



Odell Focuses on Finances in Final State of the County Address

By Rick Pezzullo

In her final State of the County address, Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell focused on the county's strong financial position and thanked residents for entrusting her the last 11 years as the first woman to lead the county.

"Putnam County has endured many challenges. That's for sure. Putnam County has endured many successes. That's for sure," Odell said before a packed crowd in the Historic Putnam County Courthouse March 10 where many attendees wore blue and gold ribbons in support of Ukraine.

"Tonight, we set forth a vision laying the groundwork for a better quality of life for future generations, and its implementation

will require our dedicated efforts through the remainder of our term," said Odell, who is term limited. "We will continue to meet the challenge of fulfilling our fiscal and social responsibilities to our constituents right through our last day of public service."

Having emphasized fiscal responsibility during her tenure, Odell highlighted the county's total outstanding debt has decreased by nearly \$41 million, its unassigned fund balance increased by almost \$50 million, the county's bond rating reached the highest level achievable in New York State, and each annual budget was within the state-mandated property tax cap.

"In fact, due to our strong financial position we intend to submit a 2023 county budget for consideration by the Legislature

that freezes the real property tax levy," Odell said. "We will not propose a tax cut that will create future budget problems, but maintain our responsible, conservative budgeting approach to balance our social and fiscal responsibilities."

The county's strong financial position has enabled it to make investments in the future, including a new plan called "Share the Growth," in which the county will increase the amount of the sales tax it shares with Putnam's six towns and three villages based on the county's sales tax revenue growth. The funds must be used for infrastructure and will be distributed based on population. Because they are tied to the amount of growth, the funds cannot be counted as a regular revenue stream.

Odell and her administration worked on the plan with Town of Philipstown
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Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell

Irish Eyes Were Smiling



Hundreds of spectators enjoyed the 45th NorthernWestchester Putnam County St. Patrick's Day Parade in Mahopac Sunday.

Third Republican Tosses Hat in Ring for District 5 Leg. Seat

By Rick Pezzullo

A third Republican has entered the race for the Putnam County Legislature District 5 seat being vacated by Legislator Carl Albano.

Greg Ellner, a resident of Carmel, announced last week he was throwing his hat in the ring to primary for the GOP line and hopes to secure the Conservative line as well.

"I'm not a politician, I'm a husband, a father, a taxpayer, a coach, and a businessman with deep roots in the community," Ellner said. "I'm running so that Putnam County can be an affordable, safe place to live, work, and raise a family."

Ellner, his wife Stephanie, a public school teacher, have three sons. His eldest is a State Champion Carmel High School Rams Football team member and a varsity lacrosse player. His twins attend George Fisher Middle School.

He is a graduate of the University of Connecticut, where he earned a Bachelor

of Science in Business Administration. Throughout his life and career, Ellner said he has become a true fiscal conservative who understands spending must be managed so taxes do not continue to rise at an uncontrollable rate.

"Status quo policy that keeps our county government tax increase from exceeding the state-mandated tax cap is just acceptable; we need to do better," he said. "The tax cap allows for an increased tax levy of 2% or the sum of one plus the inflation factor; with current high inflation, the door is open for potential property levy increases greater than 2%."

A successful businessperson specializing in water and wastewater disinfection, Ellner said his experience with municipal contracts provides him with firsthand knowledge of municipal procurement procedures that will benefit the county by preventing overspending and maximizing value.

"Agreements made long ago between Putnam County and NYC limiting new
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Carmel High Students Give Books at Kent Primary a New Home



New wooden bookcase at Kent Primary School.

A love of reading has bonded students at Kent Primary School with technology and engineering students at Carmel High School.

During Read Across America week, students in the Home Maintenance class at the high school visited the elementary school to present the younger students with a wooden bookcase that they built to kick off the school's Give a Book, Take a Book initiative.

"The high school students made this bookcase because they want to promote reading," Kent Primary Principal Dan Brown told the fourth-grade students who gathered for the presentation. "What we are going to do is put lots of books here so you can take a book when you want one or you can leave a book when you are done with it."

The collaborative project began as an idea within Kent Primary's site-based team, a group comprising teachers, staff and parent representatives that work to support school-based initiatives and goals. The team reached out to Carmel High School's then-assistant principal, John Fink, to inquire whether the high school could assist. Technology and Engineering Teacher Rob Leonard was brought into the conversation and the project for Home Maintenance class students was born. While the initial conversations began a few years ago, the physical creation of the bookcase was completed by the class of 20 high school students over a span of four weeks.

During the unveiling, Leonard and six

of the high school students from the build team promoted reading and highlighted the technology courses that await the young students when they get to high school.

"All the things you are learning here, you are going to bring with you to the middle school and to the high school. You need all of that to make really cool things like this bookcase," Leonard told the elementary students. "When your teachers say that you need to know all of that, they are not kidding."

Leonard highlighted the different skills that were needed to complete the bookcase including reading manuals to operate the machinery, math to calculate measurements, and even science to understand the reaction that wood glue would have with the wood materials.

One thing that really piqued the young students' interest: the laser used to engrave the dedication plaque on the bookcase.

"We take a laser, like you would see in Star Wars, and put that in a machine and it carves out those names and burns them into the wood," Leonard told the student. "The laser can cut through wood and different materials and is really cool."

The newly built bookcase is already stocked with a diverse collection of children's books, all donated to the school by Eric Mahollitz, Youth Services Librarian at Kent Public Library, and ready to foster opportunities to read for every student at Kent Primary School.

Carmel Schools Scrap Plans for Bus Maintenance Facility

By Rick Pezzullo

The Carmel Board of Education decided last week to scrap plans to construct a bus maintenance facility that voters approved in March 2019.

Three years ago, voters authorized spending a maximum of \$10.9 million to purchase property off Route 52 in Kent (\$2.8 million) and construct a transportation facility for the district's 120 vehicles (\$8.1 million).

However, following the presentation and discussion of several options, the board has determined it is no longer possible to stay

within the scope of the voter-approved project due to "issues related to estimated costs."

The district stated the board's Facilities and Transportation committee will continue to explore its options for the parcel that the district bought. In addition, the committee will review and discuss improvements that need to be made to the current transportation facility located adjacent to Kent Elementary School.

The committee will be garnering input from the community and its stakeholders throughout the process before any decisions are made.

Odell Focuses on Finances in Final State of the County Address

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Councilman Jason Angell and Village of Cold Spring Trustee Eliza Starbuck.

"Under your leadership, the county has prospered enormously," Putnam County Legislature Chair Neal Sullivan said to Odell. "You and your administration have worked tirelessly over the last 10-and-a-half years to put the county in the best financial position it has been in for a long time, if not ever."

Odell also noted that the county will receive \$19.1 million in funds from American Rescue Plan Act, or ARPA.

"We will be looking to make infrastructure investments in mental health, substance abuse, food insecurity, clean water, roads, bridges, and buildings that will aid in the recovery from the COVID19 pandemic," Odell said. "We have secured the services of a consultant to help ensure that a final allocation plan complies with the U.S. Treasury final rule. We believe that these investments should strengthen the county for future generations, as they will be paying

for ARPA."

Odell said her administration was recommending that the County Legislature allocate \$10 million to be sent to Putnam towns and villages based on population, according to the 2020 Census.

Meanwhile, Odell said that the county would equip the Sheriff's Department deputies with body cameras.

"These body cameras will protect the safety of both our police and the public," Sheriff Kevin McConville said.

Odell also addressed world events in her speech.

"I ask that you please continue to pray for the innocent and beautiful families and brave soldiers fighting for independence in Ukraine," she said. "Pray for the safety of the people in Poland and Hungary and the other Eastern European countries who are standing in solidarity against Russia and the tyranny of Putin. Pray for Peace, and God Bless our Putnam County and God Bless these United States."

Third Republican Tosses Hat in Ring for District 5 Leg. Seat

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sewerage treatment plants have not only compromised the quality of our drinking water, lakes, and streams, but it has also prevented good commercial development from taking place – this has to change," Ellner remarked.

A youth basketball and football coach, Ellner has advocated vociferously for youth sports and secured funding for Carmel Rams Youth Football & Cheer, Carmel Rams Youth Lacrosse, and the Carmel Sports Association. He is a life member of the NRA and New York State Rifle & Pistol Association and a clay target shooter.

Ellner stated his campaign platform will include trying to eliminate unethical and corrupt practices in government; introducing private sector corporate practices to encourage county government to do more with less; reforming government to make it more accessible for residents; and fostering economic development.

Ellner will be battling for the Republican endorsement with retired New York City police officer and former Carmel Board of Education President Richard Kreps and former Putnam Office for the Aging Director Patricia Sheehy.



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Metro-North to Add 66 Trains Systemwide Starting March 27

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) will add 66 trains to Metro-North's weekday schedule on Mar. 27 as part of its post-COVID-19 efforts to restore regular service.

MTA chair and CEO Janno Lieber and Catherine Rinaldi, president of Metro-North and interim president of the Long Island Rail Road, described their agency's post-pandemic plans last week at the Business Council of Westchester's (BCW) Political Leadership Series.

Besides adding the 66 trains to the weekday schedule, the executives described how they are prioritizing increased ridership, enhanced rider safety, luring hybrid workers and replacing infrastructure essential to safely running trains into Grand Central Terminal.

Lieber said a priority is reestablishing a sense of personal safety in the transit network.

"We've all seen the press coverage of some of the recent (horrors) that took place in the mass transit system, on the subway in particular. We're not going to tolerate violence or attacks on our workforce or our riders," said Lieber. "We don't want an environment of disorder."

The emphasis on rules means the MTA is asking police to crack down on smoking, shopping carts and other mass-transit prohibitions.

The addition trains on Metro-North's three lines will allow for faster morning commutes and bring the railroad to 89 percent of its pre-pandemic service. Weekday ridership is still at about 50 percent of pre-pandemic levels while weekend ridership is back at 100 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

"We are seeing extremely strong ridership east of the Hudson over the past couple of weeks," Rinaldi said. "We're hoping it's a harbinger of things to come in the spring as more and more employees start to come back, even if it's a couple of days a week."

The agency's plan to lure back commuters who are adopting hybrid work schedules includes the introduction of a new 20-trip ticket package, which targets commuters who do not need the expense of a monthly pass because they only travel to Manhattan two or three days a week.

"We're still waiting to see how many days a week people start coming back to work, but we are prepared to greet them with this increased service," said Rinaldi. "We're especially interested to see what the 20-trip ticket does. We saw a nice take-up with that last week because it does seem to reflect the realities of this post-COVID ridership."

MTA officials also touted Metro-North's on-time performance, which was at 97 percent for the past two years.

As for improvement projects, Rinaldi said that work is underway on replacements of the Park Avenue Train Shed and the Park Avenue Viaduct. The MTA is also lobbying

to ensure that its Hudson Line trains receive permission to use Amtrak lines along Manhattan's west side when Metro-North service becomes available at Penn Station.

As for New Haven Line access to Penn Station, the agency is performing site surveys and advance designing of the four new Bronx stations and track work. Penn Station access is expected to begin in 2027.

Work continues on congestion pricing, the plan to charge vehicles that enter mid- and lower Manhattan during peak traffic hours. The agency is in the middle of a federal environmental review. Implementation of the tolling

infrastructure is scheduled to begin in 2023.

Lieber said congestion pricing is not about punishing drivers.

"The congestion is harming our ability to deliver key services...We have to have buses," he said. "We have to have ambulances and other emergency vehicles be able to get around. We have to make it possible for all the delivery trucks that are now the reality of our modern economy to make their way around. That is what, among other things, is pressing us to adopt a congestion-pricing system."

BCW Executive Vice President John Ravitz, who moderated the Mar. 8 webinar,

said restoring confidence in public safety is paramount to encouraging riders to use the system. He noted that the MTA plays a critical role in helping to bring back economic development to Westchester County and that a strong transit system is a vital service that helps with staff recruitment and retains businesses in Westchester County.

He pledged to help the MTA accomplish its public safety goals.

"Please know that you have our support and anything we can do to help continue to try to bring some, as we've said, common sense back into this process. We will be there for you," Ravitz said.

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Assemblywoman Galef Endorses Levenberg as Her Successor

By Rick Pezzullo

As expected, Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) endorsed Ossining Town Supervisor Dana Levenberg last week to succeed her after she retires this year.

Last week Galef, who has served in the Assembly since 1993, praised Levenberg's energy, compassion and intelligence.

Levenberg, who is one of four Democrats vying for Galef's 95th Assembly District seat, worked as Galef's communications director and chief of staff before being elected town supervisor in 2015.

"I saw firsthand her incredible work ethic and persistence, as she diligently assisted my constituents in every way possible,"

Galef stated. She represented me well in regional activities and on economic development committees, where she gained important friends and allies throughout the Hudson Valley."

She cited Levenberg's successful track record of pursuing and receiving grants as an example of her abilities to be an effective state representative.

