



## Court Issues Temporary Restraining Order on Sunshine Home

By Martin Wilbur

An appellate court judge last week granted neighbors of the Sunshine Children's Home and Rehab Center a Temporary Restraining Order that will for now prevent site work related to the facility's approved expansion project from moving forward.

The Dec. 14 decision issued by Associate Justice Valerie Brathwaite Nelson of the state Supreme Court's Appellate Division, Second Department, in Brooklyn, prohibits Sunshine Children's Home on Spring Valley Road from beginning construction or undertaking pre-construction activity at the 33-acre Spring Valley Road site.

Attorneys for the defendants, which include the Sunshine Home, the town's Zoning Board of Appeals and the state Department of Health, have until Jan. 4 to submit papers to the court in response. Petitioners Cynthia and Jeffrey Manocherian are hoping the court grants an injunction and eventually rules that Sunshine must complete a full review under

the state Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

"It's very encouraging in the sense that if the court had looked at our papers and said you guys are out of your minds, all the approvals were good and the court below wrote a 40-page opinion, we don't think this belongs in court, the court would not have issued this restraining order," said attorney Adam Stolorow, who represents the Manocherians. "It's not easy to get a restraining order, so we're taking it as positive momentum for the case."

They are also asking the court to require Sunshine to obtain a use variance because they contend that the zoning does not allow for a nursing home.

Sunshine received approvals earlier this year to more than double the number of beds at the facility from 54 to 118 and increase the building's size from about 19,000 square feet to over 143,000 square feet.

Stolorow said that for a project the size of the Sunshine expansion it's very unusual



Sunshine Children's Home & Rehab Center in the far western section of New Castle had its first setback in court on Dec. 14 when a state Supreme Court appellate judge issued a Temporary Restraining Order. The court is expected to decide next month whether to grant an injunction while the appeal is heard.

for a municipality to make a negative declaration as the ZBA did, particularly in an environmentally sensitive area. Under SEQRA, the negative declaration finds that the project would cause no significant adverse environmental impacts.

"So we're asking the town to go back and

include the full review they missed the first time around," Stolorow said.

Representatives for Sunshine provided a statement last Thursday saying that while the court issued a Temporary Restraining Order, it did so knowing that it would

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## Architect to Present Scaled-Back Memorial Plaza Civic Space Plan

By Anna Young

The landscape architect designing the Memorial Plaza civic space project in Pleasantville will present the latest proposal to village officials next month after budgetary constraints resulted in major changes to the original layout.

When initial plans for the civic space exceeded the \$2 million estimates by more than \$700,000 earlier this year, Jamie Maslyn Larson, of Wagner Hodgson Landscape Architecture, was asked by village officials to redesign the plan and reduce the scope of the work in the half-acre space at the west end of Memorial Plaza.

The project eliminates the right slip lane from Memorial Plaza onto Manville Road to create the space. The original proposal

also included dividing the area into four sections for different uses, including a flexible lawn, a casual porch, a shady seating area and a multiuse plaza.

Larson's redesign resulted in a roughly 5,000-square-foot reduction to the project, Village Administrator Eric Morrissey said.

The train entrance, which was originally designed to have a wheelchair accessible ramp, will now include stairs and a freestanding ramp. Morrissey said the ramp needed to be removed because the area would have required expensive regrading.

Larson also made the south porch area smaller and trimmed additional expenses by reducing the design contingency from 15 to 12 percent. Other changes include keeping most of the existing war memorials

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## Foodies, Check This Out: Food Truck Fest Coming to Mt. Kisco

By Neal Rentz

A new community event is coming to Mount Kisco next spring that promises to be a foodie's delight while benefitting Leonard Park at the same time.

The Village Board approved a proposal from Superintendent of Recreation Joanne Aquilino to hold the Spring Fling Food Truck Festival. The event is scheduled for Saturday, May 18 from 12 to 6 p.m. in the parking lot behind Village Hall. The rain date is May 19.

"This has been something I have wanted to do for a while," Aquilino said.

Aside from a variety of food that will be made available from a still undetermined number of trucks, attendees 21 and older will be able to



Food trucks — and food truck festivals — have become increasingly popular across the country in recent years. Now Mount Kisco is planning the Spring Fling Food Truck Festival for May 18.

buy alcoholic beverages from a beer and wine garden, Aquilino said. There will be music, rides and games, including

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# Court Issues Temporary Restraining Order on Sunshine Home

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have no impact on Sunshine's construction schedule.

"The Preliminary Injunction sought by the Appellants-Objectors will be determined prior to January 19, which is the first day construction is permitted to commence pursuant to the Town Approvals. Sunshine is confident that it will be permitted to proceed, on schedule," the statement read.

Eric Gordon, the attorney for the ZBA and Building Inspector Bill Maskiell, said that

the court is generally careful when handling these types of requests, particularly if a delay does not immediately impact the property owner.

"I don't believe that it was really that surprising, although certainly the town believes that it's approvals and the decision of Judge Marks in the court below was proper and supports the (town's) decisions," Gordon said.

Gordon added that the Temporary

Restraining Order does not prevent the town from issuing permits.

Neighbors have reported that in recent weeks orange construction fencing has been installed along the perimeter of the property.

Cynthia Manocherian said the court granting a Temporary Restraining Order is nice news for the holidays but she and her neighbors have been frustrated by the town's refusal to examine the volumes of

data. One of the many concerns, she said, has been water and for about two months during the summer the facility was receiving supplemental shipments of water.

"The community is very concerned about water and sharing the aquifer," Manocherian said. "Everybody's got wells. There's no municipal water so the town did ask Sunshine to do a well-monitoring program on six neighbors' wells. The town has not shared which wells are part of the program."

Stolorow said they expect to hear sometime in January whether there will be a permanent injunction granted while the appeal is heard. With Sunshine soon ready to start construction and tree removal prohibited by the town from Apr. 1 to Sept. 30, the court's decision on the injunction is crucial.

"We're asking the court to maintain the status quo so if at the end of the day the court determines that we're right and more environmental review needs to be done or Sunshine needs to apply for a different kind of variance, that the environment and the children of Sunshine are protected in the meantime," Stolorow said.

If a permanent injunction is not granted by the Appellate Division, his clients plan to appeal to the state Court of Appeals in Albany, he said.

## Architect to Present Scaled-Back Memorial Plaza Civic Space Plan

*continued from page 1*

in place with a new base and relocating only the World War I monuments and altering the lighting and materials used. An outdoor firepit has been eliminated and the village will also oversee management of construction.

"The sense I have is the core concepts remain and we've knocked out some details that were costing money," Mayor Peter Scherer said. "They really have gone to the mat to solve the budget problem without taking too much flesh out of the project."

While the village has been prepared to contribute up to \$750,000 to supplement the expenses, a \$1.5 million state grant will cover the bulk of the work. Larson now estimates the project will cost \$1.96

million.

Morrissey said that he anticipates construction on the civic space will begin in 2021 and be completed the same year. He said the project can't start until the Manville Road streetscape project is completed.

"If we try to overlap both projects, we run into a timing issue which potentially could have us stopping construction over the winter, which significantly impacts our pricing," Morrissey said.

Scherer said demolition of the slip lane would determine the interval between projects. Morrissey added that a right turn lane from Memorial Plaza onto Manville Road must be constructed with a new traffic light.

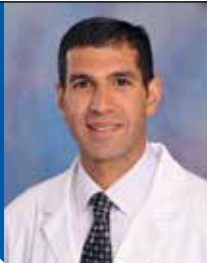
"Part of this is so frustrating, especially the timing," Trustee Joseph Stargiotti said.

"We've been talking about this for a couple of years and here we are a couple of years later projecting a couple of years before the start date. I'm expressing my extreme frustration with how long it takes to get anything done in municipal government."

Morrissey said the village has to abide by the state Department of Transportation's schedule with the Manville Road streetscape project. He added that the redesign still needs approval. The village will have to start the bidding process in 2019.

"It seems far off, but it's not," Morrissey said.

Larson will present her redesign to village officials at the Jan. 14 Village Board meeting. A public hearing will be held the same night on the reconfigured project.



## Is Your Biological Clock Ticking? The Trend toward Later Motherhood...

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#### **Q: What's behind the trend toward later parenthood?**

**A:** Women in the U.S. are waiting longer than ever to have children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In fact, the average age of first-time mothers is now 26, up almost two years since 2014. In the last 10 to 15 years, we've seen the average age of first-time mothers increase greatly, mainly because women are pursuing careers and education first.

#### **Q: I'm turning thirty. Should I be worried about my "biological clock" ticking?**

**A:** The best time for a woman to get pregnant is between the ages of 20 and 35. In this age range, you are most fertile and least likely to experience complications. Though there is a slight risk of declining fertility by the age of 35, it's only about 5 percent. Egg quality and quantity decline after age 35, and good ovulation cycles become less frequent. Eggs of poorer quality are released, making it more difficult to get pregnant.

#### **Q: Will older moms-to-be face risks?**

**A:** A mere twenty to thirty years ago, the maternal age of 35 was considered advanced for childbearing; it was also considered the age at which a woman became — virtually overnight and automatically — a high-risk pregnancy. Today we know that if you're a healthy 35-year-old woman

who is pregnant, you may often have the same degree of risk in pregnancy as that of a younger mom-to-be.

If you're over 35 and considering pregnancy, you may have to visit your physician more frequently to ensure that the pregnancy is proceeding smoothly. I recommend scheduling an appointment for both preconception counseling and genetic counseling. This will help your physician identify and minimize any risk factors so you can improve your chances of a healthy pregnancy. Women over 35 can deliver healthy children and have a safe pregnancy. It's all about taking care of yourself, knowing your risks and coming up with a plan that is right for you and your family.

#### **Q: I'm worried that when I do decide to have children, I won't be able to. What are my options if I can't get pregnant?**

**A:** Advances in technology help many women over 35 get pregnant and give birth to healthy babies. In vitro fertilization is a process by which a woman's eggs are extracted and combined with a sperm sample, creating an embryo that is transferred to the woman's uterus. In vitro fertilization now includes a procedure called pre-implantation genetic diagnosis that helps identify chromosomal and genetic abnormalities, ensuring physicians are implanting healthy embryos.



# Abinanti Calls on Cuomo to Sign Legislation to Protect Toll Payers

Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) and state Sen. David Carlucci (D-Clarkstown) called on Gov. Andrew Cuomo last Thursday to sign the Toll Payer Protection Act into law to protect the public from outlandish fees and penalties.

The two lawmakers made their pitch shortly after Cuomo announced the expansion of cashless tolling on all fixed-price toll barriers on the New York State Thruway.

The Toll Payer Protection Act responds to numerous complaints about the chaotic cashless tolling system used by the Thruway Authority, Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Port Authority.

"This legislation would establish a reasonable user-friendly process to ensure that motorists receive timely notices and can easily pay their toll bills," Abinanti said. "It would ban the unconscionable practices of suspending vehicle registrations and imposing exorbitant fines and penalties on vehicle owners. The cashless tolling systems are not specifically authorized by New York State law and are of questionable legality."

Many vehicle owners claimed they never received their toll bills in the

mail or were already sent to collections by the time they realized they had an outstanding bill.

Additionally, many drivers said the fines and fees were higher than the tolls themselves, leaving them owing thousands to multiple collections agencies.

The legislation will ensure that vehicle owners are properly notified of tolls, protected against exorbitant penalties and safeguarded against auto registration suspensions for failing to pay a toll.

"We need a fair and efficient billing system in place that protects our drivers

under the law," Carlucci said. "No one should be driven into debt or have their registration suspended due to toll-by-mail bills."

Both lawmakers noted that if the current system were working on behalf of drivers then fines would not exceed actual toll fares collected by the state. Cashless tolling began in April 2016 and the Thruway Authority collected more in fines than in fares from July 2017 to January 2018.

On average, toll-by-mail bills made the Thruway Authority about a \$1 million a month in revenue.



Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti, left, and state Sen. David Carlucci urged Gov. Andrew Cuomo to sign new legislation that would put an end to the practice of exorbitant fines for drivers who pay their tolls by mail.

