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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

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# Yorktown Supervisor Slater Sets His Sights on State Assembly

By Rick Pezzullo

Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater has often called his current role “an honor and a privilege,” but now he’s setting his sights on serving the community in a different capacity.

Slater, 36, who was reelected uncontested to a second two-year term last November, is seeking Republican and Conservative backing to run for the 94th State Assembly District seat this year.

The seat is currently occupied by fellow Republican Kevin Byrne, who has secured the GOP nomination to run for Putnam County Executive to replace MaryEllen Odell, who is term limited.

Slater said vying for the Assembly wasn’t on “his radar” until recently when he was approached by party leaders. After consulting with his family and doing some soul searching, Slater conceded he “really struggled with it” before deciding to seize the opportunity.

“This was no small decision. This weighed on me very heavily,” Slater said. “I don’t want anyone to think I used this position (supervisor) as a stepping stone. I’m not abandoning my community. I will be able to represent the town in a different capacity. It’s a fight worth fighting.”

A graduate of Yorktown High School, Slater is no stranger to Albany. He worked for three years for the Minority Leader of the Assembly, two years as chief of staff for former Assemblyman Steve Katz and four years as chief of staff for former Senator Terrence Murphy.

“I don’t need training wheels. I can hit the ground running,” Slater said. “We need a strong voice to protect our families and protect our community. I have the experience to fight for our community.”

New York’s 94th Assembly District encompasses Yorktown and Somers in Westchester and Carmel, Southeast, Patterson and Putnam Valley in Putnam.

Slater cited the skyrocketing Con Edison charges and the controversial accessory dwelling unit (ADU) proposal as two recent issues that he could help local constituents by tackling on a state level.

“I’ll make sure we will push back on a lot of the proposals coming out of Albany these days,” he said.

If elected in November, Yorktown’s deputy supervisor, Councilman Tom Diana, would become supervisor as of Jan. 1, 2023, and the Town Board would have 30 days to choose an interim supervisor that would serve the remainder of Slater’s unexpired term.

## 95th Assembly District

Meanwhile, the four candidates who are jockeying to succeed retiring Assemblywoman

Sandy Galef in the 95th Assembly District, which covers the City of Peekskill, Town of Cortlandt, town and village of Ossining and parts of Putnam County, took part in a Zoom forum last week in front of Cortlandt and Croton Democratic district leaders.

Town of Ossining Supervisor Dana Levenberg, Westchester County Legislator Colin Smith, former Peekskill Mayor Andre Rainey and former Peekskill Councilwoman Vanessa Agudelo answered specific questions on issues and talked about why they wanted to join the Assembly.

“The time to act for the future is now,” said Agudelo. “I am part of a larger movement. We need to personally have a connection with constituents. We need a fighter.”

“I want to help people on a wider scale,” Levenberg said. “We have a lot of challenges ahead of us. I will continue the good work I have done for the Town of Ossining and good

work Assemblywoman Galef has done.”

“I’ve always been a person for the people. My track record speaks for itself,” Rainey said. “I think I am the person who can get the job done and continue the legacy of Assemblywoman Galef.”

“I am a public servant at heart and have always been,” Smith said. “I want to see everyone has an opportunity to live in a place they can afford that is safe and clean.”

According to a district leader in Peekskill, the city’s Democratic Committee recently rejected a motion to endorse Rainey. Others are pushing for a “Nominating Convention” to select Rainey.

To date, no Republican has stepped up to run for the seat.



Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater

## Resident Outcry Forces Croton to Delay Abolishing Justice Court

By Rick Pezzullo

Residents of Croton-on-Hudson came out in force last week to implore the Board of Trustees not to proceed with a plan to consolidate the village’s justice court services with the Town of Cortlandt as a potential cost savings measure.

The heavily criticized proposal was first presented to the Board of Trustees on Jan. 4 from Village Manager Bryan Healy as the village grapples with an estimated \$1.6 million budget shortfall.

However, residents and town employees that packed the meeting room in the Croton Municipal Building Feb. 28 overwhelmingly maintained the village court, which handles approximately 2,000 cases annually, was not the place to try and save a few bucks.

“The court is not a business. It is a service. It is not a department store,” said Amy Kim, a 15-year village resident who has worked for the court for about five months. “Our community deserves more respect and diligence than two months (to decide the future of the justice court).”

“We’re here as a rush job. It reeks of

Hollywood accounting,” said Casey Raskob, the village’s prosecutor, who noted the court represented less than two percent of Croton’s operating budget. “The court is not to be measured by making money. Don’t just railroad this through.”

Healy said the justice court was a \$363,270 expense for the village during the current fiscal year. Revenue from the court plunged from \$350,000 in 2021 to \$170,000 this year, in large part, according to Healy, from less parking fines at the Croton-Harmon Train Station, which is still only at about 50% capacity from the COVID-19 pandemic.

If Cortlandt were to take over the court responsibilities, Supervisor Dr. Richard Becker said the town would likely hire the village’s court clerks and prosecutor. Healy said Croton would still receive the revenue generated from parking tickets and other Village Code violations.

“Eliminating the court is a permanent solution to a temporary problem,” Croton Village Justice Sam Watkins argued. “The integrity of this village must be maintained.”

“The village court is a significant part

*continued on page 2*

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# Buchanan Braces for Mayor, Trustees March 15 Election

By Rick Pezzullo

The mayoral seat and two trustees' positions are up for grabs in the Village of Buchanan March 15 election.

The main event features eight-year incumbent Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker against Trustee and former Mayor Sean Murray.

Knickerbocker, who served five years as trustee before being elected mayor in 2014, said she has effectively led the village through the most trying time in its history--the closure of the Indian Point nuclear power plants, Buchanan's largest employer and revenue generator.

"Experience matters now," Knickerbocker said. "The next several years is a critical time for the Village of Buchanan. We still face many challenges as we look to reinvent ourselves after the closure of our largest taxpayer and employer. I want to finish the work I've started."

She said the accomplishment she is most proud of is the passage of state legislation that taxed the spent fuel rod casks at Indian Point, the first such arrangement in the nation.

"The idea came to me because I have been working with other nuclear communities facing the same issue with the spent fuel," Knickerbocker explained. "We have been working hard since the announcement of Jan. 2017 (that the plants would close) to get the village through this."

Murray served as mayor in Buchanan from 2010 to 2014. He was a trustee the two years prior and was returned to the board last year. He is also a former chairman of the village's Planning Board.

"People just want to see a change," Murray said. "The reason I got out of politics in 2014 is I thought I was a bit stale. I was out of good ideas. They're not coming up with fresh ideas. She's (Knickerbocker) been a lot more reactive than proactive. I don't feel that she accepts input. She doesn't like other people's suggestions. I really don't know what she's thinking. You can't operate in a vacuum."

Murray has worked at Indian Point for 32 years and is one of about 300 employees who was retained by Holtec International during the decommissioning of the plants.

Last year, Knickerbocker wrote a letter to the Westchester County Board of Ethics seeking an advisory opinion on whether it was a conflict of interest for Murray to negotiate with Holtec. On February 18, the Board of Ethics, which has no enforcement authority, concluded Murray must recuse himself from any discussions, deliberations or votes involving Holtec.

"It wasn't political. It wasn't personal. People were asking me about it," Knickerbocker said.

Murray disagreed, maintaining Knickerbocker's actions were "purely political."

"I don't feel there is a conflict," Murray insisted, noting as Planning Board chairman he reviewed and approved plans from Holtec for a project involving a spent fuel pad without any public backlash. "To think I would do something against my values and against the people I represent is somewhat strange."

Besides ongoing issues with Holtec, Knickerbocker, who emphasized the village



Theresa Knickerbocker



Richard Function



Nicolas Zachary



Sean Murray



Steve Laker



Dan Stewart

has received more than \$8 million in grants the last few years, is looking for "smart development opportunities" to increase the village's tax base and upgrade the village's sewage treatment plant.

Murray said the village has been too slow in returning to in-person meetings and has wasted too much money on outside consultants for work that could have been done in-house.

## Trustee Race

In the race for two trustee seats, 12-year incumbents Richard Function and Nicolas Zachary are running on the same ticket as Knickerbocker, while political newcomers Steve Laker and Dan Stewart are Murray's running mates.

Function is a 45-year resident of Buchanan and retired U.S. customs agent. He is a survivor of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center. (He did not respond to questions posed by Examiner Media).

Zachary has lived in the village for more than 30 years and is a part-time site supervisor for an architectural woodworking company, a field he has worked in for 35 years. He served on the village's Zoning Board for 10 years before being elected as a trustee.

"I want to be part of bringing Buchanan to a new reinvented and reinvigorated level," he said. "We've always been a great community before but lots of young families are coming in and there are exciting possibilities. Right now, we need smart development to help restore some of our tax base and we need to keep doing little things with our streetscapes and our recreation program to make this an even more desirable place to live. We have worked hard to provide the highest level of services in the area while

keeping our budget as lean as possible."

Laker grew up in Montrose and has lived in Buchanan for the last 16 years. He said he has served in CEO & CFO roles within the retail energy, financial and construction industries. He has served as treasurer for many years for both the Cortlandt National Little League and the Our Lady of Mt Carmel Society.

"First and foremost, I am running for trustee of the Village of Buchanan because I love the village," he said. "The village offers impeccable first-class services -- from sanitation, public works, recreation and police. I would like to utilize my business expertise and experience to ensure that during these challenging times those services are maintained and even improved upon by encouraging sensible development and preserving fiscal responsibility."

"Obviously the most pressing issue is the recent closure of Indian Point and its effect on property taxes -- both the increase to homeowners as well as the decrease of

revenue for the village," he added. "Included with that is the rezoning and potential redevelopment of the Indian Point property. I believe my business acumen, leadership and management will be valuable in guiding the future of the village."

Stewart is a lifelong resident of Buchanan and a licensed insurance broker and manager of Personal Lines Insurance Department.

"I am concerned about the future of our village with the closure of Indian Point. I have a deep connection and affection for our community and I can make a difference. I am a great listener and view myself as a problem solver," he stated. "The most pressing issues facing our village are entering into an IMA with the Town of Cortlandt by June for our sewer treatment plant; negotiating a new PILOT Agreement with Holtec; as well as modifying our zoning laws to be more inclusive so we can attract more commercial businesses. I look forward to the challenge and would love to serve my community."

## Resident Outcry Forces Croton to Delay Abolishing Justice Court

*continued from page 1*

of the fabric that makes Croton a desirable place to live," added Lewis Montana, an attorney and 43-year village resident.

Healy presented data showing that between November 2021 and January 2022, only 22% of the 338 individuals who appeared in village court were Croton residents.

Following the closing of the public hearing, trustees Sherry Horowitz and Alejandro Rosales said they opposed making a change to the village's government structure.

"It's shortsighted," Horowitz remarked. "You (public) made a tremendous argument

in keeping the justice court. I think there is magic here."

Mayor Brian Pugh said the Board of Trustees would defer any decision on the future of the justice court until after Healy submits his proposed budget this spring, but cautioned about the financial hurdles facing the village.

"You've given us a lot to think about, but at the end of the day there is an important economic consideration to think about," Pugh said. "To find savings in this budget will be intensely challenging."



# County Legislator Gashi Launches Bid for Congressional Seat

By Rick Pezzullo

Westchester County Legislator Vedat Gashi is setting his sights on Congress.

Gashi, a Yorktown resident who was elected to his second term on the Board of Legislators last November, is gathering signatures to run a Democratic primary against incumbent Rep. Jamaal Bowman on June 28.

In an interview with The Examiner, Gashi said the recent redistricting of congressional territories that moved Bowman's 16th Congressional District into Yorktown and bumped Rep. Mondaire Jones out sparked his interest in vying for federal office.

"That's when the conversations started. This wasn't on my radar. I was happy with Mondaire Jones," Gashi said. "I would only get in this if I thought I had a chance to win. It feels like an historic moment, an urgent need, and that's why I am in it. It will take a huge effort by a lot of people."

