



Secret P'ville Village Write-in Candidacy Raises Eyebrows and Concerns

By Abby Luby

A secret write-in campaign engineered by Pleasantville Board of Education member Angela Vella in last month's delayed village elections has rankled officials and lit up local social media boards by residents questioning the ethics of the move.

It was recently learned that there had been 125 write-in votes submitted for the Sept. 15 election, 114 of them cast for Vella. The only two candidates who submitted petitions by last February's deadline to appear on the ballot for the pair of open Village Board seats were one-term incumbent Nicole Asquith and Pleasantville Chamber of Commerce Vice President Paul Alvarez. Former trustee Steve Lord decided against running for re-election.

Alvarez collected 282 votes while Asquith picked up 169 votes in the election.

Vella said last week she decided to move forward with a write-in campaign because of what she described as the Village Board's failure to publicize the election and a more general lack of transparency, particularly

related to the downtown civic space and Manville Road improvement projects.

She said she received a postcard in the mail on Sept. 12 from the Westchester County Board of Elections that the election was taking place in three days. Vella claimed that she hadn't thought about a write-in campaign until then.

"The board didn't do anything to let people know and they only mentioned it once or twice in the meeting before the vote," Vella said. "Many people didn't even know there was an election."

She reached out to friends and acquaintances in the few days before the election and asked them to write her name on the ballot.

"The biggest reason I did it was to send a message to the Village Board that they lack transparency with elections and with other issues and of their unwillingness to actually listen to a large portion of Pleasantville residents," Vella said.

The Examiner reported on Feb. 3 that Asquith and Paul Alvarez were running for the two board seats, with Lord deciding

to bow out and not seek another term. A formal announcement was made at the Feb. 10 Village Board meeting about the election that was at that time scheduled for Mar. 18.

Vella raised concerns about the late timing of Lord's Feb. 10 announcement, contending that it gave a resident interested in running for the Village Board only two days to obtain at least 100 valid signatures on a nominating petition by the Feb. 12 deadline.

Some viewed the write-in campaign as specifically targeting Asquith, who was surprised to learn about it last week.

"The news that there was a secret write-in campaign in an attempt to unseat me caught me off-guard, as it did the rest of the Village Board, who knew nothing about it until the election results were revealed," Asquith said.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gov. Andrew Cuomo postponed March village elections across the state until Apr. 28. When he deemed that it still wasn't safe to hold them, village elections

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Angela Vella has stirred controversy in Pleasantville after it was learned she ran a write-in campaign for village trustee that netted her more than 100 votes.

Mt. Kisco Planning Vice Chair Steps Aside From Solar, Cell Tower Review

By Martin Wilbur

The vice chairman of the Mount Kisco Planning Board recused himself last week from reviewing the proposed solar farm and cell tower applications for a 25-acre parcel because of a once tangential relationship to the property.

John Bainlardi said he will no longer participate in the board's deliberations on the Homeland Towers proposal to build a 140-foot monopole antenna for cell carriers and Sunrise Community Solar's plan for a solar farm at 180 S. Bedford Rd. so any possibility that his participation could be construed as a conflict of interest is removed.

Bainlardi explained that he was part of a limited liability company that had a development interest in the nearby

property at 201 S. Bedford Rd., That entity also owned 180 S. Bedford Rd. The 201 S. Bedford Rd. parcel is now owned by the Town of Bedford and 180 S. Bedford Road, located on the other side of the town line in Mount Kisco, was sold to its current owner, Skull Island Partners, in 2013.

Not only has seven years passed since the transaction was completed but the limited liability company was disbanded in 2017, he said.

"To be clear, I have no contractual relationship or other agreement, expressed or implied, of any kind with the current owner of the subject property or the applicants," Bainlardi said.

Last Tuesday, the remainder of the Planning Board voted to name member Michael Bonforte as the acting chairman for the two 180 S. Bedford Rd. applications

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New Castle, Chappaqua School Board in Form-Based Code Spat

By Martin Wilbur

The Chappaqua Board of Education has hired its own consultant to analyze data on the potential number of students that new downtown development could yield under the Town of New Castle's proposed form-based code.

Last week school trustees also agreed to ask town officials to slow down its process in reviewing the new code for downtown Chappaqua to give the district's consultant, The Chazen Companies, adequate time to complete its work.

The Board of Education announced its intentions after questioning how 997 units of new residential units under the proposed code's maximum buildout scenario would generate a net increase of just 96 schoolchildren.

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LINDSAY EMERY PHOTO

One of the signs that has surfaced in recent days in Chappaqua over the town's proposed form-based code. The public hearing is scheduled to begin Tuesday night.



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Mt. Kisco Planning Vice Chair Steps Aside From Solar, Cell Tower Review

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before discussion commenced on the Homeland Towers application.

Bainlardi said that despite having disclosed his prior connection to the property, "concerns alleging the existence of purported conflicts of interest continue to persist and have been recently amplified."

Last month, several neighboring residents and the Mount Kisco Chase Homeowners Association were among the plaintiffs to file a lawsuit in state Supreme Court alleging spot zoning for the proposed solar farm, inadequate notification of the village's 2018 public hearing to amend the zoning and conflicts of interest pertaining to Chairman Douglas Hertz, a principal in Sunrise Community Solar. The litigation also mentions Bainlardi's potential appearance of a conflict of interest because of his prior business relationship with the previous owner.

Hertz has recused himself from both applications since the start of discussions.

Village Attorney Whitney Singleton said it was understandable that Bainlardi decided to step aside.

"Frankly, I don't blame John in his position given some of the innuendo that was placed in some of that litigation," Singleton said. "I think he's doing what I would do if I was in his shoes. It's unfortunate, but I think there has been a lot of inappropriate comment ascribed to John's conduct."

The village's planning consultant Jan Johannessen has also recused himself because of a prior connection to the property. Simon Kates of BFJ Planning has been retained to serve as the village's consultant on the applications.

At the Oct. 13 meeting, the board and Robert Gaudio, the attorney representing Homeland Towers, discussed scheduling a balloon test to gauge potential visual impacts of the monopole and setting a public hearing.

Singleton and board members also asked Gaudio to have his client explore alternate locations on the property in hopes that visual impacts could be minimized. However, Gaudio said Homeland Towers has no access to any other portion of the land.

"The lease that matters are the lease rights today, and the lease rights that we have is where it's proposed and those are the only lease rights we have," he said.

The board asked Gaudio to reach out to the property owner to see if there is a chance to consider alternate locations.

A date for the public hearing will be set at the board's next meeting, scheduled for Oct. 27. Meanwhile, the balloon test will likely be done by the first part of November when more leaves have fallen off the trees.

Last month, the board decided that the solar farm and cell tower applications will see joint environmental review.

Secret P'ville Village Write-in Candidacy Raises Eyebrows and Concerns

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were postponed to June and then again to Sept. 15.

Turnout was expected to be low because of the unusually-timed election and some residents perhaps not wanting to come out for what was believed to be an uncontested race.

Mayor Peter Scherer said he had been asked by residents before the election if it was necessary to stand in line to vote in a public place during a pandemic. He called it "an undisclosed effort" to promote another candidate.

An undisclosed write-in campaign "fails any reasonable standard for election transparency," he said. If anyone is interested in running in an election, they could visit the county Board of Elections or subscribe to the village's newsfeed.

"People have a right to write in candidates, but in this case, it was taken advantage of – the fact that people assumed they didn't have to vote," Scherer said.

Officials learned of the situation after the Board of Elections sent the official tally to the village before last week's meeting. There was surprise that Vella collected 114 of the 125 write-in votes.

"I believe it was unknown to the community at large," Scherer said. "It's

important for folks to realize what's happened here."

Asquith said Vella should have publicized her write-in effort.

"I welcome an open discussion. I encourage anyone in the village to run against me or anyone else on the Village Board," she said. "But this should be done publicly, so that the candidates have an opportunity to air their views, and so that the public has a chance to vote, knowing who the candidates are."

Vella has received significant blowback for undertaking the write-in campaign even though she said her decision to run was made only days before the election.

"I did it knowing that I wasn't being as open about it as I could've been but it was a choice that I made," Vella said. "People may not like it but there wasn't anything illegal or unethical about it. It was my strategy to try to win and it was a bad strategy. If I were to decide to run for a Village Board seat again, I would consider running a campaign out in the open."

Alvarez said an important lesson was learned about voting in any election. "Everyone should vote no matter if an election is uncontested or not," he said. "Anything can happen."

New Castle, Chappaqua School Board in Form-Based Code Spat

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As fiduciaries of the district, it is the school board's responsibility to gauge the risks and weigh the impacts on expenses and operations, including a potential need for redistricting, Board President Victoria Tipp said at the trustees' Oct. 14 meeting.

"For this reason, appropriate input with accurate information on the impact on the school district is a necessary and crucial part of the analysis," Tipp said in explaining the need for the district to have its own consultant.

In its environmental review process mandated by the state, town officials are required to include a maximum buildout scenario. Throughout public discussion on the form-based code, Town Board members have repeatedly said maximum buildout is unlikely to be reached because it would require the sale of town-owned land at the train station and coordination between private property owners.

The issue played out in an occasionally testy joint school board and Town Board work session Monday afternoon at Horace Greeley High School, one day before the scheduled start of the public hearing on the code's Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS).

When reached last Friday, New Castle Supervisor Ivy Pool said it was unnecessary for the school board to have hired its own consultant, calling it "a waste of taxpayer money." District officials have been welcome to speak with town staff and view information compiled by the town's

consultants, she said.

"The town has land use and planning experts that we're working with on analyzing the DGEIS, and if the school board wants to slice and dice the data in a different way or use a different methodology as it related to the specific number of school-age children, they could and should work with the town consultant so that the report is consistent, so that the report is consistent and accurate and that we don't have two different versions of the truth," Pool said.

However, school trustees have argued that after a meeting with town representatives in June attended by then-Board of Education President Jane Shepardson, the next time information came their way was Sept. 29. That was when the DGEIS was forwarded electronically to Superintendent Dr. Christine Ackerman four days after the Town Board approved the document.

The form-based code, which has been discussed as a way to help revitalize downtown Chappaqua by attracting mixed-use development, has become an increasingly controversial topic ahead of the start of the public hearing. In recent days signs have popped up around the town with the message "Save Chappaqua Stop the Form Based Code."

Pool said that the hearing on the DGEIS will stay open for at least a second session on Oct. 27.

Lindsay Emery contributed to this article.

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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

W'chester to Impose School Mask Mandate as COVID Cases Rise

By Martin Wilbur

A recent steady uptick of Westchester COVID-19 cases has prompted County Executive George Latimer to call for a mandatory mask mandate in all schools and for the county to assess youth sports safety.

Latimer said Monday afternoon that the county is also going to limit its in-person employee attendance to no more than 50 percent by instructing employees who can work from home to do so. He encouraged private businesses and organizations to follow suit.

Westchester had 1,033 active coronavirus cases in the county on Sunday, the first time it has exceeded the 1,000-case threshold since June 6. Virus-related hospitalizations stood at 58, the highest total since July 9. On Sunday, there were 72 additional positives out of 4,893, a 1.5 percent infection rate.

The county's active caseload reached a low of 426 in August and increased to more than 600 two weeks ago and more than 800 last week.

During the past week, seven county residents have died, with 12 fatalities recorded in the past two weeks. It took from July 19 to Sept. 13 to lose 12 people, Latimer said.

Although most of the power to issue mandates lies with the governor, Latimer said the county will take the steps it can in hopes of curtailing the spread of the virus.

"The spread is serious. People's lives are in jeopardy, we're losing more people today than we've lost in the period of time before and to do nothing would be wrong," Latimer said.

All public, private, parochial and charter school students must wear masks except for designated breaks, when eating meals, during heavy physical exertion or when a teacher allows them to be taken off. Students must also wear their face coverings on school buses unless they have a medical issue.

Latimer said the county does not plan to impose penalties on districts for non-compliance, but will monitor self-enforcement.

"We have heard support for this mask proposal," Latimer said. "It is not unique. Orange County and Rockland County have both imposed them more recently and we believe since it's in our authority, we need to do that."

Latimer said the county will evaluate whether youth sports is adding to the rise in cases. While there is no intention to shut down youth sports at this time, he wants the county to assess how the programs are being run.

School district administrations and municipal officials can monitor the programs operated by those entities, he said.

"The safety of our kids is the highest priority, and the safety of the adults with the children is also our priority," Latimer said.

Starting next Monday, Oct. 26, the county will cut its on-sit staff to no more than 50 percent.

Latimer said while there haven't been specific causes linked to the rise in cases, social gatherings, particularly among young adults, and the reopening of schools are likely contributing. An outbreak at Iona College in New Rochelle accounted for 87 cases in the last two weeks.

"We know that one of the biggest differences between today and where we were two months ago is that there are students back at school,

K-12 education, there are students back at colleges, neither of which occurred during the summertime months, or for that matter, during the latter part of the spring," Latimer said.