"I also know that no one else will work as hard or as effectively for the 95th

Assembly District as Dana," Galef said. "I know this because I've seen her do it. She knows this district and the Assembly, and she will be able to hit the ground running on day one."

Levenberg, who is competing with former



Ossining Town Supervisor Dana Levenberg, right, one of four Democratic candidates vying for the party's nomination in the 95th Assembly District this year, picked up a valuable endorsement last week from Assemblywoman Sandy Galef. Galef, who has served in the seat for the past 30 years, is retiring at the end of the year.

Peekskill Mayor Andre Rainey, former Peekskill Councilwoman Vanessa Agudelo and Westchester County Legislator Colin Smith for the Democratic nomination, said she was honored to receive Galef's support.

"To be running for this seat and to receive (Galef's) endorsement is such an honor," said Levenberg. "I have learned so much from her as my mentor, colleague, past boss, and friend. Her example has inspired me to be a better public servant and community leader, understanding how she engages with all her communities, listens, and shows up — pretty much everywhere."

To date, Levenberg has also been endorsed by state Sen. Elijah Reichlin-Melnick (D-Nyack) and Westchester County Board of Legislators Chairperson Catherine Borgia.

Meanwhile, the Peekskill Democratic Committee will be holding a Candidates Forum for the four Assembly candidates this Wednesday, Mar. 16 at 7 p.m. at the Neighborhood Center's Senior Room in Peekskill. The committee is expected to hold a special meeting following the forum to endorse a candidate.

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Measure Proposes Posting Salary Ranges for Jobs in Westchester

The Board of Legislators is taking up a proposal to require that employers post an expected salary range every time there's an open job opportunity in Westchester.

The salary transparency legislation is

designed to combat gender- and race-based pay gaps. It is similar to a law passed in New York City this year. Several states including Connecticut, Nevada, California, Washington, Maryland and Rhode

Island already have salary range posting requirements on the books.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, women on average earn 82 cents to every dollar a man earns, and inequity is worse for women of color, said Board of Legislators Chairwoman Catherine Borgia (D-Ossining). The gap is persistent regardless of educational attainment, she said.

The agency reported that compared with White men with the same education, Black and Latina women with only a bachelor's degree earn 65 percent of the man's salary. Black women with advanced degrees earn 70 percent of what White men with advanced degrees earn. The situation also persists across nearly 350 occupations the Department of Labor tracked.

"It is now time for salary transparency, which is a powerful tool to combat pay inequality by giving everyone in the job market access to the same information about salaries," said Borgia, one of the co-sponsors of the measure.

She said the proposal continues efforts in Westchester to help narrow gender- and race-based wage gaps. In 2018, the county passed the Salary History Law to combat the cycle of workers being judged and hired based on their previous wages. For women, especially women of color, salaries are much lower than their White male counterparts.

Legislation Committee Chairman Colin Smith (D-Peekskill) said the law would

help everyone who seeks a job.

"Salary transparency means job-seekers who have pay expectations based on past experiences will now have a true sense of what their work is worth," Smith said. "Not only can it combat pay inequality but also, hopefully, make the hiring process more efficient for applicants and employers. This introduction is just the beginning of the legislative process."

Alisa Kesten, vice chair of the Westchester Women's Agenda, said salary transparency can advance economic equity that has been elusive for too long for many women.

"This legislation is part of a strong, nationwide trend of enacting laws to help eliminate pay discrimination that has historically prevented women, and particularly women of color, from achieving economic well-being and upward mobility," Kesten said. "While we understand that some employers may have concerns, we are fortunate in Westchester to have leaders in both the public and private sectors who believe in equity and fairness. We look forward to open dialog and engagement as the board begins its deliberations."

The salary transparency legislation is expected to be taken up in committee later this month. A public hearing would have to be scheduled to receive feedback in front of the full board before law can be voted on.



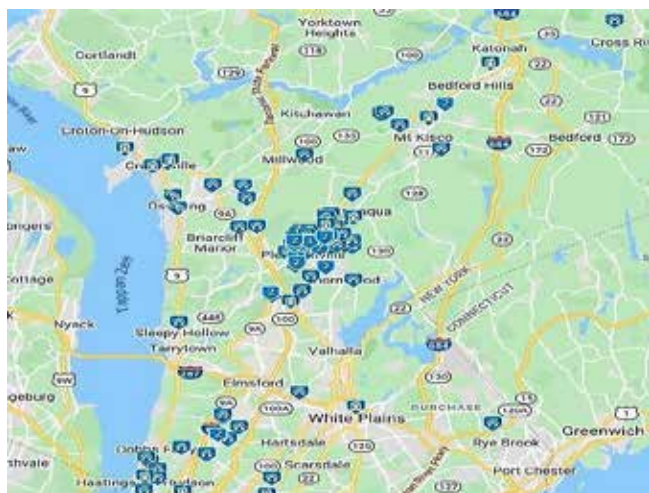
A Time to Heal

A sculpture designed and donated by a local artist is now welcoming visitors to Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla. Titled "HEAL," the 6-by-6-by-3-foot aluminum sculpture was designed by Mamaroneck resident Sid Singer and donated by him and his wife, Shirley. The sculpture has been installed at the main entrance to Westchester Medical Center and the hospital's Ambulatory Care Pavilion and celebrates the healing care of healthcare providers across WMCHHealth.



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Byram Hills Unveils \$96.9M School Budget for Next Year

By Martin Wilbur

A \$96.9 million Byram Hills School District budget was proposed last week for 2022-23 that includes several teaching staff editions to address an anticipated enrollment increase.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jen Lamia introduced the spending plan at the Board of Education's Mar. 8 meeting, ensuring that all students entering the district next year will have at a minimum an education that is equal to current students.

"We really want to make sure that the opportunities that we give are not just flashy, fantastic opportunities but that they will carry

these students forward to the changes in their lives," Lamia said.

Under the proposed budget, spending has been projected to increase by 1.78 percent.

Lamia proposed the equivalent of an additional 4.75 teaching positions throughout the district, mostly as a result of rising enrollment. While the projected increase in Lamia's presentation estimated an enrollment increase of 19 students to 2,333, late information that arrived too late to be included in her PowerPoint bumped that increase up to about 40 students.

There would be two additional full-time kindergarten teachers as the district is being

forced to go from eight to 10 sections in that grade next year, Lamia said. There would also be another elementary school special education teacher for a new program set to begin next year as well as to accommodate out-of-district student placements, she said.

Additional staff increases have all been requested at the high school – a .8 special education teacher, a .75 science teacher and a .2 math teacher.

In addition to rigorous academics, finding ways to have students enjoy their school experience through extracurricular activities, music or sports is important, Lamia said.

"The more that we can have students engage in the school that they are a part of, you feel like you're part of a community here, and that should be our main goal for them," Lamia said. "They shouldn't feel like numbers, they should feel like participants."

Key lines on the instructional side of the budget include about a 4 percent increase for special education to more than \$10.8 million, said Assistant Superintendent for Business Kelly Seibert. Most of that increase reflects about three or four additional students that will have out-of-district placement next year, he said.

Guidance services is forecasted to rise by 5.5 percent to about \$1.3 million, but social worker and psychological services will fall sharply, by 49.1 and by nearly 7 percent, respectively. There would be only \$100,000 spent on social workers and \$629,000 on psychological services.

A \$2.9 million expenditure is proposed next year for plant maintenance, or about a

5.8 percent increase, for new equipment in the buildings including air conditioning and exhaust units. Pupil transportation will go up by 9 percent to \$540,000, although some of that increased cost is a result of the district's vehicle replacement plan.

Employee benefits are slated to increase by 1.2 percent as health insurance for the district is projected to jump by only 1.5 percent under the Statewide Schools Cooperative Health Plan, Seibert said.

There will be a relatively modest increase in Teacher Retirement System expenses from 9.35 percent to about 10.25 percent, he said. The Employees Retirement System contributions from the district will slide from 14.6 percent to 11.6 percent.

Seibert said the district will present numbers on the tax levy, estimated tax rates, state aid and use of fund balance at the Mar. 29 board meeting.

Board Selects Interim Member

The Board of Education selected Melissa Jacobs to take over the vacant seat for the next two months following the resignation of longtime board member Ira Schulman at the end of 2021. Jacobs and Gwen Torre, both educators who have volunteered in the district, vied for the board's consideration to fill the seat.

Board members favored Jacobs by a 5-1 vote giving her the edge for her executive experience while serving on the Byram Hills Education Foundation.

She will remain in the seat until the May 17 school board election.

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Pediatric Dentist's Office Seeks to Move Into Former Elephant's Trunk

By Martin Wilbur

The empty building that formerly housed the Elephant's Trunk clothing store on East Main Street in Mount Kisco is slated to become a pediatric dentist's office.

A conceptual submission was recently received for the three-level building near the firehouse and across the street from Village Hall at 111 E. Main St. as representatives for the applicant met

publicly with the Planning Board for the first time last week.

Village planning consultant Jan Johannessen said the proposal is to convert the vacant space into a pediatric orthodontist use. The ground floor would consist of a lobby and reception area and a space where children in the waiting room can play. Exam rooms would be on the second floor and a lounge, office space, a conference room, storage and mechanicals

would be on the third level, he said.

Under current zoning, part of the ground floor would need to have some type of retail component, Johannessen said.

Plans show that under the current configuration the site would come up eight parking spaces short for what's required in the Commercial Business zone, according to Building Inspector Peter Miley. There are currently 12 spaces on-site with no chance of increasing that total.

Project architect Fred Wells said his client and applicant Dr. Gary Heitzler is prepared to pay a roughly \$12,000 fee for each parking space shy of the requirement. Patients and visitors would be able to use on-street parking or one of the nearby lots.

The applicant is also ready to include a retail tenant on the first floor to satisfy the commercial requirement, restripe the parking lot, which would allow for the inclusion of a handicapped spot, and head to the Architectural Review Board (ARB) for approval for a new exterior for the building, Wells said.

"We'll clean it up and make it look like a new building again, hopefully," he said. "That's the intent."

The practice is expected to generate five to eight employees, not including whatever employees the retail business would include, Wells mentioned.

In addition to site plan and ARB approval, the applicant would need to obtain a change of use for the site.

The current building was erected



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

The building at 111 E. Main St. in Mount Kisco, home of the former Elephant's Trunk clothing store. A conceptual plan for the building to house a dental practice for children has been received by the village.

about 20 years ago after a fire destroyed the original Elephant's Trunk site. More recently, the store moved from East Main Street to a space on North Bedford Road.

Ready for Golf Season at Westchester County Courses

Spring arrived early for Westchester golfers, as the six county-owned golf courses were scheduled to open for the season on Monday, Mar. 14.

Tee time reservations may be made at golf.westchestergov.com or by phoning the individual courses. Walk-up reservations will also be accepted.

The courses are Hudson Hills in Ossining; Maple Moor in White Plains; Mohansic in Yorktown Heights; Saxon Woods in Scarsdale; and Dunwoodie and Sprain Lake, both in Yonkers. All of the courses have on-site restaurants, halfway houses and full-service pro shops. Driving ranges are available at Dunwoodie, Mohansic, Saxon Woods

and Sprain Lake.

Any available E-Z Reserve spots will be sold at the courses. E-Z Reserve enables golfers with a Westchester County Park pass to block out a regular Saturday or Sunday tee time for a period of 25 weeks.

"Golfers of all ages and skill levels will enjoy playing on our beautiful fairways and greens," said Kathy O'Connor, commissioner of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation.

For more information or to make a reservation, visit golf.westchestergov.com.



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Obituaries

Thomas Sroka

Thomas Sroka passed away on Mar. 7.

Born in Mount Kisco on Nov. 28, 1962, to Diane and Wallace Sroka, he graduated from Byram Hills High School and worked as a plumber for many years for Jack Dilger Plumbing & Heating. His last employment was with Robert Spano Plumbing & Heating. He took immense pride in his work as a plumber and loved his connection with the customers he served.

He was predeceased by his father, Wallace Soka Sr. He is survived by his mother, Diane; his brother, Wallace Sroka Jr., and his wife, Amy Sroka; niece Jennifer Sroka and nephew Tim Sroka; and other cousins and family members. He leaves behind two very special people in his life, Uncle Jack Dilger and Aunt Barbara Nash along with many friends of a lifetime.

Services were handled by Oekler & Cox in Mount Kisco. Rest in peace.

Contributions can be made to SPCA Westchester in Briarcliff Manor.



Thomas Sroka

Dawnmarie Lenge

Dawnmarie Lenge, a resident of LaGrange, Dutchess County, passed away on Mar. 6 in her bed, along with her beloved dog that was by her side. She was 59.

Daughter of the late John L. and Barbara M. Weisbecker Lenge, whom she peacefully joined that night, she was born May 19, 1962, in the Bronx. After graduating college, with her family she owned and operated Hair Quarters in Mahopac for over 35 years. She loved the four generations of customers she served. She also loved animals and gardening.