Bowman, who lives in Yonkers, was elected to Congress in 2020. In 2009, he founded Cornerstone Academy for Social Action, a Bronx middle school with a holistic curriculum, where he served as principal for a decade.

Gashi said he was challenging Bowman because he disagreed with some of his votes, one being Bowman's opposition to President Joe Biden's \$1.5 trillion bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act because he felt it didn't do enough to increase social safety net funding. The bill passed regardless.

"I think we voted for Biden so we could have progress," Gashi said. "I felt that (Bowman's no vote) was out of step with the president's agenda, the party's agenda and frankly where the voters in the district are."

Gashi also said he was disappointed when Bowman voted against emergency funding for Capitol police following the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection.

"I would have voted differently," Gashi said.

Gashi, an attorney, graduated from Lakeland High School. Born in Kosovo, at the age of four he and his family fled the oppressive, socialist regime to the United States. After passing the New York Bar, Gashi was called to service in Kosovo to join the effort to help establish the newly-formed state. He helped draft some of Kosovo's foundational legal documents and create its Ministry of Local Government Administration.

Commenting on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Gashi called the Democratic Socialists of America stance in blaming the U.S. and NATO "imperialist expansion" for the conflict as being "irresponsible."

"I think that was wrong. It signaled a lack of understanding of what NATO is," Gashi remarked. "There is only one person to blame for this and it's Putin. What he is doing against Ukraine, a sovereign

country, is really historic and scary. It's kind of jarring to see the images, to see the attacks on civilians. World War III would be a horrific outcome."

Gashi said being chairman of the Board of Legislators' Budget and Appropriations Committee has given him a broad perspective of the needs of the entire congressional district. The district will stretch from the north central Bronx and include Yonkers, Mount Vernon, Harrison, North Castle, Bedford, Somers, Yorktown and portions of Eastchester, New Rochelle and White Plains in Westchester and Putnam Valley and Carmel in Putnam County.

"This is a varied district. There are a

lot of parts to it," he said. "I'm more of a Biden Democrat. I want progress. I want practical results. I have the ability to build consensus in the party and communicate outside the party. We're going to go out and try to explain why I'm the better candidate."

Gashi has served District 4 on the Board of Legislators since the start of 2019, which includes parts of Yorktown and Somers and all of New Castle.

Westchester County Legislator Vedat Gashi is gathering signatures to challenge incumbent Rep. Jamaal Bowman in a Democratic primary in the 16th Congressional District.



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# Westchester Remembers COVID's Victims Two Years Later

By Martin Wilbur

The enormity of the COVID-19 pandemic hit Westchester County Executive George Latimer in the spring of 2020 when he realized that the county needed to acquire at least one refrigerated truck.

So many people were dying during those early weeks of the pandemic that the local funeral homes were unable to keep up.

"I never thought that anything I've ever done in my life, from a kid in Mount Vernon to a student in graduate school to my years in sales and marketing and my years in other legislative positions prior to this position, prepared me to sit across the table and to make the decision to get a refrigerated truck or two to be able to handle that," Latimer recalled.

Latimer's comments came during a ceremony last Thursday afternoon in the lobby of the County Building in White Plains to commemorate the second anniversary of Westchester's first confirmed COVID-19 case in New Rochelle, the epicenter of the outbreak in the United States for a brief time.

The nearly hour-long ceremony in front of one of the county's two Ribbons of Remembrance memorials honored the 2,687 Westchester residents who lost their lives to the virus as of last week and the sacrifices made by healthcare workers and essential workers over the past two years. Family members can tie purple ribbons to the memorial there or at Lenoir Preserve in Yonkers in memory of losing a loved one to COVID-19.

In the early days of the pandemic, no one



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Westchester County Executive George Latimer delivers his remarks during last Thursday's ceremony for the nearly 2,700 victims of COVID-19 on the second anniversary of the first case in Westchester.

really knew what they were facing or how to handle it. County Health Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler said there were no treatments or vaccines, only steps from generations ago such as mask wearing, hand washing and social distancing in hopes of protecting the masses.

"Nearly every family felt the impact of this pandemic," Amler said. "Everyone has their personal stories to tell, and we will be sharing each other's stories and the memories of those that we lost for decades to come."

Affected as much as anyone was Westchester County Youth Bureau Executive Director DaMia Harris-Madden. She lost two

parents, two uncles and a brother during the pandemic. Despite the tragedies, Harris-Madden, a Pleasantville resident, said she felt lucky that so many people within her home community and the county have helped her get through the past two years.

But the sad reality has also been that innumerable children have lost parents and have been orphaned during that time, she said.

"I approach everyone today with love, hope and solidarity because despite the hardships I'm here to say that I'm so grateful and honored to be here in Westchester, led by superb members who have been elected

to office, outstanding colleagues who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to make sure children like mine are safe," Harris-Madden said.

Three Westchester clergy members, Rabbi Howard Goldsmith, Rev. Timothy Dalton and Imam Shaffieq Chace, each provided inspirational and touching remarks during the program. They called on everyone to unite and do their part to keep everyone safe.

"None of us could have imagined where this journey would take us, where this path through the wilderness would lead," Dalton said. "Today we remember and we grieve, grieve the family and friends who are near and dear to us whom we lost. Today we remember their stories, their smiles, their voices, their dreams and continuing impact on our lives. We embody their legacies today. Today, let us remember that we are not alone in our grief."

Latimer said perhaps the most important lesson of the pandemic is the value of sacrificing for the good of one another.

"What we learned through COVID is it is not the leadership of a great leader, it's the willingness of all of us to understand the moment that we're in, to make sacrifices," he said. "If getting a shot in your arm, if putting a mask on your face is the sacrifice of your personal freedom, it's the sacrifice you make."

The White Plains High School String Ensemble performed during the ceremony, which concluded with a moment of silence and the ringing of church bells throughout the county.

## COVID Trends Encouraging Despite One-Day Westchester Uptick

By Martin Wilbur

Despite a one-day uptick in COVID-19 cases over the weekend, Westchester County continues to see an encouraging trend in infections and hospitalizations as mask requirements in schools and businesses have been eased in recent weeks.

As of Saturday, there were 878 active cases in the county, down from 3,750 on Feb. 5. During the worst days of the Omicron variant in early to mid-January, there was a high of more than 36,000 cases.

Only 54 people were in Westchester hospitals from COVID-19-related illness, less than one-quarter of the 237 from a

month earlier.

While there were three deaths last week attributed to the virus, the county concluded the week with four consecutive nights without a single COVID-19-related fatality.

"We're seeing now a continuation of a downward trend," said Westchester County Executive George Latimer. "I think we can declaratively say that the Omicron variant surge is over and we're now at a level of infection that is much more manageable."

Latimer said officials continue to track the daily numbers, which included a spike on Saturday of 214 new cases from 5,712 tests, or a 3.7 percent infection rate. That number followed rates of 1.3 and 1.4 percent last Thursday and Friday, respectively, in the county.

Five of the six other counties in the same Mid-Hudson region that also includes Westchester were under 2 percent on Saturday, including Putnam County at 1.8 percent and Sullivan County at 0.9 percent. Only Ulster County was higher than Westchester at 4 percent.

Sunday's data was released by the state later Monday afternoon, which showed that Westchester had returned to less than a 2 percent infection rate, at 1.8 percent. There were 48 additional cases from 2625 tests.

Latimer said there was no reason to believe that there should be concern but the statistics will continue to be monitored.

"We don't believe that what we see now is some upswing in one day but anything is

possible and certainly by the time we report next week if that upswing is something consistent, then we'll report that to give you the accurate information," Latimer said.

The statewide positivity rate on Saturday and Sunday was 1.4 percent each day, just below the seven-day rolling average of 1.5 percent.

Tests and vaccinations will continue to be administered at the County Center for the foreseeable future. Testing will be for those residents who have had an exposure to a known positive case within the past five to seven days, said Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins. The exposure had to have been for a total of 10 minutes, he said.

Testing is available from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays, 8 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays and Fridays and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursdays.

Vaccinations are available through appointment only on the county Health Department website.

Latimer cautioned residents that just because restrictions have been eased COVID-19 hasn't ended.

"We are not finished with COVID, however," he said. "It would be foolish to act as if this is over. At some level we're going to be dealing with COVID every day for the rest of our lives, but in a manageable way that we think will be intelligent, and that does include testing and that does include vaccinations."



### Helping Hands

Westchester County Executive George Latimer and Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins, far left, honored the Westchester Chapter of the American Red Cross with a proclamation presentation on Monday. March is designated as American Red Cross Month to recognize local volunteers and donors who give time and resources to help community members in need, delivering hope and help during disasters.



# Labor Leaders, Elected Officials Push State for More Money to Fix Roads

By Abby Luby

Labor leaders and elected officials urged Gov. Kathy Hochul earlier this week to use nearly \$5 billion available in federal money that would increase funds to help repair crumbling bridges and deteriorating roads and highways.

Representatives of Teamsters & Chauffeurs Local 456 explained at a Feb. 28 rally in Elmsford that the proposed five-year state Department of Transportation (DOT) capital plan of \$6.5 billion annually from 2023 to 2027 is insufficient. The extra \$5 billion received by the state from the \$1.2 trillion federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, should be added to the spending.

John Cooney Jr., executive director of the Construction Industry Council (CIC) of Westchester & Hudson Valley, Inc., argued that with skyrocketing inflation the \$6.5 billion actually represents a significant decrease from the \$12 billion budgeted for road repairs since 2020 when factoring in inflation.

"New York State clearly is not taking advantage of a generational increase in federal funding," Cooney said. "Rather the state is choosing to pocket the increased funding and divert it to sectors where these federal monies will have much less impact on the long-term health of both our economy and transportation networks."

An analysis completed by the CIC of the DOT's capital plan determined the funding falls far short to adequately pay for road and

bridge improvements, particularly those in the Hudson Valley where roads, highways and bridges are crucial to transport people and goods.

Rep. Mondaire Jones (D-White Plains) said the historic Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was a unique opportunity to rebuild the state.

"We must see to it that the funding is put to use in the most effective way possible to have the greatest impact on our communities," Jones said.

Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) said he got a flat tire on the way back from Albany, an increasingly common occurrence for motorists throughout the region.

"It was on a state road, a big pothole that I didn't see," Abinanti said. "That is a personal impact of this decline. New Yorkers everywhere are suffering repair costs every year because of road damage."

An independent poll commissioned by Rebuild New York Now showed 66 percent of respondents said the state spends too little on transportation infrastructure. More than 73 percent favor increased state funding for road and bridge repairs.

A report issued by the Associated General Contractors of New York State, presented last month at a joint legislative budget hearing on transportation in Albany, stated that from 2016 to 2020 fair and poor pavement increased from 36 percent of the system to 45 percent, representing an additional 3,277 lane miles. That would amount to



JOHN VECCHIOLLA PHOTO

Pictured, from left, at last week's rally to urge the state to use federal money to repair the roads and highways in the region and throughout the state are state Sen. Shelley Mayer, Assemblyman Tom Abinanti, Teamsters 456 President Louis Picani, Rep. Mondaire Jones and Construction Industry Council Executive Director John Cooney Jr.

17,461 lane miles of the state's roads that are in need of repair. The organization claims that for years, DOT's capital plan has been underfunded with devastating impact on New York's roads.

Around 40 laborers and construction workers attended last Monday's rally, most of whom are currently out of work. Members of the Heavy Construction Laborers Local Union 60, including Minerva and Alex Lubi of Cortlandt, were bused in. Minerva Lubi has been a flagger on road construction for four years.

"Road work is nasty," she said. "I'm not working right now because it's been slow. We are hoping that will change in two or three weeks."

Her husband, Alex, has worked in construction for eight years.

"Work in general was terrible this year and March is usually a slow month," he said.