Micro-Cluster Strategy

Last Saturday, Gov. Andrew governor announced a micro-cluster strategy to combat COVID-19 outbreaks on such a localized scale that individual streets with a higher than usual caseload will be pinpointed.

"We are now going to analyze it on a block-by-block level," Cuomo said. "We actually have data that is so specific that we can't share it because it would violate privacy restrictions, but we know exactly where the cases are coming from."

The strategy will stay in place at least

through the fall and until there is a vaccine, he said. Until now, decisions had been made on a statewide or regional basis.

The goal of the micro-cluster strategy is to minimize community spread and limit disruptions to daily life, such as enacting school and business closings. Cuomo did not outline what level of infection would trigger the newest approach. He called it smarter and more effective.

"To make it happen is the trick," Cuomo said. "You have to have refined detection, which is more targeted testing, you need to have more mitigation measures for those areas that reflects why the virus is spreading in those areas and then you have to do enforcement."

He also announced on Sunday that New York and other states have been formulating a distribution plan for when COVID-19 vaccinations are available. The population are being divided into prioritized groups.

The National Governors Association has reached out to the Trump Administration for funding for the effort and to answer questions on issues such as vaccination storage.

He warned residents to stay vigilant and to avoid COVID fatigue in order to stay healthy.

"If you allow the fatigue to take over and don't follow the rules, the virus will spread," Cuomo said. "It is that simple. We know how to control it, but you can't get tired when the virus isn't tired."



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Movie Theaters, Ski Resorts to Soon Reopen in Most Areas of State

By Martin Wilbur

Local movie buffs who enjoy watching films on the big screen and skiers who love to race down a mountainside won't have to wait too much longer to participate in their favorite activities.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced last weekend that movie theaters in Westchester and Putnam counties can reopen this Friday, Oct. 23 with restrictions. Meanwhile, he gave the green light for ski resorts to open to limited capacity as early as Nov. 6.

Cuomo said that theaters outside of New York City and the state's "red zones" where there are elevated rates of the virus can resume operations later this week with 25 percent capacity and no more than 50 people per screen.

Theaters will only be able to operate if the infection rate in the county where they are located is less than 2 percent on a 14-day rolling average. Through Saturday, Westchester had a 1.4 percent seven-day rolling average and Putnam was at 1.5 percent.

Other requirements call for mandatory mask wearing unless someone is seated or eating or drinking; assigned seating to ensure social distancing at all times; additional staff to control the flow of patrons and ensure compliance; and an enhanced



Theaters such as the Jacob Burns Film Center will be allowed to reopen to 25 percent capacity and strict adherence to COVID-19 guidelines as soon as this Friday after Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced last weekend they can resume operations after a more than seven-month closure.

air filtration system, ventilators and air purification.

Other than the five boroughs New York City, Rockland, Orange and Greene counties currently do not qualify for theaters to reopen along with several southern tier counties that border Pennsylvania.

The news comes too late to help at least

two venues – the Mount Kisco Theater and the multiplex at the Cortland Town Center. In late summer Bow Tie Cinemas, the operator of the theater on Main Street in Mount Kisco, confirmed that it had shuttered the facility. Then last month, Regal Cinemas announced its intentions of closing all 500-plus movie theaters

throughout the United States, although some of those may reopen in the future.

Skiing to Open Next Month

Cuomo said that the state's ski resorts will be allowed to open at 50 percent indoor capacity by Friday, Nov. 6.

The governor outlined a list of requirements, some of which have become standard operating procedures for businesses or to open. Along with mandatory masks and social distancing, ski operations must restrict the gondolas and lifts to members of the same party and lessons must be limited to no more than 10 people.

Additionally, ski operators must thoroughly clean and disinfect all shared and rented equipment; shuttles, food service and retail establishments must conform to all COVID-19 guidelines; and there must be a reduction of 25 percent on a mountain during peak days or if multiple trails are closed due to unseasonable conditions.

Cuomo put in a somewhat facetious plug for New York State ski sites, but reminded enthusiasts about the restrictions upon returning home if visiting more than 30 other states.

"If you ski in New York, not only do you have the best skiing in the United States, but you don't have to quarantine when you come back, he said.

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Latimer Proposes \$231.8M Westchester Capital Budget for 2021

By Martin Wilbur

County Executive George Latimer proposed a \$231.8 million capital budget for next year that will address pressing infrastructure needs while supporting more than 2,000 jobs.

The capital plan, unveiled last Thursday, includes \$138.8 million for general fund projects, \$80.4 million for sewer and water projects, \$11.6 million for improvements at Westchester County Airport and \$1 million for the refuse district.

"We want to be sure that we are not falling behind in maintaining our assets and at the same time, in the process of doing that, we are able to keep critical jobs and people employed," Latimer said.

Repairing county roads and bridges accounts for nearly \$42 million, including \$8 million earmarked toward the rehabilitation of the Bronx River Parkway.

There is also \$20 million set aside to address the county's affordable housing needs – \$10 million each for the New Homes Land Acquisition Fund and the Housing Implementation Fund, which builds infrastructure to support the development of the housing, said Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins. Jenkins called affordable housing "the top priority" of the administration.

Also including in the proposed capital budget are investments in the county park system including Playland, rebuilding Memorial Field in Mount Vernon and



County Executive George Latimer, with Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins and Director of Operations Joan McDonald, announces Westchester's proposed capital budget for next year.

completion of the Bronx River Parkway from the Bronx-Westchester line to Kensico Dam Plaza.

"These methodical, continuous capital investments protect our environment, maintain our open spaces and provide an important cog to County Executive Latimer's commitment in doing everything he can to making our county the best it can be for everyone," Jenkins said.

Latimer said the \$80.4 million for sewer and water projects would be used to reduce greenhouse gases at the Yonkers Joint

Water and Resource Recovery Facility and for electrical and HVAC upgrades at the Port Chester plant.

Of the \$11.6 million in new appropriations for the airport, \$8.7 million would pay for the storm water management program and enhanced water supply system.

"These projects are doable and necessary and we believe will fit into a greater whole of a budget that is a reasonable budget," Latimer said.

Director of Operations Joan McDonald said during the past three years there have

been reforms and efficiencies enacted to make the capital budget process much more efficient and to save the county money. The state legislature's elimination of the \$10 million hard referendum cap was a positive step. Previously, any project costing more than \$10 million required voter approval, she said.

Transferring items with short life spans, such as vehicles, from the capital budget to the operating budget has also been helpful.

"Debt should be used for projects that have a useful life of 5, 10, 20, 30 years, and we moved some of those items to the operating budget," McDonald said.

Other changes that have helped were the addition of 10 engineering positions; consolidating planning and project delivery functions within the Department of Public Works; raising the threshold from \$100,000 to \$250,000 to require a Request for Proposal; and streamlining Board of Legislators approvals on certain projects that no longer separates design from construction.

Release of the larger operating budget for 2021 is slated for Nov. 12, Latimer said. As a result of shrinking revenues, most notably sales tax revenues, the county likely faces a deficit of well over \$100 million.

The administration's capital budget has been sent to the Board of Legislators for review. Lawmakers will decide what, if anything, should be added or deleted.

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Early voting begins this Saturday, Oct. 24 across New York State and will remain open for nine consecutive days through Sunday, Nov. 1.

There is one early voting location in Putnam County, located at the Board of Elections, located at 25 Old Route 6 in Carmel.

In Westchester, any registered voter may go to cast their votes at any one of the 17 polling places throughout the county.

Hours for early voting will be the same in both counties: from 12 to 5 p.m. on the four weekend days (Oct. 24, 25 and 31 and Nov. 1), 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Oct. 26, 28 and 30 and 12 to 8 p.m. on Oct. 27 and 29.

Below is a list of the early voting locations with full addresses in Westchester County:

- **Eastchester Public Library**, 11 Oakridge Place, Eastchester, N.Y. 10709
- **Veterans Memorial Building**, 210 Halstead Ave., Harrison, N.Y. 10528
- **New Rochelle City Hall Annex**, 90 Beaufort Place, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801
- **Mamaroneck Town Center**, 740 W. Boston Post Rd., Mamaroneck, N.Y. 10543
- **Westchester County Board of Elections**, 25 Quarropas St., White Plains, N.Y. 10601
- **Grinton I. Will Library**, 1500 Central

- Park Ave., Yonkers, N.Y. 10710
- **Mount Kisco Memorial Complex at Leonard Park**, 1 Wallace Drive, Mount Kisco, N.Y. 10549
- **Riverfront Library**, 1 Larkin Center, Yonkers, N.Y. 10701
- **Pound Ridge Town House**, 179 Westchester Ave., Pound Ridge, N.Y. 10576
- **Greenburgh Town Hall**, 177 Hillside Ave., White Plains, N.Y. 10607
- **Mount Vernon City Hall**, 1 Roosevelt Square, Mount Vernon, N.Y. 10550
- **Peekskill Nutrition Center**, Neighborhood Center, 4 Nelson Ave., Peekskill, N.Y. 10566
- **Yorktown Cultural Center**, 1974

Commerce St., Yorktown Heights, N.Y. 10598

- **Somers Town House**, 335 Route 202, Somers, N.Y. 10589
- **Joseph G. Caputo Community Center**, 95 Broadway, Ossining, N.Y. 10562
- **Dobbs Ferry Village Hall**, 112 Main St., Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. 10522
- **Mount Pleasant Community Center**, 125 Lozza Drive, Valhalla, N.Y. 10595

For voters in Westchester with any questions, call 914-995-5700 or visit <https://citizenparticipation.westchestergov.com>.

For more information in Putnam County, visit www.putnamboe.com or contact the Putnam County Board of Elections at 845-808-1300 or boe@putnamcountyny.gov.

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Holocaust & Human Rights Center Benefit to Honor Human Rights Leaders

On Thursday, Oct. 29, the Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center (HHREC) will host a virtual benefit event "Generations Forward: Honoring Human Rights Leaders Past, Present, Future" at 7 p.m.

The event will honor Rep. Nita Lowey, the HHREC Speakers Bureau Survivors and Liberators and feature guest speaker Derek Black, who is the subject of the book "Rising Out of Hatred: The Awakening of a Former White Nationalist." The

program has been developed to promote awareness and support for HHREC and its mission to enhance the teachings of the Holocaust and the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect.

There is no fee to attend this online event. For more information about sponsorship and support for HHRECNY, contact Millie Jasper, executive director, Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center, at 914-696-0738 or e-mail mjasper@hhrecny.org.

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Officials Receive an Earful During P'ville Leaf Blowers Forum

By Abby Luby

Pleasantville residents debated whether the village should pursue the regulation of leaf blowers during a live-streamed public forum last Thursday.

In August, village trustees viewed a presentation by the Pleasantville Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) about the noise and environmental and health dangers caused by leaf blowers and alternatives to maintaining lawns and property.

About 70 village residents registered for the two-and-half-hour forum, offering comments and asking questions. Mayor Peter Scherer said the forum was one of a planned series of discussions on the issue.

"There is no proposed legislation before the Village Board," Scherer said. "We've had more comments in the recent months because more folks are working from home, kids are at home and there are concerns about noise, impacts on seasonal allergies and respiratory conditions."

Some residents were critical of any possible regulations while others cited potential harmful impacts. CAC Chair Helen Meurer said leaf blowers disturb the environment and disrupt the ecosystem.

"They scour off the top soil-spreading pollens," she said. "Gas leaf blowers are dirty machines that create greenhouse gases."

Others were vehemently opposed to regulation and highlighted the difficulty of

enforcement.

"If one neighbor confronts another neighbor using a leaf blower or if a neighbor is going after a landscaper using a leaf blower, that could escalate and involve the police, which is the last thing we want," said resident Joe O'Neill. "It's a rabbit hole to nowhere."

Steve Crocitto echoed those sentiments while charging that "the CAC document that the village is circulating is full of half-truths and inadequacies."

"Any ban would be unenforceable. Besides, we already have sound laws," he said.

Quality-of-life issues were raised several times during the discussion. Pleasantville has been known for being a quiet community but is often disrupted by the use of leaf blowers, especially by landscaping companies, regulation proponents stated.

"There is an army of landscapers that come to my neighborhood two and three times a week and work at the five houses around me," said resident Jeff Kerper. "It drives me indoors. Last Monday it was a cacophony of leaf blowers for about four hours. You can't hear yourself think."

While landscaping companies were criticized for generating excessive noise, longtime Pleasantville resident Mark DeFabio defended his 30-year landscape company, MG's Lawn Green Inc.

"Having leaves and landscape debris around attracts rodents, mildew, fungus and disease," DeFabio said. "The only way to

clean a yard efficiently and cost-effectively is with (gas-powered) leaf blowers because labor is our biggest expense."

He said that during the summer his company minimizes the use of blowers by changing routes. In recent years, most lawn equipment has been upgraded to reduce noise and emissions.

"We're not using the old blowers, and you're lucky if you can get two seasons out of the new backpack blowers," DeFabio said.