## Mt. Kisco Village Board Approve Comprehensive Plan FGEIS

The process of updating Mount Kisco's Comprehensive Plan moved forward last Monday as the Village Board unanimously approved the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS).

The vote triggers distribution of the document to the public and involved agencies. It answers questions raised by the public during the review this year, Mayor Gina Picinich said.

Officials will now take written comments from the public and the involved agencies on the FGEIS and determine if environmental impacts have been adequately mitigated. If that is the case, the board can adopt a findings statement, said Village Attorney Whitney Singleton.

Written comments from the public and involved agencies will be accepted through Jan. 11. The board is scheduled to vote on the Findings Statement at its Jan. 14 meeting

—Neal Rentz

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# Foodies, Check This Out: Food Truck Fest Coming to Mt. Kisco

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a bouncy house for children, Aquilino added. The festival will be organized by the Recreation Department.

"I love the idea," Deputy Mayor Jean Farber said.

A \$5 fee will be charged for adults and vendors will also be charged to gain entry to sell items, Aquilino said. Bracelets will be worn by anyone 21 and older to allow them to purchase alcoholic beverages, provided village officials don't have a change of heart.

Aside from providing the opportunity to try various foods and beverages,

the festival will raise money for the municipally-owned Leonard Park. Aquilino said that the department, for example, is looking to replace the playground equipment at the park and proceeds would pay for a portion of that expense.

Attending vendors will keep the money earned from selling their food and beverages, she said.

The parking lot behind Village Hall has been selected as the festival's site because the Leonard Park Committee does not want the event held at the park, Aquilino said.

"With some of the deed restrictions we just couldn't get all the committee members on board to do this in Leonard Park," she said.

Trustee Peter Grunthal said he understood why the Committee opposed holding the festival at the park because the deed does not allow for commercial activities, he said. The food stand at the park that operates seasonally is there to serve people using the village pool, Grunthal said.

Schleimer, the board's dissenting vote, said she wasn't opposed to having a food truck festival; however, she

was concerned about alcohol sales, particularly at an event that promises to attract families with children.

"I'm not 100 percent comfortable with that," Schleimer said.

Aquilino said there originally wasn't a plan to sell beer and wine, but since Leonard Park would not be the venue for the festival she felt alcohol sales could be part of the event. However, the sales could be eliminated if that causes difficulties, she said.

Trustee Isi Albanese said it is expensive to obtain a liquor license from the state for one day. As a result, that may discourage vendors from selling alcohol.

Grunthal said alcohol sales should be allowed at the event. Beer and wine were sold at SeptemberFest and the village has not had a problem with alcohol being sold at other events, he said.

The board agreed to have Aquilino and the Recreation Department decide whether alcohol will be sold. However, if wine and beer sales are scrapped, the festival should be relocated to Leonard Park, Picinich said.

Aquilino said there would likely be more foot traffic behind Village Hall and the Leonard Park Committee does not want the program to be held at the park under any circumstances.

## Rehearsals Scheduled for Taghkanic Chorale Singers

The Taghkanic Chorale invites area singers to join them and learn from acclaimed music director Jason Tramm as the chorale rehearses Orff's "Carmina Burana" plus Ives' "Psalm 90," Barber's "Reincarnations" and Dello Joio's "Jubilant Song." Spring season rehearsals start Tuesday, Jan. 8 for performances on May 4 and 5.

The chorale rehearses Tuesday nights from 7:30 to 10 p.m. at the Korean SDA Church, located at 1243 White Hill Rd. in Yorktown Heights, conveniently located near the Route 202 exit off the Taconic Parkway. Prospective members may attend rehearsals during the month of

January before making a decision to join.

The Taghkanic Chorale, an established cultural organization in the Hudson Valley, is a nonprofit, nonsectarian organization. It serves enthusiastic singers and concertgoers from Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Rockland, Orange and the mid-Hudson Valley who appreciate the friendliness of the group, the high caliber of its musical direction and the professionalism of its performances.

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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS



# Chappaqua Transportation Owner Corwin Fondly Remembered

By Martin Wilbur

Joan Corwin was the owner of Chappaqua Transportation for nearly a half-century, responsible for transporting countless children to and from school.

To the legions of people throughout the community who knew her, Corwin was known not only for providing safe transportation throughout the decades, but volunteering at the Chappaqua Volunteer Ambulance Corps, taking up worthy causes through the Pleasantville and Chappaqua Rotary clubs and myriad other efforts.

"She was incredibly generous and that's not just a financial statement but with her time," said Rev. Paul Egensteiner of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Pleasantville, who knew Corwin from Pleasantville Rotary and who officiated her funeral.

Dozens of mourners packed Beecher Flocks Funeral Home in Pleasantville last Thursday to eulogize and remember what Corwin, who died on Dec. 17 at 83 years old, meant to them and to the community.

Many who attended the service were school bus drivers, some of whom told stories of her support and compassion. Employees spoke lovingly of their boss, affectionately referring to Corwin simply as "Ma."

"We loved her and she'll always be a part of my life," said longtime driver Earl Allister.

The generosity that Egensteiner spoke of manifested itself in many ways. During

snowstorms Corwin would bring in homemade soups and chili for New Castle Highway Department workers and police officers. She continued to provide soups for the Highway Department and bus mechanics during cold weather until recently. She also took in several high school students who needed homes.

Among Corwin's many community volunteer efforts was her service as an emergency medical technician for the Chappaqua Volunteer Ambulance Corps starting in 1972. She served stints as second lieutenant, first lieutenant and captain from 1977 to 1982. She served again as captain from 1994 to 1995.

She also volunteered as an emergency room EMT at Northern Westchester Hospital from 1977 to 1984 and as a registered nurse from 1987 to 2000 for the New Castle Senior Citizens.

Corwin was president of Mother's Hens Helpers, an organization she created in 1993 to help parents by providing transportation for nannies and schoolchildren before and after school hours.

"I can't tell you how proud of her I am with everything she's done," said Rebecca Bertoldi, one of her grandchildren.

Prior to her acquisition of Chappaqua Transportation in 1970, Corwin was a transportation supervisor for Northern Westchester BOCES. In 1990, her company was recognized by the U.S. Department of

Labor as one of 15 model small companies in the nation for implementation of its drug testing and Employee Assistance Program.

She also received an associate degree in nursing in 1987 from Westchester Community College and was a registered nurse at Northern Westchester Hospital from 1992 to 1994.

In 1998, Corwin was appointed to the state Bus Driver Training Council by Gov. George Pataki.

Pleasantville Superintendent of Schools Mary Fox-Alter, who knew her from years of Rotary meetings in the village, said the standards she set for safety and professionalism while transporting students was absolute.

But it was her friendship, honesty and integrity that will be missed.

"I want to thank you for touching my life," Fox-Alter said. "You made my life better just for knowing you."

Corwin served as the Chappaqua Rotary's president in 1991 and was named its Citizen of the Year in 1999. She was also the recipient of numerous awards and commendations from various professional



Chappaqua resident Joan Corwin died last week at 83 years old. She owned and operated Chappaqua Transportation for close to 50 years.

and service organizations, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Chamber of Commerce and a Community Service Award from the Chappaqua Rotary in 2013.

She is credited with being instrumental in the passage of legislation banning the use of hand-held cell phones while operating a motor vehicle.

Corwin is survived by her children, Joseph Cipriani, Laurie Dipietro, Theresa Cipriani and Seth Corwin; her sisters, Patricia and Connie; her loving

grandchildren, in addition to Bertoldi, Joseph Cipriani, Jesse Richard, Lindsay Cipriani, Nicole Cipriani, Olivia Cipriani, Steven Borges, Mikala Cipriani, Ashley and Jamie Corwin; great-grandchildren Carolyn Cipriani, Mya Cipriani and Landon Borges; and to all others that referred to her as "Ma." A son, Vincent Cipriani, predeceased her.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Chappaqua Volunteer Ambulance Corps P.O. Box 453, Chappaqua, N.Y. 10514 or the New Castle PBA, P.O. Box 222, Chappaqua, N.Y. 10514 would be appreciated.



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## Obituaries

### Andrew Groenewegen

Andrew J. Groenewegen of Valhalla died unexpectedly on Dec. 21.

He was 22.

Groenewegen was born on Nov. 1, 1996, to Charles and Suzanne (nee Parton) Groenewegen in Bronxville. He graduated Valhalla High School, Class of 2014. He worked for Mercedes-Benz of Greenwich.

Groenewegen is survived by his heartbroken parents, Charles and Suzanne and his brothers, Dylan and Charlie Groenewegen, all of Valhalla; his maternal grandmother, Deanna Parton; his paternal step-grandfather, Robert DeLisio; his aunts

and uncles, Craig and Crissy Parton, Denise and Paul Parton, David Parton, Elizabeth Groenewegen, Loretta DeVito, Linda Pratt and Brent Genzlinger; and many cousins and friends. He was predeceased by his maternal grandfather, Paul Parton, his paternal grandparents, Louise Delisio and Charles E. Groenewegen and aunt Dawn Genzlinger.

Visitation will be at Hawthorne Funeral Home on Wednesday, Dec. 26 from 4 to 9 p.m. where funeral services will be held on Thursday, Dec. 27 at 10 a.m. Interment will follow at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Hawthorne.

### Robert Kenny

Robert J. Kenny of Hawthorne died on Dec. 17 at his residence.

He was 68.

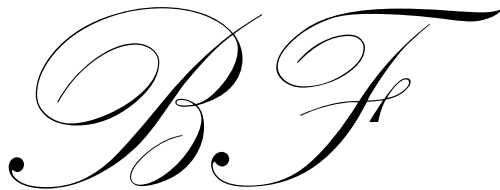
Kenny was born on Dec. 29, 1949, to the late Harold and Helen (nee Gardocki) Kenny in the Bronx. He was a retired custodial engineer with the New York City Board of Education.

He is survived by his devoted wife, Lucille (nee Diomedes) Kenny, of Hawthorne; his loving daughters, Lauren (Chris) Jagenburg of Port Washington, N.Y., Kimberly (Andrew) Damin of

Hawthorne, Christine (Caleb) Morairty of San Francisco and Meghan Kenny of Austin, Texas; one sister, Lorraine (Ken) Sinclair, of Staten Island; and five cherished grandchildren Emma, Brandon, Mason, Owen and Francey. He was predeceased by one brother, John Kenny.

Visitation was at Hawthorne Funeral Home on Dec. 20. A funeral Mass was held at Holy Rosary Church in Hawthorne on Dec. 21 followed by interment at Gate of Heaven Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the American Cancer Society would be appreciated.



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## Police Blotter

### North Castle Police Department

**Dec. 14:** Report of a dispute on Wampus Close at 10:07 a.m. A complainant reported that a fence company is apparently on his property. The caller stated that the company is affiliated with the Byram Hills School District and is not authorized to be there. An officer was dispatched. Report to follow.

**Dec. 15:** A Nethermont Avenue resident reported at 3:11 a.m. that his roommates are coming after him and that he had to barricade himself in his room and then climb out of the window. The caller seemed disorganized and unable to provide any specific information regarding the incident. The responding officers reported that the matter was adjusted.

**Dec. 16:** A caller reported at 1:42 p.m. that a vehicle in the Armonk Tennis Club parking lot was broken into and a bag was taken. The responding officer confirmed a vehicle larceny from the car. Photos and a witness deposition were secured.

**Dec. 16:** Reports of a telephone pole on fire on Maple Way at 9:38 p.m. The Armonk Fire Department responded and Con Edison was notified.

**Dec. 17:** The dispatching officer received a call at 12:41 p.m. from the Nethermont Avenue address where there had been a dispute in the early morning hours of Dec. 15. The caller stated locks were being changed, then he engaged in a verbal dispute with someone in the background and eventually hung up. Officers responded but the matter was adjusted.

### Pleasantville Police Department

**Dec. 16:** Report of a robbery behind Pleasantville High School at 2:01 p.m.

A local resident told police that he was robbed by two youths. Police arrested two males, 14 and 15 years old, who are residents of the Cottage School. The suspects reported to Family Court and will be transferred to another residential facility.

