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April 7 - April 13, 2020

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 14, Issue 657



Byram Hills Students Deliver in Pinch to Seniors Through Health Crisis

By Martin Wilbur

Last month as the full impact of the coronavirus threat began to unfold locally, Gabby Ripka noticed a large number of senior citizens still shopping for themselves.

It was already known that older residents were among the most vulnerable as the virulent COVID-19 continued to spread.

The Byram Hills High School student reached out to one of her classmates, Sam Lubcher, and asked two other friends to shop for some of the area's seniors and people who are immunocompromised so they wouldn't expose themselves to danger.

"I have an awesome group of friends and they would also be willing to volunteer, so with the help of Sam and my two other friends, Alex Hansburg and Jack Brook, we were able to create this service where we actually provide this community with whatever service they need, so they never have to leave their home," Ripka said.

Since establishing the free service, Community Against COVID-19, less than two weeks ago, the four students, all of whom are juniors, had gone on about 12 grocery runs by last Friday – and there were more orders to fill over the weekend.

Through the Nextdoor app, local Facebook groups and word of mouth, the students have

connected with an initial group of seniors who need to have grocery shopping or other errands completed for them.

They have also communicated with other community members through their Instagram account, @Communityagainstcovid19. A website is also under construction, Ripka said.

Last week, an 84-year-old woman from Ossining who has stage IV lung cancer, called Ripka to have groceries picked up. The woman had been told not to leave the house as the threat from COVID-19 intensified.

"We've immediately seen the impact that our service has had on people," Ripka said.

While some of the seniors they've assisted are from Armonk, they have also connected with others in Chappaqua and elsewhere. Last Saturday, Ripka said she shopped and delivered to a woman in Hartsdale.

Most of their shopping has been done at DeCicco's in Armonk, although they've also completed orders at Cherry Blossom and at Balducci's, Lubcher said.

He said the seniors can text them their grocery list and they will do the shopping or they can call their order into the store. If it's called in, which is the most efficient way, the senior can provide the store with their credit or debit card number and the personnel at the shop will put the order together and bring it outside.



Pictured, left to right, are Byram Hills High School juniors Sam Lubcher, Gabby Ripka and Jack Brook last Saturday outside DeCicco's in Armonk. They created Community Against COVID-19, a service where they shop and run errands for area senior citizens and others with compromised health who should remain at home.

Ripka said they also accept electronic payments or they will lay out the money and work out a reimbursement arrangement when

they leave the groceries outside the senior's door.

Since the students now drive, they have been able to complete all the orders so far, along with help from their parents, Lubcher said. They have lined up six or seven additional volunteers should the demand for their service continue to grow.

"We have the ability to get out and we have the support of our parents, too," Lubcher said. "As long as we stay safe, they're alright with us traveling because it's to help people. We're able to do it within the Westchester community."

Ripka said the seniors have the option of donating 4 percent of the price of their order to the Montefiore Health System's COVID-19 Foundation.

"We've communicated with a lot of people who've expressed interest in the service and might place orders," she said. "So we just hope it grows on a weekly basis."

Lubcher said helping others who need the most assistance right now has been a gratifying experience.

"It feels amazing, actually," he said. "Something that's always been big for me is doing something productive, something of value, and to me a large portion of my life before this was doing this."

Want to Save Journalism? Start Local and Help Support The Examiner

By Adam Stone

In the summer of 2007, while bouncing around as a freelance writer, I made a call to my journalism friend Martin Wilbur that changed our lives forever. I had an idea, to launch a local paper, by soliciting the editorial help of our newspaper pals and acquaintances in and around Westchester, while also securing advertising support from the bagel shops and pizza joints I frequented.

In the second week of September, after a frenzied, sleepless, six weeks, The Examiner was born, as I helped distribute about 2,000 of our debut copies around Pleasantville and Mount Kisco.

Since then, we've launched three additional print newspapers, along with a news website and have grown to an audience of more than

100,000 readers across Westchester and Putnam counties.

But a few weeks ago, as the coronavirus gripped the economy with a stranglehold, it all almost came crashing down.

In recent weeks, after painful layoffs, we've reinvented ourselves on the fly, becoming essentially a daily newspaper online, thinking digital first, breaking stories on our website, our social media and our e-mail newsletter, and selling more website ad space than before while continuing to produce a first-rate print product.

Yet financial dangers still lurk as the mandated shutdown of businesses statewide annihilates our local advertising revenue source.

I've never asked for donations before but it's easy to set stubborn pride aside for one

simple reason: I'm passionate about local news and our commitment to fact-checked, professionally-reported newspaper journalism. We might have started a dozen-plus years ago as a Little-Engine-That-Could publishing company, and still maintain that culture, but, setting modesty aside, we've grown into a vital local institution bigger and more important than any reservations I might have about seeking support from our loyal readers.

The bottom line: the coronavirus reporting fund I'm revealing here today is an endeavor I'd enthusiastically support even if I wasn't so intimately involved with the founding, maintenance and growth of Examiner Media. It's my responsibility to our staff, to our advertisers and to our readers to advocate aggressively for this organization, for this mission. And I'm proud to do so.

That's why I'm excited to announce the introduction of our Examiner – COVID-19 Local News Fund.

You can make tax-deductible, charitable donations to our cause. We've partnered with a wonderful nonprofit, the Local Media Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, to allow you the opportunity to support our mission while also receiving the tax benefit of contributing to a charity.

Ever since the crisis erupted, we've provided almost moment-to-moment coverage of every facet of the story here locally. Who in your government is lobbying for tax payment delays? What area restaurants are open for business? Where can the hungry turn to for food? When will my school be closing? Why did the state suspend the Open Meetings

continued on page 2

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Want to Save Journalism? Start Local and Help Support The Examiner

continued from page 1

Law? How are student-athletes dealing with the fallout? And a thousand more questions asked and answered.

Community newspapers across the country are crumbling at this vulnerable moment, at a time when community newspapers are more important than ever. No type of media outlet does more to provide vital information (intimately relevant information) to the audience: local sports, town government, Main Street parades, the school fundraiser. Stories that are happy and sad, uplifting and humorous. We're here to chronicle the lives of you and your community. And, at this fragile time, we need your help.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention another thought I've been unable to escape while contemplating the prudence of this solicitation. I've come to believe that ongoing fundraising should be an integral part of the business model of every community newspaper across the country. The old model no longer works well enough. Community newspapers play too critical a role in fostering a sense of cohesion in towns and villages across the United States to let them just fester at best. We need the resources to thrive, not just limp along, alive but badly hobbled.

Industry leaders need to educate citizens on the importance of supporting local journalism, and rally the general public to embrace the notion that fundraising can and should be a normal part of how community newspapers operate and ultimately finance their work. The

way PBS so successfully did.

For those of you who know me, please do not give to this cause as a personal favor. I'll be fine. I can return to freelance writing tomorrow and make a better living. Please give to this cause because you believe in the mission. Because you believe, as our motto says, that Small News is Big News. Because you believe in The Examiner, and everything it represents to you and your community, not to mention the broader role newspapers like ours play nationally in fostering a healthy democracy.

Since first unveiling this reporting fund on Sunday, we have raised \$6,190 online, as of late Monday morning. Two things about that figure: First and foremost, we're blown away by the generosity, especially considering almost all of the donations came in \$25 to \$100 increments from loyal readers we don't even know.

Secondly, though, to provide some context, it's important to note the cost of one week's payroll and printing costs, not to mention miscellaneous expenses, exceed the entire amount we've raised so far.

Point being, producing quality local journalism doesn't come cheap, and we're deeply grateful for any contributions you can make to the cause.

If you're generous enough to give, we'll make every last penny count. Click on the link at <https://givebutter.com/theexaminernews>

Thank you for your support of Examiner journalism during this critical time.

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Facts and guidelines related to coronavirus are constantly evolving. The facts contained here are Northwell's best judgment at time of publication.

Schools, Non-essential Businesses to Remain Closed Through April 29

By Martin Wilbur

All schools and non-essential businesses will remain closed through Apr. 29 in hopes the state can mitigate the flood of COVID-19 cases that has killed more than 4,700 New Yorkers, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Monday.

Cuomo also urged local governments to crack down on violators to the state's social distancing protocol by doubling maximum fines from \$500 to \$1,000. Crowds in parks have been a problem for authorities, particularly in New York City, when there has been good weekend weather, he said.

The governor extended the New York PAUSE campaign to nearly the end of the month and warned against becoming complacent.

"I know that's a negative for many, many reasons," Cuomo said. "I know what it does to the economy, but as I said from Day One, I'm not going to choose between public health and economic activity because in either event public health still demands that we stay on pause, with businesses closed and schools closed, whether we've hit the apex or whether we haven't hit the apex. You have to do the same thing."

There have been statistical indicators that the pandemic may be at or near its peak in New York as much as three weeks ahead of schedule, even as the death toll climbed to 4,758 through Sunday. On Sunday, there were 599 additional deaths. Last Friday was the state's deadliest day since the crisis began with 630 COVID-19-related deaths followed by a drop to 592 on Saturday.

"This could suggest that we are indeed potentially at the apex, or beginning to be at the apex at this moment," said Dr. James Malatras, a longtime Cuomo aide who is not president of Empire State College.

Another hopeful sign was that new hospitalizations dropped precipitously to 358 on Sunday, which followed a decline to 574 on Saturday. Each of the previous seven days before that saw daily new hospitalizations at over 1,000.

The total COVID-19 hospital population in the state through Sunday was 16,837, a relatively small increase from 16,479 from the day before.

However, Cuomo said that if mitigation measures are lifted too early that could mean another spike, which has happened in Hong Kong and South Korea.

Statewide, there have been just over 130,000 positive cases, with the numbers on Long Island accelerating. Nassau and Suffolk counties have had 15,610 and 13,487 cases, respectively, through Sunday. Westchester was at 14,294.

There have now been 211 Westchester residents who have died from the disease, County Executive George Latimer said. He has authorized that flags be flown at half-staff on county property and there will be a ceremony to honor those who have died from COVID-19.

Latimer said Monday that Westchester has also received a refrigerated trailer that will be used as a supplementary morgue to accommodate the rising number of bodies. It will be housed in Valhalla, he said.

On Monday, Cuomo saved his biggest salvo for those who have been violating the state's social distancing protocol. He said he

understood that people wanted to get outside on nice days, but characterized their actions as selfish and putting healthcare workers and the healthcare system at risk.

"If I can't convince you to show discipline for yourself, then show discipline for other people," Cuomo declared. "If you get infected, you infect someone else, you go to an emergency room, you put a burden on all sorts of other people who you don't know, and who frankly, you don't have the right to burden with your irresponsibility."

Cuomo said the hospital system remains stressed with healthcare providers already using some ventilators for two patients along with BiPAP machines for others who need a smaller thrust of air.

On Saturday, Cuomo announced that Oregon Gov. Kate Brown sent 140 ventilators from her state and New York procured 1,000 ventilators from China.

Despite calls in Westchester from some residents to close county parks and golf courses, Latimer has resisted. He said that if there are violators they will be dealt with.

"If you have 85 percent of the people following the rules, 15 percent not following the rules, enforce the rules for the 15 percent," Latimer said.

On Monday, Rockland County Executive Ed Day announced that all county parks there would be closed effective 6 a.m. on Tuesday. The closure will be re-evaluated every two weeks.

In other developments, Cuomo said Monday he planned to ask President Donald Trump to use the U.S. naval ship Comfort for COVID-19 patients, which is docked in Manhattan. The ship was initially sent to New York to handle non-COVID-19 cases, but because of the sharp slowdown of activity, there are fewer patients going to the hospital for other reasons, he said.

The 2,500-bed temporary hospital at the Javits Center in Manhattan has already been approved by the federal government to take COVID-19 patients.

Latimer said that the 120-bed makeshift hospital at the County Center in White Plains is expected to be ready to accept patients by Apr. 17.

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County Seeks Volunteers to Help Small Businesses Submit Loan Applications

Westchester County Executive George Latimer announced Monday that the county is seeking volunteers to help small business owners complete applications for SBA and Paycheck Protection Program assistance.

"Westchester County's small business owners are facing unprecedented economic pressures during this terrible COVID-19 pandemic," Latimer said. "They need our help in navigating through the various assistance programs, and getting their

applications completed on time. A detailed understanding of these programs is not necessary – we are here to help train you and guide you. All you need is a willingness to volunteer to help our struggling small business community."

