

**Shop Local for  
the Holidays  
Special Section  
Inside**

**FREE** @ExaminerMedia

# The PUTNAM Examiner

*Serving Putnam County. Also coverage inside from across the region.*

**Examiner  
Sports  
Pullout Section**



December 13 - December 19, 2022

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 14, Issue 716

## Putnam County Canine Complex Dedicated at Veterans Park

By Rick Pezzullo

A new dog run and canine training course was dedicated last week at the Putnam County Veterans Memorial Park in the Town of Kent.

The Putnam County Guardian Canine Complex, a 50,000-square-foot public dog park and Canine training course, is expected to open in the spring and will include the county's first public dog run, as well as an enclosed obstacle course for training service dogs and police K9s.

"This dog park and training facility will enhance the quality of life in Putnam County," Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell said after the event. "Not only will it provide

a place for dogs and their owners to socialize, but it will also provide a much-needed course for organizations, like Guardian Revival, that train service and companion dogs for those who need them most."

Guardian Revival, a local nonprofit that focuses on improving the mental health and well-being of veterans and first responders, runs a program called "Boots & Paws" that trains companion and service dogs for veterans and first responders.

The facility is dedicated to the memory of veterans Joseph P. Dwyer and Max Kalkstein, two guardians who died from suicide.

"I want to thank the Putnam County Highway Department and the Parks

*continued on page 2*



Two and four-legged friends at the Putnam County Guardian Canine Complex.

## Candy Cane Run in Kent



Children weren't the only ones who received treats during the Kent Fire Department's Candy Can Run Saturday.

## Kent Woman Charged with Neglecting Dog Found on the Loose

By Rick Pezzullo

A Kent woman was busted last week for allegedly neglecting an older Maltese dog named "Buster" that was found loose by a Good Samaritan on Route 52.

Jennifer Parrish, 48, was charged by officers from the Putnam County SPCA with Failure to Provide Sustenance, Extreme Neglect, a Class A misdemeanor in the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law, that carries a penalty of up to one year in prison, a maximum of \$1,000 fine, or a combination of both, if convicted.

The SPCA Law Enforcement Division was notified on December 6 by the Town of Kent dog control officer about a severely neglected male dog. The dog was transported to the Carmel Animal Hospital and was found to have extremely long nails curling into the pads and other digits, matted dirty hair with putrid odor, large clumps of hair missing, and severe dental disease.

The SPCA launched an investigation and located the dog's owner, Parrish, who was interviewed at the Kent Police Department.

Buster received medical treatment and is in the custody of the SPCA.



Buster

"I would like to thank the Good Samaritan, Dog Control Officer Mary Madsen, Carmel Animal Hospital and the Town of Kent Police Department for their timely assistance in this matter," SPCA Chief Ken Ross stated. "Owners of animals need to understand that constant attention to the condition and welfare of their pet is extremely important. By not addressing it immediately will allow the condition to worsen and cause unjustifiable pain to the animal and is a crime."

*Celebrate Yourself this  
Holiday Season*

**Stop by to see all that we have to offer!**

Receive a \$50 Club Fit Gift Card when you join

*This promotion expires January 20th.*



### BENEFITS OF EXERCISE



Improves Heart Health



Improves Balance & Coordination



Relieves Stress



Improves Lung Health



Strengthens Immune System

Briarcliff Manor: bradvisior@clubfit.com | 914-250-2134

Jefferson Valley: jvadvisor@clubfit.com | 914-250-2750



## Brewster High School Senior Wins \$300,000 College Scholarship

Franceska Drejaj had a busy week. The Brewster High School senior presented a policy paper to Governor Hochul, sang at the All-State Music Festival in Rochester, and found out she won a four-year scholarship to Bowdoin College worth more than \$300,000.

"It's like I won the lottery!" said Drejaj.

Drejaj was one of 1,755 students chosen from a field of more than 17,900 applicants to receive a scholarship to a top college or university through QuestBridge's National College Match Scholarship. A not-for-profit, QuestBridge connects the nation's most outstanding low-income students with leading colleges. Despite her lottery analogy, luck had nothing to do with Drejaj's good fortune. It was all about hard work.

Her counselor, Kate Hammond, said, "When I met Franceska I literally googled her! This kid has done more than most adults."

"We are so proud of Franceska," said Carlos Rodriguez, vice principal of Brewster High School. "She has worked hard and deserves this."

When asked how she found out about the decision, Drejaj said, "I was at All States in Rochester and I got an email from QuestBridge. My parents had gone out to get food and I told them to turn around. We decided beforehand that we'd call my grandparents. It took a little time to get my grandparents on FaceTime because they are not very tech savvy—but I opened up the email and my mother started screaming and crying."

**How did you feel?**

"I felt like I had won the lottery. I mean, this scholarship covers everything from room and board to travel. Bowdoin even gives us a Macbook and an Apple pencil. My dad was so happy about that. I am just so grateful to be part of the QuestBridge community."

**What do you want to study at Bowdoin?**

"I want to study government and legal studies. My sixth grade social studies teacher, Mr. Nelligan first got me interested in the world. It was the 2016 elections—when other kids were watching Netflix, I was watching the news."

**What extracurricular activities have you participated in during high school?**

"I have been on the Putnam County Youth Court. It's a court made up entirely of teenagers. If there is a first-time



Franceska Drejaj

offender, that kid appears in front of us, we act as judge. If the kid doesn't get into trouble again, the records are sealed. That has introduced me to the legal system.

I am also part of the Governor's Youth Council. I represent the Hudson Valley. We get a topic to work on and present our findings to the governor. This fall, we were asked to look into youth mental health. We researched and discussed the subject and presented a policy proposal to the governor.

And, of course, I love to sing. I made Area All State and then based on my scores, went to All State. I would like to join a singing group at Bowdoin."

**Besides academics, what else are you looking forward to at Bowdoin?**

"When I toured the school, everyone seemed really happy. I think the school fits my personality. I am excited for the outdoor orientation at the beginning of school. I think I will go white water rafting. I love lobster, so I'm excited for that. I don't ski, but I guess I'll have to learn!"

**What do you want to be when you grow up?**

"I want to be a politician. I want to change the world. Maybe it has to do with being an older sister—my little brother was born three years ago and I have a sister who overcame some developmental delays. So, I feel like I've seen a lot. I want to make the world a better place."

*This is a press release provided by the organization. It has been lightly edited and is being published by Examiner Media as a public service.*

## Mahopac High School Seniors Commit to Play Sports in College

Eight Mahopac High School seniors have committed to play sports at the college level next year.

Jake Degnan, Mike Rettberg, Emma Morretta, Lauren Beberman, Marie Camastro, Maya O'Keefe, Maddie Orsini, and Riley Massett all announced their intentions last month at a ceremony with a crowd of family members, friends and school officials in attendance.

"My parents really pushed me to be the best person and player that I could be, but they were never hard on me," said Massett, who committed to play lacrosse at Widener University. "They were very supportive of whatever I wanted to do. They were always willing to drive me to play, whether it was down the street to the high school or to a tournament in Maryland."

The student-athletes credited coaches and peers who had helped them achieve their success.

Beberman, who will play basketball at Adelphi University, thanked one of her longtime coaches, saying, "I've had the same AAU basketball coach since the

5th grade, Kristi Dini. She helped me by teaching me basketball, but she also pushed me whenever I hesitated and was always there to talk and support me."

Rettberg specifically named the larger Mahopac Community as critical to his growth, saying, "The support from students and the community is outstanding. It doesn't matter how well they know you, we always have fans turn out to watch and support us and that makes a huge difference."

Only one in 13 high school athletes goes on to play at the collegiate level.

The colleges selected by the other students were: Degnan (Springfield College—men's lacrosse); Morretta (SUNY Oneonta—volleyball); Camastro (Belmont Abbey College—field hockey); O'Keefe (SUNY New Paltz—field hockey); and Orsini (SUNY New Paltz—field hockey).

*This is a press release provided by the organization. It has been lightly edited and is being published by Examiner Media as a public service.*



## Putnam County Canine Complex Dedicated at Veterans Park

*continued from page 1*

Department for doing such an excellent job and for doing it so fast," said Alex Othmer, co-founder and executive director of Guardian Revival. "I especially want to thank County Executive Odell and her administration for prioritizing the mental healthcare of Veterans and First Responders."

Earlier this year, the Joseph P. Dwyer Vet2Vet program for Putnam County merged with Guardian Revival.

In addition to Boots & Paws, Guardian Revival runs: Another Summit, a therapeutic outdoor adventure program that organizes and leads outdoor activities for veterans and first responders, such as hiking, backpacking, and paddling adventures; and Guardian Encore, a therapeutic music program that provides veterans and first responders with the opportunity to learn, write, play, record, and share music.



FACEBOOK.COM/  
EXAMINERMEDIA

Follow ExaminerMedia on social media to monitor the latest breaking news and local reporting tidbits

914-864-0878 • advertising@theexaminernews.com • www.theexaminernews.com

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER  
@EXAMINERMEDIA



Merry Christmas

Open Christmas Eve  
9 AM to 5 PM and  
Closed Christmas Day

SUBURBAN

WINES & SPIRITS

Now you can take us with you wherever  
you go! Download our Mobile App!

Available on the iPhone  
App Store

WESTCHESTER'S FINE WINE & SPIRITS DESTINATION

WINE OF THE YEAR

2016 Ezio T. Barbera d'Asti "Vigna del Noce" Superiore



The 2016 Barbera d'Asti Terra del Noce is a fabulous introduction to Ezio Trinchero's wines. It offers up a beguiling mix of red berry fruit, tobacco, game, dried flowers, licorice and incense, all gently mellowed by the passage of time. Medium in body, with lovely complexity and tons of character, the 2016 is a winner. Best of all, it's a terrific value. For readers who want to know what Barbera from Asti is like with some age, well, this is it!

\$18<sup>97</sup>

GREY GOOSE  
Premium Vodka



\$39<sup>97</sup> 1.75 L  
Reg. \$66.99

EVERYDAY  
LOW PRICE

Dan's Wine of the Year

2012 Cosimo Taurino  
Salento Rosso Notarpanaro



The classic Negroamaro. The 2012 vintage is a beautiful one. Notes of tobacco, blackberry, cherry, and oak. Medium acidity with medium tannins and loads of flavor on the palate. No need to open this bottle and let it breathe, just pop and pour. You'll want another bottle in no time!

\$16<sup>97</sup>

Jason's Wine of the Year

2019 Fortune 1621 Napa  
Valley Cabernet Sauvignon



Fresh nose of cherry, blackberry, subtle raspberry and notes of oak and vanilla. Flavors of ripe cherry, red berry and fresh plum mingled with mocha. The palate is medium bodied with a sweet red fruit with nice balanced acidity and supple tannins.

\$24<sup>97</sup>

Sparkling Wine of the Year  
NV Pierre Sparr Cremant  
D'Alsace Brut Reserve



Light yellow with green reflections and fine, glittering pearl beads; the nose offers aromas of galia melon, sweet woodruff and dried mango, with minerals and hints of nuts. The soft mousse leaves a pleasant feeling on the palate, accompanied by a racy, powerful body and crisp, lemony acidity that brings freshness to this Crémant. With time in the glass, it opens further to a complex sparkling brut, finishing with a long aftertaste.

\$15<sup>97</sup>

Tom's Wine of the Year  
2016 Ramirez de la  
Piscina Reserva Rioja



A dark purple wine that delivers a fragrant nose of dark fruits, smoky oak, vanilla, and licorice. Spicy and broad on the palate, offering concentrated notes of black currant and floral pastille notes with mocha kisses. An incredibly smooth and lengthy finish with soft tannins that slowly build.

\$14<sup>97</sup>

EXPRESS CURBSIDE PICK-UP  
& FREE LOCAL DELIVERY

Indaba Chenin Blanc .....	\$6.97	Dreaming Tree Crush Red.....	\$11.97
Pessoa Vinho Verde .....	\$7.97	Sheldrake Pinot Gamay Noir .....	\$12.97
Alverdi Pinot Grigio.....	\$7.97	Garzon Albarino.....	\$13.97
Cantina Di Lana Montepulciano ...	\$7.97	Klinker Brick Old Vine Zinfandel.	\$14.97
Terrazas Cabernet.....	\$8.97	Anton Bauer Gruner Veltliner.....	\$15.97
Carabizal Roble .....	\$10.97	Castell Silvaner Trocken.....	\$17.97
Bousquet Reserve Malbec .....	\$11.97	Tegernseerhof Riesling.....	\$17.97
J Lohr Chardonnay .....	\$11.97	Anton Bauer Wagram Pinot Noir	\$19.97

EVERYDAY LOW PRICES

<div></div> <div>Jack Daniels 1.75 L \$47.97</div>	<div></div> <div>Cavit Pinot Grigio 1.5 L \$12.97</div>	<div></div> <div>Meiomi Pinot Noir 750 ml \$17.97</div>	<div></div> <div>Oak Farm Cabernet 750 ml \$14.97</div>	<div></div> <div>Tito's Vodka 1.75 L \$32.97</div>	<div></div> <div>Dewars Scotch 1.75 L \$32.97</div>
<div></div> <div>Hess Select Cabernet 750 ml \$13.97</div>	<div></div> <div>Hess Select Chardonnay 750 ml \$9.97</div>	<div></div> <div>Kendall Jackson Chardonnay 750 ml \$11.97</div>	<div></div> <div>Santa Margherita Pinot Grigio 750 ml \$21.97</div>	<div></div> <div>Ruffino Tan Label Chianti 750 ml \$19.97</div>	



Monday - Saturday 9am - 9pm • Sunday 12pm-5pm • December 13th through December 19th  
379 Downing Drive • Yorktown Heights, NY • 914-962-3100 • WWW.SUBURBANWINES.COM  
WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS - WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO LIMIT QUANTITIES - SALE PRICES ARE FOR STORE STOCK ONLY

All prices  
750ml unless  
otherwise  
noted



# Health Officials in Putnam, Westchester Urge Residents to Get Flu Shots

By Rick Pezzullo

Health officials in Putnam and Westchester counties are urging residents to get their annual flu shots with cases of influenza on the rise.

"The flu vaccine is the best protection we have and it can help you avoid the worst outcomes from the flu, including

hospitalization and death," said Westchester Health Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler. "Flu activity is already robust, and the vaccine appears to be a good match for the viruses circulating."

In Putnam, for the second consecutive week, cases of influenza have jumped dramatically, according to the county's Health Department. There were 404

cases reported from Nov. 27 to Dec. 3, as compared to 186 cases for the week ending Nov. 26 and just 56 cases for the week ending Nov. 19.

Half of the cases in the most recent reporting week are in school-age children, five to 17 years of age.

Earlier this week, the Centers for Disease Control reported there have been 14 pediatric flu deaths in the U.S. so far this year. CDC estimates the number of annual flu deaths between 12,000 to 52,000, and hospitalizations from 140,000 to 710,000, based on actual ranges between 2010 and 2020.

Amler said flu activity is usually highest between December and February, but can last into May. The vaccine becomes fully effective after about two weeks.

"Your flu shot protects you and it protects those around you who are more vulnerable to flu complications, such as infants too young to be vaccinated, seniors and people with chronic health conditions," Amler said. "As you prepare for holiday gatherings, place a flu shot at the top of your to-do list."

Flu shots are available at area drug stores and supermarkets. Flu shots are also offered by appointment at the Westchester County Health Department clinic on Mondays and Fridays at 134 Court St. in White Plains. For more information, visit [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).

In Putnam, clinics are held in the

Village of Brewster, supported by the New York State Department of Health and the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) program, which ensures eligible residents receive access to vital vaccinations while helping to address vaccine equity.

The next MSFW clinic was scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 83 Main St. For more information on the MSFW program and to check eligibility, or to find out more about regularly scheduled immunization clinics at the health department, call 845-808-1390 ext. 43230.

## COVID Cases Rising

COVID numbers are also on the rise in both counties. In Putnam there were 267 cases reported for the week ending Dec. 3 compared to 201 for the week ending Nov. 26. In Westchester, active cases jumped to 2,645 as of Dec. 4, nearly 700 more than a week earlier.

Westchester COVID hospitalizations also rose to 210 last week, up from 174 the week before.

"It is not by any means coming back to a crisis standpoint, but we've been waiting to see if we get back to what's happened the past two winters," said County Executive George Latimer, referring to case surges at the start of the cold weather season each of the past two years.

*Martin Wilbur contributed to this article.*

## Chanukah Wonderland at the Dreidel House Spins Into Westchester

Come one, come all to the holiday event of the season!

Dust off your menorahs and rummage through your drawers for your dreidels, because this Chanukah the Dreidel House returns to Westchester for the first time in more than five years.

From Dec. 19-26 all are welcome at 101 Mamaroneck Ave. in Mamaroneck to spin by and experience an 8,000-square-foot interactive and immersive wonderland. Complete with giant dreidel, a glow-in-the-dark Chanukah tunnel, Maccabi sumo

wrestling challenge, holiday-themed arts and crafts, a game room and much more, this promises to be an unforgettable event for all ages.



Hours for the Dreidel House will be 12 to 6 p.m. from Dec. 19-22; 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Dec. 23; 6 to 10 p.m. on Dec. 24; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Dec. 25; and 12 to 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 26.

Admission is free and festive partygoers are invited to reserve a place online at [www.thedreidelhouse.com](http://www.thedreidelhouse.com) or to stop by. Free parking on the street is available.

## SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS



A Mediterranean/Albanian Restaurant specializing in:

- Steaks - all dry aged 3 to 4 weeks
- Fresh seafood
- Classic Chicken Dishes
- Pasta Specialties
- Homemade Albanian



Specialties including:  
Burek-Fili-Tollumba-Treqe-  
Gullash-Qepada-Beef Sausages and Baklava

Also visit our market, offering Dry meats, yogurt and a variety of delicious imported Balkan foods.

**562 Route 6, Mahopac 10541**  
**845-628-0616 • [stonehouse-grill.com](http://stonehouse-grill.com)**

## HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS

Centerpieces • Teleflora Specials

Fresh Cut  
Nov. 25

## CHRISTMAS TREES

Poinsettias • Wreaths • Cemetery Tributes

Custom Made Fruit & Gourmet Baskets



**Curt's Homestead Floral Designs**

1062 Oregon Rd.

Cortlandt Manor, 914 736-0506

Directions from Rt 6, Kohl's: Take Westbrooke Dr to circle, take 4th rt Oregon Rd 1 mile

From Peekskill; Follow N. Division St. 3 miles from city line  
Open every day 9:00-7:00 • Credit Cards Accepted

UNIQUE  
COLORS!



We  
Deliver,  
Anywhere!

## Holiday Sale Going On Now!

- Special Orders • Appraisals
- Jewelry Repairs • Engraving
- Restrunging • Watch Repair

- Diamond Settings • Polish
  - Rhodium & Gold Plating
- Most work  
done while you wait.



