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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 15, Issue 741

New Castle Scraps Form Based Code, Takes No Action on Findings

By Martin Wilbur

The New Castle Town Board shelved the Form Based Code last Wednesday night, putting an apparent end to any chance of the document being adopted after more than a year of contentious debate.

All four council members, including the three-member majority that supported the Form Based Code, agreed to take no action on the findings statement just eight days after the Unite New Castle ticket led by Councilwoman Lisa Katz, defeated the entire slate of Democratic-endorsed candidates in the town election. It was also three weeks after the board approved the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement.

A vote would have completed the state environmental review process.

Proponents advocated for the Form Based Code as a way to add vibrancy to the downtown with mixed-use development as well as helping New Castle diversify housing stock, while its detractors argued it was inappropriate for downtown Chappaqua because it would have inundated the schools with children and caused taxes to spike.

Councilwoman Lauren Levin, who said she ran for the board in 2019 mostly to help the hamlet, agreed with abandoning the effort because the Form Based Code "was doomed to get caught in the political crossfire."

"I think it is a sad outcome after countless meetings, the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent, endless hours we all spent on due diligence, I find it ironic that some

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EVELYN LATELLA PHOTO

Forever Grateful

Veterans pose for a photo at Pleasantville's Veterans Day ceremonies last Thursday morning at Memorial Plaza. Standing with the veterans is Chamber of Commerce President Bill Flocks, pictured far right.

Community Celebrates Byram Hills Girls' Tennis Title With Parade

By Martin Wilbur

When the Byram Hills High School girls' varsity team defeated Friends Academy on Nov. 5 at the Billie Jean King National Training Center in Queens, they didn't just complete a perfect 22-0 season.

They became the first female athletic team to capture a state championship in the school's 55-year history.

On Sunday morning, the school district, the Town of North Castle and the entire community celebrated their extraordinary accomplishment with a celebratory parade before adding the team to the sign recognizing the school's state champions on Route 128 before entering downtown Armonk. They join the 2007 boys' varsity soccer team and 2015 baseball team as the

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ART NELSON PHOTO

The Byram Hills High School girls' varsity tennis team gathered in front of the state champions sign in Armonk on Sunday once their name was added following a parade through downtown and a ceremony outside Town Hall.

Mt. Pleasant Residents Demand Action to Alleviate Traffic Problems

By Martin Wilbur

Mount Pleasant officials are weighing closing several roads to trucks in the vicinity of the Amazon warehouse and distribution center under construction on Route 9A in Hawthorne to prevent commercial traffic from overwhelming residential neighborhoods.

The Town Board has scheduled a public hearing for next Tuesday, Nov. 23, to potentially prohibit trucks from using Belmont Road, West Stevens Avenue, Pythian Avenue and perhaps some other streets, said Town Engineer David Smyth, who formerly worked for the county as a traffic engineer.

Smyth said the build-up of traffic on Route 9A calls for the town to address the matter and offer some relief to residents.

"Besides that, and besides the fact that we are parallel between two major state routes, it does make sense to put some kind of commercial restrictions on Belmont, on Stevens to prevent, and ultimately discuss on Pythian, too, to prevent commercial traffic that may eventually come from 9A, to avoid using that area as a cut-through," Smyth said.

Announcement of next week's hearing came as several residents spoke how they feared their roads could be swamped by the volume of vehicles looking for short-cuts through town, particularly when the Amazon facility is opened in the latter part of 2023. That 153,000-square-foot building is expected to attract 100 full-time employees to the site every day and have 778 parking spaces, more than 60 van loading spaces and

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New Castle Scraps Form Based Code, Takes No Action on Findings

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will celebrate a total lack of progress,” Levin said with a crowd overwhelmingly comprised of Form Based Code opponents at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center on hand to see what the board would do after the election.

“I think what is particularly disappointing is that we can’t even make progress on an abandoned and dilapidated section of North Greeley (Avenue). The chained-up parking lot, overgrown weeds, unfinished sidewalks and an empty warehouse look more like a town in decline than one of the nicest towns in America.”

Acting Supervisor Jeremy Saland decried opponents’ efforts to spread fear and misinformation, including repeated falsehoods of a hamlet with five-story buildings, nearly a thousand new units of housing, hundreds of additional school children and skyrocketing taxes.

Saland said he wondered whether anything will be done by the new administration over the next two years to improve downtown Chappaqua.

“Listen, we can disagree on the Form Based Code and that’s fine, that’s absolutely

fair, but it should rise and fall on its own merits, and let our words and honest voices be heard and not misinformation,” he said.

Katz, who will be the town’s next supervisor, campaigned vigorously against the Form Based Code. She said she was appreciative of her colleagues’ decision against taking a vote; however, the plan was defective and wrong for the town, she said.

“What it is was a mistake that turned out to not be what it was initially intended to be, and it’s been said that you should not cling to a mistake just because you spent a lot of time making it,” Katz said. “It’s fine that we study the Form Based Code as a zoning and development plan, and I’m glad that we are all self-aware enough now to recognize that it is not right for our town and we can’t let inertia continue to drag us down a faulty path.”

Councilwoman Lori Morton said she found it ironic that some of the loudest opponents to the Form Based Code live in multifamily housing that was made possible by the landmark 1975 state Supreme Court decision that found New Castle to have had exclusionary zoning.

However, the town is still one of the most segregated communities in Westchester County, she said.

“As a community, New Castle is poorer for its lack of economic, age, cultural and racial diversity,” Morton said. “New Castle is not currently providing sufficient opportunity to those outside the age, economic family structure, and by extension, cultural and racial limitations currently in place with our current restricted housing options. This is merely one reason I have been supportive of an innovative approach to evolve our half-century-old zoning.”

After Saland was accused of being swayed by development interests by Form Based Code opponents in recent months, he revealed that former councilman Adam Brodsky, whose family is in the real estate business and owns property downtown, was a major contributor to the Unite New Castle campaign. Brodsky was a two-time running mate of Katz.

Another developer who lives in town also made multiple donations totaling \$15,000, Saland said.

But Katz dismissed the comment, saying she was called anti-development by the

Democratic ticket throughout the campaign and now is being accused of taking money from developers.

She said her goal is to leave the election behind and represent all residents in town for at least the next two years.

“I understand losing is tough and I understand that we’ve been working hard on this Form Based Code, and especially town staff,” Katz said. “You’ve been working tirelessly on this and we appreciate it because I think a lot of it will be able to be utilized going forward, but again it doesn’t mean we move forward with it just because it’s been done and time has been spent on it and it doesn’t mean that we lied, it just means that people have realized it’s just not the right thing for our community.”

Resident Robert Fleisher, a Form Based Code opponent, struck a conciliatory tone after the vote, saying he regretted that common ground could not be found to help the downtown.