State Sen. Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers) said the state has the money to match the \$5 million of extra federal money and thanked the workers who participated in the rally.

"You are the men and women who actually do the work," Mayer said. "This is the moment to make sure this gets done."

Wayne Heller, president of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 137, said he hoped the state would support increasing funds for infrastructure repair.

"Something needs to be done about the potholes that destroy vehicles," Heller said. "This meeting is important to have our voices and opinions heard. We hope our message reaches the politicians' ears in Albany to accomplish what needs to be done."

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# Chappaqua Schools Proposes Nearly \$134M Budget for 2022-23

By Martin Wilbur

Chappaqua Superintendent of Schools Dr. Christine Ackerman last week proposed a nearly \$134 million budget for 2022-23 that just makes it under the tax cap despite sharp increases in health insurance premiums and special education costs.

The proposed \$133,963,411 spending plan also anticipates higher costs in areas that are affected by inflation, such as transportation.

Despite the challenges, Ackerman said the budget addresses the students' needs and follows the district's requirements for class size.

"We feel like our budget responds to our strategic questions and our target areas and our coherence plan and our operating standards," Ackerman said. "It supports our students both academically and emotionally. It maintains our funding for equity work and adheres to our class-size ratios."

As proposed, the budget would call for a \$3.5 million spending hike and a \$3,173,211 increase in next year's tax levy, or 2.79 percent, the highest allowable figure while remaining within the cap. The projected tax rate change is expected to be unveiled at the Board of Education's Mar. 23 meeting.

Key drivers include the anticipated 8 percent jump in health insurance costs, which originally had been projected to be at about 6 percent, said Superintendent for Business Andrew Lennon. Costs associated with the district's portion of the Teachers

Retirement System will rise by about 10.3 percent but contributions will fall more than 11 percent for the Employees Retirement System, he said.

As a result, expenses for benefits will rise by \$908,000 next year, a 3.2 percent increase while salaries will see a modest 0.3 percent jump, or about \$207,000.

Costs for special education are expected to increase \$736,760, a 17.5 percent clip. Ackerman said that 33 special education students transferred into the district for the current year, nearly three times as many as the year before.

"We had an influx of students move into the district for a whole variety of reasons," Ackerman said. "Because we had been able to be open during the initial start of the pandemic, I feel like we were in a place where many families chose to move to our district over the summer last year, which was unique maybe with past experiences we've had the opportunity to learn from."

There was also an increase this year to 26 English Language Learners who transferred to Chappaqua, up from 15 in 2020-21, adding further to costs.

Lennon said the district expects a state aid increase of about \$334,000, or 3.28 percent next year. An increase of about \$290,000 in sales tax revenue is also anticipated, he said.

The district is planning to use \$3.5 million from fund balance next year, a slight decrease of about \$42,000 from 2021-22.

The current enrollment projection for next year is 3,494, a year-to-year decrease

of 65 students.

Ackerman said there will be one less kindergarten and fourth-grade section each at Grafflin and Roaring Brook elementary schools compared to this year. At Westorchard Elementary School, four second-grade sections are projected for next year compared to three currently, while the number of third-grade sections will decrease from five to three.

There will also be two fewer sections at each of the two middle schools while no changes are currently expected at the high school.

Sections would be added for any grade should there be an influx of students between now and the end of summer, Ackerman said.

With the Chappaqua School District bumping up against the tax cap, district officials are considering a facilities bond either next fall or in spring 2023 to pay for needed repairs, Ackerman said.

Work could include roof replacement at Roaring Brook and Grafflin elementary schools and at the high school, fiber optic wiring at the high school, a backup internet connection at Seven Bridges Middle School and outdoor elementary school classrooms, among other potential improvements.

The district may also examine making improvements to the front entrance at Horace Greeley High School.

Ackerman said the levy limit prevents the district from including many infrastructure upgrades in the annual operating budget. The district expects to transfer \$600,000

to the capital projects budget to complete roof repair work at Westorchard Elementary School.

Over the next month, the Board of Education will be reviewing the proposed budget, starting on Mar. 15 with curriculum, technology, special education and athletics. The following week operations and maintenance and the non-instructional budget will be discussed.

On Mar. 28, there will be a virtual PTA budget forum at 6 p.m. The board is scheduled to adopt the budget on Apr. 6, while the public gets its chance to vote on it on May 17.

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# Calls for State to Transition to Zero-Emission Electric School Buses

State senators Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) and Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers) along with other elected officials and the Bedford School District hosted a demonstration Monday of a zero-emission, fully electric school bus at Fox Lane High School.

Partnering with GreenPower Motor Company, the demonstration provided an opportunity to learn more about the electric buses and their life cycle, range, cost and maintenance. Those who attended were given a test ride on GreenPower's new 90-passenger, Class 8, Type D school bus known as The BEAST, which stands for Battery Electric Automotive School Transportation.

"To meet the greenhouse gas reduction goals in New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, we will have to take serious action, including transitioning to zero-emission vehicles," Harckham said. "School buses, which run mostly on diesel fuel, are a top cause of air pollution. This demonstration offered a lot of information and answered important questions about electric battery school buses, which are certainly on their way to wider use."

Mayer, chair of the Senate Committee on Education, pledged working with Gov. Kathy Hochul, legislative colleagues and education officials to transition the state's school bus fleet to electric.

"We see the effects of climate change every day," Mayer said. "We cannot wait to address it."

In addition to school district officials, local

residents, students and environmental and climate change advocates, including those from local groups Bedford 2030, Croton 100, Mothers Out Front, Hudson Valley Electric Auto Association and Yorktown 100, were on hand.

Advocates for transitioning to an electric school bus fleet said it would have a major positive impact on the environment. Currently, there are more school buses in the U.S. than commercial buses, trains and air travel services combined. Each school day about 24 million children ride on more than 480,000 school buses, and more than 90 percent of those operate on diesel fuel, a known carcinogen.

School-age children are exposed to as many as 15 times more air toxins than the rest of the population. Annually, school buses produce 3,000 tons of cancer-causing soot and 95,000 tons of smog-causing compounds and particulates.

Patty Buchanan of Croton 100 said adoption of electric school buses is an immediate imperative because they save taxpayer money over the life of a bus due to higher efficiency, lower maintenance costs and lower fuel costs. They also drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which, according to a consensus among global scientists, is urgently required to ensure a stable climate.

Finally, continuing to use diesel buses is harmful to the health of schoolchildren due to the particulate emissions.

"Electrifying our local district fleets is of utmost importance," said Midge



OFFICE OF SENATOR PETER HARCKHAM PHOTO

State Sen. Peter Harckham with other attendees at the zero-emission/EV school bus demonstration at Fox Lane High School in Bedford.

Iorio executive director of Bedford 2030. "Transitioning our school buses off of polluting fossil fuels will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, address health concerns and it will send a message to our children that we are taking steps to combat climate change to ensure a healthier future."

While there have been improvements, air pollution is still a problem in more populated areas of New York. The American Lung Association's latest report card shows that air pollution is putting hundreds of thousands Westchester County residents at risk of serious health issues.

New York's Climate Leadership and

Community Protection Act of 2019 has set two important goals: limit statewide greenhouse gases to 40 percent of 1990 levels by 2030 and 85 percent by 2050 and achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions across New York State's economy.

"That's why zero-emissions vehicles, including trucks and buses, are on their way," said Harckham, who introduced and helped enact a law last year requiring new sales of passenger cars and trucks in New York to be zero emissions by 2035.

Earlier this year, Hochul proposed that the entire school bus fleet in the state be entirely electric by 2035.

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# Obituaries

## Margaret Gregg

Margaret Curry Gregg, who raised a family in four world capitals during the height of the Cold War before returning to the 1845 farmhouse where she grew up, died at Northern Westchester Hospital on Mar. 1. She was 91.

The eldest child of R. Eugene and Margery Metheny Curry, she was born in New York City on July 16, 1930, and raised on a rural dirt road in Armonk. After attending the one-room Middle Patent School, Meg, as she was known, graduated from Pleasantville High School, then majored in Russian at Middlebury College, graduating in 1951. She went to work for the CIA in Washington, but throughout her life declined to tell her children what she did, saying that she had taken an oath never to say.

She met her future husband, Donald P. Gregg, in a shared cab taking them from Union Station to Georgetown, the Washington neighborhood where they both lived. Though they both worked for the CIA, she outranked him. Don was assigned to the island of Saipan and came back on home leave to propose; they were married on July 4, 1953, and, after their honeymoon, flew to Saipan.

As a mom, she was warm and engaging with her three children, whether in Tokyo; what was then-known as Rangoon, Burma; Seoul, South Korea; and in Washington. With every move she created a new home for the family, always filled with laughter, daily family dinners and life lessons about doing the right



Margaret Gregg

thing.

Meg was an outstanding partner to Don, in life and throughout his diplomatic career, as a gracious hostess, sage adviser and loving wife. She focused intently on everyone she talked to and was also an elegant dresser with a radiant smile who loved to dance. Thanks to a Chubby Checker record, Meg and Don could boast that they brought The Twist to Burma. She immersed herself in the culture of every country in which she lived and established lifelong friendships.

Although she gave up her agency career in the 1950s, Meg was employed over the years as an editor, development officer and residential real estate agent. She was regularly involved in volunteer work, including Girl

Scouts, church vestry, international schools and women's groups while overseas. She also taught English conversation in Tokyo during the 1950s and studied Sogetsu ikebana, a type of Japanese floral art.

Meg's final overseas tour was in Seoul, where her husband served as U.S. ambassador from 1989 to 1993. In honor of their decades of work to advance American relations in East Asia, the Donald P. and Margaret Curry Gregg Professor of Practice in Korean and East Asian Affairs at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University was established by their friend Spencer Kim in 2009.

After Meg's parents died, Don and Meg moved in 1995 to her childhood home in Armonk, where she became active with several groups, including St. Stephen's Church, the Armonk Outdoor Art Show and a book group formed with other Nadeshikokai friends in the New York area who had also lived in Japan. She also served on the board of the Friends of the North Castle Public Library, the Middle Patent Rural Cemetery Association and the Vestry of St. Mary's Church, and was a member of the Bedford Club.

Along with her husband of 68 years, she is survived by her three children, Lucy Gregg Buckley, of Washington, D.C.; Alison Gregg Corcoran and her husband, Edward

J. Corcoran, of Boston; and John P. Gregg and his wife, Mary Ceglarski Gregg, of Westminster West, Vt.; a sister, Jan Harrison, of Providence, R.I.; a brother, Ren Curry, and wife Nancy Knudegard of Santa Cruz, Calif.; and several Curry and Metheny cousins. She was predeceased by a brother, Jay Curry, of The Netherlands.

She also leaves six grandchildren: Caitlin Gregg Buckley and husband Michael John Leavey, William Conor Buckley, Sgt. Edward Gregg Corcoran, Alexander Curry Corcoran, Margaret Emaline Corcoran and Tyquan Lamont Davis. She was also a hands-on "Aunt Meg" to beloved nieces, nephews, godchildren and other relatives and remained close to the children of departed friends. Meg recently was contending with heart problems and had broken her hip in a fall last month.

Funeral services will be held at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Armonk on Saturday, Mar. 12 at 11 a.m. For those not able to attend in person, the service will be streamed at [www.ststephensarmonk.org](http://www.ststephensarmonk.org). The service will be followed by a reception at the St. Stephen's Parish Hall. A private burial will follow the reception.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Middle Patent Rural Cemetery or the Friends of the North Castle Public Library.

## Mark Lipka

"Smart, irreverent, funny, kind" are the words Mark Lipka's wife, Linda Hendrick, used to describe him on his passing at age 75 on Feb. 19 from acute respiratory failure.

Mark (known by family as Mike) and Linda shared 36 years together. Mark, a longtime Pleasantville resident, was born in the Bronx in 1946 and attended Lehman College. He served in Vietnam in the early 1970s. Throughout his career, he worked in telecommunications, including many years as president of NTP.

