No. Castle Road Millings No Threat to Drinking Water: Report

By Martin Wilbur

North Castle’s environmental consultant reported last week that the storage of road millings at the town’s Middle Patent Road highway yard and at the Highway Department site in downtown Armonk pose no threat to drinking water.

Ryan Manderbach, vice president at Langan Engineering, said sampling that had been conducted from the nearest wells to the Middle Patent Road site dating back to 2015 has never shown detectable levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), chemicals present in millings, which are also known as Recycled Asphalt Product (RAP).

The nearest wells are roughly a half-mile, about 2,700 feet, from where the millings have been stored, he said.

“Best management practices are in place, there are more being placed and with the drinking water all the evidence points to no impact from the RAP piles on the drinking water supply,” Manderbach said.

There is also no threat posed to Water District #4, which takes in downtown Armonk where the Highway Department site is located.

Manderbach said the properties of PAHs make them stick to soil and the chemicals also have very low water solubility. Therefore, even when they leach from the materials, they don’t move very far.

“So for these two factors, just the potential to leach from the soil is already very low,” Manderbach said.

The issue of the town storing RAP at the two locations turned into a full-blown controversy continued on page 2

New Castle Accepts Form Based Code FGEIS; Focus on Findings Next

By Martin Wilbur

The New Castle Town Board accepted the environmental review for the proposed Form Based Code as complete last week, another step toward enacting the code and potential zoning changes for a portion of downtown Chappaqua.

Despite continued heavy criticism from a contingent of opponents, the board voted 3-1 to accept the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS), with Councilwoman Lisa Katz the dissenting vote.

The board will now work on the language to be included in the findings statement over at Katz the dissenting vote. When we get there, the Form Based Code will facilitate contingent of opponents, the board voted 3-1 to accept the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS), with Councilwoman Lisa Katz the dissenting vote.

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The issue of the town storing RAP at the two locations turned into a full-blown controversy continued on page 2

Mt. Pleasant Adjourns Comp Plan, Form-Based Code Hearing

By Martin Wilbur

The Mount Pleasant Town Board last week adjourned the ongoing public hearing on the proposed Comprehensive Plan update and form-based code after Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi indicated officials have received increased feedback from residents.

At the scheduled continuation of the hearing last Tuesday evening, Fulgenzi gave no indication when the process will resume. He also suggested some of the comments from the public have been erroneous.

“The town has received some e-mails, Facebook posts, and unfortunately there is some misinformation that’s been going around that we want to digest before the Town Board makes any decision,” he said. “No decision will be made tonight or in the immediate future.”

A slowly increasing chorus of opponents has been surfacing during recent hearings on the proposed code’s Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS), concerned that the town’s proposal to improve the downtown hamlets of Hawthorne, Thornwood and Valhalla would bring in too much multifamily development. The form-based code has been proposed for the C-NR zones, which are within the hamlets.

Last week, Mount Pleasant Chamber of Commerce President Tom Milliot told the board that he likes aspects of the code, including the emphasis on design. However, he said he was concerned about the possibility of increased congestion, four-story buildings in the hamlets and whether parking regulations would be changed.

“What I didn’t hear is that the community wanted more people in our town,” Milliot said. “I’m on Elwood Avenue, we have traffic all day long. I think the last thing we want in town is a lot more traffic.”

Fulgenzi explained there would still have to continued on page 2

Powerful Message

Pleasantville High School students engage in a Q&A with actors Gabriel Lawrence and Shavonna Banks in a special performance of “The Mountaintop” at Arc Stage. The play, a fictionalized account of the last night of Dr. Martin Luther King’s life by playwright Katori Hall, considers an alternate scenario the night before the civil rights leader’s assassination.

ABBY LUBY PHOTO

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October 19 - October 25, 2021 SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS Volume 15, Issue 737
No. Castle Road Millings No Threat to Drinking Water: Report

continued from page 1

this summer when former town Planning Board chairman and Windmill Farm resident Robert Greene began circulating town-wide e-mails stating that the water supply for the development and the nearby Coman Hill Elementary School could be jeopardized.

Municipalities are encouraged to recycle millings by using them to repave roads. Over the past six to eight years, North Castle has aggressively repaved most of its 93 miles of town road.

Manderbach said multiple studies, including from the University of Florida in 1998 and a 2017 report from the New Jersey Department of Transportation, concluded that waste asphalt does not pollute groundwater.

Despite the encouraging findings, several speakers, including Greene, pressed the town to allow a second expert that he and other residents would hire to have access to the Middle Patent yard to conduct their own testing. Greene said that protection of a water supply is a serious enough issue to take that extra step.

“Most people say let’s get a second opinion,” he said. “We all like our family doctor but when we get bad news, we like to go get another opinion. So here we have an opportunity, the town could have sat through the engagement of the consultants."

Manderbach said the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) had made a recent site visit to both locations and no action, violations or other regulatory action is anticipated.

“The DEC can sometimes be very painful to work with for people who are developers, municipalities; difficult meaning so stringent,” Schiéro said. “We follow their guidelines. They inspect our properties. They do that continually.”

Councilwoman Barbara DiGiacinto said any suggestion that officials didn’t take the questions raised by residents seriously was off base. "You think as a Town Board member, and the entire Town Board, we would sleep at night thinking that we’ve had this serious problem of water contamination and we would just try to ignore or cover it up?" DiGiacinto said.

Manderbach recommended in the short term for the town to shore up perimeter controls around the piles, have personnel make biweekly inspections and provide continued training for town staff regarding the management of the millings. Many of the controls have already been in place, he said.

He also suggested a written long-term control plan that would outline inspection frequency, training and maintenance obligations and have any future recipient of the millings fill out a report.

Councilman Jose Berra suggested to Greene to have any environmental consultant that the residents hire, obtain and analyze Langan Engineering’s report.

New Castle Accepts Form Based Code FGEIS; Focus on Findings Next

continued from page 1

in the public hearings.

Before last Tuesday evening’s vote, Katz echoed similar sentiments that outspoken opponents had posed for months, including the consultants’ failure to adequately address traffic and parking issues, potential enrollment and taxation consequences for the Chappaqua School District, and the lack of meaningful financial impact analysis on services and infrastructure.

Although the board announced earlier this year it will limit the scope of any zoning legislation to the six acres of commercial property on North Greeley Avenue, Katz and other critics continually argued that the study area for the FGEIS should also be reduced to that scope. Otherwise, a future Town Board could quickly make sweeping changes without further state Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) study.

“The Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement is not sufficiently detailed to allow the Town Board as SEQRA lead agency and the public to adequately assess the potential adverse environmental impacts of the proposed Form Based Code,” Katz said. “In fact, we are not even in the ballpark to being close to complete. There is simply no way that any rational, fair-minded representative of this town could have sat through the engagement sessions and come away with the conclusion that the document is complete.”

Councilwoman Lauren Levin said she was satisfied with the efforts by the board and the consultants.

“We’ve been through this process for two years now and I think that the questions that were posed in the document as well as the answers that were provided by our consultants are sufficient and adequate,” Levin said. “So I can think we can finalize this.”

Speakers lined up pleading with the board to wait until they received more detailed answers on key issues or stop the process altogether.

“The Form Based Code can be halted right now and restarted for only the North Greeley Avenue corridor, which eliminates citizens’ concerns that a future Town Board could implement the Form Based Code process for South Greeley Avenue, King Street and areas limited around properties of King Street and Bedford Road,” said resident Ed Frank.

Resident Roger Klepper said the town has continually argued that the residents hire, obtain and analyze Langan Engineering’s report.

"The Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement that every student incrementally increases cost. Our schools are our number one asset and I’m appalled at how the concerns of our district have been continuously dismissed by this board,” said resident Sarah Shapiro. “I mean, you’re making an enormous mistake ignoring their input.”

The board did agree to include the Oct. 11 letter from the school district’s attorney as an addendum to the FGEIS, which projected each new student at a more than $35,000 cost.

While Councilwoman Lori Morton voted to include the letter, she called it “disappointing” that the district failed to complete “a real analysis.”

“I agree with the people that it defies logic that the resident incrementally increases the budget by $35,000,” Morton said. “That does make sense to me.”

Town Board work sessions on the findings statement have been scheduled for this Wednesday evening and Tuesday, Oct. 26.

Mt. Pleasant Adjourns Comp Plan, Form-Based Code Hearing

continued from page 1

be adequate parking maintained to meet the needs of residents.

The town is grappling with whether to allow three- or four-story maximum building heights in the hamlets and whether topography should play a factor.

“In an area where you have a hill behind you and the fourth story can be stepped back so it’s not as imposing, these are things that have to be worked out,” Fulgenzi said. “Nobody’s approved anything at this point.”

Hawthorne resident Jim Russell returned to the hearing, arguing that there could be significant development, particularly from Thornwood to Hawthorne, if the code is approved. He said under the form-based code, as long as developers were to meet the standards that would be written into the code, they would have free rein to develop.

