

# White Supremacy Lesson Sparks Raucous Debate in Somers Schools

By Rick Pezzullo

A lesson with racial overtones taught in a 10th-grade English class at Somers High School last week triggered a raucous revolt from parents at a Board of Education meeting.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Raymond Blanch, who penned a letter panning the lesson that centered around excerpts from the book *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad, was the target of several residents who questioned his leadership and called for his resignation.

"For \$300,000 a year, if this was sports, we could say the superintendent has lost

*'For \$300,000 a year,  
if this was sports,  
we could say the  
superintendent has  
lost the locker room.'*  
~ T.J. McCormack

the locker room," resident T.J. McCormack remarked. "We need a leader. We don't have a leader. The time has come to consider stepping aside."

In his Nov. 1 email, which also was authored by Claire Comerford, director of learning—humanities, and Kevin Guidotti, director of learning—STEM, Blanch addressed the lesson that some students informed their parents about while in class.

"The lesson was immediately discontinued, and the excerpts were pulled from use in the classroom. The district was not aware that this particular lesson was being taught, nor that the excerpts were being used," Blanch stated. "We

immediately began an investigation to determine how the text made it into the classroom. This material is not appropriate for use in our classrooms, and it is not in alignment with the district's instructional policies. We are committed to ensuring that our classrooms are welcoming, balanced environments where all students are able to thrive."

Saad's book, published in 2020, "encourages people who hold white privilege to examine their (often unconscious) racist thoughts and behaviors," according to a description on Amazon.

The English teacher who taught the lesson

*continued on page 2*

## Hotel Planned on Route 6 Near King Buffet in Cortlandt

By Rick Pezzullo

A 91-room Courtyard by Marriott hotel is being proposed near King Buffet on Route 6 in Cortlandt.

The project from applicant Bilal Ahmad was first presented last week to the Cortlandt Planning Board.

"We think we have a great project," said David Steinmetz, attorney for Ahmad. "We think this can and will work."

The 2.4-acre site, bound by Route 6, Jacob's Hill Road and the Bear Mountain Parkway, is located across the street from where a new gas station and convenience store was approved by the Planning Board but has yet to be built.

Since the hotel is proposed to be four stories, it will need a height variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals, in addition to Planning Board approval.

"The single most important thing is the height of this structure," Steinmetz said.

The hotel is slated to include an outdoor parking lot with 101 spaces, a courtyard deck, indoor swimming pool, fitness center, professional conference center and a full bar and grill.

In the application to the Planning Board, Steinmetz touted numerous benefits the

project will provide the town.

"Due to the project's location, a hotel is arguably the best and most efficient use of the property," Steinmetz stated. "The property abuts a primary arterial roadway in East Main Street (Route 6) and is also adjacent to the Bear Mountain Parkway on and off ramp. As such, the property is an ideal location for a hotel as it is easily accessible to travelers while avoiding an increase in traffic through Cortlandt's commercial corridor. In addition, the property's close proximity to the town's already developed commercial district along East Main Street will allow the town's businesses to benefit from increased foot traffic."

Planning Board member Steven Kessler said he wanted to see the new Gasland project across the street and the Sinclair gas station expansion nearby completed before reviewing the hotel, but Planning Director Chris Kehoe said Gasland representatives haven't even applied for a building permit yet and Sinclair "isn't even close" to getting a permit.

Steinmetz acknowledged residents who expressed concerns about the Gasland project would also likely have reservations with the hotel.

## Spooky Good Time



The Peekskill Police Department's 1st Annual Trunk or Treat community event was enjoyed by many. Joining in the festivities were the Peekskill Professional Firefighters Local 2343, Peekskill Volunteer Fire Dept. and Peekskill Volunteer Ambulance Corps.



"With their genuine hospitality, I felt as if I was really celebrating my mother's beautiful life, not mourning a loss. Without them, the process would have been so much more stressful." — Rcee C.



# Taxes to Decrease 6% in Levenberg Proposed Ossining Town Budget

By Rick Pezzullo

Ossining Town Supervisor Dana Levenberg submitted her seventh and likely last budget to the Ossining Town Board last week that reduces tax rates by more than 6% in both the Unincorporated Town of Ossining and Town General funds.

"As we all know, the town budget is a reflection of the values and priorities of our town government," Levenberg, who is the frontrunner to be elected to the State Assembly, stated in her budget message. "This budget invests in our local infrastructure, provides meals and activities to our senior citizens, improves our parks and public spaces, advances our commitment to reverse course on climate change and stand resilient against its devastating effects, dedicates funds towards improving equity in the community, and provides for public safety."

"I'm proud of the investments we're making in improving life for all residents of the Town of Ossining," she added.

Levenberg explained inflation and rising costs - fuel prices, contractual salary increases tied to the consumer price index, and anticipated health insurance costs for employees - added a significant challenge to the budget planning process this year.

During her tenure as supervisor, the town has brought in more than \$2 million in outside funding to support infrastructure investments as well as special projects like the Sustainable Ossining Comprehensive Plan.

"I know I speak for our town department



Ossining Town Supervisor Dana Levenberg

heads when I say we are very proud of the budget we are putting forth to the Town Board and the community for 2023," said Levenberg. "The Town of Ossining is a great place to live, work, and play. The investments set forth in this budget will only continue to improve upon this incredible community we are proud to call home."

A public hearing on the budget will be held Tuesday, Nov. 22 at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom and in person at 16 Croton Ave. Public comment can be taken at the Public Hearing, by phone at (914) 762-6001, or via email to the Town Board at TC@townofossining.com.

# Spooktacular Event



On Halloween, Main Street in the Village of Ossining was transformed into a spooktacular destination for the annual Trunk or Treat event. Mayor Rika Levin was on hand, along with members of the Ossining Police Dept. and Ossining Recreation Dept.

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## White Supremacy Lesson Sparks Raucous Debate in Somers Schools

*continued from page 1*

has been removed from the classroom, an online petition signed by nearly 2,000 people (as of press time) supporting the teacher states.

"I find it hard to believe this teacher just went rogue," one parent said at the Nov. 1 Board of Education meeting. "Are we now a district where the children have to police the curriculum? We know this just didn't happen by accident. Parents are not going to put up with this. Children are not here to take on the values of their teacher."

Christine Hanford charged her daughter was compared by the English teacher to a racist and criticized Blanch for "making light out of what happened."

"You have lost my trust and if you lose my trust, you lose my support," Hanford said.

Other parents took the opportunity to bring up their dissatisfaction with the district's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy and the recent hiring of a DEI coordinator, Susan Gonzowitz, who co-authored a book entitled *Teaching as Protest: Emancipating Classrooms Through Racial*

*Consciousness.*

Gonzowitz was selected over 30 other candidates who applied for the position.

"I am so tired of DEI. You have split my family in half," said Erin Kovacs, a former teacher in Somers. "Not every family is a cookie-cutter family. DEI is another name for CRT. We all know that. You should be focusing on the underdogs, the kids that look different, the kids that are being bullied."

However, another parent, Jessica Rifkin, said DEI was "much needed in this district."

"Children should celebrate diversity that is around us and in Somers," she said. "We need to give it a chance."

Nicole Dwyer, who said she was a third-generation Puerto Rican and mother of four children in the district, mentioned a petition circulating that had garnered more than 500 signatures calling on the Board of Education to establish a Citizens Advisory Committee.

"We are looking for checks and balances," she said. "That is the part that is dividing us. We are here for our children. One united purpose. I cry to hear the divide in our community."

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# Gullotta House, St. Ann's Church to Provide Free Thanksgiving Meals

Gullotta House, a Westchester nonprofit organization, will be partnering with St. Ann's Church and local area restaurants to provide free Thanksgiving meals to community residents facing hardships on Sunday, Nov. 20 from 1:45 to 6 p.m.

The event will take place at St. Ann's school gym, located at 16 Elizabeth St. in Ossining.

This year, Gullotta House will be providing 1,000 free hot meals, with grab-and-go meals available as well. In addition, Gullotta House will also be delivering over 500 meals to the doors of those who are unable to attend.

"We look forward to once again providing Thanksgiving meals to those in need throughout our community," said Matthew

Gullotta, founder and president of Gullotta House. "Thanksgiving is a time where families come together to share a meal, and we are thankful to help those in need enjoy Thanksgiving this year."

"In these trying economic times, HR on the Move, LLC is honored to know and support Matt Gullotta and Gullotta House throughout the year and in their wonderful mission to serve our community by providing Thanksgiving meals for those facing hardships in Westchester County," said Jeanne Stewart, president of HR on the Move, LLC.

"Rising Tides Alliance is proud to support Gullotta House and their mission of helping Westchester residents facing hardships," said member Jenna Roach. "We are thankful to



The nonprofit organization Gullotta House will be holding a free Thanksgiving dinner for those facing hardship on Sunday afternoon Nov. 20 at St. Ann's Church in Ossining.

partner with Gullotta House and help those in need enjoy their Thanksgiving."

This year's event is sponsored by HR on the Move, Rising Tides Alliance and Valley Bank, along with many other businesses and community members to help make this year a Thanksgiving to remember for those in need.

"As a longstanding corporate citizen in the communities we serve we are proud to support Gullotta House in their mission to serve the community by providing Thanksgiving meals for those facing hardship," remarked Michael Dondero, senior vice president, division head for Valley Bank.

Donations of turkeys for this year's event can be dropped off at St. Ann's rectory on Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sponsorship opportunities are available and monetary donations of any size are greatly

appreciated.

For more information about the available sponsorship opportunities or to make a donation, visit [www.gullottahouse.org](http://www.gullottahouse.org) or contact Matthew Gullotta directly at 914-525-0744.

Gullotta House was founded in 2015 for the charitable purpose of aiding residents of Westchester County who face financial or other hardships. It assists residents by providing food vouchers, scholarships to aid for the cost of education, much-needed family outings and other forms of entertainment and holiday assistance.

Gullotta House is currently running a capital campaign to raise \$350,000 for a five-family home in Westchester County to help families who have been displaced, with \$30,000 raised to date.





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# Westchester to Suspend Sales Tax on Home Heating Costs This Winter

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County officials announced last week that the county portion of the sales tax on home heating sources will be suspended for three months in hopes of giving beleaguered homeowners a break on energy prices amidst skyrocketing costs.

County Executive George Latimer said the 4 percent exemption will be in effect for three months, from Dec. 1 to Feb. 28, through the heart of the upcoming winter season. If a homeowner needs to fill a 250-gallon tank with heating oil at about \$6 a gallon, for example, there would be a savings of about \$60 with each delivery, he said.

"There's great concern for homeowners right now, looking at their budget, at what's going to happen with their home heating costs over the course of these next coming months," Latimer said.

All other types of heating, whether electric, natural gas, propane, coal or wood, will be included in the exemption as well.

The Board of Legislators has already approved the plan. Enabling legislation was passed by the state legislature and signed into law earlier this year giving counties in New York the option to provide the exemption. The remaining 4.375 percent sales tax will remain in effect.

Board of Legislators Chairwoman Catherine Borgia (D-Ossining) said county lawmakers were attracted to the benefits for homeowners because of the possibility of soaring expenses to heat residences this winter.

"That was important to us because we had

heard through some trend makers that the cost of home heating might continually go up this winter, coupled with the high inflation rate," Borgia said. "We know people really needed some relief, and even though this isn't changing the cost of the fuel or the energy, it is a way to give some measure of relief to anyone that pays their home heating bills."

Latimer made the announcement last Tuesday outside the Ossining home of Omar Lopez and Grace O'Shaughnessy. With the rising costs of almost everything today, every bit of assistance is helpful, and can make the difference as the holidays and the winter approach, Lopez said.

"It means another Christmas present, it means an additional side during Thanksgiving," Lopez said. "It means another opportunity for us to be able to have a conversation around the dinner table that's a little bit less about the pressures of the economic moment and a little bit more about spending time together."

Landlords and renters are also eligible to receive the break if they pay for the residence's home heating costs.

The CEO of a major home heating oil company applauded the county's decision to enact a three-month sales tax moratorium on energy purchases for the home. Robison CEO Dan Singer said that homeowners are likely in for a rough winter because of the expected spike in oil prices and consumers will need the assistance.

"We have heard loud and clear from our customers, and we are doing all we can to soften the blow by offering budget plans and our price capping program where homeowners



Westchester County Executive George Latimer makes an announcement last week in Ossining that the county will be exempting its 4 percent portion of the sales tax for three months starting Dec. 1. Pictured with Latimer, left to right, are Budget Director Larry Soule, Board of Legislators Chair Catherine Borgia, Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins and Ossining Supervisor Dana Levenberg. Homeowners Omar Lopez and Grace O'Shaughnessy are in the background.

can lock in rates, but there is no sugar coating that it will be difficult for families this winter," Singer said.

