



FREE

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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

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Decision Near on Gas Station/Convenience Store on Rt. 6

By Rick Pezzullo

A decision on a proposed expansion of an existing Sinclair gas station and convenience store on Route 6 in Cortlandt appears near after the town's Planning Board closed the public hearing on the project last week.

Palisades Enterprises LLC is seeking site plan approval to expand the current gas station at 2058 East Main St. from two pumps to six. The proposed 2,940-square-foot station on 1.7 acres will result in the removal of the former Popeye's Pub. A

drive-thru window has been eliminated from the plans.

John Canning, a representative for Palisades, told the Planning Board the owner of the station was adamant about having 12 fueling stations after making other alterations.

"This gas station is about as close to perfect as we can get," Canning remarked. "The plan we have presented works. This is a very well designed, generous gas station."

Canning noted the state Department of Transportation has been persuaded to install

a traffic signal in front of the station at the Bear Mountain Parkway ramp. Left turns for vehicles heading eastbound will be prohibited into the site.

"I think we have made this gas station as safe as we can make it," Canning said.

As was a major concern expressed during hearings with the nearby Gasland project, which the Planning Board approved in 2020, traffic issues have been raised by several planners with the Palisades plan.

"The question is can it be made a little safer?" said planner Bob Foley. "The issue of

the lesser pumps is still an issue."

Planning Board Chairperson Loretta Taylor and member Jeffrey Rothfeder indicated they still were not comfortable enough with the project to give it a thumbs up.

"I personally still feel we are getting too close to cars that are parked at the convenience store," Taylor said.

The Planning Board is slated to continue discussions on the project under Old Business at its Feb. 1 meeting.

Hen Hud Students Create Newspaper



Proving that print newspapers are still valued, a group of Frank G. Lindsey Elementary School fourth graders who enjoy writing put their heads together and came up with the idea of publishing a school newspaper. The Sailor Pride Paper came out just before the holiday break, with a special Winter edition featuring stories about New Year's Eve, tips for staying warm in the cold weather, a "Meet the Teacher" interview, and a variety of illustrated features and comics. "The students came up with the idea for the newspaper and all of the story ideas themselves," said teacher Megan Boyle. "They presented their idea to the principal, and once they got the go-ahead, they worked really hard to put it all together." The fourth-grade students who were involved in creating the new publication are: Ava Guarussio, Ava Hallowell, Amber Leach, Zanobia Lovell, Lisa Lush, Aubrey Moore, Bryden Ordonez, Raquel Rocha, Cadence Roldan, Sofia Santiago, Elise Van Dekker and Violet Van Dekker.

Mini Golf Course at Heritage Hills Has Some Residents Teed Off

By Rick Pezzullo

A proposed miniature golf course at Heritage Hills in Somers has some residents teed off about how it could affect the quality of life in the condominium community.

The Somers National Golf Club, operators of an 18-hole golf course at Heritage Hills with more than 200 members, is looking to construct an 18-hole miniature golf course, along with up to four golf simulators and a cigar bar on less than two acres on West Hill Drive South.

Golf Club part-owner Quintin Lew appeared at a Somers Planning Board meeting last month to address some concerns that have been raised by Heritage Hills Society Board members, condo association leaders and other residents, ranging from decreased property values and environmental issues to increased traffic from visitors who would frequent the new attractions.

"We are very respectful of neighbors and keenly aware of opposition to our plans," Lew told planners. "The key to success is building a beautiful course that is interesting and fun to play with just enough to challenge the guests who want to come again."

Lew emphasized the mini-golf course, being designed by Harris Miniature Golf Courses Inc., of Pennsylvania, which has

built more than 800 courses throughout the world, would offer "eye-catching" water features and landscaping and would "appeal to residents of all demographics and ages."

"This will not be an amusement park version of a miniature golf course, or carnival-themed," Lew said, adding historical elements of the Town of Somers and Heritage Hills would be incorporated into its design.

Richard Williams, a civil engineer for the project, said the proposed construction would provide less disturbance than an outdoor swimming pool, two tennis courts and a cabana that were approved by the Planning Board for the same site in 2017 but never built.

"This will not be dinosaurs and pirate ships. It's very low key," Williams said of the mini-golf course.

Lew estimated 30 to 40% of users of the mini-golf course and golf simulators would be from Heritage Hills. He said 25 to 35% of members of the Somers National Golf Club reside at Heritage Hills.

Planners Bruce Prince and Jack Mattes, who also sits on the Heritage Hills Society Board, said the board needs further clarification from town officials if the proposed uses in the application are

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Peekskill Awarded \$2.5M in State Funding for Waterfront Projects

By Rick Pezzullo

The City of Peekskill has been awarded more than \$2.5 million from the state for two waterfront projects.

The projects that received the grant from the New York State Regional Economic Development Councils through the Consolidated Funding Application are the Riverfront Green Connector Trail construction and the Fleischmann Pier and Charles Park improvements.

"The addition of these funds from New York State will help aid in the completion of these projects and transform the waterfront in our great city," said Peekskill Mayor Vivian McKenzie.

A grant of \$1,092,928 and a city match of \$184,309 available in a Parks and Recreation Department fund will go towards construction upgrades at Fleischmann Pier and Charles Point Park, which will likely get underway in the



Fleischmann Pier on the Hudson River in Peekskill.

spring or summer after bids are solicited in March.

The 500-foot-long Fleischmann Pier was built in 1938. The multi-phased project will involve park enhancements that include landscaping, seating, stairs, lighting and electrical work. It will also implement the city's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program by adding water-based recreational amenities and providing additional public access to the Hudson River waterfront by creating docking for kayaks and larger vessels.

Meanwhile, a grant of \$1,480,428 and a city match of \$343,544 that is also available in a Parks and Recreation Department fund will be used to construct a trail segment and amenities in Riverfront Green Park, which anticipated bidding to begin in the spring. The project will expand public access and trail opportunities, providing the final touches on Peekskill's three-mile waterfront trail system.

Mini Golf Course at Heritage Hills Has Some Residents Teed Off

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permitted under Town Code.

Mattes suggested to Lew to consider making the golf simulators and cigar bar a separate application from the mini-golf course since there appears to be less

opposition to those uses.

Once the board receives all the information it needs, a public hearing will be set at a venue other than the Somers Townhouse since a large audience is expected.

Candidates Sought for Vacant Seat on Peekskill Common Council

By Rick Pezzullo

Interested candidates are being sought to fill a vacancy on the Peekskill Common Council.

Applications will be accepted through Tuesday, Jan. 18 as the current all-Democratic six-member council looks for a new colleague to sit in the seat left empty when Vivian McKenzie was elected mayor in Nov.

City of Peekskill residents, who are

registered voters and have resided in the city for a minimum of three years, and are interested in pursuing the appointment, should mail or email a brief letter of intent and resume to the City Clerk's Office. The materials will be shared with the Common Council. All inquiries will be held in confidence.

Mail should be sent to City Clerk, Debra Petrosky, at 840 Main Street, Peekskill, NY 10566 or by email to dpetrosky@cityofpeekskill.com.

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WINE OF THE YEAR

2020 Anne Pichon Grenache Noir



Take what you think you know about Grenache and throw it out the window. As this wine opens, initial dark berry flavors meld into a true jam flavor with floral notes and bitter cranberry. It has such a divine, full mouthfeel that tricks you into not initially noticing that it's more 'dry' than not. While there a lot of wines that showcase the best flavors of their region, Anne Pichon Grenache Noir did it best this year. Cheers!

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Dan's Wine of the Year

2014 Casa Santos Lima Reserva



The nose on this wine bursts through the seems with dark fruit notes earthy spice-tinged berries that remind you the wine is old school. The palate brings Very complex on the palate with coconut, blackberry, jam and dried fruit, prune and fig. The addition of the Syrah in this blend is what separates this wine from anything ordinary.

\$11⁹⁷

Jason's Wine of the Year

2019 Oak Farm Tievoli Cabernet Sauvignon



Deep garnet in color, this Cabernet Sauvignon is composed of complex aromas of black currant, blueberry, cedar, and floral characteristics. The wine is full bodied with echoing aromas on the palate. The finish is abundant in textured tannins, yet smooth and velvety.

\$14⁹⁷

Suburban's Sparkling Wine of the Year

NV Isotta Manzoni Prosecco Rose



Subtle and fresh aromas with hints of small red berries, rose, and pomegranate. On the palate it is silky and full with elegant flavors of strawberry and crushed violets, finishing with well-balanced minerality. You will have no problem finishing the bottle once it's opened. This is crushable!

\$13⁹⁷

Tom's Wine of the Year

2018 Laurent Combier Crozes Hermitage



Mesmerizing deep dark ruby with dark pink shimmers along the rim of the wine. This Syrah emits a nose of black cherry jam, figs, black currants, and subtle notes of bacon fat, cured meat, and violets. The palate is rich with bright and juicy blackberries, blueberries, and cranberries. Black peppercorns, dried thyme, and subtle notes of river rocks breakthrough the berry medley. A lingering finish of dried blueberries and cacao finalize this wine.

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Kendall Jackson Chardonnay

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Boosters, Pediatric Vaccines to Be Available at County Center Amidst Surge

By Martin Wilbur

The rapid rise in COVID-19 cases and now hospitalizations and deaths since the Omicron variant arrived early last month has prompted Westchester officials to use the County Center as a testing and vaccination site.

County Executive George Latimer announced Monday that county residents 12 years old and up in need of a booster shot or who are seeking a pediatric vaccination for their child five to 11 years old can make an appointment online to come to the Central Avenue facility in White Plains.

"We have the space, we have it set up as a medical facility so offering testing, as well as vaccinations and boosters, makes sense and it is what the people of this county need right now," Latimer said.

In the closing days of 2021, the county opened a portion of the site for PCR testing, and that will continue. Only those people who are symptomatic or have a known exposure to COVID can make an appointment to be tested.

Sessions for boosters in January are Wednesdays from 1 to 4 p.m., Fridays from 1 to 6 p.m. and two Saturdays a month, with the first Saturday being Jan. 22, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Pediatric vaccinations will be from 3 to 6:30 p.m. on Thursdays, 2:30 to 6 p.m. on Fridays and at the same time that boosters are available on the designated

Saturdays.

About 250 doses are available each day. Appointments can be made at health.westchestergov.com.

Testing is available Mondays and Tuesdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to noon and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the remainder of January.

To make an appointment for a test, visit <https://app.squarespacescheduling.com/schedule.php?owner=24841628&calendarID=6348560>.

Latimer said the available tests and shots at the location is inadequate.

"Whether it's testing or vaccinations, the demand exceeds the supply," he said. "We knew that. It's nothing new. We had that (last) January and February. People drove to Potsdam, N.Y. to get the vaccination because they couldn't get the vaccination in due time."

Announcement of the continuation of testing and now boosters and vaccinations for children comes as cases, hospitalizations and fatalities in the county and throughout the state reach alarming levels.