“I think there is a path forward that can satisfy a great deal of the community, that will benefit from all of the work that was done even though I took great exception to the actual proposal,” he said.

Community Celebrates Byram Hills Girls’ Tennis Title With Parade

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only squads to capture a state title.

“I could not be more proud of this team,” said Head Coach Michael Racanelli. “So guys, thank you. Thank you for all the dedication, for all the long hours and the hard work.”

Following the parade that started at H.C. Crittenden Middle School and ended at Town Hall, each team member was introduced at the ceremony. They then made the short walk over to the town’s state champions sign.

Eva Shrayner, one of the senior captains who was on the court when victory was clinched, said what made this year’s team special was the closeness that developed as soon as the season started.

“Ever since Aug. 23, when we stepped foot on the court for the first time since tryouts, we honestly became a family. It’s a team like no other,” Shrayner said. “I’ve been on the team for four years. This team was the closest it’s ever been. We’re all sisters, we’re all family and these are bonds we can never break.”

For Alyssa Margolin, another senior captain, a major test was the sectional finals when the team was battling key injuries, forcing several regulars out of the starting lineup. Their replacements saved the season and kept the championship dream alive, she said.

“I think the rest of the team did their best to step up and help us get the win despite people not being able to play,” Margolin said.

Racanelli said the combination of having outstanding senior players as well as other

members who not only had high school varsity experience but tournament play under their belts was a significant factor in their success.

Even so, in their first meeting last spring, which Racanelli called the most important meeting of the season, he recalled imploring the team that if they gave their all, anything was achievable.

“I brought them in and they thought I was retiring, but no, (I said) I want you to all work hard because anything is possible when you do so,” Racanelli said. “When you play hard, you work hard, anything is possible, including being champions.”

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jen Lamia told the players that their achievement and how they carried themselves will be emulated by future players for generations to come.

“What an accomplishment, not only of their sport, of their academics, but of their ability to work together as a team and take Byram Hills straight to the top,” Lamia said.

Athletic Director Rob Castagna thanked the players’ parents for their support during a season that extended nearly three months. He also recognized junior varsity head coach Jessica Woolf, who started with the district nearly 30 years ago and helped develop some of the players as well.

“We don’t know where we’d be without her,” Castagna said. “Coach Racanelli and Coach Woolf make a wonderful team. We are blessed to have them.”

The team will also be part of the Frosty parade that kicks off the holiday season, scheduled this year for Sunday, Nov. 28.

Mt. Pleasant Residents Demand Action to Alleviate Traffic Problems

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12 truck loading areas.

The scheduling of the hearing also came after Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi, who met with residents of Belmont, West Stevens and Pythian late last month, recently announced that a broader study of the most congested areas of town would be conducted, which also includes Bradhurst Avenue near the Westchester Medical Center.

Residents last week presented the Town Board with a petition containing roughly 275 signatures asking for immediate steps to address the traffic woes they said they would almost certainly face once the warehouse and distribution center opens.

Pythian Avenue resident Kathleen Ciano said their neighborhoods are already suffering during peak hours.

“We want change now,” Ciano told the board at last Tuesday’s meeting. “We’re impacted now. We understand that Amazon is going to add to it, but the point is we’ve been kind of biting our tongue and the kids can’t even go out after school and ride their bikes. They’re on the cul-de-sac because of rush hour traffic.”

Dominick Vita, another Pythian Avenue resident, said the key issue is the drivers using their streets as a cut-through between Route 9A and Bradhurst Avenue. The fact that the Amazon distribution center will be a 24/7 operation will only exacerbate residents’ problems, he said.

“We’re concerned that our neighborhood is particularly vulnerable to traffic because of its location between major roadways and its use as a cut-through between these

major roadways, which on some days is near constant, especially on Joyce Place, Pythian Avenue and Belmont Road, the main artery,” Vita said.

The petition suggested that the town do everything in its power to push traffic away from the residential streets and work with the state Department of Transportation and local police to find solutions. Other possibilities not included in the petition but which have been a source of conversation are working with larger businesses on Route 9A and Bradhurst Avenue to get their cooperation and placing a traffic light at Joyce Place and Belmont Road.

Fulgenzi said the Town Board is listening closely to what the residents are saying and hope to alleviate the traffic volume and congestion.

“I do promise you that this is something we’re taking very seriously and we’ve started already working on it,” Fulgenzi said. “There is no immediate solution here but we’re starting, we’re starting the process.”

During last week’s discussion, Smyth reported recently recorded traffic counts along some of the key roads in the vicinity and the types of vehicles that used the streets. During a seven-day period, there were 5,100 vehicles on Belmont Road, 1,900 on West Stevens Avenue and 4,300 on Warren Avenue.

By comparison, there were 23,000 vehicles in the same time frame on Bradhurst Avenue, 13,000 on Columbus Avenue and 9,000 on Broadway.

Trucks accounted for roughly 20 percent of the traffic on Belmont Road and other nearby arteries, Smyth said.



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Abinanti Introduces Bill to Restore Tappan Zee to Cuomo Bridge Name

By Martin Wilbur

Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) has introduced legislation that would restore the name Tappan Zee to the Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, a move that he contends would properly recognize the history of the area.

Abinanti said last week that his proposal is a compromise that doesn't eliminate the former governor from the official name of the span. The bridge, which opened in 2017, would be known as the Mario M. Cuomo Tappan Zee Bridge. At that time, then-governor Andrew Cuomo prevailed over the state legislature to name the bridge after his father, who served as governor from 1983 through 1994.

While there are some residents who believe his efforts are a waste of time, the longtime legislator said restoring Tappan Zee to the bridge's name is one of the most frequent issues his office has been contacted about during the past few years. Most of his constituents want to see it officially referred to as the Tappan Zee, he said.

The Westchester side of the bridge is in his district, the 92nd Assembly District.

"People everywhere feel very, very strongly about restoring both the geographical and historical origins of Tappan Zee," Abinanti said.

Tappan is the name of a Native American sub-tribe of the Delaware/Lenni Lenape who occupied the area, he said, while Zee is Dutch for sea, referring to the early Dutch



Assemblyman Tom Abinanti has introduced a measure in the state legislature that would add Tappan Zee to the name of the Mario M. Cuomo Bridge.

settlers.

As part of Abinanti's legislation, the welcome center near the bridge's Westchester landing would be called the Governor Malcolm Wilson Welcome Center. Wilson, a 1970s governor and Westchester native, had his name added to the old Tappan Zee Bridge by Mario Cuomo, Abinanti said. However, when the elder Cuomo made that change, he made sure to keep the Tappan



Zee reference intact, which will be the case with the assemblyman's proposal, he said.

Abinanti said he would not want to see highway signs changed if he can get his bill passed and signed into law. He said there would be no justification financially to do that.

"It's time that we all came together and reached a compromise," Abinanti said. "Let's stop the war over the name, it's time to heal."