The exemption is the latest step Westchester officials have taken to try to provide some relief for county residents. During the summer, the county suspended the fares on all Bee-Line bus service from June 1 until Labor Day.

Last week, Latimer also announced that there would be no Bee-Line fares from the Saturday before Thanksgiving until the Sunday that concludes the long holiday weekend. Bee-

Line bus commuters will also be able to ride the buses for free for about the last two weeks of December until New Year's, he said.

The county also invoked a gas tax holiday earlier in the year and put a tuition freeze into effect for Westchester Community College students for the 2022-23 academic year.

"In every one of those decisions and more decisions, we recognize the problem, but more than criticizing, more than using rhetoric we try to act," Latimer said.



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# Latimer: County to Cut Property Tax Levy By \$6M in 2023

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County Executive George Latimer will propose a 2023 operating budget later this week that contains an “unprecedented” fourth consecutive property tax levy reduction.

Previewing the scheduled Thursday release of next year’s spending plan on Nov. 3, Latimer said there will be a proposed \$6 million reduction in the levy, bringing down that figure to \$542 million, a reduction of about \$17 million over the last four years.

“But the bottom line is still, we’ve looked at the operating needs of the county

government, we’ve looked at the revenue streams that we have, not only property tax but sales tax and a host of other revenue streams, and we’re confident that the overall budget that we present will be balanced, will be substantive and we’ll be able to cut the property tax levy by an additional \$6 million,” Latimer said.

He pledged that there would be no borrowing for tax certiorari settlements or to meet the county’s pension obligations for next year. There will also be no use of fund balance savings to help balance the budget. A major factor working in the county’s favor is a projected \$65.9 million budget surplus from the current year.

Latimer said his proposal for 2023 continues to provide the services that the county is required to have and Westchester residents have come to expect while understanding that inflation and other economic factors since the pandemic have made personal finances difficult for many people, Latimer noted.

“We recognize that people are having a tough time of it coming out of the situation,” he said. “Westchester has bounced back better than many other jurisdictions but we still have difficult times and we reflect knowledge of that by balancing a budget that’s responsible and cuts property taxes.”

Latimer release of his proposed plan is expected to go into detail about some

of the services and programs that will be emphasized in 2023. Last month, he unveiled a \$662 million capital projects plan for next year that stressed upgrades of the county’s wastewater treatment plants, flood mitigation and environmental initiatives and an increase for land acquisition and incentives to encourage the development of additional affordable and workforce housing.

The Board of Legislators will then hold its budget deliberations and will eventually complete its review and make any revisions by next month. There will also be multiple public hearings around the county over the next month that are expected to be announced.

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## P'ville Development Town Hall Set for November 16

The Pleasantville Village Board will be holding a community town hall on the topic of development in the village. The intent is to discuss the history of development, current zoning regulations and take questions from the public.

The meeting will take place in the Pleasantville High School auditorium on Wednesday, Nov. 16 at 7 p.m. The

auditorium is located in the middle of the front circle of the high school.

Members of the public are welcome to speak during the meeting. Alternatively, questions can be sent in advance of, or during, the meeting by emailing [info@pleasantville-ny.gov](mailto:info@pleasantville-ny.gov). The meeting will be broadcast via Zoom at <https://tinyurl.com/ywsr9umr>. A recording will be made available for PCTV76.org.



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# Hundreds of Drivers Illegally Passed School Buses in Two Districts: Report

By Martin Wilbur

Two northern Westchester school districts experienced a staggering number of motorists that passed stopped school buses picking up or dropping off students during the first two months of the academic year.

There were well over 600 illegal passes of buses in the Hendrick Hudson and Somers school districts combined from the start of the school year through October, according to statistics compiled by BusPatrol, a safety technology company, a safety technology company that affixes small video cameras on the stop arm of the school bus to document illegal passes.

In Hendrick Hudson, its fleet of 49 buses and vans had 367 illegal passes from Sept. 1 through Oct. 28 while in Somers, its 59 vehicles were illegally passed 280 times from Aug. 28 through Oct. 28. Both school systems have been participating in a pilot program with BusPatrol,

"It seems that it's happening at a higher frequency than it was years ago, and that's a scary thought," said Liz Gilleo, the transportation supervisor at Hendrick Hudson, who drove a district school bus for 20 years before serving in her current post. "I know there are more cars on the road now, but it's really scary that the kids in this state, in the country, are at such high risk, and people don't understand what the law is, what you have to do and what's required of them."

The greatest number of incidents occurred in Hendrick Hudson occurred on the Route 9A corridor and on Washington Avenue in Peekskill, she said.

Gerard Esposito, the assistant supervisor of transportation for Somers, said he wasn't surprised at the locations of where the greatest number of violations took place, but was alarmed at the volume. It was rather predictable that Route 139, the heavily traveled thoroughfare where the district's elementary school and high school are located, had the largest number of any street with 40 violations, he said.

According to Esposito, many of his colleagues in the county have also reported a growing problem of motorists ignoring the law.

"I believe it's a problem, a rising problem in the areas between most of the districts in Westchester," Esposito said. "They're definitely seeing something along those lines."

Incidents of illegal passing is likely higher in Westchester than counties to the north because of the larger population, greater traffic volume and, at least in the southern portion of the county, proximity to New York City, said Steven Randazzo, the executive vice president for BusPatrol.

Randazzo added there are other factors that would account for the violations.

"People are more distracted than ever before, they're texting and driving," he said.

Gilleo said distracted driving is a major



factor, but not the only reason. Aggressive driving also plays a role.

"I think some of it is distracted driving, absolutely because everyone's got 80 things that they're trying to do at once, and whether they're talking on the phone while they're driving or that they're texting and they're driving, but everybody's in a hurry to go wherever it is they have to go, and just people sort of not paying attention," Gilleo said.

Randazzo added there is a lack of traditional enforcement by police departments to try and capture violators illegally passing buses because of policy decisions by local officials on how best to allocate resources. The BusPatrol technology captures a violation and the license plate number of the vehicle.

Districts that sign up pay nothing to have the cameras placed on the school buses, Randazzo said. BusPatrol recoups money by negotiating with jurisdictions for a percentage of the fines collected by

violators.

While Hendrick Hudson and Somers were able to sign up for the pilot program, Westchester County has not passed legislation yet that would enable every district to do the same.

Gilleo, who is president of the Lower Hudson chapter of the New York Association for Pupil Transportation, said the best way to cut down the violations is to give every district the chance to participate.

"To have the cameras on the buses and to be able to do it 180 days a year is huge," she said.

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# Obituary

## Alphonse Valente

Alphonse J. Valente, 94, passed away peacefully on Nov. 5 in Danbury, Conn.

He was born in the Bronx to Josephine and Basilio Valente in 1928 and attended Cardinal Hayes High School and Fordham University School of Pharmacy, where he graduated in 1950.

He married the love of his life, Rosita Finaldi, on July 4, 1951. She predeceased him in 1993.

He worked as a pharmacist for Burroughs Wellcome Company and for Misericordia Hospital in the Bronx and also for the Archdiocese of New York.

He is survived by his four children, Joanne Matteo and spouse Thomas, Dr. Christopher Valente and spouse Johanna, Robert Valente and Lynne DiNardo and spouse Michael. Among his great joys in life were his 11 grandchildren – Justin, Drew, Kerri, Julie, Christopher, Joseph, Alana, Michael, Christina, Nicole and Michael, who knew him as Poppy. He is also survived by his 19 great-grandchildren who also brought him great pride and joy.

Al was an accomplished trombonist, loved big band music and the songs of Frank Sinatra. His affection for baseball and the Yankees went back to the days of Joe DiMaggio. He enjoyed telling stories of the days he was courting Rosita. In the end, he longed to be with her in heaven.

The wake for Alphonse will be held



Alphonse Valente

at Beecher-Flooks Funeral Home in Pleasantville on Tuesday, Nov. 8. Visitation hours are 5 to 9 p.m. A mass of Christian burial will be held at Holy Rosary Church in Hawthorne on Wednesday, Nov. 9 at 11 a.m. He will be buried at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Hawthorne.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Rosary Hill Home in Hawthorne, one of his favorite institutions doing charitable work.

## Genesis Jewelers Hosts Annual Diaper Drive Starting This Week

Genesis Jewelers in Yorktown is hosting its seventh annual diaper drive to support the Westchester County Diaper Bank.

Anyone who brings a diaper donation to the store starting Nov. 8 through Saturday, Dec. 10 will be eligible to win a \$50 Genesis Jewelers gift card. Winners will be announced on Dec. 10. You do not have to be present at the drawing to win.

Diapers are a basic need, not a luxury item. Diaper need is a silent crisis with parents and caregivers often choosing between food, rent or buying diapers. There is no state or federal child safety-net

program that allocates dollars specifically for the purchase of diapers. Fifty diapers or \$20 provides a week's supply for one child or 200 diapers or \$80 provides a month's supply for one child.

Your donation will make a difference. More than 10 percent of children under the age of four in Westchester live at or below the poverty line. The goal is to help get clean diapers to families that struggle to afford them in Westchester.

Genesis Jewelers is located at 32 Triangle Center in Yorktown Heights.

## Moving Westchester Toward Zero Waste Virtual Forum on Nov. 15

The Westchester Alliance for Sustainable Solutions (WASS) presents a free virtual workshop entitled "Moving Westchester County Towards Zero Waste" from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 15.

By adopting zero-waste strategies, a number of major U.S. cities have reduced the amount of garbage that gets landfilled or incinerated by 70 percent. At this

program, a panel of national and regional experts will explore the untapped possibilities for material recovery enterprises, composting and optimizing recycling.

The event is open to all. Advance registration at <https://wasspeekskill.org/workshop> is requested. Contact [wasspeekskill@gmail.com](mailto:wasspeekskill@gmail.com) for more information.



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# Returning Citizens Get Connected Through WLS Digital Equity Initiative

Westchester Library System's (WLS) Digital Equity Initiative now includes targeted technology support for individuals returning to the community after incarceration with the Reconnect with Tech.

WLS is collaborating with The STEM Alliance to offer Wi-Fi-enabled Chromebooks with a one-year Wi-Fi subscription to returning citizens who successfully complete a 15-hour digital skills training workshop and an introduction to library resources.

Participants who are seeking to enhance their skills to become engaged, informed and productive citizens are identified through the Westchester County Department of Corrections and other re-entry service providers.

"The STEM Alliance is honored to lend our expertise in digital equity to these strong partners so that we can create an innovative and successful platform of digital skills and resources for individuals who were formerly incarcerated," said Margaret Kaufer, president, The STEM Alliance. "Equitable access to tools and knowledge is critical for these community members as they work towards a positive and engaged future."

This project is made possible with a \$250,000 two-year Digital Inclusion Innovation Grant from the New York Digital Inclusion Fund supported by Schmidt Futures, a philanthropic initiative founded by Eric and Wendy Schmidt, to address the



J. VECCHIOLLA PHOTO

Representatives of the Westchester Library System, the STEM Alliance and county officials, including County Executive George Latimer, gathered on Oct. 27 to announce the launch of Reconnect with Tech, a program to help former inmates learn critical technology skills.

digital equity gap for Westchester's re-entry population.

"WLS is honored to be part of this initiative to advance the goals of digital inclusion in New York. The digital divide in our community is real – the pandemic highlighted the gap especially among our most vulnerable populations," noted Terry Kirchner, WLS' executive director.

"Digital skills are critical for navigating basic everyday activities from banking to job searching or finding a place to live. Building those skills is an important first step in successful re-entry."

WLS is one of five grantees announced earlier this year for the first round of Digital Inclusion Innovation Grants to launch digital inclusion activities to

advance digital equity in New York.

The Re-entry Digital Inclusion Project is part of WLS' commitment to building digital equity in Westchester County. This spring, WLS also launched the Digital Equity on the Road Project. A technology equipped eVan and a team of bilingual digital navigators will travel to sites throughout the county to promote digital inclusion and help individuals and families learn how to access technology, including low-cost broadband, laptops and online resources that promote lifelong learning, employment opportunities, health information and other essential services.

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# Letters to the Editor

## Development in Pleasantville Has Gone Out of Control

As a lifelong resident of Pleasantville, I am very concerned about current and future development in Pleasantville. Pleasantville used to be a small village with many colonial and historic homes. The new development in Pleasantville already contains more apartments than the infrastructure of Pleasantville can handle. Do we really need more apartments, specifically the proposed development at the former Chase Bank building?