On Monday, there were 35,816 active cases in Westchester, an increase of more than 9,000 over the past week and 20,000 over the last two weeks. A glimmer of hope, Latimer said, is that the rate of increase has been diminishing, but there have still been between 3,000 and 4,000 new positives

each day during the past week.

While the Omicron variant has been as transmissible as advertised and it has been milder for many people, particularly those who are fully vaccinated and boosted, the quickly rising COVID-19-related hospitalizations is cause for worry.

On Monday, there were 626 hospitalizations, up from 393 a week ago, eclipsing the high from last winter's surge, which saw it peak at about 560 on Jan. 18. At that time there were about 11,500 active cases.

As a result, as many patients as possible who don't have COVID-19 are being discharged from hospitals as a precaution.

"We're deeply concerned that is going to be a problem for us as we go forward," said Latimer, who noted there are about 2,700 hospital beds throughout the county.

Fatalities have also been sharply increasing. During the entire month of November, seven Westchester residents died from the virus. However, that number has been rising fast, from 15 for the week ending more than two weeks ago, to 31 the week after to 47 during the most recently completed week.

Latimer said the county is requesting a breakdown from the state regarding how



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

many of the COVID-19 hospitalizations are people who are unvaccinated, have one dose, two doses or have received their booster.

"It's not numbers for the sake of numbers," Latimer said, "it's numbers so we can look at and then drive policy. If you want to keep schools open you need to know these numbers."

White Plains Mayor Tom Roach, who like Latimer tested positive last month despite being fully vaccinated and boosted, urged people to get up to date with their shots to give them the best chance at fighting off the virus.

"I was vaccinated and boosted when I tested positive and my symptoms were basically nothing," Roach said. "I never had a fever, I never felt ill, I had a bit of the sniffles for a day and then it went away."

Food Assistance Available

Westchester County is prepared to offer food assistance for residents and families having difficulty getting access to food while under isolation from COVID-19.

The food assistance service is available to any Westchester County resident. To find out more information, call the Westchester County Department of Social Services at 914-995-5566. Assistance is available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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Galef to Retire From State Assembly at End of the Year

By Abby Luby

As Assemblywoman Sandy Galef looks back on what will be 30 years in the state Assembly, she will tell you just how much the political landscape has changed.

On Monday, Galef announced she was retiring from public office at the end of 2022.

For the last year, Galef, like most state representatives, have worked remotely because of the pandemic. That, in part, contributed to her decision against seeking re-election in November.

"I didn't go to Albany at all last year and got more bills debated on and passed via Zoom. It made me reflect on how it divided me from the Albany experience," said Galef, a longtime Ossining resident who serves the 95th Assembly District. "Going forward, I am 82, very healthy and have lots of energy."

Galef, who was first elected to the state legislature in 1992 after serving 13 years on the Westchester Board of Legislators, reflected on major changes during her tenure including the traditional political control forcing representatives to "follow the leader."

"When I first started in Albany it was so leadership driven," she said. "We were told what was decided and how we had to vote. That's not why I was there."

After winning 15 consecutive elections to the Assembly, there will likely be multiple Democratic competitors seeking the nomination this year. Hours after making her announcement, former Peekskill mayor

Andre Rainey announced his candidacy for the seat.

Trying to buck the machine, Galef recalled being involved with an attempted coup to oust then-Assembly speaker Sheldon Silver, a longtime powerful official in state politics who was later convicted for accepting millions of dollars in bribes.

"It really has changed with Speaker Carl Heastie," she said. "He reaches out to us all the time and we all feel very engaged."

Galef said early on it was rough learning the rules and regulations of how bills became laws. Among the innumerable bills she was happy to pass was one signed into law by then-Gov. George Pataki requiring the state to pay taxes on property it owned in Putnam County. Another piece of legislation she was proud of was an amendment to make the state constitutional a gender-neutral document. The amendment got high praise from Judith Kaye, the state's chief judge.

"The constitution was all about men and I had a little problem with that," Galef said.

The ongoing saga of Indian Point nuclear power plant was always on her desk.

"Indian Point has been an issue forever," Galef said, whether it was generator problems, equipment failures or September 11 terrorist planes flying right over the plant. Everyone was always anxious and the emotions went up and down for all these years."

Several local officials, all of whom served with her, had high praise for Galef on Monday. Westchester County Executive



Assemblywoman Sandy Galef announced Monday she will be retiring from the state legislature at the end of 2022 after 30 years in office.

George Latimer, whose time on the Board of Legislators and the Assembly overlapped with some of her service, said that Galef has redefined what it means for an elected official to be approachable. As a result, she has been able to represent her constituents well because they were able to reach out to her as were her legislative colleagues.

Latimer did not rule out trying to coax Galef out of retirement in some capacity.

"I think Sandy is going to be remembered by those of us who served with her very fondly," Latimer said. "She's still an active person in society, and frankly, I'm going to give her a call to see if there's a role for her to play in county government in some way shape or form because of her talent and her interests and her abilities."

Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) also served with her at the county level and the last 11 year in Albany. He called her "a great legislator."

"She's been an independent legislator who puts principle over party and did what was right for her community over the pressures of political expediency," Abinanti said.

A Republican colleague, Assemblyman Kevin Byrne (R-Mahopac), also praised Galef. The two co-sponsored multiple pieces of legislation giving sometimes needed bipartisan support.

He remembered that when he was first elected, Galef welcomed him.

"We belong to different political parties and have strong ideological differences at times, but that never prevented us from finding ways to work together constructively," Byrne said.

Galef also served as president of the New York State Association of Counties and was chair of the Welfare and Medicaid Steering Committee, among many other posts of distinction.

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Redistricting Plans Sent to Senate, Assembly But Problems Loom

By Abby Luby

The New York State Independent Redistricting Commission presented two redistricting plans to the state legislature last week but failed to reach consensus, which could delay the process of forming redrawn districts for this year's elections.

State legislators are expected to review the competing proposals starting this week after the 10 commissioners evenly appointed by Democrats and Republicans were unable to agree on a single proposal.

A joint statement issued last week by commission Chair David Imamura, along with commissioners Eugene Benger, Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina, Dr. John Flateau and Elaine Frazier, explained the lengthy process that took place during the second half of 2021, which included 24 public hearings in person and online, testimony from more than 630 speakers and 2,100 written submissions, testimonies and maps.

"After the final public hearing, we deliberated for dozens of hours to synthesize these comments and create new maps accounting for the public's input," Imamura wrote. "But there remained significant differences on important points. Namely, we saw our colleagues' indifference to public input at every step of the process, and especially in our final round of bipartisan negotiations. In our instances of disagreement, we relied on public input to guide our decision-making,



Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (92nd Assembly District) could be one of the lawmakers whose district is significantly impacted depending on what happens in the weeks ahead with redistricting.

while it is clear our colleagues did not."

State legislature and congressional districts in the U.S. are required to have their boundaries redrawn every 10 years based on the latest U.S. Census. New districts will take effect for the races later

this year.

In 2014, New Yorkers voted to amend the state Constitution to create an independent redistricting commission. The current proposed plans are based on the 2020 census and are the commission's first redistricting attempt since the amendment's adoption.

The intent of the 2014 amendment was for the commission to be apolitical and to encourage bipartisan consensus in redrawing district boundaries without the political gerrymandering that has historically favored one party over another. The commission allowed Democratic and Republican leaders to each choose five commissioners, but it produced separate plans – one offered by the five Democratic commissioners and another by the five Republican-backed commissioners.

The commission's two maps ensure an embattled approval process, local state lawmakers said.

"I don't think it (the commission) worked the way I thought it would," Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) said. "I was in favor of an independent redistricting commission but it's just not working. They can't come to an agreement on anything."

The Democrats' proposed plan for Galef's district – she currently represents the 95th Assembly District – would include Peekskill, Buchanan, Croton-on-Hudson, Ossining and Briarcliff Manor in Westchester and much of Philipstown in

Putnam County. The district's northern border would skirt but not include the villages of Cold Spring and Nelsonville.

The Republican commissioners' plan would cut out Buchanan, Ossining and Peekskill and include Yorktown, Putnam Valley, Philipstown, including the two villages, and Beacon and part of Wappingers Falls in Dutchess County.

Assemblyman Tom Abinanti's (D-Pleasantville) 92nd Assembly District now includes the towns of Greenburgh and Mount Pleasant but saw a population decline from 139,836 to 133,686 over the past 10 years.

He is concerned about the decoupling of similar communities and school districts in his territory.

"My concern is the potential splitting up the two communities of Greenburgh and Mount Pleasant, which have been joined because they are communities of interest and they have been in the past and nothing has changed to warrant splitting them up," Abinanti said. "I'm also concerned about the possible splitting up of school districts."

State Sen. Elijah Reichlin-Melnick's (D-Nyack) 38th Senate District is predominantly in Rockland County but also takes in part of Ossining. Both proposed plans eliminate Ossining and leave Reichlin-Melnick's district in Rockland only.

Reichlin-Melnick generally approved of

Continued on next page

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Redistricting Plans Sent to Senate, Assembly But Problems Loom

Continued from previous page

the redistricting process and recognized it as giving New Yorkers a chance to advocate for better representation.

"I am confident in the process and believe that we will ultimately end up with fair maps that represent the many diverse constituencies of New York," he said. "I am also confident that the process will be complete in time for the 2022 election timeline."

The upcoming election timeline looms as a possible complication. Since the 2019 election reforms, prospective political candidates could start collecting signatures for nominating petitions by late February or early March and submit them to the Board of Elections by late March or early April to get on the ballot.

If the legislature fails to approve one of the redistricting plans by the needed two-thirds majority in both chambers, the commission then has until Feb. 28 to present new maps. If the new maps also fail to receive approval, it would be up to the legislature to draw up its own plans, preferably before the deadline to file petitions.

As of last week, no date has been set for the start of candidate petitioning or the deadline for submission to the Board of Elections.

In a worst-case scenario where district lines are decided close to the petition deadline, there would be little time for those who want to run for office to consider

the makeup of their district. Galef said the problem had been anticipated and a constitutional amendment was offered on last November's ballot addressing the redistricting process and the expected election timeline complications. But the amendment was defeated.

"The amendment would have given us flexibility to change the dates (of filing petitions) so we could have moved

up the timeline by two weeks," Galef said. "The amendment would also have accommodated changing the early voting in the June primary if needed."

Frank Cordino of the Westchester Board of Elections said the state calendar has the scheduled date for candidates to file petitions.

"The state has not issued their calendar yet but I expect to see it with the (petition)

date in about two weeks," Cordino said.

If the Senate and Assembly can't agree on proposed redistricting lines by next month, the issue will end up in the courts, which would probably appoint someone to redraw district lines. That is what happened 10 years ago.

State Sen. Peter Harkham (D-Lewisboro) said despite the headaches he appreciates the commissioner's work.

"They deserve our appreciation and gratitude, although it would have been preferable for its members to reach a consensus," said Harkham.

