Carmel resident Robert Chapman boasted about his involvement in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol on the dating app Bumble and his match turned him into the FBI, according to a federal affidavit.

Chapman, who also bragged on Facebook, is the latest Hudson Valley resident to be arrested for his part in storming the Capitol, an attack that resulted in five fatalities. He was charged in White Plains Federal Court on Thursday with knowingly entering or remaining on restricted government property without lawful authority.

In addition, he is charged with violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds.

According to the criminal complaint, Chapman unprompted told the person he matched with on Jan. 13 “I did storm the Capitol and made it all the way to Statuary Hall.” He then added how he participated in interviews with The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal about it.

His match responded, “We are not a match.”

The individual then provided screenshots of the conversation and Chapman’s Bumble profile to law enforcement. After reviewing body-camera footage from the Metropolitan Police Department recorded the day of the insurrection, federal officials were able to confirm an individual who appeared to be Chapman was located inside Statuary Hall, the complaint states.

In the video, Chapman is seen filming the activity inside the Capitol on his phone, officials reported.

The FBI was also alerted to a Facebook post published a day after the attacks in which a user shared an image of Chapman inside the Capitol wearing the same jacket and multi-colored bandana he was sporting in the police footage.

According to the complaint, Facebook user Lisa Jeanne Vunk stated: “My Dear friend and BroStar Robert made it in the Capitol and we’re able to collect four large bags of trash. The Carmel Town Highway Department disposed of the trash. (L to R): Carmel-Kent Lions Frank Mueller, Lorraine Cheney, and Mike Tiren with bags of trash they collected along Lake Gleneida and on Route 301.

His match responded, “Much deserved entertainment,” according to Chapman’s Bumble match.

Robert Chapman posided inside the Capitol in Washington D.C.

In the comments on the Facebook post, an individual with the username Robert Erick – who officials believe is Chapman – responded to the critical comments: “Lisa Jeanne Vunk these are your peers? Colleagues? They are a bunch of little bitch trolls. Keyboard warriors who don’t do a f—-n thing.”

The same public Facebook profile linked to Chapman also published a Jan. 6 post saying; “I’M F—-N INSIDE THE CRAPITOL!!!”

Another Facebook post made two days prior to the insurrection stated that Chapman was getting out of New York “Sh-tty” to travel to the “District of Criminality” to enjoy some “much deserved entertainment,” according to the affidavit.

Chapman subsequently posted three photos of himself in various areas within the Capitol, including Statuary Hall, on his Facebook page, making one of them his profile photo. Chapman’s profile picture was changed to a photo of him flashing a peace sign in front of a painting inside Statuary Hall, officials reported.

Chapman was previously arrested in New York in 2017 for undisclosed charges, according to officials. State police and federal officials were able to collaborate to successfully identify Chapman.

Court documents state Chapman was released on bail, with a preliminary hearing scheduled for May 19.

Chapman is among the latest in hundreds of people – and about a dozen in the Hudson Valley – arrested for their part in storming the Capitol.

The fate of a proposed noise ordinance in Putnam Valley is unknown as residents were once again divided on the town’s third revision of the law.

Residents continued to remain in opposition of the proposal as the latest revision went before a third public hearing last week. Some argued the decibel limit is too high and would restrict folks from having parties and normal conversation while others asserted the law still isn’t strong enough to implement and enforce.

The one element residents did agree on was how the Town Board needed to revisit the proposal to make additional changes.

“I have parties at my house, and I respect everybody; and I have lots of parties, but we keep them in control and make noise, but we don’t blast music too much,” resident Stacy Tompkins said at the April 21 hearing. “I think my point is, where is this going? Where is the line drawn? The decibel limit is extremely low. I think we really need to seriously look at it again and I’m seriously against it.”

Officials have been striving to amend the town’s noise code for several months after receiving numerous complaints last year.
Brewster High Senior Heading to West Point in Fall

Brewster High School senior Macie Marinich is headed to the United States Military Academy at West Point in the fall. Marinich was accepted to the academy after going through a rigorous application process that included nominations from U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney following interviews with each of their selection committees.

She recently did a Q&A with her school about what brought her to this point and what he future holds.

What was your initial reaction when you learned you were accepted?

“I was definitely excited, but I was calmer than I expected. It was almost as though after all of the anticipation, hard work, and waiting, I was finally able to take a breath and relax. The application process was challenging, because I needed to pass a physical exam, get a nomination from a New York State senator, and also take the regular college application steps, so it was truly a feeling of relief to know that all of the work I had put in had finally paid off.”

What do you have a favorite class and/or teacher?

“All of my teachers were amazing, and I would have a long list if I tried to name everyone who affected my life along the way, but Mr. (Larry) Maggiotto, Mr. (Tom) Mullaney, and my ski coach, Mr. (Michael) Bellano, had the most influence throughout my time at BHS.

I had Mr. Maggiotto as a math teacher for three years of high school, and he is so passionate about math that it is contagious, so his classes were always very engaging.

I had Mr. Mullaney as a teacher for two years, and he was also the advisor of Model UN for my three years in the club. He knows so much about history, especially little fun facts, so his classes played a large role in developing my interest in social studies.

Mr. Bellano was my coach on the Varsity Ski Team for six years and he has always been an encouraging and supportive coach for all of the athletes on the team.”

Do you have a favorite school-related memory?

“My favorite school-related memory would probably be one of the Model UN trips to Washington D.C. We spent a lot of time in committee sessions, working with other delegates and writing papers, but we were also able to tour the city and see the national monuments on our free time. I was lucky enough to meet people from all over the world and collaborate with them in committee, and I am still friends with some of them today. The trips really resonated with me because of the people involved in Model UN and the close-knit bonds we formed while at these conferences.”

Carmel Man Charged in U.S. Capitol Riot after Boasting

Valley – to be charged with partaking in the mob of Trump supporters that attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6 while Congress was in the midst of certifying President Joe Biden’s election win. The breach caused widespread damage and sent the nation’s capital into lockdown.

The riot, which started after former President Donald Trump claimed the 2020 presidential election was rigged, also resulted in five fatalities.

Following the attacks, hundreds of photos were released by the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia and the FBI in a mass effort to identify suspects. Former Metro-North worker Wil Pepe, Mahopac resident Robert Ballestros and Armonk resident Brain Gundersen are among some locals that have already been charged.

While Gundersen was seen in a still photo on a television newscast wearing his Byram Hills football jacket during the riot, Pepe was turned into the FBI after his employers saw footage of him infiltrating the Capitol on the same day he called in sick to work. Ballestros was arrested after federal officials were notified that he posted a video of himself on Instagram inside the Capitol during the riot.

The FBI is asking anyone who recognizes someone from the wanted posters or who witnessed any of Wednesday’s activity to call 1-800-CALL-FBI (1-800-225-5324) or submit information online here.

Brewer HS senior Macie Marinich

Do you have any advice for other students?

“My best advice for other students would be to stay busy, but stay organized. I found that the more activities, sports, or difficult academic classes that I was in, the less time I had to procrastinate or waste time. It was helpful for me to have a specific scheduled time for sports practices, schoolwork, and even relaxing. Once you get into a routine, it becomes easier to repeat the same good habits every day and I found that I was most productive when I developed good habits like these. I also made my bed every morning, and though it sounds trivial, I think it started my days off in the right way.”

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

“In 10 years, I’m not certain where I’ll be. However, I do know that I want to be serving the United States in some way. I am hoping that in my years at West Point, I will figure out exactly how I can do that best.”

PV Residents Oppose Latest Noise Ordinance Proposal

continued from page 1

of neighbors being disruptive and blasting music for hours at a time. The current noise law doesn’t address daytime sound and fails to place a penalty on those who violate the code.

Furthermore, the code doesn’t have a decibel limit, which has restricted law enforcement officers and deputies from effectively enforcing the law.

Despite efforts made by the Town Board, residents have continuously panned each revision officials have presented to the public. Residents chastised the original proposal for being too strict, pressuring it would violate their rights and limit their actions.

The board was concerned for not being strict enough, with residents stating that the revision was open to interpretation and would have allowed people to continue to disrupt their neighbors.

The new proposal states that between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m., prolonged noise levels of 70 decibels or more on any given day would be prohibited. The ordinance would apply to revving cars, loud music, artificially amplified voices, or artificially amplified sound producing devices.

Additionally, noise levels exceeding 60 decibels between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m. would be prohibited.

While the remainder of the noise ordinance would remain intact, daytime exemptions to the law would include ongoing construction, yard maintenance, yard and construction mechanisms and tools, air conditioners, generators, snow-blowers, hand tools, chain saws, land and or watercraft that are not stationary, and one-day celebratory events, such as birthday parties and holiday gatherings.