With the existing development, the village infrastructure could be stressed

beyond its limits, requiring additional police, fire and emergency and school personnel. Consideration should be given to the fact that Pleasantville has all-volunteer fire and ambulance departments. Additional infrastructure costs money and will increase our property taxes.

Traffic congestion in the village currently is a nightmare. It will only be worse with hundreds of new residents. The new residents might not be two-car families, but it is naive to think the present development won't bring at least

one car per unit. Sitting at a traffic light for several cycles is currently common as the traffic just can't move.

Why does the village change zoning laws to accommodate the few when the zoning was designed to protect the town from overdevelopment? The builders/owners don't care about the impact to the village; they care about the amount of money they can make.

The Village of Pleasantville has out-of-control development. Any further development at this point would be

imprudent. A building moratorium should be considered. We should take time to assess the impact of existing development.

The village is holding a meeting on Nov. 16 at 7 p.m. in the Pleasantville High school auditorium to discuss future development in the village. Please plan to attend and stay informed.

Thomas Rooney  
Pleasantville

## All Residents Should Be Grateful for Ossining Volunteer Ambulance Corps

It's unusual for an elected official to sing the praises of a nonprofit organization that is made up of volunteers who don't live in their town. But sometimes a group of volunteers are so amazing they deserve praise and thanks even if they aren't part of my town.

I want to praise the Ossining Volunteer Ambulance Corps for their efforts and hard work keeping senior citizens, the homebound and others healthy and safe. In recent years I have referred many people to the Ossining Volunteer Ambulance Corps. It doesn't know how to say no. They have provided constituents who are homebound with vaccinations at their homes. When I am asked by residents with homebound parents for help getting their parents vaccinations, the Ossining Ambulance Corps always responds and sends a volunteer to the homebound resident. How many others make house calls like an old-fashioned doctor?

In addition, this dedicated group of volunteers have worked with VAXUPWestchester organizing vaccination

events at local farmers markets, community centers and schools. They have provided booster shots and flu vaccinations to elderly and disabled residents who ask for the shots. They are an amazing group of volunteers who have made life so much better for many. They also provide important ambulance transport for those who need the help.

The Ossining Volunteer Ambulance Corps has made a positive difference in people's lives. Besides providing residents with quality healthcare services, they also have reduced the anxiety levels of many seniors and family members who know that when they need help the volunteers are there for us.

Finally, the ambulance corps serves residents who don't live in their immediate communities. I am most appreciative. There is a tremendous need for the extra services that the Ossining Volunteer Ambulance Corps provides Westchester residents with.

I was very relieved to see that, since as we all know, Trump and many major Republicans are claiming rampant rigging of elections is going on. I asked the poll workers if there was any fraud or corruption going on, they said, "No, absolutely not here in Putnam County."

Maybe it's just Putnam County that is clean as snow and the rest of the nation is

a cesspool of election fraud and corruption as Trump and others of his ilk would like us to believe. I can't wait for the results to start coming in. When the Republicans are found to be winning it will be as it should be. But when Democrats are found to be winning it will be "Rigged!" "Massive fraud!" "Corrupt Democrats fixing the election!"

I can't wait for the poison to start flowing.

Nicholas Kuvach  
Putnam Valley

Paul Feiner  
Greenburgh Town Supervisor

## If My Side Doesn't Win the Election, Then it's Rigged

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# Column

## Crossing Guards Face Unruly Rush of Vehicles to Keep Kids, Adults Safe

Drivers fly down the road, break the speed limit, make illegal turns, run red lights, roll through stop signs, inch into crosswalks while children are there, lean on their horns and sometimes foul the air with expletives.

While most drivers are courteous, the roughly behaved minority sting.

This is the life of a school crossing guard, a vital, often unappreciated job. They stand in the middle of the road, bravely facing off against an ongoing stream of two-ton vehicles and helping get our kids safely to school.

I interviewed three crossing guards to tell their stories, anonymously, to learn the problems they face and how they can be addressed. One was stationed by an elementary school, another worked at the intersection by a middle school and high school and the third one stood at the light on a state parkway.

The first one I spoke with laughed when I asked him what challenges he faces. Let's call him Alex.

"The cars are disrespectful," he said. "They don't honor the crosswalk. They just fly down the road. Teachers and kids are standing here, and the cars cross the walk line, regardless of the signs."

Also, a few commuters curse and call Alex an idiot, with an expletive in front,



By Michael Gold

or give him the middle finger, amid a line of cars 15 cars long, with parents dropping off their children.

"Commuters don't understand what the hold-up is," Alex said. "Around 8:15, we have a big traffic standstill. A lot of times, it's the same commuters every day who are impatient."

His advice to these drivers? Come five minutes earlier or later. The line of cars piling up every day at the same time in the same place is as

predictable as someone's birthday.

A blinking yellow light might help, Alex said, "to give another layer of caution."

"Speeding is the number one challenge," said the second crossing guard, who we'll call Bella.

"Brightly-colored crossing signs are not working. They don't stop people from speeding. I'm shocked there hasn't been an accident. People are getting meaner and uglier. They don't stop even when my flag is out."

Bella has seen cars make right-hand turns into the crosswalk, roll through stop signs or inch forward into the crosswalk, even though children are still walking on the white lines of the road to get to the sidewalk. Also, she's had close calls with cars almost hitting her. Impatient drivers

blow their horns, too.

"You blowing your horn doesn't change what I need to do – which is keep kids safe," Bella said. "Sometimes I feel like I'm on the Jersey Turnpike."

She thinks a speed monitor by the sign that says "15 mph – School Zone" might help to track drivers who go too fast. Another possible solution would be for the local police to patrol the area during school arrival and dismissal time.

Bella once considered getting a mannequin, dressing it up as a police officer, and putting it on the corner where she works, to get the drivers to slow down and look.

"Ten percent of the people give you 90 percent of the problems," she explained.

The other crossing guard I talked to, who works on the parkway, calls his intersection "Death Valley."

"Where are the cameras? There's nobody here to monitor it. They take their lives in their hands," he said, referring to pedestrians.

Six cars made an illegal right turn off the parkway onto a local street just that morning, the crossing guard said. We'll call him Carl.

"Cars are going 60 to 70 miles an hour," Carl said. "They (the drivers) just don't care. Everybody's in a rush. This is an accident waiting to happen."

### On the Street

He said he's seen multiple violations every day, with drivers making illegal turns, jumping lights and going through red lights, while kids and adults are trying to cross a slim white row of boxes to get to school or work.

Carl wants the government to install a speed camera at the intersection.

"They should have put cameras in a long time ago," he pointed out.

I asked all of them why they stay with the job.

"I love this job with the kids, watching their progression year to year," Alex said. "I have a good rapport with the parents. The parents bring me hot chocolate and coffee."

He gives everybody a big hello and they greet him like he's an old friend.

Bella said she does it because, "I think I make a difference. The respect I get from the kids is marvelous. They say hello to me by name. The kids keep me smiling."

These people know the most about the possible hazards of traffic intersections, where cars meet children. We owe them the courtesy of listening to their concerns about keeping kids safe.

*Pleasantville-based writer Michael Gold has had articles published in the New York Daily News, the Albany Times Union, The Virginian-Pilot, The Palm Beach Post, other newspapers and The Hardy Society Journal, a British literary journal.*

## Unaccompanied Children Who Come to U.S. Should Receive Our Support

By Elizabeth Mastropolo, Esq.

When Jenna was just 14 years old, she made the long and dangerous trek from El Salvador to the U.S. – by herself.

Her mother had left for the States when Jenna was only a toddler and she was being raised by her father, a police officer. But one day everything changed: Jenna's father disappeared, never returning home from work. It was the last time the then-13-year-old saw him.

Jenna soon learned that her father's disappearance was linked to threats from vicious gang members, and it wasn't safe for her to remain in El Salvador. The teenager fled to New York, where she was reunited with her mother.

Once here, Neighbors Link and its Community Law Practice worked with Jenna to get her enrolled in school as well as apply for – and receive – asylum in the U.S., something alarmingly few children in her situation are granted. Today, Jenna is thriving. Now a permanent resident, she's in college with hopes of becoming a graphic designer.

While Jenna's experience has a positive outcome, her need to escape harrowing circumstances is, unfortunately, far

from unique. Minors like her, who are under 18 and enter the U.S. without a parent or guardian, are what's known as unaccompanied children. The reasons these children make the journey vary, often centering on situations completely outside their control, whether that's to escape violence or abuse, to look for a mother or father, out of economic or political instability or even due to the destructive impact of natural disasters.

In her Pulitzer Prize-winning series for the Los Angeles Times, which she later turned into the book "Enrique's Journey," writer Sonia Nazario recounted the life-threatening and emotional trek 17-year-old Enrique, an unaccompanied child, made from Honduras to the U.S.

Nazario was recently the special guest speaker at Seeking Safety: Unaccompanied Minors and U.S. Immigration Policy, an event hosted by Neighbors Link. There, Nazario, who is now a contributing opinion writer at The New York Times, discussed some of the violent and devastating situations in which many of these children find themselves and how most arriving at our border today are refugees, fleeing for their lives. They have, as she poignantly explained, "lived through an undeclared

war."

And their stories are so much more than just headlines or anecdotes. Between October 2021 and August 2022, there were 8,000 unaccompanied children released to sponsors across New York State, and in Westchester specifically, there were 535, according to the Office of Refugee Resettlement, a part of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Administration for Children & Families. Sponsors, who have to pass a background check and agree to bring the child to all immigration proceedings, are typically a family member.

Unaccompanied immigrant children who have shown tenacity and resilience in the face of extraordinary challenges need the support of a welcoming community. Once kids and teens feel safe and supported, they can begin to heal from the trauma that brought them here and get involved in their new community.

There are critical ways we can offer our support. Currently, unaccompanied children are not provided legal representation in court. Even toddlers, are expected to defend themselves against deportation. Can you imagine your own toddler being left to fend for themselves

in this manner?

Without representation, unaccompanied children are much more likely to face deportation and a return to the horrific circumstances they were fleeing in the first place.

"With a lawyer, 7 in 10 win. Without one, 9 in 10 lose their cases," Nazario said, a statistic that further underscores the stakes these kids are up against.

That's why legislation like the Access to Representation Act is so important. This bill, which was introduced to the New York State Senate but has not yet been voted on, would provide the right to counsel for people facing deportation and other immigration proceedings, and make New York one of the first states to do so. This change would expand access to justice for so many and would serve as one step in the immigration reform that is so necessary in this country.

Legislation like this, in conjunction with the resources and support of communities like ours, would give these children a chance to be what they are: kids.

*Elizabeth Mastropolo is the managing attorney for Neighbors Link Community Law Practice.*

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS



# Obituaries

## Henry Ritell

Henry L. Ritell, age 95 of Briarcliff Manor, passed away peacefully on Oct. 31.

Born in the Bronx, he was the son of the late Enrico and Anna Rizzitiello. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Joyce (Carney) Ritell.

A graduate of Fordham University with a degree in chemistry in 1952, Henry also played baseball in college and served in the U.S. Army, where he was a southpaw pitcher.

Henry established his own company, Rit-Chem, in 1972, where three of his five sons worked. He sponsored a local softball team and also played pickup basketball until he

was 70 years young! He enjoyed traveling both for his global business and pleasure.

He will be greatly missed by his five beloved children, Gary and his wife, Karen, of Buchanan, Bruce and his wife, Karen, of Danbury Conn., Wayne of Briarcliff Manor, Jeffrey and his wife, Amy, of Ridgefield Conn. and Russell of Cold Spring. He loved spending time with his 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his sisters, Vera, Louise and Millie, and was survived by his other two sisters, Gloria and Lola. His entire family will surely miss him.

## Vincent Vetrano

Vincent Vetrano passed away on Oct. 31. He was 90 years old.

Mr. Vetrano was a resident at Bethel Springvale Inn in Croton-on-Hudson. He is survived by his two sons, Vincent Vetrano Jr. and Richard and Christina Vetrano, of Wappinger Falls; his sister, Eileen; and his brother-in-law, Ronald Seamen, of Florida.

Mr. Vetrano was the owner of Wolf & Co., a consultant firm located in Katnoah. He was an active member of the Builders Institute of Westchester. He did extensive mediation work for New York State and was the president of the Residence Council

at Bethel Springvale Inn.