Mark was a wealth of knowledge, described by his stepdaughter as her "personal Wikipedia." He enjoyed making people laugh, traveling and seeing the world and The New York Times Sunday crossword puzzle.

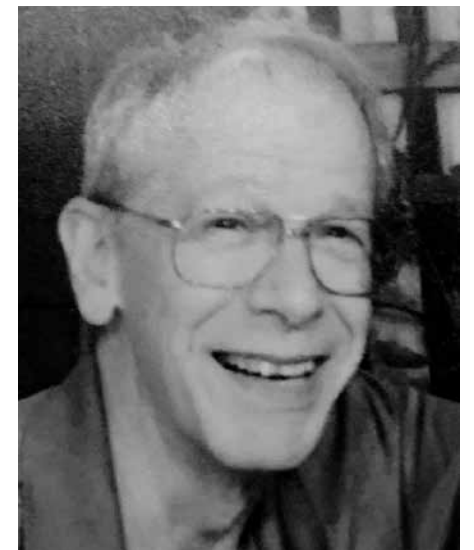
Mark is survived by his wife, Linda; his siblings, Tony Lipka and Andrea Scott; his stepdaughter, Caren Levant; his nephew, Andrew; niece Cindy; cats Jake and Molly; along with cousins and friends.

## Louise Smith

Louise Martin Smith, 97, died peacefully at home on Mar. 5, surrounded by her loving family.

She is survived by her son, George, and his wife, Annmarie; her grandchildren, George Jr., James and Erica; and loving niece and nephew Nancy McMillian and James Shields.

She was predeceased by her husband, George, after 63 years of marriage, and her sister Shirley Shields.



Mark Lipka

Memorial services were private. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the Dolphin Research Center in Grassy Key, Fla.

She married her lifelong love, George, in 1951, and worked for Dupont as an executive secretary until their first child was born.

Louise had a love for the New Jersey shore and spent countless hours accompanying her husband boating, fishing and preparing delicious seafood meals. She was known for her skill and creativity as a seamstress. In her younger years she regularly made clothing for her friends and family. She was well-known for her apple pie and well-sought after for her chocolate chip cookies.



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# Westchester Broadway Theatre to Refund More Than \$1M to Customers

By Rick Pezzullo

The Westchester Broadway Theatre (WBT) has agreed to refund more than \$1 million in tickets and gift certificates purchased prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

New York Attorney General Letitia James said her office opened an investigation into WBT in October 2020, after receiving complaints from ticketholders that the former Elmsford-based dinner theater had refused to issue refunds for canceled shows when it permanently shut down.

The theater had announced that month it was shuttering after 45 years because it could no longer afford to wait to resume operations.

As of March 2020, WBT had sold more than 30,000 tickets to upcoming performances that were canceled following the shutdown.

"After the Westchester Broadway Theatre took its final bow, thousands of theatergoers were unable to get refunds for tickets they had already purchased," James said in a statement. "For months, theatergoers were stuck in the wings, but my office helped put more than \$1 million back into New Yorkers' pockets. While the curtains are finally closed on this saga, we will continue to go after companies that

refuse to reimburse consumers."

According to James, after closing its doors, WBT created a ticket exchange policy with the White Plains Performing Arts Center (WPPAC), whereby WPPAC would honor tickets and gift cards bought for WBT shows. However, no refund option was offered to WBT ticketholders, and the ticket exchange did not honor the value of the dinner portion of WBT tickets. Only 930 WBT ticketholders participated in the ticket exchange.

WBT has agreed to refund \$1,127,258.84 to thousands of customers, even the ones who participated in the ticket exchange with WPPAC. Holders of gift certificate who show a receipt may also be eligible for a refund or may use the gift card when the entity Evening Out is expected to begin operations at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center later this year.

"The pandemic caused widespread economic despair to many businesses statewide, but in the case of the Westchester Broadway Theatre, that is no excuse to withhold ticket refunds from customers for canceled performances," said state Sen. Peter Harkham (D-Lewisboro). "Attorney General James deserves thanks for making sure these customers finally got their money back."

"I applaud the attorney general's



The operators of Westchester Broadway Theatre will be required to refund customers who had tickets to canceled shows totaling more than \$1.1 million. The Elmsford dinner theater permanently closed in October 2020 seven months after the COVID-19 shutdown.

persistence on behalf of our residents," added Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville). The attorney general has demonstrated that consumer protection is an important part of what we do as elected officials. The pandemic is no excuse for businesses to take advantage of their

customers."

Anyone who is having a problem receiving a refund on a deposit for an event canceled because of COVID-19 regulations are encouraged to call the attorney general's hotline at 800-771-7755.

## New Castle, WBT Operators in Lease Talks for Shows at ChappPac

By Martin Wilbur

The Town of New Castle is negotiating with an entity that operated the former Westchester Broadway Theatre for a multiyear lease to produce shows at the Chappaqua Performing Arts.

Evening Out, Inc. and town officials are looking at a potential three-year lease at the 425-seat venue referred to as ChappPac on the campus of Chappaqua Crossing, the former Reader's Digest property.

"Evening Out is looking to start actually booking events out tentatively later this year," Town Attorney Ed Phillips said at a recent Town Board meeting. "So they would also like to have some comfort, if you will, that these discussions are going to bear fruit and that they're going to be in a lease with the town relatively soon."

While terms of the lease were still to be hashed out, Phillips said that in addition to

a multiyear agreement of preferably three years, Evening Out would donate lighting and sound equipment to the theater. There are also other issues that still needed to be resolved such as use of the auditorium by the town, how to divide the cost of the utilities, having a \$1 per-ticket fee that would go to the town and a guarantee of a certain number of events each year.

Another issue complicating matters is that New Castle is supposed to take ownership of the theater but the town hasn't taken title because Summit, the property owner, is still completing improvements to the site, Phillips said. Once that is done, the town will take title to the property.

"I would like to be in title and be able to lease with Evening Out as opposed to a sublease," he said.

Supervisor Lisa Katz said the sound and lighting equipment Evening Out will donate will be new and is worth roughly \$150,000. It

will remain with the theater even if the lease expires without renewal, she said.

"We're not in the business of being producers or promoters, the town, so this is something we'll be able to guarantee so residents have something to see there a good portion of the year," Katz said.

Evening Out is also in the midst of applying for a liquor license with the state

and is expected to sell concessions. There has also been talk of the company working out an arrangement with local restaurants to provide deals to theatergoers.

The Westchester Broadway Theatre permanently closed in October 2020 following seven months of being shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Yorktown Approves Alcohol Consumption in Four Town Parks

The Yorktown Town Board approved the creation of permits last week to allow residents to consume alcohol in four municipal parks.

The parks where alcohol consumption will be allowed with a valid permit are Par 3 Golf Course, Railroad Park, Sparkle Lake service building and Downing Park. In addition to a town permit, alcohol sales at the golf course and Railroad Park will require a permit from the New York State Liquor Authority.

"It's not a blanket authorization for anyone to go in and be allowed to consume alcohol," said Supervisor Matt Slater. "Especially at Railroad Park, keep in mind that it does require multiple levels of approvals before it's allowed."

The alcohol permits at Sparkle Lake and Downing Park will allow people who rent town facilities for birthday parties or other celebrations to serve

alcohol to their guests. Alcohol sales at those parks will not be allowed.

"This does not mean that we can have alcohol in all of our parks. That's not what we're looking to do," said parks Superintendent James Martorano.

During the Town Board's deliberations on the matter, some council members noted that many residents have asked for permission to serve alcohol at their private parties at Sparkle Lake.

"I think it's a great way to celebrate people's lives and treat adults like adults," said Councilwoman Luciana Haughwout. "We're trusting the community to follow the rules and to honor the parks."

The permitting process will be administered by the town clerk's office.

Alcohol consumption is permitted at select public parks in Westchester County, particularly golf courses and Kensico Dam Plaza.

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Guest Column

Chabad at the Epicenter of Humanitarian Relief in Ukraine

By Rabbi Yehuda Heber

Due to the recent, most unfortunate world news, tens of thousands of Ukraine’s weary citizens are leaving their homes, forced by a war not of their making to flee toward neighboring Poland, Moldova and Romania, where they are seeking refuge in Europe or boarding chartered flights to safer destinations. Some are not able to leave.

The humanitarian effort to help the people of Ukraine, wherever they may be, did not begin when Russian tanks crossed the border. Ever since word of impending war began months ago, the Chabad-Lubavitch-affiliated Federation of the Jewish Communities of the CIS (FJC) – which serves all Jewish communities in the entire former Soviet Union – has been at the epicenter of an ever-

growing humanitarian effort that crosses ethnic divisions, socioeconomic strata and international borders.

Chabad’s Ukraine Relief Fund goes directly to the lifesaving efforts of the FJC and Chabad emissaries in Ukraine, who have also marshaled the support of local and international donors. Funds donated translates nearly instantly into much-needed cash on the ground.

“Literally every dollar that is donated right now is money sorely needed for work taking place as we speak,” said a source close to Chabad of Odessa’s relief work. “We are talking about food, clean water and medicine; we are talking about helping people leave. It’s saving lives.”

For weeks now, Chabad emissaries have been purchasing rice, kasha and other non-

perishables, which are being distributed to those in need. Even in cities where emissaries have been forced to leave in the past few days, the aid distribution continues between bombings.

Additionally, Chabad has been arranging flights and buses for thousands of refugees, helping them escape harm’s way. They have evacuated entire communities. The orphanages Chabad runs in multiple Ukrainian cities have been evacuated as well, with the children being transported to Berlin and other European cities.

Although living so far away, there are still things we can do to help the people of Ukraine in their time of need.

Each good deed (mitzvah) done in their honor helps create spiritual energy of protection and blessings. Consider performing

an additional good deed in the merit of the people of Ukraine. Helping a neighbor, giving to charity, saying a prayer (recommended Psalms chapters: 20, 23, 120, 121, 130), are some of the ways we can be there for them spiritually while we can’t do so physically.

Additionally, please consider donating to these lifesaving efforts. You can do so through the charity of your choice, or by visiting [www.ChabadYorktown.com/Ukraine](http://www.ChabadYorktown.com/Ukraine). (All of the funds go directly to the people in Ukraine.)

We pray for peace! We pray to see the day, when, in the words of the Prophet Isaiah, “... They shall beat their swords into plowshares... nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” Amen!

*Rabbi Yehuda Heber leads Chabad of Yorktown.*

Letters to the Editor

Town of Cortlandt’s Position Statement on Village Court Dissolution

In response to recent articles and editorials published in this paper, I thought it appropriate that the Town of Cortlandt provide a position statement on the possible dissolution of the

Croton Justice Court. Simply put, the Town Board and I are neither formally supporting nor opposing this proposal.

The town has been advised of the

deliberations that have been ongoing within the Village of Croton-on-Hudson for the past few weeks about the potential abolishment of its Justice Court. As a cost savings measure and as part of the general move toward municipal cooperation, the village approached the Cortlandt Town Board to investigate this option. As discussions progressed, one point became clear: under state law, this is purely a village decision. If Croton-on-Hudson abolishes its Justice Court, then by law, the town MUST assume responsibility by providing this necessary service. The town has no role or authority to influence this decision; we simply respond to whatever is decided by the village.

Further, the town does not want to interfere with the Village Board’s deliberation. We encourage the Village Board to allow for ample public comment, and if it does vote to abolish the Village Court, then beginning Jan. 1, 2023, the town will carry out its legal

responsibility to ensure that appropriate and adequate court services are provided.

It would be anticipated that the town would hire many of the Village Court staff, including clerks and the prosecutor, so that most jobs would be maintained. The costs of these positions would be covered by revenue generated by fines and fees. Our financial analysis indicates a definite cost savings for the village, and for Cortlandt, the fines and fees would cover expenses. Hence, it is financially neutral for the town.

