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The PUTNAM Examiner

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Putnam COVID-19 Cases Breakdown:

Countywide:
1,737 (active 30)
Carmel: 572 (15)
Southeast: 388 (6)
Kent: 276 (6)
Putnam Valley:
197 (0)
Patterson: 173 (3)
Philipstown: 132 (0)
Deaths: 63

September 15 - September 21, 2020

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 599

Putnam Sheriff's Deputies Awarded Medals for Heroism

By Rick Pezzullo

Two Putnam County Sheriff's Department deputies were awarded Liberty Medals Wednesday for their heroic efforts last year in rescuing two men who were threatening to jump off area bridges.

State Senator Peter Harckham handed out the medals to Benjamin Levine and Kevin Osika at the Putnam County Bureau of Emergency Services headquarters in Carmel during a special ceremony.

"The call of duty for our first responders is often varied, intense and profound. Proper action requires every facet of their training," Harckham said. "In two instances, Putnam deputies showed exemplary and poised judgment in helping two distraught residents, for which we are entirely grateful."

On May 27, 2019, Deputy Osika responded to a scene with a



Putnam Sheriff Robert L. Langley, Jr., Deputy Kevin Osika, Investigator Ryan McMahon, Deputy Benjamin Levine and State Sen. Pete Harckham

man who was standing on the side of the Veterans Memorial Bridge in Brewster over Interstate 84. Without hesitation and risking his own safety, Osika approached the man, who appeared ready to jump, and pulled him off the edge of the bridge. The man was taken safely to the Putnam Hospital for evaluation.

Meanwhile, on July 14, 2019, Deputy Levine was the first officer to respond on the scene at the Bear Mountain Bridge when he similarly found a man about to jump off the bridge. While engaging the man in a dialogue for more than 25 minutes, Levine provided him reassurance and directed his focus from the bridge. After other

officers and an ambulance arrived, Levine was able to take the man's hand and escort him off the edge of the bridge and towards the ambulance.

The Liberty Medal is the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate. Along with their medals, Harckham presented the deputies

with Senate resolutions thanking them for their heroism.

Levine and Osika and Investigator Ryan McMahon also received the National Sheriff's Association Medal of Valor.

"This is the finest group of officers I have ever worked with," said Putnam County Sheriff Robert L. Langley, Jr. "The pride I have in them is unmatched. They are true representatives of professional law enforcement and fulfill their duties with the utmost integrity and compassion."

Harckham also presented a Senate Memorial Resolution to Sheriff Langley in honor of his father, Robert Langley, Sr., who served in the U. S. Air National Guard of Texas and U. S. Coast Guard. In 1962, Langley, Sr. moved with his family to Carmel and worked for the New York State Power Authority as a sergeant with the security force at the Indian Point Energy Center in Buchanan.



Play for Keeps!

From Greeley vs. Byram Hills, to Somers vs. Yorktown, Pleasantville vs. Briarcliff and Ossining vs. White Plains the battles for boys' soccer league and sectional titles will be fierce among the locals of the Examiner region this autumn as student athletes prepare to take the field for the first time since early March when the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled all high school sports... see 2020 Boys' Soccer Preview Edition

Carmel Attorney Sentenced to Prison in Tax Fraud Scheme

By Rick Pezzullo

A Carmel attorney was sentenced last week to 18 months in prison for tax evasion and failing to pay over payroll taxes as part of a scheme that cost the Internal Revenue Service more than \$800,000.

Francis J. O'Reilly, 62, who resides in Danbury, Connecticut, previously pled guilty to the crimes and received his sentence in White Plains federal court by U.S. District Judge Kenneth M. Karas.

"Francis O'Reilly, an attorney for three decades, knew his obligations under the law to pay over payroll taxes and to report and pay income tax when due," stated Audrey Strauss, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York. "Having admitted his crimes, O'Reilly will now pay the consequences in jail time."

O'Reilly worked as a self-employed attorney who maintained a law practice in Carmel that specialized in, among other things, bankruptcy, foreclosure defense, and criminal defense. According to the allegations and court filings, O'Reilly engaged

in a decades-long scheme to defraud the IRS of the payroll taxes that were due and owing for his law practice. Between 1997 and 2018, O'Reilly failed to pay approximately \$155,771 in payroll taxes, resulting in a liability of approximately \$232,283 after interest and penalties.

In addition to failing to pay over payroll taxes, O'Reilly also engaged in substantial personal tax evasion. Between 2013 and 2017, he withdrew a total of approximately \$481,673 in untaxed funds from his attorney trust account for personal use, none of which he reported on his tax returns for those years. In addition to substantially underreporting his income and tax liabilities, O'Reilly failed to pay even those taxes that he did report, accruing large unpaid liabilities. In total, during the tax years 2007 through 2018, O'Reilly evaded approximately \$566,027 in personal federal income taxes, including interest and penalties.

In or about late 2016, in an effort to settle with the IRS, O'Reilly submitted an offer in compromise to the IRS proposing to settle

continued on page 2

Health Department Schedules First Drive-Thru Flu Clinic

By Rick Pezzullo

The Putnam County Department of Health has scheduled its first flu clinic for Monday, September 21 at the health department's main office at 1 Geneva Road in Brewster and, like the COVID testing clinics earlier this year, the flu clinic will be a "Drive-Thru" event.

For ease of administering the vaccine and overall efficiency, short sleeves and pre-scheduled appointments are required. Time slots begin at 1 p.m. and end at 6:30 p.m. A rain date is scheduled for the following day.

"Getting vaccinated against the flu means there is one less thing for you to worry about with your own health and the health of your family," said County Executive MaryEllen Odell. "This year as we continue to deal with COVID cases, our health department is making it more convenient and safer with drive-through service. Getting vaccinated is a proactive step you can take to protect yourself, your family and our great community of Putnam."

Health Commissioner Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD, Commissioner of Health, also highly recommends getting a flu shot, and addressed concerns questioning the vaccine's effectiveness saying, "Flu vaccination can reduce the risk of flu illness by between 40% and 60% among the overall

population. Additionally, serious complications or a lengthy course of illness are less likely if you get immunized with a flu shot. Preserving your health and your immunity has never been more important than it is now as we continue reopening plans with the ongoing pandemic."

The dates and locations for the two additional flu clinics are: Wednesday, October 7, at the Garrison Fire Department, 1616 Route 9, and another drive-thru clinic on Friday, October 16 at the PCDOH at 1 Geneva Road, with a rain date of Monday, October 19. All clinics will be from 1 to 6:30 p.m.

Early vaccination is always important because a person builds up immunity about two weeks after the shot. Certain people should be sure to get vaccinated. They include pregnant women; children six months through 18 years of age; people over 50 years of age; those with chronic, or long-lasting, medical conditions, and those who live with or care for them. Health care workers are also required to get the flu vaccine to protect their patients.

The public flu clinics are open to all Putnam County residents 18 years of age and older. Registration information and forms can be found at online on the health department's immunization page at www.putnamcountyny.com/health/immunization. Appointments, which are required,

can be made by calling the scheduling line and leaving your name and phone number. Your call will be returned promptly, and a time slot will be offered and confirmed. The flu scheduling line is 845-808-1390, extension 43262. A maximum of 300 people will be accommodated on a first-come, first-serve basis. Carpooling is encouraged and all attendees must remain in their vehicles. Appointment scheduling will close by noon on Saturday, September 19. Immunization consent forms must be downloaded, completed and signed, presented to the public

health nurse at the drive-thru clinic.

Proof of residency is required and will be checked. The fee for vaccination is \$25 for residents 18 years of age (minimum required) to 64 years of age. Those 65 years and older can receive the vaccine free of charge if they show a Medicare card. Only checks or cash will be accepted. High-dose flu vaccine is being offered for seniors, aged 65 years and older, as studies show this vaccine is more effective for this population. Pneumonia vaccine is not available at the flu clinics.

Carmel Attorney Sentenced to Prison in Tax Fraud Scheme

continued from page 1

at least approximately \$691,561 in outstanding tax liabilities for merely \$12,400. In the 2016 offer in compromise, which O'Reilly signed under penalty of perjury, O'Reilly made several material misstatements and omissions regarding his income and assets. Among other things, O'Reilly's offer in compromise failed to disclose the existence of his attorney trust account, from which he drew substantial income; failed to disclose real property and land that he owned in Socorro County, New Mexico; and failed to disclose a 2010 Lincoln vehicle

that he had purchased for approximately \$16,000.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Karas ordered O'Reilly to serve two years of supervised release, and to pay restitution to the IRS \$801,969, which represents his unpaid tax liabilities, as well as certain penalties and interest, relating to his personal income taxes for the calendar years 2007 through 2018, payroll taxes for the calendar years 1997 through 2018, and Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) taxes for the calendar years 1998 through 2017.

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

His two tiny babies spent twelve days in Northern Westchester Hospital's Level III NICU, the highest possible level Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in a community hospital.

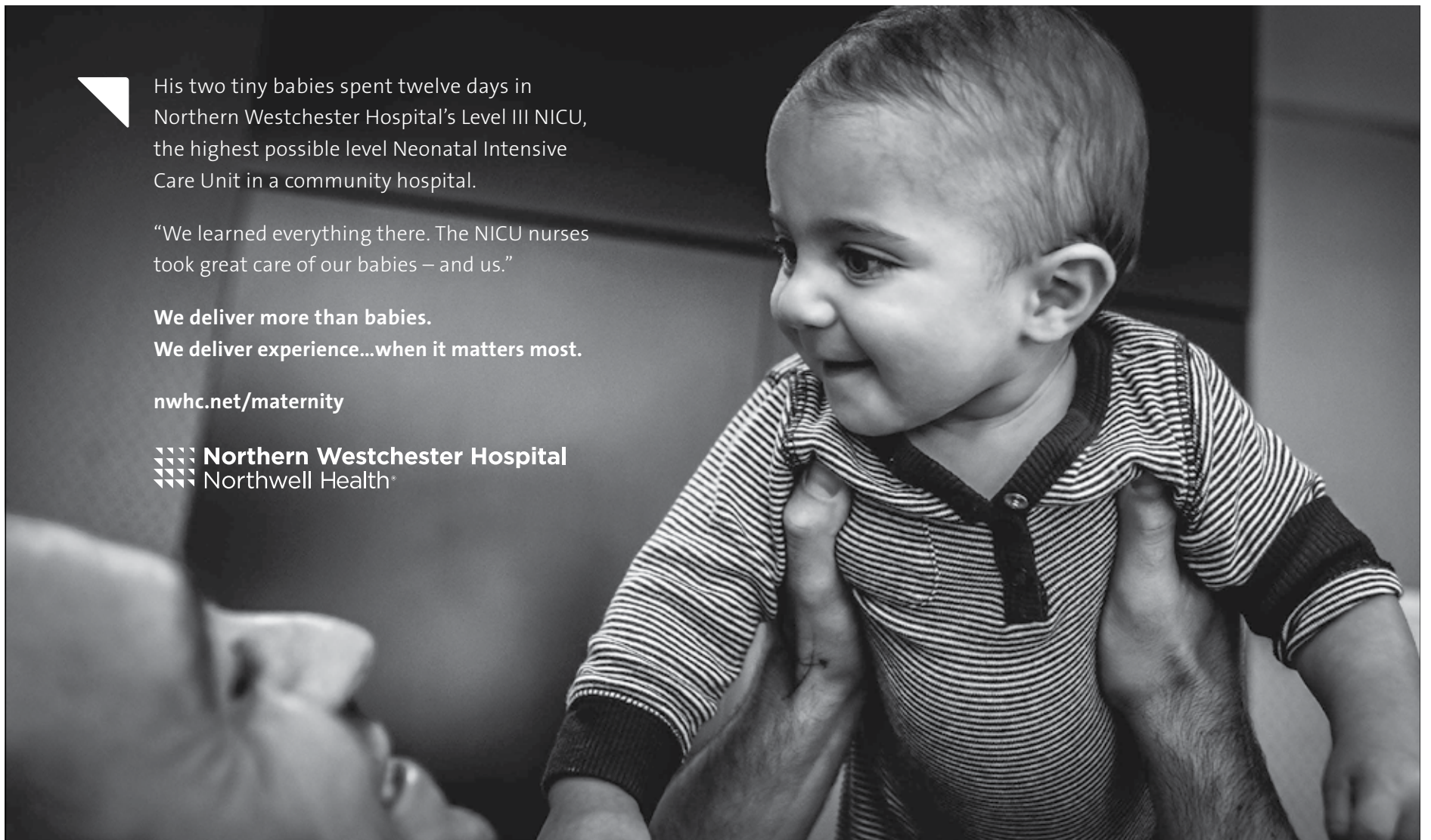
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P'ville Evades COVID-19 Outbreak; Case Uptick Seen in W'chester

By Martin Wilbur

All 205 COVID-19 tests administered at a drive-through testing site at Phelps Hospital over Labor Day weekend from a potential exposure at Holy Innocents Church in Pleasantville came back negative, Westchester County reported.

