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January 14 - January 20, 2020

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 14, Issue 645

## Wetlands Loom as Hurdle for Proposed Depew Street Project

By Abby Luby

Pleasantville planning commissioners refused to be swayed last week by the developer of a proposed three-story, 74-unit apartment building at 52 Depew St. to ease wetlands buffer restrictions.

Developer David Mann of Lighthouse Enterprises, his attorney, David Cooper, of Zarin & Steinmetz and architect Philip Fruchter presented plans showing the proposed building 12 feet from the buffer at the northwest corner of the property. The village's wetlands regulations stipulate that a structure be built at least 50 feet from the buffer.

In addition, the Planning Commission continued to ask Mann for financial information proving "extraordinary hardship" to justify issuing a wetlands permit allowing Lighthouse to build in the buffer.

Cooper argued that the costly cleanup

of the site's petroleum-contaminated soil from the former LaDuca car repair shop should be considered a hardship. Mann will spend about \$1.5 million under the Brownfield Cleanup Program before getting reimbursed two years later. The state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) requires the site be cleaned before construction begins.

Cooper has argued if Lighthouse were required to strictly adhere to the village's wetlands buffer requirement, it would be unable to excavate the soil within the buffer area.

"I don't see it as all or nothing," said Planning Commission Chairman Russell Klein. "This is a much greater structure in a probative area. The building should never be allowed in the buffer."

Cooper argued that Lighthouse has proposed expanded the on-site stormwater treatment in the buffer area by adding more

*continued on page 2*



## Eagle Takes Flight

Christian Rossi, at podium, was recognized after officially becoming an Eagle Scout last Saturday in Valhalla. Rossi is surrounded by a group of local residents, all of whom achieved the coveted rank, including his brother, Griffin, third from right. For coverage of the ceremony, see page 13.

## Land Trust Awarded \$1M Grant to Acquire Key Armonk Parcel

By Martin Wilbur

The Westchester Land Trust will receive a more than \$1 million state grant that will enable it to buy an environmentally sensitive 63-acre parcel in Armonk to preserve and protect in perpetuity.

The organization, which announced last Wednesday that it had been awarded the state Department of Environmental Conservation's Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) program grant, plans to acquire the property on Byram Lake Road from current owner Vito Errico for market value. WQIP is a competitive, statewide reimbursement grant program open to local governments and nonprofit organizations for projects that directly address water quality



A portion of the environmentally significant 63-acre parcel on Byram Lake Road that the Westchester Land Trust will now be able to purchase and protect after it was awarded a state grant for just over \$1 million.

impairment or protection of a drinking water source.

Bordered by I-684, Byram Lake Reservoir, the Meyer Preserve and the Butler Memorial Sanctuary, the property is part of a 700-acre

corridor of unfragmented land that contains highly varied species of plants and animals as well as high-quality sand and gravel aquifers that produce large volumes of water, Westchester Land Trust

President Lori Ensinger told the North Castle Town Board during a presentation in November.

North Castle Supervisor Michael Schiliro said last week that the town has eyed this property for conservation for years and is thrilled that the grant was awarded. The Land Trust will receive \$1,062,000 while the town is required to pitch in 25 percent of that total.

While Errico had proposed a couple of developments for the property, Schiliro said he was also aware that the town was interested in preserving the land and kept that option open.

"It's just a win-win-win," Schiliro said. "This has been something that's been on my to-do list since I got on the board 12 years ago and, quite frankly, it couldn't happen

during the start of the recession. There wasn't enough money to do it, there wasn't enough grant (money) to do it. It changed hands several times, and as I said, we're lucky that Vito Errico purchased it, and he's used it and maybe had some other plans and designs for it, but then agreed to sell it so we (can) protect it forever."

The land was identified as a top priority by the North Castle Open Space Committee as early as 2003. The town's 2007 biodiversity study also discovered a wide array of species on the property.

"The preservation of this property is crucial to prevent further fragmentation of a large forested habitat corridor for development (of) sensitive species, and to protect one of the

*continued on page 2*



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# Wetlands Looms as Hurdle for Proposed Depew Street Project

*continued from page 1*

rain gardens to treat runoff before being discharged to the wetlands.

"We've mitigated the amount just to protect the buffer so much more significantly than any other applicant that has come to you before," Cooper said.

He also noted that the amount of stormwater treatment in the buffer was increased to 1,440 square feet from the original 485 square feet.

Previously, the incursion into the buffer was 1,752 square feet. An updated design has reduced that incursion to 955 square feet. The project's original plans were revised from a mixed-use project that included 4,500 square feet of retail space on the first floor with 73 apartments. The new plan has eliminated all retail space and has 74 units with some apartments now smaller.

The Planning Commission has already determined in its negative declaration under the state Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) that the combination of soil



ABBY LUBY PHOTO

Attorney David Cooper and architect Philip Fruchter presented new plans for stormwater treatment for the proposed 52 Depew Street Lighthouse Living Project. Listening are Planning Board members, from left, James MacDonald, David Keller and Chairman Russell Klein.

remediation and stormwater treatment "will result in better water quality leaving the site."

Helen Meurer, chair of the Pleasantville Conservation Advisory Council commented

on the impacts of building in the buffer.

"You don't build in it because it can affect the hydrology of the soil," said Meurer. "We need to respect the ordinance and be careful of setting a precedent."

Klein pressed Cooper and Mann to redesign the building using a diagonal shape to avoid the buffer, something he has repeatedly suggested.

"A diagonally-shaped unit would be interesting and even

desirable," he said.

Mann said his new design had reduced the size of the building by 8,000 square feet, creating smaller units.

"There is now less marketability," Mann said. "If a diagonal shape in apartment projects is attractive, you would see it everywhere. It's not anywhere."

Cooper also argued that such a configuration would raise construction costs by impacting building efficiencies and creating smaller and oddly-shaped corner units, which would make the project less attractive.

Klein again asked for more precise financial information from the applicant to accurately gauge the cost of the cleanup and other impacts resulting from the project's new plans in order to determine whether Lighthouse would qualify for a hardship. Mann has claimed that because of the two-year delay in reimbursement for the cleanup and the smaller units are less desirable he should qualify.

"I'm not disclosing any numbers," he said. "Costs are projected and there's not a standardized metric. Consultants can agree or disagree – that's the inherent risk in real estate. You want a financial model and that's unprecedented."

At times, Klein threw up his hands in frustration. He suggested that Mann offer percentages as opposed to specific dollar amounts.

Cooper and Mann reluctantly agreed to supply the requested financial information.

The Planning Commission is expected to hold a public hearing on the application next month.

## Land Trust Awarded \$1M Grant to Acquire Key Armonk Parcel

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most fragile groundwater supplies in our community," Kerri Kazak, chair of the North Castle Open Space Committee, said in a statement.

Councilman Jose Berra said the land is close to important aquifers, and the sale will help protect much of the town's water supply. About 90 percent of North Castle's

water is derived by groundwater through wells.

Sale of the land was contingent on obtaining the grant, Schiliro said. There is now a process between the Land Trust and Errico to enter into a contract to transfer ownership, he said.

The town and the Land Trust will share

management of the property as a nature preserve. It is anticipated that there will be public access to the property, including a hiking trail to be built as soon as possible after the acquisition is completed.

The contract for the sale is expected to be completed late this year.



## Your Achilles Tendon is Prone to Injury

Tips to get you back on your feet after a rupture...

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### Q: What is an Achilles tendon rupture and what causes it?

**A:** When your calf muscles contract, your Achilles tendon tenses, allowing movement. As we age, its mechanical properties degrade and its blood supply diminishes. A sudden movement can result in a painful rupture – a complete tear through the tendon – and an inability to move your heel. Think of your Achilles tendon as silly putty. Pull it slowly and it elongates and stays intact; pull it fast and it may snap.

### Q: This sounds painful, is there anything I can do to lower my risk?

**A:** Absolutely. Warm up before exercising to get your blood circulating; drink plenty of water to hydrate your muscles and tendons; and be aware of the temperature outside – strenuous activities in cooler temperatures put you at a higher risk. Your tendons become less elastic, less malleable and more prone to injury.

### Q: What are symptoms of a rupture?

**A:** If it's a rupture, you'll likely experience one or more of these symptoms: the feeling of having been kicked in the back of the leg or heel; a popping sound when

the injury occurs; possible severe pain, with swelling near the heel; an inability to bend the foot downward or push off the injured leg when walking; an inability to stand on the toes of the injured leg.

### Q: What should I do if I have symptoms?

**A:** If you have any of these symptoms, elevate and ice the leg to minimize swelling. If you're unable to bear weight you should go to the Emergency Room. If you can bear weight, make an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon for a diagnosis. If it's a rupture, I generally recommend surgery. Non-surgical management is associated with a higher risk of re-rupture and decreased strength. The goal of surgical treatment is to pull the frayed tendons together at the right length for optimal long-term function. This results in faster, more efficient tendon healing.

Regardless of the type of treatment, an Achilles tendon rupture requires a year or more to recover with full function. Consistent physical therapy will help strengthen your calf muscles and your Achilles tendon so you're able to resume all the activities you were doing before the rupture, without pain. The reported risk of re-rupture after surgical repair is about five percent.



# Cuomo Spells Out Ambitious Plans for 2020 Session in Address

By Martin Wilbur

Gov. Andrew Cuomo outlined another ambitious legislative session in last week's State of the State address proposing a \$3 billion referendum to combat climate change, a small business tax cut and legalizing recreational marijuana.

His annual address in Albany on Jan. 8 touted continuation of a progressive agenda that was started last year with Democrats dominating both houses of the legislature for the first time in decades along with the start of Cuomo's third term.

"New York at its best is the progressive capital of the nation and we must fulfill that destiny again this year," Cuomo said.

However, the state begins 2020 facing an estimated \$6 billion budget gap, about two-thirds of which is a result of a Medicaid shortfall. While Cuomo did not explain how he was going to close the deficit, he hinted that local governments, who have been held harmless by the state for their Medicaid responsibility for the last six years, may have to contribute more.

Cuomo will deliver a separate address on his proposed 2020-21 budget sometime before the end of the month.

Despite the fiscal challenges that lie ahead, Cuomo had no shortage of ideas. One of the biggest initiatives planned is a \$3 billion proposition on the November ballot – the Restore Mother Nature Bond Act – that will help propel the state to a green economy while protecting its natural resources.

Money from the bond act would pay for

various environmental-related projects, including development of infrastructure to achieve those goals, he said.

"We must develop the solutions to the harmful algae blooms before they destroy our water sources, we must restore fisheries and streams and wetlands," Cuomo said. "We must plant more trees, we must filter more drinking water, we must stop the nitrogen runoff and that's what the Restore Mother Nature Bond Act would do."

Although the state's economy has been strong with 36 consecutive quarters of job growth – the first time that's happened in 80 years – Cuomo said small businesses and families still need assistance. He proposed cutting the small business tax to 4 percent, down from 6 percent, and to reduce the state income tax rate for households earning up to \$150,000 to 6.09 percent and to 6.41 percent for households earning up to \$300,000 a year.

Cuomo also called on the legislature to work with neighboring states that have passed the recreational use of marijuana to implement a safe and workable law in New York.

The governor said he wants to distribute education funding in a more progressive fashion, trying to help boost the state's poorer districts. The wealthiest districts spend as much as \$36,000 per student while the poorest school systems spend as little as \$13,000, Cuomo said.

Last year, there was about a \$1 billion increase in state education funding, but with the budget shortfall it's not yet known how much more will be available for the 2020-21



Gov. Andrew Cuomo raised a wide range of progressive issues he pledged state government would address this year during the 2020 State of the State address in Albany last week.

amount of funding in the state's history to build affordable housing to help address the rise in homelessness.

Other progressive initiatives include economic justice reforms that will pay independent contractors, such as some livery drivers, a fair wage and guaranteeing comprehensive sick leave of at least five days for employees of small companies and seven days for large corporations' workers.

All state elected officials, including legislators, and state commissioners will be forced to disclose their tax returns under Cuomo's proposed Nothing to Hide Act. Additionally, any local elected official making more than \$100,000 a year would also have to release their returns.

A recurring theme of the address was the number of anti-Semitic and hate incidents that have spiraled in New York and around the country. Cuomo said he would dedicate additional funds for security to protect schools and houses of worship to help defend themselves. He vowed that there is no place for hate in a state as diverse as New York and that there is "an American cancer that is spreading through the nation's body politic."

"The angry winds of fear and frustration and despair blames one another for our problems rather than inspiring us to come together and resolve them," Cuomo said.

Local state lawmakers had a mixed to positive reaction to the governor's address, agreeing with many of the initiatives but needing more clarity on the fiscal situation.

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro)

*continued on page 4*

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# Arts Organizations Share More Than \$550G in Private, County Funding

Westchester County and ArtsWestchester announced last Friday that 48 arts organizations within the county are the recipients of matching funds from the Art\$WChallenge grant program.

The program, made possible with \$205,000 of Westchester County support, provides much-needed funding for arts and culture.