The Westchester County Office of Economic Development's SBA Application Assistance Program is soliciting volunteers to help small businesses complete applications for the following programs:

- SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan Advance
- SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan
- Paycheck Protection Program applications.

Volunteers will be provided training on all aspects of the application process. Training will be developed and conducted in coordination with the SBA and Community Capital New York, a Community Development Financial Institution and

SBA-lender. The training will be provided by webinar and the materials and step-by-step application guides will be provided to the volunteers.

The volunteers will not be providing guidance/recommendations on which loan programs to apply for, but rather will be addressing specific questions on the application(s) selected by the applicant.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help should e-mail EconomicDevelopment@westchestergov.com.

New State Budget Forgives Mahopac Schools Nearly \$6M Penalty

By Martin Wilbur

A nearly \$6 million state aid penalty facing the Mahopac Central School District as a result of administrative errors committed nearly nine years ago has been forgiven in the newly-approved 2020-21 state budget.

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) said he introduced a forgiveness provision negotiated into the Education, Labor and Family Assistance Article VII Legislation section of the budget. The provision eliminates the requirement for the district to repay \$3.1 million in aid Mahopac had received for building improvements related to eight capital projects. District officials submitted flawed paperwork with errors during the 2011-12 school year.

It also rescinds a penalty that would have cost Mahopac another \$2.7 million of future state aid for the projects.

Harckham thanked Gov. Andrew Cuomo

and Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Yonkers) for incorporating the penalty forgiveness for Mahopac into the state budget given the deteriorating economy.

"The Mahopac schools were unfairly singled out for paperwork mistakes made nine years ago, and the financial penalties were going to end up affecting taxpayers, students and district administration who were not even in the district when the mistakes occurred," Harckham said. "Getting this right for Mahopac residents was a big priority for me."

Mahopac Superintendent of Schools Anthony DiCarlo said he was pleased to hear that the district had been relieved of the penalty, which will lift a significant burden from district taxpayers. He said once the administrative error was identified by current school officials, the district self-reported the mistake.

"I am delighted with this outcome, which unburdens the taxpayers of the Mahopac

Central School District and positions my administration to build a budget for next year and the near future that both supports the needs of our community and ensures the caliber of education to which we are all committed, even in these challenging financial times," DiCarlo said.

Harckham said there was confusion when the state changed the application process in 2011 for school districts applying for building aid. Mahopac wasn't alone as multiple districts

submitted applications with errors. Because the monetary penalty for Mahopac's error was significant enough to force the district to seriously reconsider spending priorities in the upcoming years, which was likely to affect staffing and programs, Harckham introduced legislation last year that would grant the district forgiveness.

A bill that was approved last year was vetoed by Cuomo.



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State's \$177B Budget Faces Uncertain Revenues in Year Ahead

By Martin Wilbur

Facing a deadline, the coronavirus and a looming multibillion-dollar shortfall, the state legislature approved a \$177 billion budget early last Friday that makes cuts to most departments but leaves education largely intact.

Despite the health crisis, which has caused a broad shutdown of the economy and the postponement of the income tax filing date until July 15, the budget did include multiple key policies. However, the legislature did not have enough time to address the legalization of recreational marijuana and help for gig economy workers.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced last Friday that the legislature had reached a conceptual agreement at about 3 a.m.

The budget would be scaled back as the year progresses should a projected shortfall of at least \$10 billion materialize, said state Budget Director Robert Mujica. There will also be money that comes in after July 15 once taxpayers file their returns and the economy reopens and the potential for future federal stimulus money to reduce the revenue shortage, he said.

"Over time, we're going to look and see if revenues come in, then we will put those revenues in the prospective spending areas as proposed by the governor," Mujica said. "If they do not, then we will have to make these adjustments and we would have to reduce the budget overall."

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) said the fiscal challenges facing the state

this year are immense but the legislature was able to agree on the top fiscal and policy priorities. The state has the authority to borrow up to \$10 billion.

"This is certainly a crisis period," Harckham said. "We authorized some short-term borrowing, we made cuts across the board in pretty much everything but education. We held the line on education with (last year's) numbers."

There will be an additional \$2.2 million split among the school districts within the 40th Senate District, Harckham said. While that is not much money for each district, the state had added \$1 billion to education funding last year, he said.

Policy issues that were resolved included revisions to last year's sweeping bail reform. Harckham said that an assortment of crimes was restored to the bail eligible list and repeat offenders will also be held.

Harckham applauded local police departments and district attorneys that made constructive recommendations to improve bail reform.

"The one issue that they pointed out predominantly were the repeat offenders, the folks who get out and commit a crime the next day," he said. "A lot of these folks had substance disorder issues and they're breaking and entering because they need



Gov. Andrew Cuomo

money to buy drugs. So we now have the mechanism to hold these folks, which under the old law didn't happen."

The budget also stipulated that a \$3 billion referendum will be presented to voters this November that will help propel the state to a green economy while protecting its natural resources.

Instead of renewing a five-year transportation capital bond to improve infrastructure, the legislature agreed to a two-year \$6 billion plan that makes critical enhancements while the state tries to recover financially.

Middle class tax cuts will be continued in the upcoming fiscal year, Harckham said. Those in the \$43,000 to \$161,550 income range will see a tax rate reduction from 6.09 to 5.5 percent while those between \$161,550 and \$323,200 will see their rates drop from 6.41 percent to 6 percent.

Assemblyman David Buchwald (D-White Plains) said because of the sudden economic shutdown, the budget will be subject to quarterly reviews to chart the progress of incoming revenue.

Buchwald was pleased that despite the fiscal strain, the state did not sacrifice public education.

"Of course, in some circumstances that

isn't enough, like last year it wasn't enough in some instances," he said. "But on the other hand, the state is effectively broke, but at least it shouldn't be our children and education to take the brunt of it."

He also praised placing the environmental bond on the ballot.

Conversely, Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) was harshly critical of a "bad budget" and of Cuomo for demanding policy initiatives be included under difficult circumstances. Abinanti said he wanted the state to focus only on fiscal matters rather than inserting initiatives, many of which are worthy but were rushed through.

The budget once again shortchanged the special needs community and the most vulnerable populations, he said.

"It was a really bad budget foisted upon us by an insensitive governor who acted very differently than the statesmanlike image he is portraying every day on TV," Abinanti said.

One of the most egregious shortcomings, Abinanti said, was including a new two-and-a-half-year lookback for seniors to qualify for home care through Medicaid. While there has been a longtime five-year lookback for nursing home Medicaid, there had been none for home care.

He charged that people will die because of the new requirement.

"This is barbaric. The governor's policy is barbaric," Abinanti said. "The governor's policy on helping people, helping vulnerable people is barbaric."

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\$20⁹⁹

KIM
CRAWFORD
SAUV. BLANC
\$13⁹⁹

KENDALL
JACKSON
CHARDONNAY
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NOIR
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MEZZA
CORONA
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1.5 L
\$11⁹⁹



BOMBAY
SAPPHIRE GIN 1.75L
OR TANQUERAY GIN
1.75L
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CASAMIGOS
BLANCO
TEQUILA
750 ML
\$41⁹⁹



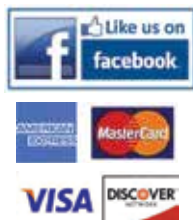
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Board of Legislators Revise Bill to Address Late Taxes

By Martin Wilbur

The Board of Legislators appears poised to vote next week on a compromise measure that would allow significantly reduced penalties for late payments of county taxes.

Last week, County Executive George Latimer proposed allowing taxpayers to have an additional two and a half months, until July 15, to pay the taxes before incurring any penalties provided a hardship provision was met.

Each year county taxpayers have until Apr. 30 to pay. If that deadline is missed, there is a 2 percent penalty levied if the taxes are paid by May 30, a 5 percent penalty if paid from May 31 to June 30 and a 7 percent fee starting on July 1.

But by Friday afternoon, a committee of Westchester supervisors and two board committees, reworked legislation that would impose a 0.5 percent fee if paid from May 1 to 30; a 1 percent fee from May 31 to June 30; and a 1.5 percent penalty from July 1 to 15. Starting July 16, the full 7 percent penalty would kick in.

There was a difference of opinion among supervisors throughout the county. Greenburgh Supervisor Paul Feiner said he supported Latimer's proposal because there are too many residents suffering through the effects of the economic shutdown and mushrooming unemployment.

The Latimer proposal would have required a resolution by each town board to opt out of providing the waiver.

"I have pushed for many weeks for a



Last week County Executive George Latimer, above, proposed a penalty-free delay until July 15 for county taxpayers to pay their bill. However, some town officials were concerned about cash flows if that measure was passed.

hardship provision," Feiner said. "Taxpayers are facing difficulties, have lost jobs."

But North Castle Supervisor Michael Schiliro said only 25 to 30 percent of his town's property owners pay through an escrow account and historically there has been a 97.5 to 98 percent on-time payment rate. As a result, the town could potentially see millions of dollars of cash flow

temporarily disappear as people choose to hold onto their money for an additional two and a half months, he said.

Therefore, Schiliro said, a minimal penalty provides relief for those who face financial difficulties as a result of the crisis, but motivation to pay on time if they can.

"If there's a complete waiver or removal of any penalty until July 15, there's no incentive for anybody who's not in escrow to pay in April," Schiliro said.

However, Latimer's proposal would have required a hardship provision, which required the taxpayer to prove that their income stream has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mount Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi said it would have been challenging for the supervisors to agree on what would constitute a hardship.

Furthermore, since towns also collect their taxes during the same time and most homeowners in Mount Pleasant pay through their escrow account, it wouldn't have helped all that many people, Fulgenzi said.

But some towns with a lower percentage of taxpayers paying through an escrow account would have faced problems had the original proposal gone through, he said.

"So it's not a good situation to be in if you don't collect taxes," Fulgenzi said. "A lot of towns have to borrow money to them through this point."

The Board of Legislators' Budget and Appropriations Committee moved the revised bill to the full board last Friday afternoon. A public hearing was scheduled

for Monday night.

"We will be dealing with the public health and the economic toll of this pandemic for a long time, but with tax deadlines approaching, we need to act quickly to help property owners now," said Board Chairman Ben Boykin (D-White Plains).

"We will need to act swiftly, but also continue to provide essential oversight and work to make sure laws we pass can be helpful and lawful," Legislator Kitley Covill (D-Katonah) said. "I am glad that we're able to work with the towns' leadership to find a measure that helps taxpayers and gives towns flexibility."

A full vote on the new proposal could take place next week.

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It helps to have a system in place as you begin to declutter, clean and reorganize.

Getting started is sometimes the hardest part.

Here are a few helpful tips!

Tip #1: Create a space in your home where you can start putting items you no longer want or need.

Tip #2: Using 4 Boxes or Bins Method

• **Box 1: Trash** - Any items you want to get rid of that aren't worth donating or selling.

• **Box 2: Give Away/Sell** - Items that are still in OK condition, but that your household could do without - like old books, toys.

• **Box 3: Storage** - Things that you can't or don't want to get rid of, but don't need on a day-to-day basis (seasonal decorations).

• **Box 4: Put Away** - Any items that need to be kept in your house, but relocated to their proper place.

Tip #3: Start with something easy. You will feel a sense of accomplishment and be motivated to do more.

Get your **Decluttering Checklist** at:
www.DonnaEdlund.com or
www.cbmoves.com/Hans.Weber.

Obituaries

Eastchester Councilman Dies from COVID-19

By Martin Wilbur

Eastchester Councilman Glenn Bellitto died on Apr. 2 after having tested positive from COVID-19.

Bellitto, 62, is one of 211 Westchester residents whose lives have been claimed by the coronavirus. He had served on the Eastchester Town Board since 2011, and had previously sat on the Bronxville Village Board and the village's Zoning Board of Appeals.

"In every one of these statistics is a human being, with a family and a life and that life has been cut short," said County Executive George Latimer. "We're going to miss Glenn Bellitto and we're going to miss the other individuals that we lost to this, and if this was the end of losing, we'd try to come to grips with it. But we're far from that point right now."

Bellitto, a Republican, had lived in Bronxville for the past 30 years with his wife, Kyle Anne Moran. He was born and raised in Yonkers and was a graduate of Archbishop Stepinac High School in White Plains and Harvard University.

