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November 24 - November 30, 2020

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 14, Issue 690

Residents Question Gun Costs, Seek More Visibility at Police Forum

By Abby Luby

Some Pleasantville residents said they want officers to be more involved with the Black community, while others questioned the types of weapons in use during the village's latest forum on police reform.

Pleasantville High School graduates Milton and Ian Esliker, who are Black, said they always had a good relationship with the Pleasantville Police Department growing up, explaining how their mother would introduce them to all the cops. Despite her efforts, they suggested more communication is needed between law enforcement and different communities.

"My mom reached out and introduced us to all the cops. Not every person of color is like that. More communication has to come from the white side, from the police side," Milton Esliker said. "It's important to emphasize all different types of heritages.

That would be a step forward."

Ian Esliker added the need for bias training within the department, noting that law enforcement should be better equipped to address situations that arise at The Cottage School and those with psychological or emotional disorders.

Last Thursday's virtual forum is the latest in a series of meetings aiming to make improvements within the police department. During the nearly two-hour discussion, residents also indicated how police need to overcome perceived racial bias and increase their presence within the village.

Resident Loretta Chiavetta said with the village a walking community, police should be assigned a beat, learn the area, and talk to people of all ages. She pressed greater visibility would teach youngsters to respect the police, while giving officers

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Classroom Balancing Act

A Bedford Village Elementary School kindergarten art class shows that while teachers continue to perform an intricate balancing act with ever-changing needs and social distancing guidelines, students are none the wiser.

Chappaqua Schools Take Step to Address Racism, Bigotry and Hate

By Sherrie Dulworth

To help faculty and students constructively address issues of racism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of prejudice, the Chappaqua Central School District has partnered with Facing History and Ourselves, an international non-profit organization that teaches how to combat bigotry and hate.

The program launched last month with educators engaging in critical self-reflection. Educators have also been tasked with reviewing the curriculum and resources to address racism, hate, harassment, and other topical issues.

"By forcing us to stop, think,

reflect and to read – it really is very powerful," said Chappaqua staff developer Mary Devane. "We feel like it's an exciting partnership right now that we are able to leverage and really help teachers connect with students, build those relationships, and start to rethink things."

While the district's middle and high school teachers have periodically participated in Facing History's programs in past years, Teaching for Equity and Justice brings a formal structure with eight 90-minute modules. Thirty teachers from the two middle schools – Seven Bridges and Robert Bell – and Horace Greeley High School are currently

participating in the program.

In the aftermath of the national civic unrest and outrage of George Floyd's killing in late May, the community experienced several incidents of racism, one involving students. A TikTok video was discovered that showed several Horace Greeley High School students using the N-word while filming themselves inside the cafeteria.

Although the 10-second video had been filmed some months earlier, it came to light in early June and led to reported community backlash.

Pam Haas, Facing History's Executive Director of the New York region, noted the struggle in

engaging students and teachers in meaningful and complex conversations about race, history, and bias. It's not easy work, she said, noting the difficulty facing these issues.

Haas added that Facing History has provided education to 15,000 teachers within 2,000 middle and high schools in the greater New York metro area.

"We believe that all teachers and schools deserve to have this kind of education," Haas said.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Adam Pease said the district is engaged in complementary work alongside the Facing History curriculum, including workshops with cultural

proficiency experts. Earlier this month, the district held a virtual meeting with Dolly Chugh, a social psychologist, NYU professor and author of "The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias."

The district also created the role of Director of Equity, Inclusion & Wellness, recently hiring Phillip Marcus, Jr. to fill the position. Marcus is expected to join the district in the coming weeks.

"It's really the community, the parents, students, many faculty members, administrators, the School Board – everybody is really leaning in to do this work," Pease said of the broad support on work

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Residents Question Gun Costs, Seek More Visibility at Police Forum

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the chance to know residents personally.

Mandy Yasinsky agreed, adding that an increase in police presence could create a more positive perception of law enforcement.

"My kids should be having a face-to-face with police officers and know who they are," Yasinsky said. "The police need to be more visible, more hands-on."

The types of firearms Pleasantville officers use was also a hot topic during the forum.

Resident Adrienne Byrne recalled seeing what appeared to be a semi-automatic weapon inside a police cruiser, asserting how young kids could become

standoffish with officers who carry guns they fear.

Police Chief Eric Grutzner confirmed the department does use semi-automatic guns, but said all equipment and firearms are considered useful for training and liability. He stressed the department takes carrying those weapons "extremely seriously."

"Sandy Hook is not that far behind us and we're very lucky that the Pleasantville Police Department takes that seriously," Superintendent of Schools Mary Fox-Alter said. "We need to rest assured if something terrible happens they are 45 seconds away."

Angeli Wallace, a Pleasantville High

School senior, questioned how much the village allocates on weapons, suggesting the money should fund mental health training. It's an area that has been lacking, she said, addressing the problem of police brutality throughout the nation.

Mayor Peter Scherer didn't cite a specific number but said very little of the village budget is spent on weaponry, adding most of the police budget is dispensed on staff and salaries. He said previous attempts to recruit mental health experts were halted for budgetary reasons.

Longtime resident and former Harrison Police Chief Louis Dorio said Pleasantville police have done a good job. However, Dorio, who used to teach at

the Westchester County Police Academy, believes law enforcement officials need to encourage more trust within the community.

"Statistics show a small percentage of police officers do the majority number of misdeeds," he said. "We have to make an effort to show the community that we're not the bad guys; we're somebody you should come to when you need help and try to erase that image of police as the bad guys."

The community is invited to submit comments at the village email: policereform@pleasantville-ny.gov

Chappaqua Schools Take Step to Address Racism, Bigotry and Hate

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has received. "We are confident that we can move the needle as the experience gets more robust."

To help track the impact of these initiatives, the district is collaborating with students and teachers on a diversity and inclusion survey that will reflect and measure progress over time as curriculum revisions are made. Additionally, the district will be providing regular public updates to the Board of Education, Pease said.

Referring to the program's civic

responsibility impact, Devane noted how it can help students think about civic action and ways that they can be strong citizens of the community and the world. She said Facing History has a reputation of getting students to think about moving "from being a bystander to being an upstander."

"There's a proverb that says the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago and if you didn't do that then, the best time to plant it is today," Pease said. "I feel like that's where we are. The best time for us to do this work was 50 years ago, but we're here now."

A Century of Good Living

Longtime Pleasantville resident Dorothy Perry turns 100 years old on Dec. 11.

Perry's daughters, Barbara, Joyce, Alison and Debbie, are asking people to send their mother birthday cards to celebrate the century mark. Perry, who now lives in upstate New York, left Pleasantville in 2013. She still exercises, gardens and knits. Cards can be addressed to Dorothy Perry at 5000 Queen Philomena Blvd., Apt 203, Schenectady, NY 12304



Why It's More Important Than Ever to Get Your Flu Shot – Now.

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Dr. Debra Spicehandler

Co-Chief of Infectious Disease
Northern Westchester Hospital

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While the start of flu season this year comes with heightened concerns about a potential double threat of COVID-19 co-infection, Dr. Debra Spicehandler, Co-Chief of Infectious Disease at Northern Westchester Hospital, is hopeful for a more favorable reality – especially if you get your flu vaccine as soon as possible.

Similarities and key differences between COVID and the Flu

Both viruses are transmitted by respiratory droplets – when someone sneezes, coughs, or even talks; or if you touch an object that someone with the virus has just handled. While COVID-19 is more aggressive, symptoms appear to be somewhat similar to the flu – fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffed nose, body aches, headache, fatigue and sometimes nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting. With COVID, the key points of difference include loss of taste and difficulty breathing.

Don't self-diagnose! Here's how you can protect yourself...

Because the characteristics of these viruses are similar, it's important to speak to your doctor about testing. If you mistakenly attribute your symptoms to the flu, you could risk spreading the coronavirus, which is more easily transmitted, to those around you.

Another way to protect yourself: Get your flu vaccine.

Getting your flu vaccine, coupled with the behavioral changes you've likely already adopted – including wearing a mask, social distancing, practicing good hand hygiene and staying home while you're sick – are crucial to reducing your risk of a potential double whammy.

Why you shouldn't skip the flu vaccine

If you're a fairly young and healthy person, you could get the flu and recover. But if you then become infected with the coronavirus, your immune system will be weakened and the impact of both viruses could be devastating. A flu vaccine adds another layer of protection against serious complications that may result from having both viruses.

Is the flu vaccine effective?

Each year, scientists monitor flu activity worldwide to determine which flu strains are likely to cause illness, then concoct a vaccine to match. Some years they get it right; some years, not so right. But even if the vaccine isn't a perfect match, if you do get the flu, you get a much milder case.

It takes about 2 weeks after vaccination to have full protection against the flu. So unless you have a life-threatening allergy to eggs, or have a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome, get your flu vaccine now and encourage those you love to do the same.

I get my flu shot every year in September and it carries me through to May. Play it safe – protect yourself and those you love.