The Town of Cortlandt will respond to whatever the Village Board and residents determine is best for the village. We offer our full support and will be ready to proceed with whatever is decided.

**Richard H. Becker, M.D.**  
**Supervisor**  
**Town of Cortlandt**

Con Ed Should Not Be Allowed Rate Hikes When Reporting Large Profits

Why should Con Edison be allowed to raise our rates while reporting obscene profits that exceeded \$1.5 billion in 2021? The company has \$63 million in assets.

I have received numerous complaints from Greenburgh residents who are shocked at the enormous Con Ed bills we all are being asked to pay. Bills are at an all-time high. There is no end in sight for the high bills we can expect to receive. Con Edison plans an additional 11.2 percent increase in electric rates next year and an 18.2 percent increase in gas bills in 2023.

I believe that the state legislature pass

should pass legislation directing the Public Service Commission (PSC) not to approve large rate hikes when the company is reporting excessive profits. Let Con Ed shareholders profit less so customers could have more affordable utility bills. Con Edison profits should be an important factor that determines the rates it charges us. I will be reaching out to the PSC, the governor and to area legislators. Please join me in contacting your lawmakers!

**Paul Feiner**  
**Greenburgh Town Supervisor**

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# Peekskill's Focus on Mixed-Use, Residential Projects Moving Ahead

By Abby Luby

The City of Peekskill is growing in leaps and bounds. This year, some of the city's biggest projects are expected to come to fruition.

At a Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce breakfast last week at the Peekskill Central Fire House, a large group of local business owners, Peekskill Common Council members and neighboring town representatives were updated on multiple projects that promise to have a major impact on the city.

"Peekskill has been transformed into a premier destination for the Hudson Valley region as well as the county," Mayor Vivian McKenzie told the audience. "As our city continues to grow, I'm excited to share with you the economic developments and the projects that are underway here in the city."

Soon to be completed are a list of downtown residential spaces. Occupancy for a new 181-unit market-rate apartment house at 1 Park Place is expected to begin later this summer. Construction of 22 residential units and two commercial spaces on South Division and Second Street is scheduled to be completed in July.

On Main Street and North Division Street, 13 residential units and five retail spaces are currently being renovated with completion expected in the next few months. In addition, 82 affordable housing rental apartments at 645 Main St. is expected to be completed early next year.



ABBY LUBY PHOTO

Peekskill Mayor Vivian McKenzie addressed local business owners, Peekskill Common Council members and neighboring municipalities' representatives at the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce breakfast last week at the Peekskill Central Fire House.

A variety of projects have been helped with financial incentives, said Deborah Post, chair of the Peekskill Industrial Development Agency (IDA). She said the IDA has been instrumental in obtaining financial incentives for the Fort Hill apartments, the Charles Point Marina, Factoria and Giulianta Machine Tool.

Post said the IDA has provided sales tax and mortgage tax exemptions for the two mixed-used developments at 1 Park Place and 216 S. Division St. Driving many of the projects is the goal to incentivize developers to provide local jobs, internships and apprenticeships.

"These are ongoing initiatives," Post said.

One such project is the Kitchen Food Incubator, a shared-use kitchen for food entrepreneurs in the former Peekskill Fire House on Washington Street. A grant was submitted this month to the U.S. Economic Development Association, which will be matched by the IDA. When the incubator is in operation it expects to have a staff of at least five people, have fully equipped and licensed commercial kitchens, prep stations, storage, packaging, shipping, receiving and office space.

Linking the Peekskill waterfront to the downtown is driving some of the projects. Peekskill Planning Director Jean Friedman said recent commercial developments and other projects are just getting started.

"The projects that have been awarded through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) are located in the downtown waterfront areas linked by the Central Avenue corridor," said Friedman. "The city is currently executing funding contracts with the state. The first step will be to hire a design consultant and hold public meetings and workshops to get the public input on each project."

Improving the streetscape on Central

Avenue, South Water Street, Railroad Avenue and a portion of South Street with a pedestrian and bicycle path is being considered to link the downtown to the train station. Expanding public gathering spaces for events is envisioned such as at North Division Street and Park Street. Closing two of the four lanes in front of the Chamber of Commerce space on South Division Street for a pedestrian plaza is proposed, leaving two lanes open for traffic.

Reconstruction of the 500-foot-long Fleischmann Pier is also part of expanding Charles Point Park with a bigger parking lot, a bus drop-off, restrooms, concessions and a picnic area.

"We hope to attract cruise ship operators who have expressed a strong interest in the pier along with fishing and sightseeing and day slips for motorized and non-motorized smaller vessels," Friedman said.

Other ongoing or yet-to-begin projects include renovations and expansion to the Paramount Hudson Valley to include a new art gallery, a new Peekskill Boys & Girls Club anticipated to open in spring 2023, adding public Wi-Fi in Lepore and Pugsley parks and low-cost internet service for Bohlmann Towers and Barham House, an affordable housing complex for seniors.

Public art will have a bigger presence and will include light sculptures and murals on buildings and on the arches under Route 9.

"This will enhance Peekskill's image as a center for art and culture," Friedman said.




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## Dementia in 2022: An Update on Diagnosis, Treatment, Research Advances, and Strategies for Healthy Brain Aging

*Presented by Brent P. Forester, MD; MSc, Chief, Division of Geriatric Psychiatry, McLean Hospital; Medical Director, Behavioral Health Integration, Partners HealthCare; Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; Co-President, American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry*

Scientists and clinicians worldwide are making advances in the research and treatment of dementia. Dr. Forester will present an update on those advances, provide the latest information on current diagnosis methods, and review the effectiveness of approved therapies for dementia. He will also delve into the impact of behavioral symptoms of dementia. Finally, he will present the latest research into disease-modifying treatments and your opportunities to enhance healthy brain aging.

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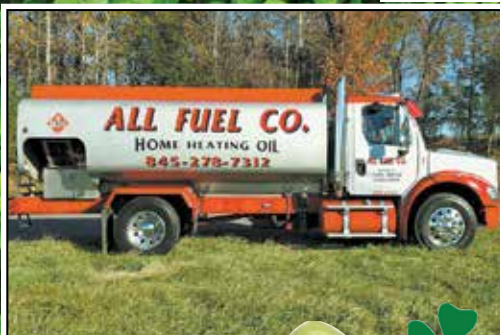
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## Spring: When Hearts Turn to Love and Elbows to Cleaning

Do you like the word association game? When you think of the word "spring," does it rapidly associate with "house cleaning?"

I must confess, for me, I had no such association. Spring was a time to clean up the yard and to create my planting plan for the flower and vegetable garden.

However, for most people, the winter blues are shaken away with a good and deep annual house cleaning. It can be quite a formidable task without the right plan, but it can be more manageable, even enjoyable (for some), with a checklist.

This list, compiled with the help of Mrs. Home Guru, offers an overview of what to do to navigate the process.

### Clean the Clutter

The essential part of spring cleaning is getting rid of any clutter, things you don't need. There is no better time to take advantage of the natural spring urge to get rid of items that are weighing you down, whether you realize it or not, and start fresh with a more streamlined lifestyle.

### Divide and Conquer

Sort belongings into four categories – trash, items to give away, store for the long term or put away for the season.

Whether you prefer to proceed from the attic to the basement or start outdoors and wind your way inside, create a realistic schedule and focus on one task at a time,



By Bill Primavera

keeping in mind that a single weekend won't suffice. You'll need several days for more involved projects, such as shampooing carpets and organizing closets.

The ensuing tips outline basic techniques that will help you clean almost every surface (or object) in any room, leaving your home refreshed from top to bottom.

### Clean Room By Room

Approaching your house room by room is the most effective way to deep-clean your home at any time of the year, but especially in spring. Use room checklists as a springboard for cleaning the areas of your home that really need extra attention. You can skip items that

have recently been cleaned and focus on the parts of your home that have been neglected all winter long.

### Dust, Dust, Dust

Use a vacuum to remove dust. (Feather dusters just scatter it.) Tackle stubborn surface grime, especially prevalent in kitchens, with a solvent-free degreaser. Test it first in an inconspicuous area to ensure it won't mar the surface.

Take everything off the shelves, and here, you can hit them (along with the books) with a feather duster.

### Vacuum and Shampoo Rugs

Synthetic carpets and rugs with waterproof backings can be deep-cleaned with a rotary shampoo machine and a hot-water extraction machine. Rugs without backings, including



Oriental, require professional cleaning.

### Clean Upholstered Furnishings

Take cushions outside and gently beat them by hand to remove dust. If there are stains, check the pieces for care labels. Use a vacuum's upholstery and crevice tools to clean under seat cushions.

### Wax Wooden Furniture

Wipe surfaces with a soft cloth dampened with water and mild dishwashing liquid. Apply paste wax, such as Butcher's wax, a few feet at a time with a cotton rag folded into a square pad. Let the wax dry; buff with a clean cloth.

### Wash Window Screens

Spring is a good time to get a clearer view of the great outdoors. Do this by washing window screens by using warm water and a mild dishwashing liquid. Scrub the screens with a brush and then rinse thoroughly with a hose.

### Wax Non-Wood Floors

Vinyl and linoleum floors that have lost

their shine should be waxed with a polish designed for these surfaces. Most stone and tile floors can be treated with either a paste or a liquid wax designed for the material.

### Establish New Habits

A good, thorough spring cleaning that includes the entire house is a great time to establish new ongoing cleaning habits, and it can also make the next spring cleaning a good deal easier. Simple 15-minute cleanup routines practiced every few days, each including a series of one- to two-minute chores, can make it remarkably easy to keep your home clean and tidy all year long.

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

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## Saving Hearts, Saving Lives

How two Westchester neighbors are leading the effort to prevent sudden cardiac deaths in local communities



By Sherrie Dulworth

*You are reading this week's excerpt of an article from our Examiner+ digital newsmagazine. To read the entire article and others like it, visit [www.examiner-plus.com](http://www.examiner-plus.com) and join our community as a member.*

"I was at work and saw that I had missed a couple of calls from my husband. My first thought was that our son Jordan had broken another bone while he was playing basketball," says Rye Brook resident Alice Schoen. "Then I read a text that said, 'Drop everything and get to New Rochelle Hospital'."

About an hour before Alice read that text in 2017, Jordan Schoen had scored a 2-point basket, then his 17-year-old

athlete's heart stopped beating. Jordan crumbled to the gym floor with a sudden cardiac arrest, or SCA.

Just four years earlier, Dave Colasante, another Rye Brook resident who was then 45, had an SCA while away during a father-son soccer game. When his wife Dana heard the news about Schoen, it brought back a flood of memories. "Even with what had happened to Dave, I was stunned to hear that this had occurred in someone who was so young," she says.

Dave Colasante and Jordan Schoen were both saved by the quick thinking and actions of first responders who happened to be in their respective audiences.

Rapid treatment is vital for someone to survive an SCA. The victim's heart usually needs a shock to restore its normal rhythm. That shock is delivered through an external device called an automated external defibrillator, AED, that gives the heart sort of a rhythm "reboot."

For Colasante, an AED was found and retrieved from a nearby school, which fortunately was open on the weekend. In Jordan's case, there was a defibrillator outside the gymnasium doors, but either the majority of those who were present didn't know where it was or didn't recognize the need to get it. Instead, an off-duty police officer who was among



Schoen and Colasante families (from l to r: Alice Schoen, Steve Schoen, Dave Colasante, Dana Colasante) in 2019 (Courtesy Alice Schoen)

the spectators ran to his patrol car and got his device.

According to the American Heart Association, SCAs are the number-one cause of out-of-hospital deaths in the U.S. with more than 350,000 incidents each year, and it is the primary cause of death in student-athletes. About 7,000 SCAs occur in children under the age of 18.

An SCA is different than a heart attack, even though they both involve the heart, and both can be fatal. Simplistically, an SCA is an electrical or rhythm malfunction, while a heart attack arises from clogged circulation. (Think of your

home's electrical and plumbing systems.) The operative word with SCA is sudden — the person suddenly loses consciousness and in about a quarter of the cases has had no prior symptoms.