“It’s not misleading to say that you could have a complete build-out of these areas that are permitted (in the code),” he said.

Fulgenzi and Councilman Thomas Sialiano told Russell that he was whipping up anxiety in the town.

“You’re creating a fear that there are going to be multiple dwellings, everyone is going to be affected,” Sialiano said. “That’s not the purpose of the code. It’s 50 years old, we’re trying to create a new template. We’re trying to move forward. We’re trying to improve the town.”
School COVID Testing Program Yields Few Cases in Westchester

By Martin Wilbur

The first month of weekly COVID-19 testing of students, teachers and staff in Westchester’s schools designed to avoid shutdowns have yielded a miniscule fraction of positive cases.

County Health Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler and First Deputy Commissioner Renee Recchia reported that there were 22 positive cases from the first 22,000 tests administered. The program started the week of Sept. 20.

“So by doing surveillance screenings, we may be able to identify people who are asymptomatic positive individuals who would be able to spread this disease, find them, isolate them, get them out of the classroom, and by doing that, prevent spread so we don’t have large, disruptive quarantines that occur in schools,” Amler said.

Last school year, some districts were forced to shutter their buildings once the fall and winter COVID spike struck, leading some angry parents arguing that their children were falling behind because online learning was inferior.

Under the testing program, participating schools initially tested their entire student body and staff during the first week, then may test up to 20 percent of their population each ensuing week. Teachers who are unvaccinated are mandated to be tested weekly, but not students who are old enough to receive vaccines.

Only two or three districts opted out of the program, but they are getting their testing completed through other means, Recchia said.

What has been helpful is that two of the three outfits that are conducting the tests use the PCR saliva test where an individual spits into a vial. The third testing company uses the PCR saliva test where an individual swabs the inside of a person’s cheek, Amler explained. Participation might have been lower had the test required the nasal swab.

“(Parents) have concerns about putting their children through that, and so the good news is that’s not done,” Amler said.

County Executive George Latimer said the testing program is key to keeping schools open this year to the greatest extent possible.

“We know that children don’t perform as well with remote learning or hybrid learning,” Latimer said. “In-class learning is the best possible way to do this, so we’re committed to do that but we’re committed to do it in a way that’s intelligent and pragmatic.”

The testing program is being paid for by $15 million in federal funding, Recchia said. It was estimated that if there was maximum weekly participation, the funding for the tests would be used up by the end of the calendar year, she said. However, it appears the districts will be able to get through nearly the entire school year.

COVID Case Decline Continues

The trend in the steady reduction in Westchester COVID-19 cases have continued over the past couple of weeks as the county has reached a 90 percent vaccination level during the past week, Latimer said.

As of Sunday, there were about 1,350 active cases, now just under half the number of the late August peak and more than 300 less than two weeks earlier.

Another highly encouraging sign is that there have been no COVID-19-related deaths in Westchester for 12 consecutive days as of Sunday.

“If we can continue to go without a COVID death in Westchester County, then I would consider that the best of all possible outcomes, whatever the statistics are,” Latimer said.

The county has seen 2,338 fatalities related to the virus since the start of the pandemic.

Declines in COVID-19 cases are evident in most areas of the state. New York City had a 1.1 percent positivity rate while the seven-county Mid Hudson region stood at 2.4 percent on Sunday, according to the state’s COVID tracker. Long Island had the second lowest rate on Sunday at 2.2 percent.

The positivity rate statewide was 2 percent on Saturday but ticked back up to 2.6 percent on Sunday.

By individual counties, Westchester declined to 0.9 percent on Sunday. Only Manhattan had a lower rate on Sunday at 0.7 percent, although the sparsely populated Hamilton County had no positive cases from 15 test results. The Bronx also stood at 0.9 percent.

All other counties in the Mid Hudson region had at least a 2.7 percent positivity rate on Sunday, with Putnam at 3.5 percent.
Affordable Housing, Recreation Among Priorities in 2022 Capital Plan

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County Executive George Latimer proposed a $476.4 million capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, with commitments to develop more affordable housing, tackle climate change locally and invest in the parks system.

Latimer, joined by various department heads, has also planned a $28 million commitment to improve potable and fire water suppression systems at Westchester County Airport.

“The capital budget is really a statement of strategic investments,” Latimer said. “This is as much about our future as our present.”

Of the more than $476 million in projects, nearly $292 million will be for general capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, with Latimer proposed a $476.4 million capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, with Latimer proposed a $476.4 million capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, with Latimer proposed a $476.4 million capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, with Latimer proposed a $476.4 million capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, with Latimer proposed a $476.4 million capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, with Latimer proposed a $476.4 million capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, with Latimer proposed a $476.4 million capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, with Latimer proposed a $476.4 million capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, with Latimer proposed a $476.4 million capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, with Latimer proposed a $476.4 million capital projects budget for 2022 last Thursday, 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Excluded Workers Call on Hochul to Expand Funds as $2.1B Runs Dry

By Bailey Hosfelt

Westchester elected officials, community members and undocumented workers held a rally in front of the Martin Luther King Jr. statue in White Plains on Oct. 12 to call on Gov. Kathy Hochul and state lawmakers to expand the Excluded Workers Fund (EWF)’s cash flow.

The $2.1 billion fund, which was approved by the state in the spring, provides undocumented New York residents who were not eligible for and did not receive COVID-19 economic relief from the state or federal government the ability to recoup lost income.

On Oct. 8, Hochul announced that the funds were nearly exhausted. That same day, the Department of Labor closed the fund to new applicants.

According to the Department of Labor website, applications already submitted will be processed in the order they were received. However, for claims submitted after Sept. 24, there is no guarantee funds will be available.

“We knew of this program, it is clear that $2.1 billion will not be enough,” said Janet Fry, deputy executive director of the Mamaroneck-based Community Resource Center. “We knew about this before the state budget passed, and we are sure of it right now.”

“Gov. Hochul, please hear the voices of this community full of workers who need those funds now for their survival,” Fry added.

Roberto Zumba, the worker center coordinator at Neighbors Link in Mount Kisco, said all people should have an opportunity for financial recovery.

“Thousands of people were excluded despite paying into the social safety net,” Zumba said. “The social safety net needs to include me and all my neighbors.”

Many excluded workers who participated in a 23-day hunger strike last spring to advocate for the funds spoke about how crucial it was for their survival, calling on Hochul to expand funding so more workers’ lives could be helped.

Fry said funds were used by many to pay debt accrued during the pandemic, purchase laptops for children to attend virtual classes, help workers remove themselves from unsafe working conditions and allow survivors of domestic violence to move away from their abuser and rebuild.

“It wasn’t easy to get the first $2.1 billion, but we heard today that it saved people’s lives,” state Sen. Shelly Mayer (D-Yonkers) said. “And we have more people’s lives to save.”

In Westchester, Mayer said 2,738 people who applied have already received their funds. However, 13,357 eligible Westchester residents applied before the applications were shut off, and many are now waiting in limbo to see if the Department of Labor will process their claims.

State Sen. Jessica Ramos (D-Queens), chair of the Committee on Labor, sent a letter to Hochul encouraging her to increase the amount of money in the fund, which Mayer and 13 other state lawmakers signed onto.

“New York led the nation this past spring when we established the most robust excluded workers fund in the country,” said Amy Rivera, bilingual community liaison for Assemblyman Chris Burdick (D-Bedford). “We can be proud of that, but it’s not enough.”

While 80 percent of the beneficiaries (of the EWF) are New York City residents, the unmet need is great in the entire state, including here in Westchester County,“

continued on page 6

Undocumented workers rally in White Plains with the support of advocates and some elected officials to try to add more state money to the Excluded Workers Fund. Thousands were shut out of the funding.

"HER TREATMENTS ARE LIFE CHANGING"

Finally! A local acupuncturist is helping cancer survivors live lives free from the constant pain and suffering associated with Peripheral Neuropathy!

Albert S. of Westchester, NY survived testicular cancer only to be living life in constant pain. He felt as though he were walking on pins and needles, becoming weaker and weaker every day. “I was beginning to be worried that one day I would be wheelchair-bound.”

Nearly half of patients who undergo chemotherapy will develop Chemotherapy-Induced Peripheral Neuropathy or CIPN.

The most common symptoms include:

- pain, tingling, burning, weakness, or numbness in arms, hands, legs or feet
- sudden, sharp, stabbing or shocking pain sensations
- loss of touch sensation
- clumsiness and trouble using hands to pick up objects or fasten clothing
- loss of balance and falling

Fortunately for Albert, Signature Acupuncture Studio is using the time-tested science of Acupuncture and technology originally developed by NASA that assists in increasing blood flow and expediting recovery and healing to treat this debilitating disease. After a series of treatments, Albert was taking stairs with stride!