Bellitto was vice president of finance at Acacia Network Housing, a Bronx-based non-profit organization and one of the largest providers of transitional housing for the New York City Department of Homeless Services.

He became interested in politics at an early age. By 18, he was elected vice president of the Westchester County Young Republicans and later became a district leader. He ran for Congress as the Republican candidate for the 16th District 30 years ago.



Glenn Bellitto

In addition to his public service, Bellitto was a member of the Eastchester Italian American Citizen's Club, Tuckahoe-Eastchester Lion's Club, Knights of Columbus, Order of the Sons of Italy and the Eastchester Irish-American Social Club.

He is survived by his wife; his daughter, Dale; his mother, Dolores (Patrone) Bellitto; brother Douglas; sister Robin Stettinisch (Bill); nephews Kevin, Ryan and Matthew; and many cousins and aunts. He was predeceased by his son, Gage, in 2017, and his father, Salvatore Joseph Bellitto.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Robert Kafarski

Robert E. Kafarski (Bob) passed away on Mar. 30 after a valiant battle with cancer. He was 72.

Kafarski is survived by his loving wife of 47 years, Kathy; his two beautiful daughters, Julia and Heather; son-in-law Joseph Long; and his two adoring grandsons, Avery and Riley.

Bob grew up in Hawthorne, the son of Mary and Edward Kafarski. He graduated Westlake High School in 1965 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy in November 1966, where he served

as a communication technician. He moved to Pleasantville after his marriage to Kathy in May 1973. He continued his communication career as a technician for Verizon for some 33 years until retirement.

Bob's happiest times were spent with his family, catching the elusive large-mouth bass fishing on the reservoir and enjoying beach days at Bonnet Shores in Narragansett, R.I.

He was a big man with an ever-bigger heart, gave the best bear hugs and smiles and always put his family first.

Soar with the angels, dear Bob, you will be missed.

Marianne Taylor

Marianne S. Taylor, 87, a 57-year Chappaqua resident, died on Mar. 24 at Northern Westchester Hospital.

Taylor was born on Oct. 24, 1932, in Fort Dodge, Iowa to the late Ted and Alvina Stephan. She was a graduate of Stephens College in Missouri. She moved to New York City where she met her husband, Dan, and worked for TWA Airlines as a reservationist. She also worked for the Chappaqua Bus Company, the Carousel Card & Party Store, served as the treasurer of her church and was employed by the Hilltop Wine and Liquor Store for nearly 23 years. She was an avid tennis player, a devout Lutheran and loved her annual fall trips to Cape Cod with friends.

Taylor was adored by so many. She always took such an interest in others, met

them with her big smile and loved to laugh.

She is predeceased by her beloved husband of 51 years, Dan Taylor, and was the loving mother of Stephanie (Don) Scott of Katonah, Richard of Stamford, Conn. and Peter (Micheale) of Wilton, Conn. She was the devoted grandmother of Katie, Greg, Lauren, Jeffrey, Ryan and Lindsay. She was our "GMOAT," Greatest Mom of All Time. We will love and miss her forever.

A memorial service in her honor will be celebrated at the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Mount Kisco at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the NWH Foundation, Northern Westchester Hospital, 400 E. Main St., Mount Kisco, N.Y. 10549, Attn: Keeva Young-Wright (include ICU Critical Care Fund in the memo) or visit <https://nwhe.net/about-us/donate-to-nwh>.

Frank LaFranco Jr.

Frank P. LaFranco Jr. passed away after a long illness on Mar. 31 at the age of 87.

He was born in Yonkers on Mar. 17, 1933, to Frank and Lena (nee Lupinacci) LaFranco. He graduated from Commerce High School in Yonkers in 1951. He served his country in the Navy during the Korean War from 1952 to 1954, receiving the National Defense Service Medal for his dedicated service.

He married Joan Timm on Apr. 18, 1954, in Mount Carmel Church in Yonkers and has three children, Deborah (John) Milone, Louann (Geoff) Hutchby and Frank P. LaFranco III (Sandra).

He is survived by his loving wife off 36 years, Christina Bjurstrom; four grandchildren, Kelly (Jeremy) Cotliar, Stephanie Curtin, Nicholas LaFranco and Tyler LaFranco; two great-grandchildren, Noah and Benjamin Cotliar; his sister, Rosemarie (Guido) DelBene; sister-in-law Mary (nee D'Angelo) LaFranco; and many loving nieces, nephews and friends. He was predeceased by his brother, Robert. He is also survived by his first wife Joan (John) Calandro, sister-in-law Helen (George) Kallos and brother-in-law Bob (Laurenelle) Timm.

He worked as an HVAC mechanical engineer for Carrier. In 1976, LaFranco was hired by Grove Skanska to work in Saudi Arabia. He later was employed there by Raytheon. Upon returning to the U.S., he worked as director of engineering for Albert Einstein Hospital, and until his illness, was director of engineering for St. Patrick's Nursing Home in the Bronx.

LaFranco had many passions and lived life to the fullest. Early in life he was a motorcycle enthusiast. The kids in the neighborhood always got treated to a ride around the block. He was a marksman and enjoyed hunting. He loved traveling and visited many countries including an "around the world trip." He especially loved his annual Thanksgiving trip to Riviera Maya. His greatest passion was golf and was a member of Dunwoodie Golf Club in Yonkers where he got not one but two holes in one!

He had a heart bigger than life and a personality to match. He never fooled anyone with his tough guy outer shell. He had a heart of gold and will be deeply missed but the family is grateful he is at peace and no longer in pain.

LaFranco's wishes were to be cremated. Arrangements were handled by Nardone Funeral Home in Peekskill. A memorial service will be held in late spring.

Obituaries continued from page 10



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The Yorktown Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Yorktown are compiling a list of local restaurants and businesses who offer special services during the COVID-19 crisis.

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Little Sorrento	914-736-6767	www.littlesorrento.com
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Chef Rob's Catering.....	914-483-8989	www.robcookfood.com/
Rooster's & Wings & Brew.....	914-743-1797	www.roosterswingsandbrew.com/
Pappous Greek Kitchen	914-455-2111	pappousgreekkitchen.com/
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Obituaries

Mary Ellen Muendell

Mary Ellen Margaret Murphy Muendell, an Ossining resident, died peacefully on Mar. 23 at the side of loved ones. She was 88.

Muendell was born to Janet Yosua and Joseph Murphy on Mar. 13, 1932, in the Bronx. She was a proud sister to siblings Joseph Murphy Jr. (Florence), Janet Byman (Frank) and John Allen Murphy (Eileen). She married Arthur Muendell in 1963 and raised two beautiful children, Janet Bashford (Eric) of Briarcliff Manor and Edward Muendell (Karen) of Yorktown. She was a loving grandmother to Sloane Bashford, Cole Bashford, Devon Muendell, Kyan Muendell, Kristen Drum, Kimberly Aucapina and Danielle Lewandowski and a loving aunt to many nieces and nephews.

Mary Marcel

Mary C. Marcel of Peekskill died Mar. 25 after a year-long health struggle. She was 89.

Marcel was born Aug. 19, 1930, in Yonkers to James and Mary Champion. She spent her entire youth and early married years in Yonkers. She graduated from the High School of Commerce, after which she raised a family in White Plains.

She is survived by three children, Patrice Miano (Tom), of Croton-on-Hudson, Renee Fanelli (Michael) of Aberdeen, Md. and John (Nina) of Briarcliff Manor. She leaves behind six grandchildren, Dr. John Marcel (Tara) of

She graduated high school from St. Francis Asissi in 1950 and went on to serve Westorchard Elementary School in the Chappaqua School District for 37 years, until her retirement in 2009. She was honored as a devoted and delightful member of the school, beloved by students and faculty. She was a resident of Millwood from 1964 until 2008, when she moved to Scarborough Manor in Ossining.

Muendell was a devoted Catholic and member of Saint Theresa’s Parish. She will be remembered for her love of those around her, especially her children and grandchildren. Her sense of humor never diminished and she never failed to provide joy to those around her. Her family feels blessed that she lived a full 88 years filled with compassion, love and peace.

Charlotte, N.C., Daniel Marcel (Caitlin) of Stamford, Conn., Brian Tompkins of New Hampshire, Jack Tompkins of Charlotte, N.C., Michael Fanelli (Caitlin) of Yardley, Pa. and Jaclyn Dennis (Jordan) of Aberdeen, Md.; step-grandchildren Chris Miano (Stephanie) of New York City and Jessi Miano of New Orleans; five great-grandchildren, Elise and Margot Marcel, of Charlotte, N.C. and Michael, Grace and Gabriel Fanelli of Yardley Pa.; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her daughter, Suzzanne Tompkins (Bill), of Mystic, Conn. in 2018; her former husband, Jack, in 1985; her sister, Catherine Dillon; and a brother, James Champion.

Thomas Conrad

Thomas J. Conrad passed away peacefully on Mar. 29. He was 80 years old.

The beloved patriarch of the Conrad family, he was surrounded by the prayers and love of all who held him dear, both near and far.

Conrad was born on Nov. 15, 1939, in the Bronx to the late Thomas J. Sr. and Mary M. (Dobbins) Conrad.

Raised in the Highbridge section of the Bronx, Conrad graduated from De La Salle Institute, Class of ‘57. He continued his education and earned a B.A. from Manhattan College, Class of 1961.

Conrad dutifully served his country for six years as a U.S. Marine Corps radio operator. He was appointed to the NYPD in 1966 and honorably served in the South Bronx and the prestigious TPF Unit during “The War Years.” He retired as a sergeant in the 24th Precinct.

Conrad was a proud member of the Putnam Lake Fire Department for over four decades. He held every position there and was chief of the department in 1979-1980. He also served Putnam County as an arson investigator. Tom believed that volunteerism and service to one’s community is a privilege and an honor. He was also employed by Green Chimneys where he worked as a job coach for adults

with disabilities.

Conrad was a devout Catholic and a member of Sacred Heart Parish for more than five decades.

He was a devoted father, grandfather, brother, uncle and friend and was loved and highly respected by all who knew him.

Conrad is survived by the love of his life and spouse of 53 years, Charlotte (Clayton); his son, Peter and his wife, Karen (Kasinger), of Conway, Ark.; his son, Paul, and his wife, Alison (Abel), of Walden, N.Y.; five treasured grandchildren, Cameron, Katelyn, Matthew, Kyle and Jack, who were his true pride and joy; his sister, Ann Farese; his brothers, Jim and Frank; and numerous cousins, nieces, nephews and lifelong friends, all whom he loved very dearly.

He was predeceased by his brother, John “Jack” Conrad; brothers-in-law Paul Clayton and John Farese; sister-in-law Lisette Clayton; and best friend Dan O’Connell Sr.

A private visitation will be held at Beecher Funeral Home in Brewster followed by a burial service at St. Lawrence O’Toole Cemetery. There will be a memorial Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Putnam Lake, N.Y. at a future date.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the Putnam Lake Fire Department Benevolent Association, 72 Fairfield Drive, Patterson, N.Y. 12563.

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Legal Notice

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF PUTNAM INDEX NO. 501311/2019

BANK OF NEW YORK MELLON TRUST COMPANY, N.A. AS TRUSTEE FOR MORTGAGE ASSETS MANAGEMENT SERIES I TRUST, Plaintiff, vs. MARK B. HOWARD, AS HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF HAROLD HOWARD; CHRISTOPHER HOWARD, AS HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF HAROLD HOWARD; EDWARD HOWARD, AS HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF HAROLD HOWARD; THERESA KELLER, AS HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF HAROLD HOWARD; UNKNOWN HEIRS AND DISTRIBUTEES OF THE ESTATE OF HAROLD HOWARD any and all persons unknown to plaintiff, claiming, or who may claim to have an interest in, or general or specific lien upon the real property described in this action; such unknown persons being herein generally described and intended to be included in the following designation, namely: the wife, widow, husband, widower, heirs at law, next of kin, descendants, executors, administrators, devisees, legatees, creditors, trustees, committees, lienors, and assignees of such deceased, any and all

persons deriving interest in or lien upon, or title to said real property by, through or under them, or either of them, and their respective wives, widows, husbands, widowers, heirs at law, next of kin, descendants, executors, administrators, devisees, legatees, creditors, trustees, committees, lienors and assigns, all of whom and whose names, except as stated, are unknown to plaintiff; SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION AND FINANCE; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

"JOHN DOE #1" through "JOHN DOE #12," the last twelve names being fictitious and unknown to plaintiff, the persons or parties intended being the tenants, occupants, persons or corporations, if any, having or claiming an interest in or lien upon the premises, described in the complaint, Defendants.

