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WESTCHESTER'S DIGITAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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HERE'S AN EXCLUSIVE PRINT PREVIEW OF
THE NEW PREMIUM DIGITAL NEWSMAGAZINE
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The Question After The Big Question: Why Do We Lose Our Minds Over Weddings?

*When I agreed to
one day enter into
a legally-binding
agreement with
my now fiancé,
I've learned what
weddings are: an
absolute scam.*

by Erin Maher

First comes love. Then comes marriage.
Wait, no.

First comes love, then comes a specific form
of hell known as "wedding planning."

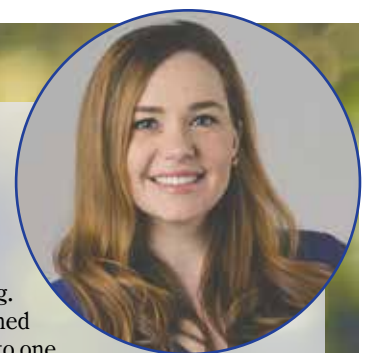
Don't get it twisted; I love a good wedding.
Especially when my bank account is not attached
to it. But, ever since December, when I agreed to one
day enter into a legally-binding agreement with my now
fiancé, I've learned what weddings are: an absolute scam.

First and foremost, the price of a wedding is equivalent to what I would
guess is the market value of one of my kidneys. According to a 2019 survey
from the wedding planning website The Knot, the average cost of a wedding
in America was \$27,000. In Manhattan, N.Y., that average rate increases to
\$88,000. To put that price tag in perspective here's a list of things that cost less
than a New York City wedding: a 2021 Tesla Model S, an entire year's tuition,
room and board at a State University of New York school for both in-state and
out-of-state students, and a 20 percent down payment on a \$400,000 home.

Included in that price is a bunch of stuff you have never had to care about
before, let alone even knew was of any importance. This includes but is
not limited to table linens, centerpieces, up-lighting, guest invitations, the
differing weights of cardstock, the (apparently) vast differences between the
colors ivory, cream and porcelain, and lest we forgot the pièce de résistance:
the wedding dress.

We've seen it in every TV show and movie: the quest to find the perfect
dress. There's even a TV show, TLC's "Say Yes to the Dress," dedicated to
helping brides find the dress of their dreams. "Say Yes to the Dress" has not
one, not two, but 14 different spinoff shows. Between the layers of tulle, tons
of beads and lacework, I can't help but think we brides out here...

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White Plains' Chrissie Mayr Navigates Cancel Culture as a Conservative Comedian

by Andrew Vitelli

"I don't think there are any comedy clubs in North Korea," says Chrissie Mayr, a Westchester-based comic. "I think it's a good gauge for where a society is."

Technically, North Korea does have standup comedy. The late Supreme Leader Kim Jong Il even brought comedians, including Lee Choon Hong, to the presidential palace to perform. Lee was enjoying a successful career until 2013, when he accidentally broached a "sensitive issue" during his routine and was taken, mid-performance, to the Jikdong Youth Coal Mine, where he was sentenced indefinitely to perform hard labor.

Mayr, who has lived in White Plains for the last four years, has recently gained prominence poking fun at her own country's sensitive issues. She's mocked teen climate activist Greta Thunberg and poked fun at the celebrity-led "Imagine" cover recorded during the beginning of the pandemic. As a conservative-leaning comedian – a relative rarity, at least judging by the world of late-night television and Netflix specials – her political evolution came as she began to see cancel culture and political correctness as a threat to society and, more directly, her chosen career path....

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Conservative Comedy – in Westchester?

by Nancy Sorbella



Girls' weekend getaways have been a staple in my life for years. They reflect our various stages in life, starting with the basic trips to someone's beach house, lake cottage, or even — yes! — a motel. My girlfriends are my oxygen; I could not survive without them. There is no one else who can share your joy and sorrow, cheer you on, lift you up, or shine a light on your hard truths than your

people, your tribe, the mirror that reflects you. My girlfriends are part of a unique web, one that began in my beloved hometown of Dobbs Ferry and has led me to where I am now. I have friends from nursery school (no exaggeration, and we are still close), elementary school (in my tiny town you made a friend in kindergarten and were still together in high school), college, work-life, mom life, and beyond. They weave in and around the web, making my life richer and becoming an indispensable resource.

Along the way, our girls' getaways have evolved. They are now amped-up, well-orchestrated spa weekends that include amenities we never dreamed of in our humble beginnings. While we have ventured across state lines, in cars and planes...

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Spa-ahh!

Take the weekend to relax, recharge, and renew at these girls' spa getaways in the Hudson Valley

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From Afghanistan to Westchester

Meet two county residents whose relatives escaped the Taliban, and the local volunteers helping them and others risk it all for a better life



by Bailey Hosfelt

For Ossining resident Sofia Bator, the Taliban’s takeover in her native Afghanistan meant her cousin Freshta Nazari — a 24-year-old women’s rights activist and lawyer — was in grave danger.

“When the Taliban took over Kabul, she was scared for her life,” Bator said. “She left her work, she ran for her life, and she got herself to her room safely.” Once there, Nazari remained hidden in her Kabul apartment for one week, with food and water supplies running out. Nazari, alone and scared for her life, worried she would not make it.