The attempt by Abinanti is one of the few name changes proposed by a Democrat since the fight over the name started shortly after the new bridge opened. There

were also renewed attempts by others late in the summer to make the switch once Andrew Cuomo resigned as governor in the wake of his sexual harassment scandals.

Although Abinanti often criticized Andrew Cuomo and had several of his proposed bills vetoed by the beleaguered ex-governor, he insisted that he was not piling on but was trying to respond to the sentiments of a majority of his constituents.

"It's historical," Abinanti said of Tappan Zee. "It's familiar to the area and I think that my bill reflects that."

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Mt. Pleasant Latest Municipality to Opt Out of Cannabis Sales

By Martin Wilbur

The Town of Mount Pleasant became the latest municipality in the region to opt out from allowing cannabis dispensaries and consumption lounges within its borders citing the potential harm of marijuana use.

By a 4-0 vote, the board made its decision last Tuesday evening after a single public hearing. Board members pointed to their objections of making marijuana more accessible while there is the possibility that it could increase the chances of escalating use and addiction to more destructive substances.

"I personally feel we have an opioid epidemic in the state of New York and all over the country," said Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi. "To me, this is adding to a problem that hasn't been resolved yet, or will it ever be resolved, I don't know. I personally feel it's a gateway drug. People say I'm wrong; I believe it is."

Councilman Thomas Sialiano said there was no way he would support the sale of marijuana in Mount Pleasant.

"God forbid if we had a business selling it and a kid took drugs or drank alcohol and got behind a car. I couldn't live with myself if I voted for something like this that may cause an accident," Sialiano said. "Someone could lose a life."

As a member of the Steering Committee

of Pleasantville STRONG, Councilwoman Laurie Rogers Smalley said she could not be more adamantly opposed to the sale of cannabis in the town. Pleasantville STRONG is an organization comprised of volunteers and educators from Pleasantville and Mount Pleasant who have worked tirelessly to protect the community's youngsters from drugs, alcohol and smoking.

There were only two residents who spoke during the brief public hearing, one in favor of allowing retail marijuana sales and the other opposing it.

Joseph Menta said it would have been unwise to allow dispensaries in town given all of the other challenges people are facing as a result of the pandemic and

other problems. Having moved out of New York City over the past year, it was commonplace to see people loitering and smoking in cars, negatively impacting quality of life.

"There was nothing more pungent, alarming and offensive as the smell of smoke emanating from multitudes of vehicles when I lived in the city, sharing the road with my family and I with little to no police enforcement," Menta said.

However, Kelsey Padgett suggested it was hypocritical and shortsighted for there to be a countless number of establishments selling alcohol and cigarettes, which are at least equally harmful to people, yet refuse to allow the sale of marijuana.

"New York State is going to have legal marijuana," Padgett said. "People are going to be smoking it. The only question is whether or not we get taxes and we get new businesses, and from what I understand...you're not anti-business, so it seems odd to me you would not want to allow these businesses to be in our town."

Municipalities have until Dec. 31 to pass a resolution to opt out from allowing dispensaries and/or consumption lounges. For the communities that do opt out, they may pass a law opting back in. However, for those who initially permit sales, they may not opt out.

Nearly all of area towns and villages surrounding Mount Pleasant have opposed opting into retail sales and lounges at this time.

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Pleasantville Bar Closes Following Multiple COVID Cases

By Abby Luby and Martin Wilbur

A Pleasantville bar and restaurant temporarily closed last weekend after multiple patrons who had recently visited the venue tested positive for COVID-19.

Lucy's Lounge manager Rob Catalano posted on the establishment's Facebook page on Nov. 12 that an undisclosed number of guests who had visited the popular venue during the weekend of Nov. 6-7, reached out to management to let them know they had tested positive.

"I value the safety of my staff and guests so we will be closing until we know that we have all gotten back a negative test result," Catalano said in the post. "Going forward we will continue to check on our staff daily to make sure they are not showing any symptoms. If you have recently visited with us please keep an eye on yourselves. We are very sorry for this unfortunate circumstance and hope that those affected are healthy or on the mend."

Pleasantville Mayor Peter Scherer said Monday morning there were nine active COVID-19 cases in Pleasantville, numbers that he said he received from the Westchester County Department of Health. Five of those new cases had been reported last Friday, the same day as Catalano's social media post, although it could not be ascertained whether any of those stemmed from Lucy's Lounge.

"We haven't had five new cases (in Pleasantville) in one day in a long time,"

Scherer said. "People need to remain clear that COVID isn't over."

It's also possible that some or all of the Lucy's Lounge patrons who tested positive may not be village residents, he said.

Although many people are vaccinated, it is critical for everyone to protect themselves.

"Part of the problem here is not everyone behaves carefully when they are out and it sounds like that's what happened here," Scherer said.

Various village administrators and employees also had gathered at Lucy's for a retirement party last Wednesday evening, Nov. 10. It is unclear how many village employees attended or their current status.

Lucy's had been closed due to the pandemic, but had been cleared to reopen on Nov. 4.

The development coincides with a relatively modest uptick in active cases throughout Westchester in recent weeks. Westchester County Executive George Latimer said Monday that there were 1,285 active cases in the county, up more than 200 over the past few weeks. On Saturday, the most recent day where data was available, there was a 1.5 percent positivity rate in Westchester, according to the state tracker. The positivity rate statewide on Saturday was 3.25 percent.

Latimer said Westchester's numbers do not represent a significant increase or spike but bears watching as the colder weather



Lucy's Lounge in Pleasantville, seen here for a 2017 event, has been temporarily shuttered after an undisclosed number of patrons tested positive for COVID-19.

settles in and people gather inside more often, including for the upcoming holidays.

Westchester hospitalizations have fallen to 27 as of last Saturday, he said, although since mid-October there have been 16 COVID-19-related deaths in the county, brining the death toll to 2,354.

"The number one issue is preventing fatalities," Latimer said. "When we have a low number or zero fatalities, that is the single most important sign of success."

Hospitalizations is the second most important number while the active caseload is the next factor on the priority list.

In Putnam County, Saturday's positivity rate was 2.1 percent, with 10 new cases from 487 tests.

State to Close County Center

The County Center in White Plains, which has administered well over 300,000 vaccinations since January, will cease operations as a mass state vaccination center on Thursday evening, Latimer said.

Demand, which had approached 2,500 vaccinations daily earlier this year, has dropped off significantly as an overwhelming percentage of the county residents have been vaccinated. Just over 91 percent of people living in Westchester have received at least one dose.

On Saturday, there were 359 vaccinations at the County Center and 163 on Sunday.

Latimer said it is uncertain whether the county would continue to use the facility on some level as a vaccination site. It is clear the entire building no longer needs to be available for vaccines, he said.

"It is likely that we can (provide) vaccinations there without having to use the totality of the County Center for that purpose," Latimer said.