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Coronavirus Cases, Deaths Continue to Surge in Westchester

By Anna Young

Westchester County has recorded 1,500 COVID-19-related deaths since the start of the pandemic, with coronavirus cases rapidly rising as the holiday season nears.

Westchester County saw 10 coronavirus-related deaths last week, a stark increase compared to July and August when both months logged a combined 11 fatalities. Coronavirus cases increased by 421 on Monday, bringing the total number of cases to 47,262 since mid-March.

Westchester now has 4,808 active coronavirus cases, a nearly 1,300 increase over last week. Three weeks ago, 1,513 active cases were recorded.

"That is a dangerous trend," County Executive George Latimer said in a press briefing on Monday. "We are hitting numbers that we saw in the month of May and there seems to be no reduction in sight in the rapid rate of growth in these various cases."

Overall, more than one million tests have been administered in Westchester, with 8,343 individuals assessed on Sunday, according to state data. The county's infection rate rose to 5.05 percent.

Hospitalizations have nearly tripled over the last three weeks, with the county reporting 168 persons hospitalized on Monday. Latimer said the hospitals remain in good shape, with 3,100 available hospital beds and 260 ICU beds.

Noting the grim number of COVID-related fatalities, Latimer said county officials will

gather at the Ribbons of Remembrance memorial in Yonkers on December 3 at 2 p.m. to pay homage to the 1,500 individuals who have died.

"Every loss is a significant loss and it's very disconcerting to see these numbers continue to spike," Latimer said. "This is not hoax. This is not some manufactured issue. This was something that hit us as a society and there was a sacrifice made and part of that sacrifice is losing people we love."

Statewide, there were 5,906 new positive cases, with the positivity rate increasing to 3.08 percent. That state recorded 33 additional COVID-19 deaths on Monday, bringing the death toll to 26,389.

Total hospitalizations are at 2,724, an increase of 162 over the previous day, according to state data. Across the state, there has been a total of 602,120 positive coronavirus cases since the start of the pandemic.

Yellow Zone Designation

Last week, Gov. Andrew Cuomo placed five Westchester County municipalities in a yellow zone as coronavirus case continue to surge throughout the region.

Portions of Ossining, Peekskill, Tarrytown, Yonkers, and New Rochelle are now considered yellow zones, requiring specified zip codes to follow new restrictions and state mandates to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As a result, there will be increased community



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

testing, tracing support, enforcement, education, and compliance efforts.

Port Chester remains in an orange warning zone, though Cuomo warned Monday the area could soon increase to a red zone. The designation would result in non-essential business closures, a prohibition on gatherings, and restaurants transitioning back to take or delivery service only.

Targeted areas include zip codes 10562, which contains most of the Village of Ossining and a small corner of the Town of Ossining; 10566 in Peekskill; 10591, which spans Tarrytown and portions of Sleepy Hollow; 10801 in New Rochelle; and areas 10703 and 10705 in Yonkers.

"The yellow zones highlight where there is a concentration of infection and therefore we are now tasked with putting additional effort to try to reduce the infection into that area so we will not see it expand further and potentially cause life-threatening realities of COVID," Latimer said in a press conference last Thursday. "These five (areas), we have begun the process of working with those communities prior to today's announcement."

New restrictions will limit mass gatherings both indoor and outdoor to 25 people, with restaurants reducing persons per table for both indoor and outdoor dining to four people. Houses of worship will now be restricted to 50 percent capacity and schools can remain open with mandatory weekly testing of 20

percent of students, teachers, and staff for in-person settings.

Latimer said the county will work with school districts to provide the testing it needs.

Businesses can remain open with no restrictions. However, if an area is increased to an orange zone, non-essential businesses, such as gyms and personal care, will be forced to close. Currently, Peekskill, Ossining, Tarrytown, New Rochelle, and Yonkers are on track to increase to an orange zone, Cuomo said.

There are no restrictions on traveling in or out of the zone, nor are there restrictions on whether residents who live in the zone can go to work.

Violators who incite mass gatherings will be fined \$15,000, according to state mandates.

To target micro-clusters, Cuomo instituted a program that will label certain areas red, orange, or yellow zones depending on the nature of the infection rate. The label would apply more stringent restrictions on gatherings, activities, businesses, and schools, in addition to the current mandates in place.

A yellow zone is the lowest of the three-tier system.

To be classified as a yellow zone, the lowest of the three-tier system, an area would need a seven-day rolling average positivity rate above 2.5% for 10 days and the addition of 10 or more new daily cases per 100,000 residents on a seven-day average.

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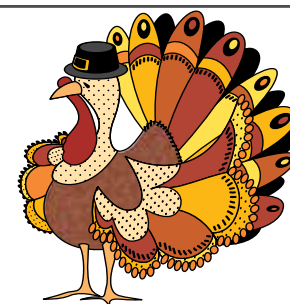
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Croton Approves Emergency Mask Law as COVID-19 Cases Surge

By Anna Young

Croton-on-Hudson officials have approved an emergency mandate that would require face masks or coverings be worn if the village declares a State of Emergency.

Officials indicated action was needed with COVID-19 cases rapidly rising statewide and locally. In the event of a State of Emergency, which can be declared by Village Manager Janine King, face masks and coverings must be worn on public, private and commercial properties when unable to maintain a six-foot distance from another person who is not a member of the same household.

Residential property is exempt from the law. The law would cease once the public health emergency expires, officials said.

"Literally one month ago there were zero cases within the Village of Croton-on-Hudson and now we have 13," Mayor Brian Pugh said during the Nov. 16 Village Board meeting. "It's an evolving situation and we have to be prepared for the worst-case scenario or adverse developments that could be coming much sooner than anyone of us would like."

As of Nov. 21, the village had 24 active coronavirus cases, with Westchester County accounting for 4,515 active cases, as of Saturday.

Other exemptions to the law are children under the age of two or anyone

who is unable to medically tolerate a face covering; drivers traveling alone or exclusively with members of their households in a car; and persons playing sports or participating in a fitness class or recreational activity who are unable to tolerate wearing a mask during physical activity.

A mask must be worn as soon as the physical activity has ended, the law states.

Additionally, individuals are not required to wear a mask or covering when eating, drinking, or seated at a restaurant. Police officers, fire fighters, ambulance personnel and other first responders are also excused from wearing a covering when engaged in an emergency.

The Croton-on-Hudson Police Department will be responsible for enforcing the law, with violators subject to an up to \$100 penalty for the first violation, and an up to \$250 fine for any subsequent violations occurring within a one-year period.

The law originally proposed an up to \$250 fine for a first offense and \$500 for continued violations, but Trustee Sherry Horowitz felt the punishment was too excessive. Officials unanimously agreed to make the change.

While Gov. Andrew Cuomo already has an executive order imploring folks to wear face masks, Pugh said it benefits the village to have its own law with specific regulations and fines authorized. New

Castle and Yorktown also have emergency mask mandates in place.

"I think there is something to be said for the transparency of having a law or the rules the village is enforcing be recorded in the code," Pugh said. "Also, I think just

making clear that the village stands ready to enforce this if necessary and that the board and the village government are going to do what it takes to make sure precautions are being taken in this environment."



DeCicco's Honored with Empire Award

Last week, New York State Senator Shelley Mayer presented John DeCicco (shown with his wife Marie) with the New York State Senate 2020 Empire Award. The award, which was given "in recognition of outstanding contribution and dedication to the growth and prosperity and betterment of their community and New York State," cited the DeCicco's store in Armonk.

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Harckham Gains Ground in 40th State Senate District Race

By Rick Pezzullo

State Senator Pete Harckham has gained ground in his bid for reelection following the tallying of absentee ballots in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess counties.

Harckham, who trailed Republican challenger Rob Astorino by more than 8,000 votes on Election night, is now facing about a 2,000-vote deficit with an estimated 18,000 absentee ballots left to be counted in Westchester.

According to Harckham, he

outpulled Astorino in absentee ballots in Putnam, 4,151 to 2,257, and in Dutchess, 1,288 to 670.

There were an estimated 25,000 absentee ballots that had to be counted in Westchester County. Those ballots reportedly were overwhelmingly returned by registered Democrats by a three-to-one margin.

Tom Stautder, press spokesman for Harckham, said Monday "it was looking great for us," noting Harckham was significantly outpulling Astorino in absentee

ballots in Mt. Pleasant where Astorino lives.

William O'Reilly, a spokesman for Astorino, confirmed Astorino's lead had shrunk to "more than 2,000 votes," adding "The proper thing to do is keep counting, and reserve any pronouncements until the process is completed. That's how democracy works."

According to the Westchester County Board of Elections, Harckham outperformed Astorino in the county on Election Day, 45,881 (52%) to 42,196 (48%).

It was a different story in Putnam, where Astorino dominated Harckham, 17,535 (66%) to 9,135 (34%). Astorino also won in Dutchess, 6,011 to 3,265.

Harckham is seeking a second two-year term, while Astorino is trying to make a political comeback following an eight-year stint as county executive (2010-2017). He ran unsuccessfully for governor in 2014.