Survivors include her brother, John Lenge, and his family; and her sister, Denise, her husband, Roger Rynkiewicz, and their children, Lisamarie and her husband, Jacob Greene, and James Rynkiewicz.

A celebration of life will be held in the future.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to The Humane Society of the United States, 1255 23rd St., NW, Suite 450, Washington, D.C. 20037.



Dawnmarie Lenge

Arrangements are under the direction of Straub, Catalano & Halvey Funeral Home in Wappingers Falls. To send the family a personal condolence, visit www.StraubCatalanoHalvey.com.



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Police Blotter

County Police/Mount Kisco

Mar. 7: Report of illegal dumping at an East Main Street business at 9:47 a.m. The business reported that someone left two old mattresses in its driveway overnight.

Mar. 8: A rear window was reported broken with blood found at the scene at an office building on Smith Avenue at 7:29 p.m. An investigation is continuing into whether the incident was an attempted burglary or an act of vandalism.

Mar. 10: Police responded to the Saw Mill River Parkway at 11 a.m. on a report that a tractor-trailer was traveling southbound on the parkway at Route 133. An officer located the vehicle south of Reader's Digest Road in New Castle and escorted it off the parkway at Route 120 in Chappaqua.

Mar. 11: An employee at a health club on North Bedford Road flagged an officer down at 11:19 a.m. to report that a 17-year-old boy was "super-glued" to a toilet seat in the men's locker room. The Mount Kisco Fire Department and Mount Kisco Volunteer Ambulance Corps also responded to assist the teen, who was subsequently transported to Northern Westchester Hospital for medical attention.

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

Mar. 3: A caller from Indian Summer Drive reported at 8:27 a.m. that at approximately 2:20 a.m. a vehicle pulled in front of their house and fireworks were thrown out of its window onto their lawn and drove away. No further description of the vehicle or its occupants could be provided.

Mar. 4: The Detective Division arrested a 36-year-old Montrose man at 11:30 p.m. in connection to an open grand larceny case concerning a vehicle stolen from the parking lot of an Albany Post Road business in 2020. The suspect was charged with two counts of third-degree grand larceny and remanded to Westchester County Jail.

Mar. 6: Patrols responded to Croton Gorge Park at 4:28 p.m. on a report of a child stuck on the ice. Patrol responded and located the child in a wooded area near the Quaker Bridge side of the park, stuck on a hill that was icy. Patrol assisted getting the child down safely and turned the scene over to Westchester County police and Croton EMS.

North Castle Police Department

Mar. 4: A complainant reported at 8:15 a.m. observing what appears to be damage to an exterior door lock on North Broadway. The responding officer reported speaking to the complainant and obtaining depositions.

Mar. 4: The manager at U-Haul on Virginia Road reported at 3:03 p.m. that a vehicle stolen from the location was recovered by the Orange County Sheriff's Department on Dec. 29, 2021, and was returned. The e-Justice stolen vehicle entry was canceled.

Mar. 4: Report of a possible residential burglary on Bedford Road at 9:41 p.m. A caller reported that she, her boyfriend,

her aunt and uncle arrived at her parents' home 45 minutes in the past to find that three bedrooms in the home appeared to be ransacked. She also reported that the window on the garage door was broken and believes that is how the intruder gained access to the home.

Mar. 8: A third-party caller reported at 3:09 p.m. that her daughter was involved in a motor vehicle accident about 10 to 15 minutes in the past where the other vehicle involved left the scene. The desk officer contacted the daughter at the cell phone number provided and was informed that the accident occurred as she was exiting the Whippoorwill Hills complex. Her vehicle was struck by a black sedan, which left the area in an unknown direction. The daughter further stated that she pulled over in a parking lot on Bedford Road. The responding officer gathered the information. A report to follow.

Pleasantville Police Department

Mar. 6: A Manville Road resident reported at 6:58 p.m. that his New York Post has been repeatedly stolen. The case is under review.

Mar. 8: Report of a disturbance on Weskora Avenue at 7:35 p.m. An order of protection was filed after the dispute between a father and son.

Mar. 10: Report of a larceny on Bedford Road at 2:06 p.m. The complainant reported being victimized by a rental apartment scam. The matter is under investigation.

Mar. 11: An arrest was made at 6:10 p.m. following a domestic dispute on Broadway. An order of protection was issued.

Putnam County Sheriff's Department

Mar. 6: Deputies responded to the Brewster Metro-North station in response to a 911 call reporting an intoxicated male pointing a pistol at people on the platform. Deputies, state troopers and Village of Brewster police officers arrived at the scene but could not locate anyone matching the description of the armed suspect. The train platform was secured and deputies searched the surrounding area, as Brewster and MTA officers interviewed potential witnesses. An investigation revealed no evidence of an armed man.

White Plains Police Department

Mar. 8: Vinicius Goncalves was arrested for fourth-degree stalking and endangering the welfare of a child at 100 Main St.

Yorktown Police Department

Mar. 11: Isiah Santana, 24, of Carmel, was charged at 9:53 a.m. with aggravated unlicensed operation and speeding after being stopped on Route 6 in the area of Mountain Brook Road for traveling 65 miles per hour in a 40-mile-per-hour zone.

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

North Castle to Begin Planning Major Celebrations for Nation's 250th

By Martin Wilbur

The 250th anniversary of the nation's birth may be more than four years away, but the North Castle Historical Society isn't wasting any time to prepare for the celebration.

The historical society announced last week it will form a committee, North Castle 250, and work with organizations within Westchester and around the state to plan a series of major events to not only mark the United States' semiquincentennial but other significant anniversaries related to the Revolutionary War that occurred in town.

"What we're looking at is educating the community on the role and the vital participation of North Castle during the American Revolution," said Historical Society President Ed Woodyard. "It's going to be working with the schools and it's going to be in conjunction with a video we're hoping to develop as well as creating lesson plans."

Last week, the organization's leadership presented to the Town Board an outline of what they hope to achieve between now and 2026. The effort is likely to include programs and events, publications, creating new signs and markers, videos and re-enactments. They appealed for a financial commitment from the town in the coming years to help pay for what will be planned,

although the historical society is prepared to initiate significant fundraising drives.

"We're going to educate, seek your support and remind you of our responsibility to preserve and protect North Castle's historic assets," town Co-historian Sharon Tomback told the Town Board.

North Castle, which at the time of the Revolution also included present-day New Castle and Mount Kisco and a portion of Pound Ridge, was the epicenter for a series of major events related to the nation's fight for independence.

In addition to celebrations on July 4, 2026, Woodyard said there would be events coinciding with the 250th anniversary of the Battle of White Plains, which started on Oct. 28. Miller House in North White Plains served as Gen. George Washington's headquarters during the battle and the patriots repelled the British at nearby Miller Hill, thwarting their advance northward.

Two additional celebrations will also be planned for 2030 to commemorate other significant local historical happenings during the Revolution. One was the capture of Major John Andre, the British spy who collaborated with Benedict Arnold. Andre was held at Thomas Wright's Mill in 1780 before his execution. Both Thomas Wright's Mill and Reuben Wright's



Local and county officials gathered outside the restored Miller House/Washington's Headquarters in North White Plains in October 2019. The house will be one of the many sites that will be included in the 250th anniversary commemorations in North Castle starting in 2026.

Mill served as the Revolutionary Army's headquarters.

Then there will be a commemoration of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary War Route, where French troops, who had marched in 1780 from Rhode Island, came down what is now Route 22, on their way to the site of Northern Westchester Hospital to meet Washington's soldiers.

North White Plains resident Nora Kans Manuele said there is also an where patriot soldiers dug trenches on what has been referred to as Mount Misery and urged the town to commemorate with markers and

to clean up the property.

In addition, there are 22 known patriot soldiers buried in four different cemeteries in town – Lyon Cemetery, Methodist Cemetery, Quaker Cemetery and Middle Patent Rural Cemetery, a few of which are in disrepair.

North Castle 250 will be working with teachers from the Byram Hills and Valhalla school districts.

"I think a lot of eyes are going to be on North Castle because we have so many sites here and the Battle of White Plains," said Historical Society member Christine Eggleton, a former president of the

organization. "I think at a minimum we need our historic sites to look good, to have them cleared of debris, and tombstones standing up and all the things that make visitors say, yes, this is what we expected to see."

Town Board members thanked the historical society for launching discussion of their plans more than four years in advance.

"I'm so glad you're starting now as opposed to a helter-skelter approach for something that's this important, and I look forward to participating," said Councilwoman Barbara DiGiacinto.

Given what is currently going on in Ukraine, the history of America's fight for independence takes on even greater importance, said Councilman Saleem Hussain.

"I think it's a really amazing opportunity for us to help people understand what that may feel like here, to realize that these types of feelings happened in our town," Hussain said.

In the coming weeks and months, the historical society will create a formal plan to submit to town officials, Tomback said. The organization plans to use its annual meeting on Saturday, Apr. 2 at the North Castle Library to introduce the effort to the wider community, she said.

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SPROUT

Letters to the Editor

Russia is Just the Latest Example of How National Leadership Matters

We shouldn't be surprised when Russian athletes are caught doping. Especially since the nation of Russia was suspended from the 2014 Olympics due to widespread doping. Its athletes can now only compete as members of the Russian Olympic Committee. (A dubious distinction at best!)

We see a 15-year-old child, Kamila Valieva, doping and being manipulated by the adults around her in their quest for the prestige of being associated with an Olympic gold medal winner. I submit this widespread doping is a consequence of a culture corrupted by bad leadership.

When you have a president as corrupt as Vladimir Putin, and he's in power long enough, the ooze of corruption leaches

down and permeates the entire culture. Citizens think "leadership is corrupt, the system is corrupt, everybody cheats... why not me too?"

Putin, the thug, is known to have had political opponents murdered, rigged elections, forced a rewrite of the Russian constitution so that he could be president/dictator for life. He has shut down opposition media and corrupted the judicial system. Putin's been president/dictator for 22 years now (including the four-year period where Medvedev was his puppet). And now Putin cruelly and cold-bloodedly invades Ukraine - killing thousands of innocents. Putin's corruption is so corrosive it has corrupted an entire society and brought great shame to Russia.

Putin is a monster by any measure.

Isn't it telling that Donald Trump had expressed nothing but admiration for Putin, only recently being shamed into criticizing him over Ukraine? And isn't it telling that Trump has modeled many of the same bullying behaviors as Putin? Neither man has a moral compass; their only guidance is their own self-serving narcissism and hunger for power.

During Trump's corrupt time in office, we saw its corrosive effects percolate down through our society, which manifested itself on Jan. 6, 2021, with the Capitol insurrection. But we have also seen it leach all the way down to the local level with Trump acolytes showing up at local school board meetings exhibiting belligerent,

bullying and thuggish behaviors.

There is a growth of fascist authoritarianism occurring around the world and here at home - all the way down to the local level. It is fundamentally cruel, mean, close-minded and anti-democratic. We ignore it at our peril.

Will the Republican Party continue to embrace Trump? Or will it come to its senses and see Trump for the Putinesque personality that he is. The fish rots from the head; leadership matters.

Nick Kuvach
Putnam Valley

Why I Support Dana Levenberg for 95th Assembly District Seat

As petitioning for the June primary gets underway, volunteers will be knocking on the doors of registered Democrats asking them to sign petitions to get their candidate on the ballot. Voters can only sign for one candidate and have it count, so choose wisely!

I am writing to share why I support Dana Levenberg for New York State Assembly, and why I hope readers of this letter will join me in supporting her as well.

From the moment I met Dana, I knew

she was special. Her energy, compassion and intelligence were on full display in her pursuit of the project she was starting at the time, the Ossining Micro Fund (OMF), which she co-founded with fellow District 95 powerhouse (and current chair of the Westchester County Board of Legislators), Catherine Borgia. The OMF, a nonprofit offering interest-free loans to individuals and families facing unexpected financial obstacles, is still going strong, a testament to the vision of its founders and their

ability to bring together the right people and resources to get things done.

In 2008, I offered Dana a position in my office as my communications director, and before long she was my chief of staff. I saw firsthand her incredible work ethic and persistence, as she diligently assisted my constituents in every way possible. She represented me well in regional activities and on economic development committees, where she gained important friends and allies throughout the Hudson Valley.

When she left my Assembly office to become Ossining town supervisor, I knew she would do an incredible job for the people of her town, and she has - including consistently seeking my support for important state grant funding. I have no doubt that when she gets to Albany, she will work closely with every municipality

in the district to help them get the funds and other resources they need because she understands just how important those resources are.

I know and respect all of the candidates running for this seat. But I also know no one else will work as hard or as effectively for the 95th Assembly District as Dana. I know this because I've seen her do it. She knows this district and the Assembly, and she will be able to hit the ground running on Day One.