“We have a lake house, and it’s upstairs. This morning I walked right down the stairs and got in the car,” Albert shared. “I remember thinking ‘that’s become mighty easy for me’, I didn’t have to hold on to the handrail or anything! It’s life-changing to have this mobility back!”

For over 5 years Taisha, Licensed Acupuncturist, has been reversing the effects of CIPN and other varieties of Peripheral Neuropathy, including that caused by diabetes without invasive surgeries and medications that come with uncomfortable side effects.

If you’ve recently beat cancer only to find that you’re living a life in constant pain and discomfort or you’re struggling with the same symptoms as a result of either Idiopathic Neuropathy or Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy, Taisha and the incredible team at Signature Acupuncture Studio can help!

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Board of Legislators Approve Declaration of Climate Emergency

The Westchester County Board of Legislators unanimously passed a declaration of climate emergency on Monday, urging state and local governments to follow suit.

The resolution cites the catastrophic global and local impacts of climate change, including devastating flooding from extreme weather, as well as many of the recent steps that county government has taken to reduce the county’s carbon footprint. Those steps include replacing fossil fuel buses and fleet vehicles with hybrid and electric vehicles, supporting food scrap recycling and installation of electric vehicle charging stations, among other initiatives.

It pledges to issue a revised Westchester Climate Action Plan with new recommended action steps and an effort to support local, state and national governments address the emergency.

“I would like to thank all legislators who have long been a staunch advocate for county action on climate change,” said Board Chairman Ben Boykin (D-White Plains). “I’d also like to thank County Executive George Latimer for sponsoring this resolution and for his leadership in pushing for a cleaner and greener Westchester County. We have much work to do, but with this resolution we’re saying to the world that Westchester County is serious about climate action.”

Last week, in his $476 million proposed capital budget for 2022, Latimer included $31.9 million for the purchase of electric hybrid buses for the Bee-Line bus fleet, $4.3 million to electrify Westchester’s two bus garages and $1 million for the installation of electric charging stations at county facilities.

Excluded Workers Call on Hochul to Expand Funds as $2.1B Runs Dry continued from page 5

Rivera added. “We cannot turn our backs on that need.”

Board of Legislators Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky (D-Dobbs Ferry), said that so many essential workers put their own and their family’s lives on the line when they went but echoed other speakers’ sentiments that the $2.1 billion was insufficient.

Brook) commended how far the EWF initially badly needed program,” Shimsky said.

MaryJane Shimsky (D-Dobbs Ferry), said that during the beginning of the pandemic, he was unable to find any work.

“During those times, it became really hard to make even $200,” Ospina said. “And of course, I got late with the rent and everything.”

The fund, Ospina said, will help him get back on his feet, especially after Hurricane Ida. The basement where Ospina lived took on eight feet of water.

“I’m basically homeless,” Ospina said, sharing that currently he’s staying in his friend’s living room.

Expanding the EWF is essential to help workers like him make a long-term recovery, he said.

“We live from our paycheck.” Ospina said. “What are people going to do without any kind of assistance? Just because they’re undocumented doesn’t mean they cannot be helped.”

Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky (D-Dobbs Ferry) said the debate should not be about economic growth versus climate change.

“With this resolution, we are putting to rest any debate in Westchester over those false choices, she said. The extreme impacts of storms and flooding and the health effects of air and water pollution that we are living with today illustrate clearly that future economic growth and the future health and well-being of Westchester require our action on the climate crisis now.”

To read the full text of the resolution, visit https://bit.ly/3qv11Cn
New York Medical College Receives $250G for Disaster Preparedness

Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) joined with New York Medical College leadership in Valhalla last week to announce a $250,000 grant for the Center of Excellence in Precision Responses to Bioterrorism and Disasters within the Center for Disaster Medicine.

The funding will support the center’s training of local health care professionals, emergency responders and law enforcement in emergency preparedness for disasters, terrorism and public health emergencies.

“Today we are here to acknowledge and give thanks to the state legislature for an additional appropriation to make the first step in becoming a national center for disaster medicine,” said Dr. Salomon Amar, vice president for research at New York Medical College, and senior vice president for research for the Touro College and University System.

“The Center has really had a platform to prepare for all hazards. To be creative, to be forward-thinking, whether it’s training hospitals for mass casualties, but not training them in the standard approach, but breaking down the standard approach and saying, nice, orderly arrival isn’t what happens. We have chaos at the scene.”

Markenson said.

“The Center has really had a platform to prepare for all hazards. To be creative, to be forward-thinking, whether it’s training hospitals for mass casualties, but not training them in the standard approach, but breaking down the standard approach and saying, nice, orderly arrival isn’t what happens. We have chaos at the scene.”

Markenson said.

Another [training] the center does in economic development is not only to prepare [businesses] but talk about continuing operations and how they can continue to operate through these events.”

Richard G. Wishnie, Westchester County Department of Emergency Services’ commissioner, said gave the Center for Disaster Medicine is not only a prominent center for research in New York but throughout the country.

“We believe that an expanded mission for the center will make it a national attraction that requires a modern facility, that will then attract students from around the nation,” Wishnie said.

“Another [training] the center does in economic development is not only to prepare [businesses] but talk about continuing operations and how they can continue to operate through these events.”

Richard G. Wishnie, Westchester County Department of Emergency Services’ commissioner, said gave the Center for Disaster Medicine reinforced how vital the research and training conducted by the center has been.

“For the past 15 years, this center has really been unique in serving the role of conducting interdisciplinary research, training, technical assistance and educational activities all related to emergency preparedness,” he said. “To see how far NYMC has come is just amazing.”

Dr. David S. Markenson, the center’s medical director, highlighted the impact the Center has had on regional emergency preparedness and how new facilities are needed to facilitate the increased demands for the center’s services.

Assemblyman Tom Abinanti, left, visits with the leadership of New York Medical College last Wednesday to present a $250,000 state grant to the college that will help it train health care professionals, law enforcement and other emergency responders to prepare for dealing with disasters, terrorism and public health emergencies.
New Castle’s Form Based Code Financial Analysis Seriously Lacking

I am a long-time apolitical Chappaqua resident, having moved here in 1995, and I am increasingly concerned about the politics apparently driving the discussion of the adoption of the Form Based Code. Last week’s article, “New Castle, Chappaqua Schools at Odds Over Funding Projections,” outlines a key problem. It is not clear to me what the motivation of several of the Town Board members may be, but I have concluded that the Board of Education clearly knows best about the potential financial impact on our school system.

Call for Volunteers Needed to Advocate for Long-Term Care Residents

October is National Long-Term Care Residents’ Rights Month, a time to acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices many long-term care residents have made to better our community and to call attention to the rights of residents in nursing homes, assisted living, adult care facilities and family-type homes.

The theme for Residents’ Rights Month 2021 is “Reclaiming My Rights, My Home, My Life” to acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 this past year on residents and highlight the need for residents’ rights to be recognized and reasserted. It emphasizes the recognition of the long-term care facility as the residents’ home and underscores residents’ rights to dignity, choice and self-determination.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is a dedicated advocacy program available to anyone residing in a nursing home or other long-term care facility. The program advocates for residents to address their quality-of-life and quality-of-care issues, along with their rights. Locally, the Tri-County LTC Ombudsman Program serves Westchester, Rockland and Putnam counties, and is sponsored by the Long Term Care Community Coalition (LTCCC). If you or a loved one need an advocate in long-term care, please call 914-500-3406 or e-mail judy@ltccc.org.

We need now, more than ever, dedicated volunteers to advocate for nursing home and other long-term care residents. Please consider volunteering in your area to advocate for this vulnerable population. As a volunteer certified ombudsman, you can help ensure that the voices of long-term care residents do not go unheard.

To learn more about making a difference as a volunteer with the Ombudsman Program, visit https://nursinghome@1ltccc.org.

Judy A. Farrell
Program Director, Tri-County LTC Ombudsman Program

Dedicating Park to Jean Craighead George

On Oct. 10, we welcomed Jean Craighead George Park into the Town of New Castle Park family. We were joined by her children Craig, Luke and Twig George and many of her neighbors, friends and colleagues. Parks have a unique way of connecting people to both one another and to nature. Jean lived up the hill from the park, her backyard touches mine, and I am proud of the work I did to kick off this project. Today, it is still rare to see parks dedicated to women. Central Park did not get its first statue of a woman until 2019. New Castle took a great step to honor our neighbor, an award-winning author and conservationist, who taught us to appreciate and protect the natural world.

Rob Rauch
Chappaqua

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Letters Policy

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

### Not Ready for a Cannabis Store for Billions of Years

By Michael Gold

Pleasantville isn’t ready for a cannabis café. It won’t be ready for about five billion years, when the sun will burn out and life on Earth will cease to exist.

It doesn’t matter where the cannabis café would be located, what security measures are put in place to prevent minors from entering or how much tax revenue it might generate.

By default, cannabis is illegal. If you seek to make a profit, you are creating a drug distribution network.

We are in a climate crisis. We are in a crisis of crime and violence.