The state, however, is reopening the Yonkers Armory as a vaccination site.

Westchester will still use its two health clinics in White Plains and Yonkers and various temporary satellite locations. It is hoped that school districts will also partner with the county to make it easy for students as young as five years old whose parents want to have them vaccinated to get the shot.

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Obituary

Dorothy Fanning

Dorothy Ann Hagerty Fanning died peacefully on Oct. 1 at her home.

Dorothy was born in 1931 in New York City. She was the daughter of Florence and Edward Hagerty. She was predeceased by her siblings, Edward, Jane and Eileen.

Dorothy grew up in Scarsdale. She graduated from Good Counsel High School, then went to Grasslands School of Nursing, where she received her degree in 1952.

Dorothy was married to John (Jack) Fanning on June 6, 1953, in Phoenix, Ariz. They eventually moved back east to Rye, then finally in Yorktown, where they raised their seven children. Yorktown was their home for over 50 years.

Dorothy had an accomplished career in nursing, working in many roles, being highly successful in all. She went on to get her master's degree in nursing from Pace University. Throughout the remainder of her career, she worked in administration, education and health services. Dorothy's nursing career extended through 2000 when she retired from Columbia University as director of health services. She always worked toward excellence in her profession.

Dorothy then joined the family business, Fanning Electric, which Jack and Dorothy established in 1965, and is now operated by her son, Mark, and his wife, Mary. Fanning Electric was one of her most rewarding positions, working with her son and

grandsons until 2017 when she officially retired.

She is survived by children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews. They have all been the light of her life. Dorothy always enjoyed being involved in everyone's life. She loved family gatherings and made each and every one of her family members feel included and special.

Dorothy lived a full life with so many people who loved her and will miss her on a daily basis. Her greatest love was her family.

Dorothy was predeceased by her loving son, John, in 1978; her friend, partner and husband, Jack, in 2006; and wonderful son-in-law Robert Sickles in 2020.

Dorothy left behind Patricia and Steve Marlin, their daughters and spouses Victoria and Brian Armocida and Rachael and Alex Presnal; Richard and Aileen Fanning and their sons and spouses, Liam and Kate Fanning, Connor and Stephanie Fanning and Tim and Shelby Fanning; Kathleen and Bill Woods and their daughters and spouses, Erin and Hector Bermudez and Shannon and Thomas Odenthal; Mark and Mary Fanning and their children and spouses, Caitlyn and Pat Dilena, Taylor and Mallory Fanning, Alysha and Jermaine Gordon and Kyle and Tiffany Fanning; Mary and Bob Froats and their children and spouses, Jessica and Jeff Bigas, Jackie and Shaun Hagey, Ryan and Banoo Froats and John Froats; and Ann

Sickles and her children and spouse, Kelsey and Drew Klein, Bridget Sickles and Colin Sickles.

Dorothy also left 18 great-grandchildren behind, Brayden, Benjamin, James, Nicholas, Jack, Thomas, Emily, Norah, Sean, Jack, Anderson, John, Chloe, Scott, Reid, Gabriel,

Harper and Kendall, and several nieces and nephews in Rhode Island, Connecticut, Arizona and Florida.

Dorothy was a unique and special person, an incredible gift to us all. Dorothy built an amazing family and will be greatly missed by all who loved her.

Police Blotter

Carmel Police Department

Nov. 8: Deputies were dispatched to a Cold Spring home at 5:44 p.m. on a report of a missing 15-year-old child. The deputies were advised that the child was supposed to come directly home after school and was supposed to attend an after-school activity. The child did not have a cell phone, so the parents were unable to contact the child. Deputies responded to the school and located the child who was safe and participating in the after-school activity.

Nov. 9: Deputies arrested a 54-year-old Putnam Valley man on Oscawana Lake Road after operating a moped without a helmet at 1:05 p.m. After the stop, he was unable to produce identification, proof of insurance and registration and then provided the deputies with a false name. The man was charged with false personation, operating a motor vehicle without an inspection sticker and various other violations.

Nov. 11: Deputies were dispatched to a car accident on Route 6 and Root Avenue in Southeast at 1:05 p.m. On the way to the scene, deputies were notified that the driver of one of the vehicles involved in the accident had left. According to witnesses, the driver of a red SUV had struck one vehicle pushing that vehicle sideways into oncoming traffic causing it to strike a third vehicle. The red SUV then fled the scene. Deputies were able to locate the SUV and arrest its driver, a 49-year-old Carmel woman. She was charged with leaving the scene of a property damage accident and other related charges.

County Police/Mount Kisco

Nov. 11: Police served a temporary order of protection to a Spring Street resident at 10:25 p.m. The court order prohibits the resident from having any contact with the person named in the order.

Nov. 11: Police responded to Woodland Street at 11:32 p.m. following a report of a hit-and-run accident. A youth reported that a black SUV backed into his father's parked car, causing minor scratches, then drove away. An officer spoke by phone with the vehicle's owner who did not wish to pursue the matter.

Nov. 12: Police responded to a Barker Street residence at 8:47 p.m. on a report of a domestic dispute. A resident reported that he had been involved in a verbal dispute with a relative who then damaged his television set in anger. A 31-year-old man, a Barker Street resident, was taken into custody and charged with fourth-degree criminal mischief, a misdemeanor.

Nov. 12: Police conducted a welfare check on Amuso Drive after a family reported a 9:41 p.m. that they had been unable to reach a relative by phone for several days. The resident answered the door for an officer and was asked to contact her family to let them know she was okay.

North Castle Police Department

Nov. 5: A woman named Vanessa from SiriusXM requested assistance at 12:18 a.m. in locating a stolen vehicle, which is pinging stationary for the last hour on King Street. The vehicle was described as a 2021 white Dodge Durango Hellcat with no plates. She advised that the ping should be exact but isn't always and could not provide a radius for the ping. Vanessa was unable to provide information about when the vehicle last pinged as moving. She stated that she would notify her supervisor and call back.

Nov. 5: Report of a larceny at the CVS on Main Street at 4:04 p.m. A store employee reported that a party, described as a man wearing a blue rain coat, jeans, red sneakers and a see-through mask, just left the store, possibly with unpaid items. The responding officers located the party and subsequently arrested him without incident.

Pleasantville Police Department

Nov. 7: A 53-year-old Tarrytown man was arrested at 8:28 p.m. on a DWI charge after hitting a parked car on Washington Avenue.

Nov. 9: A 31-year-old male driver, who was pulled over on Manville Road at 2:21 p.m., did not have his license. He was charged with an infraction. The vehicle was impounded.

Nov. 11: A dead fox was reported on Rockledge Road at 1:59 p.m., apparently of natural causes. The animal was disposed.