SUPPLEMENTAL SUMMONS Plaintiff designates PUTNAM as the place of trial situs of the real property Mortgaged Premises: 8 CRESCENT ROAD MAHOPAC, NY 10541 District: Section: 63.16 Block: 1 Lot: 15

To the above named Defendants YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to answer the complaint in this action and to serve a copy of your answer, or, if the complaint is not served with this summons, to serve a notice of appearance on the Plaintiff’s Attorney within 20 days after the service of this summons, exclusive of the day of service (or within 30 days after the service is complete if this summons is not personally delivered to you within the State of New York) in the event the United States of America is made a party defendant, the time to answer for the said United States of America shall not expire until (60) days after service of the Summons; and in case of your failure to appear or answer, judgment will be taken against you by default for the relief demanded in the complaint. NOTICE OF NATURE OF ACTION AND RELIEF SOUGHT THE OBJECT of the above caption action is to foreclose a Mortgage to secure the sum of \$544,185.00 and interest, recorded on July 13, 2006, at Liber 4892 Page 318, of the Public Records of PUTNAM County, New York, covering premises known as 8 CRESCENT ROAD MAHOPAC, NY 10541.

The relief sought in the within action is a final judgment directing the sale of the premises described above to satisfy the debt secured by the Mortgage described above.

PUTNAM County is designated as the place of trial because the real property affected by this action is located in said county.

NOTICE YOU ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING YOUR HOME If you do not respond to this summons and complaint by serving a copy of the answer on the attorney for the mortgage company who filed this foreclosure proceeding against you and filing the answer with the court, a default judgment may be entered and you can lose your home. Speak to an attorney or go to the court where your case is pending for further information on how to answer the summons and protect your property. Sending a payment to the mortgage company will not stop the foreclosure action.

YOU MUST RESPOND BY SERVING A COPY OF THE ANSWER ON THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PLAINTIFF (MORTGAGE COMPANY) AND FILING THE ANSWER WITH THE COURT.

RAS BORISKIN, LLC Attorney for Plaintiff 900 Merchants Concourse, Suite 310 Westbury, NY 11590 516-280-7675

Steps to Take to Address Your Mental Health During a Pandemic

By Martin Wilbur

Alec Cecil has counseled a vast number of individuals and families traumatized by disasters, from fires to hurricanes to mass shootings.

But even for Cecil, a psychologist who has spent most of his career at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Montefiore Medical Center, helping others wracked by the very real anxieties and fears produced by the coronavirus pandemic is among the most challenging.

Cecil has been a lead mental health volunteer for the Red Cross and is being called upon to work with people using his expertise to ease people through this national health emergency. COVID-19 is unlike any other disaster he has had to deal with previously.

"This is certainly far different in that it affects everybody, and so everybody is going to feel stress and anxiety and obviously it's a long-term situation," said Cecil, who was among the mental health professionals called in after Hurricane Harvey and the Las Vegas and Parkland shootings.

"I don't think any of us have been through something like this, really. Most disasters, it may be very bad and they have an effect on the community, but there are many people that are not so directly affected. In this case, everybody is. It's not time-limited."

There are so many levels to the

COVID-19 crisis. There are likely to be hundreds of thousands of families affected in some way with their own health issues or that of a relative or even a death.

But even if someone is fortunate to sidestep that tragic misfortune, they or their spouse may have lost their job or struggling to keep a business afloat and questioning what the future holds, Cecil said.

Then there's the uneasiness of not knowing when normalcy will return or even if you have the disease, and not being able to be with friends or family, especially as this week's holidays approach. It makes so many feel helpless, said Cecil, a Pelham Manor resident.

"People are afraid that their presence can harm others and you know that's a very difficult thing to deal with," he said. "To see yourself as the vector, or a potential vector, of a contagion. That's actually more of a concern for people than actually getting sick themselves, especially if they're younger and healthy and not in a higher risk category."

Those with pre-existing mental health issues could be particularly vulnerable, Cecil said.

Despite the painful news and frightening outlook, there are steps that Cecil suggests for people to follow to keep their own mental and physical health strong. Understand that while there are many factors that are beyond any one of our control, focus on things that you can



Alec Cecil, a psychologist with the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Montefiore Medical Center, is a lead mental health volunteer with Red Cross who is helping individuals cope with the many challenges presented by COVID-19.

influence, he advised.

Even if you're stuck at home, make a daily routine. Stay physically strong by exercising to the extent that you can, including taking walks while keeping at least six feet of distance, and get enough sleep. It's okay to indulge a little in comfort

foods, but make sure to eat healthfully and stay hydrated, Cecil said. However, he advised to stay away from drinking too much alcohol.

It's important to keep up with the news but if it's causing anxiety find other things to do. He suggested watching movies, play video games, listen to music and spend more time with family.

For some people, meditation or yoga may also be helpful, Cecil added. Getting in the right frame of mind can allow you to be grateful for what you have, even if you may not be able to do a lot of what you would like.

Cecil said keep in perspective that at some point this crisis will end and that the worst is not likely to happen to many of us.

"It may, but we try to look at what's more or less likely, and also to recognize that most people are quite resilient," Cecil said. "You have coping strategies you can use."

For those who need assistance, he suggests reaching out to support groups through apps and online meetings or contacting organizations such as the American Psychological Association or the American Psychiatric Association.

New York residents can also contact the state Emotional Support hotline at 1-844-863-9314. State residents can also receive a free app at www.headspace.com/ny.

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We've Earned It!

Census Push Continues Despite Concerns Over Coronavirus

By Martin Wilbur

Residents may be preoccupied with the horrors unfolding because of the coronavirus, hoping to hold onto their job or business, but everyone in Westchester is being asked to participate in one critically important task.

County officials are urging all residents to take 10 minutes to complete their household's 2020 Census questionnaire.

It's not just to get an accurate count of the nation's population but also to determine how much federal funding a state receives and how congressional representation is apportioned.

Blanca Lopez, an adviser to County Executive George Latimer on strategic initiatives for the 2020 Census, said last week that the public has just one chance every 10 years to help their communities get the information right. The U.S. Constitution

mandates that a count of everyone in the country be taken every year that ends in zero.

"Every person who responds to the Census is contributing to the community," Lopez said. "Money that comes from the federal government is going towards our county, our communities, our school districts, our state, our first responders, our infrastructure. So we want to make sure people understand how they are contributing and making our communities better."

For each person that isn't counted, it is estimated that their home communities lose out on \$2,500 to \$2,700 a year, she said. Multiply that by 10 years – the next Census will be taken in 2030 – and failure to participate is costly.

Lopez said nearly all households should have received an original letter containing a 12-character Census identification code by the week of Mar. 16. For those with access to a computer who haven't completed their form, log onto www.my2020census.gov and click on "Start Questionnaire." You'll be asked for your household's identification code. If you have lost that original mailer and don't have the Census identification code, there is a link to click on immediately after looking to start the questionnaire.

It will take no more than 10 minutes for households that have one or two members and slightly longer for larger households, since information has to be inputted for everyone living at the address, Lopez said.

She said a commonly held belief for why some people don't respond is that it is erroneously perceived that personal

information is divulged to other sources and that the federal government might use that information to harass non-citizens, including those who are undocumented.

"We want to make sure people understand to participate in the Census," Lopez said. "It's confidential and your privacy is protected."

For those without home computers or who prefer to complete the Census the old-fashioned way, the Census Bureau will be sending out paper questionnaires this week. If there are homes still failing to respond by computer or mail, representatives called Census enumerators will be sent out.

The enumerators were originally scheduled to start making rounds by the end of April, Lopez said. However, that has now been postponed until sometime in May because of the coronavirus, she said. Furthermore, the deadline to complete questionnaires has been pushed back from July 31 to Aug. 14.

"So we have approximately three or four months to get this right, to get everybody counted, so we can have some funding coming into us by next year," Lopez said.

As of Apr. 5, Westchester's participation rate was nearly on par with the rest of United States but is better than the rest of the state. Westchester's response rate was 44 percent, compared to the national rate of 44.5 percent, but ahead of New York State's 38.9 percent.

County Executive George Latimer said the Census Bureau is still hiring part-time workers to complete the Census and pays \$23 an hour. For more information about job opportunities, visit www.2020census.gov.



DAVE ROCCO PHOTO

The Front Lines

The wood-fired mobile pie truck from Exit 4 Food Hall in Mount Kisco was stationed outside Northern Westchester Hospital Monday afternoon providing 200 free pizza pies to feed 400 hospital employees. The gesture was a show of appreciation for the healthcare workers treating patients fighting the coronavirus.

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P'ville HS Sophomore Produces Face Shields for Ambulance Corps

By Abby Luby

We've all seen them on the news – the face shields worn by first responders. But there is a disturbing lack of personal protective equipment as the coronavirus pandemic deepens, including face shields, putting many healthcare workers at risk.

The shortage is what inspired Grant Becker, a sophomore at Pleasantville High School, to use his 3D printer to make the shields. Last Friday, Becker and his mother, MJ Becker, delivered about 20 of them to the Pleasantville Ambulance Corps.

"I'm making about one mask every three hours," said Becker. "I'm trying to make as many as I can."

Becker, who has been using 3D printers since he was in third grade, is following free face shield guidelines posted online by printer manufacturer Prusa Research, a Czech startup.

"These guidelines were approved for use in Europe and in the U.S.," Becker explained. "I'm creating the headbands using PETG (polyethylene terephthalate glycol), which is an industrial plastic that withstands shock and impact."

Becker said that at first he tested a few different types of headbands to make sure they were effective.

"For the shield, I'm using acetate sheets, which is what Prusa recommends," he said.



MJ BECKER PHOTO

Pleasantville High School sophomore Grant Becker with a 3D face shield he made at home. The talented teen has been creating products out of various materials for several years.

"They are transparency sheets used with overhead projectors you can get at Staples."

The 3D printed headbands hold the clear plastic shield that protects someone from a patient who is coughing or sneezing.

Healthcare workers usually wear the shields over N95 masks that cover their nose and mouth.

Besides the 3D printer, Becker uses a hole puncher to make the holes that attach the shield to the headband and a scissors to cut the elastic strips that hold the shield in place.

Initially, Becker had difficulties getting his printer to run smoothly, which slowed him down – but only temporarily.

"I put in a new control board to help with quality and time issues," he said. "It took some fixing and tinkering but I got it to run."

He has been using only one of his three printers to print the face shields, but hopes to get the other two up and running soon.

"The other two 3D printers have power supply issues and it's hard to get parts because of COVID-19," he said. "One of my printers should be fixed soon."

Kubiak-Becker said she and her son expect to check in with local hospitals to see whether there is a need for face shields.

"The Moms of Pleasantville and Chappaqua Moms have also been asking for supplies," she said.

Innovating isn't something new for Becker. He has been creating original products ever since he attended a Maker Faire event, which celebrates inventions and hands-on learning, in New York City. In 2018, The Examiner reported on Becker's



Becker donates his newly-produced 3D face shields to the Pleasantville Ambulance Corps.

ability to make a wide range of products from wood, metal, leather, glass and plastic.

"He does all types of things," said Pleasantville High School Principal Joe Palumbo. "He's a great person and this work he's doing now is awesome."

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS



Creative Connections in the Midst of COVID-19

Presented by Rebekah Wilson, MSW

Without a doubt, we're all experiencing a challenging and stressful time—with additional stress on those of us caring for a loved one with dementia. Social distancing makes dementia care more complicated. The good news is there are still ways for you to make meaningful daily connections.

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Letters to the Editor

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Continues to Field Concerns

During this unprecedented time for every American, I forward this letter regarding older adults who reside in long-term care facilities.

The New York State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is a resident-centered and resident-directed advocacy program available to anyone residing in a nursing home, adult care facility or family-type home across the state. The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program sponsored by the Long Term Care Community Coalition (LTCCC) covers Putnam, Rockland and Westchester counties. Ombudsmen advocate for residents to address quality-of-life and quality-of-care issues along

with residents' rights concerns.

