



**FREE**

Covering Yorktown, Somers, Cortlandt, Croton-on-Hudson, Buchanan, Ossining and Peekskill

April 26 - May 2, 2022

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 14, Issue 644

# Cortlandt Town Hall to be Named in Honor of Linda Puglisi

By Rick Pezzullo



Former Cortlandt Supervisor Linda Puglisi

She was instrumental in the acquisition of the former elementary school to be used as a town hall, and the move played a pivotal role in her being elected to the seat she held for 30 years.

So, it's only fitting that on Sunday, May 1, in a special ceremony, former Cortlandt Supervisor Linda Puglisi will have her name forever etched on Cortlandt Town Hall---becoming the town's third former supervisor to have a building named in their honor.

"I am extremely honored for this tribute to me," said Puglisi, who retired at the end of 2021. "This was a great building for us to branch out and consolidate some of our other departments into a town hall. I had a vision that this building would be so great, and it's really been phenomenal. It really has been a town hall that the community can be proud of."

As a councilwoman, Puglisi was on the negotiating team to purchase the former Lakeland School District elementary school in 1989. In 1991, residents voted to buy the 30,000-square-foot building in a public

referendum. In November 1991, Puglisi was elected supervisor, besting three other candidates, including Supervisor Jack Gaffney, who suffered the brunt of opposition from voters in Croton-on-Hudson, who were unhappy Cortlandt was moving out of the village's Municipal Building, where it rented space for years.

"We had too many offices all over the place," Puglisi recalled. "I remember taking a tour through the then closed elementary school and remarking that this lovely and historic former school would be perfect for our town hall purposes. It has been proven over these past 30 years to have been a good decision for our town."

Current Supervisor Dr. Richard Becker said he thought it was only fitting to bestow the honor on Puglisi since she had the foresight to realize the town hall would serve the needs of the town.

"It was insightful and creative," Becker said of Puglisi's first proposal to her board

colleagues to pursue the building that was first constructed in the 1930s. "We are pleased to be able to honor her with the naming of the town hall in recognition of her 34 years of dedicated service to our town and community."

Puglisi is only the second woman to be supervisor in Cortlandt's history. The first, Muriel Morabito, has the community center on Westbrook Drive named after her. The town's only swimming pool is named after former Supervisor Charles J. Cook.

"I am so honored and humbled to have our town hall where I worked every day for 30 years have my name on it for now and for generations to come. I am so grateful to Supervisor Becker and the town board," said Puglisi, whose adult twins, two grandsons and her sister will be enjoying the dedication with her.

The ceremony will take place at 3 p.m. on May 1. Everyone in the community is invited to attend.

## Dozen Candidates to Vie for Four Seats on Lakeland Board of Ed

By Rick Pezzullo

The Lakeland Board of Education race for four available seats next month has attracted a lot of attention as 12 candidates will be on the ballot.

Three of the hopefuls, board President Adam Kaufman and trustees Becky Burfeind and Marianne DiSalvo Kolesar, are seeking new three-year terms.

The rest of the field includes Paul Edwards, Maggie Perlman, Michael Marchese, Genie Muller, Erin O'Grady, Laura Perozo, Joe Ascanio, Beth Dee and Chuck Monsanto.

On May 17, the three highest vote-getters will earn three-year terms, while the fourth-place finisher will serve the final two years of former Trustee Angela Conti's unexpired

term.

A grassroots advocacy group called Lakeland Rise (Residents in Support of Education), one of the co-founders of which, Karen Haines Pressman, is a former trustee, is supporting the slate of Edwards, Perozo, Ascanio and Monsanto.

"Lakeland RISE is thrilled to stand behind these four outstanding board candidates. Each brings their own unique expertise and background to the slate. Together, they're committed to delivering high quality academic experiences to our students in an inclusive and equitable environment," Pressman said. "The candidates also value the skills and expertise of Lakeland educators to teach, not indoctrinate, our

*continued on page 2*

## Helping Win the Battle of Yorktown



The Alliance for Safe Kids, the Yorktown Lions Club and others took part in the annual Battle of Yorktown Saturday to help beautify the town in recognition of Earth Day.

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# Fitness Center Opens at Van Cortlandtville Elementary School

By Rick Pezzullo

Administrators, teachers and students celebrated the grand opening of the new Fitness and Strength Training Center at Van Cortlandtville Elementary School in Mohegan Lake last week with State Senator Pete Harckham.

The new fitness center at the school is the culmination of a three-year effort to modernize the indoor gym equipment and make it inclusive for all students, including those with unique abilities.

Harckham was able to secure \$25,000 in state funding for the project.

"All of our students thrive when given an opportunity to exercise their muscles, minds and sociability," Harckham said. "At this new fitness center, these opportunities will be available

every school day, rain or shine. So, I am glad to see this project come to fruition, and thank and congratulate the educators, parents, students and other advocates who helped make this possible."

In 2019, Margaret Rogers, a now retired physical therapist for the school district, reached out to Harckham about the need for the gym equipment for the school's students with unique abilities. Van Cortlandtville houses the majority of Lakeland's elementary school-aged students who are in the Aspire Program and require a small student to teacher ratio in response to their special needs.

The indoor fitness center, which utilized the remaining \$13,000 of state aid that Harckham secured for the school district, will allow students to access this type

of movement on a daily basis, regardless of the weather, helping them build strength, modulate their emotional state and maintain focus, as well as have fun with their peers.

"The long-awaited grand opening of our Fitness Center today was a true celebration of wellness in our school," said Jacqueline Woodruff, Principal, Van Cortlandtville Elementary School.

"Health and fitness are key components to our students' well-being and we're thankful to Senator Harckham for his support and visit today," said Dr. Karen Gagliardi, Superintendent, Lakeland Central School District. "The addition of the fitness center provides all Van Cortlandtville students with the opportunity to establish healthy habits and thrive in school."



Sen. Pete Harckham cut the ribbon to the new fitness center with educators, parents and students at Van Cortlandtville Elementary School.

## 5th Annual Cherry Blossom Festival at Peekskill Riverfront April 30

The 5th Annual Cherry Blossom Festival and Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, April 30 at the Riverfront Green in Peekskill.

The free festival, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., rain or shine, features a plant sale, food trucks, craft vendors, raffles, and children's activities, such as flower pot painting, seed planting, arts and crafts, games, bouncy slides, and more.

Sponsored by the Peekskill Rotary, all proceeds go back to the local community and to international projects through Rotary International.

The idea of gifting 100 cherry trees started in 2014, with a goal of planting 20 per year so that by the Peekskill Rotary Club's 100th Anniversary on October 1, 2019, there would be 100 trees at the Riverfront. The Club sought approval for the donation by the Peekskill City Council in a letter stating, "We want to share our success with the city we call home by making a lasting contribution to the revitalization of the riverfront as we move towards Rotary's next century of service to Peekskill." The gift, valued at \$80,000, was formally accepted by the Council on

May 23, 2016.

The plan for the placement of the trees was very intentional. Planted so as not to block the views of the river, and for train commuters to see, you can find them starting behind the Lincoln Depot, along the train line, on the trail toward China Pier where the last of the 100 can be seen.

Chappy Manzer, a Rotarian, with his company Manzer's Landscape & Design, purchased, planted, and watered the trees for the Club, at a greatly reduced cost. He chose two varieties of cherry trees, Yoshina and Kwanzan. Yoshina, also known as the

Japanese flowering cherry, has a vibrant display of white-pink blossoms. Kwanzan cherry has deep pink double-blossoms and stunning leaves that change colors throughout the seasons. The two types are responsible for the spectacular blossoming show each spring in Washington, D.C.

High school students can apply to attend a free three-day class which starts on April 30 (Cherry Blossom Day) at the Riverfront. Students will learn the technique of constructing high quality stonework from professional instructors. More information can be found at [www.peekskillrotary.com](http://www.peekskillrotary.com).

## MOD Rezoning in Cortlandt Subject of Public Hearing May 2

By Rick Pezzullo

The Cortlandt Town Board will be holding a public hearing Monday, May 2 at 7 p.m. at Cortlandt Town Hall on the proposed Medical Oriented District (MOD) rezoning and two pending projects in the area of New York Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital on Route 202.

Within the MOD zoning area, which has been reduced from approximately 105 acres and 34 parcels to 69 acres and 13 parcels in recently filed FGEIS/FEIS documents, two developments, Evergreen Manor and Gyrodine, LLC, have come under scrutiny from nearby residents.

Evergreen Manor, being led by well respected local developer Val Santucci, is comprised of three parcels totaling approximately 28 acres. The latest plans for Evergreen Manor site includes: 166 multi-family residential rental units with 244 parking spaces, 120 assisted living units with 77 parking spaces, 70 two-bedroom townhouses, and 7,000 square feet of retail space with 73 parking spaces. No longer in the plans is a hotel.

Gyrodine's project features 184,600 square feet of medical office with 4,000 square feet of café/commercial space to

service the employees and visitors of the medical office buildings and 593 structured parking spaces. The proposed development would occur within two phases and would replace the existing 30,000 square feet of existing medical offices.

Cortlandt Supervisor Dr. Richard Becker said he still has some concerns about the projects and is looking forward to getting public input.

"We want to create the zoning to match what's going to be built," Becker said Friday. "I want it to be a cooperative effort. I want to make it as acceptable to everyone as possible."

The Town Board would need to officially create the MOD zoning for the projects to move forward to the Planning Board.

"This is just a step in the part of the process," Becker said of the May 2 hearing, where residents can attend in person or watch on Zoom.



## Dozen Candidates to Vie for Four Seats on Lakeland Board of Ed

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students."

The group is also looking to increase voter participation after less than 1,400 of nearly 30,000 eligible voters went to the polls in 2021.

Seats in other area school districts are also being contested:

### Yorktown

Three incumbents seeking reelection in the Yorktown School District are facing opposition. Reshmi Bose, Cheryl Reynolds and Lisa Rolle are back on the ballot. Looking to join the board are Michael Capalbo, Richard Giannasca and Frank Panebianco.

### Ossining

Five candidates are running for two seats in the Ossining School District, Melissa Banta is the lone incumbent in the race as Aaron Spring is not seeking reelection.

Other candidates are Robert Melstein, Aidan Venuto, Christine Mangiamiele and Maureen Boozang-Hill.

### Somers

Two incumbents, Trustee Dr. Ifay Chang and board Vice President Chadwick Olsen, are running for new terms in the Somers School District. Also on the ballot are

Amanda Kandel and Kenneth Mitchell.

### Hendrick Hudson

In the Hendrick Hudson School District, five candidates are running for three seats.

Incumbents Lisa Anderson, board vice president, and William Oricchio are hoping to return to the board for another three years. Also on the ballot are Jeremy Basso, Stephanie Hickey and Erica Mills.

Hickey, a teacher, said she works in an area that also been hard hit by the closing of a power plant.

"Why am I running? I have direct knowledge and experience dealing with the very same issues this district faces today. I have been attending BOE meetings recently, and I am horrified by the total disregard for the way some members of the current BOE treat the community at these meetings," Hickey stated. "Community members have the right to be heard and not to feel afraid to express themselves. The lack of transparency and total disregard for parental input in the Hendrick Hudson School District is negatively affecting our children. If I were elected to the BOE at Hendrick Hudson School District, my focus would be to re-establish a culture of open and honest communication in this district."





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**\$11<sup>97</sup>**

**Jason's Wine of the Year**

2019 Oak Farm Tievoli Cabernet Sauvignon



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

**\$14<sup>97</sup>**

**Wine of the Year**

2020 Anne Pichon Grenache Noir



Take what you think you know about Grenache and throw it out the window. As this wine opens, initial dark berry flavors meld into a true jam flavor with floral notes and bitter cranberry. It has such a divine, full mouthfeel that tricks you into not initially noticing that it's more 'dry' than not.

**\$21<sup>97</sup>**

**Tom's Wine of the Year**

2018 Laurent Combier Crozes Hermitage



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

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# Latimer Touts Westchester's Progress, Unity in State of the County

By Martin Wilbur

County Executive George Latimer characterized Westchester as a diverse, growing, safe and attractive destination for people to raise their families in his fifth State of the County address Thursday evening in White Plains.

In a more than hour-long address in the Board of Legislators' chambers that was interspersed with a handful of short videos, Latimer reviewed many of the achievements of his first term in office while mentioning a few upcoming and ongoing initiatives that will be addressed this year.

He stressed that despite differences in culture, political persuasion and disagreements on certain issues, Westchester residents look out for one another. That was particularly true during the past two years dealing with COVID-19 when the overwhelming majority of residents took recommended precautions seriously and nearly 90 percent of them got themselves vaccinated.

"So what is the state of our county, you probably ask?" Latimer said. "That's simple. While others are divided, while others swim in opposing tides, fighting currents and waves of destruction, we, the state of our county, is united."

Westchester remains one of the more popular places for families to settle, Latimer said. For the first time, the county eclipsed one million in population, a 55,000-resident increase from the 2010 Census. Its quality of schools, proximity to New York City and pleasant suburban feel (and in some areas,

rural feel) is a draw for new residents to put down roots.

"We know families are pouring into this county, we know homes are flying off the market and we know it because we see it on our own blocks," Latimer said.

Over the last four-plus years, there has been an increasing commitment to bring more affordable housing into Westchester, he said. Throughout the county, there have been new affordable units constructed and occupied in a wide variety of communities. More than 4,400 additional units are under construction or have been approved.

For 2022, \$50 million of county money was committed to providing incentives for developers to build more affordable housing, and \$90 million over the past three years. However, Latimer conceded that still won't satisfy the demand.

"Our responsibility as a county government is to make sure that the opportunity for affordable housing is always there," he said.