Individuals who attended Masses or First Communion ceremonies at the Bedford Road church from Aug. 24 to Aug. 30 faced exposure after two priests and a staff member tested positive for the virus.

There are two additional tests where results are pending, village officials stated in a release last Friday afternoon.

The church revealed on Sept. 4 that the priests, Fr. Luke Hoyt and Fr. Frank Sutman, tested positive for COVID-19. That required anyone who had attended Masses on Aug. 24, 26, 29 and 30 and a First Communion ceremony on Aug. 29 to quarantine for two weeks from the time they attended any of those events, health officials said.

It had been estimated by county officials that as many as 400 people may have attended the Masses or the ceremony during the days in question.

Although there are no known cases traced to the Holy Innocents event, there has been some mildly increasing concern that the number of active cases throughout Westchester has been on the rise during the last two weeks. County Executive George Latimer reported Monday that as of Sept. 13 there were 587 active cases, an increase of more than 100 cases in the past few weeks, and up from a summer low of about 420.

Active cases are determined by the number of people who have tested positive and have not cleared the two-week quarantine period.

Despite the increase in the number of raw cases, the daily infection rate – the number of positive results compared to the number of test results – have not strayed far from 1 percent, Latimer noted.

"We have not seen wide geographic spread, we have not seen the infection rate get significantly above 1 percent, we have not seen a rise in fatalities and we have not seen a significant rise in hospitalizations – 10, 20, 30 percent – that would make us wary even if the active cases are up," Latimer said.

The state's coronavirus tracking site, which also provides daily statistics by county, shows that in Westchester there has been an infection rate of more than 1 percent for seven of the last nine days through Sept. 13. However, the daily rate has not exceeded 1.2 percent.

By comparison, for the entire month of August, there were only three days of Westchester infection rates above 1 percent, Aug. 7, 11 and 17, never exceeding 1.1 percent.

Latimer said the county does not have enough information to identify whether there are specific reasons for the recent additional cases.

"What we're seeing is that the positive tests are not spiraling in a particular area and as a percentage of a total they are not creating percentages that give us great

concern," he said.

If infection rates start to push toward 3 or 4 percent on a consistent basis without an identifiable reason then there would be greater worry, Latimer mentioned.

In Mount Kisco, last Thursday there were 17 active cases reported. Mayor Gina Picinich said five of those cases were in a single household. Several others were believed to have been the result of people returning from out of state.

Picinich said as schools reopened and cooler weather starts filtering in, there

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE



is likely to be some increase in cases. The numbers released on Monday showed that through Sunday there were 15 active cases in the village.

"There is not concern of a major outbreak," Picinich said of the village's situation. "This is certainly consistent with what's happening in other areas of the county."

Latimer also reported Monday the county had its first COVID-19-related death in two weeks on Sunday, bringing the toll to 1,453. Hospitalizations stood at

38, up from a recent low of 21, he said.

In its weekly report last Friday, Putnam County ticked up to 17 active cases and one hospitalization. The death toll has remained at 63 for several weeks.

On Sunday, the seven-county Mid-Hudson region had the highest infection rate of the 10 regions at 1.6 percent, followed by Central New York at 1.4 percent and New York City at 1 percent. All other regions registered less than 1 percent.

Statewide, the infection rate continues to hug closely to 1 percent each day, not having exceeded that threshold since Aug. 2.

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New Castle Approves Matching Grant Program to Spruce Up Facades

By Martin Wilbur

The New Castle Town Board approved its Façade Improvement Grant Program last week but reduced the initial amount of money it is dedicating toward the project.

The first phase of the matching grant program would allow property owners and

tenant to apply for up to \$1,000 for small repairs to storefronts and the exterior of buildings in the Chappaqua business hamlet.

Once the town has completed its work on the form-based code and rezones the hamlet, it will advance to the second phase where 50 percent matching grants of up to

\$7,500 for each property will be available.

"The goal of this program is to create positive visual impacts in our hamlets to stimulate economic activity and to complement the work that the town wrapped up in November of last year on our infrastructure and streetscape improvements in the hamlet," said Town Supervisor Ivy Pool.

Originally, the Town Board had earmarked up to \$150,000 for the entire program from a portion of the \$1.5 million paid to the town by Chappaqua Crossing developer Summit/Greenfield. The Summit/Greenfield money was earmarked to be used by the town to assist its downtown so it wouldn't be negatively impacted by the Chappaqua Crossing development, which has 120,000 square feet of retail space.

The program will terminate in three years or if all of the money has been exhausted.

Councilwoman Lisa Katz proposed to cut the amount of money in half because there could be a chance that the entire

\$150,000 won't be used or there could be other needs for the funds.

"It allows us to reevaluate kind of what the expenditures, the anticipated expenditures, are afterward and maybe we do want to use that money for something else," Katz said.

Pool and Councilman Jeremy Saland said they didn't object to pulling back half the money, but would support reinstating the other half of the money if the program proves successful.

After some discussion, the rest of the board agreed to dedicating \$75,000.

Eligible projects that the money can be used for includes new signage, exterior lighting, painting to highlight a building's historic character, façade repair or reconstruction, cleaning brick masonry and façade, new cornices for the roof gables, new awnings or canopies and window or door replacement.

Applications can be submitted to the New Castle Development Department at Town Hall, 200 S. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua, N.Y. 10514.

Welcome Back



BEDFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT PHOTO

There may be a hybrid learning model in most districts and there are fewer children in each classroom, but students returned last week to their school buildings across the region. Here, elementary school students in Bedford leave their bus and head to class.

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Student Athletes Rally to End COVID-19 High School Sports Delay

By Martin Wilbur

After sitting on the sidelines for six months, area high school athletes rallied outside the County Center in White Plains Sunday morning to try to convince state officials to reconsider their decision to postpone their seasons until spring.

Chanting "Let them play," more than 100 football and volleyball players along with members of local cheer squads – sports that are still deemed too risky because of COVID-19 – were joined by coaches, parents, classmates and other advocates urging Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the state legislature to revise their guidelines to allow their seasons to proceed.

Jenna Halpin, a senior field hockey player from Locust Valley High School in Nassau County who created the Let Them Play social media campaign, attended the rally. She said that with New York State maintaining a daily transmission rate of 1 percent or less for more than a month, the state's student athletes are being denied the chance to compete, enjoy their teammates' camaraderie, improve their social, emotional and physical health and in some cases compete for coveted college scholarships.

"For many students, this is their final chance to send film to a college," said Halpin. "This is their final chance to earn a spot and afford to attend some of the top-rated universities in our country, and you are taking that away from us."

There also seems to be no consistency

demonstrated by policymakers in determining which sports are being allowed to have a season. Field hockey and soccer, two contact sports, are on the low to moderate risk list while volleyball and cheer are considered high risk.

Cuomo first announced on Aug. 24 the resumption of low-risk sports on Sept. 21 and that football and the other high-risk sports would be delayed until at least Oct. 19. A week later, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) concluded that the high-risk fall sports will start on Mar. 1 for a spring season.

Although field hockey is allowed, Halpin said her team's season was postponed until spring because school superintendents in Nassau County canceled all sports for the remainder of 2020.

Others in attendance argued that a spring season for football and the other postponed sports is woefully inadequate. John McKillop, a parent of a football player at Fordham Prep, said in addition to having scholarships jeopardized for students being recruited, the revised schedule of winter and spring sports will overlap, forcing multisport athletes to have to choose one sport.

McKillop said teams and schools will have the same safety protocols that are being followed for the sports permitted to be played.

"They're going to test them, probably weekly, or maybe even more often, they're going to check temperatures," he said. "Anyone who's showing signs are going to



Jenna Halpin, who created the Let Them Play social media campaign, urged state officials to allow all high school sports to proceed. She stood with state Senate candidate Rob Astorino and a portion of the more than 100 people who attended Sunday's rally outside the County Center in White Plains.

be sent home immediately. It's the same as all the other sports, even some of them in the Northeast, but everywhere down south the leagues are all playing football."

Former Westchester County executive Rob Astorino, now the Republican candidate for the 40th state Senate District who helped lead the rally, said most states are allowing high school football to move forward. He cited a recent published report that more than 1,000 high school football games have been played this season nationwide without any evidence of COVID-19 spread in those communities.

Furthermore, New York leaders should decide to allow all sports or no sports to be

played, Astorino said. He pointed to soccer, which is the second leading cause of sports-related concussions, being allowed to play.

"That doesn't make sense and it's not fair," Astorino said. "All we're asking for are the same metrics to be applied across the board. That's it, science and data. Look at it."

If there are parents who want their children to opt out of high school sports, that should be permitted, and districts could have those who participate sign a waiver, he added.

Local athletes said they were looking forward to having a fall season, with New York's COVID-19 transmission rate the lowest in the nation. Lakeland High School senior Mark Cummins said he was hoping for a football season after a difficult spring and summer.

"We really haven't been able to get out of the house and everybody has been working so hard, to push it back it's just another thing we have to deal with, and online learning is tough," Cummins said. "We just want to get out and bring some sports back to Section 1."

Another football player, Sleepy Hollow High School senior Harrison Halesworth, said he was hoping to have a successful final season.

"There's obviously a level of concern but everyone here is very serious about being very safe and cautious about everything we do," Halesworth said. "We want to take the right steps and do what we can do correctly."

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County Legislators Demand Utilities 'Must Do Better' After Isaias Response

By Anna Young

Westchester County residents were once again at the mercy of local utility companies when the aftermath of Tropical Storm Isaias left thousands without power for several days, but representatives from Con Edison and New York State Electric & Gas assert they were prepared and acted swiftly.

Similar to years past, the Westchester County Board of Legislators last Thursday held a special meeting skewering both utility companies on their preparation, restoration and communication efforts during and after the Aug. 4 storm. Isaias resulted in thousands of downed trees and wires and nearly 200,000 power outages across the county.

During the more than two-hour meeting, representatives from both utilities insisted they were prepared for what Isaias was forecast to be, not what initially impacted the area, a similar sentiment made two years ago following the muddled response to the widespread outages inflicted by dual nor'easters Quinn and Riley.

Officials said that while both utilities may have appeared to be prepared, their execution was flawed, with some agreeing that changes promised years ago have yet to be made. A 170-page report was issued to both companies in 2018 with recommendations on ways to improve storm response.

"Repeatedly we've been assured that these steps would make things better the next time, but next time has come and

nothing has seemed to have changed. In fact, things may have gotten worse," Chairman Ben Boykin (D-White Plains) said. "The people who pay the price are the residents and businesses who have no choice but to rely on companies that appear not to be able to get the job done."

Boykin was also critical of the delay in mutual aid, pre-storm preparations and the shoddy communication between utilities, customers and municipalities regarding restoration times. He added substantial structural change is necessary and both companies "must do better."

Trish Nilsen, NYSEG's director of emergency preparedness, said the company planned for a "significant" event in the days leading up to Isaias. She said the utility had over 700 support personnel and crews in place, but the heavy rain and wind was comparable to Superstorm Sandy.

With 350 broken poles and 2,400 downed wires, Nilsen said the damage in some areas of Westchester and Putnam counties surpassed the impacts that Sandy had on the community. She added NYSEG had crews working around the clock to restore service in a more effective and efficient way compared to prior storms.

"We developed a plan and we worked the plan and we repeated that process until the job was complete," Nilsen said, noting that power was restored to 95 percent of customers on Aug. 9. "The company was able to quickly establish an updated estimated time of restoration due to those efforts."

NYSEG is currently reviewing how it handled the storm to further implement best



One of the many roads throughout northern Westchester that was closed following Tropical Storm Isaias in August.

practices, Nilsen said.

While residents and officials scrutinized Con Edison in the days following the storm for its faulty efforts and miscommunication, Shakira Wilson, vice president of emergency preparedness, said the utility was prepared with mutual aid requested and additional contractor crews ready to respond.

As the storm strengthened beyond what was originally forecast, Wilson said Con Edison responded "aggressively," flying in about 100 mutual aid workers and placing over 1,000 workers in the field. The storm

ultimately resulted in nearly 330,000 customers losing power, including 125,000 in Westchester.

"The extremely strong winds caused widespread destruction," Wilson said. "The damage was so severe that it required us to entirely rebuild sections of our system rather than just repair them."

Power was restored to all customers by Aug. 11.

Despite the setback, Wilson assured restoration was "significantly" faster than previous years, adding that the annual \$25 million used to fortify the county's electrical system also resulted in 20 percent fewer outages. The implementation of smart meters toward the end of the year will further aid in quicker and greater accuracy in restoration efforts, she said.

In response to erroneous restoration times, Con Edison officials explained customers were wrongly notified when one of multiple points of damage were fixed. Essentially, if the power was repaired, the distribution area may have still been disconnected, resulting in a false notification going out to customers.

"We have implemented the recommendations from past storms and strengthened our system over the years to make it more resilient, but we know this is not enough," Wilson said. "Ultimately, we are accountable for our customers, and under these types of extreme storm conditions it is clear we are not meeting our customers' expectations."