A New Vision in Engineering

New Visions Engineering students Geo deClermont and Josh Chung of Mahopac High School while at their internship at Zierick Manufacturing in Mount Kisco. New Visions Engineering is an academically rigorous program for college-bound high school seniors interested in engineering. The hands-on, project-driven course includes internship and job-shadowing opportunities. Students can earn up to 18 college credits for coursework in mathematics, physics, English, economics and social studies.



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Tips For Decluttering

It helps to have a system in place as you begin to declutter, clean and reorganize. Getting started is sometimes the hardest part. Here are a few helpful tips!

- Tip #1:** Create a space in your home where you can start putting items you no longer want or need.
- Tip #2:** Using 4 Boxes or Bins Method
- ♦ **Box 1: Trash** - Any items you want to get rid of that aren't worth donating or selling.
 - ♦ **Box 2: Give Away/Sell** - Items that are still in OK condition, but that your household could do without - like old books, toys.
 - ♦ **Box 3: Storage** - Things that you can't or don't want to get rid of, but don't need on a day-to-day basis (seasonal decorations).
 - ♦ **Box 4: Put Away** - Any items that need to be kept in your house, but relocated to their proper place.
- Tip #3:** Start with something easy. You will feel a sense of accomplishment and be motivated to do more.

Call today for our Decluttering Checklist and a list of Donation Organizations.

The Vision Team



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MASK WEARING IS OPTIONAL

Letters to the Editor

Byrne Has What it Takes to Lead Putnam County Into the Future

Putnam County voters, in particular Republican and Conservative voters, have a special opportunity to vote for a man whom I believe will offer us all sincere and honest leadership as our next Putnam County Executive.

The open seat may very well turn into a primary contest. If it does, I can think of no other candidate more qualified or prepared

to lead us than our current Assemblyman Kevin Byrne.

As you may know, I served with much gratitude to the voters, as your Town of Carmel supervisor and was then asked and served by appointment as deputy Putnam County Executive. There is no doubt in my mind, as I have met and discussed issues facing our communities with Assemblyman

Byrne, that he has the leadership skills to be an excellent county executive for all Putnam residents.

Kevin represents the values of all our people regardless of party affiliation as he has shown his legislative savvy as assemblyman, working across the aisle, when necessary, as a Republican legislator in Albany. He has been supportive of policies that help create jobs and bring new business to our area. His strong opposition to wasteful spending, high taxes and excessive regulation of small business (particularly harmful mandates), has only further revealed his skill, knowledge and leadership abilities.

Kevin has repeatedly demonstrated his willingness to champion reforms that would help our state and community, never afraid to speak up for the regular hard-working families of our communities.

On top of his legislative experience and professional background from the health care and nonprofit sectors, Kevin also holds a master's degree in public

administration, which will aid him in easily transitioning into the position of Putnam County Executive.

Kevin supports local law enforcement and was a leader in exposing corruption in Albany. He spoke up against Andrew Cuomo and his wrongdoings when few others, including Republicans, dared.

I am uniquely aware of the various tasks required of a county executive. I know Kevin has what it takes to lead our county to a brighter future as our next Putnam County Executive. I ask you to join me, whether it is in a primary or general election, in supporting Kevin. He has my full support and endorsement.

Frank J. Del Campo
Former Putnam Deputy County Executive, Carmel Town Supervisor and Carmel Town Councilman Mahopac

My School Can Do More to Help in the Fight Against COVID-19

I am currently in the seventh grade at Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School in Croton-on-Hudson. With the current number of cases that have been popping up in the school, I would like to bring to your attention the current COVID protocols.

First, I will start with the proper masking guidelines. I have noticed that most of the people in my school have been wearing cloth masks, which at first we thought were effective but with more study we have found that they are not very effective. Under the right conditions, COVID can pass right through them, especially Omicron. The New York State Health Department and the CDC both recommend that to stay safe you should wear a N95 or KN95 mask.

In addition, there is the problem with masking outdoors. Contrary to popular thinking, even though you are outside you can still get COVID if you are not properly distanced. The CDC recommends that you stay six feet away from someone when outside if you are not masked.

Many students look up to their teachers, and this is why it is important for them to follow the correct COVID protocols, especially to wear masks indoors. I see many teachers taking off their masks while teaching, and then putting them on later once they already potentially spread COVID. Data from the state Health

Department says that there are a total of eight teachers that tested positive.

Something else that can help with COVID is proper ventilation. This means opening the windows, using outside space as much as possible and staying properly distanced. The school is being filtered with MERV 13 filters listed in the 2021 school reopening plan.

One last thing. One day I stayed home because I had COVID symptoms. To keep up with my work I tried to join one of the virtual meetings, only to be asked to not come back the next day because I was not yet "COVID approved." Upon further investigation I found that this policy is not required by the state. I wanted to ask why students that have potential COVID symptoms are not allowed to join the virtual meetings. It would also be nice if the school offered a 100 percent virtual option during the dangerous Omicron wave.

It seems counterintuitive to the profile of a Croton graduate to prevent people from catching up on work while they are not sure if they are sick with COVID.

I hope you take what I say into consideration.

Callum Franco
Croton-on-Hudson

Schmitt Support on PTSD Issues Proves He Has Veterans' Backs

Assemblyman Colin Schmitt has once again proven that he is one of veterans' biggest advocates. A few weeks back Assemblyman Schmitt hosted a roundtable to bring light to the issue of veteran and first responder PTSD-related issues. As an active-duty member of the Army National Guard, Assemblyman Schmitt understands that these issues run deep, however often

go unnoticed.

I am grateful for his ongoing support of his battle buddies and overall support of our brave first responders and military.

Jack Duncan
Master Sergeant (Retired) Southeast

Calendar Submissions

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

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Guest Column

Daycare Centers a Critical Resource That Have Been Forgotten During the Pandemic

By Marie Boster

Let's face it. The first day back to school after the holiday break last week was stressful for most families.

Westchester County has seen more daily cases of COVID-19 than at any other time in the pandemic, with a positive rate over 20 percent for the last week. In the last three days of December the New York State Department of Health reported

more than 11,000 new active cases in our county, and that doesn't count those who tested positive at home with a rapid test and decided to self-isolate.

In the last few weeks, it seems like this virus is everywhere. So it's understandable to be a little apprehensive and unsure about going back to routines like work, indoor activities and school.

However, if your child is five years or older, they have a lot going for them.

First, they are eligible for, and hopefully have had, a vaccine, and perhaps are even boosted.

Second, while masking is tiresome and less effective with the Omicron variant, your child has some practice and can probably manage that responsibility.

Your final reassurance is that thanks to Gov. Hochul and BOCES, local schools have been infused with a stash of rapid tests, which helps knock out uncertainty and supports community monitoring. We know that is critical in flattening the curve.

If your child is under five and headed to one of the 323 daycare centers in Westchester, your reality is very different. Why? Because there currently is no vaccine for children under five.

Last month, Pfizer and BioNTech announced that they had to go back to their clinical trial for children six months through four years old with different dosing, so a vaccination is further away than originally hoped. Additionally, your child may not be able to wear a mask. The CDC does not recommend masks for children under two. Anyone with a young child knows that the self-awareness and responsibility to keep a mask on correctly is going to be difficult anyway.

Finally, your daycare center has most likely not received a single rapid test to monitor anyone.

We have learned a lot in the past two years about the strengths and weaknesses of our public health system. We have learned a lot about virus transmission and prevention. But it seems we still haven't learned how to prioritize our limited resources for some of the most vulnerable

members of our communities – young children and the devoted people who serve them.

Innovative daycare center directors, like the one at the center my infant daughter attends, had to beg her local mayor for tests and was able to get five rapid tests. Five. That center serves 140 children in northern Westchester. Several teachers are out because they tested positive. They serve an economically diverse population and many of their children receive county subsidies and scholarships to attend.

Parents need this service. As the center's director said, "I feel like I'm dealing on the black market to get tests. The employers of the parents don't care if daycare is closed. They expect their employees to show up. We need to be able to test the staff and support the families. Our goal is to stay open so parents can continue to work."

Supporting families during a pandemic is a noble and important goal. If this isn't the time to prioritize support and resources for daycare centers, then when?

I would feel more hopeful about this pandemic coming to an end if local and statewide officials show that they have learned that the daycare infrastructure is critical to our pandemic recovery and needs help too. Daycare is the little economic engine that keeps going because of a devoted, largely underpaid, under-resourced, mostly female workforce who thankfully takes loving care of kids. Let's show them the care they show to our children every single day.

Marie Boster is a parent of two children who attend daycare in northern Westchester.

Letters to the Editor

Descriptions of January 6 Capitol Rioters Are Exaggerated

In the one-year anniversary of the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol Building in Washington D.C., there's a lot of talk, from certain segments, about an "insurrection" and "an attempted coup" and those participants being labeled as "insurgents" and "domestic terrorists." The vice president even made a moral equivalency to the attack on Pearl Harbor and 9/11. Really? Seriously? Over-the-top hyperbole? You think?

Maybe a little perspective is needed here. Between 2,000 and 3,000 people were each killed in the Pearl Harbor and 9/11 attacks. An attempt to overthrow the government would involve guns and other firearms, which none of the protesters and rioters had. It would also involve cooperation with elements of the military and law enforcement; of which there is no evidence of.

During the summer of 2020, Black Lives Matter and Antifa led and inspired rioting and looting that took place in many cities across the nation killing more than 30 people and causing billions of dollars in damage. Were any of these perpetrators convicted and given prison sentences like the ones who participated in the Jan. 6 riot?

The person known as "Chewbacca Man," Jacob Chansley, was sentenced to 41 months in jail for his role in this incident. Were any members of BLM and Antifa given similar jail sentences for the rioting and destruction they instigated in cities across the nation?

And those who stormed the Department of the Interior Building back in October, were they labeled as domestic terrorists and insurgents and being held in solitary confinement as many of the Jan. 6 participants were or still are?

It's worth noting that autocratic and authoritarian regimes like China, Russia, Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua are very loose in the labeling of peaceful protesters as domestic terrorists, insurgents and coup plotters. Is this where our nation is heading?

Finally, it seems that the definition of the term insurrection nowadays to those currently in power is merely a state of mind and mischievous afterthought rather than a violent, disorderly, messy or disruptive acts to overturn the established order of things.

Bruce Kelly
Mahopac



Salvation Army Taking Donations to Help Bronx Fire Victims

In the wake of Sunday's tragic apartment building fire in the Bronx that cost the lives of 17 people, including eight children, The Salvation Army New York Division has set up the Bronx Fire Relief Fund and is encouraging the community to give to support those families impacted by the fire. The effort is for a significant money and supply-raising effort.

To contribute, anyone can text the word "bronxfire" (one word) to 41444 for a link to make a donation.

The Salvation Army New York Division is working closely with nonprofit and government agencies to identify immediate and long-term needs to continue supporting the families affected.