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Putnam Schedules COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics for Children

The Putnam County Department of Health has scheduled four clinics to vaccinate children five to 11 years old with COVID-19 shots along with providing boosters for eligible adults.

Afternoon clinics are scheduled for Nov. 18 and 23, and Dec. 9 and 14, and will run from 2 to 4:30 p.m. Children vaccinated at the first clinic in Carmel Plaza this Thursday, can receive their second shot on Dec. 9 in Carmel and be fully protected before Christmas Day.

The clinics on Nov. 23 and Dec. 14 will be held at the Philipstown Recreation Center, with full protection by New Year's Eve.

Online registration and further information will be shared on the health department's social media platforms and posted on its webpage at <https://www.putnamcountyny.com/health/covid19/#vaxinfo>.

The authorization of an estimated youngsters in Putnam County comes as most clusters of COVID-19 cases in Putnam County have affected schools and daycare centers where children gather. The most impacted school districts last month were Mahopac and Putnam Valley. There are an estimated 6,000 children in Putnam County from five to 11 years old.

The benefits for vaccinated children go beyond protection from infection. Fully vaccinated students of all ages, who remain asymptomatic, are not required to quarantine if exposed to a classmate or other person with COVID-19, allowing them to continue attending school and other activities.

"We are working closely with our local pediatricians in this phase of vaccination," explained Kathleen Percacciolo, supervising public health nurse. "We are offering these four Pfizer vaccination opportunities to assist them in their campaign to vaccinate this 5- to 11-year-old age group. Putnam

pediatricians have been and continue to be the lead vaccine providers for children. One day COVID vaccination will become as routine as other childhood immunizations. Now, these young children have the chance to join the more than 73,000 residents who have already received their first doses."

In addition to providing first shots for these children, the Department of Health will offer booster shots and third doses to eligible adults at the same clinics. Eligibility depends on which shot was initially received. Anyone who received Moderna or Pfizer is eligible for a booster if they are 65 years and older, or 18 years and older and have certain health conditions, or live or work in a high-risk setting. These individuals must wait at least six months after their second dose.

Recipients who are 12 years old and up, with weakened immune systems, (for example from cancer treatments) are eligible for a third dose if it is at least two months from their last shot. If it has been over two months, they are eligible for a booster. Booster and third doses are technically different and may vary clinically in the dosage.

For individuals who received the Johnson & Johnson shot, and are 18 years of age and older, should get a booster if at least two months has passed since their shot.

Five to 11-year-olds will receive the Pfizer vaccine in two doses, spaced three weeks apart, the same timing for older recipients. Each of the two doses for the younger group will be equal to one-third the amount given to people 12 years of age and older.

While it is true that children have a lower risk than adults for hospitalization and death due to the virus, and for continuing post-COVID infection symptoms, pediatric illness has accounted for a higher proportion of cases in the most recent surge driven by the

more easily transmitted Delta variant.

The safety of the vaccine for these children has been studied in more than 3,000 children and no serious side effects were detected in these clinical trials. Additionally, the vaccine proved to be 90.7 percent effective in preventing COVID-19 in this age group. Trials are now underway looking at vaccination for children as young as six months of age.

Short-term side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine including fever, chills and body aches, have been common across all age categories, most noticeably after the second dose. Similar side effects were also seen in the trials for the 5- to 11-year-olds, with younger recipients possibly more prone to these.

In COVID-vaccinated adolescents and young adults under 30 years of age, rare cases of myocarditis, an inflammation of the

heart, have also been seen, most notably among males. However, infection with COVID-19 poses a higher risk for developing myocarditis than vaccination.

Moreover, multisystem inflammatory syndrome, which is linked to the virus in pediatric cases, is also much more common and can cause inflammation of the heart. There were no reported or observed cases of myocarditis in the recent trial data submitted to the Food and Drug Administration on the 3,000-plus children five to 11 years old. Clearly the less risky path for all ages, five and older, is vaccination.

For more information, visit Putnam County's website at www.putnamcountyny.com, or visit the health department social media sites on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @PutnamHealthNY.

Third Mt. Kisco Planning Board Member to Leave at Year's End

Another member of the Mount Kisco Planning Board will be leaving his seat by the end of the year.

Acting Chairman John Bainlardi, who had another two years left on his current term, said he needs to take break from the board due to family life and various other responsibilities.

"I've enjoyed my time tremendously," Bainlardi said during last week's Planning Board work session, which preceded the regular meeting. "There were some times where it's been difficult, but nothing worthwhile, in my opinion, is without some challenge."

Mayor Gina Picinich said Bainlardi's knowledge of the law and his ability to listen to applicants and residents' positions has made him a valuable board member. The village also appreciated his willingness to chair the board following another resignation earlier this year.

"We were so fortunate that John stepped up at a time when really, really need his leadership," Picinich said.

In the coming weeks, the Village Board will be discussing the Planning Board's leadership moving forward.

When Bainlardi leaves his seat, it will be the latest upheaval this year for the Planning Board. Last winter former chairman Doug Hertz resigned after the village's Board of Ethics issued an advisory opinion stating that he violated the code after his company was pursuing a controversial application to a solar farm on a portion of a 25-acre property.

Last month, Ralph Vigliotti was also caught in an ethics breach for talking publicly as a board member on the Kirby Commons proposal despite owning a piece of property in the affected area. He announced last month he would be leaving at the conclusion of his term in December.

--Martin Wilbur

Mt. Pleasant, New Castle to Receive Hudson River Estuary Study Grants

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) announced last week that the towns of Mount Pleasant and New Castle, Pace University in Pleasantville and Riverkeeper have been awarded Hudson River Estuary program grants from New York State to advance the stewardship of natural resources as well as enhance environmental education and improve recreational access.

The grants are funded by the state's Environmental Protection Fund and administered by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Hudson River Estuary Program.

DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos noted that the grants will "help Hudson River Valley communities develop plans and advance tools to become more resilient to flooding and other climate impacts while expanding recreational opportunities for people of all abilities."

Among the 39 grants and \$1.5 million being awarded statewide, three are heading to the 40th Senate District. Mount Pleasant will receive \$17,440 to conduct a natural resources inventory and map the town's

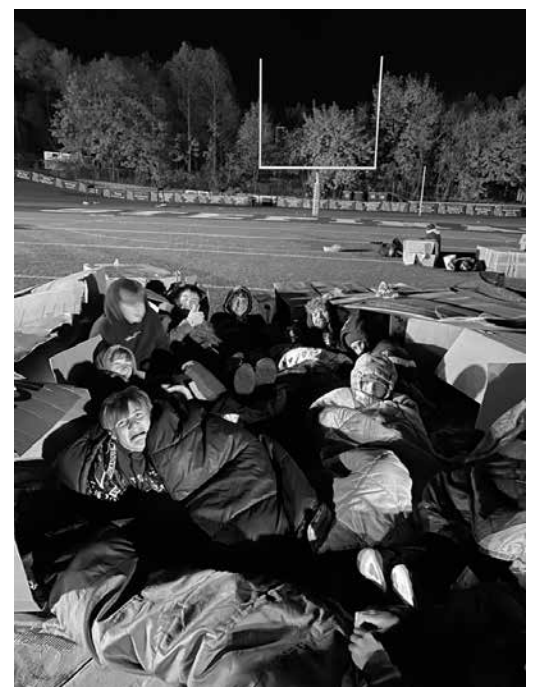
wetlands; New Castle will receive \$36,033 to conduct a natural resources inventory, with a detailed analysis of the town's natural resources and recommendations for conservation and mitigation; and Pace University will get \$46,612 to conduct a stakeholder-based assessment of the Pocantico River watershed. This will increase the capacity of the river's Watershed Alliance by compiling existing information and adding new data.