**968 Broadway • Thornwood**  
(ShopRite/ CVS Shopping Center)  
**914-741-1920**



**Thornwood Jewelers**  
A Perfect Piece for Every Occasion



# Schumer Vows Federal Aid to Make Metro-North Grade Crossings Safer

By Martin Wilbur

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer pledged Friday to deliver more than \$100 million to make dangerous Metro-North grade crossings safer for drivers, including money for a vehicular overpass for Roaring Brook Road in Chappaqua.

Schumer said he has already secured \$4.4 million to upgrade five crossings in Putnam and Dutchess counties, including the one at Manitou Station Road in Philipstown where he made the announcement. The money is from the \$9 billion in federal rail safety funding in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

He said he is also pressing for another \$67 million for the overpass over the Metro-North tracks at Roaring Brook Road and additional funds for various upgrades at other crossings from the \$3 billion earmarked in the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program. That would include the crossing at Commerce Street in Valhalla, the site of the deadliest accident in Metro-North history in February 2015 when five train passengers and the driver of an SUV were killed.

Additionally, Schumer is pushing for another \$45 million



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Sen. Chuck Schumer announced his plans last Friday in Philipstown, surrounded by various officials, to secure more than \$100 million to improve the most dangerous grade crossings in Westchester and Putnam counties.

for the installation of positive train control technology, which automatically slows trains down if there is a nearby emergency of if there's an obstacle on the tracks.

"We need to make sure that Hudson Valley commuters aren't passed over," Schumer said. "Since I've been majority leader the funding's finally there and with my clout behind the applications, let's go full steam ahead and get the Hudson Valley rail safety program back on track."

While unable to provide specific timetables, the senator said the upgrades to the five crossings in Putnam and Dutchess will be

done soon since the money has already been set aside.

Schumer credited Putnam County Legislator Nancy Montgomery (D-Philipstown) for continually sounding the alarm for a safer Metro-North in her county. Montgomery, whose husband was one of four people killed in the Metro-North accident at Spuyten Duyvil in December 2013, called Schumer's commitment "a wonderful Christmas present to the people that I represent."

"We're grateful to our Putnam representatives at the MTA who really got on the MTA board for this purpose, to make our trains

safer," she said.

In total, there are nine crossings in both Westchester and Putnam counties that have been deemed dangerous, said Neal Zuckerman, the Putnam representative on the MTA Board. The grade crossing in Peekskill, for example, has been graded with a 1.6 chance out of 1,000 for an accident, an unusually dangerous location, he said.

Town of New Castle officials were pleased to hear that Schumer has thrown his support behind securing funds for an overpass over the tracks at Roaring Brook Road. The grade crossing is a short distance from the Saw Mill Parkway and less than a half-mile from Horace Greeley High School and Chappaqua Crossing, where construction of 91 townhomes will soon be completed. More than 60 apartments and retail shops have been open for several years at Chappaqua Crossing.

The area has seen more than 850 accidents in the past 15 years, Schumer said.

New Castle Town Administrator Jill Shapiro, who attended the senator's press conference with Police Chief James Carroll, said the Town Board has recognized for years the urgency of addressing the dangers on Roaring Brook Road.

"This means that one of the busiest commuter rail lines in the country and hundreds of vehicles driven by our newest drivers cross paths every day," Shapiro said. "But our town can't resolve this issue on our own. We need partnerships with agencies and government officials as we see here today, municipalities standing alongside railroad workers, MTA board members, county representatives and led by our federal government, working together to permanently eliminate unacceptable safety situations."

Supervisor Lisa Katz, who was unable to attend the press conference, said later Friday that having the support in Washington for a remedy to the dangerous condition on Roaring Brook Road, both at the railroad crossing and at the Saw Mill Parkway helps everyone who travels in that area.

"I just think it is so phenomenal that this is even a possibility," Katz said. "I'm thrilled."

Zuckerman said there are 364 grade crossings on MTA property, with 295 of those on Long Island and the remaining ones in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess counties.

## Have Medicaid and Medicare?

For those who qualify, a Dual Special Needs Plan from MVP Health Care® may offer more benefits, more support, and no monthly premium.

### With an MVP DualAccess plan, you'll get:

- **\$0 co-pays** for doctor visits
- **\$1,000 per year for dental costs** with no deductible
- **\$50 per month** to spend on healthy groceries (for those who qualify)
- **\$200 per year** for eyewear
- **FREE transportation** to medical appointments
- **FREE meal delivery** after a hospital stay
- **\$75 every three months** to spend on over-the-counter medicine and health-related items

**Find out today if you're eligible.**

Call **1-844-687-6691** (TTY 711)

Seven days a week, 8 am–8 pm Eastern Time.

April 1–September 30, Monday–Friday, 8 am–8 pm.

MVP Health Plan, Inc. is an HMO-POS/PPO/HMO D-SNP organization with a Medicare contract and a contract with the New York State Medicaid program. Enrollment in MVP Health Plan depends on contract renewal. MVP Health Plan, Inc. has been approved by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) to operate as a Special Needs Plan (SNP) until December 31, 2024 based on review of MVP Health Plan's Model of Care. This plan is a dual eligible special needs plan (D-SNP). Your ability to enroll will be based on verification that you are entitled to both Medicare and medical assistance from a state plan under Medicaid.



Y0051\_7260\_M



# Dog Owner Sued By Animal Advocate for Alleged Abuse

By Abby Luby

The owner of a white, female Siberian Husky is being sued for alleged animal abuse in a civil case that was heard last Monday in Westchester County Court.

Animal advocate Deborah Pangle, who until recently was a longtime Briarcliff Manor resident, is suing for the surrender of the dog from its owners, the Piscopiello family of Ossining.

Pangle alleged that the Husky, named Luna, has been tethered outside for over a decade regardless of weather conditions.

The family, which has owned Luna for 11 years, countered that the dog has been well cared for.

Last week's five-hour hearing before Westchester County Court Judge David Zuckerman produced testimony from animal rescue experts, Ossining Police Chief Kevin Sylvester and residents who for about seven years have observed Luna at various times of day.

Photos and videos documenting the dog's circumstances were entered as evidence by Pangle's lawyer, Matthew Albert, a Buffalo-based animal rights attorney. Westchester-based attorney Russell Smith defended the Piscopiellos.

Pangle, who now lives in Cape May, N.J., is the founder of the animal advocacy group The Cat Squad. She raised about \$20,000 for the legal fees and expenses.

Complaints about Luna started in 2017 when a resident living near the Piscopiellos contacted Pangle after seeing the dog

tethered outside all the time.

"I observed Luna from the street and she was chained to a doghouse on the side of the house," Pangle testified. "She was always tethered even in extreme weather conditions."

Luna's owner, Marco Piscopiello, said he purchased the dog from a puppy mill in 2011, but she resisted crate training and didn't want to be inside.

"We thought it best for her to be outside and we tethered her to a mountain climbing device, not a chain," he said.

Piscopiello said keeping the dog inside made her bark continuously and neighbors complained, but when tethered outside Luna seemed content. The family leaves the garage door open two feet for Luna to freely enter and exit, he said.

According to Piscopiello, the garage has a fan and is cool inside during the summer. In the winter the nearby boiler keeps the space warm. There is a raised bed for Luna to sleep in, and when the family isn't home, Luna is left in the garage with the door closed.

Lorraine Healy, founder of Husky House, a Siberian Husky rescue organization, testified that Huskies are bred to be part of a pack and isolating them can cause suffering.

"A Husky needs tons of exercise and roughhousing with people and other dogs," Healy said.

Piscopiello said Luna regularly socializes and plays with dogs owned by other family members.

Pangle said she contacted Ernest Lungaro, director of the Humane Law Enforcement



Deborah Pangle, left, animal advocate and founder of The Cat Squad, and Lorraine Healy, founder of Husky House, a Siberian Husky rescue organization, outside a Westchester County courtroom last week. Pangle is suing for the surrender of a white, female Siberian Husky who she alleges is being abused.

Unit at the SPCA Westchester in Briarcliff Manor.

"The SPCA did nothing," Pangle said. "I tried to work with the Piscopiellos through the police, but they did nothing to help

Luna."

Sylvester, who has been chief since 2016, testified that Pangle e-mailed and called the police numerous times. Officers specializing in animal control were dispatched to check on Luna.

"They found the dog well cared for. From the body camera footage there was no evidence of abuse," Sylvester said. "There was no cause to take action."

Albert asked Sylvester if he knew how long Luna was tethered on a daily basis and if he was familiar with the local tethering law.

"We (the police) can't sit outside the house to see if a dog is tethered," he responded, adding that he wasn't familiar with the details of the tethering law. "That's what the police staff of animal control officers are for."

Ossining passed an ordinance in 2018, which states a dog may be tethered outside for a maximum of 12 hours during any 24-hour period. Violating the law is punishable by a fine of up to \$250.

Sylvester said he also contacted Lungaro who observed Luna in the company of a police officer.

"Lungaro said the dog didn't require anything and nothing needed to be done," he said.

Testimony was given by Piscopiello's mother, Lucy, who said the dog has always received the required vaccinations and routine checkups with a local veterinarian and is in good health.

Maria Varrone, who has been involved with animal rescue and would pass Luna

*continued on next page*

**DREAMERS.  
DOERS.  
ACHIEVERS.**

**GO-GETTERS**

**PACE  
UNIVERSITY**  
/ New York City  
/ Westchester

[gogetters.pace.edu](http://gogetters.pace.edu)

**CHABAD OF YORKTOWN INVITES YOU TO A**

**CHANUKAH VILLAGE WALK**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18TH, FROM 3PM-4PM**

Also join the  
**Somers Menorah Lighting**  
Sunday, Dec 18, 6pm  
at the  
Elephant Hotel

Stroll through Commerce St. in Yorktown and enjoy the Chanukah spirit! Fun for the whole family!

Participating stores will be hosting: Hot latkes, Chanukah crafts & activities, Chanukah themed give-aways (Dreidels, Chocolate gelt, LED Menorah necklaces, Chanukah prizes), Chanukah Judaica items for sale, and more!

**FOLLOWED BY A GRAND MENORAH LIGHTING NEAR THE RUNNING TRACK AT 4:00 PM. FREE DONUTS & HOT COFFEE FOR ALL!**

START AT THE YORKTOWN COMMUNITY CENTER (1974 COMMERCE ST.), AND PICK UP A MAP OF ALL PARTICIPATING STORES.  
**\$5/PERSON \* RSVP REQUIRED: [WWW.CHABADYORKTOWN.COM](http://WWW.CHABADYORKTOWN.COM) \* OR CALL 914-962-1111**



# Westchester Budget Unanimously Adopted, Signed By Latimer

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County Executive George Latimer signed the \$2.37 billion 2023 budget Monday afternoon hours after the Board of Legislators unanimously approved the spending plan.

In the final week before its adoption, legislators added money to reopen two mental health clinics that had been closed, reduced the parents' share of contributions from 10 to 5 percent for those who qualify for subsidized child care and increased spending by \$500,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money for neighborhood community health centers.

Another \$750,000 in ARPA funds was appropriated for Westchester Connects, a program that partners with the Westchester County Association to improve internet access for residents, and lawmakers added \$350,000 for smoking cessation programs.

The latter initiative was one of the issues raised during the recent public hearing and board vote to prohibit flavored tobacco products in Westchester.

Board of Legislators Chair Catherine Borgia (D-Ossining) said the county residents will be well-served by the 2023 budget.

"At the very end of this process, we were very pleased to be able to make improvements to the good budget that we received from the county exec, working and negotiating with the county exec's team to reduce the parents' share for child care, to help the child care facilities around our county, (to) make sure they can stay open to provide service for our county," Borgia said.

For the fourth consecutive year, the budget reduces the property tax levy in 2023, this time by about \$6 million despite an additional \$150 million in spending, Latimer said. More than half of the additional

spending is a result of about \$68 million in ARPA funding that the county must put toward certain expenses and nearly \$12 million to cover an anticipated 5 percent average inflation rate next year, he said.

"The important thing to understand is we now have less property tax levy today than we did the day we walked into office five years ago," Latimer said.

When Latimer entered office at the start of 2018, the parents' portion for subsidized child care stood at 27 percent. He called it "a savings for hard working people."

"That is a proactive investment in human beings and human capital through child care," Latimer added.

Budget and Appropriations Committee Chair Vedat Gashi (D-Yorktown) said with the additional mental health services and money for child care, the county has made wise choices.

"It's something I'm tremendously proud



Officials surround Westchester County Executive George Latimer Monday afternoon as he signs the county's \$2.37 billion budget for 2023 in Valhalla.

of," Gashi said.

The county will have a projected fund balance of about \$448 million at the end of 2022, Latimer said. Nearly 500 of the 5,027 positions will remain unfilled but are included in the budget in case positions need to be filled at some point.

Department of Community Mental Health Commissioner Michael Orth said the county's commitment to serving residents was illustrated by the allocation of money to mental health. More than \$17 million is earmarked for that line next year.

There is also about \$6 million for the Mental Health Crisis Response Team.

"They have made a statement that addiction and co-occurring disorder need attention," Orth said. "And, they have told all of us here in the county that we matter."

## Dog Owner Sued By Animal Advocate for Alleged Abuse

*continued from previous page*

on her way to and from work, said she took pictures of the Husky in different weather conditions at different times of day.

"The dog was always outside, even this past summer when it was well over 85 degrees," Varrone said.

Pangle is also suing for suffering distress, anxiety and depression since being involved with helping Luna.

"I lived 15 minutes from Luna, and years

of not being able to help her left me feeling overwhelmed," she said.

If Pangle wins the case she has arranged for Luna to live with an animal advocate in Connecticut, where the dog would be housed inside with other pets.

At the end of the hearing, both attorneys briefly summed up their arguments.

"That the Piscopiello should forfeit Luna is insane," Smith said. "It's clear, unequivocally, this family loves Luna and the

allegations are unfounded."

Albert said although the dog has access to the garage, the town's tethering ordinance had been violated.

"The dog is outside from early morning to bedtime and there is evidence of distress," he said. "That gives the court the right to have the dog surrendered."

Zuckerman asked for final summations to be submitted from Albert and Smith. His decision is expected sometime after Jan. 20.

**Aardvark Pet Supplies, Inc.**  
Not your AAverage pet store

visit us at:

**1016 Broadway  
Thornwood, NY 10549**

**(914) 747-4848**  
**aardvarkpet@verizon.net**

**Glass Onion**  
ORIGINALS

Specializing in Fine  
American Craft

Fine Art • Sculpture  
• Unique Gifts • Furniture  
Home Accessories • Antiques  
• Exquisite Jewelry • & more...

4 Washington Avenue,  
Pleasantville 914-741-6294  
Open 7 Days —  
Friday and Saturday until 8pm

**La Barberia**  
EST. 1970

**FAMILY HAIRCUTTING ESTABLISHMENT**  
65 Wheeler Avenue, Pleasantville  
(914) 741-1120

Hours: Mon-Wed 9:30-6  
Thurs & Fri 9:30-7  
Sat 9-5 • Open Sunday 10-3

Offering Services for Men & Women  
HIGH QUALITY  
AT LOW PRICES!

**\$5.00 OFF  
COLOR/PERMS  
HIGHLIGHTS**

**\$2.00 OFF  
HAIRCUTS**

Venmo: @Raffaele-Ferraioli

**BUYING  
COMIC BOOK  
COLLECTIONS!**

★ **Top Prices Paid!** ★

30+ Years Experience!  
Reliable & Local (W'chester/Putnam)

Call/Text: 917-699-2496  
email: smileLP@aol.com

During this  
*Most Wonderful Time of the Year,*  
we extend a heartfelt  
*Thank You*  
and wish you a joyous  
*Holiday Season*  
and a  
*Happy New Year!*

**The Vision Team**

**Hans Weber**  
Associate Real Estate Broker  
Cell: 914-329-8601  
HansWeb9@aol.com  
www.HansWeb9.com

**Donna McKenna-Edlund**  
Associate Real Estate Broker  
Cell: 914-403-4237  
Donna.Edlund@cbmoves.com  
www.DonnaEdlund.com

**COLDWELL BANKER REALTY**  
1 Washington Avenue, Pleasantville, NY



## Obituary

### Gordon Kolvenbach

Gordon Kolvenbach died on Dec. 8 after a short illness. He was 98 years old.

He was predeceased by Maggie Kolvenbach, his wife of 62 years. Gordon is survived by his six children, Mary Hacopian, Ann Kolvenbach, Joan Jacobsen, Beth Waggoner, John Kolvenbach and Laura Olson, and their spouses, 16 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Gordon was born in Milwaukee, Wis. on Aug. 30, 1924, to John and Eleanor Kolvenbach. He was the second of three sons. After serving with distinction in World War II, he returned to Milwaukee and graduated from Marquette University. He then moved to New York City and worked as a television producer in advertising where he received a Clio Award.

Gordon and Maggie met in New York and were married in 1958. They moved to Jackson Heights, Queens, and then to Mount Kisco, where they raised their family.

Gordon was a wonderful husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Gordon loved playing tennis and played until he was 90 years old. He heated their house with wood from trees that he felled and split, built a MiGi kit car in his garage over one very cold winter and did The New York Times crossword puzzle daily. He faithfully attended St. Francis Church



Gordon Kolvenbach

weekly.

A memorial service for Gordon will be in the chapel at St. Francis of Assisi in Mount Kisco on Dec. 29 at 10 a.m. His wishes were to have his body donated to New York Medical College to further medical science.

*B.F.*

**BEECHER FLOOKS FUNERAL HOME, INC.**

*“The place to turn in your time of need!”*

**Personally Owned and Supervised By**

**William F Flooks, Jr. & William J Flooks**  
**Proprietor Licensed Funeral Director**

*Caring for our community since 1928*  
*Personal and Complete Funeral Service*

418 Bedford Road...Pleasantville, NY 10570...769-0001

[www.beecherflooksfh.com](http://www.beecherflooksfh.com)

## Police Blotter

### Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

**Dec. 2:** Patrols and Croton Fire responded to northbound Route 9 at 12:21 p.m. on a report of a dump truck fire. After an extended closure of the roadway, the fire was extinguished and the truck was removed.

**Dec. 4:** A caller from a Grand Street business requested assistance at 8:07 p.m. Two female customers had been asked to leave the premises but refused. Upon arrival, the females had already left the establishment.

**Dec. 5:** A caller reported at 7:16 p.m. that a sick raccoon was lying in the roadway on Harrison Street. Patrols responded and dispatched the animal. The Village of Croton DPW was notified for pickup.

### Kent Police Department

**Dec. 2:** A 42-year-old Carmel woman was arrested for second-degree menacing and fourth-degree criminal mischief following a dispute with her boyfriend. The boyfriend, 37, reported that at about 11:45 p.m. they got into a dispute, which escalated into a screaming match that saw the girlfriend grab a kitchen knife and stab a wooden door that the boyfriend was hiding behind. He provided officers with a video of the incident. The woman was transported to police headquarters for processing. She was arraigned and instructed to report to Putnam County Probation to obtain an ankle monitor.

