



FREE

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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

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McKenzie Makes History as First Black Female Mayor in Peekskill

By Abby Luby

History was made Saturday when Vivian McKenzie was sworn-in as the first African-American woman to be mayor in the City of Peekskill.

A crowd of about 200 filled the large meeting room at Peekskill's Central Firehouse in what was a celebratory event marked by countless rounds of applause and standing ovations. The two-hour inaugural ceremony also had moments of pomp and circumstance highlighted by personal recognition of many in the audience.

McKenzie, who is the third woman to hold Peekskill's top elected post, specifically named several important people in her life and those from her church, Park Street A.M.E. Zion, all of whom supported and helped her.



PHOTO BY ABBY LUBY

Vivian McKenzie was sworn-in Saturday as the first Black female mayor of the City of Peekskill. Joining her were Congressman Mondaire Jones, husband Eric McKenzie, and former Peekskill Councilwoman Drew Claxton.

When she spoke about being born and raised in Peekskill, McKenzie became tearful remembering her parents, prompting her husband Eric to approach the podium and hand her a handkerchief.

"My parents instilled in us strong values, morals and the importance of education, of saving money and serving your community, church and God," she said.

The historic swearing in

saw high profile officials in attendance such as U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer (on zoom), U.S. Congressman Mondaire Jones and Valerie Eaton, NAACP president, both there in person. Among those present on zoom were Westchester County Executive George Latimer, New York State Assemblywoman Sandra Galef, Peekskill City Court Judge Honorable Reginald Johnson, Westchester County Deputy Executive Ken Jenkins, and Westchester County Legislator Colin Smith.

Jones joined McKenzie's husband as she was sworn in by former Peekskill Councilwoman Drew Claxton. In a heartfelt speech of gratitude, McKenzie thanked her large, extended family and those who had supported her.

"I also realized that I didn't just become mayor or accomplish the things that I have on a

whim," she said. "I had the strong shoulders of other women of color in my life to stand on to reach these goals."

Schumer lauded McKenzie as a natural born leader. "This is a great day," he said. "Vivian has always given back to this community, not only as a small business owner of Kathleen's Tea Room, but Vivian got here the hard, old fashion way, by working her way up the ladder step by step. Vivian has worked so hard on so many issues — grants for small businesses, outdoor space, revitalizing downtown Peekskill."

Schumer added that McKenzie's voice will speak out for the working poor, immigrants, exploitive workers, the elderly and for diversity. "It's a great day for Vivian, for Peekskill and for our country. This installation

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Becker Takes the Reins in Cortlandt; Jacoby Joins Town Board

By Rick Pezzullo

A new era in Cortlandt government was ushered in Sunday as Dr. Richard Becker was officially sworn-in as town supervisor.

During a COVID-19 affected ceremony at Cortlandt Town Hall that limited the number of in-person attendees, Becker, a cardiologist who has been on the Town Board since 2007, took the oath of office from Town Attorney Thomas Wood.

"It's an honor to assume this position. I feel ready and I'm excited," Becker said. "It's going to be a great year. We're off and running."

Becker handily defeated Laurie Ryan on Nov. 3 for the right to succeed Supervisor Linda Puglisi, who retired after 30 years running the town.

"You have very big shoes to fill, but you are more than capable," said Westchester County Legislator Colin Smith, one of several regional elected officials who

appeared via Zoom to wish Becker and the other Cortlandt officials elected well in their new terms. "You have the best interests of Cortlandt at heart. Cortlandt will be well-served by you at the helm."

U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer, Congressman Mondaire Jones, Westchester County Executive George Latimer, State Senator Pete Harkham, State Assemblywoman Sandy Galef, County Legislator Catherine Borgia, Buchanan Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker and Croton Mayor Brian Pugh also offered their congratulations.

"It's a long time since we have sworn-in a new supervisor in Cortlandt," Schumer said. "Rich (Becker) is a Westchester guy through and through. He comes from the community. He knows it, he loves it, he breathes it. It's a great day in a lot of ways."

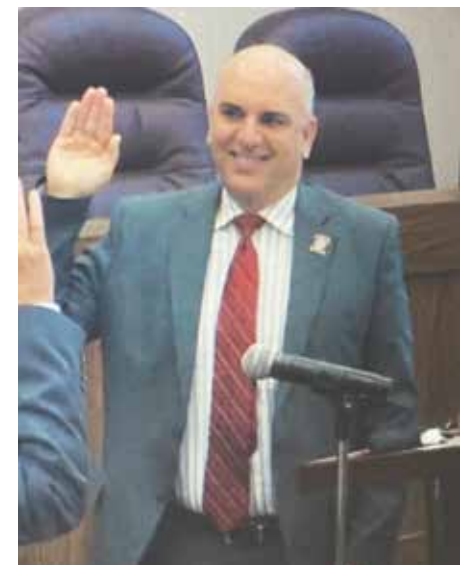
Cortlandt Councilman James Creighton was sworn-in for a second four-year term,

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PHOTOS BY RICK PEZZULLO

Supervisor Dr. Richard Becker (center) looks on as Councilwoman Cristin Jacoby is sworn-in.



Councilman James Creighton takes oath for his second four-year term.



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Peekskill, Cortlandt Vote to Allow Cannabis Dispensaries

By Rick Pezzullo

Cannabis dispensaries will be allowed to set up shop in the City of Peekskill and Town of Cortlandt.

Both the Peekskill Common Council and Cortlandt Town Board voted in December not to opt out of the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA) enacted in New York State on March 31, 2021 that legalized marijuana and gave the green light for dispensaries and lounges, also known as consumption sites.

All municipalities in the state were given a Dec. 31, 2021 deadline to make a decision on the legislation. If no action was taken, a municipality was automatically opted in, which can't be overturned. However, a municipality that opts out can decide later to reverse course.

On Dec. 13 in Peekskill, the Common Council voted 4-3 not to opt out. Joining forces on that vote were councilmembers Vanessa Agudelo, Dwight Douglas, Ramon Fernandez and Kathie Talbot.

"It will be monitored by a state agency. There will be a lot of supervision and oversight. In a few years, this will not be a big issue," Douglas contended.

On the opposing side were Mayor Andre Rainey, mayor-elect Vivian McKenzie and Councilwoman Patricia Riley.

"I cannot in good conscience vote for this," said Riley, who is an educator. "We taught our students not to do drugs, not to drink. We have the DARE program. Right now I feel like we just don't have enough information."

Yorktown Town Board Adopts Overlay District Zoning

By Rick Pezzullo

The Yorktown Town Board voted last week to adopt overlay district zoning for the Yorktown Heights and Lake Osceola business hamlets.

Town officials had been considering the creation of overlay districts for about 18 months with a goal of encouraging creative redevelopment approaches. The overlay zones will allow a greater diversity of permitted uses, including residential.

"Our community is taking a significant step towards repositioning our business hamlets to fit 21st-century market realities," said Supervisor Matt Slater. "Ultimately, from all of the feedback we have received, it is abundantly clear that standing still is not an option. It is important for our residents to know this does not approve any specific project but ensures every development application will receive the same levels of scrutiny and abide by our existing laws."

The board voted 4-0 to adopt the legislation at its last official meeting of 2021. Councilman Vishnu Patel was not in attendance. Language permitting overlay district zoning has existed in Yorktown's Town Code for decades, but the zones were never created.

"We didn't have any choice but to do something with this legislation. As the saying

McKenzie agreed with Riley, and noted a potential business owner would need \$250,000 to get a license for a dispensary and another \$800,000 to open the business.

"I think it's a poor business decision to do something before you have all the information," McKenzie remarked. "As a Black person I know this does affect the family. We don't need more drugs."

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

Meanwhile, the council also voted to allow lounges.

In neighboring Cortlandt, during a special meeting on the 2022 budget that was not televised, the four member Town Board automatically opted the town in after reaching a 2-2 vote, which meant the resolution to opt out failed.

Supervisor Linda Puglisi and Councilman Frank Farrell, the longest serving board members at 34 and 26 years respectively, voted to opt out, while supervisor-elect Dr. Richard Becker and Councilman James Creighton voted no.

A second vote to opt-out of lounges/consumption centers and limit cannabis retail dispensaries to the Route 6 corridor passed 3-1, with Puglisi siding with Becker and Creighton.

Farrell said he felt the state still hasn't finalized all the guidelines and town officials had the option to opt in at a later date.

"I think it was kind of acting blindly," Farrell remarked. "And why Route 6? Why not other parts in town?"

goes, 'If you keep doing the same thing, you'll get the same results,'" said retiring Councilwoman Alice Roker. "We're in an economy that is unlike any other economy we've seen."

The new zoning is the most significant change in Yorktown since the 1970s and it will advance the redevelopment of underperforming properties like the Yorktown Green, which for years has suffered from significant retail vacancies. A mixed-use development has been proposed for that downtown shopping center.

"I am looking forward to seeing some creative thinking by our property owners," said Councilman Ed Lachterman. "Most reasonable people will agree that the current situation in the Heights' business corridor is unacceptable."

The Town Board hired a consultant to study proposed zoning overlay districts. That study concluded that the proposed zoning would not overburden the town with traffic or school-aged children over the next decade, despite estimating about 400 housing units could be built over the next decade.

"It is a positive thing for the community," said Councilman Tom Diana. "We're trying to get things done."

The board heard a wide array of opinions on the controversial subject during a more than two-hour public hearing Dec. 14.

Taking the Plunge for This is Me Foundation



PHOTO BY RICK PEZZULLO

The Ninth Annual Polar Plunge, benefitting the This is Me Foundation, attracted about 40 participants on New Year's Day who ran into the Hudson River at Peekskill Riverfront Green. More than \$15,000 was raised from the plunge, which will go towards college scholarships for local students who have faced adversity, or helped a friend through adversity, as well as national scholarships to students who have alopecia, an auto-immune disease that causes hair loss. The non-profit organization was founded by Peekskill sisters Caitlin and Lauren Brady.

Becker Takes the Reins in Cortlandt; Jacoby Joins Town Board

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while Cristin Jacoby, a former Zoning Board of Appeals member, was elected to her first term.