### TEAMING UP FOR ACTION

Dana Colasante quickly reached out to Alice Schoen to offer her support and they connected shortly afterward. They had been acquaintances for several years, but after they both came so close to losing a loved one to an SCA and at youth athletic events, they wanted to help others be better prepared.

In 2018, the two women co-founded Saving Active Hearts, a local initiative that is helping to raise awareness and implement a cardiac emergency response plan in Westchester communities and schools.

With input from Saving Active Hearts, the Village of Rye Brook implemented...

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Police Blotter

County Police/Mount Kisco

**Mar. 1:** A Moore Avenue resident reported at 6:46 p.m. that someone had removed a package that had been delivered and left in the lobby for her. The building superintendent reported that he has video of a person who took the package. An investigation is continuing.

**Mar. 1:** A resident arrived at the Green Street precinct at 7:10 p.m. to report that someone had used her identity to take out a car lease. The woman had already been in contact with the leasing company, which is looking into the matter, and recommended she file a police report.

**Mar. 2:** Police responded to a South Moger Avenue business at 11:58 a.m. after a man called to express concern for the safety of his daughter in Putnam County. The man told officers that he believed his daughter was being physically abused by her boyfriend. Officers contacted state police in Brewster and troopers responded to the woman’s residence to conduct a domestic violence investigation.

**Mar. 2:** Jasmine Martinez, 30, of Fisher Court in White Plains, was charged at noon with petty larceny, a misdemeanor, on a complaint from staff at Target on North Bedford Road. She was accused of leaving the store without paying for more than \$700 worth of merchandise found in her shopping cart. She was booked at the Green Street precinct and released pending an Apr. 7 appearance in Mount Kisco Justice Court.

**Mar. 3:** A home health aide reported at 11:05 a.m. that she found a Sutton Drive resident deceased when she arrived for work at the elderly woman’s residence. Police and Westchester EMS responded and determined that the death was of apparent natural causes.

**Mar. 4:** Three men reported loitering inside a laundromat on East Main Street at 11:23 p.m. The men agreed to leave the premises.

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

**Feb. 21:** A caller reported an individual sitting in the shade of a tree just north of the bathhouse at Croton Landing at 2:52 p.m. wearing a hooded sweatshirt and having a samurai sword. He believed the sword is unsheathed. The complainant reported the individual is not waving the sword around or threatening anyone. There was no other description of the individual other than the hooded sweatshirt. Patrols were dispatched and reported the individual is a 12-year-old boy and the sword is a toy. The youth was with his father, who was fishing.

**Feb. 25:** A Hispanic male wearing a blue and white baseball cap and face mask and with tattoos on his hands entered the village’s engineering office and police headquarters at the Croton Municipal Building on Van Wyck Street at 1:30 p.m. to ask questions and was filming with his cell phone camera. He stated his name was “Guy” and was there at the building

at the request of “the people.” He asked for the police department’s phone number and left without incident. A message and photo of the subject was sent on Slack. The Department of Public Works reported the same male tried to enter the DPW building and was not permitted access. The man left the building in a 2020 gray Nissan Altima.

Mount Pleasant Police Department

**Mar. 3:** At about 5:30 p.m., police received a call for assistance by the state police. A juvenile out of Dover Plains, Dutchess County, was missing and endangered. State police had the juvenile’s cell phone location tracked. Mount Pleasant officers canvassed the area and located the juvenile runaway. She was turned over to state police and her mother.

**Mar. 4:** A business located off of Route 9A in Hawthorne reported that a catalytic converter was removed from one of the company vehicles overnight. An investigation is ongoing.

North Castle Police Department

**Feb. 26:** Report of a dispute at a gas station on North Broadway at 11:48 p.m. A caller reported a customer asked to use the bathroom but was declined access. The caller stated the individual became irate and started to yell at him in a threatening manner. The complainant also stated the customer had left the store and was apparently awaiting an Uber ride. The individual was described as a tall white male between 40 and 50 years old with a white beard. The responding officers reported that the party is no longer on the premises and appears to have left the area.

**Feb. 27:** A caller reported at 2:40 p.m. that a customer at the Stop & Shop on North Broadway is attempting to shoplift. The caller described the party as a white female wearing black leggings, a black shirt and black “slides.” Officers responded and depostions were secured. A report to follow.

**Feb. 27:** An officer conducted a traffic stop at 5:31 p.m. on Cox Avenue, and upon an e-justice inquiry, the registered owner of the vehicle was shown to have had her driving privileges suspended in New York. The officer reported that the vehicle was removed from the roadway by Armonk Garage and the driver was processed roadside and given a desk appearance ticket with an Apr. 5 return date.

**Mar. 1:** A Windmill Road resident reported at 3:46 p.m. that she believes her tenant possibly took her credit card from her bedroom and processed several charges on the card. Information was gathered; a report to follow.

Pleasantville Police Department

**Feb. 27:** A male driver was arrested at 8:33 a.m. and charged with DWI after he had passed out at the wheel on Bedford and South View roads.

**Feb. 28:** Report of a larceny on Manville Road at 7:25 a.m. A patron left Farrows Gas Station in a white Acura after failing to pay.

**Mar. 1:** Report of a father-and-son dispute on Weskora Avenue at 7:35 p.m. An

order of protection was filed.

**Mar. 3:** A Hildreth Place homeowner returned at 6:18 p.m. to find the house ransacked. An investigation is underway.

State Police

**Mar. 1:** State police, in conjunction with the Westchester County Department of Probation, arrested Vincenzo Fidanza, 40, of Somers, in connection with possessing multiple illegal substances and three weapons. Fidanza was found with about 21.5 pounds of marijuana; 2.7 pounds of Psilocybin mushrooms; 246.9 grams of THC oil; 101 grams of marijuana wax; 1,516.2 grams of amphetamines; 552.2 grams of alprazolam; 2.4 grams of cocaine; and 11 grams of oxycodone. Fidanza also had one Romarm SA/CUGIR AK-47, one Eagle Arms Eagle-15 and one 12-gauge Mossberg shotgun in violation of his terms of probation. He was charged with seven counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance and one count of first-degree criminal possession of cannabis, all felonies, and third-degree criminal possession of cannabis and criminal possession of a weapon, both Class A misdemeanors. He was arraigned in Town of Somers Court and remanded to the Westchester County Jail without bail.

White Plains Police Department

**Mar. 4:** Naomi Del Carmen Asmat was arrested and charged with second-degree assault and first-degree criminal contempt in connection with an incident at 170 Grand St.

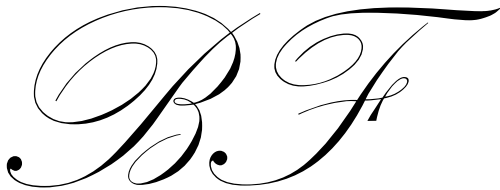
Yorktown Police Department

**Mar. 3:** Perry Freeman, 36, and Schaniqua Oglesby, 35, both of Mohegan Lake, were arrested at 9:34 a.m. and charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance and endangering the welfare of a child as part of a joint investigation conducted by Yorktown and Westchester County police into local narcotics sales that started last year. After executing a search warrant, police alleged a quantity of various narcotics was located and a child living in the residence had their welfare endangered by the defendant’s alleged actions.

**Mar. 3:** Spencer Reed, 27, of Peekskill, was arrested at 9:39 a.m. and charged with reckless endangerment, reckless driving and resisting arrest after driving away at a high rate of speed and almost hitting two officers as they approached a vehicle parked on Lexington Avenue. A passenger, Perry Freeman, 36, of Mohegan Lake, was also charged in connection with an arrest warrant issued by the Putnam County Sheriff’s Department after he and Reed jumped out of the vehicle and tried to run away.

**Mar. 3:** Mariana Vasquez, 48, of Ossining, was charged with petty larceny at 3:06 p.m. after allegedly stealing \$394 worth of merchandise from Macy’s at the Jefferson Valley Mall.

*Editor’s Note: The policy of providing names for people who have been arrested varies between each department.*



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# Maria Regina HS Marching Band in NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade

When Irish Eyes Are Smiling will be plentiful for Maria Regina High School's first-ever marching band during this year's St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

The talented all-girls ensemble, which is rare onto itself, will not only have the honor of participating in the New York City parade on Mar. 17 – the oldest and largest St. Patrick's Day Parade in the world – but will also march in four other popular regional parades honoring the patron saint of Ireland.

The band will join a contingent of thousands of marchers and bands from throughout the metropolitan area and pass His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan, archbishop of New York, who will review the procession from the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Throngs of celebrants lining both sides of the avenue's route stretching from 44th Street to 79th Street will cheer the marchers. Maria Regina's band is scheduled to march between 1:45 and 3:15 p.m.

Next Thursday's event will be the first full-scale New York City St. Patrick's Parade since before the pandemic struck two years. A tradition since 1762, this year's parade will be dedicated to first

responders and essential workers.

In addition to its trip to Manhattan, it will be a very busy week for Maria Regina's band. This Saturday, Mar. 12 the band will march in the White Plains parade from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. On Sunday, it will march in two parades, first at Throggs Neck in the Bronx, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and then at Eastchester from 1:45 to 3:15 p.m. The band will conclude their appearances at the Yonkers parade on Saturday, Mar. 19, from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Families, friends and members of Maria Regina's administration and faculty will be on hand to cheer the musicians during these high-profile community celebrations.

Maria Regina's marching band made its debut last October in the 44th annual Bronx Columbus Day Parade, the only all-girls group among the participating 50 groups, including several other high school ensembles that marched in the popular community event.

Outfitted with brand new uniforms and equipped with bells and snare and bass drums, Maria Regina's 11 young musicians are twin sisters Allison and Emily Ibarra of Mount Vernon (both play bells); sisters Clevisa Bujaj (bells) and Jessica Bujaj (bass drum) of



Maria Regina High School's first-ever, all-girls marching band, shown above at the Bronx Columbus Day Parade last October, will participate in the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade and four other area parades through Mar. 19.

the Bronx; Shaiyanne Noisette (snare drum) of Mount Vernon; Angelina Costa (bells) of Yonkers; Kelly Cambillo (snare drum)

of White Plains; Nathalie Bello (bass drum) of Elmsford; Gianna Buccieri (bells) of Port Chester; Amber Korcz (bells) of Peekskill;

and Mariam Ahmed of Dover Plains leading the Marching Band.

Maria Regina's band is part of the new marching band and string and rhythm orchestra program that the leading all-girls Catholic high school launched in 2020. In addition to parades, the band participates in pep rallies and school concerts and open houses, performing patriotic favorites, marches and the school song.

The string and rhythm orchestra is designed to introduce students to an array of instruments, including violins, violas, cellos, guitars, bass, keyboards and percussion that the school has purchased. Its repertoire will encompass holiday songs, hit songs from Motown, rock n' roll, pop and standards.

Musical experience and the ability to read music are not required to participate in either the band or string and rhythm orchestra. Both are under the direction of Steven Finkelstein, a professional percussionist who previously served as the marching band and orchestra director and music instructor at Aquinas High School in the Bronx, specializing in working with young musicians who have little or no experience.

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# Creative Writing Program Helps Two Young Students’ Love of Storytelling

By Martin Wilbur

The importance of having young children interested in reading and writing can never be overemphasized. It’s even better when they enjoy the activity.

Last month West Patent Elementary School first-grader Kaylee Vitkowski and Allie Franco, a second-grader at Mount Kisco Elementary School, were able to complete writing and illustrating a children’s book, “As Told by Allie and Kaylee: Adventures in Unicorn Land,” an anthology of five stories that the two girls teamed up to finish.

“We have the book in the (Mount Kisco) library,” Franco said. “We can show it to our friends. That’s really cool.”