Along with population growth, there has also been job growth, including several programs that have encouraged a healthy Westchester economy, Latimer said. The county launched the Advanced Manufacturing Career Training Program, a virtual six-month program where trainees learn new technologies to help them stay current in their skills in the constantly-evolving manufacturing sector.

It will also finance the Westchester County Association's Healthcare Talent Pipeline Program that will recruit, train and place up to 100 applicants with healthcare employers.

There has also been success with the



Westchester County Executive George Latimer giving his fifth State of the County address last Thursday night from the chambers of the Board of Legislators.

Launch 1000 Program which has provided entrepreneurs the chance to start businesses in Westchester. This year will see the kick-off of Launch 1000 in Spanish.

"So we are launching innovative economic development programs but we aren't raising taxes to do it," Latimer said. "We've got results, not rhetoric, and those results, yours as well as mine, was to cut the county tax levy by \$7 million in the 2022 budget."

It was the third consecutive year there was a levy cut, and while Latimer stopped short of assuring another for 2023, he said if current projections hold "we will make every effort to continue this for next year."

Latimer touted Westchester's falling rate in the major crime categories, including some

that are down more than 25 percent during the past four years.

"Here in Westchester, we are tough on crime. Don't let any other political nonsense tell you otherwise," Latimer said. "The numbers don't lie."

The county has been able to achieve that while supporting and implementing reforms from the Police Reform and Reimagining Task Force. So far, Westchester has implemented 34 of the 38 recommendations that the county has jurisdiction over.

In the year ahead, the remaining initiatives will be integrated, including the use of the county Department of Public Safety's social media and greater community outreach, equipping all police vehicles and officers with dashcams and body cameras, respectively, and diversifying recruitment for the county police.

Latimer said he kept his promise to revitalize the county's Human Rights Commission and signed the Anti-Discriminatory Harassment Bill, which expands the type of harassment that can be prosecuted under the law.

"Here in Westchester, we say gay, we say transgender because we also say love and acceptance," Latimer said. "In the end, love and acceptance are all that is left. And, this is, unfortunately, a tale we all learn at one point or another in our life."

Next month, the county will resume its public engagement on the Westchester County Airport master plan after a two-year COVID-induced hiatus, Latimer announced. The first session will be on Tuesday, May 24 at 6 p.m. at Pace Law School, with additional dates planned for June.



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COMPASS



# Mt. Kisco to Hold Eminent Domain Hearing, Cell Tower Q&A on Saturday

By Martin Wilbur

Residents opposing acquisition of a 25-acre property through eminent domain persuaded the Mount Kisco Village Board last week to resume the public hearing this Saturday and include a question-and-answer session regarding cell tower relocation to Leonard Park.

Critics and supporters returned to the Village Board meeting on Apr. 18 in hopes of swaying officials on the potential launch of eminent domain proceedings to purchase the site of a proposed solar farm and cell tower at 180 S. Bedford Rd.

The board, which entertained the idea of closing the formal hearing on eminent domain last week, decided to hold at least one more session this Saturday at the Mount Kisco Library at 3:30 p.m. The forum will also allow for questions related to the board's Mar. 7 vote that authorized moving the cell tower from the South Bedford Road site to a back portion of the park provided it receives approvals at the state level.

Officials are considering buying the 25 acres on South Bedford Road where the twin applications are being considered by the

Planning Board. The purchase would satisfy the requirements of replacing the loss of about 11,000 square feet of land at Leonard Park.

Resident Robert Dagostino, who opposes both eminent domain and the cell tower at the park, has pressed for additional public forums on both issues, since the board's Mar. 7 vote to relocate the tower. He and others have asked for the board to engage with the community on the two difficult topics in sessions outside the formal twice-monthly meetings.

Dagostino said among the key questions that should be answered related to the tower at the park includes how the village intends to get power to the site, where it will store a 500-gallon diesel fuel tanker at the site, how it plans to navigate steep slopes and for the village to identify the exact location of the tower.

"I think that a decision of this magnitude that will affect thousands and thousands of children for future generations needs to be seriously considered," Dagostino said. "Although we have already voted on the cell tower in the park, it is not, as you have told me before, is not complete. I have asked you to tap the brakes, and I seriously ask you to tap the



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

A portion of the disc golf course at Leonard Park, believed to be in the general vicinity where a cell tower may be erected.

brakes now and reconsider and tap the brakes, hold off until we have multiple public hearings involving all residents of our community."

The board agreed to hold a special Saturday session at the library. Village Trustee Karen Schleimer said she has heard from many residents who are unable to make the weeknight regular board meetings and would welcome a weekend afternoon.

"My feeling is I don't see the harm and I think there is great benefit to letting people voice their concerns, voice their opinions and for us to hear what people have to say," Schleimer said.

During last week's hearing, former village mayor Michael Cindrich suggested that the board is considering eminent domain for the South Bedford Road parcel for the wrong reasons. It seems to be based on outcry from nearby residents and representatives from the adjacent Marsh Sanctuary who have been outspoken against a possible cell tower and solar farm rather than a defined public use, he said.

"This I don't consider a public use," Cindrich said of the potential acquisition. "I consider it a land grab to prevent development that nobody wants. I have to preface

this: I don't want it either."

Cindrich later added that he might be able to support eminent domain if the village were to use the land for ball fields or other active recreational purposes.

However, the public benefit would be "an amazing addition" to the village's park inventory and open space, said Conservation Advisory Council Chair John Rhodes. He said there is also space at the 25-acre site for the village to create a parking area and there are trails nearby.

"If you look at it in a balanced way, you can start to see there are plusses and minuses but you have to look at it in an honest and direct way and not alter the facts to suit your very much justified emotional reaction to the situation with the cell tower," Rhodes said.

Resident Rex Pietrobono, whose house would be less than 300 feet from the cell tower at 180 S. Bedford Rd., said there would be no way to screen the base of the tower near his home while most people would not see it at Leonard Park.

It is still unknown how much the village would have to pay for the 25 acres until there is an appraisal. It was sold to the current owner in 2013 for \$1.5 million.

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# Latimer Looks to Suspend County Gas Tax, Bee-Line Fares

By Martin Wilbur

Drivers and Bee-Line commuters in Westchester will soon be getting a little bit of relief from inflation as County Executive George Latimer hopes to suspend the county gas tax and rescind bus fares for the summer.

Latimer announced Monday afternoon that he is asking the Board of Legislators to pass legislation by no later than next Monday to enact a county gas tax holiday starting June 1 to combat rising costs that have been a hardship for many families' budgets.

He also plans to submit a request to county lawmakers to back his proposal to permit free ridership on all county Bee-Line buses from June 1 through Labor Day, Sept. 6.

The state legislature recently passed a measure that gives counties the ability to enact a bill to suspend the county gas tax but it must do so by May 2.

Although, Latimer has the executive authority to call off bus fares, he will ask the Board of Legislators for its support to show an even-handedness to both drivers and those who rely on the bus system.

"That savings is profound for people who use mass transit, and at the same time, we are concerned about the cost of gasoline at the pump in these inflationary times," Latimer said. "We want to do what we can do, what we are legally limited to do."

The county executive estimated that each action will cost the county as much as \$7 million in tax revenues. However, sales tax and other sources have been so strong so far this year that the suspension of the gas tax and the bus fare should have no impact on the county's finances, Latimer said.

"Because we had had such a robust tax result through sales tax and other revenue streams, and we have saved money from other actions we've taken, the loss of that revenue does not change that budget appropriately," he said. "We are not tapping our reserves to pay for it."

Westchester's pending decision on lifting the gas tax comes shortly after New York State took similar action when the legislature passed the Fiscal Year 2023 budget earlier this month. The state's suspension of the gas tax also begins June 1 and lasts for the remainder of the year.

Latimer estimated that the state and the county's action would save motorists about 20 cents a gallon every time someone stops for gas.

For those residents who use the Bee-Line system, the impact could be even greater. It may also encourage some people who have cars to take the bus for certain trips.

"It might convert some of those automobile

trips that can be satisfied by bus usage into a bus trip over that period of time," Latimer said. "It's much less impactful to be on a bus at no cost than to gas up and spend that much more money."

## COVID Numbers Remain Elevated

The latest uptick in COVID-19 positive tests continues compared to the readings during the second half of the winter following the late fall and early winter Omicron surge.

For the second consecutive week, Westchester continues to record just over 3,000 active cases, although in the past 10 days or so there seems to have been a leveling off.

Latimer said as of Sunday, there were 3,079 active cases in the county. A week earlier on Apr. 17, that number stood at 3,102.

Hospitalizations are also edging up in recent weeks. On Saturday, Westchester hospitals held 65 COVID-19 patients, a slight rise from one week earlier when that number stood at 52.

On Mar. 24, there were 1,257 active cases in Westchester and 25 hospitalizations.

However, there are some encouraging signs. There have been few fatalities as a result of the virus this month and Sunday's positivity rate in Westchester dipped to 3.8 percent with a seven-day rolling average of 5.5 percent. Meanwhile, the statewide readings on Sunday were 6.7 percent and 6.9 percent, respectively.

Putnam County clocked in with a 7.9 percent positivity rate on Sunday and stood at 7.1 percent over the seven-day span.

## Yorktown Commemorates the Holocaust

Community residents joined Yorktown officials on Apr. 22 for the annual Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony at Town Hall. Holocaust survivor Esther Geizhals, pictured with Councilman Ed Lachterman, was the event's keynote speaker. Geizhals was 10 years old in Lodz, Poland when German troops invaded her country, and a year later she and her family were forced to live in a ghetto. After giving her account of survival and emigration to the United States, she remembered her late husband's words that led her to speak about her experience. "If we want people to remember the Holocaust, we have to start with students."



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# Police Blotter

## County Police/Mount Kisco

**Apr. 21:** Officers responded to a Britton Lane residence at 8:12 p.m. after a resident reported he was having an adverse reaction to medication. The Mount Kisco Volunteer Ambulance Corps responded and transported the man to Northern Westchester Hospital.

**Apr. 22:** A woman arrived at the Green Street precinct at 9:54 a.m. to turn in a wallet that she found in a shopping cart at Target on North Bedford Road. The wallet contained \$134 in cash, multiple credit cards and personal ID. Based on that identification, officers were able to return the wallet to its owner in Chappaqua.

**Apr. 22:** At 12:26 p.m., a Maple Avenue resident contacted police to request an order of protection against another person who lives at his address. The resident reported that he has had a series of verbal altercations with the other person and wants to be left alone. Officers determined that no criminal harassment had occurred and advised the resident how he could pursue an order of protection through the court system.

**Apr. 22:** Staff at a North Bedford Road medical office contacted police at 1:10 p.m. to report an incident involving a former patient. A man had pushed his way into a back office and asked to see two doctors. When told those doctors were not present, the man left without incident. Staff asked for a police report to document the incident.

**Apr. 22:** Officers responded to Park Drive at 4:18 p.m. on a report of a strong odor of gas in the area. The Mount Kisco Fire Department also responded and determined there was no hazard.

## Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

**Apr. 10:** Patrols responded to Route 9 at 10:43 p.m. on a report of a wrong-way driver possibly entering the village. Patrols conducted an extensive check of the area, but the vehicle was not located.

**Apr. 11:** At 8:15 a.m., patrols took a complaint about a fraudulent withdrawal from Chase Bank.

## Mount Pleasant Police Department

**Apr. 15:** Albert Orjuela, 47, of Yonkers was arrested and charged with second-degree contempt and violation of probation. The charges stem from the suspect allegedly violating an order of protection in connection with his conviction for second-degree sex abuse and endangering the welfare of a child in Mount Pleasant in 2019. Police had received information that Orjuela had visited the workplace of one of the juveniles whom had received an order of protection. Anyone with additional information is encouraged to call 914-769-1941.

## North Castle Police Department

**Apr. 15:** A complainant reported at headquarters at 11:22 a.m. after being involved in a verbal dispute with another party while walking his dog on North Lake Road. The animal control officer will follow up and issue summonses.

**Apr. 15:** An officer reported a disabled vehicle with a flat tire on Route 22 at 3:28 p.m. due to a large pothole while responding to a similar incident. Police placed two cones near the pothole. The vehicle was removed by the owner's private tow. The state Department of Transportation was notified to expedite the repair of the pothole.

**Apr. 16:** A Windmill Road resident reported at 8:50 a.m. an ongoing issue with a neighbor and landscapers using lawn equipment about 20 minutes before the allowed time as specified by the town noise ordinance. The responding officer reported that the matter was adjusted; the parties were advised of the ordinance.

**Apr. 17:** Report of a rollover accident on Route 22 at 5:37 a.m. with a female driver trapped in the vehicle.

**Apr. 18:** A person arrived at headquarters at 3:52 p.m. and reported that he has flares and a flare gun he wishes to surrender to be destroyed. The property was taken for destruction.

**Apr. 20:** Report of a burglary at the Armonk Town Center on Main Street at 4:16 a.m. The responding officers reported broken glass in front door of a business. The officers cleared the interior and confirmed a burglary.

**Apr. 20:** Reports of a large amount of smoke on Mead Road at 4:29 p.m. possibly from an open burn at a new construction site. Officers responded and reported locating the smoke condition and reports there is a dumpster fire at that location. The fire department extinguished the blaze and cleared the area.

## Pleasantville Police Department

**Apr. 16:** Report of a fire on Marble Avenue at 4:51 p.m. Smoke was detected from a commercial building causing the alarm to go off. The cause of the smoke was a person smoking in an area where it was prohibited.

**Apr. 20:** A complaint was received for a flooded basement on Washington Avenue at 1:10 a.m. The cause of the flood was a burst pipe. The valve was shut off.

**Apr. 21:** A vehicle was parked illegally

on Cooley Street by Chatterbox restaurant at 7:52 p.m. A summons was issued.