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Police Blotter

County Police/Mount Kisco

Jan. 5: Police responded to Gregory Avenue at 9:14 p.m. on a report of a disturbance involving two men who were arguing and pushing and shoving each other on the street. Officers separated the parties and sent them on their way.

Jan. 6: Report of flooding in a residence on Carpenter Avenue at 5:46 p.m. The resident told officers his hot water heater had burst and he was unable to locate the building superintendent. Officers located emergency contact information for the super and had him return to address the issue.

Jan. 7: Police responded to a Barker Street apartment at 6:07 a.m. to assist a man who was bleeding heavily after a fall. The man, who suffered a deep laceration to his arm, told officers he passed out and fell in his kitchen. Westchester EMS and the Katonah-Bedford Hills Volunteer Ambulance Corps responded. The man was transported to Northern Westchester Hospital.

Jan. 7: A village resident reported at 10:34 a.m. that there was more than \$20,000 in unauthorized withdrawals from her bank account in recent months. The victim is addressing the matter with her bank, which directed her to file a police report about the fraud. The victim identified a possible suspect who accessed her account. An investigation is continuing.

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

Dec. 27: The manager of ShopRite stopped a woman outside trying to steal

more than \$300 worth of groceries at 5:14 p.m. The manager recovered the groceries and the woman, described as a Black female wearing a green coat, got into a white Cadillac and left.

Dec. 28: A Half Moon Bay Drive resident arrived at headquarters at 3:54 p.m. reporting her estranged husband stole about \$150,000 from her checking account by writing checks and forging her signature. Patrols conducted a preliminary investigation. Supporting documentation was completed and a report was filed. The investigation continuing.

Dec. 29: A Bari Manor Apartment complex resident reported at 6:15 a.m. that her 16-year-old daughter ran away from home during the night. Her location is coming up in Highland Falls, N.Y. on the Find My iPhone app and her mother said her daughter has a boyfriend who lives in Highland Falls. The mother contacted Highland Falls police to conduct a welfare check and stated that the Highland Falls Police Department located her daughter at that location and she is going to pick her up now. The mother said her daughter was a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) in the past and she is going to start the process again.

Jan. 1: An Old Post Road South resident reported at 1:04 p.m. that while placing her son inside the car at the above location she heard yelling. She said that a large white male wearing a black jacket was yelling at the owner of a local deli and making threats to kill him. Patrol was dispatched and spoke with the deli owner who stated

that he had a heated argument with the guy who sharpens knives for his store. The owner stated that he will follow up with the company to not have the individual return to his store.

Jan. 1: A 911 caller reported at 9:56 p.m. that her husband assaulted her and her face is covered in blood. Her husband also called 911 reporting that his wife assaulted him. Patrol units requested an ambulance to evaluate the wife who sustained injuries to her face. EMS also evaluated the husband. Both parties refused further medical attention. Patrols stated the defendant punched his wife in the nose during a verbal argument while traveling in their car on northbound Route 9. The 40-year-old husband, of Croton-on-Hudson, was arrested. The defendant was arraigned in Village Court and a temporary order of protection was issued against the defendant.

Kent Police Department

Jan. 1: Officers initiated a traffic stop at 1:55 a.m. on a white Subaru Impreza traveling on southbound Route 52 for not having rear license plate lamps. The vehicle was operated by Rodolfo Perez, 28, of Mount Kisco. Perez was arrested for second-degree aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and for operating the motor vehicle without an interlock device as a result of prior DWI offenses. Perez was processed at headquarters and is due back in town justice court at a later date.

Jan. 4: Officers responded to Amdur Place for a boyfriend-girlfriend dispute. Upon arrival, officers observed Branden Green, 21, of Carmel, holding a sword in a threatening manner. After several commands by Kent officers and sheriff's deputies, Green dropped the sword and was taken into custody without further incident. Officers located the girlfriend, Alexa Byrnes, 21, of Carmel at a neighbor's house. Byrnes stated that Green began breaking items around the home and their

verbal argument escalated, resulting in him throwing her into a wall, breaking her phone so she couldn't call for help and grabbing her by the throat. Green was arrested and charged with second-degree menacing, third- and fourth-degree criminal mischief, third-degree assault and criminal obstruction of breathing. Green was processed at police headquarters and arraigned by Judge Douchkoff with a court appearance for a later date.

Pleasantville Police Department

Jan. 2: Report of criminal mischief at the Soldiers and Sailors field parking lot. Multiple cars that were in the lot were egged. The matter is under investigation.

Jan. 3: Report of a malfunctioning traffic light at Bedford Road and Wheeler Avenue, creating a hazardous condition. The light was repaired.

Jan. 5: A person reported at headquarters that an unknown person fraudulently used the complainant's debit card to make more than \$5,000 in purchases through Amazon. The matter is under investigation.

Yorktown Police Department

Jan. 3: Edwin Colon, 61, of Yorktown, was charged at 9:42 p.m. with aggravated driving while intoxicated following a report of an erratic operator who had driven through a fence at the BJ's gas station on Route 202 and fled the scene. An officer observed the suspect's vehicle on Route 132 near Salem Road where it crashed off the roadway and into an embankment.

Jan. 5: Piotr Czajkowski, 40, of Yorktown, was charged at 2:04 p.m. with false personation and aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle following an accident on Route 202. A check based on information provided by the defendant showed he was unlicensed and that his driving privilege was suspended.

Green Chimneys School Welcomes New Principal

Green Chimneys School in Brewster started the new year with new school leadership, welcoming Tara Cox as principal.

Cox comes to Green Chimneys following her tenure as assistant principal at the Bronx East College Academy, which serves more than 500 students in grades 6-12. Her responsibilities included safety, transportation, special education compliance, leadership within the inquiry cycle and supervision of middle school and high school teachers.

Her 16-year career as an educator includes elementary, middle school and high school experience within the New York City Department of Education. She has worked as a special education and regular education teacher for grades K-5, and has taught middle school science. She has also served as a teacher mentor, an adjunct professor at New York University, and as instructional coach at the Brooklyn Green School.

"My time in the New York City Department of Education has given me the honor and privilege of supporting hundreds of diverse learners each day," Cox said. "I share in Green Chimneys' commitment to caring for the whole child, providing a therapeutic learning environment to support each student's success, both during the time that they are here and as they

become ready for their next challenge."

An animal and nature lover, Cox is also looking forward to working across departments to maintain the integration of nature-based programming and related therapeutic activities for all students. A nature-based approach is a key component in educational and clinical services for Green Chimneys students, who face a range of social, emotional and behavioral challenges.

"Principal Cox is an outstanding addition to the Green Chimneys family," said Executive Director Ed Placke. "She brings a wealth of expertise, experience and passion to Green Chimneys School and I look forward to watching both students and staff flourish under her leadership."

Cox holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education and special education from Temple University; a master's in educational leadership from NYU and a master's in disability studies from City University of New York.

Green Chimneys is a nonprofit organization helping young people to maximize their full potential by providing residential, educational, clinical and recreational services in a safe and supportive environment that nurtures connections with their families, the community, animals and nature.

Gardner Returns to Fill Chappaqua Board of Ed Vacancy

A familiar face will return to the Chappaqua Board of Education this week.

The board is expected to appoint former board member and president Alyson Gardner at Wednesday evening's meeting to fill the vacancy created by the departure of Victoria Tipp. Tipp resigned from the board effective Dec. 31 following her victory for a New Castle Town Board seat.

Gardner's interim appointment will extend from Jan. 12 until the next regular school board election on May 17.

Gardner previously served from 2009 through 2018, and was board president for the 2011-12 and 2016-17 school years.

Gardner, a Chappaqua native, is a district alumnus. Her two oldest children also graduated from the district. Her youngest daughter is currently a junior at Horace Greeley High School.

"I am honored to be appointed to the Board of Education and to have the privilege

of serving my community again," Gardner said in a statement. "I look forward to reconnecting with past colleagues and to meeting new ones. I want to thank Vicky for her tireless work on behalf of our district and wish her well in her new role."

Board of Education President Hilary Grasso expressed gratitude to Gardner to serve in the interim role.

"I want to thank Alyson for her willingness to return to the board to help us through the next four months," Grasso said. "Alyson brings not only her familiarity with (board) issues and the budget process, but also deep financial knowledge. Although I have not personally had the opportunity to work with Alyson, every current board member who previously served with her has voiced their unequivocal support for her return to the Board to fill Vicky's seat. I very much look forward to working with her."

Hochul Lays Out Plan for COVID Recovery in Her First State of the State

By Martin Wilbur

Gov. Kathy Hochul pledged last week to help New York recover from COVID-19 with policy priorities that restores the ranks of health care workers and educators, provides middle-class tax relief and makes green initiatives a priority.

In her first State of the State address last week from a nearly empty Assembly chamber, Hochul said that despite so many residents worried about the future, taking bold action today will put New York on a road to recovery when the pandemic abates.

"This is not a moment of despair, but a moment of great possibility because while we're in the midst of an all-consuming crisis, we also remember that if we make the right choices right now it will end," Hochul said.

One of her more notable proposals is to pour \$10 billion toward increasing the health care workforce by 20 percent. About \$4 billion of that money would be used to increase workers' salaries and bonuses while also expanding health care training and education, recruiting workers in underserved areas and strengthening home care.

Hochul proposed a \$3,000 bonus for health and direct care workers.

"A once-in-a-lifetime pandemic requires a once-in-a-lifetime response and that's why I'm setting an ambitious goal of growing our health care workforce by 20 percent over the next five years, and we'll make the biggest investment in health care in the state's history," Hochul said.

The governor also said she would commit to more funding for K-12 education, which includes providing incentives to attract teachers and school workers, providing learning and mental health grants, creating a state teacher residency program and funding for training of teacher support workers to earn their certifications.

As part of the emphasis on education, Hochul hopes to extend access to child care to another 100,000 families statewide by increasing the threshold to be eligible for subsidies from 200 to 225 percent of poverty level. Another \$75 million would be earmarked to attract more child care workers, she said.

Hochul said she would speed up the phase-in of a \$1.2 billion middle-class tax cut by two years from its original 2025 start. That would help an estimated six million New Yorkers. Additionally, she's advocating a \$1 billion property tax rebate program for another two million families and \$100 million for close to 200,000 small businesses.

"Families, small business owners, they all need our help and they need it now and they're going to get it," Hochul said.

By making it a goal to build another two million "climate-friendly" homes by the end of the decade and investing \$500 million for offshore wind energy to create good-paying jobs, it would start to help address the climate crisis, the governor said.

Hochul also hailed the \$4 billion green referendum that will be on the ballot in November as a major step toward achieving



Gov. Kathy Hochul delivered her first State of the State address last Wednesday with her vision to increase funding for health care and education to recover from pandemic-related issues.

those and other goals.

Hochul took a couple of thinly-veiled swipes at her predecessor, Andrew Cuomo, by saying the days of the governor disrespecting the legislature and "the days of the governor of New York and the mayor of New York City wasting time on petty rivalries are over."