Two years ago, Harckham became the first Democrat to

serve the district since 1914 after ousting Republican Terrence Murphy.

The 40th State Senate District covers the villages of Sleepy Hollow, Pleasantville, Briarcliff Manor, Croton-on-Hudson and Buchanan, the town/village of Mount Kisco, the towns of Cortlandt, Lewisboro, Mount Pleasant, New Castle, North Salem, Pound Ridge, Somers and Yorktown, the City of Peekskill, and parts of Putnam and Dutchess counties.

Maloney, Reichlin-Melnick Declared Winners in Respective Races

By Anna Young

Nearly three weeks after Election Day, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney and newcomer Elijah Reichlin-Melnick were declared victors in their respective races.

Maloney officially secured his victory last Thursday to continue serving the 18th Congressional District for a fifth term. The Associated Press called the tight race, with Maloney defeating Republican challenger Chele Farley 143,488-131,095.

With the race too close to call on Election Day, AP declared Maloney the winner after analysis of absentee ballots determined Farley couldn't overcome his lead. Despite the race officially confirmed, Maloney had prematurely claimed victory on Nov. 3 with a roughly 7,000

vote lead prior to absentee ballot consideration.

"The Hudson valley has once again spoken: We have won this race and been granted the opportunity to keep serving New York for the next two years," Maloney said in a statement on Election night. "It is time to put partisan politics aside because there is so much work to do."

Maloney, a Cold Springs resident, was first elected to Congress in 2002.

Farley, a Tuxedo resident who had an impressive showing two years after losing to Kirsten Gillibrand in a bid for U.S. Senate, had held out hope the thousands of absentee ballots would lead her to victory. Farley said she will continue to fight for people across the Hudson Valley and hinted at another run.

"This has been an incredible journey and

I will forever be grateful for the confidence and trust placed in me to be the NY18 GOP and Conservative nominee," Farley said in a Facebook post. "Many have called on me to run again in 2022 and I am seriously considering it, but at the moment I need time to reflect with my family before making any final decisions."

The 18th Congressional District includes portions of northern Westchester and Dutchess counties, and all of Putnam and Orange counties.

Reichlin-Melnick Bests Weber in 38th Senate District Race

Democrat Elijah Reichlin-Melnick will succeed state Sen. David Carlucci to serve the 38th Senate District.

Despite trailing behind Republican challenger Bill Weber on Election Day,

Reichlin-Melnick declared victory last Tuesday following an abundance of absentee ballots that gave him a nearly 10,000 vote lead. The 38th Senate District includes much of Rockland County and Ossining in Westchester County.

"It is the honor of my life to have the opportunity to represent the people of Rockland and Westchester counties in the New York State Senate," Reichlin-Melnick said in Facebook post. "We have a lot of work to do, and I look forward to going to Albany to fight for the middle class and working people of our district."

Reichlin-Melnick, 36, who is currently serving his second term as a Nyack village trustee, will replace Carlucci, a Democrat, who opted against re-election to run unsuccessfully

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NRC Approves License Transfer for Indian Point to Holtec

By Rick Pezzullo

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Monday approved the application to transfer the licenses for Indian Point Energy Center's nuclear power plants from Entergy Corporation to a Holtec International subsidiary for prompt decommissioning.

The transfer of Indian Point to Holtec, currently targeted for May 2021, would occur following the satisfaction of all closing conditions, including the permanent shutdown and reactor defueling of Unit 3, which is the last operating power plant at Indian Point. Unit 3 will shut down by April 30, 2021.

Entergy and Holtec jointly filed a License

Transfer Application with the NRC in November 2019, requesting approval for the transfer of Indian Point, along with its Nuclear Decommissioning Trusts (NDTs) and decommissioning liability.

"The NRC's approval of the Indian Point license transfer is a critical milestone as we move closer to completing the transaction," said Leo Denault, Entergy's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. "The sale of Indian Point following its permanent shutdown will benefit the community by enabling the facility to be removed and the site remediated decades sooner than otherwise thought possible."

In its decision, the NRC determined Holtec possessed the required technical and

financial qualifications to decommission Indian Point safely and in accordance with NRC requirements. Previously, the NRC approved two separate transfers of retired nuclear power plants to Holtec for prompt decommissioning;

Holtec plans to begin the decommissioning process shortly after taking ownership, and as part of the agreement between the companies, will initially provide job opportunities for approximately 300 of Entergy's current

employees at Indian Point.

As part of its plan, Holtec expects to move all of the Indian Point spent nuclear fuel into dry casks within about three years following facility shutdown in 2021. Holtec has a pending application with the NRC for a Consolidated Interim Storage Facility in New Mexico, which could eventually store spent nuclear fuel from Indian Point and other U.S. nuclear power plants.

Maloney, Reichlin-Melnick Declared Winners in Respective Races

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in the Democratic primary for the 17th Congressional District. Carlucci assumed office in 2011.

Following the ballot count, Weber, a certified public accountant, conceded in Facebook post last Thursday. Despite the loss, Weber said his campaign gave voice to tens of thousands of people who want to live in a fiscally healthy, economically viable, and well-governed New York.

Weber, a life-long Rockland County resident, campaigned on his abilities to evaluate the state budget and rid any wasteful spending among officials to restore New York's fiscal

stance.

Weber, 51, noted that while it will take some time to turn New York around, he will continue to hold his opponent accountable for his pledges to fully fund education, not raise taxes on the middle class, be fiscally responsible, and support local law enforcement.

"While we're very disappointed that we did not win this race, we achieved important victories and learned important lessons," Weber said in his post. "We have formed and fostered incredible bonds across communities in this district, making inroads in surprising places and finding partnerships in unlikely corners."

Yorktown Man Faces \$10,000 Fine for Illegal Dumping

By Rick Pezzullo

A Garrison man could be fined as much as \$10,000 after being charged with illegally dumping demolition debris on Baldwin Road Tuesday evening.

Charles A. Valt, 48, was flagged by Yorktown code enforcement officials for abandoning the debris around 6 p.m. at Baldwin Road near the Mohansic Golf Course and the Taconic State Parkway.

If found guilty, Valt faces a \$10,000 fine. Yorktown Town Court has scheduled a hearing for Valt on December 3 at 3 p.m.

"Dumping on our roads and public spaces is not a victimless crime. Potentially tainted construction debris poses health risks to wildlife, our waterways and our residents," said Yorktown Highway Superintendent Dave



Demolition debris dumped on Baldwin Road

Paganelli.

The debris consisted of cinder blocks and other building waste. A roll-off container truck deposited the waste by the side of the road.

Yorktown highway and code enforcement officials tracked the debris to a garage demolition at 3536 Strang Blvd. in Yorktown. Officials determined that the demolition site was the source of the debris after finding clues in the

abandoned waste.

Supervisor Matt Slater said Yorktown will prosecute all illegal dumpers.

"This incident is a slap in the face to all our residents who take pride in their community. It is also deeply offensive to our municipal workers who do their best to keep Yorktown beautiful," Slater said.

