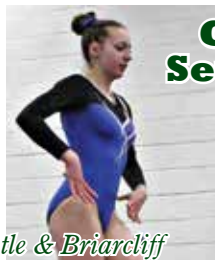


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January 19 - January 25, 2021

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 15, Issue 698

## Form Based Code Would Produce Modestly Higher Enrollment Hike

*Chappaqua School  
Consultant Projects 36  
More Students Than Town*

By Martin Wilbur

Chappaqua School District consultants revealed last week that the proposed Form Based Code's full build-out scenario would produce 36 more students than had been estimated by the Town of New Castle's experts.

In a report compiled by the engineering and planning firms The Chazen Companies and Econsult Solutions, Inc., the construction of 997 one- and two-bedroom apartments in the 72-acre study area in downtown Chappaqua would generate 150 additional

students in the seven years from 2023 to 2030. Meanwhile, the town's consultants have placed that number at 114 children over a 15-year span in the code's Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS).

The difference is a result of the methods used to compute the number of school-age children for different types of housing in various communities. The Chazen Companies employed the Public Use Microdata Sample, which uses a higher multiplier for two-bedroom apartments in multifamily structures than the Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research Center, the method that the town's consultants based their estimates on. The Rutgers formula was devised about 15 years ago based on information in the 2000

*continued on page 2*

## New ShopRite Approved at Diamond Properties Complex in Mount Kisco

By Martin Wilbur

The Mount Kisco Planning Board last week approved a new 85,000-square-foot ShopRite supermarket for the Diamond Properties complex at 333 N. Bedford Rd. along with other improvements to the 38-acre site.

After more than three years of review, which also required a zoning text amendment from the Village Board and approvals from the Bedford Planning Board because more than six acres extends over the town line, planners unanimously granted site plan approval and steep slopes, change of use and special use permits.

Construction of the supermarket, near the north end of the property, is the centerpiece of the project. There will also be a 3,800-square foot expansion to Grand Prix New York to increase its floorspace to



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

The northern end of the building at 333 N. Bedford Rd. where a new ShopRite supermarket will be built. It will be at least two years before the store opens.

121,913 square feet.

Other changes include an increase in parking spaces from 802 to 873, a 318-square-foot fieldhouse to be built at

*continued on page 2*



## Puppy Sunday

While Super Bowl Sunday is the biggest day of the year for football fans, for dog lovers it could be the Puppy Bowl. The 17th renewal of the annual

event, to be shown on Animal Planet before the big game on Feb. 7, sees dogs go paw to paw with dozens of other puppies from animal shelters across the nation for a shot at the chewy Lombardy trophy. Paws Crossed Animal Rescue in Elmsford has two puppies that made the final roster this year, including Yogi, right, who will be playing for Team Fluff, and Bailey who will be part of Team Ruff. In the first 16 years, every dog involved in the event has been adopted.



## Political Newcomer to Join Scherer, Vinjamuri in Pleasantville Election

By Anna Young

Pleasantville Mayor Peter Scherer will be running for re-election in March's village election, while a newcomer has announced his candidacy for one of the two available seats on the Board of Trustees.

During the Jan. 11 Village Board meeting, Scherer announced he will be seeking his fifth three-year term as mayor. The petition filing deadline is Feb. 9, but there has been no conversation about a possible challenger for Scherer, who has run unopposed each of the last three elections.

"I can report it is my intention to run again," said Scherer, who was first elected in 2009 after having served as a village trustee. "If the community will have me, I am happy to serve."

Trustee David Vinjamuri also revealed he

*continued on page 2*



CHAD DAVID KRAUS PHOTO

First-time candidate Michael Peppard announced his decision to vie for one of the two available trustee seats on the Pleasantville Village Board. The election is scheduled for Mar. 16.

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Public Briefing, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> 2020

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# Form Based Code Would Produce Modestly Higher Enrollment Hike

*continued from page 1*  
Census.

New Castle Supervisor Ivy Pool said last week that she and her board colleagues were still digesting the heavy volume of information in the school district's consultants' report presented last Wednesday evening, but there doesn't appear to be a significant difference between the two studies.

"What they told us is certainly a higher projection but not of the magnitude that some in the community had feared," Pool said.

She also noted that the town used 15 years for full build-out while the seven-year estimate for full build-out is unrealistic.

The Town Board is expected to discuss the school district's report in more detail and other issues related to the DGEIS during Tuesday night's work session. Continuation of the public hearing on the DGEIS will follow.

Since the start of the hearings in October, some residents and school district officials feared that the town's projection of additional schoolchildren with the introduction of mixed-use development downtown was seriously underestimated. Concerns have been repeatedly raised that the influx of students could flood Chappaqua schools and

potentially trigger capacity issues in the schools, higher budgets and higher property taxes.

However, town officials have countered that the Form Based Code is not a development plan but a zoning revision designed to eventually attract developers to propose mixed-use projects to enliven the downtown and help diversify the town's housing stock. The full build-out scenario is unlikely ever to occur, they have argued, because it would require the sale of multiple town-owned properties, each subject to a permissive referendum, and coordination between private property owners.

A full build-out projection is required of the town under the state Environmental Quality Review Act. (SEQRA).

Econsult Solutions Director Frank Robinson said the extra 36 children would increase the school district budget by about \$8 million regardless of future birthrates. For the purpose of calculations, the consultants used three estimates for future birthrates within the Chappaqua School District: a yearly average for the decade of the 2000s, another for the 2010s and an average of those two decades.

In the 2000s, according to the report, there was a 10-year average of 160 children

born in the zip codes comprising the district. The 2010s saw a sharp decline to a 110-child annual average while the average between the two decades stands at 135.

The live birthrate in the district in 2020 increased to 120, said Erik Kaeyer, from the Mount Kisco architectural firm KG&D.

"Is that a one-year blip or is that the beginning of a new trend?" Kaeyer said.

There doesn't appear there will be a districtwide capacity issue based on the 110 and 135 annual birthrate scenarios because "the existing housing stock has accommodated a larger population in the past," he said.

Current district enrollment stands at 3,556 students, down nearly 700 from the district's all-time peak of 4,254 in 2007-08, Kaeyer said. In that time, elementary school enrollment has declined about 30 percent, the middle schools are down 20 percent and the high school is off by 15 percent.

However, Kaeyer mentioned that there could be capacity issues at individual schools, most notably Douglas Grafflin Elementary School and Robert E. Bell Middle School, based on the existing zoning. Another 30 students are projected for the Chappaqua Crossing townhouses, the mixed-used development at 91 Bedford Rd. and the Conifer affordable housing project on Hunts Place, all of which would feed into Grafflin and Bell.

Kaeyer said that the functional capacity, described as 85 percent of maximum capacity, at the three elementary schools is 521 students each, while Seven Bridges Middle School has a functional capacity of 774 students compared with Bell, which is 701.

He does not expect Horace Greeley High School to have a capacity issue.

Deputy Supervisor Jeremy Saland said at last week's joint meeting that the Form Based Code appears to be less of an influence in future enrollment projections than other factors.

"It's really not a hamlet issue, it's really something the district should be examining irrespective of this, or maybe it's a catalyst for the district to examine this," Saland said. "But it's a districtwide issue irrespective of the 114 or 150 (students) in the worst-case scenario."

Board of Education President Victoria Tipp said district and town officials should also explore the makeup of the number of bedrooms and how that could affect the schools. Under the full build-out scenario, the DGEIS uses 599 one-bedroom and 299 two-bedroom market-rate units. There would also be 99 affordable units – 66 with one bedroom and 33 with two bedrooms.

The effects of COVID-19 on future trends should also be studied further, she said.

Tipp said the school board authorizing the study was for planning purposes, not to appear to exclude students from the district.

"I just want to be clear what our purpose here is; (it's) not to prevent kids from coming into the district, it is to understand how many will move in so that everyone can plan adequately," Tipp said.

It is likely that the public hearing on the DGEIS will be closed Tuesday night, Pool said, to allow for the town's consultants to address the long list of issues raised the past three months. A 30-day written comment period will remain open.

## New ShopRite Approved at Diamond Properties Complex in Mount Kisco

*continued from page 1*

the northeast corner of the soccer field to provide equipment storage, public restrooms and vending machines and a variety of landscaping, drainage and lighting improvements.

ShopRite will relocate from 747 Bedford Rd. in Bedford Hills once the new supermarket space is ready to be occupied.

Stephen Spina of John Meyer Consulting, the project engineer for applicant Diamond Properties, said he expects construction of the supermarket to begin within the next 10 months and last up to two years.

"We're really excited about it," developer Jim Diamond said after the approval. "We think you guys will be proud of the project when it's done and it's going to be a real positive for the property and the whole village."

The complicated application required coordination with the Town of Bedford, nine zoning variances and a commitment to have the southern driveway entrance for the sprawling complex known as The Park align with Park Drive (also referred to as Ice House Road) and the northern entrance align with Foxwood Circle. There will be traffic signals installed at those intersections.

Also required are various modifications to be made at two adjoining properties that Diamond owns or leases at 309 and 383 N. Bedford Rd.

About one-third of an acre of the property will transfer from 309 to 333 N. Bedford Rd. A 4,688-square-foot portion at the south end of the existing building and the parking lot

in front of the building will be demolished to align the driveway with Park Drive across North Bedford Road.

At 383 N. Bedford Rd., the northern portion of the structure will be demolished to align The Park's northern driveway with Foxwood Circle. The existing building is 7,893 square feet. A replacement retail building will be 5,528 square feet and have 31 parking spaces, 13 more than before.

The southward relocation of the driveway also moves it completely into Mount Kisco's jurisdiction.

There is a list of 45 conditions in the resolution, including installation of the traffic signals on North Bedford Road and Park Drive and Foxwood Circle. Another requires that ShopRite employees park in the most remote and underutilized portions of the lot and the supermarket's staff must direct parking once 90 percent of the spaces are filled.

Peak hours are expected to be later Friday afternoon and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Planning Board Chairman Douglas Hertz said he was satisfied with the work that the village did over the past three years to devise a workable plan.

"I'm proud and I'm hopeful this is going to be a superb development and I think your guys have done yeoman's work to get us here," Hertz told Diamond after the vote was taken.

Diamond had sought other uses for the complex after a series of businesses departed leaving multiple vacancies.

## Political Newcomer to Join Scherer, Vinjamuri in P'ville Election

*continued from page 1*

will appear on the Mar. 16 ballot in hopes of securing a second term. The marketing and branding specialist was first elected in 2018.

Trustee Joseph Stargiotti failed to respond to multiple inquiries last week on whether he would run again.

First-time candidate Michael Peppard announced last week his decision to vie for one of the two available seats on the board. Peppard, 43, is a tenured Fordham University professor who has three children in the Pleasantville School District.

Peppard said his more than 20-year career in education has provided him with the expertise in research, moderating and communication that will translate well into public service. If elected, he hopes to bring a balance of tradition, innovation and reflection to the board.

"My vision for public service stems from core democratic principles and the hard lessons learned during 2020," he said. "We will always maintain what makes Pleasantville excellent: our schools, small businesses, farmers market and walkable streets."

Peppard also noted a desire to enhance the civic values for which Pleasantville holds

much of its pride: a village government that is practical, inclusive and sustainable. He suggested the board could be "more nimble" regarding the areas of outdoor public spaces, permits, use of parks and sustainability.

Furthermore, Peppard stressed the importance in committing to the Main Street experience and supporting the small businesses that have struggled through the COVID-related lockdowns. If elected, he wants to help promote a community where families and businesses can thrive.