Whether you live in Philipstown, Yorktown, Peekskill, Cortlandt or Ossining, I hope you will join me in supporting Dana Levenberg for Assembly.

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef
Ossining

Calendar Submissions

We're happy to help spread the word about your community event. Please submit your information at least three weeks prior to your event and include the words "Calendar Submission" in your email subject line. Entries should be sent to Abby Luby at aluby@theexaminernews.com.com.

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Guest Column

Too Many New Yorkers Still Don't Have High-Speed Internet

This op-ed was submitted by Connect the Future, a coalition working to deliver on the promise of technology to create opportunities for all Americans, especially in rural areas. For more information on its efforts, visit www.connectthefuture.com.

Over the last two years, the pandemic has highlighted a range of challenges that need to be addressed. Many problems still need to be fixed, but when it comes to broadband access, policymakers in Washington have displayed their understanding of how important closing the digital divide is with their recent passage of the bipartisan infrastructure framework.

The law invests in initiatives to improve our nation's infrastructure including \$65 billion in federal funding that will be used to help low-income families afford broadband with a permanent benefit that goes to their internet bills, as well as an effort to expand broadband infrastructure across the country to the millions of Americans who still do not have access to high-speed internet.

Overall, the newly-passed law is the most sizeable investment in the country's

infrastructure in almost 70 years.

BroadbandNow ranks New York eighth in broadband access. Nearly 250,000 New Yorkers still don't have access to high-speed internet service at minimally acceptable speeds, with 53 percent of those being in rural areas. Countless Americans have operated remotely and relied upon internet access to stay connected.

Unfortunately, those without it fell behind, particularly students. In rural areas, public Wi-Fi networks at restaurants and municipal buildings became a lifeline for teachers and students who had no reliable broadband access at home.

The recent Omicron wave reflects that the virus is still very much with us, and the reality remains that millions of students still lack suitable internet access at home, which has fueled our nation's troubling "homework gap."

The infrastructure bill's investment in broadband expansion offers great promise in resolving this problem and evening the playing field for all students, but outdated utility pole access rules threaten to delay fixing the issue.

Utility poles fuel our country's communications infrastructure. Similar to how a water company would need access to a region's water pipes to bring running water to homes, internet providers will require access to utility poles to provide homes with broadband. Internet providers typically do not own the poles, so for any broadband expansion to begin, the pole owners and those doing the expansion must come to an agreement that allows internet providers to access the poles and attach their technology.

This procedure seems simple, but the rules in place make it difficult. Internet providers are prepared to pay their fair share to owners to cover the cost of access – which they are required to do. But sometimes disagreements arise over how the costs are divided, and without a clear framework in place to manage the disagreement, disputes can go on indefinitely without expanding access to broadband.

The biggest losers in all of this are the communities that are unserved. A few months or years of delay to connect an unserved community can mean everything when every day without broadband is a day

you fall further behind. In the digital age that we find ourselves in, countless Americans rely upon internet for almost every facet of daily life. The gap in educational outcomes between students with broadband and those without is so well-documented that the FCC chair coined a term for it – "the homework gap." It's clear we can't let poles get in the way of fixing this inequity.

Unserved Americans need legislative action to modernize the pole processes and expedite broadband deployment. Congress can remove bureaucratic barriers that cause delays and work to increase transparency through consistent timelines for permits and access to poles.

The bipartisan infrastructure law was a major step in the right direction to connecting every American, but outdated pole rules threaten to hinder that progress by delaying deployment. We need faster, fairer standards for pole access so that unserved Americans can get online now. The nearly 14 million Americans that live in areas with no access can't delay, and they know that Congress shouldn't either.

Letters to the Editor

The Curious Role of Mt. Pleasant's Industrial Development Agency

A recent investigative report by state Sen. James Skoufis (D-Cornwall) concluded: "While reasonable incentives are occasionally necessary to attract or retain business, the extent to which IDAs have been providing questionable benefits brings into question whose interests are being served by the system."

Industrial Development Agencies are not subject to the many laws that regulate traditional agencies or private companies. Sometimes referred to as "shadow governments," an IDA may favor the interests of business over the public interest. Members of the governing board of the Mount Pleasant IDA are not elected, but are appointed by the Town Board. The Mount Pleasant IDA has acquired assets in excess of \$4 million, mostly from businesses that have been awarded tax breaks.

In 2018, the Town Board decided that the town needed a new Master Plan. However, it was the Mount Pleasant IDA, and not the town, that hired Cleary Associates to produce the plan. Unlike typical master plans, Mount Pleasant's proposed Comprehensive Plan includes a seismic change in the zoning laws for the hamlets of Valhalla, Hawthorne and Thornwood called form-based zoning. A radical departure from traditional zoning, form-based zoning would streamline

the approval process for developers by curtailing the oversight of our planning, zoning and architectural review boards. The proposed form-based zoning would also encourage increased population density via new apartment construction. Recently, the Mount Pleasant IDA has promoted the development of apartment buildings at 408 Elwood Ave. and 500 Commerce St.

Form-based zoning could significantly change the suburban character of our town and could negatively affect schools, traffic, safety, taxes, property values and our general quality of life. Public hearings on the Comprehensive Plan and form-based zoning will soon resume. We, the people, must be vigilant!

**Ken Noonan
Valhalla**

Fossil Fuel Interests Must Not Exploit Ukraine Invasion

Shortly after the invasion of Ukraine, in addition to my concerns about the dangers to the Ukrainian people and the geopolitical situation, I became worried that fossil fuel corporations would exploit this situation, calling for more new drilling and infrastructure with the excuse that it is needed so that nations could embargo Russian energy yet minimize supply problems and price hikes. (Subsequently, I have received alerts from various environmental organizations with similar messages.)

I believe that allowing fossil fuel corporations to have their way would be a terrible mistake.

The U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, released on Feb. 28, stresses how little time is left for the world to take meaningful action to combat this climate emergency. Among other problems, there will be millions of climate refugees by the end of the century if we do not heed the

call, numbers that will make the statistics from Ukraine pale in comparison.

Will this make life difficult for us? Yes. I certainly do not want to have to pay yet even higher prices for gasoline and heating oil, and as an anti-racism activist, it truly pains me to envision how this will hit communities of color and other marginalized people.

But we are at the point where we must consider this a war of sorts, a war for our planet. I urge President Biden and Congress to use whatever authorizations they have in their power to make emergency investments to develop and implement renewable energy and make buildings energy efficient instead. This is the best option for the long term, in the hopes of keeping our planet from destruction.

**Terry Kardos
Cortlandt Manor**

We Need More Reasonably Priced Housing and We Need it Now

As an expectant mother and young professional living in Westchester County, I'm particularly concerned about reasonably priced housing options and access to transit in our communities, which I believe were addressed in Gov. Hochul's Transit Oriented Development proposal.

On paper, living in White Plains near the train station sounds like an ideal situation; however, most developments in the area are carbon copies of the same luxury apartment buildings that remain mostly empty.

As my family grows, my options are to either pay an exorbitant amount for the

"luxury" of living within walking distance of a train line or bus stop or move to an area where my only commuting option is to purchase a car – potentially out of the county and further from the community and support I've built here.

There is a "missing middle" housing option in Westchester. The lack of mid-range townhouse, co-op, condo and rental units is apparent, particularly in areas that are walkable or have access to transit. I'm embarrassed by the almost visceral response from local elected officials throughout Westchester denouncing the governor's inclusion of Transit Oriented Development and Accessory Dwelling Units in

the state budget. It should not take a "threat" against home rule to get any local leader to talk about missing middle housing.

I am genuinely concerned about being priced out of Westchester. If there are no affordable options now, what kind of housing landscape are we leaving for future generations? How much worse are our elected officials willing to make this housing crisis to protect the interests of the vocal NIMBY minority?

**Megan Keane
White Plains**

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LEGAL NOTICE
NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING
MOUNT PLEASANT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a resolution adopted by the Board of Education of the Mount Pleasant Central School District (the “District”) that a special meeting of the qualified voters of said District be and the same is hereby called to be held in said District in the Westlake High School Gymnasium, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, New York on Tuesday, March 29, 2022 from 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. for the purpose of voting on the following proposition:

Proposition

Shall the Board of Education of the Mount Pleasant Central School District be authorized to (1) reconstruct school buildings and construct and reconstruct athletic fields, tracks and related facilities, including site work, and acquire original furnishings, equipment, machinery or apparatus required for the purpose for which buildings, athletic fields, tracks and facilities are to be used, at a maximum cost of \$9,777,745, (2) expend such sum for such purpose, (3) levy the necessary tax therefore, to be levied and collected in annual installments in such years and in such amounts as may be determined by the Board of Education taking into account state aid; and (4) in anticipation of the collection of such tax, issue bonds and notes of the School District at one time or from time to time in the principal amount not to exceed \$9,777,745, and the levy of a tax to pay the interest on said obligations when due?

The vote upon such proposition shall be by machine or absentee ballot. The hours during which the polls shall be kept open shall be from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. prevailing time or for as long thereafter as necessary to enable qualified voters who are in the polling place at 9:00 p.m. to cast their ballots.

Any resident of the School District who is registered to vote in general elections is qualified to vote at said meeting without having their name placed upon the School District register of voters provided they voted at a general election at least once within the last four calendar years. Further, provided that any person who has previously registered to vote in any annual School District meeting or election or special School District meeting or election and who has voted at an annual School District meeting or election or special School District meeting or election held during the past four years (2021, 2020, 2019, 2018) shall not be required to re-register. The Board of Education has also provided for registration of qualified voters at the District Office, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, New York, between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM on any regular school day through March 23, 2022.

The register prepared pursuant to Section 2014 of the Education Law shall be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the District, and will be open for inspection by any qualified voter of the District at the Office of the Clerk of the District, District Office, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, New York, at the polling place on the day of the vote, as well as between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on each of the five (5) days prior to the election excluding Sunday, March 27, 2022, except on Saturday, March 26, 2022 it will be available for inspection only between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Absentee ballots may be applied for at the office of the District Clerk. Applications for absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk at least seven days prior to the vote if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or on or prior to March 28, 2022 if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter. The Education Law makes special provisions for absentee voting for “military” voters of the District. Specifically, the law provides a unique procedure for “military ballots” in school district votes. Whereas absentee ballots must be received by the voter by mail, a military voter may elect to receive their absentee ballot application and absentee ballot by mail, email or facsimile. The military voter must, however, return their original military ballot application and military ballot by mail or in person. The District Clerk of the District shall transmit the military voter’s military ballot in accord with the military voter’s preferred method of transmission. Absentee ballots, including military absentee ballots, must be received by the District Clerk not later than 5:00 p.m. on March 29, 2022.

A list of all persons to whom absentee ballots shall have been issued will be available in the Office of the District Clerk during regular office hours until the day of the vote. Any qualified voter may challenge the acceptance of the ballot of any person on such list by making their challenge and reasons therefor known to the District Clerk before the close of the polls.

DATED: January 19, 2022
District Clerk, Board of Education
Mount Pleasant Central School District

AVISO LEGAL
AVISO DE REUNIÓN ESPECIAL
DISTRITO ESCOLAR CENTRAL DE MOUNT PLEASANT

POR ESTE MEDIO SE NOTIFICA que en cumplimiento con una resolución adoptada por el Consejo de Educación del Distrito Escolar Central de Mount Pleasant (el “Distrito”) en el sentido de convocar a una reunión especial de los votantes calificados de dicho Distrito, dicha reunión se convoca por este medio en dicho Distrito, en el gimnasio de la Escuela Preparatoria Westlake, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, Nueva York el martes 29 de marzo de 2022, de 7:00 a.m. a 9:00 p.m. con el fin de votar la siguiente propuesta:

Propuesta

¿Debe el Consejo de Educación del Distrito Escolar Central de Mount Pleasant recibir autorización para (1) reconstruir los edificios escolares y construir y reconstruir campos deportivos, pistas de atletismo e instalaciones relacionadas, incluyendo los trabajos en el sitio, y adquirir el mobiliario, el equipamiento, la maquinaria o los aparatos necesarios para los propósitos para los que se usarán los edificios, los campos deportivos, las pistas de atletismo y las instalaciones, con un costo máximo de \$9,777,745, (2) gastar esa suma con ese fin, (3) aplicar los impuestos necesarios y cobrarlos en pagos anuales, en los años e importes que determine el Consejo de Educación, tomando en cuenta la asistencia estatal; y (4) en previsión del cobro de dicho impuesto emitir bonos y notas del Distrito Escolar en una sola ocasión o de forma ocasional por un monto nominal que no exceda \$9,777,745 y aplicar un impuesto para pagar los intereses de dichas obligaciones a su vencimiento?

El voto para dicha propuesta será con máquinas o papeletas para voto en ausencia. El horario en el que los centros de votación estarán abiertos será de 7:00 a.m. a 9:00 p.m., hora predominante, o durante el tiempo que sea necesario mantenerlos abiertos al final para permitir que los votantes calificados que estén en el centro de votación a las 9:00 p.m. puedan emitir sus votos.