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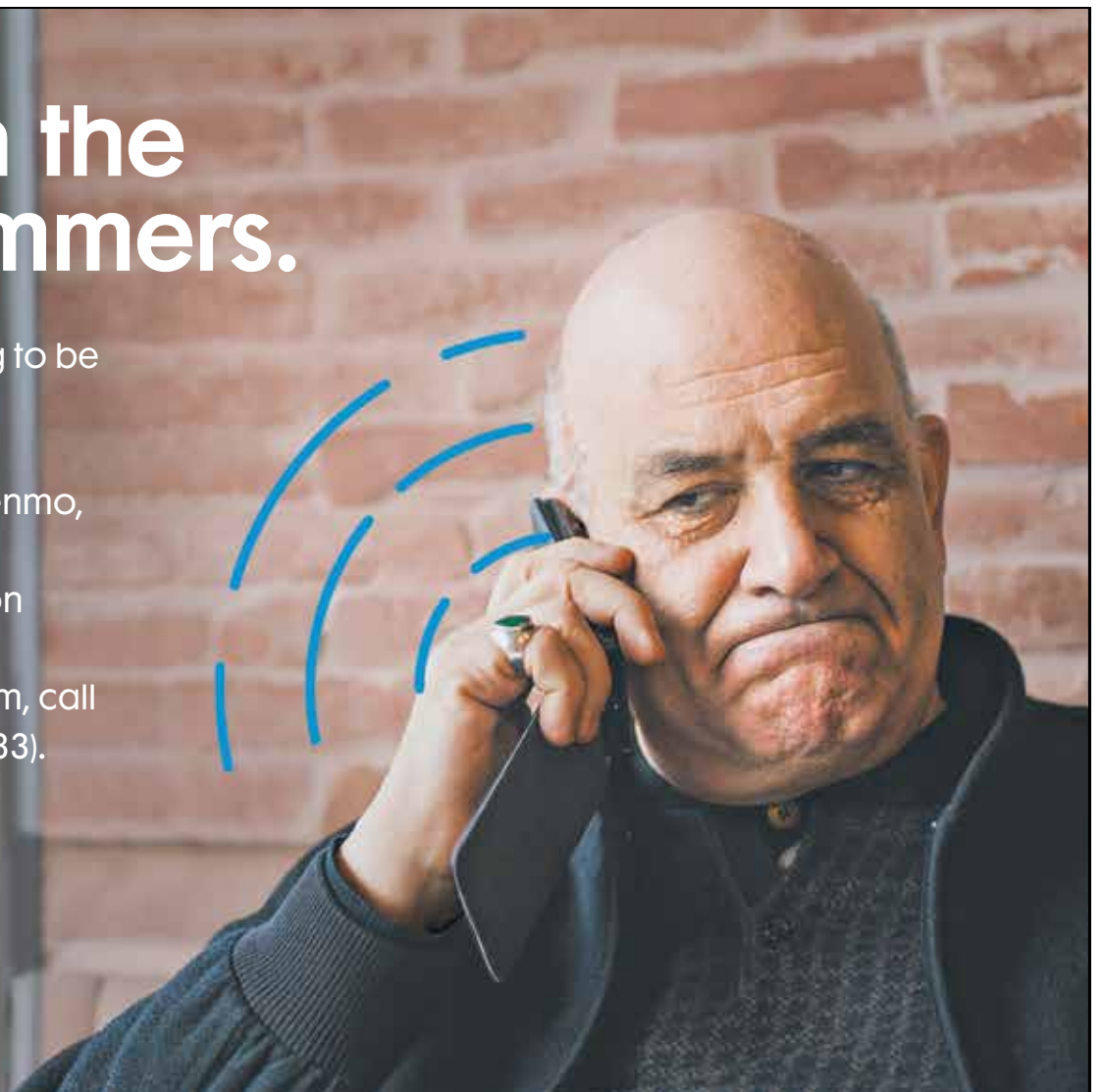
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We invite readers to share their thoughts by sending letters to the editor. Please limit comments to 250 words. We will do our best to print all letters, but are limited by space constraints. Letters are subject to editing and may be withheld from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



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Yorktown Funeral Home Participates in Toys for Tots Program

Yorktown Funeral Home in Shrub Oak has announced that it has joined the Toys for Tots program which collects and distributes toys to needy children in Northern Westchester and Putnam Counties during the holiday season.

Sponsored by the Marine Corps Reserve, Toys for Tots participation involves hosting a receptacle to hold donated toys and a container for check donations.

In joining the program, Anthony Guarino, Funeral Director, said,

"We seek to be involved with many worthwhile causes in our community and surely Toys for Tots will be one of our most gratifying endeavors."

For those individuals who want to contribute toys, the guidelines are that they be new unwrapped toys. It is assured that donated toys and monetary contributions will be distributed to needy children within the local community.

Contributions can be dropped off during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, from 9 am to 5 pm, and

on Saturday and Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Checks should be made out to the Toys for Tots Foundation.

Yorktown Funeral Home is located at 945 E Main Street in Shrub Oak. Its website is www.yorktownfuneralhome.com. The Guarino family also owns Yannantuono, Burr, Davis, Sharpe Funeral Home in Mt. Vernon.

For more information, Yorktown Funeral Home can be reached at 914.962.0700 or YFH945@gmail.com.

Letters to the Editor

Creating Sewer District in Somers was Always About More Tax Revenue

I watched the Somers Town Board Meeting on November 12th and the Supervisor announced that the Somers Sewer District vote did not pass. They mentioned that they would not be bringing back any more proposals and I find this rather odd if this was truly about saving our lakes and improving water quality. There are other options that can be done and now they brush their hands of it all. This just goes to show you when politicians have an agenda they will say anything to get it pushed through, hence the hiring of a PR Firm. We have said right along it was not about our septs or lakes, it was about generating more tax revenue and more development.

There's no reason why an aeration system could not have been put into Shenorock Lake once the Town took ownership of it a few years ago. Instead the Town Board spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on studies and reports on something the people didn't want. They didn't want the residents to vote or be included and it's pretty sad that residents had to ask for a vote and petition for it and spend their hard earned money doing mailers. Why not clean up the lake and dredge it? I guess they can't because they have spent all of our taxpayer money on this deceitful sewer plan. When a plan is done incorrectly, intentionally leaving off a clubhouse right on the lake, you know

something is not right. The Town Board was most definitely working with these pro-sewer residents to push their agenda. That's why they created a website with one of the Councilman to try and make it look legitimate.

Westchester County has a program that will pay for a resident to get a new septic system if they have a failing system, and it's not with the \$10 Million from the East of the Hudson. More to come on that. Why hasn't our Supervisor told everyone about this program? I bet it's because the number of failing systems are close to zero.

Marie Tomasetti
Shenorock

Cortlandt GOP Seeks Candidates for Nov. 2021 Election

Thinking of running for office of getting involved in your community?

We need dedicated public servants in local government, especially in these difficult times. If you are a resident of the Town of Cortlandt and you think you may want to get involved either by running for local office or just getting involved in your community please contact me.

Next year all town offices are up for election, Town Supervisor Open Seat and two Town Board seats, Receiver of Taxes Open Seat and Town Clerk and Town Justice. We will be interviewing candidates this December and early January 2021. Individuals of any political party and background are invited.

Please contact the committee at

danielpaganolaw@optonline.net.

We look forward to meeting you.
Thank you and keep safe.

Daniel L. Pagano, Esq.
Chairman, Town of Cortlandt
Republican Committee

Obituary

Kathryn A. Etzler

Kathryn (Kay) A. Etzler, a resident of Oviedo, Florida, formerly of Rhinebeck and Pleasantville, died peacefully August 27 at the home of her daughter, Victoria (Vicki)

Ross in Florida. She was 96.

She was born September 7, 1923, in Parkersburg, West Virginia to Margaret (Louis) and Constantine Joseph Kunka. She graduated from the University of Dayton where she majored in English. She married Charles David Etzler in 1945 and he predeceased her in October 1970. She is survived by her four children: David, Vicki (Ross), John, and Sally (Peake) as well as her grandchildren: Heidi (Weaver), David, John, and great-grandchildren: Matthew and Sophie Weaver and Brendan Etzler.

Mrs. Etzler had a long career in journalism, having started at the Dayton Journal-Herald after graduation from college. She taught English as a second language and worked in public relations at Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco. Journalism was her passion and after college graduation worked at the daily newspaper in Dayton, Ohio. She has held positions as a "stringer" reporter, as

well as editor-in-chief. She had been editor-in-chief at the Patent Trader newspaper in Mount Kisco, prior to her position as copy desk editor and then head of the copy desk at Newsweek magazine, from which she retired.

She was involved at the Pleasantville Presbyterian Church in the choir and the women's groups as well as community activities, especially those involving her children, such as school events and boy and girl scouting. She loved music, art, gardening, nature, cooking, and travel and was always willing to try something new. She took up golf at retirement and enjoyed playing at the Red Hook Golf Club in Red Hook, where she was a member for many years.

The service for Mrs. Etzler took place on Saturday, October 3, and she was laid to rest that day with a graveside service at Fair Ridge Cemetery in Chappaqua.

Obituaries

Kurt M. Beger

Kurt M. Beger, a lifelong resident of Mahopac, died November 10. He was 79. He was born in Baldwin Place on July 26, 1941, to Kurt and Anna (Kleshka) Beger. He graduated from Mahopac High School in 1959 where he was a star athlete who lettered each year in baseball, basketball, football and track. He was inducted into the Mahopac High School Hall of Fame. Following high school, he played minor league baseball with the Washington Senators farm team in the catcher's position. Although he didn't go on to the majors, he continued to play locally in men's baseball leagues for many years. He retired as a supervisor from NYSEG after many years of service, working out of the Brewster and Mahopac yards. He was a life member of the Mahopac Volunteer Fire Department which he joined in 1960. He served the department as Chief from 1967-1969 and then again from 1972-1974. He also served on the Board of Fire Commissioners from 1975-1985 and then again from 1996-2000. He was the department's Parade Marshall for many years and led the department to many Best Overall trophies and Hudson Valley Volunteer Fireman's Association championships against competing fire departments. He served on many other committees in the department through the years and often officiated as the emcee at



Kurt M. Beger

many functions. Mr. Beger was a member of the Westchester County Parade Judges Association, the Hudson Valley Volunteer Fireman's Association, the Putnam County Volunteer Fireman's Association and a member and Past President of the Lake Mahopac Rotary Club On August 27, 1960 he married Carole Ann Seeman at Sacred Heart Church in Putnam Lake. Carole died on February

8, 2018. He is survived by his daughters, Cindy Keefe of Mahopac, Janet Livingstone of Avon, CT and Diane Oldfield and her husband, Michael of Benton, AR; his grandchildren, Brian (Cassie), Kyle,

Andrew, Christopher and Lindsay and his great-grandsons, Bodhi and Kai. He was predeceased by his sister, Joan Trombetta in 2012.