"We all want to get back to the simple freedoms of social life from before, but we'll carry forward what we've learned," Peppard said. "When I consider our renovation of the pool, management of hybrid learning, transparency of village meetings, permits for outdoor dining or the precarious situation of our anchor businesses, every area of governance can be improved through reflection on 2020."

Pleasantville has had a longstanding tradition of nonpartisan elections where candidates run on independent lines rather than being nominees of the Democratic or Republican parties.

*Abby Luby contributed to this article.*



# Cuomo Appeals to Pfizer to Supply State Amid Vaccine Shortage

By Anna Young

As COVID-19 vaccine eligibility and demand swiftly outpaces New York State's availability, Gov. Andrew Cuomo is asking the Pfizer corporation to directly supply the state with the product.

Cuomo on Monday criticized the federal government for vastly increasing the number of individuals eligible to receive the vaccine last week without first boosting the state's supply. More than seven million residents are authorized to receive the vaccine, but the state only receives about 300,000 doses a week.

However, the federal government has only supplied New York with about 250,000 vaccines each of the last three weeks, Cuomo said. At this rate, he said, it will take about seven months to inoculate all current eligible recipients.

"The federal government is in control of the supply, and they must increase the supply," Cuomo said. "As a state, we're trying to do everything that we can."

As a phased approach, health care workers were the first to receive the vaccine. Last week, police, firefighters, other public safety workers, educators, transit workers and people 65 and up became eligible.

Due to the shortage, areas like Putnam County have no more vaccines available after hosting three events where more than 900 people were immunized. As of Jan. 15, County Executive MaryEllen Odell said she has no indication of when a new shipment will arrive.

Cuomo added that eight more vaccination distribution sites will open throughout the state this week. Five are currently accessible to the public, including the County Center in White Plains.

As of Monday, there have been 1,053,650 vaccine doses dispensed statewide.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer issued concern last Thursday that residents have become almost desensitized to the daily impacts the coronavirus pandemic continues to have on the community.

While Cuomo noted there's been a slow decline in coronavirus cases and hospitalizations following the holiday surge, Latimer said the area is still experiencing a hike in COVID-related deaths, calling it a continuing tragedy.

"The concerns that we have in the increase of infection, increase in hospitalizations and increase in fatalities is that we're not talking about that," Latimer said. "That we are in the process of becoming inured to these numbers when everyone of these people who has died is a human being."

The county reported eight more deaths on Monday, bringing the death toll from COVID-19-related fatalities to 1,797 since March. In the last week, 67 people have died from the virus, with 133 overall fatalities since the start of the new year.

Coronavirus cases increased by 712 on Monday, bringing the total number of positive cases to 84,420 since the start of the pandemic. There are now 11,658 active cases, an increase of 512 over last week.

During the peak of the pandemic last spring, active cases had reached a peak of about 12,000.

Daily testing reached an all-time high last week, with 16,024 COVID-19 tests

administered on Wednesday. The county's daily positivity rate is 6.61 percent, with 10,771 tests given on Saturday.

Overall, there have been over 1.62 million COVID-19 tests dispensed in Westchester since March.

As of Jan. 12, there are 554 virus patients in Westchester hospitals, an increase of 50 within a three-day span. Latimer said that while the numbers are concerning, it's about half of the peak hospitalization rate at the height of the pandemic last spring.

"The numbers continue to rise even



## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

with the presence of a vaccine starting to be disseminated," Latimer said. "This is the continuing tragedy of COVID that we're not yet past."

Putnam County's total caseload has reached 6,447, with 61 additional positive cases recorded on Monday. The county's daily positivity rate is 6.45 percent, with 946 tests administered Saturday.

A record number 1,650 single-day tests were also given on Wednesday in Putnam. The county currently has 1,285 active cases.

There have been 74 coronavirus-related deaths in Putnam since the start of the pandemic. Six people died from the virus last week.

Statewide there were 12,185 new positive cases on Monday. The daily positivity rate is 6.54 percent.

The state recorded 153 additional COVID-19-related fatalities, bringing the death toll to 33,052 since March.

Statewide hospitalizations stand at 8,771, an increase of 97 over the previous day. Across New York there have been 1,245,575 positive coronavirus cases since the start of the pandemic, according to the state tracker.

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# Chappaqua Firehouse Vote Tabled Until After Resident Meetings

By Martin Wilbur

The scheduling of a New Castle firehouse referendum has been put on hold until fire commissioners can form a group to meet with community members and provide details of any expansion.

Since late 2019, the Board of

Commissioners has periodically addressed the potential scheduling of a proposition to address space and safety needs at the facility at 495 King St. in Chappaqua. However, last week Board of Fire Commissioners Chair Terence Hoey said there won't be a vote until district officials have interacted with residents on the key issues facing the

firehouse and the district.

"There isn't a specific timeline, there isn't," Hoey said. "I believe that the time is not right to continue discussion with respect to a specific timeline."

Over the next couple of months, commissioners plan to establish a group and schedule meetings with residents to answer questions and provide information, he said. After that, the board could come up with a schedule, including informational meetings and a referendum date, if the community is generally in support of a plan and the board has demonstrated a need, Hoey said.

Throughout last year, estimated project costs were repeatedly promised to the public but were not formally discussed. Then in October, commissioners met with architect Bob Mitchell to review preliminary drawings. At the time, Mitchell said the schematic design had been completed and a design development would need to be created before a more accurate estimate could be provided.

The only estimates for a possible two-story addition were from last March, totaling just over \$12 million. That estimate was later placed on the fire district's website. The figure included \$10,217,806 in hard construction costs and another \$1,846,422 in soft costs.

In addition to fitting larger trucks, there are health and safety issues that must be

addressed in a modern firehouse. Room to disinfect equipment after firefighters return from a fire and removing clutter so the volunteers have quick and easy access into and out of the building were among the most significant concerns, Mitchell said in his presentation last fall.

Hoey said once representatives have met with residents it might be appropriate to move forward.

"I don't think we're in a position right now," he said. "I think this board needs to spend a couple of months discussing this issue, and then considering all options, perhaps after establishing a conversation with some of the residents."

Resident Lynne Lambert applauded the commissioners for wanting to receive public feedback before pressing forward with a referendum. Lambert said she believed that public outreach by Millwood fire officials may have been the difference in getting the referendum approved for their new firehouse.

"I felt it came very late (in the process) in our last referendum in 2016, and having that along the way would be incredibly helpful," she said.

The 2016 expansion referendum was badly defeated; however, a subsequent vote was approved to buy the adjacent parcel on King Street to accommodate a future expansion.

## First Case of U.K. COVID Strain Confirmed in Westchester County

By Anna Young

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Sunday that an individual in Westchester County has tested positive for the United Kingdom variant of COVID-19.

This is the county's first confirmed case of the virus strain, but it is unknown the individual's age, gender or town of residence. To date, there are 18 confirmed cases of the variant in New York State.

Due to the aggressive spread of the virus, the U.K. has been under lockdown since mid-December. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now requires all passengers flying from the U.K. to the United States to test negative for COVID-19 prior to boarding.

Health officials warn that the new variant is up to 70 percent more transmissible than earlier versions of the virus, but there is currently no evidence showing the

new variant causes more severe illness or increased risk of death.

However, like the coronavirus, the CDC asserts that an increase in cases will put more strain on health care resources, lead to more hospitalizations and potentially more deaths.

On Jan. 4, Cuomo announced the state's first case of the U.K. variant had been confirmed in a 60-year-old Saratoga County man. The individual had no known history of travel when he tested positive.

In recent weeks, the virus has since been detected in Nassau, Suffolk, Tompkins and Warren counties as well as in Queens and Manhattan.

Overall, cases have been confirmed in 14 states, including New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Florida, Georgia, Texas, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and California.

## SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS



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# Covill Won't Seek Re-election to BOL; Two Democratic Hopefuls Step Up

By Martin Wilbur

Two-term County Legislator Kitley Covill (D-Katonah) has decided against running for re-election in later this year opening the way for her legislative aide and a local Democratic party chair to vie for the seat.

Covill said last week that there were other challenges she hopes to pursue after she completes her fourth year representing District 2 on the Board of Legislators.

During her remaining time on the board there is a full agenda of challenges including helping Westchester recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, environmental initiatives and executing ethics reform at the county level.

With an open seat, Covill's legislative aide and Bedford resident Erika Pierce and Mount Kisco Democratic Chairman William Serratore plan to soon make an official announcement signaling they will vie for the Democratic nomination.

Pierce, who will be stepping down from her position as Covill's aide at the end of the month to concentrate on her candidacy, said when the lawmaker made her intentions known, she decided to jump into the fray.

"I've been working very hard for this district for the last few years, and know the district incredibly well," said Pierce, who acknowledged that she was mildly surprised at Covill's decision not to run again. "Given the time of crisis that we're in, there is probably no better time to make sure that

whoever is coming into that office can hit the ground running on Day One and knows all the issues and know all the players and procedures and really knows what needs to be done."

She added that her professional experience would bring valuable skills to the Board of Legislators. In addition to holding her current post since Covill was sworn in at the start of 2018, Pierce worked for about a decade as a financial manager for a company, helping them navigate the upheavals following 9/11 and two recessions, as well as managing a nonprofit organization.

"So that experiences, in addition, I think makes me particularly well qualified to come into the district now as legislator because our downtowns and our arts nonprofits are hurting post-COVID," Pierce said.

Serratore, who has lived in Mount Kisco for 27 years, said he'll be pursuing the seat because he wants to increase his service to the community.

"I feel as if I'm active and energetic enough and committed to serving," said Serratore, who owns an energy supply company. "I think I've been a good steward for the party and I would like to serve in a greater capacity, and being a 30-year resident of this district, I think I understand the concerns of the constituents and can provide effective leadership and legislation."

Serratore made an unsuccessful bid in September to succeed Reginald LaFayette



County Legislator Kitley Covill has decided against running for a third term on the Board of Legislators. So far, her legislative aide Erika Pierce and Mount Kisco Democratic Chairman William Serratore have confirmed that they plan to officially announce their candidacies for the seat.

to become Westchester's next Democratic Party chairman. That role went to Suzanne Berger of Greenburgh. He also has served as the county Democratic Committee's

executive director.

Both Pierce and Serratore agreed that they expect a Republican challenger for November, pointing out that an open seat typically attracts more potential candidates. Furthermore, until relatively recently, the district has traditionally more Republican leaning districts.

While Mount Kisco and now Bedford are solidly Republican, District 2 also takes in Lewisboro, Pound Ridge, North Salem and part of Somers and is the most geographically expansive district in the county.

A primary to determine the nominee would be held on June 22.

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# Westchester, NYC Rotary Clubs Distribute 300,000 Masks Across Region

The Rotary Million Mask Challenge Take 2 tour arrived at White Plains High School's student parking lot last Thursday with a delivery of 200,000 surgical masks, 50,000 children's masks and 50,000 KN95 masks that were picked up by Rotary clubs in Westchester, the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island.

After the distribution stop in White Plains, the truck went on to Harlem and Staten Island to cover all of the District 7230 Rotary Clubs in the region.

Of the 300,000 masks, 112,000 surgical masks and 29,000 children's masks will be distributed by Rotary Clubs in Westchester County and the Bronx for first responders, health care organizations, food pantries and children's organizations in their communities.

The Rotary Million Mask Challenge was the brainchild of Connecticut Rotary member Ted Rossi and the Rossi Family Foundation. In October they secured a million masks and donated them to first

responders, health care organizations and needy communities in the Northeast. Rotarians throughout the area organized and participated in the distributions called Take 1.