In total, the 48 organizations raised \$353,189 in new private funds through the 2019 Art\$WChallenge program. Together with the county's matching funds, the program successfully leveraged \$558,189 for arts and culture last year.

"On behalf of ArtsWestchester, I would like to thank Westchester County and the

Board of Legislators for their long-term investment in an arts program that over 13 years has paid dividends for the economy," said ArtsWestchester CEO Janet T. Langsam. "With cultural visitors spending nearly twice as much as local arts attendees and with the cultural sector generating more than \$172 million in economic activity annually, this grant program is great for Westchester."

The following organizations were the recipients of Westchester's 2019 Art\$WChallenge program: Actors Conservatory Theatre; Arc Stages; Axial Theatre; Ballet des Ameriques School and Company; Bethany Arts Community; Blue Door Art Center; Chappaqua Orchestra; Clay Art Center; Clocktower Players; Copland House; Downtown Music at Grace;

Emelin Theatre for Performing Arts; Fine Arts Orchestral Society of Yonkers; Friends of Music Concerts; Hamm & Clov Stage Company; Hammond Museum and Japanese Stroll Garden; Historic Hudson Valley; Hoff-Barthelson Music School; Hudson Stage Company; Hudson Valley Museum of Contemporary Art; Hudson Valley Writers Center; India Center of Westchester; Jacob Burns Film Center; Jazz Forum Arts; Katonah Museum of Art; Lyndhurst National Trust Historic Site; Mamaroneck Artists Guild; Mount Vernon Public Library; Neuberger Museum; Pelham Art Center; Picture House Regional Film Center; Rehabilitation Through the Arts; Rivertowns Arts Council; Schoolhouse Theater; Songcatchers; Steffi Nossen Dance

Foundation; Taconic Opera; Tarrytown Music Hall; The Revelators; The Rye Arts Center; The Symphony of Westchester; Urban Studio Unbound; Westchester Children's Museum; Westchester Collaborative Theatre; Westchester Philharmonic; White Plains Performing Arts Center; YoFi Fest; and Youth Theatre Interactions.

"Since the inception of the Art\$WChallenge in 2007, this powerful public/private program has raised over \$6 million in support for Westchester's arts and cultural sector," said County Executive George Latimer. "In many ways, this particular matching grant program helps to strengthen the cultural infrastructure of Westchester by fueling organizations located in cities and towns across the county."


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## Cuomo Spells Out Ambitious Plans for 2020 Session in Address

*continued from page 3*

said he believes that the environmental restoration bond would be very beneficial to the state and the district, particularly if steps are taken to prevent phosphorous from entering the watersheds.

He also likes the small business tax cuts that would help mom-and-pop operations.

Harcsham acknowledged that Cuomo needs to spell out how the state was going to close the deficit in his budget address.

"I'm really looking forward to that because as much as we want to do a lot of great things, the deficit casts a pale on everything

until we know how we're going to address that," he said.

Assemblyman David Buchwald (D-White Plains) said he was pleased that Cuomo addressed a number of issues that the state still needs to make progress on. He said he expects the governor to be much more specific about costs in his budget address.

Buchwald also expects that there will be a much better chance of recreational marijuana use getting approved as stakeholders work to address the concerns of local communities.

Assemblyman Tom Abinanti

(D-Pleasantville) was more critical of Cuomo's address, saying that it was a well-crafted and inspirational speech but was glaringly short on details.

Additionally, he panned Cuomo for ignoring many of the most vulnerable constituencies, such as the special needs population and those with disabilities.

"He also failed to address how we're going to address the disastrous condition of our roads," Abinanti said. "He talks in terms of infrastructure improvements, but what about the roads and bridges?"


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# New Castle Exploring Feasibility of New Sidewalk Connections

By Martin Wilbur

New Castle officials are in the midst of evaluating the feasibility of several new potential sidewalk connections in town, an initiative that was outlined as a priority in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan update.

Last week, the town's Assistant Planner Kellan Cantrell updated the Town Board on the status of the Comprehensive Sidewalk Plan that is being done to examine whether sidewalks are achievable in five locations in town that were identified by officials last year.

The locations being looked at are Bedford Road from King Street to Roaring Brook Road; the Chapp Line, which would be the pedestrian path linking downtown Chappaqua with the area near Chappaqua Crossing; extension of the Route 120 sidewalk to near Wagon Road Camp; Millwood Road to Gedney Park; and Somerstown Road to Hidden Hollow Lane.

"We are presenting these options and hoping that they are going to give us a preliminary determination as to what is our best path forward," said Town Administrator Jill Shapiro.

Cantrell said there are existing sidewalks in the hamlets but access for pedestrians to other areas of town are inadequate.

"There's a lack of walkable connections to parks via sidewalk and there's a lack of walkable sidewalks to regional pedestrian and multimodal infrastructure along with the North County Trailway as well as to Metro-North," he said.

Evaluations of the proposed connection to Gedney Park and Somerstown Road are with the engineering division while about 90 percent of the engineering analysis to help determine the possibility of a Bedford Road sidewalk has been completed in house, Cantrell said. A separate feasibility study is being conducted for the Chapp Line.

For each proposed location, the town faces challenges. Shapiro said that for any sidewalk to be installed along a state road, the Department of Transportation (DOT) requires a five-foot-wide path for the pedestrians and another five feet for a snow shelf. If there isn't enough room to accommodate those requirements, then the town must acquire the necessary land from private property owners, she said.

In addition to space, topography could also play a factor in other locations.

Supervisor Ivy Pool said that once the Chapp Line feasibility study is completed the board may have a better understanding whether to pursue that connection or a Bedford Road sidewalk.

"So it's good that we've done that so we'll be able to compare the two when we get the results of the feasibility study," Pool said. "I don't think it would make good strategic sense to do both."

Councilwoman Lisa Katz agreed with that assessment, saying the town should make clear that one to the public that one, but not both, of those possibilities would be considered.

"I'd like to understand Bedford Road

versus the Chapp Line in terms of feasibility and kind of where we're leaning toward," she said.

Board members also discussed whether they should consider a sidewalk along Douglas Road in Chappaqua. Councilman Jason Lichtenthal said that there are many residents who live on that street or streets off of Douglas who walk to downtown or the train station.

An advantage for the town if it were to pursue sidewalks for Douglas Road is that

since it's a town street only easements would be required from residents, if needed, instead of the taking of land, Shapiro explained.

The next step for the town is finish the analysis for Bedford Road, Cantrell said.

Shapiro said that sidewalks that had been approved in Millwood will likely be completed in 2021. She said Town Engineer Robert Cioli is working on the final plans to send to the DOT for the agency's approval.

## Welcome Aboard

New Castle Town Clerk Christina Papes, right, swears in Chappaqua resident Lauren Levin as an interim member of the Town Board during last Tuesday's organizational meeting at Town Hall. Levin was appointed by the board to fill the vacancy created with the election of Ivy Pool as supervisor. She will remain in the seat until a special election in November for the remaining year of Pool's unexpired term.



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# NWH Opens Center for Healthy Living at Chappaqua Crossing

Northern Westchester Hospital (NWH) has opened its Center for Healthy Living next to Whole Foods Market at the Chappaqua Crossing campus.

The new community resource for health and wellness offers a variety of ongoing programs and monthly healthcare themes and kicks off its educational program for diet season in January with Nourished for Life, a 12-week weight management and wellness class.

"The Center for Healthy Living's mission is to be a trusted resource for the community," said Maria Hale, associate executive director at NWH. "It will support the health and wellness goals of every member of the community by providing education classes, health resources, diverse programming and referrals from an expert health care navigator.

In addition to healthcare navigation and referrals, the center will offer a wide variety of community health education programs including free blood pressure, vascular, cholesterol and osteoporosis screenings; lectures and events; nutritional counseling, weight management and a teaching kitchen; integrative medicine; health and wellness consultations and support groups; mother-baby programs, including breastfeeding classes and support groups; classes for new moms; and pre- and post-natal yoga. A lab draw station is also onsite.

Nourished for Life, the center's first onsite program, is designed for people who wish to lose weight and/or adopt a healthy



Pictured, from left, are the Center for Healthy Living's registered dietitian Amy Rosenfeld, certified health coach Mary Beth Gierlinger and healthcare navigator Lauren Selsky at the produce department of Whole Foods. In addition to hands-on demonstrations in its teaching kitchen, the Center for Healthy Living conducts tours of Whole Foods in conjunction with Nourished for Life and its other educational programming.

lifestyle. Led by a registered dietitian and a multidisciplinary team of clinical experts from NWH, the class will cover nutrition 101; meal planning and cooking skills; healthy snacking; hydration; mind/

body food connection; managing stress; optimizing sleep, exercise and physical activity; and strategies for making healthy choices while dining out or vacationing.

Each 60-minute class includes a lifestyle

education topic and a Q&A with a weight loss expert as well as a hands-on activity, such as a cooking demo in the facility's teaching kitchen or a grocery store tour at Whole Foods Market. This is a fee-based program.

In February, the Center for Healthy Living will observe Heart Month with Valentine's Day cooking demos, a seminar, "Inflammation and Your Heart," and a panel called "Getting to the Root of Heart Disease." Other upcoming programs include "Mindful Eating," a sheet-pan dinner cooking demo, "How to Feed Your Baby," "Nutrition for Brain Health," "the ABCs of Food Allergies," youth vaping cessation and a mental health lecture series.

Center for Healthy Living program development will be led by healthcare navigator Lauren Selsky and registered dietitian Amy Rosenfeld.

For more information, contact 914-666-1955. To sign up for any of the upcoming programs, visit [www.NWHCenterforHealthyLiving.Eventbrite.com](http://www.NWHCenterforHealthyLiving.Eventbrite.com).



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# Civil Rights Attorney Officially Joins Field for 93rd Assembly Seat

By Martin Wilbur

A White Plains civil rights attorney officially entered the Democratic field of candidates for the 93rd Assembly District last Tuesday pledging to support measures to fight climate change, create more affordable housing and strengthen healthcare coverage.

Jeremiah Frei-Pearson, 41, making his first run for political office, announced his entry into the race surrounded by a legion of White Plains Democrats, including Board of Legislators Chairman Ben Boykin and Mayor Thomas Roach. He is one of as many as five Democrats that plan to vie for the party's nomination for the seat to succeed Assemblyman David Buchwald, who is running for the 17th Congressional District seat.

"I am running for this seat because we are at a critical time in our community's history and in our country's history," Frei-Pearson said. "The atmosphere from Washington, D.C. is deplorable. We're being divided. We have the federal government, which isn't working for the people and is targeting the most vulnerable amongst us. We can change that in New York State."

Although this is his first run for office, Frei-Pearson is no stranger to politics. He had considered running for the seat in 2012 when Buchwald was victorious and also weighed challenging a former state senator who opposed marriage equality when he still lived in Queens.

He was appointed by Roach to serve on



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Jeremiah Frei-Pearson, surrounded by a large gathering of White Plains Democrats, formally announces his candidacy for the 93rd Assembly District seat last week on the steps of White Plains City Hall.

the Sustainable White Plains Committee and on the Mayor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities. He has served as chair of both committees.

"He's right on the issues, he understands how to work with people and he knows how to make things happen in government," Roach said. "That's what we need in Albany."

Frei-Pearson said he would differentiate himself from the other Democrats by

pointing to his record of advocating for social change on a large scale. He said he and his law firm traveled to the southern border to fight for the rights of migrants who were being separated from their children and recovered millions of dollars for workers that had been paid under the minimum wage by unscrupulous employers.

In Albany, Frei-Pearson said he would also support implementing parts of the Green

New Deal to help New York do its share to combat the climate crisis.

He has lived in the district most of his life, having grown up in Mount Kisco and Bedford and graduating from John Jay High School in Cross River.

"There are so many amazing people who have lots of needs, from affordable housing to health care to the kids in this district who live in poverty, from small business owners, like I am, who want to be free from regulation, and I think I can deliver some real results and make change with that," Frei-Pearson said.

Boykin said his legal work has made Frei-Pearson a champion of those in need.

"He's always working to help those less fortunate," Boykin said. "So we need someone who can be the voice for the voiceless, to be the one who can advocate for those who can't advocate for themselves and to work to make sure we have representative legislation to help us throughout the 93rd Assembly District."

The White Plains Democratic Committee officially endorsed Frei-Pearson on Dec. 26, even though he had yet to officially declare as a candidate.

Frei-Pearson appears headed to a June 23 primary against at least three other Democrats who have also officially announced – Bedford Supervisor Chris Burdick, Chappaqua attorney Kristen Browde and White Plains resident Alex Roithmyar, who has worked for Buchwald as a community liaison and as chief of staff.

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# Police Blotter

## County Police/Mount Kisco

**Jan. 6:** An officer on foot patrol downtown observed a woman in Starbucks on South Moger Avenue at 8 p.m. that was known to him to have an outstanding warrant. The 67-year-old White Plains woman was taken into custody on the outstanding charge of third-degree criminal mischief, a misdemeanor. She was arraigned in Mount Kisco Justice Court and released pending a future court appearance.