Some residents who have been working from home said they are forced to rearrange schedules and times to communicate virtually because of leaf blower use.

"Concentration from the standpoint of working at home is a major issue for me," said resident Brad Serlin. "It's an issue for me and it's highly distracting to kids who are trying to focus."

To reduce noise impact, a local ordinance proposed by the CAC would request minimizing high-throttle use and encourage landscapers and lawn care companies to use of four-stroke or electric leaf blowers. Other CAC suggestions included raking rather than blowing leaves and limiting use of blowers to the fall.

"I can't use an electric blower to maintain my property where I have 12 maple trees," said Brett Bisgrove, adding he didn't have time to rake. "I work and commute because I am an essential worker. I'm trying to get through the day."

Some residents who have purchased

electric leaf blowers said they weren't as effective as the gas-powered machines. Resident Ed Elliott said he bought a battery-powered lawn mower for \$800 and the battery lasts for 45 minutes.

Others felt the equipment shouldn't be regulated based on season.

"Leaves don't fall on a schedule," said Steve Harrigan. "We've had storms in July and August and there's no certainty of when that's going to happen."

Steven Kavee, chairman of the Mount Pleasant Conservation Advisory Council, suggested taking a different approach to yard maintenance.

"There may be a paradigm shift in ways to address landscaping by using ground cover and grass clippings," Kavee said. "This may take some time, and along with legislation, we have to educate about alternatives that might reduce the need for blowing leaves."

Kavee said the community has an obligation to cooperate.

"As private citizens and municipal governments we need to find a pathway to bring this planet to a place going forward for coming generations," he said.

Village officials plan to hold additional forums and encouraged residents to continue to submit questions and comments.

"It's important to have this dialogue and give everyone a chance to express their concerns," said Trustee Paul Alvarez. "A big part of this is trying to work together to find a compromise."

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Letters to the Editor

Harckham Has Delivered in His First Term in State Senate

I am writing today because Pete Harckham deserves your vote for re-election to the state Senate.

Senator Pete has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Town of Cortlandt and all the communities in the 40th Senate District. He is an effective and caring leader who has done more for our communities in just a few short years than many politicians have done in their whole careers.

Sen. Harckham has fulfilled the promises he made by protecting families with common-sense gun control, providing victims of abuse with access to justice in the courts, protecting our environment while keeping taxes low for our families.

Senator Pete leads the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse to help fight opioid dependency while addressing barriers to treatment. He doubled the minimum inpatient treatment period for those who seek help when they

need it most.

For those hurt by COVID-19, Pete has been a real partner in helping individual businesses, non-profit organizations and laid-off workers to get needed benefits and assistance. Senator Pete rolled up his sleeves and worked to organize food drives for the communities he serves. I have personally worked alongside him to distribute food with Feeding Westchester at the Croton-Harmon train station. He has joined our Town Board meetings to help our community through this emergency, including one meeting where he joined us by Zoom while on a break from hearings in Albany to hold our utility providers responsible for their failures during Tropical Storm Isaias.

He supported our frontline workers and fought to help our nurses at New York-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital get a fair contract. Sen. Harckham also

successfully brought grant funding and economic development assistance to Cortlandt to help keep our community as one of the most vibrant, economically stable and sustainable communities in the Hudson Valley.

I hope you will join me in voting to re-elect Pete Harckham for state Senate so that he can continue to fight for our communities. Make a plan to vote early, and don't forget to also re-elect Sandy Galef for state Assembly and to elect Mondaire Jones for Congress. Each of these candidates are excellent public servants who will continue to fight for our communities.

**James Creighton
Cortlandt Manor**

*James Creighton is a Cortlandt town
councilman.*

Serino Has Always Been There for Her Constituents

I'm a veteran and a senior and nothing about this pandemic has been easy. I'm a social guy, used to people coming and going from my home that I'm fortunate to share with my daughter and her family. In a typical week, we get visitors almost every night, and I've never been dependent on anyone for anything. The lockdown and the isolation it's created hasn't been easy and I just want to publicly thank state Sen. Sue Serino for always being there for guys like me and my family.

Last weekend, I attended the drive-thru senior event she held with the Office for the Aging and a drive-thru veterans appreciation dinner she put on with the great guys from Vet2Vet. I've been going to these events for years and I was so happy that Sue got creative to make them happen for us again this year, at a time when they were more important than ever.

While most people have been retreating into their homes, it's clear that Sue has been out there every day helping to keep

people safe and working for us. As a Korean War veteran, I spent a lot of years around politicians, and I know that most make a lot of promises they never seem to keep. Not Sue. She's always there for us, no matter what challenges come up along the way.

That's why I'll be proud to vote for Sue again this year and I hope others will do the same.

**Martin Kirwan
Wappinger Falls**

Harckham Combined Care With Effective Leadership in Senate

I am writing today to encourage my fellow voters to re-elect state Sen. Pete Harckham to serve our district. He is an effective and caring leader.

For starters, if you plan to exercise your civic duty and keep yourself safe by voting early or by mail during this pandemic election season, you can thank Sen. Harckham. He was a co-sponsor and voted to pass a comprehensive package of bills and amendments, which established early voting and ballot by mail in New York State in January 2019.

Sen. Harckham has racked up an impressive record of legislative accomplishments in his

two-year tenure, helping to pass the Extreme Risk Protection Order/Red Flag Bill, chairing the Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse and being a strong advocate for environmental protections.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis when we were in full lockdown with limited access to supplies, Sen. Harckham's office worked tirelessly to call senior citizens in his district. He reached out to see if they needed help obtaining masks, hand sanitizer, groceries and access to unemployment benefits. During this crisis, he has held numerous food drives in all regions of the district to support the most

vulnerable among us. He has also worked to stay responsive and engaged with the other social issues of our times by speaking at local Black Lives Matter and environmental rallies, as well as visiting with police chiefs.

For me the choice is clear. Please join me in casting your vote during this election season for state Sen. Pete Harckham. He will continue to work hard and with heart for us at the community and state level.

**Bettina Mayer
Croton-on-Hudson**

Harckham Has Fought for Middle-Class Residents in Office

Peter Harckham has worked throughout his career in public service to help the people of Westchester. As a county legislator he was always accessible, responding to the needs of his constituents and supporting legislation to improve our environment as workers, families and small businesses.

Harckham was also a staunch advocate for affordable housing critical for seniors, home care workers, the disabled, veterans, municipal employees, young people returning home, couples starting out or single parents. For well over a decade, Pete worked in Westchester partnerships to support the effective housing programs that have helped longtime residents and newcomers feel welcome, be safe and contribute to the local

economy and workforce.

When his opponent, Rob Astorino, became county executive, efforts to secure federal funding and increase residential opportunities took a dive. Astorino didn't have better ideas nor was he against affordable housing per se, but he was beholden to a Westchester Republican Party with quite different interests. His administration blocked or watered down every piece of legislation presented to improve housing opportunities, which I witnessed as a program specialist to the Board of Legislators' Committee on Affordable Housing.

Since being elected state senator in 2018, Harckham has again taken on the task of helping ordinary people. His concerns do

not include building golf courses or luxury developments, but with the survival of so many middle-class residents suffering the loss of income and jobs while facing severe health issues. He has been working diligently against hunger, organizing food donation drive-ins all over our district.

Pete Harckham is an independent fighter for people, with good ideas that will help the state Senate fix what's broken and stay strong so that our state and communities can survive the devastation accompanying this pandemic.

Please vote to re-elect state Sen. Pete Harckham!

**Barbara Arrington Dodds
Mount Kisco**

Letters to the Editor

Advanced Septic Systems Are Not a Solution for Shenorock, Lincolndale

There has been much talk about the use of advanced septic systems instead of sewers and a recent letter to the editor promoting these systems. Proponents of this approach say they are cheaper and just as effective as sewers.

The truth is, these systems are only permissible in Westchester County under very limited circumstances. Even if they were permitted, they are expensive to install and maintain and are not as effective as sewers.

These systems are only allowed in Westchester County for the complete replacement of a failed septic system. They are only permissible on certain sites that will not support conventional septic systems. The question that immediately comes to mind is why the county would prohibit systems that were so cheap and so wonderful. Turns out there are some very good reasons.

Advanced septic systems generally cost

twice as much as traditional septic systems to install. They require annual maintenance and sanitizing chemicals. Electricity costs can be several hundred dollars annually. In fact, these systems cost between \$350 and \$800 annually to maintain. The pumps last about five years and cost several hundred dollars to replace. The tank needs to be pumped out every two to three years. Only special soaps and detergents can be used in these systems in order for them to function properly. The systems themselves last about 25 to 30 years with proper maintenance before requiring replacement.

It is for these reasons that these systems are not generally permitted. Many people do

not maintain them properly and the systems fail leading us back to the problem we started with.

Finally, the \$10 million in grant funds cannot be used for these systems. The funding is for sewers. No matter how many times people say it, these systems are not a realistic alternative to sewers. It is time to look critically at our only options: vote yes for sewers or continue to contaminate our water with septs that are too dense for the area. For me, the choice is clear, our water should be, too.

Robyn Anderson
Shenorock

Results Have Marked Harckham's First Two Years in Senate

In his first term as our state senator, Peter Harckham has been working hard for us. In only two years, he has made the lives for individuals and communities better in multiple ways.

During COVID he's helped many people, cutting through red tape to help get unemployment benefits, food, financial aid, access to health care and guaranteed sick leave. He's also helped small businesses get the funds and support they need from state agencies by getting results faster and more reliably.

He's sponsored bills for improving services for those affected by the opioid epidemic, domestic violence, including children, and women's health challenges. Sen. Harckham has brought state funds to many communities, including a grant for the first eco-friendly

hybrid police vehicle in Croton-on-Hudson, \$1 billion for additional school funding and money for repaving roads such as Route 139 in Somers, which is now much safer to drive. He was also instrumental in getting a bill passed to protect our waterways and drinking water.

And Sen. Harckham has done this while voting against tax increases, giving middle class tax relief and preserving the 2 percent property tax cap. If you attend one of his town halls, as I have, you'll see he listens to constituents and follows through on our issues and concerns.

For all these reasons and many more, we need to vote to re-elect Pete Harckham as our state senator.

Ann Glazer
Somers

Support Candidates Such as Harckham Who Fight for Justice and Equality

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg fought to protect our Constitutional freedoms. Her passing becomes another moment in American history never to be forgotten. Our nation and the world mourn her loss. How do we perpetuate her legacy? By voting, by urging others to vote, by voting for those upholding our Constitution, by voting for those protecting our American institutions, by voting for those with compassion wanting justice and equality for all.

The first step to take is in our own backyard: re-elect Pete Harckham for state senator in District 40. Sen. Harckham during his first year in office passed significant legislation in support of taxpayers, Indian Point workers, the environment and in combating substance abuse disorder. He pushed for legislation

to provide crucial financial support for first responders, local law enforcement agencies, health care clinics, schools, extra funding for veterans' programs, infrastructure, parks and libraries. His challenger, Rob Astorino, while serving as county executive, prompted a federal investigation based on allegations of corruption.

The choice is clear: vote for the honest, just and diligent Pete Harckham for state senator who will continue to protect and work for our communities, ensuring hard-working New Yorkers are not forgotten – while voting for candidates who will uphold their oath to protect our Constitution and American democracy.

Rhoda Elison Hirsch
Ossining

Harckham Has Helped Communities on Variety of Issues

I am writing to ask voters in Croton-on-Hudson and throughout the 40th Senate District to re-elect our state senator, Peter Harckham.

Sen. Harckham has helped the Village of Croton-on-Hudson on issues big and small: from securing funding for the Croton Point Avenue improvement project, to financing a new hybrid police car, to getting the state Department of Transportation to finally repair the Route 9 fence.

Most importantly, I believe Sen. Harckham represents the values of our community. Sen. Harckham co-sponsored the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act,

which requires 70 percent of electric power in New York to come from renewable energy by 2030.

Peter Harckham is courageous and compassionate. Pete shared his struggles with addiction in The New York Times. As chair of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism & Substance Abuse, Harckham doubled treatment times at rehabilitation facilities.

Early voting begins on Oct. 24 and ends on Nov. 1. Please make your plan to vote for Sen. Harckham.

Brian Pugh, Mayor
Croton-on-Hudson

Keegan Has All the Qualities to Serve Successfully in the Assembly

I first met Stephanie Keegan last year when she decided to run for state Assembly. Right away, I saw that she was smart, energetic, down to earth and with a "can-do" attitude.

Stephanie tragically lost her son, a veteran who fought in Afghanistan and suffered from PTSD when he returned. She turned that tragedy into a driving force as she campaigned tirelessly for better and more timely health care for our veterans, and better treatment options for all who struggle with addiction and mental health issues. In fact, Stephanie is determined to make health care and prescriptions more

affordable for everyone.

We have all been affected in some way by the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on jobs, businesses, housing, health care, childcare and mental health. As we move forward, we need a representative in Albany who has compassion, determination and a steady hand. That person is Stephanie Keegan. She will have my vote for the state Assembly. I hope she will have yours, too.