**Dec. 17:** A Choate Lane resident reported a disturbance at 4:12 p.m. The woman screamed into the phone "I need help. I need help," then disconnected the call. On a return call, the anonymous woman stated that she is involved in a verbal dispute with the father of her children and needs help. The woman reported that there are no weapons in the home. Officers responded to the scene.

**Dec. 18:** A 37-year-old Belleville, N.J. man was arrested for marijuana possession at 9:36 a.m. following a traffic stop on Pleasantville Road.

**Dec. 20:** The owner of O'Connor Irish Pub on Bedford Road reported at 12:33 a.m. that when he asked a group of underage males to leave the establishment, they became disruptive, dragging chairs outside as they left. He described the males to the responding officer and that they left on foot toward Bedford Terrace. The officer found the group of six males – four from Chappaqua, one from Pleasantville and another from Mount Kisco – and talked to them. There was no property damage but the males are permanently banned from the bar.

**Dec. 22:** A 57-year-old village resident reported at headquarters at 1:23 p.m. reporting that she sold a grandfather clock on Craigslist and the buyer sent two separate checks totaling \$1,750 for the clock that was listed for \$200. The complainant is concerned that the checks are fraudulent and has not cashed the checks or moved forward with the sale.

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# New Year's Ball Drop, Fireworks and 15 Years of Safe Rides Home

The White Plains New Year's Eve Spectacular will take place again this year at Court and Main streets to ring in 2019 with fun and celebration.

The free event, which is open to the public, begins at 10 p.m. on Dec. 31 and ends at 12:30 a.m. There will be live music, a ball drop and fireworks at midnight by Zambelli.

There is access to the event only at Main Street at Church Street; Court Street at Martine Avenue; Renaissance Square at Williams Street; and at Martine and Mamaroneck avenues.

For the 15th year in a row, Heineken USA, which is based in White Plains, is partnering with the city and the White Plains Business Improvement District for its New Year. Safe Ride. program.

During that time, the program has provided free and safe rides home to more than 5,000 county residents of legal drinking age who celebrate New Year's Eve in downtown White Plains.

The safe rides transportation stand will be on the corner of East Post Road and Mamaroneck Avenue between 11 p.m. on Dec. 31 and 3 a.m. New Year's morning. A dedicated fleet of cars, including at least one that is handicap accessible, will provide complementary rides home for those 21 and older traveling from the heart of downtown White Plains to anywhere in Westchester.



SHAN WONG PHOTO

Pictured, from left, White Plains Mayor Tom Roach, Tara Rush, Stephanie Kersten-Johnston and Carole Sears mark the 15th anniversary of Heineken's New Year's Eve Safe Ride program in White Plains.

"Since 1873, Heineken USA has been a family-owned company that's dedicated to good corporate citizenship by giving back to the community," said Stephanie Kersten-Johnston, director of sustainable business at Heineken USA.

"We proudly call the city of White Plains not only company headquarters, but also our home. It's been an honor to work with our community partners over the past 15 years on the 'New Year. Safe Ride.' program to help ensure that revelers

enjoy their celebrations and arrive home safe."

A recent study by Heineken found that 77 percent of respondents think there are circumstances where it is acceptable to drink and drive, while 49 percent get "caught up having fun" and find it hard to plan ahead. Heineken is encouraging everyone to plan ahead and utilize its convenient New Year. Safe Ride. program so they can enjoy the holiday season more safely and responsibly.

Heineken is also announcing a new product, Heineken 0.0 (pronounced zero zero), a nonalcoholic version of the company's namesake beer, which will launch nationwide in January. Heineken 0.0 was showcased at a party in White Plains on Dec. 12.

"The New Year's Eve Spectacular in White Plains has become the go-to party for many Westchester County residents each year," said White Plains Mayor Tom Roach. "By staying close to home in downtown White Plains, Westchester residents have a convenient place to have fun, and enjoy the New Year. Thanks again to Heineken USA for partnering with us through their highly successful New Year. Safe Ride. program. This program helps keep our streets safe and is an important part of the festivities."



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## Obituaries

### Panayiota Nekos

After a long, beautiful life, Panayiota "Pam" (Patsalos) Nekos of Pleasantville was called into eternal rest on Dec. 15. She was 91.

Nekos was born on July 15, 1927, in Newburgh, N.Y. to Constantine and Agathe (Striphas) Patsalos. She was a graduate of Newburgh Free Academy and received a bachelor's degree in math from Ladycliff College in Highland Falls, N.Y. Due to a teachers' shortage after World War II, she subsequently obtained her elementary school teacher's certification. She taught for several years and then worked for GE as an engineering assistant in its gas turbine division. After raising her family, she was employed at PPG Biomedical Systems as an executive assistant in Pleasantville.

From a young age, Nekos was always a high-energy person who loved the outdoors, dancing, sports, drawing, painting, parades and patriotic events. As a child, she worked in her father's business, Patsalos Brothers Ice Cream and Confectionary Store. She was active in various organizations including hiking and skiing with the OYK Adirondack Club, Contemporary Club, Pleasantville School PTO and several bridge and art groups. She was a longtime member of the Church of Our Savior in Rye, where she was active in the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos, serving as treasurer and she chaired the annual luncheon fundraiser.

On July 6, 1957, she married Peter James Nekos of Kingston, N.Y. and was blessed with three children and their spouses, Athena (Costas) Loukellis (Hartford, Conn.), Barbara (Anthony) Soldano

(Ridgefield, Conn.) and James (Michele Fennelly) Nekos (Katonah). She is also survived by her loving grandchildren, Nicholas, Stephen and Alexander Loukellis, Peter, Demetrius and Georgia Nekos; seven nieces and nephews; and a god-daughter.

In addition to her parents, Nekos was predeceased by her brothers, Demetrius and Peter; sister Georgia (Patsalos) Janis; sisters-in-law Maria (Nekos) Davis and Angelina (Vassel) Patsalos; and brother-in-law Thomas Janis.

Nekos had an appreciation for everyone she met resulting in many longtime friends who will miss her. She will be remembered for her gentle demeanor, wonderful

personality and devotion to her family and friends. Pam and Peter had recently moved to Atria on the Hudson where she was enjoying her new friends and community.

Visitation and a Trisagion was held on Dec. 20 at Beecher Flooks Funeral Home in Pleasantville. A funeral service was held on Dec. 21 at the Greek Orthodox Church of Our Saviour in Rye. Internment followed at All Souls Cemetery in Pleasantville.

Memorial donations may be made in Pam's name to the Greek Orthodox Church of Our Saviour, 2195 Westchester Ave. East, Rye, N.Y. 10580 or The Hillside Food Outreach, P.O. Box 155, Pleasantville, N.Y. 10570.

### Stuart Bush

Stuart Charles Bush, a longtime Pleasantville resident who was raised in Mount Morris, N.Y., died peacefully on Dec. 11.

He was 74.

Bush was a devoted husband, father, brother, uncle, grandfather and friend. He was a decorated Vietnam Navy veteran and educator in the Bronxville School

District for more than 35 years.

He is survived by his adoring wife, Lowen, of 47 years; daughters Robin Meehan and Kaitlyn Conlan; sons-in-law John and Gerald; sisters Joanne Haele and Janis McCormack and her husband Stan; and his five beautiful grandchildren who meant the world to him.

A home visit was held at the family residence on Dec. 15. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

### Helen Tomaino

Helen J. Tomaino of Valhalla and Little Egg Harbor, N.J. died Dec. 20 at her residence.

She was 89.

Tomaino was born on Nov. 1, 1929, to the late Henry and Jeanette McIntyre in New York City. She loved crafts and being by the water, crabbing and fishing at the Jersey Shore.

Tomaino was predeceased by her devoted husband, Daniel Tomaino, in 1988. She is survived by her loving children, Daniel (Patsy) Tomaino of

Valhalla and Little Egg Harbor and Linda (James) Adams of Valhalla; and her five cherished grandchildren, Ashley (James) Romanelli, Anthony Tomaino and Jessica, Justin and Nicole Adams.

Visitation was at Hawthorne Funeral Home on Dec. 23. A funeral Mass was held at Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Hawthorne on Dec. 24, followed by entombment.

In lieu of flowers, donations to either the American Cancer Society or the Alzheimer's Association would be appreciated.

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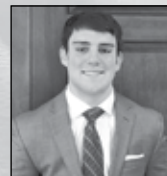
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# Mt. Kisco Resident Treats Neighbors to Christmas Light Show

By Martin Wilbur

Christmas may be over but you can still enjoy a special holiday treat in Mount Kisco for at least another week.

About five years ago, William Serratore decided to do something a little extra with his Christmas decorations. Instead of simply turning them on at nightfall, he bought the license to some popular holiday tunes and an FM transmitter and set his lights to the beat and the rhythm of the music.

The result is a local, homemade 16-channel Christmas light show that has become a hit – at least on Pine Street where Serratore lives.

"It's not grandiose like some of those that you see on a Christmas light TV show," Serratore said. "People do the whole entire house and that kinds of stuff. It's the front of the house and the garage and it's some

popular interesting songs."

Passersby can pull up to the house at 22 Pine St., tune their car radio to 88.1 FM and listen to the continuous 22-minute loop that begins at dusk and is broadcast until about 9 p.m.

To this point, there haven't been enough visitor where Serratore needs to inform the police, just something a little different.

"In my hyperlocal neighborhood, my neighbors know about it and they bring some friends and relatives over and I thought, well, maybe some other people in Mount Kisco could enjoy that as well, so why not share?" he said.

The light show can be seen each evening through Jan. 6. Serratore explained that he keeps it going through the Epiphany, better known as Three Kings Day or until the 12th day of Christmas has been completed.

Now that he has started, Serratore has no plans to stop what has become a Christmas tradition – as long as he's still able to climb onto his roof and string up the lights.

"I would love it if I were a wealthy man, I would do a whole lot more," he said. "I personally feel it's a little gift back at Christmas to kind of add something nice to the neighborhood."



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

For the past five years William Serratore has offered a neighborhood holiday treat after buying the license to several Christmas song and obtaining an FM transmitter to broadcast them so passersby can enjoy his Christmas light show.

## Westlake High Students Become Kids' Secret Santa Claus

By Neal Rentz

Westlake High School students displayed the Christmas spirit this holiday season by playing Santa Claus for children in need.

Nicholas DiPaolo, director of guidance and the school's Service Club adviser, said the club's students have been participating in the Operation Santa program for the past decade.

The U.S. Postal Service sends "Dear Santa" letters from families that can't afford to buy their children gifts. Letters are assigned to students go out and shop

for the requested items.

"Our students really get into the spirit, buying extra items, wrapping and writing letters from Santa," DiPaolo said. "It's really heartwarming to watch, to know despite the privileges we experience, that we take the time to give back."

This year the students shipped 80 gifts to 17 children from the Bronx, Manhattan and New Jersey.

"Operation Santa is one of my favorite service projects to do because I know every gift we give is truly

appreciated and we make the holidays really special for all the families who receive our packages," said Service Club President Faith Summers, a senior.

Many of the children don't ask for a toy or game, DiPaolo said. Instead, they request necessities such as coats and shoes.

"My favorite thing to see is when our students go beyond the wish list and get them toys, games and things most kids might ask for," he said. "I'm proud of our students. They really love this program."

## Happy Holidays!



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

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## Letters to the Editor

### Now is a Chance for Albany, Washington to Forge Alzheimer's Progress

I am writing to congratulate the recently re-elected Congresswoman Nita Lowey and state Sen. Andrea Stewart Cousins. As an advocate for the Alzheimer's Association, I am proud to have them as my representatives and laud them for all they have done to support those suffering with this devastating disease.

I know the awful toll of this disease having lost my mother to early-onset Alzheimer's. Her diagnosis at age 56

was an earth-shattering experience for my family, and we had no idea how disproportionately women are impacted.

Every 65 seconds another brain develops Alzheimer's and two-thirds of them belong to a woman. In New York State, there are currently 400,000 people living with Alzheimer's and one million caregivers providing \$1.2 billion in care.