### New Castle Police Department

**Nov. 26:** Property was stolen from an unlocked vehicle parked in the driveway of a Pine Cliff Road residence.

**Nov. 26:** Officers seized about three pounds of marijuana during a traffic stop on Millwood Road. The two occupants of the vehicle, both under the age of 21, were arrested for the offense.

**Dec. 1:** A pedestrian was struck by a vehicle at the intersection of Quaker Road and Kipp Street. The victim sustained serious but not life-threatening injuries. The driver of the vehicle left the scene but was later identified and arrested.

**Dec. 6:** Officers assisted a woman who was having a mental health episode in the lobby of Town Hall. She was transported to Northern Westchester Hospital for further assistance.

**Dec. 8:** Officers received a report of a one-car accident and the vehicle had gone off the roadway on Millwood Road. They located the driver of the vehicle walking away from the accident and later determined the subject had a suspended driver's license. He was arrested for the incident.

### North Castle Police Department

**Dec. 2:** A caller reported striking a rock with his vehicle on Oregon Road at 2:09 a.m. making it inoperable. The responding

officer reported that the vehicle had New York registration and was disabled in the roadway. Armonk Garage was notified to remove the vehicle and the operator was taken home.

**Dec. 4:** A complainant reported at 3:07 p.m. that a dog, described as about 80 pounds and tan in color with a fluffy coat, was seen walking loose in the roadway on Terrace Circle. The responding officer located the dog, which he was able to reunite with its owner.

**Dec. 5:** Security at Stop & Shop on North Broadway reported at 3:05 p.m. that a larceny occurred the previous day and requested an officer respond. A report and a witness deposition were filed.

**Dec. 6:** An officer reported at 5:51 p.m. that while out with a disabled vehicle a passerby reported observing a female party walking on Route 22 followed by two male parties. The administrator on duty at the Jennie Clarkson campus was contacted and she reported that staff just returned to campus with a female resident who had left campus. The responding officer checked the area and found it to be clear of anyone walking. A follow-up was made and the administrator reported that a female resident had been brought back to campus by staff members prior to their arrival and no further assistance was needed.

### Pleasantville Police Department

**Dec. 7:** A 65-year-old man was arrested at 2 p.m. at the Chase Bank on Washington Avenue after attempting to make a withdrawal with fraudulent documents. The suspect had had previous felony charges against him. He was arrested and was being held at the Westchester County Jail in Valhalla.

**Dec. 7:** A Pleasantville resident arrived at headquarters at 6:16 p.m. to report that the landlord of his apartment has not turned the heat on. The complainant was told that the matter is civil in nature and was referred to the village's Building Department.

### White Plains Police Department

**Dec. 8:** Justin Panariello, 35, of Brooklyn, was charged with third-degree attempted robbery at the Bank of America at 206 Main St.

### Yorktown Police Department

**Dec. 6:** Mateo Arteaga, 38, of Mount Kisco, was charged with first-degree sexual abuse, a Class D felony, at 3:15 p.m. for allegedly sexually abusing a victim on Sept. 12. He was remanded to Westchester County Jail.

**Dec. 7:** A 31-year-old Yorktown man was charged with driving while using a mobile phone and other traffic infractions following a traffic stop on Route 6 at 9:20 p.m.

**SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS**



# Bountiful Garden Serves the Community at Mt. Kisco Elementary School

By Abby Luby

A child's thrill and delight at a newly sprouted seed can radiate out to an entire community.

When youngsters at the Mount Kisco Elementary School Community Garden immerse themselves into planting, growing and harvesting fruits and vegetables, their enthusiasm ripples out, impacting everyone from local food pantries, gardening clubs, coffee shops, family help groups and commercial nurseries.

"I love seeing how important this is to our kids," said parent volunteer and Garden Co-chair Jennifer Wege.

Wege, also known as "Mrs. Garden Teacher," recalled how students planted seeds in milk jugs last winter and their surprise to see small green plants in the spring that would grow into lettuce, kale, herbs and Swiss chard.

"When they looked inside the jugs, they couldn't believe what they planted," Wege said. "We had the first- and second-graders create drawings and write about the jugs."

The jug project got a boost from local retailers, including Michael's Garden Gate Nursery, which donated the seeds. The recycled milk jugs came from Mimi's Coffee House and Starbucks on South Moger Avenue.

The garden had been an abandoned tennis court 12 years ago before former Mount Kisco Elementary School principal Sue Ostrofsky had the idea to transform it into a garden. In the last few years, the garden

slowly deteriorated. Needed funding had disappeared during the pandemic.

Wege, who lives in Bedford Hills with her husband Greg and their twins who are in the second grade, started to revitalize the garden two years ago. Of the 41 raised wooden beds, 24 were rebuilt by Wege's husband and the family of Juan Barbecho last spring. The two families had completed another 10 the previous year while seven other beds were previously rebuilt.

"We were able to get it started in the spring of 2021 and had all grades outside," Wege said. "We just had brought back all of our children from remote learning. It was great to see the teachers come out, take off their masks and help teach the children to plant and maintain the garden."

When vegetables were being planted, Wege was approached by current Principal Inas Morsi-Hogans.

"We talked about food insecurity and I told her we can grow food for the community," Wege said. "From that point a schedule was created to bring all 25 classes down to learn about gardening."

Once a week in the warm weather, all 500 students spend 40 minutes in the garden with their teachers. Bilingual science lessons include learning how to maintain a garden, grow and harvest food. Last spring, more than 400 pounds of fruits and vegetables were gathered by students and donated to local food pantries.

Students experienced the full cycle from ground to table by taking home foods they had never eaten before and donating bags of



JENNIFER WEGE PHOTO

The Jupiter second-grade class at the Mount Kisco Elementary School Community Garden. The school's students learn to sprout seeds in the winter, plant seedlings in the spring, then harvest and donate food to local food pantries.

food to the nearby Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry.

A pollinator pop-up tent donated by the Westchester Land Trust also taught students about the life cycles of butterflies and bumblebees, both essential to pollinate plants. That added to the lesson about the life cycle of fruits and vegetables.

Wege said the students wrote a bilingual skit about bumblebees and acted it out with

hand puppets.

"For these kids it took the fear out of bumblebees and they would stare at sunflowers that attracted bees," Wege said. "As we teach them about the connection to nature, it's beautiful to watch."

The garden has attracted support from many families and community groups, including the Foundation for Bedford Central Schools and the Suzanne Grant Foundation, which helped build a reading garden and outdoor classroom that was completed this fall.

As part of its civic beautification program, Katonah's Hopp Ground Garden Club donated \$2,500 to create a musical component in the garden. Wege, a club member, said the school's music teacher was inspired by the Princess Diana Memorial Playground at Kensington Gardens in London.

The goal is to finish the musical section of the garden by spring. Recycled PVC piping will create an outdoor xylophone and various rain barrels will be drums. Sounds will come from students walking along a pathway made out of recycled wood from the garden.

During the summer Wege said volunteers work with Neighbors Link and use its Summer Links program at Mount Kisco Elementary School to help keep the garden going.

"Watching the children planting seeds, asking questions, telling me about something they ate and wanting to grow a garden at home, those are the moments that make my heart melt," Wege said.

**JAZZ**  
ON MAIN

**Buy Tix Today  
for Hottest  
Party in Town!**

(914) 730-2399

[www.jazzonmain.com](http://www.jazzonmain.com)

**WESTCHESTER  
TABLE TENNIS CENTER**

**KID'S TRAINING**

Mon./Tue./Wed. 4:30-6:00 pm  
Sat. 10:30-Noon

**OPEN DAILY TILL 10 PM**

175 Tompkins Ave, Pleasantville  
**914-741-0738**

[www.westchestertabletennis.com](http://www.westchestertabletennis.com)

**C.O.D. OIL**  
HEATING OIL ON DEMAND

**CALL US TODAY AND SAVE!**  
**914.737.7769**

*The Consumer's Choice  
for Discount Heating Oil!*

**SAVE WITH OUR  
LOW C.O.D.  
PRICES!**

- No Contracts or Commitments
- Oil Burner Service/Tune-ups
- Quality Heating Oil
- Senior Citizen & Volume Discounts
- Expert Burner Service
- A/C Tune-ups
- Price Matching (Restrictions apply)

Order online at: [www.codoil.com](http://www.codoil.com)

Logos: American Express, MasterCard, VISA, DISCOVER

**Ballard-Durand: Now Serving  
All of Westchester County**

Providing unmatched funeral & cremation services in **White Plains, Elmsford, and now in Hawthorne, NY.**

**HAWTHORNE**  
21 West Stevens Ave  
Hawthorne, NY 10532

**ELMSFORD**  
72 E Main St  
Elmsford, NY 10523

**WHITE PLAINS**  
2 Maple Ave  
White Plains, NY 10601

Now accepting new and transferred pre-arrangements call (914) 688-6611 or scan code



**BALLARD-DURAND**  
FUNERAL & CREMATION SERVICES

[BallardDurand.com](http://BallardDurand.com)



# Byrne Tabs Orange County Official as Deputy Putnam Executive

On Sunday, Putnam County Executive-elect Kevin Byrne announced the appointment of James Burpoe as deputy county executive for his upcoming administration.

Burpoe has an extensive background in both the public and private sectors, leading government and businesses in implementing cost savings and efficiency measures. Burpoe currently serves as the commissioner of

general services for Orange County, where he has streamlined government operations, saving taxpayers millions of dollars annually while enhancing processes and services throughout the county.

"I look forward to working hand in hand with (Byrne) for the people of Putnam County," Burpoe said following his appointment. "Citizens deserve a government that puts them first and Putnam

has an opportunity to lead the state in innovative, forward-thinking services. I am truly honored to be a part of the incoming administration."

Burpoe also spearheaded the consolidation of Orange County's information technology and purchasing departments, leading to additional efficiencies and better enabling the government to serve the people.

In addition to his years of service in county government, his background includes building and managing his own multimillion-dollar retail technology start-up company, as well as his time in public service as a law enforcement officer and U.S. Army veteran.

As Putnam's new deputy county executive, Burpoe will be instrumental in implementing a more efficient, streamlined and transparent government.

"I am honored that Jim has accepted my request to join me in creating a better Putnam County for all," Byrne said. "I have known Jim for years and have always admired his innovative thinking, his can-do attitude and his energetic spirit. His experience in county government is unmatched. His ability as a strategic thinker has been a boon to Orange County residents, saving them millions of dollars every year as the county has fostered economic growth. I am thrilled that he is willing to bring his ideas and talent across the Hudson River as we seek to bring bold change and fresh leadership to Putnam County."

Burpoe's appointment was applauded by Orange County Executive Steve Neuhaus.



James Burpoe will be incoming Putnam County Executive Kevin Byrne's deputy, it was announced on Sunday.

"Jim's diverse experience in both the public and private sector and knowledge of county government operations will make him an asset to County Executive Byrne's team and the residents of Putnam County," Neuhaus said in a statement.

Byrne's transition team has devoted more than 100 hours to reviewing contracts, meeting with current department heads, evaluating existing programs in Putnam County, reviewing resumes and other tasks.

## Putnam County Gas Stations Now Eligible for Help in Getting Generators

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) announced that a bill that she sponsored, which includes Putnam County in the definition of the Lower Mid-Hudson region in the existing alternate generated power source at gasoline outlets law (Section 192-h), was signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul last week.

After Superstorm Sandy in 2012, the Agriculture and Markets Law was amended to initiate a program in the Lower Mid-Hudson region to provide assistance to fuel stations in obtaining backup generators so that in the event of a major storm or other disaster, they would be equipped with the power necessary to provide residents with gasoline and diesel.

Previously, Putnam County was excluded from this program because it

was not considered a part of this region. With the new amendment, the county will be better equipped to provide effective emergency response, including as an evacuation route.

"I thank the governor for passing this important legislation," Galef said. "Putnam County is a vital part of downstate New York, and it is imperative that the stations in Putnam County are able to provide fuel to the many backup generators operated by its residents and businesses and to those traveling along its evacuation routes, residents and non-residents alike. I am glad we were able to change this law to reflect that."

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) sponsored the bill in the Senate.



Patrick J. McNulty Jr.



Patrick T. McNulty

## ~ Trusted for Three Generations ~ Same Family ~ Same Location ~ Same Great Service

While most funeral homes today are being bought by large corporations, funeral groups or change of ownership, Pleasant Manor Funeral Home has always stood family operated continually by the same family for multiple generations. Earning the families trust of Mt. Pleasant and the surrounding communities Pleasant Manor has been the preferred choice for funeral services and cremations. We are grateful for the families we serve and appreciate their confidence in our ability to create meaningful services that help them begin the healing process. Our wide range of affordable service options ensures that you can focus less on managing expenses and more on healing.

*Pleasant Manor Funeral Home, Inc.*  
575 Columbus Avenue, Thornwood, NY 10594  
914 - 747 - 1821  
[www.pleasantmanorfh.com](http://www.pleasantmanorfh.com)

Patrick J. McNulty Sr.  
Patrick T. McNulty

Patrick J. McNulty Jr.  
Daniel J. McNulty

Funerals • Cremations

We honor all existing pre arranged funds with other funeral homes

• Memorial Services



## Pace Law Legal Call-in Center Expected to Launch Next Month

The Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University has partnered with Legal Hand, Inc., a New York State nonprofit corporation, to launch the Legal Hand Call-In Center serving Westchester County.

The Legal Hand Call-In Center will be an all-virtual resource center for community members, with office space on the third floor of Aloysia Hall at the Law School starting in January.

Haub Law students, along with college students and community volunteers, will be trained to assist those who live, work and send children to school in Westchester by phone and online and provide legal information, assistance and referrals. While the center will not provide legal advice or representation, it will serve as a valuable resource for community members seeking guidance in areas such as employment, housing, family, immigration, domestic violence and public benefits.

The Legal Hand Call-In Center serving Westchester County will function as part of the law school's broader Access to Justice Project, which incorporates curricular, experiential, research and policy advocacy components, all designed to increase student, faculty and staff engagement in pro bono and community work, and to

support the local community in addressing justice gaps.

"Through our partnership with Legal Hand, the Elisabeth Haub School of Law will serve an important role as a resource for the community, while providing our students with an invaluable opportunity to understand and address access to justice issues," said Horace E. Anderson, Dean of the Elisabeth Haub School of Law. "The center's goals are to empower both volunteers and visitors to understand and navigate issues and self-help resources, and to help visitors resolve issues before they turn into legal action."

Law student volunteers will be able to participate by handling shifts during the center's hours as trained volunteers or through a guided externship for credit. Members of the broader community will be trained as volunteers and asked to commit to serving a minimum of three hours per week for six months.

Haub Law is currently recruiting students and other interested members of the community as volunteers. Qualifying volunteers will participate in an intense training program prior to the center's planned launch.

## P'ville Garden Club Recognizes Jean Nonna With Green Thumb Award

Pleasantville's Jean Nonna, a valued horticulturist and accomplished gardener who has enriched the village and community by sharing her knowledge, enthusiasm and cherished gardens, was named the 2022 Pleasantville Garden Club's Green Thumb Award recipient last week.

The Nonna family moved to Pleasantville in 1986. Jean, who inherited enthusiasm for gardening from her mother, was destined to follow in her footsteps. By 1992, she was well on her way to transforming the one-and-a-quarter-acre plot into a botanical wonderland. Working with large shade trees, Nonna created understory gardens, highlighting a wide range of shrubs, perennials and annuals.

Visitors from all over Westchester enjoy the many and varied woodland gardens. Multiple paths lead to rock gardens, rare evergreens, a white garden, a purple garden, a fairy tale garden and others. She has selected and grows 40 varieties of Japanese maple trees and other rare trees and shrubs.

Over the years, Nonna continues to change and expand her garden, growing annuals from seed gives her a broad selection of zinnias, marigold, anemone and others to add to the spirea, irises, roses, daisies, hydrangea and myriads of plants for all seasons.



JOANNE LANZA PHOTO

Jean Nonna was the Pleasantville Garden Club's 2022 Green Thumb Award winner.

## SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS



*Happy Fall!*



**17 Miller Road  
Mahopac, NY 10541  
845.621.1222**



11 city place, white plains, ny 10601 | 914.328.1600 | wppac.com

**LIVE ON STAGE**



**COMING SOON!**



An Evening with  
Tony Award Winner  
**Laura Benanti**

Broadway star and Tony Award Winner, Laura Benanti, an artist whose remarkable talents have inspired audiences across Broadway, Cabaret and Screen, is coming to WPPAC for One Night Only!

**Saturday, January 28  
8:00 PM**



**PROFESSIONAL THEATRE DOWNTOWN WHITE PLAINS**  
914.328.1600 | wppac.com

Media Sponsor:  
**The Examiner**  
SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Letter to the Editor

Gov. Hochul Should Veto Changes to Estates, Power and Trusts Law

We, the undersigned members of the Putnam County Legislature, write to respectfully request that you veto bills S74A/A6770, known as the Grieving Families Act, which amends the Estates, Powers and Trusts Law (EPTL) in relation to payment and distribution of damages in wrongful death actions.

This proposed law is vague in many critical aspects and has the potential to adversely affect the availability and affordability of medical professional liability insurance. That will prompt even more doctors, nurses and healthcare professionals to leave our state, exacerbating an already significant employment crisis.

As examples of vagueness, it is unclear just who is eligible to recover damages in wrongful death claims. The types of losses and damages for which plaintiffs may receive compensation is also unclear. The legislation also lacks important payout caps adopted by many of the nearly 40 other states with these types of laws.

The bills would extend the statute of limitations from two years to three years

and six months, likely increasing the volume of wrongful death lawsuits. This extension may also lead to injustices, with litigants unable to properly defend claims brought years after the alleged wrongful acts because documents and/or witnesses are no longer available.

If enacted, this law would needlessly result in severely increased costs for all New York civil defendants, public and private. It would amend the EPTL to allow for the recovery of emotional damages against someone found liable for causing a death. This will open the door to such non-economic damages as grief, sympathy and "loss of love, society, protection, comfort, companionship and consortium."

Such damages may far exceed the amount of economic damage awards because intangible factors, such as subjective values, beliefs, emotional sensitivities and differing perspectives of justice, often drive their assessments. Courts and juries often struggle to calculate fair and rational non-economic damage awards, and they can vary widely from case to case.

Authorizing new types of claims for

families of a person killed as a result of negligence is unnecessary. Such families already have numerous and adequate legal avenues to recover financially for their loss. Under current law, a family can recover not just for economic loss but for the decedent's pain and suffering. Civil judgments already, in a practical sense, factor in the value of non-economic losses.

Critically, this law would have unintended consequences that damage medical care throughout the state. In addition to forcing healthcare professionals to leave New York, it will significantly increase the financial strain on hospitals and medical practices, which continue to deal with considerable pandemic-related struggles.

More than 30 hospitals in New York already receive extraordinary financial assistance from the state to sustain patient care services. Enactment of this law may well lead to closures of financially struggling hospitals, emergency rooms and primary and urgent care facilities.