Toward that end, she proposed formation of a new independent ethics agency to replace the Joint Commission on Public Ethics, she said. The governor also supports a two-term limit for governor, state comptroller and state attorney general.

"This pandemic did not create all the problems we are facing today," Hochul said. "It simply forced us to hold up a mirror and

see the cracks in our society that has been so easy to ignore before. This crisis created an opportunity to redefine ourselves."

Reaction was mostly positive, certainly from the Democratic side or from those who generally lean that way, although it drew sharp criticism from leading Republican candidate for governor Rep. Lee Zeldin and one of Hochul's most serious Democratic rival Thomas Suozzi.

State Sen. Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers) called Hochul's address "optimistic yet realistic," something needed at this moment.

"I especially appreciate her willingness to listen to and work with members of the legislature and to find cooperative solutions to the problems our constituents face," Mayer said. "As we move ahead, I look forward to examining the details of each of the proposals outlined as well as their budget implications."

Another Democrat, Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville), was mostly positive as well, although he said he is interested in seeing Hochul's budget proposal next week that would give clues on funding the proposals.

Assemblyman Kevin Byrne (R-Mahopac) said he was encouraged by the acceleration of middle-class tax relief, support for term limits for statewide offices and to prohibit outside income on those officeholders.

But she gave short shrift to public safety policies, particularly the problematic effects of bail reform, he said.

"I thought it felt a little flat," Byrne said of the address.



Facing Forgetfulness

Understanding What Types of Forgetfulness Are Normal

Presented by Donna B. Fedus, MA, gerontologist and founder of Borrow My Glasses, LLC. Donna discovered the field of aging at age 23, and she rearranged her life to be part of it, earning her master's degree in social gerontology in 1991 from the University of Pennsylvania. Now, nearly 30 years later, Donna is still inspired to create innovative programs, services and training to benefit older adults and the dedicated family caregivers, professionals and organizations that support them.



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Mt. Kisco to Transition to a Weekly Spring-to-Fall Farmers Market

By Martin Wilbur

For supporters of local farmers markets, there's a lot to look forward to every spring. This year that will include a weekly market in Mount Kisco.

After a successful monthly trial run during the second half of last year, the Mount Kisco Farmers Market will be held every Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. starting May 15 and running through the end of October, said Nicole Sturomski, a member of last year's Farmers Market Committee that launched the experiment in August. The market will once again be held at the South Moger municipal parking lot.

Since the one Sunday in October was the best of the four market dates last year, that's when it will end, she said.

"The weather was great, the turnout was great," Sturomski said. "I think October was really our high point. This year we plan to end on a high note and start on a high note."

This year the market will be co-managed by WMN Unite and D.I.G. Farm, a North Salem-based nonprofit outfit that practices regenerative agriculture by growing its own food and supporting local farms, said founder Allison Turcan.

As part of the farm's emphasis on getting the community involved, it will also run programs in collaboration with the Mount Kisco Community Garden and Mount Kisco Elementary School, she said. Part of D.I.G. Farm's mission is to involve



The Mount Kisco Farmers Market will be held every Sunday starting in mid-May and lasting through October with a variety of vendors and activities.

multiple stakeholders, such as Neighbors Link, to partner with and understand the relationship between locally grown food and sustainable practices.

"Our farm is putting together all the connections that we made and working on a really viable, sustainable global food system, which is why the farmers market is a great collaboration with Nikki," Turcan said.

Sturomski said all of the vendors will be from the region with most of them from the Hudson Valley. There are also several from Long Island, she said.

Some of the most popular ones will be Out of This World Pretzels, Cooperstown Cheese Company and Doc Pickle. While the trial run started slowly late last summer with only five vendors, by the end it had attracted 22, Sturomski said. One of the

market anchors will be Ladle of Love, which used to be located in the village and now is in Bronxville. However, it is an example of a vendor with a mission to have locally-sourced food.

Turcan said if the market could start at roughly the same size that it ended last year, then other vendors could be attracted to participate in a Sunday market.

"We're looking to really spread out the types of vendors that are going to be there," she said. "You have kind of everything you need but also arts and crafts as well as food trucks and music and face painting and fun things like that."

Making sure the market is fun is a key objective for organizers, Sturomski said.

"We're planning to have music, create a vibe so families can come and hang out for the day and enjoy the environment and the experience as well, not just come for some produce and go home," she said.

Mount Kisco Mayor Gina Picinich said she's excited for the weekly market because it ties multiple aspects of the community.

"There's so much opportunity to build on the program," Picinich said. "So I'm very much looking forward to when the new farmers market season starts."

For more information about the Mount Kisco Farmers Market, including what to do to be a vendor, look for the launch of its new website later this month at www.mkfarmersmarket.com.



The Most Common Sexually Transmitted Disease: HPV

What you need to know about keeping yourself and your children safe

Ask the Doctor

Dr. Adina Keller
Associate Chief,
Obstetrics and Gynecology
Northern Westchester Hospital

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Q: What is the human papilloma virus (HPV)?

A: HPV is a sexually transmitted virus. There are approximately 150 strains of the virus and nearly 40 affect the genital area. Most HPV infections are asymptomatic, which means that you may never know you were exposed. The majority of HPV strains do not cause any issues and will eventually go away on their own. Some strains, however, can cause genital warts, cervical cancer, anal cancer and other cancers, including head and neck cancers.

Q: Who is at risk?

A: Studies have shown that almost everyone gets exposed to HPV at some point in their lives. Some studies have shown that up to 90% of college-aged men women have been exposed to HPV. If you're dating someone and they say they've been "tested," please know that men cannot be tested for HPV. The virus hides from our immune systems, so it will not show up on a blood test. Women can be tested for HPV by getting a pap smear, but there's no test for men.

Q: What's the best defense against HPV?

A: Condoms are the best defense against HPV, but even with condom use, the virus can still be transmitted to others. There is no cure for HPV, only prevention.

That's why it's so important for both boys and girls

to get vaccinated. Vaccines against HPV have sharply reduced infections in men and women and will likely cause major drops in HPV-related cancers. Parents should discuss the optimal time for the vaccine with their pediatrician. Some may decide to delay the vaccine until the middle teen years.

Men and women, up to age 45, can get the HPV vaccine.

The CDC recommendation now includes men and women up to age 45 – especially if they are dating, widowed or have a new partner. If you're interested in a vaccine, speak with your doctor.

Q: Does my child really need this?

A: The answer is yes. You're providing your children with something that will prevent cancer down the road. So, if anybody has any concerns that they're not doing right by their child, think again. We have to assume that our children will become sexually active as they get older, therefore they need to be vaccinated. The HPV vaccine has already been shown to markedly reduce the incidence of HPV infections in young adults.

Learn more about Northern Westchester Hospital, visit nwh.northwell.edu

Ways to Create the Illusion of Bigger Space

Who says bigger is better? Well, all of us do, it seems, when it comes to living larger and wanting more space, especially if we happen to be downsizing but don't want to be fully aware of it.

There are countless ideas in decorating magazines, on HGTV and online about how to give the illusion of pushing back those walls and elevating the ceiling, but not all experts are in agreement about which techniques work best. It all depends on the mix of color, furniture arrangement, accessories, pattern and texture.

But color is where to start.

The rule of thumb for enlarging space has normally been to paint walls in lighter colors. For me, a prime example comes to mind from the play and movie "The Producers" when Max Bialystock and Leo Bloom hit pay dirt and hire their very efficient secretary Ulla, who in turn paints their entire office white, including all furnishings and even the safe. Suddenly the set expands visually from a dim and depressing space to a bright and sunny environment, seemingly twice its size.

Traditionally we have believed this works because we know that lighter colors reflect the light rather than absorbing it.

But some decorating consultants would argue that lighter colors bring walls and



By Bill Primavera

objects closer to us and actually make a room seem smaller, while darker shades, such as a gray, can give the illusion of receding into deep space. I believe that either technique can work depending on a variety of factors, from the height of the ceiling to the amount of natural light the room receives, to how the room is furnished and accessorized.

But there are endless ways to deceive the eye.

Some years ago, I had a friend, a fashion editor, who complained that her apartment had the smallest bedroom that one could imagine, with just enough room for a double bed, a dresser and a night table. But she came up with an ingenious idea inspired from a scene in a Barbra Streisand movie. She covered her entire bedroom in a small floral print. That included the wallpaper for both her walls and ceiling and the fabric, which was used for all her bedding, including the headboard.

When she invited friends over to see the finished result, it was amazing. Stepping into that room with its pale, repetitive pattern was like entering into an endless flower garden where the walls just seemed to disappear.

Here are some other tricks to make it seem like you're expanding space.

1. There's an old rule that small furniture



in a small space is the way to go, but a few larger pieces of furniture in a small room will often make it look bigger. A sleek sofa or chair will give as much sitting room as an overstuffed version but will take up much less usable space. For the dramatic effect of utilizing larger pieces without taking up floor space, take to the walls, either with a mirror or art.

2. Don't automatically place your furniture against walls, believing that it frees up floor space. Sometimes placing a piece at an angle or surrounded by open space, even if it's just two or three inches from the wall, will make a room look bigger.
3. Choose tables and desks of clear glass. When you can see through objects, it creates clear space, rather than blocking it.
4. When it comes time to select fabrics and rugs, choose smaller prints like my friend did or plain colors that will

visually expand a small room.

5. You can lengthen a room with drapes by hanging them from the ceiling rather than from the tops of the windows. Making them sheer lets in the light.
6. Another way to raise the ceiling is by painting it a darker shade than the four walls.
7. The oldest trick in the book is placing two mirrors on walls across from each other, which gives the illusion of a room that goes on and on forever.
8. It's always best to choose furniture with exposed legs, rather than a skirt, for expanding space.
9. And, finally, eliminate the need for some pieces by taking advantage of all the double-duty furniture now available to us through outlets like Home Goods, such as ottomans that double as storage units or as coffee tables.

Then again, if you live in a small house and want to ignore all the tips above, there is nothing wrong with living in a cozy space, with everything near at hand, feeling embraced by your environment. After all, when you think about it, who said everything has to stretch?

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

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ROOFING WINDOWS SIDING DOORS DECKS

Talented Chef Reinvents Himself During Trying Times

By Rick Pezzullo

It is often said when life gives you lemons, make lemonade. In Matthew Mancuso's case, he could easily whip up a lemon curd tart.

A 2008 Walter Panas High School graduate and a pastry major at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), Mancuso, 31, moved back to Philipstown from Brooklyn when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. While many people have struggled to find employment, Mancuso has many irons in the fire with his exquisite culinary skills in high demand.

"Food was always a big part of my life. I know what good food tastes like," the newly-engaged Mancuso said. "I'm one of those stories where I benefitted from the pandemic. I ended up losing a business but came out of it with two more."

Having been in and around kitchens since he was 15, Mancuso worked as a chef de partie in a new bakery after graduating from CIA in 2010. He then moved on to becoming a pastry chef at Michelin-rated eateries such as Le Bernardin, Corton, TKRG and Blue Hill at Stone Barns, sometimes putting in 80-hour weeks. In 2014, he started a food blog called The Art of Eating.