The ordinance would include ongoing construction, yard and construction mechanisms and tools, air conditioners, generators, snow-blowers, hand tools, chain saws, land and or watercraft that are not stationary, and one-day celebratory events, such as birthday parties and holiday gatherings.

Additional exemptions would consist of air conditioners, generators, all moving land vehicles, tools needed during a weather or national emergency, and one-day celebratory events, including birthday parties and federal holiday parties.

For birthday parties and/or holiday parties, the noise restrictions would be imposed at 8 p.m., the proposal states.

The municipality and utilities also would be exempted from all restrictions if it involves necessary maintenance, repairs, and any emergency response during a weather event or national emergency.

Violators would be subject to a fine of up to $500 for each offense, imprisonment of up to 15 days, or both. The town would also be authorized to seek injunctive relief to prevent the continued violation.

While board members have previously expressed concern that neighborhoods could still be disrupted on any given day with birthday parties and holiday gatherings an exception within the law, residents in favor of passing a noise ordinance want to see that scrapped from the proposal.

“For the one-day celebration I don’t think it should be in there at all as an exception,” Gary Larson said. “I still don’t think that any kind of celebration at all should have an unlimited decibel level. I still think there should be a decibel limit on parties.”

Mario DiCangi agreed, stating the one-day celebration exception isn’t a good idea moving forward. Larson advised board members to mirror noise ordinances in neighboring municipalities instead of continuing to alter the same contentious proposal.

Town Supervisor Sam Oliverio said the proposal would be up for discussion at the town’s May 5 Pre-Work Session meeting, adding how the board has listened to both sides of the issue and is trying to reach a “happy medium.” He alluded that people would be upset no matter what law becomes enacted.

“No matter what law becomes enacted, there’s always going to be people upset by it,” Oliverio said. “We’re trying to reach a popular consensus where it does what it’s supposed to do, which is provide protection for those being harassed by sound but at the same time allow our citizens and our residents to go about their daily lives without being interrupted.”
Activities, Capacities Increase Along With Vaccination Rates Statewide

By Martin Wilbur

As strong progress has been made in the past couple of weeks in reducing COVID-19 infection rates and increasing vaccinations, state and Westchester County officials are planning to increase outdoor activities and capacities.

On Sunday, New York State registered a 2.39 positivity rate, the 12th consecutive day that the state has been below 3 percent. This followed Friday and Saturday where the infection rate dipped to pre-holiday season levels of 1.8 and 1.9 percent, respectively.

Statewide hospitalizations from the coronavirus dipped on Sunday to about 3,100, the lowest since Thanksgiving, and the 729 COVID-19 patients in intensive care and 434 intubations also represent lows not seen since the week after Thanksgiving.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo welcomed the upbeat news, but cautioned that it shouldn’t mean residents stop taking precautions, including mask wearing and social distancing, whenever possible.

“The 2.39 is great progress in reducing the positivity rate of COVID, but the fact that 41 New Yorkers passed away (on Sunday) also makes a point that we’re not out of the woods, and people are still dying, so take it seriously,” Cuomo said.

As a result of the progress made in recent weeks, Cuomo announced Monday that the New York State Fair in Syracuse will be held this year from Aug. 20 to Sept. 6 at 50 percent capacity.

He also announced that outdoor stadium capacity can increase from 20 to 33 percent; offices from 50 to 75 percent; casinos from 25 to 50 percent and gyms and health clubs from 33 to 50 percent.

At the county level, Bicycle Sundays will resume this weekend along the Bronx River Parkway from White Plains to Scarsdale from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Those will run every Sunday through October, except for May 30, July 4 and Sept. 6.

However, fireworks programs at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla on July 3 and Playland on July 4 will not take place. The popular cultural heritage festivals will also not occur on July 4 and Sept. 6.

Similar to the state level, the decline in COVID-19 hospitalizations in Westchester has been encouraging.

County Executive George Latimer said Monday that active cases have fallen by nearly 1,000 for the second week in a row, down to 3,208. Since Apr. 12, cases have fallen more than 1,900, from 5,128. COVID-19-related hospitalizations as of last Saturday were 131, and there were just four deaths during the past week, including four days where there were no fatalities, Latimer said.

He said he was hopeful that the hospitalizations will fall under 100 in the next week or so and active cases dip under 3,000.

Vaccinations across Westchester continue to surge, although there is some concern that vaccination rates will plateau at a number that will not enable the county or the state to reach herd immunity. The state continues to loosen requirements for the vaccine. Last week Latimer and Cuomo appeared together in Yonkers to announce that people at least 60 years old can show up at the Yonkers Armory for a vaccination without an appointment.

Since vaccinations began in January, 352,743 people in Westchester have completed their series, and about 490,000 have had at least one dose, Latimer said.

“We believe that is the path out of this pandemic and that is through vaccination,” he said.

Latimer said there is a path to getting at least 60 percent vaccinated in Westchester given the amount of demand that remains, but will wait and see how much beyond 3,000.

“There are still targeted groups that haven’t been fully activated and I think that will happen,” he said of the 60 percent threshold. “We probably will be in a better position in about a month from now as we approach the Memorial Day weekend to really have a hard estimate about how far we can get voluntarily.”

Over the weekend, federal health officials announced that starting Tuesday the Johnson & Johnson one-dose vaccine will be available. The Putnam County Department of Health will be using the Johnson & Johnson and Moderna vaccines at a site in Garrison on Tuesday and a clinic in Brewster on Thursday. Anyone at least 18 years old who lives, works or attends school in New York is eligible.

To sign up, visit https://www.putnamcountyny.com/covid-19-vaccine-information/.

“From homebound residents to college students nearing the end of their semesters, rolling up their sleeves for a single dose has helped to keep individuals safe as well as contributed to the overall vaccination rates in the county,” said Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell. We are glad the processes in place to ensure vaccine safety worked and now we can keep Putnam healthy and moving in the right direction.”

According to the state tracker, 48 percent of Putnam residents have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Putnam is slightly ahead of the statewide average of 44 percent.
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To register, call the Alzheimer’s Association at 800.272.3900.

This advertisement is supported in part by a grant from the New York State Department of Health.
Mt. Kisco Unveils Westchester’s First Community Solar Storage Project

By Martin Wilbur

The Village of Mount Kisco celebrated Earth Day last Thursday by cutting the ribbon on Westchester’s first municipal community solar and battery storage project on a capped landfill to help support renewable energy.

Generating 575 kilowatts, the repurposed 1.5-acre parcel at the end of Columbus Avenue, which had laid fallow for more than two decades until the 1,750-solar panel array was installed late last year, now generates energy for more than 100 customers in the village.

Mayor Gina Picinich, who hosted a wind-blown press conference at the site, said the village is happy to do its part in helping New York State reach its goal of being powered by 70 percent renewable energy by 2030.

“Everyone has a part to play, an important part in all of this, to ensure that we meet not just those goals but that we do what is right in order to ensure that we can live onward in a clean planet,” Picinich said.

The village partnered with BQ Energy, a Wappingers Falls-based company that specializes in using brownfields sites and capped landfills for wind turbine and solar projects, and Sustainable Westchester, which performed community outreach and enrolled subscribers. Technical expertise was provided by the NY-Sun team at the New York State Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA), which provided about $900,000 in solar and energy storage incentives for the initiative. The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) performed the comprehensive solar assessment for the site.

Mount Kisco is receiving $100,000 a year in its lease agreement with BQ Energy for the land over the next 25 years, Picinich said.

Paul Curran, BQ Energy’s managing director, said what has made this project unique for the company and in Westchester are the use of battery units that are able to store energy and release it when there is more demand, such as in peak consumption days in summer or if there happens to be a stretch of time when the sun isn’t shining brightly. It also allows storage of excess energy for the grid.

It is a model that will be replicated across the region, state and nation with solar projects in the years ahead, he said.

“It makes renewable energy usable for the people of Mount Kisco, for people in the area, but also for the grid in general,” Curran said. “It’s an incredibly important landmark that can be replicated and that is something that renewable energy really needs to do.”

NY Green Bank provided a $2.27 million loan for the project.

Although many renewable energy projects slowed because of the pandemic, David Sandbank, vice president of distributed energy services for NYSERDA, said it oversaw more projects in 2020 than in any other year. He said turning a landfill that was no longer of value to anyone provide energy, help the environment and provide local governments with an additional revenue source makes it a benefit to everyone.

Another advantage is that it’s community solar, said Sandbank, which can also provide homeowners who don’t live in areas that are conducive to having their own panels and renters to participate.