Lawmakers briefly discussed the possibility

continued on next page

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Covill Proposes Legislation to Revise Westchester's Ethics Code

By Martin Wilbur

County Legislator Kitley Covill (D-Katonah) is introducing legislation to bolster Westchester's ethics laws in hopes of increasing accountability and instilling greater public confidence in county government.

If the proposed changes are approved by the Board of Legislators, it would be the first time that the county's Code of Ethics would be updated in about 10 years. It was expected to be formally introduced to the full board at Monday night's meeting.

"I think a strong, robust Code of Ethics really gives guideposts for what municipal officials and municipal employees need to do," Covill said. "We need to streamline a lot of what is in there."

There are multiple areas that would be

addressed with an updated code including issues of recusal, future employment, private employment in conflict with official duties, use of county resources, gifts, tips or other benefits and personal or private gain. It would apply to all county employees and appointed and elected officials.

County Executive George Latimer, who is supporting the new code, said training and whistleblower protections are enhanced in the proposed law.

Latimer said that Covill is perhaps the most qualified to tackle the issue. Covill, a lawyer, is a former assistant county attorney and also served as the inspector general in Yonkers.

It is critical that with distrust in government running high those who serve the county do everything they can to increase the public confidence, he said.

"It has a stated purpose that sets forth very clearly and in a very comprehensive Code of Ethics to ensure both the reality and the appearance in integrity in county government to thereby foster public confidence in county government," Latimer said.

Covill, Latimer and County Attorney John Nonna each gave a practical example of areas of the code that will be strengthened or that had been previously silent. Covill said that a provision requiring employees leaving county employment to wait a year before going to work for an outfit that does business with the county. Departing employees would often request a waiver from the Ethics Board and there were portions of the code addressing that issue that have been unclear, she said.

The update code would also allow for an employee or official to seek out an advisory opinion beforehand if they had questions about a certain action, Nonna said.

"That's an important feature or ability for somebody to ask if they have a question rather than do something and later find out that they have violated the Ethics Code," he said.

Board of Legislators Chairman Ben Boykin (D-White Plains) said it was time to tighten the law and bring it fully into the 21st century. Not only government but most industries even in the private sector review and update their ethics code, he said.

"Ethics are important because it (lays



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

County Executive George Latimer speaks during a briefing last week ahead of the anticipated introduction of legislation proposing updates to Westchester's ethics code. He was accompanied by the bill's author, Legislator Kitley Covill, and Board of Legislators Chairman Ben Boykin.

out) hat you do and how you do it and when you do it and what you do and these are important things," Boykin said.

After its introduction to the full Board of Legislators, the legislation will be referred to the appropriate committees for review. Afterwards, a public hearing is required in front of the full board before lawmakers can vote to enact.

County Legislators Demand Utilities 'Must Do Better' After Isaias Response

continued from previous page

of burying power lines underground, implementing stronger utility poles and removing trees that sit on power lines, options that have been discussed following other significant weather events. Other suggestions included utilities investing more in hiring local personnel.

Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky (D-Hastings-on-Hudson), along with fellow officials, also issued concern with the damage

stronger storms could bring to residents and the economy if efforts are not better coordinated and executed.

"Having been through this in 2018, I have to say today, I'm really not feeling like we've come very far," Legislator Catherine Parker (D-Rye) said. "If crews aren't here as soon as the storm is over to restore power to Westchester, then that's not good enough."

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Editorial

Playing High-Risk High School Sports This Fall Not Worth the Risk

It's completely understandable that high school athletes whose sports were determined to be too risky to be played this fall are frustrated.

For the past six months, their lives have been upended with mostly deficient remote learning. So many other activities that make life enjoyable have disappeared as well.

There was the hope this summer that with markedly improved daily infection rates, the fall sports season, including football, might be played.

But COVID-19 hasn't vanished, even if New Yorkers have done an outstanding job at limiting its impact since June after a hellish spring.

On Sunday more than 100 athletes, parents and coaches held a rally in White Plains calling for the state to include all sports in the school fall sports schedule. But for adults to call for football, in particular, to

be played while there is still an average of more than 35,000 new COVID-19 cases a day across the United States is shockingly irresponsible.

This isn't picking on football. High school football is part of the fabric of America in thousands of communities on Friday nights or Saturdays in the fall. Who doesn't want it to be played?

But you don't need to know anything about the sport to understand that football during a pandemic where the virus is a highly transmissible airborne disease is in a completely different situation than tennis, cross country or baseball.

Some at the rally on Sunday pointed to many states around the country that have had their high schools playing. They also pointed out that the Big Ten colleges are reconsidering their decision to cancel football. But that's missing the point.

School districts in this area don't have the access to frequent on-demand testing for dozens of athletes like the pros or even some Division I colleges. And speaking of colleges, on Monday Texas Tech had five more football players test positive. Since the return to campus this summer that team has had 75 positives. They won their season-opener last Saturday – but it doesn't make the decision to press forward smart.

Anyone with a heart can't feel anything but sadness for the current students losing out on so much. But there is spring football. It isn't great, but neither is a two-month, 60-game MLB season. It's just the best that can be done under the circumstances.

COVID-19 is the crisis of the century, a bitter pill to swallow. But like previous generations, there are times when sacrifices for the greater good have to be made.

Letters to the Editor

School Tax Increases Are Higher Than What School Officials Claim

Here is my annual complaint about my school tax bill in Carmel

The Board of Education's budget stated that the 2.6 percent increase in the total tax levy would result in a \$240 tax increase for a house assessed at \$350,000. They lied!

My taxes went from \$6,166 for 2019 to \$6,523 for 2020 – up by \$357 or 5.8 percent. My assessed value is \$329,500.

Somehow, the 2.6 percent increase in the tax levy produced a 3.8 percent increase in the tax per \$1,000 of assessed value – from \$27.49 per \$1,000 last year to \$28.58 per \$1,000 this year. How do they do that?

The items which affect my school tax bill are:

(a) Assessed value of my home. That did not change in 2020. I don't have the details, but I am certain that the aggregate assessment of all property in the Carmel School District would have risen in 2020, due to new building and renovation. That should have reduced my individual property's share of the tax levy.

(b) School budget. That increased by 2.26 percent, but other revenues leave the amount to be raised by property tax to \$98.6 million, an increase over 2019 of 2.6 percent.

(c) STAR exemption. I am fortunate to qualify for the Enhanced STAR Exemption of \$2,823, but that is unchanged from 2019.

As in previous years, enrollment in the schools has declined, from 4,052 to 4,027.

Correction

In last week's edition, the obituary for Scott Ralls contained an incorrect spelling of his last name.

In the guest commentary last week "How Local Native Americans React to Hate Language, Crimes" by Michael Gold, it incorrectly described the cause of death of Anne Frank. She died of typhus in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in February 1945 and was buried in a mass grave.

The Examiner regrets the errors.

What really troubles me is that the school district's most recent financial statements (from June 30, 2019) show that it has an overall deficit of \$181.6 million, which means it's insolvent and represents a future tax bill for property owners. The reason for the deficit is the unfunded liability for "Other Post-Employment Benefits." These are health care and life insurance benefits promised to retired employees and their dependents for the rest of their lives after retirement.

That unfunded liability, which reached \$212 million in June 2019, more than wipes out all of the assets and reserves of the schools. Unless the world comes to an end, which no doubt the school administrators are

counting on, that liability will have to be paid by future taxpayers. The liability increased by \$19 million in 2019, despite the payout for 516 presently retired employees of \$6.7 million (presumably included in last year's budget for "medical insurance" of \$19.6 million). There are 586 current employees who will retire in the future and are accruing these benefits.

It is this type of future obligation that the federal government forced the U.S. Postal Service to pre-fund that has caused the massive losses at the post office.

Cliff Narbey
Carmel

We Must Learn to Love Our Neighbors, Not Sow Division

As citizens of these United States and as clergy persons leading congregations in Westchester County, we have been disheartened by the ugly acts of violence against the Quaker community and the First Congregational Church of Chappaqua, as well as the Presbyterian Church of Mt. Kisco. These violent acts, including arson, are becoming all too commonplace in our towns and villages.

For the Quaker and Congregational communities, it was their Black Lives Matter sign, at train stations and schoolyards it is anti-Semitic graffiti, for St. John's Episcopal Church in Pleasantville it was the breaking of a sign and ripping of a rainbow flag. We are compelled to speak out condemning such acts of aggression for the cowardice they represent. Sneaking around in the dark to destroy is not a heroic act.

There is another way, not the way of the right nor the way of the left, but the way of faith. The way through which we learn to love our neighbor as ourselves. The way through which we learn kindness,

compassion, generosity, justice, hope and love.

We, the Pleasantville Clergy Association, respectfully submit that the way forward for our nation is not chaos and division, but peace and reconciliation. We must learn to listen, to truly hear the lived experience of our neighbors, with open hearts.

Pastor Roger Berner, Emanuel
Lutheran Church

Rev. Dr. Debra Bronkema,
Pleasantville Presbyterian Church
Rabbi Julie Danan, Pleasantville
Community Synagogue

Rev. Susan Goodman-Chapungo,
United Methodist Church

The Rev. Mary B. Gregorius, St.
John's Episcopal Church
Dr. Majhabeen Hassan, Muslim

Women's Association
Rabbi Maura Linzer, Temple Beth-el,
Chappaqua

Rev. Dr. Arlin Roy, Foundation for
Religious & Mental Health

Letters to the Editor

Byrne's Sensible and Bipartisan Voice is Needed in Albany

In these times of such polarizing extremes – when too many of us are quick to paint an individual's idiotic actions with a broad ideological brush and too many of us refuse to look beyond each other's presidential candidate of choice to be inclusive or generous to our neighbors – we are fortunate to have an elected representative like Assemblyman Kevin Byrne.

I have worked for most of my professional career in and around Assemblyman Byrne's district. I've known him since before he entertained running for office and I have watched him put in the hard work for our community both before and after he was elected.

Kevin and I don't agree on every issue, but I trust him to represent our community because he has stuck to the principles and values many of us share and has opposed the dangers of extremism. He has a proven track record and is someone who has repeatedly demonstrated his ability to work across the aisle to get things done for us – and that is part of the reason he has received so much support from third party and non-affiliated voters as well as more than 20 labor organizations.

While many public office candidates pander to the periphery of their party, Kevin has refused to bow to extremist factions while focusing on delivering results for

our community. For example, when the New York City Young Republicans made an absurd joke that labeled Labor Day as a "fake communist holiday," Kevin was unsparing in his criticism, and showed us that he is loyal first to his community's values, calling their statement "an embarrassment to hard-working Republicans everywhere (both union and non-union)."

In Albany, where any objective measure of our elected officials shows that the far majority are loyal only to themselves, where the far majority voted this year to abdicate their financial duties – because they could not be bothered to put in the hard work when the circumstances of 2020 demanded hard work

– and where the far majority pander to the polarizing extremes at the periphery of their party, we need more people in government like Kevin who are candid, thoughtful and committed to serving the community.

I invite you to learn more about Kevin at his website, Byrne4NY.com. And this November, I ask my neighbors to stand against political extremism by voting with me for Kevin Byrne for state Assembly.

**Dan Branda
Somers**

Dan Branda is a Republican candidate for Westchester County Executive in 2021.

Yorktown is in Good Fiscal Shape After Gilbert's Stewardship

Thanks Supervisor Gilbert!

The Town of Yorktown does not have an immediate financial worry because former town supervisor Lanny Gilbert left Yorktown with an \$11 million surplus, a surplus built from strong fiscal management and additional payments he negotiated with Enbridge and other sources.

According to the Brookings Institution, states and localities have already laid off 1.5 million government workers as a result of COVID-19-related budget shortfalls.

But because of recent job hirings, the plight of states and localities was overlooked. After a shutdown, it's logical to expect an early bounce-back of workers just to ensure minimal operation of businesses.

Whenever there's a recession, or worse, job losses in the private sector lead to reduced spending and foreclosures, unless the federal government passes a rescue package.

The loss of private sector jobs results in reduced sales tax and real estate tax collections, the lifeblood of town budgets.

And since towns cannot borrow to meet payroll expenses, more layoffs are forthcoming. This time the layoffs will be government workers such as police, teachers and others.

Already the National League of Cities reported that more than 700 cities have halted plans to improve roadways, buy new equipment, complete upgrades to water systems and other critical infrastructure.

This is not speculation. This occurred previously during the Great Recession. And, New York City just announced that about 22,000 city workers face layoffs by October.

However, Yorktown does not have an immediate worry because former supervisor Lanny Gilbert left Yorktown with an \$11 million surplus. We shouldn't have to cut jobs and infrastructure if the surplus is managed properly throughout the crisis.

Once again, thank you Supervisor Gilbert!

**Constance Grover
Yorktown**

Support Candidates That Relieve Employers From Burden of Health Care

Though we are divided on many issues, some should enjoy bipartisan support: stimulating our state economy, common-sense gun laws, fighting against climate change and access to health care.