At this time when visitation to facilities has been restricted, we would like families and residents to know that the Ombudsman Program must also abide by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and New York State Department of Health guidelines for no in-person visitation. With that said, our office remains fully able to receive phone calls or e-mails regarding any concerns or questions you may have about care. Please call 1-855-582-6769 or e-mail judy@ltccc.org to contact us.

Our certified ombudsman volunteers will be ready to return to their weekly commitment once the visitation restriction

has been lifted.

As you can imagine, residents are in much need of an advocacy program during this unprecedented time. We will be scheduling our next training session when social distancing protocols are lifted, at which time we will be looking for new volunteers to become ombudsmen and help us advocate on behalf of our long-term care residents.

Judy A. Farrell, MPA
Regional Program Coordinator
Long Term Care Community
Coalition

EMS and 911 Dispatch is Essential in COVID-19 Crisis

To Our Friends in the First Responder Community,

Since Gov. Cuomo has announced the 100 percent workforce reduction of all non-essential businesses, I've heard many of you expressing your concern and dismay about EMS and 911 dispatch not being listed alongside fire protection and law enforcement as essential.

Due to this, I have had multiple conversations with representatives from the governor's office and, unfortunately, it is clear that this was an oversight in language. As someone who has both worked and volunteered as an EMT for years, I understand how sad and fairly common it is for EMS to be overlooked.

Initially, fire protection and law enforcement were singled out as essential in the guidance, but emergency medical services and 911 dispatch were not. Empire State Development (ESD) had initially interpreted EMS and 911 dispatch to be included under the category of "emergency management and response," but the lack of clarity regarding EMS and 911 dispatch had bewildered many who work and/or volunteer in emergency services.

After our advocacy, which was joined by many others, I am pleased to report the ESD Guidance for Essential Businesses was updated to specifically include both EMS and 911 dispatch. I'd like to thank the

reps from ESD and Gov. Cuomo's office for their assistance in making this important clarification happen. You can learn more about what qualifies as an essential business at esd.ny.gov.

To all our first responders out there who are working hard during this frightening and difficult time, thank you for all you do. Your community truly appreciates all of the hard work you have done to help keep us all safe.

Stay healthy and stay safe.

Assemblyman Kevin Byrne
94th Assembly District

Farkas' Clarity of How the Nation Must Tackle COVID-19 is Impressive

I read with great interest the Mar. 27 op-ed by Evelyn Farkas, "What Our Nation's Leadership Must Do to Overcome COVID-19" on www.theexaminernews.com.

I was impressed with the clarity and forthrightness of her call for greater national leadership in this time of national and global crisis. She proposes several actions the federal government must take to address the COVID-19 crisis.

First, our leaders must speak clearly about the threat and take measures to control

the virus across the nation and across state lines. Second, the administration needs to utilize the Defense Production Act and establish a Department of Defense (DOD) federal task force to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Third, Farkas recommends that the United States spearhead the establishment of an international task force to address the crisis. She concludes that this is not a crisis in which the states should be left competing for resources.

Farkas is running for Nita Lowey's seat

in New York's 17th Congressional District. As deputy assistant secretary of defense under President Obama and executive director of the Congressional Commission on WMD Prevention and Terrorism, she helped to identify an infectious epidemic as one of the top threats facing our nation. Evelyn Farkas has the experience and credentials to be a capable representative who is willing to speak truth to power.

Virginia Stillman
Ossining

Slater's Attention to Constituent's Concern Was Greatly Appreciated

In the late evening on Sunday night, I had a utility problem. So I called the company and a tech came who managed to make the problem much worse by disconnecting the service. When I called the utility back, I got little satisfaction.

While I knew that he had to have much more consequential problems but exceedingly frustrated, I fired off an e-mail at 9:14 p.m. to Yorktown Supervisor Matt

Slater telling him of my problem.

Surprisingly, I got an e-mail back from him an hour later, asking for a little more information and telling me that he would "make a phone call in the morning." On Monday morning, he called to tell me that he had made a call and that the problem would be fixed shortly – and, by 2 p.m. it was.

It's possible that the company would

have corrected the problem on its own. I'll never know. What I do know is that when I had a problem and brought it to Matt's attention, he reacted and made it his problem and, for that, I am grateful.

John F. McMullen
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How Coronavirus Could Reshape the Housing Market, Part II

Last week, I detailed a few ways that the coronavirus may impact the housing market. In the second part of this column, here are several more potential consequences.

1. Rents will fall for some, but finding units that are affordable will be hard. Before COVID-19, affordable rentals and homes for sale were already in short supply across many markets. In 2019, a quarter of all renter households spent half of their income on rent.

Fewer people moving means fewer homes available. With both pandemic and policy keeping people in place, affordable units will become even more rare through the 2020 peak season.

Luxury apartment inventory, on the other hand, which has led the construction recovery since the Great Recession, may soon be plentiful. The number of multifamily units permitted in the last three years has set a 30-year record. Most of these new communities will cater to the higher end of the rental market and many will become available in the next year.

A coronavirus recession, however, will slow the growth of high-income renters searching for this inventory. Once we reach recovery, supply competition will drive prices down at the higher end of the market, creating deals for those high-income households still looking to move.

2. Housing inequality will grow. Uneven growth in housing costs has exacerbated income inequality in the U.S.

since the Great Recession. Since 2008, the bottom 10 percent of earners have seen their housing costs rise, while the richest quarter of the population has actually seen their housing costs fall.

The pandemic's economic effects are likely to accelerate this trend. Over the next two years, higher earners will take advantage of low borrowing costs for refinancing and abundant luxury rental inventory, while lower-income households will struggle with economic uncertainty and even greater competition for an already tight inventory.

Moreover, as shelter-in-place orders cover a growing share of the nation, those who are able to work remotely are at a distinct economic advantage. Unfortunately, a correlation between income and the ability to work from home reveals that the lowest earners will be hit hardest by these measures.

Among full-time workers whose salary is over \$100,000, 52 percent say that they are able to work from home, but the same can be said for just 15 percent of those earning less than \$25,000.

3. Homeownership plans will have to wait for many young renters. Last year, we estimated that nearly half of

millennial renters who planned to purchase a home had saved nothing for a down payment. The other half has likely seen a significant hit to their savings in the past few weeks. Home values, however, are unlikely to fall significantly because (1) low mobility leads to low available supply on the market and (2) home values may still capitalize optimism about a strong recovery. The result is that many young renters will delay homeownership even further.

For Gen Z, who came of age during the longest economic expansion on record, this pandemic will shape expectations and outcomes. This cohort has

been touted for their strong preference for homeownership, but the class of 2020 will need to face the economic effects of graduating during a recession. Their views and behavior may ultimately differ significantly from what their teenage-year survey responses implied.

4. The rise of sight-unseen housing choices will accelerate. Many families will still need to move in 2020, and those that do will be more likely to move into a new home sight-unseen than ever before. Many apartment communities are already enabling virtual tours in response to the

pandemic, and many renters and owners may soon be evaluating their next home through a tablet screen. Mainstream adoption of sight-unseen moves will bring both opportunities and challenges for the housing market.

The good news is that technological innovation has the potential to enable seamless transactions that do not require in-person visits. The widespread use of these tools is likely.

The bad news to watch out for is that sight-unseen transactions have, in the past, attracted elevated levels of rental fraud. Buyers and renters will need to stay alert, do their research and work through trusted platforms to stay safe at a time when individual verification will be challenging.

In the last release of the American Housing Survey, one in three movers cited wanting to upgrade their home as their reason for moving. In fact, this was the most common reason among survey respondents who had moved during the past year. Such upgrade moves will likely wait.

Bill Primavera is a public relations practitioner (www.PrimaveraPR.com) who also is a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate (www.raveis.com). To engage the marketing and real estate services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.



By Bill Primavera



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Tech Repair Shop Connects Their Customers to the World

By Martin Wilbur

Seth Berkman's business is in high demand and may have never been more important to more people than right now.

Berkman is the owner of uBreakiFix, a tech repair shop in Mount Kisco with two other locations in Westchester. With a larger portion of the population working from home because of the coronavirus pandemic and students at all grades level required to attend classes through remote learning, Berkman's services have been a lifeline.

As the state and county began heading toward a shutdown by the middle of March, there was a surge of customers starting to drop off their devices at Berkman's Mount Kisco and Scarsdale stores. His third store in New Rochelle has been shuttered since early March because it is located in what was that community's containment zone.

"People were bringing in laptops, computers, iPads, Chromebooks, all kinds of devices they had at home, now that they had to work from home and their kids had to work from home," Berkman said. "They had to get any device fixed or up and running as quickly as possible. So there was a rush to get that stuff done."

Making sure there are no more than two customers at one time in his stores to adhere to social distancing rules, uBreakiFix had to manage the lines that were forming outside. Berkman said his customers uniformly respected the need for distancing.

During the pandemic, Berkman has discontinued his while-you-wait service. If

a device is dropped off, even for a relatively minor repair, the owner has to return to pick it up.

In the past week or so, he has started to see the business shift from in-person service to having devices shipped to him. Plus, Berkman's five we-come-to-you service vans, equipped with a workspace and a technician, have been busily crisscrossing the region's highways, fielding calls from the Bronx northward to Dutchess and Orange counties.

"My guys can be driving two or three hours to do a repair, but you've got to go where the work is," Berkman said.

Understandably, customers who live even short distances from the two stores currently operating, have increasingly taken to shipping their technology, presumably to avoid going out and risking exposure, he said.

Berkman said most of his current business has also shifted from commercial jobs to service for residents, with a large number of establishments closed or with far fewer staff even if open.

Along with servicing his customers, Berkman said he has been equally concerned about the health and safety of his 24 current employees. Making the situation more challenging, he had a few who didn't want to work because of the potential risk, while several others used accrued vacation time to take time off. He said their concern is understandable.

"It's not the type of business where you can work from home," Berkman said.

"It's a hardware repair business. You can't do it through a computer virtually. It's a



Seth Berkman, owner of uBreakiFix, which fixes computers, tablets and phones, among other devices. He has two stores currently operating, including one in Mount Kisco.



Berkman wants to make sure his remaining employees are healthy because with a smaller crew he needs everyone he can to continue to keep the public connected.

"The telecommunications lines are like a lifeline at this point," Berkman said. "You almost can't operate without a functioning device and a functioning internet connection."

The uBreakiFix stores are open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Mount Kisco location is located at 14A S. Moger Ave. For more information, visit www.ubreakifix.com.

hands-on kind of thing. It's like construction, if you will. You have to be there to do it."

Aside from the two-customer limit in the stores, his employees wear gloves and repeatedly wipe down all surfaces and equipment as soon as they start each job.

With the van service, a customer leaves the device in a box outside when the technician pulls up to avoid as much contact as possible. It is then worked on in the back of the van.

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Ossining Students Excel in National Science Competition

By Rick Pezzullo

Three Ossining High School students fared well in the Upstate Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (JSHS), which was held online last week.

Senior Caroline Reed placed first in the competition with her research on minke whales, earning her a \$2,000 award. She will participate in the 58th national contest from Apr. 15-17 in a field of 230 students who qualified.

"I'm so happy. I'm in shock. I'm reeling," said Reed, who presented her research to five judges on Zoom.

Her research involved passive acoustics monitoring of North Atlantic minke whales. Passive monitoring involves the use of an underwater microphone to detect and monitor marine mammals.

Reed created an algorithm that cuts the vocalizations into pieces, thus increasing the ability of scientists to distinguish the minke whale vocalizations – which sound like heartbeats – from boat noises. To create the signal processor, she reached out to experts at IBM, who allowed her to adapt their open source code algorithm used for recognizing patterns of human speech.

"I changed it to better suit what I was going to do," she explained.

She worked to collect data with her mentor, Genevieve Davis, senior acoustician with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Davis collected passive

acoustics data from a site in the Caribbean and another off the southeastern coast of the United States.

"The strategy that I've created is what's really important here and hopefully it's able to be used by researchers in all different bioacoustics disciplines," said Reed, who plans to pursue a career in environmental protection.

Classmate Alexandra Hoffman took fourth place overall for her biomedical research project on acute myeloid leukemia and will also advance to the national competition. The Upstate JSHS selected the top five students overall from all categories: biomedical, biochemistry, behavioral studies, general biology and physical computational mathematics.