“We’re sending price signals to projects like these, and we’re saying, hey, if you can produce electricity when the grid needs it the most, we’re going to pay you more for it,” Sandbank said. “Sometimes that’s when the sun’s not shining, sometimes that’s when the sun goes down, so we’re sending price signals to this particular project right here, and they’re able to create, to generate more income just by having that battery storage, they’re providing the grid with the electricity when it needs it the most.”

As of last October, there were 417 renewable projects on contaminated lands across the United States under the Repowering America initiative, said Walter Mudgan, EPA acting regional administrator for Region 2, which includes New York. Of those, 245 solar installations have been placed on landfills and landfill bugger areas, he said.

In New York, the EPA has assessed nearly 50 sites, almost all of them landfills. Six are operational, including Mount Kisco, which went on line late last year, and a seventh will be running this summer, Mudgan said.

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Mt. Pleasant IDA Approves Incentives for E-Commerce Distribution Center

The Mount Pleasant Industrial Development Agency (IDA) last week approved about $3.8 million in sales tax exemptions for the construction of a 153,062-square-foot e-commerce distribution center located at 211 Saw Mill River Rd. (Route 9A) in Hawthorne.

The project, which received approval at the IDA’s Apr. 21 meeting, represents total private investment of more than $99 million. According to the developer, USRE Hawthorne LLC, the project is expected to create 100 full-time and part-time jobs as well as 1,000 construction jobs during the course of the building of the structure. The project will also generate additional tax revenue on a property that has been historically underutilized.

The developer is not seeking a mortgage recording tax exemption or a payment in lieu of taxes agreement for the project.

“The IDA is pleased to provide incentives for this important project which represents a significant private investment in our town,” said Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi, who serves as chairman of the IDA, said in a statement. “In addition to creating much-needed new jobs, it will also generate tax revenue for the town and school district without adding any new students and will contribute toward road improvements to Route 9A. This is win-win for the town and school district.”

Fulgenzi said that the facility will pay full property taxes estimated at more than $1.5 million a year when completed. The project will be on the stie of the old Green Valley Nursery. The town’s Planning Board granted site plan approval last July.

The one-story distribution center, which is located on 10.475 acres, will consist of 136,214 square feet of warehouse space, 16,848 square feet of office space, 181 passenger car parking spaces, 597 van parking spaces, 12 truck-loading spaces and 62 van-loading spaces at grade.

In addition to significant onsite improvements, the developer is in the permitting stages with the state Department of Transportation to construct a traffic signal on Route 9A at Belmont Road and a left-hand turning lane from the south, which serves both the proposed project and the existing NYSCO Products building.

The proposed road improvements will create needed traffic flow and traffic calming measures for motorists on the busy corridor.

Dain’s Lumber to Hold Deck & Railing Sale All Month in May

Dain’s Lumber, serving homeowners and contractors since 1848, will be holding its May Deck & Railing Sale throughout the month of May.

Vendor Kickoff Weekend is May 1-2 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Deck experts and contractors will be available to answer all of your questions. Vendors from the top-rated brands will be on-site, including Fiberon, TimberTech/Azek, Trex, Zuri, Moisture Shield and Atlantis Cable Systems.

A newly-redesigned 2,500-square-foot outdoor deck display with more than 80 colors and styles is open 24/7. For information on the sale and show, call 914-737-2000 or visit www.dainslumber.com. Dain’s Lumber is located at 2 N. Water St. in Peekskill.

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P’ville Board of Education Approves Budget With Flat Tax Rate

By Abby Luby

The Pleasantville Board of Education approved the district’s $53.8 million budget for 2021-22 last week, providing homeowners with a zero percent tax increase for the second straight year and a tax levy hike of about .6 percent.

The $53,834,774 budget increases spending just over $1 million from last year.

The district was able to achieve another flat tax rate by factoring in some of the $623,483 in Foundation Aid, the first part of the state funds owed the district. The remainder of the district’s outstanding Foundation Aid that it is owed is expected from the state in a three-year phase-in: $875,943 in 2022-23 and $876,012 in 2023-24.

To maintain the flat tax rate, $100,000 was added from fund balance.

“Some of the money from the state Foundation Aid will go directly into the budget, which we propose to use to lower the tax levy,” said Tim Whipple, budget, which we propose to use to lower the tax levy,” said Tim Whipple, assistant superintendent of business.

“I think it’s going to be a win-win situation. It will benefit all students,” said board President Michael Horan.

Fox-Alter said.

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To maintain the flat tax rate, $100,000 was added from fund balance.

“The decision of how to use the federal funds will be decided by the wider school community and the public at a later time,” Fox-Alter said.

“Of the two new academic and extended learning support teachers, one will work with students in grades K-4 and the other with grades 5-8. The certified teaching assistant with a bilingual background will help high school English Language Learners.

“The Foundation Aid increase to pay for the new positions will add $280,406 to the budget to cover employee salary and benefits. Another $220,845 was added to pay for additional counseling from Student Assistance Services (SAS) five days a week, up from one day a week this year, a full demographic and enrollment study, and middle-school ventilation improvements.

Next year’s proposed budget also includes other program enhancements such as funds to support staff development for teachers during the summer; more summer school opportunities to help close student learning gaps; Tru-Touch Displays in all classrooms; additional portable devices for grades 2-4; and ClassLink software – Single Sign-On technology for multiple applications.

Last week, school officials briefly discussed using the funds for student health and mental services, a summer learning program, an after-school program and an in-depth study of student needs. The monies could also be used to repair and replace HVAC systems and replace about 13 unit ventilators at the middle school.

The decision of how to use the federal funds will be decided by the wider school community and the public at a later time. The mandatory public hearing on the budget is May 4, followed by the public vote and Board of Education election on May 18.

Area Board of Education Races

Pleasantville will have a contested school board race next month. While President Lawrence Boes will be leaving the board, Vice President Emily Rubin Persons will see re-election. Challengers Michael Busch and Sara Hukkanen will also be on the ballot in the face for two seats.

Other contested races are in Bedford and Chappaqua. Bedford has four candidates for two available seats, including current incumbent Michael Bauscher. Namasha Schelling, Steven Matlin and Robert Mazaruk are the challengers. President Collette Dow will be retiring from the board.

In Chappaqua, the candidates are Ellen Exum and Cailee Hwang for one available seat. Vice President Holly McCall is running for New Castle supervisor and will leave the school board.

Mount Pleasant and Byram Hills will see uncontested races. The three incumbents in Mount Pleasant, Michael Griffin, Michael Horan and President Colleen Scaglione Neglia are the only candidates on the ballot for three seats.

Byram Hills incumbent Scott Levy seeks a third term on the board and will be joined on the ballot by Petrie Verma. Incumbent Michael Sanders will not run for re-election.
Florine Eisele

Florine “Peggy” Eisele, 98, entered the Lord’s kingdom at the Vermont Veterans Home surrounded by her family on Apr. 13. She was born to Julian and Lena “Dixie” (Ward) Smith in Norfolk, Va. The family moved to Peekskill. After college in New York City and the beginning of World War II, she answered the call to service and joined the U.S. Navy. In 1942, Peggy attended the Naval War College in Rhode Island and went on to serve as a cryptographer stationed at Pearl Harbor for which she was awarded a commendation for her service with the U.S. Naval Communications Intelligence Organization. Peggy was always proud of her military service.

After the war, she met and married Edward Eisele, also of Peekskill. Peggy and Ed raised their family in Millwood. She was a member of the PTA of the Bedford Elementary School and was a regular at the Bedford Autism Spectrum Support Parent Teachers Association (SEPTO) Central School District, Special Education Program in the Bedford Central School District. Peggy was a master’s from Teachers College of Columbia University in Manhattan. She was a member of the Children’s Health Defense and fought tirelessly for vaccine safety and the vaccine was nothing short of exceptional when it came to advocating not only for her sons, but endless children and young adults on the autism spectrum. She singlehandedly changed the lives of many families, encouraging them to look at autism as a different and wonderful way to approach life, not as something tragic. Katie was passionate about her work with the Children’s Health Defense and fought endlessly for vaccine safety and the vaccine injured. She was an active member of our community, especially within the Bedford Central School District, Special Education Program, Bedford Autism Spectrum Support (BASS). She loved her town, Mount Kisco, and took great pride in being a part of the Beautification Committee. The flowers that will bloom in front of the library this spring are thanks to her efforts.

Visitation was held at Oelker-Cox & Sinai Funeral Home in Mount Kisco on Apr. 24. A memorial service will take place at a later date.