The pandemic has made it even more clear that health insurance should not be tied to employment: millions have lost their health insurance along with their jobs. (See the Apr. 14-Apr. 20 Northern Westchester Examiner story about the Yorktown school bus drivers' plight). Asking businesses to provide health insurance puts them at a major disadvantage in the global economy and threatens their survival in a recession. Having health insurance provided by for-profit corporations (the U.S. is unique in this in the developed world) leads to million-dollar salaries for hospital and drug company executives and the cost of drugs and health insurance spiraling out of control. In Yorktown, the cost to provide family

coverage for just one town employee rose from \$23,115 in 2016 to \$28,953 in 2019; the employee contribution also went up 25 percent, by \$1,460.

We could stimulate our state economy by reducing the health insurance burden on New York businesses. We need leaders with the foresight and the courage to tackle tough problems such as health insurance.

Our president is trying to take away our health insurance (without a plan to replace it); the Republican candidates support our current for-profit insurance system. I am voting for Pete Harckham for state Senate and Stephanie Keegan for state Assembly because they believe access to health care is a human right and that our broken health insurance system – a burden on business – needs fixing.

**Larry Kilian
Yorktown Heights**

Sewers Will Forever Alter the Beauty of Lake Lincolndale, Shenorock

I've lived in Lake Lincolndale for nearly 30 years and I oppose the proposed Somers sewer system.

Over the years, we've seen progress and upgrades as people have moved into our community. We've watched and paid for the expansion of schools. Watched new homes and shopping centers built and traffic lights added to accommodate the growing pains of our little town. Yet, our neighborhood around the lake remained the same hidden gem that we treasured and preserved and protected from becoming "citified."

This is not a polluted lake. Many people outside of Lake Lincolndale joined the Lake Association because they know it's something special. We have magnificent eagles, great blue herons, egrets, cormorants and an assortment of other beautiful wildlife, including fox, deer and turkey. The lake is filled with turtles, bullfrogs, fish and snakes. We swim, kayak, paddleboard and canoe in it.

There's no denying the many seasons of beauty that surrounds us – the lily pads blooming in the summer, followed by the spectacular colors of fall foliage

reflecting off the hills onto the lake. This breathtaking beauty and peacefulness attract people from outside the community to walk or birdwatch or photograph this impressive neighborhood. Our respect for Lake Lincolndale is immense.

THIS IS NOT A POLLUTED LAKE! It's a flourishing, thriving, living lake that supports the abundant wildlife we enjoy every day. If we allow this sewer system into our neighborhood, the ecological balance of the lake will be forever changed and damaged from many years of destruction, disruption, noise pollution and construction run-off.

As an intelligent, caring community, we shouldn't be forced into a corner without first considering another less invasive and more efficient way to upgrade our septic systems.

In order to protect the future of our lake and our property values, we need to vote No on the Somers sewer system until a better solution is presented.

**Janet Best
Lake Lincolndale**

Astorino's Level-Headedness, Common Sense What's Needed for New York

Violence committed against peaceful protesters during the Civil Rights Movement resulted in the persistent chant "The Whole World is Watching." They certainly were. Martin Luther King Jr.'s non-violent revolution produced positive change in America. Now the whole world is watching the left's appalling destruction of our cities. Not a good show.

Now, the Democrats condone violence and lawbreaking. That's Harckham's party. He is a major instigator of "cashless bail." He is a pawn in the radical left's revolutionary agenda. They won't be satisfied until America becomes socialist.

We need Rob Astorino's cool-headed voice and common sense in Albany. We are facing extreme challenges from COVID-19 and the destruction of our cities. Rob has proven before that he can make the wise decisions

to bring people together in order to get our New York train back on track. His voice is an absolute necessity in our state Senate.

I'm a registered Democrat. I see what's taking place with dangerous ideologues like Harckham, AOC and DeBlasio. These folks are destroying our region and state. Rob, as county executive, created a bipartisan coalition that never raised taxes and created 44,000 new jobs. He earned Westchester the highest credit rating of any county in our state.

Rob supports our state and our freedom. Looking at what's going on in our cities, I don't think the actions and silence of Harckham do.

**Martin Annunziata
Thornwood**

Obituaries

Gary White

Gary Richard White, a lifelong Peekskill resident, died Sept. 6 from pancreatic cancer at Westchester Medical Center. He was 70.

Born on Sept. 13, 1949, he attended Lakeland High School where he met the love of his life, Valerie Gornie. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his daughter, Kristina (Tom) Frost; son Jon (Jonathan Colquhoun); granddaughters Kaitlyn (Adee) Dubray and Maddie Frost; grandson Thomas Frost; great-granddaughter Laine Dubray; his sisters, Nancy (Tom) Cottrell and Marianne (Peter) Bub; mother-in-law Dorothy Gornie; in-laws Paul and Theresa Gornie, Bill and Gwen Briggs, John Gornie and Mary Ellen De Rosa; and numerous nieces and nephews and extended family.

White was predeceased by his parents, Leslie and Mary (Daley) White; his son, Gary White Jr.; brother Leslie White; sister



Gary White

Patricia White; father-in-law Paul Gornie; and sister and brother-in-law Linda and Bill Corsa.

An excellent football player, White played in high school for the Lakeland Hornets as well as several years in a semipro league. He served as a police officer in Port Chester and Croton-on-Hudson before early retirement and a long career as a truck driver in the Local 456 Teamsters where he drove for Burke Oil

Company.

White was incredibly handy and spent lots of free time building decks, making home improvements and being the best "go-to" guy for all his friends and family.

He loved his motorcycle and enjoyed being out on the road with his closest friends, but above all, he loved his family and would do anything for them. He will be missed terribly.

from Saunders Trades and Technical High School in 1947. He enlisted in the U.S. Army and proudly served in Germany from 1947 to 1950 as a signal radio and intercept operator. Vangor was honorably discharged as a private, first class. He was proud to go on the Mission 14 Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. in 2016 with his son.

By trade, Vangor was a master tool and die maker. He built a large homemade telescope that was featured in Sky & Telescope magazine. He also built and flew radio-controlled airplanes in addition to crafting uniquely-styled homemade slot cars. He enjoyed reading science fiction, watching classic movies and the New York Yankees. Vangor was an avid bowler, tennis and table tennis player and was known to frequent Atlantic City and the Connecticut casinos.

Robert Vangor

Robert John Vangor, a Mahopac resident, died Aug. 26 at his home surrounded by his loving family. He was 90.

Vangor was born in Yonkers to John and Mary Vangor. Along with his parents, he was predeceased by his brother, William, and his sisters, Rose Kontur (John), Veronica Mutmanský (Pete) and Margaret Quinn (Albert).

He is survived by his beloved wife of 65 years, Rochelle; daughter Karen Ann, son Brian (Cathy); granddaughter Jennifer Hatch (Travis); sister-in-law Rhoda Rosenthal (her late husband Fred); many loving and devoted nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews; and the Collins family.

Vangor attended Holy Trinity Catholic School in Yonkers where he was a member of the fife and drum corps. He graduated

Lisa Marie DeMatte

Lisa Marie DeMatte, a Mohegan Lake resident, died peacefully on Sept. 4 after a brave battle against ovarian cancer. She was 65.

Born Feb. 17, 1955, she was a teacher and literacy coach for more than 33 years in the New York City Department of Education. Specifically, DeMatte spent a majority of her career working at elementary school P.S. 111 in the Bronx.



Lisa Marie DeMatte

She will be remembered as a loving mother, sister, aunt, godmother, mentor and friend by all who knew her. She is survived by her son, Nicholas DeMatte; her brother, Jeffrey DeMatte Sr.; sister-in-law Darcey DeMatte; nieces and nephews; great-nieces and great-nephews; and countless friends. She was predeceased by her loving parents, Roger and Marie DeMatte.

Eileen Haeger

Eileen Haeger, a Croton-on-Hudson resident, died Aug. 12. She was 95.

Haeger was born and raised in Mamaroneck. After graduating from high school, she worked as head bookkeeper for the County Trust Company. She married Erwin Haeger in 1948, living in White Plains for three years before moving to Croton Falls. She worked for 13 years at North Salem High School.

Her husband, Erwin, died in 1976, and shortly after she moved to Springvale in Croton-on-Hudson, and worked for 24 years at Westchester Medical Center, retiring in 2001.

Haeger belonged to the Cortlandt Seniors and Croton Caring Organization and volunteered in the Partners Program with the

local schools.

She was an avid traveler, voracious reader and animal lover. She belonged to St. Christopher's Church. Until recently, Haeger lived an active life living independently in her own home and without assistance of any kind, driving locally to run errands and attend church.

She is survived by her three daughters, Susan Haeger, of Connecticut as well as her two favorite daughters, Bonnie Haeger (Rick Taylor) of Maine and Janice Haeger of Italy. She also leaves her two very good friends, Kathy Lewis and Virginia Juliano, plus many of her wonderful Springvale neighbors.

Police Blotter

North Castle Police Department

Sept. 4: Report of a one-car accident on Route 22 at 9:37 p.m. The caller reported that the driver appears to be breathing but may be unconscious and injured. The responding officer stated that the vehicle was secured by Empire Towing. The operator was arrested and charged with DWI.

Sept. 5: An anonymous caller reported at 11:17 p.m. that there were suspicious parties who looked like they are "up to no good." The responding officers reported observing the parties who work locally and were waiting for

an Uber.

Sept. 6: A complainant reported at 10:29 p.m. that someone has been knocking on her door at her Limestone Road residence throughout the night and that this has happened three times this evening. The responding officers stated that juveniles were out playing "ring and run." The area checked negative on a canvas.

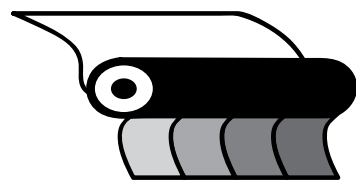
State Police/Cortlandt

Aug. 25: Police arrested Charles C. Cerbone, 42, of Carmel, for endangering the welfare of a child and petty larceny, both class A misdemeanors. At about 3 p.m., troopers were dispatched to Home Depot on East Main Street in Cortlandt for a report of larceny. The investigation determined Cerbone utilized a child to push a shopping cart containing \$768.95 worth of stolen tools from the store.

Yorktown Police

Aug. 27: A 64-year-old Mohegan Lake man was issued a criminal summons after officers responded to a Mohegan Lake residence on a harassment complaint. It is alleged the suspect repeatedly committed acts, which alarmed a victim.

Aug. 31: Three male teens were charged with juvenile delinquency after allegedly spray-painting graffiti at George Washington Elementary School in Mohegan Lake.



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Mt. Kisco Mulls Four Evenings of Drive-in Movies in Municipal Lot

By Martin Wilbur

Movie lovers who want to enjoy a film and get out of their homes for an evening still can't get to the local multiplex, but a small outfit is hoping to fill a bit of that void locally.

SCRN Cinemas has requested to use the Village of Mount Kisco's North Moger parking lot to set up a drive-in movie night for four weekend evenings in October. There would be two screenings each night, at 7:45 and 10:15 p.m.

Proposed dates have not been announced. There are several logistical and safety issues that SCRIN Cinemas has to resolve with the village before the movie nights can be approved.

The family-owned company is scheduled to offer two evenings of drive-in movie programs at the Jefferson Valley Mall in Yorktown this Friday and Saturday night. There would also be two screenings each evening.

Mount Kisco Mayor Gina Picinich said the village must agree to an appropriate rent for the use of the municipal lot for the four evenings and on the maximum number of cars for each screening. SCRIN Cinemas has proposed accommodating up to 100 cars for every showing.

The applicant also hopes to have food trucks and portable bathrooms for the moviegoers to use, but that was also a sticking point for the Village Board.

Village officials indicated that they are open to approving the drive-in movie nights

but are not interested in having food vendors and would also like SCRIN Cinemas to lower maximum capacity to fewer than 100 cars, perhaps 85 to 90, if possible.

Assistant Village Manager Ken Famulare said earlier this year the municipality hosted a drive-in Jewish Film Festival organized by a nonprofit organization and they had a cap of 75 cars. The event never reached that number, with the average car count closer to 65, Famulare said.

The company must also indemnify the village if they are going to bring in portable bathrooms and be prepared to reimburse Mount Kisco if police or village personnel need to help direct or manage traffic near the site.

"It would provide an entertainment option that doesn't currently exist for folks in our community," Picinich said. "We want to make sure that it is as COVID safe as possible, so we don't want food vendors on site."

Officials hope that for residents who may attend any of the screenings they will buy food from one of the local restaurants beforehand.

Trustee Peter Grunthal questioned whether the village would be setting a bad precedent by approving the evenings for a for-profit entity rather than a nonprofit organization.

"My own feeling is that it would be terrific for some additional entertainment, movies out of one's own home when we can only go into a movie house with fear of infection," Grunthal said.



Mount Kisco's North Moger parking lot could be the venue for as many as four evenings of drive-in movies next month if the village and the screening company can work through several outstanding details as part of an agreement.