## Yorktown Police Department

**Apr. 19:** Amanda Colello, 25, of Mohegan Lake, was charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance and criminal use of drug paraphernalia after police officers executed a search warrant at a Mohegan Lake residence at 3:40 p.m. Officers located more than four ounces of cocaine, scales, packaging material and multiple Schedule II controlled substances.

**Apr. 19:** Cynthia Marcello, 44, of Yorktown, was charged with menacing and criminal possession of a weapon at 4:10 p.m. after police were dispatched to Gerard Court for a report of a dispute between the resident and workers on the property. It is alleged Marcello pointed a BB gun at a subject and threatened to shoot him. When officers attempted to contact Marcello, she barricaded herself inside the residence.

**Apr. 20:** Faraz Butte, 31, of Sudbury, Mass., was charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance at 4:45 p.m. after police received a call to check on the welfare of a person inside a parked vehicle on Baptist Church Road.

## White Plains Police Department

**Apr. 16:** Samantha Guerrido was arrested for fifth-degree arson, second-degree menacing and criminal possession of a weapon in relation to an incident that occurred at 6 School St.

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

## Two Men Charged After Fleeing Car Dealership in Stolen Vehicle

Westchester County police arrested two men early Monday morning after they fled from a Mount Kisco car dealership in a car that had been stolen from another dealership in the village.

Amaury Madera, 40, of Hollywood, Fla., and Rafael Cornielle, 33, of the Bronx, were charged with fourth-degree criminal possession of stolen property, a felony. Amaury, the driver, was also charged with fleeing a police officer in a motor vehicle and aggravated unlicensed operation, both misdemeanors.

While on patrol about 12:40 a.m., Officer Dave Sanchez observed a suspicious vehicle at a Lexus dealership on Kisco Avenue. He attempted a traffic stop as the vehicle left the dealership but the driver refused to stop. Near West Main Street and Maple Avenue, the driver lost control of the car and struck a

guardrail. Three men jumped out of the vehicle and fled.

Police did not release which dealership the car had been stolen from.

Sanchez was able to take two of the suspects quickly into custody. A search immediately followed for the third suspect by Westchester County and Bedford police officers. That suspect, who remains at large, was seen running on the Metro-North railroad tracks near the Mount Kisco train station.

Service on Metro-North in the area was suspended while the search was conducted. An investigation is continuing to determine his identity.

Both apprehended suspects were released on desk appearance tickets and are due in Mount Kisco Justice Court on May 12.

— Martin Wilbur

## Countywide Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony This Thursday

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center (HHREC) and Westchester Jewish Council (WJC) will host the annual countywide Yom Hashoah Commemoration Keeping the Memory Alive this Thursday, Apr. 28 from 12 to 1 p.m. at the Garden of Remembrance on 148 Martine Ave. in White Plains.

The event will feature a keynote speech delivered by Alan Moskin, a U.S. Army liberator and member of the HHREC Speakers Bureau. There will also be a procession of Westchester's rescued Holocaust Torahs.

"This is the 30th anniversary of

the Garden of Remembrance, and the memorial site enables us to come together to commemorate Yom Hashoah (Day of Remembrance) at this special place," said Millie Jasper, the executive director of HHREC. "We are very proud to host this event with our friends from Westchester Jewish Council and look forward to being together again in person with the Westchester County community."

This event will be held rain or shine, and admission is free and open to all. For more information, contact Millie Jasper at [mjasper@hhrecny.org](mailto:mjasper@hhrecny.org) or Pam Goldstein at [pam@wjccouncil.org](mailto:pam@wjccouncil.org).

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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING, BUDGET VOTE AND SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION, MOUNT PLEASANT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, OF THE TOWNS OF MOUNT PLEASANT AND NORTH CASTLE, WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK.

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT** a Budget Hearing in lieu of an annual meeting of Mount Pleasant Central School District, of the Towns of Mount Pleasant and North Castle, State of New York, will be held on May 10, 2022, at 7:30 PM, of said day, in the Westlake High School Library, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, New York. This is in accordance with Chapter 853 of the Laws of 1983.

The purpose of said meeting will be:

- a. To receive from the Board of Education of the District a detailed statement in writing of the amount of money which will be required for the ensuing year for school purposes, exclusive of public monies, specifying the several purposes and the amount of each as provided by Section 1716 of the Education Law;
- b. Transact such other business as may lawfully come before such meeting.

NOTICE IS FURTHER given that the Budget Vote and School Board Election will be held on May 17, 2022, between 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM, of said day in the Westlake High School Gymnasium, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, New York, for the purpose of voting upon the appropriation of the necessary funds to meet the estimated expenditures for the 2022 - 2023 school year for school purposes and for the election of two members of the Board of Education for terms expiring June 30, 2025.

Petitions nominating candidates for the Board of Education must state the name and address of the candidate being nominated, have the signature and address of each person signing the petition, and must be filed with the Clerk of the District at her office, in the District Office, 825 Westlake Drive, Thornwood, New York between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, no later than Monday, April 18, 2022. The petition must contain at least 25 signatures of qualified voters.

The Board of Education, having provided for personal registration of voters, and having designated qualified voters to constitute a Board of Registration for this District, such Board of Registration will meet to prepare the register of voters for said Meeting and Election between the hours of 5:00 PM and 9:00 PM, Wednesday, May 11, 2022 in Westlake High School, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, New York, and any persons shall be entitled to have his/her name placed upon such register, provided that at such meeting of the Board of Registration, he/she is known or proven to the satisfaction of such Board of Registration to be then or thereafter entitled to vote at the school meeting or election for which such register is prepared, and further provided that any resident of the School District who is registered to vote in general elections is qualified to vote at said meeting without having his/her name placed upon the School District register of voters provided he/she voted at a general election at least once within the last four calendar years. Further, provided that any person who has previously registered to vote in any annual district meeting or election or special district meeting or election and who has voted at an annual district meeting or election or special district meeting or election held during the past four years (2021, 2020, 2019, 2018) shall not be required to re-register.

The Board of Education has also provided for registration of qualified voters at the District Office, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, New York, between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM on any regular school day through May 12, 2022. The Board of Registration will also meet during the foregoing election in the Gymnasium of the Westlake High School, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, New York, on May 17, 2022, for the purpose of preparing the register for elections held subsequent to such election.

The register prepared pursuant to Section 2014 of the Education Law will be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the District, and will be open for inspection by any qualified voter of the District at the Office of the Clerk of the District, District Office, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, New York, at the polling place on election day, as well as between the hours of 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM on each of the five (5) days prior to the election excluding Sunday, May 15, 2022, except that on Saturday, May 14, 2022, it will only be available for inspection between the hours of 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that applications for absentee ballots may be applied for at the Office of the District Clerk, located in the District Office of the Mount Pleasant CSD, 825 Westlake Drive, Thornwood, NY 10594. An application for an absentee ballot must be received by the District Clerk no earlier than thirty (30) days before the Annual Election. An application for an absentee ballot on the form prescribed by Section 2018-a of the Education Law must be received by the District Clerk at least seven (7) days before the Annual Election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or the day before the Annual Budget Vote/Election if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter or his/her designated agent. Upon receiving a timely application for a mailed absentee ballot, the District Clerk will mail the ballot to the address designated on the application by no later than six (6) days before the Annual Election.

A list of all persons to whom absentee ballots shall have been issued will be available in the Office of the Clerk between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM, except Saturday and Sunday.

Military voters who are not currently registered may apply to register as a qualified voter of the school district. Military voters who are qualified voters of the school district may submit an application for a military ballot. Military voters may designate a preference to receive a military voter registration, military ballot application or military ballot by mail, facsimile transmission or electronic mail in their request for such registration, ballot application or ballot. Military voter registration forms and military ballot application forms must be received in the office of the District Clerk of the school district no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 21, 2022. No military ballot will be canvassed unless it is (1) received in the office of the District Clerk before the close of the polls on election day and showing a cancellation mark of the United States postal service or a foreign country's postal service, or showing a dated endorsement of receipt by another agency of the United States government; or (2) received by the office of the District Clerk by no later than 5:00 p.m. on election day and signed and dated by the military voter and one witness thereto, with a date which is associated to be not later than the day before the election.

A copy of the detailed statement in writing of the amount of the money which will be required for the school year 2022 - 2023 for school purposes, specifying the several purposes and the amount of each, as provided by Section 1716 of the Education Law, may be obtained by any resident in the District between the hours of 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM on each day other than a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday during the fourteen (14) days immediately preceding the annual budget vote and school election as well as on the day of the vote at the office of the following:

District Office	Westlake High School	Westlake Middle School	Columbus Elementary School	Hawthorne Elementary School
Westlake Drive	Westlake Drive	Westlake Drive	580 Columbus Avenue	Memorial Drive
Thornwood, New York 10594	Thornwood, New York 10594	Thornwood, New York 10594	Thornwood, New York 10594	Hawthorne, New York 10532

A Real Property Tax Exemption Report prepared in accordance with Section 495 of the Real Property Tax Law will be annexed to any tentative/preliminary budget as well as the final adopted budget of which it will form a part; and shall be posted on District bulletin board(s) maintained for public notices, as well as on the District's website.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MOUNT PLEASANT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
TOWNS OF MOUNT PLEASANT AND NORTH CASTLE  
WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK  
DISTRICT CLERK



AVISO LEGAL

AVISO DE AUDIENCIA PRESUPUESTAL, VOTACIÓN SOBRE EL PRESUPUESTO Y ELECCIÓN DEL CONSEJO ESCOLAR, DISTRITO ESCOLAR CENTRAL DE MOUNT PLEASANT, DE LOS POBLADOS DE MOUNT PLEASANT Y NORTH CASTLE, CONDADO DE WESTCHESTER, NUEVA YORK.

**POR ESTE MEDIO SE DA AVISO DE QUE** se celebrará una audiencia presupuestal en lugar de una reunión anual del Distrito Escolar Central de Mount Pleasant, de los poblados de Mount Pleasant y North Castle, estado de Nueva York, el 10 de mayo de 2022, a las 7:30 p.m. de dicho día, en la biblioteca de la Escuela Preparatoria Westlake, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, Nueva York. Esto se lleva a cabo de acuerdo con el Capítulo 853 de las Leyes de 1983.

El propósito de dicha reunión será:

- a. Recibir del Consejo de Educación del Distrito un presupuesto detallado, por escrito, de la cantidad de dinero que se necesitará para propósitos escolares el próximo año, excluyendo los fondos públicos, y expresando los diversos propósitos y el importe de cada uno de acuerdo con la sección 1716 de la Ley de Educación;
- b. Tramitar otros asuntos que puedan presentarse legalmente en dicha reunión.

ADEMÁS SE DA AVISO de que la votación sobre el presupuesto y la elección del Consejo Escolar se llevarán a cabo el 17 de mayo de 2022, entre las 7:00 a.m. y las 9:00 p.m. de dicho día, en el gimnasio de la Escuela Preparatoria Westlake, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, Nueva York, con el fin de votar sobre la asignación de los fondos necesarios para cubrir los gastos estimados para fines escolares en el año escolar 2022 - 2023 y para la elección de dos miembros del Consejo de Educación a períodos que expiran el 30 de junio de 2025.

Las peticiones para nominar a candidatos al Consejo de Educación deben establecer el nombre y la dirección del candidato nominado, tener la firma y la dirección de cada persona que firme la petición, y deben presentarse a la secretaria del Distrito en su oficina, en la Oficina del Distrito, 825 Westlake Drive, Thornwood, Nueva York, entre las 9:00 a.m. y las 5:00 p.m., a más tardar el lunes 18 de abril de 2022. La petición debe contener por lo menos 25 firmas de votantes calificados.

El Consejo de Educación, habiendo tomado medidas para el registro personal de votantes y habiendo designado a votante calificados para integrar un Consejo de Registro de este Distrito, dicho Consejo de Registro se reunirá para preparar el registro de votantes para dicha reunión y elección entre las 5:00 p.m. y las 9:00 p.m. del miércoles 11 de mayo de 2022, en la Escuela Preparatoria Westlake, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, Nueva York, y toda persona tendrá derecho a que se incluya su nombre en dicho registro, asumiendo que en dicha reunión del Consejo de Registro se reconozca o se demuestre a satisfacción de dicho Consejo de Registro que tenía en ese momento, o adquiriría posteriormente, el derecho a votar en la reunión escolar o la elección para la que se preparó dicho registro, y considerando además que todos los residentes del Distrito Escolar que estén registrados para votar en las elecciones generales son elegibles para votar en dicha reunión sin necesidad de que se incluya su nombre en el registro de votantes del Distrito Escolar, asumiendo que hayan votado al menos una vez en las elecciones generales en los últimos cuatro años calendario. Además, si una persona se ha registrado previamente para votar en cualquier reunión o elección anual del distrito o en una reunión o elección especial del distrito y ha votado en una reunión o elección anual del distrito o en una reunión o elección especial del distrito en los últimos cuatro años (2021, 2020, 2019, 2018), esa persona no necesita volver a registrarse. El Consejo de Educación también ha tomado medidas para el registro de votantes calificados en la Oficina del Distrito, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, Nueva York, entre las 9:00 a.m. y las 3:00 p.m. de cualquier día regular de clases hasta el 12 de mayo de 2022. El Consejo de Registro también se reunirá durante la elección en curso en el gimnasio de la Escuela Preparatoria Westlake, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, Nueva York, el 17 de mayo de 2022, con el fin de preparar el registro para las elecciones a celebrarse posteriormente a dicha elección.