Mr. Vetrano attended Columbia University and was a graduate of Westchester Community College. He was an avid Frank Sinatra fan, as well as a New York Yankee fan and a New York Giants fan. He was an avid reader, preferring nonfiction and autobiographical material.

The family gathered at All Souls Cemetery in Pleasantville on Nov. 7 for Vincent's funeral service.

# Police Blotter

## Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

**Oct. 27:** A caller reported a larceny in progress at a South Riverside Avenue business at 2:30 p.m. Patrols responded and located the suspect on Croton Point Avenue. After an investigation, the business declined to pursue charges against the suspect and he was released.

**Oct. 31:** A caller reported at 3:04 p.m. that a male was seen holding a sign on Croton Point Avenue and walking up to

**Oct. 29:** Michael Ostuni, 26, of Patterson, was charged with DWI at 11:19 p.m. following a traffic stop near the area of North Terryhill Road and Route 52.

**Nov. 2:** Brian Ahearn, 36, of Carmel, was charged with third-degree assault following a report of a possible physical dispute on Yorktown Road at 7:48 p.m. An investigation revealed Ahearn became angry with his wife over an iPad she purchased and appeared to strike her in the face with a closed fist.

the Pleasantville Cottage School, were in possession of stolen property from the vehicles, including a laptop computer and a credit card. Two of the youths were armed with knives. The school's staff was notified and responded. The youths were processed as juveniles and issued Family Court appearance tickets at police headquarters. Police advise residents should lock their vehicles and remove the key fobs.

**Nov. 2:** Report of a juvenile resident of the Pleasantville Cottage School having damaged seven vehicles belonging to staff members at about 11:30 a.m. The youth was identified by staff and will be issued a Family Court appearance ticket for the offenses.

## North Castle Police Department

**Oct. 28:** A traffic stop on North Castle Drive at 11:08 a.m. revealed that the vehicle's registration was suspended. The officer processed the vehicle's operator roadside. The vehicle was impounded by Armonk Garage.

**Oct. 31:** Caller reported at 9:06 a.m. that there were 15 to 20 goats running at large in the area of Mianus Drive. Goats have tags on their ears. The animal control officer responded and reported that the animals were corralled back onto the property of 1 Mianus Drive and 2 Middle Patent Rd. Matter adjusted.

**Oct. 31:** A caller reported at 1:19 p.m. that he is involved in an active dispute with one of his co-workers on Old Mount Kisco Road. He reports that during the dispute the co-worker threatened him and made a gun gesture using his hands. The responding officers reported that the dispute was verbal in nature and the parties have agreed to separate.

**Oct. 31:** An officer reported being flagged down on Clove Road at 10:22 p.m. regarding a larceny that occurred about one hour in the past. The party refused to file a deposition.

**Nov. 1:** A complainant reported at 4:40 p.m. that a suspicious male party pulled in

front of her driveway on Deer Hill Place about 10 minutes in the past, got out of his vehicle and asked her "Are you the one I am looking for?" The complainant told the male party to leave, but he began using profanity toward her. The male party was operating a white Audi and might have been lost. The responding officer will monitor the area.

## Putnam County Sheriff's Department

**Oct. 24:** Brandon Tompkins, 37, of Southeast, was arrested at 12:50 a.m. and charged with DWI, refusing to take a breath test and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended registration after being observed crossing over the double yellow line and having trouble maintaining a lane of traffic.

## White Plains Police Department

**Oct. 24:** Four individuals, Jose Ortega, Diego Franco, Victor Restrepo and John Arteaga, were charged with first-degree attempted burglary and a hate crime in connection with an incident at 10 McKinley St.

**Nov. 1:** Alexis Valverde was charged with first-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance in connection with an incident at 50 Westchester Ave.

## Yorktown Police Department

**Oct. 28:** Oscar Pena, 46, of New York City, was charged at 10:30 p.m. with second-degree grand larceny, a Class C felony, following a complaint from a business owner on Saw Mill River Road. The business owner reported \$42,000 in cash and \$10,000 in payroll checks had been stolen on Oct. 15 from his vehicle, which was parked in the parking lot of the business. Pena was remanded to Westchester County Jail in lieu of \$75,000 cash, \$125,000 bond or \$250,000 partially secured bond.

## North Castle Man Gets 15 Years for Sexually Abusing 12-Year-Old

A 44-year-old North Castle man was sentenced last week to 15 years in jail for engaging in sexual conduct with a 12-year-old victim, the Westchester County District Attorney's office announced.

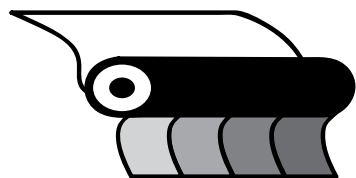
Jorge Lazo Achahui was also sentenced on Nov. 1 to 20 years of post-release supervision. The defendant will also be required to register as a sex offender after completing his prison sentence, according to the district attorney's office.

The North Castle Police Department arrested Achahui on Feb. 6, 2021,

following an investigation, which was conducted with assistance from the district attorney's office, the Westchester County Department of Laboratories and Research and the New York State Police Crime Laboratory System.

The defendant pleaded guilty on Sept. 28 to first-degree course of sexual conduct, a violent felony, for subjecting the victim to sexual intercourse multiple times between March 2020 and July 2020.

—Martin Wilbur



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# Jazz on Main Brings Smorgasbord of Sound, Sight and Taste to Mt. Kisco

By Brian Kluepfel

Shaul Dover's teenage attempts at playing music, including marching band, drums, piano and guitar, never quite took hold, yet he remained a fan.

Moving from Israel to New York City in the 1980s, his appreciation was heightened by the Big Apple's smorgasbord of musical styles and venues.

When his own children showed a proclivity for making music – and wanted it to be recorded – Dover finally opened his own studio, Sweatshop Studios, in Katonah in 2008. The recording facility has hosted Rob Thomas, among other artists, and also focuses on television and radio voiceovers and soundtracks.

The ultimate byproduct of “sound” business decisions and sandwich-filled dreams was the opening earlier this year of Dover's Jazz on Main in Mount Kisco, decades-long in conception but only five years in realization.

Past family discussions often jokingly brought up the idea of opening a food-based cafe, but Dover had always seriously considered it, and now has a venue which combines his love of sound engineering with savory Middle Eastern cuisine and a light show for what he calls “an immersive experience.”

For Dover, the main thing is entertainment. He said he is less interested in “virtuosos playing scales up



Jazz on Main in Mount Kisco not only brings appealing jazz to lovers of the music genre but a savory menu as well.

and down” than in communication with the audience. Thus, he said, “vocalists are very important to me.”

So is food. When asked about his house hummus, he laughed and said, “Of course, it's the best in the world.”

Consulting with friends in the restaurant

trade to develop a kitchen and menu, he's achieved his goal of bringing flavors from his homeland to his clientele, which is of great importance to him.

“The way Italians care about coffee, I care about hummus and baba ghanoush,” he said.

While a master builder in Maine fashioned the club's bar, lighting fixtures traversed a more difficult path. Dover ordered them on Etsy, not knowing the seller was based in Kiev. Somehow, though the Russian invasion took place just after the order was placed, the fixtures were routed through Poland, and eventually made it to Mount Kisco.

Dover's preoccupation is twofold – for the clientele, but also for the musicians.

“I am a sound engineer, he said. “Our sound is pristine. This is very important for musicians; they are feeding off it, really enjoying what they hear,” he said.

His experience at Sweatshop Studios, as well as consulting on the Bedford Playhouse's sound system, gave him confidence to design the system for Jazz on Main.

In sum, Dover is recreating his vision of the American Dream, the golden age of jazz, reimagined for the 21st century.

“We aim to transport guests to another era while engaging all the senses.”

What would jazz be without a little improvisation? On Thursdays, Jazz on Main hosts an open jam session and on Sundays a relaxed jazz brunch.

Jazz on Main is located at 37 S. Moger Ave. in Mount Kisco. For more information, including a schedule of upcoming performers and the menu that is offered, visit [www.jazzonmain.com](http://www.jazzonmain.com).

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POSTNET





# Hudson Valley Weather Calendar Continues to Support Children Causes

By Rick Pezzullo

Ever since a major hurricane ripped through Long Island in 1944, Jim Witt and the weather have been an inseparable pair. Intrigued by the strength of that storm, which caused water to seep through his family’s home in Queens, Witt began his lifelong journey of tracking the weather and making forecasts – a hobby that led 38 years ago to the creation of the Hope for Youth Foundation and the Hudson Valley Weather Calendar.

“I just learned by myself. I have no formal training in meteorology,” Witt said last week from his Cold Spring home. “It’s an amazing thing that has happened. I get up in the morning and I’m excited. I’m proud of what we do.”

Witt, a popular on-air personality at WHUD radio for the last 50 years, was a teacher and chairman of the Science Department at Lakeland High School from 1962 to 1977. He was also a faculty member at Columbia University where he directed the weather program for Columbia and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Several of Witt’s former students at Lakeland, where he ran the Weather Club, have channeled their meteorology education into careers. One student is executive vice president of AccuWeather. Another is the head forecaster for NASA. A third is director of research for the National Hurricane Center. His most famous student is New York City weatherman Irv “Mr. G” Gikofsky.

But Witt’s proudest accomplishment is, by far, his work with the Hope for Youth Foundation, which provides physical, emotional, educational or enrichment support to children in the Hudson Valley. His efforts have helped raise almost \$6 million for children’s organizations in the region.

The first year he produced the calendar, which was black and white, 1,000 copies were printed and \$1,000 was raised for Friends of Karen.

Last year, 18,000 color calendars were printed, raising \$236,000.

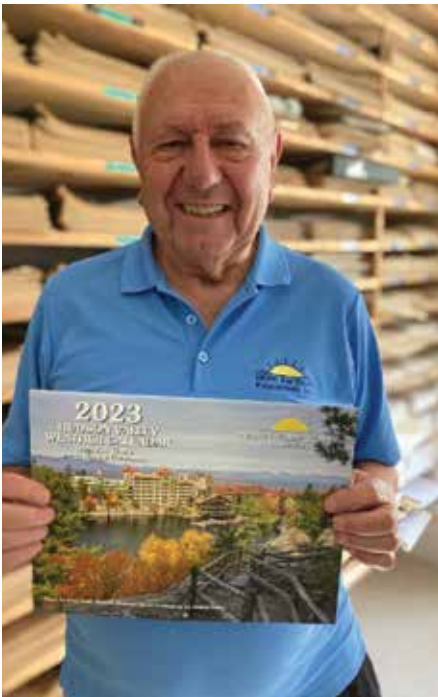
“It’s a year-long project. Last year we ran out (of calendars),” Witt said. “Everything that comes in goes to the kids. Some of the kids we help will never say a word or take a step.”

Besides stunning images submitted by about 50 photographers who vie for exposure, the 15-month calendar features Witt’s long-range weather forecasts that includes some stormy predictions that extend to 2032.

Witt said a Somers resident has been keeping track of his forecasts since 1986 and Witt’s precipitation predictions have compiled about a 90 percent accuracy rate over that span.

In addition to supporting children’s organizations, since 1996 Witt has given out seven annual \$5,000 scholarships to graduating seniors in local high schools.

Witt is currently making appearances in the region autographing and selling the



Hudson Valley weatherman Jim Witt with one of his 2023 Hudson Valley Weather calendars. Thousands of the calendars are sold each year, which benefits the Hope for Youth Foundation.

calendars, which cost \$10 apiece. Anyone interested in purchasing a calendar or finding out what retailers carry the calendar can visit [www.hfyf.org](http://www.hfyf.org).

## Let’s Talk: An Open Discussion for Men Living With Loss

Support Connection has announced a free program, It’s Okay to Grieve, Let’s Talk: An Open Discussion for Men Living with Loss, via Zoom on Tuesday, Nov. 29 from 7 to 8 p.m. It is open to men nationwide who have lost a spouse or partner to breast, ovarian or gynecological cancer.

It is impossible to prepare yourself

for the loss of a spouse or partner. Learning how to cope with the grief and the impact on your life is hard to do alone.

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# Well-Traveled Comedian Directed By Palminteri in New One-Man Show

By Martin Wilbur

Peter Fogel has been a successful working comic and comedic actor for decades, so it's difficult to get the Long Island-raised comedian starstruck.

After all, he has toured throughout North America, is a veteran of countless radio and television commercials and has appeared on late-night comedy shows on HBO and Comedy Central.

Just before the onset of the pandemic, Fogel was debuting a new one-man comedy show he wrote, "Til Death Do Us Part...You First!" in Florida. Despite his own impressive list of career credits, he was taken aback at what happened after his performance.