If there’s even the slightest chance that just one kid could figure out an illicit strategy to get into a cannabis café in this town or fake a way to get an adult to buy them pot, that’s one too many.

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### Letters to the Editor

**Pierce is Best Candidate to Continue to Help Westchester From District 2**

Erika Pierce should be our next county legislator for District 2. Retiring County Legislator Kitley Covill has served the district for two terms and her careful and smart leadership needs to be continued.

Erika is the candidate to do just that. She served as Kitley’s legislative aide from 2018 until earlier this year. She has gained unparalleled insight into the job, from running the office to researching and drafting important local legislation. Erika’s curiosity, integrity, intelligence and impartiality make her uniquely qualified to take on this role and be effective immediately upon taking office.

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**Yorktown Doesn’t Need Do-Nothing Politicians Like Gilbert**

Rama Iyengar’s letter to the editor (“Gilbert’s Record of Accomplishments Merits His Return in Yorktown,” Oct. 12-18) touting Ian Gilbert’s “record” is an embarrassing attempt to mislead Yorktown voters. Here’s some of the things Yorktown voters should know about the failed tenure of Ian Gilbert:

- Gilbert takes credit for “obtaining” $875,000 for Hilltop Hanover from Westchester County but neglects to state that Hilltop Hanover is a county property. Gilbert did not obtain anything for the farm.
- Gilbert takes credit for searching for things Yorktown voters should know about Yorktown voters. Here’s some of the information that was missed:
  - An embarrassing attempt to mislead the public about Hilltop Hanover.
  - A failure to provide clear, specific information about future plans for the property.

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**Tattered American Flags on Pleasantville’s Bedford Road Must Be Replaced**

Have you seen the American flags displayed along Bedford Road in Pleasantville? If not, I invite you to please go and look at them. They are a disgrace!

The American flag is not just a flag. It represents our nation and the millions of American soldiers who fought for this great country of ours – from Lexington and Concord to Afghanistan. These brave soldiers fought and died defending it. We do them a gross disservice in allowing these tattered and torn flags to remain in place.

Please request that they be replaced ASAP. If they cannot be replaced immediately, please respectfully remove them and allow the Marine Corps League to take them to be respectfully taken out of service.

Allowing these flags to remain in place is a black mark on Pleasantville, and a disrespectful tribute to our veterans. I would hate to see these flags remain on the poles when Veterans Day comes on Nov. 11.

It would cost less than $2,000 to replace the flags and poles with new ones. Surely that is not asking too much.

Please don’t dishonor your veterans by keeping the flags up for Veterans Day. God bless America.

---

**Small News is Big News**

Drew McFadden

Pleasantville
Guest Column

Cortlandt is Looking to Shirk Responsibility for Wallace Pond

By George Pappas and Marlene Sauer

Wallace Pond, located in the northern and often forgotten section of Cortlandt Manor, is plagued with troubles that the Town of Cortlandt can resolve by taking ownership of the situation and of the Wallace Pond dam.

For decades, the issues have remained unresolved and top of mind for residents as they relate to the town’s unscrupulous actions involving (1) transfer of ownership of the Wallace Pond dam in the early 1980s (and after the state Department of Environmental Conservation notified the town that they would need to remediate the dam’s serious and significant deficiencies) to an unsuspecting property owners association; (2) lack of maintaining the water quality of Wallace Pond which they still own; and (3) the condition and rating of the dam.

Last December, the DEC reclassified and downgraded the Wallace Pond dam to a Class C rating. This new high-hazard rating (potential downstream damage in the event of a breach) means that repairs are now mandatory or the dam could potentially be removed and Wallace Pond would be drained. The Town Board has been banging this potential threat as an incentive for neighborhood residents to vote in their “we-want-to-help-you” proposal, which calls for the residents to assume the cost burden of repairing the dam instead of the town reclaiming ownership and paying for the dam’s repair.

Cortlandt Town Board members publicly stated “over their dead bodies” will the Wallace Pond dam be taken down. However, their proposed solution would unfairly redirect, create division and burden a smaller number of residents in our neighborhood if a special parks district was voted in. A parks district would allow the town to inflict an annual tax assessment of thousands of dollars per household for 30 years and assign perpetual responsibility for the maintenance of the dam that is owned by a defunct property owners association that individual neighborhood residents are not responsible for.

The town’s stance is only the residents in the immediate area of Wallace Pond benefit from it and, therefore, are responsible for the cost. This logic is flawed since Wallace Pond is located in a critical watershed area and all town residents have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from its environmental significance. Wallace Pond also has historical significance as it was used for ice harvesting prior to refrigeration. The town claims that they have no interest in Wallace Pond as a community resource. How can that be, especially when they own the pond?

Neighborhood residents are unified in rejecting the Town Board’s unfair proposal and want the town to reclaim ownership of the dam and pay for the repairs to remedy this situation. The town should work cooperatively with Westchester County, the state and FEMA to obtain infrastructure and environmental grant funding. The Lake Isle dam in Eastchester and Lake Suzanne in Rockland County prove that this is possible.

The Town of Cortlandt is already receiving significant amounts of grant money and, as highlighted by the town on public television, is benefiting from several million dollars in realized savings due to program restrictions during COVID-19.

With their smiling faces and crossed arms, the Town Board’s campaign slogan is Cortlandt Forward. Forward okay, but the Town Board has a responsibility to correct haunting situations from the past and preserve Wallace Pond as a town resource for wildlife and constituents alike.

George Pappas and Marlene Sauer are residents of Cortlandt’s Wallace Pond neighborhood.

Letters to the Editor

Transparency Needed to Ensure Chappaqua Rezoning Plan is in Public Interest

New Castle Acting Supervisor Jeremy Saland has made multiple public requests that explain who is privately lobbying the town for favorable development regulations. He claimed that no one has lobbied him or other town leaders. I am writing to respond, and to publicly call for much-needed transparency.

Freedom of Information requests reveal written correspondence between the town and numerous developers and their representatives that have not, until now, been publicly disclosed. The communications contain insults against the Chappaqua Board of Education for “fighting back” against the 997-apartment development plan for Chappaqua, and claims that the impacts of the development will cost much smaller than the town has publicly acknowledged. Town officials deride community residents standing in principled opposition to the town’s development plan as “NIMBYs.”

Town counsel report revile efforts by Mr. Saland, former supervisor Ivy Pool, Councilwoman Lauren Levin and the-Councilwoman-elect Lorton Morton met privately, away from Town Hall, with high-level associates of Joseph Tavolacci, the developer of a newly constructed three-story building in Chappaqua. His representative, William Spade, who made the arrangements, had told them in advance to expect that they would be lobbied to increase the height limit for buildings in Chappaqua to four stories, which is contrary to the town’s Comprehensive Plan.

The public was never noticed either before or after, and no meeting minutes were published. New York State’s Open Meetings Law prohibits three or more Town Board members from meeting to conduct town business in private, let alone together with private interests to be lobbied about pending legislation.

Mr. Spade also privately lobbied the town in pursuit of other lucrative legislative changes relating to properties owned by his clients including eliminating retail requirements and reducing setback requirements, which was then quietly introduced by the town, without public discussion of the merits.

Mr. Saland should know how lobbying works. His father, a former state senator, is a registered lobbyist paid to represent development and construction interests. Mr. Saland should have publicly disclosed his family ties to developer interests, because this knowledge would help the public interpret his support for this pending developer-friendly legislation.

Mr. Saland is currently refusing to release numerous communications between the town and developers. New York State law permits him to disclose this correspondence. In the interest of transparency, I call on Mr. Saland to now publicly release all correspondence with private development interests related to the pending zoning legislation. Keeping these influences on governmental decisions private is contrary to the public interest – which demands sunshine, nature’s best disinfectant.

Scott Le Vine Chappaqua

Esposito’s Business Acumen Would Help the Town Thrive in Years Ahead

Before COVID-19 I had no idea who Sergio Esposito was. During the pandemic lockdown, I watched Supervisor Matt Slater’s town COVID-19 updates, which were great and very informative). This is where I found out about Mr. Esposito.

I have watched him explain what businesses needed to do to survive. I’ve watched him talk about the PPP loan process and how it would help the local business owners. I’ve watched him talk about establishing a list of restaurants that provided takeout and a pledge from the restaurants to the town’s ingenuity. He also provided us with information on the stimulus packages and what was going on in Washington to help every one of us. He worked with the town to help restaurants get outdoor dining established so they could survive.

Sergio Esposito really cares about the town, people and all the businesses that make this town a great place to live. Being a small business owner himself, I feel that Sergio Esposito would be a valuable member of the Town Board. He will help keep this town thriving with business because of his concerns to help everyone succeed.

Patricia Costello Yorktown

Esposito Has Clear Understanding of What Yorktown Businesses Need

I want to personally thank Sergio Esposito for advocating for our town, our citizens and our small businesses, especially mine. Sergio was instrumental in formulating the “outside dining” legislation, which allowed my business to survive. I remember talking about it with him by phone and he even came to my store later to get my input on what I would like to have seen in the new legislation.