**Jan. 8:** A resident reported at 3:11 p.m. that his car was damaged by a hit-and-run driver while it was parked in the Blackeby lot. When an officer responded, the vehicle owner reported that he subsequently found a business card had been left behind by the motorist who damaged his vehicle. He said he would handle the matter privately.

**Jan. 8:** A High Street resident reported at 8:14 p.m. that she lost her iPhone while patronizing several businesses downtown. She retraced her steps and could not locate it. At 10:15 p.m., a person found the phone on the sidewalk on Main Street and turned it over to police. An officer drove to the woman's home and returned her phone.

**Jan. 9:** Report of an employee at an East Main Street business who was injured by a door that closed on her hand at 12:19 p.m. The woman was taken by ambulance to Northern Westchester Hospital.

**Jan. 9:** A 30-year-old Goldens Bridge man was arrested at 4:11 p.m. and charged with second-degree aggravated harassment, a misdemeanor. He was accused of making threats to staff members at Northern Westchester Hospital during phone calls he made the previous day about a relative being treated there.

**Jan. 9:** Police responded to Mount Kisco Justice Court at 7:43 p.m. after a 32-year-old Bronx woman turned herself in on two outstanding warrants. The woman was booked on misdemeanor petty larceny charges and released pending a future court appearance.

**Jan. 9:** Police responded to Kisona Road at 8:56 p.m. after a home health aide reported that his client was in emotional crisis and was smashing furniture inside the residence. Officers were able to subdue the man and he agreed to be taken to Northern Westchester Hospital for evaluation.

**Jan. 10:** A resident reported at 2:52 a.m. that someone entered his unlocked vehicle

and rummaged through it while it was parked in a lot off North Moger Avenue. Nothing of value had been in the vehicle and nothing was taken. The resident said the car was parked in the lot for about four hours.

**Jan. 10:** Police responded to an East Main Street business at 11:52 a.m. on a report of a woman in a highly emotional state. Officers were able to calm the woman and she agreed to be taken to Northern Westchester Hospital for evaluation.

## North Castle Police Department

**Jan. 4:** An officer on patrol reported at 5:45 p.m. that a sink and bathtub was disposed of on the side of Wampus Lakes Drive. A voice message was left for Jamie Norris at the North Castle Highway Department.

**Jan. 5:** Report of possible menacing on Woodland Road at 2:46 a.m. An officer reported being with one party that may have been involved in a past domestic dispute in the area of Bedford Banksville Road and Finch Lane.

**Jan. 5:** A Wampus Avenue resident reported at 3:17 p.m. that her dog is trapped under the deck with a raccoon and she fears for her dog's safety. The responding officer reported that the dog is no longer in harm's way and the homeowner is going to arrange for removal of the raccoon.

**Jan. 7:** Report of a suspicious package on Maple Avenue at 7:22 p.m. An officer on patrol was flagged down and reported the package checks okay. It turned out to be an empty paint can.

**Jan. 8:** Report of damaged mailbox on Creemer Road at 8:10 a.m. A report will follow.

## Pleasantville Police Department

**Jan. 7:** A 51-year-old Briarcliff Manor woman was stopped on Pleasantville Road at 9:15 p.m. and charged with driving with a suspended New York State driver's license.

**Jan. 10:** A Pleasant Avenue resident reported at 9:39 a.m. being defrauded on an application for gift cards.

**Jan. 11:** Report of a disturbance on Memorial Plaza at 9:20 a.m. Police did not provide additional information because the incident is under investigation.

# Obituary

## Joseph Collins

Joseph A. Collins peacefully entered into eternal life on Jan. 4 at his home in Thornwood. He was 87.

Collins was born in White Plains in 1932 and raised in Valhalla by his parents, Patrick and Mary, along with his brother, Patrick John, who predeceased him. He attended St. John the Evangelist for grammar school in White Plains and was a member of the last graduating class of boys from St. John's High School in 1950. He married Peggy Flatley of County Mayo, Ireland, in 1956.

An aircraft mechanic by training, Collins worked at Westchester County Airport for General Electric and other companies for almost two decades. In 1973, he left aviation and opened a Carvel ice cream store in Thornwood and two years later purchased a Carvel store in Armonk, later relaunching it as Collins Ice Cream. In the 1980s, Collins became a developer of residential properties and built houses in Thornwood and Hawthorne.

He was a volunteer chaplain and eucharistic minister at Westchester Medical Center and Phelps Hospital in the 1990s and 2000s. He also was a staunch

advocate for the sanctity of human life at all its stages, a devoted member of the Helpers of God's Precious Infants and a sidewalk counselor for alternatives to abortion. A friend of Bill W. since 1984 and a fourth degree Knight of Columbus, he had many valued friends throughout Westchester.

He is survived by his children, Mary Moran (Robert) of Boston, Elizabeth Collins (Kevin) of Yonkers, Patrick Collins (Denise) of Brooklyn, Joan O'Keefe (Daniel) of Raleigh, N.C., Margaret Collins of New Jersey, Joseph Collins (Andrea) of Solihull, U.K. and Michael Collins (Justine) of Pleasantville, as well as 14 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Visitation was held at Beecher Flocks Funeral Home on Jan. 8. A funeral Mass was celebrated on Jan. 9 at Holy Innocents Church in Pleasantville. Collins was laid to rest at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Hawthorne.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Expectant Mother Care/Frontline at [www.emcfrontline.org](http://www.emcfrontline.org).

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.

## Chappaqua to Host Airport Open House Jan. 22 With FAA Reps

Westchester County Executive George Latimer announced last week that an open house with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in Chappaqua regarding Westchester County Airport has been scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 22. The forum will be held at the New Castle Community Center, located at 10 Senter St., from 6 to 8 p.m.

The open house will include participation from HMMH, an environmental and transportation planning consultant, which recently completed a noise study for the county, airport officials and the FAA. The session will be an opportunity

to learn more about the study, air traffic procedures in the area and airport operations, in a more informal environment.

County residents are invited to attend at any point during the open house. Attendees will have the chance to speak one on one with a variety of experts, without formal presentations.

The open house was scheduled after hearing concerns from New Castle residents and officials in hopes of getting a better handle on the increased complaints that have surfaced in town and in neighboring communities regarding airport noise.



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# P'ville Welcomes Nonprofit That Provides Jobs to Autistic Adults

By Martin Wilbur

For families who have children with developmental disabilities, there are often plenty of services available to them while in school.

But when the children reach adulthood, much of the support system that families depended on for years disappears.

Spectrum Designs Foundation, a Long Island-based nonprofit organization that has been addressing unemployment and a dearth of programs among the adult special needs population, is expanding to a second location in Pleasantville this year. It provides adults on the autism spectrum vocational training and employment opportunities so they can achieve a measure of independence and lead meaningful lives.

Lee Anne Vetrone, development manager for Spectrum Designs, said as much as 90 percent of the adult autistic population is unemployed or underemployed, and the organization fills a gaping void for them.

"Services end, support ends, parents are at a loss," Vetrone said. "We have three co-founders and they said there's got to be something more and we know there is."

Spectrum Designs is expected to move into its newest location, an 8,000-square-foot multiuse production facility at 199 Tompkins Ave., sometime this spring. The structure will house its Westchester workers in the organization's different businesses as well as provide satellite offices, said Jothy Narendran, president of the organization's board of directors.

While a nonprofit, Spectrum Designs is actually a business that produces custom apparel, promotional items and baked goods and provides laundry services using the special needs population as much of its workforce, said Amy Beyer, a parent of an adult son with autism who is president of the board of the Nicholas Center, which is a connected program that provides support and training for the participants. Founded nine years ago in Port Washington, all of its revenue from the sale of its products and services is reinvested into its programs, she said.

There are nine Westchester families that helped bring Spectrum Designs to the county. Dependent on fundraising, donations, grants and revenue from its businesses, Spectrum Designs was recently awarded a \$240,000 state Regional Economic Development Council grant, that will help pay for the expansion.

One of the three co-founders of the organization, Stella Spanakos, whose adult son is autistic, said she and fellow co-founders Patrick Beardsley and Nicole Sugrue established a pilot program in 2011 where they would create apparel, which was seen as a sort of recession-proof business.

"I looked at him and I looked at all his classmates and I said what kind of future do they have," said Spanakos, who was among the more than 250 people who welcomed Spectrum Designs to Pleasantville last Thursday when it hosted a hard hat party at the Tompkins Avenue facility.

Beyer said the progress made during



TJ HART/SPECTRUM DESIGNS PHOTOS

Ron DeMio of Spectrum Designs demonstrates the heat press machine during a reception last week welcoming the organization to Pleasantville. Right: Spectrum Designs co-founder Stella Spanakos with her son, Nicholas, at last Thursday's hard hat party welcoming the organization to Pleasantville.



have four flower pots in the middle of town and the Spectrum participants take care of them."

Spectrum Designs doesn't give its participants busy work, but meaningful jobs that companies and organizations depend on, Vetrone said. It was awarded a bid for its workers to make Metro-North safety jackets for the railroad workers to wear when they work on or near the tracks, garments that need to be changed every three years.

Other companies that Spectrum's staff have provided services or products to include Uber, Northwell Health and NYU Langone, Vetrone said.

"We're just thrilled to be in Pleasantville," she said. "We really are. It's similar to Port Washington in a way. It's a very small, tight-knit community and there's a lot of interconnectedness, a lot of people out doing good in the world."

the past nine years has inspired the organization to expand. It has helped many of the 43 participants experience a sense of self-worth and teaches them important life skills. The workers are paid at least minimum wage and work a manageable schedule where they can succeed.

Recently, Beyer's son moved into his own residence with two other participants within walking distance of the Port Washington location. Spectrum Designs also partners with local school districts, something it expects to do in Westchester.

"The community has embraced them," Beyer said. "There's a group in Port Washington where they grow beds of vegetables and take care of the plants. We

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## Letters to the Editor

### RFP for Voting Machines is Best Way for State to Ensure Fair Elections

New voting machines in New York?

Ask your Assembly and Senate representatives to support and co-sponsor bills that will help ensure free and fair elections in New York by changing the procurement process for voting machines.

When you voted early in Westchester County last fall, most of the machines that scanned and tabulated ballots were not the same ones you've seen for over a decade. Thirty new machines were purchased by the Westchester County Board of Elections for early voting.

These new machines replaced the old tabulators, which frequently broke down and were sometimes not repaired in a timely manner. Breakdowns during elections cause delays and confusion for voters.

The Board of Elections hopes to purchase hundreds more of these Dominion ICE

machines for the 2020 election, enough for all polling places. This will require a huge expenditure of public money. As a voter, I expect this expenditure to guarantee machines that will be fully functional and safe against hacking for at least a decade. But will it?

In business, best practice for purchase of equipment calls for a request for proposal (RFP), which originates with the purchaser. Vendors compete to satisfy requirements stated by the entities who have an insider's understanding of how the product should perform. The purchaser contracts with the vendor who comes closest to fulfilling the requirements at the best price.

This is not the process of the state Board of Elections. According to current state law, vendors develop voting machines without the benefit of a detailed RFP. The only voting

machines available for the state Board of Elections' certification are what vendors offer. All counties must choose from those certified by the state Board of Elections. Choices are very limited and guarantees of satisfaction of voters' needs are weak.

To guarantee free and fair elections, New York should create an RFP for voting machines.

Bills now in the state legislature (A8449, S6734) would establish an RFP system in which Board of Elections commissioners determine the criteria for voting machines. Changing the voting machine procurement process is essential. No more public money spent on vulnerable voting machines!

Catherine Ray  
Ossining

### Residents Must Learn to Pick Up After Themselves

As a resident of Mount Kisco, I have been thrilled to see the efforts to beautify the town. The downtown area is much more attractive with sponsored flower beds and repairs to broken sidewalks. Leonard Park is a much more attractive and pleasant park with the improvements. What I don't understand is why our residents don't take care of the town.

Each morning I walk our dog past CareMount Medical into Leonard Park or through the Boys & Girls Club and into different neighborhoods. Sadly, too many do not pick up after their dogs, and that is even though there are plenty of trash cans in the park and throughout the town. In Leonard Park and in the town, I see garbage and plastic bottles left on the ground next to the

trash cans. How hard would it be to pick up after your dog or throw your garbage in the receptacle?

Maybe a New Year's resolution for us all is to bring the doggie bag and use it and throw all of our trash in the garbage cans.

Martha Glantz  
Mount Kisco

## Guest Column

### Wise Winter Weather Tips to Consider for Your Pet

Winter creates a whole new canvas in the living landscape, with snow blanketing our backyards, community parks and schoolyards. There are simple steps pet owners need to take to ensure their pups are safe and healthy during the cold weather.

The TurfMutt Foundation, which encourages outdoor learning experiences and stewardship of green spaces, offers these tips for keeping pets healthy and safe this winter.