Because of the ongoing pandemic, Rossi donated another two million masks through the Rotary network in New England and this time to New York. The four-day Take 2 tour last week saw the 26-foot Million Mask Challenge Tour truck drop off the much-needed PPE facemasks during stops at 14 Rotary clubs to receive and distribute the masks all over their territory.

There were 25 Rotary clubs in Westchester, the Bronx and Riverdale that participated in the Jan. 14 White Plains tour stop. They were joined by Westchester County Executive George Latimer, White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach, White Plains Schools Superintendent Joseph Ricca and New York City Councilman Mark Gjonaj.

The masks are being distributed to



JOHN EHRLICH PHOTO

Boxes containing some of the 300,000 masks that were delivered to the White Plains High School parking lot last Thursday as part of the Rotary Million Mask Challenge. Rotary clubs throughout Westchester and New York City participated in helping to take and distribute the masks to first responders, health care organizations and communities in need.

numerous community organizations including food pantries, volunteer ambulance corps, family community centers, youth bureaus, St. John's Hospital and Sound Shore Hospital.

The White Plains organizations that are receiving masks are the White Plains Youth

Bureau; the Salvation Army White Plains; Slater Center/Ecumenical Food Pantry; Grace Church Food Pantry; White Plains elementary schools; El Centro Hispano; Lifting Up Westchester; Coachman Family Center; and Feeding Westchester.

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# Galef Calls for Removal of Trump Name From State Park

By Rick Pezzullo

Now that President Donald Trump faces a second impeachment for inciting an insurrection at the Capitol, Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) is calling for a passive state park in Yorktown that carries Trump's name to be renamed.

In a Jan. 14 letter to Erik Kulleseid, commissioner of the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Galef requests signs on the Taconic State Parkway that advertise the park be taken down.

"It is time for these signs and this charade to end. There is no park, just abandoned structures and some woodlands," Galef wrote. "Originally meant to be a golf course, the park is simply the result of offloading

a tax liability and reaping the publicity. We must take a stand. The motorists on the Taconic have complained for years, increased recently, that our state directs people to a defunct park named for Mr. Trump."

"Monuments, landmarks, and parks can hold a symbolic meaning and in this case a park named for Donald J. Trump can only represent the division he has sought to create in our country over the past four years," she added. "This division has no place in our state."

Several online petitions have been circulating that also advocate for a name change. One, which has attracted more than 17,000 signatures to date, is looking for the park to be named in honor of the late American folk singer Pete Seeger, who lived

## Manhattan D.A.'s Trump Criminal Probe Includes Seven Springs Property

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance has widened its criminal investigation into outgoing President Donald Trump's company to include possible inflation of the value of Trump's Seven Springs estate, multiple media sources reported.

Bedford Town Attorney Joel Sachs told CNBC last Friday that the town was subpoenaed by Vance's office for records. The 213-acre property, which lies mostly in the Town of Bedford, was approved for development of seven mansions. About 30 acres of the land are in North Castle or New Castle. It is not clear whether those two

towns were also contacted by the Manhattan D.A.'s office.

In August, New York Attorney General Letitia James opened a civil investigation into whether Trump fraudulently inflated the value of the property. In 1996, he bought the property for \$7.5 million, but 16 years later, the Trump Organization valued the land at \$291 million.

Trump's company then used that valuation for a \$21 million tax deduction when granting a conservation easement in 2015.

—Martin Wilbur



Assemblywoman Sandy Galef, right, has asked the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to strip Donald Trump's name from the state park, most of which is located in Yorktown.



in Patterson in Putnam County.

Galef believes it would be fitting to name the park for former Governor George Pataki, a former Peekskill mayor and resident of Garrison.

"Former Governor Pataki has called the Hudson Valley home for decades. Mr. Pataki made environmental conservation and preservation part of his agenda and it should be acknowledged publicly," Galef stated. "I can think of no better way to honor our two State Mottos of Excelsior and E. Pluribus Unum than by ridding a blight from our state and replacing it with a demonstration of bipartisanship and shared values."

Trump purchased the 436 acres for \$2

million in the 1990s with plans to build a \$10 million private golf course. The land contained significant wetlands and any development would have faced strict environmental restrictions and permitting requirements. He donated it to the state in 2006 after he was unable to gain approvals in Yorktown for the golf course.

The park is divided into two sections, the 282-acre Indian Hill parcel in northern Yorktown and Putnam Valley and the 154-acre French Hill parcel in southern Yorktown.

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# Obituary

## Saul Singer, Former Robison Oil CEO, Dies at 84

Saul Singer, the former CEO of Robison, one of the largest full-service home comfort and energy companies in the region, died on Jan. 10 in Florida. He was 84.

Singer led the growth, expansion and diversification his family's home heating oil company, which started as Original Consumers Oil, serving the five boroughs of New York City. Over time, it grew into a full-service energy company serving thousands of residents throughout Westchester and Putnam counties.

He was born on May 30, 1936, to Anna and Harry Singer. His father founded the company Original Consumers Oil in 1928, and in the 1980s the company purchased Robison Oil, which was founded in 1921.

Robison is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. The Port Chester-based company with 200 employees, delivers home heating oil and clean-burning biofuel, natural gas and electricity and installs and services heating, air conditioning systems and plumbing services.

Saul, his wife Fran, and his sons oversaw a more than three-decade expansion of the company, purchasing more than 15 regional oil and HVAC companies while diversifying into air conditioning services, domestic plumbing and green renewable energy solutions.

Singer was also a significant contributor to the betterment of Jewish life and culture in Westchester. He was the youngest



Saul Singer in a 1992 photo.

president of Greenburgh Hebrew Center at age 30 and a founding member of the Solomon Schechter School in White Plains, a co-educational Jewish day school, which is now the Leffell School. He was a founding member of the Westchester Business and Professional's division of UJA, chaired the Westchester division of Israeli bonds and the Jewish National Fund.

Singer led a mission to the former Soviet Union to deliver religious items to dissidents and returned to create the Westchester Conference on Soviet Jewry, now the Westchester Jewish Council, that fought for the release of the Jewish people from behind the Iron Curtain.

He graduated from the University of Illinois in 1957 with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. Singer enjoyed a great relationship with the Teamsters Union

and sat as a trustee until his death. He was a proud supporter of White Plains Hospital and dozens of other local charities.

Singer is survived by his wife, Fran; sons Michael, David and Daniel; daughters-in-law, Jill and Holly; and grandchildren Cassidy, Delilah, Olivia, Ben, Wyatt, Harrison, Zara and Jared.

Due to COVID-19, in-person funeral services and shiva were restricted to immediate family.

## Bronx Man Dies After Car Overtakes in Cortlandt Crash

By Anna Young

One person was killed after a car overturned during a fatal crash in Cortlandt last Wednesday night.

Bronx resident Samuel Puerto Paz, 32, died in the single-car crash, according to New York State police. Passenger Enzo Flores, 20, also of the Bronx, was treated for injuries.

Around 5:25 p.m. on Jan. 13, state police responded to a rollover on West Mount Airy Road near Hollis Lane. Upon arrival, the Croton-on-Hudson Fire Department was assisting the occupants of the 2006 Ford Econoline.

Police said Paz was driving westbound on Mount Airy Road when the vehicle left the curved roadway for unknown reasons, ultimately hitting a tree stump and losing control. When the vehicle got back onto the roadway, it crossed over both lanes, overturned and struck a utility pole, according to police.

Paz was pronounced dead at the scene by paramedics and Flores was transported by Croton EMS to Westchester Medical Center with non-life-threatening injuries.

The investigation into the accident is ongoing.

### Thinking of Running for Office or Getting Involved in Your Community?

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

This year in the **Town of Cortlandt**: Town Supervisor, Two Town Council persons, Town Clerk, Receiver of Taxes and Town Justice  
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Please contact the committee at [danielpaganolaw@optonline.net](mailto:danielpaganolaw@optonline.net).

We look forward to meeting you.

Thank you and keep safe. **Daniel L. Pagano, Esq.**

Chairman, Town of Cortlandt Republican Committee

**Steve Winkelman**, Chairman Town of Cortlandt Conservative Committee

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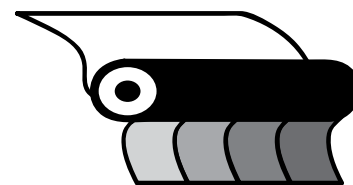
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# No. Castle Planners Split on Affordable Housing Reduction at Lumberyard

By Martin Wilbur

In a split 3-2 vote, the North Castle Planning Board recommended last week a reduction in the percentage of affordable housing units for the scaled-back condominium project at the old lumberyard in Armonk.

The board narrowly agreed to suggest to the Town Board that 10 percent of the units should be affordable rather than 20 percent if developer Michael Fareri follows through on a revised proposal to reduce the density of the project at 154-162 Bedford Rd. from 36 to 22 units. Under the revised plan, there would be two affordable units and 20 market-rate residences, down from six affordable units for the 36-unit project.

Fareri must obtain all approvals and complete construction by June 30, 2022, to make the change unless there is an unforeseeable delay.

Town Attorney Roland Baroni said Westchester County has agreed to the amendment in the covenant for the property. The county must approve any changes regulating affordable units in municipalities that have an affordable housing ordinance on the books.

"The county executive has signed the amendment and I'm holding it in escrow and I will file it once the Town Board has acted," Baroni said.

Following a public hearing, a zoning text amendment to reduce the affordable housing in the R-MF-SS district would

be needed from the Town Board. Fareri must also return to the Planning Board to subdivide the property because the layout of the revised plan has changed. He must obtain site plan approval on the new plan as well.

A slim majority of Planning Board members recommended the reduction in the percentage of affordable units to help move the project forward. Board member Lawrence Ruisi said the property has been sitting empty for years, which fails to help the town and the developer.

"We're trying to create a situation where this is going to get built," Ruisi said. "If we keep on putting hurdles up there, this is not going to get built."

Board member Steven Sauro said that he backed the amendment going from 20 to 10 percent for the affordable housing units because 10 percent is the requirement in all other districts in town.

Chairman Christopher Carthy joined Ruisi and Sauro in supporting the change. Carthy mentioned that those with reservations about the will have another chance to press their point during site plan review.

Fareri received approvals more than five years ago for the 36-unit plan, agreeing at the time to the 20 percent threshold for affordable units. However, afterwards he contended that he couldn't build the project because it was no longer financially feasible. Fareri was unsuccessful in his attempt to transfer the affordable units to a 16-unit

project of his that was recently completed at 470 Main St. in Armonk.

Dissenting board members Michael Pollack and James Jensen argued that despite the reduction in the project's unit count, the floor-area ratio (FAR) remains at about .9. Pollack said density is not just a function of unit count but also of bulk.

"This zone already has a FAR that's in excess of everything around it and that the reduction in the number of units without an accompanying reduction of the FAR is incomplete," Pollack said. "It certainly doesn't give us enough basis to evaluate it."

So reducing the number of units by itself doesn't necessarily result in a reduction in density."

In October, Fareri expressed confidence that he would meet the town-imposed deadline to receive the reduction in affordable units. Traffic, water consumption and sewer capacity issues would not have to be rehashed because the project will be smaller, he said. His hope was to receive approvals over the next several months enabling him to break ground sometime this spring.



## Welcome Aboard

The Westchester County Association recently elected Kristen N. Gizzi, general counsel for ECCO III Enterprises, Inc., director of real estate for ECCO Development, LLC Yonkers and executive director of Litchfield Crossings in New Milford, Conn., to its board of directors. The Westchester County Association is the region's leading development and business advocacy organization.