"I like cooking things that I'm not used to cooking," Mancuso said. "It's fun doing things that are out of your comfort zone."



WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSES... Despite challenges for the food industry since the start of the pandemic, local chef Matthew Mancuso has made the most of his opportunities.

Mancuso suffered severe injuries to both knees in 2017 and 2018 that put him on the shelf for 14 months. While recuperating, Mancuso started a social media management company and took an online course on food photography, which led to a paid internship as a food stylist with famous photographer Brent Herrig.

"He took a chance on me. It was very eye-opening to see another part of the industry I didn't know existed," Mancuso said.

After the pandemic ended that 14-month adventure, Mancuso started a YouTube channel on recipes. That led to viewers asking him to do cooking classes and

requests for him to be a private chef in homes. Mancuso cooked at barbecues and small weddings and for couples.

"It grew from word of mouth. It just kind of blew up," he said, noting he was booked every weekend for nearly a year.

Mancuso branched out to offer dinner boxes for special occasions and pop-up dinners.

"I wasn't planning on going back to cooking," he said.

Last year, Mancuso teamed up with Connor McGinn, one of the local entrepreneurs selling artisanal goods at a warehouse called Makers Central in Tarrytown, to offer high quality four-course meals on site once a month on what is called the Sunday Supper Club. Last summer, the dinners sold out in less than an hour.

"It's a really neat space," said Mancuso, who is hoping the club will resume in the spring.

In the meantime, Mancuso is doing what he loves.

"I like to call myself a gentleman, some would say a wise-ass and to others I'm well-seasoned, but I'll leave it to you to taste," he said. "It's been a busy road so far."

Mancuso can be found on Instagram @theartofeating.info. You may visit his website at www.theartofeating.info.

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Obituaries

Masako Esaki

Masako Esaki, a writer and cultural commentator who lived most of her adult life outside of her native Japan, passed away peacefully of natural causes on Jan. 3 surrounded by family. She was 91. She had been a longtime Chappaqua resident.

Masako Araki was born on May 16, 1930, on "Sadogashima," a small island located in the Sea of Japan, to parents Jisaku and Teru. Her family were wealthy landowners who generously provided for local townsfolk during the scarcities of World War II. Masako had five brothers and a sister who died before her, and a surviving younger brother, Goro, who lives outside of Tokyo. Despite her family's affluence, it would have been impossible to predict that Masako would lead an incredibly global life, eventually settling over 6,500 miles away in the U.S.

After completing her secondary school education on Sado Island, Masako moved to Tokyo to study at Japan Women's University (Nihon Joshi Daigaku). Upon graduation, she was hired by Akio Morita, a co-founder of what was then known as Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo, the predecessor to the Sony Corporation. According to Masako's recollection, Mr. Morita was drawn to her outgoing and positive personality as well as her "ability to run quickly." Because the company had such limited resources, she ingeniously initiated their pocket transistor radio export business by selling them to American commercial pilots staying at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. As the radios grew in popularity, she found the pilots increasing their orders with every subsequent visit to Japan.

During her employment with Sony, Masako met fellow employee Dr. Reona (Leo) Esaki, a promising young physicist, and they eventually married. Shortly after their wedding, Reona accepted a position at the IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center in Yorktown Heights, and the couple emigrated to the United States in 1959. They had three children, Nina, Anna and Eugene, as well as Kiska, a fiercely independent and clever Siberian Husky.

It was in their Chappaqua home that Masako wrote a number of books about the life of a Japanese family in America, as well



Masako Esaki

as numerous magazine and newspaper articles. Her deadlines were sometimes so tight that she would bring her manuscripts to JFK Airport and ask Tokyo-bound passengers to hand-carry documents for her publishers waiting at Narita Airport for pick-up.

Masako was highly curious and pursued academic study throughout her life, particularly in the fields of architecture and art history, which fueled her passion for global travel. She loved classical music, not only as an audience member, attending numerous performances at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, but as a performer, having studied opera singing for many years, inspired by her idol Luciano Pavarotti. Masako also started studying ballet in her 70s, actually discovering that she could do a split at the age of 75 (much to the concern of her children!) and contemplated going en pointe.

Masako also had a great love of cooking and hosted countless parties at her house, dazzling guests with cuisine from a multitude of countries. Because she was a wonderful conversationalist and a respectful, compassionate listener, Masako

had friends of different ages, backgrounds and citizenships.

In 1973, Reona was awarded a Nobel Prize in physics, which created a great opportunity for the family to travel throughout Europe. The Nobel festivities were held in Stockholm and Masako was seated next to King Carl XVI Gustaf, who was presiding over his first ceremonies following his ascension to the throne earlier that year.

Although the marriage with Reona did not last, Masako continued to live in Chappaqua for more than 60 years, taking great pride in her long-term residency. She wanted her children and grandchildren to feel like they had roots in Chappaqua, a home to return to and a delicious meal to enjoy.

An avid MTA supporter, Masako commuted to Grand Central Terminal for 10 years when she returned to work after

Peter Skrobela

Peter Andrew Skrobela passed away at his home on Jan. 5 with family members by his side. He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Frances, and his three children, Jennifer, David and John. He is also survived by four grandchildren, Louisa, Gianna, Leo and Luther, and two daughters-in-law, Jennifer and Elizabeth.

Born on Feb. 12, 1941, in Brooklyn, Peter had a very full life that included a lot of quality time spent with family and a large circle of close friends. His early days were spent in the neighborhoods of Greenpoint and Maspeth in New York City, where he grew up with his father, John, mother, Martha, and brother, Paul. Growing up in Maspeth was full of fond memories and childhood friends; Peter's connection to the neighborhood remained strong throughout the course of his life. Peter attended New York City public schools, was a graduate of Grover Cleveland High School and studied at CCNY.

Peter began his professional career at New York Life Insurance in 1959. It was there that he forged new friendships that endured for over 60 years. The majority of his career was spent working for companies in the insurance and legal services industries, where he held several positions that spanned sales, leadership and research. He worked for companies small and large, including the international law firm Baker Botts LLP. Peter most recently worked at Abelman Frayne & Schwab in midtown Manhattan.

Peter spent his early adult years living in New York City, enjoying life with his friends and serving as a member of the National Guard. He first met Frances at Shea Stadium in 1964 (both big Mets fans) and they married in Yorktown in April 1968. After living a few years in Manhattan, they moved to Pleasantville in the early '70s. Peter immersed himself in the community, volunteering for the village and various organizations related to his children's sports and extracurricular activities. His years as a coach for AYSO soccer teams remain a highlight for his children, where he famously carried a clipboard with game strategies and team rosters.

Cape Cod was a vacation destination for

a long absence, this time as a manager at Sakura Bank. An extra perk to living in Chappaqua, too, was running into fellow resident President Bill Clinton in town, the prospect of which would prompt the normally barefaced Masako to return home for a quick application of lipstick.

While Masako's joyful approach to life and care for others will be greatly missed, she remains an inspiration to many. She is survived by her children Nina (Dr. Sander Rabin), Anna (Craig Smith) and Eugene (Suzy Hilton-Esaki) and three grandchildren, Esaki Sky Smith, True Araki Smith and Siena Hilton Esaki.

If you'd like to make a donation in Masako's name, please donate to SUNY Purchase, the Metropolitan Opera or another charity of your choosing. A memorial will be held in her honor in May.



Peter Skrobela

Peter and family throughout the 1980s and '90's, and it was in 1999 that they purchased a home in Eastham. Peter and Frances gradually spent more time in the Eastham house and eventually relocated to the Cape. His love of the Cape was strong, in many ways it represented the best elements of food, nature and culture in a single location.

One of Peter's true gifts was his ability to connect and build strong relationships with so many different types of people in his life. He possessed a natural ability to engage in conversations, was an amazing listener and an avid storyteller. He was always willing to help someone in need and cared deeply about the people in his life, whether or not he'd just recently met them or had known them for 75-plus years.

A celebration of Peter's life will be held later in the spring, with details to be announced.

In place of flowers, donations in Peter's honor can be made to either the Eastham Historical Society (<https://www.easthamhistoricalsociety.org/>) or Friends of the Cape Cod National Seashore (<https://www.fccns.org/>).

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The Game and I

How chess enriches life



By Adam Stone

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As he scurried down the stairs, the little Long Island boy couldn't possibly forecast the significance of the ancient game his father was about to deliver into his life with an introductory lesson.

Donning his blue and white pajamas on a lazy weekend morning, too young to care

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about his brown mop bed head, he reaches for the humble white pawn, pushing it two squares forward after some basic instruction. He listens and learns as dad explains how to maneuver each piece.

On the sunny school-less morning, driveway basketball or any outdoor neighborhood activity screamed for him like an insistent toddler. But the usual routine would have to wait. A relationship with chess — one that would blossom into an obsession nearly four decades later — was about to be born.

I was seven years old that morning, digesting the moves of the game, but it wasn't until last year, about eight months deep into the pandemic, that I became entirely transfixed by this genuinely ingenious human invention.

"The game of chess is not merely an idle amusement," Ben Franklin once observed. "Several very valuable qualities of the mind, useful in the course of human life, are to be acquired or strengthened by it. Life is a kind of chess, in which we have often points to gain, and competitors or adversaries to contend with."

Despite chess being the game of choice of our most lovable founding father, it's a hobby that transcends social class and race, and even language in a way that few



Adam at 7, contemplating his next move.

other activities can claim. And, more to the point, I certainly haven't been alone in Westchester or the wider world with my post-pandemic obsession with Ben's grand game.

While chess and its precursor has been around for about 1,500 years, likely invented in India, it was COVID and, well, Netflix, that combined to supercharge chess's surging popularity.

The ratings bonanza that was Netflix's The Queen's Gambit, together with the virus's quarantine-era demand for new hobbies, led to chessboard sales jumping 87 percent in the United States alone, according to Nov. of 2020 research reported by the NPD Group, a marketing research firm.

But to Franklin's beautifully articulated point, chess provides us with much more than a game to pass the time. It's an endeavor that links generations and requires us to use critical thinking skills that are pivotal to achieving success in our personal and professional lives.

Growing up in Hungary, my father remembers not just playing with his father but also visiting a friendly downstairs neighbor who taught him some especially important tricks of the chess trade. As I relay tips to my two daughters today, I think about the straight line that can be drawn from our Mt. Kisco dining room table to the card table of an elderly gentleman ...

To read the rest of this article, and others like it, visit examiner-plus.com and click subscribe. We hope you've enjoyed this week's excerpt from Examiner+. We love honest feedback. Tell us what you think: examinerplus@theexaminernews.com

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Obituaries

Robert Carey

Robert (Bob) L. Carey, of Chappaqua and formerly of Holbrook, Mass., passed away unexpectedly on Dec. 20 surrounded by his loving family at the age of 84.