**Bring Outdoor Dogs Inside:** The safest, most comfortable place for your pet during the winter months is inside with you. Remember, if it's too cold for you, it's also too cold for your pet. Offer a warm, dry place to rest inside. A pet bed works perfectly.

**Know Your Fur Facts:** With the exception of the fur in between their paw pads, which you should trim to prevent painful ice balls from forming, do not cut your dog's fur in the wintertime. Pets naturally develop winter coats to protect them from the harsh elements. Remember that not all dogs are created equally for winter conditions. Smaller dogs, those with shorter hair, older pups and pets who are sick might need winter attire like a coat or protective booties to be comfortable outside. For very frail pups and young puppies who have a hard time regulating their body temperature, you will want to limit exposure to necessary breaks and very short walks.



**Keep Them Clean and Dry:** Keep a dry, clean towel near the door to wipe down your pet's legs, belly and paws after each outdoor excursion. Also, check your dog's ears, paws and tail for any sign of frostbite, which shows up as discolored skin, swelling or blisters. Signs of hypothermia include shivering, shallow breathing, weak pulse and lethargy. If frostbite or hypothermia appears, take your dog to a warm, dry place and contact your vet. Finally, ice-melt is helpful for humans, but it can hurt your pet by irritating their skin and can cause serious illness if ingested.

**Wear Reflective Gear:** Shorter winter days mean daily walks are often done after sunset. In addition to choosing a walking route that is lighted and keeping your dog close to you when walking, you can

offer extra protection by getting your pet a reflective collar, leash or coat. Reflective clothing is a good idea for humans as well. Lighted headgear not only helps drivers see you, it also makes it easier to clean up after your dog when you're on a walk in the dark.

**Be Careful Around Ice:** Slipping on ice can cause muscle strains and other injuries. For those who live near a pond or lake, extra precautions need to be taken to keep your dog – and yourself – away from frozen bodies of water. Even if it looks solid, you or your pet could fall through.

**Be Food and Water Wise:** Winter air is dry, so make sure your pet has unlimited access to fresh, clean water to drink. Monitor their food and snack intake since indoor pets – like humans – will burn fewer calories during the winter months.

**Be Prepared for Emergencies:** When you are preparing your family's winter emergency kit, don't forget the family pet. You should include enough food, water and medication to last five days.

**Have Fun Inside:** As much as your dog might love romping in the snow, there will be days when winter weather makes getting exercise outdoors impossible. Stave off boredom by teaching your dog a new trick or working on an obedience lesson inside. Treat toys and puzzle games provide mental and physical stimulation until the weather improves.

**SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS**



# Mitigation Plan Sought to Screen Proposed Mt. Kisco Country Club Dome

By Martin Wilbur

The Mount Kisco Country Club is looking for approvals from the Town of New Castle to erect a temporary dome over two of its four outdoor tennis courts to be used for the cold weather months.

The club, located at 10 Taylor Rd., needs to obtain an amendment to its special use permit application and variances for building height and development coverage.

Last week, representatives for the applicant appeared before the Planning Board on a referral from the Zoning Board of Appeals to discuss a mitigation plan to limit the visual impact of the opaque green fabric dome.

Project Architect Viktor Solarik and landscape architect Abigail Adams proposed planting one three-and-a-half-to four-inch caliper red maple tree and 18 evergreens, each with about a four-inch caliper. Adams said the proposed plantings would more than offset the removal of two trees – a 12-inch caliper birch and a 16-inch caliper black cherry tree.

Under the town code, tree replacement requires at least an equal number in the aggregate caliper of the trees. The two trees proposed for removal equal 28 inches in caliper but they would be replaced with at least 75.5 inches, Adams said.

Each of the evergreens would start at a height of 14 to 16 feet, she said, and would grow to help screen the dome. The trees would eventually grow to as high as 70 feet tall but would be placed higher on the ridge in front of the dome, making it appear as though the trees are taller after

they are newly planted.

Removal of the birch and cherry trees is recommended mainly because a gas line is cutting through the trees and a large portion of the root system, which places them in jeopardy, Adams said.

Planning Board members were concerned over two issues – the color of the dome and the proposed removal of the cherry tree.

Solarik said that if the goal was to save the cherry tree than the country club can consider moving the gas line but that would require some fairly extensive excavation. Adams also said that would require the evergreens to be moved.

“What I’m concerned about is if we don’t

remove the cherry tree, I will have to back the evergreens farther down the hill,” she said.

But board member Thomas Curley said placing the trees another 10 feet down the slope should not make a big difference visually.

Solarik and Adams said they would explore options to save the cherry tree and move the evergreens from the originally proposed location.

Chairman Robert Kirkwood said that since the dome will be used when the leaves are off the trees, the green fabric may seem out of place.

“I’m wondering why we’re looking at green as opposed to brown or gray because

that is going to be the predominant color this time of year,” Kirkwood said. “When we see the dome, I think the green is going to stand out.”

Solarik said the choices of available colors are white, light gray or green. He recommended the green because it would reflect less light.

“I think even though you see a totally uniform green, it’s not necessarily going to be like that because you have a lot of shadows here, you have a lot of reflections from different angles,” Solarik said.

The Planning Board will write its recommendation regarding those two issues before the application will return to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

### Taghkanic Chorale Welcomes New Singers at Rehearsals for May Concerts

The Taghkanic Chorale, under maestro Jason Tramm, invites new singers to join rehearsals for the May concerts, featuring Mozart’s “Requiem” with a full 25-piece orchestra, Beethoven’s “Elegischer Gesang” and Ola Gjeilo’s “Sunrise Mass.”

Rehearsals are Tuesday evenings for performances on Saturday, May 16 and Sunday, May 17. All January rehearsals are open, with no obligation to join.

The Taghkanic Chorale welcomes singers of all ages, vocal ranges and skill levels.

Rehearsals are Tuesday nights from 7:30 to 10 p.m. at the KSDA Church, located at 1243 White Hill Rd. in Yorktown Heights, near the Route 202 Exit off the Taconic Parkway. Rehearsals are fun and educational, balancing musicianship and collegiality.

For more Information, call 914-440-3596 at visit [www.taghkanicchorale.org](http://www.taghkanicchorale.org).

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## Six Byram Hills Students Named Regeneron Science Semifinalists

Six members of the Byram Hills High School 2020 graduating class were recognized last week as semifinalists in the Regeneron Science Talent Search.

Sam Aberman, Spencer Karp, Merideth Mayers, Alexa McGrath, Carolina Pedraza and Owen Skriloff will now have the opportunity to become one of 40 finalists in the national competition.

The students were chosen from a pool of 1,993 students from 659 high schools across 49 states and eight countries. The Regeneron Science Talent Search is one of the most prestigious science and math competitions in the nation.

Byram Hills led all of Westchester County with six semifinalists. There were 33 students named semifinalists throughout Westchester.

Regeneron awards each semifinalist and their school \$2,000 to support ongoing research.

The Regeneron Science Talent Search was founded in 1942 and is considered the oldest contest of its kind. It provides high school students an opportunity to present original research on scientific topics of their choice. The competition focuses on engaging motivated and promising young scientists who are looking to help solve societal and global issues.

Byram Hills High School's six Regeneron Science Talent Search semifinalists. Pictured in the back row, from left, are Sam Aberman, Owen Skriloff and Spencer Karp. Pictured in the front row, from left, are Carolina Pedraza, Alexa McGrath and Merideth Mayers.



## Boykin, Williams Re-elected to Lead Board of Legislators for Next Two Years

The Westchester County Board of Legislators began the 2020-2021 term on Monday, re-electing Ben Boykin (D-White Plains) as board chairman and Alfreda Williams (D-Elmsford) as vice chair.

In a ceremony at the board's chamber last Monday night, all 17 legislators were sworn in, including three new legislators beginning their first terms – Colin

D. Smith (D-Peekskill) in District 1, Vedat Gashi (D-Yorktown) in District 4, and Ruth Walter (D-Yonkers) in District 15. Also sworn in was Jose I. Alvarado (D-Yonkers) in District 17, who returns to a seat he held from 2001 through 2011.

Outgoing Majority Leader Catherine Parker (D-Rye) chose not to seek the position. Democrats, who hold a 15-2

majority, selected MaryJane Shimkys (D-Hastings-on-Hudson) as majority leader and Christopher A. Johnson (D-Yonkers) as majority whip.

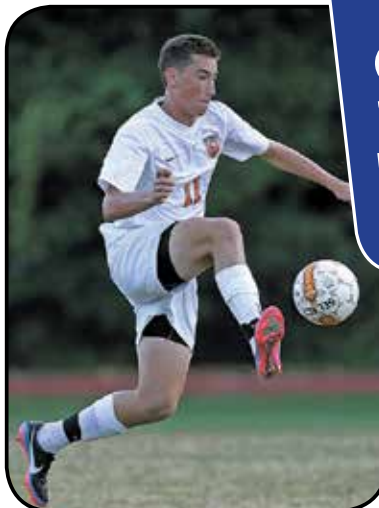
The minority caucus selected Margaret A. Cunzio (C-Mount Pleasant) as minority leader and David J. Tubiolo (R-Yonkers) as minority whip for 2020.

"While we achieved a lot in the last term, there is more work

to do," Boykin said. "We must fearlessly address challenges and seize opportunities with regard to affordable housing, economic development, infrastructure, the environment and public safety. And in these times, we must make sure that all our residents, are safe, secure and welcome, regardless of race, religion, gender and sexual orientation. Hate and bigotry have no place in this county and acts

of hatred and bigotry will not be tolerated.

"We look forward to a new term brimming with fresh energy and ideas, building on our record of progressive achievement to ensure a better tomorrow for the people of Westchester. We will be bold, we will act bold and we will implement a bold agenda."



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# Valhalla Teen Attains Scouting's Pinnacle, Joins Brother as Eagle

By Martin Wilbur

Christian Rossi had some significant footsteps to follow. It was four years ago that his older brother, Griffin, earned the rank of Eagle Scout.

Now, Christian can stand on equal footing.

Last Saturday, Rossi, a junior at Valhalla High School, was honored as the area's newest Eagle Scout. The 10 years of time and effort Rossi put into scouting were well worth it, he said.

"All the work paid off and I know it's going to help me in the future and it was a great thing for the troop as well," said Rossi a member of Troop 1. "That's what makes it special, that you have it from when you're a little kid to when you're a 70-year-old. It kind of stays with you forever."

A large turnout of family, friends, scouts, including a contingent of Eagle Scouts from past years, community members and local officials celebrated Rossi's accomplishment during a luncheon and the Eagle Scout Court of Honor at the Valhalla Methodist Church.

Scouting has been a way of life for the Rossi family, said his mother, Susan. The boys' father, Jim, was involved in the troop for about 15 years. Susan Rossi's late father was a veteran and would have been extremely proud of both of her sons, she added.

She said having both sons make Eagle Scout is more than just the achievement.

"Everyone is very independent, everyone knows how to take care of themselves and each other, and my husband is a perfect role model for that being that he made it to Life

Scout," Susan Rossi said.

Scoutmaster Marcelo Quellet said while Rossi's ascension to Eagle Scout is impressive as a high school junior, troop leaders instruct the members that it's not a race to the finish. Rather, it's about learning, helping others and helping the community.

"Really, at the end of the path we want them to be prepared for life," Quellet said. "We try to give them the skills from a young age, seven, eight years old, so that they'll be prepared for life, that they have all the skills necessary."

County Executive George Latimer was part of a contingent of local officials who told Rossi that whether it will be interviewing for colleges or later for jobs, when people see that he is an Eagle Scout they will know he has qualities that many of his peers may not have.

"They will see that Eagle Scout jump out as a sign of maturity and ability and accomplishment and the folks who don't have that, they may be very fine people, but this is that extra little statement that you're a young man with a great future," Latimer said.

For his Eagle Scout project, which was approved last August, Rossi excavated a 20-foot by 14-foot area to create a driveway for the Valhalla Ambulance Corps to park an emergency service trailer. He also transformed a four-foot by seven-foot space into a stone platform for the corps' refuse container.

His brother, Griffin, said he saw all the qualities that were needed for his younger



Christian Rossi's mother, Susan, places the Eagle Scout pin on her son's shirt during last Saturday's ceremony celebrating him reaching scouting's highest honor.



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTOS

New Eagle Scout Christian Rossi of Valhalla with County Legislator Margaret Cunzio after his Eagle Scout Court of Honor ceremony last Saturday.

brother to become an Eagle Scout, including when Christian helped him with his Eagle Scout project at the Valhalla American Legion.

He said for both of them scouting was something that they both enjoyed immensely.

"I went hiking all up and down the East Coast. So did he," Griffin Rossi said. "I wanted all the different experiences. It was hard to say, 'Oh, I don't have the time.' It's something I wanted to do and it's something he wanted to do."

Christian Rossi said just because he's

reached scouting's pinnacle and he has the rest of a busy junior year and his college search coming, he will remain active with Troop 1.

"I don't age out until I'm 18; I'm still 17 years old," Rossi said. "I still get another year, so I can still be around them."