# Bill Volz Westchester

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***Advanced Manufacturing Tech Firm  
to Double its Space in Hawthorne***



The building on Skyline Drive in Hawthorne where PTI, a leader in advanced manufacturing technologies, will expand its operations.

Continuing to build on its focus serving the needs of the pharmaceutical and medical device industries, Robert Martin Company announced last week that PTI, a leader in advanced manufacturing technologies, has signed a lease for 13,650 square feet of expansion space at 8 Skyline Drive at the Mid-Westchester Executive Park in Hawthorne.

PTI, which manufactures non-destructive package inspection technologies for the pharmaceutical, medical device and food industries, had previously leased 14,255 square feet at the location in 2018. The space incorporated PTI's executive offices, sales department, research and development, manufacturing and shipping and receiving functions.

With this new lease, PTI now occupies about 28,000 square feet at 8 Skyline Drive, nearly four times the size of its original offices in Tuckahoe.

"PTI's considerable expansion at our Mid-Westchester Executive Park represents the kind of entrepreneurial, innovative technology companies we are targeting for growth through the RMC Bio1 initiative we launched in late 2019," said Tim Jones, CEO of Robert Martin Company.

RMC Bio1 focuses primarily on attracting life sciences and health technologies companies transitioning from start-up incubators and accelerator programs into larger "graduation" spaces, as well as working on the retention of existing small to midsize firms in Westchester in need of expanding their operations. This includes providing flexible spaces for light manufacturing, labs and/or offices designed especially for high-growth potential companies utilizing the latest in research and development workflow techniques.

"Skyline Drive's repositioning as an innovation corridor for the life sciences and health technologies industry is bearing fruit," said Greg Berger, president of

Robert Martin Company. "PTI's expansion is evidence of a longer-term trend that will benefit the Westchester economy for years to come."

RMC Bio1 Managing Director Laurence Gottlieb noted that the expansion of larger scientific research and development companies such as Regeneron Pharmaceuticals creates start-up and expansion opportunities for companies in related fields that feed off that growth.

He said Skyline Drive has been evolving into a "bio boulevard" as more STEM-related companies connect and form an epicenter in Westchester, which includes Regeneron, Acorda Therapeutics, New York Medical College, BioInc@NYMC, Westchester Medical Center and the planned North 60 life sciences campus in Valhalla.

PTI's CEO Oliver Stauffer said that his company's story "has been one of innovation and creativity, creating an intellectual powerhouse within our specific field. We find the Westchester business community vibrant and supportive in growing high-tech manufacturing companies like ours."

PTI has been located in Westchester for more than 30 years.

"We look forward to a strong future here as we continue on our mission to assure patient safety through quality control," Stauffer said.

The PTI lease is the second transaction in several months at Skyline Drive, which is emerging as a center for companies in the bioscience and medical device field. In October, Clarapath leased 7,000 square feet at 12 Skyline Drive. The company, which is moving from New York City, is a developer of an integrated histology platform designed to standardize and digitally transform anatomic pathology.

The company plans to use the new space for the light manufacturing of its medical tech equipment.

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# P'ville Firefighters Remember Slain Volunteer 25 Years Later

By Kristen McNerney

Pleasantville firefighters, police and friends honored the memory of volunteer firefighter Thomas Dorr at a vigil in Graham Hills Park last Monday night, not far from where he was murdered 25 years ago last week.

Dorr, a Pleasantville resident who worked for the White Plains Water Department at the time of his death, didn't report to the firehouse ahead of a winter storm on Jan. 6, 1996.

Dorr's brother, Steve, said fellow firefighters found Dorr's body with stab wounds beneath two feet of snow the following day.

To this day, no one has been arrested in Dorr's murder.

"If there's anyone out there who has information, please come forward," said Capt. Mark Busche who heads the cold case unit of the Westchester County police.

Steve Dorr said the county parkway police's jurisdiction over the case contributed to its mishandling. Dorr and his wife, Jane Lockett, who live in Florida, said they haven't been contacted regarding the case in years and conduct a quick Google search at about the time of Dorr's death every year to see if any new details have surfaced.

"We appreciate the community continuing to keep Tom's memory alive," Lockett said of the annual vigil.

Candles were lit and placed alongside a cross in front of a maple tree planted after Dorr's murder. Those who knew Dorr spoke kindly of his life and legacy. Fellow firefighter John Perino said Dorr was one to always go

the extra mile and help out with anything that needed to be done.

"Tom was a good friend, a hard worker and very conscientious of everything he did," said Perino, who has served the Pleasantville Fire Department for 52 years.

Fr. Luke Hoyt of Holy Innocents Church in Pleasantville led the group in a prayer of the Our Father. Although he did not know Dorr, he said he was honored to have led the vigil.

Hoyt spoke of the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 10 and brought comfort to the crowd.

"The water of the river Jordan where Jesus was baptized represents not so much, life, but death," he said. "Jesus entered into the waters of death to show us that he is with us in any darkness."

Steve Dorr said he holds little hope that anyone will be punished for the crime after all these years, but keeping his brother's memory alive is crucial. Lockett added that her mother-in-law tried to guard against getting upset by the lack of justice, since her husband, Dorr's father, died of a broken heart. She did not want to meet the same fate.

"I think a lot of people know what happened, we just don't have the proof," said firefighter John Thys, who helped organize the vigil. "He was a good person who deserves justice."

At the time of Dorr's death, his wife, Jane Sawyer, and stepson, Jeffrey Sawyer, were suspects. Dorr also had one biological son, Thomas, who was a young teenager when his father was killed. Steve Dorr and Lockett said they believe their nephew suppresses



KRISTEN MCNERNEY PHOTOS

Pleasantville firefighters gathered at Graham Hills Park last Monday night to remember Thomas Dorr, who was found in a snowbank stabbed to death in January 1996. No one has ever been arrested in connection with the murder.

the tragedy, but that he embodies his father's best qualities.

"Thomas has always been a quiet, gentle, smart young man," Lockett said of Dorr's son.

The couple shared personal details of Dorr's life, including his fascination with cars and motorcycles and his height of almost 6-foot-8, which excused him from the draft during the Vietnam War. Dorr was also known to love animals and nature, and was called the "gentle giant."

Perino said Dorr used to feed wild turkeys in the woods and wasn't surprised when Dorr's wife called and said her husband had stopped to feed the turkeys on the way to the firehouse. Perino said he never expected



The maple tree that was planted in Dorr's memory at Graham Hills Park.

what he and other firefighters would discover the next day.

"I think one day this will come to a resolution," said Thys. "Someone will have a conscience and come forward."

He added that only about 10 of the roughly 50 people at the vigil had known Dorr. The rest had come in support of someone they had heard to be a great man.

"What can I say, he was my brother," Steve Dorr said about the emotional impact of talking about Tom.

Busche asked anyone with information related to the killing to contact Westchester County police at 914-864-7701 and ask for him.



## Lung Cancer is a Silent Killer

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**A:** Lung cancer is a silent killer. In its early stages, it has no symptoms and can spread without warning. That's why lung cancer screening for people who are high-risk is so important: They often feel perfectly healthy. Often, people don't develop symptoms until the disease has either spread or grown too large to cure. Research shows that if a person's lung cancer is detected at an earlier stage, their five-year survival rate can increase from four percent to fifty-five percent, according to the American Lung Association.

#### Q: Who is considered high-risk?

**A:** If you currently smoke or have a long history of smoking, you may be considered high-risk. Of course, even lifetime non-smokers sometimes get lung cancer. Exposure to second-hand smoke, asbestos, or a family history of lung cancer can all increase risk. For the safest approach, speak to your doctor about any of the above risk factors. If your physician recommends a lung cancer screening, don't delay.

#### Q: How are patients screened and treated?

**A:** Patients are screened with a noninvasive low-dose CT scan, which only takes a minute. It's a very sensitive test for diagnosing lung cancer. If the cancer is in the early stages, the most advanced treatment option is minimally invasive robotic surgery, which enables me

to move surgical instruments more precisely, so I'm not damaging healthy surrounding tissue. In addition, I'm able to make tiny incisions, so there's less bleeding and pain for the patient. At NWH, we also offer advanced ablation techniques, which use image guidance to insert a needle through the skin into the tumor. Other options include burning or freezing the tumor; or stereotactic radiosurgery, which uses radiation without an incision.

#### Q: What if surgery is too risky for the patient?

**A:** Some patients have advanced lung disease, very bad emphysema, or heart disease, and surgery is too risky. If the patient is too high-risk, the cancer is too advanced or the patient doesn't want surgery, an option is immunotherapy, a newer treatment. Immunotherapy is a targeted treatment that revs up the immune system so it's better able to fight the cancer. It's been remarkably effective. I have patients who are in complete remission. It's a wonderful advancement in the treatment of lung cancer. As part of the Northwell Health Cancer Institute, we're able to expand our ability to bring top-rated cancer specialists, state-of-the-art technology, leading-edge clinical trials and a full range of support programs so community members can get the best cancer care right near home, in Westchester. Patients who want the most advanced cancer care don't need to travel to New York City.



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# Letters to the Editor

## Say No to Developing Soundview/Underhill Property in Yorktown

How is it possible that seemingly overnight, the Soundview School (in the Underhill mansion at Underhill and Route 118) went from being a private school to – without any notice whatsoever to the general public – being purchased by a developer (Unicorn Contracting) that plans to carve it up and squeeze in enough residences to accommodate hundreds of people and up to 300 vehicles?

This piece of property is of extreme historical value to Yorktown. The land and many of the structures on the property are original and hail from the Underhill family, who were one of the first families to call Yorktown home, hence the road named Underhill. In fact, this property was many times bigger than it is now, encompassing much of the downtown Yorktown area. It is fantastic that their home and land are still there and in good shape.

If Yorktown was smart, appropriate and valued its history, our leaders would do all

they could to keep this piece of property intact and convert it into a public park and museum. They could move the Yorktown museum into the big house, add artist space and a gallery on the upper floors. They could have a café and art openings. They could create trails and picnic areas in the back. Have a place for performers to perform and event space to accommodate weddings or parties.

It's a beautiful piece of property that contains an original man-made lake and offers wetlands, specimen trees and forested land/open space, which is something increasingly rare in Yorktown. It's a phenomenal opportunity to showcase the heart and history of our town.

If anyone has ever been to Caramoor in Katonah, an absolutely gorgeous piece of land throughout which incredible music concerts are performed year-round, you can imagine the Underhill property (although smaller) could serve a similar purpose. This is what

the Underhill property should be – Yorktown's version of Caramoor.

Other huge problems in developing this piece of property include impossible traffic issues; water, sewer and drainage issues; zoning issues; noise issues; school crowding; and the additional strain on emergency responders.

If you wish to object to this development project, please let the Yorktown Town Board know ASAP. E-mail the Yorktown supervisor and councilpersons at Supervisor Matt Slater, mslater@yorktownny.org; Councilperson Tom Diana, tdiana@yorktownny.org; Councilperson Ed Lachterman, elachterman@yorktownny.org; Councilperson Vishnu Patel, vishnuv@optonline.net and Councilperson Alice Roker, aroker@yorktownny.org.

**Jennie Sunshine**  
**Yorktown Heights**

## Accusations Won't Change Fact That Wrong Tax Rates Were Publicized

When the writer of the letter in last week's paper, "Apology is in Order After Baseless Claims Made Against Yorktown Officials," accused me of being an obstructionist and conspiracy theorist, he obviously hadn't heard my comments at the December budget hearing. Or, if he did hear them, he chose to ignore them.