The Weisman family kindly asks that in lieu of flowers, a donation be made in Katie’s name to the Children’s Health Defense at https://childrenshealthdefense.org/annual-fellowship/. There is also a GoFundMe page set up to assist the family at https://gofund.me/f849c9b3.

Funeral arrangements are in care of the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home, 20 Church St., Saranac Lake, N.Y. 12983. There were no calling hours. Peggy was a member of St. Luke’s the Beloved Physician Episcopal Church in Saranac Lake. A funeral service will be held on Saturday, May 1 at 1 p.m. at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home with Reverend Andy Cruz-Lilligard officiating. Peggy will rest next to her husband in the Gale Cemetery in Piercfield immediately following the funeral service. COVID-19 safety protocols are in effect. All guests are required to wear a mask and maintain social distancing.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be sent to the Tri-Lakes Humane Society in care of the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home, 20 Church St., Saranac Lake, N.Y. 12983. Family and friends can also leave condolences and sign the online guest book at www.fortunekeoughfuneralhome.com.

Monsignor Dermot Brennan

Monsignor Dermot R. Brennan, pastor emeritus of St. Patrick’s parish in Yorktown, died Apr. 18. He was 90.

Born May 22, 1930, in New York City, Brennan was pastor of St. Patrick’s from 1965 until his retirement in 2005, when he became a resident at the John Cardinal O’Connor Pavilion of the St. John Vianney Priests’ Residence in the Bronx.

He also served as pastor of Our Lady of Victory parish in Mount Vernon (1980 to 1985) and was a former vicar of northern Westchester and Putnam counties.

Last year, a surprise birthday car parade was held May 22 for Brennan. About 150 cars joined the afternoon caravan in Yorktown. Parade participants came from St. Patrick’s and other area parishes Brennan had served.

He was a parochial vicar of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (1970 to 1980) and St. Peter’s in Liberty (1956 to 1958). He was a weekend associate of St. Margaret of Cortona and St. Gabriel, the Bronx. He served on the faculties of Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx and Bishop Dudois High School in Manhattan. He also served at the Juilliard School of Music.

Brennan earned a bachelor’s degree from St. Joseph’s Seminary in Yonkers and a master’s from Teachers College of Columbia University in Manhattan. He was ordained by Cardinal Francis Spellman at St. Patrick’s Cathedral on June 2, 1956. He was named a monsignor in 1990.


Visitation will be held on Tuesday, Apr. 27 from 4 to 7:30 p.m. and on Wednesday, Apr 28 from 9:30 to 11 a.m. at St. Patrick’s Church, 137 Moseman Rd. in Yorktown. A mass will be held on Tuesday, Apr. 27 at 7:30 p.m. at the same location.
By Martin Wilbur

For the second straight year, the Pleasantville Rotary Club was unable to hold its biggest fundraising event, Hudson Valley Fermented, a celebration of some of the region’s finest craft beer, spirits and wine. In 2021, however, the club is able to present a virtual event that promises to be fun for those who participate and raise critically important funds for local organizations that could use the help to support its programs.

Instead of holding Hudson Valley Fermented, which in 2019, raised about $45,000, Pleasantville Rotary is presenting Virtually Fermented, where two-thirds of the proceeds from sales of a mixed four-pack produced and distributed by Captain Lawrence Brewing Company will go toward the organizations. For every $30 four-pack that is sold, $20 will go toward the Rotary’s charitable causes that have been designated for the event.

Pleasantville Rotary President-elect Henry Leyva said two years ago the club was able to help more than a dozen organizations covering a variety of causes locally and internationally. Regular recipients have included Feeding Westchester, the Pleasantville Fund for Learning, the Community Scholarship Fund, Hope’s Door, which helps domestic violence victims, and many others.

“We’re not the only ones affected by COVID in that way,” Leyva said. “It just completely interrupted our fundraising process, so these organizations, especially the smaller ones, don’t get a lot of attention. Boy, the checks that we write for a thousand, $1,500 really makes a difference to them.”

To participate in the virtual tasting, people can register online and order the four-pack for $30. The pack will feature Hop Commander IPA, Jam Juice Hazy IPA, Orbital Tilt NEIPA and the Classic Lager. Deliveries can be made for $5 for anyone in Westchester with at least a $40 purchase.

For those who don’t want to pay extra for delivery or who only order one four-pack, they can pick up their order at Captain Lawrence’s main location in Elmsford. The four-packs are not available at its Mount Kisco location that opened last fall.

The virtual tasting is scheduled for 4 p.m. Leyva said the club is also partnering with Second Mouse Cheese Shop in Pleasantville, where its owner, Ivy Ronquillo, is putting together platters to pair with the four craft beer selections. Anyone interested in that, can also place their order on the Hudson Valley Fermented website.

The idea for the virtual tasting came about after the Rotary held its annual holiday fruit sale last year online, which took in more than $4,000. With Fermented not only being the biggest fundraiser but the most anticipated, the club wanted to find a way to hold a version of it this year, he said.

“It’s the first time we’re doing it this way,” Leyva said. “We’ve been marketing the heck out of it but we don’t know what it will turn into. But the main thing is just trying to make people aware that the event’s happening, that they can go to Captain Lawrence Brewing Company and purchase their beer to have it delivered to their house or they can pick it up at Captain Lawrence prior to the event on May 1.

After a difficult 13-plus months, Virtually Fermented could give people an opportunity to gather with family or a few friends outdoors in the yard, kick back and enjoy, Leyva said.

“It will be a great opportunity for folks to get together with friends and family in backyards, driveways or wherever they’re comfortable and enjoyed some delicious beer and help us raise money,” Leyva said.

To learn more about the event or to purchase the four-packs, visit www.hvfermented.com.
Letters to the Editor

Property Tax Circuit Breaker Was a Long Time Coming for Homeowners

There are many important provisions in this year’s state budget, including record funding for our schools, our environment and our health care system. I want to highlight a budget provision that has not gotten much attention: the property tax circuit breaker, totaling $382 million this year and helping more than one million middle class families.

As chair of the Assembly’s Real Property Taxation Committee, I know that too many families are struggling to keep up with rising property taxes. While we have programs like STAR and the property tax cap, they do not go far enough to provide relief. That is why, beginning in 2006, I introduced a property tax circuit breaker to relieve our tax burden. After 15 long years I can finally say this program is now law.

The credit will be available when you file your 2021 taxes next year. Qualifying individuals must reside at their current address for at least six months in the current tax year, enrolled in or eligible for the STAR program, spend more than 6 percent of their income on property taxes and make less than $250,000 in income. Credits will be up to 14 percent of the remaining property tax obligation, depending on income. Credits will be between $250 and $350. As this program is implemented, the state Tax Department will provide more information.

While this is a far cry from enough, it is a beginning. I am proud to have fought for this property tax relief and I know we can enhance the program in the coming years.

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef
95th Assembly District

Why Buchanan Intervened in Entergy’s Sale of Indian Point to Holtec

When the Indian Point closure agreement was made in January 2017, there were three men in the room – the governor, Riverkeeper and Entergy. The host community, the Village of Buchanan, had no say. There was no one in that room protecting or looking out for the interests of the village.

With the sale of Indian Point to Holtec, it was imperative that the Village of Buchanan have a seat at the table. It was all about protecting the village’s interests. In the River Journal, it was reported that “Trustee Murray criticized the village’s expenditure of more than $27,000 to file for intervener status,” and that “for a small village it was a waste of time and money.”

Nothing could be further from the truth. Because the village had a seat at the table, it will be receiving $1.2 million, which will give us certainty in next year’s budget. Also in the agreement are provisions related to the maintenance of local roads and expedited release of portions of the site and more.

It certainly is a great return for the time, effort and money for being an intervener. Holtec would have definitely benefited if Buchanan wasn’t an intervener and the village was left out in the cold.

My administration was accused of having lost our way with no plans for the future. Once again, nothing could be further from the truth. Since the announcement of the closure, we were laser-focused and had many discussions on what the village needed to do to survive. Now all that hard work is coming to fruition.

Pleasantville Pharmacy Has Been a Godsend for Village, Seniors

For the past year with the COVID-19 pandemic, the police, the firefighters, the doctors, nurses and health care workers gave unselfishly of their time and efforts to help us and we use the moniker “heroes” when acknowledging them. However, I think we have some unsung heroes who are also worthy of our gratitude. Here in Pleasantville, there is a consensus that Sal DiLeo, Ira Schwartz and the entire staff at Pleasantville Pharmacy on Wheeler Avenue are also true heroes.