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## To Add Pizazz to Your Home, Go for Custom Lighting

As a realtor, I'm always looking for ways to enhance homes for listing and sales.

To me, one of the most important elements of showing a home at its best, whether or not for sale, is its interior lighting.

When I was in college, I appeared in a play called "The Madwoman of Chaillot" by Jean Giraudoux starring Linda Lavin, who would later go on to achieve fame in "Alice." The most stunning thing about that production, as I recall, was the amazing effects achieved by its lighting director, on staff in the theater department, who was an incredible talent.

I remember when the curtain rose for the second act, the stage was completely dark and slowly a small pin spotlight illuminated only the face of the madwoman in the center of the stage. Just that lighting effect alone brought applause from the audience.

Every scene of the play was an arresting study in shadow and light as brightness drew the viewer's attention where it needed to be while other areas of the stage receded. I was mesmerized as I observed how light created movement and mood by playing off stationary surfaces.

Many years later I was reminded of my interest in stage lighting when Barry Liebman, director of Yorktown Stage,



By Bill Primavera

shared with me his thoughts that a production really doesn't come to life until the lighting director does his job with a show, going so far to say that seeing a set dramatically lit for the first time has brought him to tears.

His comments convinced me that someday I should have a home where its lighting would be as dramatic as a stage set, which would require a custom designed lighting system. But having always lived in antique homes, my lighting was primarily from traditional lamps.

When I moved five years ago to Trump Park Residences, however, my dream for dramatic lighting presented itself. I arranged with management to have electrical contractors install a system to light my great room, which I had designed basically as an art gallery for my collection of paintings.

The lighting system I planned was to highlight the paintings on three walls: portraits on the living room side, pastorals on the dining room side and a large abstract on the third wall in between.

At first, I was planning to hire a lighting designer, but I was lucky to find an electrician with sensitivity to my ideas and needs – P&K Electric in Yorktown Heights. Working in tandem with an electric supply company, Mid-County Electrical & Lighting in Mahopac, we all



worked wonders together.

There were many technical challenges to overcome working on the fifth-floor condo with 10-foot ceilings, installing high hats in a soffit with insulation material. The casing for the high-hat units I originally wanted turned out to be too large to be accommodated in the soffit, but I had the good fortune to be assigned a job manager named Jimmy from P&K who was as much an artist as he was an electrician.

Jimmy guided me every step of the way in terms of which product to use. We sourced a small LED light at Mid-County whose imprint on the ceiling is only two inches square, as well as the appropriate spacing and angles of light to employ. He cut such clean holes that nary a speck of spackle was needed for patching the plasterboard.

Now completed, the overhead pin spots illuminate my great room/gallery in a warm and inviting way. Rather than being surrounded by flat walls with two-dimensional shapes on them, the lighted paintings create great depth and richness to our space. While we have other traditional lighting sources in the room, it really requires no light other than that resting on the faces of the portraits and on the landscapes of the pastorals. The effect

transports to other acquaintances and distant places beyond the space we occupy.

Whether utilizing standard or custom lighting for our homes, when preparing to list a home for sale, it's good to remember to light it brightly, not only so that all its features can be seen properly, but also to elevate the mood of each room.

Bill Primavera is a Realtor® associated with William Raveis Real Estate and founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc., the longest running public relations agency in Westchester ([www.PrimaveraPR.com](http://www.PrimaveraPR.com)). His real estate site is [www.PrimaveraRealEstate.com](http://www.PrimaveraRealEstate.com) and his blog is [www.TheHomeGuru.com](http://www.TheHomeGuru.com). To engage the services of The Home Guru and his team to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.

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# Panel Discussion Focuses on the Fight Against Anti-Semitism

By Neal Rentz

Acts of anti-Semitism have occurred with disturbing regularity in the region in recent weeks.

There was deadly violence at a kosher market in Jersey City in December, a recent Hanukkah attack in Monsey and a menorah was toppled as part of a vandalism spree, which included houses of worship, in Yorktown.

Opposing anti-Semitism was discussed as part of a forum that attracted about 800 residents last Wednesday at the Temple Israel Center in White Plains.

The forum, "Anti-Semitism: What We Face and How We Fight It," was a discussion about its rise in the United States and abroad and Westchester's efforts to combat hatred.

The speakers were Westchester County District Attorney Anthony Scarpino, Mark Weitzman, director of government affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and Hindy Poupko, deputy chief planning officer at UJA-Federation of New York.

Scarpino said his office has been collaborating with the Westchester Jewish Council and the UJA-Federation "on important initiatives to serve to protect the community."

The Intelligence Center, which is staffed with analysts and criminal investigators, immediately contacted state police and went on alert after the Monsey attack, Scarpino said. Part of the responsibilities of the center is hate crime and hate speech intelligence gathering, partnering with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

"Upon request we conduct research into social media and other online sources of information to identify, track and monitor individuals and groups engaged in hate incidents," Scarpino said. "We have established a hate crimes, hate speech database of reported incidents. In addition, we have mapped the location of all Westchester houses of worship to allow law enforcement to act quickly on threats that may affect more than one location."

Weitzman said he is often asked about anti-Semitism. He doesn't believe that the United States is in a period that resembles 1933 Germany.

"We have no heritage in this country of official state-sponsored violent anti-Semitism," he said. "Anti-Semitism has always had to compete with other forms of bigotry."

In addition, there have been

movements throughout American history of fighting against anti-Semitism.

"Most Americans retain bitter memories of days past when they or their ancestors were themselves the objects of prejudice and discrimination," Weitzman said.

It also helps that the United States does not have an established state-sponsored religion, although anti-Semitism has always been present.

"Anti-Semitism is foreign to American ideals. These ideals have not always been lived up to, but nonetheless the ideals are enshrined in our founding documents," Weitzman said.

Anti-Semitism has entered the political discourse, including in conspiracy theories, in recent years, he said.

Weitzman said that the public at large first has to have a common understanding of what anti-Semitism is. The National Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition is "the targeting of Jews just because they are Jews. And Jews just because Israel is a Jewish state," he said.

Greater security at Jewish institutions and the assistance of law enforcement is needed to fight violent anti-Semitism, Weitzman said. He added that the White



A discussion about the rise of anti-Semitism and Westchester's efforts to combat hatred was held last Wednesday at the Temple Israel Center in White Plains.. The speakers were, from the left, Westchester County District Attorney Anthony Scarpino, Hindy Poupko, deputy chief planning officer at UJA-Federation of New York, and Mark Weitzman, director of government affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

House should appoint a person whose primary responsibility would be to coordinate efforts to fight Anti-Semitism, he said.

"We also need to push the tech companies to live up to their own standards and to ban posts that promote anti-Semitism, racism and hate," he said. "That effort is not censorship as it involves private contractual obligations and not government regulation."

Poupko said there is anti-Semitism expressed by both the

far right and far left in the United States. The question is how to confront hate in the world, she said.

The UJA-Federation and its partners are embarking on a multimillion-dollar upgrade of community security infrastructure, Poupko said.

"When a Jew is threatened or beaten up or murdered or worse, it's as if we are all threatened," she said. "These persistent attacks must end."

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# Happenings

Tuesday, Jan. 14

**DIY Notebook.** Start the new year with your very own journal, planner, diary or writing notebook. Customize it with all kinds of fun materials. All supplies and snacks provided. For students in grades 5-12. Mount Pleasant Public Library 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Free. Registration requested; walk-ins welcome. Info and registration: 914-769-0548.

**Reading With Tobie and Karen.** Practice your reading. For school-age children. Tobie and Karen are with the Good Dog Foundation. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 4 p.m. Free. Every Tuesday. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

**DIY Egg Carton Penguins.** Create your own adorable penguins out of egg cartons. For children of all ages. (Children under five years old must be accompanied by a caregiver.) Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-864-0130.

**Italian Language and Culture.** Mara De Matteo, born and raised in Italy and passionate about her native language, combines lively conversation with grammatical instruction in her classes. She creates interactive lessons on the richness of Italian culture, past and present. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 6:30 p.m. Free. Every Tuesday. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

**Women Reading Women Book Club.** "The Fifth Letter" by Nicola Moriarty will be discussed. Copies of the book available at the circulation desk. New members welcome. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Free. Info: E-mail denisedauriasommer@hotmail.com.

**Legendary Tuesday Night Jam.** This jam has fostered many great musicians over the years. Some have gone on to tour, win Grammy Awards and achieve celebrity status. You never know who you'll hear. Come on down, play or listen, dance, drink and enjoy. All levels of musical talent are welcome. Lucy's Lounge, 446 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 8 p.m. No cover charge. Every Tuesday. Info: 914-747-4740.

Wednesday, Jan. 15

**Functional Medicine.** A holistic, patient-centered approach to preventing, treating and reversing chronic disease by identifying and understanding the root causes of the individual's symptoms and conditions, including genetic predispositions, environmental contributors and lifestyle factors. Phelps Hospital, fourth floor, 755 N. Broadway, Sleepy Hollow. 9 a.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-366-3937 or e-mail vitality@northwell.edu.

**Holistic Pain Support Group.** In addition to our pain management physician practice, people suffering from chronic pain will have access to holistic pain management services including educational programs, exercise classes and complementary medicine approaches such as meditation

and guided imagery, Tibetan Singing Bowls, aromatherapy and more. Phelps Hospital's Family Medicine Residency Conference Room, 701 N. Broadway, Sleepy Hollow. 9 a.m. Free. Info: Contact Ellen Woods at 914-366-3937 or ewoods3@northwell.edu.

**Zumba Babies and Tots.** A wonderful fun dance-and-play party for little feet. Age appropriate music and props are used to help children learn to love moving their bodies and dancing to their own rhythm. Singing and exciting activities will amuse delight and stimulate your child benefiting their cognitive, emotional and social development. For parents or caregivers and children one to three years old. Dance Emotions, 75 S. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua. 9:45 to 10:30 a.m. Eight-week session: \$120. Maximum 12 children per class. Every Wednesday. Info and registration: Contact Dance Emotions at 914-238-8974 or instructor Peggy at 914-960-4097.

**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. 20). Info: 914-769-0548 or www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.

**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, 170 Joan Corwin Way, Chappaqua. 10:25 to 11:10 a.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-238-4967.

**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. 20). Info: 914-769-0548 or www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.

**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. 20). Info: 914-769-0548 or www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.

**Mother Goose.** Listen to stories and sing along with the librarian for a fun morning. The session incorporates picture books that focus on colors, shapes, letters and more. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 11 to 11:30 a.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.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.mountkiscoblibrary.org.

**Meditation Series: Midday Mind Break.** Benefits of meditation include

increasing focus and memory; increased health; reduced stress, anxiety and pain; and increased productivity and happiness. Led by Alka Kaminer. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd., East, Armonk. 12:15 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

**Chair Yoga With Alka Kaminer.** Experience greater flexibility, cardiovascular endurance and improved balance, strengthening and toning of muscles, better digestion, stress reduction, mental clarity, improved breathing, relaxation and an overall sense of well-being. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 1 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

**Senior Movie Matinees: "The Thin Man."** Starring William Powell, Myrna Loy and Maureen O'Sullivan. Refreshments served following the screening. Jacob Burns Film Center, 364 Manville Rd., Pleasantville. 1 p.m. \$10. Advance reservations required. Info and reservations: 914-773-7663 ext. 424.

**People Love Yarn.** Share your knowledge or learn from the group. All skill levels welcome. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 1 to 3:30 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: Contact Louann Rooney at rooneylm@optonline.net.

**Adult Book Group.** To learn this month's book title, contact group discussion leader Martha Iwan. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-864-0136 or e-mail miwan@wlsmail.org.

**Grow Your Business With GoogleAds.** What is GoogleAds? It is the most powerful marketing tool in history. In this workshop, Jeff Garnett, entrepreneur, digital marketing consultant and owner of Clean Slate Laser Tattoo Removal Centers, will help you examine marketing cycle fundamentals, pay-per-click versus SEO and Google AdWords account structure, components and strategies. SCORE Headquarters at White Plains Public Library, 100 Martine Ave., White Plains. 2 to 4 p.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: Visit www.westchester.score.org.

**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. Wednesdays from 2:30 to 7 p.m., Thursdays from 1 to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Appointment required. English only on Wednesdays. Appointments available in Spanish on Thursdays and Saturdays. Info and Wednesday appointments: 914-336-6026. Info and Thursday and Saturday appointments: 914-336-6935.

**Science Lab.** Become junior scientists and learn about different science topics through stories, crafts and experiments. For children four to six years old. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 4 to 5 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

**Knitting at the Library.** Knitters and crocheters of all skill levels. For ages 10 and

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

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.mountkiscoblibrary.org.

**Support Group for Families in Recovery.** Mountainside Chappaqua now offers this family support groups to those who have been impacted by a loved one's addiction. These sessions are designed to provide family members with the recovery and support services they need to heal in tandem with their addicted loved ones. For parents, spouses, children, friends and others whose loved ones have struggled with drug or alcohol misuse. Group members are encouraged to share their stories, setbacks and successes with those who have encountered similar challenges. Mountainside Chappaqua, 480 Bedford Rd., Chappaqua. 6:30 to 8 p.m. Free. Meets the third Wednesday of every month. Info: 800-762-5433.