These consequences will most severely impact safety-net care providers in

underserved communities, placing those with below average access to quality care at risk. The law would thus compromise the social equity the bills' proponents seek to achieve.

Our state's healthcare infrastructure simply cannot bear the burden that this law would impose. New York is already by far the costliest state in the nation for medical liability, with medical malpractice payouts of \$661,703,250 in 2019. In fact, New York's payouts exceeded medical malpractice payouts made in the entire Midwest region of the United States.

Again, we respectfully request Gov. Hochul veto S74A/A6770. A veto will offer the legislature the opportunity to clarify the ambiguous elements in the bills and bring New York into alignment with other states that have applied necessary and reasonable restrictions to similar legislation.

**Chairman Neal Sullivan, District 9**  
**Legislator Toni Addonizio, District 3**  
**Legislator Gini Nacerino, District 4**  
**Legislator Carl Albano, District 5**  
**Legislator Amy Sayegh, District 8**

Harckham, Levenberg to Host Holiday Food Drive in Ossining

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) and Ossining Town Supervisor Dana Levenberg will be holding a special holiday food drive this Saturday, Dec. 17 from 12 to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of Ossining High School, located at 29 S. Highland Ave. in Ossining. (Access to the parking lot is on Emwilton Place.)

Volunteers and members of Harckham's team will be collecting food for the Ossining Food Pantry, which helps to feed some of the neediest members of the community, including many seniors.

"Too many of our friends and neighbors

are still troubled by economic uncertainty and food insecurity," Harckham said. "We have seen a great amount of generosity so far, and hope that those who can will stop by with some food or bag of groceries and make a difference – right here in Westchester County."

In the 13 prior food drives since March 2020, Harckham and volunteers have collected about 44,000 pounds of food and more than \$12,000 in cash donations so far.

This will be a drive-thru, drop-off event. No food will be distributed; it will only be collected. Volunteers will collect the food

from the car. There is no need to get out of the vehicle.

Anyone interested in donating shelf-stable food, the items most needed include both non-perishable food and household goods, such as cold cereal (low sugar) and oatmeal; shelf-stable or evaporated milk; oil (olive or vegetable); peanut butter and jelly; pasta and pasta sauce; instant coffee and tea; and canned tuna.

Only unopened, non-damaged and unexpired items will be accepted.

Correction

In last week's article "Single Mom Seeks Kidney Donor for Holiday Season," it was incorrectly reported that the Flood Sisters Kidney Foundation's last transplant was May 13. The foundation's last transplant was May 10, 2022. Also, it was incorrectly reported that the foundation would have a table at last Friday evening's Parent's Night Out event in Chappaqua. The event was called Wine Around Town.

The Examiner regrets the errors.

To advertise in The Examiner, call 914-864-0878 or e-mail advertising@theexaminernews.com

The Examiner

The NORTHERN WESTCHESTER  
Examiner

The PUTNAM  
Examiner

The WHITE PLAINS  
Examiner

THE  
Examiner  
NEWS  
www.theexaminernews.com

Examiner+  
www.examiner-plus.com

Business Team:

**Adam Stone**  
Publisher  
astone@theexaminernews.com

**Laura Markowski**  
Associate Publisher  
lmarkowski@theexaminernews.com

**Peter Stone**  
C.F.O.  
pstone@theexaminernews.com

**PO Box 611**  
**Mount Kisco, NY 10549**  
**914-864-0878**  
**www.TheExaminerNews.com**

Print Team:

**Martin Wilbur**  
Editor-in-Chief  
mwilbur@theexaminernews.com

**Rick Pezzullo**  
Editor  
rpezzullo@theexaminernews.com

**Ray Gallagher**  
Sports Editor  
rgallagher@theexaminernews.com

**Andy Jacobs**  
Sports Editor  
ajacobs@theexaminernews.com

**Annette Van Ommeren**  
Designer

**Paul Card**  
Senior Account Executive  
pcardi@theexaminernews.com

**Jeff Ohlbaum**  
Senior Account Executive  
johlbaum@theexaminernews.com

**Ken Gulmi**  
Senior Account Executive  
kgulmi@theexaminernews.com

**Nick Antonaccio**  
Wine columnist

**Bill Primavera**  
Real estate columnist

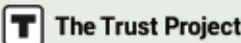
**Morris Gut**  
Food Writer

**Gus Amador**  
Distribution

Digital Team:

**Robert Schork**  
Digital Editorial Director  
rschork@theexaminernews.com

**Dean Pacchiana**  
Webmaster  
dpacchiana@theexaminernews.com



Letters Policy

We invite readers to share their thoughts by sending letters to the editor. Please limit comments to 250 words. We will do our best to print all letters, but are limited by space constraints. Letters are subject to editing and may be withheld from publication on the discretion of the editor. Please refrain from personal attacks. Email letters to mwilbur@theexaminernews.com. The Examiner requires that all letter writers provide their name, address and contact information.



# Guest Columns

## State Needs a Practical Energy Policy to Protect Economy, Quality of Life

By John Ravitz

Is there anyone who is not in favor of improving the climate of our nation and the globe? Of course not. That's the easy part.

The more vexing questions are how and how quickly can we reach this ambitious goal?

In New York State this challenge is about to be put to the test. On Dec. 19, the state-appointed Climate Action Council will issue its final "scoping plan" outlining how New York will transform its energy supply systems. It is impossible to overstate the impact of the program's mandate that by 2040, just 17 years, 100 percent of our electricity will be required to come from renewable power sources.

Over the last four years, the Business Council of Westchester (BCW) has been laser focused on the changing landscape of our renewable energy future. We have actively followed the push to impose a hard deadline on the cut-off of fossil fuel sources. We have carefully assessed the impacts, both economic and personal, it will have on every aspect of life in our state. Every resident and business sector will be affected. We remain deeply concerned about the unintended but inevitable consequences of setting a self-imposed deadline.

In Westchester County we have witnessed firsthand the impacts of sudden, dramatic changes in energy policy and production. The BCW was at the center of the debate over the state-imposed closing of Indian Point nuclear power plant that provided 25 percent of the power for New York City and

Westchester, and called for relicensing of the plant.

Gov. Cuomo, however, refused. The financial and reliability ramifications of this decision continue to be felt not just in the local communities and school district, but in the scramble to find sufficient power to make up the difference, and the inflated costs that come with it.

Currently we are continuing to cope with Con Edison's moratorium on new natural gas hookups in southern Westchester. This is a direct result of the unwillingness of the state to allow additional natural gas pipelines or even expansions of existing lines. The reasoning is that new building construction should use electric versus power, not natural gas. Another example of a goal that cannot be met in practical terms and time frames.

That takes us to the heart of the relentless push by green energy activists to impose a hard deadline on ending the use of fossil fuels, often with the acquiescence of state officials. They simply ignore the fact that the capacity to replace fossil fuels doesn't currently exist and that developing alternative sources in the time frame New York has set forth is simply not possible.

In this environment, there is great reluctance to be seen as a naysayer. Unfortunately, unless common sense and reality prevail, we are going to find ourselves in an energy crisis of our own making. Wind and solar power are nowhere near being developed to a level that will come close to offsetting the loss of fossil fuel power in the time frame that's being established.

Hydropower from Canada, often talked about as a significant source of added clean energy, has become less certain. Hydro-Quebec has indicated that its surpluses have diminished in recent years, and it cannot guarantee consistent large-scale year-round supplies.

For the last 20 years the BCW has thoughtfully examined the issues surrounding the availability and cost of our electric power supplies, and for good reason. Without a reliable, consistent, abundant and affordable supply of power we cannot have a successful and thriving economy, plentiful jobs and a quality of life that we enjoy. The energy supply uncertainties being seen in Germany and other European nations, and to a growing extent in California and other states, are harbingers of how quickly the situation can deteriorate.

Richard Ellenbogen, a BCW member, is an engineer and business owner in New Rochelle who has operated a factory and his home "off the grid" for decades, long before most people had even heard the term. An expert on energy technologies, we are fortunate to have him serving with us as a consultant and a respected authority. He has helped the BCW emerge as a leading voice for the business community on this challenging subject.

Over the last four years he and I have met with state elected officials, regulators and policymakers to express our concerns about the strong potential of creating a debilitating energy shortage of our own making.

We join with those who aspire to see a

cleaner energy future, and to address the complex issues posed by climate change. At the same time, we will remain a voice of reason and reality. Setting green energy goals and time frames that cannot be met, while effectively undermining our ability to assure the basic electricity supply needs of New York's residents and business can be met, is irresponsible and unacceptable.

The BCW strongly urges Gov. Hochul and the state legislature to take a deep breath and begin the process of having honest conversations with all stakeholders statewide on how we can achieve the goals to ensure New York has a strong and reliable energy plan in place. Those conversations must stress that the state has a long way to go to create the renewable energy infrastructure that is needed to support the state's power grid, and that natural gas will be required to support the system until the renewable energy infrastructure is in place.

It is imperative that New York continues to attract and retain businesses to keep our economy strong. This means demonstrating that we have a clear, smart and secure energy delivery plan in place now and in the future. Achieving this will require a tremendous amount of work, mutual understanding and cooperation on everyone's part. It's not an option and the time to begin is now.

*John Ravitz is executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Business Council of Westchester and oversees energy issues, policies and planning.*

## The Best Way to Write About Yourself is to Interview Others

By Alan D. Bergman

Perhaps 2023 is when you finally decide to devote time to writing your memoir or autobiography. It may sound illogical or, at the very least, counterintuitive but interviewing others will go a long way toward capturing and preserving your own story.

### Two Types of Life Stories

First, it is essential to determine what form your life story will take. As the author of your tale, you have essentially two choices: The autobiography is the story of one's life told from birth to the present day, from soup to nuts. It is often longer than the memoir and contains a wider breadth of content – anecdotes, memories and feelings, as far back as you, the author, can recall. A memoir is typically defined as a specific period, event or theme within an individual's life.

Writing "My Teen Years" or "My Struggle Living With Type 1 Diabetes" would be memoirs, essentially classified as a subgenre of the autobiography.

### Why Interview Others?

The autobiography or memoir is your story, chock full of your memories and experiences. However, interviewing others will bring so much to the table, probably creating a distinctly more interesting narrative.

Those folks who have known you the longest may remember stories no longer fresh in your memory bank or just bring a totally different perspective about you or a shared event. They can perhaps describe your personal evolution, what you're like today versus then. Children, whether young kids, teens or adult children, may bring an untarnished perspective to your life story. Chances are good that family and friends will provide a more unbiased, objective view of you than you can offer yourself.

However, it is imperative to remember that interviews with others are only meant to supplement your story, not replace your words, thoughts and memories. At the end of the day, this should be your story, told in your voice, with most of the narrative generated by your mind and heart.

### A Case Study

A biography I wrote in 2020 perfectly illustrates the value others can bring to the story. A woman commissioned me to write a biography as a surprise 80th birthday present to her husband. For the sake of anonymity, let's call him Don. Since the gift was meant to be a surprise, interviewing Don, the subject of the biography, was not an option available to me.

I was somewhat fearful of and dubious about the task ahead. I asked myself, "Can I properly capture and describe someone's

life without speaking directly with that person?"

Together with Don's wife, we compiled a list of 17 individuals who could conceivably contribute to recreating Don's life story. The breakdown was as follows: Don's wife; his two children and their respective spouses; his five grandchildren; his two brothers; two childhood friends; two members of the clergy; and one former Wall Street work colleague.

Their contributions wove a rich mosaic of Don's life, from his boyhood in Ohio through retirement in New York. In unison, they painted a highly accurate portrait of who Don is and what he's all about.

Don's two siblings described what it was like growing up together in their tightly-knit Midwestern family. His boyhood friends shared stories about being varsity sports teammates and exploits as brothers in a high school fraternity. Not surprisingly, Don's wife lovingly described their courtship, becoming parents and growing old together. His two children and their spouses had plenty of great anecdotes to contribute. The grandkids affectionately described how important their grandfather was to them. The two clergy members spoke of Don's spiritual side and his former work colleague explained how Don had mentored him.

Put these all together and the end

product was one extraordinarily complete biography. Don, still sharp as a nail at age 80, said that he had forgotten many of the stories presented in the book, especially those contributed by his brothers and lifelong friends.

### Benefits of Writing Your Story

Writing a memoir or autobiography not only helps preserve the past for current and future generations, but is also a cathartic exercise that stimulates our brain's cognitive muscles.

Researchers at Western University in London, Ont. have found that recalling stories from our past improves memory and can also help prevent serious conditions like Alzheimer's. Other studies indicate that writing our stories can lower blood pressure, enhance sleep quality and even help relieve depression.

Preserving our stories in writing can improve our mental and physical health. Interviewing others for our memoir or autobiography can improve the quality of our narrative.

*Alan D. Bergman is a baby boomer and the founder of Life Stories Preserved LLC, a memoir and biography writing services firm, found online at <https://LifeStoriesPreserved.net>. He can also be contacted via e-mail at [Info@LifeStoriesPreserved.net](mailto:Info@LifeStoriesPreserved.net).*

# Fair Street USA: Wishing Everyone A Holiday

As 2022 wraps up, the City of White Plains looks forward to keeping the spirit of Fair Street USA alive. Fair Street USA is a 3D, immersive, interactive arts exhibit focused on exploring fair housing challenges.

Housing discrimination derails dreams. Fair Street USA aimed to change that course. Ten community organizations joined forces with artists to envision a community where fair housing reigns. Visitors to Fair Street USA learned about fair housing choice, impact of housing discrimination on communities, and how to recognize and report fair housing concerns. The exhibit premiered on the White Plains library plaza and later remained on display in the library gallery.

In October, the exhibit inhabited Court Street as part of the Serious Fun Arts Festival.

White Plains Mayor Tom Roach stated, “Fair housing education is essential to eliminating housing discrimination in communities. Each community must do their part to educate stakeholders about how to identify and combat these deleterious practices so that every person has equitable access to housing.” Mayor Roach continued, “Thank you to the city staff, community organizations and artists that collaborated to bring Fair Street USA to the City of White Plains.

“Every person should be treated with dignity and respect and should be able to live where they choose.”

## History of Fair Housing

Community Group: Westchester Residential Opportunities.

Artist: Moira Trachtenberg



The history of fair housing is paved with problematic practices. Redlining: the discriminatory practice of denying services to residents of certain areas based on their race or ethnicity. Restrictive Covenants: covenants that prohibit racial, ethnic, and religious minority groups from buying, leasing, or occupying homes; these became common after 1926 after the U.S. Supreme Court validated their use. Blockbusting: manipulating homeowners to sell or rent their homes at a lower price by falsely convincing them that the neighborhood's socioeconomic demographic is changing because of new groups of people moving in and that this shift will affect the value of their home. Steering: influencing a buyer's choice of communities based upon one of the protected classes.

## Promoting Fair Housing

Community Group: Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.

Artist: Taesha Muhammad

We all have a role to play in promoting fair housing and realtors have a special opportunity. “Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS® believes in Equal Opportunity for all. Fair housing laws are a cornerstone of community. As REALTOR® members, we have both the opportunity and responsibility to increase efforts to support diversity and inclusivity in the real estate market. It is our commitment to uphold fair housing laws and offer equal professional service to all in their search of real property.”



## Protected Classes

Community Group: White Plains

Artist: Jennifer

Jane is a Muslim woman who wears a hijab. Jane enters an apartment building lease because a sign in the building's window advertised several available units. Jane speaks to the leasing officer, who says there are no units available. Jane asks to be put on the waiting list but she never receives a call. Jane files a complaint with HUD because she suspects that the leasing officer doesn't want to rent to her because she is Muslim.

## Reporting Discrimination

Community Group: Westchester County Human Rights Commission.

Artist: Taesha Muhammad

The Westchester County Human Rights Commission combats discrimination by implementing and enforcing the County's Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law and by empowering the community through its education and outreach efforts regarding discrimination and hate-related issues.



If you have experienced or witnessed discrimination or a hate-related incident in Westchester County call the Human Rights Commission at (914) 995-7710 or email the Commission at [humanrights@westchestergov.com](mailto:humanrights@westchestergov.com)

## Future of Fair Housing

Community Group: WP Mayor's Youth Council.

Artist: Moira Trachtenberg

Our youth are our future, and the young people who envisioned the future of fair housing envision housing in its broadest sense with access to healthy food, green space, recreational activities, Wi-Fi, mental health services and supports and so much more.



## Protected Classes

Community Group: Thoroughbred

Artist: Taesha Muhammad

John, who is a Black man, speaks to a professional leasing an apartment. The landlord sees



contacted for a reference. John files a complaint with HUD because he suspects the real reason he was denied was his race. Joe, who is an Asian man, meets with a broker purchasing a house for his family. When Joe is interested in, the broker steers him to a neighborhood where there are more "professional" residents of the neighborhood appear to be from a certain neighborhood because of his



# Play Season Free of Fair Housing Challenges

part The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, and familial status, and protects residents who feel they have experienced discrimination in housing,” said Alicka Ampry-Samuel, HUD Regional Administrator for New York and New Jersey. “HUD provides funding for fair housing education and enforcement to local governments and organizations that assist residents. I am pleased that the City of White Plains, stakeholders, and artists came together to create this innovative exhibit.”

using crim- st do iden- every Roach unity bring and re-oose.



White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach, HUD Regional Administrator Alicka Ampry-Samuel, Westchester County Human Rights Commission Executive Director, Tejash Sanchala, and Artist Rebecca Mills in front of the house representing discrimination on the basis of sex and gender.

**Protected Class: Religion**  
Community Group: Interfaith Committee.  
Artist: Rebecca Mills



**Protected Class: Race/Color**  
Community Group: H. Slater Center.  
Artist: Muhammad

pective landlord on the phone about John meets with the landlord in person, the landlord's attitude is entirely different. Later, John receives a letter saying that his application was denied because of a negative reference from his current landlord. John is surprised because he never had problems with his landlord, and his landlord swears she was never a complaint with HUD because he was because he is Black. with a real estate broker to discuss Joe names the neighborhood that he him toward a listing in another people like him." Joe notices that the o be mostly Asian. Steering someone r race is a form of race discrimination.

**Protected Class: Sex/Gender**  
Community Group: The LOFT LGBTQ+ Community Center.  
Artist: Rebecca Mills



composition". A maintenance worker employed by a housing provider subjects a female tenant to pervasive harassment because she is a lesbian. A tenant is evicted after the housing provider discovers the tenant has dated persons of the same sex and identifies as bisexual. A same-sex couple asks a realtor to see rental units throughout the city but is only shown rental units in a part of the city known for having many LGBTQ residents. All these examples constitute a form of sex discrimination.