In the crowd that night was Oscar-nominated actor, writer and director and Emmy Award-winner Chazz Palminteri, who happened to be in town on business. Fogel never met Palminteri, a Bedford resident, but they have a mutual friend, who recommended taking in the show. Afterward, Palminteri offered to direct him as well as be the voice of Fogel's conscience in the show.

"My eyes lit up. Time stood still," Fogel recalled. "I'm going to have Chazz Palminteri direct my show. But every dog has its day. Maybe the dog had its day that day."



JENNA FRANKLIN PHOTO

Comedian Peter Fogel in a scene from his new one-man show, "Til Death Do Us Part...You First!" The show, which can be seen Off Broadway this weekend and at the Bedford Playhouse on Nov. 17, is directed by Oscar-nominated actor and Emmy Award winner Chazz Palminteri.

The show, based on true events in Fogel's life, is about an eternal bachelor who has difficulty making a commitment in his relationships. One love of his life dumps him on Valentine's Day, which actually happened to the now 59-year-old Fogel, about 30 years ago.

"She wanted to know my intentions with her. Were we going to get married," he said. "I was not ready. It was a funky time."

Fogel slips in and out of about 15 characters during the roughly 85-minute show, hilariously weaving

in different voices.

The project had to be put on hold because of the pandemic, but "Til Death Do us Part...You First!" makes its Off Broadway debut this weekend at the Triad Theater in Manhattan for three performances before coming to the Bedford Playhouse next Thursday evening, Nov. 17. The hope is to take it on the road after that.

The offer from Palminteri and his participation was a big deal because not only because of his name recognition, but because he

has directed only three shows in the past 30 years.

Palminteri said he came unannounced to the show in Florida nearly three years ago and sat toward the back of the theater. He said he was "blown away" at how funny Fogel was and was also impressed with his writing, the pace of the show and how it resonated with the audience. It's about what nearly everyone goes through in life – the absurdities of love, relationships and marriage.

"I was so impressed with the solo show's potential that I met Peter later in the lobby," Palminteri said. "Right there, on the spot, I offered to take his play on to the next level and get it ready for Off Broadway and beyond."

"He saw the crowd, the laughter, the couples elbowing each other," Fogel recalled. "He thought I had something, just like Robert DeNiro discovered him 34 years ago doing 'A Bronx Tale' in a small theater in L.A., and he always felt like he wants to give back when the right property comes along."

Palminteri's voice, as Fogel's conscience, tries to guide the character to make the right choices in life.

"It takes a lot to impress me," Palminteri said. "But when I saw Peter's gift for mimicry, voices,

dialects and how he moved effortlessly between 15 characters, I knew this was a show that deserved a larger audience."

Fogel said a lot of his problems with relationships stemmed from being on the road and his partners not wanting to have that lifestyle. He admitted he grew up in a bit of a dysfunctional household.

"I'm a middle-aged man trying to figure it out," Fogel said. "I'm a man-child at my age. There's no difference in my mind than I was at 35. A man my age is a grandfather. Do you understand that? Does that make sense? I have friends that are grandparents. I have a friend that's 76 and he's never been married and we're like the same guy. We look at things through a different lens."

The three shows at the Triad Theater are this Friday at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 2 and 9:30 p.m. Tickets are \$35 to \$50 each. For tickets and more information, visit [www.triadnyc.com](http://www.triadnyc.com). The theater is located at 158 W. 72nd St.

The Bedford Playhouse performance on Nov. 17 at 8 p.m. is produced by Palminteri's wife, Gianna. Regular tickets are \$45 and \$60 for premium for non-members. For tickets, visit [www.bedfordplayhouse.org](http://www.bedfordplayhouse.org).

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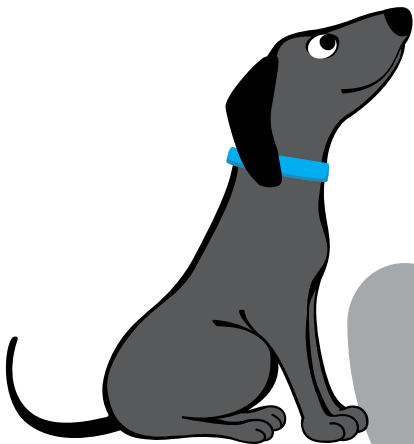


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# 75-Year-Old Pleasantville Barber Still as Sharp as His Scissors

By Jessie Jafet

Following in the footsteps of his now 97-year-old father who worked as a barber until the age of 92, Alfonso Magnotta of Pleasantville Barber Shop on Wheeler Avenue has devoted his life to the same trade – cutting and trimming each customer's hair with precision and care.

Magnotta, who immigrated to the United States at age 19 from a town near Naples, Italy, just celebrated his 75th birthday on Nov. 7 and still loves his job, a craft that he said he began to learn when he was 13 or 14 years old at his father's shop.

He then bought his own barbershop in the Bronx, back when haircuts cost \$2.50, and ran it for many years before deciding in 2001 to join his father, who was working at Pleasantville Barber Shop. He has remained working there ever since.

"When I came here, I liked the place, I liked the people. They are really nice people," Magnotta said. "The community is fantastic; it seems like a great place to live and there are so many children here. It is a very down-to-earth town with great restaurants."

Gavriel Yakubov, the shop's owner since 2010, said that having a barber like Magnotta on his team is something special.

"He is easygoing, with a great sense of humor, always the center of the show,



TODD SHAPERA PHOTO

Barber Alfonso Magnotta, who learned the craft from his father as a teenager, has no plans yet to retire from cutting hair. This week the personable barber celebrates his 75th birthday.

making sure that people are laughing and feeling comfortable," Yakubov said. "Customers that have been with him for over 20 years still come to see him."

Magnotta recognized that his job is often much more than just providing a fresh cut, hot shave, beard trim or keeping up

with the latest styles. The work naturally includes a lot of good conversation and interaction with people.

"You know, I should have been a psychologist. People will tell me their life stories," he said. "You get to know their kids; you see them growing up and there is great enjoyment when you finish with a customer and they are happy."

His loyal customers feel the same way and seem to appreciate the relationship, according to Todd Shapera, who said sitting in Magnotta's chair is inspiring on many levels.

"He's an artist with his scissors, razor and comb, cleaning up his clients' scruffy heads seemingly effortlessly

and intuitively, and pulls this off with an old-world gift of gab, making engaging conversation without prying, gossip or veering into the divisive hot buttons of the day," Shapera said.

The affable barber said he plans to stay working a while longer, although perhaps not as long as his father did. A father of two who has been married for 51 years, Magnotta said he is now simply enjoying his enduring career and the warm connections he has with his clients.

"They make me feel good; when you go home you don't have any stress, that is why I work," he said.

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## 'Love Letters' Can Be Dangerous When it Comes to Real Estate

In real estate, love letters have an entirely different meaning and purpose. Rather than seeking to win hearts, love letters in this case are drafted and sent from prospective buyers to sellers to try and win preference over other buyer candidates. While it is not illegal, it can be a dangerous practice.

As a realtor, I always advise my clients against the practice. To entice a seller to choose their offer, buyers sometimes write "love letters" to describe the many reasons why the seller should select them.

Buyer love letters are a tactic used by some buyers in an attempt to stand out to a seller, especially in hot markets with low



inventory and bidding wars. Seemingly harmless, these letters actually raise fair housing concerns, and could open real estate professionals and their clients to violations.

The letters often contain personal information and reveal characteristics of the buyer, such as race, religion or familial status, which could then be used, knowingly or through unconscious bias, as an unlawful basis for a seller's decision to accept or reject an offer.

Consider where a potential buyer writes to the seller, detailing how their children will be running down the stairs on Christmas morning for years to come in the house. This statement reveals the potential buyer's familial status and that they are Christian, both of which are protected characteristics under fair housing laws. Using protected characteristics as a

basis to accept or reject an offer, as opposed to price and terms, would violate the Fair Housing Act.

Realtors are advised to protect themselves and their clients from fair housing liability by educating their clients about the fair housing laws and the pitfalls of buyer love letters, as well as informing their clients that they will not deliver buyer love letters.

A realtor's clients should be advised that their decision to accept or reject an offer should be based on objective criteria only. And, if a client insists on drafting a buyer love letter, the realtor is advised not to help their client draft or deliver it. Further, the realtor is advised to not even read any love letter drafted or received by their client. They must document all offers received and the seller's objective reason for accepting an offer.

Personally, I ran into this kind of situation only twice, and the particulars in both cases proved curious, if not embarrassing (to me).

In the first case, my seller clients were two men who received an offer from two women who stated that it was obvious they shared some preferences, from their "Mini-Cooper cars to their lifestyles." My clients were offended that this assumption would have been made without their own

disclosure.

In the second case, where again I represented the seller, a letter was received from a prospective buyer who claimed that he had a brain tumor and had not long to live, but wanted to be assured that his widow was left in such a "beautiful and comforting" home.

My seller client was so moved that she accepted his offer, which was lower than two other offers on the table! I must confess that I too was moved, but still managed to advise my client to think about letting sentiment sway her. However, she persisted.

That situation occurred more than 20 years ago, and occasionally when I pass that house on my way home, I witness that successful buyer, healthy as an ox, mowing his lawn. I guess the only way I can accept this situation, which was decidedly deceptive, is to write about it here and to hope the buyer reads it.

Bill Primavera is a residential and commercial realtor associated with William Raveis Realty, as well as a publicist and journalist writing regularly as *The Home Guru*. For questions about home maintenance or to buy or sell a home, he can be e-mailed at [williamjprimavera@gmail.com](mailto:williamjprimavera@gmail.com) or called directly at 914-522-2076.



By Bill Primavera



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# Dr. Kathleen Lynn: Rebel, Reformer, Eradicator of Tuberculosis

Our final installment in the “Women of Ireland” series, Kathleen Lynn, did not carry a gun, as the bulk of our other subjects had. Instead, she carried a medical kit.

Writer Mary Thorpe, in <https://celticlifeintl.com>, labels her “one of the great Irish humanitarians of the 20th century.”

Born Jan. 28, 1874, in County Mayo, Lynn was distantly related to Countess Markiewicz, another of our recent subjects, and grew up in the same privileged environment. Her family was Protestant, and her father, Robert Young Lynn, was a Church of Ireland clergyman. Despite being members of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, Lynn’s family were engrained with compassion for the masses, who suffered greatly during Kathleen’s life, whether in rural Ireland or urban Dublin.

At 16 she knew what she wanted to be – a physician. She studied first in England and Germany, and then returned to Ireland where she enrolled in the Royal University of Ireland, now the University College (Dublin) School of Medicine. In 1899, at 25, she became one of its first female graduates. She promptly left for America, accompanied by her close friend, Madeleine French-Mullen. She remained there for 10 years, and learned as much as she could about American hospital practices.

Unable to secure a hospital position upon her return to Ireland, she struck out on her own and set up a physician’s practice in



Dr. Kathleen Lynn (1874 - 1955)

Rathmines, where she and Madeleine lived. Her efforts were finally rewarded in 1910 when she became the first female Irish doctor employed in a hospital.

But medicine was not her only passion. With a thirst for social reform and justice, she became involved in the women’s suffrage movement; the Irish labor movement (where she became a close friend of the Irish socialist and revolutionary James Connolly); and, at Connolly’s urging, the Irish Nationalist movement.

By the time of the 1916 Rising, she was a captain and chief medical officer in the Irish Citizen Army, to whose members she taught first aid classes. During the Rising, she personally directed rebel medical

operations at Dublin’s City Hall, prior to its recapture by the British.

Dr. Lynn was arrested and sent to Kilmainham Gaol. Released, she continued her involvement in politics during the Anglo-Irish War and the subsequent Irish Civil War. She rose to a leadership position in the Sinn Féin (Ourselves Alone) party, where she hoped to introduce greater emphasis on community healthcare.

She simultaneously agitated for the creation of a municipal hospital concentrating on providing services to the women and children of Dublin, the majority of whom lived in abject poverty and fear of one of the number one killers of the day – tuberculosis. Other common maladies included syphilis, then widespread among Dublin’s poor, and malnutrition.

Infant mortality was another scourge, with Ireland having the highest rate in all of Europe. Her efforts resulted in the establishment of Saint Ultan’s Hospital, which opened in 1919. It was the only hospital in Ireland managed and staffed solely by women. Thus, it offered an environment in which the typical Irish woman of the time would feel far more comfortable in as she sought treatment for ailments that might make them objects of shame and derision, no matter how unfair that characterization might be.