**Woodstock Festival: Honoring the 50th Anniversary.** The festival has become widely regarded as a pivotal moment in popular music history as well as a defining event for the counterculture generation. David Fruci, adjunct professor at Westchester Community College, will present a program with guitar and Power Point videos. New Castle Town Hall, 200 S. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 914-238-4779 or www.chappaqualibrary.org.

**Art Series: Picasso, the Mystique of a Master, Part II.** A second look at the life and work of Pablo Picasso. Dig a little bit deeper into his various styles during the periods of his creativity. 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.

Thursday, Jan. 16

**Third Thursdays Bird Walk.** Join naturalist Tait Johansson at this local migration hotspot for the second in a new series of bird walks. A great way to hone your birding skills and mark the passing of the seasons and birds. Maple Avenue, Katonah. 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: Contact Susan at 914-302-9713 or e-mail info@bedfordaudubon.org.

**Regional Workforce Development Summit.** Nationally renowned experts and local stakeholders will address an audience of leaders from business, education, economic development, workforce development, government, nonprofit organizations and foundations to discuss innovative solutions to the region's recruitment and retention issues. Speakers will include Westchester Community College President Dr. Belinda Miles, Joseph Carbone, president and CEO of The WorkPlace and Diane Woolley, chief human resources officer at White Plains Hospital. The keynote speaker will be Jason Bram, regional economist officer, Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Opening remarks will be delivered by County Executive George Latimer. Westchester Marriott, 670 White Plains Rd., Tarrytown. 8 to 11 a.m. Westchester County Association members: \$85. Non-members: \$95. Info and registration:

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# Legislator Calls for Judicial Discretion in Bail Reform Legislation

By Pat Casey

Assemblywoman Amy Paulin (D-Scarsdale) has proposed legislation that aims to restore judicial discretion to judges regarding bail for criminal defendants who may pose a threat to public safety.

Last Friday, Paulin filed legislation in the state Assembly to amend a subdivision of the criminal procedure law to allow a court to make an individualized determination regarding the dangerousness of a particular defendant. In cases such as domestic violence and hate crimes, flight risk by the defendant is not enough to suspend bail.

"With this amendment, we have the opportunity to adjust the critical bail reforms that were enacted last year," Paulin said. "Bail reform needed to happen in the interest of justice and equal treatment of accused individuals but we must balance those objectives against the safety and security of our residents. The good intentions of the pre-trial reforms that were passed in last year's budget unfortunately have come with some unintended consequences that need to be addressed immediately."

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, the new bail law, which went into effect Jan. 1 in New York, eliminates pretrial detention and cash bail as an option

for most misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies, about 90 percent of arrests. For the remaining cases, judges will maintain the option of setting cash bail.

Judges must release individuals charged with misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies with no cash bail either on their own recognizance or with release conditions designed to ensure that the individual returns to court, such as pretrial supervision and text message reminders for court dates.

For those charged with the most serious crimes, including virtually all violent felonies and certain nonviolent felonies, very little has changed. In those cases, judges will retain the option to set cash bail.

The Brennan Center concluded the law has not changed what judges are permitted to consider in setting bail. Judges in New York are not allowed to detain people due to concerns that they will pose a danger to the community if released. This part of the legislation is consistent with longstanding law in New York, which has prohibited the consideration of dangerousness in setting bail since 1971 in order to ensure that those charged with crimes are afforded the presumption of innocence.

Since the bail reform law went into effect, there has been outcry among some in law enforcement and advocates for victims'



Assemblywoman Amy Paulin has introduced legislation to make changes to the new bail reform law that would give the state's judges greater discretion to impose bail.

rights that the law needs to be adjusted.

Along with the recent mass shooting at a kosher supermarket in Jersey City

and a stabbing incident at a rabbi's home in Monsey, Paulin also cited an attack in Brooklyn where a 30-year-old woman physically attacked three Jewish women while shouting anti-Semitic epithets. As a result of the new bail reforms, the attacker was released after being charged with attempted assault as a hate crime.

Just one day later, the defendant was arrested following a similar unprovoked attack on another woman and again was released. The judge did not have the discretion to detain the defendant on bail.

It wasn't until a third arrest just days later that the serial attacker was remanded pending a psychiatric evaluation.

Paulin said she is particularly concerned that judges have lost the ability to impose bail on violent and potentially violent perpetrators of hate crimes and domestic violence incidents, offenses that carry a high rate of recurrence and escalation in severity. She said she didn't want to see the judiciary handcuffed and crime victims left vulnerable and afraid.

Several other versions of bail reform legislation are also in the works. Gov. Andrew Cuomo recently acknowledged that "bail reform is a work in progress," although he did not mention it during his State of the State address last week.

## Happenings

*continued from previous page*

Visit [www.westchester.org](http://www.westchester.org).

**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).

**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 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. Every Monday and Thursday. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

**Lifeline 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 2 p.m. Free. Every Thursday and Friday. Info: Visit [www.lifelinetheaterinc.org/index.html](http://www.lifelinetheaterinc.org/index.html).

**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).

**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, 125 Lozza Drive, Valhalla. 11 to 11:30 a.m. Free. Every Tuesday and Thursday. Info: 914-769-0548 or [www.mountpleasantlibrary.org](http://www.mountpleasantlibrary.org).

**Toddler Mixer.** Come to play and hang out with other toddlers and adults. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 11 a.m. to noon. Free. Every Thursday. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.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.mountkisco.org](http://www.mountkisco.org).

**Bereavement Support Group.** Members receive the emotional, educational and social support needed to successfully manage their issues. Phelps Hospital, Room 545, 755 N. Broadway, Sleepy Hollow. Noon. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: Contact Monica Hobson at 914-924-9593 or e-mail [mhobson@northwell.edu](mailto:mhobson@northwell.edu).

**Pelvic Floor Health: Beyond Kegels in the Chair.** Educational and experiential,

this workshop will empower women with a new awareness of their pelvic floor. Come learn the anatomy and physiology, the weakness, dysfunctions and techniques to relax, strengthen, balance and maintain optimal health. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 1 to 2 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

**Mahjongg Club.** Intermediate players welcome. Participants must bring their own set. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 1 to 4 p.m. Free. Every Thursday. Info: 914-666-8041 or [www.mountkisco.org](http://www.mountkisco.org).

**National Theatre Live: "All My Sons."** Captured at The Old Vic in London, Academy Award-winner Sally Field and Bill Pullman star in Arthur Miller's blistering drama. It's 1947 and Joe and Kate Keller have built a home, raised two sons and established a thriving business. But nothing lasts forever – and their contentment is about to be shattered. With the return of a figure from the past, long-buried truths are forced to the surface and the price of their American dream is laid bare. Jacob Burns Film Center, 364 Manville Rd., Pleasantville. 2 p.m. Members: \$20. Non-members: \$30. Info and tickets: Visit [www.burnsfilmcenter.org](http://www.burnsfilmcenter.org).

**Family Storytime.** Stories, songs, fingerplays and other activities. For children one to four years old and their siblings and caregivers. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 4 to 4:30 p.m. Free. Every Thursday. Info: 914-769-0548 or [www.mountpleasantlibrary.org](http://www.mountpleasantlibrary.org).

**Arts and Crafts.** Paint, glue and color yourself something cool to take home. Each

session will feature a different craft. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 4 to 5 p.m. Free. Every Thursday. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

**Creative Writing.** Meet up with other writers, share ideas and write stories. For students in grades 6-12. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 4 to 5 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

**DIY Pine Cone Birdfeeders.** Help take care of the birds during this cold season with a pine cone birdfeeder. For children of all ages. (Children under five years old must be accompanied by a caregiver.) Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Registration recommended. Info and registration: 914-864-0130.

**Read to Rover.** Dogs love listening to stories. Come meet Rover and read your favorite story. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 5 to 6 p.m. Free. Thursdays from 5 to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to noon (except Jan. 25). Info: 914-666-8041 or [www.mountkisco.org](http://www.mountkisco.org).

**John Jay Homestead's Scholars Lectures: Joanne Freeman.** In 1856 Charles Sumner of Massachusetts was caned nearly to death on the Senate floor by Preston Brooks of South Carolina. Freeman has found 70 more examples beginning in the 1830s of increasing physical violence, sectional intensity and paralyzing effect on Congress. She teaches history and American studies at Yale, where she won a DeVane Award for distinction in teaching. John Jay

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# Happenings

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**Homestead Ballroom**, 400 Jay St., (Route 22), Katonah. Check-in and refreshments at 6:30 p.m. Lecture at 7 p.m. Members: \$20. Non-members: \$25. Students (must register): Free. Info and tickets: Visit [www.johnjayhomestead.org](http://www.johnjayhomestead.org).

**Drop-In Knitting.** First-time knitter? Need help with a knitting project? Knitting instructor and advanced knitter Benny Gerwitz can help. Please bring your own materials. Briarcliff Manor Public Library, 1 Library Rd., Briarcliff Manor. 6:30 to 8 p.m. Free. Info: 914-941-7072 or [www.briarcliffmanorlibrary.org](http://www.briarcliffmanorlibrary.org).

## Friday, Jan. 17

**Stroller Tour.** For the youngest museum-goers and their caregivers. Katonah Museum of Art, 134 Jay St., Katonah. 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Members: Free. Non-members: With museum admission. Info: 914-232-9555 or visit [www.katonahmuseum.org](http://www.katonahmuseum.org).

**Hoff-Barthelson Music School Early Childhood Open House.** Children six months to five years old and their adults are invited to join in the fun of a music and movement class followed by a brief Q&A with faculty and a reception during which you can socialize with other families. Hoff-Barthelson Music School, 25 School Lane, Scarsdale. 10 to 11:30 a.m. Demonstration class at 10:30 a.m. Free. Snow date: Jan. 24. Info: 914-723-1169, visit [www.hbms.org](http://www.hbms.org) or e-mail [hb@hbms.org](mailto:hb@hbms.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. Walk-ins welcome. Info: Call or text the instructor at 914-643-6162 or visit [www.amyolin.zumba.com](http://www.amyolin.zumba.com).

**Passport to Fitness for Kids.** Get fit and learn dance moves from around the world with a fun Zumba class. For children four to six years old. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 11:15 a.m. to noon. Free. Every Friday. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-864-0130.

**Music With Miss Laura.** Stories, songs, finger plays and movement activities. For children 18 to 36 months old. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 11:30 a.m. to noon. Free. Every Friday. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

**Senior Social.** In the company of art-loving guests and an expert docent, explore the work of women artists of Abstract Expressionism and reminisce about New York in the '50s. Coffee and treats provided. Katonah Museum of Art, 134 Jay St., Katonah. 1 to 2 p.m. Members: Free. Non-members: With museum admission. Info: 914-232-9555 or visit [www.katonahmuseum.org](http://www.katonahmuseum.org).

**Artful Afternoons.** A host of fun projects and activities inspired by the exhibition "Sparkling Amazons." All ages welcome. Katonah Museum of Art, 134 Jay St., Katonah. 3 to 5 p.m. Members: Free. Non-members: With museum admission. Info: 914-232-9555 or visit [www.katonahmuseum.org](http://www.katonahmuseum.org).

**Bingo.** For children. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 4 to 4:30 p.m. Free. Every Friday. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

**Overbooked!** (Young Adult Book Club). "I Hope You Get This Message by Farah Naz Rishi will be discussed. For students in grades 6-12. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 4 to 5 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

**Friday Night Films and Discussion: "Lost in Translation."** Post-screening discussion led by Carol Durst-Wertheim. Chappaqua Public Library, 195 S. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 914-238-4779 or [www.chappaqualibrary.org](http://www.chappaqualibrary.org).

**Friday Night Film Series: "Welcome, Mr. President."** This Italian farce explores a novel concept: What would happen if an honest man ends up in charge of a very corrupt system? Starring Claudio Bisio, one of Italy's most lauded comedic actors, this film takes us into that most unscrupulous of environments – the world of politics. In Italian with English subtitles. Post-screening 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).

**Phil Vassar: Stripped Down Acoustic Tour.** Country music hitmaker Phil Vassar is a piano-pounding powerhouse on stage who taps into his audiences via social media for song requests throughout his more than 135 shows a year. Vassar's signature songs include 10 Number 1 singles and 26 Top 40 hits, including "Carlene," "Just Another Day in Paradise," "Six-Pack Summer," "When I Love You" and many more. Vassar was racking up hits on the radio long before he began his recording career that has seen the release of six albums, two ASCAP Songwriter of the Year trophies ACM's Top New Male Vocalist and sold-out shows across the country. Vassar's songwriting career blossomed in the mid-'90s when he landed a publishing contract with EMI and penned his hits for Collin Raye, Alan Jackson, Tim McGraw, Jo Dee Messina and Blackhawk. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St., Tarrytown. 8 p.m. \$38, \$48 and \$58. Info and tickets: Visit [www.tarrytownmusichall.org](http://www.tarrytownmusichall.org).