At the televised hearing, I very clearly acknowledged that, like past supervisors, I unwittingly had been using the wrong tax rate information for years as supervisor,

councilperson and resident. It was only after realizing my error, which was using a December estimated tax rate instead of the actual April tax rate when comparing the impact of taxes over two years, that I spoke up and brought the error to the board's attention. The comptroller acknowledged that there was a difference between the two tax rates.

My issue is that when the error was brought to the board's attention – and was not disputed – in the spirit of honesty

and transparency, the board should have changed the comparison between 2020 and 2021 town taxes. It didn't. Instead, the board continued to tell taxpayers, incorrectly, that it was "holding the line" on taxes when, in fact, many taxpayers will see an increase in their town tax bill in 2021.

All I did was tell the truth. I'm not the one who should apologize.

**Susan Siegel**  
**Yorktown Heights**

## Attacking America's History Will Not Help the Country in the Future

Mr. Stone's editorial last week, "America at its Best But We Still Have an Awfully Long Way to Go," is another example of the hatred progressives like himself have for our country's history.

Those of us privileged to be American citizens have been given a great gift. The progressives in this country want to fundamentally transform that gift. This transformation will destroy the nation we cherish. The fixation on race, class and gender, to the exclusion of all else, will tear us apart. As will the attack on our history that has been going on since the 1960s.

The college campuses, the media, the arts and now a growing portion of the Democratic Party reads from the same progressive script where America is the villain. Man by his nature is flawed and capable of great evil, so no country will ever be perfect, not even our great nation. But I ask Mr. Stone, what other nation in history has provided such freedoms

and opportunities as America has for its citizens (and I mean all its citizens)?

While Mr. Stone sees the America of today as our finest time, I look at an America in decline, breaking apart at the seams. If we are to be one nation, we must unite in a love of our nation, take pride in our unique history. Progressives look at our past and only see genocide, racism and sexism; they see something that should be destroyed and started over.

When I look at America's history, I see the foundation of a nation built on the notion that man has certain God-given rights that no government can take away; I see the heroism of our soldiers, who defeated the greatest superpower in the world to win our freedom and the succeeding generations of soldiers who have died, and continue to die, defending that hard-won freedom.

To be one nation, we need common heroes and common ideals we can all rally around. FDR, Truman and JFK were

all men of the left and they loved their country deeply. Why does the left today hate this country so much, what will this hatred bring except more hatred, violence and destruction?

While we should not hide our country's sins, that should not be the focus of the history that we teach. In the scales of justice, America has done far more good than bad in its 245-year history.

As long as the price of admission to this new utopia that Mr. Stone and other progressives want to create is a rejection of our country and our country's heroes, I want no part of it. The progressives will receive no mea culpa from me on America's past. I will continue to revere it and pass on my love of our country to my children.

**Andrew Amenn**  
**Yorktown Heights**

## Publisher's Column Hit the Right Notes in Discussing American Progress

I'm not alone in deeply appreciating your last editorial, "America at its Best But We Still Have an Awfully Long Way to Go." In this present atmosphere of strong opinions, loud voices and blazing headlines, you set the present into the context of history, which we too often neglect to consider. Yours are words not only for the "progressives" you

address, but for anyone claiming American identity. We've never been the "more perfect Union" hoped for in the Preamble to the Constitution, but we cannot stop trying to be. That is the American way.

It doesn't hurt to remember Shakespeare's wisdom: "Whereof what's past is prologue; what to come in yours and my discharge."

I used your editorial as the first part of my sermon for the People of St. Andrew's (see Facebook) on January 10. I simply couldn't have said it better.

**The Rev. Dr. Carole Johannsen**  
**Bedford Hills**

# Calls Renewed for Positive Declaration for Kisco Cell Tower, Solar Farm

By Martin Wilbur

Neighbors near the 25-acre site of a proposed cell tower and solar farm once again called on the Mount Kisco Planning Board last Tuesday to undertake a robust environmental review of the projects.

During the public hearing for the solar farm at 180 S. Bedford Rd., speakers appealed to the board to issue a positive declaration under the state Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) because of the potential significant cumulative impacts the projects could have on the area and the village. The cell tower would also be located on the same parcel.

In addition to being an eyesore, the projects would result in the loss of close to 700 trees, which could contribute to excessive runoff and threaten the value of nearby residences, neighbors argued.

Resident Rex Pietrobono said the land, which borders the Marsh Sanctuary, is the last remaining undeveloped 25 acres

parcel in Mount Kisco. He said using the roofs of public buildings for solar panels and building carparks are a better solution than encroaching on residential properties and environmentally sensitive areas.

"While many of us like the idea of renewable energy, we don't want to trade our limited greenspace to get it," Pietrobono said during the hearing on the solar farm. "These are intelligent people and therefore should figure out how to make use of the rooftops, parking lots and commercial properties."

The public never got a chance to comment on the second hearing for the cell tower. The marathon six-hour meeting, which featured a packed agenda, was approaching midnight when Village Attorney Whitney Singleton and Robert Gaudioso, an attorney representing Homeland Towers, resumed their testy exchanges.

The possibility of shifting the tower elsewhere on the property so it could be

less obtrusive to residents has been met with resistance by Gaudioso, who has argued that his client's lease with property owners Skull Island Partners prohibits moving the tower from a predetermined location.

"Did your lease change from the time you submitted it without objection," Singleton quizzed Gaudioso.

Gaudioso bristled at the question and wanted to know if Singleton wanted to cross-examine him under oath before reiterating his position.

"It's a specific location on the property and that's very clearly stated in the lease, and if you had the ability as the lessee to put that facility anywhere on the property anytime you wanted, that lease wouldn't hold water," Gaudioso said.

Manny Vicente, president of Homeland Towers, charged that Singleton's focus on the lease prevented the board from "talking about real issues." He said that the suggestion to move the proposed 145-

foot monopole toward the top of the hill is problematic for all parties.

"We're trying to do our best to hide this facility and limit the visibility and you keep on asking us to go to the top of the hill that's not available to us," Vicente said.

"Did you not at any point in time have the right to go to the top of the hill?" Singleton continued to ask.

A short time later Vicente said he wanted to know if Singleton was an advocate for a special interest or advising the board.

"Are you questioning my integrity?" Singleton shot back.

"I'm questioning your question that has been asked and answered over and over again," Vicente responded.

Acting Planning Board Chairman Michael Bonforte, supported by fellow board members, suspended the hearing and said it would resume early on the agenda of a future meeting.



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## WHICH FUTURE MAKES SENSE FOR WESTCHESTER?

**Indian Point will shut down by April 2021, and federal law allows for up to 60 years for it to be dismantled and removed.**

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There's a smarter plan for Indian Point currently under review. It calls for major work to be completed in just 12-15 years.

The plan will provide hundreds of local jobs. It means opportunity for redevelopment of the land decades sooner. And it results in predictable tax revenue for local schools and governments.

Indian Point will close soon after operating for nearly 60 years. We don't have to wait another 60 years for it to be dismantled.

Learn about the smarter plan at **[indianpointdecommissioning.com](http://indianpointdecommissioning.com)**

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

Indian Point Energy Center





## The Ashikari Breast Center has joined Northwell Health and moved to two new state-of-the-art locations.

Andrew Ashikari, MD, FACS and Pond Kelemen, MD, FACS of the Ashikari Breast Center, recognized as leading experts in compassionate breast surgery, have joined Northwell Health Cancer Institute in Westchester. They are now part of our multidisciplinary team of breast specialists who work together to develop an individualized treatment plan to achieve the best possible outcome.

Dr. Ashikari and Dr. Kelemen are now part of Northwell Health and have moved to these new locations:

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Mount Kisco, NY 10549  
(914) 362-6270

Northwell Health Physician Partners Breast Surgery at Phelps  
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# How Much 'De-Personalization' is Too Much When Selling a House?

With many of us stuck at home because of COVID-19, we probably have more time on our hands to consider our surroundings. Therefore, it might be a good time to question whether those surroundings truly express who we are and whether they support our comfort and interests.

Further, we might consider how others perceive our home, especially for anyone who might be considering selling in the near future.

I have always believed that our home surroundings should project who we are through the use of highly personal items that remind, motivate and inspire us to achieve certain goals, both professionally and personally. But how much of that should be revealed to prospective buyers?

As a realtor, I know that when a home is on the market and prospective buyers are invited in, sellers are advised to "neutralize" or de-personalize the décor with bland colors and to "hide" personal items so that the buyer can project their own lives into the space. Such personal effects as family photographs on the refrigerator, it is advised, can sabotage that objective.



By Bill Primavera

But here's a realtor who did not take his own advice. When I put my colonial home on the market five years ago, I tried de-personalizing in just one room of my house, but failed when I found that I was uncomfortable being set adrift in a world of sterility without all the reminders that comfort and inspire me, collected over a lifetime. I wanted to experience them every day, despite the fact that my home was on the market. Prospective buyers would just have to see beyond this little kink in my thinking.

I became aware of this issue about revealing too much of

ourselves to buyer prospects during my first week in the real estate business. My office received a call from a client who complained that a visiting agent had left her business card on the seller's "home altar," certainly a very private matter. When the agent was advised of the complaint, she responded, "Gee, to me it just looked like an end table. I thought the statue of the Buddha was just for decoration."

While I do have evidence of calling upon the Divine in my own home, my main focus for motivation and inspiration – and this is highly confessional – has always

been my daily quest for fitness. Having been involved for many years in the food and restaurant field as a promoter, I was like a kid in a candy shop, coping daily with all the products I represented – and I didn't have Medifast or Nutrisystem as a client. As a consequence, I surrounded myself with motivational tools for health and fitness. Any visitor to my home would clearly know that.

In my dressing room, for instance, was a weight bench, although it was mostly used as a pants rack. Directly over my barbell rack was a framed watercolor, painted by my daughter when she was eight, depicting me as a musclemán pumping barbells, with a photograph of my face pasted on the neck. It's just too charming and motivational for me to hide.

Then there were the nutrition and diet books in the kitchen bookshelf, including the very first book published by Weight Watchers, signed by the group's founder, Jean Nidetch, whom I once met.

Also, I devote myself to achieving mental calm and relaxation through meditation and have tools to encourage that, including a tubular tuning chime and an extensive collection of crystals that all but make my man cave vibrate.

And I hid nothing when there was a showing.

I have found some real estate bloggers

who share my view that there is some confusion between de-cluttering and de-personalizing. I think the former is what should be sought, rather than removing the history, love and taste bestowed on a home by its sellers. Creating clean and open spaces is a good thing. But removing distinctive colors with boring beige is not something I recommend as professional stagers sometimes do.

As for items that project our personal lives, I suspect that buyers have more than a little curiosity about them. The lifestyle that we may take great pride in might just be an attraction rather than a turn-off. Many times, I observe buyer clients looking at family photographs and, in particular, reading the titles of books on the shelf.

I welcomed prospective buyers to my highly personalized home with all its revealing evidence of a life well lived and enjoyed. Despite that personalization, we sold quickly and at a good price. It's all a matter of a case-by-case consideration. Does personalization project your home in its best light? Then, I say go for it.

*Bill Primavera, while a writer and public relations practitioner, is also a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate in Yorktown Heights. To engage the talents and services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.*

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# Friends of Miller House Announces New Leadership for 2021

Friends of Miller House/Washington's Headquarters announced that new leadership has been elected for the term that commenced on Jan. 1.

Former New Castle Town Board member and longtime advocate for Miller House, John S. Diaconis, was elected president and Adam Rodriguez was elected vice president. Diaconis and Rodriguez are partners in the law firm of Bleakley, Platt & Schmidt LLP, one of Westchester's oldest firms, which has a history of civic engagement in the county. The founding member was William Bleakley, Westchester's first county executive.