SCRIN Cinemas plan has proposed to charge \$20 per car plus \$6 per person above the age of five years old.

The board told Famulare and Village Manager Ed Brancati to work out the details with the applicant to see if they would agree to some of the restrictions. SCRIN has also spoken to representatives of Grand Prix New York on North Bedford Road for use of

that parking lot as a backup plan.

Picinich said the village would like to see how the first night of screenings goes before agreeing to additional evenings.

"It's like a trial run kind of thing," she said. "If that goes well and is effective and there were no issues and no problems, then we can extend it to other nights as well."



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Stop & Shop Celebrates Grand Reopening of North White Plains Store

Stop & Shop unveiled its newly-remodeled store on Sept. 4 in North White Plains, located at 670 N. Broadway.

The upgrades are centered on delivering fresh, healthy and convenient options that make grocery shopping easier for customers. New features include an expanded produce section, hundreds more natural and organic products, plus a hot bar featuring entrees and sides made fresh in the store daily to grab and go for meals and entertaining.

The store also introduced same-day online pickup. Customers can shop online at www.stopandshop.com head to the store on a date and time of their choosing, and have a Stop & Shop associate load their groceries right into their car.

Highlights of the North White Plains store include:

- Expanded produce sections with more organics and locally grown produce selections
- More prepared foods including a new hot bar featuring pre-packaged lunch and dinner solutions for easy meals on the go.
- More grocery items customers want including hundreds of natural products, plus a larger assortment of pet, baby, health and beauty care items.
- Stop & Shop delivery and pickup provides local customers with a faster and more convenient way to shop, including home delivery or pickup available in as little as four hours.

"We're excited to share our newly-



Stop & Shop representatives cut the ribbon on the recently remodeled supermarket on North Broadway in North White Plains.

remodeled store with the community," said store manager Jim Rao. "We've added more of what our local customers want – fresh produce, specialty cheeses and seafood – plus lots of convenient meal solutions. We are also proud to now offer same-day online pickup as we continuously work to make our customers' shopping experience easier and more convenient."

To celebrate Stop & Shop's commitment to the community, the store donated \$1,000 in cash and an additional \$500 in non-perishable items to the George Washington Elementary School Food Pantry. Stop & Shop formed the school's pantry this summer to provide donated food to students facing food insecurity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This donation will further assist students and families in need throughout North White Plains.

New Board Member Named for Armonk-Based Adopt-A-Dog

Cathy Kangas, CEO of New Canaan-based PRAI Beauty, a longtime financial supporter of Adopt-A-Dog in Armonk recently announced that she will serve on the Adopt-A-Dog Board of Directors.

Kangas adopted four dogs from Adopt-A-Dog and her endless mission to help save animals around the world continues.

"I am thrilled to join the board of Adopt-A-Dog. Their life-saving work has saved thousands of dogs from euthanasia," Kangas said. "Adopt-A-Dog has proudly served the Westchester-Fairfield community for more than 35 years. The dogs I have adopted from this shelter are wonderful animals that they have socialized to live with a family."

One of her proudest accomplishments is The Cathy Kangas Foundation for Animals that aims to provide a voice for animals, particularly those in shelters facing euthanasia. The foundation underwrites programs nationally and internationally and has had remarkable success with two initiatives: Free the Shelters, an international campaign to help homeless animals, and Squirrelwood, an equine sanctuary that provides therapy to veterans with PTSD. Since its inception, the foundation has encouraged pet adoptions nationwide with over 6,000 animals adopted to date.

Kangas' love of animals is woven

throughout PRAI's brand DNA. Every product is certified cruelty-free, Leaping Bunny approved, and a portion of every purchase goes toward animal rescue efforts.

PRAI's charitable arm, PRAI for Paws, helps find forever homes for shelter animals across the nation.

"Cathy brings great value and expertise to our board because of her great work saving shelter animals through PRAI Beauty's Free the Shelters campaign that pays adoption fees to move animals out of a shelter, says Kristen Alouisa, executive director of Adopt-A-Dog. "We have worked with her for many years and know how passionate and committed she is to our mission to save, socialize and secure loving homes for unwanted animals."

Adopt-A-Dog focuses on animals with special emotional and health needs. Today, the staff of 15 cares for between 35 and 40 dogs at any given time, and collaborates with local organizations to educate the public about animal welfare.

The organization has a shelter in Armonk. It was established in 1981 when Greenwich, Conn. residents Donna Nives, Gloria Scheur and Pam Fahnestock became concerned about the growing number of abandoned animals languishing in local shelters.

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School Composting Saves Money, Food and the Planet

By Miriam Gold

The Pleasantville School District can save a lot of money and food and decrease carbon emissions if it implements a food composting program.

A late 2019 World Wildlife Fund report estimated that U.S. schools waste 530,000 tons of food per year. While composting meat and fish isn't possible, schools would drastically reduce food waste by composting fruit and vegetables.

Composting accelerates the decomposition of organic substances by creating the most suitable conditions for detritivores. Detritivores are microorganisms that consume decomposing plants, animals and bodily waste.

When there are more of these organisms living in the ground, the soil is richer and ideal for growing plants, trees and crops.

Leaves, vegetable and fruit scraps, coffee grounds, livestock manure, sawdust and shredded paper can all be composted in a designated bin.

Once the bin is filled up, empty it into a well-drained area, such as a garden.

Composting lowers methane emissions caused by landfills and lowers your carbon footprint.

Based on my own time spent in the cafeteria, students who purchase school lunch usually leave behind the fruit and vegetables. These are two types of food that can be composted. Imagine how much food waste and how many pollutants would be

lowered if all schools composted.

One way to convince students to compost and recycle is to hold regular in-class meetings about the importance of composting and its benefits for the environment.

Many people don't know how to sort their leftover food and trash properly without help. Hence the reason why there are unused paper napkins in the garbage and food wrappers in the recycle bin.

There aren't even labels on the blue bins, causing plastic and paper to be mixed together. I am proposing a way to encourage recycling and add compost bins while practicing social distancing.

Due to COVID-19, there is a strong possibility that students will be eating in their classrooms instead of the cafeteria, so recycling and composting should take place in these locations.

To make sure the classroom garbage bins don't overflow, students should come by with separate bins during the lunch periods. These bins can be labeled "plastic, metal, glass," "compost," "paper" and "trash" with paper and permanent marker taped on with clear masking tape.

School administrators can direct respected student leaders to walk around the classrooms during each lunch period with the bins to collect all the waste. Student leaders who volunteer or are selected to collect compost and recyclables may earn community service hours from the school, as well as rewards, such as pizza and ice cream parties.

Once their composting and recycling collections are completed in all the classrooms, they will be emptied into a larger bin that is also labeled.

All compost should be taken to a bin and stored until the end of the last lunch period. The edible garden students can then take the bags of compost and put them in a large wheelbarrow in one of the school gardens to mature for at least three months.

The schools will directly benefit from composting as well. The plants and vegetables growing in the three gardens would be healthier and much less food would be wasted.

All composting and recycling bins and other supplies would cost \$575.80. The bags to line the bins would cost about \$25 for 100 bags.

To pay for recycling and composting costs of the program, I looked at annual Pleasantville School District budgets dating back to 2015. In the "Materials and Supplies" section, for "Operation of Plant," under "Capital," the proposed budget doesn't come close to the actual expenditures. For instance, that line for the 2017-18 school year was \$58,500; the actual amount spent was \$49,187. In 2018-19, \$58,500 was again budgeted and \$48,964 was spent.

There are differences between the approved budget and the money spent during each year. It may be inferred that this pattern will continue. Districts should use this to their advantage. They can get the funds for composting from unspent budget

monies.

Pleasantville's proposed budget in the "Materials and Supplies" section for this year is \$92,250. Assuming there is \$3,000 leftover, the school still has \$2,424.20 to spend. According to an external audit of the district, about \$1,953,000 was not spent in 2018-19.

There are 85 incinerators across the U.S., burning 29 million tons of garbage and food every year. From Pleasantville, village garbage trucks transport trash to Wheelabrator Westchester, an incineration facility in Peekskill.

This trash includes much of the food waste in the village, except for residents who choose to compost.

Burning trash releases harmful toxins into the atmosphere like lead, mercury and carbon dioxide. These substances are harmful to the people living near the incinerator and our environment.

Residents and their food sources near incinerators are exposed to unhealthy amounts of air pollution. These chemicals contaminate animals, including fish, making them hazardous to eat.

Composting food waste will reduce the amount of trash incinerated, and ultimately the dangerous toxins dispersed into the atmosphere. Equally important, it reduces the carbon pollution schools generate.

Miriam Gold is a freshman at Pleasantville High School.

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After Delay, Spectrum Designs on Target to Arrive in P'ville This Fall

By Abby Luby

It may have taken longer than expected but a critical service for Westchester's adult autistic population expects to have its long-delayed opening this fall.

Spectrum Designs, a nonprofit social enterprise staffed by those on the spectrum that operates a laundry service and makes clothes, promotional items and baked goods, will soon be opening in Pleasantville, operating out of the newly-renovated building at 199 Tompkins Ave.

A soft opening is planned for the first week in October with a grand opening sometime in November. There will be 16 employees along with six coaches and trainers starting next month. The goal is to create 20 full-time jobs. Starting pay is minimum wage with salary increases as employees gain experience and develop additional skills.

"That people with disabilities are underemployed and underestimated has gone on for too long," said Patrick Bardsley, the CEO and co-founder of Spectrum Designs. "We are giving our employees a sense of self-worth which is so much more than a paycheck. These jobs teach important life skills that benefits society as a whole."

The Tompkins Avenue site is Spectrum Designs' second location; it operates a similar facility in Port Washington on Long Island. The non-profit company is affiliated with the Nicholas Center for Autism, founded in 2011 by Stella Spanakos, a Long Island parent of an autistic son who was frustrated by the lack of work opportunities for her only child, Nicholas.



SPECTRUM DESIGNS PHOTO

The renovated warehouse on Tompkins Avenue in Pleasantville, where Spectrum Designs, which employs autistic adults, is expected to soon begin operations.

Both organizations advocate for people with autism and help them lead productive lives.

Spectrum Designs had been looking for a location in Westchester but couldn't find suitable space elsewhere. The Tompkins Avenue space was discovered in August 2019 and a lease was signed last October, Bardsley said.

"Pleasantville is a great place and a welcoming community. We will be able to integrate our employees safely in the community and into the Spectrum Designs business," he said.

The one-level building has a large industrial space, which made it attractive and capable of

producing items in higher volume, Bardsley said.

In January, Spectrum held a hard-hat tour of the 8,000-square-foot multi-use facility attended by more than 200 people. Bardsley said they planned to open in May, but construction was halted in March because of the pandemic.

"We had to stop renovations for about 12 weeks," he said. "We also had a fundraiser planned for May to get over the finish line, but we had to do it virtually."

Spectrum Designs received a \$240,000 Regional Economic Development Council grant from New York State to help renovate

and equip the building. The projected cost of setting up the business is \$3 million, which includes renovations, upgrading the HVAC system, installing new insulation, buying new equipment and eventually purchasing the building, Bardsley said.

It has a two-year lease with the option to purchase the building for \$1.7 million. It expects to have a down payment to buy the building by next year, Bardsley said.

With the Tompkins Avenue site so close to Pleasantville's downtown, he envisions Spectrum Designs' employees and their coaches frequently walking into town.

"Our guiding philosophy is to integrate in the community and Pleasantville is accessible and perfect," Bardsley said. "It's an old village with character, arts, music and good restaurants."

Bardsley said many people with autism have significant strengths – they are reliable, have an eye for detail, produce high-quality work in a well-organized environment and have excellent memories. At the Pleasantville site, the workers' first job will be to make reflective vests for Metro-North employees. Future tasks will include silk screening, stitching on hats and custom printing logos on a variety of garments.

There has been ample support from the community. At a building department meeting last year where Bardsley addressed a parking issue, he described Spectrum's mission and what the organization is about.

"On the way out, about five people stopped me and said they were so excited we were coming to Pleasantville, and that they couldn't wait to tell their neighbors," he said.

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When the anniversary of 9/11 arrives, it's a difficult day for those who remember where they were at the time of the attacks, and especially for those who lost friends and loved ones on that tragic day 19 years ago. This year it was made even more challenging because of the pandemic, but villages, towns and cities throughout the region made sure to find a way to remember the nearly 3,000 lives lost in 2001. Most of the ceremonies were virtual, except those in locations that had enough room for social distancing. Here are scenes from North Castle, Mount Pleasant, Yorktown, Peekskill and Kensico Dam Plaza and the annual twin beams of light projected into the night sky over lower Manhattan.



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North, South, East, West: Which Way is Best for a House to Face?

My homebuying history involves three purchases. The first was a wonderful town home in the historic neighborhood of Brooklyn Heights. The second was a large historic home in northern Westchester and my current residence is in a Trump building in the same town in which I have lived for more than 40 years.

But as a realtor, I have been involved with many purchases and sales of homes.