The program that spawned the collaboration is called Take a Look, It’s in a Book, which meets on Mondays at the Mount Kisco Public Library and is led by Mar-li Pitcher. Pitcher developed a creative writing program called Writing Rainbow about five years ago that she also presents through the parks and recreation departments in Yonkers, Ossining and Pleasantville and at the John C. Hart Memorial Library in Shrub Oak.

Pitcher came up with the idea in April 2017 because she always wanted to be a writer growing up. She created the Writing Rainbow program that employs techniques to help young children use their imagination and create original stories.

“This is a class I would have taken if it existed when I was their age,” Pitcher said.

The program runs for five weeks and each week they would write a different story.



First-grader Kaylee Vitkowski, left, and second-grader Allie Franco collaborate on their book at the Mount Kisco Public Library.

Last month, the library held a special ceremony for the release of Kaylee’s and Allie’s work, so other children who visit can read and enjoy their stories.

Kaylee said she left a lot of the writing to Allie while she concentrated on the illustrations.

“I drew the posters because I like to draw,” Kaylee said. “I really didn’t have to write that much.”

Allie said she used her personal experiences to help her come up with the story ideas, such as when she and her family had taken a trip to the beach in New Jersey and about school.

Her father, Paul Franco, said when he

learned of the program it seemed beneficial and appeared to be a fun way to reinforce the importance of reading and writing. An unexpected benefit was that the two girls, who likely would not have met because they are in different grades and in different schools, have become friends.

“Mount Kisco has a lot of really great programs, and when Ms. Mar-li came on and this program came on, Allie was ecstatic about trying it out, and then she forged a friendship with Kaylee and it was just wonderful, just a wonderful program,” he said.

Pitcher said she looks forward to what Kaylee and Allie can accomplish as they grow



Second-grader Allie Franco, front left, and first-grader Kaylee Vitkowski, with Mar-li Pitcher, back row, right, and Linda Surovich, the head of youth services at the Mount Kisco Library. Pitcher developed a creative writing program for young children that she offers in four other communities around the county.

older as both girls are talented and have sharp minds.

“She’s extremely, extremely talented. I’ve very, very proud,” Pitcher said. “I’m very proud of both of them.”

Anyone from the public can view “As Told by Allie and Kaylee: Adventures in Unicorn Land” in the children’s room at the Mount Kisco Public Library.

<p>Aum- LF 2021-00764 FCA § 1035(b), 1036 [NOTE: May be served outside New York State]</p> <p>FAMILY COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER</p> <p>..... In the Matter of a Proceeding Under Article 10 of the Family Court Act</p> <p><b>MARIE ERLANDE DE FRANC</b> (dob 09/25/2004), <b>MARIE ANGE DE FRANC</b> (dob 02/01/2009)</p> <p>Child(ren) under Eighteen Years of Age Alleged to be Severely Abused, Abused And/or Neglected by</p> <p><b>ARNOUS DE FRANC,</b></p> <p>Respondent.</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>NOTICE: PLACEMENT OF YOUR CHILD(REN) IN FOSTER CARE MAY RESULT IN YOUR LOSS OF YOUR RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD(REN). IF YOUR CHILD(REN) STAYS IN FOSTER CARE FOR 15 OF THE MOST RECENT 22 MONTHS, THE AGENCY MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO FILE A PETITION(S) TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND TO COMMIT GUARDIANSHIP AND CUSTODY OF YOUR CHILD(REN) TO THE AGENCY FOR THE PURPOSES OF ADOPTION. IN SOME CASES, THE AGENCY MAY FILE BEFORE THE END OF THE 15-MONTH PERIOD. IF SEVERE OR REPEATED CHILD ABUSE IS PROVEN BY CLEAR AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE, THIS FINDING MAY CONSTITUTE THE BASIS TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND TO COMMIT GUARDIANSHIP AND CUSTODY OF YOUR CHILD(REN) TO THE AGENCY FOR THE PURPOSES OF ADOPTION.</b></p> <p><b>UPON GOOD CAUSE, THE COURT MAY ORDER AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE NON-RESPONDENT PARENT(S) SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A RESPONDENT; IF THE COURT DETERMINES THE CHILD(REN) SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM HIS/HER HOME, THE COURT MAY ORDER AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE NON-RESPONDENT PARENT(S) SHOULD BE SUITABLE CUSTODIANS FOR THE CHILD(REN); IF THE CHILD(REN) IS PLACED AND REMAINS IN FOSTER CARE FOR FIFTEEN OF THE MOST RECENT TWENTY-TWO MONTHS, THE</b></p>	<p>Form 10-7a (Summons-Child Abuse Case) (8/2010)</p> <p>NA-07846-21 NA-07847-21</p> <p>Docket Nos.: <b>NA-03863-21/21--</b> <b>NA-04363-21/21--</b></p> <p>F/U No.: 163931</p> <p><b>SUMMONS</b> (Child Abuse Case)</p> <p>AGENCY MAY BE REQUIRED TO FILE A PETITION(S) FOR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS OF THE PARENT(S) AND COMMITMENT OF GUARDIANSHIP AND CUSTODY OF THE CHILD(REN) FOR THE PURPOSES OF ADOPTION, EVEN IF THE PARENT(S) WERE NOT NAMED AS RESPONDENTS IN THE CHILD NEGLECT OR ABUSE PROCEEDING.</p> <p>A NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT HAS THE RIGHT TO REQUEST TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT CUSTODY OF THE CHILD(REN) AND TO SEEK ENFORCEMENT OF VISITATION RIGHTS WITH THE CHILD(REN).</p> <p>BY ORDER OF THE FAMILY COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT(S) WHO RESIDE(S) OR IS FOUND AT [specify address(es)]:</p> <p>Last known address:</p> <p><b>ARNOUS DE FRANC (Father)</b> <b>36 White Plains Ave</b> <b>Elmsford, NY 10523</b></p> <p>and to [specify name(s) and address(es) and relationship to child(ren)]: <b>N/A</b></p> <p>A Petition under Article 10 of the Family Court Act having been filed with this Court, and annexed hereto <b>YOU AND EACH OF YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED</b> to appear before this Court <u>Virtually by Video Conferencing and/or Telephone*</u>, on <u>MARCH 30</u>, 2022, at <u>2:30</u> o'clock in the <input type="checkbox"/>morning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>afternoon of that day to answer the petitions and to be dealt with in accordance with Article 10 of the Family Court Act.</p> <p>Upon your failure to appear as herein directed, a warrant may be issued for your arrest and/or the Court may proceed to Inquest and hear and determine the petitions as provided by law.</p> <p>*Please contact your attorney and/or the Court by telephone (914-824-5501) or by email (VirtualWestchesterFamilyCourt@nycourts.gov) for further instructions on how to appear via video and/or telephone.</p> <p>Dated: <u>FEBRUARY 3</u>, 2022.</p> <p><u>/s/ William Curry</u> Clerk of Court</p>
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# Putnam County Business Outlook Seen as Improving in 2022

Business is picking up in Carmel and Mahopac and employers need more workers. Costs have also risen, and supply chains are still tangled.

So, John Iorio, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Mahopac-Carmel Chamber of Commerce and owner-operator of Funtime Amusements, a local special event and party rental company, seems cautiously optimistic.

Iorio has seen a lot of help wanted signs in store windows in the area. He thinks more people will be filling the jobs posted.

"As government pandemic aid ends, more people should be coming back into the workforce," Iorio said.

Many potential employees stayed home for fear of getting sick, he explained. But as the virus seems to be receding, he hopes to see businesses thriving and expanding.

However, business costs have increased about 10 percent, Iorio said. For example, the cost of helium, for party balloons, has gone up by that amount. Printing and paper costs are higher, too, the chamber learned, when they printed their new directory.

The cost of the pizzas Funtime serves at parties has risen more than 25 percent per pie. Pizza boxes were hard to come by for



By Michael Gold

a while because of supply chain issues. The cost of flour has gone up as well, Iorio said.

Also, employee salaries have risen, so companies are passing those costs onto customers.

Restaurants and retail shops are spending more on masks and cleaning agents, to keep both employees and customers safe.

Supply chains are still snarled, in part because trucking companies don't have enough drivers, Iorio

said.

"The cost of trucking, raw materials and labor have gone up. And ports lack people to offload goods" from ships, he explained.

As well, the cost of gasoline has gone up, which fuels inflation, but also may draw teenagers with cars back to the workforce, Iorio said. They may need to get a job to pay for their driving habits.

Iorio, who started working when he was 13 years old painting houses for his uncle, is encouraged that people will start looking to fill all the job openings.

Funtime had a sluggish January, Iorio said. Fundraisers and bar and bat mitzvahs are often booked in January, but COVID-19 has impacted event bookings.

"People are skittish. Catering halls

lose clients and bookings if someone gets COVID," he said. "Event planners wonder if the guests will show up, how many will attend. The party may get canceled."

But March bookings are "looking promising," he pointed out.

"Hospitalizations are going down. More people are getting vaccinated. As the number of the sick are going down, we expect people will feel more confident. People are starting to book (events)."

Also, home sales are increasing, always a positive sign for the economy.

"Home sales are strong," reported Jennifer Maher, founding chairwoman of the Putnam County Business Council, who is also a partner and chief operating officer at J. Phillip Real Estate, a commercial and residential real estate brokerage.

"Putnam County is becoming more diversified, with buyers coming from New York City," Maher said. "They're diverse in race, politics, culture and sexual orientation. Putnam has a different feel than before the pandemic. The landscape has changed. Businesses should acknowledge that and adjust."

A benefit of new home sales is that appliance sales often increase as buyers look for new washing machines, dryers, dishwashers and other products to supply their new home. Local grocery stores, clothing stores, restaurants and other

consumer businesses should benefit from an increase in shoppers.

The commercial real estate market was "not a super-hot market going into the pandemic," Maher explained. But commercial sales and leasing are up so far in 2022.

A possible explanation for the uptick?

"A lot of people are rethinking their careers," Maher said. "They're starting businesses."

One potential hiccup in the business outlook is the "uncertain guidelines" coming from the state and county governments.

"Businesses feel unsupported on masks and vaccine mandates," Maher said when I spoke with her a few weeks ago. Gov. Kathy Hochul allowed the state's strict mask mandate for businesses to lapse on Feb. 10, so that eliminates one roadblock for businesses in the area.

Overall, Iorio sees things looking up.

"New Yorkers are very resilient," he said. "The risk (of the virus) is becoming less. We expect people will feel more confident."

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

## On the Street

## Are We All Red-Light Existentialists?

*"Life can only be understood backwards; But must be lived forward."*

—Soren Kierkegaard

We all agree how frustrating it is being stuck at a red light when we find ourselves rushed or running late. Finding ourselves agitated and alone wasting precious time as we are held captive in the moment.

It is also a time when we fall into a silent dialogue with ourself as we attempt to formulate how we plan to navigate our challenging times. We are truly in an era of challenging times. The "new normal" is living with COVID-19 along with its variants, political division, inflation, daily acts of random violence, a war in Ukraine, just to name some of the challenges.

It's a new world we are now forced to navigate. That oftentimes makes us

feel helpless and confused, along with the resulting anxiety, making us feel at times that life itself is absurd.

It is also an opportunity for us to sit back and take a few moments to have an intimate conversation with ourselves to try to bring some essence into our existence. So, we can take this life micro-moment, take a deep breath and use this time as an opportunity to ponder our intimate thoughts and feelings we tend to fear and share with friends, loved ones, family and even our partners.

It's in these thoughts that we find ourselves being unconscious of our existential nature. The philosophy and psychology of existentialism, a

term first used in the mid-20th century, was basically an academic response to how we think and view life naturally and seek to find meaning. It may be fair to state we are all existentialists to some degree. At times we feel

tormented and arrested in life. In these quiet and reflective moments, one should formulate on how to develop the courage to find the meaning of life.