Also, Ossining-based Riverkeeper will receive \$50,000 to conduct a regional-scale climate vulnerability assessment to better define threats to local water bodies.

New York's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) has grown from its original appropriation of \$31 million in fiscal year 1994-95. The Fiscal Year 2022 enacted budget sustains the fund at \$300 million, the highest level in the program's history. Appropriations include \$40 million for solid waste programs, \$90 million for parks and recreation, \$151 million for open space programs and \$19 million for the climate change mitigation and adaptation program.

Helping the Homeless

About 250 Stepinac High School students slept outdoors overnight in cardboard boxes last week on the school's athletic fields and raised more than \$40,000 to help the unsheltered homeless in their communities and New York City. The nearly 12-hour stay set new records for Stepinac's participation and amount of money raised in the Cardboard Box City Campaign, which was organized by the school's campus ministry. Contributions to Stepinac's community cause can still be made at <http://www.stepinac.org/boxcity>.



Letters to the Editor

New Castle Town Board Majority Failed During Form-Based Code Process

We are writing in response to the recent Examiner article entitled “New Castle Scraps Form-Based Code, Takes No Action on Findings Statement.”

As concerned residents of New Castle, we actively participated in our town’s 18-month-long debate over the adoption of a Form-Based Code (FBC), with Lisa Katz serving on the Town Board during that time. Against the backdrop of a global pandemic, a large grassroots movement of diverse and disparate voices emerged, all of whom simply wanted to be heard. Thousands signed petitions, wrote impassioned letters, and attended board meetings and engagement sessions decrying the impropriety of a blanket zoning and development overhaul for the Chappaqua hamlet during a period of great uncertainty. Virtually no residents spoke out in favor of the FBC.

Those voices were joined by key interested agencies, namely our school, planning and library boards, who all expressed reservations about the inadequate analysis being done by the Town Board. For the first time in memory, these agencies were treated like adversaries by our Town Board.

The incumbent Town Board had a moral and fiduciary responsibility to educate residents and achieve substantial consensus before moving forward with a plan destined to be transformational. Despite the objections and reasoned arguments of Katz, the Town Board majority failed throughout the process on all counts.

Within that landscape, we joined together as Unite New Castle on a platform of collaboration and consensus, as we listened to the collective concerns. We campaigned largely on the issue of the FBC, along with the broader idea of transparent, inclusive, respectful and responsive governance.

We faced an opposing slate that, together

with the board majority, had all the levers of power – the ability to control the message through official communications, how and when the public could speak and the rote endorsements of virtually every major Democratic political figure in New York. The result? The Unite New Castle slate won all four open seats.

We understand how frustrating this must have been to our opponents and members of the Town Board who advocated for the FBC. Even accounting for that disappointment, however, we were shocked at the lack of grace and good will displayed at last Wednesday evening’s Town Board meeting. We heard three Town Board members make unsupported and frivolous claims and accusations about lack of progress, misrepresentation of facts, nefarious campaign contributions and the failure to address social justice goals.

As we have said all along, the only endorsements that matter to us are those of our neighbors, and we are honored that they spoke loudly on our behalf on Election Day. They heard our promises to promote responsible growth that takes resident voices into account, not just a blanket plan that focuses on developer profits. They saw through claims of misrepresentation based on their own studied analysis of the town’s Environmental Impact Statement (and the clear victory our slate earned in the one fair election complaint filed against us by our opponents). And they certainly recognized the performative nature of arguments that the FBC was somehow a social justice proposal, particularly when it never took into account the likelihood of displacement for our lowest income neighbors and ignored the fact that we have achieved over 60 affordable and workforce housing units in recent years without an FBC.

Finally, we are so proud to have received financial support from hundreds of

neighbors and friends. To the extent that included the support of local entrepreneurs and philanthropists or longtime friends and former colleagues who care deeply about our town is a tremendous source of pride for us and should be for all residents.

We now must come together as neighbors to support each other and to collaboratively foster a New Castle that is inclusive, welcoming and thriving. We look forward to working with all of New Castle’s residents, merchants and stakeholders in

an open, positive and engaging manner for the best interests of this home we all love. The actions we take in the future will stand or fall on their own merits, and we are proud that the voters in New Castle entrusted us with that responsibility.

Unite New Castle
Lisa Katz
Tara Kassal
Chris Hildenbrand
Victoria Tipp

Republicans Will Take Back the Country Through the Ballot Box

This is in response to Nicholas Kuvach’s letter to the editor last week (“The Dangers of Thinking That Elections Are Rigged or Stolen.”) I do see how dangerous election tampering can be. In President Trump’s bid for re-election, why was he winning in districts and then magically ballots were found in the middle of the night that reversed the count and gave Biden the win?

Similar things happened in many places. Why did we see the same ballots being repeatedly put into the voting machines? Why were there boxes of ballots pulled out from under tables once the Republican election workers were told to go home for the evening? How about all the anomalies with the down ballots? They went against all statistical models from past elections.

Does anyone (even a Democrat) believe that Biden is the most popular president ever elected and actually garnered 82 million votes? Hillary Clinton was so angry at her loss to President Trump and still maintains that she won. She conspired to steal the election but never took into account how many Republicans and Conservatives were tired of being insulted by her and her “deplorables”-type comments, and her biggest mistake was that she didn’t cheat

enough to steal the election. Thank God! The problem with Republicans and Conservatives is that many feel that their vote doesn’t count so why bother voting? This past election showed exactly how angry we are with the Democrats and their free spending, anti-American attitudes that are going to put the middle class in the poorhouse and the poor on the streets.

Get your head out of the sand and face the facts – we are going to take back our country with fair and unbiased elections. We are done with Democrats thinking they are the only ones that can run the country and we are embarrassed by the “Great American Apology Tours” by Obama and Biden. America is the greatest country in the world. That’s why people don’t look to leave but want to come here.

The cities that have been run by the Democratic Party for decades are the ones that have been run into the ground, are broke and have the highest crime rates. We are done with this. Show us where we cheated or keep your unproven opinions to yourself.