Bator, who attended Westchester Community College last semester, reached out to her former psychology professor, Sheldon Malev, desperate to find a way to get Nazari out of Afghanistan safely. “I was trying to help her because she is not only my cousin, she’s representing all those Afghan women that are suffering through this hardship and situation,” Bator said, noting that Nazari’s profession as an advocate for women and previous work in the Afghan government’s anti-corruption bureau made her particularly vulnerable....

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Final Jeopardy! Indeed

One of America's last unifying cultural treasures, Alex Trebek's legacy is in danger of becoming yet another politicized, polarizing piece of Americana.

by Robert Schork



I confess to having been ridiculously invested in the burning question that has gripped much of the nation since the beginning of the year: Who will replace Alex Trebek as the new Jeopardy! host?

For months I'd been dutifully tuning in each evening to watch the latest guest host du jour make their beaming debut in a televised audition for the most wanted job in America. After meticulously evaluating their performance for a few days (Did he crack enough jokes? Did she take too long reading the clue?) I'd sequester myself in my own mind with all the passion and earnestness of a juror in 12 Angry Men to deliberate my verdict. How will I ultimately rate them relative to the parade of guest hosts who'd aired previously? Was Bialik better than Buzzy? Was Roberts' delivery more robust than Couric's?

Upon reaching my conclusion, I'd hop online to see how my rankings stacked up against USA Today's, BuzzFeed's, and those from countless other media outlets. Ranking the hosts soon became America's parlor game for 2021.

In reviewing my list, many performed as expected — Dr. Oz was an atrocious train wreck, Anderson Cooper was smooth and steady — while others were surprisingly good or bad. Who knew that an over-the-counter version of Ambien was available in the form of Bill Whitaker's episodes?

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by Andrew Vitelli

Growing up in New York – and as a vegetarian since age 12 – pizza was more than just a staple in my diet. In high school and in the years following college, I typically had pizza several times a week, sometimes more than once a day. But I never made much of an effort to seek out the best pizza; usually, lunch was a couple slices at Pizza Grill or Slices in Hastings-on-Hudson, or The Brick Oven Pizza in Dobbs Ferry.

From 2012 to 2015, I lived mostly in Tel Aviv, a city with great food but pizza that was generally closer to Sportime USA than DiFara. When I returned to New York, the pizza capital of the world (Naples being a close second), I decided it was time to branch out and try the pizza considered the best in the United States, in New York, and in my own county of Westchester.

Before presenting this list, a few words of qualification.

First, I've not had close to every pizza in the county; and there are many pizzerias widely considered among the best that I have not yet made it to, like Gino's in Yonkers, or just ate too long ago to fairly judge against the places on the list, such as Peppino's in Somers.

Secondly, as a vegetarian, I am judging these establishments based on its vegetarian offerings. Pepe's in Yonkers is known for its clam pie; if I ate clams, perhaps I'd rank it higher than its current spot.

Lastly, despite an array of acclaimed pizzerias in northern Westchester, this list is somewhat biased toward the central and southern portions of the County given that is where I've lived most of my life.



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The Slice is Right: A Vegetarian's Guide to the Best Pizza in Westchester County

I present my recommendation of the Top 15 Best Pizza joints in Westchester County

Examiner+ Delivers Best of Old, Best of New

by Adam Stone

When I started The Examiner print newspaper in 2007, iPhone fever had just begun to flourish, Tom Brady was racking up stats, and some of Westchester was loaded for bear over celebrity developer Donald Trump; he cracked our debut cover with a story about his ditching of a controversial local land project.

In some ways, lots has changed over the past 14 years. In other ways, not so much.

But as the newspaper industry has been battered over the course of our history, we've weathered the storm by embracing change while maintaining a firm grip on old-fashioned principles that should never be abandoned. The best of the old with the best of the new.

With that approach in mind, we couldn't be more excited to launch our digital newsmagazine, Examiner+.

In our newsmagazine we'll be delving deeper, wider and longer in the storytelling. You'll enjoy exclusive content delivered straight to your email inbox several times a week. In-depth news reports and local lifestyle pieces. Deep dives on meaty issues balanced with the lighter side: food and wine, home and garden, arts and entertainment.

Readers can review some of the content on Examiner+ for free, to give us a test ride. But a paid subscription delivers access to all of the newsmagazine's journalism. The cost is affordable at just \$5.99 per month, or \$49 for the entire year.

There's also an option for our biggest supporters to invest \$99 or more to become "Examiner Ambassadors," a way to signal support for local journalism and receive occasional perks, like E+ swag and newsletter shoutouts.

All the particulars aside, as we launch this new publication, I can't help but reflect on the years since our 2007 debut and wonder what the years ahead might hold. It's impossible to imagine what exact shape the local media landscape will take. That being said, while distribution methods might change, and revenue sources evolve, the core of quality journalism will remain the same: professional reporters and editors checking their facts and telling great stories.

Best of the old, best of the new.



Meet the Westchester Firm that Saved the President's Life

Understanding the science and business behind Regeneron's COVID-19 biotech breakthrough

by Sherrie Dulworth

Last January, a blip on the viral radar went unnoticed by much of the world. By the time the public became aware of an emerging pestilence—soon to be known as COVID-19—infamous disease researchers at Tarrytown-based Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc., were already on the hunt for new drugs that could combat the disease.

Dr. Alina Baum, Associate Director for Infectious Diseases at Regeneron, is a trained virologist who has been with the company for almost six years and leads a 12-person research team. She recalled the urgency felt in the wake of the rising numbers COVID cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. "In New York in April, it was terrifying," she said.

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