The time is now to take action on this unprecedented social and health issue.

With Rep. Lowey as the chair of the

Appropriations Committee and Sen. Stewart-Cousins as the majority leader in the New York State Senate, Westchester County now harnesses the incredible potential of two dynamic women and we are poised to make significant progress in 2019.

It truly is a Happy New Year!

**Nancy Keane**  
Ossining

### New York Must Act to Ensure it Can Fulfill its Energy Needs

Looking ahead as the new year approaches, dark clouds are gathering over our energy horizon.

Let's start with the ill winds represented by the many taxes and fees that comprise nearly 25 percent of our utility bills, making them among the highest in the country. Lower-income New Yorkers and small businesses are disproportionately hurt by these charges. Reducing or eliminating them must be a priority for our legislators in 2019.

Then there's the growing thundercloud presented by the impending closure, by 2021, of Hudson Valley's Indian Point nuclear power plant. Replacing its

2,000 megawatts of baseload power is achievable, but it will require completion of both the Cricket Valley and CPV Valley natural gas facilities – yet approvals are still pending for the pipelines needed to fuel these plants.

Finally, looking even further out on the horizon, we see the lofty goals of the Clean Energy Standard, requiring that New York generate half its energy from renewables by 2030. This is a bold and admirable plan requiring enormous wind and solar projects that must overcome both "Not in My Back Yard" opposition and huge financial hurdles. Siting and building renewables, and updating our

aged and fragile transmission grid, takes years – and time is rapidly running out.

New York's growing businesses and consumer demands, including electric cars, require clean, affordable, reliable energy in abundance, produced for New Yorkers, by New Yorkers. We must mobilize now to ensure that our brightest energy future – and a new year is the perfect time to start.

**Arthur Kremer**  
Chairman  
New York Affordable Reliable  
Electricity Alliance

### An Open Letter to Our Congressional Delegation on the High Cost of War

Dear Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Congresswoman Lowey,

As my representatives it is your duty to decide whether our country goes to war or not. You and your congressional colleagues have abdicated this responsibility and allowed our presidents to make disastrous decisions.

Our wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, to name just three, have increased instability and terror. They boost profits for corporate campaign donors

but imperil our planet with pollution. The U.S. military is the world's biggest polluter and cause of climate change.

Gillibrand stands against sexism. Schumer gives unconditional support to Israel. Nita Lowey is concerned with vaping and the addiction of our children. We can consider nuances and still live with these issues, but war and climate change have pushed our planet too far. Our world might become uninhabitable in our lifetimes. What about our

children? Do we have the political will to save them?

Will we cease and desist from destroying our environment with war or will the incumbency of war and self-destruction become our legacy?

This is our watch.

Thank you for reading.

**Steve Sloane**  
Ossining

### County Offers Residents Certificates to Reduce College Tuition Costs

Westchester residents can reduce their cost of tuition at community colleges outside of the county.

Certificates of Residence, which can be obtained from the Department of Finance, qualify students for residential rates at two-year SUNY and CUNY colleges. So far, 1,742 certificates have been issued in 2018. That number is expected to be closer to 2,000 as

students begin to submit applications for the Spring 2019 semester.

Commissioner of Finance Ann Marie Berg said the department has seen an increase in the number of applications over the last few years.

Students have a 90-day window – from 60 days before and 30 days after the start of the semester – to apply for a certificate and send it to their schools.

Each certificate is valid for one year and one school. If students take classes at more than one school they must apply for multiple certificates.

"There is no cost involved to get the certificate," said Berg. "If you meet the resident requirement for Westchester and New York State and are attending a community college outside of Westchester County you'll get the financial benefit."

Students, who have lived in Westchester for six months and New York State for one year qualify for the program.

Applications can be found on the Department of Finance's website and must be submitted by mail.

## Correction

In last week's article about noise complaints at Westchester Airport ("Business Group: Airport Noise Complaints Come From Few Residents"), it was incorrectly reported that the county's Airport Advisory Board had

approved a resolution calling for a halt to all capital expenditures until the airport master plan supplement is complete. The board discussed that issue but tabled the resolution. The Examiner regrets the error.



# County Launches Climate Action Task Force to Reduce Carbon Emissions

Speaking to the crowd gathered at a recent workshop titled “Confronting Climate Change: What to Expect in Our Region,” County Executive George Latimer announced the creation of a Climate Crisis Task Force tackling actions needed to reduce Westchester’s carbon footprint and make the county more resilient.

Steered by Sustainability and Energy Conservation Director Peter McCartt, the task force, led by Janet Harchham, Beth Sauerhaft and Anjali Sauthoff, will be creating short-term action initiatives for the county while working on an updated long-term Climate Action Plan. Both of these moves will help shape Westchester’s climate future now and going forward.

“Westchester County is one part of a very large puzzle in the country, and we all must work together to make a big impact on stopping climate change,” Latimer said. “While certain levels of government might down play its impact – and even say its fiction – I don’t. We are going to fight for our climate’s future; we are going to do it together and it starts right here at home.”

This task force joins an already extensive list of actions taken by the Latimer Administration aimed at combatting global climate change.

- These actions include:
- Entering into a Demand Response Program that eliminates the chance of brownouts and blackouts and the subsequent need for more expensive infrastructure repairs and upgrades;
  - Solarizing county properties and facilities while creating energy savings and minimizing expensive and non-sustainable infrastructure construction;
  - Electrifying county fleets, which will result in savings on repairs and fuel costs, reducing reliance on fossil-fuels and reducing pollutants;
  - Expanding electronic vehicle infrastructure, creating a network of charging stations across the county;
  - Expanding recycling measures, including new programs for textile and food scrap recycling, which minimizes waste disposal expenses including incineration;
  - Initiating a teleconferencing system which minimizes travel expenses as well reducing vehicle emissions; and
  - Installing 30,000 LED bulbs

countywide that maximizes energy savings and lowers the cost of maintenance of lighting.

“I am proud of the work we are doing here in Westchester County under County Executive Latimer’s leadership,” McCartt said. “Global warming is real and we need to address our critical infrastructure to withstand rising waters on both sides of the county. Devastating storms and flood surges are going to be much more intense and frequent, we need to build resilience in addition to being proactive on long term sustainability.”



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## Handmade Holiday Memories to Last a Lifetime or Two

Before I married, I had a roommate, Tom, who was an excellent artist and craftsman, a fellow who added more taste and style to our place than one normally would expect to find in an apartment occupied by two bachelors.

We shared living space for little more than a year but when Christmas approached, he suggested that we have a fully decorated tree. I was somewhat surprised, even resistant, to such an idea but he insisted. Because he was really into crafts, he suggested that we make our own ornaments. I was definitely not interested in that prospect, so I suggested that he make the ornaments and I offered to buy the tree.

Because he worked in the garment district, he had access to shops where he bought spools of ribbons, many kinds of different glass beads, sequins, buttons and feather plumes. With a supply of different sized Styrofoam balls and lots of straight pins, he had assembled all the makings of a home industry for ornaments. And artistic as he was, he crafted ornaments that were indeed sensational.

Impressed by his artistry, I thought I'd try my hand at it and must confess, while I'm not at all crafts oriented, I enjoyed it.



By Bill Primavera

When I moved out, I didn't get custody of the handmade Christmas balls, but soon after I was able to bring the concept to my wife and, as newlyweds, we had our first project to share.

In the days before A.C. Moore and Michael's, not to mention Martha Stewart, the place to get the wildest stuff for ornamental projects was in Manhattan's hat district, west of Fifth Avenue on 38th Street. On my way home from work each day, I'd pass through and buy interesting hat decorations at a time when women still wore hats.

Then, immediately following dinner, my wife and I would sit in the living room, spread out my finds on our large coffee table and get to work.

We came up with the idea of each making one elaborate tree ornament every year throughout our marriage, but we got so much into our new hobby that it became an obsession the first year. The balls became more and more elaborate as we practiced our skills, and many were themed with their own names.

One, completely covered in pink ribbon ruching, was named our Baby Girl ball, even though we didn't have a baby yet. There was the Grace Kelly ball with pale blue and yellow ribbons and pearls; the

Swan Lake ball with white ribbons, white feathers and crystals; the Can-Can Girl ball with black and red ribbons, beads and a black feather plume on top; and a large Faberge ball with semiprecious gems taken from old pieces of jewelry.

The tips of our thumbs had developed calluses from pushing in the pins until we got smart and used thimbles to aid our obsession.

We decided it would be safer to buy a large artificial tree so that there would be no threat of sap staining the balls, and we kept producing our little gems until we ran out of space on the tree. We had become Christmas ball addicts.

During that first holiday season, we magnanimously allowed any visitor to select one of our creations for their trees, and still our tree seemed overlaid. We must have OD'd on our first year's attempt because we haven't made a single ball since then. We did, however, add antique and



BILL PRIMAVERA PHOTO

The Home Guru and wife decorated home-made ornaments fashioned out of Styrofoam balls, straight pins, ribbons, beads and feathers.

specialty ornaments over the years as presents to each other.

To this day, couples with whom we are still in contact from our first year together remind us annually that they think of us when they take their gifted ball out of its box.

As we have grown older, our tree has become smaller, and our daughter, who was predated by that pink ribbon ball in her honor, is now the recipient, one by one, of our early Christmas ornament binges.

I guess that's the kind of stuff newlyweds do together, projects that can be appreciated later in life when there's time to do so. That's exactly

what has happened.

Bill Primavera, while a publicist and journalist, is also a Realtor® associated with William Raveis Real Estate and Founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc. ([www.PrimaveraPR.com](http://www.PrimaveraPR.com)). To engage the services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.

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# Ronald McDonald House Provides a Necessary Respite for Families

By Martin Wilbur

The most sought-after lodging in Westchester isn't one of the hotels in White Plains or facilities that are scattered in communities throughout the county.

It is Ronald McDonald House on the campus of Westchester Medical Center for families who have children at Maria Fareri or Blythedale children's hospitals in Valhalla. Opened in 2011, it provides those families that have a sick child with overnight accommodations in a hotel-style suite with a television, two queen-size beds and toiletries.

There are meals, two laundry rooms to wash clothes and a comfortable place to take a nap or quietly reflect. There is also a playroom for young siblings and a game room for older children.

For most people, an hour-plus commute for a doctor's appointment every once in a while, isn't much of an inconvenience. For those with a child that has a life-threatening medical issue, the emotional and financial stress to their families can be too much to bear.

"We're lucky if we have access to quality health care because it's not a big deal for us to go down to the city, but there are families that don't have the means or live out of state or out of the country," said Christina Riley, the executive director of Ronald McDonald house in Valhalla,



The Ronald McDonald House in Valhalla provides a comfortable, homey place for families to stay when they have a child at one of the two nearby children's hospitals. Inset top: The kitchen and dining room at the Ronald McDonald House. Inset bottom: One of the 12 rooms made available to families with a child at Maria Fareri or Blythedale children's hospitals.



one of more than 300 locations around the world to help families who have a child with a health crisis. "We give these families the ability to have that access to health care that they need."

Despite providing more than 1,500 families accommodations since its opening nearly eight years ago, the occupancy rate at the 12-room facility is 100 percent virtually every night, said Director of Events Lisa Fine. In fact, there's a nearly perpetual waiting list that

averages 12 to 15 families, she said. The typical length of stay ranges from 22 to 25 days.

Fine said that Ronald McDonald House asks most families to check out after 30 days and apply again two weeks later if they need to stay longer. However, depending on the condition of a child and where the family lives that requirement is sometimes waived. Since Maria Fareri draws patients from all over the world, it is s unfeasible to ask some

families to leave, she said.

About 63 percent of the families come from the mid-Hudson Valley counties of Orange, Putnam Dutchess, Ulster and Sullivan.

"They all understand that there's a whole hospital of families up there and everybody is taking their turn," Fine said. "I wish we had 12 more rooms."

Families are asked to contribute only a \$15-a-day donation for what is currently estimated to cost \$219 a night, Fine added.