Todos los residentes del Distrito Escolar que estén registrados para votar en las elecciones generales pueden votar en esta reunión sin necesidad de incluir su nombre en el registro de votantes del Distrito Escolar, si han votado en las elecciones generales por lo menos una vez en los últimos cuatro años calendario. Además, si una persona se ha registrado previamente para votar en cualquier reunión o elección anual del Distrito Escolar o en una reunión o elección especial del Distrito Escolar y ha votado en una reunión o elección anual del Distrito Escolar o en una reunión o elección especial del Distrito Escolar en los últimos cuatro años (2021, 2020, 2019, 2018), esa persona no necesita volver a registrarse. El Consejo de Educación también ha tomado medidas para el registro de votantes calificados en la Oficina del Distrito, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, Nueva York, entre las 9:00 a.m. y las 3:00 p.m. de cualquier día regular de clases hasta el 23 de marzo de 2022.

El registro preparado en los términos de la Sección 2014 de la Ley de Educación se entregará en la Oficina de la Secretaria del Distrito, y estará disponible para que lo inspeccione cualquier votante calificado del Distrito en la Oficina de la Secretaria del Distrito, Oficina del Distrito, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, Nueva York, en el centro de votación el día de la votación, así como entre las 9:00 a.m. y las 4:00 p.m. de cada uno de los cinco (5) días previos a la elección, excluyendo el domingo 27 de marzo de 2022, excepto que el sábado 26 de marzo de 2022 estará disponible para inspección entre las 8:30 a.m. y las 10:30 a.m.

Las papeletas para votar en ausencia pueden solicitarse en la oficina de la Secretaria del Distrito. Las solicitudes de papeletas para voto en ausencia deben ser recibidas por la Secretaria del Distrito por lo menos siete días antes de la votación si el votante enviará su voto por correo, o a más tardar el 28 de marzo de 2022 si el votante entregará su papeleta en persona. La Ley de Educación contiene disposiciones especiales para el voto en ausencia de los votantes “militares” del Distrito. Específicamente, la ley contempla un procedimiento especial para las “papeletas militares” en las votaciones de distritos escolares. Si bien las papeletas de voto en ausencia deben ser recibidas por el votante por correo, un votante militar puede optar por recibir su solicitud de papeleta de voto en ausencia y su papeleta de voto en ausencia por correo, correo electrónico o fax. Sin embargo, el votante militar debe entregar su solicitud original de papeleta militar y su papeleta militar por correo o en persona. La Secretaria del Distrito transmitirá la papeleta militar del votante militar usando el método de transmisión que prefiera el votante militar. Las papeletas de voto en ausencia, incluidas las papeletas de voto en ausencia de militares, deben recibirse en la oficina de la Secretaria del Distrito a más tardar a las 5:00 p.m. del 29 de marzo de 2022.

Habrà disponible una lista de todas las personas a las que se enviaron papeletas para voto en ausencia en la oficina de la Secretaria del Distrito durante su horario regular de atención, hasta el día de la votación. Todos los votantes calificados pueden impugnar la aceptación de la papeleta de cualquier persona de la lista, manifestando su impugnación y los motivos de la misma a la Secretaria del Distrito antes de que cierren los centros de votación.

FECHA: 19 de enero de 2022
Secretaria del Distrito, Consejo de Educación
Distrito Escolar Central de Mount Pleasant

New Castle to Vote on 10% Affordable Requirement in Business Zones

By Martin Wilbur

New Castle is likely to vote on expanding the 10 percent affordable housing requirement into two downtown business zones next week after it closed a public hearing on the proposed local law.

Two of the three speakers at last Tuesday's hearing were in favor of obligating a developer who builds a project with residential units in the Business Retail (B-R) and Business Retail and Parking (B-RP) zones to include an affordable unit if there are at least five apartments. Larger project would require the 10 percent threshold.

The two zones can be found in downtown Chappaqua and a portion of the Millwood hamlet.

"Whatever other zoning changes are made, I think you need to have this in place now and as soon as possible, so that nothing else slips through the cracks, so that anybody who is thinking about building here in districts, that is an expectation of the town in terms of what they're looking to achieve going forward," said Chappaqua resident Robert Fleisher.

A few years ago, some residents and affordable housing advocates questioned why the developer of 91 Bedford Rd., a mixed-use project on Route 117 near King St., was not required to include at least one affordable unit. Since it was part of the B-R zoning district, the town's affordable zoning ordinance did not apply.

Holly McCall, last year's unsuccessful

Democratic candidate for supervisor, however, said the law would do little to increase the town's affordable housing stock in those two zones because of structural limitations within the code. There are currently requirements for ground-floor commercial and a three-story limit on building heights in the B-R and B-RP zones.

She said there should be steps taken to overhaul portions of the code that could more effectively encourage developers to build, but this law would likely impede the construction of housing units unless the requirements are addressed.

"In the absence of a study and a holistic update of our (zoning) code, this additional requirement is likely to deter the development of new housing units rather than add affordable housing units to the town that we need," McCall said.

West End resident Sidney Finehirsh, an advocate for affordable housing, encouraged the town to give the legislation a try because New Castle must begin to reverse decades of resistance to multifamily housing. It remains one of the most segregated towns in the area, he said.

"I'm willing to give it a test, but what I really want to see is that test should really have a limit of time," Finehirsh said. "If developers don't take the bait, we should come up with something new, if nothing else. I don't know what that is."

Town Attorney Edward Phillips said if the legislation were to be approved it would then include the 10 percent affordable

requirement in every zone in which this type of housing is buildable.

The Town Board voted by a 4-1 margin to close the public hearing and kept the period for written comments open until Monday. Councilman Jeremy Saland, who was the lone vote to keep the hearing open, reiterated how the law would have little

impact on increasing affordable housing without other code revisions.

"I think it's something we should work through to make sure it's a viable, successful means to affordable housing in conjunction with other zoning changes," he said.

The board could vote on the legislation at its Mar. 22 meeting.

Fancy Footwork



MATT HILLIS PHOTO

Fox Lane High School alum Henry Davis, who was selected first overall by the Pittsburgh Pirates in last summer's Major League Baseball draft, generously gifted the school's varsity baseball team with new cleats for the upcoming season. The students were grateful for the unexpected gift.

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When Spring Arrives, it's Time to Pull Out Those Weeds

Even though I've lived in a maintenance-free condo for some years, I still have residual anxiety come spring when I would realize that the ecstasy of the season comes with the need to keep one's garden free of weeds.

Its threat never failed. I'll be in a rush to meet a client, dashing to my garage across my parking area, covered with crushed bluestone, and I'll spy a tiny fleck of green peeking through the gravel. Another weed. I had to stop to pull it out.

When I'd bend over, I could drop my car keys, my glasses might fall out of my breast pocket and, if the weed was deep-rooted, like a dandelion, my hands would get dirty, requiring that I return to the house to wash them after the nasty deed was done.

Worse yet, we might be entertaining guests on our patio and, in my peripheral vision, I'd detect another unwelcome visitor in a nearby flower bed. Nonchalantly, I'd push myself out of my glider, perhaps mid-sentence, and conduct an enemy attack without missing a beat. Annoyed, my wife later would tell me that I must not have been giving full attention to our guests.

Yes, I confess. I was a compulsive weeder. You might even call me a compulsive over-weeder.

When I first discovered the joys of gardening as a youngster, it was all about planting annuals and seeing quick results.



By Bill Primavera

But by the time I was in high school, perhaps in dealing with my impetuous nature, I found that I equally enjoyed pulling weeds to help ease those first bouts of post-adolescent anxiety.

My weeding addiction became full blown as an adult when I moved to Westchester from the city and my responsibilities were upgraded from a small patch of earth in front of my house, where a sickly ginkgo tree sprang from the concrete sidewalk, to a verdant 1.5 acres of lawn and garden.

At the same time, I had started a new job and commuted a long distance every weekday to report to a boss who was the "Mr. Hyde"

personality of all time. My weeding activity was especially intense during that period. Every time I yanked a weed, it was as though I was vicariously yanking his head bald, even though he was already bald.

Lest one think that I need intervention, I would say that there are good compulsive habits and this might be one of them. For instance, at a time when many parents are concerned about violence in video games, I might suggest that, as an antidote, they require their children to weed in the garden for an equal amount of time that they would spend on their iPads playing those games of virtual destruction. Put the quest for the elimination of villains to practical use, I say.

For adults, rather than considering weeding a chore or even therapy, it can

be approached as an art, complete with its own techniques and disciplines, as I first learned many decades ago when I read a joyous book called "The No-Work Garden" by Ruth Stout, sister of the detective fiction writer Rex Stout. I was reminded of the healing art of weeding when I discovered that the "Chicken Soup for the Soul" series featured an edition "For the Gardener's Soul" by Marion Owen. Owen said that weeding can be a pleasant "Zen-like" experience, and I agree.

She also wrote that regular weeding in the garden is like regular vacuuming in the home. We probably don't like either chore, but it's essential to a successful garden, as to a clean home.

Considering that a single weed can produce as many as 250,000 seeds, and that those seeds arrive through a multilevel attack from the air, rain runoff and bird droppings, weeding would seem to be a losing battle. But there are preventative measures that can help diminish sprouting weeds.

Just keep up with the following:

- Uproot the offenders and place them in the compost pile before they go to seed.
- Mulch, mulch, mulch. A three- to four-



inch layer of mulch applied between plants or garden rows can slow down, or in many cases, prevent the re-growth of weeds.

- In the spring, after preparing the soil for planting, let it set for seven to 10 days. Then work the surface of the soil with a hoe. This will slice off the newly emerged weed seedlings. If you have time before planting, let the soil rest another week or so and hoe again.

- Cover the soil for a short while with black plastic, but don't leave it on for

more than a couple of months, because the soil needs air and water to remain healthy.

- Use those vertical barriers, such as wood, metal or heavy plastic edging to prevent grass and weeds from encroaching from lawn to garden.

Be mindful of what William Shakespeare wrote: "Sweet flowers are slow and weeds make haste."

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

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Local Musicians Inspired to Connect, Collaborate Through Pandemic

By Martin Wilbur

For as much pain and loneliness that the pandemic has brought, for some the extra time at home has spawned artistic ventures

You can put Mount Pleasant resident Joe Walden and Phil Went, a Pound Ridge resident, into that category. The two friends had been part of a band with two other musicians and had even recorded two albums together.

But when COVID-19 seemed to shut down the world two years ago, Walden and Went, who go by the band name W2, decided to get creative. They have recording equipment in their basements and a collection of original music, but their two other bandmates did not.

"Phil and I were talking on the phone," recalled Walden, the group's lead singer. "We have all these great ideas. We were sitting on all this music and we were itching to do something, and I said to Phil why don't we do a solo project, something outside of the band."

They reached out to accomplished drummer Brian Doherty, a Thornwood resident, and 26-year Mount Pleasant Police Officer Peter Blume, who had become friendly with Walden through their children. Blume, a professionally trained trumpet player added brass arrangements. Both Doherty and Blume were also able to record their portions at home.

What they devised was a 10-track album called "4 Corners of a Circle," which they released last month. It has a definite 1980s and '90s classic rock vibe but with their own sound.

"The music reflects all our influences, the '80s influence that we all sort of grew up with," said Went, the guitarist who was a working



The four members of W2 collaborated on an album, "4 Corners of a Circle," with a 1980s and '90s rock vibe, through the pandemic by each recording their parts remotely. Pictured, from left, are Peter Blume (trumpet), singer Joe Walden, Brian Doherty (drums) and Phil Went (guitar).

musician before raising a family and now is the director of the Montessori School in Armonk. "The classic hair bands of the '80s is the music that I grew up listening to and influenced my playing."

Walden was raised musically The Beatles, Led Zeppelin and U2 while Blume gravitated to the big horn sound of groups like Chicago and Earth, Wind & Fire but also played classical.

Blume said he plays with many bands and has had plenty of session work, and Walden and Went knew what he had done when they asked him to write a horn arrangement to "Set Me Free," one of the album's tracks. Blume was impressed.

"I was blown away. I said 'Wow, this is a good song,' he said. "It's very hard to make something musical out of something that's not. It's a challenge and I don't mind doing it, but when you have something that's good already, now it can take off."

Walden and Went would eventually ask him to collaborate with horns on seven songs. Blume also plays other brass instruments and was able to mix his part of the recordings to make it sound as though W2 is backed by a full horn section.

"His greatest strength is his sense of melody, and each of these songs that he played on here he actually has these counter-melodies

within the music," Went said. "So there's the main melody that Joe's vocal will sing and then there's a hole where Pete will play a second melody."

Other pandemic-inspired songs on the album include "Ghost Town" and "Social Distance."