Phillip A. Tumbarello

Phillip A. Tumbarello, a resident of Peekskill and Spring Lake Heights, died peacefully November 15 at Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch, NJ. He was 68. Born in Brooklyn, he lived on Long Island before moving to Westchester County in 1987 and Spring Lake Heights in 1998. He was a graduate of the State University of New York at New Paltz, where he earned his BA in Political Science in 1974. He then attended St. John's University School of Law, graduating in 1979. He was a successful attorney for 41 years with the firm Wilson Elser, based in White Plains. Prior to becoming a lawyer, he trained at the State Police Academy in Albany and worked in law enforcement for six years with the State University of New York at New Paltz. Mr. Tumbarello was a deeply devoted husband and is survived by his beloved wife of 47 years Susan A. Tumbarello. He was a nurturing father of two sons, Michael Phillip Tumbarello and his husband Michael Mason of Morrisonville,



Phillip A. Tumbarello

NY; Gregory Thomas Tumbarello and his partner Marley Lubin of Ithaca, NY, and his two brothers Thomas Tumbarello of Marietta, GA and Joseph Tumbarello of Seaford, NY.

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Obituaries

Warren J. O'Connell

Warren J. O'Connell, a resident of Irvington and Lake Carmel, died November 13 after a courageous battle with cancer. He was 71.

He was born in Yonkers to Joseph and Florence (nee Kranko). He graduated from Carmel High School and earned degrees in data processing from SUNY Cobleskill and SUNY Albany. He was a computer programmer at NYC and Westchester companies.

Mr. O'Connell enjoyed snow skiing, ice skating, golf, swimming, traveling, bingo, model trains and photography. He took exceptional care of his aging parents and aunt. He was a kind and compassionate man to everyone he knew. He was a parishioner and usher at St James Church/Our Lady of the Lake and Immaculate Conception Church.

He was predeceased by his Uncle Theodore Kwap and cousin Richard Kwap. He is survived by his aunt Eleanor Kwap of Brewster, cousins Patricia (Bruce) Kemble; Cheryl (Eric) Kozlowski both of New Fairfield, CT; David Kemble of NC,



Warren J. O'Connell

and many cousins and friends in CT, NY, and NC.

Nicoletta Naclerio

Nicoletta Naclerio, a resident of White Plains, died peacefully November 16 at her home. She was 97.

She was born in New York City on September 24, 1923 to Amindo and Amelia Cristiani. She attended Evander Childs High School and received a bachelor's degree in Languages from Hunter College. During World War II, she served her country as a censor, screening the communications of foreign prisoners of war in American custody.

After the war, she met Alexander Naclerio, a returning American soldier who had been liberated from a German POW camp. They were married on November 9, 1947. Together they were supportive parents to their three children.

Known to all as Nicki, she was quick to make friends who she remained close to her entire life. Nicki loved the theatre and was a regular at the Metropolitan Opera and the New York City Ballet. She also enjoyed traveling, acting as a guide and interpreter for her family. Family was the focus of Nicki's life and she especially looked forward to holiday traditions and preparing wonderful meals for all to enjoy.

She was predeceased by her husband of 51 years, her parents, two brothers and a sister. She is survived by her son, Alphonse Naclerio and his wife Susan of



Nicoletta Naclerio

White Plains, her daughter Linda Marie Naclerio and her partner Paula Aiesi of Milton, Massachusetts and her son Michael Naclerio and his wife Jeanne of Levittown, NY. She is also survived by five grandsons, a granddaughter and two great-grandsons.

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Former Cortlandt Town Justice Gerald Klein Dies at 76

By Rick Pezzullo

Former longtime Cortlandt Town Justice Gerald M. Klein died November 13. He was 76.

Klein served on the Cortlandt bench for 28 years before losing a bid for reelection in 2017. Klein, who also had a private law practice in Croton-on-Hudson, often referred to his courtroom as a "court of hope" where he could play a role in getting young criminal offenders back on the right track.

Cortlandt Supervisor Linda Puglisi said Klein, also a former town attorney, presided our court with "distinction, fairness, integrity and with honor."

"Judge Klein was well respected by all of his colleagues, fellow judges, attorneys who came into the courtroom, his co-workers in the court office and by all of us who worked with him at Town Hall," Puglisi stated.

"I have known Judge Klein for over 30 years. He was always very pleasant asking me about my family (children and grandchildren). That meant a lot to me and I will never forget that kindness," Puglisi continued. "Even though Gerry Klein will be remembered by all of us in the town and greater community as a long serving town justice that was only one part of his life. Gerry was a devoted family man to his lovely wife Lee and to their three children, to his many friends, to several community organizations and to his faith."

Born September 28, 1944, Klein was a long-time congregant at Temple Israel of Northern Westchester and enjoyed being a Croton Lion where he volunteered on their many charitable committees. He was also a board member of the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce. A Republican, he also served as chairman of the Cortlandt Planning Board.

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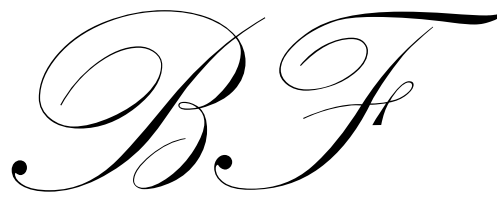
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High School Basketball, Cheerleading, Wrestling Delayed to 2021

By Anna Young

As coronavirus cases continue to rise across the region, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) announced high-risk winter sports will be delayed to January.

High-risk sports include basketball, competitive cheer, ice hockey and wrestling. The new start date will be January 4, with NYSPHSAA member schools prohibited from participating in sports determined to be high risk by the New York State Department of Health.

"The NYSPHSAA membership has expressed concerns pertaining to the increase in infection rates," said Dr. Robert Zayas, NYSPHSAA Executive Director. "Minimizing risk and exposure to COVID-19 is a top priority of the Association. We continue to make these types of decisions based upon readily available information and communication with state officials."

Despite the delay, low- and moderate-risk sports, including bowling, gymnastics, indoor track & field, skiing, and swimming & diving are permitted to begin on November 30 for those schools and sections who have determined it feasible to host interscholastic athletics at that time.

Regular season games or contests can begin for low- and moderate-risk winter sports once student-athletes have participated in the required number of

practices as per NYSPHSAA bylaws. At this time, all winter NYSPHSAA State Championship events remain as scheduled.

"NYSPHSAA's leadership recognizes the numerous challenges interscholastic

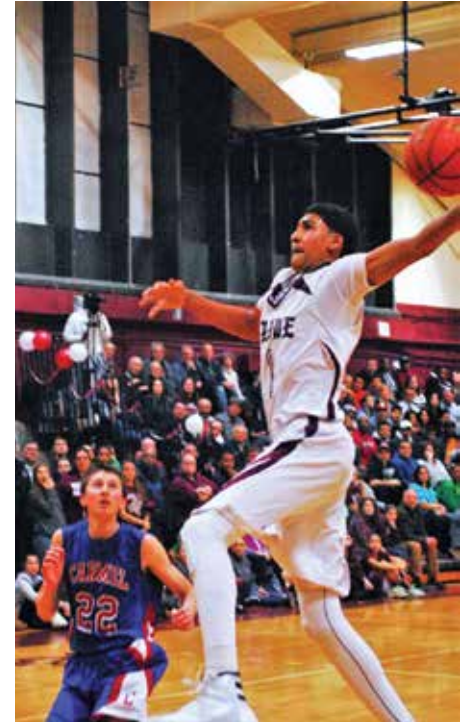
programs are experiencing and the obstacles associated with resuming high risk sports," said Julie Bergman, NYSPHSAA President. "While it is certainly the goal of the Association to

provide all students with the ability to participate in interscholastic athletics we must remain steadfast in our decisions to ensure the safety of our athletes is our focus."



Ossining High Grad Drafted by Knicks

Obadiah "Obi" Richard Toppin, Jr., 22, an Ossining High School graduate, was selected eighth by the New York Knicks in last week's NBA draft. The 6'9", 220-pound power forward averaged 20.6 points, 8.1 rebounds, three assists and three steals as a senior during his only year playing varsity at Ossining and helped lead the team to its first conference title in 10 years. He played college basketball at Dayton.



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

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Pleasantville Business Owner Offers Luxury Items to Help Destress

By Abby Luby

If there was ever a time to pamper yourself or a loved one, it's now.

Following a year full of stress, panic and unease, Pleasantville-based business Beneboon offers unique, handpicked gift arrangements that provide pure indulgence. Founder and designer Maya Sheinberg said she has spent the last year putting her lifelong passion for discovering quality items to use.

"I have spent years scouring items at gift shows to find things I liked," Sheinberg said. "There are items I've liked for two years but perhaps haven't fit in with other gift box items. It's a matter of balance, form and theme."

Products can vary from body scrubs to rich teas and scrumptious chocolate – the hard-to-find items that are small batch, healthy, organic, reliably produce and environmentally sourced.