"This didn't happen with a snap of the fingers. We worked hard. We cared," Creighton said. "This town is something that we truly love. Thanks to Supervisor Puglisi for setting the base for us."

Jacoby, a married mother of two children, said she often thought about running for various elected offices during her youth.

"I wanted to grow up and change everything I thought was wrong with the world," said Jacoby, who has a public finance background and majored in political science in college. "I like to solve problems. I hope I make the Town of Cortlandt proud."

Town Justice Kimberly Ragazzo, Town Clerk Laroue Shatzkin and newly elected Receiver of Taxes Debbie Carter also were sworn-in Sunday.

The Democratic-dominated Town Board will start 2022 functioning with only four members until it can decide who would be the best fit to fill the unexpired seat of Becker.

Interviews for the empty board seat will take place in January and, although it is likely a Democrat will be chosen, anyone is invited to apply. Since there are two years remaining on Becker's unexpired council term, the individual selected will have to run in the next General Election in November and again in Nov. 2023.

McKenzie Makes History as First Black Female Mayor in Peekskill

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represents the best of America," Schumer said.

Jones had equal praise for McKenzie. "Vivian is going to be an incredible mayor. She's very talented and she will rise to the occasion. I look forward to partnering with her in running local government."

Longtime Peekskill resident and business owner Pam Johnson directly addressed McKenzie. "You were made for this," she said. "It's a new day, God is doing a new thing. You made Peekskill a place for hopeful entrepreneurs who are realizing their dreams. You will continue to move the community forward."

In his last official appearance, former Mayor Andre Rainey served as master of

ceremonies.

"We have made history again in New York State," he told the audience. Rainey's 97-year-old great-grandmother gave her blessing at the beginning of the program.

Reelected Peekskill Common Council members sworn-in were Ramon Fernandez and Dwight Douglas, followed by newly elected Rob Scott. Peekskill Common Council member Patricia Riley was appointed as the new Deputy Mayor.

Also sworn-in were five Peekskill Fire Department chiefs: Fire Chief James Seymour, First Assistant Chief Michael Sniffen, second Assistant Chief John Kelly, third Assistant Chief James Sniffen and Deputy Chief John Rose.



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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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State Struggling to Contain COVID Surge as Hospitalizations Rise

By Martin Wilbur

Gov. Kathy Hochul has instituted additional steps in hopes of slowing the spread of COVID-19 fueled by the Omicron variant that continues to cause the state's hospitalizations to balloon.

With a statewide positivity rate of just over 23 percent on Sunday, Hochul is asking hospitals to begin tracking this week how many patients are being hospitalized for COVID-related symptoms, not just those who have tested positive for the virus and might have been admitted for other reasons.

This is on top of halting all non-essential elective surgeries at hospitals that have hospital bed availability at less than 10 percent. As of Sunday, there were 21 hospitals in the state that had dipped beneath that threshold; however, that was down from 32 a week earlier, Hochul said.

"We're not in a good place. I'll be really honest with you," Hochul said during her Monday briefing. "This is the winter surge we predicted. We know that particularly after families gathered Dec. 25 over that weekend, another weekend holiday we just completed with New Year's, there's a lot of human interaction. And what happens when humans gather? They spread the virus, and we fully anticipate on top of the surge that's already ongoing that there's going to be another wave that's coming as a result of these holidays."

While the number of hospitalizations

is about half of what it was during the height of the initial wave in spring 2020, the 9,563 statewide number that was reported on Saturday has now surpassed last year's fall and early winter surge of 9,273 on Jan. 19, 2021.

That is of concern because available hospital beds in some areas of the state are disappearing. Hochul said facilities could be under greater pressure unless the outbreak begins to dissipate soon.

What has been encouraging is that for the number of cases the state has seen, which included more than 85,000 on Dec. 31 alone, the hospitalizations have thus far been relatively manageable, she said. Whether that's because of the state's high vaccination rate, a less virulent Omicron variant or a combination of both, it is a hopeful sign, the governor said.

"These numbers are rather shocking when you think about where we are, but as we have to remind everyone, this is not the first strain of COVID-19, it is not the Delta variant," Hochul said. "People are testing positive, which is a much higher rate, but the severity of the illness is far less than what we've seen before."

She once again urged all those haven't been vaccinated and are eligible to do so to arrange for their doses. For those who were fully vaccinated and it's at least six months since their last shot, it's time to



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

get a booster, Hochul advised.

"We know what to do, but it's about getting vaccinated, boosted and wearing our mask," she said, "and again, people who are sick, please stay home."

Last Friday, the governor cited the state's statistics that New York's hospitalization rate is 30 per 100,000 for those who are unvaccinated but just 2.1 per 100,000 for the vaccinated population. She said that while plenty of vaccinated people have tested positive for COVID-19, the likelihood of serious illness, hospitalization or death is significantly diminished if inoculated.

"That is why this situation is 100 percent preventable," Hochul said.

Through Sunday, 95 percent of New Yorkers 18 years old and up had received at least one shot, with 83 percent having completed the series. For 12- to 17-year-olds, 76 percent have received one shot with 66 percent had two.

For children in the five- to 11-year-old category, 29 percent have received the first dose statewide.

Mask Mandate to Continue

On Dec. 31, Hochul announced that the statewide mask mandate for indoor public spaces will continue until at least Feb. 1.

The governor put forth a mask requirement effective Dec. 13, and it was initially scheduled to last through at least

Jan. 15.

Meanwhile, the state is now requiring that all SUNY and CUNY students receive their booster by Jan. 15 to attend classes for the upcoming spring semester, Hochul said.

"We are putting on an additional requirement in order (for a student) to return to your college campuses," Hochul said. "You need to be boosted."

The state is also requiring all SUNY and CUNY faculty to be vaccinated for the upcoming semester as well.

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St. Christopher's Names New Chief Executive Officer

The Board of Directors of St. Christopher's, Inc., a growing human services agency specializing in youth residential treatment and comprehensive care management services in New York, announced the appointment last week of Dr. Sarah Ruback as its chief executive officer.

She will assume her role as CEO this Wednesday, Jan. 5, upon the retirement of Dr. Donald Antonecchia, who led the agency as CEO for four years.

"Dr. Ruback brings to her new role as CEO a well-rounded background in youth residential treatment services, employee growth and advancement and new business development, expertise crucial to St.

Christopher's as we continue to expand our agency's human services offerings," said Larry Carbone, St. Christopher's chairman of the board.

Ruback joined St. Christopher's in 2016, where she has held positions of increasing scope and responsibility, currently serving as assistant executive director of residential services and intra-agency programming. In this role, she has been responsible for shaping and articulating the agency's strategic vision and providing leadership, management and services to more than 200 employees and residents in treatment.

She is also leading the Dobbs Ferry campus's transition into a therapeutic and healing arts center, where movement and dance, writing, visual arts, drama, music, gardening and other therapeutic techniques are being used to enhance the well-being of residents.

"St. Christopher's highly experienced and caring team is powered by purpose and that purpose is to help youth and families with special needs build better, stronger and more stable lives, and they deliver on that commitment every day," Ruback said. "They are the reason I am excited and honored to assume the leadership of St. Christopher's at this moment in time, when our trauma-informed care and services are needed more than ever, and our journey as a human services agency is evolving."

Ruback holds a doctorate in education from Fordham University and master's and bachelor's degrees in fine arts from Yale



Dr. Sarah Ruback will take over as chief executive officer of St. Christopher's on Wednesday, replacing Dr. Donald Antonecchia.

University's School of Drama and Illinois Wesleyan University, respectively.

St. Christopher's uses evidence-based, therapeutic approaches to help young women and men, 12 to 21 years old, pursue their studies, interests and passions, move beyond past traumas and move forward with their lives as happy, healthy and connected members of their communities. It is also a Health Homes Care Management Agency and helps families with children between

the ages of 6 and 21, who receive benefits through Medicaid and have specific, serious and/or chronic health conditions, access the healthcare, mental health and social support services their children need to get well and stay healthy.

St. Christopher's three New York campuses are located in Dobbs Ferry, North Castle and New Windsor. Learn more contacting Dennis da Costa at ddacosta@sc1881.org or visiting stchristophersinc.org.

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Board of Legislators Makes History as Borgia, Barr Named to Lead

The Westchester County Board of Legislators made history Monday night by electing women for its chair and vice chair positions to lead the 17-member body for the 2022-2023 legislative term.

Veteran Legislator Catherine Borgia (D-Ossining) is the new chair while lawmaker Nancy Barr (D-Rye Brook) will serve as vice chair.

Borgia is only the second woman to lead the board, following the late Lois Bronz, who served in that role 20 years ago.

She becomes chair after a long career in public service, including working in the state Assembly as a staffer for several years, serving on the Ossining Village Board and then serving two terms as supervisor of the Town of Ossining before being elected to the Board of Legislators in 2012.

"I am humbled by the support and confidence of my colleagues who elected me as chair of the Board of Legislators," Borgia said. "I look forward to working with the county executive, our new leadership team, the entire legislature and our partners in federal, state and local government to lead Westchester through this pandemic and on to better days. We will continue to provide the resources needed to help every resident of Westchester thrive."

Borgia served as chair of the board's

Government Operations Committee in 2012-2013 and then as the Democratic Majority Leader for the 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 terms. She championed historic legislation including the Immigrant Protection Act, Employee Earned Sick Leave, Safe Leave, the Fair Chance to Work Act, Co-op Disclosure and the Wage History Discrimination Law.

She also served as chair of the Budget and Appropriations Committee for the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 terms. During that time, she worked with the administration and her colleagues to pass budgets that cut the county's property tax levy and rebuilt its reserve funds while investing in infrastructure and providing much-needed services for county residents, especially during a global pandemic.

Barr comes becomes vice chair after having served on the Blind Brook Board of Education for six years, including as president and vice president. Barr was first elected to the Board of Legislators for the 2018-2019 term.

Barr said she was honored to have been selected.