Celeste Theis
Croton-on-Hudson

The Choice of Raskyn for Putnam Valley Town Justice Couldn't Be Clearer

I am writing to support the candidacy of Terry Raskyn for Putnam Valley justice. I first met Terry some years ago through her volunteer notary work at the Putnam Valley Library, where she also volunteers helping with passport applications. Terry was warm and welcoming, and encouraged me to become involved in activities at the library. Ultimately, I was elected to the library Board of Directors, which Terry chairs.

As the board's chair, Terry is always prepared, responsive and open to the ideas of other board members and the community. I have been so impressed with her dedication and her integrity that I volunteered to serve as treasurer for her campaign.

As town justice, Terry plans to use her work as a mediator for dispute resolution, saving the court time and money. She will work with the drug courts and treatment programs to address the opioid crisis. And she will emphasize legal education, working with young people in Putnam Valley to promote understanding and participation in the legal system.

In short, Terry is dedicated, prepared and ready to go to work for the Town of Putnam Valley. I recommend her to you with great enthusiasm.

Marilyn Power
Putnam Valley

Astorino's Proven Track Record is Needed in State Senate

As an immigrant and American citizen residing in Westchester County, I am writing this letter to express my desire and hope that Rob Astorino be elected to the state Senate from the 40th District.

I feel that during these turbulent times we need an individual like Rob Astorino to be our state senator. As county executive, he worked hard to reduce property taxes, encouraged businesses to invest in our state and served the people during his public service. He is an individual with a proven record demonstrating he shares our values or government fiscal responsibility, lower taxes, public safety and prosperity for its citizens – all of its citizens – and no one can deny that Rob Astorino didn't build bridges and bring people together.

Currently, we need to have a balanced democracy in our state, one in which one party does not simply steamroll over the other. The Republicans may be a minority in the state, the ideas and values of hard-working Americans should be heard. We must stop demonizing people with different views as we live in the country whose cornerstone is the First Amendment.

Let us send Rob Astorino on Nov. 3 to Albany, someone who will work to bring people together to get things done and someone who will work hard for us.

George Diakakis
Pleasantville

Letters to the Editor

Republicans Have No Answers on Health Insurance, Broadening the Tax Base

I am a 72-year-old grandmother and retired teacher, hardly a political operative, who believes that it is important to tell the whole truth when you write a letter to the editor.

The whole truth is, most of the cuts and possible cuts to the New York State budget, mentioned in Daryl Lindholm's letter of Oct. 6-12, are happening because the Republicans in Washington and the president are willing to let states and cities go bankrupt while they are quick to protect the super-rich.

What are Rob Astorino's and Kevin Byrne's specific plans to make up the hole in

the state budget caused by the pandemic and the President's hatred of New York? What's their plan? As a teacher, I always had a plan!

As a senior citizen on Medicare for many years, I believe that others should have the same benefits. I have excellent coverage, can choose my own doctors. All I ever got from my private insurance companies is agita, fighting to get them to pay what they should.

Don't we have a moral obligation to find a way to provide access to health care to the millions of people who have lost their private medical insurance with their jobs or who

can't get health insurance because of pre-existing conditions? Think about this: as my co-pays for doctor visits and drugs have gone up and up, the multimillion-dollar salaries of insurance, drug and hospital executives are going up even faster. It's easy to criticize, but what are the Republican candidates' plans to fix this?

Now let's talk specifics about our property taxes with close to 70 percent going to support our great schools. We can hold the line on property taxes only if the state, with a broader tax base (corporate and personal income, etc.), takes over a larger share of

funding education.

We need representatives in Albany who are willing to make tough decisions and tackle tough problems. If you think that the super-rich should pay more, that people who lose their jobs and people with pre-existing conditions should have access to health care, you will join me in voting for Pete Harckham and Stephanie Keegan.

Mary Jane Kilian
Yorktown Heights

Join Those Who Stand With Assemblyman Byrne

I have known Assemblyman Kevin Byrne for many years and have witnessed his dedication to his constituents and how he puts us above his own needs and desires. He did the same when he was an emergency volunteer because giving to others has always been his path. I trust this man with my life and my vote. He is a man for all the people and has never divided any issue into party affiliation.

Kevin has delivered tangible results for our community. Why would we even be considering losing this public servant? I have tried to find all those who have endorsed him, and some had to be left out for the length of this letter.

Medical Society of New York; Federation of Independent Business; Business Council of New York; Utility Workers Union Local 1-2; Westchester-Putnam Building & Construction Trades; Teamsters No. 456; North Atlantic Council of Carpenters; UA Local 21 Plumbers, Steamfitters; Boilermakers Local 5; Laborers International Union of North America; CSEA; Affiliated Police Associations of Westchester; Putnam County Sheriff's Dept. PBA; NYS Troopers

PBA; NYS Fraternal Order of Police; NYS Police Investigators Association; Westchester County Corrections Officers/Superior Officers Benevolent Association; Westchester Hispanic Law Enforcement Association; New York City and Yonkers PBA; Law Enforcement Employees Benevolent Association; NYS Court Officers Association; NYC Deputy Sheriff's Association; Lake Mohegan Firefighters I.A.F.F. Local 2956; NYC Uniformed Fire Officers Association; FDNY Uniformed EMTs, Paramedics & Inspectors; NYC Fire Dispatchers I.A.F.F. Local 4959; FDNY Uniformed EMS Officers Union; Westchester County PBA; NRA; Putnam County Firearm Owners Association; Fire Marshal Benevolent Association of Nassau County; Nassau County Police Medic Association; Protect Our Police PAC; NYS Log Cabin Republicans and Latino National Republican Coalition of Putnam County

Michael McDonald
Carmel

There Are Too Many Parallels Between Trump and Astorino

My family and I lived in Westchester during Rob Astorino's term as county executive. We felt that Astorino did a terrible job, and that it was a great day when George Latimer replaced him, and another great day for New York State when Pete Harckham was elected state senator.

We now live in Putnam County and are alarmed that Astorino is challenging Sen. Harckham, who has been working diligently to ensure recovery from COVID-19 and economic, environmental and educational recovery.

Having lived under Astorino and Trump governance, here are my views on their chilling parallels.

Trump has tried to destroy the Affordable Care Act, eliminating health care for millions. He has damaged the economy by his tariffs, giveaways to the wealthy and mismanagement of the pandemic. He has failed to address the nation's infrastructure, which would have created millions of jobs.

His administration has been accused of malfeasance. Trump's company was charged with racial discrimination in violating the Fair Housing Act.

Astorino actually slashed vital county health care services. His mismanagement of the economy left Westchester with a deficit, plus debt of nearly \$2 billion. His incompetency fumbled infrastructure projects and subsequent job creation. His administration was accused of malfeasance. And he cost taxpayers millions in federal grants by mishandling the county's fair housing zoning requirements.

The ineptitude of Trump and Astorino has dangerously slowed COVID-19 and economic recovery efforts. That is a major reason, regardless of party (or no) affiliation, to vote for Joe Biden and re-elect Senator Harckham.

Jeanne Nelson
Mahopac

Harckham's Legislative Priorities Represent the Ideals of Our Country

People from across the political spectrum are recognizing that this is the most important election of our lifetime. We are seeing large numbers of leaders from one party, the Republicans, endorsing the candidate of the other party, Joe Biden, because protecting our democracy is more important than allegiance to party.

We are facing unprecedented challenges ranging from the pandemic to the climate crisis to the threat of violence from white supremacists and militias.

Our state legislature needs to be prepared to plan and legislate creatively and equitably.

The difference between Sen. Pete Harckham and the Republican candidate couldn't be more stark. Pete has proven how hard he will work for us and how much

he can accomplish.

Two issues that are very important to me are moving to make the ideals of our country a reality and addressing climate change. Sen. Harckham co-sponsored the Climate Leadership and Community Protections Act, which puts us on track to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. He has held food drives to help families. He has supported increased funding for education. He has also worked to make our state more equitable by recognizing the toll of opioid and drug abuse and moving us to a caring stance for those who are suffering.

Please vote for Sen. Pete Harckham and other Democratic candidates.

Karen E. Johnson
Katonah

Raskyn is the Only Candidate to Be Trusted in PV Town Justice Race

I write to urge all Putnam Valley voters to vote for Terry Raskyn to become our next town justice.

She is a compassionate, kind-hearted person who is dedicated to serving our community. She has served the Putnam Valley library for years as a board member and is currently president. Her ethics and financial responsibility are clear; the same cannot be said for her opponent.

Raskyn is running against Pat Longobucco, who appears to flout the rules, not just for judicial candidates, but also for attorneys.

His website asks for donations to his campaign, yet he has not met state law requirements to register a committee or file the required reports of contributors and expenses. When contributors donate, they receive a personal note from Pat, asking that if they ever need anything, don't hesitate to call.

Knowing who your contributors are or how much they've given is a violation of judicial ethics rules – just one of several examples that demonstrate Longobucco is unable to follow either the law or ethics rules.

His finances are marred by federal income tax liens on his Putnam Valley home – owing more than \$40,000 – the latest lien imposed by the IRS earlier this year. When a bank sued him for non-payment of a \$17,000 credit card debt, Longobucco, an attorney, didn't even show up in court to answer the lawsuit, resulting in a default judgment for Bank of America.

He's relying on your vote, but Pat has yet to vote in Putnam Valley – ever. He registered to vote in town just prior to the 2019 election, first not registered in a party then changing to a Democrat. And he didn't bother to vote in 2019. Immediately after the election, he switched his party registration to Republican.

If Pat Longobucco can't handle his own finances or follow election rules, we can't allow him to handle our town court's money or pass judgment on others. There is only one choice in this election, and that is why I am pleased to vote for Terry Raskyn. I urge you to do the same.

Margaret Ploener
Putnam Valley

Westchester Med Center Launches Post-COVID-19 Treatment Program

By Martin Wilbur

Weeks or even months after people fell ill from COVID-19, thousands are still suffering the lingering and debilitating effects of the disease.

The sometimes unusual and inexplicable symptoms long after a patient has supposedly recovered from the coronavirus prompted doctors at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla this summer to launch the hospital's Post-COVID-19 Recovery Program.

Problems such as fluid around the heart, hair loss, shortness of breath, fatigue and "brain fog," which mimics the sensation people can briefly experience immediately after waking up from a deep sleep, have all been reported as among the ongoing symptoms, said Dr. Gary Rogg, an internal medical specialist at the hospital.

Since the symptoms can be so varied, Westchester Medical Center constructed a team of designated primary care physicians and specialists to learn more about COVID-19's aftermath and to try and alleviate patients' symptoms.

"As time went by, it became evident that so many of these people with these symptoms are not resolving, and again, they weren't getting any worse, but they weren't getting significantly better," said Rogg, a key member of the program's medical team. "So that's where we came to provide the ongoing care to try and close the gap in care for people."



Dr. Gary Rogg, an internal medical specialist, is one of the physicians that are part of the Post-COVID-19 Recovery Program designed to help those who suffer lingering effects from the virus.

The primary care doctors provide the initial tests, and depending on someone's medical history and symptoms, the person is sent to one or more specialists, Rogg said. Pulmonologists, nephrologists, cardiologists, psychiatrists and others are

all part of the team, he said.

Rogg said when someone contacts the program, they are guaranteed an initial appointment at the hospital within 72 hours. Once evaluated, they are assigned a designated patient services representative and a navigator so before they leave the office, they will have their appointments for the specialists set instead of forcing participants to call each doctor on their own.

Anyone from the community who contacts the program, either by phone or online, had tested positive for the virus and is feeling long-term effects is eligible. An individual does not need to have been admitted to Westchester Medical Center or any other hospital or be part of the WMCHHealth network to seek help, Rogg said.

Recently, the program has been averaging about 40 to 50 patients a week, he said.

Rogg said one pattern that has developed is patients alternately experiencing improvement in their symptoms, then a regression. When that occurs, there is often anxiety and stress, so mental health workers are among the specialists.

"What we're looking for are secondary issues that could be compounding it, and then we're working with psychiatry, in terms of more formal psychiatric testing, to see where the defects are, but there's not a clear-cut ideology as to why this is happening," Rogg said.

People of all ages have reached out

to the program for help, including many relatively younger adults with no previous underlying health issues, he said. Rogg said the unpredictability has been eye-opening.

"That's what I think frightened the general public, that you had more than sporadic cases of healthy people who wind up on ventilators or passing away, and then unlike the flu or anything else, you have these lingering symptoms," Rogg said.

Andrew LaGuardia, senior director, network strategic communications for Westchester Medical Center, said the public should be comforted that the hospital follows all guidelines and precautions when someone arrives for a visit. Furthermore, most of the physicians involved in the program have had experience treating COVID-19 patients.

"This was one of the hardest hit areas during the spring surge here," LaGuardia said. "Dr. Rogg and many of the physicians in this particular program have quite a lot of experience with the COVID-19 infection, its care and its aftercare. So the individuals who are part of this program have direct access to physicians with quite a lot of experience working with this."