"It's really a way to express yourself, a way to reflect on the times and, sure, if you're sitting home all day long and you're thinking to yourself I'm working throughout the day, I'm sitting in the house and you're just itching to connect with people in some way," said Walden, an artist who designs the Christopher Radko Christmas ornaments. "This was our way of doing that, connecting with each other."

Doherty, a Yonkers school system music teacher who is also a Broadway musician, said he was dazzled by the material.

"When I heard the music, I thought this is really good, I will definitely make time in my schedule to record this stuff here at home and send in my tracks, and it worked out perfectly," he said. "I love their music. I'm very impressed by it and I think that they're great songwriters."

Walden and Went, who also produced the music videos to go with the album, said they will continue to collaborate and include Blume and Doherty in their efforts and perhaps play live at some point.

To listen to W2's "4 Corners of a Circle," visit www.w2.hearnow.com. The album is available in select stores in the Mount Pleasant area. All proceeds will go to various children's charities, including Blythedale Children's Hospital.

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Tips to Keep Young Minds Active Over Spring Break

No matter the length of a vacation, students often have some catching up to do upon their return to school. However, it doesn't have to be this way. Check out these five spring break ideas that will keep young minds active and engaged, for a smooth transition back to the classroom.

- 1. Host a read-a-thon.** Get inspired by the reading challenges typically hosted by schools and libraries during the longer summer break and host a mini event this spring. Invite your child and their friends to participate. You might even want to add a philanthropic element by having participants get sponsored by friends and family to earn money based on the amount of reading they do. (Because of the short duration of the event, you may choose to have pledges based on the number of pages or chapters a student reads, instead of entire books.) Donate the money raised to a local charity.
- 2. Pick up a new instrument.** Spring break can be a great time to immerse oneself in a new instrument. To build a solid musical foundation fast, consider a keyboard designed with beginners in mind. For example, the compact and portable 61-key Casiotone CT-S200 allows students to make music from anywhere during their break, and has an array of useful features – a metronome to help with lessons, app connectivity to make learning fun and built-in speakers for cranking up the tunes.
- 3. Get outdoors.** What do physical activity and time spent outdoors have in common? They're both beneficial for cognition and brain health. Take advantage of the warm spring weather to hit a local park, trail or nature center and get moving as a family.
- 4. Make math a game.** Use the time away from school to show kids that math is not just for the classroom. From puzzles to patterns to logic challenges, recreational mathematics can reintroduce an often dry subject to students in a way that is fun. Equip your child with a calculator, which can be used to play a variety of games. The basic, scientific and graphing calculators from Casio are easy to use and can be part of the fun.
- 5. Get creative.** Whether it's writing poems, painting a portrait or putting



GOLDEN FAMILY FOTO/ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS PHOTO

on a play, making art can boost self-esteem while offering children an outlet for self-expression. It's also a fun way to keep the mind active during the break.

Not only is a week off from school the perfect time to explore interests,

take up new hobbies and be creative. Engaging in these activities can help make the transition back to school after spring break easier.

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Being Away From Home Builds Self-esteem, Independence

One of the many joys of parenthood is helping children navigate new waters. While often these situations are met with hesitation, slight anxiety – or in the case of some first-time campers, homesickness – it is these moments that develop the 21st century skills needed in adulthood.

New situations, such as going away to camp, serve as teachers in life’s classroom, developing leadership, self-esteem, teamwork, independence and problem-solving.

It’s important, even critical, for parents to help children overcome any feelings of hesitation in order to help them grow.

Take camp, for example. From a child’s perspective, camp is fun, fun, fun! Parents know that camp provides immeasurable growth opportunities and is a vital part of childhood. As the day approaches, even the most excited campers sometimes get nervous about being away from home.

“Homesickness is completely normal,” said Michael Thompson, consultant, author and psychologist in a 2011 PBS Parents article titled “Helping Kids Beat Homesickness at Sleep-Away Camp.” “If a child



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loves his or her parents and has a good home, why wouldn’t he or she feel some longing for mom, for dad, for the dog or for home cooking?”

It is up to parents, then, to help ease the transition to camp, and help their children grow from the experience. The American Camp Association (ACA) suggests the following advice to help alleviate anxiety and get a jump start on life’s lessons.

- Encourage independence throughout the year. Practice separation, such as sleepovers at a friend’s house, can simulate the camp environment.
- Involve children in the process of preparing for camp. The more they own the decision, the more comfortable they will feel being at camp.

- Make sure to understand the camp’s philosophy on how issues, such as homesickness, are addressed. Talk candidly with the camp director to understand his or her perspective on the adjustment to camp life.
 - Discuss what to expect at camp before leaving for camp. Consider role-playing anticipated situations, such as using a flashlight to find the bathroom.
 - Reach an agreement ahead of time on calling each other, but make sure to honor the camp’s policy on phone calls.
 - Send a note or care package ahead of time to arrive the first day of camp. Acknowledge missing the child, in a positive way. For example, saying “I am going to miss you, but I know that you will have a good time at camp,” lets your child know that families are thinking about them, but confident in their ability to adapt to camp.
 - Pack a personal item or two from home, such as a stuffed animal.
 - Avoid bribing behaviors.
- Families send the wrong message when they link a successful stay at camp to a material object. Families should focus on the real rewards – like newfound confidence and independence.
- Don’t plan an exit strategy. If a “rescue call” comes from the child, offer calm reassurance and put the time frame into perspective.
- While most incidents of homesickness pass quickly, parents know their child best. If parents have concerns (for example, the child is not eating or sleeping, or appears overly anxious), they should immediately talk to their camp director. Camp staff are trained to identify and ease homesickness, and are a valuable resource for parents as well as campers.
- For more information on preparing your child for an independent, fun-filled summer, visit www.ACACamps.org. Or, follow the American Camp association on Facebook and Twitter for helpful hints and camp information.
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Some New Culinary Delights to Try for Local Foodies

This free-standing building neat the Hawthorne Metro-North station had been operating as Gordo's Tavern for 40 years before shutting down in 2019. Along the way, they accrued a large following of locals and out-of-town visitors.

Unionville Tavern has replaced the original, and longtime owner Gordon (Gordo) Kreuger has kept the place intact, much to the delight of his many regulars.

My first encounter with Unionville was last summer, once COVID-19 restrictions began dissipating. I recall pulling into the parking area and taking a seat on the outdoor patio. It was a quiet sunny afternoon, a fine time to enjoy a quick beer and snack.

My follow-up visit was just a few weeks ago. I walked into the bar area and it was bustling. Customers spread into the rustic multiroom dining areas as well. I was the stranger at the bar, and ordered an IPA as I looked over the menu. Nora, the friendly bartender, was working hard to keep up with her clientele. It didn't take long for us all to exchange smiles and enter the conversation. I was made to feel at home.

The sliders seemed like a good bet – three mini burgers served with pickles. I enjoyed every juicy bite. They were delicious! So were the tender Buffalo chicken wings on the bone I ordered during a return visit a few weeks later. They were served with crisp celery sticks and dipping sauce. There's a choice of flavors such as Jameson, spicy Thai and dry, too. I found these plump wings to be among the best I have tried in Westchester. They were that good.

Nora told me Unionville would be premiering an expanded updated menu this week and showed me a copy. There will be tempting tavern fare, such as the Dy-No-Mite shrimp, crispy fried chicken, flatbread pizzas, a variety of burgers and sandwiches, Guernsey fish and chips, "Yoots" mac and cheese and a wiener and fries. I will keep my palate open for another visit to check out some of the new specialties. Best part? The house is doing its best to keep prices reasonable.

There's a great Happy Hour starting at 3 p.m. on weekdays featuring specially-priced drinks and small plates.

Unionville Tavern is located at 415 Commerce St. in Hawthorne. Open Tuesday through Sunday. Free parking. Info: 914-747-6795 or visit www.unionvilletavern.co.

Morris Park Inn to Open in Thornwood

Proprietor Steve Poli, of bustling Morris Park Inn in the Bronx, has taken a space in the Rose Hill Shopping Center in Thornwood. The storefront had previously operated as Skratz.

If the Bronx restaurant is any indicator, there will be a full tavern menu with generous portions. Specialties to look for include the nachos supreme; Baja crispy fish tacos; chopped Cobb salad; hefty burgers; wraps and sandwiches; mussels



By Morris Gut

with spaghetti; baby back ribs; fried seafood combo; and center-cut pork chops. They are currently awaiting proper licensing. More on this as it develops.

MPI Thornwood will be located at 652 Columbus Ave. in Thornwood. Info: Visit www.morrisparkinnthornwood.com. For a look into Morris Park Inn in the Bronx, visit www.morrisparkinn.com.

Craving Meatballs?

While Macelleria is a high-end Italian steakhouse, a Michelin Guide Award-winner serving classic cuts of prime beef and chops, you may want to pop in for their comfort dishes and small plates that are sure to please. Just what we need right now.

You can have fresh-made meatballs served with a big dollop of ricotta cheese and luscious tomato sauce; a jumbo crab cake appetizer served with an herb mustard sauce; a perky arugula salad, with arugula, navel orange segments, fennel, goat cheese and lemon vinaigrette; and a delicious herbal steak tartare. There's a classic burger, too.

For dessert there's a most extraordinary house-made tiramisu. Proprietor Tony LaLa and his team will take good care of you.

Open seven days for lunch and dinner. Free parking. Macelleria Italian

Steakhouse is located at 111 Bedford Rd. in Armonk. There are locations in Pelham and Greenwich. Info: 914-219-5728 or visit www.macelleriaarmonk.com.

Hudson Valley Restaurant Week Returns

The 2022 edition of Spring Hudson Valley Restaurant Week will take place Mar. 21 to Apr. 3. It is being touted as "the sequel," an appropriate tag for this popular dining-out promotion sponsored in spring and fall by The Valley Table Magazine



It's not just steak at Macelleria Italian Steakhouse in Armonk. If you're looking for something a bit lighter, meatballs with ricotta cheese is another selection that makes for a great meal.



A serving of the savory chicken wings at Unionville Tavern, which operates in the space formerly occupied by Gordo's in Hawthorne.

(now owned by Today Media). More than 200 past participants and some new ones from throughout the Hudson Valley are promised, with patrons anxious to cash in on the seasonal bounty at reasonable prices.

Restaurants are expected to offer three-course luncheons for \$29.95 and three-course dinners for \$39.95. There are also take-out options. Remember that beverages, tax and tip are not included. Sometimes there are caveats, so be sure to verify the hours and menus that are being served. Reservations are advised.

For additional information and an up-to-date list of participating restaurants, visit www.valleytable.com/hvrv.

Local Beard Award Finalists

Local chefs and restaurants are semifinalists for James Beard Awards in 2022. They are Chef Dale Talde of Goosefeather in Tarrytown; Chef Eric Gao of O Mandarin in Hartsdale and Hicksville, L.I.; and Chef Brian Lewis of The Cottage in Westport and Greenwich, Conn. and OKO in Rye.

The James Beard Awards are considered the Oscars of the culinary world.

Lewis was the opening executive chef at The Barn and The Farmhouse at the Bedford Post some years back. Nominees in the Hudson Valley include Gabe McMackin, Troutback, Amenia, N.Y.; Albert and Melinda Bartley, Top Taste, Kingston, N.Y.; and Carla Perez-Gallardo and Hannah Black, Lil' Debs Oasis, Hudson, N.Y.

Finalists will be announced this Wednesday, Mar. 16 in Scottsdale, Ariz. For more information, visit www.jamesbeard.org.

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



The retro booths in the dining room at Unionville Tavern.



If you're looking for delicious tavern food, Morris Park Inn at the Rose Hill Shopping Center in Thornwood will soon open.

Steffi Nossen's 85th Anniversary Gala to Feature Music of Woody Guthrie

Steffi Nossen School of Dance, the oldest dance education institution in Westchester, is proud to celebrate its long-awaited return to the theater by honoring the connection between modern dance and Woody Guthrie, a songwriter whose music continues to be of vital relevance in today's world.

The event, Steffi Nossen's 85th Anniversary Gala on Mar. 24, will be the first time since before the pandemic that the dance school will be back in a professional theater to perform, allowing its dancers to showcase their talents.

The choice to showcase Guthrie's music is based on a deep-rooted respect for his vision to tell a lyrical story as one of America's greatest folk singers. He turned complex ideas about democracy, human rights and economic equality into songs that all Americans could embrace. That strength of community supporting each other as a united group is an infinite thread embedded within Guthrie's music as well as a shared mission of the school.

The event will highlight Guthrie's music with Steffi Nossen's Master Class students dancing to his music, including covers of his iconic songs and songs of previously unpublished lyrics from the Woody Guthrie Archive by Billy Bragg and Wilco. With Guthrie's poetry and lyrics interwoven throughout the evening, the event is a true love story of the magical attraction of folk music and modern dance.