The convenience of being located within a walk across the parking lot from a sick child instead of driving an hour or more or finding expensive accommodations is a blessing. Earlier this month, Favi Cuesto of the Bronx gave birth to a son whose lungs were filled with fluid that blocked his ability to breath. He was rushed to Maria Fareri Children's Hospital, and while his condition was improving about a week into his stay,

*continued on page 16*

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# Ronald McDonald House Provides a Necessary Respite for Families

*continued from page 15*

health scares always create upheavals.

But for Cuesto, her husband and their three other children who are between one and six years old, being together with their needs taken care is a tremendous relief.

“It’s a very scary time, for sure,” Cuesto said. “We don’t know what’s going to happen. We don’t know how the kids are taking it, so just the fact that it’s kind of homey, the kids are distracted, it’s a good distraction and it kind of helps our stress and their stress, too.”

In the dining room, families have the ability to bring and prepare their own food if they’d like. Each family has a space in a commercial-style refrigerator, their own cupboard and access to the pantry, Fine said. The pantry contains donated nonperishable food, including cereal, pasta, peanut butter and jelly and canned foods in case any guest needs to eat during off hours.

Corporate sponsor Coca-Cola’s vending machine dispenses beverages for just 25 cents each, she said. Those quarters go toward the annual budget.

There is also one day room that can be reserved for up to three hours by a family or individual with a child in the hospital. They can use that smaller

room to take a nap and a shower.

“By staying here, we do try to alleviate a lot of that stress because the parents know if something’s going on in the hospital at three o’clock in the morning, they’re three steps across the parking lot,” Fine said.

Most of the funding for Ronald McDonald House comes from private sources, Riley said. About 10 percent is derived from the McDonald’s corporation with donations and fundraising accounting for the remainder. The annual budget for the Valhalla facility is about \$930,000, she said.

The first steps are being taken for an expansion that would at least double the number of rooms with possibly as many as 30 rooms, Riley added. Families, particularly those that ask for a room for one night because their child may return for a follow up visit or recurring treatment, are turned down because of lack of space, she said.

“So to be able to help these families, in addition to everyone we serve, would be wonderful because it’s a hardship to take off as a family, drive down here, stay overnight with a child,” Riley said.

# Line Up a Summer Job in January at Playland Job Fair

Mark your calendar for the Playland Job Fair on Saturday, Jan. 12 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the County Center in White Plains. On-the-spot interviews will be conducted at this event for the first 300 candidates to arrive.

Positions to be filled include cashiers, ride operators, lifeguards, park management, EMTs, mechanics, custodial staff, IT technicians, human resources interns, marketing interns and a junior graphic designer. Playland’s seasonal employment runs from April through September.

Although no prior experience is required for most positions, prospective employees should have a positive attitude, enthusiasm, good communication skills and the ability to work a flexible schedule.

Applicants must be at least 16 years old. Some positions require applicants to be a minimum of 18 years of age. Anyone under 18 who plans to complete their application

prior to the job fair must have the form signed by a parent or guardian to be considered for an interview. Those under 18 who wish to complete their application onsite at the job fair must bring a parent or guardian to the event to sign the form in order for an interview to take place.

Eligible applicants who may wish to enroll for direct deposit must bring a voided blank check or a bank-issued direct deposit setup form that includes routing number and account number printed on the document.

To apply during the job fair, bring a completed application, a valid photo identification, Social Security card plus contact information for three references. Applications can be obtained by calling 914-813-7010 or by visiting [www.PlaylandPark.org](http://www.PlaylandPark.org), where an application can be downloaded or submitted online.

THERE’S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz

By Edward Goralski

**Most Wonderful Time of the Year.** This week the quiz words are taken from the book “Weird and Wonderful Words” edited by Erin McKean. The book “is a potpourri of colorful and strange words.” Here is your chance to expand your vocabulary with some weird and wonderful words.

1. **expergefaction** (n.)

A) a tentative procedure

B) something that explains

C) waking up

2. **ninguid** (adj.)

A) having much snow

B) unhurried

C) sharp

3. **halch** (v.)

A) to swindle

B) embrace

C) compel to go

4. **sternutation** (n.)

A) act of sneezing

B) act of squinting

C) act of sweating

5. **verecund** (adj.)

A) empty

B) bashful

C) deliberate

6. **emacity** (n.)

A) a fondness for buying

B) a cozy atmosphere

C) pleasant conversation

7. **rassasy** (v.)

A) to analyze

B) blunt an attack

C) satisfy a hungry person

8. **logodaedaly** (n.)

A) a dispute about words

B) a word puzzle

C) cunning use of words

ANSWERS:

1. C. Waking up, from a Latin word meaning “make awake.”

2. A. Having much snow, used to describe a place.

3. B. To hug or embrace. A citation for this word from the Latin ninguis, meaning snow.

4. A. The act of sneezing or a sneeze. Something dates to 1650.

5. B. Shy, coy, bashful. Related is vergynous that causes sneezing is sternutatory.

6. A. A fondness for buying things. Comes from a Latin verb meaning “to buy.”

7. C. To satisfy a hungry person. Related to satiate.

8. C. Ingenious or cunning use of words. Logo-daedaly is related to Daedalus, the designer of the Labyrinth for the Minotaur of Crete.

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# Unique Pleasantville Firm Helps Companies Find Key to Success

By Martin Wilbur

There's a Pleasantville-based firm that provides a service to more than 80 Fortune 500 companies that no one else can currently offer in the United States.

The firm is OrgVitality, which employs organizational and industrial psychologists, technologists and project managers, to develop customized, scientific-based employee surveys with the primary goal of helping its clients improve company operations and effectiveness.

"We're really at this point, and I'm sure others will come into the field, but at this point we're the last U.S. company that's doing truly customized work in this space, the employee survey space," said CEO Jeffrey Saltzman.

That was ensured, at least for the time being, following its merger this fall with The Metrus Group of New Jersey. Saltzman said his firm has offices in India and Israel where the tech staff is located while the consultants and project managers are in the U.S. Saltzman works remotely in Pleasantville and partner and Vice President of Consulting Scott Brooks is based in San Francisco.

OrgVitality deals mainly with major firms, whether it be the Fortune 500 firms or outfits with several thousand employees, Saltzman said. There is also a collection of nonprofit organizations that retain OrgVitality. Typically, smaller companies

don't have the structure to warrant using scientific surveys, although there is one OrgVitality client in Wisconsin with about 400 employees that has used their expertise for the last six years, he said.

The most common service OrgVitality provides is its strategic surveys. Surveys are developed for a wide variety of industries, but Saltzman's team tailors what they present to address unique needs and challenges for each client.

"From an employer's perspective, what's enabling you to achieve your strategy and what's getting in the way?" explained Saltzman, a psychology major at Binghamton who switched his concentration from clinical to industrial/organization for graduate school. "What's enabling you could be engaged employees, but it could be you have a great product in the right location and customers love the quality and on and on. So we're evaluating an organization's strategic aspect to perform."

Once the data is compiled, OrgVitality's personnel analyzes it and presents a report to the company, which high-ranking executives will read and evaluate. Saltzman said those reports create a narrative of the company's status, what might be ripe for improvement and an action plan for that improvement. Since the company works with many international companies, reports can be written in 30 languages, he said.

Another common service is the 360

assessment. Brooks said companies use that evaluation when looking to develop individuals, which may address questions about an organization's leadership style or whether there should be executive coaching.

Sometimes OrgVitality is asked to create customer survey work. Lately, the company has been approached by police around the nation, including the Yonkers Police Department, Brooks said.

"We've been doing a lot of law enforcement public survey work where law enforcement and fairness is usually something that is very important, and how the public perceives law enforcement around them is critical," he said.

It's really less about the type of work the client does and how much an organization's leadership wants to improve operations, Saltzman said.

"Most of the time it's just good management practices," said Saltzman, who hopes to soon find suitable office space in Pleasantville that will serve as his firm's



Jeffrey Saltzman, CEO of OrgVitality, a Pleasantville company that conducts scientific surveys using organizational and industrial psychologists to help corporations and organizations improve operations.

headquarters. "Sometimes the companies that do this the best are the companies that need this the least, right? Because they're good companies and it's part of good practices that we're going to do this. That's what keeps them the best and the companies that sort of shy away from this are companies that should be doing it."

With technology and scientific advances constantly being made, the field of industrial/organizational psychology will continue to evolve, Saltzman said. Major improvements could be realized with the infusion of artificial intelligence, he

said.

For example, if a company was looking at who would be best suited to relocate to a foreign country, the factors to determine that "would be more complex than sending someone to the moon," Saltzman said.

"What makes an organization filled with people successful is infinitely more complex from a standpoint of boiling it down to algorithms," he said.

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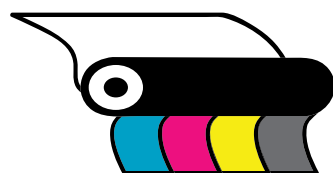
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# Happenings

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## Wednesday, Dec. 26

**Zumba Fitness.** Achieve long-term benefits while having a blast in one exciting hour of calorie-burning, body-energizing, awe-inspiring movements meant to engage and captivate for life. For all fitness levels. Dance Emotions, 75 S. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua. 9 a.m. Every Monday and Wednesday at 9 a.m. and Saturdays at 10 a.m. Drop in or weekly discount rates available. Info: Contact Peggy at 914 960-4097.

**New Mommy and Daddy Meet-Up.** Whether it's your first child or your fifth, this is a great way to get out of the house, meet new friends and enjoy time with your baby. World Cup Nursery School, 160 Hunts Lane, Chappaqua. 10:25 to 11:10 a.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-238-9267 ext. 20.

**Holiday Howl.** Get outside during the holidays and learn about the mythology, biology and ecology of wolf families and discover why this season is such a magical time for packs in North America. Guests will assemble "wolfy" gifts for ambassador wolves Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and then enjoy watching the wolves tear them open. Guests can also behold the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Adults: \$14. Children (under 12): \$11. Also Dec. 26 at 11 a.m. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

**Bilingual Storytime.** Sing songs and read picture books in English and Spanish. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 11:15 to 11:45 a.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: Visit 914-666-8041 or [www.mountkiscopubliclibrary.org](http://www.mountkiscopubliclibrary.org).

**Red Cross Blood Drive.** One donor can save up to three lives. New donors needed. Walk-ins welcome. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 12 to 5 p.m. Info and to sign up: Visit [www.RedCrossBlood.org](http://www.RedCrossBlood.org) and enter the sponsor key word Blood Drive.

**Affordable Care Act Navigator.** A trained navigator provided by the county Department of Health will be available to help people with choosing and signing up for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act and the state health marketplace. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 2:30 to 7 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Also Thursdays from 1 to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Appointment required. Info and appointment for Wednesday sessions: 914-336-6026. Info and appointment for Thursday and Saturday sessions: 914-813-5192.

**Family Bingo.** Bring the whole family to play Bingo and win books. All ages welcome. Ruth Keeler Memorial Library, 276 Titicus Rd., North Salem. 3 to 4:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-669-5161 or [www.keelerlibrary.org](http://www.keelerlibrary.org).

**Knitting at the Library.** Knitters and crocheters of all skill levels. For ages 10 and up. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-864-8041 or [www.mountkiscopubliclibrary.org](http://www.mountkiscopubliclibrary.org).

**Light-o-Rama Christmas Light Show.** The Serratore Family is pleased to announce that their humble Light-o-Rama Christmas light show is now running. The show is 22 minutes long and can be enjoyed from the privacy of your vehicle by tuning into 88.1 FM. Happy holidays! 22 Pine St., Mount Kisco. Dusk until 9 p.m. (The show runs in a continuous loop.) Daily through Jan. 6.

**Westchester's Winter Wonderland.** A one-of-a-kind holiday event featuring the Santa Experience, unlimited skating, a circus, great rides, food trucks, gift vendors and more on weekends and select dates through December. Kensico Dam Plaza, 1 Bronx River Parkway, Valhalla. 5 to 9 p.m. \$20. Also Dec. 27, 30 and 31 from 5 to 9 p.m. and Dec. 28 and 29 from 5 to 10 p.m. Info: Visit [www.Wwinterwonderland.com](http://www.Wwinterwonderland.com).