For my first two purchases, I never considered the orientation of the front of the house. The only way to control such considerations is to build your own house and face it as desired while observing local zoning laws and setbacks.

I fell in love with both homes regardless of their orientation. As I think about it, my home in Brooklyn Heights and my first Westchester purchase faced south, while my current condo residence faces east. For the latter, I considered its orientation, and being in a large building, I had only two choices, east or west. I chose east, preferring to have the morning sun and the afternoon shade.

I must confess that the views took precedence. Facing west looked over a row of homes, while facing east provided the lush greenery of trees embracing the Taconic Parkway.

The orientation of a home may not



By Bill Primavera

necessarily register with buyers as something of importance when buying or building a home; however, it is critical to maximizing energy efficiency. As a realtor I've learned that it can be much more than that.

My very first buyer client insisted that I should only show him a home that faced east. That involved some extra consideration on my part when researching listings. I just did as I was told, but never considered the reasons why until recently. Research identified the pros and cons of facing east.

Pros: Beautiful sunrises, lots of morning and early afternoon sunshine and warmer east-facing rooms on winter mornings.

Cons: Waking up early to sunlight if your bedroom faces that way, a lot of heat in summertime and rooms facing east will be darker in late afternoon and evening, expending more energy.

If I were house shopping today, I would look for a home with a lot of windows in all directions, so I would be guaranteed excellent cross circulation when they are open.

I do like homes with east-west exposures the best. As I think about it now, when I was home searching for a property in the country, I probably saw some that seemed dark inside, even with the lights on. Probably

subconsciously, I automatically rejected those homes. Now I know that orientation of a home impacts energy consumption and the size of heating and air conditioning bills as well as comfort.

As a realtor, I now know that a poorly designed and orientated house will have key living areas shrouded in darkness, increasing the costs of heating and keeping the lights on longer during the day. A well-designed home should have lower energy costs by using as much natural light as possible.

A house orientated to capture sunlight from the north delivers radiant heat inside and makes a big difference when it comes to energy consumption. Maximizing the amount of sunlight falling onto hard surfaces, such as polished concrete or tiles, helps transmit as much thermal heat as possible during cooler weather. These hard surfaces retain heat longer than materials such as wood and carpeting.

You can utilize the amount of natural light which comes into your house through skylights and windows. A very good idea is to have these double-glazed to help reduce heat loss.

When looking to build in southerly climates, look at ways to maximize the northern sunlight. Whereas if you were looking at building a house in the northern part of the country, you would look at ways

to reduce radiant heat by adding louvres and blinds and using tree shade.

Many people will consider that facing north has the most impact with direct sunlight. However, the ideal direction for your yard to face is west due to the afternoon sunlight having more impact on the dwelling.

Another key factor to consider is that the sun shines down at a 67-degree angle in summer but at only 32 degrees in winter. By allowing your windows to be set high on the north side and by incorporating overhang shading, you will receive ample privacy, warmth in winter and shade in summer.

Something else to consider if designing a double storey house – locate the stairs on the northern side and have large windows to capture as much of the sun's natural heat as possible.

When buying or designing a new home, always consider orientation. You will save on energy bills, increase lifestyle comfort and add value to your property.

Bill Primavera, while a writer and editor, is also a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate and founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc. (www.PrimaveraPR.com). His real estate site is www.PrimaveraRealEstate.com. To engage the talents and services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.



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Pleasantville Hair Salon, Owner Reach Milestones Together

By Martin Wilbur

Raffaele Ferraioli has seen and heard a lot in his 50 years on the floor of the hair salons that he has owned.

He has managed to persevere through innumerable style changes, economic downturns and now the COVID-19 pandemic, which shuttered his shop, La Barberia on Pleasantville's Wheeler Avenue, for about two-and-a-half months this spring.

But this week, Ferraioli has plenty to celebrate. Tuesday marks 30 years since he opened the doors to La Barberia. Although he gave up haircutting a few years ago, he manages the seven-day-a-week business and keeps it a well-oiled machine, relying on his five expert hairstylists, all of whom provide customers with the same high-quality service.

"I think the key is atmosphere and (hiring) professional people," Ferraioli said of his longevity in the village. "I have a reputation in here and (customers) know. They don't care who they go to. There's always a few that will like somebody, but no matter who you see, I have five hairstylists, it's going to be good."

"In other words, there's not one person who makes the store; they all make the store," he added.

Another key to Ferraioli's success is

catering to men and women, something he needed to do when breaking into the business in 1970. The styles at the time saw many men grow their hair longer, so he didn't initially have as much foot traffic at his first shop in Yonkers. But many of the wives and girlfriends of Ferraioli's customers liked the cuts he was giving, so they started coming around and asking him to style their hair as well.

Maintaining a nearly 50-50 split between men and women has been to Ferraioli's advantage over the years, perhaps no more so than coming out of the pandemic-induced shutdown.

"I think it was a godsend that I came out at a certain time and I think my success (is that) I kept the format of a men's and women's salon," he said. "I think that's my success."

La Barberia also caters to people of all ages. It's not unusual for Ferraioli to have an entire family come in for haircuts, from children to grandparents.

During the closure, Ferraioli used the time of the to remodel the store's interior, giving it a sleeker, sharper look. His duties include making sure that every customer and hairstylist has their temperature taken, his employees have the necessary personal protection equipment, sweeping the floor and scheduling appointments so there is no one waiting inside the store. If



La Barberia hair salon celebrates its 30th anniversary at its space on Wheeler Avenue in Pleasantville. This year also marks the 50th year that owner Raffaele Ferraioli has been in the hairstyling business.

the schedule gets backed up a bit, he has a few seats outside.

A Bronx native who grew up on the borough's famed Arthur Avenue, Ferraioli never thought about spending his life in hair salons. After high school, he worked in a supermarket. During a trip to the

barber, Ferraioli asked the owner whether there was any money in the business.

He was told it could be a good living if he was willing to work hard and put in the time. Ferraioli decided he would go to barber school, where he caught on quickly.

"I knew I wasn't college material, but I knew I had to make something of myself, and it's a good profession," Ferraioli said. "I'll never become a multimillionaire, but I have three kids, five grandkids. I have no regrets. I have no regrets with how my life panned out. It's pretty good."

He opened his first shop in Yonkers 50 years ago, then briefly left the industry, before looking to establish another salon by 1990. The first year-and-a-half was slow in Pleasantville, but Ferraioli slowly built his clientele and has built a loyal customer base and strong relationships with people.

"It's personal. People tell you a lot of stuff," he said. "I've been on the floor for 50 years. I hear some intimate stuff sometimes. To some people I'm like a psychiatrist. It becomes very personal."

La Barberia is located at 65 Wheeler Ave. in Pleasantville. It's open Monday through Wednesday 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday and Friday 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information and appointments, call 914-741-1120.

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Late Summer Bites and Pieces: A Visit to Ben's Kosher Deli

With the Jewish High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur approaching, I thought it would be nice to have a good old-fashioned meal loaded with memories at Ben's Kosher Delicatessen on Central Park Avenue in Scarsdale. They had been closed for a while during the pandemic.

For me, it's the stuff I grew up with. My soul food. There were many Jewish restaurants and delis back then in New York City and the nearby suburbs, but over the years they have been in decline.

Every time I sit down at a Jewish deli it brings back many fond memories of friends and family sharing this special larder with gusto. To me, there is nothing like a tasty knish or kosher hot dog with mustard and sauerkraut. I was looking forward to it.

Founder Ronald Dragoon opened his first Ben's in 1972 on Long Island. Today there are seven locations. We pulled into the restaurant's parking area on an early weekday afternoon. There was an enclosed seating area outside, but we opted for a table in the dining room.

The place was quiet, and the staff greeted us cheerfully as soon as we came through the door. Right now, with COVID-19 guidelines in place, you must access their extensive menu on your phone. Our waitress brought us complementary platters of coleslaw and sweet and sour pickles. A glass of Baron Herzog Chardonnay and a Dr. Brown's cream soda kicked it up a notch. We started to indulge immediately.

It took a little while, but we finally decided to fill the rest of our table with a big bowl of matzo ball soup with noodles, overstuffed deli double sandwiches with tender and



By Morris Gut

tasty corned beef and pastrami on soft challah rolls and sides of kasha varnishkes and crinkled French fries. I was in foodie heaven! Every bite evoked the flavors of my childhood.

Right now, Ben's is offering a variety of catering packages by advanced order for the Jewish holidays. Check the website.

Ben's Kosher Delicatessen is located at 718 Central Park Ave. in Scarsdale. Open Tuesday through Sunday. Special holiday hours; check ahead. Take-out and delivery available. Free parking. Info 914-468-2367 or visit www.bensdeli.net.

9AEats Food Truck Park Opens

Westchester's first food truck park has opened on Route 9A in Elmsford on the site of the former Red Fox Diner, just off I-287. 9AEATS is still a work in progress, but backers hope to offer the public a tasty cross-section of food trucks from around the region on a rotating basis.

We stopped by 9AEATS on a recent Sunday afternoon and found it fairly busy.

Family groups filled the colorful picnic tables. It is not as large a space as I had anticipated. Alas, the only truck serving this day was Walter's Hot Dogs.

During its opening weekend, participating trucks included Doughnation, Off the Hook,

Wrapper's Delight, Poke Motion, Road Grub, Pizza Vitale, Abeetz, Mac's, Latusion and Longford Ice Cream. In coming weeks, appearing on a rotating basis, you may enjoy The Fried Chicken, Bazodee Street Food, Gyro Uno, Graziella Italian Kitchen, Westchester Burger and Bona Bona Ice Cream.

There is free parking and a narrow road in and out. There were small bottles of hand sanitizer and 9AEATS stickers at the reception table. Tables were immediately wiped down as patrons left. An owner on the premises said there would be a daily posting on the website listing which food trucks will be on hand on a daily basis.

By the way, while there we shared a couple of Walter's Flat Dogs with mustard and it was a retro-treat. Plans are for an indoor dining pavilion with party facilities down the line.

9AEATS is open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Rain or shine. Info: Visit www.9aeats.com.

Artsy Chocolate in Mount Kisco The



A view into the chocolate factory at Mast Chocolates in Mount Kisco.



The food truck park 9AEATS on Route 9A in Elmsford.



A delicious Jewish deli meal at Ben's Kosher Deli in Scarsdale: pastrami sandwiches on challah rolls, matzo ball soup with noodles, kasha varnishkes, French fries, coleslaw and a cream soda.

Mast brothers moved their company, Mast Chocolates, from Brooklyn to Mount Kisco about a year ago. They took over a one-story building along South Moger Avenue, not far from the Metro-North train station, which they remodeled into a manufacturing facility, market and café featuring the Mast product line.

We had read recently in The New York Times that they partnered with the Metropolitan Museum of Art by combining a line of their artisanal chocolates with artworks selected from the museum's collection as part of a fundraiser. A portion of the sales go to the museum. A masterful proposition that made me want to visit.

We arrived in Mount Kisco early on a Sunday afternoon, and as we pulled up our anticipation grew. The façade looked inviting. The designers had given the entryway a carriage house look. There were some active tables outside.

Once inside, our eyes were immediately drawn to a large window that allows for a into the chocolate processing area where big gleaming silver urns of liquid chocolate were in constant motion, whirring in circles. There is a comfortable lounge and seating area and a coffee bar with the day's menu overhead. Their house-roasted coffees, teas, chocolates and pastries were on display. Below the counter there was a lovely selection of artsy cake and pie platters. The colorful new Metropolitan Museum of Art gift selections were on display on a side wall along with more of their line.

The store manager was helpful with our questions. We left with two of their popular chocolate bars – almond butter and hazelnut. It made for a fine indulgence during our Sunday outing.

Mast Market + Café is open to the public Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Info: Visit www.mastchocolate.com.

Lobster at Home – Rediscovered

I recently wrote about the dramatic increase in home cooking during the COVID-19 pandemic. Concerns about dining out are still running high, so what did people do? They have rediscovered their home kitchens and their cooking skills. It has been



Making a mouthwatering homemade lobster dinner these days is reasonably priced.

a tasty revelation.

In lieu of our annual trips to Maine, our latest home kitchen indulgence has been lobster. For most of the summer season, the price of Maine lobster has been down due, in part, to the pandemic. Food markets in Westchester have been selling lobster for \$6.99 per pound on average, up to one-and-a-quarter pounds, and a bit more for a pound-and-a-half or more. We have taken advantage.

Our preferred preparation is a simple boil in a big lobster pot with perhaps some potatoes and fresh corn. Our outdoor grill is always ready, too. Melted butter or a good aioli for dipping on the side, of course. We might even treat ourselves to extra shellfish such as clams or mussels, even a piece of beef for an old-fashioned surf and turf. It is simple to do and always turns out great. The internet is loaded with easy lobster recipes.

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



WHICH FUTURE MAKES SENSE FOR WESTCHESTER?

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The illustration above is an artist's depiction of the Indian Point property after the completion of major decommissioning work.