Sheinberg, who has lived in the area for 15 years with her two daughters, started Beneboon last year and works out of her home with her husband and sister. The decision to name her business Beneboon culls from the Latin root bene, meaning well/good,



Beneboon founder and designer Maya Sheinberg

and boon, which is something helpful and beneficial, she said.

In designing arrangements and pairing items, Sheinberg said she takes great pride in creating a product that is not only visually appealing but entices our most basic senses.

The Bread & Chocolate arrangement, which consists of teas and chocolates, conjures brunch, an afternoon snack or a late-night nosh with two types of Artisanal/Gourmet Chocolates – one is isle of sky sea salt and the other earl grey tea – both made by Coco, a Scottish company. Also included are 15 organic white tea bags with hints or

apricot and elderberry, derived from Germany.

The arraignment costs \$77.

With a variety of gift boxes appealing to all ages and genders, prices range from \$48 to \$140, with arrangements offered in two sizes. Included in gift boxes are reusable containers to encourage sustainability.

Arrangements are also offered for those as young as infants, with Sheinberg seeing a greater demand in home and pampering products in recent months.

Designed for newborns, the Bundle of Joy gift box includes a swaddle made of organic muslin, a cuddle bunny, clutch ball, art cards, a teething necklace, and a bracelet set. For mom, the Ultimate Retreat box offers a clean-burning botanical soy candle, a quartz facial roller, aroma therapeutic slumber aura oil, and a satin eye mask.

"We've seen those receiving gift boxes come back as customers," Sheinberg said.

Recently, Beneboon launched a service aimed at corporate gift giving that provides tailored branding for any company, organization, or business group. She added her business will work with local printers to create branded packaging that can



A Beneboon gift box, "Ultimate Retreat" includes a clean-burning botanical soy candle, a quartz facial roller, aroma-therapeutic slumber aura oil and a satin eye mask.

include a car, sticker, water bottle or a fully branded box.

The new business model means reaching out to business groups locally and globally to create new relationships.

"These new [business] relationships are something to nurture and we are willing to put that time in," Sheinberg said. "I am so excited about growing sales and getting the word out."

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Families Urged to Connect with Loved Ones over Holiday Season

By Lindsay Emery

With the holiday season rapidly approaching, those with Alzheimer's and their caregivers are facing unique challenges.

With the COVID-19 pandemic placing stringent visitation restrictions on health care facilities, Eileen Hendricksen, care consultant and director of early stage services for the Alzheimer's Association, said caregivers are striving to ensure loved ones receive the support and attention they would normally get during the holidays.

"Some caregivers have their loved ones in facilities and they haven't been able to see them in months, and that's stressful for a lot of reasons," Hendricksen, who serves Putnam, Dutchess and Orange counties, said. "They don't know if they'll be able to see them for the upcoming holiday, as well."

Despite the current health crisis, Hendricksen said connecting in whatever way possible with loved ones, whether that be virtually or by phone, is vital. Though, she warns communication shouldn't derail from the individual's routine and the amount of people on a call should be limited at a time.

The more their routine is disrupted, the more agitated or tired they become by those interactions, she said.

Hendricksen suggested family members

create videos throughout the holiday season, including cooking the individual's favorite dish to share together virtually. Additionally, she said families could drop off premade meals or gifts, such as arts and crafts, puzzles, coloring, or a comfortable blanket.

She said buying these gifts could offer both comfort to a loved one and some relief to their helper, who might not have the opportunity to take a break.

"For caregivers that are living with their loved one with dementia, that also has its own challenges because they're unable to get a break a lot of the time where before the pandemic their loved one may have been going to an adult day program or they may have felt more comfortable having help come into the home," Hendricksen said. "And they may not feel comfortable with that right now, so now they're just taking care of the person on their own."

With most often suffering from various stages of dementia, Hendricksen advised that families should determine which type of technology would be suitable to host a virtual gathering. Websites like seniorplanet.org offer free videos and classes for seniors to learn technology.

Hendricksen added that some with dementia will often ask for a relative who has already died around the holiday season. In those situations, she urged families to show

compassion and redirect the conversation to something much lighter and enjoyable.

"It's really hard but try to connect in whatever way you can," Hendricksen said. "We don't know when it (the pandemic) will end but it's not forever."

The Alzheimer's Association is offering Caring through the Holidays: Virtual Education Sessions on December 14 from 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to help make the holidays easier and more enjoyable. To sign up, call the number below or learn more on the Association's website.

For more resources or to learn more about the Alzheimer's Association in Hudson Valley, visit www.alz.org/hudsonvalley or call the 24/7 hotline for help at 1(800) 272-3900.

Harrison PD Help Reunite Missing Bronx Girl with Mother

By Anna Young

The Harrison Police Department reunited a missing child from The Bronx with her family last week.

On Nov. 16, several Harrison police officers responded to multiple reports of a roughly 10-year-old girl ringing doorbells and walking away. Following an extensive two-hour search, officers located the girl approximately two miles from where she was initially seen, officials said.

While in the care of the department,

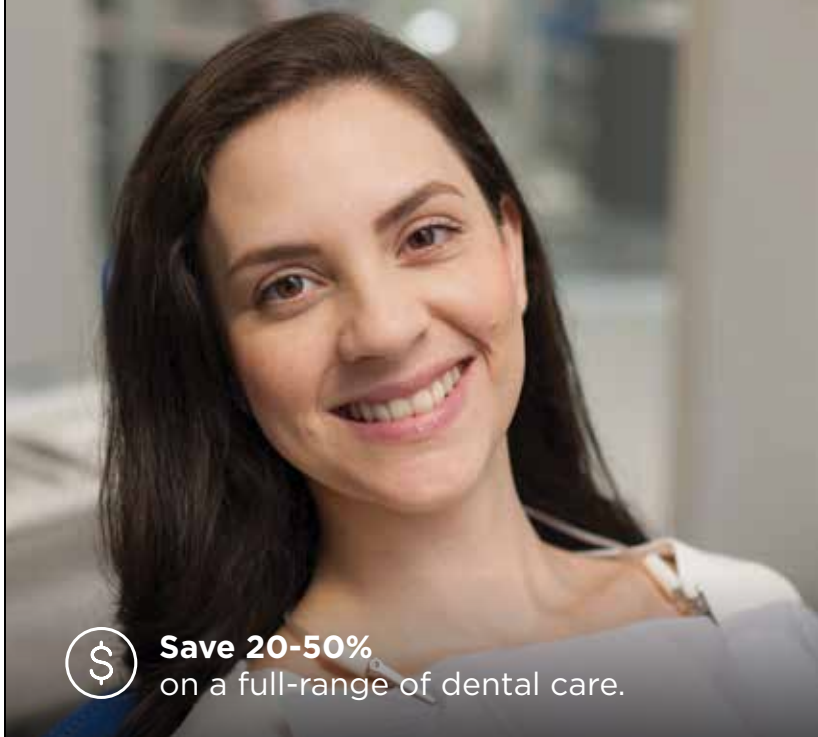
the girl claimed to not know simple information, such as her full name, age and where she lived, officials said. As officers continued to build a friendship with her through watching cartoons, coloring, and offering police garb, the department exhausted every resource to locate her family.

Officials said the situation progressed when Det. Domenick Gentile learned her full name, birth date and enough personal information to contact the NYPD 52nd precinct, who were actively looking for her.

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THERE'S A WORD FOR IT
A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

This is Jeopardy! To honor Alex Trebek, the long time host of Jeopardy who passed away earlier this month, the quiz this week is presented in a Jeopardy format, where the answer is given and you provide the question. Some of the clues come from J! Archives, a site created by fans of the show that lists clues going back to 1984. There are a reported 11,000 clues about words on the site.

1. Of praise, increase, or mock, what you do to something you augment.
What is _____
2. It's the prosecution of a person twice for the same offense, or considerable danger or trouble from two sources.
What is _____
3. Sir Walter Scott used this term to mean a mercenary knight; today it refers to work project-by-project.
What is _____
4. "Bumbershoot" is Britspeak for one of these.
What is _____
5. This adjective can be used to describe something as high quality or it can describe something especially thin.
What is _____
6. As a noun it can refer to a periodical devoted to condensed versions of previously published articles; as a verb, to take into the mind or memory.
What is _____
7. The verb form of this four-letter word can actually mean to cut something apart or to attach together.
What is _____
8. One definition of the Collins Dictionary Word of the Year for 2020 is "a state of isolation or restricted access instituted as a security measure."
What is _____

- ANSWERS (Questions?):
1. What is increase?
2. What is double jeopardy?
3. What is freelance?
4. What is an umbrella?
5. What is fine?
6. What is digest?
7. What is clip?
8. What is lockdown?