**Protected Class: National Origin**  
Community Group: El Centro Hispano.  
Artist: Jennifer Levine

John recently moved to the United States from Mexico. One day, John sees that there is a new tenant in the apartment next to his, so he welcomes her to the building. John's neighbor comments on how nice everyone in the building seems, especially the building manager who offered to waive her security deposit. John is surprised because the building manager was short-tempered with him and said that John's accent made him hard to understand. John later finds out that the building manager has waived fees and deposits for other tenants he likes, but not for John or other persons from Mexico. Providing different terms and conditions to tenants because of national origin is illegal discrimination.



**Protected Class: Familial Status**  
Community Group: Lifting Up Westchester.  
Artist: Rebecca Mills



John has three teenage children. John's building has a patio with picnic tables, and John's children decide to have lunch there. John receives a notice from the homeowners association informing him that the building rules say that the patio is for adult use only. Building rules that discriminate against children are a form of familial status discrimination.

Jane & John are filling out an application for a mortgage at their local bank. Their loan officer notices that Jane is visibly pregnant and asks whether she will be taking maternity leave. When Jane says yes, the loan officer informs the couple that they either have to apply without Jane's income or wait until she returns from leave. They file a complaint with HUD because the bank's policy discriminates based on sex and familial status.

**Protected Class: Disability**  
Community Groups: WP Mayors Advisory Council for People with Disabilities and MHA Westchester.  
Artist: Moira Trachtenberg

Jane has a developmental disability and needs assistance managing her finances. Jane tells her building manager that her mother will be paying her rent and asks if all notices relating to her rent can be sent to her mother. The building manager says that the management company will only send notices to residents, no exceptions. Jane gets an eviction notice because her mother did not know that Jane's rent increased. Denying a reasonable accommodation is disability discrimination.

John, a person with a disability who uses a wheelchair, views a condominium he is hoping to purchase in a new building. When John arrives, he finds there are no accessible parking spaces in the building's parking lot. Inside the unit, the thermostat and light switches are all too high for him to reach. The building has a fitness room, but the only way to get to it is to go up steps. Failing to comply with accessibility requirements is a form of disability discrimination.



the project organizers are solely ment.



## Fire Safety is Especially Important This Time of Year

This time of year, I always become more aware of fire safety.

The U.S. Fire Administration reports that the number of open-flame fires on Christmas Day is more than double the average, and New Year's Day runs a close second. Even worse, holiday fire fatalities are nearly 70 percent higher than average, and property loss is 34 percent greater.

On a more personal note, I remember a holiday house fire in my own neighborhood. It was a while back, but I still recall the experience vividly. It's always upsetting to hear about a house fire, but when it hits closer to home it takes on special meaning.

As it happens, I was on my way to show a buyer client a house and there was a road block between me and my scheduled appointment. Making a U-turn and a few other errand turns somehow landed me just a half-block from the fire, which I could see as a blazing outpouring of grey smoke punctuated by the red lights of the fire trucks and emergency vehicles. It was a chilling sight.

I turned around yet again and, sick at heart, eventually made it to my destination.

By the time I finished my showing and got home, it was being reported online that, while there were some injuries and four dogs unfortunately perished, all human life was spared.



By Bill Primavera

A little later, it was reported that two neighbors had rescued the homeowner from a second-story window with an extension ladder, and that one of the dogs, who heroically had alerted the household about the fire, might still be alive, but was reported lost, perhaps having panicked and run away. By the end of the day, all that remained of the house was a burnt-out black hole in the ground.

Not too long before this tragic event, there had been a terrible fire in Stamford, Conn. on Christmas Day when a homeowner's three children and two parents were lost to fire. From that day forward,

I have been aware of the need for awareness about fire safety in the home – especially around the holidays.

A good friend of mine, a retired firefighter, has offered me the following list of advisories about fire safety to share here:

- Remember that the sound of a smoke detector can save your life or that of a loved one. Be sure that batteries are replaced annually, including detectors that are hard-wired to have battery backup.
- Families should practice the acronym EDITH (Exit Drill in the Home). Know two ways out of the house and, once out, never return to get belongings or pets; have a planned meeting place for family



members outside the home; call 911 from a cell phone or a neighbor's phone.

- Have oil burners serviced annually to prevent misfire and puff backs. Also, have chimneys cleaned annually for both wood stoves and fireplaces.
- Place supplemental heating sources, kerosene lamps and electric at least 36 inches away from any combustible material.
- Dispose of fireplace embers and ashes into a metal container located a distance from the house.
- Be particularly careful during the holiday season when most house fires occur. Make sure that extension cords are not frayed; don't overload circuits; and don't leave Christmas tree lights on when out

of the house or asleep.

- Special notes for children: Always sleep with the bedroom door closed; if the door is hot, never open it. If there is smoke, stay close to the floor and don't hide.

Being aware of fire safety can literally save lives. And, especially at holiday time, it's important to pay heed to the advice given by those who have been at the forefront of keeping us safe in our homes.

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

**Happy Holidays!**

**Miracle on 2010 Albany Post Road!**  
**Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

**Miracle Home Improvements**

FINANCING OPTIONS FROM **GreenSky** **914★271★9119** **GAF Master Elite**

**ROOFING • WINDOWS • SIDING • DOORS • PAINTING**  
**DECKS • SEAMLESS GUTTERS • LEADERS • REPAIRS**

**Robert, Mary & Ryan Sniffen - Happy Holidays!**

WC. Lic. #10415H99 • P.C. Lic. #1817 • YNK 307 • H-12519-07-23-00  
[www.miraclehomeimprovements.com](http://www.miraclehomeimprovements.com)

**AARP®**  
Auto Insurance  
Program from  
**THE HARTFORD**

**GET GREAT VALUE ON  
BETTER CAR INSURANCE**

**AARP® Auto Insurance  
Program from The Hartford®**

**Brendan Mulvihill**  
Feehan Insurance Agency  
845-278-7070  
[Brendanm@feehaninsurance.com](mailto:Brendanm@feehaninsurance.com)  
BR-1294677  
PC-1294677  
LA – 1294677  
CT-16962903

AARP does not employ or endorse agents or brokers. AARP and its affiliates are not insurers. Paid endorsement. The Hartford pays royalty fees to AARP for the use of its intellectual property. These fees are used for the general purposes of AARP. AARP membership is required for Program eligibility in most states. The AARP Automobile Insurance Program from The Hartford is underwritten by Hartford Fire Insurance Company and its affiliates, One Hartford Plaza, Hartford, CT 06155. You have the option of purchasing a policy directly from The Hartford. Your price, however, could vary, and you will not have the advice, counsel or services of your independent agent.

<sup>1</sup> In Texas, the Auto Program is underwritten by Southern County Mutual Insurance Company through Hartford of Texas General Agency, Inc. Hartford Fire Insurance Company and its affiliates are not financially responsible for insurance products underwritten and issued by Southern County Mutual Insurance Company.

PLAO33-3



# Woman Responds to Anti-Semitic Incidents With Electric Menorah

By Martin Wilbur

One northern Westchester woman hopes that one small gesture but powerful gesture can unite others as the rise in anti-Semitism and hate has taken hold throughout the United States in recent years.

Over the past few weeks, South Salem resident Cathy Deutsch has created the Menorah Project, urging Jewish households everywhere to place an electric menorah in their home's window for the eight nights of Chanukah that begin this Sunday, Dec. 18 at sundown. Deutsch hopes everyone can display their solidarity, whether they are observant or not or even if they're not Jewish, if they're so inclined.

She has taken to various social media

platforms and has received positive responses, including from people across the country.

"I do think the rise in anti-Semitism, racism and anti-LGBTQ (incidents) and (against) numerous minorities has risen dramatically," Deutsch said. "I know that this is a small ask and not going to solve the problems...but I also feel like our government, our public thought, not separating church from state is very frightening to me."

Anti-Semitic incidents increased from 2020 to 2021 by 34 percent, according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). There were 2,717 reported incidents across the United States last year, the highest number ever recorded in the 40 years the

organization has been tracking statistics. Prior to 2016, incidents declined for 15 years, the ADL has reported.

While many Jewish families will place an electric menorah in their windows during the holiday, Deutsch said she believes that in most areas the tradition has waned since she was growing up. Other families choose to light candles and place those menorahs in their kitchen or dining room.

This year, Deutsch said she was determined to rekindle her childhood tradition, especially as the disturbing upswing in incidents is clearly not an accident.

"I'm putting a menorah in my window this year," said Deutsch, whose ancestors escaped eastern European pogroms while

others fled the Nazis. "I want to stand proud; I want to show who I am in a world that is starting to increasingly minimize us."

Deutsch said she hopes to build off of her effort in future years, getting more organizations, including area synagogues involved, and promoting mutual respect for people of all backgrounds.

"I always feel like we stand stronger together as human beings if we respect each other and this is about that, and it's about embracing the diversity of the community and the country, and that's really where it's coming from," she said.

For those who don't have an electric menorah, they can be bought online or at stores like Target or Walmart.

## Yorktown Launches Holiday Food Drive to Help Those in Need

The Yorktown Town Board and the Yorktown Food Security Task Force launched its first holiday food drive last Friday to address rising numbers of people needing help from local food pantries.

The drive began at Uncle Giuseppe's Marketplace at 380 Downing Drive, where a collection box is set up for shoppers who want to buy extra food items to donate. The drive runs through Dec. 31.

Uncle Giuseppe's Marketplace donated \$500 to the drive. Additional corporate donations include ShopRite of Cortlandt, which will donate product to the drive. The law firm Bleakley Platt in White Plains donated \$500.

"In ordinary times we see demand at food pantries

increase around the holidays, so with significant price hikes for basic foods like milk, eggs and meat, families in need are having a harder time," said Supervisor Matt Slater. "Uncle Giuseppe's Marketplace is making it easier for its customers to help others by hosting a collection box."

Nationwide, food prices rose significantly in the past year. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, grocery and supermarket prices were 12.4 percent higher in October compared with October 2021.

"This is a great initiative and we're honored as Uncle Giuseppe's to help do our part," said Derek Asplint,

manager at Uncle Giuseppe's Marketplace.

Four food pantries operate in Yorktown – the First Presbyterian Church Food Pantry at 2880 Crompond Rd.; the Community Food Pantry at St. Mary's Episcopal Church at 1836 E. Main St.; the Westchester Korean Seventh-day Adventist Church at 1243 White Hill Rd.; and Yorktown Community Help at 1974 Commerce St.

Cindy Smith of St. Mary's Food Pantry and co-chair of the task force said that her pantry served almost 300 families for Thanksgiving. St. Mary's Food Pantry expects to serve about 350 families for Christmas.

"On a weekly basis, we're looking at over 200 families. We really appreciate your help," Smith said.

## MEMORIES FADE, BUT TRADITIONS REMAIN.

*Artis helps her enjoy this season the way she always has.*



Somers

Your Partner in Memory Care™

Your Partner in Memory Care™

**TheArtisWay.com/WestchesterExaminer • 914-214-7927**

**Artis Senior Living of Somers:** 51 Clayton Blvd., Yorktown Heights, NY 10598  
Check out our other nearby communities in Briarcliff Manor and Chestnut Ridge.





# Mt. Kisco Residents to Decide New Street Name in Vote

The street currently known as Holiday Inn Drive in Mount Kisco needs a new name, and if you're a village resident, you can help decide what that name will be.

Since Holiday Inn left the village, with the lodging facility having been taken over by Hotel MTK, local officials decided that a new name for the street would be appropriate.

Below is a list of the six names that are up for consideration. Village residents can visit [www.mountkisco.ny.gov](http://www.mountkisco.ny.gov) to cast their vote. Voting will close on Friday, Dec. 23.

**Mel Berger:** As a Mount Kisco resident and the owner of Mount Kisco Pharmacy, Berger saw the negative impacts of those with drug and alcohol addiction. Seeking to find solutions, he founded the Mount Kisco Drug and Alcohol Prevention Council and helped pioneer Drug Court to divert young offenders from prison and into recovery programs. Berger also collaborated with local places of worship to create the Emergency Shelter Partnership to provide winter shelter for those who are unhoused.

**Peter Chinni:** Born in Mount Kisco to Calabrian immigrant parents, Chinni became a celebrated sculptor. He was also a painter, printmaker and singer. He was raised on West Hyatt Avenue. He served in the military and lived in New York City and Italy before returning to Mount Kisco to raise his daughters. Chinni's work has been shown around the world and some of

his most noted pieces are in the Rockefeller Collection, the Hirshhorn Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

**Lenni-Lenape:** The indigenous people that lived in this area were part of the Wappinger confederation and called the Lenni-Lenape, which means "original people." They lived by hunting, fishing and cultivating the "Three Sisters" – corn, beans and squash. By the early 18th century, they had been moved off of most of their land here. The name Kisco comes from their word Cisqua meaning "muddy place."

**Quetzal:** The Quetzal (pronunciation kay-tzahl), also known as the Resplendent Quetzal, is a symbol of the nation of Guatemala. Guatemala also trades in currency known as the quetzal and an image of the resplendent quetzal bird graces the national flag of the nation. The quetzal bird is considered one of the world's most beautiful, living in tropical forests of Central America. Its plumage is brilliant green, with a red-feathered chest and most spectacular long, wispy tail feathers on the males, extending twice the length of the bird itself. The quetzal is a threatened species within their habitat, with the primary threat being deforestation.

**Pat Reilly:** A Mount Kisco resident her entire life and daughter of Mayor J. Edward Fox, Reilly was an active participant on

village boards and committees since she was a teen. She served as village trustee from 1994 to 1999 and mayor from 1999 to 2003. Though she was very busy raising six children and working as a school nurse, Reilly made time for community service beyond village government, including sitting on the board of the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester and assisting seniors through the Friends in Service Helping (FISH) program.

**Sutton's Row:** A beloved neighborhood

in the northern end of the village by Carpenter Avenue and Preston Way. The homes were largely built and occupied by Italian immigrant families. Many have very fond memories of their childhood on Sutton's Row. In the mid-1960s, the land (in addition to Kisco Avenue) was claimed for an Urban Renewal Project, which included affordable housing and sites for industrial development.

## Greeley Senior Honored for Role in Helping Community Organizations



Horace Greeley High School senior Netra Easwaran was awarded the Certificate of Excellence by state Sen. Peter Harchham in October for displaying leadership for a campaign that helps community and nonprofit organizations.

Netra Easwaran, a senior at Horace Greeley High School in Chappaqua, was recently awarded a Certificate of Excellence by state Sen. Peter Harchham (D-Lewisboro) for her leadership of Project Certify, a campaign that enables community, nonprofit and service organizations to be recognized as certifying organizations for the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA).

Led by AmeriCorps and managed in partnership with Points of Light, the PVSA program allows certifying organizations to recognize their most exceptional volunteers. In 2003, the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation founded the President's Volunteer Service Award, which has since continued under each administration.

Easwaran began Project Certify under the aegis of Sen. Harchham's office as part of her internship at the district level. The campaign's objective was to address the decline of in-person volunteering and the dire need for additional volunteers that organizations experienced in the wake of

pandemic social restrictions.

After crafting a proposal to begin the project, Easwaran was given the opportunity to spearhead Project Certify, engage with several community stakeholders and correspond directly with the PVSA office to see the campaign come to fruition.

Project Certify has successfully certified 20 organizations across Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess counties with a combined volunteer base of about 1,530 volunteers. The organizations include fire and EMS Departments, libraries, food pantries, cultural groups and grassroots civic education centers. The campaign is featured on the 2022 Points of Light Inspiration Honor Roll.

Easwaran herself is a Gold President's Volunteer Service Award recipient, which she earned for volunteering at Youth4Better, a youth-led nonprofit organization. She hopes to continue her work with the campaign.

Any interested organizations can e-mail [harchhamprojectcertify@gmail.com](mailto:harchhamprojectcertify@gmail.com) to begin the certification process.

## SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

*Donna Mueller*  
PHOTOGRAPHY

Outdoor Sessions  
Studio Sessions  
\$75 Headshots  
Events

**BEST**  
WESTCHESTER  
WINNER  
3X

**Thank you**  
FOR VOTING ME

**Best Family Photographer 3x!**

**15 Minute Outdoor Mini Sessions**

*This Special Offer includes your gallery of downloadable images.  
Sessions will take place in Pleasantville*

text 914-980-2267 / [DonnaMueller@Optonline.net](mailto:DonnaMueller@Optonline.net)  
[www.DonnaMuellerPhotography.com](http://www.DonnaMuellerPhotography.com)



## Grandpas United to Hold Awards Breakfast on Thursday

Grandpas United is holding its annual Awards Breakfast this Thursday, Dec. 15 at 8:30 a.m. honoring three grandfathers for their community service and two civic leaders for their support of this groundbreaking intergenerational program.

The grandpas to be honored are Dr. Vito Sessa, Marc Sharff and Dean Wiltshire. The recipients of the Grandpas United Civic Leadership Awards are state Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and White Plains Police Chief Joseph Castelli.

Grandpas United has grown from a handful of grandfathers in 2018 to more than 125 grandfathers across Westchester County, with chapters in five municipalities: White Plains, Port Chester, Ossining, New Rochelle and Peekskill.

For more information about Grandpas United, call 914-422-1378 or visit [www.whiteplainsyouthbureau.org](http://www.whiteplainsyouthbureau.org).

## New Photography Exhibit Center Opens in Yorktown

The Capa Space, a new photography-based education and exhibition center in Yorktown, opened Saturday night with the exhibition "Empathy and Empowerment" by photographer Jose Alvarado Jr., who grew up locally.

Alvarado, a graduate of the Fashion Institute of Technology and now based in Brooklyn, is dedicated to documenting class inequality, civil engagement and contemporary issues in Puerto Rico and New York City. He is a frequent contributor to The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal and his work has appeared in many other well-known publications.

"Empathy and Empowerment" will be shown through Feb. 25.

The facility is named after internationally renowned war photographer and Medal of Freedom recipient Robert Capa and his younger brother Cornell Capa, founder of the International Center for Photography in New York City. The brothers are buried at the nearby Amawalk Friends Meeting cemetery.

Robert Capa, recognized as the greatest war photographer in his day, covered five wars: the Spanish Civil War, the Sino-Japanese War, World War II, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and ultimately the French Indochina War, where he lost his life to a landmine in 1954. He was the only civilian photographer at Omaha Beach on D-Day, and his photographs, which appeared in Life Magazine, brought the horror and reality of war to the American public for



DAVE ROCCO PHOTOS

Crowds gathered for opening night of The Capa Space on Saturday, which featured an exhibit by photographer Jose Alvarado Jr.


the first time.

Founded by Yorktown residents Elise Graham and Tim Hartung, The Capa Space is a venue where people can gather to create, view and learn about photography. It is dedicated to continuing the legacy of the Capas and their work as socially conscious photographers.

For more information about The Capa Space and the upcoming exhibition, visit [www.thecapaspace.org](http://www.thecapaspace.org).



The exterior of The Capa Space, a new photography education and exhibition center, located at 2467 Quaker Church Rd. in Yorktown.