"We are fortunate to have a board comprised of many intelligent and dedicated individuals and I am looking forward to working with all of them to improve people's lives in Westchester County," she said. "I am especially excited



Westchester County Legislator Catherine Borgia became only the second woman chair of the Board of Legislators Monday night. Legislator Nancy Barr is the new vice chair, the first time women have served in those roles at the same time.

to serve with Chairwoman Borgia, as she has been an exemplary role model for me over the last four years. I believe that together we will be strong advocates for a safer, stronger and more sustainable Westchester."

Since joining the board, Barr has

worked diligently on environmental issues, including passage of a ban on expanded polystyrene food containers and advocating for the expansion of the county's compostable waste program. She has worked to protect county residents by introducing and passing the Wage Theft Law and backing the creation of the Advisory Board on People with Disabilities. She was instrumental in raising the age to purchase tobacco from 18 to 21 years old.

Barr has served as chair of the Law and Major Contracts and Environment and Health Committees, and represents the legislature on the Airport Advisory Board, Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Farmland Agriculture Board.

Following their election, Barr followed the swearing in of all 17 legislators. Those sworn in include new Legislators Erika Pierce (D-Katonah) in District 2; Jewel Williams Johnson (D-Sleepy Hollow) in District 8, and James Nolan (R-Bronxville) in District 15.

Legislator Christopher Johnson (D-Yonkers) will serve as majority leader. Legislator Jose Alvarado (D-Yonkers) will serve as majority whip and Legislator Margaret Cunzio (C-Mount Pleasant) will serve as minority leader. Legislator James Nolan will serve as minority whip.

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Police Blotter

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

Dec. 22: A Cook Lane resident reported at 1:30 p.m. receiving a scam call from a male pretending to be her grandson stating he needed money after being involved in a car accident. The resident knew the person on the phone was not her grandson and hung up. No further issues were reported.

Dec. 25: A Whelan Avenue resident who had reported on Dec. 7 that items had gone missing from her home, reported at 11:15 a.m. that some Christmas gifts she had purchased have been taken. She did not know when or how that occurred. Patrols responded to make sure everything was secure and reported there was no sign of entry into the house and all appeared secure. The case report was completed; an investigation is continuing.

Kent Police Department

Dec. 25: Officers responded to a Cottage Road residence at 7:30 p.m. on a report that Yeferson Rivera Cruz, 18, of Patterson, was upstairs in his room with a knife. Officers gave commands for Rivera to exit his bedroom and were able to handcuff him without incident. Upon speaking with Cruz's girlfriend, police

were advised that a dispute occurred between the two, escalating to Cruz pulling a knife both on his girlfriend, and her mother Carmel. Cruz was arrested and charged with two counts of second-degree menacing and two misdemeanor counts of endangering the welfare of a child. He was processed headquarters and arraigned in front of Judge Curtiss. Cruz was issued an appearance ticket to return at a later date.

North Castle Police Department

Dec. 23: A caller reported at 8:36 a.m. that a catalytic converter was apparently stolen from one of his vehicles sometime overnight on North Broadway. An officer responded and a report will follow.

Dec. 25: A call was received at the desk at 10:44 p.m. for what appeared to be a domestic dispute that occurred in the past. However, the caller was unable to elaborate on what occurred and kept stating "I don't know" when asked why she was calling. After several attempts, it was ascertained that there was an altercation that took place with her mother and she was outside the house on Bedford Banksville Road. She was advised to wait outside for the officer's arrival.

Dec. 26: A male caller reported at 4:41 p.m. that an Uber driver is stuck on his

lawn on Valhalla Place. The driver called for a tow truck about an hour ago and it hadn't arrived. The caller requested an officer respond to assist. The responding officer requested Empire Towing take the call; the vehicle was removed.

Dec. 29: A complainant reported at 7:32 a.m. that the North Castle Highway Department is conducting millings removal from their yard before the previously agreed to 8 a.m. start time. The highway foreman on duty stated two truckloads of millings were removed for a separate contract, which is different from what the caller is referring to. The foreman also reported that the Town of North Castle is exempt from any noise ordinance. The complainant was advised.

Pleasantville Police Department

Dec. 31: Report of harassment at the Raw Cloud Smoke Shop at 5:40 p.m. Youngsters are causing a disturbance. The youths' guardians were called.

Jan. 1: Report of a fence knocked over by a truck on Skytop Drive at 11:44 a.m. The matter was civil in nature and a report was filed.

Jan. 1: The traffic light at Grant Street and the Saw Mill Parkway was reported to not be functioning at 10:19 p.m. due to a

power outage. Westchester County and Con Edison was called. The street was blocked off with road cones and the traffic signal was fixed.


Jan. 2: A call was received at 9:45 a.m. about road cones remaining on Grant Street after the traffic light was fixed. The cones were removed.

Yorktown Police Department

Dec. 24: Wilmer Macas, 22, of Danbury, Conn. was charged with driving while intoxicated and given several traffic infractions after an officer located a vehicle at 6:16 a.m. that was parked on Route 35 halfway in the lane of travel and halfway on the shoulder. Following an investigation, it was alleged Macas was operating a vehicle while intoxicated by alcohol and driving without a license. He is due in Yorktown Town Court on Jan. 6.



Dec. 25: Seon Tim, 45, of Brooklyn, was charged at 2:24 a.m. with driving while intoxicated, unlawful possession of cannabis and other violations following a report of an erratic operator. An officer located the vehicle on Route 132. An investigation also revealed Tim was driving with a revoked license and the vehicle was unregistered and uninsured.

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Peekskill Man Pleads Guilty to Stalking Multiple Victims

By Rick Pezzullo

A Peekskill man could face up to five years in prison after pleading guilty last week in White Plains federal court to stalking multiple victims between October 2019 and August 2020.

David Kaufman, 27, is scheduled to be sentenced before U.S. District Judge Nelson Román on Mar. 16.

According to Damian Williams, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Kaufman self-identifies as a member of the "Incels," or the "Involuntary Celibate," which refers to a group of individuals, typically heterosexual, white males, who adhere to a violent and misogynist ideology of male supremacy. Incels believe they are entitled to sex with women and to women's bodies, and they

blame women for refusing to have sex with them, authorities stated.

Incels have an active online community, and over the last seven years it has also committed acts of violence against women around the world, including in the United States.

"As he admitted in court, David Kaufman is an adherent of the Incels who stalked and terrorized two victims, not only harassing them by impersonating them online, but also graphically threatening to murder them," Williams said. "Thanks to the FBI, the NYPD, the state police and other law enforcement partners, Kaufman is in custody and awaiting sentencing for his admitted crime."

Kaufman's "overt hatred of women and sickening threats to harm potential victims" caught the attention of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York, said FBI

Assistant Director Michael J. Driscoll.

"We know acts of violence among those in the Incel community have increased in recent years," he said. As Kaufman's guilty plea brings this topic closer to the forefront, we want the public to know the law enforcement community is aware of the threat and working together to confront it."

According to the indictment, beginning around October 2019, Kaufman sent two victims, among others, violent and threatening messages using various social media accounts. In those messages, Kaufman self-identified as an Incel and expressed his hatred of women.

Kaufman, who also went by the names "David Khalifa," "John Morray" and "Big Man," also created social media accounts using the first and last names of the two victims and impersonated them online.

In the summer of 2020, law enforcement officers approached Kaufman and told him to stop harassing the victims. On about July 14, 2020, an order of protection was issued in Westchester County ordering Kaufman to, among other things, refrain from communication or any other contact with the victims.

Notwithstanding the order of protection and warnings by law enforcement, Kaufman continued to send harassing and threatening messages to the victims through August 2020, the U.S. Attorney's office stated. On or about Aug. 16, 2020, Kaufman posted a picture of himself licking a photograph of one of the victims.

Kaufman also conducted online surveillance of the victim's residence and researched how to illegally purchase a gun and assemble a semi-automatic rifle.

Yorktown Officials Join Harckham in Calling for FDR Park COVID Testing

By Rick Pezzullo

Yorktown officials have written to Gov. Kathy Hochul asking to open a mobile testing site in FDR State Park to help fight the latest spike in COVID-19 cases that have ravaged the state.

Hochul has announced that the state plans to open more testing sites to combat the surge. Of the 18 new sites that the governor disclosed Friday and Monday, two are located what has been

considered the seven-county Mid Hudson region – at the Grace Baptist Church in Mount Vernon and at Patriot Hills Golf Club in Stony Point, Orange County.

"As we continue to fight this pandemic, we need to utilize all of the resources and tools available to us, and we know that testing is a crucial component in stopping the spread," said state Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro), who on Dec. 26 made the initial request to Hochul.

"I urge the governor to promptly open a site in the Hudson Valley region and recommend utilizing FDR State Park as a testing site. It's large enough to easily accommodate a drive-thru testing site, and it's easily accessible off the Taconic State Parkway and Route 202."

Yorktown officials made the same request, noting the state used FDR State Park as an emergency staging ground after Tropical Storm Isaias.

"Our local healthcare system and regional hospitals are under

extreme stress as testing demand remains at an all-time high," Yorktown Town Board members wrote in their letter. "Patients are traveling from as far as Long Island in a desperate attempt to get a test at our local urgent care centers. The strain has caused our local police department to assist with crowd control at times."

As of Dec. 29, there were 6,961 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Yorktown, with 1,252 active cases, according to the Westchester

County COVID-19 dashboard.

Two vaccine clinics in Yorktown are slated to be held this week where both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines will be available. One clinic will take place on Tuesday, Jan. 4 from 1 to 4 p.m. at John C. Hart Library in Shrub Oak. The second clinic is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 6 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the Albert Capellini Community Center in Yorktown Heights.

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Wishing you a healthy and prosperous New Year!

Letters to the Editor

Putting on a Mask is a Small Sacrifice That Everyone Can Make

I like to patronize local businesses. Small businesses are the heart and soul of every community.

So, when I shopped at three local Putnam Valley businesses recently, I was appalled to see not only customers but staff not wearing a mask, or wearing the mask below their nose or on their chin, which is basically not wearing a mask at all.