By the late 1920s, it became apparent



By Brian McGowan


that the Irish political scene would not be particularly receptive to Dr. Lynn’s aims. Issues of gender and probable sexual orientation stymied her goal of providing modern medical treatment to all the women and children of Ireland.

Despite the continued opposition of the male-dominated Irish medical establishment, Dr. Lynn continued tirelessly in her labors for the poor and oppressed, dispensing quality medical care, conducting research into the causes of tuberculosis and ultimately managing widescale vaccination against this major killer.

A sharp reduction in the disease is credited to her work, which continued until the day she died, aged 81, on Sept. 14, 1955. In recognition of her contribution to Ireland, she was given a funeral with full military honors and is widely recognized today as an outstanding “Woman of Ireland.”

Longtime Pleasantville resident Brian McGowan was born and raised in the Bronx and is a second-, third- and fifth-generation Irish-American/Canadian, as his immigrant ancestors followed several paths to the New World. Reach him at [brian.m.mcgowan1952@gmail.com](mailto:brian.m.mcgowan1952@gmail.com). He is the author of two books, “Thunder at Noon,” about the Battle of Waterloo, and “Love, Son John,” about World War II. Both are available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

## Irish Eclectic



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**NOTE YES!**

**Proposition #1 MKVFD LOSAP**

**Proposition #2 MKVAC LOSAP**



**LOSAP (Length of Service Award Program) is no additional cost to taxpayers & 100% of the funds go to the volunteers.**



The program, which is used as a recruiting and retention tool, will bring our volunteers closer to parity with those in surrounding communities.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the LOSAP Program?

- A. LOSAP is a Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP). The program began in 2003 after a referendum vote by the Village taxpayers.
- B. The program allows Mount Kisco Volunteer Firefighters (MKVFD) and Mount Kisco Ambulance Corp (MKVAC) members to attain 50 points during the calendar year which would give them a benefit of \$20 per month for each year that 50 points were attained for a maximum of 20 years. **This is not a Pension Plan.**
- C. The maximum monthly payout after 20 years would be \$400 per month once entitlement age has been reached. (60 years of age for the Fire Department and 65 years of age for the Ambulance Corps).
- D. The program was created to recruit new members and retain existing members for both organizations.
- E. The MKVFD and MKVAC are seeking to increase their benefit from \$400 per month to \$750 per month. Surrounding towns currently have a similar program with benefits ranging from \$800 to \$1200 per month.
- F. The LOSAP program will go from \$20 per month to \$30 per month and from 20 years to 25 years before the maximum benefit can be attained. It will also offer parity between the fire department and ambulance corps with entitlement at age 60 for all.
- G. No additional taxpayer funding will be required if projections hold true for this increase in benefits.
- H. The Village of Mount Kisco Treasurer and the Village Manager created investment accounts in 2003 to ensure the program for the MKVFD and the MKVAC would be funded.
- I. Financial models project that the current budget allocations for these accounts growing at a rate of 4.5% will cover the cost of the increased benefit through 2035 with no current tax increase to the residents of Mount Kisco.



# Volunteer's Corner: News From the Pleasantville Volunteer Fire Department

By John R. Thys

It has been a busy stretch for the Pleasantville Volunteer Fire Department. On Oct. 2, the department participated in the Pleasantville Block Party, sponsored by the Chamber of commerce. Some members also participated in the 10th annual Charity First Responder Chili cook off at the Broken Bow Brewery in Tuckahoe. Resulting fires were extinguished with Roloids.

Lt. Ryan Onuma organized the department's Open House on Oct. 8. The department opened its doors to the village with exhibits of tools, proper fire extinguisher use, vehicle extrication and a smoke house exhibit. The Pleasantville Volunteer Ambulance Corps also participated.

On Oct. 4, a fire safety presentation was made to a local Girl Scout troop and three days later, a similar presentation was made at Bedford Road School. Both presentations were organized by Onuma.

On Oct. 22, 18 members of the department attended a hands-on training class titled "Man vs. Machine," where members were taught how to respond to industrial accidents and impalements and received additional training on extrication of victims from a vehicle.

The department responded to a



Pleasantville assisted the Thornwood Fire Department at an Oct. 15 structure fire.

structure fire on Oct. 15, as mutual aid to Thornwood. Thornwood was also assisted by Valhalla, Hawthorne and Millwood. The main fire was knocked down relatively quickly with members cleaning up hotspots and overhauling to assure no extension.

In addition, there were responses to an array of calls for automatic alarms, gas leaks, car accidents and carbon monoxide calls.

In previous articles, a member of the department has been recognized to honor them for their contribution to the community and to demonstrate that the volunteers of the Pleasantville Volunteer Fire Department are the same as the



Jon Ells joined the department shortly after moving to Pleasantville with his family in 2018.

residents of the village, except from time to time they ride the big red trucks to come to the aid of their neighbors.

This month, we recognize Jon Ells, a fairly new volunteer, having moved to Pleasantville in 2018 and joining the department shortly thereafter.

Ells, a Yale grad, works remotely from home as a consultant specializing in sustainability. Previously he spent 20 years working for New York City, in emergency management and vehicle operations. He lives in Pleasantville with his wife, Stephanie, and daughter Delilah.

He joined the department after seeing a banner soliciting volunteers. Ells decided

that joining the department would be a good way to meet neighbors and perform a needed service in his new village.

Jon said that he gets much satisfaction from responding to fires and other emergencies where he is part of a team that makes a difference. He also has learned a great deal from courses given at the local fire training center.

Aside from courses necessary to qualify as a firefighter, he mentioned that Con Edison provides a class in gas emergencies covering practical hands-on training to recognize gas issues.

The Pleasantville Volunteer Fire Department is always looking for new members. Should you be interested, we'd love to talk to you. No commitments. The fire service has proven to be a rewarding and meaningful experience for many. Just ask the long-term members; some have been with the department for over 50 years and many 25 years or more.

*Anyone interested in joining us can stop by the department's headquarters at 75 Washington Ave. most Monday nights when there are drills, meetings and equipment maintenance. If you see us come on in, we will make time to talk to you. Or you can give the department a call at 914-769-2336 (You will get the recording, but we will get back to you.)*

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# Remembering the Life and Bravery of Conservationist Gonzalo Cardona

By Bryan Kluepfel

As I head for another trip to South America, I'm reminded that just last year a leader in environmental conservation, Gonzalo Cardona, was killed in Valle del Cauca, Colombia. Gonzalo dedicated the last 23 years of his life to protecting the yellow-eared parrot, a wondrous bird which was in danger of extinction. (It has already been extirpated, or made locally extinct, in neighboring Ecuador.)

Colombia has become somewhat safer since the most terrifying days of the drug cartels. It has become a more popular birding destination. It could be the greatest birding destination on the planet, for its range of habitat and number of species.

Yet Colombia is still the most dangerous place in the world to take a stand for the environment.

In 2019, 64 park rangers and others working to protect and preserve nature were killed. There is ongoing conflict between remnants of the FARC, which signed a nominal peace treaty with the government in 2016, and the country's official armed forces.

It was into this mess that "Gonza" Cardona bravely stepped. He had been a farmer, but he had no specific reason to protect an endangered species. He could have gone on with his life, as many of his



An illustration of the yellow-eared parrot from "Parrots of the World" by Joseph M. Forshaw. The illustration was by William T. Cooper.

fellow Colombians do every day. But he persisted.

When Gonzalo began counting the yellow-eared parrots in 1998, there were only about 80 left in Colombia. Through his efforts, and those of ProAves, a nonprofit conservation organization in Colombia, the number grew to more than 2,800 when he completed his last census

in December 2020.

After last year's census, on Jan. 8, Gonzalo was returning to Roncevalles, a mountain town 2,400 meters above sea level. His birthplace, Roncevalles is a town that has been occupied by armed forces, its citizens terrorized and killed. A place to tread lightly.

There is a road connecting Barragán and Roncevalles. A lonely road, and a no-go zone after 6 p.m., "everyone knows," said the local papers. FARC holdouts, armed bandits and others don't like "their" territory compromised after dark. Gonzalo hopped on his motorbike and headed home for a well-deserved rest after completing the census.

He never made it. A few days later, after his disappearance was reported and publicized, Gonzalo's wife received a call from the perpetrators who shot and killed him. They can stop looking; you can find his body here, they said. The corpse was found, covered in sticks and dirt, with two bullets in the chest.

Gonzalo Cardona died defending a species of parrot that otherwise may have disappeared forever. He never questioned why he did it. It simply had to be done. He knew, and he persisted.

Gonza gave people hope. He made

Colombians proud of their natural treasures, just as the adventurous team at Expedicion BIO from the Humboldt Institute is reclaiming this heritage and giving the country a path forward in conservation and eco-tourism. Gonzalo lives on in the work of ProAves throughout Colombia, and through the annual Yellow-Eared Parrot Festival in Roncevalles, close to where he died.

Dian Fossey, the American primatologist murdered in Rwanda on the day after Christmas in 1985, would have been proud to know Gonzalo. I'm sorry I never met him.

Today's column is also dedicated to Franz Jägerstätter, a humble Austrian farmer who faced down terror, refusing to be conscripted into Hitler's army or to sign an oath of loyalty to the Fuhrer. For this, he died, beheaded at age 36.

Much of this column originally appeared on the blogsite birdmanwalking.com.

Brian Kluepfel of Ossining is a proud member of Saw Mill River Audubon and an author for the Lonely Planet travel book series, Westchester Magazine and Birdwatching Magazine. His article on birding in Newfoundland appeared in October's Birdwatching. Check him out at birdmanwalking.com.

## For The Birds

## THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

**November Bounty.** According to vocabulary.com, "November is stuffed with word-worthy occasions. From Native American Heritage Month to Election Day, Veterans Day, National Pickle Day and Thanksgiving, it's a veritable cornucopia of vocabulary." The words this week come from the "A Bounty of November Vocabulary" word lists.

1. **muddle** (n.)

A) a grinding stone      B) a bungling performance      C) a disorganized state
2. **dumfound** (v.)

A) to say nothing      B) baffle      C) jettison
3. **benignant** (adj.)

A) serenely mild      B) dear to the heart      C) strongly inclined
4. **terrapin** (n.)

A) web-footed turtle      B) solid ground      C) physical features
5. **statute** (n.)

A) state of affairs      B) legislative act      C) a collection of data
6. **buffalo** (v.)

A) to give strength to      B) become encouraged      C) overawe
7. **pemmican** (n.)

A) a paste of dried meat      B) an introduction      C) companion piece
8. **eleemosynary** (adj.)

A) marked by elegance      B) inherent      C) charitable

- ANSWERS:
1. C. An untidy and disorganized state or collection; a confused multitude of things
2. B. To be a mystery or be bewildering to; amaze; baffle; perplex
3. A. Pleasant and beneficial in nature or influence
4. A. Any of various edible North American web-footed turtles living in fresh or brackish water
5. B. An act passed by a legislative body; legislative act
6. C. To overawe or intimidate (someone)
7. A. A paste of dried and pounded meat mixed with melted fat and other ingredients
8. C. Generous in assistance to the poor; charitable



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**NOTICE OF SPECIAL DISTRICT MEETING  
CHAPPAQUA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT,  
IN THE COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a resolution of the Board of Education of the Chappaqua Central School District, in the County of Westchester, New York, adopted on October 3, 2022, a Special District Meeting of the qualified voters of said School District will be held on:

**Tuesday, November 29, 2022**

from 7:00 o'clock A.M. to 9:00 o'clock P.M. (Prevailing Time) at the Gymnasium of the Horace Greeley High School, Chappaqua, New York for the purpose of voting upon the following Bond Propositions:

**BOND PROPOSITION #1**

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Board of Education of the Chappaqua Central School District, in the County of Westchester, New York (the "District"), is hereby authorized to construct improvements and alterations to District school buildings and/or sites (the "Project") substantially as described in a plan prepared by the District with the assistance of KG+D, Architects, P.C. (the "Plan"), available for public inspection in the office of the District Clerk, including (as and where necessary): roof replacements and/or reconstruction; improvements to the heating, ventilation, air conditioning, electrical, fire safety, lighting, and communications systems; bridge replacement; and site and athletic improvements including the construction of bathrooms, a storage building, playground resurfacing and a modified baseball field and paving improvements; all of the foregoing to include the original furnishings, equipment, machinery, apparatus and ancillary or related site, demolition and other work required in connection therewith; and to expend therefor, including preliminary costs, costs incidental thereto and to the financing thereof and interest during construction, an amount not to exceed the estimated total cost of \$33,985,000; provided that the costs of the components of the Project as set forth in the Plan may be reallocated among such components if the Board of Education shall determine that such reallocation is in the best interests of the District;
- (b) that a tax is hereby voted in the aggregate amount of not to exceed \$33,985,000 to pay such cost, said tax to be levied and collected in installments in such years and in such amounts as shall be determined by said Board of Education; and
- (c) that in anticipation of said tax, bonds of the District are hereby authorized to be issued in the principal amount of not to exceed \$33,985,000 and a tax is hereby voted to pay the interest on said bonds as the same shall become due and payable.