Sergio Esposito listened to my concerns and my recommendations, and shortly thereafter, he appeared at Town Board meetings and lobbied the town to take part in passing legislation that he helped formulate. As a side note, many of my suggestions were in the proposed legislation. Thankfully the new legislation was enacted! Sergio even showed up one day with Supervisor Slater and brought along News12 for an interview regarding the proposed redevelopment for the Yorktown Green shopping plaza. The man is unstoppable and truly dedicated.

Sergio Esposito is the only candidate that understands what our business sector needs and can get the job done.

Bob Crossett Owner Yorktown Grille

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Residents of White Plains and local history lovers are invited this Sunday to attend a pair of simultaneous celebrations that have been as much as three centuries in the making.

Not only is the White Plains Historical Society holding its annual commemoration of the Battle of White Plains, which has its anniversary several days later on Oct. 28, but it will also observe the 300th anniversary of the Jacob Purdy House, where George Washington is known to have stayed in 1776 and in 1778.

John Vorperian, president of the White Plains Historical Society, said with the Purdy House’s milestone anniversary this year, it made sense to combine the two events, where 1721 meets up with 1776.

“The point is that we’d like to do something where the public is aware,” Vorperian said. “The Battle of White Plains we do every year to commemorate (and) the board had felt this was the appropriate way to go, so that’s what we’re going to do on Sunday.”

The celebrations last from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Jacob Purdy House, located at 60 Park Ave. in White Plains, with a flag-raising at noon. There will be groups of re-enactors, not only representing the patriots but also British redcoats, along with two blacksmiths and women re-enactors who portray the importance that they played during the American Revolution, Vorperian said.

One re-enactor who usually dresses as Martha Washington will come as a washerwoman, someone who would be found at a Revolutionary War camp, he said. Women often came and gave support to the rebels.

“This is something that I’ve been hammering away at as president, to look at history in a more global perspective,” Vorperian said. “Yes, Washington is one of the fathers of our country, but we get to look at who else participated in the Revolution and the role of women.”

There will be a fife and drum corps and the White Plains High School marching band will also perform at the event. Tours will be given of the Jacob Purdy House, where visitors can walk the same spaces that Washington did on his visits, although groups will be limited to six to eight people at a time.

While some may think of history occurring in far-off places, Vorperian said White Plains and its surroundings were a hotbed of activity during the Revolution. In addition to being home to the battle, where Washington’s troops were able to repel the British, the city was the first place in New York State that held a public reading of the Declaration of Independence at the armory on North Broadway, he said. That site now has senior apartments. White Plains was also split in its loyalties, with roughly a third of its inhabitants loyal to the crown and another third supporting the patriots. The rest of the citizenry just tried to stay out of the way. There were even taverns that were known to be pro-crown or pro-patriot. Hatfield’s Tavern, a pro-King George spot, was burned down by rebels.

“Here in Westchester, and White Plains in particular, there was no safe side to be on,” Vorperian said. “People just tried to get through it all.”

The split also fractured the Purdy family, which bought the house and about 132 surrounding acres from its original owner and builder Samuel Horton. Jacob Purdy was living in the house at the time of the Revolution, Vorperian said. The Purdys who were loyalists fled to Canada, and the White Plains Historical Society has formed a friendship with the Annapolis Royal Historical Society in Nova Scotia, where they settled.

The house stayed in the hands of the Purdys until shortly after Jacob’s death in 1823. Then 10 years later, it was reacquired by Jacob Purdy II until it was bought by James Ferris in 1866.

Vorperian is hopeful that if families bring their children there will be at least a couple of youngsters who will fall in love with history.

“My hope is if it means one, two, maybe three youngsters turn and say, ‘Hey I want to go to college and I want to major in history, I’ll be all the more enthused and happy about this,’” he said.

The event is free for anyone who attends.
**Sonia Gitner**

Sonia (Auerbach) Gitner, a longtime Yorktown Heights resident, died Oct. 14 at NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital following a recent stroke. She was 89.

Gitner was born in New York City on Feb. 18, 1932, the daughter of the late David Auerbach and Tallie (Rubin) Auerbach. She was a graduate of Walton High School in the Bronx, attended City College School of Business, and after raising her family, graduated from Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, class of 1979, with a degree in business administration.

Sonia married the late Stanley Gitner of Brooklyn on Jan. 27, 1951. She is survived by three sons, Fred of New York City, Barry of Morgan Hill, Calif., and Henry (Debra) of Goshen, N.Y.; grandchildren Jessica of St. Louis, Andrew (Elizabeth Hauserman) of Denver and Christopher of New York; nieces Suzanne Becker Bronk; nephews Lewis Auerbach and Stephen Auerbach; and many cousins. She was predeceased by her sister, Grace Becker, brother Jack Auerbach and niece Rosalie Becker. She was especially active as a volunteer serving on the Board of Directors of the Yorktown Teen Center for many years and remained a board member emerita; organizing luncheons and excursions for her extended family and friends, both near and far, with whom she kept in contact by telephone across the U.S. and Canada, sharing in their joys and sorrows, and her friends and all of the people she touched during her 63 years in Yorktown. A gathering for family and friends was held Sunday, Oct. 17 at 10 a.m. at Yorktown Funeral Home, 945 E. Main St. (at Route 132), Shrub Oak, NY 10588, followed by a graveside service and burial at 11:30 a.m. at King David Cemetery, 101 Mill St., Putnam Valley, NY 10579. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that contributions in memory of Sonia be made to one of the following: Yorktown Teen Center, PO. Box 192, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598; Yorktown Senior Center, 1974 Commerce St., Yorktown Heights, NY 10598; Yorktown Volunteer Ambulance Corps, PO. Box 104, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598; and NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital, 1980 Crompton Rd., Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567.

**Melvin Berger**

Known around his hometown of Mount Kisco as a tireless community servant who helped countless citizens battling alcoholism, drug addiction and homelessness, Melvin “Mel” Berger will be truly missed. He peacefully passed away on Oct. 6.

Born on June 28, 1938, Mel grew up in the middle-class Bronx enclave of Pelham Parkway, as the eldest of four sons to George and Elaine Berger. He and his brother Stuart studied pharmacy at Columbia University and soon opened a series of small pharmacies around Westchester County.

Mel settled in Hartsdale where he helped raise his three sons, Michael, Craig and Jonathan. He first came to Mount Kisco as a co-owner of Mount Kisco Pharmacy, a business he would ultimately run and own by himself for over two decades. After a divorce, he moved to Mount Kisco where he met and partnered with Cheri Nowell, and helped raise her two young children, Megan and Bob, as his own. He would remain a proud Mount Kisco resident for the rest of his life. As a local pharmacist, he saw first-hand the negative effects of drug and alcohol abuse in his community and founded Mount Kisco’s Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Council. Consequently, he helped pioneer the successful drug court to divert young drug and drug offenders away from prison and into recovery programs. Later, he would collaborate with local places of worship to create the Emergency Shelter Partnership to provide winter shelter to the area’s growing homeless population, many of whom were laborers from Central America who couldn’t find work in the colder months.

Mel was so loved and respected in the community that his children often joked that he was the unofficial mayor of Mount Kisco. In addition to his passion for community service, he was an avid fan of classic country music and his beloved New York Mets.

He is survived by his five children and eight grandchildren.

**Gertrude Farrington**

Gertrude (Guggie) Farrington, 107 years old, formerly of Ridgefield, Conn., passed away peacefully in Valhalla.

Born in 1914, Gertrude lived a long life that allowed her to excel at her professional career at Texaco and pursue her passion for gardening.

She graduated from the College of New Rochelle in 1935, a significant achievement since only 8 percent of females in the U.S. graduated from college at that time.

Gertrude had a long and remarkable career with Texaco. She started in 1944 as a stenographer in the Personnel Department. In 1963, she became the first female officer of Texaco when she was appointed assistant secretary of the company. She retired from Texaco in 1973. Gertrude and her husband, Wesley, shared a lifelong passion for gardening. Gertrude was a member of the Ridgefield Garden Club where she was instrumental in the restoration and maintenance of Ballard Park’s parterre gardens. Gertrude kept a diary from 1978 to 1992 that detailed her daily life, gardening activity, bird sightings, world events and Notre Dame football games. Her diary was accepted into The Smithsonian Institution’s Archives of American Gardens, and turned into a learning lab titled “Explore One Woman’s Experience in the Garden of the 20th Century.” Gertrude is survived by her sister, Kelly Davis; 10 nieces and nephews; 12 great-nieces and great-great-nephews; 22 great-great nieces and great-great-nephews; and two great-great-great-nephews.

Visitation will be on Monday Oct. 25 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Beecher Funks Funeral Home in Pleasantville, where funeral services will be held. A burial will follow at Mount Calvary Cemetery in White Plains.