El registro preparado en los términos de la Sección 2014 de la Ley de Educación se entregará en la Oficina de la Secretaria del Distrito, y estará disponible para que lo inspeccione cualquier votante calificado del Distrito en la Oficina de la Secretaria del Distrito, Oficina del Distrito, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, Nueva York, en el centro de votación el día de la elección, así como entre las 9:00 a.m. y las 4:00 p.m. de cada uno de los cinco (5) días previos a la elección, excluyendo el domingo 15 de mayo de 2022, excepto que el sábado 14 de mayo de 2022 solamente estará disponible para inspección entre las 8:30 a.m. y las 10:30 a.m.

ADEMÁS, TOME EN CUENTA que las solicitudes de papeletas para voto en ausencia pueden presentarse en la Oficina de la Secretaria del Distrito, situada en la Oficina del Distrito del DEC de Mount Pleasant, 825 Westlake Drive, Thornwood, Nueva York, 10594. Las solicitudes de papeletas para voto en ausencia deben recibirse en la oficina de la secretaria del Distrito no más de treinta (30) días antes de la elección anual. Las solicitudes de papeletas para voto en ausencia en el formulario ordenado por la Sección 2018-a de la Ley de Educación deben recibirse en la oficina de la secretaria del Distrito por lo menos siete (7) días antes de la elección anual si la papeleta debe enviarse por correo al votante, o a más tardar el día antes de la votación del presupuesto anual y elección, si la papeleta se entregará personalmente al votante o su representante designado. Tras recibir de manera oportuna una solicitud de enviar por correo una papeleta para voto en ausencia, la secretaria del Distrito enviará la papeleta por correo a la dirección señalada en la solicitud, a más tardar seis (6) días antes de la elección anual.

Habrà disponible una lista de todas las personas a las que se enviaron papeletas para voto en ausencia en la oficina de la secretaria, de 9:00 a.m. a 3:00 p.m., excepto los sábados y domingos.

Los votantes militares que no estén registrados actualmente pueden solicitar su registro como votantes calificados del distrito escolar. Los votantes militares que sean votantes calificados del distrito escolar pueden presentar una solicitud de papeleta militar. Los votantes militares pueden indicar la preferencia de recibir un registro de votante militar, una solicitud de papeleta militar o una papeleta militar por correo, fax o correo electrónico en su solicitud de registro, solicitud de papeleta o papeleta. Los formularios de registro de votantes militares y formularios de solicitud de papeletas militares deben recibirse en la oficina de la secretaria del Distrito del distrito escolar a más tardar a las 5:00 p. m. del 21 de abril de 2022. No podrá tomarse en cuenta una papeleta militar que no sea (1) recibida en la oficina de la secretaria del Distrito antes del cierre de los centros de votación el día de la elección y con un matasellos del servicio postal de Estados Unidos o del servicio postal de un país extranjero, o con un acuse de recibo fechado de otra agencia del gobierno de Estados Unidos; o (2) recibida por la oficina de la secretaria del Distrito a más tardar a las 5:00 p. m. del día de la elección y firmada y fechada por el votante militar y un testigo del hecho, con una fecha que se determine que no es posterior al día antes de la elección.

Cualquier residente del Distrito puede recibir una copia del presupuesto detallado por escrito con la cantidad de dinero que se requerirá para el año escolar 2022 - 2023 para propósitos escolares, especificando los diversos propósitos y la cantidad de dinero para cada uno, según lo establecido en la Sección 1716 de la Ley de Educación, entre las 8:00 a.m. y las 3:00 p.m., todo los días excepto sábados, domingos y días feriados, durante los catorce (14) días inmediatamente anteriores a la votación del presupuesto anual y la elección escolar, así como el día de la votación en la siguiente oficina:

Oficina del Distrito Westlake Drive Thornwood, Nueva York 10594	Escuela Preparatoria Westlake Westlake Drive Thornwood, Nueva York 10594	Escuela Secundaria Westlake Westlake Drive Thornwood, Nueva York 10594	Escuela Primaria Columbus 580 Columbus Avenue Thornwood, Nueva York 10594	Escuela Primaria Hawthorne Memorial Drive Hawthorne, Nueva York 10532
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Se anexará un informe de exenciones de impuestos a bienes raíces, preparado de acuerdo con la sección 495 de la Ley de Impuestos a Bienes Raíces, a cualquier presupuesto tentativo o preliminar, así como al presupuesto definitivo adoptado del que formará parte; y se publicará en el tablero de mensajes que mantiene el Distrito para avisos públicos, así como en el sitio de internet del Distrito.

POR ORDEN DEL CONSEJO DE EDUCACIÓN  
DISTRITO ESCOLAR CENTRAL DE MOUNT PLEASANT  
POBLADOS DE MOUNT PLEASANT Y NORTH CASTLE  
CONDADO DE WESTCHESTER, NUEVA YORK  
SECRETARIA DEL DISTRITO



# Family-Friendly Pirate Festival to Stage Shows in Putnam Valley

By Rick Pezzullo

The Town of Putnam Valley will be hosting an immersive pirate festival for 19 shows starting this weekend through the end of June.

Kingdom Faire, run by Megara, Inc., which was founded in 2021, is an original theatrical production with talent that have been connected with the New York Renaissance Faire in Tuxedo Park and Medieval Times in New Jersey.

The shows, which will be held on weekends and Memorial Day from Apr. 30 to June 26 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., will take place at the Putnam Valley Day Camp site on Peekskill Hollow Road and are expected to draw about 3,500 people per day.

"We are delighted to be able to bring such a fantastic festival to New York," said Christopher Francia, CEO of Megara, Inc. "We are grateful to the Town of Putnam Valley and the county for their help in bringing this festival to fruition."

Tracey Walsh, Putnam County's tourism director, said she was thrilled to have a family-friendly festival help put the county on the map.

"We are always excited to give our residents and tourists a chance to see our lovely county, engage in a variety of activities and art forms and spend a memorable day together," Walsh stated.

Putnam Valley Supervisor Jacqueline Annabi said the town will receive \$82,500 for renting 12 acres of the 161-acre property to Megara and has the potential



Kingdom Faire, a new theatrical pirate-themed show, will be starting this Saturday for nine consecutive weekends at the site of the Putnam Valley Day Camp in Putnam Valley.

to earn up to another \$25,000 if ticket sales exceed a certain threshold.

"It's very exciting," Annabi said. "We're always looking for new ways to bring down taxes and this seemed like a financially sound decision. People seem very excited about this. Nothing is guaranteed for the future, but we'll see if it's something the town can do. If this is a successful event for them and for the town, we will consider keeping them. We don't know until we try."

To avoid traffic congestion to the site

on the narrow residential road, all visitors from outside the town will have to park at the Jefferson Valley Mall on Route 6 and Lee Boulevard and take a free shuttle bus. Putnam Valley residents who attend will have to park at the town's senior citizen center and be shuttled over.

Annabi said others may choose to travel to the event by train.

"They do have a very big following," she said. "Many followers come from New York City, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Our main concern is the health and safety of our residents."

According to Kingdom Faire's website, "The Pirate Queen" show is a "unique interactive outdoor performance" that features five acts, each of which can be viewed on its own, but which work together to create an overall storyline that will unfold. Each show features musical numbers, stage combat, humor and drama and will appeal to all ages. Each weekend has a different theme.

Tickets are \$25 at the gate and \$23 online. For more information, visit <https://kingdomfaire.com>.



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Letters to the Editor

Kramer Would Provide Badly Needed Leadership to Bedford Schools

I have known Chris Kramer and his family for several years, since our children attended pre-school together. Over this time, I've seen Chris as an active participant at Board of Education forums, Bedford Central School District community committees and school meetings where his level-headed, collaborative approach to complex issues has always made him stand out, particularly in these turbulent times.

I serve on the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Committee and I can attest that Chris provides a much-

needed counterbalance to some of the more radical proposals, yet he always approaches conversations respectfully and with an open mind. This type of balanced leadership is desperately needed on the board.

We as a community have watched our school ratings creep lower and lower every year, and now our children are suffering the effects of more than two years of COVID-related learning loss. I'm sure each of us can give evidence from our own families of how our children have been affected.

Our district and our kids are truly at a crossroads. We need leaders who will get back to the basics and focus on the fundamentals. There are evidenced-based strategies that actually help all students achieve better outcomes, regardless of their background, that can help turn this tide. Greater emphasis on the science of reading, phonics and improved math instruction are critically needed.

Additionally, Chris is a true believer in setting performance-based academic goals and will hold our new superintendent accountable for achieving them.

Chris Kramer, along with Gilian Goldman-Klein and Roger Nadel, are the collaborative leaders we need to make real, impactful improvements in this district and not contentious ideologically-driven decisions. Please join me in voting for them on May 17. It's time to raise the bar for the Bedford Central School District.

Andrea Dallaire  
Pound Ridge

County Should Move Forward to Protect Pocantico Lake From Development

I was excited to read that the Westchester County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Advisory Board resolved unanimously to recommend purchasing the beautiful 36.8-acre property that overlooks Pocantico Lake. My family and I thank the board for urging this action, the best possible solution to what is likely to become a very divisive

development.

The proposed development adjacent to Pocantico Lake County Park will ruin the park. To make room for 31 large houses and to make them more marketable, the developer will need to cut down a significant swath of the mature forest. With the enormity of the proposed development,

runoff to the watershed would be inevitable, disrupting the wildlife habitats and spoiling the lake, the county park, the Pocantico River and all points to the Hudson River.

Pocantico Lake County Park is one of the most beautiful spots in all of Westchester. We encourage the county to act on the board's resolution as soon as possible,

taking advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to expand the park, in which the county has already made a substantial investment.

Marilyn Johnson Fleder  
Briarcliff Manor

More Transparency is Needed in Yorktown Ethics Code Practices

It has been nearly a full year since the Yorktown Town Board commissioned the firm Bleakley Platt & Schmidt as special counsel to investigate the circumstances surrounding the leak of a report issued by our own Board of Ethics. Additionally, this firm was directed to review our existing ethics charter and make recommendations for improvement. All of this was done in response to a complaint I filed in November 2020 alleging a conflict-of-interest violation by a member of the Yorktown Planning Board.

As of this writing, there has been no further mention of this subject from our town government. The question then is whether there was ever any true intention

to get to the truth in this matter, or if this was simply a maneuver intended to bury the issue and move on.

Indeed, perhaps our ethics code is more than adequate as is and revisions are not needed. As stated in Yorktown's Rules for Ethical Conduct, Section 45-5: "No Town official or employee shall engage in any business or profession or accept private employment or render any service for private interests which creates a conflict with his or her official duties." It should be obvious to any town official that their access to privileged information is not for personal financial gain.

Rather than rewriting the law, I suspect that the true problem lies in enforcement

and administration. It is not enough to have a succinct code of ethics; officials, employees, volunteers and advisory board members should be given mandatory ethics training and held accountable for infractions.

I urge the Town Board to enact a sustained effort to implement ethical standards and establish clear guidelines to uphold them. Instead, we now have an unfortunate situation, compounded by an administration more interested in avoiding scandal than in seeking transparency.

Tim Glass  
Yorktown Heights

County Must Consider Purchase of Pocantico Lake Property

I'm writing to you today to ask that the Westchester County please consider purchasing the proposed property where 31 new homes along Pocantico Lake on Sleepy Hollow Road in Briarcliff Manor have been proposed. This is a unique opportunity to expand the park and preserve the area's natural beauty and wildlife habitat that will have an enormous future impact on this inimitable environment.

Anthony Spina Jr.  
Mount Pleasant

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# Letters to the Editor

## Pocantico Land Donation With 31 Homes Still Carries Environmental Risks

As a longtime resident of Mount Pleasant and former candidate for town supervisor, I am concerned that your Apr. 14 article, "County Advisory Board Recommends Exploring Pocantico Lake Purchase," does not emphasize how important this land is to protect the current use of a county park.

Pocantico Lake Park is a Westchester County park enjoyed by people from throughout Westchester. I live six miles away, and during my last hike around the lake I

met many people from all over Westchester enjoying the park. It is one of the few lakes in our area that has easy accessibility while its unique, tranquil setting makes visitors feel they are deep in the woods.

The proposed development, however, risks current enjoyment and recreational use of a county park. At a recent meeting, the town supervisor discussed a potential donation of land. Follow-up questions by residents clarified that the developer is still trying to

build a 31-home subdivision, which many have argued will not only degrade the environment but also risk polluting a potential drinking water supply for all Westchester residents. The reference to a potential donation does not reduce the impact this proposed development will have on use of a county park.

Purchasing the park is important for everyone in Westchester. It would be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to not only expand a county park that is used by thousands, but

also protect current use of the park.

In my 48 years as a Westchester resident, I don't ever remember the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Advisory Committee issuing a resolution recommending purchase of real estate for park purposes. This should be given serious consideration by our elected officials.

**Joe Bonanno**  
Valhalla

## Nadel Has the Skills, Experience to Succeed on Bedford Board of Ed

I am a Mount Kisco resident for the past 13 years and currently have three children attending Fox Lane High School, Fox Lane Middle School and Mount Kisco Elementary School. I enthusiastically recommend Roger Nadel to be elected to the Bedford Board of Education on May 17.

I have had the pleasure of getting to know Roger and his family over the last five years. Roger has been a volunteer board member and head coach for the Mount Kisco AYSO soccer program since his children have been able to play. When our board needed a new treasurer to guide our local branch through the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and a national AYSO reorganization, Roger willingly stepped up to take over this position with his relentless determination and strong fiscal experience.

He also serves on our community homeowners association board and

coaches in the Mount Kisco Little League. In addition, he has collaborated on the Student Achievement Advisory and Budget Committee within our school district. Roger has also served our country as an active-duty U.S. Marine during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

I have always admired Roger's willingness to volunteer his time and expertise to community causes. I am confident that he will use sound judgment to benefit all students in our district. Roger is responsible, committed and possesses the qualities that will make him the exceptional Board of Education leader our community needs.