Ray Rau
Brewster

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Guest Column

A Plea for Help for Pedestrians Trying to Cross the Saw Mill Parkway

By Michael Gold

Cars, SUVs and trucks hurl themselves down the Saw Mill Parkway like demented bowling balls hopped up on amphetamines, blowing past pedestrians so quickly it can shock the breath out of you.

People trying to walk across the parkway do so at great peril. The pedestrian/parkway interface is a real-life horror movie for walkers.

On a recent school day, I was waiting to cross the parkway with my daughter. I have worked out a strategy to protect her. I always place her on my left, so drivers aching to ignore the law to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk when they turn from Grant Street in Pleasantville onto the northbound Saw Mill Parkway will see me instead of her. I'm a bigger target and I can usually get drivers to pay attention when I look straight at them.

This strategy worked until it didn't. We got the white walk sign and were about to cross the road when a car came roaring at us from the southbound lane, nearest to us, flying through the red light. The car came within a few feet of hitting my child.

Luckily for us, we both froze at the

last moment and let the car break the law without breaking anyone's body parts. If we had entered the crosswalk sooner, she would have been struck.

On any given day, during rush hour, also time to go to school, southbound cars often make illegal right-hand turns onto Grant Street, meaning there is an additional way parents and kids may get hit trying to cross.

I have talked to the school crossing guard at Grant Street on many occasions. He has told me of the casually dangerous traffic. Drivers speed through the lights, make illegal turns and often ignore the pedestrians in their way.

"The drivers are terrible," the crossing guard told me. "They're constantly running lights."

He's worried someone is going to get killed.

The most obvious and satisfying solution to deter dangerous drivers is to install a traffic camera on the Grant Street light. Then, we need to put up a sign that warns drivers, "Running through a red light is illegal. Making a turn here is illegal. You will be fined (insert appropriate dollar amount here) if you break the law."

A far more effective, yet expensive

solution would be to build a pedestrian bridge over the parkway. New York City has installed these bridges all over the boroughs. There were two just in my old Bronx neighborhood alone, over the Henry Hudson Parkway.

A bridge would probably cost millions, so I'm betting this is a non-starter for officials.

I have exchanged e-mails concerning the issue with County Legislator Margaret Cunzio and her legislative aide, the Westchester County Police's Real Time Crime Center and Pleasantville Mayor Pete Scherer. State Sen. Peter Harkham's office called me, and we spoke about the problem. I have also discussed the situation with the Pleasantville Pedestrian Committee.

Everybody has listened. Everybody understands what's going on. But we all need to do more. This situation is literally an accident waiting to happen.

My daughter came up with a great solution – and the cheapest. Ask a Pleasantville police officer to patrol the crosswalk in the hour before school starts and the hour after it ends.

I understand that the parkway comes under county jurisdiction. Isn't it possible that the county and the village can come up

with an agreement to allow a Pleasantville police officer to help keep the crossing safe?

The current arrangement relies on the kindness and courtesy of drivers. So far, they've proven themselves sorely lacking in both departments. What they have also proven is that they're in a great rush to get to work. This is understandable. It's also dangerous.

With the great power allotted to them by the gift of thousands of pounds of a lightning-fast steel machine, drivers need a greater sense of empathy for the flesh and blood humans in their midst. A traffic camera, stiff penalties for violations and stronger signage can help them grow the empathy required for the job. Short of that, a police officer on patrol at the crosswalk would accomplish the same thing.

Pleasantville village officials, county police and our local and state lawmakers, citizens are looking to you to please help make it safer to cross the parkway before someone gets hurt.

Pleasantville resident Michael Gold has had op-ed articles published in the New York Daily News, the Albany Times Union, The Virginian-Pilot and other newspapers.

Letters to the Editor

Yorktown Has Seen Racist Behavior From GOP Before

The revelation of racist and obscene comments by a Republican district leader at a Republican victory party in Yorktown were sad and disturbing but revealed that systemic racism is alive and well here and needs to be addressed honestly in a public forum like a Town Hall meeting.

The disingenuous apologies from

Republican leaders and his removal from leadership are only intended to distance themselves from this disgusting behavior. For those who have short memories or are new to the area, I refer them back to The Northern Westchester Examiner of Oct. 31, 2017, which reported about two Republican racist, anti-Semitic and

xenophobic mailers before Election Day. Two of our current councilmembers ran for office using these tactics and our current supervisor, then-Yorktown Republican Committee Chairman Matthew Slater, released this statement about the mailers: "Yorktown voters have a right to know that if elected Ilan Gilbert, Alice Roker and Vishnu Patel will turn Yorktown into a sanctuary town."

These officials have never publicly apologized for these mailings, one of which also depicted a Jewish woman who was not running for office holding the puppet strings of the three Democratic candidates who happened to be African American,

Jewish and Asian American. The time has come when these parties must take responsibility for the mailers, apologize for and disavow such statements, and most importantly, pledge to never use such tactics again.

If not, Yorktown residents should consider a recall campaign to make a strong statement showing that hate truly has no home here. This incident also reinforces the need for a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative in our schools.

Melvyn R. Tanzman
Mohegan Lake

Yorktown Still Has Much Work to Do to Address Racism in the Community

Race Amity of Northern Westchester & Putnam strongly abhors the racist statements clearly heard on the video recording made at the Yorktown Republican Party victory party. We appreciate that the Yorktown Republican Committee has condemned these comments and has taken steps to discipline the speaker. That is a good first step.

A bigger concern is that this individual

apparently felt that he could shout these words at that party, with his peers, with no fear of rebuke. We have heard people say, in public meetings, that racism doesn't exist in Yorktown. We have had people tell us that by talking about racism we are causing the problem. There have been other public instances of racism in Yorktown within the last year and in years past. Racism is not only in Yorktown, it is everywhere. Acknowledging that fact enables working toward healing.

We call on Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater to take measures to address the underlying problem. While we don't expect any one program to wipe out the scourge of racism, we can all certainly work to make it less acceptable.

As a community organization that has been addressing racism for several years and providing local forums for friendship and discussion, we are happy to partner with the town to explore options.

Judyth Stavans

Race Amity of Northern Westchester & Putnam Steering Committee

Patel Should Be Appointed to a County or State Board, Commission

I do not reside in Yorktown. But I join many others from around the county who are deeply offended by the racist remarks made on Election Night against Yorktown Councilman Vishnu Patel, who lost his re-election bid after serving for 10 years.

I have known Vishnu for his entire tenure as a councilman. We both have participated in meetings of the Westchester Municipal Officials Association. And I have attended numerous legislative meetings with Vishnu over the years. Vishnu is highly respected, hardworking, has had great ideas, was one of the first, if not the first, elected official in the county of Indian heritage. He has inspired other Indian Americans from around the county to seek and win election to public office. And, he is an exceptional human being.