After creating the improved model, Hoffman used it to run experiments investigating which mutations in which order caused the most severe AML developments. She determined that one particular order – Tet2 loss of function, followed by Npm1 alteration – led to more severe symptom development than the reverse order.

She is hoping her model will help give researchers a better understanding of mutations as a whole in AML and provide another platform for testing new drugs and treatment therapies.

She conducted her research with Dr. Ross Levine of the Levine Lab at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Researchers in the lab are testing various new models and different mutations. They plan to publish her



Ossining High School senior Caroline Reed, left, captured first place in the recent Upstate Junior Science and Humanities Symposium for her research project while classmate Alexandra Hoffman finished fourth. They will advance to the national competition.

work along with their research this fall, she said.

"I really enjoyed being in a lab and having this opportunity," said Hoffman, who will begin biomedical engineering studies at Duke University this fall.

"What an amazing accomplishment by these two young scientists, particularly in these unusual and troubling times," said

Angelo Piccirillo, who co-teaches the three-year Science Research Program with Valerie Holmes.

A third student in the Science Research Program, Hammad Hassan, earned third place in the biomedical category on the first day of the upstate symposium for his research on B-cell cancers.




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Photographer Offers Front Steps Project to Help Local Businesses

By Lindsay Emery

Photographer Donna Mueller is encouraging families to sit outside their homes and be photographed from at least six feet away.

Mueller has brought the Front Steps Project to her home community of Pleasantville and the surrounding area. She was inspired by an article about a Boston-based photographer last month who started taking portraits of families on their front steps – from an appropriate distance – once her jobs dried up due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Mueller re-posted the article on Facebook and is now offering a similar service.

Instead of asking for money, Mueller recommends that people buy gift cards from local eateries and other businesses and give them to someone in need.

What began as a small project has turned into numerous requests throughout the village and Mount Pleasant to help others during the current crisis.

"I really originally wanted to keep this to a small number of families," Mueller said. "But I've gotten inundated with requests and I really don't want to leave anybody out."

Earlier this week, Mueller said about 80 families had already had their portraits taken. To keep organized, she has developed a spreadsheet so that she can organize the families by their respective



Donna Mueller photographs a Pleasantville family as part of the Front Steps Project. Mueller asks for a donation from the families and businesses she is photographing to be used to buy gift cards from local merchants and donate them to those in need.

neighborhoods. She takes photographs of 25 families a day and was on track to have captured images of around 150 families by the end of last week.

Once she arrives at someone's house, she texts them to come outside and does not break any social distancing rules. Mueller stays at least six feet away, but is usually positioned further away, often about 10 to 20 feet from her subjects.

Many families have chosen to incorporate signs into their portraits, Mueller said. Rainbows have become a popular sign because Bedford Road School Principal Peggy Galotti encouraged children to draw them and put them in their front windows. When people go outside for their walks, they can look for the rainbows to brighten their day.

Some of the other signs praise healthcare workers or encourage people to stay safe and healthy, she said.

"So I show up to the house and they come out and I take a couple shots and then they get a beautiful family shot and there's no charge; I don't make a penny off this," Mueller said. "In exchange for the picture, they just agree to do something kind and support a local business."

Some of the families that have been photographed have donated far more than the suggested \$25, she said. When they order takeout, they have the opportunity to buy a gift card that they can pay forward by giving it to someone else in need.

Families are also welcome to give the gift cards to Mueller, who donates them to organizations like the Red Cross and Feeding Westchester.

Pleasantville businesses such as Lucio's Pizza, Sal's Pizza & Pasta, The Village Bookstore, Sundance Deli, Frank & Joe's Deli and Soul Brewing Company have already received donations thanks to Mueller's project.

"People don't have to buy a gift card,"

she said. "They can donate to whatever they feel they want to support at this time."

Mueller, a self-taught photographer, started her career seven years ago, taking pictures at her children's sporting events and gradually expanding her portfolio to family portraits and other events. She has always been passionate about giving back to her community and saw the Front Steps Project as an opportunity to use her talent to help her neighbors through the COVID-19 outbreak. She also encourages others to assist those who are less fortunate.

Mueller is trying to find the bright side to the current crisis.

"People's children are home from college and they're bonding with their families and they never could have done this before," she said. "At least that's one good thing that's coming out of all of this. They're getting a photo that they never could have even gotten."

This week, Mueller is reaching out to the Pleasantville Chamber of Commerce in hopes of taking photos of merchants outside of their businesses. She hopes to spread the word on social media platforms that these local businesses are open for business.


For more information about the Front Steps Project, contact Donna Mueller at www.greatkeepsakes.com or on her Donna Mueller Photography Facebook page.

A MESSAGE FROM
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CAREERS Support Solution Names Two New Members to its Board

Art Amler and Ken Gulmi have joined the board of directors of CAREERS Support Solutions.

Since 1987, CAREERS has provided job training, placement and ongoing support for individuals with disabilities throughout Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess

counties.

Amler is president and founder of Amler Associates, a human resources consultant group in Yorktown Heights. He has more than 35 years of experience in senior HR management with special expertise in compensation and benefits. For 23 years,

Amler was a senior manager at IBM.

"I'm delighted and honored to join the board of CAREERS," Amler said. "This team supports the special needs of our differently-abled population by providing opportunities to flourish and become valued members of our community. I can't think of a more rewarding mission to be part of."

Gulmi is an account executive with Examiner Media. He has a diverse background in operations, human resource management, production, marketing, financial control and problem-solving techniques. Gulmi holds a marketing degree from Pace University and he has previously held positions as an executive with Xerox and was the CEO/COO of an imprint business.

"For the past 13 years I have been very aware of the great work CAREERS has done, having observed the CAREERS staff at work training and coaching their clients," Gulmi said. "I am thrilled at the opportunity to contribute whatever assistance I can to such important work."

CAREERS Support Solutions has made thousands of job placements in its 33 years and provides support services to hundreds of program participants annually. Its mission is to empower



Art Amler, left, and Ken Gulmi are the two newest members of CAREERS Support Solution's board of directors.

'Why a Free Press Matters' Essay Contest Open Until April 24

Our kids are home and we are now their teachers. What better time to consider the important role the press is playing in bringing us the facts we need during this difficult time?

Have them join a national student essay competition titled "Why a Free Press Matters in a Democracy."

The competition offers students in grades 6-8, grades 9-12 and those at universities and colleges an opportunity to reflect on the importance of a free press and to compete for \$15,000 in cash awards from the Boston Globe Foundation, plus a four-year scholarship (current total value of \$152,000) at Westminster College in Salt Lake City.

"This contest is a great way to consider the crucial role the press is playing during this crisis while competing for significant awards," said National Student Essay Competition Director Mary Kay Lazarus.

Essays will be judged on originality and thoughtfulness in addressing the topic. Students are asked to e-mail their essay as a Word document of no more than

500 words typed and double-spaced to Examiner Publisher Adam Stone at astone@theexaminernews.com.

All entries must include the student's name, phone number, e-mail address, mailing address, name and department of the school and grade in which the student is currently enrolled, as well as the name of your participating newspaper. (The Examiner, in this case). The deadline is Friday, Apr. 24.

The competition is funded by the McCarthy Family Foundation. The Boston Globe is the media sponsor. The cash awards and scholarship will be given at the 15th annual McCarthy Family Foundation Lecture Series: In Praise of Independent Journalism on Nov. 7 in Salt Lake City.

For more information about the competition, the sponsors and the Honorary Advisory Committee, visit <https://mklpr.com/national-student-essay-competition>, @freepressessays or #StudentsForPressFreedom.

people with disabilities by teaching workforce readiness skills and providing job placement, on-the-job training and ongoing support to assure long-term success – at no cost to the individual or employer.

For information on CAREERS programs for individuals with disabilities or employers in need of qualified help, contact its Valhalla office, which serves central and lower Westchester, at 914-741-8500, or the Carmel office, which serves northern Westchester and Putnam counties, at 845-225-8007.

For more information, visit www.CAREERSSupportsolutions.org or friend CAREERS on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CareersSupportSolutions/> and Twitter at <https://twitter.com/CAREERSTinaCL>.

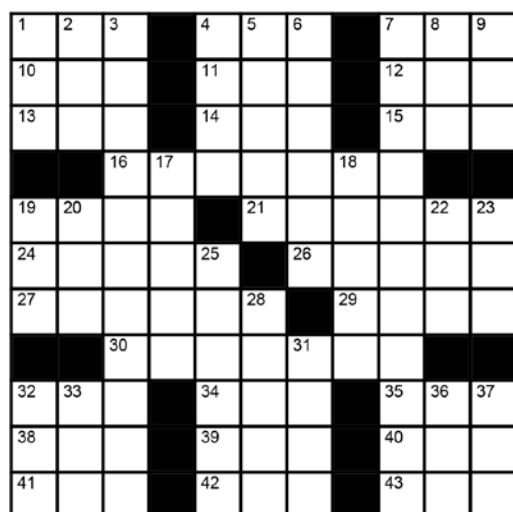
Crossword

Across

1. Had a meal
4. Mail carrier
7. Regret
10. Breakfast food sometimes
11. Uncooked
12. ____ with her head!
13. Back when
14. Overwhelming admiration
15. Land area
16. Cultivation
19. Puffed up
21. Not very bright
24. Dark black
26. Like ocean water
27. Strengthen the muscles
29. Flower holder
30. Curved entry area
32. Jiffy lube product
34. Dove call
35. Hockey rink surface
38. Everything
39. Banking machine
40. Criticize a lot
41. Go on a plane
42. Show grief
43. Main mail center; abbr.

Down

1. "Now I get it!"
2. You're it game
3. ____ stressed
4. Russian river
5. Bars that go into the teeth of ratchet wheels



6. Gym wear
7. Actor's job description?
8. Alien craft
9. Newton
17. Kind of tube
18. Tropical fruit
19. Ex-GI
20. Blood group system
22. "____ show time!"
23. Salon application
25. State flowers of New Mexico
28. Snapshot
31. Baby growth area
32. Clodhopper
33. Not well
36. Baseball headgear
37. ____ trip

Answers on page 25

A Spiritual View

By Fr. Nils Chittenden

The U.S. has been my home for over a decade, but, originally, I'm from Europe and during this time of world crisis it is hard to be separated from loved ones in the U.K. and Sweden.

Thank goodness technology allows us to at least have a visual reminder of family and friends; but I think we're all starting to realize that for all their benefits, social media and smartphones can offer only a very small part of what in-person gatherings bring us.

It's vitally important that we're socially distant from each other right now to try and mitigate this crisis, but one of the most heartbreaking effects is that at the time people most need their friends and family around them – as they face the end of life – they are not able to have that. Now, more than ever, we need to remind ourselves that God is always alongside us, even when we are physically alone – and that God will always care for us.



Each of us is experiencing the suspension of normality in different ways. For me, one of the strangest feelings is preaching to an empty church. But I have to remind myself that, actually, it only seems empty, because I am still connected to my congregants by an invisible thread. And I am preaching and offering prayers in a building in which the sense of the sacred is palpable – walls that, if they could speak, would tell of generations of sadness, joy, crisis, comfort and worlds turned upside-down.

And, most importantly, there with me in that church is God – real, and present, and abounding with love.

Fr. Nils Chittenden is rector of St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Armonk and is part of the Armonk Faith Alliance. The alliance also comprises Congregation B'nai Yisrael, Hillside Church, St. Patrick's RC Church and St. Nersess' Armenian Seminary.

A Different Kind of Seder for a Somers Synagogue

By Martin Wilbur

This week's holidays will be very different for untold numbers of families. Those accustomed to large gatherings for Passover or Easter won't be sitting around the table celebrating together because of the social distancing guidelines necessitated by the coronavirus.

But last Friday evening, members of the Hebrew Congregation of Somers held a model Seder via Zoom, the increasingly popular videoconferencing platform, that connected dozens of congregants for an early Passover celebration.

There wasn't the festive meal that is part of the ritual service, but Rabbi Shoshana Leis said Friday's Seder may have held deeper significance for those who participated because there was more time for interactive discussion about the story of the holiday and its lessons.

"It's like we're living the Passover story in a way that I have never experienced in all my years," said Leis. "By that I mean the story of getting down to the essentials. On Passover, we eat matzoh because we want to become our core self without the puffed-up airiness of bread. It's sort of like our ego-less self. It's like we've been flattened. We're down to what matters the most."