**Art Series: Aubrey Beardsley.** A look at the works of Beardsley, who was born in 1872, which are remarkable illustrations and images. A major contributor to the development of Art Nouveau, Beardsley was a collaborator in the Aesthetic art movement that helped to change the art world in his brief 25 years. Also, a review of the art, artists and museums that have been covered during the past several months. Discussion led by Professor Valerie Franco. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

## Thursday, Dec. 27

**Knitting Circle.** This group is open to everyone who has an interest in knitting. Live, love, laugh, learn and have fun together during these creative journeys. Come share patterns and ideas and celebrate creative spirits together while enjoying the ancient art of knitting. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. Every Monday and Thursday (except Dec. 31). Info: 914-273-3887.

**Life Line Theater Music Program.** An outlet for unlocking the potential of children and adults with special needs through integrated arts and life skills programs. Drop in anytime and join founder Billy Ayres as he uses singing, dancing, creating plays, artwork and gardening to help participants realize their strengths and potential contributions to their communities. Ayres has created a technique called improvisational integrated music/drama. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free. Also Dec. 28 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info: Visit [www.lifelinetheaterinc.org/index.html](http://www.lifelinetheaterinc.org/index.html).

**Wolves of North America.** Learn about the mythology, biology and ecology of wolf families and discover why it's a special time for packs in North America. Whether the wolves are living on the Arctic tundra or the woodlands of the southwest, wolf families are out searching for prey as they prepare for winter. Guests will visit ambassador wolves Atka, Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and possibly the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem 11 a.m. Adults: \$14. Children (under 12): \$11. Also Dec. 28, 29, 30 and 31. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

**Storytime.** For children 18 months to five years old. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 11:15 to 11:45 a.m. Free. Every Thursday. Info: Visit 914-666-8041 or [www.mountkiscopubliclibrary.org](http://www.mountkiscopubliclibrary.org).

**Mahjongg Club.** Intermediate players welcome. Participants must bring their own set. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 1 p.m. Free. Every Thursday. Info: 914-666-8041 or [www.mountkiscopubliclibrary.org](http://www.mountkiscopubliclibrary.org).

**Kwanzaa Celebration.** Includes traditional drumming by Kofi and Sankofa Dance & Drum Ensemble and performances by White Plains Youth Bureau drummers and dancers, White Plains Steppers, Praise Dance, storytelling and books for children and more. A cultural Karamu feast will be provided by ShopRite following the program. Thomas H. Slater Center, 2 Fisher Court, White Plains. 2 p.m. Free. Info: 914-769-7186.

**"Polar Express."** A screening of this G-rated movie. All welcome. Ruth Keeler Memorial Library, 276 Titicus Rd., North Salem. 3 p.m. Free. Info: 914-669-5161 or [www.keelerlibrary.org](http://www.keelerlibrary.org).

**DIY Snowflake.** Come in from the cold and create adorable snowflakes using cotton, glue, some glitter and paper. For children three to 10 years old. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4 to 5 p.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-864-0130.

**Read to Rover.** Dogs love listening to stories. Come meet Rover and read your favorite story. For children five years old and up. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 5 to 6 p.m. Free. Every Thursday. Info: 914-666-8041 or [www.mountkiscopubliclibrary.org](http://www.mountkiscopubliclibrary.org).

**"The Madness of King George."** It's 1786 and King George III is the most powerful man in the world, but as his behavior becomes increasingly erratic, ambitious politicians and the scheming Prince of Wales threaten to undermine the power of the Crown and expose him. Written by one of Britain's best-loved playwrights, Alan Bennett, this epic play features Mark Gatiss in the title role and Adrian Scarborough. A broadcast from London's National Theatre. Jacob Burns Film Center, 364 Manville Rd.,

Pleasantville. 6:30 p.m. Members: \$20 Non-members: \$30. Info and tickets: Visit [www.burnsfilmcenter.org](http://www.burnsfilmcenter.org).

**Lucy's Laugh Lounge: Welcome to the Party!** Frankie Becerra is bringing back his popular show. Lucy's Lounge, 446 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 8 p.m. \$20. Info and advance tickets: Visit [www.lucyslaughs.com](http://www.lucyslaughs.com). Type in the promo code Examiner at the prompt when buying tickets online.

## Friday, Dec. 28

**Magic Show for Children.** Join magician Jonathan Blair for a lively show that will include magic, juggling, comedy and lots of audience participation. For children five years old and up and their families. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 11 to 11:50 a.m. Free. Info: 914-769-0548 or [www.mountpleasantlibrary.org](http://www.mountpleasantlibrary.org).

**ZUMBA®** With Amy. Fun cardio dance fitness workout, low-impact approach, easy learning environment. This feel-good workout is exercise in disguise. Free trial class available. Addie-Tude Dance Center, 42 Memorial Plaza, lower level, Pleasantville. 11 a.m. to noon. \$14 drop-in fee. Every Friday. Also Tuesdays from 10 to 11 a.m. (except Jan. 1). Walk-ins welcome. Info: Call or text the instructor at 914-643-6162 or visit [www.amyolin.zumba.com](http://www.amyolin.zumba.com).

**"Mary Poppins."** A screening of this G-rated movie from 1964 starring Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke. All welcome. Ruth Keeler Memorial Library, 276 Titicus Rd., North Salem. 2 p.m. Free. Info: 914-669-5161 or [www.keelerlibrary.org](http://www.keelerlibrary.org).

**DIY Popsicle Stick Reindeer.** Make your own reindeer made from popsicle sticks, pom-poms and pipe cleaners for the antlers. For children three years old and up. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 2 to 3:30 p.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-864-0130.

**Evening Howl for Adults Only.** Enjoy visiting the wolves during their favorite hour – dusk. Learn about the mythology, biology and ecology of wolves in North America while enjoying a spread of wine and cheese. Guests will take a short sunset hike to howl with Ambassador wolves Atka, Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and potentially behold the center's critically endangered red wolves and Mexican wolves, too. For adults 21 years old and up. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 5:30 p.m. \$20. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

**Moondance: The Ultimate Van Morrison Tribute Show.** Rock 'n' roll doesn't get any better than Van Morrison. Van the Man has done it all, from classic rockers like "Brown Eyed Girl" and "Domino" to legendary tunes like "Tupelo Honey" and "Into the Mystic," the legend

*continued on page 20*

# The Celtic Fringes: From the Mists of Time, Alive Today

By Brian McGowan

What do Ireland, Scotland, Brittany (France), Galicia (Spain), Galatia (Turkey) and Wallachia (Romania) all have in common? They are what remains of a culture older than the classic Greeks and Romans, which echoes yet in the legends, music and customs of people who trace their roots back to a world pre-dating written history – that of the ancient Celts.

Originating in the Hallstatt territory (modern day Austria) during the Iron Age 3,000 years ago, the Celts spread across most of Europe prior to the emergence and ultimate dominance of the Roman Empire. They even ventured into western Asia.

My wife and I were astounded when we toured northern Italy a few years ago and visited the historic town of Bergamo, inhabited for the last 3,000 years, and were told by the local tour guide that it originated as a Celtic town. The might of the Roman Empire proved inexorable, and the Celts, never a united political entity, slowly fell, tribe by tribe, to the Romans.

The Battle of Alesia, fought in modern-day France in 52 BC, was an epic clash between the Romans under Julius Caesar and a number of Celtic tribes united for a while under a chieftain named Vercingetorix. The Romans won. Had they

not, might Gibbons in 1776 have written “The Decline and Fall of the Celtic Empire” instead?

In the wake of Alesia, the Celtic sun dimmed, until it shone only in the remotest areas at the edges of Roman expansion, what is today called “The Celtic Fringe,” that group of regions holding the cultural remnants of the ancient Celts. The “fringe” extends through many lands: Ireland, arguably the closest descendant; Scotland; Wales; the Isle of Man; Cornwall (England); Brittany; Galicia; and possibly even Galatia in modern day Turkey, to whose inhabitants St. Paul penned a letter or two.

Perhaps the greatest heritage shared among these regions today is musical, something very evident on a recent evening at the Sheen Center on Bleecker Street in Manhattan. It is where the Irish group Lunasa took the stage and regaled its audience with an extravaganza of sound, covering tunes both new and old, in what was billed as a Lunasa Christmas From Ireland celebration.

The Sheen Center, named for renowned progressive 20th century Roman Catholic Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, is an intimate venue with amazing acoustics and a perfect place for Lunasa’s distinctive sound, bringing traditional Irish music to an entirely new level.

Lunasa has changed its cast since the group was founded in 1997. The only original member is Trevor Hutchinson, whose stand-up double bass fiddle provides a solid underpinning of sound to his fellow band members: uilleann piper Cillian Vallely; flutist and comic spokesperson Kevin Crawford; fiddler Colin Farrell; and guitarist Ed Boyd.

In several sets the band roamed far from the Emerald Isle and brought the audience to a foot-stomping, hand-clapping crescendo with several tunes from Brittany and Galicia, where the local tradition is alive and well and remarkably close to Irish trad, with similar instrumentation, meter and drive.

Another addition to the stage, reflecting Lunasa’s continuing metamorphosis, was guest vocalist Ashley Davis, who performs often with the group, whom she affectionately refers to as “her boys.” Upcoming New York area appearances include the Tarrytown Music Hall (Mar. 16) and Symphony Space (Mar. 17), both featuring singer Natalie Merchant, a frequent collaborator with the band.

Finally, kudos to several readers in meeting the Dracula Author Challenge



By Brian McGowan

and correctly identifying Bram Stoker as the penman: Diane Couzens and Examiner wine columnist Nick Antonaccio.

Reader Merci Rogers also shared the historical figure upon whom Stoker based the character – Vlad III, a 15th century Prince of Wallachia. (That was once the homeland of the Celtic tribe Volcae. There’s that fringe again!).

Vlad’s cruelty in battle against the Ottomans earned him the alias “Vlad the Impaler.” Kudos to all three.

A future collaboration between Nick and I will appear soon, as we research any potential connection between expatriate Irish monks of the Middle Ages and the development of European winemaking. Stay tuned!

*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). To see more of his writing on “things Irish,” follow his blog “Rethinking Irish” at www.rethinkingirish.com.*

## Irish Eclectic

## Moving to Westchester: Should You Rent or Buy?

The migration of Baby Boomers and Millennials is underway and that means decisions must be made by those on the move. One of the biggest decisions: go all in to purchase a house or condo or opt for a rental?

There are plusses and minuses to each possibility and much to be mulled before making the decision. A prime consideration is stage of life. Are you selling the big house to move to a smaller, retirement residence? Conversely, are you thinking of buying because there are growing children in the family or babies expected?

Careful consideration is needed especially for those who see their homes as a platform for investment. In the short term, apartment living can potentially save money, which could be used for other investments. But owning a home can increase equity over time. Remember, however, the S&P index grows far more over time than the average home, so run the numbers if you are considering buying a home as an investment rather than meeting a lifestyle goal.

Buying means you will need a significant chunk of up-front cash for costs ranging from a down payment – typically 20 percent



By Kevin Peters

of the purchase price (sometimes less) – to moving expenses. Once you have selected a location and negotiated an offer, the closing itself carries its own costs. Then there are the monthly expenses. In Westchester County, the average home price is \$617,000, meaning buyers will need at least \$100,000 down if applying for a standard mortgage. That could

result in a payment of at least \$3,500 per month with property tax and insurance payments included.

Keep in mind there are programs for some first-time homebuyers that may make it easier to get into that first house. The Veterans Administration, for instance, partners with private lenders to guarantee a portion of home mortgages for eligible veterans, including no-down-payment provisions. There also are Federal Housing Administration programs for first-time buyers, plus a variety of other incentives.

Conversely, you may want to rent rather than buy. If you decide to rent, you may end up paying a monthly amount similar to that of a mortgage – but you won’t need anywhere near as much up-front money to make the move.

