patients face a fork in the road, either they no longer receive treatment because the symptoms are gone or they participate in maintenance care and periodically make sure the spine is functioning at its highest capacity. Research shows the best way to reduce the amount of future low back pain would be to take the approach of maintenance care, and with the risk profile of chiropractic treatment being so low it seems like a no-brainer.

As a child, having the privilege of growing up with chiropractic care and, as an adult, having my brother as my chiropractor, I am living proof of the benefits of maintenance care. It has helped me to prevent injury, reduce pain and keep me functioning at the highest level.

Chiropractic care combined with stabilizing exercises can be a life-changer for most of the population once we escape the idea of only going to the doctor when in pain.

That is the hurdle ahead of us, and that is the hurdle that we will jump over together, as the most recent research and evidence propels us. Dr. Elan Michael is a chiropractor at ProClinix Sports Physical Therapy & Chiropractic in its Pleasantville and Ardsley locations. For more information about this article or about ProClinix, Michael can be reached at 914-202-0700 or at emichael@proclinix.com. You may also visit www.ProClinix.com.

Tips to Embrace the Healthy Habit of Bicycling

Whether rediscovering the joy of riding a bike or taking a ride for the first time, cycling saw a boom during the pandemic, and many believe this trend is here to stay.

The summer is an excellent time to recognize the many benefits of this healthy habit, as well as outfit yourself with everything you need to embrace your inner adventurer. Here are some tips and insights to celebrate cycling.

Recognize the Benefits

Bicycling is a heart-healthy cardiovascular exercise that strengthens your lower body, yet is low-impact on joints, making it a terrific workout for adults of all ages, as well as kids and families. It’s also great for the mind, and has been shown in studies to boost mood and improve cognitive function. But the benefits extend beyond the individual. Biking is a great substitute for driving a car and is good for the planet and your local community, cutting down on greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants and improving traffic congestion.

Find Time to Bike

Changing or creating a single habit can have unexpected and wide-reaching effects. Even with a jam-packed schedule, you can establish the habit of biking by seamlessly incorporating it into your current routine. Here are a few ideas for doing so:

- Pick one to two days a week to commute to work by bike.
- Swap out sedentary activities you do to unwind with your family, such as watching TV, with bike rides.
- Are weekends the time you spend connecting with friends? Suggest your next meet-up start with a bike ride.
- Whether you’re a runner, swimmer or love working out at home, swap at least one workout a week with cycling. Cross training emphasizes different muscle groups and helps build out a more well-rounded fitness routine.

Go Electric

Electric bikes are great alternatives for all adult riders, no matter your level of experience. An e-bike helps you get back on a bike if it’s been a while since your last ride, if you have physical limitations that make riding a standard bike difficult, or if you want to keep up on a ride with more experienced friends. The pedal-powered boost can also provide a less intense alternative to traditional hiking, especially for those looking to commute without breaking a sweat. Whether it’s to ease back into biking or just want a cool bike, the e-bike offers the same joys as a conventional bike ride with a bit of a kick.

Get Equipped

Consider a one-stop brand, such as Huffy Bicycles to ensure each member of your family is equipped with the bike that best meets their needs. Whether you’re an adrenaline seeker in need of a tough, durable mountain or gravel bike, or a day tripper seeking a cruiser or comfort bike, Huffy offers a range of models in every style. They have tricycles, bicycles, scooters and battery-powered ride-ons, for kids of all ages, from those still experimenting with foot-to-floor and first-bike fun, to active kids seeking adventure.

Finally, if you’re an RV-er or plan to regularly commute by bike, they also offer fun-to-ride electric bikes that make it easy to ride more miles and power up hills. For more information, visit www.huffy.com.

This year, pave the way for a healthy habit you and your family can enjoy together for years to come.

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I’ve written on numerous occasions that today’s wines are of the highest quality and greatest value in the history of wine. A mere 50 years ago (which is a small sip in the 6,000-year history of wine), poor growing techniques in vineyards, unclean grapes and adulterated fermented grape juice were the culprits in many off-putting wines sold in the marketplace.

Then the latest generation of winemakers took over the family reins in wineries across the globe. They were eager to learn new techniques and to employ new technology to enhance their wines in order to meet the growing sophistication of wine consumers’ palates. They were critically aware that the success of their wineries depended on expanding their brand recognition and distribution beyond their local and national borders.

In 2021, wine consumers have more choices than ever before, from more regions than ever before, at price points lower than ever before. The value and quality of wines priced at $15 – and below – has grown exponentially in the last 10 years. A parallel history of water has occurred. Ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans cultivated grapes and produced wine as an alternative to contaminated water. As the quality of water began to improve, it was added to wine to dilute the bitter taste and off-flavors of many wines. Medieval winemaking practices dictated a ratio of two to three portions of water to one portion of wine.

In more modern times, water continues to be added to wine to mitigate unwanted components, including high alcohol and undesirable concentrations of naturally occurring sugars. In California, regulators now permit the limited addition of water to wine.

Once water became clean and pure, it slowly became a beverage of choice over other beverages, including certain wines. I remember the first time, which seems like ages ago, I came across a bottle of still water on the supermarket shelves. My reaction? They put tap water into a bottle and expect me to pay for it when I can drink my own (seemingly) free New York City Catskills spring water from my kitchen faucet? But over time, convenience won out over financial logic, and today I’m buying cases of “spring water” at my local supermarket.

These days, retail outlets are selling “spring water” for about 10 cents a bottle. So, just as quality wines have been declining in price, so has bottled water. And that sounds like markets in perfect sync with each other: higher quality and lower prices.

But there are distinct exceptions to the norm. There are still a few wines in the marketplace where economic elasticity is upside down. Now I’m seeing the same phenomenon for bottled waters.

High-end “designer water,” like Voss, retails for well over $1. Higher-end bottles, such as 10 Thousand BC, drawn from a deep, Ice Age-era Canadian glacier, retail for over $14 per bottle.

In today’s consumer market psyche of “I will outspend you simply because I can” and “I need to have the most expensive product in the market,” it’s difficult to rationalize the price of wine compared to these waters.

When the vectors of wine and water prices cross in a pricing graph, the prices of select waters are greater than that of select wines! Here’s a case in point:

For years, the price Charles Shaw wines from Trader Joe’s, dubbed “Two Buck Chuck,” have been the darlings of price-conscious consumers. At $1.99 per bottle, the multiple wines bearing this label have sold over 800 million bottles since 2002. Even when the price escalated to $2.49, then $2.99 (it’s still $1.99 in parts of California), Trader Joe’s retained the name – and sales have remained solid. However, in a strange twist of upside-down economics, the Two Buck Chuck on the shelves sells for less than select bottles of water in the marketplace.

The “elixir of life” – wine or water? You decide. Is it composition or economics?

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.

‘...it’s difficult to rationalize the price of wine compared to these waters.'
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