I realize it is hard to enforce the law on customers, but you can enforce it with your own staff. Whether you like our governor or not, it is a law to wear a mask inside. A law that was put in place to save lives, not suppress our freedom. As a good citizen we do not pick and choose which laws we want to follow. Yes, maybe try to change laws if we disagree, but not ignore them. Therefore, I will not shop at any local business that does not try to keep our community safe.

There is an expression, "Freedom ain't free." This expression is used to show how grateful we as Americans are to our brave men and women in the military who have sacrificed during a time of crisis to save our lives and protect our freedom. Well, with millions of Americans dead and infected with this virus aren't we in a time of crisis? Can't we ask people to sacrifice and wear a mask to protect our freedom to live a healthy life? We are all sick of COVID-19, masks, vaccines and hearing about this damn virus. Even though we are done with COVID, COVID is not done with us.

I think about the analogy of not wearing a mask to smoking inside an establishment. Smoke has volatile chemicals that can cause harm to your body. Smoking inside can cause harm to someone else's body. If the smoker wants to cause harm to his own body that is his

right. But he does not have the right to harm other people's health.

By not wearing a mask inside that is basically what you are doing. People have health issues and this virus could cause them to become severely ill or die. People who are infected with COVID can be asymptomatic days before they know they have it. People who are infected with COVID can release particles and droplets of respiratory fluids that contain the virus when they exhale, breathe, speak, sing, cough or sneeze.

Transmission of the infected droplets can occur in distances of more than six feet. These particles from an infected person can linger in the air in a room for hours. If we do not start taking precautions, this virus will continue to mutate and eventually evade our current vaccines.

I have heard people say, "if you get COVID from the Omicron variant it won't make you too ill, especially if you are vaccinated and boosted." No one knows the long-term effects

from this virus. Think about chicken pox and shingles, polio and post-polio syndrome. These diseases can remain dormant in your body for years then come back with a vengeance.

I know the good people of Putnam Valley and Putnam County care deeply about one another. I see it in our first responders, the brave, wonderful law enforcement officers, the town boards, the folks who volunteer their time at our fire and ambulance departments, food pantry and the neighbors who look out for one another every day.

So please, as a good citizen, caring person and a fellow American, let's protect each other. Please do the right thing. Wear a good tight-fitting mask that covers your nose and mouth, and hopefully get vaccinated and boosted. Thank you.

Have a happy, healthy New Year. God Bless.

Susan Kimble
Putnam Valley

Astorino Should Re-think Mask Mandate
Opposition After COVID Positive

I wish former Westchester County executive Rob Astorino a total and quick recovery from his COVID-19 diagnosis. I hope that Mr. Astorino will re-think his public opposition to mandatory mask mandates that would curb a spike in COVID-19 cases and his opposition to vaccine mandates.

Mr. Astorino is sure to recover from

COVID, thanks in part to his contacts and stature as a former county executive. Not everyone is as lucky as he is. There are many New Yorkers who aren't wearing masks inside stores, supermarkets and at work. Mr. Astorino's public comments might make some people think that it's OK to be careless and irresponsible. By not wearing masks not only are Astorino admirers jeopardizing their own health but they are also increasing the odds of infecting others.

Over 800,000 Americans have already died from COVID. And many more are expected to die in the coming weeks and months – thanks, in part, to irresponsible statements from people like Rob Astorino.

Paul Feiner
Greenburgh Town Supervisor

Mythical Unicorn or Real-Life Trojan Horse

Developers are having the hardest time selling the average Yorktowneer (non-politician) that irreversibly changing their community is in their own and children's best interest. Developers speak volumes about their efforts increasing Yorktown's tax base but neglect to mention all the hidden long-term financial and quality-of-life costs that will inevitably be paid by our town's residents. Not a single word regarding how

many millions they'll rake in for themselves, complements of our politicians granting generous zoning concessions and tax breaks.

Business-as-usual "adopt-a-developer programs" don't sound to be quite fair to taxpayers.

Stephen Brown
Yorktown Heights

Correction

In last week's article on Love Holds Life Children's Cancer Foundation's donations to families, it was incorrectly reported that Amanda Dumont's daughter Zoe, one of the families helped by the nonprofit, had battled cancer. Dumont received \$1,000 as part of an effort to help families in need. The Examiner regrets the error.

Calendar Submissions

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Guest Column

Local Bird Population Have a New Addiction

A gang of crows as tightly organized as a motorcycle crew flies onto the Pleasantville High School track every morning before school, their feathers blacker than the blackest coal, crowding the blue sky and looking like an invading army of winged monkeys from "The Wizard of Oz."

It's time for breakfast.
There's a lot to eat.

Students from the middle and high schools seem to have left lying around on the running track and lacrosse and soccer fields empty, open bags of Doritos Cool Ranch chips, Lay's Potato Chips, Keebler Thin Stripes Minis, Chips Ahoy, Nilla Wafers, Kool-Aid Jammers pouches, Go-GURT strips, Air Heads candy, plastic food wrap, plastic bags, plastic spoons, forks and yogurt cups, pint milk containers, soda cans, granola bars, lollipop sticks, used face masks, pencils in various states of decay, and on one occasion, a paper clip.



By Michael Gold

I have also seen a few remnants of orange peels, apples and tomatoes.

The kids tend to deposit plastic water bottles on the ground, many of them not even consumed. I collected 14 water bottles on a mid-December morning. All the plastic from the bottles is equivalent to 56 ounces of oil (four ounces per bottle).

All the debris signifies the triumph of the men and women who have worked so many long hours to market these brand names. They have broken through all

that advertising clutter and made a deep impression on youngsters' minds. Their products are good enough to leave as litter on the ground, where the crows and local squirrels can get at them.

The crows, whose black eyes gleam against the light of the sun, walk slowly and carefully, with their heads down on the synthetic grass and rubber surface track, like the people you see at the beach with

their metal detectors, looking for gold and other valuables left behind by tourists.

The birds peck at bits of chips, cookies and candy left in random trails on the ground. I have also seen one or two jump on top of the garbage cans set out in the area and stick their heads inside. On occasion, they pull out cardboard lunch trays and other garbage and toss the stuff on the ground with their beaks, so the rest of their little crowd can eat the leftovers of some kid's lunch.

I once saw a crow dig its beak into a chocolate milk container on the track. I saw another lick a piece of hard candy. They've become addicted to sugar and salt, like us humans.

The crows scatter when a human approaches, taking refuge on the bleachers. Some sit on the top bar of the back row. Others clatter against the metal surface of the stands with their claws as they walk. Many of them fly to the roof of the middle school and wait for the intruder to pass them by. They squawk at each other like cranky grandfathers.

Sometimes a seagull will fly in, desperate for a bite to eat. But he always looks out of place among the sea of black birds, and he usually leaves quickly.

The squirrels don't like to miss out either. They dive into the garbage cans, too. I recently saw a grey squirrel take command of a giant chunk of blueberry muffin on the track. He only left his prize with the approach of a walker doing laps. After his brief escape, he hopped back to

the meal and chipped away at the mound with hyper-nervous speed.

I've gotten friendly with the middle school maintenance man, who arrives before school to pick up the litter with a mechanical claw. We say hello to each other. He brings me plastic bottles sometimes, so I can recycle them properly.

Recently, I saw him picking up small pieces of junk on the track and putting them in his bucket. I asked him if it was food. I was briefly worried he would be depriving the crows and squirrels of their meal.

No, he said, it's glass. I took a closer look and saw the fragments on the ground shining in the low morning sun. The maintenance man was worried a kid

might cut his foot on the shards of glass. It was the middle of December, and this seemed like a remote possibility. Who would walk barefoot on the freezing running track this time of year? But, the

maintenance man, looking out for the kids as carefully as any parent would, wanted to make sure it never happened.

As the students walk onto the grounds to start the school day, the crows know it's time to leave. They fly up into the nearby trees, high above the school buildings and sit on the bare, cold branches, waiting for their next chance to eat.

Pleasantville resident Michael Gold has had op-ed articles published in the New York Daily News, the Albany Times Union, The Virginian-Pilot and other newspapers.

On the Street

Construction of Health Care Facilities Today Requires Highest Standards

By David Campbell

In this COVID-19 era where risk is everywhere, yet unseen and often unknown, construction crews have an even greater responsibility to their clients.

As the National Institutes of Health reported, "The pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the construction and renovation of healthcare facilities, and likely will lead to increased use of engineering controls, designs, and planning to mitigate risk of exposures."

Indeed, innovative engineering, prudent planning, elite-level materials and the highest quality workmanship are now driving the construction industry in new ways. Health care, hospital, laboratory and pharmaceutical organizations – looked to for life-saving care and solutions on levels rarely seen before – require elevated safeguards to protect their patients, staff, researchers and others.

Therefore, construction crews working at health care or research centers must strategically incorporate the highest standards of health, safety and cleanliness into their regimens.

LeChase Construction Services is boldly transforming to do just that. It has created an Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA) Training Center at its New York metro office in Armonk. The center, which provides specialized approaches to contain pathogens, contaminants, dust and noise, is believed to be one of the first in the country developed by a private company.

The center will be used to train LeChase employees and subcontractors in the specialized skills needed to safely perform construction and renovations,

while protecting health care providers and scientists working nearby in settings.

For example, workers will learn to use temporary hard barriers to contain construction work areas, high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to remove dust and other contaminants, and techniques for personal protection and cleaning. The barrier walls, made of plastic and aluminum and filled with insulation, reduce sounds by 50 percent, enough to deaden loud, sharp noises.

HEPA filtration removes a very high percentage of particulates and creates negative air pressure that draws air into the enclosed construction area, rather than allowing potentially contaminant- or dust-laden air to escape into the occupied areas of a hospital or laboratory.

Trainees also will learn procedures to clean themselves of dust with HEPA-filtered vacuums before leaving an enclosed construction area, and use sticky mats to safely secure dust and particulate matter from boots.

LeChase has already successfully applied these systems and techniques at several health care centers in the New York metropolitan area, and will continue to explore approaches to provide even safer work environments for its clients and staff. Responsible contractors, and the construction industry as a whole, must prioritize such safeguards when helping organizations enhance and expand their facilities.