Anytime you visit or call they go out of their way to assist you treating each individual with courtesy and patience. During the pandemic they stayed open, following all the safety guidelines, making deliveries and Mr. DiLeo even came to the senior housing complex to administer the vaccine to the housebound seniors.

Regardless of how many times you called with queries regarding the vaccine they answered your call completely unfazed with the constant interruptions. If you needed something they did not carry, they would order it for you within a day or two.

I have dealt mostly with Mr. DiLeo. He is highly allergic to, has given me valuable advice about over-the-counter medications, and most importantly, has given me the confidence of knowing I am dealing with a true professional who knows my medical history and is genuinely concerned about my well-being.

Kudos and a heartfelt thank you to Pleasantville Pharmacy, which is such an integral part of our village!

Sylvia Anna Nominos
Pleasantville Mayor

McConville Would Do a Great Job as Putnam County Sheriff

It is clear there is only one qualified candidate with the needed and prior experience for the position of Putnam County sheriff, and that is Kevin McConville. Kevin has the experience, training and knowledge of running a law enforcement agency, understands how to manage a budget and exemplifies what volunteerism means and how to accomplish things without costing the taxpayers more money.

Kevin was the chief of the MTA police, managing nearly 800 members, with a 50-member K-9 team, detectives, emergency services, counterterrorism, highway and homeless units. This police department had a budget of over $100 million. The department he was in charge of was many times larger than the Putnam County Sheriff’s Department with much more complexity than you can imagine.

These are the facts and information that are supported, as demonstrated during Kevin’s leadership of the MTA police. Kevin created great relationships with law enforcement agencies in 14 counties as its chief.

I trust him with all my being and am supporting Kevin McConville for sheriff of Putnam County and ask all of my friends and family to do the same.

We need experienced leadership at the helm of our Sheriff’s Department. That is Kevin McConville.

I know that Kevin will do a great job for all the citizens of this county.

Michael McDonald Carmel

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Economic Growth Has Sustained Cortlandt Over the Past 30 Years

By Linda D. Puglisi

Our largest taxpayer and employer, of course, was always Indian Point and the two operating nuclear plants currently owned by Entergy, Inc. It is located in the Village of Buchanan, and in the Town of Cortlandt, as well. These plants will be permanently closed at the end of this week and will be dismantled and decommissioned by a new company for 20 to 60 years. Only about one-third of the 900 jobs will remain and significantly reduced revenue will result.

Due to this closure and the challenges it brings, the town is seeking new businesses with the help of an economic consultant to offset the loss of revenue. We work closely with the Village of Buchanan, the Hendrick Hudson School District, which will also be affected, and with residents on our local task forces.

During the past 30 years there was a large expansion of our major shopping mall called the Cortlandt Town Center on Route 6, which we call the Cortlandt Boulevard. It doubled in size, brought in additional tax revenue, many new jobs and exciting new stores, restaurants and a movie theater. This took place in the late 1990s.

More recently, across from the Town Center, a smaller but lovely shopping mall opened named Cortland Crossing, with a clock tower that I insisted be included for aesthetic purposes. This produced more jobs and revenue and a greater variety of shopping for our residents.

Some national or regional stores recently closed in these malls, but I am in constant communication with the mall owners and they tell me new stores and restaurants will replace them soon.

We have worked with our local contractors, builders and developers to build new housing areas (apartments, affordable units, condominiums, townhouses and subdivisions), which adds to our growth as well. I was instrumental in lobbying Metro-North for a new state-of-the-art Cortlandt train station, which opened in 2000, where many of our residents and business owners can commute, if need be, to New York City. The fact that we are only one hour from midtown Manhattan is important to a company or a business looking to locate in Cortlandt. Along with our economic consultant, board members and staff, we have many exciting possibilities for future economic growth.

The town has a new brand, which is a trademark called “Where Life Works.” We believe this logo and brand tells our successful story in Cortlandt.

Each spring we host a month-long emphasis on Shop-Dine-Do Business event to showcase our many businesses. Incentives from the small businesses are given out to our residents, their consumers. It’s a lot of fun. However, I always say every day of the year, everyone should shop, dine and do business in our wonderful community.

We also have an expanded hospital center recently purchased by NewYork-Presbyterian, bringing in additional medical services and jobs of all kinds to our community. We’ve also seen expanded nursing homes and soon will have a senior living complex in town. All add to our overall economic and service-oriented story.

I am very proud of our economic growth during my 30 years as town supervisor. We have a vibrant and healthy economy and we have also assisted our smaller businesses navigate the pandemic by giving them information and guidance.

Linda D. Puglisi has been the supervisor for the Town of Cortlandt since 1992.

Letters to the Editor

Peekskill Officials Should Approve Ginsburg’s Proposed Mixed-Use Project

I want to urge the Peekskill Common Council and other agencies involved to approve the proposed Martin Ginsburg mixed-use project. The area needs a serious facelift. Is the expression, “don’t look a gift horse in the mouth” appropriate? When a developer like Ginsburg offers a booster shot for the whole city, we should all work toward that goal.

He is even proposing to redesign and upgrade infrastructure and roads with his passion for detail, as well as making a more positive statement for our train station. Ginsburg has a proven track record in Peekskill and can work with any rational concerns about the proposed project’s design. He has already contributed to affordable housing at the Gateway on Main and has maintained fair market rates for rentals and hotel space. His Abbey Inn and Spa, along with this new project, will help make Peekskill a destination resort. The people of Peekskill will benefit by tourism and that will lead to more business downtown.

Let’s root for Mr. Ginsburg to make a big splash near the train station and waterfront in Peekskill.

Robin Goldsand
Lifelong Peekskill resident

Crossing Has Done an Exemplary Job on the Ossining Board of Education

I am writing to express my support for Katherine Crossing for re-election to the Ossining Board of Education. I am an Ossining School District resident with three children. I am also a frontline health care worker.

Katharine was elected to the Ossining school board in 2018. During her first term on the board, I watched her consistently contribute to important issues in a thoughtful, respectful and meaningful way. She relies on her analytical training and background as an attorney to navigate challenging issues. She is not afraid to ask tough questions or voice her concerns. Her driving force is the well-being of families and children in our community and ensuring that all viewpoints are heard.

When faced with the challenges of navigating the district through a global pandemic she became a true leader on the board. She passionately advocated for robust live virtual instruction for our students. She helped ensure compliance with complex state Education Department, Department of Health and CDC guidelines. She deftly reviewed budgeting and expenditures. She helped to ensure all students had access to appropriate technology. She was sensitive to the concerns of our teachers, administration and staff. She was fully engaged in every aspect of managing the reopening of our schools and worked tirelessly to ensure the needs of families were met in both an in-person and virtual environment. She also sought workaround services to families in need were a priority and not an afterthought.

Stability on the board, as we see this pandemic through to the end, is critical to the success of our families, children and community.

Trusted Crossing is a true asset to the Ossining Board of Education and she has my vote in next month’s election.

Kelly Milano
Briarcliff Manor and Ossining School District resident

A Spiritual View

By Fr. Nils Chittenden

In the Christian tradition, one of Jesus’ disciples is known as “Doubting Thomas.” Indeed, this moniker has become part of everyday language, used as a byword for someone who seems to be lacking in faith. Thomas gained this reputation because he refused to believe that Jesus had bodily risen from the dead before he’d had empirical evidence, since he had been away on the day when the risen Jesus appeared to all the other disciples. In the end, he got the evidence he sought, but the name stuck.

I’ve always thought that was a bit unfair on Thomas. It’s easy for us to say that he ought to have had more faith without needing physical evidence, but would we have been any different in the same circumstances? And it’s not like the other disciples were any less imperfect; yet, for instance, Peter has not been labeled as Peter the Denier.

If you’ve ever been in, say, a group meeting and someone says something you don’t understand, are you reluctant to ask for clarification for fear that everyone else already knows the answer and you’d end up looking foolish? Well, I wouldn’t mind betting that when the other disciples heard Thomas say that he wouldn’t believe without proof, they’d privately felt the same way as him but hadn’t had the courage to voice their doubts out loud the way Thomas did.

I think it’s time to rehabilitate Thomas. Instead of calling him Doubting Thomas, let’s call him “Courageous Thomas.” It takes courage to ask questions and voice doubts. If you ever have doubts about faith, don’t worry, it’s natural to have them, and it’s good to question things. It’s the only way to grow and mature.