**Trumbull**  
PRINTING

Newspapers • Publications • Shoppers • Catalogs • Magazines  
 Directories • Coupon Books • College Course Catalogs  
 Business and Financial Periodicals  
 Free Standing Inserts • Advertising Supplements

**205 Spring Hill Road, Trumbull, CT 06611 • 203.261.2548**  
[www.trumbullprinting.com](http://www.trumbullprinting.com)

**FOLLOW US ON TWITTER**

 **@EXAMINERMEDIA**

 **Find us on Facebook**

**FACEBOOK.COM/EXAMINERMEDIA**

Follow ExaminerMedia on social media to monitor the latest breaking news and local reporting tidbits

914-864-0878 • [advertising@theexaminernews.com](mailto:advertising@theexaminernews.com) • [www.theexaminernews.com](http://www.theexaminernews.com)



**PARAMOUNT**  
EST. 1930  
HUDSON VALLEY THEATER

The best venue in the Hudson Valley for live music and entertainment.

Get your tickets now!



[paramounthudsonvalley.com](http://paramounthudsonvalley.com)  
 1008 Brown St • Peekskill, NY  
 914.739.0039 EXT. 2



# Confronting the Epidemic of Drug Overdose Deaths in Our Communities

As America's drug overdose and death epidemic continues to impact communities of every size in every corner of the country, new challenges have emerged.

In 2021, more than 107,000 people died from drug-related overdoses, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the bulk of which were from illicitly manufactured fentanyl, which shows up in fake pills, methamphetamine and cocaine.

Since its founding in 2014, the American Medical Association (AMA) Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force has brought together medical societies and practicing physicians to develop and implement strategies that can help end this epidemic. The task force's recommendations include urging physicians to enhance their education as well as advocate for comprehensive care for patients in pain and for those with a substance use disorder.

The AMA also strongly urges states to update laws to make the opioid overdose reversal medication naloxone more readily available, decriminalize fentanyl test strips, and take other harm reduction initiatives to save lives from overdose.

When it comes to helping patients with a substance use disorder so

they can lead satisfying, productive lives, the science shows what works: medication prescribed by a physician or dispensed at Opioid Treatment Programs, combined with behavioral counseling and other services.

Despite certain positive trends and clear science, of the 40.3 million people nationwide with a substance use disorder, 93 percent receive no treatment, according to federal officials. A report earlier this year from the U.S. Department of Labor found that health insurance companies regularly violate state and federal laws designed to provide coverage for substance use disorders and mental illness. Health insurance companies also continue to put up barriers to accessing medications for opioid use disorders and deny care to patients with pain – or make it so expensive that patients cannot access care.

"No community has been – or will be – spared the pain of this epidemic," said Dr. Bobby Mukkamala, chair of the AMA Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force. "The spiking mortality numbers, with young people and Black and Brown Americans dying at the fastest growing rates – add yet another urgent call to remove health inequities from the healthcare system. We know



ARLAWKA AUNGUN/ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

policymakers have not exhausted all remedies. Until we have, we must keep advocating for humane, evidence-based responses."

The AMA stresses that while physicians are leading in areas where they can have an influence, they cannot end the epidemic alone. To combat the issue at the state and national level, the organization has issued a national "roadmap" to policymakers and regulators focused on these specific actions:

- Remove barriers to evidence-based care for patients with an SUD. This includes removing prior authorization, step therapy and dosage caps for medications for

opioid use disorders, continuing federal flexibilities for take-home medication for opioid treatment programs, continuing audio-visual and audio-only telehealth options for patients to begin treatment, and removing regulations that prevent most physicians from being able to prescribe those medications to their patients.

- Take immediate steps to protect families by focusing on increasing access to evidence-based care rather than using punishment and the threat of family separation for persons with a substance use disorder who are pregnant, peripartum,

postpartum and parenting.

- Enforce laws that require mental health benefits to be on par with other health benefits, thereby broadening access to treatment related to mental health and substance use disorders.
- Pharmacy chains, health insurance companies and pharmacy benefit managers should remove arbitrary barriers to opioid therapy as well as ensure patient access to affordable, accessible non-opioid pain care.
- Patients and physicians should have conversations about safe storage and disposal of opioids and all medications and increase access to naloxone to patients at risk of overdose.
- Develop and implement systems to collect timely, adequate and standardized data to identify at-risk populations, fully understand polysubstance drug use and implement public health interventions that directly address removing structural and racial inequities.

To learn more about efforts to end the drug overdose and death epidemic, visit [www.end-overdose-epidemic.org](http://www.end-overdose-epidemic.org).

*This article is reprinted by permission of statepoint.net.*

## Patterson Auto Body

Your Complete Automotive Service Center

**WINTER CAR CARE SPECIAL**  
**NOV. & DEC. ONLY 79.95\***

Oil & Filter Change Includes BG GAS & OIL Additives.

Check all fluid levels & top off if needed. CHECK LIGHTS, BELTS & HOSES. INSPECT TIRES, BRAKES, STEERING & SUSPENSION.

TIRE ROTATION if NEEDED & ADJUST TIRE PRESSURE.

*\*Plus Sales Tax. MOST cars & SUVs, up to 5 QTs. Full Synthetic motor oil. Some restrictions may apply. Mention the AD when making the appointment. Cannot be combined with other offers.*

OFFER EXPIRES 12/31/22

MUST BRING THIS AD.



**It's NOT TOO EARLY to PREPARE  
your VEHICLE  
for WINTER**

**WE'RE READY!!**

**SNOW TIRES, WIPER BLADES,  
ANTIFREEZE & COMPLETE WINTER  
CAR CARE SPECIAL!!**

**RECORD BREAKING COLD TEMPS ALREADY  
PREDICTED FOR THE 22/23 WINTER SEASON**

2597 Rt. 22 Patterson  
PattersonAutoBody.com

**845.878.3456**



# Nashville or Bust: The Bird of the Year Meets the Bluebird Café

By Brian Kluepfel

The state bird of Tennessee is not the Nashville warbler, nor is it the Tennessee warbler. It is the northern mockingbird.

This was among the factoids I garnered whilst attending the American Birding Association's Bird of the Year reveal party in Music City.

My concept of Nashville is based on Townes van Zandt and George Jones songs, and the 1975 Robert Altman film of the same name; i.e., like me, a bit dated. Nashville, in fact, is now a sprawling megalopolis with traffic rivaling New York City and Atlanta. But it has a system of lovely public parks and that's where our energy was focused this December weekend.

We began Saturday at a place called Shelby Bottoms, fast against the banks of the historic Cumberland River. A large group of birders appeared – our flock probably comprised at least 30 individuals – and it was a chatty and fun bunch. Birders love to share knowledge, and even if big groups of us may frighten off the wildlife sometimes, it is good to get together and share the experience.

Immediately, in the parking lot, I saw a pileated woodpecker, one of my favorite birds and an auger

of good things to come. Soon after, black vultures slowly circled the park. We soon graduated to one of my great birding moments of the year – an amazing red-shouldered hawk flying over the fields and into a nearby tree. Our birding leader, Chris Sloan, was able to get a spotting scope on the raptor, and I marveled at its mottled plumage and striking reddish-brown coloration. Soon, a mockingbird, asserting its state's rights, harassed the larger raptor into flying off, which afforded us another great view of it in full flight.

After regrouping for lunch, we sped over to the Warner Park Nature Center for a demonstration of the MOTUS software, a satellite system which allows researchers and birders to track avian species as they pass through during migration. This important program allows us to see when a Nashville warbler, for example, has left Tennessee and is now in northern Mexico or on a coffee farm in Colombia.

Our small group tracked a tagged hermit thrush, and after about 30 minutes, found it above a trail. I was proud to be holding the tracking device when we reeled the sighting in, which was actually much like the sensation of getting a fish on the line and ultimately landing it. We were delighted with our high-tech



An image of the American Birding Association's 2023 Bird of the Year – the belted kingfisher.

adventure.

Then came the big event: What species would be designated Bird of the Year? Past selections – the tradition began in 2011 – included the pileated woodpecker, burrowing owl and cedar waxwing. What could it possibly be?

Local artist Liz Clayton Fuller was called to the podium, and she proudly revealed the 2023 winner, and her rendition of such: the belted kingfisher! The female of the species actually includes a "belt"

around its chest, a rusty orange contrast to the chunky bird's overall greyish-blue appearance. (The male does not have this belt.)

The kingfisher turns traditional avian dimorphism on its head; most often the male is more attractive and brightly colored. Since Fuller chose to paint the female, her artwork was dubbed "Queenfisher" and all attendees were graced with a print.

After some vinyl spins by some very cool local DJs the Deli Shop Boys (including "Bluebird Wine" by country music legend Emmylou Harris), a metric ton of finger food and a few adult beverages, we reconnoitered back at the hotel to argue about ivory-billed woodpeckers and rest up for Sunday's outing at Radnor Lake.

It was here that we hoped to see the Bird of the Year, and we were not disappointed. In addition to a kingfisher across the lake, we saw two other former Birds of the Year (cedar waxwings and pileated woodpeckers), great blue herons, bald eagles, purple finches stuffing themselves on sycamore seed clusters, mallards, ruby-crowned kinglets and white-throated sparrows. It was a brisk morning but well worth the

two-hour walk.

What I treasure about birding is it's a friendly, interesting and shared experience. Our large group included folks from seven different U.S. states; ages ranged from 4 to 70. The kids were treated with as much respect as the adults, and in fact, encouraged to join in the discussions. As I stood among the crowd from Indiana, Ohio, Colorado, Georgia and even New York, I thought to myself, maybe birding is the thing that could heal this country of ours. It brings people together.

Much thanks to the American Bird Association's staff (Nikki, Kelly, John, Nate) in general, and to Katinka Domen in particular, for making sure I had transport everywhere in Nashville and never got abandoned in a cold state park overnight. I'm already wondering what next year's Bird of the Year might be.

*Brian Kluepfel is a correspondent for the Lonely Planet travel publications and Birdwatching Magazine, among others. He lives in Ossining and watches eagles from his deck overlooking the mighty Hudson River. Find him online at [birdmanwalking.com](http://birdmanwalking.com).*

## For The Birds

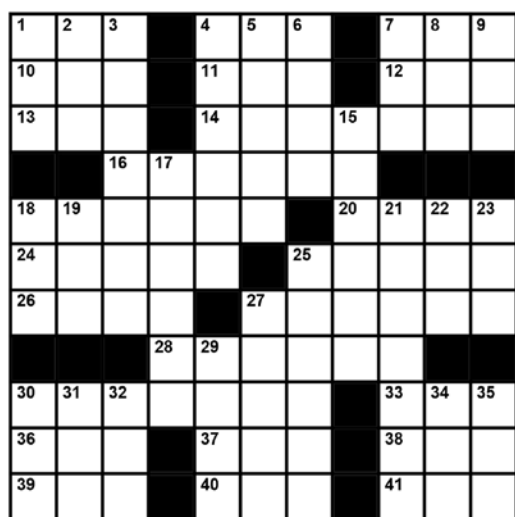
## Crossword

### Across

1. Made a fool of
4. Bridle part
7. Country Western lady
10. Flamenco cheer
11. Spanish article
12. O.T. book, abbr.
13. Crow sound
14. Westchester parkway or Cortlandt Manor animal hospital, \_\_\_\_\_ Veterinary Center
16. Tap, 2 words
18. Leatherneck
20. Sharpen
24. New Mahopac grill \_\_\_\_\_ House
25. "For goodness \_\_\_\_!"
26. Lights-out melody
27. Natural
28. Symbolize
30. Spanish sherry
33. Anger
36. Home room
37. Get-up-and-go
38. Law and Order's home
39. Earlier
40. Lt.'s inferior, in the Navy
41. Band booking

### Down

1. Ad \_\_\_\_\_ committee
2. \_\_\_\_\_ grecque (cooked in olive oil, lemon juice, wine, and herbs, and served cold)
3. Morning moisture
4. Colorless gas
5. Blown away
6. Meal in a shell



7. Martini ingredient
8. "\_\_\_\_\_ recall ..."
9. Varnish ingredient
15. Available to purchase now
17. Dishwasher, at times
18. Montana hrs.
19. Premium preceder
21. Approving
22. Mesh
23. Vane direction
25. Busybodies
27. "Peer Gynt" playwright
29. Have the blues
30. Initials on a toothpaste box
31. Ryan of "When Harry Met Sally"
32. Warbler Yoko
34. Baseball stat
35. Electrocardiograph, abbr.

Answers on page 23



**Thursday, December 15, 7:00 pm via Zoom**

**Members' & Friends' Best Nature Photography**

A showcase of local nature photographers! New submissions invited: [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/photo-show](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/photo-show)

**Zoom Bird Chat, Selected Tuesdays, 7:00 pm,**

Learn where local birders are birding & what they are seeing and, if you wish, share your own bird observations or questions. See schedule and past videos: [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/chat](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/chat)

**Weekly Guided Bird Walks**

Registration required for most walks. Visit local birding hotspots. [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-walks](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-walks)

**Visit [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org)**

for more information and free registration for above events, to purchase bird seed and to download SMRA sanctuary maps. SMRA sanctuary maps also available free on Avenza map app.

**To Place a Classified Ad**  
**Call 914-864-0878 or e-mail**  
**classifieds@theexaminernews.com**

# EXAMINER MEDIA Classifieds

**Classified Ad Deadline**  
**is Thursdays at 5pm for the**  
**next week's publication**

**ANTIQUES & ART/COLLECTIBLES**

**MOST CASH PAID FOR** paintings, antiques, furniture, silver, sculpture, jewelry books, cameras, records, instruments, coins, watches, gold, comics,

sports cards, etc. PLEASE CALL AARON AT 914-235-0302

**\*\*COMIC BOOKS WANTED! TOP PRICES PAID!\*\*** 30 years experience. Reliable and honest!

Call or Text: 917-699-2496, or e-mail: smileLP@aol.com.

**WANTED TO BUY:** Antiques, collectibles, oddities - for cash. (914) 263-2917

**AUTO DONATIONS**

**Drive Out Breast Cancer: Donate a car today!** The benefits of donating your car or boat: Fast

Free Pickup - 24hr Response Tax Deduction - Easy To Do! Call 24/7: 855-905-4755

**Wheels For Wishes benefiting Make-A-Wish® Northeast New York.** Your Car Donations Matter NOW More Than Ever! Free Vehicle Pick Up ANYWHERE. We Accept Most Vehicles Running or Not. 100% Tax Deductible. Minimal To No Human Contact. Call: (877) 798-9474. Car Donation Foundation d/b/a Wheels For Wishes. [www.wheelsforwishes.org](http://www.wheelsforwishes.org).

**BUYING/SELLING**

**Buying diamonds, gold, silver,** all fine jewelry and watches, coins, paintings, better furs, complete estates. We simply pay more! Call Barry 914-260-8783 or e-mail [Americabuying@aol.com](mailto:Amercabuying@aol.com)

**COIN/GOLD/SILVER WANTED**

**Top Buyer for Coins & Currency, Gold & Silver, Jewelry, Diamonds, Watches** Buying & Selling Gold & Silver Bullion Experienced, Licensed, Professional Mount Kisco Gold & Silver Inc 139 E. Main Street, Mt. Kisco, NY 10549 Free Valuations 914-244-9500 [www.bermanbuyscollectables.com](http://www.bermanbuyscollectables.com)

**EDUCATION/CAREER TRAINING**

**COMPUTER & IT TRAINING PROGRAM!** Train ONLINE to get the skills to become a Computer & Help Desk Professional now! Grants and Scholarships available for certain programs for qualified applicants. Call CTI for details! 844-947-0192 (M-F 8am-6pm ET). Computer with internet is required.

**TRAIN ONLINE TO DO MEDICAL BILLING!** Become a Medical Office Professional online at CTI! Get Trained, Certified & ready to work in months! Call 855-543-6440. (M-F 8am-6pm ET). Computer with internet is required.

*continued on page 24*

**Could your kitchen use a little magic?**

American Made Family Owned Award Winning

**855.281.6439 | Free Quotes**

## DENTAL Insurance

from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company

Call to get your **FREE** Information Kit

# 1-855-225-1434

[Dental50Plus.com/nypress](http://Dental50Plus.com/nypress)

Product not available in all states. Includes the Participating (in GA: Designated) Providers and Preventive Benefits Rider. Acceptance guaranteed for one insurance policy/certificate of this type. Contact us for complete details about this insurance solicitation. This specific offer is not available in CO, NY; call 1-800-969-4781 or respond for similar offer. Certificate C250A (ID: C250E; PA: C250Q); Insurance Policy P150 (GA: P150GA; NY: P150NY; OK: P150OK; TN: P150TN). Rider kinds: B438, B439 (GA: B439B). 6208-0721

Are you raising a grandchild, young relative or child of a family friend in the absence of the biological parents?

**Then you're a Kinship Caregiver!**

Want to keep your family healthy and safe?

**NYS Kinship Navigator can help.**

NYS Kinship Navigator provides information, referral and assistance with financial needs, legal options, school enrollment, kinship law and other resources.

**Help is just a phone call away.**

# 877-454-6463

TTY: NY Relay 711 or 1-800-421-1220  
[nysnavigator.org](http://nysnavigator.org)

## Prepare for power outages today

**WITH A HOME STANDBY GENERATOR**

**\$0 MONEY DOWN + LOW MONTHLY PAYMENT OPTIONS**

Contact a Generac dealer for full terms and conditions

**REQUEST A FREE QUOTE**

CALL NOW BEFORE THE NEXT POWER OUTAGE

# (877) 516-1160

**FREE** 7-Year Extended Warranty\* - A \$695 Value!

\*To qualify, consumers must request a quote, purchase, install and activate the generator with a participating dealer. Call for a full list of terms and conditions.

## Saving a Life EVERY 11 MINUTES

*I'm never alone*

**Life Alert® is always here for me.**

One touch of a button sends help fast, 24/7.

Help at Home Help On-the-Go

**Life Alert®** Batteries Never Need Charging.

**For a FREE brochure call:**

# 1-800-404-9776

Call today and receive a

# FREE SHOWER PACKAGE PLUS \$1600 OFF

**SAFE STEP WALK-IN TUB**

# 1-855-916-5473

With purchase of a new Safe Step Walk-In Tub. Not applicable with any previous walk-in tub purchase. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445

FINANCING AVAILABLE WITH APPROVED CREDIT

**Give Something that Means Something®**



## Dublin and Handel Connection: Less Curious Than it First Appears

What do Dublin and Handel have in common? Much, it turns out.

But first, a word about a recent trip to Ireland, and some discussion on celebratory music of the mid-18th century.

With COVID on the wane, a two-year-delayed journey was kicked back into high gear, and in late September a party of four (my wife and I and two good friends) set foot in Ireland's capital, eager to put some miles on our walking shoes as we saw the sights. For our friends, this was their first visit to Ireland; for us, our second. We wondered had Dublin changed much in 20-plus years.

It had. Construction projects abounded, a sign of a thriving economy. Bright glass facades and vibrant colors had replaced previously gritty sights along the River Liffey. The city was much more cosmopolitan. While happy that Dublin and her inhabitants are faring well, I found something sad about the loss of the city's legendary edginess, which gave it a distinctive character.