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Lakeland High Grad Serving Overseas on Navy Ship

By Rick Pezzullo

Lakeland High School graduate John Chimbo is serving aboard the USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), which is continuing to

conduct operations in the Indo-Pacific region.

Chimbo, a petty officer 3rd class and an aviation machinist's mate, works with a team of skilled mechanics that tear down

and build aircraft jet engines.

"Never thought I would find myself in an environment like this, but since I've become a part of this organization, I'm proud of what we sacrifice to accomplish the tasks we are given," said Chimbo, a Yorktown native.

Since the ship's Yokosuka departure in June 2020, the Ronald Reagan continues to operate in the Indo-Pacific alongside allies and partners to demonstrate the nation's commitment to defense agreements, as well as provide security and stability in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

In early July, the USS Nimitz (CVN 68) and USS Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Groups started conducting dual carrier operations in the Philippine Sea and South China Sea. These carrier strike groups incorporate the capabilities of embarked fixed and rotary wing aircraft, Aegis guided-missile cruisers and destroyers and attack submarines. This opportunity for two carrier strike groups to train and operate together in the region provides combatant commanders with significant operational flexibility and capabilities that only the U.S. Navy can bring.

Most recently, the Ronald Reagan completed a trilateral naval exercise with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and Australian Defense Force (ADF). Australia and Japan both have longstanding alliances with the United States. This year also marks the



Lakeland High School graduate John Chimbo is currently serving aboard the USS Ronald Reagan.

John C. Hart Library, Yorktown Offices Resume Indoor Service

The John C. Hart Memorial Library and Town of Yorktown departments resumed indoor service last week.

The library's new indoor hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Staff at the town's departments are available for in-person meetings indoors by appointment only.

Visitors to the library and all town facilities will be expected to submit to a temperature screening and are required to answer a COVID-19 questionnaire.

"This is another milestone on our road to recovery from the pandemic closures," said Supervisor Matt Slater. "It's important for the public to remember that we are still in a public health emergency, which means that masks are mandatory while visiting the library and town offices. We also expect visitors to adhere to other social distancing precautions to ensure the safety of our public workers."

Library and town officials' safety precautions include the installation of plastic barriers at counters and a new self-checkout

machine for library materials.

Yorktown departments will continue to hold virtual conferences for anyone who is not comfortable with in-person visits.

The library, located at 1130 E. Main St. in Shrub Oak, will also continue its outdoor porch pick-up service Tuesday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Thursday from 4 to 7 p.m. Patrons must place their porch pick-up requests online or by calling the library in advance. When the requested items are available the library staff will call the patrons for the pick-up.

As part of the library's safety protocols, all items returned to the library and Town Hall book drops are held for at least 72 hours before they are handled. Items returned may take up to a week to be removed from patrons' accounts. All items are checked in on the date they were returned and no fines are incurred during the wait time.

Patrons should wait at least one week after returning items to contact the library if items still appear on library accounts.

60th anniversary of the treaty of mutual cooperation and security between the United States and Japan.

The Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group (CSG) is the Navy's only forward-deployed strike group and one of America's most visible symbols of resolve. The Ronald Reagan CSG, consists of Carrier Air Wing 5, the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Antietam (CG 54) and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mustin (DDG 89).



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Keep Walking to Reduce Vascular Disease Symptoms

By Dr. Aditya Rachakonda

If you or a loved one is older, it's sensible to stay home during the pandemic. But let's face it, staying home usually leads to inactivity.

If you have vascular disease, inactivity means you aren't keeping up the walking program that's the mainstay of most treatment. Today, as the older population self-confines in their homes, vascular surgeons across the country are noting with concern that patients are no longer properly managing their disease through walking. That increases the risk of complications.

So how do you keep active while staying home? Read on for helpful tips that'll get you walking at home – and maybe even enjoying it – while keeping symptoms at bay.

So what is vascular disease?

Your blood flows through two main kinds of pipes: arteries and veins. Arteries deliver blood to the cells of your body. Veins collect the blood from all body points and bring it back to your heart. Vascular disease affects the arteries or veins.

The most common form of vascular disease affects the arteries and is called atherosclerosis. A build-up of plaque in the arteries' inner walls causes them to narrow, which results in diminished blood flow. This condition often leads to peripheral artery disease, which involves

diminished blood flow to the muscles of your legs. Because your leg muscles are being starved of nourishment, you feel pain when you walk.

Other types of vascular disease affect your veins. If you have venous insufficiency disease or venous reflux disease, the valves of your leg veins have become leaky. As a result, blood doesn't move back up your leg toward your heart the way it should. Instead, it pools or even flows backwards.

Another condition that affects the veins, called peripheral edema, involves the chronic retention of fluid in leg tissues. Both conditions cause leg pain and chronic swelling.

The standard treatment for all these conditions is not surgery. It is walking. Why is walking so effective in stabilizing vascular disease?

Let's say you have a blockage in your leg artery. When you walk, your leg muscles feel tired from lack of blood. However, if you keep walking, that tiredness triggers your brain to prune the dysfunctional arteries and grow brand-new channels for blood flow called collateral branches. Picture driving on a road and suddenly being stopped by an obstruction. You can't keep going straight. But there are detours – side roads – that let you reach your destination.

In order for your brain to trigger the creation of new pathways for the blood,

your walking regimen must be consistent – at least five days a week for a minimum of 30 minutes each time, preferably on something hard, like concrete.

But how can you walk five days a week for 30 minutes in your home? Here are strategies that have the "Seal of Approval" of my patients with vascular disease, people who are mostly 65 and up and currently self-isolating. (A 95-year-old patient walks at home every day and she's in better cardiovascular health than some patients in their 60s.)

- Use a treadmill. Listen to music as you walk and the beat will make you want to move.
- Use a stationary bike. Position it near the TV and have your remote handy.
- Buy a fitness watch that tracks your steps. Wear it (they look cool – your grandkids will be impressed!) while you walk "laps" around your house. You'll enjoy the way your watch keeps track of how much you're doing, and motivates you to stick to your plan.
- Use a fitness app on your cellphone that guides you through small activities and easy exercises while keeping track of your progress. Get set to be impressed by your own achievements.
- Set the timer on your cellphone and take a walk around your home. Think of a pleasant or funny memory connected with each room as you walk through it.

- If you're sitting at a table or desk for long periods, take five or 10-minute walk every two hours.
- When sitting, keep your legs elevated.
- If you have chronic leg swelling, keep your leg elevated while you watch a TV show (say 25 minutes). Or set a timer and elevate your leg for that period. The goal is to walk and keep the affected leg elevated for specific periods of time during each day.

This next tip is extremely important to your health if you're living with vascular disease: Keep seeing your doctor, whether in person, on the phone or through telemedicine. You will figure out a game plan together for maintaining your walking.

Skipping doctor's appointments can lead to hazardous outcomes. Please know that the care and safety of our community during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is Northern Westchester Hospital's top priority. We have put maximum safety measures in place to prevent exposure to the coronavirus for anyone who comes to the hospital for emergent or scheduled care.

Learn about what we are doing to keep you safe and what to expect if you need care by visiting www.northwell.edu/coronavirus.

Dr. Aditya Rachakonda is a vascular and endovascular surgeon at Northern Westchester Hospital.

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Early Flu Vaccination Recommended as Fall Season Begins

Flu season will soon arrive and public health experts everywhere are recommending that people get their flu shots this year, and to get them as early as possible.

The Putnam County Department of Health has its first clinic set for Monday, Sept. 21 at its main office at 1 Geneva Rd. Like the COVID-19 testing clinics earlier this year, the flu clinic will be a drive-thru event. For ease of administering the vaccine and overall efficiency, short sleeves and pre-scheduled appointments are required. Time slots begin at 1 p.m. and end at 6:30 p.m. A rain date is scheduled for the following day.

Putnam County Commissioner if Health Dr. Michael J. Nesheiwat highly recommends getting a flu shot, and addressed concerns questioning the vaccine's effectiveness.

"Flu vaccination can reduce the risk of flu illness by between 40 percent and 60 percent among the overall population," Nesheiwat said. "Additionally, serious complications or a lengthy course of illness are less likely if you get immunized with a flu shot. Preserving your health and your immunity has never been more important than it is now as we continue reopening

plans with the ongoing pandemic."

The dates and locations for the two additional flu clinics are Wednesday, Oct. 7 at the Garrison Fire Department, 1616 Route 9, and another drive-through clinic on Friday, Oct. 16 at the Department of Health at 1 Geneva Rd., with a rain date of Monday, Oct. 19. All clinics will be from 1 to 6:30 p.m.

Early vaccination is always important because a person builds up immunity about two weeks after the shot. Certain people should be sure to get vaccinated. They include pregnant women; children six months through 18 years of age; people over 50 years old; those with chronic or long-lasting medical conditions; and those who live with or care for them. Health care workers are also required to get the flu vaccine to protect their patients.

The public flu clinics are open to all Putnam County residents 18 years of age and older. Registration information and forms can be found online on the Health Department's immunization page at www.putnamcountyny.com/health/immunization. Appointments, which are required, can be made by calling the scheduling line at 845-808-1390 ext. 43262 and leaving your name and phone number.

Your call will be returned promptly, and a time slot will be offered and confirmed. A maximum of 300 people will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis. Carpooling is encouraged and all attendees must remain in their vehicles.

Appointment scheduling will close by noon on Saturday, Sept. 19. Immunization consent forms must be downloaded, completed and signed and presented to the public health nurse at the drive-thru clinic.

Proof of residency is required and will be checked. The fee for vaccination is \$25 for residents 18 to 64 years old. Those 65 and up can receive the vaccine free of charge if they show a Medicare card. Only checks or cash will be accepted.

A high-dose flu vaccine is being offered for seniors, 65 years old and up, as studies show this vaccine is more effective for this population. Pneumonia vaccine is not available at the flu clinics.

Additional public flu clinics may be held later this year.

For more information, visit www.putnamcountyny.com or the social media sites on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @PutnamHealthNY.

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THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

Seas the Day! This week the quiz will test your knowledge of nautical terms. This could be the perfect opportunity to see if your vocabulary is ship-shape. Hopefully the quiz will be smooth sailing for you. So, time to find out if your ship has come in or you are lost at sea.

1. bilge (n.)	A) jettisoned cargo	B) lower part of a ship	C) a heavy rope
2. scud (v.)	A) to abandon ship	B) change course	C) sail swiftly
3. stevedore (n.)	A) a dock worker	B) ships' steering wheel	C) owner of a barge
4. thalassic (adj.)	A) relating to pirates	B) relating to model ships	C) relating to the sea
5. moonraker (n.)	A) the topmost sail	B) mast nearest the bow	C) a sailor on watch
6. demurrage (n.)	A) hiring of a ship	B) delay of a vessel's departure	C) a ship's chart
7. frap (v.)	A) to draw tight	B) fill with ballast	C) clean a ship's hull
8. binnacle (n.)	A) a small crustacean	B) a signal flag	C) a compass case

ANSWERS:
1. B. The lower part of a ship where dirty water collects
2. C. To sail swiftly before a gale
3. A. A dock worker who loads and unloads ships
4. C. Relating to the sea or ocean
5. A. The topmost sail of ship
6. B. Delay of a vessel's departure or loading of with cargo
7. A. To draw tight with ropes or cables
8. C. Case in which a ship's compass is kept

A Dark Period in the History of European Winemaking



By Nick Antonaccio

There are several subjects of past columns that come to mind as I prepare to pen a new one.

One has been swirling around in my wine writer's subconscious for several weeks. It is a tale full of intrigue, widespread

destruction and a strong dose of irony. It is the dark history of the Phylloxera (Fi-LOX-eh-ra) cross-border epidemic, one that plagued much of the European vineyard plantings in the middle of the 19th century.

This week I reprise that column.

Today the wine industry across the globe is thriving, thanks to the increasing quality and quantity of wines produced around the world. However, in its 7,000-year history, there is one singular moment when the survival of a large swath of the wine industry was seriously in question.

In the mid-19th century, in a brief period of 15 years, the greatest disaster in the modern history of the wine industry took place in Western Europe, wiping out nearly two-thirds of all grapevines.

Picture This: Previously healthy vines in the south of France suddenly develop

'The rogues that caused the problem are now bearers of the solution.'

ominous symptoms. Leaves yellow and drop, roots die and grapevines wither. Growers are forced to uproot the dead, diseased plants, burning them in the vineyard fields.

The devastation quickly spreads throughout France and then into Italy, Spain and Germany. Centuries-old cultivated and refined grapevines are gone in a wisp of smoke. Producers are bankrupted, unemployment skyrockets and consumers are deprived of their life-sustaining nectar.

What caused this devastation? And what was the ultimate solution?

The Cause: A tiny aphid insect, the Phylloxera Vastatrix ("the devastator" in Latin), began infesting French grapevines in the mid-1850s. Thousands of Phylloxera invaded the roots of plants, weakening grapevines and making them susceptible to fatal diseases.