Edward L. Woodyard was elected vice president as well. Woodyard has been involved with the Friends since its inception, including having served as president, and has been active in community affairs. Leo Viricillo will be the new treasurer. Linda Fernberg stepped down as president, but will remain on the board of directors. The Friends are appreciative of Fernberg's past service and pleased she'll stay on as board member.

"We are grateful for County Executive Latimer's leadership in preserving this historic landmark," Diaconis said. "The Elijah Miller House is an 18th century farmhouse used by General George Washington during the Revolutionary War as a headquarters command post."

The house, located on Virginia Road in North White Plains, was home to Ann and Elijah Miller and their seven children, he said. Miller and two sons, John and Elijah Jr., died as members of Westchester's militia in 1776. Ann Miller then turned the house into a hospital



John Diaconis, left, and Adam Rodriguez, were recently elected president and vice president, respectively, of Friends of Miller House/Washington's Headquarters.

for Continental soldiers. During the Battle of White Plains, soldiers sheltered under the shade of a 300-year-old sycamore that's preserved on the property, Diaconis said.

"George Washington's leadership during and after the American Revolution set this great nation on a path that has endured for over 200 years," Rodriguez added. "The Friends are committed to sustaining Washington's legacy. We'll assist the county in programming and plan to educate citizens both young and old not only about Washington's unprecedented



achievements, but also his position and struggle with other controversial issues."

The organization also recently announced that Philip Sieverding has been elected as a member of the Board of Directors for a three-year term that started Jan. 1.

Sieverding, 28, is a product of the Chappaqua School District, graduating from Horace Greeley High School. He attended New York University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in theater arts. Sieverding is currently the artistic director of

Brunch Theatre Company.

"Philip has extensive experience in storytelling, production and programming," Diaconis said. "The Friends look forward to utilizing his creativity as we expand the scope of our events. It's our intention to connect with a wide range of audiences and share our common history and values. Philip will help us do so."

Sieverding said he was thrilled to be elected to the board.

"I believe that we are at a crucial moment in our history. As we continue to both celebrate and reckon with the foundation on which America was built, I look forward to exploring the Miller House's significance in history and engaging our Millennial and Gen Z communities," he said.

Friends of Miller House/Washington's Headquarters, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to aiding in the historic preservation of this important national landmark, which is owned by Westchester County. Since its formation in 2011, the Friends have spent hundreds of hours working with the county and the Town of North Castle to save Miller House/Washington's Headquarters. The structure reopened after many years following a major refurbishment that was completed in 2019.

Diaconis and Rodriguez also thanked Daughters of Liberty's Legacy for their hard work in preserving the house.

The Friends are looking for new members and to fill board of directors vacancies. Those interested may contact John Diaconis directly at [jdiaconis@bpslaw.com](mailto:jdiaconis@bpslaw.com).

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# Yorktown for Justice Hosts Food Drive on MLK Day of Service

By Sophia Spiegel

Yorktown for Justice, a group dedicated to creating community and working for justice, observed the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service on Monday by hosting a food drive to benefit the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown's food pantry. The holiday encourages Americans to volunteer to improve their local towns and cities as a way to honor King's legacy.

Yorktown for Justice was formed last year after more than 1,000 local residents participated in a march for social justice in

Yorktown following the killing of George Floyd.

One Yorktown resident, Stefanie Iennaco, was one of the many people inspired by the outpouring of local activism. She helped to turn the momentum from the march into Yorktown for Justice.

As part of its efforts to promote a more inclusive environment and spread awareness of the inequities within their community, Yorktown for Justice collected 11 carloads and truckloads of non-perishable food items and more than \$650 in donations at the Jack DeVito Field gazebo to benefit those in need.



Yorktown for Justice, a group created last year to unify the town and help others in need, collected 11 carloads and truckloads of food donations and \$650 to help the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown's food pantry during Monday's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

## Send a Valentine to a Hero

The message is a simple one, "Thank you so much for what you do, we always need you."

This is just one of the many sweet messages from the heart of a child to a soldier or veteran in a project called OPERATION VALENTINE.

Cassidy-Flynn Funeral Home, Inc. in Mount Kisco is one of nearly 1,000 exclusive Veterans & Family Memorial Care funeral home providers across America who are sponsoring the 12th annual OPERATION VALENTINE initiative. The project is simple and meaningful, said John G. Flynn, CEO and president at Cassidy-Flynn.

"Students and individuals throughout

the community write messages to the troops and veterans on Valentine cards, cut-put hearts or whatever they like, and we make sure that they are delivered to our brave men and women serving overseas," Flynn said.

Cards cannot include glitter, food or candy, but there are still many ways to personalize a handmade card. Write a message on them and say "Thank You," tell them about yourself and wish them a Happy Valentine's Day.

Valentine cards may be dropped off now through Feb. 5 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at Cassidy-Flynn Funeral Home, Inc., located at 288 E. Main St. in Mount Kisco.

"I know a lot of people don't think that things like that happen in Yorktown, but they do," Iennaco said of the level of food insecurity within the town.

Iennaco said she hopes that the food drive, along with other future events, will instill a greater sense of inclusiveness within their community.

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the group's ability to influence change has been challenging. There are many plans to engage residents but social distancing guidelines have made meeting in person to formally introduce group members to local residents difficult. However, that hasn't stopped Yorktown for Justice.

The group recently launched its website ([www.yorktownforjustice.org](http://www.yorktownforjustice.org)) where community members can learn about the work being done and join the group. There is a monthly newsletter and a blog is being

created to record and report on their efforts.


Anyone interested in Yorktown for Justice's mission may join its Facebook Group, where people are encouraged to share their thoughts on justice issues throughout the town and across the country.


From the food drive to creating a place for open and honest communication, Yorktown for Justice is not only providing much-needed help but trying to give the residents of Yorktown a unified community, Iennaco said.

"We have a great community, but there are people who don't feel as included as everybody else," she said.

Iennaco said she hopes the food drive will "build some goodwill and let people know that we are members of this community, we love Yorktown and we want everybody to feel the same way about it that we do."


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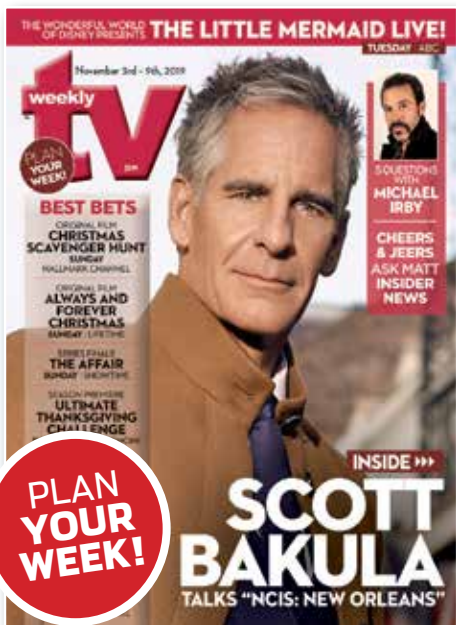
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# New York Knicks Legends Discuss Lasting Legacy of Dr. King

By Rick Pezzullo

State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins teamed up with three New York Knicks legends last Friday to discuss the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The Zoom panel forum, which featured Earl "The Pearl" Monroe, John Starks and moderator Allan Houston, was held on what would have been King's 92nd birthday.

Stewart-Cousins said she was 18 when King was assassinated on Apr. 4, 1968, while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis.

"Dr. King didn't start out to lead the movement at all. He never expected to be the Dr. King that we are still admiring and emulating today," she said. "It is very clear what Dr. King fought for and died for is still an issue. It's over 50 years but we are still not there yet."

Monroe, 76, a key member of the 1973 Knicks championship team, was named Rookie of the Year in 1968, a day before King was shot. To pay his respects, Monroe said he wore a black patch on his uniform the next season and read passages from King's speeches before every game.

"His passing for me was quite dramatic. He was the type of person who had



State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins participated in a virtual forum last Friday with basketball Hall of Famer Earl Monroe, left, to discuss the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on what would have been his 92nd birthday. Joining Stewart-Cousins and Monroe were two other Knicks legends, Allan Houston and John Starks.

humility and cared about his fellow man," Monroe said. "He was inclusive, the movement wasn't all about him. Injustice is out there and that's the name of the game. It's always time to do what is right. Maybe we'll get another Dr. Martin Luther King one day because we certainly need it."

Houston, 49, played nine seasons for the Knicks and was a member of the 1999



team that reached the NBA Finals. He is currently general manager of the Knicks G League affiliate, the Westchester Knicks.

"Dr. King once said faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase," Houston said. "He fought for equality and equity for Black Americans. He put a bold vision in front of people, and he lived it."

Starks, 55, played eight seasons with

the Knicks and was a fan favorite for his tenacity and grit. He played on the 1994 Finals team that lost to the Houston Rockets. He works as an alumni and fan development adviser for the Knicks.

He said most of his knowledge of King came from textbooks and watching historical programs on television, but stressed he fully acknowledged the impact of what King stood for.

"His courage to stand in the face of death every time he left his house, he had no fear," Starks said. "He knew he was going to make this a better place."

Houston and Starks said they were proud of today's African American athletes who aren't afraid to use their celebrity platforms to speak about racial and political issues.

"The work of a Black person was always either a Black entertainer or free labor," Houston remarked. "Athletes are coming to realize if you can value me as a performer, when will you value me as a human being? This is above and beyond the game of basketball. This is about life."

"Black athletes understand what this fight is about. They're not sugarcoating it. These guys understand they are leaders," Starks said. "It's important that people understand we are all in this together."

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The poet laureate's honorarium has been increased from \$1,250 per year to \$2,500 per year thanks to a match by a generous ArtsWestchester board member.

As the literal darkness of this season and the figurative darkness of this pandemic continue to swirl around us, I pray that we can be the sources of light in the darkness for each other that we all need so deeply.

*Joshua Strom is the rabbi at Congregation B’Nai Yisrael in Armonk and is part of the Armonk Faith Alliance. The alliance also comprises Hillside Church, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, St. Patrick’s RC Church and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.*

# Essential Tips for Solo Ager During Unprecedented Times

Are you a solo ager, or in some circles, an “elder orphan?”

A solo ager is typically defined as a single, childless baby boomer. Someone may have children, but there is no relationship, or in many cases, children are preoccupied with their own affairs.

While you may be unfamiliar with these terms, you may, in fact, already be a solo ager, and there is an increasing number of boomers who likely will become solo agers as well. Odds are that everyone, whether having a partner or not, may become a solo ager at some point.

Solo agers face many challenges, but the common denominator is that they often lack a support system to assist in the management of their health, legal and financial affairs. Despite these challenges, there are several, impactful recommendations that should be considered to thwart the unintended consequences of a solo-ager lifestyle.

### Execute a Power of Attorney

A power of attorney grants another person (an agent) the authority to handle financial affairs. I frequently explain to my clients that one of the most important documents is a power



By Salvatore M. Di Costanzo, Esq.

of attorney. Failure to have this simple document may necessitate a guardianship proceeding, which is costly and burdensome.

On Dec. 15, Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed into law legislation significantly changing the New York General Obligations Law, which governs powers of attorney. Effective June 15, the new law simplifies what has been the overly cumbersome power of attorney form. While the

form has been simplified, the key to a properly drafted power of attorney lies in the modifications added by an elder law attorney. Reliance on the statutory form is improper as it does not contain very impactful modifications, such as the authority to move your assets for planning purposes.