Typically, renters can expect to pay at

least the first and last month’s rent up front, and in some apartments or rental houses can expect to pay the equivalent of another month’s rent as a security deposit. The exact amount of the deposit can vary from landlord to landlord and often is contingent on factors such as the applicant’s credit score.

Renters also face the question of whether to rent a house or an apartment. That decision may be easier than it seems. If you are raising a family, renting a house could be the better way to go depending on your family’s needs.

If you rent a house you have a few options regarding maintenance. You can take care of your yard, driveway and small projects yourself or you can hire gardeners and maintenance personnel to do it for you – or include provisions for upkeep in the lease.

If you purchase an apartment, you probably will be assessed a monthly maintenance fee. If you buy a house it is advisable to determine whether it is part of a subdivision that has a homeowners association, which likely will charge a monthly fee for maintenance such as landscaping, snow plowing and lawn mowing in common areas. If not, set

aside some money each month for routine expenses and any work you may need to have done.

There are many ways to achieve the basic life necessity of “shelter,” and make it part of a well-thought-out investment plan at the same time. No matter what you are planning to do, the key is to have just that – a plan. Take into account all of your needs, determine where you want to live and what type of housing unit or free-standing home would best suit your needs, then build a budget. Know how much you could spend per month on a mortgage, rent and maintenance fees. Once you have a set number in mind, work with the professionals that know the area and know how to make your money work best for you.

Remember, all options have their benefits and whether investors are just starting out or are downsizing, the experience can provide for future financial growth. The key is knowing your own lifestyle needs and how they fit into your long-term financial portfolio.

*Kevin Peters is a financial adviser with the Wealth Management Division of Morgan Stanley in Purchase. He can be reached at 914-225-6680.*

## The Prudent Portfolio



# Happenings

*continued from page 18*

has never failed to impress music lovers around the globe. The show captures the Van Morrison concert experience like no other. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St., Tarrytown. 8 p.m. \$24, \$28 and \$32. Info and tickets: Visit [www.tarrytownmusichall.org](http://www.tarrytownmusichall.org).

## Saturday, Dec. 29

**Pleasantville Farmers Market.** Experience the largest, year-round farmers market in Westchester, voted "Best of Westchester" from 2014 to 2018. With nearly 40 vendors participating in the Indoor Market, the delicious good time continues each week. The farmers market is a dog-free environment. There will be seasonal vendors throughout December. Pleasantville Middle School cafeteria, 40 Romer Ave., Pleasantville. 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays through Mar. 30, 2019. Info: Visit [www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org](http://www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org).

**Practice Tai Chi With Larry Atille.** Learn specific feldenkrais and chi kung breathing techniques for deep relaxation and apply them to tai chi movement. This is a hands-on class that will be geared to the level of experience of the class and challenge all participants. Wear comfortable clothes and bring a floor mat or towel. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East. Armonk. 10:30 a.m. Free. Every Saturday. Info: 914-273-3887.

**Adult Salsa Class.** Addie-Tude Performing Arts Center, 42 Memorial Plaza (lower level), Pleasantville. 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. \$12. Every Saturday. Info: 917-215-1720 or visit [www.addie-tude.com](http://www.addie-tude.com). Call or visit website because classes are subject to change.

**"Ice Age."** Come in from the cold for a screening of this fun movie. Rated PG. For children seven years old and up. Sponsored by the Friends of the Mount Kisco Public Library. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 1 to 3 p.m. Free. Info: 914-864-8041 or [www.mountkiscoliberalry.org](http://www.mountkiscoliberalry.org).

**Pack Chat for Kids.** This is the best introduction to wolves for families with young children. Kids will learn about the mythology surrounding wolves and the important role they play in the natural world. This is an exciting time for wolves as they are out searching for prey preparing for winter. Guests will visit ambassador wolves Atka, Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and possibly the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 2 p.m. Adults: \$14. Children (under 12): \$11. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: 914-763-2373 or visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

**A Night of Giving: Flood Sisters Holiday Cocktail.** The Flood Sisters Kidney Foundation will be hosting this benefit featuring cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and live music. Proceeds will benefit the foundation.

Tesoro D'Italia, 160 Marble Ave., Pleasantville. 8 p.m. \$50 at the door. Info: Visit <http://www.floodsisterskidneyfund.org>.

## Monday, Dec. 31

**New Year's Eve Celebration.** A gala celebration includes a culinary feast, an astounding musical, "Phantom," dancing into the night with the Tuxedo Parc Orchestra, and at the stroke of midnight, raise a glass of bubbly. An open bar for the entire evening, lavish hot and cold hors d'oeuvres and a sumptuous dinner featuring a choice of a variety of entrees. Champagne and noisemakers at midnight. Westchester Broadway Theatre, 1 Broadway Plaza, Elmsford. 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. \$391 per couple (includes tax, gratuity and parking). Private luxury boxes (for parties of at least eight): \$470 per couple. Info and reservations: 914-592-2222 or [www.Broadwaytheatre.com](http://www.Broadwaytheatre.com).

## Tuesday, Jan. 1

**Howl in the New Year With Winter Wolves for Kids.** This is the best introduction to wolves for families with young children. Kids will learn about the mythology surrounding wolves and the important role of wolves in the natural world. This is an exciting time for wolves. They're out searching for prey as their growing pups experience their first winter season. Guests will visit ambassador wolves Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and potentially behold the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Guests will enjoy hot beverages in the woodstove-heated classroom. Dress for cold weather. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Adults: \$15. Children (under 12): \$12. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

## Wednesday, Jan. 2

**Baby Time.** A fun interactive lap-sit story time that includes songs, rhymes and a few very short stories. The experience gives babies an opportunity to socialize and parents a time to share. Recommended for newborns through 12 months old. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 10 to 10:30 a.m. Free. Every Monday and Wednesday (except Jan. 21). Info: 914-769-0548 or [www.mountpleasantlibrary.org](http://www.mountpleasantlibrary.org).

**Toddler Storytime.** Finger plays, action rhymes, songs and stories to encourage an enjoyment of books and to stimulate early listening, learning and speaking skills. Recommended for children one to two-and-a-half years old. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Free. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday (except Jan. 21). Info: 914-769-0548 or [www.mountpleasantlibrary.org](http://www.mountpleasantlibrary.org).

**Senior Benefits Information Center.** Counselors offer older adults one-on-one counseling covering a broad range of topics including Medicare health and prescription plans, food stamps, HEAP,

EPIC, weatherization, minor home repair and tax relief programs. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 Main St., Mount Kisco. 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-231-3260.

**Preschool Storytime.** This interactive story time uses picture books, songs, finger plays, action rhymes and other activities to encourage the enjoyment of books and language. Recommended for children two-and-a-half to five years old. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 11 to 11:30 a.m. Free. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday (except Jan. 21). Info: 914-769-0548 or [www.mountpleasantlibrary.org](http://www.mountpleasantlibrary.org).

**Mount Kisco Democratic Meeting.** All Democrats are welcome. Dinner is provided. 118 N. Bedford Rd., Suite 100, Mount Kisco. 6:30 p.m. Free. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month.

**"Antony and Cleopatra."** Caesar and his assassins are dead and General Mark Antony and Egyptian Queen Cleopatra have fallen in love. Ralph Fiennes and Sophie Okonedo play the famously ill-fated couple in this hotly anticipated production. Director Simon Godwin sees Shakespeare's great tragedy of politics, passion and power as both love story and political theater. A rebroadcast of this production from National Theatre in London. Jacob Burns Film Center, 364 Manville Rd., Pleasantville. 6:30 p.m. Members: \$20. Non-members: \$30. Info and tickets: Visit [www.burnsfilmcenter.org](http://www.burnsfilmcenter.org).

**Art Series: Wine and Bacchus in Art.** Hangovers are on the mend as we look at the history of wine in art and representations of Bacchus, God of wine and revelry, throughout the ages. With special guest lecturer and wine tasting off premises. Discussion led by Professor Valerie Franco. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

## Thursday, Jan. 3

**Baby Time.** A fun interactive lap-sit story time that includes songs, rhymes and a few very short stories. The experience gives babies an opportunity to socialize and parents a time to share. Recommended for newborns through 12 months old. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 125 Lozza Drive, Valhalla. 10 to 10:30 a.m. Free. Every Tuesday and Thursday. Info: 914-741-0276 or [www.mountpleasantlibrary.org](http://www.mountpleasantlibrary.org).

**Toddler Storytime.** Finger plays, action rhymes, songs and stories to encourage an enjoyment of books and to stimulate early listening, learning and speaking skills. Recommended for children one to two-and-a-half years old. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 125 Lozza Drive, Valhalla. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Free. Every Tuesday and Thursday. Info: 914-741-0276 or [www.mountpleasantlibrary.org](http://www.mountpleasantlibrary.org).

## Friday, Jan. 4

**Country Line Dance.** Dancing followed by a complete dinner. All proceeds to go to the scholarship fund at Fox Lane High School and New York Boys' State. Moses Taylor American Legion Post 136, 1 Legion Way, Mount Kisco. 7 to 11 p.m. \$15 per person. First Friday of every month. Info: 914-241-0136.

## Saturday, Jan. 5

**Chappaqua Farmers Market.** Locally-raised and produced food to the community creating a connection between shoppers and small-scale food producers in the region. First Congregational Church of Chappaqua, 210 Orchard Ridge Rd., Chappaqua. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. First and third Saturdays of each month through March. Info: Visit [www.chappaquafarmersmarket.org](http://www.chappaquafarmersmarket.org).

**Winter Wolves.** Winter offers families a unique opportunity to visit the wolves during their favorite time of year. Learn about the mythology, biology and ecology of wolf families and discover why this season is such a magical time for packs in North America. Whether the wolves are living on the Arctic tundra or the woodlands of the southwest, wolf families are out searching for prey as their maturing pups experience their first winter season. Guests will visit ambassador wolves Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and potentially behold the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Guests will enjoy hot beverages in the woodstove-heated classroom. Dress for cold weather. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 11 a.m. Adults: \$15. Children (under 12): \$12. Also Jan. 6, 13, 19 and 20 at 2 p.m., Jan. 12 and 27 at 1 p.m. and Jan. 21 and 26 at 11 a.m. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

**Winter Wolves for Kids.** This is the best introduction to wolves for families with young children. Children will learn about the mythology surrounding wolves and the important role of wolves in the natural world. This is an exciting time for wolves; they're out searching for prey as their growing pups experience their first winter season. Guests will visit ambassador wolves Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and potentially behold the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Guests will enjoy hot beverages in the woodstove-heated classroom. Dress for cold weather. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 2 p.m. Adults: \$15. Children (under 12): \$12. Also Jan. 6, 13 and 20 at 11 a.m. and Jan. 26 at 2 p.m. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

**Open Art Studio.** All supplies are provided to create your own artwork. For children four years old and up; with parent or caregiver. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free. First Saturday of every month. Info: 914-666-8041 or [www.mountkiscoliberalry.org](http://www.mountkiscoliberalry.org).

# There is a High Cost to Letting Your Cats Roam Outside

By Louise T. Gantress

People have lived with cats throughout millennia. Whether adored in Egypt or murdered in medieval France, cats have always been with us. When our beloved kitty purrs to us, we rarely consider him or her a cuddly predator.

However, domestic cats (*Felis catus*) are not native to America and are, in fact, considered an invasive species.

Consider cats from the point of view of native birds. As any birder will tell you, cats are responsible for up to an estimated 3.7 billion bird deaths in the lower 48 states – per year. Worse than one solitary cat is a clowder, or group, of feral cats. More than anthropogenic threats such as high-power lines, buildings, vehicles or pesticides, it is cats that are a bird's worst nightmare, not only for direct kills but stress has been shown to reduce the health of chicks.

Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology estimates that 69 percent of cat kills in the U.S. are due to feral cats, estimated at 40

to 100 million. (The Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center estimates the number at 80 million). However, the estimated 50 million domestic cats let out to roam are a significant predator population.