**Rebecca Brauning**  
Mount Kisco

## Goldman-Klein Has All the Qualities Needed to Help Lead Bedford Schools

As a resident of Bedford Village, I am writing this letter to offer my full support of Dr. Gilian Goldman-Klein for the Bedford Central School District Board of Education. Gilian's intelligence, values, thoughtfulness, compassion and decades worth of professional experience in education make her the perfect candidate to lift the district to its full potential. As a longtime Bedford resident and parent of two at Bedford Village Elementary School, Gilian and her family are committed to making Bedford more vibrant, desirable, safe and inclusive for all residents—especially our children.

Gilian's mission to provide students with the educational building blocks necessary to thrive is vital. She has the experience, knowledge and drive to be an effective voice for making positive and necessary change within our school community, most importantly in the areas of academic assessment and

curriculum, safety and inclusion and school budgeting. She is passionate about improving math and literacy programs and developing an effective curriculum for all students.

Gilian has a rare combination of approachability and fierce commitment that will allow her to work with diverse personalities and optimally serve the stakeholders of our education system. I know firsthand that she is dedicated to the long-term vitality of Bedford schools and the future of our community at large.

These qualities make her the obvious choice, and I hope you will join me in voting for Dr. Gilian Goldman-Klein, along with her running mates Chris Kramer and Roger Nadel, for the Bedford Board of Education on May 17.

**Dr. Allie Kosterich Salomone**  
Bedford Village

## Yorktown Has Conducted a Thoughtful, Thorough Review of Underhill Farm

I would like to commend the Yorktown Town Board for taking time to review the Underhill Farm proposal at the former Soundview Preparatory School. The board's unanimous, positive vote provides the opportunity for the proposal to continue through the overall review process.

Any innuendos that this was an inside deal or political favor are, I believe, unfounded. My understanding is that Unicorn Contracting Corp. purchased the property out of bankruptcy in 2020 with no assurances that the Town Board would consider its plans. In fact, it took the Town Board a year and a half

of thoughtful deliberation to move Underhill Farm to the next step: a state Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) review by the Yorktown Planning Board. This process has just started and will provide opportunities for Yorktown residents to get a thorough understanding about this project and to, also, add their voices and comments to the review process.

Approval and construction of the Underhill Farm project will bring many great things to Yorktown, including the addition of much-needed senior-friendly housing; adding essential and required parking to

our senior center; and major road and traffic signal upgrades that will improve congestion problems at Underhill Avenue and Route 118. The project website, [www.underhillfarmsyorktown.com](http://www.underhillfarmsyorktown.com), I have found highly informative.

Thank you again to our Town Board for its meaningful process of reviewing Underhill Farm prior to the project's Planning Board review.

**David DeNapoli**  
Yorktown Heights

## Lessons From the Holocaust Must Be Told So it is Never Repeated

At a time when horrific human rights violations occur on a daily basis in China, Syria, Yemen, Burma and in Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, it's more important than ever that we keep the memory of the Holocaust alive and alert people to where racism, bigotry and militarized nationalism can lead when left unchecked.

On Apr. 29, I will be at the Holocaust Museum & Center for Tolerance and Education in Suffern to present a proclamation declaring that day to be End Jew Hatred Day in the 38th Senate District and recognizing the urgent need to act against anti-Semitism, which the Holocaust

Museum and other groups are now describing as Jew-hatred. Appropriately, this event is just one day after Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Recently, I took some time in Albany to visit "The Courage to Remember," an exhibit on the Holocaust created by the Simon Wiesenthal Center that my colleague, state Sen. Anna Kaplan, sponsored to be displayed in the Legislative Office Building for a week.

With the number of Holocaust survivors decreasing each year, we are losing a vital link to this history, and younger generations are increasingly uninformed

or misinformed about the Holocaust. Shockingly, at least one survey of New Yorkers ages 18 to 39 revealed that 28 percent thought the Holocaust was a myth or had been exaggerated and 19 percent believed Jews caused the Holocaust.

Exhibits like this, and local institutions like the Rockland Holocaust Museum & Center for Tolerance and Education, are vital to ensuring that New Yorkers understand the horrors of the Holocaust so they are never repeated.

**State Sen. Elijah Reichlin-Melnick**  
38th Senate District

## Volunteers Make Alzheimer's Association Walk Successful

During National Volunteer Week, I would like to acknowledge Michele Lippin for her exceptional service to the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter Westchester Walk Planning Committee. During her time here, she has played an important role in organizing call scripts and ensuring volunteers are scheduled for our call nights that help recruit new teams.

Without volunteers like Michele, we would not be able to accomplish our mission of raising funds and awareness to end Alzheimer's and all dementia. We are so grateful for all that our volunteers like Michele do to advance our cause.

**Esther McCarthy**  
Director, Westchester Walk to End Alzheimer's

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# Former Knicks Star Sees How Spectrum Designs Changes Lives

By Martin Wilbur

Former New York Knicks star John Starks knows a little bit about overcoming the odds.

Starks was passed over by every team in the NBA draft coming out of college but managed to fashion a successful 13-year career, including a trip to the 1994 Finals and other memorable moments with the Knicks.

Last Tuesday, he visited Spectrum Designs in Pleasantville, a custom apparel and promotional products organization that trains and employs neurodiverse workers, most of whom are on the autism spectrum, to watch firsthand how the staff have become valuable members of the operation.

"They do a terrific job, and like I said, their goal is to get them to do things on their own and you have to commend Spectrum and their mission statement to give every individual an opportunity to do something with their lives, and for them to take on people with disabilities is amazing," said Starks, who visited Spectrum's Pleasantville warehouse on Tompkins Avenue in recognition of Autism Awareness Month.

About 60 percent of Spectrum Designs' 70-employee staff across the organization have disabilities, co-founder and CEO Patrick Bardsley said. Its original location continues to operate in Port Washington on Long Island with about 20 workers in Pleasantville.

There is no shortage of work that needs to be done. The staff has been busy producing the rally towels and t-shirts that are being handed out to fans attending the home playoff games this spring for the Brooklyn Nets and



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Former Knick John Starks visited Spectrum Designs in Pleasantville last Tuesday to take a tour of its Pleasantville facility, which employs mostly workers with autism and related conditions. Starks is pictured with Spectrum Designs CEO Patrick Bardsley, left, and COO Tim Howe, right.

the New York Rangers. They must produce about 20,000 for each game.

Bardsley said the work may get a bit intense if at least one of the teams has a long playoff run. There may be instances where there will be less than 48 hours' notice to produce the items for a game if a series is extended.

"We do as much as we can do," he said. "We always have the habit of saying yes and then figuring it out later. But that's with the greater mission in mind of creating even one extra hour of employment for people on the spectrum is worth it to us."

Spectrum got the work through a Long Island-based sports branding firm, Coyote Promotions, Bardsley said. Staff is expected to produce the goods on time for each game. The nonprofit organization isn't a place that provides busy work just to make their workers feel good about themselves, he said.

"This isn't charity, this isn't play," Bardsley said. "We want to be seen as a real business and that's what we are. So it's a good message."

The work for the Nets and Rangers isn't the only job Spectrum is currently handling.

They're also in the midst of producing 60,000 face masks for the state Department of Transportation and it is the official licensed vendor for New York State Parks for all its retail merchandise.

Spectrum also embroiders the apparel for school districts around the state and some colleges.

Tim Howe, Spectrum's chief operating officer, said the work allows employees to become more self-reliant while giving them a sense of purpose. For many with autism, they've been told since high school that they might never find work, forcing them to be on Medicare or Medicaid their entire adult lives, he said.

With the unemployment rates among those on the spectrum at least 70 percent, the organization is trying to change their employees' outlook.

"Along comes Spectrum Designs and says 'We see you, you're capable and you can thrive in this environment because we built it for you. We built it around what we think you can do, so just come show us,'" Howe said. "To be part of that, it's just beyond."

Starks, who works in the Knicks' front office in marketing and runs his foundation that provides scholarships to high school students in the tristate area, said it was inspiring to see the work that Spectrum and its employees do.

"Spectrum Designs is amazing," he said. "Coming here and seeing the workers and being productive, these guys do terrific things to help out people with disabilities."

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# X Ambassadors to Headline the Return of Pleasantville Music Festival

By Abby Luby

A jam-packed crowd filled Soul Brewing Co. in Pleasantville on Sunday, eager to hear the lineup for the 16th Pleasantville Music Festival scheduled for Saturday, July 9 at Parkway Field.

"It's been a long time since I last made an announcement for the upcoming festival," said Bruce Figler, festival executive director who organized the Reveal Party.

Figler was referring to the cancellation of the festival for the last two years because of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

"This is a cause for celebration," he said.

Music fans waiting to hear the roster of bands on Souwere entertained by Christine Chanel, who performed on the Chill Tent Stage at the 2018 festival, and the Rosters, a three-piece band with Chanel singing and playing keyboard.

There were 14 confirmed bands that were announced as a video of each group was featured on two screens over the bar.

The headliner for the festival is X Ambassadors, a pop rock band from Ithaca, N.Y. that will perform on the Main Stage. Their most notable songs include "Jungle," "Renegades" and "Unsteady."

Also performing on the Main Stage is the alternative rock band 10,000 Maniacs featuring famed violinist and violist Mary Ramsey; rock n' roll, soul and Americana band Clare Maloney and the Great Adventure; and the blues, funk and soul group Black Joe Lewis & the Honeybears.

One more band for the main stage has yet to be confirmed.

Another three bands from the festival's Battle of the Bands competition will also be announced. A total of 18 acts will be performing throughout the day.

The headliner at the Chill Tent will be Grammy-winning artist Paula Cole who wrote and sang "I Don't Want to Wait" for the television series "Dawson's Creek." Also at the Chill Tent will be New Yorker Chaz Kiss performing her emo-jazz-piano-rock; folk music and indie rock singer and Hudson Valley songwriter Greg Jacquin; alternative folk artist Riki Stevens; and the bluegrass band Cole Quest & the City Pickers.

Headlining the Party Stage will be Illiterate White, a psychedelic indie-rock duo from Virginia followed by The Breaks Inc., a six-person power pop rock band from New York City. Also on the Party Stage will be Blankslate, a five-piece alternative rock band from Virginia Beach; Girl Skin, a Brooklyn-based indie-rock band; and the Narrowbacks, Irish rockers from The Bronx.

The three winners from the Battle of the Bands competition will kick off the festival's music on each of the stages. Those winners have yet to be announced.

Figler, wearing a blue 2019 Pleasantville Music Festival t-shirt at Sunday evening's reveal party, said acts were booked that appeal to a variety of tastes and ages.

"I'm pretty convinced that most everybody will find an artist they already like or discover someone new that they didn't know about,"



ABBY LUBY PHOTO

Pleasantville Music Festival Executive Director Bruce Figler announcing the 2022 lineup of performers for the upcoming July 9 Festival at Soul Brewing Co. on Sunday. Playing for the crowd was Christine Chanel who played the Chill Tent Stage at the 2018 festival, and the Rosters.

he said.

Tickets for the 2022 Pleasantville Music Festival now through July 1 are \$60 for adults and \$30 for seniors (65 and up) and students (12 to 21 years old). Prices increase to \$70 and \$32 the week leading up to the festival and \$75 and \$35 the day of the festival. Children under 12 will be admitted free if they are accompanied by an adult who bought a ticket.

Tickets to the Pleasantville Music Festival are available at the Pleasantville Recreation Center, located at 48 Marble Ave. in Pleasantville during office hours, or through Ticketweb, which can be accessed through the festival's website at [www.pleasantvillemusicfestival.com](http://www.pleasantvillemusicfestival.com). More information about the event and links to the performers can be found on the website.



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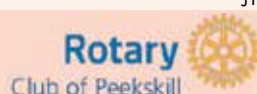
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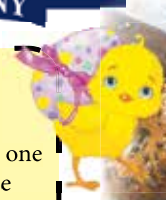
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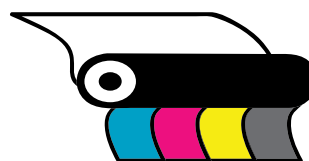
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## Using Color to Stimulate – or Suppress – Mood

Maybe I was 14 or 15 when my mother allowed me to select the color that “my” room (as distinguished from the one I had always shared with my older brother until he went off to be a paratrooper) was to be painted.

I didn’t have to think for a minute about the color I wanted to surround myself with – red. Actually, a blood red, and not the dull color of dried blood, but the vibrant hue of fresh blood. I intuitively knew how to surround myself with warmth and vibrancy.

But, as I clearly recall, when it came time to sell that home, prospective buyers would look into that room and exclaim “Wow!” According to my mother, it may actually have ruined a sale or two, but as a realtor today, I always advise buyers that paint is the quickest and easiest fix to upgrading a property, both outdoors and indoors. A fresh coat of paint can forgive a multitude of sins, both physically and psychologically.

When my wife Margaret and I bought our first home in Brooklyn Heights, we immediately set out to cover the walls of most rooms with busy wallpaper. (We were crazy for wallpaper in those days.) When the former owner, a friend, visited us after our wallpaper frenzy, he exclaimed, “On no! And it took me weeks to decide on the perfect color green paint for this room!”



By Bill Primavera

Today we live in a home where, bought new, the slightly off-white color of the walls appealed to us, and we stuck with it for a half-dozen years. We feel that a neutral background for our collection of antique oil paintings is a good thing to stick with. And, when I get an urge to change something in our maintenance-free surroundings, maybe by changing the color of a room, my wife exclaims, “No!”

“But I’m feeling that a nice shade of salmon would be great for the bedroom,” I plead.