### Consider a Revocable Trust

A revocable trust is an efficient and effective tool that can be utilized for asset management, asset protection and estate planning purposes. There are many advantages to creating a revocable trust. First, it ensures the continuous management of your assets if, unfortunately, you become physically or mentally disabled.

After drafting a revocable trust, you

then transfer your assets to your trust. Under the terms of the trust, if you cannot serve as trustee, you appoint a successor trustee. This provides for the orderly transition of the management of your assets.

Another advantage is the avoidance of probate. In the case of a solo ager, the probate process can be quite exhausting since there may be no descendants. In these cases, New York Law requires elder attorneys to contact distant relatives and, in some instances, a genealogist might be necessary. A revocable trust avoids this hassle.

### Health Care Proxy

New York law allows you to sign a health care proxy appointing an agent to make your medical decisions. An agent’s authority under a health care proxy is only effective if you cannot make your own medical decisions. I recommend that you have intimate discussions with your health care agent regarding your wishes.

### Funeral Pre-Planning

If you have specific wishes regarding your burial, you should consider planning and funding your funeral to ensure your wishes are carried out. Moreover, you may want to complete a burial remains form expressing your desire to not be embalmed or to be cremated.

If you intend to donate your organs for scientific research, this is a good place for that as well. Registering as an organ donor and notifying the organization you intend to benefit is recommended.

### Advisers

Professional advisers exist in many areas, in part because it is nearly impossible to know everything about everything. Often clients who are proficient at preparing their own income tax returns or self-directing their own investments do not account for changed circumstances such as their incapacitation.

If case of incapacitation, those trying to assist you must first go on a fishing expedition to understand the breadth of your financial affairs to provide competent assistance. It is advisable to form relationships with other professionals such as attorneys, accountants and financial planners early in life so that you do not burden others.

Salvatore M. Di Costanzo is a partner with Maker, Fragale & Di Costanzo, LLP in Rye and Yorktown Heights. He is an attorney and accountant whose main area of practice is elder law and special needs planning. Di Costanzo can be reached at 914-925-1010 or at [smd@mfd-law.com](mailto:smd@mfd-law.com). You may also visit [www.planfortodayfortomorrow.com](http://www.planfortodayfortomorrow.com).

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## LEGAL NOTICES

**On December 14, 2020, the Board of Trustees of the Village of Pleasantville, Westchester County, New York** (the "Village") adopted a Bond Resolution, a summary of which is published herewith, and the validity of the obligations authorized by such resolution may be hereafter contested only if such obligations were authorized for an object or purpose for which the Village is not authorized to expend money or the provisions of law which should have been complied with as of the date of publication of this notice were not substantially complied with, and an action, suit or proceeding contesting such validity is commenced within twenty (20) days after the date of publication of this notice, or such obligations were authorized in violation of the provisions of the New York State Constitution. Summary of Bond Resolution 1. Specific Object or Purpose - the purchase of a new sanitation truck. 2. Period of Probable Usefulness - fifteen (15) years. 3. Maximum Amount of Obligations to be Issued - the maximum amount of obligations to be issued for the objects or purposes described above is \$275,000. The Bond Resolution herein summarized shall be available for public inspection during normal business hours for twenty (20) days following the date of publication of this notice at the office of the **Village Clerk of the Village of Pleasantville, Westchester County, New York. Eric Morrissey Village Administrator/Clerk, Village of Pleasantville, Westchester County, New York**

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that the Village Tax Year 2021 Tentative Assessment Roll will be filed February 1, 2021 with the Village Clerk, 80 Wheeler Avenue, Pleasantville, New York. The roll may be seen and examined by any person at all times on the Village website [www.pleasantville-ny.gov](http://www.pleasantville-ny.gov).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, several processes associated with the grievance process have been modified. The roll may be viewed in person by appointment only during business hours (8:00am-4:00pm). The Board of Trustees and the Assessor will meet virtually for the purpose of completing such assessment roll and of hearing and determining grievances in relations thereto by any person(s) conceiving himself aggrieved thereby on **Tuesday, February 16, 2021, between the hours of 5:00pm to 9:00pm, via Zoom id 91620212443, password 072849. The last filing date is February 16, 2021. Village of Pleasantville Pleasantville, New York 10570 Noreen Regan Deputy Village Clerk**

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# Robert 'Robbie' Burns: A Man's a Man for A'That!

This month we cross the Irish Sea to Scotland, and the birthday celebration of its most beloved bard, Robert Burns.

Burns, still widely and wildly celebrated 261 years after his birth, is one of the enduring cultural icons of Scotland. His birthday, Jan. 25, 1759, is celebrated wherever the Scottish diaspora has taken the sons and daughters of Alba.

Each year on his birthday a "Burns Dinner" is celebrated, an event renowned for the cooking of Scotland's national dish, the haggis, praised in Burns' "Address to a Haggis." Always the first item on any Burns Dinner program, in Burns' favored Scots dialect, it opens with: "Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face, great chieftain o' the puddin'-race." Translated: "Good luck to you and your honest, plump face, great chieftain of the sausage race."

Burns was a native of Ayrshire, in southwest Scotland. His parents were simple folk. His father, William, was a hard-working farmer who never seemed able to make ends meet. Eldest of seven, Burns was raised in relative poverty, though his father, a self-taught man, took great interest in teaching his children

reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and history.

In 1774, at 15, Burns worked beside a female farmhand and had his first taste of love. This encounter led to his first poem, "Handsome Nell." Its subject, Nelly Kilpatrick, the same age as he, must have exuded considerable charm.

Burns would later recall her as a "bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass." But alas, she would marry another.

Burns kept at his writing while continuing to farm, and tried his hand at other trades as well. He even considered working as a bookkeeper on a Jamaican sugar plantation. All the

while he wrote poems and songs, and slowly gained some small measure of reputation as a clever wordsmith.

To finance his passage to Jamaica, a friend suggested he put some of his poems into a book. The collection, published in 1786 and called "Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect," was an immediate success, and all plans for leaving Scotland were abandoned. Overnight he went from unknown to a favorite across the

country.

By the end of the year, he was established in Edinburgh, Scotland's capital. A second edition of his work was in print, and he was on his way to becoming one of Scotland's legends.

No effete, Burns had a prodigious talent for wooing and winning women over, and incorporated many of them into his poetry and songs. In fact, Kilpatrick was but the first in a long line of romances Burns fell into. By one count, he had serious involvements with at least nine women, three of whom bore him children. By the time of his death in 1796, he was father to at least 12 children. Nine of the 12 were borne by Jean Armour Burns, the only woman with legitimate claim to the title "Mistress Burns."

"Tam o' Shanter" is considered to be his masterpiece. Other gems still in popular use are "A Red, Red Rose," "A Man's A Man for A' That," "Comin' Through the Rye" and the immortal "Auld Lang Syne." All by their beauty raised the common dialect of the Scots to an art form. He is also the source of common sayings in use



By Brian McGowan

to this day. Who has ever heard the phrase, "The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley," without knowing exactly what it meant?

A life of early hardship and subsequent fast living caught up with Burns, but it is more likely a rheumatic heart condition stilled his pen on July 21, 1796. He was only 37. He may also have suffered from some form of manic depression, which he characterized as "blue devilism."

He is buried in St. Michael's Churchyard in Dumfries, where he and his family had lived since 1791, and where Jean Armour Burns joined him in 1834, after carefully cultivating his fame in the decades after his death.

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

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# Plenty of Places to Get Your Fill of Winter Bites and Pieces

It was a cold morning, but we recently decided to take a drive to the outdoor winter farmers market in Ossining. It operates from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

There were perhaps six or seven vendors in place when we arrived at Market Square on Main Street. Parking was easy. There were shoppers wandering the stalls. The longest line was for the meat and egg purveyor. The fish vendor appeared to be doing well, too, and her hand heater was close by.

Typically, winter farmers markets are held indoors. I wondered how these intrepid shoppers and vendors put up with the elements when there is a warm supermarket somewhere nearby. Perhaps it was the fresh root vegetables, organic meats and fresh baked goods.

At the end of the day, I wondered if it was worth the effort. The farmers markets help local farmers and artisans, though.

Next time I'm in Ossining I must stop into First Village Coffee on Main Street for coffee and a croissant. I hear it's quite good. Visit [www.firstvillagecoffee.com](http://www.firstvillagecoffee.com) to learn more.

For more information on local winter farmers markets, visit [www.downtoearthmarkets.com/markets](http://www.downtoearthmarkets.com/markets)

**Curry on Purdy Premier in Harrison**  
Westchester's newest Indian restaurant



By Morris Gut

has opened on Purdy Street in Harrison. The doors opened last August in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The restaurant brings the authentic sights, sounds and flavors of regional India to the area.

Curry on Purdy offers a large selection of curry and vegetarian dishes along with specialties from throughout India. The setting and atmosphere, which is in stark contrast to the cuisine, is that of the historic Risoli's Tavern that was active in Harrison from the late 1950s. The sprawling bar room is divided from the main dining room.

The menu is extensive and covers an impressive level of Indian cuisine. There is a Purdy special goat curry; classic chicken tandoori out of a clay pot; a rack of lamb seared in the clay oven; saffron shrimp tikka; and vegetable biryani. Don't forget the wonderful house-baked Indian breads such as garlic nan or onion kulcha. Great for dunking into those delicious sauces and gravy.

For dessert, try the special kheer, a type of pudding, or the Gajar Halwa.

I will be reporting on a meal here soon. Curry on Purdy Bar is located at 7 Purdy St. in Harrison. Open daily for lunch and dinner; take-out and delivery also available. Info: 914-600-8500 or visit [www.curryonpurdy.com](http://www.curryonpurdy.com).

**Archie Grand to Open**



The saffron paneer tikka at Curry on Purdy, an Indian restaurant that opened last summer in Harrison.

Archie Grand has been in the works for months. The 130-seat "new American" restaurant is about to open on Mamaroneck Avenue in White Plains in the former James Joyce space.

It is owned by seasoned hospitality veteran Vincent Ninzatti and Brazen Fox owners Declan Rainsford and Rory Dolan. Dolan also owns the highly popular Rory Dolan's on McLean Avenue in Yonkers. I would be willing to bet there will be a touch of the Irish in the premises.

More on this shortly. Archie Grand is located at 166A Mamaroneck Ave. in White Plains. Info: Visit [www.archiegrandwp.com](http://www.archiegrandwp.com).

## Year of the Ox Feasts

The Chinese Lunar New Year celebration begins on Friday, Feb. 12. Many eateries will be extending the festivities through that weekend with special dishes and menus. Be sure to check ahead for exact dates, times and pricing.

At Aberdeen Seafood & Dim Sum, located at 3 Barker Ave. in White Plains in the Residence Inn, the staff reported that they would be offering a special New Year's menu. You can also celebrate with a run through its popular dim sum or from the regular menu. Info: 914-288-0188 or visit [www.aberdeenwhiteplains.com](http://www.aberdeenwhiteplains.com).

David Chen, at 85 Old Mount Kisco Rd. in Armonk, has been at it for 25 years. They reopened last May and now feature a variety of celebratory Chinese specialties. Info: Visit 914-273-6767 or visit [www.davidchens.com](http://www.davidchens.com).

Mister Chen, at 265 Mamaroneck Ave. in Mamaroneck, is the newest Chinese restaurant along the strip known for its Asian food. It serves wonderful house-made soup dumplings and buns prepared on the premises, chicken lo mein and tasty honey-glazed barbecue spare ribs. Info: 914-777-1212 or visit [www.misterchenny.com](http://www.misterchenny.com).