Born in Dorchester, Mass., for many years he had owned and operated Mr. Sub with locations in Brockton and Quincy, Mass. He had a passion for music and singing and was extremely talented; however, he was also a devout family man and spending time with his family brought him the most joy.

As a devoted husband, father, grandfather, uncle and friend, Bob will be greatly missed by all who were blessed to have known him. Bob was the beloved husband of the late Vittoria Carey; dearly loved father of Kimberly Carey and her husband, Milan Tyler, of Chappaqua; cherished "Papa" to J. Chase Tyler III and Mia Carey Tyler, both of New York; dear uncle of Gene Persampieri of California, Diane Grosman of Florida and Lorrie Borden of Charlestown, Mass., who he loved as his own; son of the late Ruth Francione; and brother-in-law of Dominic Persampieri Jr. of Brockton. He is also survived by many nieces, nephews and friends, especially his karaoke compadres who brought much joy to his later years.

A memorial service to celebrate his life will be held at a later date.

Marshall Asche

Marshall Asche of New Rochelle passed away on Dec. 9 at Calvary Hospice Care in the Bronx. He was 79.

Marshall was born Dec. 16, 1941, in Mount Vernon to Leon Asche and Jeanette (Goldberg) Asche. He married Carol Jacobs on Aug. 4, 1968, in New Rochelle.

He is survived by his wife, his son, David, and his daughter, Jo, and her husband, Ron.

He attended A.B. Davis High School in Mount Vernon and graduated with honors in 1959. He continued his education at Penn State where he graduated in 1963 with a bachelor's in business administration.

Marshall spent many years in the financial industry, working at BDO where he was named a senior partner before retiring in 2002. He then worked as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for St. Christopher's, a residential home and school for troubled teens. Due to Marshall's incredible fiscal acumen, he helped save St. Christopher's from closing in 2005 and was later named as the CFO of the Year (2015) by the Westchester Business Council.

The Westchester Business Council stated that Asche was "recognized as a highly accomplished CFO due to his outstanding

service and leadership at St. Christopher's and for making a significant difference while creating a meaningful legacy as their CFO."

Prior to joining St. Christopher's, Marshall was a partner in an international CPA firm.

Marshall had been an active member of Leewood Golf Club for many years where he enjoyed playing golf as well as the camaraderie of his fellow members. He was an avid sports enthusiast and enjoyed playing cards with his friends.

Due to emergent COVID-19 restrictions and protocols, funeral arrangements were private.

New 'Appetizing Arts' Promotion a Win-Win-Win for Yorktown

A unique new promotion is being launched by the Yorktown Small Business Association (YSBA) that simultaneously supports the Town of Yorktown's restaurants, artists and community service organizations, all of whom continue to be severely challenged financially by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Titled "Appetizing Arts," the three-way economic revitalization effort is designed to help restaurants attract more customers, help artists sell their original creations and help nonprofit civic groups raise needed funds.

"It's a win-win-win for all concerned," said YSBA's Bob Giordano.

He said that the Appetizing Arts effort has been joined by the Yorktown Arts + Culture Committee (YACC), which enthusiastically endorses it.

Rounding out the Arts + Culture Committee is Co-Chair August Abatecola of Yorktown Stage, Gennifer Birnbach, Allyson Montana and Karen Trendell.

YSBA and YACC actively are seeking to pair artists with dining establishments that will display their work for purchase by customers. A portion of the art sales

at each location will benefit various Yorktown nonprofit organizations, which are currently being chosen.

The public is invited to join elected officials at the Appetizing Arts opening exhibition for a meet-and-greet with the artist, Diane Aronian, at Primal Bowls, located at Underhill Plaza, 1877 Commerce St. in Yorktown Heights, on Wednesday, Jan. 19, from 4 to 6 p.m.

For additional information, contact Bob Giordano at info@yorktownsba.com or 914-874-4347.



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Crossword

- Across
- 1. Knight's weapon
 - 6. Sharpened
 - 11. Perfumes
 - 12. Cool
 - 13. Category
 - 14. Pizza feature
 - 15. Author Fleming
 - 16. Overly smooth
 - 17. Outfitted
 - 19. Rainbow's shape
 - 20. Whodunit character
 - 23. Mich. neighbor, abbr.
 - 24. Klutz's cry
 - 27. Nightclub of song
 - 29. Coffee maker
 - 30. Hearsay
 - 31. Place to lounge
 - 33. To any degree
 - 34. Gibe
 - 35. France's patron saint
 - 36. US Tennis star, first name

- Down
- 1. Detective's skill
 - 2. "Have I got ____ for you!"
 - 3. Belonging to an Italian grandmother or Putnam
 - 4. French vineyard
 - 5. Pothook shape
 - 6. Concert finale
 - 7. Upscale jewelers in Mt. Kisco and Scarsdale -

- 8. France, in the time of Caesar
- 9. Web site featuring crafts
- 10. E-mail address part
- 18. State of market dominance by two companies
- 19. Clever
- 21. Boxers' warnings
- 22. Solicited customers
- 25. Overly inquisitive one
- 26. Sleep-time annoyance
- 27. Nice looking
- 28. Middle-eastern kingdom
- 30. "Way cool!"
- 31. Good works ad
- 32. Massachusetts' cape

Answers on page 20

Acupuncture Can Be a Viable Option for Women's Hormonal Issues

Women often make appointments for acupuncture and Chinese herbs for symptoms associated with perimenopause, menopause, PCOS, amenorrhea and painful periods.

But it can also ease hormonal imbalances that lead to migraines, low libido, anxiety, insomnia and fatigue (just to name a few). While each person's case is different, treatment is often a combination of acupuncture and herbs for about three months. More serious issues may require a combination of both Western and Eastern medicine.

For people who can't or don't want hormone replacement therapy for the symptoms associated with menopause,

acupuncture and herbs can be a viable option for relief. A small 2019 study found that five weeks of only acupuncture reduced hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings and sleep disruptions in women dealing with menopause symptoms. They also concluded that acupuncture was a safe, cost-effective and simple procedure with

very few side effects reported.

There are several symptoms of menopause that acupuncture may help including hot flashes, night sweats, pain, mood swings, anxiety, insomnia and fatigue.

Painful periods can also be addressed naturally with acupuncture and herbal therapy. Period pain, or dysmenorrhea, is a condition affecting up to 95 percent of menstruating women, according to a report published in the Human Reproduction Update.

Dysmenorrhea is classified in two types: primary, wherein no known health conditions can account for the painful cramps, and secondary, during

which the pain occurs as a result of a diagnosed disorder, such as endometriosis or uterine fibroids.

Multiple studies have shown that women undergoing acupuncture more frequently experienced more significant improvements in period pain intensity and related symptoms, as well as in overall quality of life.

Acupuncture can also address

low libido. It works to restore optimal health rather than suppressing or masking a particular symptom.

Acupuncture increases your sex drive by improving circulation and promotes blood flow along the pathways that surround the reproductive and other organs that affect sex drive. By addressing hormonal issues and stress, acupuncture can directly improve your libido. Acupuncture is well-known in the treatment of infertility. In a study of 160 women published by the Reproductive Journal of Fertility and Sterility, a group of German researchers found that adding acupuncture to the traditional IVF treatment protocols significantly increased pregnancy success rates. Acupuncture has also been shown to stimulate egg production in women who can't or don't want to use fertility medications.



By Andrea Gurciullo

Acupuncture works by restoring the flow of Qi, your essence, or your body energy. Regarding infertility, treatments have a calming, restorative effect that increases a sense of well-being and ultimately helps the body to accept the creation of life. By placing needles at key energy meridians, acupuncturists can move energy in a

direction that encourages fertility.

Andrea Gurciullo, is a licensed and board-certified acupuncturist and clinical herbalist in practice for more than two decades. A global expert in the treatment of pain, she also specializes in treating infertility. Her other specialties include weight loss, anxiety and depression. Gurciullo treats patients at ProClinix in Pleasantville and Armonk. For more information, you may contact her at 914-202-0700 or at agurciullo@proclinix.com.

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All Trusts Are Not Created Equal

*Dear Mr. Di Costanzo:
Does my trust protect my assets if I need to go into a nursing home?*

Be careful! People often refer to a trust as a one-size-fits-all vehicle, yet there are many different types of trusts serving different purposes. Generally, trusts are either revocable or irrevocable.

In practice, a revocable trust is also known as a living trust and commonly used as a planning technique to avoid probate. You should think of a revocable trust as an alter ego to yourself since you are the trustee of your own trust and have unfettered access to the assets of the revocable trust. Since you have access to the assets of your revocable trust, the assets are NOT protected if you get sick and require long-term care.

The most common type of irrevocable trust is the Medicaid trust. Unlike a revocable trust, a Medicaid trust DOES protect your assets after



By Salvatore M. Di Costanzo, Esq.

the five-year look-back period has elapsed. Many people today are using Medicaid trusts to protect their assets from the cost of long-term care, primarily their house.

As elder law attorneys, we regularly meet with people who think they have done Medicaid planning by creating a trust, but all they did was avoid probate by creating a revocable trust.

If you would like us to review your trust or if you would like to explore your options regarding the creation of a Medicaid trust, please contact us.

Salvatore M. Di Costanzo is a partner with the firm of Maker, Fragale & Di Costanzo, LLP

located in Rye and Yorktown Heights. Mr. Di Costanzo is an attorney and accountant whose main area of practice is elder law and estate planning. He can be reached at 914-245-2440 or via e-mail at smd@mfd-law.com. You may also visit www.planfortomorrow.com.

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Do We Choose to Live the Hivemind?

When contemplating this year's New Year's resolution, we may consider against choosing to live the hivemind.

The hivemind is a collective consciousness in which we share consensus thoughts, emotions and opinions, a phenomenon whereby a group of people act as if a single mind.

We know as adults the need and importance of having a good social network of friends for our emotional well-being, as opposed to living life as a lone wolf.

Taking an existential approach asks the question how as a person we relate to each other and how much influence the hivemind has over us. This will impact how we select and construct our social networks and to discern between a hivemind social network or a healthy and free-thinking social network based on personal free thinking.

We are social creatures in need of acceptance. In our attempts to find acceptance into a social network, some will oftentimes willingly surrender their views and even their beliefs and values in exchange for finding acceptance into the hivemind as opposed to finding a social network that promotes your true self and free-thinking values. That allows



By Richard Cirulli

for learning and discourse and remaining open-minded with the goal of expanding one's radius of knowledge and wisdom.

I'm not being a fan of cliches, especially when making a life decision. However, I will inject one just to make a point: Do we want to be merely birds of the same feather that flock together? Or do we choose to be free birds ever spreading our wings to soar above the Hivemind, to expand our radius of knowledge to seek our essence of life?

Achieving one's essence and to grow intellectually is only possible if we are able to discern between a true social network and a social crutch. Misery truly loves company-dam cliches. Hiveminds come in many forms and disguises.

When we make our New Year's resolution, we should ask ourselves, will we casually delegate our minds to the hivemind?