**BOND PROPOSITION #2**

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Board of Education of the Chappaqua Central School District, in the County of Westchester, New York (the "District"), is hereby authorized to construct a single point of entry at Horace Greeley High School (the "Project") substantially as described in a plan prepared by the District with the assistance of KG+D, Architects, P.C. (the "Plan"), available for public inspection in the office of the District Clerk, including (as and where necessary): including a new entrance and connector to gymnasium, and reconfiguration of main office; the foregoing to include the original furnishings, equipment, machinery, apparatus and ancillary or related site, demolition and other work required in connection therewith; and to expend therefor, including preliminary costs, costs incidental thereto and to the financing thereof and interest during construction, an amount not to exceed the estimated total cost of \$11,340,000; provided that the costs of the components of the Project as set forth in the Plan may be reallocated among such components if the Board of Education shall determine that such reallocation is in the best interests of the District;
- (b) that a tax is hereby voted in the aggregate amount of not to exceed \$11,340,000 to pay such cost, said tax to be levied and collected in installments in such years and in such amounts as shall be determined by said Board of Education; and
- (c) that in anticipation of said tax, bonds of the District are hereby authorized to be issued in the principal amount of not to exceed \$11,340,000 and a tax is hereby voted to pay the interest on said bonds as the same shall become due and payable.

Such Bond Propositions shall appear on the ballot used for voting at said Special District Meeting in substantially the following condensed forms:

**BOND PROPOSITION #1**

YES NO

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Board of Education of the Chappaqua Central School District, in the County of Westchester, New York (the "District"), is hereby authorized to construct improvements and alterations to District school buildings and/or sites, substantially as described in a plan prepared by the District with the assistance of KG+D, Architects, P.C., and to expend therefor, including preliminary costs, costs incidental thereto and to the financing thereof and interest during construction, an amount not to exceed the estimated total cost of \$33,985,000; (b) that a tax is hereby voted in the aggregate amount of not to exceed \$33,985,000 to pay such cost, said tax to be levied and collected in installments in such years and in such amounts as shall be determined by said Board of Education; and (c) that in anticipation of said tax, bonds of the District are hereby authorized to be issued in the principal amount of not to exceed \$33,985,000 and a tax is hereby voted to pay the interest on said bonds as the same shall become due and payable.

**BOND PROPOSITION #2**

YES NO

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Board of Education of the Chappaqua Central School District, in the County of Westchester, New York (the "District"), is hereby authorized to construct a single point of entry at Horace Greeley High School, substantially as described in a plan prepared by the District with the assistance of KG+D, Architects, P.C., and to expend therefor, including preliminary costs, costs incidental thereto and to the financing thereof and interest during construction, an amount not to exceed the estimated total cost of \$11,340,000; (b) that a tax is hereby voted in the aggregate amount of not to exceed \$11,340,000 to pay such cost, said tax to be levied and collected in installments in such years and in such amounts as shall be determined by said Board of Education; and (c) that in anticipation of said tax, bonds of the District are hereby authorized to be issued in the principal amount of not to exceed \$11,340,000 and a tax is hereby voted to pay the interest on said bonds as the same shall become due and payable.

The voting will be conducted by ballot as provided in the Education Law and the polls will remain open from 7:00 o'clock A.M. to 9:00 o'clock P.M. (Prevailing Time) and as much longer as may be necessary to enable the voters then present to cast their ballots.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that registration of voters is required pursuant to Section 2014 of the Education Law. If a voter has registered to vote with the School District and has voted at an annual or special school district meeting within the last four calendar years, (after January 1, 2018) s/he is eligible to vote at this Special District Meeting. If a voter is currently registered to vote with the Westchester County Board of Elections, s/he is also eligible to vote in this Special District Meeting. All other persons who wish to vote must register. Registration may be done on any business day at the office of the District Clerk, during business hours, at the Education Center at 66 Roaring Brook Road, Chappaqua, New York, up to November 23, 2022. Any person possessing all of the following qualifications may register to vote:

1. Is a citizen of the United States; and
2. Is eighteen years of age or older; and
3. Has resided in the School District for a period of thirty days immediately preceding the day of the Special District Meeting.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the register of voters so prepared, including the names of military voters who submitted valid military registrations, shall be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the District and shall be open for inspection by any qualified voter of the District between the hours of 8:30 o'clock A.M. and 4:00 o'clock P.M., (Prevailing Time), beginning November 23, 2022, except legal holidays, Sunday and on Saturday, November 26, 2022 by appointment only. Said register will be open for inspection at the polling place on the date of the election and vote.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that, applications for absentee ballots for said Special District Meeting may be obtained at the Office of the School District Clerk. The completed application must be received by the District Clerk no more than thirty (30) days and at least seven (7) days prior to the election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter or the day before the Special District Meeting, if the ballot will be picked up personally at the District Clerk's Office by the voter or the voter's designated agent set forth in the application. Absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk by no later than 5:00 o'clock P.M., (Prevailing Time), on November 29, 2022.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that a list of all persons to whom absentee ballots shall have been issued and a list of all military voters to whom military ballots shall have been issued, will be available for inspection from qualified voters of the District in the said office of the District Clerk during regular office hours, 8:30 o'clock A.M. to 4:30 o'clock P.M., (Prevailing Time), until the day of the Special District Meeting. Any qualified voter may file a written challenge of the qualifications of a voter whose name appears on such list, stating the reasons for the challenge.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that Military Voters who are not currently registered to vote may request an application to register as a qualified voter of the District and Military Voters who are registered to vote may request an application for a military ballot by contacting the District Clerk at 66 Roaring Brook Road, Chappaqua, NY 10514, Telephone (914) 238-7200, Ext. 1002 or email: [lielsner@chappaquaschools.org](mailto:lielsner@chappaquaschools.org), for the Special District Meeting on November 29, 2022. The Military Voter may indicate their preference for receiving the registration application and/or application for military ballot by mail, facsimile or email. The application to register and the application for military ballot must be received by the District Clerk no later than 5:00 P.M. (Prevailing Time) on November 3, 2022. Military ballots will be mailed or otherwise distributed no later than 25 days before the election. Military ballots must be returned by mail or in person and received by the District Clerk by 5:00 o'clock P.M. (Prevailing Time) on November 29, 2022.

Only qualified voters who are duly registered will be permitted to vote.

BY THE ORDER OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dated: October 3, 2022  
LIISA ELSNER  
DISTRICT CLERK



(a) Que la Junta de Educación del Distrito Escolar Central de Chappaqua, en el Condado de Westchester, Nueva York (el “Distrito”), está autorizada por la presente a construir mejoras y modificaciones en los edificios y/o sitios escolares del Distrito, sustancialmente como se describe en un plan preparado por el Distrito con la asistencia de KG+D, Architects, PC, y gastarlo, incluidos los costos preliminares, los costos incidentales y el financiamiento de los mismos y los intereses durante la construcción, una cantidad que no exceda el costo total estimado de \$33,985,000; (b) que por la presente se vota un impuesto por un monto total que no exceda los \$33,985,000 para pagar dicho costo, dicho impuesto se impondrá y recaudará en cuotas en los años y en los montos que determine dicha Junta de Educación; y (c) que en previsión de dicho impuesto, por la presente se autoriza la emisión de bonos del Distrito por un monto de capital que no exceda los \$33,985,000 y por la presente se vota un impuesto para pagar los intereses de dichos bonos a medida que venzan y sean pagaderos.

PROPUESTA DE BONO N° 2

SÍ

NO

SE RESUELVE:

(a) Que la Junta de Educación del Distrito Escolar Central de Chappaqua, en el Condado de Westchester, Nueva York (el “Distrito”), está autorizada por la presente a construir un único punto de entrada en la escuela secundaria Horace Greeley, sustancialmente como se describe en un plan preparado por el Distrito con la asistencia de KG+D, Architects, P.C., y gastar para ello, incluidos los costos preliminares, los costos incidentales y el financiamiento de los mismos y los intereses durante la construcción, una cantidad que no exceda el costo total estimado de \$11,340,000 .para pagar dicho costo, dicho impuesto se impondrá y recaudará en cuotas en los años y en las cantidades que determine dicha Junta de Educación; y (c) que en previsión de dicho impuesto, por la presente se autoriza la emisión de bonos del Distrito por un monto de capital que no exceda los \$11,340,000 y por la presente se vota un impuesto para pagar los intereses de dichos bonos a medida que vencen y son pagaderos.

La votación se llevará a cabo mediante boletas según lo dispuesto en la Ley de Educación y los centros de votación permanecerán abiertos de 7:00 A.M. a 9:00 P.M. (hora vigente) y más tiempo según sea necesario para permitir que los votantes presentes emitan sus votos.

ADEMÁS SE NOTIFICA, que se requiere el registro de votantes de conformidad con la Sección 2014 de la Ley de Educación. Si los votantes han sido registrados previamente en el distrito escolar para votar y han votado en una reunión anual o especial de Distrito escolar dentro de los últimos cuatro años, ellos reúnen los requisitos para votar. Si un(a) votante está actualmente registrado(a) para votar con la Junta Electoral del Condado de Westchester, también es elegible para votar en esta Reunión Especial del Distrito. Todas las personas que deseen votar deberán registrarse. La inscripción se puede realizar cualquier día hábil en la oficina de la secretaria del Distrito, durante el horario laboral, en el Centro de Educación en 66 Roaring Brook Road, Chappaqua, Nueva York, hasta el 23 de noviembre de 2022. Cualquier persona que posea todas las siguientes cualificaciones puede registrarse para votar:

1. Es ciudadano(a) de los Estados Unidos
2. Tiene dieciocho (18) años o más; y
3. Ha residido en el distrito escolar por un período de treinta (30) días inmediatamente anteriores al día de la votación;

ADEMÁS SE NOTIFICA, que el registro de votantes así preparado, incluidos los nombres de los votantes militares que presentaron registros militares válidos, se archivará en la oficina de la secretaria del Distrito y estará abierto para su inspección por parte de cualquier votante calificado del Distrito entre el horario de 8:30 A. M. y 4:00 P.M., (hora vigente), a partir del 23 de noviembre de 2022, excepto feriados legales, domingos y el sábado 26 de noviembre de 2022 solo con cita previa. Dicho registro estará abierto para inspección en el lugar de votación en la fecha de la elección y votación.

ADEMÁS SE NOTIFICA, que las solicitudes de boletas de voto en ausencia pueden obtenerse en la oficina de la secretaria del Distrito Escolar. La solicitud completa debe ser recibida por la secretaria del Distrito no más de treinta (30) días y al menos siete (7) días antes de la elección si la boleta se enviará por correo a los votantes o el día anterior a la Reunión Especial del Distrito, si la boleta será recogida personalmente en la oficina de la secretaria del Distrito por los votantes o los agentes designados por los votantes en la solicitud. Las boletas de voto en ausencia deben ser recibidas por la secretaria del Distrito no más tarde de las 5:00 P.M., hora vigente, el 29 de noviembre de 2022.

ADEMÁS SE NOTIFICA, que una lista de todas las personas a las que se les habrán emitido boletas de voto en ausencia y una lista de todos los votantes militares a quienes se les habrán emitido boletas militares estará disponible para inspección de los votantes calificados del Distrito en dicha oficina de la secretaria del Distrito durante el horario regular de oficina, de 8:30 A.M. a 4:30 P.M., (hora vigente), hasta el día de la Reunión Especial del Distrito. Todos los votantes calificados pueden presentar una impugnación por escrito acerca de la cualificación de uno de los votantes cuyo nombre aparezca en dicha lista, exponiendo los motivos para la impugnación.