But the manager of all the nice things that made a home a home has put her foot down. So I live in a tranquil setting of off-white, certainly nothing too exciting.

In researching the psychology of color online, I find that my early fondness for red may be explained psychologically as “the warmest and most contradictory of the colors. In fact, this fiery hue has more opposing emotional associations than any other color: Red is linked to passion and love as well as power and anger.” I guess that explanation shows where my head was when I was a teenager.

Through my research, I can offer a basic primer on which colors besides red stimulate which moods or feelings. Green is calming; blue, especially in the workplace, is stimulating; purple is spiritual; orange



is attention-grabbing (which is why it is frequently used in advertising); and yellow is bright (the color of the sun, Van Gogh reminds us).

When I am asked what my favorite color is, I never have to think twice: it’s pink. Pink for a man? Yes, but actually it’s more a mauve, where the pink contains a lot of gray. When we owned an historic home in Brooklyn Heights, we changed its exterior color from pale gray to mauve, and that created quite a stir in the neighborhood.

When I established the colors for my

public relations firm, I chose mauve for a lot of our materials (such as the press kit folders) and it frequently produced comment. But that’s who I am, color psychology-wise.

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

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# A Healthcare Option for Those Who Have Nowhere Else to Turn

By Martin Wilbur

For 50 years, people in the southern and central part of Westchester County who don't have health insurance or can't afford the high cost of co-pays even with insurance have had someplace to go for their health care needs.

The Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center just doesn't provide care for residents in that community and neighboring municipalities but its network oversees five other locations, including its facility at 295 Knollwood Rd. in Greenburgh that serves residents in central Westchester, including White Plains. The location was formerly the Greenburgh Health Center until it merged with Mount Vernon in 2013.

Between those two locations, its facility at 30 S. Broadway in Yonkers and the operations at the Grasslands Homeless Shelter in Valhalla, the Coachman Family Center in White Plains and Women's Premier Obstetrics at 25 Lake St. in White Plains, there are about 130,000 visits a year from its roughly 20,000 registered patients, said Judith Watson, CEO of Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center.

It is one of a few networks of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) in Westchester, which not only helps keep people healthy but relieves the pressure on the hospital emergency rooms that the patients would most likely overwhelm if it didn't exist, Watson said.

Anyone with or without insurance from anywhere can get their medical needs addressed.

"We are the safety net for the most

vulnerable people in the community who have no place else to go," she said. "At no time was it more important than during the COVID pandemic, which we're still in, by the way."

The health center not only provides basic preventative health measures such as annual physicals but a wide assortment of other services and specialties are offered, such as pediatrics, dentistry, obstetrics, behavioral health, ophthalmology and radiology.

"We have a lab on site," Watson said. "It's a one-stop shop for all ages. That's very important. It's one-stop shop."

If a patient needs a service that the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center can't provide, it has an affiliation agreement with Westchester Medical Center so no one will be turned away for that specialty, she said.

The Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center sees patients with private insurance, Medicare or Medicaid as well as those without any coverage. Watson said about half of its patients have no insurance. It will also never refuse seeing a person because he or she is undocumented, Watson said.

The health center's \$25 million annual is supplemented by grants and donations, she said. For those with the ability to pay, their out-of-pocket costs are determined based on their income on a sliding scale.

One major advantage for those who seek out health care services from one of its 66 providers is that the center is enrolled in the 340b Health program, which cuts prescription medication costs for the public by about 70 percent.

Watson also dispelled what could be a



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Judith Watson, CEO of the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center, where there are about 130,000 patient visits a year at its six locations throughout Westchester.

misconception held by some members of the public that the quality of health care is lacking at an FQHC. All doctors, physician assistants and nurse practitioners are board certified, which means they have the same certifications as providers in high rents districts, she said.

"They go to the same colleges and university the doctors who are operating private facilities or who are working in some of the larger facilities that cater to those that have commercial insurance," Watson said. "They get the same education. They sit for the

same boards."

Watson, a registered nurse, said she derives a great amount of satisfaction helping others. A White Plains High School graduate, she served in the U.S Army before going to college. After she was discharged, Watson went to Pace University, and in 2007, earned her master's in public health at New York Medical College.

"The health center has been my life, and it's my passion and service is my life," Watson said.

In addition to overseeing the operation, her goal is to educate and inform the public on the health center's value and to let people know who may need its services that it's in the community.

Without it, during the darkest days of the pandemic, thousands of people would have had no place to turn for testing and later vaccinations, Watson said.

Black and brown communities have been disproportionately affected not only by COVID but hypertension, diabetes and asthma. The healthcare situation, which is already complicated, expensive and inaccessible for some, would be even more dire without the neighborhood health center.

"They would turn to the emergency room, and your tax bills would increase, our tax bills," Watson said. "Some of them would stay home and die, and others would go to the emergency room. It's as simple as that. It's not a complicated thing. That's why we were established."

For more information on the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center, call 914-699-7200 or visit [www.mvnhc.org](http://www.mvnhc.org).

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# Katonah Classic Stage to Offer Acting Workshop to Students

Katonah Classic Stage, Westchester County's nonprofit, professional theater company dedicated to producing classic dramatic and comedic works, will offer a Shakespeare-focused acting workshop, Speak the Speech, to high school and middle school students starting Tuesday, May 3 in Bedford Hills.

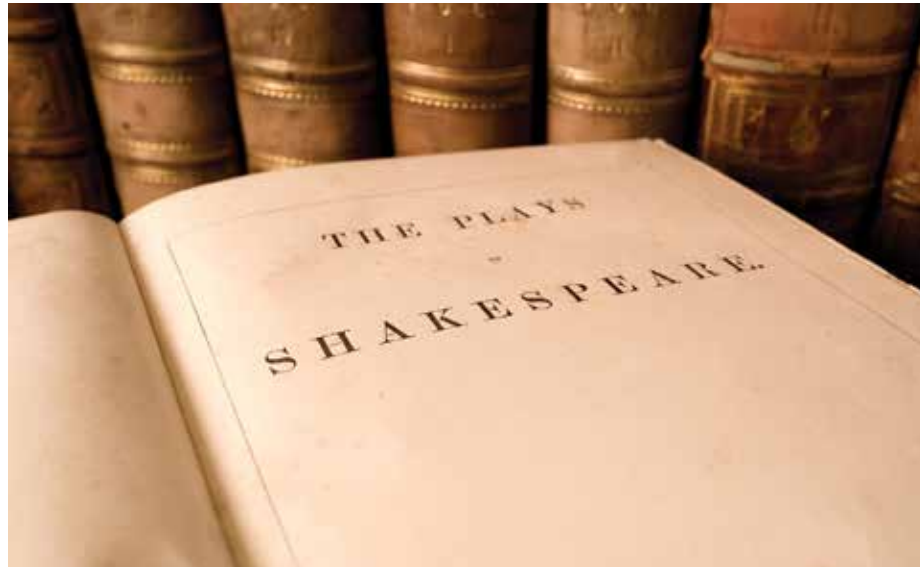
The workshop will culminate with a live performance for friends and family on June 7. In addition, on June 11, each student's scenes will be professionally filmed and edited into a reel for their own use. All of the scenes will then be combined into a short film, which will debut on the big screen at the 3rd annual Katonah Classic Stage Film Festival this summer at the Bedford Playhouse.

KCS Artistic Director Trent Dawson has wanted to offer these classes for years.

"The educational component is something we envisioned for KCS from the very beginning and I am thrilled that we can finally welcome students into the fold and get them up on their feet learning and performing Shakespeare," Dawson said.

KCS is also offering students a chance to be a part of a live production of the all-time classic, "Romeo and Juliet," this summer at the Bedford Playhouse. Students will rehearse beginning in early July and the performance will be July 23.

With such a short rehearsal period,



Dawson said that while no acting experience is necessary, participants in the production are encouraged to enroll in the Speak the Speech workshop so they can hit the ground running for "Romeo and Juliet." He said student volunteers are also being sought for help behind the scenes.

"We want this to be a learning opportunity for kids interested in all aspects of theater and there is no better way to learn than hands on training alongside professionals," Dawson said.

Somers resident Christine Canavan is also excited about this new endeavor.

"I think this is a great chance for students to delve into Shakespeare and really work through it on stage," she said. "I personally don't believe the classics are stressed enough in school, so for those kids who are curious and want to take it a step further, this is a wonderful opportunity. I am confident the professionals at KCS will do a great job engaging these kids and I look forward to a great performance"

All proceeds from the workshop will go

toward the "Romeo and Juliet" production as well as KCS's main stage production of Noel Coward's classic comedy "Private Lives" this fall.

In addition to its productions and film festival, KCS is also looking forward to its Spring Auction Fundraiser, which will offer a chance to bid on fantastic local goods and services including hot ticket items such as experiences on Broadway, Caramoor tickets, exclusive wine tastings, shopping sprees and more.

The Speak the Speech workshop will be held Tuesdays from May 3 through June 7 at 46 Depot Plaza in Bedford Hills from 7 to 9 pm. The cost is \$375, which includes classes, performance and edited reel for personal or professional use and debut at the KCS Film Festival.

The production of "Romeo and Juliet" will take place at the Bedford Playhouse on July 23. Rehearsals will be held from July 5 to 22 in the evenings from 6 to 9:30 p.m. Full-day commitments are possible on July 21 and 22. The cost is \$275 and covers the costs of the production.

Students can sign up for both the workshop and production now. All information regarding Speak the Speech, including the application for the workshop and "Romeo and Juliet" production, can be found at [www.katonahclassicstage.com/education](http://www.katonahclassicstage.com/education). Tickets to "Romeo and Juliet" will go on sale in July.

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# Pleasantville Celebrates Earth Day With Messages of Unity and Hope

By Martin Wilbur

Communities across the region and the nation participated in Earth Day celebrations last weekend, many stressing the importance of a clean environment and reducing carbon footprint to slow down and possibly reverse the effects of climate change.

Pleasantville did something a little different.

The Pleasantville Interfaith Committee partnered with the village for the inaugural Pleasantville Earth Day Interfaith Celebration that featured the committee's five clergy leaders and lay members of each congregation encouraging cooperation to make their community, and by extension the world, a better place.

Gerard Falco, a parishioner at Emanuel Lutheran Church and one of the organizers of the event, said the impetus for the celebration was to adhere to many of the principles in the Earth Charter, a kind of global mission statement related to sustainability, peace and social justice created by visionaries around the world more than 20 years ago.

With all of the world's problems in 2022, it was a fitting time for Pleasantville to launch the event in that spirit.

"They identified the problems we have as a society that include things that you normally think of – social justice, democracy, the environment – and they decided in order to solve these problems it requires all of us because we're all globally interrelated," Falco said. "It becomes a shared responsibility and we can only solve these problems by working together."

The roughly 80 people who attended planted five saplings on the village-owned

property on Lake Street, a short walk from the Pleasantville Pool. They also received seeds to plant sunflowers, the national flower of Ukraine. The attending clergy offered prayers and messages of hope and dignitaries spoke as well.

Fr. Luke Hoyt, the pastor at Holy Innocents Parish in Pleasantville, said people can disagree on many issues large and small, but there should be no argument over preserving the planet.

"One fundamental thing that we can all agree on is that this planet is our home and so we have to do our part to make it a beautiful home, and one thing that we have all been given, as communities of faith, is a very important fact, which is that this Earth has been given to us as a gift and that we're in call to live in this Earth as that, as a gift, and not just a gift in a metaphorical sense, not just a gift in an ecological sense," Hoyt said.

Clergy and members from Pleasantville Community Synagogue, St. John's Episcopal Church and Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester also comprise the committee and participated.

Village Trustee David Vinjamuri said current events, such as the war in Ukraine, is making it even more challenging to fight climate change as other countries are ramping up oil drilling. Then there are the thousands of people that are dying who shouldn't be dying.

However, the symbolism of planting is to renew the planet for future generations.

"Remember, every time we plant someone will eventually sow, and what we want is for that to be a great harvest for us and the Earth," he said.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Children help to place one of the five saplings that the Village of Pleasantville planted on municipal land on Sunday in celebration of Earth Day.

Cousins, whose district will include Pleasantville should she win re-election in the fall, told a story about growing up in a New York City project and having asthma made worse by the burning of garbage that was done to get rid of trash in those days.

At the time little was known about the toll on the air quality and people's health by doing that.

"Nobody understood that the air that we breathe is taking a toll in our ability

to thrive, and so to stand here now in a conscious community that I once again have the privilege of representing after the lines have been drawn, with faith leaders who understand the connection between the divine and humanity and the interconnection between the environment, our health piece, and being able to respect each of these things enough to know that war is not an answer is a great thing for me," Stewart-Cousins said.

# Mount Kisco Observes Earth Day With Fun and Smiles



Mount Kisco held an Earth Day celebration for the entire community and for all ages last Saturday near Village Hall. It was quite a day to be outside to enjoy the sunshine, learn about sustainable practices and how to protect the planet while having an enjoyable time in the process. There was music, games, food and a chance for local residents to mingle with their neighbors. Not a bad way to spend a weekend spring afternoon.



ART NELSON PHOTOS





# Trio to Help Celebrate International Jazz Day at Bethany Arts

By Martin Wilbur

Jazz is often considered an American art form, but the musical genre has been enjoyed by music fans around the globe.

On Saturday evening, two Westchester jazz musicians will be performing the music of one of the world's most eclectic practitioners at Bethany Arts Community in Ossining to celebrate the 11th annual International Jazz Day.

Mount Kisco saxophonist Daniel Blake and Yonkers percussionist Rogerio Baccato will be joined by keyboardist Vitor Goncalves to perform the music of legendary Brazilian jazz composer Hermeto Pascoal in a special performance.