David Campbell is vice president at LeChase Construction Services. Learn more at LeChase.com. For a video that showcases the LeChase ICRA Training Center, visit <https://player.vimeo.com/video/654658948>.



New Organization Helps to Ease the Plight of New Refugees in W'chester

By Martin Wilbur

With a constant need to resettle refugees from around the globe, members of four Westchester communities have formed a new organization to help make newcomers' transition to living in the United States a little easier.

Ossining for Refugees, a nonprofit established in October, is on the verge of helping to resettle its first federally-sponsored evacuee, an Afghan woman who fled the Taliban in August and whose cousin and family live in town.

A wide range of volunteers from Croton-on-Hudson, Ossining, Briarcliff Manor and Pleasantville, including houses of worship and their congregations and more than 20 community organizations, helped Ossining for Refugees get off the ground. In the short amount of time since the onset of the crisis in Afghanistan, enough volunteers have lent their time and efforts and raised enough money to have a furnished apartment ready for her to move into, arranged for online English classes and lined up other services.

While volunteers from the four communities have been pouring time, energy and resources into the effort, Ossining, one of the most diverse and relatively affordable places in northern Westchester, has become the home base for the organization. It also helps that the Mount Kisco-based Neighbors Link, which helps integrate immigrants into the community, and Open Door Family Medical Centers each have a location in Ossining, making the community the logical



Ossining Supervisor Dana Levenberg is one of the co-founders of Ossining for Refugees, a new non-profit that will be welcoming its first refugee to Westchester. The organization is helping to integrate refugees into society by raising money for housing, English classes, health care and other needs to make the transition to America easier.

choice for the organization to include it in its name.

"We're more than ready," said Dana Levenberg, Ossining's town supervisor and one of the co-founders of Ossining for Refugees along with Ted Buerger, Eric Thielking and Sofia Bator, herself an Afghan immigrant who lived in Ossining. "We want her to come to Ossining so all can embrace

her."

The incoming refugee, who is only being called F to protect her identity, has been having her case processed by federal authorities as she and thousands of others from Afghanistan have been waiting at a U.S. Army refugee center in New Jersey, said Peter Russell, a Pleasantville resident and one of the key participants of the group.

But for those wanting to make life easier for a new arrival and properly executing the effort, it takes hard work, training and covering a multitude of issues such as housing, jobs, health care, transportation, English classes, social orientation and other tasks.

Russell said Ossining for Refugees gelled very quickly this fall, with about a dozen volunteer-staffed teams that concentrated on each of those categories.

There is an apartment ready for F to move into and a welcome guide that has been translated into her native Dari. The goal is to help the refugees to integrate into American society within six to 12 months, Russell said. That includes making sure they learn English if they don't already know the language, discovering their skills and interests and seeing if they are entitled to any social services.

Since shortly after arriving at the refugee center, F has been taking an online English course through Westchester Community College, which members of Ossining for Refugees assisted in her enrollment.

"A lot of importance is attached to helping the residents get up to speed as fast as

possible with the English language because that's the gateway to so many other things," Russell said.

The volunteers also received guidance from the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and Catholic Charities, among other organizations, because there are strict requirements for community-based organizations to follow to help settle refugees such as culturally-appropriate food, said Cathy Dreilinger, part of Ossining for Refugees.

It also received mentorship from members of Hearts & Homes for Refugees, one of the leading community sponsorship organizations in Westchester.

"There are very strict rules and in the case of this particular evacuee, we weren't supposed to make her the face of the story," Dreilinger said. "The face(s) of the story really is the community stepping up in such numbers so quickly and being so willing to help and create this organization."

Bator, who contacted the offices of Greenburgh Supervisor Paul Feiner, Rep. Mondaire Jones and U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer, said she is gratified that the community has stepped forward and is ready to help refugees.

"I am amazed by how quickly volunteers offered to help and by their personal concern for these evacuees. It is a special community," Bator said.

Levenberg said one of the overriding goals is to make sure the refugees are provided the proper tools so they can become self-sufficient as quickly as possible.

"We all believe that if you're here we want

continued on next page

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Briarcliff Synagogue Joins to Help Local Refugee Resettlement Efforts

By Martin Wilbur

The images of thousands of Afghan citizens trying to flee their country last August was heartbreaking for many to watch.

But the developments halfway around the world spurred congregants at Congregation Sons of Israel (CSI) in Briarcliff Manor to help out anyway they could.

After talking to a synagogue member who had been involved in refugee resettlement

during the Syrian crisis and the congregation's rabbi, Steven Kane, Abbe Marcus and Julie Peskoe launched the CSI Refugee Resettlement Committee.

Working with other community groups, including Ossining for Refugees, they have joined a growing number of grassroots efforts around Westchester to help families who might otherwise have difficulty transitioning to life in America.

"Especially in the Jewish community and

the CSI community, we are keenly aware that our grandparents or great-grandparents and the struggles and challenges they had coming here," Marcus said of the motivation. "So, we are driven by our values and principles and our collective narrative."

During the fall there had been a Zoom meeting with other community organizations that were also preparing their efforts. The committee's kickoff meeting was Nov. 21 with each person in attendance sharing their family's immigration story, Peskoe said.

Since then, the Refugee Resettlement Committee created eight smaller committees each taking on a separate task, such as housing, employment, education, transportation, community orientation, finance and to help with furnishings, clothing and personal care needs, she said.

The hope is that the committee can help one Afghan refugee family in the first part of 2022. With an estimated 54,000 refugees who have fled, many are or will be in need of community assistance, Peskoe said.

"Some of them, as we understand it, some don't need the help of community," Peskoe explained. "They have family members of friends here and have the ability to get themselves jobs and are independent. But there are a significant number that do need a community sponsorship model."

Marcus said that their committee's relationship with the other community organizations has been key in instituting best practices in addition to receiving invaluable mentoring. She said the biggest challenge has been housing given the cost of finding a



suitable residence.

However, the Refugee Resettlement Committee is off to a good start in obtaining initial funding. An anonymous donor from the congregation pledged a \$10,000 matching donation, which has been accomplished, so that money is in place. Plus, community members who aren't part of the congregation want to help, Marcus said.

"We are happy to accept donations from outside the community and for them to volunteer," Peskoe said.

Marcus explained that the long-range plan is to have a consistent effort so whenever the need arises to help a family, the CSI Refugee Resettlement Committee can be counted on.

"Our long-term goal is that we create a really strong structure and that we can continue on and continue to help families in the future, and we know there will be many, many more Afghan families that are going to need our support," she said.

For more information on the committee's efforts, visit <https://www.csibriarcliff.org/resettlement>.

New Organization Helps to Ease the Plight of New Refugees in W'chester

continued from previous page

to make sure that you're safe, that you're happy, that you're healthy and we know that that's what makes our community stronger," she said.

But the efforts do not come cheaply. To help settle the average family in a Westchester community costs about \$20,000 to \$30,000, Russell said. Costs can vary based on the size of the family. The website, www.ossiningforrefugees.org, includes a tab to donate, and volunteers are always needed.

Toward that end, Ossining for Refugees has partnered with Neighbors Link and Films on Purpose, a Pleasantville-based community organization that periodically holds film screenings related to social issues, to tentatively schedule its first official fundraising event on Feb. 17. The time and location have yet to be determined.

Russell said he sees the organization as an

ongoing commitment and to continue even after most of the Afghan refugees have been settled. There are large groups of refugees from Congo, Myanmar, Ukraine, Venezuela and Syria.

"It is not for us to say where the next refugees will come from," he said. "We will be happy to receive whoever they are."

Levenberg said it is fitting that Ossining and several of its neighboring municipalities partner to try to make a difference for today's immigrants.

"Ossining is a community that was built on the backs of immigrants and continues to be a place that welcomes our immigrant communities and where people can make it in America and they feel that they're welcome and they feel they are supported," Levenberg said.

For more information, visit www.ossiningforrefugees.org.

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Why the Holidays Can Be the Best Time to Be a Homeowner

Another holiday season, another checklist of planned activities around the home.

As a homeowner, that magic time between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day has always been my favorite time of year, each and every year. Others may prefer spring when the garden is awakening and we may be spending most of our time outside, or mid- or late summer when the flower and vegetable gardens are in full bloom, or perhaps the fall when the rich colors of nature can take our breath away.

But for me, I have always been most grateful for my home and the pleasures it affords in the dead of winter. When I owned a single-family home, as opposed to a condo, that was always the time when, finally, that stubborn grout weed that plagued my property was in remission for the season, the leaves had been raked and composted and my time was suddenly expanded exponentially for other duties inside the house.

Those duties might have included anything from refinishing that horrible floor in a guest room that had been hidden by a rug for many years to tiny chores like gluing on the knob to an antique



By Bill Primavera

chest that fell off 10 or 12 years earlier to disguising all those furniture scratches that have accumulated over time with Old English Scratch Cover. (When my wife and I owned an antiques shop early in our marriage, Old English was the single most important defense mechanism in our bag of tricks to make our furniture inventory look twice as good as when we bought it at auction, short of refinishing.)

In recent years, our holiday time has not included tackling major projects in the extra time that had been gifted us by those Fridays off after Thanksgiving or around Christmas and New

Year's because we are fortunate enough now to live in a maintenance-free home. Or rather, if any maintenance is needed, someone else does it.

But whether in a single-family home or condo building, the holiday season has always been the time when our homes never looked cleaner or better with decorations, ready to receive guests.

For many years, I wrote about my journey as a homeowner planning to sell my home and all the preparations that went into it. It gave me a lot of material to write about. Now comfortably ensconced in a place



that is as settled in as can be imagined, I can only relate my homeowner history, or write about others' experiences.

My wife and I are at the stage in life where we no longer anticipate that next big home project, and thankfully so. Now, all of our time at home can be spent enjoying the fruits of many years of joyful labor and living.

So especially this season, we really enjoyed utilizing our extra holiday time

to appreciate our home and the many memories it holds.

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

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Promoting Equality and Justice Through the Art of Photography

By Martin Wilbur

A new Yorktown-based education and photography exhibit organization dedicated to advancing peace, equality and justice will have its debut show starting later this week.