To contact the Post-COVID-19 Recovery Program or set an appointment, call 833-329-0095 or visit <https://wmchealthnetwork.tfaforms.net/278>. For more information, visit <https://www.westchestermedicalcenter.org/wmchealthpostcovid19recoveryprogram>.

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Obituary

Joseph Grillo

Joseph J. Grillo Jr., a longtime Armonk resident, passed away in the presence of his loving family on Oct. 6 at the age of 69 after complications from ALS.

Grillo was born on Oct. 14, 1950, in the Bronx to Joseph and Theresa (Musco) Grillo. He graduated from Monroe High School, attended Kansas Wesleyan University and transferred to L.I.U. Brooklyn where he played baseball and graduated. He was drafted by the Texas Rangers and played one year of Minor League Baseball before returning to coach and start his 35-year career as a teacher for the Yonkers Public School District.

Everyone will remember Joe as a bigger than life person, loving family member and friend, Mr. Baseball, teacher, coach and the person who mastered making the best mozzarella in the world. He worked hard and played even harder. He was stronger than Superman and told some of the most entertaining and funny stories imaginable. He was a rare combination of someone who loved life, sports, food and entertaining by hosting the most memorable parties with his former wife, Mary Ann. However, his number one joy were his two grandchildren, Jude and Brielle.

Joe is survived by his daughter, Daria, her husband Kelby and their son Jude; his son, Joseph, his partner Jess and their daughter Brielle; his sister, Louise and Duane; his brother, Frank and his wife, Linda; his



Joseph Grillo

significant other, Andrea; and countless nieces, nephews, cousins and friends, all of whom he adored.

Memorial services for Joe were held on Oct. 12 at Beecher Flocks Funeral Home in Pleasantville. A funeral Mass was held on Oct. 13 at Holy Innocents Church in Pleasantville.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Teamgleason.org, an organization that works hard to improve life for people living with ALS.

Manhattanville Announces Hybrid Spring Semester to Start Feb. 1

Manhattanville College has announced plans to conduct a mix of in-person and remote learning classes for its spring semester beginning Feb. 1.

The college announced the plans last week to the entire Manhattanville community.

"As we approach the midpoint of the fall semester and look toward the Thanksgiving holiday, I wanted to tell you how very grateful I am for the dedication and hard work shown by our students, staff and faculty since the campus reopened, adhering to safety guidelines and offering support to one another," said Interim Provost Christine Dehne.

Instruction for the spring semester is expected to begin on Monday, Feb. 1. Classes will begin remotely for two weeks with the first day of in-person instruction planned for Monday, Feb. 15.

Dehne also announced that there will be no spring break this academic year. This is part of an effort to

reduce traveling outside the area and to potentially reduce the risk of exposure to coronavirus.

In lieu of spring break, the college will schedule two "Valiant Days" with no classes when students will be encouraged to get out and enjoy the outdoors.

Residential students will move in during the weekend of Feb. 13-14. All residential students will be tested upon returning to campus and will be randomly tested throughout the semester. The semester will end on Friday, May 14.

"We want to assure everyone that when we return to campus in the spring we will continue to follow all the safety protocols we developed with New York State and CDC guidance," Dehne said. "These include social distancing, face coverings, testing, contact tracing, symptom monitoring and reporting, and for the residence halls, isolation and quarantine practices as necessary."

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Pleasantville Farmers Market to Operate Outdoors Through Winter

After adapting to the challenges of running Westchester's largest farmers market during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pleasantville Farmers Market is ready for its next hurdle: falling temperatures.

The Pleasantville Farmers Market will continue outdoors at Memorial Plaza through the winter. The market will be closed on Saturday, Nov. 28 to allow for the transition to the winter market, and will officially open on Dec. 5.

"Foodchester has operated the PFM as a year-round market since our inception in 2013 and we are committed to sustaining this important community resource, both for our customers and our producers," said Peter Rogovin, president of Foodchester, Inc., which operates the market. "While we'd prefer to be inside this winter, the village has no indoor location large enough to operate while protecting the health of our shoppers, producers, volunteers and staff – which is our first priority."

To ensure the safety of shoppers and producers, the market will rely on its online store, Pleasantville Farmers Market Online (PFM-O) to help speed the shopping process. This will help shoppers avoid crowds and pick up their food order quickly, while helping producers protect their food from freezing temperatures and spoilage.

"We are doing everything we can to support regional growers and food artisans through this difficult time," Rogovin said.

He noted that as small businesses, many producers have faced unprecedented



The Pleasantville Farmers Market will operate outdoors through the winter but with reduced hours and a greater emphasis on pre-ordered online sales.

challenges during the pandemic and value the opportunity to participate in the market year-round.

Expanded Online Store, New Hours

The online market debuted this summer to provide easy, quick shopping. PFM-O customers place pre-orders online, pay with a single click and enjoy a quick, contact-free pickup during their visit to vendors at the market on Saturday. A small pickup fee is applied to each order. The fee helps defray costs of the software for Foodchester, a

nonprofit organization run by volunteers and a small staff.

"We're excited to announce that PFM-O is expanding," said Steven Bates, executive director of market operations. "For the first time, all participating vendors – and all their products – will be in our online store. With a complete menu of offerings, all customers will be able to enjoy preordering and prepaying. Not having to stand on line to shop and then pull out a wallet with gloved fingers is going to be a huge convenience. And as COVID

case counts rise, our shoppers appreciate adjustments we make to speed them on their way."

Bates added that some producers will also bring products for spontaneous walk-up purchase, but "the best way to ensure that you get what you want is to preorder on PMF-O."

To accommodate more shoppers, PMF-O hours have been expanded. Customers will now be able to preorder from 7 p.m. on Tuesdays through 7 p.m. on Thursdays.

As winter closes in, the efficiency of online preordering will enable vendors to have a shorter market day, Bates said. The market will be open from 9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., which will limit exposure to the cold for the producers and their products and avoiding potential food spoilage.

Shoppers and vendors will continue to be required to wear a face covering at all times, and lines will be monitored to ensure safe distancing.

The public may visit <https://pleasantvillefarmersmarket.localfoodmarketplace.com/to> register for the

online store, check the list of participating vendors and register to receive the market's weekly newsletters to keep up to date on promotions and other news. Updated safety protocols are on the website as well.

The Pleasantville Farmers Market has been voted Best of Westchester from 2014 to 2020, and attracts customers from across the tristate area.



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Westchester County Jail ‘Completely Transformed’ After Inquiry

By Anna Young

A recently completed marathon investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice of the Westchester County Jail has concluded that reforms have been successfully implemented that remedy constitutional violations committed against inmates over the years.

Key findings to the 2007 investigation found the jail used excessive force, failed to provide adequate medical and mental health care and kept minors housed in isolation in the punitive segregation unit as a form of punishment, according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

Those issues have since been resolved, with Acting U.S. Attorney Audrey Strauss calling the jail a “completely transformed institution.”

“Since the commencement of our investigation in 2007, Westchester County

Jail has worked steadily and in good faith to implement sweeping reforms that have significantly improved the treatment of inmates at the facility,” Strauss said. “At every step along the way, the Jail’s leadership and staff have been a willing partner in creating lasting reforms that have significantly improved the quality of life for inmates and detainees within the facility.”

In 2009, the DOJ issued a letter stating the government’s findings regarding constitutional violations and living conditions at the Valhalla jail. Following extensive negotiations between the federal government and Westchester County, both parties in 2015 entered into an agreement to implement sweeping reforms within the facility.

The agreement, which went into effect on Jan. 1, 2016, required the jail to apply measures designed to ensure that its use of

force is not excessive and consistent with the law; to implement appropriate policies and practices concerning review of all uses of force, training of staff and supervision of inmates; and to improve the provision of medical and mental health care for minors and adults.

In addition, the jail was assigned an independent monitor to oversee operations, assist in achieving compliance and make reports concerning progress, the statement said. The agreement was terminated after the jail maintained substantial compliance with all provisions for 24 months.

Officials found that incidents involving force have plummeted more than 80 percent and continued to significantly decrease with each compliance report. The staff is now consistently and routinely trained in de-escalation tactics and are swiftly disciplined for any deviation from reporting requirements and de-escalation procedures, the statement said.

Furthermore, mental health care and medical care has improved dramatically, officials said. The jail now places particular emphasis on rehabilitative care for inmates with mental health issues, instead of focusing on purely punitive measures.

“Working with a team of dedicated professionals we developed a number of metrics and identified attributes that would allow the department to implement sustainable reforms that decrease the

use of force, enhance physical and mental health, reduce recidivism and enhance returning citizen’s reintegration to their respective communities,” Department of Corrections Commissioner Joseph Spano said.

“As evidenced by the Department of Justice press release, our collective body of work during this period exceeded the agreement terms and greatly benefited the population we serve and many aspects of (Westchester County Department of Corrections) operations, something we are all very proud of.”

The facility also entered in a joint venture with Legal Aid of Westchester County, opening an office within the jail and allowing inmates access to legal resources, the statement said. Additionally, the jail partnered with Westchester County Social Services to grant inmates the opportunity to plan after their release from custody.

Rehabilitation efforts also improved, with several educational options for inmates, including culinary, civil engagement, college classes and nationally recognized parenting programs.

“From innovative programs providing education and life-skills support to actually housing lawyers in the facility for inmates, I am immensely proud of the work being done in our jail,” County Executive George Latimer said. “No one is forgotten in our county, and this work is just more proof.”



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JeffersonValleyMall.com

Community Celebrates Byram Hills’ Two State Championship Teams

By Martin Wilbur

It took a little longer than anticipated but the Armonk community had reason to celebrate the two Byram Hills High School state championship sports teams last weekend.

District and town officials unveiled the long-awaited sign on Route 128 Saturday morning with the message “Home of the Byram Hills State Champions.” The wood sign, painted in the Bobcats’ colors, commemorate the 2007 boys’ soccer team and the 2015 baseball team.

Members of both teams joined soccer coach Matt Allen and baseball coach Scott Saunders and community members for the honor.

“Congratulations to the athletes and what you’ve accomplished here, for inspiring, and really inspiring the youth of Byram Hills,” said Director of Athletics Rob Castanga. “That’s what something like this does.”

Over the past two or three years, there was a push led by resident Jane Gertz and North Castle Councilwoman Barbara DiGiacinto and others connected with the district and the town to recognize the two teams’ accomplishments, said Board of Education President Ira Schulman.

The town and district agreed to split the cost for the sign and agreed on an appropriate

design and location.

“It’s really a collaborative effort and we’re just thrilled,” Schulman said. “It’s such a wonderful thing for people to see as they come into town, the celebration of the state championship teams, and they’ll be more.”

He noted that there are two empty slots for future champions and more wood can always be added.

Allen and Saunders recognized their players, families and the community for making their championship seasons a reality. Allen said the year before the squad made states but came up short. During the off season, the players dedicated themselves to taking the next step.

In 24 games during the 2007 season, the team surrendered just nine goals.

“The mark of a great team is since that state championship, future teams that came after it, no team at Byram Hills soccer has lost more than three games since that point.” Allen said. “We stand on the shoulders of giants and that’s what this is about.”

Saunders said that as a young coach in the district at the time, he followed the example set by Allen. It paid off eight years later, when the baseball team captured its state title. He said the soccer team’s success was a turning point for Byram Hills athletics, with teams in multiple sports also competing for titles.

“What you did was pave the way for future

teams, not just in soccer but in everything else,” Saunders said. “You showed us that winning a state title, it wasn’t just a fantasy but a reality. What we had to do was commit to each other, believe in each other, work hard and we can get there, and you guys paved the way for that.”

Greg Shaheen, a striker on the 2007 soccer team, said his remembrances from that season were better than anything he experienced while playing college soccer at Wesleyan.

“Having the whole community really behind you was just unbelievable,” Shaheen said. “I played in college right after high school and it still doesn’t compare to the memories I had back in high school.”

Forward Will Ogden said by playing for your school you were able to receive the support of the district, fans, families and community members.

He said he was happy the two teams will forever be remembered by the community.

“It was a long time in the making and it’s great to see it finally here and have something we can all remember the season by,” Ogden said.