"I've loved Hermeto Pascoal as long as I've been a jazz musician, basically, and I've never been able to do a program of his compositions, so I thought this might be an opportunity to try that," Blake said. "There's so much to love about that music, and we've brought in Vitor Goncalves who is a pianist and an accordionist who I think has played with Hermeto, so it feels really good to be able to bring these sounds up to Ossining."

What makes Pascoal so special? Baccato, who as a native Brazilian has loved Pascoal's music for



Jazz musicians Daniel Blake, Rogerio Baccato and Vitor Goncalves will be performing the music of brilliant Brazilian jazz composer Hermeto Pascoal this Saturday night at Bethany Arts Community in Ossining.

decades, said his brilliance is incorporating all sorts of different sounds. In fact, he's almost impossible to define because he uses various object to help create those sounds, Baccato said.

"As a musician, he's a multi-instrumentalist that plays all the conventional instruments but also he plays, he makes music

with things that aren't considered instruments," he said. "So, like a bottle full of water and his beard. Every sound is music, and he uses these (to) incorporate all the sounds into his music."

He's also a prolific composer, having been credited with between 4,000 and 5,000 works, according to Baccato. In 1996, he created "a

calendar of sound," where he wrote one piece a day every day for the entire year. The calendar includes comments about where he was and what he was thinking about when he created each composition.

Blake said he discovered Pascoal in college. He and some buddies were listening to a Miles Davis recording when someone urged them to listen to Pascoal's track of "Selim." It's no coincidence that the title of the track is Miles spelled backwards.

The ingenuity and experimentation are so unique it's music like no other.

"He encapsulates everything that's great about jazz music," he said. "He has the potential to communicate across borders and also into the cosmos."

Baccato said that over the years, the definition of jazz has changed. For American jazz enthusiasts, it has traditionally been looked as having a swing feel, but that no longer applies. Musicians in countries all over the globe create music that redefine what jazz has become.

Blake said he had looked forward to bringing a music program to Bethany Arts since he was involved in a ballet project at the venue. Bethany Arts Community is located in a portion of the Maryknoll site.

"There's something about that space that inspires experimentation," Blake said. "Those are my favorite places to play, to go and experience."

The performance space is a roughly 1,300-square-foot room in the original part of the building from the 1920s, said Abby Lewis, executive director of Bethany Arts. It has been outfitted with new sound and lighting and has an intimate feel that seats up to 75 people.

Lewis said the organization looks to present diverse forms of art, and wants to present more musical performances. This is the first time it will be commemorating International Jazz Day, she said.

"The community is really what defines Bethany, and so we are really looking for artists and musicians and other creatives in the community to propose to us projects that they'd like to do and figure out ways to do it," Lewis said.

Audience members will have a chance to speak with the musicians as well as enjoy food and drink courtesy of Sing Sing Kill Brewery in Ossining.

The concert is at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25 each. Bethany Arts is located at 40 Somerstown Rd. in Ossining. For tickets and more information, visit [www.bethanyarts.org](http://www.bethanyarts.org).

## Meeting of the Minds Dementia Conference

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# Longtime Bakery Honored for Making its Community Sweeter

State Sen. Peter Harkham (D-Lewisboro) recently honored Homestyle Desserts, a multigenerational family bakery on South Water Street in Peekskill as a New York State Historic Business.

The official designation is reserved for businesses that have been in operation for at least 50 years and contributed to their community's history.

"The long and continuing success of Homestyle Desserts is a reflection of the hard-working residents from the area whom it has served for more than five decades," Harkham said. "With local businesses facing a variety of immense challenges, I was pleased to ensure that this much-loved bakery received state recognition for its sustained sweetness and excellence."

Rose Sanca, the founder of Homestyle Desserts, started the bakery in 1969, focusing on her legendary apple dumplings. Located originally in Buchanan and known as Dutch Mill Donuts, Sanca changed the name of the business in 1984 when she moved to its present location in Peekskill.

In 2015, Sanca retired and passed the business on to her two children, Laura Timmons and Jason Elias.

Today, Homestyle Desserts are known as innovators, offering gluten-free and vegan baked goods, as well as a wide range

of specialty items. Homestyle created the cake for New York Yankees star Derek Jeter's retirement party.

In 2018, the business expanded to a new storefront in Cold Spring while continuing to maintain its location near the Peekskill waterfront as one of the premier destinations for cakes, cookies and pastries in the region.

"Homestyle Desserts has been a central part of our family for more than two generations, and my brother and I are happy to preserve the traditional aspects of the bakery while staying up to date and trying new things," Timmons said. "We appreciate the recognition that Sen. Harkham has presented to us, knowing how valued we are by our customers."

New York State's Historic Business Preservation Registry was established in 2020 to commemorate the local businesses across the state that have helped to shape the history, heritage and identity of the communities they serve. The program is administered by the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation.

Nominations to the registry must be sponsored by an elected state official, which could include the governor, lieutenant governor or members of the Senate and Assembly. Each elected official may nominate two businesses for inclusion per term. The program is non-



SEN. PETER HARKHAM OFFICE PHOTO

State Sen. Peter Harkham with Laura Timmons, co-owner of Homestyle Desserts. The Peekskill bakery was recently recognized for more than a half-century of serving the community.

competitive, and as long as the nomination criteria are met, businesses will be added to the registry.

Anyone interested in having a business added to the registry should reach out to their state representative.

## Grammy Award-Winning Duo to Headline Lincoln Party May 14

Jay Unger and Molly Mason, who wrote and performed "Ashokan Farewell," the theme song for the Ken Burns PBS series on the Civil War, will headline the entertainment at a Lincoln Lawn Party on Saturday, May 14 in Peekskill.

The outdoor tented and catered event will be held on the grounds of the Lincoln Depot Museum at 10 South Water St. in Peekskill from 6 to 9 p.m. Unger and Mason have previously performed at the White House, Carnegie Hall and the Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Ill.

This outdoor party is open to members and non-members and is being organized by the Lincoln Society in Peekskill. Founded in 1903, it is one of the oldest Lincoln groups in the United States and was created to commemorate Abraham Lincoln's only speaking event in Westchester County when he addressed a crowd of 1,500 people gathered at the



Tickets are on sale for the May 14 Lincoln Lawn Party in Peekskill, which will include Grammy Award winners Jay Unger and Molly Mason, food and drink and Civil War-era re-enactors.

old Peekskill railroad depot during the train journey to his inauguration in 1861.

The organization is a dedicated to promoting a nonpartisan and nonprofit greater awareness of the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln.

The all-inclusive ticket price of \$65 includes assorted hors d'oeuvres, variety wine tasting, a section of popular beers, coffee and dessert and free admission to the Lincoln Depot Museum. Garden party attire is suggested; uniforms and period dress are welcome.

Attendees will enjoy an evening of history, music and entertainment, a photo opportunity with "President Lincoln" and a chance to stand where Lincoln stood when he visited Westchester 161 years ago. Other entertainment will include Emily Lapisardi, professional musician, author and Civil War-era re-enactor, and Alyssa Martin, a gifted local singer and performer.

Tickets can be purchased on the website of the Lincoln Society at [www.lincolnsocietyinpeekskill.org](http://www.lincolnsocietyinpeekskill.org). The deadline to RSVP is May 4.

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*continued on page 26*

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# Galef Proposes Bill to Prevent Insider Trading in State Government

By Martin Wilbur

Two area state legislators have proposed a new bill that would prohibit state elected officials and certain employees from profiting through investments in stocks based on information they received in the course of doing their job.

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) and state Sen. Elijah Reichlin-Melnick (D-Nyack) recently introduced the New York Stock Act, which would look to stamp out insider trading among members of the legislature, executive and judiciary branches in the state government and their employees by making it illegal to have an unfair advantage in the stock market based on information that isn't available to the general public.

It is a similar piece of federal legislation that was approved by Congress in 2012 following multiple instances of lawmakers in Washington who were found to have benefited from inside information.

Galef, who made the announcement last Thursday in downtown Ossining, said she and Reichlin-Melnick are trying to stop the problem before it happens – or worsens – in New York State. A suspected offender could be prosecuted under the proposed law.

“This is really a preventative measure,” Galef said. “We just want to be sure that our colleagues and the people who work in the state capitol are doing the right thing.”

Neither legislator was certain about how widespread a problem insider trading may be in Albany.

However, various New York State officials have had their share of ethics problems over the years, including the convictions of former Senate majority leaders Joe Bruno and Dean Skalos and former Assembly speaker Sheldon Silver.

Earlier this month Lt. Gov. Brian Benjamin resigned after he was arrested by the FBI for allegedly steering \$50,000 in state money to a nonprofit organization run by a developer, who then contributed \$25,000 to Benjamin's state Senate campaign.

Reichlin-Melnick said the public must have confidence that state officials are not taking advantage of their positions for personal financial gain. The senator said he chooses to not invest in individual stocks, and while that would not be a requirement under the measure should it become law, he said he does not want even the appearance of corruption.

“A thriving democracy depends on trust in public governance,” said Reichlin-Melnick, who is carrying the bill in the Senate. “The New York Stock Act is a critical tool for preventing corruption and strengthening public trust for Albany.”

The bill provides for the legislative ethics commission to issue interpretive guidance regarding the prohibition of nonpublic information for private profit to



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef and state Sen. Elijah Reichlin-Melnick announced legislation that would prohibit stock investments for personal gain among state officials and their employees based on information they learn through their positions.

each chamber, Galef said. The joint ethics commission would also issue relevant

ethics rules applicable to executive and judicial officers and employees.

Initial public offerings of stocks are also prohibited to be bought by the officials and their employees under the proposed law.

While the legislation wasn't in response to a specific matter in Albany, Galef said earlier in her tenure in the Assembly a company that produced potassium iodide pills was pitching to the legislature the need for all residents within a 50-mile radius of the Indian Point nuclear power plant to take the pill. That was a situation where had the legislation been approved it could have compromised legislators' ethics, knowing that a pharmaceutical would have had a lucrative contract to distribute millions of pills, she said.

“That's the type of type of action that's happened in Washington,” Galef said. “We may not know that it could have happened in Albany, too. That's why we're doing this bill, to make sure that voters have confidence that that's not going to take place.”

Reichlin-Melnick said corruption in Albany has been a problem on both sides of the aisle and this bill serves notice that insider trading will not be tolerated.

“This has been a bipartisan ongoing issue in Albany, Washington, Trenton, Connecticut, wherever you want to look around the country, but we want to clean up and we want to do better and I believe we can,” he said.

THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz

By Edward Goralski

An April Assemblage. The quiz this week consists of a selection of words that have recently appeared in print or on web sites. Whether alone, or with a group of friends or family, see if you find a word, or a collection of words, to add to your vocabulary.

1. quandary (n.)	A) an abrupt change	B) dilemma	C) a state of isolation
2. pastoral (adj.)	A) light in color	B) bygone	C) idyllically rustic
3. confabulate (v.)	A) to put together	B) lead to a result	C) talk casually
4. detritus (n.)	A) rubble	B) a roundabout way	C) something notable
5. mephitic (adj.)	A) falsely attractive	B) offensive smelling	C) ideological
6. absquatulate (v.)	A) to flee	B) take in	C) set free
7. noetic (adj.)	A) relating to the intellect	B) superficial	C) very good
8. passe-partout (n.)	A) a leave of absence	B) satirical writing	C) a master key

ANSWERS:

1. B. A state of uncertainty or perplexity; dilemma	2. C. Idyllically rustic; bucolic	3. C. To talk casually; chat; natter	4. A. The remains of something that has been destroyed or broken up; debris; rubble
5. B. Offensive smelling	6. A. To flee; to take off with something or somebody	7. A. Relating to mental activity or the intellect; brainy; clever	8. C. A master key; a skeleton key

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# SPECIAL REPORT: The Great Yonkers Casino Gamble

## Has betting on Empire City paid off? (PART 1 of 2)



By Bailey Hosfelt

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.

Nestled between the New York Thruway and Bronx River Parkway in Southeast Yonkers sits Empire City, Westchester County's only operating casino and horse racetrack.

Acquired by MGM Resorts from the Rooney family in January 2019, Empire City brought in a whopping \$570 million this past fiscal year, with over \$8 billion credits played between April 2021 and March 2022.

As Yonkers' largest private employer, its



One of the gaming floors at Empire City (photo: Empire City Casino)

highest property taxpayer, and a consistent contributor to school funding, there's no question that Empire City plays a major economic role in New York's downstate region and the city specifically.

That's why elected officials, business leaders, and labor unions are pushing for a full-scale gaming license for the casino, which would bring live table games and dealers to the facility. Presently, Empire City only has virtual lottery terminals (VLTs), a type of electronic gambling machine.

Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano, an ardent supporter of full-scale gaming, says if Empire City gets the license, the sky is the limit.

"If you talk to any expert about gaming,

they will tell you that Yonkers is a sure bet," Mayor Spano says. "Empire City has only been an economic success for us, and we think we can take it to the next level, providing meaningful jobs, development, and real revenue for New York State."

### Banding together

Last year, a consortium of 30 groups called "A Sure Bet For New York's Future" came together to put pressure on state lawmakers and the former governor to greenlight a full-scale license for Empire City. The group says a full-scale gaming license will create thousands of new jobs for the area, generate even more revenue, and further boost educational aid for Yonkers schools.

While the Cuomo administration and some lawmakers were previously unwilling to grant downstate licenses — saying it would hurt the bottom-line of upstate casinos — Governor Kathy Hochul seems to have a different opinion.

In her recently-announced proposed state budget, Gov. Hochul included a one-year acceleration of the downstate license process initiated slated for 2023.