Fr. Nils Chittenden is rector of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Armonk and is part of the Armonk Faith Alliance. The alliance also comprises Congregation B’nai Yisrael, Hillside Church, St. Patrick’s RC Church and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.
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Reiki Practitioner Opens Etsy Store Combining Home Décor, Positive Energy

By Anna Young

After spending nearly 15 years as a registered nurse providing those in need with relief and rehabilitation, Putnam Valley resident Nicole Taylor was motivated by the COVID-19 pandemic to help people find solace in other ways. As Taylor continued her six-year stretch working with disadvantaged youth at Lincoln Hall in Somers last year, she began to experience anxiety and was looking for outlets to relieve it during high-stress moments.

Growing up in an environment where holistic medicine was an acceptable alternative, Taylor found comfort falling back on her roots to ease her mental health.

But in the process of managing her mind and soul, she realized how much she wanted to help others who could be experiencing similar bouts.

“I’ve always been interested in holistic healing, and with my aunt a Reiki master, I always grew up around crystals and Reiki and I was always intrigued by it but never knew how I could apply that,” Taylor said. “This was the perfect opportunity to take Reiki courses.”

In late August, Taylor took online courses and became a Certified Reiki Practitioner.

Taylor said Reiki, a healing technique based on the principle that the therapist can channel energy into the patient by means of touch to activate the natural healing processes of the body and restore physical and emotional well-being, provided her with a new outlook on life and a sense of peace she had been missing.

Nicole Taylor found relief from the difficult days of the pandemic by producing and then selling some of her handmade products that are designed to bring a sense of peace and tranquility.

“People are always looking for ways of a stigma will do some good, this is putting this out there and hopefully more aware of their mental health, provide those in need. With the ability she received and that maybe things aren’t so heavy as long as you know how to cope with them. With the ability she received and was able to perform on friends and family in need of relief, Taylor also started using healing crystals to create an array of suncatchers as a form of meditation. But what started as her selling a few of her homemade items on Facebook Marketplace and Instagram for fun quickly took off. This led Taylor in October to launch her own website and Etsy store called The Charmer Boutique.

“I felt I needed to open up a platform so people can make orders,” Taylor said. “It’s become a beautiful thing for me and a beautiful way to cope with the world. It’s meditative for me to craft these items for people who can appreciate them. It’s very flattering.”

While all of Taylor’s pieces are handmade with the purpose of bringing a sense of peace and tranquility to those who purchase them, she also infuses each piece with Reiki healing power. Additionally, she cleanses and blesses them with sage or Palo Santo to remove all negative energy before shipping them.

“Hopefully, the rightful owner can feel that energy when they receive the piece,” Taylor said. “Everybody just needs a little hope these days with everything going on in the world, and if you can believe in that and it is a healing piece, it can help.”

Taylor added that her pieces offer a little protection and reminder that everything is going to be OK.

The Charmer Boutique Etsy page, which has generated about 560 sales since October, offers about two dozen designs, including crystals, crystal air plant holders and simple suncatchers. Prices range from $12 to $70.

Taylor added she’s always coming up with new designs and pieces to provide those in need.

“With this year making people more aware of their mental health, putting this out there and hopefully making mental health and Reiki less of a stigma will do some good, this is just another alternative,” Taylor said. “People are always looking for ways we can heal, and we need all the help we can get at this point.”
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Unwelcome (Mostly) Poisons in the Garden

Spring has sprung, and many who have gardens will be getting their green thumb ready to dig in the dirt. Others may just be enjoying being outdoors, but we must remember that not all of nature is people-friendly. Case in point: The itch of poison ivy or poison oak. (Note: What is the difference, you might ask. Poison ivy generally has hairy, or fuzzy-looking, vines, looks similar to ivy and has smooth almond-shaped leaves. Poison oak, on the other hand, has leaves that look like oak leaves, is generally a duller green and has leaflets that have hair on both sides. Both, once contracted, can drive a person crazy.)

When I was a bachelor living in Manhattan, I had an acquaintance who would occasionally visit friends living in “the country” over the summer weekends. Maybe I was a little jealous about not knowing anybody outside the reaches of the steamy city because I found myself having little patience when he called me one day to complain at some length about having contracted a case of poison ivy in his friends’ garden during his last visit. I just didn’t want to pay much attention to his whining.

The next day he called again and this time he upbraided me for not showing any sympathy about his itchy plight. Instead of time he upbraided me for not showing any whining.

On the next day he called again and this time he apologized which I offered with great sincerity. Not long after that incident many years ago, I married, moved to the country and since that time, have had countless opportunities to suffer the effects of poison ivy myself, regardless of the care I take in recognizing the plant and trying to avoid it. Living for some years on a property that had been gardened since the early 18th century, I had been aware that it was riddled with poison ivy vines in the areas of my property that were discouraging its growth. Call me crazy, but I rather liked its dark waxy leaves growing on vines in the areas of my property that were not cultivated, and, from what I understand, although I don’t remember from which source, it may have served some useful purpose to bind together the mortarless stone walls our forefathers built to delineate properties and contain livestock.

About two out of three people are allergic to poison ivy and its relatives, poison oak and poison sumac. For some, the reaction can be severe enough to require hospitalization. Treatment for poison ivy is most effective if addressed immediately after exposure. Invariably I always got it on my wrists and lower arms. When I did, I would wash the affected area with strong soap and very hot water, and then apply calamine lotion for relief of the itching. Literature suggests applying rubbing alcohol, but I’ve never tried that. It is also suggested that clothing that has been worn when poison ivy has been contracted be washed separately from other laundry but, very honestly, I never found that it was that finicky an issue. Perhaps that would apply to individuals with extreme sensitivity to the allergens.

As a side note, I looked for anything that could justify God’s plan for placing something so nasty in Earth’s garden, if not in the Garden of Eden, and I found it! According to a report in Weed Science and subsequently reported in The Wall Street Journal, poison ivy has gotten much nastier since the 1950s in leaf size and oil content, but at the same time, it was reported that the plant absorbs much more than its fair share of CO2 in the atmosphere. With CO2 having increased 33 percent in the environment in the past half century, poison ivy has risen to the challenge as Earth’s friend in helping to combat climate change. So, leave it stay, I say. There is something to love about poison ivy!

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

It turned out to be quite a celebration last week for Fox Lane High School’s varsity football team. The team celebrated its senior day with a come-from-behind 26-16 win over Port Chester on the gridiron on Apr. 20. Before the game, the senior football players, cheerleaders and dance team members were honored in a ceremony that recognized each of the team’s seniors where they walked out to midfield with parents and other family members.
The season for fresh soft-shell crab runs through September and there are legions who crave this delicacy simply sautéed or deep fried with some lemon and butter (and perhaps some capers). Of course, there are other recipes, too.

There’s nothing like a crispy soft-shell crab sandwich with the proper condiments. They have been showing up at area markets. Here’s where to seek them out for take-out, delivery or dining at restaurants.

**La Mer Seafood**, 407 Main St., Armonk. This market has been serving the area for 30 years. A sign on the window says soft-shell crabs have arrived. Info: 914-273-1766 or visit www.lamerseafood.net.


**Conte’s Fish Market**, 448 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. The patio is open as is their retail town for fresh seafood and soft shells in season. Info: 914-495-5020 or visit www.farmandbistro.com.


**Riverview**, 45 Fair St., Cold Spring. Jim Ely and company have kept this picturesque spot bustling for 20 years. They offer soft-shell crabs in a variety of styles. Take-out and delivery. Info: 845-265-4778 or visit www.riverdining.com.

**Furnace & Fin**, 500 Main St., Peekskill. Chef Salvatore serves soft shells with creamy polenta and cheese and spinach-stuffed tomatoes on the side. Sounds yummy! They will also be on hand at their other space, El Barrio in Scarsdale. Info: 914-722-0808 or visit www.furnaceandfin.com.

**Holy Crab**, 32 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains. This seafood spot serves fresh Cajun-style seafood as you would see in New Orleans. Steamed in sous vide bags, too. Info: 914-948-3888 or visit www.holycrabny.com.

**Purdy’s Farmer & the Fish**, 100 Titicus Rd., North Salem. Located on a farm where herbs are harvested and produced for the restaurant kitchen. Seasonal soft shells are a specialty. There is a rustic farm market on site. Info: 914-617-8380 or visit www.farmerandthefish.com.

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**La Mer Seafood, 407 Main St., Armonk.**

**Continued on next page**
April 27 - May 3, 2021

www.TheExaminerNews.com

Lifting Up Westchester Announces Student Essay Contest Winners

Lifting Up Westchester, a nonprofit agency committed to helping individuals restore their independence, announced the winners of its fourth annual Student Essay Contest.

Open to all Westchester students in grades 7-12, students were invited to explore the changes and challenges they have experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and reflect how those experiences might be the same or different for individuals who are homeless or low-income.