**Local Author to Speak on Churchill’s 1932 Visit to Westchester**

When Winston Churchill spoke in Westchester County will be the topic of a talk this Saturday, Oct. 23 at 2 p.m. at Cortlandt Town Hall.

Jointly sponsored by the Van Cortlandtville Historical Society, the Yorktown Historical Society and Croton Friends of History and hosted by the Town of Cortlandt, the program is open free to the public.

Author and historian Anthony Czarnecki of Cortlandt Manor will present in a PowerPoint program what the iconic British prime minister said in an historic lecture on “The World Crisis” at the then newly-opened Westchester County Center in White Plains in 1932. It was at the end of a memorable two-month lecture tour of the United States by Churchill and it was eight years before he emerged on the world stage.

“This year marks the 75th anniversary of Winston Churchill’s famous ‘Iron Curtain Speech’ in 1946, which followed the multinational military victory that defeated Nazi Germany during World War II,” Czarnecki said.

Based on his article published in Westchester Historian Magazine in 2014, Czarnecki will elaborate on the meaning of Churchill’s lecture in White Plains, including an almost tragic incident that happened to him upon his arrival in Manhattan that involved a Yonkers resident.
Mt. Kisco Lions Walk to Raise Funds for Nursing Scholarships

By Martin Wilbur

The pandemic has changed so many lives, including how and where we work. Until the last year-and-a-half, nursing was a profession that seemed to always attract enough young adults to the profession. But COVID-19 has seemingly changed all of that, with many hospitals and other health care facilities reporting shortages.

This Sunday morning, the Mount Kisco Lions Club will be holding a three-mile walk within the village to raise money for a scholarship for a local high school student who plans to pursue a nursing program in college and for a current health care worker who would like to go back to school and become a nurse.

Gail Smilkstein, president of the Mount Kisco Lions and a retired registered nurse, is reconstituting the walk to raise money for the scholarships after the effort lapsed for the past 12 years. She said the prospective nursing candidates need all the encouragement that can be mustered to entice students into the field.

“People are leaving the nursing field, people aren't going into the nursing field because of COVID and we really need nurses,” said Smilkstein, who worked as a school nurse for the bulk of her career at Sleepy Hollow High School, along with several other schools around the county.

Candidates for the high school scholarship will be selected from Fox Lane, John Jay or Kennedy Catholic high schools, she said. The two recipients will receive $1,500 each.

The walk, which kicks off at 9 a.m. from the front entrance of Northern Westchester Hospital, will follow a three-mile loop around the village. After leaving the hospital grounds, it will head down Moore Avenue, before turning onto Lexington and then South Moger Avenue, and finally onto Main Street to head back to the hospital.

The route will remain on the sidewalks so there will be no road closures or impact on traffic. Smilkstein expects a fair number of nurses from the area to take part.

Participants are asked to secure donors to sponsor their walk for a flat rate and to pay before the walk. Smilkstein said a station will be set up at the gazebo on South Moger Avenue to answer questions from passersby and solicit additional donations from the public. A second table may also be set up near Jacobson's Pharmacy on East Main Street.

Participants may park behind the pharmacy or at the Boys & Girls Club. Smilkstein said since 2009 the Mount Kisco Lions have focused their energies on other charities, organizations and causes. But with the pandemic straining the nursing field in many areas, it seemed the proper time to restart the walk, she said.

“We would like to raise as much money as we can because it will carry over to next year if we make extra money, and we will give (out) funds the next year,” Smilkstein said. “If it’s really a very well supported thing then we will.”

The walk will be held from 9 a.m. to noon rain or shine. For more information or if anyone has questions, they may call Gail Smilkstein at 914-483-7106.

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Halloween Celebrations Close By in the Hudson Valley

Boasting crisp seasonal air and vibrant scenery, New York is one of the best destinations to experience Halloween. From quirky small-town festivities and a hotel offering otherworldly experiences to a theme park’s inaugural family-friendly Halloween experience, the state offers something for everyone to celebrate the spookiest time of the year. Below are some of the best locations to celebrate Halloween in the Hudson Valley.

Roxbury: Nestled in the heart of the Catskills Mountains, Roxbury offers small-town charm and one of the nation’s most immersive and fantastical hotels that offers over-the-top Halloween thematic accommodations. From the spooky Dracula’s Fangs Tower Cottage featuring old-world Transylvania gothic décor, a grand winding staircase, a vampiric throne chamber and red velvet curtains to the beautifully ornate Victorian-inspired 1848 mansion room where a friendly young ghost is said to preside over the room, The Roxbury at Stratton Falls is just the ticket for a unique Halloween experience.

Goshen: Off the heels of its grand opening in August, LEGOLAND New York Hotel, the first and only LEGO-themed hotel in the Northeast, located just steps away from the theme park’s iconic entrance arch.

Croton-on-Hudson: Along the Hudson River is Croton-on-Hudson. Starting in late September and running through Nov. 21, Historic Hudson Valley puts on The Great Jack O’Lantern Blaze that’s known for being one of the most eye-catching events in the entire state. Made up of thousands of lit up magical pumpkins, you won’t believe the spectacular displays that are put together at Van Cortlandt Manor every year.
Jefferson Valley Mall
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The Recent and Sad Demise of Interest in Antiques

When my wife and I first got married, way back in the dark ages of 1965, we were anxious to fill our first apartment with interesting furnishings.

Because I had gone to college at William & Mary in the historic town of Williamsburg, Va., I was really into antiques. My wife Margaret was totally a modern kind of gal and the furniture she brought to our first apartment was her bedroom set from her parents’ home, which was strictly modern.

What I brought to our first home was a collection of antiques I had been gathering since I first arrived in New York City three years before. During that time, there were many antiques shops in New York City, especially along lower 3rd Avenue, and I spent almost every lunchtime visiting them and adding both furniture and accessories to my first bachelor apartment, which was located in the historic landmark neighborhood, Brooklyn Heights.

My future wife was impressed when she visited my place for the first time. I further indoctrinated her to furnishings of the past by suggesting for our honeymoon that we visit Colonial Williamsburg, then Charlottesville, Va. (specifically the home of Thomas Jefferson).

Isn’t it interesting how one can align with another’s interests once exposed to them? Not only did Margaret jump on the bandwagon of antiques discovery and purchase, but she soon far surpassed my interest.

For many years we acquired pieces both big and small, filling an 18th century home we eventually bought in Yorktown Heights, a large six-bedroom house where there was plenty of room to house our collection.

However, when it came time for us to downsize a half-dozen years ago from that 3,900-square-foot home to an 1,800-square-foot condo in Trump Park, we endeavored to unload the bulk of our collection, first through an open house sale, then by inviting local antiques dealers to buy from us wholesale. The sale directly to the public didn’t produce much and the antiques dealers didn’t even bother to show up.

As a result, the buyers of our home lucked out with a lot of furniture and accessories left behind, which they, moving from a smaller apartment, were grateful to inherit.

Very honestly, I couldn’t understand how the interest in antiques could slack off so dramatically in recent years. I had to look up the reasons on the interest and was not all that surprised to find that, by all estimates, antique furnishings have decreased in value by 45 percent over the past 15 years. Once-hot commodities struggle to find buyers and, when they do manage to sell, can see up to a 70 percent drop in price.

The reasons given for the current lack of interest include the fact that baby boomers are downsizing their homes and flooding the market with antiques and other furniture. Add to that the fact that many more people are buying open concept homes, which don’t require as much furniture.

So, while there are far fewer people who are interested in relics from the past to incorporate into their homes, I will continue to take pleasure in indulging my own love for antiques. Further, if and when I find a little treasure I want to adopt from former owners, I can have it at a cheaper price.

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

By Martin Wilbur

Four Latina women in Westchester were honored last Thursday by state Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) for outstanding contributions to their communities in commemoration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Ruth Ayala-Quezada, Dinora Pacheco, Karine Patiño and Diana Loja were featured at a special ceremony at Sleepy Hollow Village Hall. Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes the accomplishments of the many Hispanic communities throughout the United States.

Ayala-Quezada is the owner of Carmel Taxi in Sleepy Hollow. A native of Peru, she arrived in the United States in 1986 with her parents, who a few years later bought the old Ernie’s Taxi in Mount Kisco.

Having worked for her parents learning how to dispatch taxis while going to school served her well when it came to open her own business. She has worked with her sisters, and they take turns working and watching each other’s children, Harckham said.

“I’m very proud of my heritage and I’m proud to represent my community, and with hard work, dedication and being humble, you can succeed,” Ayala-Quezada said.

Pacheco was born in the Dominican Republic and her desire to help people led her to become a nurse, including serving on the health care staff of the Dominican president. After immigrating to the United States, she met her husband Freddy and moved to Peekskill.

She co-founded the Peekskill Hispanic Community Corporation, which helps feed families that face food insecurity, conducts certification classes and raises funds for international crises. Pacheco currently serves as its president.