"We are thrilled that Governor Kathy Hochul and the State Legislature have reached an agreement to allow the state to issue the available commercial casino licenses," Bill Hornbuckle, Chief Executive Officer and President of MGM Resorts says. "We applaud their tireless efforts to help communities recover from the lows of this pandemic."

Just approved, her budget will allow the New York State Gaming Commission to issue a request for applications open to three casinos in the downstate region. It's heavily anticipated that Empire City and Resorts World in Queens will vie for two of the three new licenses.

Hornbuckle says MGM looks forward to responding to the request for applications and is excited by the opportunity to bring thousands of new jobs and ...

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# Part-Owner, GM of Pro Hoops Team Lives a Sports Lovers' Dream

By Art Nelson and Martin Wilbur

As a lifelong sports enthusiast, Mount Kisco resident Craig Sulema has taken his passion to a new level.

Shortly before the pandemic, Sulema became a part owner of the New York Hoop Dragons, a Long Island-based semiprofessional basketball team that completed its inaugural season last month in the reconstituted American Basketball Association.

Sulema, who played sports growing up through high school, had been quite active in Mount Kisco youth sports guiding his children, including coaching Little League baseball and youth basketball. He also served on the board of the Mount Kisco Little League and has worked as the athletic director of a summer camp program for the last 10 years.

But when his kids aged out of the local programs, there was a void. Then came an opportunity to get involved in the Hoop Dragons and also become its general manager.

"I wanted to say involved and be active, and a friend of mine, my partner, Perry Tischler, he got this franchise two years ago prior to COVID," Sulema said. "I saw him and we were talking about it and



Mount Kisco resident Craig Sulema, right, with Perry Tischler, president of the New York Hoop Dragons, a Long Island-based semipro basketball team in the American Basketball Association. Sulema is a part owner and served as the team's general manager for its recently completed inaugural campaign.

I asked him if he was looking for some help, a partnership, and he thought it was a good idea."

In addition to player personnel decisions, his responsibilities include facility coordination, game-day operations, live-streaming, marketing and social media promotion. He has enlisted the help of his adult children, Brett and Danielle, to work for the



A team photo of the Hoop Dragons, which plays in the semipro American Basketball Association. It is owned in part by Mount Kisco resident Craig Sulema. The team won its last eight regular season games but was eliminated in the first round of the playoffs in its first season.

Hoop Dragons as assistant general manager and director of sales and marketing. Their home games are played in the gym of the Upper Room School in Dix Hills, Suffolk County.

The team and the league were on hold for more than a year-and-a-half waiting out COVID-19, but when the league was ready to restart last fall, they had to build much of the franchise on the fly.

"We really built a team, our facility, our marketing in season," Sulema said. "So even our player

development, the team, the players that we ended (with), didn't get solidified until halfway through the season."

After a slow start, the Hoop Dragons won their last eight games, capturing the eighth seed in the Northeast region. They were eliminated in the first round by the top-seeded Steel City Yellow Jackets, but the first-year objectives were met.

"We set very modest goals for Year One," Sulema said.

The league took the name of the

old ABA, a competitor in the 1960s and '70s of the NBA. In 1976 it saw four of its franchises merge with the more established league.

While today it's nowhere near the quality of the former ABA, Sulema said it's the largest professional sports league in the world with more than 100 teams divided into seven regions. It uses the iconic red, white and blue ball that the likes of Julius Irving, Artis Gilmore and other hoops legends used back in the day.

Sulema said while it is unlikely that any of the league's players will go on to the NBA or the teams' minor league affiliates in the G League, nearly all are former college players and many have played or will compete professionally overseas.

The first-year Hoop Dragons was comprised of semi-pro players from the New York area ranging in age from 23 to 38 years old, Sulema said. They all work outside jobs, and attend weekly practices to prepare for games that take place most weekends.

Now that Sulema has the initial season under the belt, he can look back with satisfaction and look forward to next fall.

"We're excited to build upon our success from Year One," he said.

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# Mental Health Awareness Day at Granite Knolls Park on May 22

Yorktown For Justice (YFJ) is sponsoring a Family Fun Mental Health Awareness Day at Granite Knolls Sports and Recreation Complex in Yorktown on Sunday May 22 from 12 to 4 p.m.

Entrance and activities are free, however, voluntary contributions benefiting the Granite Knolls Sensory Garden will be encouraged. There will be games, crafts, storytelling, songs, yoga for stress relief and mindfulness and an open mic for reading poetry or performing music in the spirit of renewal, hope and wellness for all ages, including young children, teens, and adults.

Visit informational tables staffed by community-based organizations who provide services and activities for all ages. Learn about and enroll in the Yorktown Police Department's new registry for people with special needs. Bring your own picnic lunch. Hot dog and ice cream food trucks will be onsite.

"We are thrilled to be working with Yorktown For Justice, a group acutely aware of equity and inclusion for all and our fiscal sponsor, the Rotary Club of Yorktown," said Jamie Collins, vice president of the

Yorktown Special Education PTA and co-organizer of the Sensory Garden. "Sensory gardens are designed to provide opportunities to stimulate the senses, both individually and in combination, in ways that users may not usually encounter."

Those who would benefit from a Sensory Garden include:

- More than 200 families in Yorktown that have one or more children with a developmental disability.
- About 1,000 Veterans who suffer from PTSD.
- Over 750 seniors who have dementia; and
- Anyone looking for a place to reflect on the glory of nature.

For more information visit The Sensory Garden at Granite Knolls ([google.com](https://www.google.com)).

"This event will reflect a positive, hopeful and empowering approach to mental health, while also benefiting an inclusive project that best portrays our underlying belief that 'All means All,'" said Melvyn Tanzman, a YFJ member who is on the event organizing committee.

"We're so happy to help support the fundraising needed for the sensory garden project and provide a space to come together as a community in the name of mental health awareness," added YFJ Leaders Rachel Frederick.

Granite Knolls Park is located on Stony Street in Mohegan Lake. For a

detailed schedule of activities and to RSVP, visit Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/family-fun-day-disability-and-mental-health-awareness-event-tickets-326649205567>

This will be an environmentally friendly event. Be prepared to carry out refuse. No alcohol will be permitted in the park.

Yorktown For Justice is a community-based nonprofit organization with the mission of serving Yorktown and surrounding communities by promoting social justice through arts-based and cultural events, education and opportunities for volunteerism and intergenerational collaboration.

## Putnam to Hold Ukrainian Supply Collection Drive May 6-8

Putnam County government is teaming up with members of the local Polish community to send food, supplies, medicine and monetary donations to help the millions of Ukrainian refugees who have taken shelter in Poland.

A Mother's Day Weekend collection drive for the much-needed supplies will be held Friday, May 6 through Sunday, May 8 at the Paladin Center, 39 Seminary Hill Rd. in Carmel. Volunteers and deputies from the Putnam County Sheriff's Department will help organize the supplies and pack them into shipping crates to be sent to a city in Poland near the Ukrainian border.

For more information, visit [putnamcountycare.com/ukraineaid](http://putnamcountycare.com/ukraineaid).

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- Wait times vary from 10-30 minutes depending on volume of cars. Please plan accordingly. No Commercial Establishments.

#### What NOT to Bring

- Electronics, Computers, VCR's (e-waste)
- Used motor oil
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- Tires
- Unlabeled/unidentified containers
- Household batteries (AAA, AA, C, D, 9V)
- Ammunition, explosives, fireworks
- Asbestos products
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- Medical waste, old medications

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**Pre-Registration Required.** Please visit our website at [www.putnamcountyny.com/recycling](http://www.putnamcountyny.com/recycling) to schedule your appointment. Please bring your confirmation email with you to the event. For more information about waste disposal options, recycling and more, please call (845) 808-1390 ext. 43125 or visit our website above.



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## Time to Play Ball!



It's that time of year again, where the local Little League seasons are all underway. Last Saturday on a beautiful spring morning, the Mount Kisco Little League held its annual parade from Village Hall to Leonard Park before the kick off to the season. All 14 teams in the league in various age categories were part of the Opening Day ceremonies, including The Examiner Green Team, above, led by Head Coach Josh Elder. Good luck to all the teams that are participating with hopes for a fun and exciting season.



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTOS

## Hen Hud Student Raises Awareness About Teen Mental Health

Sarah Nabi, a sophomore at Hendrick Hudson High School, has created an event to be held this Sunday, May 1 from 3 to 5 p.m. at Congregation Sons of Israel in Briarcliff Manor dedicated to fostering awareness about teen mental health.

Nabi is calling the event "No Stigma."

The event, which is free to the public, will feature a keynote speaker trained in teen mental health, a nutrition workshop led by Stacy Hendrie, a certified health coach, mental health workshop, a meditation workshop and refreshments. Nabi has also created a website for the event <https://www.nostigmateen.com>.

Nabi's goal is to remove the stigma around conversations related to mental health for teens.

"Many people struggle with mental health at some point in their lives, but it's hard to talk about it and to ask for help without feeling like there is something wrong with you," Nabi said. "Our aim is to remove the stigma around teen mental health conversations."

Nabi's initiative is her way of honoring her great-grandfather who was a World War I veteran and a

recipient of the Victoria Cross. He suffered from undiagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"Because there was no knowledge about mental illness and PTSD, my great-grandfather was left unsupported and unable to cope with his trauma," Nabi said. "I want to avoid what happened to my great-grandfather by starting conversations that weren't started then due to societal stigma. My wish for this event is for teens to be equipped with tools to better understand themselves and what they are going through."

While the event is free, registration is required by e-mailing [nostigmainfo@gmail.com](mailto:nostigmainfo@gmail.com). Nabi has also set up a GoFundMe campaign to help defray the costs of the event, which she and her family are absorbing. Any additional funds after paying for the costs will be donated to Active Minds, a nonprofit organization promoting teen mental health. Donations can be made by visiting <https://gofund.me/14d6b8c7>.

"With this event, we hope to start conversations about teen mental health wherever those discussions are needed," Nabi said.

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# The Highs and Lows of Pairing Wine and Chocolate



By Nick Antonaccio

This week we're going to become acquainted with a very provocative pair. When the chemistry is right between them, the sparks fly, the senses are aroused, the experience is intoxicating and the urge to be together

again is overwhelming.

However, when the chemistry is a mismatch, there is conflict in the air; the senses are dulled, there is a lasting negative memory of the experience and the two rarely are together again.

The pair I'm referring to is wine and chocolate.

I have been experimenting with the pairing of wine and chocolate for most of my mature adult life. When the pairing is right, when the chocolate enhances the flavor of a wine, when the wine brings out new nuances in the taste of a chocolate, the experience created is unique.

However, a bad pairing is usually a disaster that can leave a taste of chalk on your palate and a dust bowl feel in your mouth. Some people find it difficult to pair these two. The reason chocolate and wine often don't always

get on well is that chocolate's sweetness can overpower the fruit of the wine and leave your mouth totally confused.

There are the three basic guidelines to follow when matching the pair. Experimentation, as always, is the rule of the day.

First, the wine should be "sweeter" than the chocolate. Second, the wine must be able to cut through the rich coating that chocolate leaves in your mouth. Third, the flavors of the wine and the chocolate should have a high degree of similarity. Basically, the priority is gauging the sweetness or bitterness level of the chocolate and then seeking a wine with similar attributes.

Let's look at examples of pairings. I'll present them from the focal point of four classifications of chocolate.

The differentiating characteristic of each is the percentage of cacao present.

1. White chocolate is not technically chocolate, since it has no cacao bean base. It is a super-sweet blend of milk, sugar and cacao butter. Ugh! If you must indulge (and I will respect your palate), try a sparkling wine. The bubbles will cut through the cloying sweetness.

2. Milk chocolate typically is produced with approximately 35 percent cacao bean as its base while the rest is primarily condensed milk and sugar. Remember the first rule



and choose a sweeter wine than the chocolate. A Tawny Port or a California Central Coast Pinot Noir work well.

3. Dark chocolate contains about 50 to 70 percent cacao, has an earthier taste and is more balanced in flavor. The velvet texture of the chocolate can be intoxicating. This is my favorite chocolate. It is the most complex of the chocolates and pairs well with old favorite Zinfandels and Cabernet Sauvignon. Try one of the 50-plus Rosenblum Zins or a South African Cabernet Sauvignon blend from Aslina. And, of course, a vintage Port.

4. Bittersweet chocolate contains the highest percentage of cacao – up to 85 percent. The bitter, roasted flavor is so intense that it takes a powerful wine to balance the astringency of the chocolate. The tannins in each can make it difficult to complement each other. Try a high-alcohol Zinfandel, or better yet, a big

Cotes du Rhone Syrah. And, of course, a vintage Port.

Overall, the quality of the chocolate is key. Several area chocolatiers have excellent offerings. I like Mast Chocolates in Mount Kisco and the Lil' Chocolate Shoppe in Pleasantville. (Artisanal dark chocolate truffles anyone?)

Overall, my favorite high-end chocolatier is Amedei, located in Lucca, Italy and widely available in the United States. Of course, chocolate bars are entirely acceptable (Valrhona, Scharffen Berger, Vosges). If chocolate cake suits you better, La Tulipe in Mount Kisco is fanatical about using the best ingredients in their offerings.

Keep these pairings in mind and soon you will be drawn into the world of connoisseurs and provocateurs who seek gratification in each of their culinary experiences. What better pair to spend time with, get to know better and with whom to form a lasting relationship?

If you're truly adventurous, host a wine and chocolate pairing party in your home. It will be a unique adventure for all.

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

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05/14	Tom Petty Tribute - DAMN THE TORPEDOES
05/20	LORDS OF 52ND STREET: Legends of the Billy Joel Band
05/22	IRRADIANCE, ft. The Daisy Jopling Band
05/27	MISS NEW YORK (Through 05/29!)
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