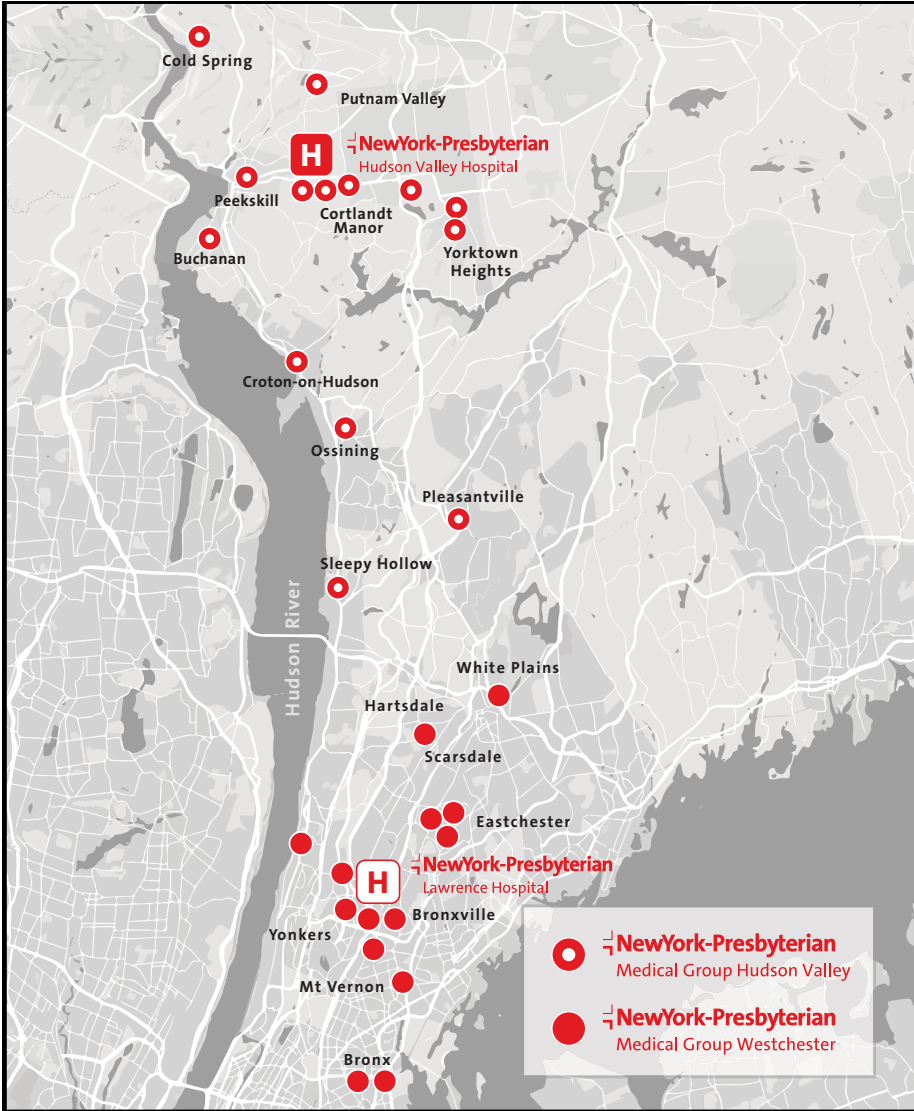
North Castle Supervisor Michael Schiliro said the dedication was originally scheduled for last Memorial Day weekend, but the pandemic forced a postponement until later in the year.



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Byram Hills soccer coach Matt Allen, left, and baseball coach Scott Saunders stand by the recently installed sign on Route 128 in Armonk commemorating the school’s 2007 boys’ soccer state title and 2015 baseball state championship.

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North Castle Unveils Sculptures for Longtime Community Icons

By Lindsay Emery

Friday's rainy weather didn't dampen the mood of North Castle's Beautification Committee's two sculpture dedications.

Longtime North White Plains resident Nancy Battistelli was surprised to see the first sculpture's plaque dedication, which included her name.

Battistelli, who chairs the committee's North White Plains subcommittee, was surrounded by her fellow committee members when she helped unveil the plaque of the first bronze sculpture, "Best Friends Reading," outside of the North Castle Public Library branch and community center on Clove Road. The Beautification Committee's budget paid to acquire the artwork.

"She formed her own North White Plains subcommittee, and dare I say, fought tirelessly for what she and her committee thought North White Plains needed in the way of beautifying their hamlet," Committee Chair Carol Bidjarano said of Battistelli.

Councilwoman Barbara DiGiacinto, the Town Board liaison to the Beautification Committee, spoke fondly of Battistelli, saying that there was no one more deserving. "I'm very honored and humbled," Battistelli said. "It was the last thing I would expect."

Immediately after the North White Plains dedication, committee members and town officials traveled up to Armonk to unveil the second sculpture, "Acrobat Kids," located outside the Hergenhan Recreation Center.



Nancy Battistelli, left, and Carol Bidjarano of the North Castle Beautification Committee, stand with the sculpture Best Friends Reading that was dedicated last Friday outside the White Plains Branch of North Castle Public Library and community center.

Joyce Hergenhan donated the money for the purchase of the sculpture in memory of her parents, John and Goldie, who were longtime community fixtures. John Hergenhan served as North Castle's first police chief for more than 40 years and Goldie was an active volunteer for a variety of organizations and causes.

Joyce Hergenhan and DiGiacinto, who was Goldie's goddaughter, recounted how John would answer every call from people throughout the town no matter what the



North Castle Beautification Committee members stand outside the Hergenhan Recreation Center in Armonk with Acrobat Kids, one of two sculptures unveiled last Friday.

problem.

"He also got calls from people who had skunks in their basement and didn't know who else to call, so they'd call my father," Hergenhan said. "And somehow, he'd get the skunk out of the basement."

Both sculptures were provided to the town by Yonkers resident Randolph Rose, who referred to them as "production" pieces, DiGiacinto said. She hopes that it encourages others to help beautify the town.

"We hope more residents or former residents will not only be pleased with Joyce's generosity but also think about reaching out to Beautification and discuss

funding a beautification project," DiGiacinto said. "Their wish list runs the gamut from bronze sculptures of herons for Wampus Brook Park to a clock tower, and they are certainly open to other suggestions."

Town Supervisor Michael Schiliro described how the unveiling of the statues reflected the town's resiliency during this difficult time.

"We're actually putting statues up during these times and it shows town spirit," he said. "And both statues are beautiful and they're in perfect spots in front of both of our rec centers."

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The Journal News (10/31/17)

Drive-Thru Holiday Lights Show to Be This Year's Winter Wonderland

By Martin Wilbur

Hundreds of events have been postponed because of the coronavirus but not Westchester's Winter Wonderland.

It'll just be different.

Instead of attractions such as ice skating, rides and food, the county and the Westchester Parks Foundation announced Wednesday a drive-thru holiday lights extravaganza at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla starting Nov. 27 and running through Jan. 3.

Families will be able to enjoy a 1.2-mile route through the park featuring more than a dozen elaborate light displays of Christmas-themed scenes that will include Candy Cane Lane, an elves playground and Winter Winds Way, where Old Man Winter swirls snowflakes into the air.

Classic holiday music will be simulcast and can be listened to in each vehicle through each car's FM frequency.

The attraction ends with a 100-foot lighted tunnel, said Joe Stout, executive director of the Westchester Parks Foundation. The route can be completed in about 20 to 25 minutes, he said.

"(These are) things you can't see anywhere else," Stout said. "There's really nothing like it in the Hudson Valley or close to us."

Event sponsors, led by Westchester Medical Center, helped pay for the displays. They were designed by Eclectic Precision of Peekskill and Dark Tech Effects of Valhalla



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Santa Claus joins Joe Stout, executive director of the Westchester Parks Foundation, at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla last Wednesday to announce a drive-through holiday lights display for this year's Westchester Winter Wonderland.

and are being installed by county Parks Department personnel.

The best part is that the public can view what is billed this year as The NEW Westchester Winter Wonderland from the safety of their own car.

"It is a drive-thru, you're in your car with your family and friends and it should be fabulous," said Westchester County Parks Commissioner Kathy O'Connor, who mentioned that she had been approached by residents asking whether the county was going to hold the Winter Wonderland this



Santa arrives at Kensico Dam Plaza last week to help county officials announce plans for The NEW Westchester Winter Wonderland.

year.

County Executive George Latimer said there was no way the county could safely present the conventional Winter Wonderland, which had been held for the past six years. But the Westchester Parks Foundation and the Parks Department used some ingenuity and creativity to plan what should be a memorable holiday experience.

"You try to reimagine, you try to find a practical way to take the basic experience that's wonderful and make it still happen going forward," Latimer said.

The NEW Westchester Winter

Wonderland will be open Tuesday through Saturday from Nov. 27 to Dec. 20 and every night from Dec. 21 through Jan. 3, except on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The event will be open from 6 to 9:45 p.m. Tickets are \$25 per vehicle.

Stout said reservations are strongly encouraged to ensure each party is admitted. Each 15-minute time slot each day it's open and can accommodate up to 100 vehicles, he said.

Tickets are now on sale. For tickets and more information, contact www.wonderland.com.

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When Your Leaves Start Falling, Don't Bag 'em, Shred 'em!

Around this time of year, I start to see large paper bags filled with leaves parked by the roadside, and I have two thoughts.

First, I regret that I no longer have the occasion to rake leaves, living as I do in a nice condo building where a whole team of people are responsible for leaf clean-up. I always considered the act of raking leaves to be therapeutic.

Second, I say to myself, what a waste! I can't understand why anyone would part with this rich resource in the life cycle of plant life.

I love fallen leaves of red, brown and gold. I love their look, their smell and the sound, if you listen carefully, as they fall gently from their branches to the ground.

If they are left as is, they can cause damage to your lawn by blocking light from reaching the grass and inhibiting the evaporation of water, particularly if you have a lot of oak trees whose leaves decompose slowly. They also encourage the growth of mold and/or fungus, which isn't very friendly to grass. If you have walnut trees, that's another problem in that they have compounds in them that actually poison other plants.

I remember one year, before I had the money to have a lawn service (yes, as a self-employed person for most of my life,



By Bill Primavera

I've been downright broke on occasion and sometimes only my own brawn has kept my household going), I just left the leaves, figuring that one year wouldn't hurt.

Well, when the rains came, the leaves turned into a wet, matted mess that flattened and melted into the grass. And when spring came and the weather dried up, I had dozens of wet, muddy holes in my fairly decent lawn. I spent the spring getting rid of the thatch and re-seeding. That was the last fall season that I was lazy.

Then for some years, I got into composting, which became somewhat of a religion for me, although I wasn't fanatical. I had enough property where I was able to take a corner of it, not noticeable from either my front or back lawns, and create a pile of alternating grass and leaf layers, along with daily kitchen scraps. I'd just keep the pile growing until it reached about four feet, occasionally mixing it up with a pitchfork and letting it simmer and smoke throughout the year. By spring, when I was ready to do all my planting, I had the richest compost you might imagine.

In the intervening years, my lifestyle changed radically concerning my prodigious production of leaves on my property, which at one time was heavily shaded before Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy hit.



When I no longer had time to work on a layered compost pile, I started to mulch my leaves in place on the lawn with my mower and found that to be a satisfactory solution. I suggest this to any homeowner, rather than bagging, because leaves decompose very quickly when shredded.

Organic Gardening Magazine has suggested that the best technique for mulching leaves in place is to fit your lawn mower with a blade that chops leaves and grass into small pieces, but a side-discharge mower works, too. Set to shred by setting the mower height to three inches and remove the bag. It works best to shred leaves when you can still see some grass peeking through them, and that means you may need to mow several times during the fall.

Begin mowing on the outside edge of the lawn, shooting the leaves toward the center of the yard. Mowing in this pattern allows you to mow over the leaves more than once.

If the leaves are still in large pieces after you pass over them the first time, go back over the lawn at a right angle to the first cut. Finely shredded leaves filter down through the grass and decompose easily by the following spring.

If there is an overabundance of leaves on your lawn and the layer of shredded leaves seems too thick, you might want to suck them up by making more than one pass over the lawn with the mower's bag attached. You might also mow with the bag on if you want to collect leaves for the compost pile or to use as mulch in the garden beds. It's best to have no more than a one-inch layer of leaf mulch on lawns and a three- to four-inch layer on garden beds.

Mulched leaves return valuable micronutrients to your lawn and gardens, especially when mixed with grass clippings, and feed the microorganisms and worms that keep your soil – and your grass – healthy.

So why would you want to throw all that good health away by bagging?