**Westchester Photographic Society: Charles Needle – Impressionistic Flower and Garden Photography Using Your Camera as a Paintbrush.** Unlock your creative potential and discover how to craft impressionistic-looking photographs using nothing but your digital camera. Award-winning photographer and educator Charles Needle guides you through the process of using long-exposure and multiple-exposure techniques to transform everyday scenes into unimaginable visual masterpieces. For adults 18 years old and up. Westchester Community College's Technology Building, Room 107, 75 Grasslands Rd., Valhalla. (Use Parking Lot 11) 8 p.m. Free. Info: 914-827-5353 or visit [www.wpsphoto.org](http://www.wpsphoto.org).

## Saturday, Jan. 18

**Pleasantville Farmers Market.** The delicious good time moves indoors for the winter. A great way to support regional

agriculture and eat healthy, year-round with plenty of warm smiles and community togetherness. Pleasantville Middle School, 40 Romer Ave., Pleasantville. 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please note the market is a dog-free environment. Indoor market continues through Mar. 28. Info: Visit [www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org](http://www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org).

**Winter Wonderland Photo Session.** A special opportunity to photograph ambassador wolves Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr in a winter wonderland setting. Guests will also have the chance to photograph some of the critically endangered Mexican wolves and red wolves from vantage points not generally available during regular visits. Dress for cold weather. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 9 a.m. \$100. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

**Blood Drive.** Whole blood and double red cells units will be collected from qualifying candidates. All blood types are needed. If you donated whole blood at the Nov. 4 drive at Pleasantville High School, you are eligible to donate either whole blood or red cells. If you donated double red cells on Nov. 4, you cannot donate either whole blood or red cells. (The 112-day requirement will not be met.) Emanuel Lutheran Church, 197 Manville Rd., Pleasantville. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Info and questions: 800-688-0900. Appointments: 800-933-2566 or visit [https://donate.nybc.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/266218](https://donate.nybc.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/266218). Walk-ins also are welcome.

**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. 10 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.

**History Hike.** A history hike around the preserve looking at all the things that makes Cranberry Lake so interesting. Cranberry Lake Preserve, 1609 Old Orchard St., North White Plains. 10 to 11:30 a.m. Free. Info: 914-428-1005.

**Miller House Open House.** An afternoon of history and intrigue involving George Washington and the richest single woman in Colonial America, Mary Eliza Philipse. Miller House, 140 Virginia Rd., North White Plains. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free. Info: 914-428-1005.

**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 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

**Musical Munchkins.** An interactive program where parents engage in the musical activity along with their children demonstrating the joy of music. The fun involves hand-held instruments, props, puppets, stories, singing, beat keeping and other joyful musical activity. For children two to five years old. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 11

a.m. to noon. Free. Registration requested. Info and registration: 914-769-0548.

**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.

**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 the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Enjoy hot beverages in the woodstove-heated classroom. Dress for cold weather. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 1 p.m. Adults: \$15. Children (under 12): \$12. Also Jan. 20 and 25 at 11 a.m., Jan. 26 at 1 p.m., Jan. 19 at 2 p.m. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

**Feeding Fun.** A hands-on program to learn about the care that goes into feeding the indoor animals as well as the birds of prey and those in the barnyard. Greenburgh Nature Center, 99 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. 1 to 2 p.m. Members: Free. Non-members: \$8. Info: 914-723-3470 or visit [www.greenburghnaturecenter.org](http://www.greenburghnaturecenter.org).

**Drop in for Tech Help.** Receive assistance with any of your technology devices. PC, Google, Microsoft savvy volunteers help with troubleshooting, downloading, Overdrive, Freegal, Hoopla or any other online service. First-come, first-served. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 1 to 2:30 p.m. Saturdays from 1 to 2:30 p.m. and Tuesdays from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-666-8041 or [www.mountkisco.library.org](http://www.mountkisco.library.org).

**"The Secret Judaic Origins of the Tarot de Marseille."** This event will focus on Jewish history in Europe and analysis in the cards with Stav Appel helping decode the hidden Jewish content in the cards. Sponsored by the Westchester Community for Humanistic Judaism. Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 468 Rosedale Ave., White Plains. 2 p.m. Free; donations welcome. Info: 914-218-8535 or e-mail [info@wchj.org](mailto:info@wchj.org).

**Evening Howl for Pups of All Ages.** Enjoy visiting the wolves during their favorite hour – dusk. Learn about the mythology, biology and ecology of wolf families and discover why it's a magical time for packs in North America. This time of year, wolf families are out searching for prey as their pups experience their first winter. Guests will take a short sunset hike to howl with ambassador wolves Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and possibly the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican wolves. Enjoy hot beverages in the woodstove-heated classroom. Dress for cold weather and bring flashlights. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 4:30 p.m. Adults: \$16. Children (under

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# Debunking the Top 5 Myths About Surgical Weight Loss

By Dr. Mitchell Roslin

## 1. If you're obese, you don't need bariatric surgery. To lose the weight, diet and work out.

Obesity is probably one of the most misunderstood conditions in the world. It's an energy-storage disease, a problem with the body's central regulator. Obesity occurs when your body's regulator is set too high, and that elevated "set-point" drives you to consume more food to produce the energy to meet this increased demand. Exercise and low-calorie diets produce short-term changes that make only a slight difference. But bariatric surgery changes your gastrointestinal tract and set-point, so you get full faster, feel less hungry, and therefore, can lose significant weight.

## 2. Bariatric surgery is dangerous.

This mainstream procedure has minimal risk compared to the complications of obesity, which include cardiovascular disease, hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, sleep apnea and dementia.

## 3. I'm too young or old for the surgery.

Obesity is a serious disease that affects you physically and emotionally, no matter how old you are. For teens, obesity not only increases the risk of the health problems noted above, but also affects mood, self-esteem, the ability to concentrate, get



good grades and even make friends.

The good news is that surgical weight loss is very successful in adolescent patients, helping them physically, emotionally and academically. The surgery is also safe and effective for older obese patients, many of whom are functionally impaired, meaning they have radically limited their activities because of their condition. At Northern Westchester Hospital, I've seen patients who are in their seventies.

## 4. Women can't have children after weight-loss surgery.

Big myth! In fact, surgical weight loss boosts

fertility since the leading cause of infertility in women is obesity. Polycystic ovary syndrome, a common cause of infertility, is associated with obesity. And obese pregnant women have a higher rate of miscarriage and diabetes.

## 5. After surgery, you'll have a large scar, lose your hair and may gain your weight back.

We do minimally invasive surgery through small incisions, so scarring is minimal – four to six tiny marks. As for hair loss, there's some truth to this. Some patients undergo hormonal changes after surgery and might experience thinning hair. However, you won't go bald.

As for gaining weight back after surgery, this depends on the person. If you have the surgery and refuse to develop healthier habits, it's possible you'll regain weight. That's why it's important to exercise regularly – three to five times a week – and to choose foods that make you feel full, don't drive up your sugar level, are nutritious and take longer to digest.

At Northern Westchester Hospital, a registered bariatric dietitian helps you stay on track with healthy eating. We also offer support groups to help patients make healthier decisions about post-surgery eating.

*Dr. Mitchell Roslin is director of bariatric surgery at Northern Westchester Hospital.*

# Happenings

*continued from previous page*

12): \$13. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

**The KJ Denhart Trio.** Denhart's special blend of urban folk and jazz has earned her four Independent Music Award nominations, and in 2009, she was named as one of Jazz.com's top female vocalists. She's appeared at scores of festivals and has residencies at the '55 Bar, Smoke in NYC, the Baz Bar in St. Barth's and the prestigious Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy. Consistently praised for her pathos, originality and impeccable musicianship, Denhart is a one-of-a-kind songwriter, guitarist and performer, not to be missed. Common Ground Coffeehouse at the First Unitarian Society of Westchester, 25 Old Jackson Ave., Hastings-on-Hudson. 7:30 p.m. Front row: \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. General admission: \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. Info and tickets: Visit [www.commongroundconcerts.com](http://www.commongroundconcerts.com).

## Sunday, Jan. 19

**Namaste KMA Yoga.** Add a little mindfulness to your day. Following the session, view the "Sparkling Amazons" exhibit before it opens to the public. Katonah Museum of Art, 134 Jay St., Katonah. 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. Members: \$20. Non-members: \$25. Info and registration: Visit [www.katonahmuseum.org](http://www.katonahmuseum.org).

**Winter Wolves for Kids.** This is the best introduction to wolves for families with young children. Youngsters 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 the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Enjoy hot beverages in our woodstove-heated classroom. Dress for cold weather. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 11 a.m. Adults: \$15. Children (under 12): \$12. Also Jan. 25 at 2 p.m. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

**Creatures of the Night.** While we are in bed fast asleep, some of our animal friends are using their senses to find food and make their way through a mysterious nocturnal world. Meet some of our nocturnal animals and find out why they only come out at night. Greenburgh Nature Center, 99 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. 1 to 2 p.m. Members: Free. Non-members: \$8. Info: 914-723-3470 or visit [www.greenburghnaturecenter.org](http://www.greenburghnaturecenter.org).

**Kids Open Mic.** Perform solo or bring your band. Refreshments and snacks available for sale. Kids under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Lagond Music School, 9 Haven St., Elmsford. Doors open and sign up begins at 6:15 p.m. Performances from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Performers: Free. Non-performers: \$5. The third Sunday of every month. Info: 914-345-0512 or visit [www.lagondmusic.org](http://www.lagondmusic.org).

**Hudson Valley Blues Society Presents: Felix Cabrera.** Cabrera brings his unique twist on the blues. One of the world's most recognized harp players, he puts on a show like no other. Lucy's Lounge, 446 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Show at 7 p.m. General admission: \$20 (on first-come, first-served basis). VIP Seating: \$25. (In the event of bad weather, the show will be rescheduled and all tickets will be honored at that time.) Info and tickets: Visit <https://www.facebook.com/pg/LucysLoungeNY/events/>

## Monday, Jan. 20

**MLK Day Practice Test.** Participants should arrive no later than 10 minutes before the start of each exam. Tests are proctored and will begin promptly. Students must bring their own calculator. C2 Education, 195 N. Bedford Rd., Mount Kisco. Practice ACT from 8 to 11:15 a.m. Practice SAT or PSAT from 11:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Free. Seating limited; registration required by Jan. 18. Info and registration: 914-362-1100, e-mail [mount.kisco@c2educate.com](mailto:mount.kisco@c2educate.com) or text 914-362-8495.

**Morning Bird Walk.** Go birding with the Saw Mill River Audubon. Beginners welcome. Rain or shine. Rockefeller State Park Preserve. (Use Sleepy Hollow Road entrance.) 8:30 a.m. Free. Meets the third Monday of each month. Info: Visit [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org).

**MLK Day of Service: Donating and Sorting Children's Books.** Volunteers of all ages will be sorting children's books and making decorated LED bookmarks to give to young readers. An interfaith and community-wide service that pays tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s emphasis on the importance of education and reading and on the "content of your mind, not the color of your skin." JCC of Mid-Westchester, 999 Wilmot Rd., Scarsdale. 10 a.m. to noon. Free. Registration required. Registration: Visit [www.ujafedny.org/volunteer-opportunity/donating-and-sorting-childrens-books-18](http://www.ujafedny.org/volunteer-opportunity/donating-and-sorting-childrens-books-18). Info: Contact Donna Divon at 914-385-2130 or [divond@ujafedny.org](mailto:divond@ujafedny.org).

**MLK Day of Service: Pack Emergency Kits.** Volunteers of all ages will pack emergency kits, known as Blizzard Boxes, containing emergency-use, nutritious, non-

perishable foods for those in need. Shames JCC on the Hudson, 371 S. Broadway, Tarrytown. 10 a.m. to noon. Free. Registration required. Registration: Visit [www.ujafedny.org/volunteer-opportunity/emergency-kit-packaging-14](http://www.ujafedny.org/volunteer-opportunity/emergency-kit-packaging-14). Info: Contact Donna Divon at 914-385-2130 or e-mail [divond@ujafedny.org](mailto:divond@ujafedny.org).

**The Best of the 2019 New York International Children's Film Festival: Kid Flicks One.** Change is in the air with these fun and clever stories of growth and transformation. If you've ever been the youngest of the group, you'll sympathize with the little tadpole who always falls a tad behind in the charming "Kuap." Catching up on penmanship is the name of the game in the winning documentary "The Pen Licence." Then little ones are in charge and grownups get to play when the hilarious "Flipped" reworks the script. These shorts and many others await you. Jacob Burns Film Center, 364 Manville Rd., Pleasantville. Noon. Members: \$10. Non-members: \$15. Children (13 and under): \$8. Info and tickets: Visit [www.burnsfilmcenter.org](http://www.burnsfilmcenter.org).