The essay contest was established in 2017 in memory of Beth Massey Rubens, a 40-year Scarsdale resident and a lifelong teacher, tutor and mentor who had a love for language arts.

Students were asked to reflect on how the pandemic impacted them personally and what it has exposed about economic and social inequities in the United States; what they learned about the importance of connection; where they have seen resilience or adaptability during this crisis; what values were more important or less important to them today than a year ago; and what can be done to change inequities in social justice that the pandemic exposed.

Students related their essays back to Lifting Up Westchester’s response to the pandemic and the agency’s core mission.

The organization received essays from 441 students representing 76 middle schools and high schools throughout the county, with many students sharing deeply personal stories about how the pandemic affected them, their families, their friends and their community.

“This year’s essay contest topic clearly struck a chord,” said Anahaita Kotval, CEO of Lifting Up Westchester. “Students wrote about disappointment, loss, loneliness and social inequality. But they also expressed a sense of renewed hope and how the lessons they learned could be a powerful force for all of us to move towards a better future.”

A panel of 61 judges reviewed the essays to select the winners.

Students will be honored during a May 2 awards ceremony conducted online Zoom.

Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano will present awards to winning students. Eileen Gallagher, chair of the English Department at Keio Academy of New York, will join to present awards to ESL students.

First-, second- and third-place and honorable mention categories were awarded in three grade groups: seventh- and eighth-graders, ninth- and 10th-graders and 11th- and 12th-graders. A category was added this year for students who speak English as a second language.

Here is the list of winners for the 2021 Student Essay Contest:

**First Place:** Sofia Mejia, School 5, Yonkers
**Second Place:** Zoya Nabeel, Seven Bridges Middle School, Chappaqua
**Third Place:** (tie): Haniah Khan, Ardsley Middle School, Ardsley
**Third Place:** (tie): Sofie Farkas, Valhalla Middle School

**First Place:** Janiva Martinez, Peekskill High School
**Second Place:** Kristen Luther, Woodlands High School
**Third Place:** Joseph Berger, Briarcliff High School

**Grades 9-10**

**First Place:** Celya Black, Tappan Zee High School
**Second Place:** Kimi Girard, Byram Hills High School
**Third Place:** Alex Shafir, Briarcliff High School

**Grades 11-12**

**First Place:** Alyssa Lee, Yonkers Middle/High School
**Second Place:** Drew Burnham, Rye High School
**Third Place:** Janette Martirena, The Ursuline School, New Rochelle

Honorable Mention: Eli Makaron, Briarcliff High School

Saw Mill Club’s Spring Tennis Returns to Bedford Parks

Spring tennis is back in the parks! This is the 11th season that the Saw Mill Club has managed the program for the Town of Bedford providing clinics and private lessons for children and adults. There is no substitute for fresh air, so it’s great to get on the court after a long winter.

There are 29 hours of clinics six days per week at Bedford Hills, Bedford Village and Katonah parks. Tennis participation has increased in the U.S., and because of this trend most of the clinics are full for this session.

For more information, contact Charles Lacy-Thompson at clacythompson@sawmillclub.com or Director of Tennis Zuka Mukhradze at zuka@sawmillclub.com.
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Poets’ Corner. National Poetry Month, launched in 1996 by the Academy of American Poets, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this month. National Poetry Month “reminds the public that poets have an integral role to play in our culture and that poetry matters.” In honor of National Poetry Month, the quiz this week focuses on poetic terms, forms and techniques. If you find yourself inspired, Poem in Your Pocket Day takes place on Apr. 29 this year.

1. allusion (n.)
A) rhythmic pattern
B) a grouping of lines
C) passing reference

2. hyperbole (n.)
A) extravagant exaggeration
B) a play on words
C) hidden meaning

3. What is the name of a three-line poem which contains seventeen syllables?
A) Haiku
B) Limerick
C) Sonnet

4. caesura (n.)
A) a dramatic monologue
B) a pause
C) a comparison

5. litotes (n.)
A) free-verse poetry
B) poetry about nature
C) ironic understatement

6. lament (n.)
A) a poem set at night
B) poem expressing grief
C) a lyric address

7. What is the name of a poem composed entirely of lines from poems by other poets?
A) Enjambment
B) Persona Poem
C) Cento

8. Ars Poetica (n.)
A) a poem about poetry
B) a non-narrative poem
C) a poem of tribute

Poets’ Corner

April 27 - May 3, 2021
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Every season, and even every month, have their own feel. Spring is different than summer, and there’s a certain indescribable difference between July’s and August’s muggy heat.

The same is true in the skies. There are bright lights that dominate winter. While, in the summer, other stars take over the night.

The skies don’t change the instant a new season comes along, though. There’s a slow but steady hand off that happens over weeks and weeks, like with the weather here on Earth. Depending on where you look as April hands the night to May, we’re treated to the skies of three seasons, all in one night. If we want, we can even use the stars to look back on our lives.

As our skies dim these days, some of the first stars we see are in Orion, which are in the west now, starting the night in the setting half of the sky. His belt stars – Alnitak, Alnilam and Mintaka – stand out against the early evening’s glow. Thanks to the same optical illusion that makes a rising full moon look enormous, Orion looks positively gigantic, hovering above the distant hillsides.

As you look off into the twilight, consider that those stars have been with us since around Halloween. Night after night since, as we crossed the winter, they crossed the sky. Before long, they’ll vanish into the dusk until the trick-or-treaters come back.

Now, high toward the south and east, are the stars of the Spring Triangle – Arcturus, Regulus and Spica. Reddish Arcturus, which is a short way off the curve at the end of the Big Dipper’s handle, is an old, giant star that’s similar to the type our sun will grow into billions of years from now. So, in a way, looking at it is like looking at our own future.

These stars return to the night every February, when we need them to remind us that warmer weather and good things are on their way. Even when things are at their darkest and most difficult, they’re always a small bit of optimism.

And they’re right. Summer always seems to find a way. Another turn to the left brings us to the brilliant, blue Vega, which is just starting to make its way into late April’s nights, far toward the northeast. As these things go, Vega is one of the closest bright stars to us, only about 25 light years away. It’s kind of fun to try to imagine where you were when its light left for your eye.

Vega is part of a group of stars called the Summer Triangle, along with Altair and Deneb. Watch them as the weeks move along and let your mind drift to s’mores and cannonball contests. In July’s sticky nights, Vega crosses the dome almost directly overhead. Amazingly enough, these will stay with us until January, when they sink into the twilight, too, and hand the night back to Orion.

With May just about here again, the skies give us a chance to have another look at where we’ve been and where we’re going. We’ve been through a lot, but little by little good things are coming. I hope you’re well, and will look up this month.

Scott Levine (astrosco@ymail.com) is an astronomy writer and speaker from Croton-on-Hudson. He is also a member of the Westchester Amateur Astronomers, who are dedicated to astronomy outreach in our area.

For information about the club including membership, newsletters, upcoming meetings and lectures at Pace University and star parties at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, visit westchesterastronomers.org. Star parties are free and open to the public, but attendance is capped at 50 people, as required by state COVID-19 requirements.

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**Clear Skies**

**By Scott Levine**

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The phases of the moon for the month of May.
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The illustration above is an artist’s depiction of the Indian Point property after the completion of major decommissioning work.
Plenty of Contenders to Choose From in Wide-Open Kentucky Derby

By Charles Palombini

Yes, even the 2020 Kentucky Derby had to take a back seat to national health concerns caused by the dreaded coronavirus.

Last year’s first Saturday in May had to go without the traditional kickoff of horse racing’s famed Triple Crown at Churchill Downs in Louisville. The Derby joined the Masters golf tournament, college basketball’s March Madness, the delay and modification of professional baseball’s schedule and a host of other sports and events that had to rearrange their seasons because of COVID-19.

The Derby was ultimately run later in the year (Sept. 5) but without the usual fanfare that accompanies the nationally-renowned event. It kind of became another race on another day of a rotten year. Do you even remember who won the race? It was a horse named Authentic.

Well, put that all behind you because the Kentucky Derby is back in its rightful place on the calendar! Prep the mint juleps, dust off those beautiful hats and ready the roses to remember who won the race? It was a horse event. It kind of became another race on their seasons because of COVID-19.

March Madness, the delay and modification of professional baseball’s schedule and a host of other sports and events that had to rearrange their seasons because of COVID-19.

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During the points qualifying era that started in 2013, Derby results have become remarkably consistent. The post time favorite has been a significant factor in the finish of the race, with the winner usually racing as part of the early pace. Every winner has had a victory in one of the 100-point qualifying races.

So, let’s look at the field of possible starters at the time of this writing. In the last 15 years I’ve never seen a Kentucky Derby field with so many serious contenders.