The Capa Space will open on Friday featuring an exhibit of images by well-known photographer William Abranowicz. The show, entitled "This Far and No Further," is a collection of contemporary pictures from Abranowicz's trip in 2018 to ordinary places in the South that helped shape the civil rights movement.

Founder Elise Graham said with nearly everyone today carrying a camera when they leave home and able to post picture for others to see, it's not just world-renowned photographers capturing iconic images that can have an impact in the 21st century.

"Our mission is to kind of inspire the community to get involved in photography and see it as a powerful tool for their own engagement with social action and advancing peace and equality and social justice, feelings about the community, how they can help and how photography can do that," Graham said.

The Capa Space recognizes Robert Capa, a highly acclaimed Hungarian-born photojournalist and considered the world's best war photographer during his time. He was killed covering the French-Indochina War in Vietnam in 1954. His brother, Cornell Capa, while less well-known, was

a major photographer for Life magazine and established the International Center for Photography in New York. Cornell Capa also promoted his brother's work after his death.

The inspiration for Graham wasn't just that Robert Capa gave his life documenting some of the biggest military conflicts of his day, including the D-Day invasion at Normandy, but captured how war destroyed lives and property as well as the survivors who tried to overcome unimaginable adversity.

Graham decided to work toward launching an organization that embodied the spirit of the Capas after she discovered that Robert and Cornell are buried in the Quaker Meeting House Cemetery in the Amawalk section of Yorktown, although having no apparent connection to the area when Robert was alive.

After Robert Capa was killed, his family didn't know where to bury him. They eschewed an offer of a military burial at Arlington National Cemetery because he was a man of peace, Graham said.

Although the brothers were Jewish, John Morris, co-founder and a member of the Quaker Meeting House in Purchase at the time, heard of Capa's story and suggested to his family that he be buried in a Quaker cemetery. There were no available plots in Purchase, but there was space at the cemetery in Yorktown.

When Capa's mother, brother and sister-in-law passed, they were also buried at the cemetery.



Photographer William Abranowicz will be the first exhibitor offered by The Capa Space, an education and photography group. The first show will be at the Bethany Arts Community in Ossining starting on Friday.

"When I discovered that, because I've lived in this town for over 30 years, I'm an artist myself, and there was never anything here for the community that was looking for that kind of thing," Graham

said. "Lots of sports and lots of other kinds of things in Yorktown but no real cultural institution or place where like-minded people can kind of come together and see things and do things that they would enjoy and benefit from."

The Capa Space's first exhibit, which will run through Saturday, Jan. 29, will be at the Bethany Arts Community in Ossining. Moving forward, Graham said she would like to find a permanent home for The Capa Space closer to home.

"We want to find a space in Yorktown, but first we need money and we're just starting the process of fundraising, and that's going to be a big effort for us," Graham said. "We have a board, not a complete board, but we're working on a board and we do have other things planned."

The organization will also offer discussions, films and classes that support the artistic and documentary endeavors of the community.

The exhibit will be open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bethany Arts Community is located at 40 Somerstown Rd. in Ossining.

For more information about The Capa Space, visit www.thecapaspace.org.

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM WAITING LIST OPENING IN PUTNAM COUNTY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Putnam County Housing Corporation (PCHC) Carmel, New York in accordance with regulations outlined by the New York State Homes & Community Renewal, Statewide Section 8 Voucher Program, Section 8 Administration Plan May 1, 2021 will reopen the Section 8 waiting list for all income eligible individuals and families. Annual income limits vary by household size:

Following the HCR Administration Plan, In order to be eligible, total household income must be below HUD's 50% income guidelines. Priority will be given to those 30% and below of the area median income:

Extremely Low income limits (30%)

1 person - \$25,100; 2 persons - \$28,650; 3 persons - \$32,250; 4 persons - \$35,800; 5 persons - \$38,700; 6 person - \$41,550; 7 persons - \$44,400; 8 persons - \$47,300.

Very Low Income Limits (50%)

1 person - \$41,800; 2 persons - \$47,750; 3 persons - \$53,700; 4 persons - \$59,650; 5 persons - \$64,450; 6 person - \$69,200; 7 persons - \$74,000; 8 persons - \$78,750.

Applications will be available to the public on January 14, 2022 at PCHC's office, 11 Seminary Hill Road, Carmel, NY 10512.

Applications must be mailed to: PUTNAM COUNTY HOUSING CORPORATION, 11 SEMINARY HILL ROAD, CARMEL, NY 10512
NO FAXED, EMAILED OR WALK IN APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED

All applications postmarked between January 14, 2022 and February 14, 2022 will be placed on the waiting list. Seven hundred and fifty (750) applications will be accepted. Each application will be dated, time stamped, numbered and entered into a bound log book and then entered into the SHCVS System in the order they are received by using the date they are time stamped. Letters will be sent to selected applicants confirming their placement on the waiting list. All applications not drawn as one of the 750 will be notified by May 14, 2022.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program is a federal housing program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program provides housing assistance to renters with low to moderate income in the form of rental subsidies. Individuals with disabilities are eligible for the program and reasonable accommodations will be made where necessary to ensure equal participation in housing assistance.

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After Indian Point

A community in economic and environmental transition as decommissioning begins



By Bailey Hosfelt

You are reading this week's print edition excerpt of Examiner+, a digital newsmagazine serving Westchester, Putnam, and the surrounding Hudson Valley. Need to subscribe — or upgrade your Examiner+ subscription to enjoy full access to all of our premium digital content? Visit www.examiner-plus.com

For nearly six decades, Buchanan residents lived with a nuclear power plant operating in their backyard. Indian Point, which generated approximately 25 percent of the Lower Hudson Valley and New York City's annual electricity consumption, powered off its last remaining nuclear reactor last April.

The decision, despite being four years in the making, was described as a dark day for the community. While environmental activists saw the plant's closure

as the culmination of 50-plus years of mounting pressure, others viewed it as a short-sighted, even reckless decision.

Now, as Holtec — the New Jersey-based company that bought the plant from Entergy — oversees the decommissioning process, Buchanan, Cortlandt, and the surrounding area are left in a period of financial transition.

As the largest employer in Buchanan and Cortlandt, Indian Point not only provided 1,000 jobs at its peak but also gave millions in revenue to the local community.

Buchanan stands to lose 47 percent (\$3.5 million) of its

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INDIAN POINT NUCLEAR POWER PLANT (GETTY)

annual operating budget, while the Hendrick Hudson School District will lose \$24 million annually. Cortlandt is estimated to lose \$800,000, according to Town Supervisor Linda Puglisi. The Verplank Fire District is also estimated to lose \$372,703, 64 percent of its annual budget.

"We had an agreement with Entergy that we will live here with the risk of a nuclear power plant in exchange for lower taxes," says Joseph Hochreiter, Superintendent of the Hendrick Hudson School District.

"One of the hardest things to acknowledge was that when the plant stopped making nuclear power, and therefore it wasn't as great of a risk, the other end of the deal had to go with it."

Until last year, Indian Point provided 30 percent of the school district's total annual budget. Hochreiter says the district has had to raise its taxes and reduce expenses to counteract the financial impact Indian Point's closure will have on the district.

"When the school district looks at reducing expenses,

it's usually two things: you reduce programs, meaning opportunities for kids, or you reduce the number of people you staff," Hochreiter says. "Those are really emotional and tough conversations to have."

Starting this September, the district is reorganizing its elementary students, which will save anywhere between \$1.5 and \$2 million annually.

"A direct result of Indian Point closing is that we had to make some very significant and important changes to where students go to school so we could save money," Hochreiter says.

For eight years in a row, the district's average tax increase was 1.04 percent — rising less than the cost of living ...

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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Nowhere is this more evident than the long-term health care system.

Long-term care refers to an individual's ongoing need for supervision due to an illness, injury or chronic condition. Feeling sick and following a treatment plan with antibiotics is not long-term care. Degenerative diseases such as dementia, Parkinson's, ALS and MS are illnesses that require long-term care.

Falls or injuries leading to loss of mobility also require long-term care. It may be essential for slow recoveries from heart attacks or cancer treatments to manage activities of daily living.

Though nursing homes provide necessary long-term care for those who are unable to remain at home, receiving care at home is the stated goal for many clients.

Supervision at home, in a long-term care context, means home health aides and caregivers providing physical support, feeding, dressing, bathing and other related assistance. Paying for supervision can involve private pay directly from the consumer, long-term care insurance payments or Community Medicaid. Medicare has limited short-term coverage for home health services.

The two most common approaches for paying for care is private pay and Community Medicaid. Privately paying for home health aides is an

expensive proposition; costs can run north of \$26 per hour.

Long-term care, as the name implies, can last for a long time. Illnesses with slow trajectories may take years to reach a critical juncture but still require regular paid supervision. Spending thousands of dollars each month on care that probably was not budgeted will put a financial strain on any family.

Community Medicaid has eligibility requirements plus an enrollment process with assessments and paperwork. Once approved, Medicaid will pay for home health aides for the approved hours assigned to the ill individual.

Medicaid also has a Consumer Directed program in which certain family members or other chosen friends and neighbors who agree to be caregivers can be paid by Medicaid. Consumer Directed has become increasingly important in the Hudson Valley. The need for home health



By Alan D. Feller, Esq.

aides has outpaced the supply of available workers in our area. Establishing even an informal caregiver network to provide some coverage could mean the difference between safely remaining in the home or not.

Some families can weather a crisis financially better than others.

Privately paying for long-term care is sometimes necessary before a proper plan is formulated. Once families realize that Medicaid can subsidize the cost of care at home then additional flexibility can be achieved.

Contact the professionals at Sloan & Feller to review long-term care options.

Alan D. Feller, Esq. is managing partner of Sloan & Feller Attorneys at Law, located at 625 Route 6 in Mahopac. He can be reached at alandfeller@sloanandfeller.com.

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THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

Let's Get Started. The new year has just begun. A new year brings the opportunity for do-overs and restarts in our lives. The quiz this week is a collection of words that just may help to get your new year, and your vocabulary, off to a good start. Happy New Year!