In addition to birds, suburban cats prey on squirrels, rabbits, mice and voles, amphibians and reptiles. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature lists cats as one of the world's worst non-native invasive species. According to the American Bird Conservancy, "cats have contributed to the extinction of 63 species of birds, mammals and reptiles in the world and continue to adversely impact a wide variety of other species." In Hawaii, cats are deemed responsible for water pollution affecting seals and otters. Cat feces and urine may also contaminate drinking water in areas where they roam closer to home.

From a personal perspective a pet owner ought to consider the risks: disease and predation. As a result of being let out, their

cat may return with unexpected problems, including diseases such as toxoplasmosis (especially harmful to pregnant women and now suspected of changing connections between neurons, which may trigger schizophrenia in susceptible individuals), rabies, feline leukemia, feline herpes, tapeworms, fleas and ticks. Cats themselves can be prey to raccoons or coyotes, be poisoned or hit by a vehicle.

Free-roaming cats do not kill for food, so they hunt when not hungry. They play. The National Audubon Society cited data from a review of 21 studies of cat predation published in *Nature Communications* concludes that more birds die from cat predation than all other causes.

"These numbers really elevate this threat to a new level," Gary Langham, chief scientist for the National Audubon Society, said in *Science News*. According to the study's linear regression analysis, the median fatality from cats is 2.4 billion birds and 12.3 billion mammals a year.

Although it is clear outdoor cats pose a serious threat to wildlife, feral cats do have supporters. Some suggest trap, neuter, release as a control measure. However, with a population of 40 to 80 million, this seems unreasonable.

Spring is an especially hazardous time for birds. Some are returning from migrations, all are nesting. Peter Marra, a scientist at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and author of "Cat Wars," recommended that cat owners keep their pets at home.

There are cat collars, with bells and bright fabric, that may discourage a cat's hunting success in the field. However, owners should resist such a measure. Better to find a nice indoor window for kitty to perch. There is due concern for the moral cost of cats allowed to roam.

*Louise T. Gantress is a Westchester writer who is active in conservation issues and the author of "Bitter Tea," a novel set in Japan.*

## Furry Matchmaker Seeks Loving Families for Holiday Love

This holiday season, Adopt-A-Dog is searching for homes for some special dogs called "Diamonds in the Ruff."

Located in Armonk, Adopt-A-Dog pulls dogs from local shelters and helps people in the community who are no longer able to care for their dogs. Adopt-A-Dog provides these dogs with lots of love and training and transforms them into amazing, loving family pets.

Dogs that are considered "Diamonds in the Ruff" have been living at Adopt-A-Dog for a year or more. All of these dogs have completed, or are in the midst of completing, obedience training suited to their specific needs. These dogs are waiting for a family to open their hearts and homes to them.

"We believe every dog deserves a loving, warm home for the holidays," said Adopt-A-Dog Executive Director Kristen Alouisa. "We know there is a home out there for every one of these sweet dogs and if we can spread the word, we might just find those families in time for a holiday adoption."

Adopt-A-Dog's mission is to save, socialize and secure loving homes for unwanted or abandoned dogs. Adopt-A-Dog accomplishes this goal by providing the highest standard of care for dogs in need with a particular focus on ensuring that all aspects of their overall health and well-being are addressed.

Find more information about Adopt-A-Dog, visit [www.adoptadog.org](http://www.adoptadog.org).

## Students of Two Fox Lane Teams Named Greenlight Finalists

Two teams of ninth-graders from Fox Lane High School were selected as finalists in the opening round of the Bedford 2020 Greenlight Award contest on Dec. 15.

The winning projects – Worm Warriors and Straw Free – were pitched to judges at the competition featuring 19 teams from eight area high schools.

The Greenlight Award is a contest that challenges high school students to lead a project to get people to change their behavior in a way that benefits the environment. The seven highest scoring teams at the Round One Expo receive up to \$1,000 in funding, and Bedford 2020, the nonprofit organization that runs the contest, helps connect them with experts and mentors as they carry out their plans between now and the finals in April.

"All the teams that entered this year's contest demonstrated just the kind of innovation, passion and leadership that we need in our world for a sustainable future," said Ellen Calves, program director at Bedford 2020. "We wish we could fund them all."

Judges with sustainability expertise scored the student proposals at the expo. The judges were Peter McCartt, Westchester County director of energy conservation and sustainability; Anne Jaffe-Holmes, director of programs for Federated Conservationists of Westchester County; Kevin Brenner, president of Healthy Home Energy and Consulting; Sara Goddard of the Rye City Council and Friends of Rye Sustainability Committee; Chris and Kathy Perry, teachers at Rippowam Cisqua School; Laura Kaplan, president, Rusticus Garden Club; Veronique Pittman of the Green Schools Alliance; and Vinoy Siva, manufacturing engineer at Curtis Instruments in Mount Kisco.

Both Fox Lane teams are comprised of



Members of one of two student groups from Fox Lane High School, The Worm Warriors, who will be finalists in the second round of the Bedford 2020 Greenlight Award contest. The competition challenges high school students to help people to change their behavior to help the environment. The Worm Warriors are pictured with their adviser, Anita Rivera.

students of English teacher Anita Rivera. One team, Worm Warriors, will work with students and faculty at Mount Kisco Elementary School to teach children about composting and encourage in-class composting of food scraps for the school garden.

The students who comprise Worm Warriors are ophia Trejo, Nataly Naranjo, Lesli Rodriguez, Daisy Quijada, Eric Sagastume, Heber Perez, Renzo Romero, Amy Guerra, Ariana-Jade Ford and Vanessa Lopez.

The other team, Straw Free, will run a campaign at Fox Lane High School to discourage the use of disposable plastic straws. Team members include Marjory Lopez, Alva Crisostomo, Mireyli Morales, Karen Carchipulla, Melany Hernandez, Melany Giron, Josh Ortiz, Rudy Perez and

Daniel Rojas.

Both teams will track their impact and hope to inspire permanent behavior change among the school communities.

The Fox Lane teams and the other finalists will present the results on Apr. 8 at the final event before an audience and judges in the Hayloft at Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills. The best-executed projects will win the Greenlight Award and cash prizes up to \$500.

Bedford 2020 is a community-wide effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Town of Bedford. The Greenlight Award is an organization project that engages students countywide in environmental innovation and leadership. For more information, visit [www.Bedford2020.org](http://www.Bedford2020.org).



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## LEGAL NOTICES

**NOTICE OF FORMATION OF WEBER ROSSELLI & CANNON LLP** filed with SSNY on 8/8/2018. Office in Westchester, SSNY designated as agent upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 7 Skyline Drive – Suite 350, Hawthorne, NY 10532. **Purpose: any lawful purpose.**

**APPLICATION FOR AUTHORITY OF SURETY TITLE AGENCY COASTAL REGION, L.L.C.** filed with the Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 11/6/18. Formed in NJ on 10/12/99. Office loc.: Westchester County. SSNY is designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The address SSNY shall mail copy of process to 853 Mill Creek Rd., Manahawkin, NJ 08050. The office address required to be maintained in NJ is **11 Eves Dr., Ste. 150, Marlton, NJ 08053. Cert. of formation filed with State Treas., 33 W. State St., Trenton, NJ 08608. Purpose: Any lawful activity.**

**NOTICE OF FORMATION OF SU-JEAN STUDIO LLC** filed with Secretary of State NY on 11/14/2018. Office location: Westchester. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to **33 Windmill Rd., Armonk NY 10504. Purpose: Any lawful activity.**

**NOTICE OF FORMATION OF SECOND MOUSE CHEESE, LLC.** Articles of Organization were filed with the SSNY on 10/18/2018. Office location is Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to **SECOND MOUSE CHEESE, LLC, 351 Manville Road, Pleasantville, NY 10570. Purpose: Any lawful act or activity.**

**NOTICE OF FORMATION OF KABATCHNICK ENTERPRISE HOLDINGS LLC** Arts of Org filed with Secy of State of NY (SSNY) on 12/7/2018. Office location is Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: **18 Belmont St., White Plains, NY 10605. Purpose: Any lawful act or activity.**

**NOTICE OF FORMATION OF ROMANOFF ELEMENTS, LLC.** Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 10/25/2018. Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent for service of process on LLC. SSNY shall mail a copy of process to **Carol Romanoff 55 Byram Ridge Road, Armonk NY 10504 Purpose: Any lawful purpose.**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that a license, serial number pending, has been applied for by the undersigned to permit patrons to bring wine, beer and cider for on premises consumption under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 141 E. Post Rd., White Plains, NY 10601 – **Am-badi Kebab and Grill Corp. d/b/a Am-badi Kebab and Grill.**

**Articles of Organization (DOM-PROF. LLC).** Erica O'Connor PT PLLC filed with the Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) 11/6/18.

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# Cruising Along the Spanish Route of the Early Monks and Pilgrims



By Nick Antonaccio

Over the past few weeks, our virtual summer tour of the Spanish wine regions has taken us along the Mediterranean Coast. We've experienced wines from the Alicante, Valencia, Jumilla, Penedes and Priorato denominations.

Today, we're pulling up stakes and traveling to the fourth of Spain's six primary wine regions: the Ebro River Valley.

This is the motherlode of Spanish wines and culture. This northeastern region is more fertile than the Meseta and Southern regions, more diverse than the Mediterranean Coast regions and more emblematic of Spain's surge in quality wine production than the other regions.

The Ebro River Valley consists of six classified subregions, each unique unto itself. The most popular and the most sophisticated are Navarra and Rioja. The others, all producing excellent wines are Calatayud, Campo de Borja, Carinena and Somontano.

Let's resume our virtual tour by following the course of the Ebro River as we trace its origins to the mountains

of Cantabria in the northwest. From Priorato we travel through hilly terrain and visit tiny towns that evoke Middle Ages architecture; many are still agrarian based. Here are ideal towns to use as our base of operations as we immerse ourselves in the culture and history of the region and of Spain itself.

The Ebro River was the lifeblood of northern Spain for centuries, primarily as a pilgrim route. Many monasteries and churches still stand as monuments to the dedication and fervor of Catholics visiting holy sites. The castles that dot the landscape were home to famous royalty; even the Knights of Templar "hung out" here.

Fast forward to the 20th century, when Americans first became aware of the unique culture of this area through the writings of Ernest Hemingway. ("For Whom the Bell Tolls," his immersion in the Franco-period civil uprisings and "The Sun Also Rises," the introduction to many Americans of the running of the bulls in Pamplona.)

Until we reach Rioja, the history of winemaking in these regions is sparse: mostly inferior wines that were consumed locally. The resurgence of Spain's wine economy has emphatically reached this area. Even in these "lesser" regions, fine wines are produced and exported to the

U.S. It is an economically thriving area, unlike other regions and other industries, which are still feeling the long aftereffects of the Great Recession.

When we reach Navarra and Rioja, the climate, the terrain and the wine passion change significantly. This is the heart and soul of Spanish wine history.

Navarra was predominately a Garnacha-based region until about 20 years ago, when the local winemakers realized that their soil and microclimate were ideal for growing the esteemed Tempranillo grape variety. Then, shockingly at the time, they went one step further and blended the Tempranillo with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Today, world-acclaimed wines are produced that offer unique aromas and flavors to the American palate.

Rioja has been a world-class wine region since the 19th century. Most Americans remember these wines as astringent, dry, with little fruit forward taste. That has dramatically changed in the last 20 years.

The young winemakers who have assumed responsibility for centuries-old wineries and vines have crafted wines

with elegant texture, sophisticated balance and complex structure. They approach winemaking in the same manner as the highly respected Bordeaux vintners and the results are outstanding. Using Tempranillo as their foundation, they have become organic alchemists; in fact, fewer wines coming from this area are 100 percent Tempranillo, a striking departure from the past.

There are many individual wines coming from the Ebro River Valley, but space this week does not permit the proper focus. Next week we'll delve into selections

that I recommend. Have your wine glasses at the ready.

Nick Antonaccio is a 40-year Pleasantville resident. For over 25 years he has conducted wine tastings and lectures. Nick is a member of the Wine Media Guild of wine writers. He also offers personalized wine tastings and wine travel services. Nick's credo: continuous experimenting results in instinctive behavior. You can reach him at [nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com](mailto:nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com) or on Twitter @sharingwine.

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