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

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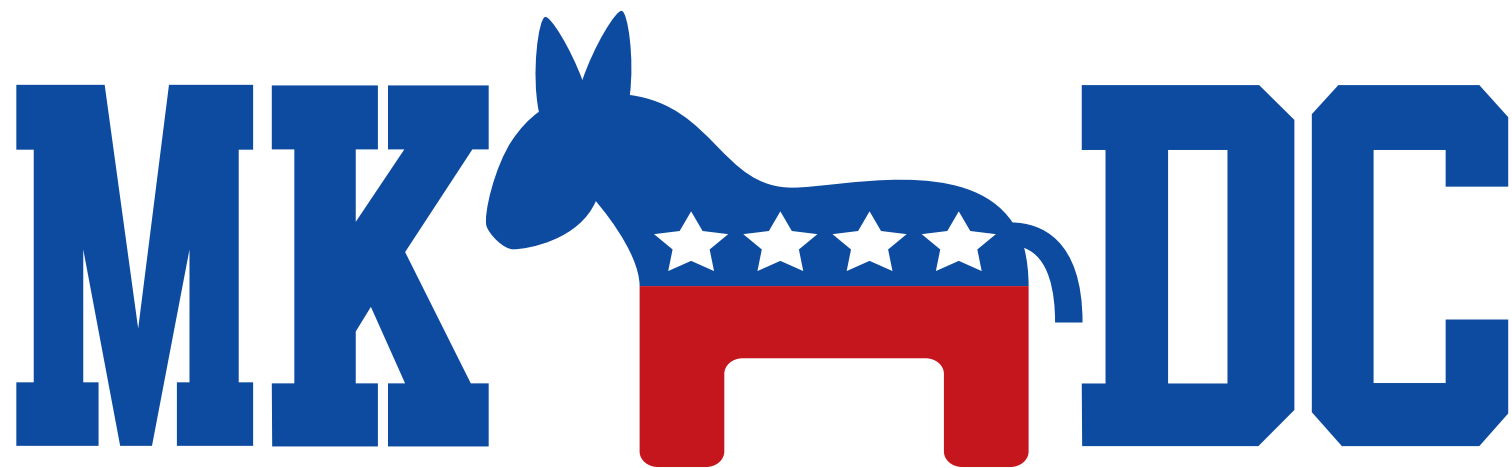
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- | | | |
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| Michelle Schaurer | - | Family Court |
| Mimi Rocah | - | District Attorney |

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- | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------|
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| Chris Burdick | - | NY State Assembly |
| E. Loren Williams | - | NYS Supreme Court |
| Alexandra Murphy | - | NY Supreme Court |
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November 21-29



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Stop & Shop Launches Pickup at Westchester Stores

Stop & Shop continues to provide Westchester residents with faster and more convenient ways to shop.

On Monday, the supermarket chain announced new pickup locations at its stores in Somers at 80 US-6 in Baldwin Place and in Ossining at 246 S. Highland Ave. Shoppers are able to place an order at stopandshop.com or on the Stop & Shop® mobile app, head to the store on a date and time of their choosing, and have a Stop & Shop associate load their groceries into their car.

"We're excited to offer our customers the convenience of shopping online for all their favorite items, and then picking up that order from the comfort of their vehicle," said Robert Schaentzler, store manager at the Somers store.

"We hope this service helps make things easier for our shoppers by giving them more options in how they shop for their family's groceries while saving them both time and money," added Keith Speed, store manager of Stop & Shop in Ossining.

To schedule a pickup, customers can visit www.stopandshop.com, or the Stop & Shop® mobile app, click on "Order Online" and select "Pickup" for the store location. Shoppers can then head to the store at their chosen pickup time, park in a designated pickup spot and call the store to let the team know they have arrived. Stop & Shop team members will then deliver the order right to their car.

New customers can receive the

service free for 90 days by entering SSFREEPICKUP at checkout.

A minimum purchase is required. The online pick-up fee is waived on the first order and then on all subsequent orders of \$30 or more if placed within 90 days of the first order. Valid for first-time residential customers only in select zip codes. Offer excludes alcoholic beverages, gift cards, postage stamps and any other purchases prohibited by law. Offer not transferable. There's a limit of one per household. Enter code at first order checkout. The offer

expires Dec. 31.

For returning customers, a \$2.95 service fee will be applied at checkout on all orders with a minimum order of \$30. For more information on the new service, or to schedule a pickup, visit www.stopandshop.com or download the Stop & Shop® mobile app.

Stop & Shop has altered its Pickup policies with associate and customer safety in mind. Customers are asked to have their trunk or door open for associates to place groceries directly into their vehicle. Customers are

also encouraged to wear masks and limit the number of people in their vehicle, when possible. In addition, all Stop & Shop pickup associates will be wearing masks and follow all of the same sanitizing precautions as its in-store associates, including surface sanitization and regular hand washing.

Due to customer demand, supply may be limited for certain items like disinfecting wipes and other cleaning products and may not be available for purchase. Purchase limits are also still in place for certain high-demand items, and customers are encouraged to allow for comparable substitutions.

No. Castle, Harrison Libraries to Receive \$274G in State Aid

State Sen. Shelley Mayer and Assemblyman David Buchwald announced last week major library building improvement grants for the Harrison and North Castle Public Libraries totaling more than \$274,000 to make needed capital improvements to three library buildings. The funding comes from the 2019-20 State Aid for Library Construction Program, an initiative strongly supported by both legislators.

The North Castle Public Library

located in Armonk the building's roof will be replaced along with installation of an elevator to improve access for all patrons. The North White Plains branch of the library will install an automatic entry door to make access easier for people with disabilities.

In Harrison, the funding will be used to replace the windows at the Richard E. Halperin Memorial Library Building with heavy-duty commercial grade windows to improve energy efficiency.



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Mt. Kisco Honors Community's Amateur Photographers in Annual Exhibit

By Martin Wilbur

The Mount Kisco Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) and three other village organizations finally had the chance to honor the village's top amateur photography last week.

An abbreviated and scaled-down reception for "The Nature, Culture, and People of Mount Kisco," was held last Thursday at the Mount Kisco Public Library more than six months after it was originally scheduled.

The CAC partnered with the Mount Kisco Arts Council, the village's Historical Society and the Mount Kisco Tree Preservation Board for the third annual exhibit that celebrates images captured within the boundaries of the



Some of the top entries in this year's "The Nature, Culture, and People of Mount Kisco" photo exhibit. Many of the photos are on display at the village's public library through the end of the month.

community.

"It's incredible how we all live in the same place and yet we can all see the world through our own eyes, and the way they're reflected in these photos is amazing," Mayor Gina Picinich said of the array of photos.

There were 191 images submitted by 58 different resident photographers, capturing the sights and people of Mount Kisco last year. There is enough room on the walls of the library's community room for 62 photos, although all submissions are featured as part of the slideshow on a large-screen television downstairs in the lobby, said CAC Chairman John Rhodes.

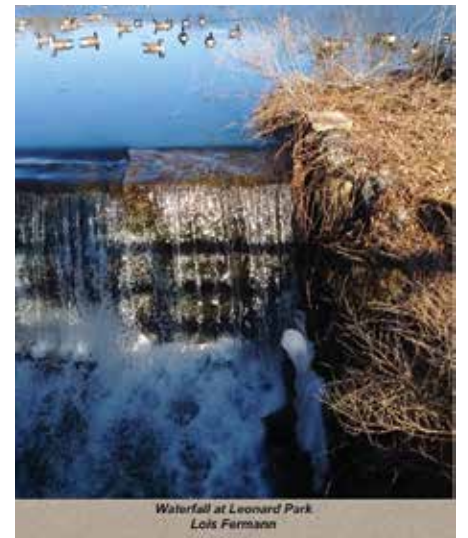
Rhodes said within a few years the exhibit has gained in popularity and is a highly-anticipated event for many residents and the village.



Hummingbird
Maria Famoso



Winter Walk - Fresh Snow on Trail
Bryan Tompkins



Waterfall at Leonard Park
Lois Fermanian

and James Locovare were recognized in the Young Photographers category. Two young photographers, Sam Griff and Adam Reig, were honor for having a photo chosen by all five judges on the Selection Committee.

Photographers Young at Heart and Over Age 18 whose photo was chosen unanimously were Robert Beringer, Robin Bucu, Art Nelson, Shonan Noronha and Stephen Potter.

"The Nature, Culture, and People of Mount Kisco," can be viewed at the Mount Kisco Public Library on Mondays and Tuesdays from 4 to 5 p.m., Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4 to 6 p.m. and on weekends from 12 to 3 p.m. The exhibit continues through the end of October.

To view all exhibit submissions, visit www.KiscoPhoto.org.

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Yorktown Heights Audiology Clinic Holds Ribbon Cutting

By Sydney Stoller

Not even the mask covering her beaming smile could detract from Nicole Kalukiewicz's joy as she celebrated the opening of Hearing Aids Near Me in Yorktown Heights last Friday.

Hearing Aids Near Me, located at 1940 Commerce St., is an audiology clinic specializing in personalized hearing care. Under the supervision of Dr. Sarah Frankly, the clinic will provide services ranging from diagnostic hearing evaluations to hearing aid repairs and fittings.

Kalukiewicz hopes the facility will be "the hearing center that everybody knows is here to help them regardless of what [their problem] is."

After spending 16 years working in the hearing aid industry in Massachusetts, Kalukiewicz joined the Yorktown community soon after moving into the space formerly occupied by McGuire's Hearing Center. While she owns the business, Kalukiewicz said the company will continue to be affiliated with its predecessors' other locations in Long Island and The Bronx.

Kalukiewicz explained that the creation of Hearing Aids Near Me was not without its challenges. She described opening a new business during a health crisis a difficult endeavor in any industry, especially one that requires doctors and patients to be in close proximity with one another.

Office personnel adheres to all health



Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater, right, and Chamber of Commerce President Sergio Esposito, center, were among those in attendance at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Hearing Aids Near Me last Friday.

guidelines, Kalukiewicz said, and her staff works hard to continually clean and sanitize the offices to ensure people feel comfortable when they arrive for their appointments.

"Pandemic or not, people need to hear," she said.

Being able to hear properly has long-term impacts on a person's overall health,

including mental health, Kalukiewicz said. Proper hearing allows a connection to other people and meaningful communication. She added that hearing problems leads people to "stay in their houses and become isolated and depressed."

During a ribbon-cutting ceremony last Friday, the Yorktown Chamber of Commerce and local elected officials

welcomed the new business to the community, calling it an integral part of Yorktown.

Councilman Ed Lachterman stressed the need for Hearing Aids Near Me's services, noting that there is a substantial group of local seniors and veterans who suffer from hearing loss and benefit from the services provided by the clinic.

State Sen. Peter Harkham and chamber representatives presented Kalukiewicz with two certificates during the ceremony.

For more information, call 914-245-6618 or visit www.hearingaidsearme.com.

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Who Really Discovered America? (Aside From the Indigenous Folk!)

By Brian McGowan

With all the tumult over Christopher Columbus and political correctness, it may be time to resurrect a far-earlier discoverer of North America, and give credit where credit is due.

In this particular case, that credit must go to a Dark Ages Irish monk, known to us today as St. Brendan the Navigator, though he did wear a number of other labels during his 93 years, all of them honorable. He was a well-liked man.

Saint Brendan was born in Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland in the year 484, not long after St. Patrick made his way through the island and less than a decade after the fall of the Roman Empire. With the Western world plunged into darkness, this was the beginning of one of Ireland's greatest gifts to mankind, as Irish monks labored in their monasteries to replicate and preserve the great texts of a crumbled civilization.

But that is not what we know St. Brendan best for. He is best known as the patron saint of sailors and other voyagers.

Why? Because he was one himself. And he documented his longest voyage well enough that it would be recorded years after his death in a Latin text titled "Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis," which translates to "The Voyage of Saint Brendan the Abbot."

About the year 512, he set about with a loyal band of 12 monks to build a sturdy craft which he hoped would carry them over the seas to a land known in Irish legends as "Hy Brazil" (in Irish Uí Breasail), a mythical island, shrouded in eternal fog except for a brief time every

seven years when it became visible. (It has nothing to do with the modern country of similar name).

The isle was rumored to be somewhere to the southwest of Ireland, convenient to the Dingle Peninsula

where Brendan and his band built their vessel. Its stout wooden ribs were covered with hide well waxed in sheep fat, really a large version of a curragh, the traditional craft of West of Ireland fishermen. They labored at their task

in the shadow of a mountain known to this day as Mount Brandon. Others say he sought the land of Tír na nÓg (Land of Youth), whose residents never age.

An Atlantic Ocean shoal some 120 miles off the Irish coast, today named Porcupine Bank, is the likely location of St. Brendan's goal. But once he set sail, he

ventured much further. In his recounting of the journey, he described wondrous sights, such as mountains of crystal (icebergs), floating islands (whales), an island whose rivers ran with gold fire (volcanic activity on Iceland), and an island filled with grapes (possibly modern-day New Brunswick, just north of Maine).

Saint Brendan returned to Ireland about 530 and resumed the life of an abbot, continuing to establish monasteries throughout Ireland, Scotland, Britain and France. No doubt he had great yarns to spin, in the wake



By Brian McGowan

of his adventures.

Several hundred years later, in the year 1000, a Viking named Leif Erikson replicated Brendan's feat and set foot in what the Vikings called "Vinland," savoring the grapes that grew abundantly in this newly re-discovered land.

It would take almost another 500 years before an enterprising seaman from Genova in Liguria, Italy journeyed to Ireland to consult first-hand the writings of Saint Brendan's voyage. From what he gathered, this seaman deduced the best round-trip path for his voyage – southwest going, northeast returning. Apparently, Saint Brendan had stumbled upon the Gulf Stream. On Oct. 12, 1492, following St. Brendan's lead, this Genovese set foot in the New World, this time to stay – Cristoforo Colombo, known better as Columbus.

Would Chris, weary of the turmoil, willingly relinquish his monuments in favor of his Dark Ages guide? Perhaps. But are we ready for "St. Brendan's Circle?"