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. huffy (adj.) | A) quick to take offense | B) lacking in meaning | C) secret |
| 2. exculpate (v.) | A) to carry out fully | B) stimulate | C) clear of guilt |
| 3. profundity (n.) | A) a valuable return | B) deep insight | C) lavish display |
| 4. intimate (v.) | A) to frighten | B) hint | C) copy |
| 5. clinquant (adj.) | A) tinsel | B) coolly aloof | C) crucial |
| 6. dithyramb (n.) | A) a divergence of opinion | B) a negative value | C) a passionate speech |
| 7. corybantic (adj.) | A) producing corruption | B) frenzied | C) invincible |
| 8. diadem (n.) | A) a distinguishing mark | B) an artist's impression | C) a jeweled crown |

- ANSWERS:**
1. A. Quick to take offense; touchy
 2. C. To clear of guilt or blame; acquit; exonerate;
 3. B. Deep insight; great depth knowledge or clear
 4. B. To indicate or make known indirectly; hint;
 5. A. Glistening with gold and silver; tinsel
 6. C. A passionate or inflated speech, poem, or other writing
 7. B. Wild; frenzied
 8. C. A jeweled crown or headband worn as a symbol of sovereignty

Nothing Like a Hearty Tavern Meal to Kick Off Dining in the New Year

There is nothing that brings out the true local color of a community than your friendly local pub or tavern. Comforting venues to sort out the past year and bring in the new.

Here are a few of my favorites in Westchester, some of whom have been filling those pints for decades and offer the best dining deals.

Dunne's Pub

Dunne's is a neighborhood treasure, an authentic Irish tavern with all the traditional Gaelic accoutrements intact.

New owner Declan Farrell, who also operates Vintage on Main Street in White Plains, has upgraded the premises but has taken great strains not to get caught up in the modernist mode. It is a friendly, home-style place with a good kitchen, dishing out generous servings of traditional Irish-American fare at prices that will leave some money in your wallet. Declan and his staff also know how to pour that pint of Guinness while keeping the crowd in spirited conversation.

Try kitchen favorites such as their fabulous corned beef Reuben sandwich, Plain Jane Burger served on a Kaiser roll, beer-battered fish 'n' chips, grilled Irish bangers and cheddar cheese meatloaf served with Irish beans and mashed potatoes.

Oktoberfest is celebrated the first Thursday of every month all year. Irish music sessions. Open seven days for lunch and dinner, along with Sunday brunch. Municipal parking is free in the evenings.

Dunne's Pub, 15 Shapham Place, White Plains. Info: 914-421-1451 or visit www.dunnespubandrestaurant.net.

Squire's of Briarcliff

Proprietor Kurt Knox has been serving patrons since 1967. No easy task in this business, for sure. When I entered the bar/lounge area for the first time, I was made to feel right at home, the way it should be in the hospitality trade.

Why do I enjoy old venues like Squire's? The stories, history and memorabilia on the walls in the bar and dining room walls.

I recall hearing of their award-winning burgers year after year in the local media. So that's what I wanted on this visit. I zeroed in on the Squire's Burger, topped with bacon and cheese and served on a soft bun with a mountain of fries. Their basic burger probably has not changed in years and has withstood the test of many palates over time. Mine, too, I am pleased to report. It was a retro-delish indulgence.

I did notice prime rib listed on the menu on weekends. Not too many places serve it these days.

Squire's, 94 N. State Rd., Briarcliff Manor. Open daily. Free parking. Info: 914-762-3376 or visit www.squiresbriarcliff.com.

McShane's Public House

Edmund Cleary had worked for Dunne's Pub for many years, a personable barkeeper who knew how to keep the crowd buzzing. Vincent Furey tended bar at Davy Byrnes in Port Chester. Longtime friends, they partnered to open McShane's Public House, converting a former Latin restaurant into



By Morris Gut

an Irish gastropub with a wraparound bar, original tin ceiling, table and booth seating, a free-standing community table and plenty of TVs to keep up with daily events.

The best news of all is the menu offers above average gastro-fare loaded with flavor. Have their overstuffed corned beef Reuben, a winner for its tender corned beef, pickled cabbage, stout mustard and Gruyere cheese, or try their chicken tenders, plump juicy burgers and McShane's Fish & Chips.

McShane's Public House, 123 N. Main St., Port Chester. Info: 914-937-7800 or visit www.mcshanesportchester.com.

The Barley House

A warm, friendly greeting from the staff was a welcoming start to my recent visit to The Barley House on Commerce Street in Thornwood. The wraparound bar with its barnwood accents and high tops looked inviting. There is a good craft beer selection posted on the wall in artsy fashion.

There is another dining room on the side of the freestanding house and an open-air deck. Watching several dishes emerge from the eclectic American kitchen caught my attention. Portions were very generous and nicely plated, too. A couple near me ordered a giant homemade soft pretzel with dipping sauce. That was just for starters.

Then there were those overstuffed sandwiches. My pastrami Reuben with Swiss, coleslaw and Russian on rye, served with fries was decadence on a plate. Their burgers are prepared with a blend of short rib, brisket and chuck, served on a brioche bun.

Owners Bobby Harris and Rob Nugent also operate The Barley Beach House in Rye and the seasonal Barley on the Hudson in Tarrytown.

The Barley House, 665 Commerce St., Thornwood. Info: 914-495-3333 or visit www.thebarleyhouseny.com.

Horsefeathers

The storied towns and trails that make up the Sleepy Hollow area are loaded with fables and tales, and there are some dining venues dotting this landscape along the Hudson River that bring out the best of it.

One must certainly be Julia McCue's popular Horsefeathers on Route 9, a pub and restaurant that has been part of the local scene since 1981. You are greeted by a convivial staff ready to serve you. The menu offers a copious selection of more than 100 specialties.

The vintage metal-topped wooden bar is lined with cozy mini booths. The larger dining area is highlighted by a large wall mural depicting a cross section of famous authors, from Hemingway to Vonnegut, with readings from each.

The Knickerbocker, their 10-ounce burger topped with "rolled in" caramelized onions and horseradish cheddar on a soft bun, is served with hand-cut steak fries. Their Cobb Salad, with chicken, cheddar, bacon, tomato, hardboiled egg and croutons, is served with a side of blue cheese.

Horsefeathers, 94 N. Broadway,



Mamaroneck's cozy Duck Inn in Mamaroneck, where the emphasis is on conversation and cold brew.



The corned beef Reuben with fries at Dunne's Pub in White Plains.

Tarrytown. Info: 914-631-6606 or visit www.horsefeathersny.com.

Duck Inn

Proprietor Paul Collins has been at the helm for 20 years, but the place has been operating in one form or another for a century. If you've been in Mamaroneck, you must have noticed it across from Harbor Island Park on Boston Post Road. The façade is strewn with ducks, and there are duck artifacts inside, too.

It is housed in what used to be part of Mamaroneck's historic George Washington Hotel that used to be a Pony Express route. It is said that Al Capone even ran booze through here during Prohibition.

Well, the cozy bar is strewn with memorabilia and the friendly barkeepers make sharing a brew or two most congenial. Please note, there is no food. You are a short walk from some good eateries, though. This is a true pub where spirited conversation takes center stage. It is just around the corner from the Emelin Theater and the Mamaroneck Public Library.

Duck Inn, 128 W. Boston Post Rd., Mamaroneck. Info: 914-835-8791 or visit its Facebook page.

White Plains Restaurant Month

Kicking off 2022, the White Plains Business Improvement District has launched its second



The bacon cheeseburger with fries at Squire's of Briarcliff.

annual White Plains Restaurant Month with a variety of dining options from the city's downtown. Restaurants are expected to offer prix fixe \$20.95 specials for lunch and \$30.95 specials for dinner and/or what is being called a second tier enhanced dinner for \$40.95. Take-out included. Sometimes there are caveats, so if you want to take advantage, I recommend calling your restaurant of choice in advance for details.

A list of participating eateries has been posted at www.wpbid.com/restaurantmonth.

Follow COVID-19 protocols and stay safe!

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

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A Virtual Wine Trip, Vicariously Coping With COVID's Vicissitudes



By Nick Antonaccio

Here we are, heading toward our third year of living in COVID hell.

So...what's in store for us going forward?

I don't know, you don't know, the government doesn't know, the scientists don't know, the

politicians don't know.

Living in the present is full of uncertainty. Allow me in this week's column to revel in those relatively certain pre-COVID times, when we traveled freely and without restrictions.

Herewith, in the following paragraphs, I reprise a wine trip to the Burgundy region of France, which provides a bit of escapism to help me endure the melancholy mood I'm in as I pen this column. Perhaps it will hearten you to plan for better times ahead.

The pungent aromas wafting through the air in the subterranean cellars of the winery were like no others I have ever experienced. Yes, I've visited many wine cellars in my travels over the years. But here, at this moment, in this time and place, I was inundated with a barrage of complementary and contradictory aromas

and air moisture, slippery floors underfoot and the faint but ever-present sense of the ghosts of past vintners.

Generations of winemakers had plied their trade within the four walls that bore the history of the winery, laboring through the best and worst vintages over the centuries. All of these components filtered through my senses and into my psyche as I shuffled through the dark passageways amidst scores of barrels containing multiple vintages of fine wine, quietly resting as they continued their uninterrupted maturation.

I was living the dream. I was in Burgundy.

My mantra on this trip through French wine country has been "to taste barrel samplings deep in hand-carved wine caves, to caress grape-laden grapevines in sun-drenched vineyards, to sample ripe grapes as they were being prepared for the harvest

crush, to rub soil and rocks between my fingers to understand the nutrient-poor stress placed on grapevines."

And here we were, in late September on a cloudy early morning, as the sun cast its scant rays on the eastern slopes of ripening clusters of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay (the hallmark

grapes of Burgundy), eagerly walking amongst grapevines. My friend Rick and I had abandoned our car on the lower slopes, with their paved roads, and had trudged along rudimentary narrow trails of mud and



rocks to sample the near-harvest grapes deep in the commune of Vosne-Romanée in the Cotes de Nuits subregion.