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*Date night feeds 2

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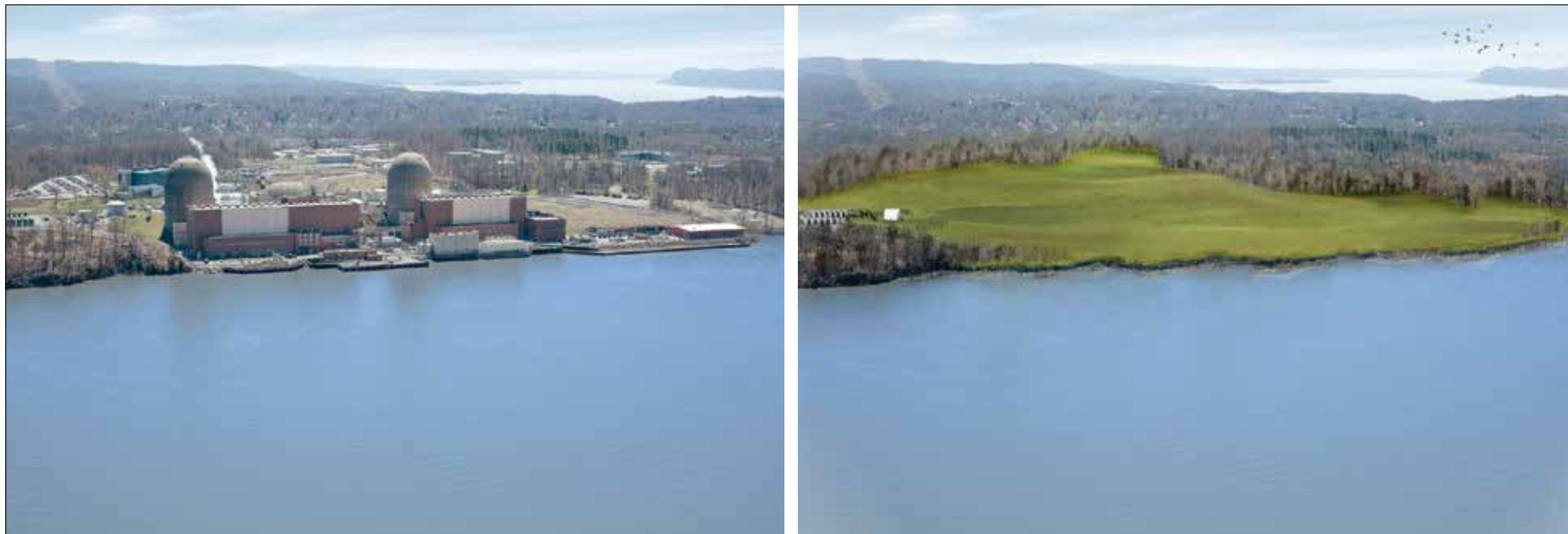
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The illustration above is an artist's depiction of the Indian Point property after the completion of major decommissioning work.

Indian Point Energy Center



All Good Things Around the House Will Die

Just recently my wife attempted to turn on our central air conditioning and nothing happened. After a visit from an HVAC technician, we found that it couldn't be repaired but had to be completely replaced. It was only six years old! We felt cheated, even betrayed.

As a realtor, I'm always so conscious of checking all utilities in a home about to sell or be purchased, and while I might guarantee a client that they are working, there is no guarantee of how long they will continue to do so.

Don't you just hate the concept of planned obsolescence where everything you own will eventually either die or need to be replaced? Don't you wish that everything, including ourselves, could last forever?

The harbinger of trouble ahead with any product or appliance in the home is usually just a little kink in its operation. Once that whiz is heard or blip is seen, it's only a matter of time before the death knell inevitably tolls. The time in between can produce great anxiety, even anger, over being betrayed by something we depend on.

Why must all trusted equipment and appliances have so limited a life span? Why can't everything be made to last at least as long as we do? Would we ever grow tired of the same old things hanging around the

house indefinitely? I think not.

The only mechanical/electrical device that I have enjoyed without interruption for many years is one of the biggest and earliest desk lamps made with a technically brilliant flexible arm and a rotating device on a base that is heavy as solid lead. Even its twin fluorescent tubes seem to last forever. While every other piece of equipment in my home office has eventually failed, this one has lived on to see another working day, then another.

The lamp originally belonged to my Aunt Pearl who gave it to my wife and me when she retired, telling us at the time that it was indestructible. She was right.

It was already at least 30 years old at the time and we've put another 30 years into it. It has always stood next to my main office computer du jour, which since my first primitive Wang has been replaced more times than I can remember.

And, not so long ago, the latest edition of my main computer began to shut down unpredictably on its own. I panicked until I found that I could get it to restart. But after an hour or two it would shut down again and my unsaved work would be lost in the process. I called in my computer technician who at first thought it could be the electrical connection, which he replaced. But after he left, the shutdown problem continued. When he returned and opened up the computer

again, he proclaimed that the problem was a failure in the "mother" board.

Feeling betrayed as I did by the trusted repository of my work for at least six years, I denounced the computer without reservation as a different kind of "mother."

At the same time, my television was experiencing occasional digitalized images in reception (I don't know how else to describe its quirk), the refrigerator's ice cube maker was producing a prodigious amount of cubes in a deep tray that required emptying daily so that it wouldn't overflow, and the light switch to the mudroom in my former home half-bath crackled if I dared to turn it on.

All this unwelcomed activity sparked in me a curiosity about the life expectancy of common household products, and I remembered having saved an article I found in The Kiplinger's Report on that very subject. The life expectancy of some items was surprising and others, from my personal experience, incredulous.

Here are a few highlights from the survey: Washing machines and dryers typically last 11 to 12 years, with top loading washers lasting a bit longer than front-loading models.

Dishwashers fare better, lasting an average of 13 years. (Here's a tip: Dishwashers actually run better and longer if you use them regularly, otherwise problems such as sticky motor seals and mold can develop.)

An electric range lasts 15 years, 13 if fired by gas.

Refrigerators should last from 14 to 17 years. I guess we're very tough on ours

because each lasted less than 10 years before problems developed, such as our icemaker on speed.

Furnaces will usually last about 20 years. (although mine, installed 20 years before I bought my house, lasted another 25 years with occasional replacement of the starter and yearly maintenance.)

A hot water heater can wear out after 10 years, but it has a better chance if the water is not hard or mineral-filled. To lessen the effects of hard water, the tank can be drained and flushed once a year to prevent mineral buildup, but who has time to think about that?

The summation of the survey noted that the results were based on average life expectancies. There are exceptions on both ends of a product's life cycle, much like my Kenmore dishwasher that stopped dead after only a year, but was mercifully capable of being repaired.

For now, I take comfort in the belief that my Aunt Pearl's sturdy adjustable desk lamp will last longer than I. But I admit every time I push the red button to turn it on, I hold my breath.

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.



By Bill Primavera

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The Multiple Micro Issues in Pricing a Bottle of Wine



By Nick Antonaccio

Last week my column focus was the macro issues influencing the price of a bottle of wine. This week, I analyze the micro issues of the cost to produce and the profit margin of the \$75 and \$30 bottles of "Cal Cabs" presented.

My hypothesis: How is it that two seemingly comparable wines may be significantly disparate in price?

Herein, "The Accountant's Report" on the "average" cost of a bottle of wine and the ultimate shelf price of that bottle.

First, the accountant's assumptions: smaller, family producers (10,000 cases or less) who grow their own grapes, harvest small yields and don't invest heavily in packaging or in marketing their end product. This is the profile of over 80% of Napa producers.

Let's break down the cost and pricing model into four distinct components:

1. From the vineyard to the door of the winemaking facility. First the capital investment (winery construction, vines, trellises, irrigation, depreciation, interest on a land loan, lost opportunity

cost of non-productive vineyards for 3-5 years). COST per bottle: \$2.50. Second, maintaining the crop (fertilizers, pest control, cultivation, pruning) and harvesting the grapes. COST per bottle: \$1.25. A total cost of \$3.75 before the winemaker begins to weave his or her magic.

2. From the winery doors to the doorstep of the winery's marketing office. First, the winemaking process (crushing, fermenting, time spent on alchemy, aging in oak barrels, storing, taxes). COST: \$1. Second, packaging (bottle, cork, foil, label, boxing) and bottling. COST: \$2.25. Total cost: \$3.25.

3. From the marketing office door to the loading dock. In varying degrees, wineries a) operate staffed tasting rooms to ply a portion of their wares directly to consumers; b) sell to wholesalers; and c) sell directly to consumers through clubs and mail orders. COST: \$4.50. The grand total cost to a winery is approximately \$11.50. Now add a 10% - 20% profit for the winery - \$1.50 to \$2.30 - and the selling price to a wholesaler is \$13 to \$14. Caveat: wineries with deep pockets may choose to invest more heavily, significantly impacting their

costs - and pricing.

4. From the loading dock to the retail shelf. To gain the widest distribution, producers solicit wholesalers to market their wines, who then sell them onward to retail shops and restaurants. The typical mark-up is 200%. In our example, the \$13 bottle ultimately wends its way to the retail shelf for \$26.

The bottom line? The \$30 bottle we enjoyed at dinner has a cost basis of \$11.50, yielding a rather tidy profit in the supply chain - except at the winery level. There, 90% of the effort results in 10% of the profit.