Take for example, President Theodore Roosevelt, who led the Rough Riders on a suicide charge, conquered child illness and depression. A man known for his physical courage, though his greater act of courage was formulated in his private existential moments.

He defied all sense of convention and bigotry of his times by being the first American President to invite a black man, Booker T. Washington, to dine as his guest at the White House, knowing full well he would be abandoned by the Southern voters and scorned in the newspapers.

Our thoughts are private, though



By Richard Cirulli

the actions of our thoughts are public and have influence upon those we have a social intercourse. With this said, we should mark our time well and turn these annoying moments into opportunities to find our meaning and purpose in life.

The light is turning green and horns are honking. I'm glad I caught the long red light to afford me the

time and inspiration for this article, and to be able to meet my deadline. Now this is essence.

Be well. Be safe. Be happy. Be nice! Amor fati!

*Dr. Richard Cirulli is a published author, playwright and retired professor. His body of works can be viewed at [www.demitasseplayers.com](http://www.demitasseplayers.com). He looks forward to your comments and can be reached at [profcirulli@optonline.net](mailto:profcirulli@optonline.net).*

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continued on page 22

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# No Blacks, No Irish, No Hawks: A Master Falconer Overcomes Racism

By Brian Kluepfel

In our not-so-distant past, landlords, businesses and employers posted signs indicating “No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs.”

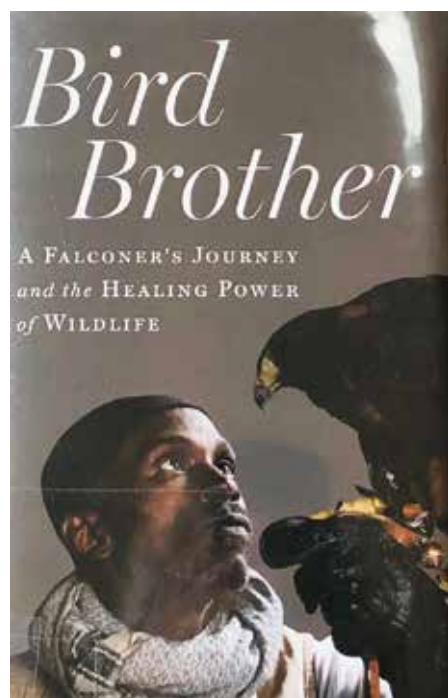
It was clear that in the social hierarchy of the day, Blacks and Irish were considered less than second-class citizens; perhaps subhuman, if we're to be completely honest.

I was reminded of this slogan the other day while drinking in an Ossining bar. We were all enjoying ourselves, listening to loud heavy metal music, as people of a certain age do, and knocking back some cold ones. As I walked to the jukebox to play another Black Sabbath tune, I overheard somebody say the n-word. I'm not sure who, but I think it was the bartender. They were contrasting metal music with rap. (Maybe they haven't heard about Eminem or the legion of rappers of all races.)

I didn't say anything, but I paid my tab and left soon after. It's not the kind of place I'd hang around in.

It's not the first time I've heard this nonsense in Westchester. I used to frequent a Pleasantville deli. One day one of the counter guys was talking animatedly to a customer and that terrible word came out again. Once again, I said nothing, but I put my items down and left the store.

This was at a time after a young unarmed Black man had been shot and killed by local police, and a Pleasantville police officer was suspended for threatening President Obama from his Facebook account.



The cover of the book by Rodney Stotts and how he went from overcoming the tough streets of Washington, D.C. to become a master falconer.

For whatever progress we've made as a society, as a human race, we still have the destructive and hateful seed of racism deep within us.

Last week I read “Bird Brother: A

Falconer's Journey and the Healing Power of Wildlife” by Rodney Stotts. Stotts grew up on the mean streets of southeast Washington, D.C. Poverty. Single-parent family. Violence and drugs all around at the height of the crack cocaine epidemic.

Stotts fell prey to the lure of the streets and was, for some time, a small-time drug dealer. He carried a firearm and did not envision his life lasting far beyond his early 20s. He did time.

That all took a drastic turn when he signed up for a job with a local environmental organization and became part of a team charged with cleaning the contaminated Anacostia River. His motives for applying for the job were not pure, but that doesn't matter.

Eventually the program was successful enough to be chosen to re-introduce Bald Eagles to the area. Stotts, always fascinated with birds of prey – he sometimes cut school to visit the National Zoo in Washington – became engrossed in the eagles' successful re-population, and through that was introduced to the ancient sport of falconry.

Falconry has been the sport of kings and royals for centuries. When Stotts sought out a sponsor, the first step in becoming an official falconer, he met mostly older, White people, who were often unkind or indifferent to him. One told him, “You people don't hunt and fly birds. You eat

them.” (“Hunt” in falconer's parlance is taking your bird out and letting it hunt and fly. Again, the not-too-subtle “you people” reference.)

Stotts was angered but unfazed. He eventually found a mentor, and is now a master falconer and has taught his son and many others. He runs a program called Rodney's Raptors, which educates school groups and others about birds of prey. He is converting a property in the Virginia countryside into an animal rescue, rehabilitation and education center. You should read his story, or check out

the National Geographic documentary about his life.

Once, Stotts was showing a hawk to some local children in a park. He was feeding it mice, as one does, and momentarily lost

concentration. The hawk lunged and bit his ungloved hand, badly injuring it. He had learned to never lose focus when handling a bird.

We, too, should never lose focus on our humanity. We should not let the ugliness of racism and prejudice come back and bite us. Our ideals should fly as high as Stott's falcons and hawks.

*Ossining resident Brian Kluepfel is an independent journalist whose work has appeared in Lonely Planet travel guides and Westchester Magazine, among other publications. The views in this column are his own.*

## For The Birds

## Crossword

### Across

1. Act like a sponge
7. Liquid unit
10. Sully
12. Gnawed
13. Asphalt laying machinery
15. Jimmy Stewart movie or Bedford college prep academy, The \_\_\_\_\_ School
16. From a cask
19. American in Paris, perhaps
22. Movie channel (abbr.)
23. Sis, e.g.
24. Stuffed
27. Clarkson and Underwood, e.g.
29. Freshen
31. New athletic training facility at the JV Mall, \_\_\_\_\_s Hub
36. A Law and Order version
37. Downgraded
38. Milk soaked bread
39. Scraps

### Down

1. Stomach muscles, for short
2. Put money in the pot
3. Compass point
4. The Oracle of \_\_\_\_\_ (Warren Buffet)
5. Plot again
6. Character is Asimov's “Foundation Series”
7. Music genre
8. Colorado Native American
9. The “p” in r.p.m.
11. Move aimlessly
14. Comic villain Luthor
16. Exclamations of surprise
17. Basketball org.
18. Reckon
20. Afflict
21. Atlanta-based channel
25. Scaleless fish
26. Historic Scott
27. Reply to “Who's there?”
28. Station
30. Some votes
31. Vision benefits provider
32. “On the Beach” actress, Gardner
33. Baseball's Mel
34. \_\_\_\_\_ Speedwagon, rock group
35. Football scores

Answers on page 23

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continued from page 20

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# Determining the Salability of an Older Bottle of Wine



By Nick Antonaccio

"My Dad was an avid collector of wine, but I don't know much about fine wines. He passed away recently. How do I know if the wines in his cellar are valuable?"

"I found several bottles of wine stored in my aunt's cellar. She asked me if they are any good. They were gifts received many years ago. How much are they worth?"

"I purchased a bottle of expensive French wine a number of years ago as an investment. I think it may be valuable. How can I sell it?"

These questions have been posed to me on numerous occasions over the course of the years I've penned this column. How many of us have asked similar questions?

Many of us have pondered that bottle of older vintage French wine that was in your grandparent's wine cabinet, on your father's basement shelf, nestled on your aunt's wine rack over the refrigerator or resting comfortably in your uncle's custom-made wine cellar kept under lock and key.

Attempting to determine the drinkability, not to mention the value, of an older bottle of wine can be fraught with uncertainty. If only there were guidelines one could follow or an empirical procedure one could employ that

would unequivocally answer these questions before we reach the decision point of drink, sell or pour down the drain.

My recommendation: Consider the standards employed by auction houses in evaluating the viability of wines for auction. While your one-off bottle of vintage wine is likely of little interest to the premier auction houses, applying their standards and criteria to your wine will likely determine its value and salability.

For an auction house to consider your aging bottle of wine, you and the bottle must meet strict standards.

The foremost criterion is provenance. Do you know the journey the wine has taken before coming into the current owner's possession? How many owners' hands did the wine pass through? Was it purchased upon release from the winery and immediately stored in a temperature- and humidity-controlled location? If not, how long was it sitting in grandma's cabinet or on

dad's shelf?

The death knell for any bottle of wine is being imprisoned on top of a hot refrigerator motor, exposed to bright kitchen lights. In the absence of a verifiable wine cellar, wines will nevertheless tolerate a number of conditions. The key is minimal disturbance. A permanent resting spot, with constant temperature and dim light is critical.

If your wine has met the provenance

criterion, you are well on your way to meeting the next set of criteria, which are solely market driven.

1. How rare is the wine? The natural law of supply and demand dominates the fine wine market. A shrinking supply coupled with increasing demand results in rising prices.
2. Was the wine's vintage stellar? Mediocre? There is a wide disparity in price between a coveted vintage and a lesser one. However, there are many buyers seeking out lesser vintages, thus stabilizing market prices.
3. How old is the wine? Unlike other commodities, wine is in a constant state of change – and presumably improving (to a point). As it improves, its value naturally rises. This anticipated increase in quality and commensurate price is often factored into the market price of a wine.

If you are unable to determine empirically a wine's origin, its value and salability will be seriously compromised. Revert to Plan B: Serve your special wines(s) alongside a backup wine purchased at a local wine shop. In the event the aged wine is spoiled or past its prime, you will be able to salvage the overall wine experience with the backup wine.

As I typically advise those who ask about the quality, value and salability of their cherished older wines, do your research, seek



out a willing buyer, but be prepared for disappointment.

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.

## Crossword Answers

1	A	B	S	O	R	B		7	C	U	P		
10	B	E	S	M	E	A	R	11		12	A	T	E
13	S	T	E	A	M	R	O	14	L	L	E	R	
				15	H	A	R	V	E	Y			
16	O	N	T	A	P			19	E	X	P	A	T
22	H	B	O							23	S	I	B
24	S	A	T	E	25	D		27	I	D	O	L	S
				29	A	E	R	30	A	T	E		
31	V	A	L	L	E	Y	S	P	33	O	R	T	
36	S	V	U			37	D	E	M	O	T	E	
38	P	A	P					39	S	E	T	T	O

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Gold Award



**MARIA MAKAJ**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Gold Award



**BARBARA SAWIN**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Gold Award



**JENNIFER STEVENSON**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Gold Award



**PATRICIA D'ALESIO**  
*Associate Real Estate Broker*  
Gold Award



**WILLIAM FRATTAROLA, JR.**  
*Associate Real Estate Broker*  
Gold Award



**MARIBEL ILLESCAS**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Gold Award



**AMIE CUNNINGHAM-SMITH**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Gold Award



**FATIMA CANDIOTTI**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Silver Award



**DEBORAH BARRY**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Silver Award



**JUNE CANAVAN**  
*Associate Real Estate Broker*  
Silver Award



**KIM GUNNESS**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Silver Award



**WILLIAM FRATTAROLA, SR.**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Silver Award



**ELIZABETH FINNEGAN**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Silver Award



**LIZABETA NDREU**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Silver Award



**JOELLA DELIBERTO**  
*Associate Real Estate Broker*  
Silver Award



**ANGELA LANNI**  
*Associate Real Estate Broker*  
Silver Award



**JUSTINE CUMMINGS**  
*Associate Real Estate Broker*  
Silver Award



**EDONA DJONBALAJ**  
*Real Estate Salesperson*  
Silver Award



**MARGHERITA ECCLESTON**  
*Associate Real Estate Broker*  
Silver Award