I chose this time of day to elude the crews who toiled in the vineyards as the harvest date drew closer. I knew we would have been shooed away, and rightfully so, if we interfered with their time-worn process.

My intent on this trek into my vineyard nirvana was to validate the claims of many before me: the terroir of Burgundy is unlike any other in the world. Geologically and meteorologically, each plot has unique attributes. The overwhelming majority of the vineyard plots are small and Mother Nature has created microcosms in which plots just a few meters apart have characteristics unlike any other nearby plots.

With my experiment in mind, Rick and I sampled grapes from vines across the

narrow dirt path from one another and grapes on differing gradients on the long gentle slope on which we were treading. Individual vineyards were indistinguishable from one another. In some cases, just a cloth rag, dangling from a small stake in the ground, separated a few rows of vines from the next owner's few rows.

True to Burgundy's reputation, each of the berries we sampled was distinct in its tannin, acidity and fruit levels. I had not experienced this before; these were not refined subtleties, but obvious differences. We inhaled and then tasted differing aspects of soil minerality, complex sugars, tannins and flavor profiles. After six or seven of these field experiments, we finally understood the mystery and reputation of Burgundy.

So there you have it, and yes, it was uplifting for me.

I welcome living vicariously through your pre- what-the-heck-is-going-on-with-my-life travel adventures. Please send them. I'm certain they will provide the sustenance I need to endure these times.

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

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Sports

Hormazabal Dishing, Swishing for Front-Running Hornets

By Tony Pinciario

Some five years ago, Lakeland High girls' hoops Coach Miranda Mangan realized immediately that she had a major player in then eighth-grader Tyler Hormazabal, so the decision to move her up was easy.

"We only take up middle school kids if they are going to play and contribute," Mangan said. "We knew she was something special from the start. Even though Tyler was the youngest on the court, she played with no fear and a ton of passion. She always wanted to know what she could do to get better. It's been a pleasure to watch her grow into the player and fantastic young woman she is today."

Hormazabal has developed into one of Section 1's premier players as she has been instrumental in Lakeland's 8-0 start, best in Class A. The five-year varsity player is averaging 23 points per game, 7.6 rebounds, 5.6 steals and three assists per game this season. Hormazabal does all this while playing/embracing the team concept.

"Tyler would be the first one to tell you that a big part of her success is because of her teammates," Mangan said. "We have a lot of talented girls on our team this season, but Tyler is definitely the glue that holds us together. Tyler is extremely unselfish and will always do what is best for the success of our team."

Hormazabal consistently fills up the stat sheet despite being the opponents'

defensive focus. Opponents have learned that despite her offensive prowess, Hormazabal is just as effective as a facilitator.

"It all starts with my teammates," Hormazabal said. "We open up the floor and move the ball around. Our goal is to put the pressure on the defense by wearing them down so they make a mistake. I know it's a team game where everyone participates and contributes."

Being an eighth-grader on junior varsity is difficult enough, but making the major leap to varsity is intimidating and also scary. Hormazabal recalled her first year on varsity and how the upperclassmen helped her make the transition. As a result, Hormazabal has been that guiding force when newcomers, especially underclassmen, join varsity.

"It was a great feeling to make varsity but I was also very nervous and I ended up putting a lot of pressure on myself to do well," Hormazabal recalled. "My teammates were great and very supportive, but I wish I would have told myself to relax and enjoy the moment. I want them to have fun and relax. I remember being in their position and I want them to enjoy the moment and the fact that we are winning. I try to lead by example by putting a lot of effort into practice, always having their backs, and continuing to support them."

Even with her individual success, Hormazabal is happier with the team's fine

play. She said it can be traced to a couple of factors.

"We've been very focused from the beginning of the season and came in with a positive attitude," Hormazabal said. "We are all sensitive to the pandemic conditions and we are trying to make the best decision for the team to continue to be successful. I really love our team defense and the overall team effort has been a pleasant surprise. We are optimistic about our chances and Coach Mangan has done a great job of keeping us grounded."

Mangan has had the pleasure of coaching Hormazabal for five years and her senior captain has left a lasting impression.

"Tyler truly is the type of student-athlete coaches wish they had on their team," Mangan said. "She is coachable, disciplined, resourceful and self-motivated with a passion for excellence that you just can't teach kids. She is the hardest-working player I have ever coached and she is extremely determined."



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTO

Lakeland is profiting big time behind the exploits of senior G/F Tyler Hormazabal.



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Sports

It's Better to Have Limped Than Not Walked at All



By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports
Editor @Directrays

We've all seen it on the news. Everybody with a platform is pushing renewed COVID-19 fears and concerns with the recent statewide spikes, and rightly so, to a certain extent, because it's real, people are still getting very ill and/or dying and it's not going away anytime soon.

Consequently, educators, administrators, town officials, et al., were pushing the pause button on Section 1 and recreational sports as we went into the holiday break, despite the obvious mental and physical setbacks to student athletes who cannot deal with another dose of this hide-and-hope-for-the-best mentality. Wisely, we mustn't venture down this road again, or risk the built-in depression our children have dealt with for nearly two years now.

"I know in our district, the administration wants our student athletes to experience a full season with no interruptions," Somers girls' hoops Coach Marc Hattem said. "Athletics have really been such a special thing to have back during the craziness of the past 20 months, and we certainly want to keep that going. With that being said, the district has been very clear about following protocols and guidelines that are in place. We have adapted to those rules along the way, and I am sure that will continue."

"If we get to a point where the safety of our kids, coaches, staff and officials becomes an issue, and a pause or stoppage needs to happen," he added, "I believe that getting back on the court and/or fields will not be delayed when we are clear to start again because the value and importance of high school athletics will be, and should continue to be, an integral part of the high school experience for all kids in Section 1."

I get the recent pauses; it's the holidays and we all needed to gather safely, so better safe than sorry in this particular instance #PostponeOutOfCaution. I did the same thing in the recreation leagues I run in Putnam Valley on account of Grandma and Grandpa. Pausing before the holidays made sense on account of the recent spikes in the Omicron variant throughout the region, but – for the sake of our student athletes – let's try to make some sense of this before school administrators cancel the winter sports season on account of some very basic common cold or flu-like symptoms from the latest variant.

"I don't know how sports resume," one Section 1 bigwig admitted prior to the holiday break. "Any basketball team that claims to not have exposure (to COVID and its variants) is just lying."

Lying, bending the rules or blatantly ignoring the mandates have been par for the course, so what did we expect without the imaginary "COVID police" enforcing the "optional" rules we put in place across Section 1?

"It's going to be a challenge for sure, very messy," Panas boys' hoops Coach Mike Auerbach admitted. "It's a shame we're still



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTO

We simply can't deny our student athletes the opportunity to share magical moments by shutting down varsity sports like we did last winter.

dealing with this and letting it disrupt the learning and playing experience for kids."

Like many local programs, COVID has wrought havoc on Auerbach's Panthers since their last game on Dec. 15. The Panthers had been unable to practice or play games since Dec. 20 until they gathered with six eligible players last Thursday (Dec. 30).

"It was our first practice since Dec. 20," the coach said. "We have a few more players who can filter back in over the weekend, but I'm not sure how this goes with two league games and then White Plains the week back from break."

I've been to a handful of varsity basketball games this winter season and well over 30 outdoor varsity games during the course of the fall. It's almost impossible to comfortably compete at this level with a mask on. The mask mandate has been a running joke; not that I'm calling for stricter enforcement because I see very little actual proof that face coverings work when dudes are face to face, knockin' snot in competition. Yet I wonder why we impose these mask mandates but don't authorize actual enforcement after the school's closing bell.

If there are 10 kids on the basketball court at one time, I'd wager two of them are properly masked up while the other eight are wearing useless chin straps. Y'all know I'm spitting facts. But I'm not sure we can take that approach right now based on the decision-making process. Administrators and school boards are beholden to things many of us don't quite understand, like

big-picture safety, political persuasion and answering to the masses, including the teacher's union.

"The return-to-play process isn't easy either," Auerbach said. "Doctors' appointments and notes are needed. Try getting into a doctor's office or urgent care on short notice right now."

Been there, done that! But the protocols, which need to be explicit and enforced, are vital if we're to get to a sectional tournament format this winter with some semblance of normalcy.

However, normalcy seems light years away when you hear this: "I wish that I knew the answers," Putnam Valley School Superintendent Jeremy Luft said. "We are struggling just to get the kids back in school. There were 1,200 positive cases in Putnam County just yesterday (Dec. 29)."

Many of which were asymptomatic or minimal in complications, especially among teenagers, so it seems like a situation we can navigate, though there will be many issues for coaches to contend with, including a lineup that comprises 12th player as a pivotal part of the equation at times.

"I doubt Section 1 or the state athletic association (NYSPHSAA) is going to make any decisions, so I suspect teams will play and just limp through the season with positive cases and quarantine orders," Luft added. "All of that is contingent on schools being able to reopen next week. Hopefully, the fuel burns out and this variant will fade away."

It's better to have limped, than not walk at all. In the meantime, coaches will be put to the test. Some will be hit hard by the surge in COVID-related cases, some will be spared the myriad complications. Players will be rusty. Sets will seem out of sorts at times and coaches will fume and burn timeouts in an effort to find proper synchrony.

"I think we'll get the season in, but there has to be some uniformity across the section on what the expectation is," Auerbach said. "Very few teams will be fortunate to be at full strength from now until March. If you can field six or seven players, play the game. We've all coached plenty of offseason games shorthanded, and you lose some games to teams you shouldn't lose to because you're forced to play with kids who don't normally play as much. I think if we keep trying to postpone and reschedule games, we're just going to lose games completely in the long run."

And if you don't think politics aren't a part of this, I can't help you. A portion of this pandemic is political, and we all know it. Let's put politics aside for the good of the children, which, in New York State, we hadn't done until nearly a year into the pandemic.

We better put our best foot forward if we're going to combat this pandemic; lest we find ourselves back in the same boat we were in 2020 when high school sports were canceled altogether and kids were stuck at home.

Let's get out in front of this now and continue to #AdvocateForOurYouth! Happy New Year, y'all!

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