The projected field, as it currently stands, has 20 horses that are listed below in order of earned Derby qualifying points. This list includes the recap of potential starters, according to Horse Racing Nation, a thoroughbred racing website.

Essential Quality: Essential Quality checks all of the boxes of a potential Kentucky Derby winner – undefeated with a victory in a 100-point race and races close to the pace. He won his debut race at Churchill Downs and has the advantage of familiar surroundings as he will race from his own stall. A worthy Derby favorite.

Hot Rod Charlie: With his Louisiana Derby victory, Hot Rod Charlie lived up to the promise he flashed as a two-year-old when he ran second as a long shot in the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile. He used his speed to convincingly win the Louisiana Derby’s 100-point qualifier, which was run at 1 3/16 miles. Thus, Hot Rod Charlie is a winner at a distance longer than any other horse in the field. Winner contender.

Super Stock: Super Stock got a perfect trip in his Arkansas Derby victory when he saved ground in the early going as he tracked a fast pace. He swung outside and ran by five other competitors to win easily. No horse gets a trip like that in the 20-horse Kentucky Derby field. Toss.

Like the King: This runner began his career at Belterra Park in Ohio, where he broke his maiden in his second start. It was on the Tapeta surface at Turfway Park that he found his own with two wins and a second. Yes, his sire Animal Kingdom did win the Kentucky Derby after a win on an artificial surface at Turfway, and it seems that Like the King has been better than expected. A real maybe.

Known Agenda: Known Agenda leads the four Todd Pletcher-trained horses as he looks to win his third Derby. This son of Curlin is an improving three-year-old and his stalking running style will serve him well in the 1 1/4-mile test. Win contender.

Rock Your World: Led the Santa Anita Derby every step of the way as he made his first start on dirt after winning his first two on the grass. He’s 3-for-3 in his career, all as a three-year-old, and he has a victory in a 100-point prep race. Win contender.

Bourbon: Even trainer Todd Pletcher was surprised by Bourbon’s victory in Aqueduct’s Wood Memorial at 72-1. The son of Bernardini did have two wins at Aqueduct. The Wood was run slowly and he got a perfect trip making it a soft win. Toss.

Medina Spirit: After all is said and done, Medina Spirit will be the lone Bob Baffert-trained horse in the Derby. The large field and the extra distance certainly don’t seem to suit this colt who won the Robert B. Lewis with a front-end effort. Toss.

Midnight Bourbon: This consistent colt picked up 66 points with a win in the Leoncave Stakes in January and then with a third and a second in the other Derby prep races at the Fair Grounds in New Orleans. Midnight Bourbon was second in the Louisiana Derby going 1 3/16 miles and pressing the pace of Hot Rod Charlie. He could get trainer Steven Asmussen another top three finish in the Derby, but not a win. Use for second and third if you like him.

Mandaloun: He was the impressive winner of 50 qualifying points in the Risen Star Stakes at Fair Grounds as the 2-1 favorite. He headed into the Louisiana Derby as the 6-5 favorite and came up empty to run sixth, which was the first off-the-board finish of his career. It’s hard to dismiss that kind of performance from a horse who has always shown up and run well. Toss.

Caddo River: The third of three Brad Cox-trained runners to make the Derby field. His valiant second-place finish in the Arkansas Derby secured enough points after his disappointing performance in the Rebel. Toss.

Highly Motivated: Gets high marks for coming within a neck of defeating Essential Quality in the Blue Grass after setting all of the fractions. In defeat, however, he was far ahead of the rest of the field, which shows the quality of his performance. This son of Into Mischief joins the long list of horses that want to be part of the early pace. Use for second and third.

Helium: Like Rock Your World, Helium has a career record of 3-for-3, but there is a huge difference in their odds. Helium will try to win the Derby with only one start as a three-year-old. It was a late–winning win in the Tampa Bay Derby, where he closed from 10th to win at 15-1. There will be plenty of pace to set up his closing move. Possible winner.

Soup and Sandwich: After winning the first two races of his career, this son of Mark Casse-trained Derby horse burst onto the scene when he ran second in the Florida Derby at 12-1. There is a long list of horses with similar running styles, which will make it hard for handicappers to separate them. Finish second, beaten only a length. Back on further improvement, but not enough to hit the board. Toss.

Dynamic One: The third Pletcher runner in the field, he faced tough fields in his early maiden races. In his fourth try at Aqueduct, he got what is currently his only win. In the Wood Memorial, he made a closing move, took the lead in the stretch and looked like a winner until his stablemate caught him at the wire. He will have plenty of horses out to get the table for his closing move. Contender.

Sainthood: Pletcher’s fourth runner in the field and, in a way, might be the most interesting. On the dirt, he was second in his debut at Gulfstream Park and then broke his maiden on the main track at Fair Grounds. Pletcher put him in the Jeff Ruby on the Tapeta at Turfway Park, where at 10-1 he encountered traffic in the stretch, had to check and lost all momentum. He recovered quickly, got clear and closed a lot of ground to finish second, beaten only a length. Back on the dirt in the Derby, this guy will come with big odds and a chance to rally into the exotic wagers. A must use for the minor awards.

Hidden Stash: Passed tired horses in a trio of Derby prep to earn points in all three. However, he never got the job done and will likely not get it done in this very competitive field. Yawn.

Dream Shake: Listed as possible for the Derby by Churchill Downs, but right now he is part of the field of 20. Won’t matter if he gets in; he still gets thrashed! Toss.

O Besos: Two victories for O Besos, but they only came in a maiden special weight and an allowance at Fair Grounds. He stayed in New Orleans for the final two Derby preps and ran fourth in the Risen Star and third in the Louisiana Derby. Double yawn.

Get Her Number: Two key stops on the Derby trail at Oaklawn yielded only a seventh in the Rebel and a fourth in the Arkansas Derby. Toss.

So, there you have it, a rundown of the most competitive Kentucky Derby field in over a decade. My picks?

I will bet a four-horse trifecta box using Essential Quality, Hot Rod Charlie, Helium and Sainthood.

I will use the same four in an exacta box and hope for one of the long shots to finish in the first or second position.

Don’t get crazy. This is a wide-open race. Good luck!

Charles Palombini is a Cortlandt resident and an owner of thoroughbred horses.
The Consequences of Man’s Evolving Farming Practices

By Nick Antonaccio

Farmers, including vineyard owners, seeking to optimize their cash flow, reverted to low cost practices and enhanced financial returns. Man-made chemical fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides and pesticides became the norm. By the 1960s, many farmers had succumbed to a profit-over-safety mentality.

The 21st century has brought another revolution – one that is consumer-led. Technology has created a vast, thriving, industrial food complex, at times fraught with health risks. In the face of this industrial food complex, at times fraught with health risks, Man has been highly educated, and vocal, in demanding disclosure of product ingredients and processing. Concepts such as natural, organic and eco-friendly have become the norm.

With the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century came the introduction of petroleum-based products that changed the landscape, and economies, of our planet. New industries emerged that catapulted the planet. New industries emerged that changed the landscape, and economies, of our planet. New industries emerged that changed the landscape, and economies, of our planet. New industries emerged that changed the landscape, and economies, of our planet.

The results of another study were equally alarming. An activist group sent a sample of ten anonymous bottles of wine produced from prime northern California vineyards to a laboratory for testing of glyphosate, the active ingredient in the chemical pesticide Roundup. All ten wines, including those that were produced organically, tested positive.

Another, unrelated, laboratory test of 300 bottles of wine and found small (non-lethal) traces of pesticides in all 92 bottles, a number of which were organically produced.

The dangers of industrial herbicides and pesticides are well documented. Several years ago, a French laboratory tested 92 bottles of wine and found small (non-lethal) traces of pesticides in all 92 bottles, a number of which were organically produced.

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Access to high quality information is essential. Especially local information. And especially now. What’s happening in our communities? What’s the impact? How are our local leaders responding? For answers to these questions, we rely on the hard work of our local reporters. As a result, readership of local news outlets has reached record highs.

But due to COVID-19, most local news publications are losing money, fast. Advertising has plummeted during the crisis and readers aren’t subscribing fast enough to fill the void. This has led to thousands of local reporters being laid off. Just as our society faces numerous, urgent challenges, millions of people are in danger of losing access to the authoritative local information they need to stay informed. That’s why the Local Media Association and the Local Media Consortium are working with local news providers to build a strong future for local journalism. And that’s why our long-time partner Google is purchasing ads like this in local publications across the country, as well as providing a Relief Fund to help struggling local news outlets. But those actions alone aren’t enough.

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