Be well. Be safe. Be

happy, Be nice! Amor fati!
Dr. Richard Cirulli is a published author, playwright and retired professor. His body of works can be viewed at www.demitasseplayers.com. He looks forward to your comments and can be reached at profcirulli@optonline.net.

**Existentially
Speaking**

HHREC Announces Holocaust Museums Guided Tours in Germany, Poland

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center (HHREC) of White Plains will be providing a guided tour of Holocaust museums in Germany and Poland from June 18-29.

The HHREC Community Guided Tour and Trip is being offered to those interested in visiting these museums and to hear from experts in the field.

"This trip was created to expand the comprehension of this monumental event in human history," said Steve Goldberg, co-director of education at HHREC. "We are very excited to offer this guided tour, to help participants gain first-hand knowledge to help understand the meaning of the Holocaust and pass on lessons learned for the future."

The HHREC tour is now open for applications. Trip highlights include:

- Sightseeing coach tour of Berlin, including the Berlin Wall Memorial, Brandenburg Gate, Bebelplatz.
- Holocaust memorials in Berlin.
- Tours at the Berlin Jewish Museum, House of the Wannsee Conference and Polin (Museum of the History of Polish Jews) in Warsaw.
- Tours at Sachsenhausen and Auschwitz-Birkenau camps.

- Tour of Warsaw Ghetto and other Holocaust sites.
- Tour of Kasimierz (historic Jewish section of Krakow).
- Panel discussion on Jewish life and antisemitism in Germany today and a visit to the Neue Synagogue in Berlin.
- Interactive workshop on the effects of the Nuremberg Laws of the 1930s.

Services provided as part of this trip and tour include roundtrip flights from Newark Airport to Berlin and national and Intra-European transportation by public transportation, local, coach, taxi and local and long-distance trains. Accommodations include breakfasts in four-star hotels (for 10 nights) in Berlin, Warsaw and Krakow, along with group lunches and dinners, tickets for the Chamäleon Theater in Berlin and lectures, discussions and local guided tours in English or with English translation.

For more information or to register, visit hhrecny.org/educators-study-tours/summer-community-tour/ or contact Steve Goldberg at sgoldberg@hhrecny.org or call 914-696-0738.

Westchester Seeks Public Health Award Nominees for COVID Commitment

The Westchester County Board of Health is now seeking nominations for the 2022 Public Health Service Awards.

The board wants to recognize adults, young people and nonprofit programs whose volunteer efforts have demonstrated creativity and compassion in response to the enduring COVID-19 pandemic and who have helped improve public health in Westchester.

The board encourages community leaders, health care professionals, educators and residents to nominate worthy people or programs by Feb. 8 using the nomination forms at <https://health.westchestergov.com/news/public-health-awards>.

"Adults, teenagers and organizations have been inspired to help our community in innovative ways during this prolonged COVID-19 pandemic," said Dr. Robert Baker, president of the Westchester County Board of Health. "This year, the board again would like to salute these extraordinary people and programs. By highlighting their volunteerism, we hope to inspire others to promote and protect public health in Westchester."

The Dr. Harold Keltz Distinguished Public Health Service Award is presented annually to a person or community-based organization whose efforts have made an extraordinary contribution to the public health of Westchester residents, but who is not professionally engaged in public health work.

The J.R. Tesone Youth Public Health Service Award is an annual award to a student up to age 21 for his or her creative contribution to public health in Westchester. The award was created in 2014 in memory of J.R. Tesone, a Board of Health member with a lifelong commitment to children in Westchester County.

The board also will highlight the compassion, creativity and commitment demonstrated by a select group of nominees, who will be named public health honorees.

Awards will be announced and presented in April to spotlight National Public Health Week. The honorees and their achievements will be featured on the Health Department's web pages.

Last year's youth winners provided meal deliveries and other COVID-19 relief to first responders and families. Recent youth winners have promoted awareness of the dangers of vaping; advocated for restrictions of tobacco sales; promoted awareness of the opioid crisis; increased sustainability and Earth Day programming; advocated for children affected by cancer; and created an app to encourage communication between teens with Type 1 diabetes.

Adult volunteers were recognized last year for raising thousands of dollars and distributing PPE and meals to first responders and families with COVID-19 and for providing food, cash and case management to new immigrants affected by the pandemic.

Previous awards were for promoting awareness of mental health and addiction among young people, promoting the construction and preservation of affordable housing and advocating for comprehensive mental health care for low-income residents. Non-profit programs also have been selected for their work to reduce health disparities, improve health literacy and improve access to care.

Crossword Answers

1	L	A	N	C	E	6	E	D	G	E	D
11	O	D	O	R	S	12	N	E	A	T	O
13	G	E	N	U	S	14	C	R	U	S	T
15	I	A	N			16	O	I	L	Y	
17	C	L	A	D		18					
						19	A	R	C		
						20	S	U	S	P	E
						21					
						22					
						23	O	N	T		
						24	O	O		25	P
						26	S				
						27	C	O	P	A	
						28					
						29					
30	R	U	M	O	R						
						31	P	A	T	I	O
33	A	T	A	L	L						
						34	S	N	E	E	R
35	D	E	N	Y	S						
						36	A	N	D	R	E

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Native Legends: Mockingbird Gives Out the Songs

By Brian Kluepfel

In his 1970 book "People of the Short Blue Corn: Tales and Legends of the Hopi Indians," Harold Courlander includes the myth from the Southwest about how many of the birds received their calls.

The legend of Yaalpa, the mockingbird, is as instructive of human nature as it is useful in learning some common bird calls.

According to Courlander, the mockingbird had many songs – it's known among birders as the most melodious and vocal of birds – and had even given language to different human tribes, like the Apache and Hopi.

It then decided all its bird brethren, too, deserved individual voices. Thus, it called forth the dove, the red-tailed hawk, the owl and the rock hen. Each was given a distinctive call, and happily went on its way.

Last was the gray catbird, which somewhat resembles the mockingbird. When Yaalpa offered to give the catbird a voice, the latter responded in the negative: Mockingbird, it said, annoyed all the other animals with its constant chattering. No, said the catbird, I prefer no call at all.

"Every bird should have its call," the mockingbird said.

"In this case, it is different," the catbird



Gray Catbird

answered. "From what I have seen, you are not very popular with the other birds. You are talking all the time. Too much talking drives people away. Did you notice how the birds left the meeting as soon as they could? They avoid you. You talk too much. I would rather not have language. If I talk, the other birds may think I am you."

Thus, the catbird, familiar denizen of lakeside shrubbery, has few



Northern Mockingbird

SUZANNE O'ROURKE PHOTOS

sounds other than its unique cat-like "mew." Not everybody has to stand out in the crowd. Not everyone has to run their mouth constantly to be effective.

Perhaps it would behoove us to know the lesson of the catbird – silent but smart.

Postscript: Harold Courlander wrote 35 books during a well-traveled life, and famously won \$650,000 in an out-

of-court settlement when it was proved that several passages of his novel, "The African" were used by Alex Haley in his seminal work "Roots."

Brian Kluepfel is a longstanding Saw Mill River Audubon member and encourages you to support efforts in protecting and enjoying local wildlife habitats. Visit SMRA sanctuaries and attend their events online or in person. All are welcome.

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continued on next page

'Contains Sulfites' on Every Bottle: Reality vs. Perception



By Nick Antonaccio

The consumer movement toward being one with nature has picked up steam and is moving more and more into mainstream diets. From global environmental issues to locavores' appetites for foods and products that are natural, organic or sustainable, consumers are seeking ways to preserve the planet for themselves and future generations.

It seems that with the introduction of new "planet-friendly" products, nefarious marketers or dangerous food products invariably follow; so, too, government efforts to "protect" consumers.

I was reminded of one of these organic products, and the concomitant regulations, in a recent discussion with a reader. I've previously written columns on the use and misuse of various natural or organic terms that create more confusion than clarification. But this particular conversation struck a chord with me on the dilemma consumers face when encountering ill-defined wine terms.

This reader enjoys wine, but reduced her intake when she began having headaches after consuming a glass of wine. She had

deduced that the headaches were brought on by an allergy to sulfites in wine.

"They must be bad, because every wine label has a government warning, 'Contains Sulfites,'" she lamented.

Thus began a long conversation. To wit: "Contains Sulfites" has been a government-mandated message since the 1980s, evolving from consumer complaints of headaches when drinking wine (roughly 1 percent of the population claims a sulfite allergy). It is not a warning, but rather information. (Unlike the other mandated message on bottles regarding the risks of drinking during pregnancy; that is a warning.) The FDA has not banned the use of sulfites or provided any evidence that sulfites are detrimental to our general health.

The confusion is further compounded by consumers seeking organic wines, who interpret the sulfites label message as an adulteration of an otherwise naturally crafted product. In fact, sulfites are generally recognized as harmless compounds when used as food preservatives.

Sulfites are naturally present in the wine-making process; they exist in vineyard soil and rocks and as a byproduct of fermentation. Additional sulfites are introduced into most wines as a preservative. There are the good, the bad and the ugly issues in the use or abstention of sulfites.

The Good: Sulfites provide clear benefits. They act as a preservative against oxidation,

'the dilemma consumers face when encountering ill-defined wine terms.'

inhibit the growth of bad micro bacteria and yeasts and preserve natural flavors.

The Bad: Wine is a perishable product. Without sulfites present, it will quickly oxidize. An unopened bottle of white wine without sulfites may become undrinkable in a few months. (Red wines have natural preservatives in their skins and, therefore, have a much longer shelf life.)

The Ugly: Oxidation will cause wine to turn brown (similar to a cut apple exposed to air) and change, even suppress, its aromas and flavors, thus stripping it of its unique personality. For those who are allergic or asthmatic, just a few sips of wine can cause concurrent headaches, nasal congestion and facial flushing.

At this point, I advised my sulfite-fearing reader her reaction may not be sulfite-related. There are many other compounds in wine that may cause similar effects (tannins,

histamines, ethanol), as well as unsanitary or sloppy techniques employed in wineries. I offered a test: eat dried fruits, like apricots. They contain exponentially higher levels of sulfites as wine (but not its other compounds). If you don't develop a headache, chances are you are not allergic to sulfites. I advised that she discuss this with her physician.

One alternative possibility to my reader's reaction may be genetic. The lack of an enzyme in one's digestive tract prevents the breakdown of harmful compounds in all alcoholic beverages. This is widely attributed to facial flushing when consuming alcohol.

Government-mandated labels are not always dire warnings. Sulfites are generally harmless for the masses.

However, if you believe you are allergic to them, please seek proper medical advice. Perhaps one day we can welcome you back into the fold.

Nick Antonaccio is a 45-year Pleasantville resident. For over 25 years, he has conducted wine tastings and lectures. Nick is a member and program director of the Wine Media Guild of wine journalists. He also offers personalized wine

tastings and wine travel services. Nick's credo: continuous experimenting results in instinctive behavior. You can reach him at nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com or on Twitter @ [sharingwine](https://twitter.com/sharingwine).



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