Omandarin Chinese Cuisine, located at 361 N. Central Ave. in Hartsdale, will be serving some of the classics: Peking duck, assorted hot pots and hearty Mandarin pork shank in its beautifully decorated



Arche Grand, a "new American" restaurant, will soon be opening in White Plains.

dining room. Info: 914-437-9168 or visit [www.omandarin.com](http://www.omandarin.com).

All restaurants offer take-out and delivery.

## Want to Cook it Yourself?

If you are an intrepid home cook and want to pull the old wok out of the closet and oil it up, you may want to visit big, bustling H Mart for a wide variety of pan-Asian products. It's located at 371 N. Central Ave. in Hartsdale. Info: 914-448-8888 or visit [www.hmart.com](http://www.hmart.com).

There is another H Mart at Highridge Plaza at 1789 Central Park Ave. in Yonkers.

Though smaller, New Golden Village Oriental Market, located at 365 Central Park Ave. in Scarsdale, is also a good bet. Enjoy a fresh bubble tea while there. The Chinatown markets in Flushing and Manhattan are great but take a bit longer to reach. For more information, call 914-437-9795.

In addition to the Lunar New Year during that week, there's also Valentine's Day on Feb. 14 and Fat Tuesday on Feb. 16.

Follow COVID-19 protocols and stay safe!

*Morris Gut is a restaurant marketing consultant and former restaurant trade magazine editor. He has been tracking and writing about the food and dining scene in greater Westchester for 30 years. He may be reached at 914-235-6591 or [gutreactions@optonline.net](mailto:gutreactions@optonline.net).*



Mister Chen in Mamaroneck serves delectable honey glazed barbecue spare ribs.



# A Progress Report on My Dry January Experiment



By Nick Antonaccio

At the beginning of the month, I vowed to join the Dry January movement, abstaining from alcohol for 31 days. I hope you considered this challenge as well.

How have I been persevering? I haven't yet fallen

victim to abstaining from abstaining.

I started off rather tenuously. During the first few days, for a fleeting moment, I even worried that my pandemic-long inclination to imbibing at will may have catapulted me down a path to dependency. By the fifth day I was back in control of my mind and body, even building momentum and confidence toward the remaining 26 days.

And then came Jan. 6. Many of us found ourselves horrified at the debacle in Washington. I felt myself descending into the temptation of pouring a glass of wine to relieve the stress.

Notwithstanding the shocking events before me, I diverted my thoughts to rationalizing how to cope. A small measure of Washington Cabernet Sauvignon? No, I did not succumb. Just a single shot of single malt Scotch? No. A splash of one of the very

low-alcohol hard seltzers? Almost. But no, somehow, I persevered.

## How did you fare?

The urge to imbibe ebbed and flowed for several days. But I'm back on track.

I've developed several coping strategies. Allow me to share them with you.

1. When on a celebratory Zoom event, I've become adept at sleight-of-hand. I pour a standard portion of a glass of wine. I sniff, swirl and sip. Then I spit, not swallow (off camera).

2. My alternate tack on Zoom sessions is to prepare a mocktail. These non-alcoholic drinks mirror many of the sophisticated new cocktails on beverage lists. I can raise my mocktail glass for a toast, sip and swallow in a bon vivant style and even enjoy a second.

3. Abstaining at the dinner table is the most challenging. Wine enhances so many dishes and influences my palate to appreciate food on a unique plane. I must admit, our longstanding

family tradition of Friday night pizza, wine and a movie without a bottle of red is quite unfulfilling. Alas, I have no clever alternative. Reluctantly, tap water it is.

4. For other occasions, mineral water with a squeeze of lemon, or one of the flavored natural seltzers, is a reasonably

acceptable substitute. And always in Champagne flute.

Here at the halfway point in my Dry January (or Dryanuary), I'm also finding positive effects. I wake up feeling refreshed, am getting more out of my early morning gym workout and saving on wine purchases.

It's only 31 days, less than 10 percent of the year. I can do this.

But now I'm beginning to think of the potential momentum created by Dryanuary.

What if the movement started to grow across all drinking-age generations, but especially among the self-declared alcohol abstainers of the millennial generation?

What if the movement began to spread to organized groups averse to alcohol consumption and who espouse temperance? Hundreds of millions of dollars have already been invested in this movement.

What if popular support began to grow and a national march on Washington was held, further creating an awareness of the negative effects of alcohol consumption?

What if legislators in Congress began to consider legislation to address their constituents' concerns?

What if this groundswell gained momentum, resulting in a proposed amendment to the Constitution brought to the public for a vote?

What if it passed?

Preposterous, you exclaim. Not in an enlightened society of diverse opinions, practices, preferences and beliefs.

But can history repeat itself? In 1920,



the 18th Amendment was enacted, which made it a federal crime to manufacture, sell, transport, import or export "intoxicating liquors." Prohibition was ultimately repealed by the 21st Amendment, the only amendment to suffer such a fate.

The nation was under the alcohol ban, not for the equivalent of a Dryanuary, not for an entire year, but for 13 long, dark years, straining the very fabric of our society.

Consider all the facts, weighing them carefully as you consume wine and consider its effects on your health and sociopolitical lifestyle.

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

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# Sports

# Gymnastics Notebook

## Defending All-Around Champ Pellegrino set to Repeat for L/P/PV *Mahopac, Ossining, Somers/Hen Hud Hope to Challenge for Local Supremacy*

By Ray Gallagher  
Examiner Sports Editor@Directrays

Mahopac gymnastics Coach Vin Collins has graced the Section 1 circuit for 42 years, winning a handful of sectional titles, training scores of All-Americans and doing as much for local gymnasts than perhaps anybody ever has.

His 2021 Mahopac team is poised to follow the footsteps of those before them, but this will be anything but a normal year for gymnasts due to COVID-19 restrictions that will prohibit a Section 1 and NYSPHSAA tournament. At this point in time, gymnastics meets are expected to be "live" -- not virtual -- like most Section 1 swim meets this winter, so, barring a last-minute change, face-to-face competition, with punctual results, will be a real thing starting this week.

"There will be no sectional tournament this year," Collins said. "We will have some type of tournament at season's end, but that is to be determined."

It's expected that Section 1 will do something similar to what they did in the fall with regionalized field hockey and soccer tournaments, but for now local gymnasts are just happy to be in a gym with mats and apparatus flooded with competitors. Local gymnasts are stoked to get started this week.

"It is very exciting to start competing finally," Hen Hud senior Taylor Breeding admitted. "This season was very unpredictable due to Covid, so it is exhilarating that the season has begun, and we are on track to compete. As varsity gymnasts, we

despite the effects of Covid. It was very upsetting to know that there will not be a states this year since we were all looking forward to being chosen for the state team and competing at the state competition at the end of the season. Yet, we are happy to receive the opportunity to compete, and we are all ready to show the judges what we have been practicing. Working as a team and supporting one another is always the key to a successful meet, and I am thrilled that I get to spend my last year in varsity gymnastics alongside such amazing gymnasts."

Coaches are excited, too, and are hoping to avoid the COVID-related postponements we saw last fall.

"It is nice being back in the gym; the team is working very hard," Collins said of his Indians, who were second to Lakeland/Panas/Putnam Valley last year, 175.875 to 167.425. "It's a shorter season this year, but everyone is anxious to start competition. Our goals are the same every year: to qualify for the NYSPHSAA Scholar Athlete Award; be successful as a team and individually throughout the season. This year our primary goal is to stay healthy and attempt to compete as often as we can. We have a solid core of veterans returning and an eager group of rookies to comprise this year's team of 14 gymnasts."

**LAKELAND/PANAS/PUTNAM VALLEY** is in a very similar mode as the defending champions; locked and loaded with the section's top returnee in Putnam Valley senior Caitlin Pellegrino, the defending All-Around champion. Last year's haul included



BILL KENNEDY PHOTO

Mahopac senior Jamison Castrataro, a four-time All-American, is poised to take a run at an All-Around title in 2021.

the one to beat.

She will be joined by the likes of state qualifier Samantha Flores, Hayley Madden, state qualifier Emily Quinn, Izzy Albano and Olivia Marricco, a potential All-Around challenger. The unit comes with both great experience and promise. Working out of Dynamic Gymnastics in Mohegan Lake, this well-coached unit is in good hands.

"The team looks pretty good," said L/P/PV Coach Sorin Cepoi, once an international star on the gymnastics circuit. "We have lost (injured) Veronica Rosario, but we have some key additions. The one to watch this season is the newcomer Olivia Marricco, who's coming on very strong. We're looking forward to the start of competitions and I'm sure we will have a great season again."

**MAHOPAC's** top returners include fifth-year senior Jamison Castrataro, a four-time All-American and four-time NYS qualifier. She will be joined by All-American senior Nicole Giannetta, sophomore and three-time All-American Lia Graap, senior Rachel Romero, junior Juliette LeBlanc, freshman Alessia Gristina, sophomore Jade Paciullo, junior Kaylie Ann Hammond and senior Lesly Cely.

Keep an eye on Lexi Castrataro, a promising seventh-grader and terrific All-Around gymnast.

The Indians will open up this Wednesday against Ossining and Suffern, which features 2019 sectional champion Samantha Greenhut, plus Ava Greenhut.

Another merged team with some legit talent is the **Hen Hud/Somers/Yorktown/John Jay CR/Croton/Briarcliff** club that features Hen Hud's beam specialist Taylor Breeding, the first Hen Hud gymnast to qualify for New York State Championships since Kyla Palombini (1997), and Somers' state qualifier Emma Lusthaus, who



Putnam Valley senior Caitlin Pellegrino, the 2020 All-Around champ, is hoping for another major haul in 2021.

excels on vault.

"I don't know if any of our girls can overpass Caitlin Pellegrino in the All-Around competition," said Coach Sorin Cepoi, a former Romanian competitor with a worldwide rep, which earned her place in the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame. "We have lots of new girls this season. I'm not sure who is more promising yet because we've just had a few practices and I will have to wait for the first competitions to see them perform."

**OSSINING** returns senior captains Meagan Ryan and Cruz Vernon to lead the way.

"It's still early in the season but we do have our top returning gymnasts this year and both are ready to lead the team with their experience in competition and their consistency and commitment to the sport of gymnastics," Pride Coach Sandra Mitchell said.

Additional veterans include sophomore Ashley Lovastik, sophomore Adrianna Switnicki, and freshman Carolena Thompson.

"They are also gearing up to show their maturity in the sport of gymnastics this season," the coach said.

New to the team is seventh grader Nina Mori, Charlotte Doto, sophomore Rebecca McMahon and our two additional male gymnasts in Aaron Song and Simon Fleischer.

"They are all looking forward to a complete season as we all make adjustments to our new way of practicing with masks and eventually competing in person or virtually if needed. "O-Pride" is here in Ossining and evident with the motivation I see in these gymnasts eyes. We will make it a great season no matter what comes our way."

**BREWSTER** will give it a go behind Erica Hamel, Bella Laluna, Chloe Lubrano, Sammi Miller, Emily Taylor and Anaya Marta under Coach Vin Savastano.



Hen Hud's Taylor Breeding is set to take flight this winter on Section 1 gym circuit.



work very hard to perfect our skills on each event; vault, bars, beam and floor. I think many people, who are not familiar with the sport, do not fully understand the time and work we put into gymnastics. That is why I am very honored to represent my school in this sport and show how great it is. I am hoping that this season will be a good one

four first-place medals as Pellegrino won the vault with a score of 9.4, the uneven bars with a score of 8.75 and the floor exercise with a score of 9.525. She also took fourth place on the balance beam, the only event she didn't win, with a score of 9.15, raising her all-around score to a section-best 36.825. She enters the 2021 season as



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