About seven fifth-, sixth- and seventh-graders from the congregation's Hebrew school led the unconventional Seder. Other children who were part of the Zoom call with their parents were asked to gather



some of the symbols of Seder.

There was also the search for the afikomen, one of the pieces of matzoh that is the dessert. The children had a Seder plate and the participating families also brought a snack as part of the festivity.

"We wanted to make it as easy as possible to participate, and since it's before Passover we didn't want them to have to make their own Seder plate," Leis said. "So we just said come, bring some symbols of the 10 plagues, hide something that will be your afikomen and join us."

Hebrew Congregation of Somers will



Left: Rabbi Shoshana Leis of the Hebrew Congregation of Somers recently placed a Torah in her car along with her son, Isaiah Newman. Leis led a model Seder via Zoom last Friday evening with the congregation's Education Director Jill Liflander, right.

be joined by members of Congregation Ahavas Achim in Keene, N.H. Leis said she was recently on a conference call with some of her colleagues in Judaism's Reconstructionist movement when she mentioned that she and her members were conducting their model Seder via technology.

Since Purim on Mar. 8, the congregation has been holding its Shabbat services on Zoom when early concerns were surfacing locally that gatherings were spreading COVID-19.

Leis said the challenges presented by the virus are a lesson for Passover, which includes reaching out to others who are

hungry and inviting them in along with the spiritual hunger to reach people who are isolated.

There's also the story of triumph over slavery, overcoming adversity and adapting as much as possible.

"We are not supposed to just learn about something in the past," Leis said. "We are supposed to lift up the messages and the meaning and the values of what's being expected of us in this time, what's available to us, in that there's a great redemption and transformation that is possible in this moment that we can reach for."

Even after social distancing can be relaxed, the technology has opened up future possibilities to interact and share with congregations throughout the United States and abroad, Leis said. She has tuned in on Friday mornings recently to be part of a Jerusalem synagogue's Friday night service.

For more information about the Hebrew Congregation of Somers, visit www.hebrewcongregationofsomers.org.



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				16	T	I	L	L		18	G	E		
19	V	A	I	N		21	S	T	U	P		22	I	D
24	E	B	O	N	Y		25	S	A	L	T	Y		
27	T	O	N	E	U	P		28	V	A	S	E		
				30	A	R	C	H	W	A	Y			
32	O	I	L		34	C	O	O		35	I	C	E	
38	A	L	L		39	A	T	M		40	N	A	G	
41	F	L	Y		42	S	O	B		43	G	P	O	

Important Info on Federal Tax Filings; Payment Deadline Extended

The U.S. Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) are providing special tax filing and payment relief to individuals and businesses in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The filing deadline for tax returns has been extended from Apr. 15 to July 15. However, anyone who is owed a refund should file as quickly as possible. Filing electronically with direct deposit is the quickest way to get refunds. You do not have to be sick or quarantined or be impacted from COVID-19 to qualify for this relief.

If you need more time beyond July 15 to file your return, request an automatic extension of time to file.

Filing and payment relief includes:

The 2019 income tax filing and payment deadlines for all taxpayers who file and pay their federal income taxes by Apr. 15, including all individual returns, trusts and C-corporations. This relief is automatic. Taxpayers do not need to file any additional forms or call the IRS to qualify.

First quarter estimated tax payments for tax year 2020 are due on Apr. 15. Second quarter 2020 estimated income tax payments are still due on June 15.

Contributions to your IRA for 2019 is also extended to July 15.



By Robert Joyce

Early withdrawal penalties of 10 percent on deferred retirement accounts (IRA, 401(k), etc.) are also extended to July 15 without any further penalty or interest.

Contributions to your Health Savings Account or Archer Medical Savings Account for 2019 can be made at any time up to July 15.

Any taxpayers who have filing or payment due dates other than Apr. 15 have not been granted relief at this time. Normal filing, payment and deposit due dates continue to apply to payroll and excise taxes. If you already filed your federal income tax return and you owe money but have not yet made the payment, as long as you make the payment by July 15, you will not incur any interest or penalties.

Changes for IRAs

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act suspends the mandate for 2020 required minimum distributions (RMDs) for everyone. The suspension includes distributions for those who turned 70½ in 2019 and otherwise would have had to take a minimum distribution before Apr. 1.

Likewise, those who took a required distribution within the last 60 days can roll over their distribution to the same

or a different IRA within 60 days of that distribution and not pay the income tax on the distribution, as long as the taxpayer did not make an IRA withdrawal within 365 days preceding the distribution.

The CARES Act also provides for taxpayers, regardless of age, to take retirement plan distributions of up to \$100,000 without the 10 percent early withdrawal penalty for those younger than 59½.

What's more, distributions taken in 2020 can be reported as income evenly over 2020, 2021 and 2022, or can be repaid within those three years to avoid income tax altogether. These provisions apply to individuals, defined as people who are diagnosed with the coronavirus; or have a spouse or a dependent with the virus; or experience financial hardship as a result of quarantine, furlough, lay-off or reduced hours at work; or are unable to work due to lack of childcare; or own and operate a business that suffers closing or reduced hours.

The information in this article is as of Mar. 31 and is subject to change. All individuals and businesses should consult their tax preparer and financial advisers before making any financial decisions.

Robert Joyce is a certified public accountant and financial planner in Yorktown Heights. He can be reached 914-960-9285 or at www.rfjoycecpa.com.

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Producing and Consuming Wine Through the Virus and Regulations



By Nick Antonaccio

Last week's column focused on wine-themed movies to view as you wile away the increasing downtime some of us are experiencing.

As you might expect, I received inquiries on how to enjoy wines, in self,

or family, confinement.

With that in mind, I began thinking about the multiple hardships the pandemic has thrust on the wine industry and wine consumers. Those entrenched on the front lines of the pandemic, healthcare workers and those supporting the essential service industries, are sacrificing their professional time, their family togetherness and even their health, all in support of their fellow citizens. Can we ever adequately express our gratitude to them? I think not.

There has been much publicity concerning the role of wine-associated businesses as "essential services." Whether you think this is an effort by Gov. Andrew Cuomo to accommodate – or sedate – the populace, the fact remains that the nationwide wine industry, from the winemaker through to the consumer, has been disrupted in ways

not otherwise foreseen.

As you might expect, numerous acronyms have surfaced regarding the pandemic and its effects. One lighthearted attempt: we are all encouraged to Shelter in Place. I prefer the inference of the acronym: SIP. Hmm. Well-advised guidance.

Herewith, a synopsis of the impact of legislature, and common sense, on the wine industry and our wine consumption habits.

1. Wineries. The coronavirus has not ventured into the vineyards and social distancing has not affected the ability of workers to cultivate the land. Spring budding is taking place in its normal cycle; workers are cultivating and pruning at a safe distance from each other.

In the wineries however, this is not the case. Winemakers pride themselves on working shoulder to shoulder to apply exacting standards for aging barrels of wine and in many cases for blending complementary wine. No longer able to ply their craft in this manner,

many have resorted to Facetime, Skype, Zoom and other platforms to conduct virtual work sessions.

In the tasting rooms, the effects are devastating. Tourism is non-existent and regulations have shut the doors. Winery owners are promoting direct-to-consumer sales, even waiving shipping charges in several instances. This is a unique

opportunity for consumers.

2. Consumers' Wine Experience. Permit me to state the obvious: wine is a discretionary purchase, not a staple, especially if you've been laid off or dismissed.

Just as restaurants and food outlets have instituted curbside pickups and doorstep deliveries, so, too, your local wine retailer. Please support these local businesses, your neighbors, as they attempt to weather the storm. More than ever, "shop local" has a direct impact on the vitality and survival of our community fiber.

3. Virtual Food and Wine Socializing. It was inevitable that we would make the next leap forward (or backward) in social engagement. But virtual culinary experiences? Who could have imagined sharing wine or a meal through an app on an electronic device? How many of you have succumbed? I have.

The business app, Zoom, has transformed society. Sheltered in place, a growing number of consumers are reaching out for virtual communal food and wine sharing. With seemingly limitless bounds of participants, consumers are planning and scheduling Zoom get-togethers such as:

Zoom cocktail hours. Raise your glass with friends to recreate the camaraderie of group settings.

Zoom live-streaming tastings with

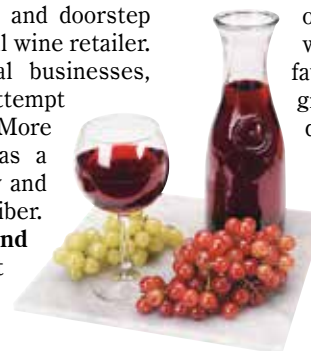
producers. Example: California producer Ampelos Cellars has Friday night virtual events. Participants bask in the virtual warmth and sunshine of a vineyard tour and then share a specific wine.

Zoom wine tasting events. Share several wines and offer your opinions and scores on each wine. Which is the group favorite? How long can the group maintain its focus before digressing to socializing?

Zoom dinner parties. Enjoy a common delivery-meal and a common wine (or wines) with friends, comparing notes and opinions on the cuisine, the wine and the inevitable world events discussion.

Where are all these changes heading? A new digital age of food and wine indulgence? Is virtual reality the next frontier? Hopefully, we'll all persevere through the next few weeks and experience these in a brighter and clearer light.

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



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Social Life Tips Amidst the Coronavirus – For Your New Pet

By Sarah Hodgson

If you're living through the early days of the global health crisis due to the coronavirus, there's not only a toilet paper shortage.

Rescue dogs are also flying out of shelters and into compassionate homes. If you're one of the lucky ones who got a rescue before the supply ran thin, you might be thinking: What did I get myself into, and how on Earth will I train and socialize this puppy or dog while social distancing?

In my books "Puppies for Dummies" and "Modern Dog Parenting," I introduce concepts that simplify the process; however, most involve socializing, playing and training outside. Not!

Training and socializing – even house training your dog – now have a whole new set of rules. Here are some tips to help organize your efforts.

Socialization blues?

Dogs react to social distancing as we do; some love it, others are suffering immeasurably. Being social and socialization, however, are not the same thing.

While socializing a dog or puppy involves learning to be comfortable with new dogs, situations and people, it also includes conditioning to everyday sights and sounds. Socialization is something you can and should practice at home. Although it's ideal to socialize puppies between eight and 14 weeks old, socialization can effectively help even nervous dogs feel more comfortable in new surroundings.

1. Use Modern Technology. Use your phone or another device to record everyday sounds like pots banging, blenders and doorbells. Download sounds such as traffic noises, children playing and dogs barking, etc. Play the sounds quietly as you feed and engage playfully with your dog, then gradually increase the volume. If they're startled, walk out of the room until your dog is less distracted.

2. High Definition. TV dogs can appreciate high-definition television. Sights and sounds come alive as if your home has been invaded, triggering your dog's prey, protection and defensive drives. Condition your puppy to these common distractions by engaging them with toys, treats and training games while the TV drones on in the background. Lower the volume and play behind a sofa or table to block their view if your dog finds the TV distracting.

3. Windows to the World. While you may not be able to go out in the world, you and your dog can look out from a window in your home or car. Engage your dog with toys, treats and training words as you condition them to life's distractions.

The Poops and the Pees

Many people are encouraged to stay inside for everything but "essential outings." But you may be in an area where dog walking isn't considered an essential activity or you may be concerned with going out yourself. Dog owners can potty train their dogs to go inside the home. What a turnaround!

If this has you in a frenzy, let me reduce

your fears. Dogs generally would prefer not to potty inside, and will happily return to going potty outside once permitted to do so.

Need to teach your dog to potty inside? It's not the end of the world. Follow these steps.

1. Line an area with absorption pads or papers: a penned spot, a whole bathroom, or garage space. Pad four times the space you think you need and block the potty area with a secured gate. The goal is to get your dog to go to one area of the house to potty, and one removable surface to do so. Newspaper and wee-wee pads are fine.
2. Dogs need to go after rest, play and feasting. Direct your dog to this area confidently and calmly. It's the new normal.
3. Say "papers" as you walk your dog confidently to their paper area, then block or use a leash to help them focus.
4. Say "get busy" as they pee or poop.
5. Pick up their eliminations before going back to your routine.