ADEMÁS SE NOTIFICA, que los votantes militares que actualmente no están registrados para votar pueden solicitar registrarse como votantes calificados del Distrito y los votantes militares que están registrados para votar pueden obtener una solicitud de una boleta militar, poniéndose en contacto con la Secretaria del Distrito en 66 Roaring Brook Road, Chappaqua, NY 10514, teléfono (914) 238-7200, Ext. 1002 o correo electrónico: lielsner@chappaqua-schools.org, para la Reunión Especial del Distrito el 29 de noviembre de 2022. Los votantes militares pueden indicar su preferencia de recibir la solicitud de registro y/o boleta por correo, fax o correo electrónico. La solicitud completa para registrarse y/o la solicitud para una boleta militar debe ser recibida por la secretaria del Distrito no más tarde de las 5:00 P.M. (hora vigente) el 3 de noviembre de 2022. Las boletas de voto militar se enviarán por correo o se distribuirán a más tardar 25 días antes de la elección. Las boletas de voto militar deben ser devueltas por correo o en persona y deben ser recibidas por la secretaria del Distrito no más tarde de las 5:00 P.M. (hora vigente) el 29 de noviembre de 2022.

Sólo los votantes calificados que están registrados para votar podrán votar.

POR ORDEN DE LA JUNTA DE EDUCACIÓN

Fechada: 3 de octubre de 2022  
LIISA ELSNER  
SECRETARIA DEL DISTRITO



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# Addressing the Movement Toward Low-Alcohol Wines



By Nick Antonaccio

I've always been an advocate of full-bodied wines – be they red or white. I enjoy the unique balance of fruit and acid present in these wines.

The increasing problem I've been encountering is these full-bodied wines tend to have higher and higher levels of alcohol, sometimes approaching 16 percent, not a good thing in general and especially if I'm driving afterwards.

I've been focusing on this trend in alcohol content when selecting a bottle of wine. What an eye-opening experience. As I reported last week, there is a trend toward higher alcohol levels in wines, especially those from several California producers of Cabernet Sauvignons and Zinfandels.

But, countering this trend is a consumer movement to seek out lower-alcohol wines, influenced by consumers' changing preferences and, even more significantly, the deeply embedded awareness of the effects of drinking and driving. This week I'm focusing on this phenomenon.

The wine industry has responded to these changing demographics in several ways:

*'a consumer movement to seek out lower-alcohol wines, influenced by consumers' changing preferences'*

1. Ignore consumer concerns. Great wines, according to many vintners (and critics), represent the specific expression of grapes, soil and climate. In order to achieve this, they believe grapes should not be harvested until the optimal ripeness occurs. (Increasingly, global warming is influencing the hang-time of grapes on the vine, allowing winemakers to optimize their efforts.) This is a noble viewpoint, but at times it results in high levels of residual sugar and, therefore, high levels of alcohol in the finished product.

What does this portend for the average consumer? We may have to reduce our consumption of wine. In the absolute, a 1 or 2 percent increase in alcohol levels may seem insignificant, but the impact may be. I recently read of an experiment in which an individual's

blood-alcohol content was measured one hour after consuming two glasses of wine: first, one with 12.5 percent alcohol on an empty stomach, and on a separate occasion, one with 15 percent alcohol. The difference? Legally sober versus legally drunk.

2. Offer consumers lower alcohol wines.

Opportunistic winemakers are seeking ways to market a new category of wines. These "low-alcohol" wines, ranging from 10 to 12 percent, are appearing in the marketplace, offering consumers an alternative to the same wines on the next shelf having higher alcohol levels.

Again, a noble viewpoint, but it has been difficult to achieve "great taste, less alcohol" to paraphrase a beer slogan. These wines fall into two broad categories: a) naturally produced and b) technologically induced.

It stands to reason that if higher alcohol levels result from longer hang-time, then shorter hang-time will result in lower alcohol levels. However, if grapes are harvested earlier, they may be less mature and the flavor profile of the resulting wine may be compromised.

If producers can't achieve the desired result in the field, they can utilize technology in the winery. With high tech processes like reverse osmosis and spinning cones, producers have total control in determining the ultimate alcohol content. Or they can eliminate alcohol entirely. Ah, the wonders

of technology. Ugh, the price we sometimes pay for technology.

The unintended consequence of stripping out alcohol in this manner is typically a noticeable loss of bouquet and flavor in the wine, sometimes to the point of making the wines undrinkable.

3. Cultivate naturally low-alcohol grapes. There are grape varieties grown in many wine regions that are naturally low in alcohol and have been so for centuries. At the top of my list are sparkling wines from Spain (Cava) and Italy (Prosecco). Next are a number of white wines, including German and French Riesling, many Rosés and Portuguese Vinho Verde. Reds are more difficult to ferret out; there are a few Pinot Noirs and Beaujolais. (Always check the labels; there are significant variations.)

Whether for health reasons or for being safety conscious, the quest for low-alcohol wines is an admirable pursuit. It doesn't have to be a compromise between lower alcohol and great taste.

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](mailto:nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com) or on Twitter @sharingwine.



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# Where to Hold Your Special Holiday Event, Part I

We're always on the lookout for venues to hold that special event and be well catered to. With the holiday season coming up, here are a few suggestions in the local area.

## Tesoro D'Italia

Heading the day-to-day operation is host and owner Peter Lucaj who had been general manager of Cioa Ristorante in Eastchester.

Peter, Mark and Don have done a stellar job growing this expansive Italian restaurant and catering house. The restaurant is divided into a main dining room for 100 guests, a semiprivate fireplace room for up to 40 guests and a lovely glass-enclosed wine room seating up to 25. A spacious banquet room can accommodate 130 guests for all types of parties and private events. There is an inviting tiled bar and lounge area for networking, spirited conversation and casual dining. A dramatic wine wall highlights the dining room along with smoked glass dividers and white tablecloths.

Look for their black linguini pescatore, chicken payard and Chilean sea bass. The weekday lunch special is from 12 to 3 p.m. for \$24.95. Happy hours are 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the bar only. Live entertainment Friday evenings. Ample free parking.

Tesoro D'Italia is located at 160 Marble Ave. in Pleasantville. Info: 914-579-2126 or



By Morris Gut

visit [www.tesoroditaly.com](http://www.tesoroditaly.com).

## Freebird Kitchen and Bar

Seasoned proprietor Nick Fusco serves tasty versions of fried calamari, meaty baby back ribs, Cobb salad, spicy chicken wings, crispy Brussels sprouts, shrimp and grits and braised short ribs. The cooking here is very satisfying and it's all done with a friendly Southern theme. Portions are ample and shareable.

The lighting and birds hanging from the dining room ceiling give the place a magical atmosphere. There is a seasonal rooftop lounge, Sunday night jam sessions and a sprawling bar with craft beers. Happy hours are Tuesday to Thursday from 4 to 6 p.m. and Friday from 2 to 6 p.m. Weekend brunch. Closed Mondays.

Freebird Kitchen and Bar is located at 161 Mamaroneck Ave. in White Plains. Info: 914-607-2476 or visit [www.freebirdkitchenandbar.com](http://www.freebirdkitchenandbar.com).

## Alex's Bar & Grille

Proprietor Alex Ahmetaj serves big cuts of aged steaks and chops along with generously served Northern Italian/Continental fare. The tender steaks could be called a bargain

here. Customers enter the multi-section dining room through the bar and lounge with its black industrial ceiling, banquets and soft lighting. It is a good networking spot.

The handsome dining room is split



Casa Rina in Thornwood serves plates of delicious meatballs and broccoli rabe with sides.

into cozy sections with white tablecloths, colorful impressionist paintings and warming scones. Check out the pan-fried calamari with hot cherry peppers, linguini alla vongole, a delicious fresh branzino prepared tableside, classic veal parmigiana, grilled prime filet mignon, prime New York sirloin steak or the veal chop. Don't pass up the delicious house-made cheesecake.

Alex's Bar & Grille is located at 577 N. Broadway in North White Plains. Info: 914-358-1444 or visit [www.alex577.com](http://www.alex577.com).

## Mansion on Broadway

Housed in an historic building, it is loaded with the charm of a bygone era. It has undergone a multimillion-dollar renovation and is operated by a creative culinary team ready to make your special event most memorable.

Dynamic proprietor Michael Pasqualini has restored the Mansion to its original glory. A bar and lounge is available. Whether you are planning a corporate meeting or any kind of event for up to 200 guests, Pasqualini invites you to a tour and taste of the premises by advance reservation.

*continued on next page*



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# Where to Hold Your Special Holiday Event, Part I

*continued from previous page*

Recently, Pasqualini collaborated with celebrity chef Todd English as exclusive caterers for Blade, a private jet company working out of Westchester County Airport.

Mansion on Broadway is located at 139 N. Broadway in White Plains. Info: 914-949-6900 or visit [www.mansiononbroadway.com](http://www.mansiononbroadway.com).

## Prime Pub

Dynamic proprietor Simi Polozani, founder of Prime Pub gastropubs in Somers and Danbury, opened his latest location last January on Route 202 in Somers at the entrance to Heritage Hills.

Walk in and you notice the extraordinary airy setting. The free-standing building sits at the edge of a large pond, which can be seen through large picture windows, a seasonal fireplace highlighted with wood and stone, an attractive dining room with well-spaced tables, contemporary lighting and a semi-enclosed bar and lounge area for schmoozing and munching. Best of all, the staff are all about hospitality from the moment you enter.

Check out menu specialties such as the honey goat cheese flatbread, their blast-from-the-past beef stroganoff, braised short ribs and the decadent Burrata Burger. Located across from DeCicco's Market. Open seven days a week for lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch. Happy hours and a kids and a craft beer menu.

Prime Pub is located at 249 Route 202 in Somers. Info: 914-617-9818 or visit [www.primepubgroup.com](http://www.primepubgroup.com).

## Mulino's at Lake Isle



Diners won't go wrong by ordering the decadent Burrata Burger with fries at Prime Pub in Somers.

From the same well-heeled crew that has been serving patrons at Mulino's of Westchester in White Plains for the past 30 years comes Mulino's at Lake Isle, a major state-of-the-art multi-section catering facility that underwent a multimillion-dollar renovation on the grounds of Lake Isle Country Club.

Proprietor Louis Gigante and Louis Gigante Jr. are in charge. When operating at full throttle, Mulino's at Lake Isle can accommodate up to 300 guests for all types of catered events and functions.

Mulino's at Lake Isle is located at 660 White Plains Rd. in Eastchester. Info: 914-961-7800 or visit [www.giganterestaurant.com](http://www.giganterestaurant.com).

## Mamma Francesca

When Nick DiCostanzo was growing up on the Island of Ischia in the Gulf of Naples, his earliest memories were of the simple seaside meals he would enjoy with his family. It was



The Ischia Salad with pizza bread at Mamma Francesca.

farm to table and, of course, sea to table.

As proprietor of Mamma Francesca for nearly 40 years, located on the banks of Long Island Sound with six-story views of the Queen City's seafaring boat clubs, this culinary philosophy still holds true, albeit with a sprinkling of contemporary taste. There are private and semiprivate party facilities for up to 100 guests and catering packages to suit your needs. Robust Italian-American specialties include fresh-made manicotti, calamari fritti, Ischia salad, chicken parmigiana, misto frutti di mare and rabbit cacciatore. There are daily happy hours, off-premise catering and a new woodburning pizza oven. Free parking.

Mamma Francesca is located at 414 Pelham Rd. in New Rochelle. Info: 914-636-1229 or visit [www.mammafrancesca.com](http://www.mammafrancesca.com).

## Lexington Square Café

The Pearl Restaurant Group led by Jim

Sullivan and Jan Fabry keep this artsy multilevel dining room and bar buzzing. New American specialties include the lobster BLT salad, pan-roasted halibut, braised short ribs, shrimp and scallop scampi, steak au poivre and the grilled angus burger. Private party facilities. Wine and specialty cocktails available from the sprawling bar. Happy hours.

Lexington Square Café is located at 510 Lexington Ave. in Mount Kisco. Info: 914-244-3663 or visit [www.lexingtonsquarecafe.com](http://www.lexingtonsquarecafe.com).

## Casa Rina

Casa Rina on Commerce Street in Thornwood is a 40-year-old throwback to the days when the Italian-American kitchen reigned supreme. There are Sinatra photos on one wall, while Marilyn pics highlight another.

Proprietor Tommy Stratis took over the establishment some 20 years ago and has been keeping the creative juices flowing. The Italian classics are served here – great meatballs, hot antipasto for two, manicotti, rigatoni with broccoli rabe and sausage, chicken scarpariello, a big zuppa di pesce, shrimp scampi and veal saltimbocca.

Popular happy hours are weekdays from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Free parking.

Casa Rina is located at 886 Commerce St. in Thornwood. Info: 914-769-4515 or visit [www.casarinarestaurant.com](http://www.casarinarestaurant.com).

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

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