Once satiated, the Phylloxera moved on to the next feast – leaving no physical trail. Farmers were confounded, unable to identify Phylloxera as the culprit. In a vain attempt to remove the "poison" in the vineyards, farmers flooded vineyards, spread chemicals, even buried live toads

under each grapevine. All to no avail.

A decade later, the cause of the devastation is identified. For years, the French had been importing American grapevine rootstock for analysis and possible hybridization. Little did they know these vines carried the Phylloxera across the ocean. They didn't understand that, whereas American rootstock had developed a resistance to Phylloxera, the native French vines had no such tolerance.

As the American rootstock was transported throughout France for experimentation, the Phylloxera was carried along. The invasion began and spread inexorably.

The Solution: In a manner worthy of an episode of CSI: Bordeaux, the source of the blight was traced to the Phylloxera carried on the American plants. The French are incensed at the crude Americans for allowing this to happen and tensions mount.

Then a solution is proposed: graft French grapevines onto the American rootstock and replant the vineyards with these hybrid plants.

Sacre bleu! What will this incongruous coupling accomplish? The uniqueness of French grape varieties will be preserved and the resistant American rootstock will

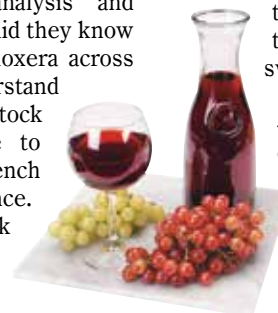
save the French wine industry.

So now the French are once again incensed. The rogues that caused the problem are now bearers of the solution. Future French wines would be produced in an incestuous relationship with the inferior American vines. The French nation would have to acknowledge its gratitude for the survival of its beloved wines to the very culprits that wiped out their vineyards. This was hard to swallow.

But swallow they did. Slowly – very slowly. Nearly a half-century after the invasion of Phylloxera (and one million graftings later), the wine industry in France and across Western Europe flourished once again – but with the nagging knowledge of the American presence in the soil and soul of their vineyards.

To this day, your glass of French wine may have American roots.

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



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Students Emerge as Leaders During COVID-19 Through Service Learning

As learning has gone virtual to curb the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, educators and parents have been left with a pressing concern: How will this experience impact social and emotional development?

"The pandemic is having profound effects on children's mental well-being, their social development, their safety, their privacy, their economic security and beyond," a policy brief by the United Nations stated. "While children are not the face of this pandemic, its broader impacts on children risk being catastrophic and amongst the most lasting consequences for societies as a whole."

While maintaining progress in core subject areas is imperative, a curriculum that develops leadership skills is equally essential to ensure that emotional development continues virtually.

An independent research study commissioned by Lead4Change found that students who completed the Lead4Change Student Leadership Program experienced tangible emotional growth. The program involves lessons in leadership, as well as creating and implementing team projects to



meet a need in the community.

Those that completed the program experienced significant changes in leadership skills (60 percent of students improved), respect for others (54 percent) and ambition and innovation (53

percent). Programs of this nature can be completed virtually by adapting projects to address current concerns, and they can not only succeed without physical contact, but offer unique challenges that help students to

grow as leaders.

Students at Mohave High School in Bullhead City, Ariz. reconsidered their project when quarantine began, creating a read-aloud library of developmentally appropriate books for preschoolers. With high schoolers reading preschoolers books and teaching them literacy and social development skills, this resource allowed an early childhood program to continue virtually.

"The students developed a can-do attitude while working collaboratively to adapt to their new normal," said teacher Michele Leyendecker. "With so much uncertainty, this project truly gave them purpose."

The "T-Bird Readers" team was awarded Lead4Change's grand prize, a \$10,000 grant for a nonprofit of their choice.

In Garner, N.C., students participated in service learning and emerged as community leaders by directly addressing the local impact of the pandemic. The Corona Relief Crew collaborated with volunteers and vendors to create and distribute kits with essential food and supplies for the homeless and those in nursing homes who

have been severely impacted by the pandemic.

"Being an adult leader for the Corona Relief Crew has caused a paradigm shift in how I view youth strength and their ability to lead," educator Dr. Cleopatra Lacewell said. "This experience has taught me when students have well-organized plans, identified goals and established team structures they can then perform as stellar leaders with minimum support."

The Corona Relief Crew was also honored with Lead4Change's \$10,000 grand prize for their initiative. For more information about the Lead4Change Student Leadership Program, visit lead4change.org.

While distance learning's impact on students' education has been unprecedented, this disruption also has presented a unique opportunity for students to overcome obstacles and grow as leaders. With a service-learning project, students can gain a sense of purpose, lead real change in their local community and maintain a sense of unity that is integral during challenging times.

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Keeping Children Safe Online This School Year

Between schoolwork, socialization and gaming, children will likely be online more than ever this year, especially with many students continuing to learn remotely.

Families are yet again facing the challenge of ensuring children's online usage is balanced, healthy and safe. Here are a few of the issues around increased screen time:

- **Disrupted sleep.** According to the National Sleep Foundation, blue light emitted from electronic devices disrupts quality shuteye, as it can delay the release of melatonin, a natural sleep hormone. Over time, compromised sleep can create a number of physical and mental health concerns.
- **Safety threats.** With kids online more hours a day and less supervised than they would be during a typical school day, online predators have taken advantage of the situation. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Cyber Tipline reported a notable surge in complaints.
- **Mental health issues.** The physical separation from friends, teachers and the classroom has created new mental health challenges for students, not all of which remote learning can



completely address. With many adults and kids alike experiencing "Zoom fatigue," maintaining motivation throughout the school year will be even more challenging than in a typical year. Excessive online usage can also increase exposure to cyberbullying and ultimately lead to other mental health

issues, such as anxiety and depression. Despite these new challenges, there are many steps parents can take to help children strike a healthy balance with their screen time for a happier, more successful school year.

- **Set a schedule.** A typical school day includes natural breaks. Families can

recreate this at home with scheduled time for kids to walk around, stretch and get fresh air between assignments.

- **Monitor online usage.** With parents themselves busy during the day, monitoring what children are doing online is a challenge in many cases, and impossible in others. However, screen time management solutions for parents, such as OurPact from Eтури Corp., can prove a valuable tool in keeping children productive and safe. Using the app, parents can set schedules, grant access to needed sites, create daily screen time allowances, block inappropriate content and apps and monitor internet use.
- **Have a conversation.** Families should have an open dialogue about healthy digital habits. Parents can back up these conversations by setting a good example with their own device usage.

With the boost in online usage come new health and wellness challenges. At the same time, parents can help their children navigate the remote-learning environment by taking steps to promote healthy digital habits.

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Westchester Expands Program to Prevent Domestic Violence

Westchester County is creating an expanded crisis intervention team that will identify families at highest risk of deadly domestic violence and intervene to save lives by providing immediate support and services.

The Westchester County Domestic Violence High Risk Team, which is already at work in several parts of the county, will expand its work countywide and continue to pioneer a multiagency, collaborative approach to preventing lethal family violence.

At the heart of the expanded effort is a Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) and 24-hour hotline. These tools will enable police departments, county agencies and service providers to immediately identify persons and families at high risk of being

murdered or seriously harmed by an intimate partner or other family member. A safety plan and services will be provided promptly to these victims to reduce the odds that deadly violence might occur.

"The implementation of a high-risk team in Westchester County is an integral step in reducing lethality and risk of serious harm to victims of family violence," said Robi Schlaff, director of the county's Office for Women. "To be harmed by someone that is supposed to love and protect you is unfathomable to most, but it is a reality throughout the world, regardless of race, ethnicity, income or gender. It is only by working together that we can change this reality."

County Executive George Latimer said

the high-risk team will be coordinated by the Office for Women, which will collect data and ensure compliance by all partners with their roles and responsibilities. Enhanced training in lethality assessment will be offered to all county law enforcement agencies at the Westchester County Police Academy. The training will be incorporated into the academy's curriculum for new recruits as well as in the in-service training program provided to veteran police officers.

Public Safety Commissioner Thomas A. Gleason said LAP gives police officers a practical tool they can use to assess the level of risk when they respond to a domestic incident.

"There is nothing theoretical about the potential for deadly family violence," Gleason said. "We have suffered these tragedies in Westchester. We know all too well that it can happen here, because it has happened here. No one wants it to happen again."

LAP begins with a simple but effective set of 11 questions. The answers to those questions guide an officer in assessing the level of immediate danger.

Under the expanded program, Westchester Medical Center will staff an emergency hotline 24/7 to be informed of high-risk cases. Advocates will provide immediate assistance to these victims, including crisis intervention, safety planning and referrals for emergency housing and other critical services.

The service providers on the high-risk team will train hotline staff and other advocates in high-risk response and protocols, follow

up with high-risk victims within 24 hours and obtain victims' consent to obtain critical services for them.

The legal services providers will assist victims in a range of civil family law matters including child custody and support, immigration assistance and obtaining orders of protection. The Probation Department and district attorney's office will work with victims to ensure offender accountability and assist in creating related training for the law enforcement community.

The expanded high-risk team will incorporate the Northern Westchester Domestic Violence High Risk Team, which operates in a number of communities. Law enforcement in those towns, as well as in the City of White Plains, already utilizes LAP.

Partners in the high-risk team include the Westchester County Office for Women, Westchester County Department of Public Safety, Westchester County Probation Department, Westchester County District Attorney's Office, Westchester Medical Center, Hope's Door, My Sister's Place, Putnam/Northern Westchester Women's Resource Center, Westchester Community Opportunity Program/Victims Assistance Services, Legal Services of Hudson Valley, and the Elizabeth S. Haub School of Law at Pace University/Women's Justice Center. Other County agencies such as the Departments of Social Services and Community Mental Health are resources for the team.

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Empire City Casino Announces Sept. 21 Reopening Date

Empire City Casino by MGM Resorts announced Wednesday that it will reopen with limited capacity on Monday, Sept. 21 at 10 a.m. after being closed for six months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Upon re-opening, attendance will be capped at 25 percent capacity under regulations set by the New York State Gaming Commission. There will also be restrictions on food and beverage availability.

Bill Hornbuckle, CEO and president of MGM Resorts, said health and safety for Empire City's patrons and employees is the top priority.

"This has been an unimaginably difficult and challenging time, and as we reopen our doors and welcome back team members and guests, we owe our gratitude to all health care and essential workers and those providing resources to the community," Hornbuckle said. "It's been several months since we were forced to close, so it is with strong emotion that we welcome our team members back to work. Health and safety remain our first priority, and our commitment to New York has never been stronger."

MGM Resorts' comprehensive Seven-Point Safety Plan is a complex set of protocols and procedures designed in conjunction with medical and scientific experts to mitigate the spread of the virus, protect customers and employees and rapidly respond to potential new COVID-19 cases. As time passes, the company will continue to evaluate and evolve its safety protocols.

Key initiatives from the plan and protocols specific to Empire City include:



Empire City Casino will reopen to patrons next Monday, Sept. 21 but there will be limited capacity.

- Employee screening, temperature checks and COVID-19 specific training
- Guest screening and temperature checks with limited casino entrance points
- Masks required in all areas for employees and guests (and provided free of charge)
- Physical distancing policy for all guests and employees
- Physical barriers installed in areas where distancing presents challenges
- Standalone handwashing stations designed by MGM Resorts and conveniently located on the casino floor
- Increased and enhanced routine cleaning based on CDC guidance, with electrostatic sprayers utilized in many large public areas to apply disinfectant efficiently
- Restaurant digital menus available to view on personal mobile devices via QR codes
- Virtual waiting lists for restaurant guests with text message notification when tables are ready
- MGM Resorts has compiled an internal team and processes to respond if a guest or employee tests positive for COVID-19. If a guest tests positive after visiting an MGM property, they are asked to alert the company through a special e-mail address (covid19@mgmresorts.com). The company will immediately report any positive test results to the local health department.

A glimpse at what guests can expect:

- Gaming: Empire City's gaming floor of

slots and electronic table games will be open. To promote physical distancing, numerous machines have been disabled and chairs have been removed.

- Dining: The Pub, Empire City Chophouse and The Big Kitchen international food court will be open for dining. Food and beverage are prohibited on the gaming floor.
- Bars and Beverage Service: In accordance with state guidelines, bars on the property will remain closed and beverage service on the casino floor is not permitted.
- Yonkers Raceway: Live racing resumed at Yonkers Raceway in June, and will continue to follow a revised racing schedule without spectators. State guidelines prohibit on-property wagering at this time.
- Property Entrance: Entrance to the property will be limited to the Yonkers Avenue entrance. The Central Avenue general parking entrance and Clark Street valet entrance will remain closed.
- Parking/Valet: Complementary self-parking will be available for guests; valet parking and shuttle service will not be operational at this time.

Hosted, invitation-only access will be available to certain MLife members ahead of Sept. 21.

For a full list of offerings, visit empirecitycasino.com. Empire City will continue to work closely with medical experts and state officials to determine how to safely and appropriately offer more amenities and entertainment to guests when possible.

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