Or "St. Brendan, Ohio?" Or the "Saint Brendan's day parade?" In deference to my Italian friends and

relations, and the reality of events we cannot change, I hope not!

Pleasantville resident Brian McGowan was born and raised in the Bronx, a second-, third- and fifth-generation Irish-American/Canadian, as his immigrant ancestors followed several paths to the New World. Reach him at brian.m.mcgowan1952@gmail.com or on Twitter (@Bmcgowan52M). He is the author of two books, "Thunder at Noon," about the battle of Waterloo, and "Love, Son John," about World War II. Both are available at Amazon.com.



St. Brendan and his band

Irish Eclectic

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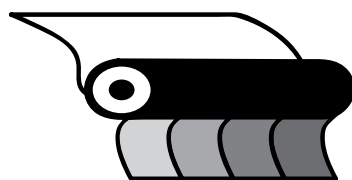
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Living the Life You Love After a Cardiac Event

After treatment for a cardiac event such as a heart attack, a patient's personal recovery goals are usually simple yet extremely meaningful: "I'd like to be able to walk up the stairs without having to rest." "I want to walk with my grandchildren in the park and not slow them down." "I'd love to ride my bike around my neighborhood again."

These are the things that make life special, and the Cardiac Rehabilitation program at Northern Westchester Hospital makes them achievable. How does that happen?

Learn how Northern Westchester Hospital's state-of-the-art program helps to build strength, capacity and a heart-healthy lifestyle so you can reconnect with the things you love.

What is cardiac rehabilitation?

The goal is to restore your heart and help you gain the strength to recover faster from heart disease while being safely monitored. Take part in supervised exercise programs, including strength training and aerobic (cardio) exercise. You'll also learn how to build a healthy lifestyle that dramatically improves your chance of preventing future heart conditions. Get educated about

heart-healthy nutrition, stress management, meditation and basic heart disease prevention.

Am I a candidate for the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at Northern Westchester Hospital?

With the opening of the hospital's Cardiac Catheterization Lab at the Seema Boesky Heart Center, comprehensive cardiac care in Westchester is now seamless and more convenient than ever. If you suffer a cardiac emergency, you'll be treated at our cath lab, after which you'll receive a direct referral to get the crucial follow-up care needed at our cardiac rehabilitation program.

Candidates for that program have suffered a cardiovascular event, such as a heart attack, bypass surgery, angina, heart valve repair or replacement, heart transplantation, coronary stenting or heart failure.

What are the benefits of cardiac rehab?

Perhaps surprisingly, a key benefit is restored confidence. After a cardiac emergency, any pain in your chest area may cause anxiety that another cardiac event is happening. This is completely understandable and very common. However, these fears typically

go away during or after cardiac rehabilitation as patients see undeniable evidence of their gains in strength and stamina.

Activities such as walking uphill on the treadmill, riding the bike or using the rowing machine provide great confidence. Other benefits include:

- Reduced risk factors for heart disease
- Increased capacity and muscle strength to carry out daily activities
- Improved quality of life
- Improved nutrition thanks to new knowledge about healthy choices
- Increased knowledge about heart disease, knowledge you'll put to immediate use

What happens when you join the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at Northern Westchester Hospital?

Our experts design a personalized exercise regimen based on health history and physical condition. You can have up to 36 training sessions, depending upon your insurance, during which you receive continuous EKG monitoring and close supervision by our physician and exercise physiologists.

We're always watching your



heart rate and cardiac rhythm. Blood pressure is taken before, during and after exercise. Starting off at 30 minutes, work up to between 42 minutes and an hour of training, with weight training added when appropriate.

How do I choose a cardiac rehabilitation program?

Look for accreditation. For example, Northern Westchester Hospital's program is recognized by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation for providing a high standard of care and significantly improving patients' quality of life. Also consider the expertise and experience of staff, convenient

scheduling and insurance coverage.

How are patients being kept safe during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Everyone wears a mask. On your first visit, you'll be asked to have a COVID-19 test. After the initial test, you'll fill out a COVID-19 screening questionnaire with each visit to the center.

Inside the gym, machines are placed at least six feet apart and gloves and a mask must be worn while using the equipment. All equipment is disinfected after each use. We provide single-use bottled water at each visit, and send all educational materials via e-mail, avoiding paper contact.

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Westchester Land Trust Receives Community Garden Award

By Martin Wilbur

State Sen. Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers) awarded the Westchester Land Trust with her offices' first-place Community Garden Award last Friday for the organization's work to combat food insecurity in the county.

The Land Trust, which operates Sugar Hill Farm in Bedford Hills, has donated roughly 1,300 pounds of produce grown at its nearly half-acre community garden this year to the Community Center of Northern Westchester in Katonah, said Land Trust Vice President Kara Whelan.

It is the second year that the Land Trust has partnered with the Community Center after producing food for Feeding Westchester for the previous eight years, she said.

Mayer said while Bedford and surrounding communities aren't often thought of as suffering from food insecurity, there are families in need everywhere.

"Since I represent a district that stretches from Yonkers to Bedford, that this northern part of the district really needs help with food, clothing, employment, health," Mayer said. "There's such a need here and what a fantastic partnership."

Whelan said the harvest features a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. The organic farm uses nutrient-dense soil to maximize the output and steers clear of any chemicals so the crops taste better than conventional growing.

Allison Turcan, the farmer at Sugar Hill



State Sen. Shelley Mayer, center foreground, surrounded by Westchester Land Trust representatives at Sugar Hill Farm as she presents the organization with her office's first-place Community Garden Award last week.

Farm, manages the scores of volunteers who attend the twice-a-week field work to help harvest the crops from spring through October. The location of the garden and the farm's practices help yield a healthy bounty.

"This is not only an organic farm but we practice regenerative agriculture," said Turcan of the process of topsoil regeneration, improving the water cycle and enhancing ecosystem services. "So we just build really nice, healthy soil and you can definitely see the results of that in the yield. Pretty much anything you plant here likes to grow as long as you give it the basics – a little love, a little water, a little sun, then it's good."

During its eight-year partnership, the farm grew an average of just over 8,000



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

The main part of the community garden at Sugar Hill Farm in Bedford, operated by the Westchester Land Trust. The organization received a Community Garden Award presented by state Sen. Shelley Mayer for providing about 1,300 pounds of food this year that it donated to the hungry.

pounds of food during each growing season. Volunteers are also a big part of the program's success, helping to plant and weed in the spring followed by harvesting the crops throughout summer and into the fall.

The award was part of Mayer's garden

contest, which asks residents to nominate home and community gardens that add beauty to local communities. There were numerous submissions containing touching stories of residents turning to gardening as an outlet during the pandemic.

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WLS Demystifying Medicare Workshop Has Moved Online

Open enrollment runs through Dec. 7, yet there are still no live workshops to help people get a handle on the complicated subject of health care coverage for seniors.

But help is at hand – literally!

The Westchester Library System's Medicare counselors have put its upbeat and interactive workshop online. For a free, easy-to-use audio version that people can absorb at their own pace, visit <https://wikis.westchesterlibraries.org/sbic/demystifying-medicare/>. See all the

displays used in the live presentations and download all the same handouts.

Newly added at the top of the screen is a five-minute video on how this presentation works. Also new is a pdf on Medicare and COVID, outlining the relaxation of some of Medicare's rules during this public health emergency. Any live workshops scheduled once the libraries start permitting these again are listed down below the audio chapters.

Demystifying Medicare is designed

not only for people currently enrolled in Medicare, but for those soon to be 65 or helping relatives and friends with their medical decisions and paperwork. A complete understanding of how the entire system works is key to making the best personal health insurance decisions. Topics include original Medicare, Medicare Advantage Plans, prescription drug plans, Medigaps (supplemental plans), EPIC and cost-saving programs for people with limited resources.

In a non-COVID universe, Westchester Seniors Out Speaking works year-round in other ways to help people with Medicare. They run free Senior Benefits Individual Counseling centers (SBICs) at nine libraries throughout the year, where people can get answers to their coverage and billing questions on a first-come, first-served basis. The roughly 80 volunteers in this program have been trained and are updated monthly by the Medicare Rights Center in New York City, an advocacy group with no affiliation with the insurance companies or with Medicare itself.

For questions about Demystifying Medicare Online or to sign up for future live presentations, leave your name and number at 914-231-3236 or e-mail SBICmedia@gmail.com. You can receive individual help at the WSOS helpline, 914-231-3260 or by e-mailing SBIC@wlsmail.org. Like the workshops, the counseling is also free.

Films on Purpose to Present Documentary on Interracial Adoption

Community-based documentary film group Films on Purpose is joining forces with two recent Pleasantville High School graduates, Milton Esliker (2016) and Humza Mumtaz (2017), to present the film "Black and White and Us," directed by Loki Muholland.

This 2019 documentary explores the experiences of four white families in Utah who adopt black children. Not only are they awakened to the fallacy of their belief that "racism did not exist," they are forced to confront their own biases as they learn to see their all-white world through the eyes of their children of color.

The film will be screened in conjunction with Pleasantville Community Television, which will offer the film on demand for free on its website during the week of Oct. 21-28, and

offer a scheduled screening at 6:30 p.m. on Oct. 28. A virtual panel discussion and question-and-answer session will be held on Zoom on Oct. 28 at 8 p.m. immediately following the screening.

Mulholland and Esliker will participate in the panel discussion, which will be moderated by Mumtaz. Esliker and Mumtaz bring their own experiences and observations about growing up as children of color in a predominantly white environment. The organizers expect to offer a revealing and enlightening conversation about race in our society.

Details and links to the event will be available at FilmsOnPurpose.org, and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FilmsOnPurpose/>.

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Our Virtual Tour of Italy Continues in the North



By Nick Antonaccio

Italian winemakers have a storied history of developing grapes that are symbiotic with their climate and soil conditions. The characteristics of each grape have been tailored to the land and to the local cuisine – and vice versa.

Until recently, many Italian wine producers were more interested in quantity than quality; American consumers were more interested in price than quality. The result was just like those 1960s movies about Italian marriage: dysfunctional, apoplectic relationships masked by hedonistic lifestyles. We were in wine hell and didn't even know it – or care.

Over the last few decades, the American market is enjoying the new Italian renaissance of fine wines at affordable, even bargain, prices. One Italian wine region stands out as a producer of wines that have made a significant turnabout.

In this fourth installment of our reprised virtual tour through the wine regions of Italy, in search of less widely known grapes, we've landed in the northeast of Italy, and the region of Veneto.

The first stop is Venice. Steeped in a long

history of world trade dominance and the opulence that signifies such wealth, Venice in the 21st century has become a theme park for me, a city frozen in time. Its aura of millennia of history, culture, trade and conflict envelopes you as you walk the narrow passageways of this cosmopolitan city, constantly losing your way, only to turn a corner and be confronted with a 12th century palazzo and the neighborhood trattoria of your destination.

But venture west from Venice and you will come upon a countryside of gently undulating hills that produces a number of the most prestigious wines of Italy. The Veneto region is home to 80 grape varieties, many of which are "quaffing" wines, consumed in the enotecas and trattorias in the tiny hamlets that dot the landscape.

We begin our virtual tour with the Veneto's ubiquitous white wine: Soave. Like many Italian wines, Soave is the name of the wine, not the grape. Typically composed of the Garganega and Trebbiano grapes, the area's northern latitude and low altitude

produce a wine with aromas of apple and elderberry, always light on the palate and in the alcohol levels. It is at its best with appetizers or light seafood dishes.

A tantalizing and versatile white dessert wine is Torcolato, produced in the Breganze region, primarily from the Vespaiolo grape. It offers the richness and complexity of a fine Sauternes.

You Heard It Through the Grapevine



On to the reds.

The reincarnation of Bardolino, as a light, food-friendly wine, is a perfect match for lighter meat dishes. Grown since the Bronze Age, its name of Germanic origins, it is not a grape, but a blend including the three core grapes of most Veneto red wines: Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara. Think young Beaujolais with a touch of spiciness.

Next in the hierarchy of red wines is Valpolicella (a region, not a grape). Also a blend including the three core Veneto grapes, it is always a crowd pleaser at my wine tasting events. It varies from one hillside vineyard to the next, but is typically mid-bodied and fruit-driven, with rich cherry aromas and flavor.

The undisputed champion of the Valpolicella region is Amarone, typically a blend of the three core Veneto grapes. It is made from very ripe grapes, which are dried for several months and then pressed, producing an opulent, concentrated, full-bodied, complex wine with notes of black cherry, dark chocolate, ripe plum and leather.

This is a wine for robust game dishes and pasta topped with newly harvested truffles.

A subset of the Amarone is Ripasso, fondly referred to as "Baby Amarone." Vinified in the traditional fashion but then subjected to a partial secondary fermentation ("ripasso," or "to pass again") with dried Amarone grapes, it is characterized by its concentrated fruit and depth of flavor. Try it with rich sauces and roasted game.

Whether partaking of the sights of Venice or the wines of the surrounding area, you will never forget the unique attributes of the Veneto region.

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

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