“During the pandemic the organization has fed dozens of families through its dozens of food distributions and it’s volunteered to deliver food door to door to people who were quarantining,” Harckham said.

Pacheco’s dedication was evident when in one of her first roles with the Hispanic Community Corporation she helped find homes for 24 families displaced by fire.

Patiño, an attorney specializing in immigration and criminal law, was born to Ecuadorian immigrants in Sleepy Hollow and has lived her entire life in Mount Kisco. She volunteered for Neighbors Link and worked with the old Mount Kisco Police Department in the Police and Community Together partnership that trained about 200 officers in cultural competency.

Patiño also joined Putnam County Legal Aid Society in 2017 and served on Westchester County’s Police Reform and Reimagining Task Force. She is running uncontested in two weeks for Mount Kisco village trustee and will become the municipality’s first Latina board member.

Hispanics comprise nearly 40 percent of Westchester’s population but are severely under-represented in many careers, including law and government, Patiño said. Hispanic women make up only 2 percent of the nation’s attorneys, she said.

“I hope to be not only a source of inspiration for younger generations, but as a source of support for my community and for the younger generation,” Patiño said.

Loja immigrated at 12 years old from Ecuador with her parents. Today she serves as a liaison between municipalities, communities and businesses to connect the public to cultural and educational workshops, social events, government assistance programs and nonprofit outreach.

As a liaison for the Village of Sleepy Hollow, Loja is passionate about providing assistance to residents on such issues as job opportunities, food assistance, shelter and loan applications. Loja launched her own Spanish news media platform to capture some of the pressing issues impacting the Latino population.

“It is for me a privilege to be Hispanic, number one,” Loja said. “This county has diversity of culture.”

Each woman received a special proclamation from Harckham for their achievements.
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Police Blotter

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

Oct. 4: Patrol responded to Half Moon Bay Drive at 5:22 p.m. on a report from a resident who stated that she received a letter in the mail from an unknown source that had very derogatory language about their spouse. There was no report taken at this time.

Oct. 5: Croton EMS responded to Veterans Plaza at 10:59 p.m. for a party who locked themselves in the bathroom and was in need of medical attention. Patrol, along with another law enforcement agency, were able to get the party out of the bathroom. The individual was transported to the hospital.

Oct. 7: Patrols responded to Croton Point Avenue at 1:03 p.m. on a report of a party loitering on their property while yelling obscenities. The area was checked and the party was located at the train station. They were interviewed, appeared disoriented and Croton EMS was notified to respond. The subject refused to be seen by medical personnel and left the scene on foot.

Oct. 10: Patrol responded to Maple Street on a report of a disorderly group of juveniles at 10:18 p.m. It was discovered there had been an altercation between two parties. One of those parties had left the scene prior to the officers’ arrival. Parents were notified and a report was to be filed.

United Way to Host Human Trafficking Learning Session Oct. 28

The United Way of Westchester and Putnam is co-hosting an hour-long live learning session with United Way Worldwide’s Center titled “Understanding Human Trafficking: The Intersections & Complexities” on Thursday, Oct. 28 at noon. The event will include a team of survivor leaders who are experts in the anti-human trafficking movement. The session will provide an overview of the issue of human trafficking and information on how we can strategically and collectively combat it in our community.

Human trafficking is a widespread and often invisible crime that occurs worldwide and in our own backyards. It is the act of compelling someone into work or commercial sex acts through force, fraud or coercion.

Although it is illegal everywhere, human trafficking happens everywhere, including in our community. Whether or not we recognize it, this is an issue we all touch daily through our professional and personal lives.

Fortunately, we are positioned to drive a powerful, unified strategy to combat human trafficking together as a community.

All are welcome, but advance registration is necessary. To register or for more information, visit https://www.uwwp.org/human-trafficking-session/

Crossword

Across
1. Hamburg’s river
5. Posthumous Pulitzer Prize winner James
9. Hair tangle
10. Academic types, abbr.
11. Not a fish supplement, but a way to heat your home and save $$
12. Markers
13. They desert causes
15. Prickly seed case
16. Fall month, abbr.
17. Attention grabber
20. Cat calls
22. Wing
23. Sheepish computer memory?
25. Vinny Gambini” would eat at this Mahopac restaurant
29. Toward shelter, nautically
31. Makes one
32. Cub Scout units
33. Flight section
34. Heaththrob Brad
35. Going _ crazy

Down
1. Approval
2. Neighbor of Cambodia
3. Englishman, abbr.
4. “Enchanted” role for Anne Hathaway
5. Per person
6. Halloween correspondent?
7. Part of some e-mail addresses
8. Count followers
9. Absorb
11. Jamie Fox’s vehicle in “Collateral”
14. “Magnum, PI.” star Selleck
18. Most cunning
19. What patients need, for short
21. Not so crazy
24. Ed’s in-box filler
26. Not theirs
27. Condo, e.g.
28. Spanish affirmeratives
29. Payroll processing company
30. Waikiki wear

Answers on page 25

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continued on page 26
Samhain: A Fitting Time to Reflect and Reconsider Roots

By Brian McGowan

Samhain is one of the four major Celtic seasonal festivals, the others being Imbolc (Feb. 1), Beltaine (May 1) and Lughnasa (Aug. 1). Samhain marks the end of the harvest season, the beginning of the Celtic winter, the birth of another year and the beginning of the storytelling season, which would run until spring. At Samhain, we move from the “light” half of the year, to the “dark” half. Samhain continues to exhibit a magnetic hold on the popular imagination, and has morphed into an almost universally celebrated event throughout the Western world: Hallowe’en.

What happens during this almost 24-hour period from dusk to dusk? The boundaries between our world of the living and that of the dead are lifted, and free passage is afforded to the spirits inhabiting the far side, whether good or evil. It is a time for honoring ancestors, inviting them to step through the portal and take a seat at the hearth. We solicit their aid in warding off malevolent spirits who may have slipped through, with the aim of wreaking havoc among the living for the duration of the feast.

One method of protection is to don evil-looking garb, bizarre costumes and ghoulish masks to fool evil spirits into thinking that someone is already well at work protecting us. Food is prepared as an offering, both for the living and the dead. Portions left uneaten will be shared later with those less fortunate. A scary night, certainly, but one with great purpose and a stronger chance of calling protection upon oneself and one’s family than most others offered.

Enter Christianity, and a convenient transformation occurs. The Feast of All Saints is on Nov. 1, and the day after, the Feast of All Souls. Why Oct. 31 wasn’t similarly commandeered is a mystery, but may speak to the depth of Samhain’s starting hours in the people’s psyche — strong magic not to be toyed with. And on these Christian feast days, we still honor the dead, saints or sinners, just as the ancient Celts did.

On their eve, the custom of wearing disguises to ward off evil spirits endures, a solid favorite of young and old alike. Irishcentral.com lays out a nice blessing to sum it all up, deftly balancing a blend of beliefs:

“At all Hallow’s Tide, may God keep you safe From goblin and pooka and black-hearted stranger From harm of the water and hurt of the fire, From thorns of the bramble, from all other danger, From Will O’ The Wisp haunting the mire, From stumbles and tumbles and tricksters to vex you, May God in His mercy, this week protect you.”

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 forebears followed several paths to the New World. Reach him at brian.m.mcgowan1952@gmail.com or on Twitter (@Bmcgowan52M). He is the author of two books “Thunder at Noon,” about the battle of Waterloo, and “Love, Son John,” about World War II. Both are available at Amazon.com.

Halloween Organ ‘Spooktacular’ Set for October 31

On Sunday, Oct. 31, Halloween night at 7 p.m., Dr. Sandor Szabo, music director and organist will perform a short organ concert featuring a spooky selection of well-known organ music such as “Toccata and Fugue” by Bach, “Dance Macabre” by Saint-Seans, excerpts from “Nutcracker Ballet,” Tchaikovsky, “Peer Gynt Suite” and “Suite Gothique” by Boellman.

The free concert will take place at Sacred Heart Church, located at 417 Broadway in Dobbs Ferry. Open to all ages. Come in costume and enjoy this festive music before or after trick-or-treating.

Lifting Up Westchester, a nonprofit agency committed to helping individuals experiencing homelessness and hunger achieve self-sufficiency, announced last week its fifth annual high school student essay contest.

Open to all pupils attending school in Westchester grades 7-12, students are invited to explore the role housing plays in influencing their personal future, the future of their community and how it impacts all of Westchester.

This year’s essay challenges students to reflect broadly on the issue of housing in Westchester. Today, there are 1,800 individuals living in shelters every night in the county. There are tens of thousands of Westchester residents living in homes where their tenancy is unstable. Even more individuals and families have to couch surf or live within overcrowded quarters just to have a roof over their head.

There are negative physical, mental health and educational consequences for those experiencing inadequate housing and all forms of homelessness. The pandemic has exacerbated the housing problem for a much broader socioeconomic group who lost jobs and/or had salaries reduced at the same time that rents and mortgages have risen faster than income and earnings.