One place that still holds its edge, while allowing improvement, is Temple



The arched gateway to Neal's New Music House, all that remained of the original theater, as it appeared in 1986.

Bar, a unique Dublin neighborhood. Once home to some of Dublin's seediest streets, it now comfortably blends old and new. It was also where we tasted the best Guinness ever poured, in an establishment the name of which, unfortunately, was lost over the next 10 days of travel.

Not so a nearby street called Fishamble Street, which holds a claim to fame few other streets can rival.

But first, that promised word about 18th century celebratory music, in particular, George Frideric Handel's "Messiah." Composed to celebrate

Easter, it has become a Christmas staple. One is guaranteed during the season to hear this magnificent piece many times, whether performed at Carnegie Hall or a high school auditorium.

Aside from "Silent Night," few works are as fused with the season as this one. Completed in September 1741, the "Messiah" had its first public performance at a theater called Neal's New Music Hall on Fishamble Street in Dublin on Apr. 13, 1742. It has been rewarding its

listeners with an auditory feast ever since.

Was Handel British? Well, no, and yes. He was born in 1685 in Halle, in modern-day Germany, and spent time in Hamburg and Italy. He moved to London in 1712. He became a British citizen in 1727, by an act of Parliament, and died in London in 1759.

But how did he come to be in Ireland in April 1742?

The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at the time, William Cavendish, 3rd Duke of Devonshire, invited him there. At that time Ireland was an integral part of the British Empire, and Cavendish was the king's personal representative.

Dublin was no cultural backwater, but rather held a reputation as the empire's "second city," the first obviously being London. The invitation came at a time of ill health and mounting debt for Handel, and he seized the opportunity. His performance of "Messiah" at Neal's was not his first appearance there. Several earlier performances of other works of his had also been held, all to acclaim.

Handel's reputation, which had been at a low in England, began to rebuild. He decided it was time to unveil his masterwork. The debut performance of "Messiah" was a



By Brian McGowan

resounding success. Proceeds went to several Dublin charities, one for prisoners and two for the poor. A second performance netted over £100,000 (today's money) for Handel, helping him rebuild his reputation as one of the greatest composers of all time.

Handel left Ireland that June, promising to return. He never did, but always felt a fondness for Ireland.

The feeling was mutual. Today, every April, there is an outdoor performance of "Messiah" at the site of the old music hall on Fishamble Street. Now demolished, it provides a prime example of how music can span generations, cultures and the march of time.

And yes, the Irish also sing it at Christmas!

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

*Irish Eclectic*

## Nominations Sought for 2023 Westchester Public Health Awards

The Westchester County Board of Health is seeking nominations for the 2023 Public Health Service Awards. The board wants to recognize adults, young people and nonprofit programs whose volunteer efforts have demonstrated creativity and

compassion and who helped improve public health in Westchester.

The board encourages community leaders, healthcare professionals, educators and residents to nominate worthy people or programs by Jan. 9, using the nomination forms at <https://health.westchestergov.com/news/public-health-awards>.

"Busy teenagers, adults and organizations have extended a hand to our community in innovative ways these past few years," said Dr. Robert Baker, president of the Westchester County Board of Health. "The board would like to acknowledge the extraordinary people and programs who have given so much to Westchester this past year. We hope their example of selfless volunteerism inspires others to help us promote and protect public health in our county."

The Dr. Harold Keltz Distinguished Public Health Service Award is presented annually to a person or community-based organization, whose efforts have made an extraordinary contribution to the public health of Westchester residents, but who is not professionally engaged in public

health work.

The J.R. Tesone Youth Public Health Service Award is an annual award to a student up to age 21 for his or her creative contribution to public health in Westchester. The award was created in 2014 in memory of J.R. Tesone, a Board of Health member with a lifelong commitment to Westchester County children.

The awards will be announced and presented in April to spotlight National Public Health Week, and the honorees and their achievements will be featured on the Health Department's web pages.

Last year's youth winners coached seniors on technology use, registered homebound seniors for COVID-19 vaccines and supported youth mental health.

Recent youth winners have delivered meals and other COVID-19 relief to first responders and families; promoted youth awareness of the dangers of vaping; advocated for restrictions on tobacco sales; promoted awareness of the opioid crisis; increased sustainability and Earth Day programming; advocated for children affected by cancer; and created an app to foster communication between teens with

type 1 diabetes.

An organization was recognized last year for its breathing, mindfulness and movement program to reduce stress, and an adult nurse was recognized for providing free skin, nail and foot care to seniors and the unhoused. Previously, adult volunteers were recognized for raising thousands of dollars and distributing PPE and meals to first responders and families with COVID-19 and for providing food, cash and case management to new immigrants affected by the pandemic.

Previous awards were given for promoting awareness of mental health and addiction among young people, promoting the construction and preservation of affordable housing, and advocating for comprehensive mental health care for low-income residents. Non-profit programs also have been selected for their work to reduce health disparities, improve health literacy, and improve access to care.

*This is a press release provided by Westchester County. It has been lightly edited and is being published by Examiner Media as a public service.*

### Crossword Answers

1	H	2	A	3	D	4	B	5	I	6	T	7	G	8	A	9	L
10	O	L	E	11	U	N	A	12	I	S	A						
13	C	A	W	14	T	A	C	15	O	N	I	C					
				16	D	R	A	17	W	O	N						
18	M	A	R	19	I	N	E	20	H	O	N	21	E				
24	S	T	O	N	E	25	S	A	K	E	S						
26	T	A	P	S	27	I	N	N	A	T	E						
				28	E	M	B	O	D	Y							
30	A	31	M	32	O	R	O	S	O	33	I	34	R	35	E		
36	D	E	N	37	P	E	P	38	N	B	C						
39	A	G	O	40	E	N	S	41	G	I	G						

**SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS**



To Place a Classified Ad  
Call 914-864-0878 or e-mail  
classifieds@theexaminernews.com

# EXAMINER MEDIA Classifieds

120622

**Classified Ad Deadline**  
is **Thursdays at 5pm** for the  
next week's publication

continued from page 22

## FINANCE

**ARE YOU BEHIND \$10k OR MORE ON YOUR TAXES?** Stop

wage & bank levies, liens & audits, unfiled tax returns, payroll issues, & resolve tax debt FAST. Call 888-869-5361 (Hours: Mon-Fri 7am-5pm PST)

## HEALTH

**ATTENTION VIAGRA USERS:** Generic 100mg blue pills or generic 20mg yellow pills. Get 45 plus 5 free \$99 + S/H. Call Today. **877-707-5523**

## HELP WANTED ADMINISTRATIVE OPENING

**Fallsburg Central School Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel Services** NYS SDA or

SDL Certification required Please forward resume & Fallsburg's application (located at fallsburgcd.net) by Dec 23rd to: Fallsburg-recruitment@schoces.org Attn: PPS Assistant Director Search EOE

**\$200 OFF** the purchase of any stairlift

## Regain Your Independence!

**The ALBANY Lift Company**  
Stairlifts \* Elevators \* Wheelchair Lifts \* Ramps  
747 Pierce Road, Clifton Park NY 12065  
(518) 393-2274 \* (888) 558-LIFT  
www.thealbanyliftcompany.com  
Locally Owned & Operated  
New and Reconditioned Lifts  
• Sales • Rentals • Service • Buybacks  
Visit Our Display Center at 747 Pierce Road, Clifton Park, NY, 12065

## Hearing Aids Starting at \$799

Get **25% Off** Beltone Hearing Aid Set\* + A Free Cleaning Set with Purchase  
**Limited Time Offer!**

Schedule Your **FREE** Hearing Screening **(877) 503-2187**

**Beltone**

Terms and conditions apply. Discount based on MSRP. Offer valid 10/1/22-12/31/22 at participating locations only on qualifying purchases. Belone Enhance Plus not eligible for the discount. See locations for details. Benefits of hearing instruments may vary by type and degree of hearing loss, noise environment, accuracy of hearing evaluation and proper fit. Cannot be combined with any other promotions or discounts.

## HOME IMPROVEMENT

**BATH & SHOWER UPDATES** in as little as ONE DAY! Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & Military Discounts available. Call: **866-393-3636**

Do you need a Roof or Energy Efficient Windows & Help paying for it? YOU MAY QUALIFY THROUGH NEW RELIEF PROGRAMS (800) 944-9393 or visit NYProgramFunding.org to qualify. Approved applications will have the work completed by a repair crew provided by: HOMEOWNER FUNDING. Not affiliated with State or Gov Programs.

Don't Pay For Covered Home Repairs Again! American Residential Warranty covers ALL MAJOR SYSTEMS AND APPLIANCES. 30 DAY RISK FREE/ \$100 OFF POPULAR PLANS. **833-398-0526**

## LEGAL NOTICE

Sealed Bids will be received and publicly opened at the Office of the Purchasing Director of the Town of Cortlandt, Town Hall, One Heady Street, Cortlandt Manor, New York at 2:00PM, December 21, 2022, for the bidding of **Chain Link Fence Repairs and Installation #22-26**. Those interested in submitting bids may secure copies of the specifications at the above address during business hours weekdays. Anyone who wishes to attend a bid opening should make an appointment. If you are a reporting agency, kindly email the Town of Cortlandt and we will forward you a copy of the bid results.

Jennifer Glasheen  
Jennifer Glasheen  
Purchasing Director

continued on next page



Find us on Facebook

**FACEBOOK.COM/EXAMINERMEDIA**

Follow ExaminerMedia on social media to monitor the latest breaking news and local reporting tidbits

**AMERICA'S ORIGINAL BUTCHER SINCE 1917**

## OMAHA STEAKS

**Butcher's Deluxe Package**

- 4 Butcher's Cut Top Sirloins (5 oz.)
- 4 Air-Chilled Boneless Chicken Breasts (5 oz.)
- 4 Boneless Pork Chops (6 oz.)
- 4 Individual Scalloped Potatoes (3.8 oz.)
- 4 Caramel Apple Tartlets (4 oz.)
- 1 jar Omaha Steaks Seasoning (3.1 oz.)
- 8 **FREE** PureGround™ Filet Mignon Burgers (6 oz.)

71941GLZ separately \$225.94 **\$99.99**  
SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE

**8 BURGERS FREE**

**ORDER NOW! » 1.877.461.6823** Ask for 71941GLZ  
**OmahaSteaks.com/GiftGiving3556**

Savings shown over aggregated single item base price. Photos exemplary of product advertised. Limit 2. 8 free 6 oz. burgers will be sent to each shipping address that includes 71941. Standard S&H added per address. Offer available while supplies last. Items may be substituted due to inventory limitations. Cannot be combined with other offers. Other restrictions may apply. All purchases acknowledge acceptance of Terms of Use: OmahaSteaks.com/terms-of-use-OSI or call 1.800.228.9872 for a copy. Expires 12/31/22. | Omaha Steaks, Inc.

**100% GUARANTEE**  
THE BEST STEAKS OF YOUR LIFE OR YOUR MONEY BACK

## COMPUTER PROBLEMS?

Friendly Certified Computer Repair Experts

**Geeks on Site**

Call Now for a **FREE** Diagnosis **1-866-848-0045**

Simply mention coupon code **42513** and get **\$20 OFF** any service you need!

One time use only. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other coupon or offer. Coupon good only until December 31, 2022. Valid for any new service except subscription fees. Must mention coupon at time of sale.

## LeafFilter GUTTER PROTECTION

**BACKED BY A YEAR-ROUND CLOG-FREE GUARANTEE**

**EXCLUSIVE LIMITED TIME OFFER!**

**20% OFF + 10% OFF**

YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE SENIORS & MILITARY!

**FINANCING THAT FITS YOUR BUDGET!**

\*Subject to credit approval. Call for details.

**Promo Code: 285**

**FREE GUTTER ALIGNMENT + FREE GUTTER CLEANING\***

**CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE**

**1-855-478-9473**

Mon-Thurs: 8am-11pm, Fri-Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: 2pm-8pm EST

\*For those who qualify. One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. \*\*Offer valid at time of estimate only. 2The leading consumer reporting agency conducted a 16 month outdoor test of gutter guards in 2010 and recognized LeafFilter as the "#1 rated professionally installed gutter guard system in America." Manufactured in Plainville, Michigan and processed at LMF Mercor Group in Ohio. See Representative for full warranty details. Registration# 0366920022 CSLS# 1035705 Registration# HIC-0649905 License# CBC056678 License# RCE-51604 Registration# C127230 License# 559544 Suffolk HIC License# 52229-H License# 2102212986 License# 262000022 License# 262000403 License# 2106212946 License# MHIC111225 Registration# 176447 License# 423330 Registration# R731804 License# 50145 License# 408693 Registration# 13N40953900 Registration# H-19114 License# 218294 Registration# PA069383 License# 41354 License# 7656 DGPL #10783658-5501 License# 423330 License# 2705169445 License# LEAFNW622J License# WV056912

Are you looking for help to replace your home's windows, doors, siding or roofing?

**We have access to funding sources - up to \$25,000 per homeowner - to help you improve your home!**

**HOMEOWNER FUNDING**

**CALL NOW: (888) 254-6006**  
**OR VISIT: NYProgramFunding.net to QUALIFY**

Approved associations will have the work completed by a quality repair crew provided by: HOMEOWNER FUNDING. Not affiliated with State or Gov Programs. #H-54084

## TROY.NY

Give The Gift of Local

Visit Troy, NY Eat. Drink. Shop.

**This Holiday Season**

• Shopping • Bars & Restaurants • Misterie Downtown •

Fellow Us @troybid Shop small Shop TROY

www.downtowntroy.com



# The Evolving Science Behind Our Sense of Smell



By Nick Antonaccio

The advances of science in the realm of wine continue to refine, and even redefine, our understanding of wine appreciation.

Our perception of wine is influenced more by our sense of smell than by our sense of taste.

Our olfactory sensors are present in the nasal passages and in the back of the throat. They bombard our brain with significantly greater impulses than those sensors in our mouth and on our tongue. Yet we often find it difficult to express words that describe the aromas in a glass of wine.

Scientists at Northwestern University have unraveled one aspect of the mystery of aroma perception. Research has discovered the connection between how the brain processes aromas versus visual or auditory signals. What we see is generally the same as the next person. What we hear is generally the same also. (Yes, I know, there are exceptions and anomalies, just as with every other aspect of our interface with fellow citizens of Earth.)

Yet with our sense of smell, our perception of the reality of aromas can be widely

*'Scientists have concluded that a component of our brain...controls and manages our olfactory sensors.'*

disparate from the next person.

Scientists have concluded that a component of our brain, the piriform cortex, controls and manages our olfactory sensors. Yet the electric impulses sent by these olfactory sensors are assimilated in a different manner than those in which our brain manages our other four senses.

The cerebral cortex – specifically the gyrus region – directly manages visual and auditory signals and creates the words we use to identify these senses.

The piriform cortex is an outlier, intercepting olfactory signals on their pathway to the gyrus

region. Electrical impulses from our olfactory senses are transmitted to the piriform cortex, resulting in rather garbled output as it relays signals to the gyrus region. This unique pathway influences the formation of words in the gyrus region. The process varies from person to person, creating vocabularies that may differ greatly.

Scientists have concluded this is a primary factor in the disparate descriptions we assign to aromas. Each time the olfactory sensors are bombarded by aromas, the signals to the brain are interpreted “on the run” through the piriform cortex, making it difficult to translate a smell into a descriptive word.

What does all of this science mean to the average wine consumer?

1. It explains why it is sometimes difficult to verbalize aromas.

2. It explains why we may not have the same perception of a wine as a wine critic. This can be intimidating if we don't smell the violets, or graphite, or Meyer lemon, that professional wine critics pinpoint in their wine critiques. We are not inferior; we are simply different.

The challenge is how to improve our sense of smell. It is more a sensory refinement than a scientific procedure. If we continually and diligently focus on identifying aromas in our glasses of wine, our brain will build a data bank of these perceptions. Eventually, each impression of the characteristics of a wine will be stored as a fixed memory, enabling us to describe instinctively a particular aroma. Just as the cerebral cortex creates and stores language memory, the piriform cortex enhances the aroma impulses in creating aroma memories.



And, of course, our memory plays a significant role in our sense of smell. When we encounter an aroma of a particular food or wine, our brain searches our memory banks for similar past experiences. This is why we can verbalize the vanilla scent in a Chardonnay or the hint of chocolate in a Cabernet Sauvignon. This is how I enjoy wines, which I proclaim each week: “Continuous experimenting results in instinctive behavior.” Now I have the weight of science behind my credo.

Life is a series of experiments and outcomes.

From each of them we learn and build the foundation of our interactive lives. With food and wine experiments, we bring to the table hundreds, perhaps thousands, of individual sensory experiences each time we drink and dine. Our learned sensory instincts hopefully guide us to an enjoyable outcome. Science increasingly explains how we got there.

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

**You Heard It Through the Grapevine**

To Place a Classified Ad  
Call 914-864-0878 or e-mail  
[classifieds@theexaminernews.com](mailto:classifieds@theexaminernews.com)

**EXAMINER MEDIA Classifieds**

Classified Ad Deadline  
is Thursdays at 5pm for the  
next week's publication

continued from previous page

888-508-5313

## MISCELLANEOUS

**BEST SATELLITE TV** with 2 Year Price Guarantee! \$59.99/mo with 190 channels and 3 months free premium movie channels! Free next day installation! Call

Get **DIRECTV** for \$64.99/mo for 12 months with CHOICE Package. Save an additional \$120 over 1st year. First 3 months of HBO Max, Cinemax, Showtime, Starz and Epix included! Directv

is #1 in Customer Satisfaction (JD Power & Assoc.) Some restrictions apply. Call **1-888-534-6918**

## PANTHER CLUB GROUP LEADER POSITIONS

The Village of Pleasantville's

**Parks & Recreation Department** is seeking eligible candidates for their 2022-2023 Panther Club After School Program. Get paid to PLAY! Panther Club is a program that operates during the school year, Monday - Friday, from 2:30pm - 6:30pm. Staff is required

to supervise a specific grade level of children through games, outdoor play, and during homework periods. Salary is \$20 per hour. Please contact Laura Von der Osten **914-769-7950** [lvonderosten@Pleasantville-ny.gov](mailto:lvonderosten@Pleasantville-ny.gov)

## TV INTERNET PHONE

**DISH TV \$64.99 For 190 Channels + \$14.95 High Speed Internet.** Free Installation, Smart HD DVR Included, Free Voice Remote. Some restrictions apply. Promo Expires 1/21/23. **1-866-595-6967**



**Join online as a member to live your most intelligent local life**



**TheExaminerNews.com**



## Prepare for Power Outages & Save Money

PWRcell, Generac's fully-integrated solar + battery storage system, stores solar energy that can power your whole home during utility power outages and save you money on your electric bill.

**REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!**

**ACT NOW TO RECEIVE A \$300 SPECIAL OFFER!\***

| (888) 871-0194

**\$0 DOWN FINANCING OPTIONS!\***

\*Offer value when purchased at retail.  
\*\*Financing available through authorized Generac partners.  
Solar panels sold separately.

**GENERAC PWRCELL**  
SOLAR + BATTERY STORAGE SYSTEM



## Upgrade Your Home with a NEW METAL ROOF

Guaranteed to Last a Lifetime!

**LIMITED TIME OFFER**

**60% off**  
YOUR INSTALLATION

**+ TAKE AN ADDITIONAL 10% off**

Install for Military, Health Workers and First Responders

**ERIE**  
Metal Roofs  
Limited time offer. Expires 12/31/22.

## STRONG AS STEEL WITH THE ATTRACTIVE LOOK OF VARIOUS ROOF STYLES

From Dimensional Shingles to classic styles reminiscent of Cedar Shake and Spanish Tile, an architectural roofing system by Erie Metal Roofs can enhance the beauty of your home while protecting your family and property for a lifetime.

Call today to schedule your **FREE ESTIMATE 1-855-492-6084**

**ERIE**  
Metal Roofs

Made in the USA



New orders only. Does not include material costs. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Minimum purchase required. Other restrictions may apply. This is an advertisement placed on behalf of Erie Construction Mid-West, Inc. ("Erie"). Offer terms and conditions may apply and the offer may not be available in your area. Offer expires December 31, 2022. If you call the number provided, you consent to being contacted by telephone, SMS text message, email, pre-recorded messages by Erie or its affiliates and service providers using automated technologies notwithstanding if you are on a DO NOT CALL list or register. Please review our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use on [homeservicescompliance.com](http://homeservicescompliance.com). All rights reserved.

# Optum: 'Special Place' Beset by Phone Woes, Scheduling Issues

While my favorite type of written-word journalism to read is often the straightforward, balanced news report, the format and its rightful traditions sometimes put the squeeze on important truth-telling.

In late July, a respected member of the community, Bedford Corners resident Jennifer Saine, contacted me, asking if we could report on unfolding issues with our local medical group. The organization had recently announced it would now be part of Optum Tri-State, a new entity linking CareMount Medical with ProHEALTH NY and Riverside under the Optum banner.

Journalism is more art than science, and one example of that is how much weight reporters and editors give to an endless stream of reader tips based on who gives them. When someone as thoughtful and level-headed as Saine reaches out, it tells us a lot right out of the gate.

After consulting with Examiner Editor-in-Chief Martin Wilbur, we decided to ask local freelance journalist Sherrie Dulworth to suss out the facts. Sherrie is as thorough a reporter as you can imagine, and we wanted to be extraordinarily comprehensive, citing many patient sources and more, before publishing any piece. Loose talk on social media does not by itself a story make, and we don't just chase gossip pap.

But despite Sherrie's excellent efforts and a little poking around on my end, almost no one wanted to go on the record with their concerns after months of trying.

In vetting and trying to report out a straightforward news article, several patients with stories to tell understandably declined our on-the-record requests, not wanting to complicate relationships with their medical office. While there's always more poking and prodding you can do, our stab at a straightforward news report or in-depth news feature hit a general dead end by mid-November.

## The Name Game

In October of last year, Dr. Scott D. Hayworth, now the CEO and market leader for Optum Tri-State Region, blasted out an e-mail newsletter message announcing his former CareMount organization joining the "Optum family." (Before it became CareMount in 2016 with a merger of several area practices, the organization was called Mount Kisco Medical Group, known in more recent years as MKMG; the original enterprise was founded in 1946.)

"With gratitude to you and your family for having entrusted your health care to us, I'm proud to share with you that CareMount Medical has joined the Optum family," Hayworth, a veteran Mount Kisco obstetrician-gynecologist as well, triumphantly declared at the time.

"Optum is a national health services innovation company, helping people live healthier lives and improving the delivery of care for everyone," continued Hayworth, who also happens to be the husband of former local Republican congresswoman Nan Hayworth. "Partnering with Optum allows us at CareMount to do even more to fulfill our mission to provide you with state-of-the-art



By Adam Stone

care close to home."

But that promise Hayworth articulated has failed to deliver, scores of patients tell us and tell the wider world on social media. Beyond formal interviews, I've also heard story after story from reliable, even-keeled people in personal conversation.

Local Facebook community group pages and social sites like Nextdoor have been littered for months with myriad complaints over deteriorating patient care access and service, particularly around issues with scheduling, health records, and the affiliated patient portal function, along with other infrastructure-type issues. (Even while some patients describe extraordinarily positive experiences and gratitude, which I'll get to in a minute).

One particularly acute concern has been general headaches over communication – including about the patient portal – and the inability to easily schedule human conversations with doctors. An entire maddening infrastructure of digital and human blockades has been constructed to limit real patient-to-doctor, one-on-one contact. That's a relatively new development in healthcare requiring a reckoning.

The more you can limit human interaction and increase automation, the more you can scale the business and create a medical delivery system that is somewhat akin to (best-case scenario) a well-run, quality fast-food chain and less like your beloved neighborhood restaurant.

"It's unbelievable how horrible it is when you need to get ahold of someone," one commenter stated earlier this week. "I am beyond annoyed as well!"

When a torrent of new posts started populating local social media groups again this week, I realized it was time to chime in. We didn't have quite what we needed for a news report. But as a reporting-based opinion columnist, this was a story I felt compelled to tell in some capacity, with more than enough information to tell it.

The frustration of waiting on hold on the phone for ungodly sums of time is a common complaint. (Common enough to be deemed a publishable offense right here in this column after much deliberation and corroboration.) While Optum does have an automatic callback system, locals say that hasn't fixed the problem.

"They did call me back, but then put me right back on hold," one commenter said earlier this week. "I finally gave up."

The digital portal communication system also receives mixed reviews and tends to be particularly difficult to maneuver for older patients unaccustomed to the technology.

## Phone Woes

To confirm the phone concerns, I tried calling Optum myself multiple times over an extended period of months and discovered similar frustrations. On Friday, I conducted one final experiment, taking more notes along the way.

Mind you, I was feeling entirely healthy, making an aggravating situation much easier to stomach, not to mention the fact that I work from home and don't have to worry about a boss breathing down my neck while trying

to navigate the phone maze. Even though I felt bad clogging up the line, it felt more irresponsible to not give the phone system another try. (Although I did happen to have a legitimate, if benign, medical question worth asking, which comforted my conscience.)

- I called at 9:30 a.m.
- I waited on hold for about five minutes before hearing the option about getting an automated callback.
- I pressed the automatic callback button by about 9:36 a.m., but it didn't process.
- I was returned to the computerized operator, which gave me the option of the automatic callback about a full minute later, and I pressed "1" to request a callback.
- As I only later in the afternoon learned, I missed a callback from Optum at 9:52 a.m. because of another time-sensitive call that came in at the same time. I didn't figure that out until about 2:30 p.m.
- Not realizing I missed the call, I decided to let at least two hours pass before calling again if a call didn't come unprompted.
- I called again at 11:37 a.m.
- Not until almost five minutes later, at 11:41 a.m., was I offered the option to request an automated callback. I didn't press the digit "1" quick enough – I think it gave me up to maybe two seconds – and, as a result, I was sent back on hold to continue to listen to excruciatingly irritating hold music.
- Not until two minutes later, at 11:43 a.m., was I provided the option again for an automated callback. I pressed "1."
- It worked perfectly, generating a callback only two minutes later, at 11:45 a.m. I asked a lovely-sounding receptionist for a doctor to call me, specifying it was a doctor I needed to talk to about an issue, not a nurse or assistant.
- At about 2:30 p.m., after learning about the earlier voicemail, I called again to ask for an ETA on a callback from the doctor. It took another few minutes to reach someone, but a very helpful receptionist, by about 2:35 p.m., explained how the doctor is understandably in with patients and often makes calls after those sessions, if a quick call in between patients isn't possible. I made it clear it wasn't urgent. She said the doctor would likely be calling me around or shortly after 4:30 p.m.
- As of press time, more than three days after my original request, I have not received the promised phone call from what is more than likely an overworked, over scheduled and diligent doctor.

Patients battling a flawed phone system when ill (or when seeking treatment for a loved one) is no small thing, especially as it sometimes leads frustrated people – in particular busy working people – to abandon or delay care. In fact, it's a giant problem for any medical establishment genuinely committed to delivering a globally positive experience.

Saine, for her part, stressed how the developments have led to it becoming "difficult to schedule timely appointments, harder to find providers within the group and maintain relationships with those providers

because of rushed double-booked seven-minute appointments and being pushed to seeing PAs and nurses."

Issues with the organization's billing system are also a lingering, longtime concern, and one I've personally heard grumbles about for years and years, well before the Optum development.

"The old CareMount billing department issues have certainly not been resolved, never mind the continual phone problems and long telephone wait times," added Saine, a trained attorney. "I feel like my family is trapped in a quickly-collapsing system. I have stayed because our doctors are excellent, and we value their expertise, but how long will they even be able to endure being stretched so thin?"

While wanting to avoid sounding melodramatic, Saine pointed out in an interview on Friday how frustration with the phones could have life-threatening consequences.

"It could lead to people not getting diagnosed and not being treated and not getting the care they need to save them," she said. "That is really what can happen with these things."

But Saine also explained a bigger picture concern. She worries about Optum's corporate parent looking to dominate the local market in multiple medical industry buckets – insurance and healthcare. She is right to raise the specter of Optum's corporate architecture. Here's the deal:

Optum is a subsidiary of United HealthGroup, a Minnesota-headquartered multinational behemoth. The entire corporate setup appears to be inherently problematic, as the broader organization is both a healthcare and insurance company, even if the two areas are allegedly siloed. What could possibly go wrong?

The answer is plenty, for those keeping score at home.

## Poor 'Judge'ment

In fact, just last month, the illustrious and Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalism site, ProPublica, published an explosive report outlining how UnitedHealth might use a treasure trove of patient data

to give itself a competitive edge.

A federal judge had permitted the company to acquire a mind-boggling boatload of health insurance claims. While UnitedHealth publicly insists it won't use the data to benefit itself – just trust us. Ha! – some company documents indicate otherwise, ProPublica reported.

Meanwhile, after the ProPublica piece published, the U.S. Justice Department (as well as the New York and Minnesota attorneys general) filed a Nov. 18 notice stating they will appeal a decision by Judge Carl Nichols that allows UnitedHealth Group to acquire a company called Change Healthcare. (It was former President Donald Trump who nominated Nichols for the federal judgeship; the judge was commissioned onto the United States District Court for the District of Columbia in 2019.)

Regarding Change Healthcare, it is a firm that connects medical patients, payers, and providers. As ProPublica described it,

*continued on next page*

**Stone's  
Throw**



# Optum: 'Special Place' Beset by Phone Woes, Scheduling Issues

*continued from previous page*

the company “functions as the pipes that carry insurance claims between health care providers and insurers.”

Yeah, again, what could go wrong?

## Good Guys, Bad Outcome

It's worth emphasizing how Hayworth and his top colleagues might very well be pleasant folks. I don't mean that facetiously. Hayworth is known locally for seriously impactful philanthropy, and is surely a fine doctor, committed to the Hippocratic oath and all the rest. I have friends who speak glowingly of him as a doctor from personal experience, even while critics have harsher conclusions to share about his business practices. But Hayworth the man is not the point, even if he's the local man best positioned to address the point.

The point is we have a fundamentally flawed system leading to the problems that drive people batty, sending your friends and neighbors (including some of the reasonable, even-tempered ones) to vent on social media, with little or no other recourse.

A consolidated local medical industry motivated almost exclusively by profit can much more than justify fewer human beings answering the phone, even if it negatively impacts the patient experience, as long as the near-monopolistic dominance is potent enough to avoid losing too many paying “customers” while limiting business expenses. (Optum does have competitors, and some patients say they are fleeing to alternatives, even if it means a little extra travel.)

As a doctor might conclude in a complicated case, I can diagnose what's triggering the symptoms but not provide a cure-all treatment.

That said, the Justice Department appeal of the judge's seemingly wrongheaded decision (please read that ProPublica article) appears to be one place to start. (Not to mention Optum deciding to invest a few lousy bucks on more people to answer the damn phones and general customer experience enhancements; even if doing so requires, ahem, modestly trimming executive pay; although it feels safe to suspect there's some surplus dollars lying around to pay more personnel and keep the talented execs fully and handsomely compensated.)

## Middle Ground

Everything doesn't have to be a far-left versus far-right ideological screaming match either, debating fully socialized medicine on one extreme versus an almost entirely unrestrained medical industry on the other. A layman can see the dangers in the consolidation of private medical power into too few hands and still enthusiastically embrace the beauties of capitalism to generate elite medical innovation.

That all said, we were very eager to hear Optum's point of view about patient experience. We spent weeks trying to secure an interview, offering in-person, video, or phone options. Eventually, all we were granted was a canned statement over e-mail.

“Our priority is to keep our valued patients informed during our transition to Optum – and share what this means for



While local Optum patients, generally speaking, have sung the praises of their doctors, they have expressed frustration with the corporate bureaucracy that complicates their ability to communicate with and see their healthcare providers.

them,” stated a ridiculous filibustering reply to what we were trying to ascertain for our readers, aka many of Optum's patients. “Our three medical groups have the expertise, experience and dedication to create exceptional, personalized experiences for our patients, their families and our communities.”

While not an exact quotation, the next 116 words of the statement, essentially all bureaucratic corporate communications speak, basically read “blah, blah, blah,” and was signed by Hayworth and Kevin Conroy, the president of Optum in the tri-state region, which boasts how it provides “access to more than 2,100 providers, representing 70 specialties, working in 360 medical practices and more than 55 urgent care locations across New York, New Jersey, and Southern Connecticut.”

We also reached out yet again just before publishing this column, offering Optum a post-publication interview opportunity to address patient concerns in a follow-up news article. Fingers crossed.

## FYI

In the name of transparency, it's important for readers to know that medical institutions are relatively significant advertisers for local news outlets, and we're no exception.

CareMount et al. has been a major client of ours over the past 15 years. Community news outlets are not financially incentivized to publish hard-hitting area health institution coverage, even as many do exactly that to the best of their abilities.

Setting all of that aside, if Optum's corporate communications department is reading this now, we'd still love the opportunity to ask follow-up questions – about doctor buyouts, compensation for executives, whether some money could be better spent on fuller medical staffing levels and a variety of other questions. Given the overlap between our coverage area — from White Plains to Northern Westchester and up through Putnam County — and Optum's market reach for prospective patients, it feels like a meaningful opportunity to share Optum's perspective with its frustrated constituency.

What's important to stress is how no reasonable observer doubts that Optum is populated by wonderful doctors and support staff, while very many patients undoubtedly enjoy sterling treatment, sometimes in the lifesaving variety. Much of the care is genuinely world-class, delivered by elite medical talent, and the community is extraordinarily lucky in that regard. In fact, my interview with Mount Kisco resident Donna Cravotta (full disclosure: she's a friend and former colleague) illustrates that very fact.

Cravotta and her young adult son, Matt, have been patients for about 15 years. While she notes how “making appointments is horrendous,” she also emphasized how she does not “think the Optum-bashing is fair” and how “as a middle-aged woman who lives alone with health issues, I am grateful to have quality healthcare all around me.”

“I know the scheduling problem can be resolved,” Cravotta said. “In the past six months, I've been seeing two new doctors, a primary care physician and an electrophysiologist, who both handle the scheduling. When I visited my primary doctor, I made an appointment for next year as I was leaving. The electrophysiologist's office is incredible at handling scheduling and insurance issues. The entire organization should follow their lead.”

Cravotta, like many patients, sees the good and the bad. For instance, on the negative side, there was a preposterous 18-month wait to get an annual appointment with her gynecologist. She ended up seeing a nurse practitioner at the Yorktown office and made an appointment with her doctor for 2023. While the nurse practitioner was “very thorough,” Cravotta also noted how it is “not a good solution.”

On the flip side, other than an issue she had with two cardiologists in the past, she said she has “loved all of our doctors through the years” and also remarked how she likes how all of her medical records and doctors are in one centralized location.

“And...the offices are convenient,” she added. “Matt is going to college in New Paltz. There is an Optum office

five minutes away. I have also visited the Yorktown office, Katonah office, the Briarcliff office, and urgent care; all are very convenient.”

## 'Totally Fixable'

But the bigger, related issue appears to be what some say is a doctor shortage at the medical group as a result of intentional, profit-driven attrition.

Maybe there's no shortage at all. That's where, Optum, you can chime in and alert our readers to whether their perception is your company's reality – or not. And, if it's not, how you might explain and/or address the widespread community sentiment about diminished service.

“Not only do you wait a year or two for appointments, but once there, the appointments are three minutes, and they have one (expletive) foot out the door to get to the next of their 300 patients scheduled for the day,” one infuriated patient told me, requesting anonymity to speak freely about their current healthcare provider. “What has happened to me on many occasions is one waits on hold for hours and then someone picks up and disconnects you.”

But to Cravotta, a self-employed marketing strategist, the understandable outrage expressed by patients like the unnamed source illustrate a frustrating dynamic. Cravotta moved to town in part because there was an impressive medical group nearby, along with Northern Westchester Hospital. To have such specialized medical care in a small suburban community is a genuine blessing, she said, and, in her view, the problems at Optum are “totally fixable.”

The company should hire a user experience (UX) consultant so Optum can better interact with patients and use that feedback to improve the organization, Cravotta stressed. If, say, the portal was enhanced with a finer eye toward user experience, and molded into a super easy-to-use, one-stop-shop, more time would be opened up to deal with incoming issues and concerns, over the phone and otherwise. A “UX” expert could examine processes and procedures across the organization for low-hanging fruit to pick at and improve.

“How lucky are we to live in this town and have this level of care?” Cravotta said in a phone interview Friday afternoon. “So much of this conversation is because you can't make an appointment. But it's amazing we live in a town where you can go see a cardiologist, an internist, a hand specialist, whatever you need. This very fixable issue is detracting from a very special place.”

As for any of you doctors out there reading this column, we don't usually grant off-the-record interviews. This is a case where we'd make an exception. (Some casual preliminary conversations indicate that patient frustration with Optum is shared by some staff.)

You know how to find us.

One way or the other, these first few pages of Optum Tri-State's local history are just the beginning of an important story we'll all continue to live through together and tell.

Please stay tuned and be in touch.





**TOURO**  
**COMPLEX CARE**

EXCEPTIONAL DENTAL CARE

# GET READY TO SMILE

*with Precision Implants*

**TOURO'S COMPLEX CARE CLINIC** provides the most technologically advanced implants and restorations using pain-free, high-precision digital dentistry, for a perfect smile in weeks, not years. And, the cost is about 30% less than elsewhere due to our affiliation with TCDM. **Call Touro's Complex Care Clinic today at (914) 594-5656 or visit [www.dental.touro.edu](http://www.dental.touro.edu).**