However, my model has within it a systemic anomaly. Several of you have likely surmised it. If the cost to produce is fairly uniform, what accounts for the higher mark-up of the \$75 wine (other than the significant caveat noted above)? Here, the price elasticity of supply and demand does not necessarily follow its financial logic.

Working backwards, my model estimates the cost basis of the \$75 bottle of wine should be \$37.50. However, a different dynamic comes into play at this price level: market perception (what the market will bear), the game-changer for all consumer products.

Although my \$75 bottle of wine may have a higher cost basis, the incremental pricing is geometric, not arithmetic. The

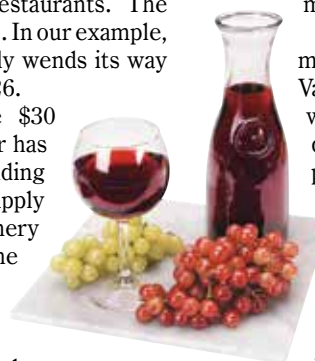
sum total of the higher costs might be \$18, implying a retail price of \$36. The winery typically commands the same 10%-20% profit (perhaps higher); the remainder goes to the wholesaler and/or retailer (a 400% markup).

An example of this economic model: Screaming Eagle in Napa Valley has been dubbed a "cult wine," produced in miniscule quantities (500 cases). Cost to produce? Approximately \$18.

Price to those chosen few on the winery's direct mailing list? \$750. Ah, but that's not the final point of elasticity. An aftermarket of retail/auction demand has been spawned. Price? A whopping \$1,500.

It is the micro issues that separate the marginally profitable winemakers from the prestigious, highly profitable entrepreneurs. And distributors and retailers are firmly attached to each producer's coattails.

Nick Antonaccio is a 45-year Pleasantville resident. For over 25 years, he has conducted numerous 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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Do You Suffer from Debilitating Back Pain?

By Dr. Marshal Peris, FAAOS

During Covid-19, your orthopedic physician at Northern Westchester Hospital is always available in the office or through telehealth. Imaging (such as x-rays) can be performed completely safely. And both non-surgical and surgical treatments at the Hospital are available and extremely safe. All exam rooms are cleaned and disinfected between patients. Everyone wears masks, gloves and PPE. Delaying care can sometimes lead to irreversible damage even if surgery is performed.

Chronic back pain usually affects your lower back, also called the lumbar spine. Physicians define chronic back pain as daily pain for more than three months. The pain can be intense enough to affect all aspects of your life – from work to sleep. That's why prevention is so important. The good news is that there are many ways you can help keep chronic back pain at bay, permanently.

Prevent Pain From Ever Taking Hold – Here are the risk factors...

Studies show a major risk factor for back pain is smoking. Older people and those who are overweight also experience more back pain. So do manual laborers and people who sit while working. People who work from home need to maintain a good level of activity. Walking, stair climbing, air squats, yoga/trunk strengthening exercise can all be done in your home.

A recent or old back injury can also trigger

pain. An injury to a spinal disc can speed up the normal spinal disc degeneration that occurs in all of us with age.

Prevention Works! Stop Back Pain Before It Starts. Here's How...

1. Immediately stop smoking. To join our FREE smoking cessation program, please email NWHSmokingCessation@northwell.edu
2. If you are overweight, it's important to get to a healthy weight. If you're struggling to lose weight, Northern Westchester Hospital's Center for Weight Management offers weight-loss strategies geared to your lifestyle now – being home much of the time, with added responsibilities and stress, maybe still not able to go to a gym. And just a few steps from the kitchen. From medical screening and nutritional counseling to virtual individual and group classes, possible referral to our surgical weight loss team, and optional sessions with our exercise physiology team plus a personalized exercise plan -- we help you put all the pieces together in your unique way to take off the pounds and keep them off. To learn more, call (914) 223-1780.
3. Go to bed! People who sleep well have less back pain.
4. Sit up. Not slouching in your chair helps protect you from chronic back pain.
5. Move around to keep your joints juicy. While sitting, change your position frequently. Your body wants to move – it's

how your joints are lubricated. Moving also changes the area of stress. If you don't shift stress from one part of the body, it eventually gets tired and you hurt yourself. The best type of chair is one you can raise and lower, with a tilt feature that lets you lean back with support.

6. Exercise is key for a painless future. Here's how working out wards off back pain. Embark on a program of general regular aerobic exercise (30-45 minutes, three to four times a week) that you enjoy, whether it's swimming, walking, using the elliptical machine, biking or stationary biking, or any combination of these. Studies show that people who exercise have less back pain than those who don't. Discuss with your physician or a physical therapist how to tailor your workouts so they offer maximum lower back protection.
7. Be sure to exercise your trunk. People tend to avoid the muscles around their midsection when working out. But because these hardworking muscles support your lumbar spine, the stronger they are, the less stress the discs and ligaments of your lumbar spine must withstand. There are many floor exercises that people can do at home to strengthen their core or trunk muscles. Try planks (also called a front hold, this involves holding a position similar to a push-up as long as you can), leg lifts, crunches, air squats, basic yoga or Pilates. You don't need to be in a gym to do

any of these exercises.

Non-surgical treatment for chronic back pain is very effective.

After diagnostic imaging, it typically starts with physical therapy (PT) and an in-home regimen. Steroid injections may be recommended to reduce your pain if it's so severe that you can't participate in PT or exercise. All rehab exercise programs should combine education with strengthening the core and back muscles. Hands-on techniques can reduce acute pain through massage, heat, electro-stimulation, ultrasound and guided stretching.

Should you require surgery for severe back pain, spine surgery can provide lasting relief. It consists either of a decompression, which frees pinched nerves; fusion, which eliminates a herniated disc and locks together the vertebrae above and below; or a combination. Learn more about spine surgery at Northern Westchester Hospital.

At Northern Westchester Hospital, we are able to dramatically reduce chronic lower back pain so you can live a fully normal life. But prevention is the best medicine of all. Don't avoid seeking care during Covid-19. We are ready and equipped to help you with all our expertise -- safely.

Dr. Marshal Peris, FAAOS, is Co-Director of the Orthopedic & Spine Institute, Spine Surgery Section, Northern Westchester Hospital

Jupiter and Saturn Set to Dance This Month

A few months ago, we talked about using the sun and moon, along with some simple observation tricks, to find the out solar system's planets in the night sky. With just a little bit of practice, it's easy to pick them out from the much more distant stars and paint a picture of what's going on closer to home. Since then, Jupiter and Saturn have guided us through this difficult year from hundreds of millions of miles away.

As the months have gone on, you might have noticed the two giant planets dancing across the southern sky. They've risen a little earlier each night, even have started to creep closer and closer to the western dusk by the time the sun sets.

Everything in space is moving all the time, and as we've watched spring become summer, and then autumn, we've seen this movement as the subtle changes in the planets' positions relative to each other and to the stars far behind them. The same way a little bit of water, given enough time, can carve canyons out of stone, little by little the tiny changes in our point of view on those planets' orbits have added up, too. With December just about here and autumn starting to feel more and more like winter, we're in for a great show as the planets' story for this visit to the night sky comes to an end.

When darkness comes this week, head out and look

southwest. Distances across the sky are often measured degrees, as distances around a circle are. On November 24, the pair are separated by about 2 ½ degrees. That's close

Clear Skies

enough that you'll be able to blot them both out with just two fingers held out at the end of your arm. You can pick whichever of your fingers and arms you like.

Together, let's keep an eye on this as the pair lurch toward the southwest horizon and the last of the leaves fall to our feet. By December 1st, that gap will close to less than two degrees, while they sink deeper and deeper toward the dusk. Keep watching and keep measuring over the next few weeks. When will the two fingers shrink to just one?

On December 16 and 17, the scene will be truly stunning as a thin waxing crescent moon races through the picture. Those nights, the planets will be only about half a degree



By Scott Levine

apart. Then, on the first night of winter, low in the west just after dusk on the 21st, they'll reach their closest – about one tenth of a degree apart! That's the closest they've been since 1623. Imagine it: the two biggest planets and 161 of our solar system's moons squeezed so tightly into a tiny patch of sky that we might not be able to tell where one ends and the other begins. When you watch, keep in mind that this is just an optical illusion. The two planets are nearly a half billion miles apart. Then, in just a few days, they'll be gone from the night sky entirely until next year.

I love moments like these when we get a chance to watch the universe at work. I hope you'll watch Jupiter and Saturn dance this month. Clear skies, everyone!

Scott Levine (astroscott@yahoo.com) is an astronomy writer and speaker from Croton-on-Hudson. He is also a member of the Westchester Amateur Astronomers, who are dedicated to astronomy outreach in our area. For information about the club including membership, newsletters, upcoming meetings and lectures at Pace University, and star parties at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, visit westchesterastronomers.org. Events are free and open to the public. Please Note: All in-person club activities are suspended until further notice due to concerns over COVID-19.



Last Quarter
December 7



New Moon
December 14



First Quarter
December 21



Full Moon
December 29



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