“We know that stable, adequate housing is a critical foundation on which all other individual and family success can be built,” said Anahaita Kotval, CEO of Lifting Up Westchester. “This year’s essay contest challenges our students to reflect deeply on how we can ensure adequate housing for all our neighbors.”

The essay contest was established in 2017 in memory of Beth Massey Rubens, a lifelong teacher, tutor and mentor who had a love for language arts.

First-, second- and third-place cash prizes will be awarded in each of the three grade groups: seventh and eighth grades, ninth and 10th grades and 11th and 12th grades. New this year is an ESL category. Any ESL student in grades 7-12 can choose to enter this category.

First prize in each category is $500, second place is $250 and third place is $100.

The contest, which kicked off last Friday, is accepting students’ submissions through Jan. 17, 2022, at 5 p.m. Students can enter the contest through the dedicated portal at http://s.alchemer.com/s/32022-LUW-Essay-Contest and upload their essays. Winners will be announced in late February.

Students, teachers and parents can learn more about how the contest works and review the judging process and criteria by visiting https://www.liftingupwestchester.org/essay-contest.

Crossword Answers

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Todd Elementary School Welcomes In-House STEAM Teacher

Todd Elementary students are in luck. Not only does their school have its very own STEAM teacher this year, but she comes to Briarcliff Manor with background in International Baccalaureate (IB), an inquiry-based learning program.

The new teacher, Amira Lahlouh, hails from Canada, where she spent six years working as an elementary school teacher and regularly used science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics in her classroom.

“I always did different STEAM-related activities that I integrated into the subjects that I taught,” she said. “This fits well with the IB program because STEAM is all about inquiry-based learning.”

Lahlouh has done various professional development workshops but also learned on her own.

“My degree is in mathematical sciences and I have always loved math and science but STEAM is a passion of mine,” she said. Before Lahlouh arrived at the district, various teachers did STEAM activities. Now, however, with Lahlouh, they have been organized as one subject that encompasses many subjects within the curriculum.

“I am trying to integrate STEAM to the existing curriculum and working with the teachers to do activities that will enhance the work that they are already doing,” Lahlouh said. “I have done that when I worked back in Canada, too; I helped other teachers integrate STEAM activities into their curriculum.”

“I can always find ways to integrate subjects like coding or makerspace into the program. It makes it more exciting because it adds another dimension of learning.”

Recently, Lahlouh visited Ana Correia’s second-grade class to work on coding and spelling.

“I taught the students how to code blue bots which is fairly simple and a great way to introduce coding for the younger grades,” she said. “We used the blue bots to spell different words – we started with simple words, so the students would code the blue bots to spell the word cat, for example.”

Once the students learn how to code with the blue bots, they can use coding as one of the options when they have various stations in the classroom.

“If one of the stations is word work, students can choose to use coding as one of the options to practice spelling,” Lahlouh said.

Lahlouh works in both the students’ classrooms and her own classroom to have the students engage in the various activities.

“Recently, for example, kindergarten students came to my room to do an activity where they were tasked with creating a structure that will prevent an ice cube from melting,” Lahlouh said.

She acknowledged that not all schools have a dedicated STEAM teacher and thinks it is fortunate to have such an opportunity for students.

“There has been a bigger push for it recently in the area because there has been a push in New York State, so more schools are starting to get STEAM teachers. I am fortunate to have been hired to do this work at Todd,” Lahlouh said.
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VOTE on November 2nd to Re-Elect....

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TOWN BOARD

TOM SIALIANO
TOWN BOARD

RICH BENKWITT
SUPERINTENDENT OF HIGHWAYS

GRACE LABRICCIOISA-PAPA
RECEIVER OF TAXES

EMILY COSTANZA
TOWN CLERK

www.mtleasantmovingforward.com

FIND US ON FACEBOOK
MtPleasantMovingForward

OUR PROMISE

• Continue to control taxes & spending so town government lives within its means.
• Keep Mount Pleasant a safe place to live and raise a family.
• Continue to invest in improving our roads and infrastructure.

• Encourage the development of financially accessible senior housing.
• Support sustainable energy alternatives and green initiatives.
• Foster the development of business-friendly, walkable down town areas without sacrificing existing character.

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Just as Christie's curates great art sales, Christie's International Real Estate assembles the world's leading real estate experts, dedicated to providing the highest quality home buying and selling services. Our trusted advisors are leaders in the local market and meet strict standards of excellence by demonstrating continual success in the marketing and selling of properties and upholding the core values of the Christie's brand.

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Nancy Shafiroff
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Doreen Zuccaro
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Elisa Brickell
Licensed Real Estate Salesperson
Imma Carletto
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Gladys DiSisto
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Gabriel Pasquale
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Meet the Scarsdale Sales Team

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Contact YOUR TRUSTED ADVISOR today for all of your real estate needs.

Chappaqua
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Meet April

Science & Tech Leader
• Ph.D. Chemistry & Published Research Scientist
• Software Developer & System Architect
• Laboratory Informatics Business Analyst
• U.S. Naval Research Laboratory Researcher
• Experience in a wide range of industries

Business Owner
• Lab Objects Corp, Daly Web Inc

Community Minded
• Parent, grandparent, Mahopac home owner for 16 years, STEM and local business advocate, and Keep Putnam Beautiful sponsor

April’s Goals for Carmel

Effective & Efficient Government
• Maximize transparency & public interest
• Ease tax burden on families & seniors

Business Growth
Expand water, sewer, and broadband to
• Support small businesses
• Benefit remote workers and students
• Keep seniors safe and connected in their homes

Sustainable Infrastructure
• Strengthen Infrastructure against severe weather
• Take advantage of climate smart grants
• Form a Sustainable Infrastructure Task Force

Digital Surveillance Data Policies
• Address how collected digital surveillance data is accessed, shared, and retained

Vote for A Better Carmel
Vote for Change

Town of Cortlandt Halloween Events

HALLOWEEN DOG PARADE
Costumes suggested and treats for all participants!
Cortlandt Dog Park
130 Sprout Brook Road
Cortlandt Manor
Saturday, October 30th
2:30 PM – 3:30 PM
FREE

Please register at
tim@townofcortlandt.com.
For more information call
914-734-1056.

HOBGOBLIN Parade
A SPECIAL HALLOWEEN PARADE IS OPEN TO EVERYONE IN COSTUME FROM AGES 2-14. TROPHIES AND CANDY WILL BE GIVEN TO ALL CHILDREN IN COSTUME
Cortlandt Youth Center
3 Memorial Drive, Croton on Hudson
Hockey Rink
Saturday, October 30th
1:00 PM SHARP
FREE

PLEASE CONTACT LESLEY POPKIN FOR MORE INFORMATION AT LESLEYP@TOWNOFCORTLANDT.COM OR 914-734-1057.
Is Your Palate Able to Discern a Biodynamic Wine?

By Nick Antonaccio

Over the past few weeks, I’ve been focusing on the virtues of organically produced wines, those that are simpatico with the natural order of agriculture, grown and produced in a symbiotic relationship with the multitude of environments that influence the aroma, taste and enjoyment of a glass of wine.

We’ve also explored the various phrases in today’s lexicon to describe the process by which wines are produced. The use of many of these words and phrases are not regulated, or government-defined, leaving many consumers in a quandary when confronted with “natural,” “organic,” “sustainable” or “biodynamic” on a label or in descriptive material.

Last week we took a deep dive into one of those descriptors, biodynamic, the ultimate expression of being one with nature. It has been espoused that this practice is one that will sustain the land, nature. It has been espoused that this practice is one that will sustain the land, nature.

How is biodynamic different from organic?

It is a farming philosophy, not a farming practice. It incorporates elements of astronomy and benevolent co-existence with pests, all in an effort to sustain a mutually rewarding relationship with Mother Earth. For example, some practitioners will plant vines and harvest grapes by the phases of the moon in order to be in harmony with the earth’s natural cycles; others will bury a cow’s horn filled with cow manure in the vineyards on the autumnal equinox, believing that this will enrich the soil over the winter in preparation for spring growth. Still others will burn insects and weeds and spread the ashes in the vineyard to ward off other pests. This may sound like a harkening back to the Dark Ages, when occult practices prevailed, but think of it as a renaissance or an enlightenment that rej ect modern day chemistry and crop management practices focused on the bottom line.

A short history of vineyard management in a symbiotic relationship with the natural order of agriculture, grown and produced in a symbiotic relationship with the multitude of environments that influence the aroma, taste and enjoyment of a glass of wine.

For more information contact Nick Antonaccio at nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com or on Twitter @sharingwine.

Jingle 5K Bell Run

 Register Today! www.jbr.org/westchester Westchester 2021 Jingle 5K Bell Run Saturday, December 4, 2021 Westchester Community College For more information contact Jamie Jordan (908) 347-6040 or jjordan@arthritis.org

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