Guthrie was married to Marjorie Mazia, a dancer in the Martha Graham Dance



Company for 15 years. Mazia performed in the 1944 premier of "Appalachian Spring" featuring a score composed by Aaron Copland that was inspired by the Shaker hymn "Simple Gifts." This first introduction of roots music to modern dance inspired a follow-up collaboration by another Graham dancer, Sophie Maslow, who used Guthrie's live performance of "Dust Bowl Ballads" in a dance piece titled "Folksay."

Another connective thread in the program is Martha Graham Dance Company member May O'Donnell, who danced in the company with Mazia and Maslow. O'Donnell is known for creating

and pioneering the May O'Donnell Technique, a codified dance approach that Steffi Nossen has adopted for its Master Class program for decades. Guest performers from the Graham 2 Dance Company will be performing a duet excerpt from "Appalachian Spring" to further highlight this beautiful connection between music and dance.

Steffi Nossen's personal connection to the Woody and Marjorie Guthrie family extends further as three generations of the Guthrie family have danced at the school. Prior to opening the Woody Guthrie Archive, Guthrie's daughter, Nora, was a professional dancer for more than 15

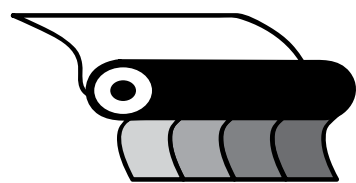
years and had her own dance company, the Guthrie Rotante Dance Company.

During this time, Nora Guthrie choreographed a piece for the school's pre-professional company. Her daughter, Anna Canoni is one of the school's alumni and current board member. Canoni's two daughters are currently members of the Master Class program.

"The Woody and Marjorie Guthrie family is proud to share Woody's music and legacy with the Steffi Nossen Dance Foundation this evening celebrating the loving pairing of dance and music, the foundation from which our family was based," Canoni said. "It's vital to learn our history in order to strengthen and guide our future. We appreciate Steffi Nossen for introducing their Master Class students to the history and powerful connection in the arts."

The 85th Anniversary Gala is scheduled for Thursday, Mar. 24 at 7 p.m. at the White Plains Performing Arts Center. There will be six dance performances by its students as well as a special guest performance by the Graham 2 Dance Company. Tickets for the performance are available with multiple seating tiers for \$65, \$80 and \$100. A post-performance reception will be held at 9 p.m., which includes complementary drinks and desserts.

Tickets are available to purchase online at www.steffinossen.org. COVID-19 health guidelines will be observed with masks required in the theater for performances.



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A Shift-Shaping Job Market – Can We Fill All the Jobs?

The challenge of aligning the skills of Westchester's workforce with the needs of today's emerging jobs and careers



By Abby Luby

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The labor market in this country has been a fast-changing landscape from high unemployment during the pandemic, then swerving to an overflowing job market with some 10.6 million job openings in this country. Today, the national unemployment rate is hovering around 4.0% and seems to be dropping; in Westchester, it's about 3.7%.

But what about all the folks quitting their jobs in unprecedented numbers? Last November, the number of people who



GETTY IMAGES PHOTO

voluntarily left their jobs spiked to a record 4.5 million — and that was in just one month according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. What's that about? Reasons for those walking out are unreasonably low wages, poor working conditions, no career path, and no benefits. The message from workers: we want better jobs with decent pay and jobs that have a future.

The Ballooning Skills Gap

Adjusting to the evolving, post-pandemic workforce are groups who have come together to create new employment opportunities and training programs. The challenge: to reimagine what today's workforce development really looks like — what are the skill gaps and what areas of expertise are needed. Here in the Hudson Valley several organizations and educational institutions have been at the drawing board for the last year designing accessible

and affordable training programs geared towards landing people in good-paying jobs with career advancement.

The Westchester County Office of Economic Development has partnered with Westchester Community College to offer an Advanced Manufacturing Career Training Program which helps individuals with little or no prior manufacturing experience on the path to a highly skilled, well-paying, and in-demand career. Enrollment started at the end of Jan. 2022.

Enrollment in short-term workforce programs at Westchester Community College is ongoing in courses leading to credentials in IT, Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, and other in-demand areas. Most programs are six months or less in length. Many students may be eligible for tuition and fee scholarships thanks to public and private funding.

Many of the WCC courses are virtual, attracting those who want to learn a new skill and keep working; virtual classes also help students progress at their own pace and a loaner laptop program is available for participants who may need them.

Ivan Woodard was enrolled in the WCC Workforce Development

Program last spring. A Dobbs Ferry resident, Woodard received a Pepsico scholarship available as part of the Advanced Manufacturing Career Training Program, funds that paid for all his courses. Woodard took the three-part series of courses teaching Python programming, a scripting language that allows you to manage web servers. "The biggest thing WCC has going for it is that the professors are actual professionals working in the field and they are very accessible," Woodard explains. "Having someone there to hold your hand is a huge deal when learning new technical skills because you have to get it right."

The program offers a variety of skills from creating products using computers, robotics, 3D printing, and mastering the basics of safety, quality, manufacturing processes, and green production. The program also offers opportunities to ..

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Making Sure Pandemic Puppies and COVID Kitties Enjoy a Happy Life

By Dr. Shannon James

Since the pandemic began in early 2020, it's been raining cats and dogs.

As more and more people found themselves having to stay home and find something to do with their newfound free time, an increasing number decided it was a good time to add a pet to the family. Pet ownership has dramatically increased in the past two years, and paralleling with the outlook on the pandemic, there is really no end in sight. Each month, pet ownership continues to grow.

As a veterinarian who works in multiple states, I am seeing the same trend everywhere. Whether people that have never owned a pet in their life are purchasing a new puppy from a breeder or current pet-holding households are adopting new siblings for their bundle of fur joy at home, the growth in pet ownership is real.

As we return to normal, for many people, their new normal will include a pet! The pandemic puppies and kittens will be here to stay and will grow into adolescents, adults and then seniors, requiring diligent care throughout all stages of their lives.

Whereas large breed dogs may average a 12- to 15-year lifespan, small dogs and cats can live upward of 18 years on average.

Even though these new family additions were added in at a time where free time was plentiful, they will still need to be actively

cared for when life becomes more hectic.

Here are some commonly asked questions that you may have as a new pet owner.

How many vaccines does my pet need during the first year?

Like children, puppies and kittens will get a series of booster shots starting around two months old and lasting until they are at least four months old, if not older. These shots are very important since the protective maternal antibodies that they acquired from their mother will slowly wane over the first few months of life, leaving them vulnerable to many diseases that they can acquire through contact with other dogs or even just from the environment. The booster shots are administered on a monthly basis and will keep their immunity up against various pathogens and will keep them healthy.

At four months old, the maternal antibodies have waned enough that their vaccines will be effective in keeping them safe from most diseases going forward. After this age, their shots will be reduced to once every year or every three years, depending on the vaccine.

Should I spay or neuter my dog, and if so, at what age?

It is highly recommended that if you don't intend to breed your pet down the line, you should spay or neuter them around six months old. (This number may vary based on the breed of dog that you have and should



be discussed with your veterinarian.) This is the process whereby the reproductive organs are surgically removed. It is one of the most common surgical procedures performed in veterinary medicine and will benefit your pet greatly in the long run.

Along with a multitude of long-term health advantages, spaying and neutering greatly decreases the development of mammary cancer in dogs and cats as well as eliminating the chance of testicular cancer. This procedure will also allow you and your pet to enjoy a happier life together. As testosterone levels increase with adolescence, intact males tend to develop undesirable traits, such as urine marking in the home, straying from the home in search of females as well as some increased chances of aggression that may not necessarily diminish if neutered post-adolescence.

Intact females will carry the inherent risk of developing severe uterine infections that become surgical emergencies as

well as an increased chance of developing detrimental mammary cancers. For these reasons, spaying and neutering your pets at an appropriate age is highly recommended.

What type of food should I feed my pet?

An entire article can be written on this topic as there are a multitude of recommendations. With pet stores and breeders quick to offer advice, my advice would be to discuss this with your veterinarian during a visit when the health of your pet can be a vital component of diet recommendations.

Whether you are a new pet owner, just entering the world of having a dog or cat in your life or a seasoned pet parent, there is always more to learn. Animals bring such warmth and joy into our lives and it is our responsibility, as their caretakers, to return that favor and to provide them with the very best care that we can.

Routine medical care with your family veterinarian will help guide you with the important decisions that you will find yourself having to make on a daily basis. Whether it be food selection or medical workups and procedures, maintaining a close relationship with your veterinarian will ensure that you keep your fur babies healthy and happy for many years to come.

Dr. Shannon James is a Somers-based veterinarian and works in animal hospitals across the tristate area and in Florida.

Outstanding Women of Croton to Be Discussed at Historical Society Program

In celebration of Women's History Month, the Van Cortlandtville Historical Society will present a program on women of historical significance from Croton's past on Saturday, Mar. 19 at 2 p.m. at the Little Red Schoolhouse, located at 297 Locust Ave. in Cortlandt Manor. The event, with seating limited to 40, is open free to the public.

Cornelia Cotton of Croton-on-Hudson will reprise her historical retrospective –Outstanding Women of Croton – which she first presented several years ago to the Croton Friends of History in a two-part PowerPoint program with vintage pictures.

A writer with a long interest in local history, Cotton will tell the tantalizing tales of accomplished women who lived in Croton and made their mark in many different notable fields such as literature, theater, graphic arts, photography, education, politics, history, science, women's rights and music and dance. She will relate the stories of a great poet, a wonderful sculptor, a glittering film star and a brave suffragette.

Among those featured will be Elizabeth Duncan, the sister of world-famous dancer Isadora Duncan, who directed the first Duncan Dance School in the country, which was situated in the village, and another world-renowned entertainer,

the iconic opera star Jessye Norman. Other women included in the program are Hollywood film star Gloria Swanson; writer, activist and feminist Louise Bryant; and poet Edna St. Vincent Millay.

A board member of the Croton Historical Society, Cotton has written "They Lived in Croton: An Archive of Croton's Visual Artists" and "Stepping Stones," a book of autobiographical stories. She has given talks on the history of Mount Airy and the Old Croton Aqueduct.

Born in Germany, she came to America as a college student and studied history and the constitution on the graduate level. She has lived in Croton-on-Hudson since 1953, where she and her late husband built their own home and raised their three daughters. She has three grandsons.

The venue for Saturday's program, the Little Red Schoolhouse, has limited seating with 40 people considered full capacity. It is located at the north end of Locust Avenue next to historic Old St. Peter's Church and cemetery on the left side of the hill just south of Oregon Road in Cortlandt. Off-street parking is available atop the schoolhouse driveway or in the adjacent cemetery on Locust Avenue.

For more information, call 914-736-7868 or visit www.vancort.net.

THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

Beware The Ides of March. On March 15, 44 B.C., the Ides of March, Julius Caesar was assassinated by an elite group of Romans. To mark that fateful day, the quiz this week, which should not cause any bodily harm, consists of words that contain "ide."

- | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. chide (v.) | A) to prevent justice | B) scold | C) make cool |
| 2. sideswipe (n) | A) a glancing blow | B) a hearty laugh | C) an incidental diversion |
| 3. iridescent (adj.) | A) not possible to revoke | B) blameless | C) shimmering |
| 4. providence (n.) | A) divine guidance | B) the source | C) local interest |
| 5. snide (adj.) | A) unusually easy | B) slyly disparaging | C) carried on secretly |
| 6. betide (v.) | A) to express sorrow | B) be reminded | C) happen as if by fate |
| 7. bolide (n.) | A) an object of fear | B) standardized text | C) an exploding meteor |
| 8. elide (v.) | A) to draw forth | B) leave out | C) raise in status |

ANSWERS:
1. B. To scold; voice disapproval of
2. A. A glancing blow from or on the side of some-
thing, especially a motor vehicle
3. C. Showing luminous colors that seem to change
when seen from different angles; shimmering
4. A. Divine guidance or care
5. B. Slyly disparaging; insinuating
6. C. To happen, especially as if by fate
7. C. An exploding meteor; a fireball
8. B. To omit; leave out; curtail; abridge

Skyfactor Maintains its Musical Mojo Despite Pandemic Challenges

By Martin Wilbur

The members of the locally-based band Skyfactor have been waiting for this Saturday night for more than two years.

That's when they'll return to what can be considered their Westchester home base, Lucy's in Pleasantville, for their first show at the now remodeled club since Dec. 7, 2019.

It's not like the band's been idle since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, despite the many challenges that performers have faced since live audiences were discontinued until fairly recently.

But Skyfactor's loyal following was made for a traditional rock club, said its lead guitarist Jon Rubin. Playing at places such as Lucy's and at The Bitter End in the city is what the band was built for and maybe where it has its greatest appeal.

"The intimacy of a rock club, that's the last bastion to come back," Rubin said. "When can you pile a hundred people in a room and no one get sick? I think the majority of our fans, we reached out to people, hey, what if we rescheduled it for March instead of April or May? Is that too soon or are you dying to see live music?"