Accidents? It's frustrating to find soil on your floor or carpets. Try to be forgiving. If you blow up at your dog, they'll be less likely to potty in front of you, which will make it harder to coach them. Put them out of sight while you clean up the accident calmly.

The coronavirus may have shifted the Earth's axis, but don't panic. Schedules and routines are still feasible. Structure your day around your puppy's needs as you use the time to influence and celebrate their life. Oh, to be a dog!



Sarah Hodgson with Rosie the Warrior Princess.

A best-selling author of many manuals, including "Puppies for Dummies" (fourth edition) and "Modern Dog Parenting," Sarah Hodgson is reimagining life with pets. A dog trainer and behavior consultant, she is working virtually during the crisis. For more information, visit www.SarahSaysPets.com.



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Alternatives to the Nursing Home for an Aging Loved One

By Alan D. Feller

For most of our lives, the familiarity, comfort and security of one's home is taken for granted.

The sudden onset of illness or a hospitalization may complicate the plans for continuing residence in your home. There are tangible and intangible factors that contribute to a successful return with workable home healthcare.

A basic element of maintaining a positive home care environment is the living space itself. Is it clean and uncluttered or is it a hoarding nightmare? Is there a viable one-level solution or are there too many stairs and ill-suited rooms? Do the appliances work? How about the boiler, the roof, the windows? Is there mold? A cleaning service may solve one problem, but other issues may require renovations.

This leads us to the most important element in the home care equation – the primary caregivers. Ultimately, the support system for a loved one struggling with an illness governs

their trajectory. Even with sufficient financial resources to remain at home, if there is no point person willing to manage and coordinate all the disparate pieces that make up care in the home it will not work.

What is involved? Make sure there is food in the refrigerator and the pantry with someone available to feed them. Bills have to be paid and home health aides hired. Arranging doctor visits and transportation require patience. There is also laundry, trips to drug stores and wardrobe purchases. Smart caregivers delegate and utilize professional services.

Home care as a long-term solution can also be very expensive. In New York State, Medicaid has a home care program that pays for care. Eligibility requirements are not as stringent as nursing home Medicaid; there is no five-year lookback or transfer of asset penalties. Excess income can also be protected with the use of Supplemental Needs Pooled Trusts.

A solid home environment, engaged caregivers and a sensible financial plan for long-term care combine to offer

the best chance for avoiding a nursing home when an illness strikes. The delicate balance of these forces must be monitored closely. Overburdened caregivers also juggling jobs and children are always in danger of burning out. What do you do when home care becomes more challenging?

Luckily, there are intermediate solutions when home care is not feasible. Assisted living facilities offer medical supervision and social support while still prioritizing lifestyle and independence. Some facilities have memory care units and other specialized services. They are not nursing homes, and though most are private pay, some are Medicaid-approved with the same basic eligibility as home care Medicaid.

There are situations where a



nursing home makes sense. Even with a suitable house or apartment and an actively engaged support system, the healthcare needs of the loved one may be too difficult to manage effectively. Behavioral changes due to dementia, dialysis, nutritional imbalances and a whole range of other problems can challenge even the most able caregiver and rise above the

thresholds for assisted living.

There are well-traveled paths for avoiding a nursing home when a long-term illness hits. A sound first step is to reach out and talk to the professionals for guidance.

Alan D. Feller, Esq. is managing partner of Sloan & Feller Attorneys at Law, located at 625 Route 6 in Mahopac. He can be reached at alandfeller@sloanandfeller.com.

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Homebound Athletes: Seize This Opportunity to Reflect and Reset

By Cassie Reilly-Boccia

Our current situation can be viewed as a disappointing one, especially when we think of the spring and summer sport seasons being impacted.

It is important to view this time as an opportunity to entrench ourselves in the process in order to experience true growth. Every single one of us has the option to improve during this time. Remember, we never stay exactly the same from day to day, we can either accept defeat and retreat backwards or make the decision to advance and progress into better people both athletically and mentally.

Below are three solid ways to view the cards we all have been dealt.

Appreciation. Gratitude is a powerful emotion that can have long-lasting effects. There is a famous saying that states, "If a man in the desert only has a single grain of rice to eat, but is grateful for that grain, then he will be happy."

We all need a perspective check in our life to remind us of the things we can be thankful for. In fact, there are several studies that discuss a daily habit of writing down three things someone is grateful for can rewire their brain and outlook on life for the better. The scenario we all find ourselves in is a tremendous opportunity to rekindle the gratitude light within you.

Self-Management. Motivation and

awareness are key components to growing and maturing throughout life. Thankfully, athletics typically encourages athletes to develop self-motivation tactics as well as establish a heightened awareness of their body and mind.

If anything, this time more than ever is a chance to fine-tune these tools within us. Currently, with gyms closed, it is difficult to find the right equipment or resources to train and workout with.

Make no mistake, working out at home on your own is a difficult task. Coaches and trainers understand the difficulties of self-motivation throughout the day. The important thing is to feel proud of yourself once you do make a payment to developing yourself further. Did you get your workout in on a rainy day when you didn't feel like it? Complete an extra rep or set of a tough exercise? Were you able to correct your own form as you began to feel fatigue set in? These are all big wins! Be proud when you accomplish them!

Self-awareness and management will also be instrumental to an athlete wanting to play their sport at the next level. Whether that is a college athlete seeking a pro career, a high school athlete who is hopeful for a future in college athletics or a young athlete attempting to try out for a more competitive team, every stage will require more self-regulation tactics.

As an athlete, it is their job to take care



Cassie Reilly-Boccia, co-owner of Athletes Warehouse in Pleasantville, was a softball star at Yorktown High School before becoming an Academic All-American at Alabama, where she was a national champion. In her senior season in 2012, the 5-foot-6 first baseman and outfielder batted .331 with nine homers and 48 RBI.

of their body and make sure it is prepared for their sport. An athlete who is able to learn how to take ownership of their life regardless of the ease or difficulty of the surroundings will develop habits and techniques that will last them the rest of their life.

Finding peace within yourself. This final point will call upon valuable stoic and meditative principles. As we take this time in our life to reflect and reset, let us understand that a peaceful state of mind is not just at the gym or somewhere outside your home. It is not with a person or on vacation. Peace of mind exists within you wherever you are right now. Practice the tool of accessing that peace at multiple times throughout your day.

Perhaps a year from now, when you are standing on the field amongst a large crowd, competing for a championship and in a pressure situation, you can take a deep breath, become aware of your body and state of mind, find inner peace and recall just how grateful you were for this time we were called upon to stay inside.

Lake Peekskill resident Cassie Reilly-Boccia is a sports performance specialist and co-owner of Pleasantville's Athletes Warehouse, a training facility dedicated to redefining the lives of student athletes in the tri-state area. Cassie was a four-year starter for the University of Alabama softball team, winning three SEC titles and a national championship, which she documented in her book "Finished It – A Team's Journey to Winning it All." Reilly-Boccia grew up in Yorktown where she was a part of the high school softball team's first sectional championships in 2007 and 2008.

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I'll Never Get This Year Back, But Here's How I'm Coping

By Maddie Stone

This is the year I have been dreaming of since I was eight years old. My first year as a student-athlete.

The plan was to play modified sports this year, maybe try out for junior varsity the next.

Just a month ago, the dream was within sight. Now, a month later, it's a whole year away. I think the most frustrating part of this situation is not the wasted practice, not that I don't get to play with my friends, but that I'll never get this year back.

This was going to be my introduction into school sports. I was going to learn how it works, meet the coach, meet the kids and get better. Now, in high school, and if I keep playing through college, which I hope to do, I will always have one less year of experience and playing time.

As a student-athlete, I didn't get the worst of it. There are the high schoolers who were going to try out for varsity. There are the high school and college seniors, missing out on the last year of organized sports in their lives.

Don't get me wrong, I know this is for the best. I'm perfectly aware of what's happening in the world and the precautions that must be taken. I know that this isn't a joke. I know this pandemic



ANDY JACOBS PHOTO

Maddie Stone hits a line drive to the outfield gap for the Dodgers in last spring's KLBS championship game in Katonah.

is far bigger than my personal problems. I know there are sick people who are certainly not thinking about the toll this is taking on a healthy 13-year-old.

But it remains upsetting that this year is just gone.

It's hard getting used to the "new normal" of being inside all the time, especially for athletes, who are accustomed to being active.

So here are five things you can do to cope.

First, control what you can control. Your attitude. Your work ethic. Feeling in control of your own life can help you stay calm.

Second, stay active. Go outside. Even a walk or a light jog is valuable.

Third, seize this opportunity to spend more time with your family. Play games. Talk.

Fourth, set up a routine for yourself. Go to bed at a certain time, wake up at a certain time, do your work, go outside, do something fun for yourself, spend time with family, repeat. It may seem static and boring, but it will help.

Finally, fifth, stay in touch. Keeping in touch with your

friends and teammates will make life seem a little more normal.

There are two other things to remember. The first one: keep practicing. Stay healthy. Just because the season is over

"..stay in touch. Keeping in touch with your friends and teammates will make life seem a little more normal."

doesn't mean you stop working hard. It may not seem worth it now, but it will be next year when you're the only one that remembers what a softball or a basketball, or whatever it is, even looks like. Next

year, when the list of who made the team is posted, it will be worth it.

Finally, this is going to end. It may not be now or next week or next month, but this is going to be over. We are going to recover, and it is going to be okay.

Madeleine Stone, 13, is a seventh-grader at Fox Lane Middle School and lives in Mount Kisco. She plays softball for the Lady Fury, a traveling tournament team through GameOn13, a softball and baseball training facility in Elmsford. Stone played in a national tournament last summer in Florida and is also a veteran of KLBS recreational and travel softball in Katonah.

Student Athletes: Got the No Sports Blues? Turn to Twitter

By Adam Stone

Just because they're not out on the diamond, Mahopac softball varsity Head Coach Cristina Giansante knows maintaining team cohesion is critical, as is making sure her players remain upbeat.

In fact, taking active steps to solidify that team chemistry – and general mental health – might be more important than ever for coaches to monitor as student-athletes from across the region grapple with the uncomfortable and depressing reality of being barred from the ball field amidst the COVID-19 shutdown.

That's why on Mar. 24, while she was doing her usual check-in with the girls on their mental state, Giansante asked her squad members what they were doing around the house to stay fit, besides the largely expected routine of hitting off a batting tee in their yards.

"It was my senior/captain Carolyn Galizia who was the one who came up with the idea to do a team challenge," Giansante recalled. "The last few weeks on social media there's been 'See 10 Do 10' individual push-up challenges and she thought it would be fun to do it and send it



Mahopac softball varsity Head Coach Cristina Giansante, left, and senior/captain Carolyn Galizia.

over to some of our classmates."

So with that, each player sent Giansante a video and she compiled all the footage into a montage. Then she sent it off to the school's varsity girls lacrosse team and the varsity boys baseball team.

"From there they challenged Somers baseball, Yorktown baseball and (John Jay East Fishkill) baseball," Giansante explained. "And well, then it went from there. We thought it would be a good way to get the teams 'together' and feeling that

sense of one cohesive unit while staying fit. I remind the girls quite often how important physical health is to our mental health."

As of last Thursday afternoon, the 24-second video the Mahopac softball team posted on Mar. 24 had generated 997 views, 46 "likes" and four retweets.

Galizia, the senior captain, noted how the team was already looking for ways to stay fit when she learned about the social media phenomenon.

"I saw on Instagram a lot of people doing the See 10 Do 10 challenge with pushups," Galizia remarked. "We were talking to coach about workout ideas, so I thought it would be cool if we could do that and tag our baseball team, girls lacrosse team and other sports teams to keep us all involved. We are all trying to stay active during this time, so I thought this was a fun way to do it."

Yorktown softball Head Coach Samantha Fernandez, in her second year coaching the team, mentioned how Yorktown baseball challenged her squad.

"We have been doing challenges within our team along with other teams," she said. "We do four virtual workouts a week



The Mahopac softball team.

as well as challenge the players to work every day on their own."

As for Giansante, she explained how a pick-me-up was certainly needed, observing how it's "been a rough month for us."

"We have a state caliber team and we've been working for weeks, months on end," she said. "It's especially hard for my seniors and it being their last hurrah, especially when everyone knows we had a date with states in our minds."

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*-Adam Stone
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