**Meet the Animals.** An informative program that allows you to get up close and hands on with some of the center's live animals. Greenburgh Nature Center, 99 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. 1 to 2 p.m. Members: Free. Non-members: \$8. Info: 914-723-3470 or visit [www.greenburghnaturecenter.org](http://www.greenburghnaturecenter.org).

**Two Shorts by Madeline Anderson.** Trailblazing filmmaker Madeline Anderson, often credited with being the first black woman to produce and direct a televised documentary film, believed that film must inspire social change. Two examples of her influential work will be screened: her first film, "Integration Report 1," a 1960

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# Truth in Package Labeling: On a Wine Bottle?



By Nick Antonaccio

When shopping for the produce and/or meats necessary to prepare an at-home meal, consumers are increasingly aware of the nutritional and health values of unprocessed ingredients. Many products contain nutrition and ingredient information on government-mandated food labels.

But what of the fresh produce and non-shrink-wrapped meats in supermarkets? Current regulations are not always effective in food labeling.

Increasing numbers of consumers are seeking out products grown and raised as they were for centuries before the industrialization of food products, before the era of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides and before GMO products and Monsanto corn.

Conscientious consumers have more food information available today than ever before. However, the availability of nutritional and health information still has a few wide gaps.

When consumers prepare a meal of the most healthful foods in the marketplace, they sit at the table proud of their accomplishment.

Typically, they will celebrate their meal with a glass of wine. Herein lies the rub. That bottle of wine may be “industrialized” with man-made additives. But how is a discerning consumer able to make an informed decision on the quality of the wines they purchase? No government regulations exist that require a nutrition or ingredients label on a bottle of wine.

Ironically, there is no lack of verbiage on wine labels today – where the grapes are grown, which grapes were blended together, flowery adjectives describing the bouquet, aroma, flavor, even suggestions for food pairing. All with the implied intent of making a consumer’s decision-making process easier. The more information the better, right?

Maybe. Does nice-to-know trump need-to-know?

In the face of this lack of mandatory ingredients labeling, many consumers might question any need for disclosure. To them, wine is simply fermented grape juice that “contains sulfites.”

The reality is that many wines contain additives introduced during the winemaking process, including several that remain present in the final product. Remember the (unfounded) scare several years ago concerning the levels of (naturally occurring) arsenic in numerous wines? To

add to the confusion are the current federal government regulations that list 62 chemical materials that may be legally added to wine – and not disclosed on the bottle label.

In varying degrees and in varying winemakers’ end products, numerous man-made enzymes may be added to enhance the color or balance the flavors or aromas. Sugar may be added to control alcohol levels, powdered tannins to influence overall quality, citric acid to control pH levels.

Many of these additives have not (yet) been shown to be harmful. However, otherwise natural wines are being adulterated in a significant amount of the wine unaware Americans consume.

The industry has successfully resisted any form of disclosure. However, several pioneering American winemakers have taken the bold step of voluntary disclosure. As one might suspect, these virtuous winemakers have nothing to hide, although several of their specific disclosures might turn heads amongst uninitiated or naïve wine consumers.

Ridge Vineyards, one of California’s most respected wineries, adds a list of ingredients to the back label of several of their wines. Here is the language for the highly regarded and expensive Ridge Monte Bello bottling: “Hand harvested, sustainably grown

estate grapes, indigenous yeasts, naturally occurring malolactic bacteria, 2.4% water addition, calcium carbonate, oak from barrel aging, minimum effective SO<sub>2</sub>.”

This is a very straightforward presentation with a list of ingredients I wouldn’t mind ingesting. “Bacteria?” “Water?” These are natural ingredients many winemakers add to their wines to improve their quality. The harmless bacteria are naturally produced during the fermentation process; a portion may remain in the wine upon bottling. Water may be added to a wine during its aging process to compensate for overly ripe grapes or to reduce high levels of alcohol.

Informed consumers spend considerable time – and money – seeking out food products that conform to their lifestyle choices. Shouldn’t we be able to scrutinize wine in a similar fashion?

*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 or on Twitter @sharingwine.*

**You Heard It Through the Grapevine**



## Happenings

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examination of the struggle for black equality, and “I Am Somebody,” a document of a 1969 struggle for labor rights in Charleston, S.C. led by 400 black female hospital workers, featuring a rousing speech from Coretta Scott King. Jacob Burns Film Center, 364 Manville Rd., Pleasantville. 5 p.m. Members: \$10. Non-members: \$15. Info and tickets: Visit [www.burnsfilmcenter.org](http://www.burnsfilmcenter.org).

**Belly Dancing.** Learn this captivating Middle Eastern dance and enrich your cultural knowledge. Whether you want to dance professionally or just have fun and get in shape, this is the place to start. Josie’s International School of Dance, 42 Memorial Plaza, Level B, Pleasantville. 7 p.m. \$20. Every Monday. Info: 914-332-8670 or visit [www.josiedance.com](http://www.josiedance.com).

### Tuesday, Jan. 21

**Bridge for Beginners.** Sharpen your mind and enlarge your social circle by learning the fascinating game of Bridge. You will learn the suggested rules of bridge through card playing. Moving at a comfortable pace, also experience a passion for this game. Led by Doris Paucaldo. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. Every Tuesday. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-273-3887 ext. 3.

**Music & Movement.** Shake, shimmy and dance. For children two to five years old.

Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 11:15 to 11:45 a.m. Free. Every Tuesday. Info: 914-666-8041 or [www.mountkiscoliberal.org](http://www.mountkiscoliberal.org).

**Sign and Play With Chloe.** A fun, musical, early communication program for children and caregivers to enjoy together. Based on the award-winning Baby Signing Time series, this class uses songs and games to help families learn to communicate using real signs from American Sign Language. Led by certified instructor and professional children’s entertainer, Chloe from Chloe’s Kids. For children up to three years old. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

**Brown Bag Lunchtime Book Discussion Group.** Bring your lunch and join this book discussion group. “Educated” by Tara Westover will be discussed. Books are available to borrow from the library. Discussion led by Reference Librarian Shelley Glick. Briarcliff Manor Public Library, 1 Library Rd., Briarcliff Manor. 12:30 to 2 p.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: Contact Shelley Glick at 914-941-7072 or [sglick@wlsmail.org](mailto:sglick@wlsmail.org).

**Drop-In Breastfeeding Support Clinic.** Join other moms and Certified Lactation Counselor Cabiria Dougherty at this drop-in clinic for breastfeeding concerns and questions big and small. This clinic is designed to lessen the pressure to perform

that can arise from the usual hour-and-a-half home visits or 30-minute office visits, and afford time to observe more than one feeding in a relaxed and welcoming space. Latch assessments and suggestions for improved positioning and feeding outcomes are the main focus, but moms with babies at all ages and stages are welcome. Questions about pumping, weaning, solids and more are answered with evidence-based, current knowledge and judgement-free respect. Drop in any time. NUR Space, 596 Warburton Ave., Hastings-On-Hudson. 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. \$30. Every Tuesday. Info: Visit [www.nurspace.com/nur-calendar/drop-in-breastfeeding-support-clinic-mf83s](http://www.nurspace.com/nur-calendar/drop-in-breastfeeding-support-clinic-mf83s).

**Earring Making.** Learn to make earrings while helping a good cause. For every pair of earrings you make, make another pair that will be donated to a battered women’s shelter. Led by Joan Lloyd. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-666-8041 or [www.mountkiscoliberal.org](http://www.mountkiscoliberal.org).

**DIY Tree and Birds Winter Art.** Make your own wintry scene from the warmth of the library with this fun art project. For children of all ages. (Children under five years old must be accompanied by a caregiver.) Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Registration recommended. Info and registration: 914-864-0130.

**Mount Kisco Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting.** Mount Kisco Public

Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Info: 914-666-8041 or [www.mountkiscoliberal.org](http://www.mountkiscoliberal.org).

**Armonk Readers Book Club.** “House of Broken Angels” by Luis Alberto Urrea will be discussed. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whipoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 6:45 to 8 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or [www.northcastlelibrary.org](http://www.northcastlelibrary.org).

### Wednesday, Jan. 22

**Meditation Session.** Meditation is one of the best tools to balance emotions, deal with physical and psychological distress and promote the peace of the present moment. Phelps Hospital’s Family Medicine Residency Conference Room, (fourth floor), 755 N. Broadway, Sleepy Hollow. 11 a.m. Free. Info: Contact Ellen Woods at 914-366-3937 or e-mail [Vitality@northwell.edu](mailto:Vitality@northwell.edu).

**The Basics of Intellectual Property.** Intellectual Property is one of the most important and valuable assets of any business. Laurie Marshall, founder and president of Marshall Law Group, and Libby Varghese, counsel for Scarinci Hollenbeck, will help entrepreneurs and small business owners better understand the different types of IP and how to protect them. SCORE Headquarters at White Plains Public Library, 100 Martine Ave., White Plains. 2 to 4 p.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: Visit [www.westchester.score.org](http://www.westchester.score.org).



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# From NY Island to the Philippine Islands: Can We Save Our Symbols?

By Brian Kluepfel

This week I attended two local events about symbolic birds – the Eastern bluebird, New York's state bird, and the Philippine eagle, which is – guess what – the national symbol of the Philippines. The birds seem headed on different paths in terms of conservation.

At last Thursday evening's Saw Mill River Audubon event at the Mount Pleasant Public Library, our guest speaker was Sandy Morrissey of the Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon. Morrissey is a licensed bird bander and has been studying bluebirds for the past two decades.

Eastern bluebird populations dropped by about 90 percent in the early 20th century due to the introduction of invasive house sparrows and European starlings, who are cavity nesters, but nastier than the bluebird. Pesticides and habitat loss played a role, too.

But it wasn't too late to turn things around.

Morrissey spoke about the positive impact of community

involvement in building bluebird boxes over the past several decades – thank you, Girl Scouts! – and how box care and maintenance has affected the species in a positive way. (The boxes must be checked regularly to keep out invasive birds like house finches, which are "evil," Morrissey joked.)

We also found out that our lovely state bird keeps a meticulous pine needle/grass nest ("You could eat out of it!") and like other thrushes lays blue eggs, but occasionally white. Using wooden fenceposts – not the newfangled plastic ones – helps the birds because they can nest in the decaying stumps. Native plants like sumac are also good to plant.

The sites of live duffers (golf courses) and dead people (cemeteries) are good habitats for our state bird. Morrissey's data over a short sample period seems to show that non-golfing and golfing birds are surviving and breeding at nearly the same rate.

So, overall, good news for the Eastern bluebird.

Fast forward to last Saturday's screening at the Ossining Public Library about the Philippine eagle, co-hosted by Teatown Reservation. (It was the only way they could sneak a live turkey vulture into the library.) The film was called "Bird of Prey: Story of the Rarest Eagle on Earth."

The Philippine eagle was discovered in about 1890. That's how hard it is to see in the wild. Current estimates of the population range from 200 to 800, although they're hard to track down with nests in remote, well-hidden treetops. And it only breeds every other year.

A team led by intrepid cinematographer

Neil Rettig climbed many arduous rainforest slopes, swallowed a lot of mosquitos and generally risked life and limb to document the Philippine eagle's breeding in 1978. Then, 36 years later, they did it all again.

A rather comical turn came in 1978 when the visitors convinced then-President Ferdinand Marcos to rebrand the eagle. The name "monkey-eating eagle" was hurting its image among the local populace and even fed the legend that the giant raptor sometimes ate smallish people. Marcos, with the stroke of a pen, changed the name of the now-official national bird to the Philippine eagle.

No ornithologists were consulted on the name change. Then he went shopping with Imelda.

Of more dire consequence, however, was Marcos' inaction in saving his nation's rainforest. During his presidency, more than 90 percent of the hardwood forest, upon which the national bird depends for survival, was cut down. No place for the eagle to hunt or nest. Many died in the rampant deforestation.

The Philippine Eagle Foundation is doing all the right things: educating school groups, breeding eagles in captivity, monitoring nest sites for activity and any violation of the eagle's sacred space. Legally, it's protected by Philippine law; on the ground and in the skies of the island nation, it's a different story and many dead eagles are found with bullets in them.



STEVE RAPPAPORT PHOTO

The Eastern bluebird, New York State's official bird, is flourishing after 90 percent of its population was wiped out about 100 years ago.

Tracking a hard-to-find species, even in the scattered remaining Philippine rainforest, is a difficult task, as is breeding and releasing chicks with hardly a place to go. The majestic bird is in grave danger.

So for New York's bluebird, indeed, there is some cause for happiness. For the Philippine eagle, only time will tell. Both are cautionary tales of how quickly we can bring a species to the point of extinction.

*Brian Kluepfel is an author for the Lonely Planet guidebook series and just completed work on the most recent guide to Costa Rica. He lives in Ossining and edits the newsletter for the Saw Mill River Audubon. He has also contributed to Birdwatching Magazine. Find him at thewritingkooop.com.*

*B.F.*

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**Thursday, February 13, 7:00 pm**

Free public program at Croton Free Library

**For the Birds: How Birders Make a Difference**

**Thursday, March 17, 7:00 pm**

Free public program at Croton Free Library

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