The show was a go when a friend of Rubin's, who has been extremely cautious about exposing himself to COVID-19, told Rubin that he'll be there – wearing an N-95 mask with a hole cut out to sip his beer.

On Saturday, Skyfactor will perform songs from its most recent album, "A Thousand Sounds," from 2019 as well as older selections from its catalog that has made it a rock club favorite in Westchester and Manhattan for more than a decade.

"We've always been a live band, that's where we thrive, feed off the energy of the crowd, and that's tangible when you can feel

that and get that back," said lead singer Bob Ziegler. "That's what we're real excited to get back to at this point."

Rubin said since the start of the pandemic, Skyfactor managed to play four backyard concerts in 2020 at the Hastings-on-Hudson home of his brother, Cliff, the band's bass player. Three of those engagements were for various charitable causes, including a virtual benefit for the Tarrytown Music Hall. The band members donated their fee for the night back to the music hall.

Another performance was for the charity Code Red, an organization created by Rubin's niece, Charlotte, and a friend of hers to help raise money for feminine hygiene products for homeless women. Yet another virtual concert was their scheduled appearance for what was supposed to be Ossining's summer concert series at Louis Engel Waterfront Park in 2020.

In each case, Skyfactor had about 20 people attend, socially distanced and wearing masks, of course. While the virtual performances had its drawbacks, they were able to expand their exposure.

"We got like 3,000 or 4,000 people (tuning in)," Rubin said. "When we pack a club for 150 people, we're excited."

Skyfactor was also able to play outdoor concerts in Connecticut, which had loosened some of its restrictions on outdoor crowds faster than New York.

But there's been some new music put out by the band. The pandemic-inspired "Streets of New York" pays tribute to the healthcare heroes and first responders who put their lives on the line in 2020 to help others.

Most recently, Skyfactor was contacted by filmmaker David Seth Cohen to write and perform the song for Cohen's upcoming documentary "Finding Sandler." The film



BOB DEUTSCH PHOTO

The band Skyfactor, with a sizeable local and regional following, will return to one of its favorite venues this Saturday night, Lucy's in Pleasantville, for the first time in more than two years.

is about Cohen's search to reconnect with comedic actor Adam Sandler after turning down a chance to hang out with him when he was 22 years old while working as a production assistant on the set of a movie.

The song, "Hey Adam," is featured in the film, which will be screened on Mar. 26 at the Garden State Film Festival in Asbury Park, N.J. The recorded the song at a Woodstock studio, a location they plan on recording at again, Rubin said.

A local cover band, Your Welcome, will open for Skyfactor this Saturday evening at what is now called The Garage at Lucy's at 8:15 p.m. Skyfactor is scheduled to begin its performance at about 9:30 p.m. Doors open

at 8 p.m.

Rubin said he and his bandmates are amped about returning to one of their favorite venues.

"I think the number one thing for people to expect would be a lot of pent-up energy from the band and the crowd in a healthy way," he said.

Tickets are \$12 in advance through Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/skyfactor-with-special-guests-your-welcome-tickets-276088717787> and \$15 at the door. The Garage at Lucy's is located at 446 Bedford Rd. in Pleasantville.

End of the Line Nearing for Hudson Stage Company

By Martin Wilbur

Denise Bessette is at peace with the realization that this spring's production will be the last for Hudson Stage after 23 seasons.

Like so many other arts and entertainment outlets, the Westchester-based nonprofit theater company was forced to close for about a year-and-a-half following the outbreak of COVID-19.

But life circumstances for Bessette and her co-founder, Olivia Sklar, at least as much as the pandemic, helped make the decision to close after their upcoming production, "Off Peak," which opens on Apr. 22, followed by one additional staged reading.

Sklar is expecting her first grandchild and Bessette's children are now grown and both living in Los Angeles. Coupled with the decision of the company's other co-founder, Dan Foster, to leave a few years ago makes this the appropriate time to end Hudson's Stage's run.

"I probably could have done a couple more before retiring, but I



Mariah Lee, left, and Denise Bessette in Hudson Stage's fall 2019 production of "A Doll's House, Part 2." The theater company will close this spring following its final production and one more staged reading in April and May after 23 years.

do believe that this feels like the right time. I do feel that now," Bessette said last week. "Again, I did not want to collaborate, I did not want to have to find other partners to collaborate with after Olivia and I had this strong relationship."

Financially, the theater company was stable, Bessette said, although more challenging. There were three board members who had retired during the past two years,

and finding replacements was also difficult.

The pandemic-fueled closure made it difficult to return, although Hudson Stage had a successful return last October with "The October Storm." But it was difficult to go from being dormant to trying to get back to normal.

"It just about killed us last fall to try and get that show open and running," Bessette said. "The

audience loved it, but (a) very small turnout. For both my partner and I, we were so fried trying to keep the theater alive, which we did with digital performances that we had. She was ready to say that's it, and I thought that, well, we've got a season planned and I can do it myself. But I certainly can't see carrying the theater further than that myself."

Hudson Stage was conceived by Bessette, Sklar and Foster when they met in 1997. Its mission was to present new productions or productions that were new to Westchester, Bessette said.

By 1998, the first reading was done at the Northern Westchester Center for the Arts in Mount Kisco. After that, the company presented staged readings at the Croton Free Library, which had just opened a new performance space.

After two years in Croton, Hudson Stage moved to the Julie Harris Theater at the Clearview School in Briarcliff Manor, before heading to their most permanent home, the Briarcliff campus at Pace University. However, when the school sold that campus

about seven years, it moved to Whippoorwill Hall in Armonk, where it's continued presenting a major spring and fall production since then.

"We were sustained by some very generous people," Bessette said. "But I do have to say in Westchester it's challenging holding an audience. There are still people who'll say, 'Oh, I've never heard of you,' which is just shocking to me."

It didn't help when The New York Times curtailed its Westchester coverage, she said. The Times and The Journal News had previewed their productions previously, but that exposure just stopped.

Despite the melancholy finish, Bessette said she will use the opportunity to spend more time with family but also pursue her own acting roles.

"I want to see what life brings," she said. "I'm still an actress; in fact, I have an audition coming up for a TV show. I'm hoping at this ripe old age that maybe I'll get to work more as an actress, which I haven't been as accessible."

Advocating For Better-Informed Wine Consumers



By Nick Antonaccio

Drinking responsibly can be a daunting task. The vernacular meaning tends to focus on the level of alcohol consumption. I view this well-worn phrase as a reminder, a self-directive if you will, to be mindful of not only the alcohol I ingest, but also of the type and level of the other components in the alcohol I consume.

Over the past few weeks, I've taken my perspective of wine consumption in a direction that is the opposite of what I typically espouse. In my columns, I've been an advocate of moderate consumption of wine. Numerous studies have shown the health benefits of consuming one to two glasses of wine per day. I've enthusiastically reported these results.

However, I recently read a study that gave me pause. I reported that this study provided evidence that any level of alcohol consumption contributes to potentially negative health consequences. In that column, I focused on two aspects of consuming wine: alcohol levels and calorie count.

For alcohol levels, I focused on the gradients of alcohol levels as controlled by

nature and by winemakers. My suggestion: seek out lower alcohol wines – and consume in moderation.

For calorie content, I focused on the dietary consequences of consumption. My suggestion: seek out alternative wines that by their nature have lower calories – and consume in moderation.

Since those columns, I've been ruminating on ways to better educate consumers on wine consumption; how to provide a fair and balanced profile of both its beneficial and deleterious effects.

The first step, of course, is to provide guidance on drinking consciously and conscientiously: being conscious of the pitfalls of alcohol consumption and conscientious of its impact on our bodies and our lives. I believe public service announcements and diligent surveillance by law enforcement agencies have succeeded in drawing attention to the health (and legal) consequences of excessive alcohol consumption.

As for dietary considerations, I began to evaluate what type and level of information is readily available to consumers when they consider purchasing a bottle of wine. Just before dinner the other night I picked up that evening's bottle of wine from my kitchen counter and perused its label, front and back. I read past the marketing prose, seeking out the nutritional information.

Then it hit me: "nutritional information."

That is what wine consumers need more of, to be informed consumers, provided with information similar to that on many other food product labels.

Until government regulations began requiring standardized nutritional information on product labels in 1994, consumers were wandering in a vast wasteland of nutritional knowledge. The FDA regulations, enhanced several times (additional changes are being considered as I pen this column), provide guidelines across many food types, enabling consumers to make informed decisions.

So why not require similar nutrition labeling on my bottle of wine? In fact, the government considered mandatory labels a few years ago. The Alcohol and Tobacco Trade and Tax Bureau issued regulations permitting voluntary disclosure of nutritional information. Very few wineries jumped on the bandwagon.

Here is what the current (voluntary) disclosure regulations might include for the back label on a bottle of California Cabernet Sauvignon: Serving size: 5 ounces; servings per container: 5; Alcohol: 14 percent; Calories: 124; Carbohydrates: 3 grams; Fat: 0; Protein: 0.

Other than the calorie count, wine appears to be a reasonable beverage (in a nutritional, not alcohol, context). How does it compare to other beverages? A Starbucks Grande Cappuccino (16 ounces) contains 150 calories, 13 grams of carbohydrates (including 11 grams of sugar), 8 mg of fat, 30 mg of cholesterol, 115 mg of sodium, 8



grams of protein – and no alcohol.

It takes me just as long to sip my evening glass of wine as it does my morning cappuccino, without the fat and sugar.

In the context of label information, one can rationalize enjoying wine with meals. Portion control seems to be the key to a healthy wine – and food – lifestyle.

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

*You Heard It
Through the
Grapevine*

Saint Patrick: Where Do the Good Saint's Bones Lay?

Quite soon, or thereafter – depending upon when the presses roll – we will close the books on our first full-fledged celebration of Saint Patrick since the COVID-19 pandemic fell upon us two years ago.

We will firmly sink a final nail in the coffin of COVID, and the much-revered saint will smile upon us as we return to normal lives – new, old or otherwise. With any luck, his annual commemoration will never be disrupted again. We can only hope.

But where, a reader asks, do the remains of our favored saint rest? And are there any relics of him?

The possession of relics was a major goal of all great pilgrimage sites in the Middle Ages, and even to the present day. In order to be a place of pilgrimage, a cathedral needed to have relics of a saint. The older the saint, the more powerful the relic. The best relic would be one from Jesus himself.

These existed primarily in the form of wood from the cross, or blood from his wounds, preserved



Reliquary Alleged to Have Once Held Saint Patrick's Arm and Hand

in a sacred chalice, the Holy Grail, object of many Medieval quests.

As far as Saint Patrick goes, there are plenty of relics. The National Museum of Ireland in Dublin holds a tooth alleged to be that of the saint, lost when he traveled through Sligo converting the Celtic tribes there to Christianity. There is a jawbone venerated as his in the Roman Catholic church in Derriagh, County Antrim.

The Ulster Museum in Belfast holds a silver reliquary in the shape of an arm and a hand reputed to have once contained just that. Unfortunately, both arm and hand are long gone, possibly taken to Rome by Papal authorities in 1186. Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York City even holds a bit of his bones, a gift from Rome, perhaps part of the "loot" from the 12th century "relocation." It has been enshrined in the cathedral's high altar since 1942.

And then, there are the rocks. Saint Patrick liked to sit. Perhaps all that walking throughout Ireland tired him

out. After all, he was not a young man when he returned to the country in 432, a cleric on a mission: convert the Irish to Christianity.

There are numerous rock chairs throughout Ireland alleged to be places where the saint sat, and holy wells where he baptized converts – or maybe just slaked his thirst. While not relics, these locations are pre-Christian sites Patrick astutely knew to seek out and by his presence convert them to symbols of the new religion. Croagh Patrick in Mayo is an excellent example. By fasting on its summit for 40 days, he turned it from a Druid place of worship to a saint's holy mountain.

As to where his bones lay, there is little dispute. Most say he lies in the graveyard of Down Cathedral, in Downpatrick, Northern Ireland. Down, in Irish "dun," means "hill," and it was on the "hill of Patrick" that his body was purportedly laid to rest when he died in 461. A cathedral was erected there years later.

Supposedly, he has company there. An 11th century Anglo-Norman nobleman, Lord John DeCourcy, is said to have somehow gathered the bodies of two



By Brian McGowan

of Ireland's other most revered saints – Saint Colmcille (Columba), and Saint Brigid – and had them interred with Saint Patrick. Cathedrals in Armagh and Kildare, equally important sites in Ireland, vied with Downpatrick for "burial bragging rights." But in the end, most agree, Saint Patrick rests in Downpatrick, if not in the exact location commonly held to be his grave, at the

worst somewhere close by.

On a final note, I love receiving feedback on these columns, and rarely does an issue pass without at least one comment – all favorable – from a reader. Keep those e-mails coming!

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 or on Twitter (@Bmcgowan52M). 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.

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