It's my hope that Vishnu will not get discouraged by his election loss and that either Westchester County or New York State will find an appointment for him to a prestigious board so he can continue to stay involved. I am pleased that Democrats and Republicans condemned the GOP party leader who made the offensive comments and inappropriate remarks.

By appointing Vishnu to a board or commission, an important statement will be made, that our county appreciates Vishnu and we applaud his dedication to community service and his substantial accomplishments over the years.

Paul Feiner
Greenburgh Town Supervisor

George Latimer
Westchester County Executive

A Thank You to Voters

I am writing to express my appreciation to all the voters of Westchester who gave me a vote of confidence in electing me to a second term as Westchester County executive. I am committed to continue achieving positive results for our neighbors over the next four years and I look forward to working closely with the people and the local governments of our area every single day.

Mt. Kisco Food Pantry Expands to More Effectively Serve Guests

By Martin Wilbur

For the past 30 years, the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry has been sustaining families facing food insecurity within the village and in communities throughout northern Westchester.

Recently, its volunteer leaders and partners at the United Methodist Church of Mount Kisco, where the pantry is located, created a larger space on the church's lower level to better serve the approximately 440 households and 1,300 people each week who rely on the extra assistance.

They converted the downstairs Porter Library, named after the church's late pastor Willett Porter, into the pantry's Porter Annex. There is now additional for refrigerators to offer better and more nutritious choices for their guests.

Last week Porter's widow Shirley, son Ross and daughter-in-law Lisa, cut the ribbon to ceremonially open the annex. Although Rev. Porter, who served as the congregation's spiritual leader from 1973 to 1989, was no longer the pastor when the pantry opened in 1991, he remained dedicated to helping the needy in the area.

"One of the great things is my father walked this area many, many times, so he was a big believer in the food pantry," Ross Porter said. "He was a volunteer walking these aisles. Rice was his favorite."

Pantry Director of Operations and Programs Roberta Horowitz said the additional space, estimated at perhaps 800-plus square feet, will



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Shirley, Ross and Lisa Porter, pictured fifth, sixth and seventh from left, respectively, get ready to cut the ribbon on the new Porter Annex at the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry. They were joined by pantry volunteers.

allow guests to social distance more effectively for the remainder of the pandemic. For much of the past 20 months, volunteers coordinated a drive-through operation in the parking lot.

Even with the easing of restrictions to allow families to once again choose their food off the shelves, only about four families have been allowed into the area at a time. Now with the cold weather coming in for the winter, fewer guests will be forced to wait outside.

Beyond that, the extra refrigeration will expand the offerings to families, Horowitz said. "That will give us more options to have a lot more between the eggs and the frozen protein, we'll have a lot more space to give our guests what they need," she said.

There is also improved lighting and there will be the room to hold cooking demonstration

classes in the future.

The Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry has helped fill a gaping hole for families in need. From the start of the pandemic through July, it saw a nearly 50 percent jump in visits.

A goal was to make the guests feel as though they're walking into a grocery store rather than making it seem they're accepting help, said Sharon Seidell, co-president of the Board Management Committee.

"So there's a lot of people that come through," Seidell said. "Most of them are neighbors right here in Mount Kisco and we really wanted it to be a special place that was very welcoming."

Making the expansion possible was the shuffling of space by the church. Bobbie McCann, the president of the church's trustees, said accommodating the larger pantry space set off a chain reaction of relocations within the building, which included moving library, the choir room, the toddler room and the area for the Sunday School.

In the end, any inconvenience was little compared to the help it will provide, she said. "I'm very good at these visions, and I said, 'Yeah, we can do this,'" McCann said. "So we did a lot of moving around and it was for a wonderful cause. So no regrets."

The Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry is open from 4 to 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays. For more information, including donations, visit www.mountkiscofoodpantry.org.

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P’ville Synagogue’s Rabbi Navigates Two Congregations, Difficult Times

By Abby Luby

The Hebrew words tikkun olam mean to repair the world and are among the many healing words shared by Rabbi Shoshana Leis with her congregation at the Pleasantville Community Synagogue.

Leis became the part-time rabbi at the synagogue in September while still serving a similar role at the Hebrew Congregation of Somers.

“As a rabbi for two communities, it is working out quite well,” Leis said. “When I show up to each congregation, I’m focusing on each one and being their partner. The congregations are alike and there might be some opportunity to overlap.”

It was a significant development when Leis arrived in Pleasantville.

“It’s a pretty big deal when a synagogue changes rabbis,” said synagogue administrator Marcy Gray. “Rabbi Shoshana Leis, better known as Rabbi Shosh, is a fascinating, warm and engaged individual.”

A Dobbs Ferry resident, Rabbi Leis lives with her husband Ben Newman, also a rabbi, two children, Ari and Isaiah, and two dogs, Toto and Oz. She is a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and Dartmouth College, and she also studied at St. Petersburg University, the Conservative Yeshiva and the Drisha Institute for Jewish Studies.

Leis recently served as director of youth and family education at Romemu, a start-up synagogue in New York City. She and

her husband both served for seven years as rabbis at Har Shalom Center for Jewish Living in Fort Collins, Colo.

It is her practice to reach out to other religious and community leaders.

“Building partnerships with fellow clergy and the interfaith councils in Yorktown and Somers is what strengthens us so we can come to a common ground,” Leis said.

Embracing other faiths is evident by Pleasantville Community Synagogue’s weekly meditation sessions or “Jewbu Sangha: Morning Sit.”

“In Buddhism we learn of embedded contemplation and exploration of what’s already there, just like we do in Judaism,” Leis said.

Just as Leis began serving in Pleasantville, she lost her father in a hit-and-run accident. Her father was in excellent health and was on an evening walk with her mother.

“I’ve been very public with my grief process,” Leis said. “I process a lot out loud and it hasn’t felt hard to come in (to serve as rabbi) right after the death of my father. To be in the heart and not leaving part of yourself aside, that’s who I am. It’s about giving other people the opportunity to be vulnerable.”

The Judaic core value of one’s commitment to justice shapes much of Leis’ philosophy as she navigates current political battlegrounds and polarizing issues such as social and emotional health of young people and community diversity.

“We have to find a way to move forward



Rabbi Shoshana Leis, who became Pleasantville Community Synagogue’s part-time rabbi in September. She also holds a similar role at the Hebrew Congregation of Somers

and learn about other political perspectives without compromising and staying true to our core values,” she said. “I have a special interest in the neurodiverse community and the LGBTQ+ community and want to work to build on Pleasantville’s core values of inclusion. Multifaith and LGBTQ+ families need adaptation, curricula and social-emotional support, things religious school tries to provide with small classes that (generally) public schools cannot provide.”

Societal and educational issues are key to

Leis who sees how Judaic spiritual tools can especially help young people.

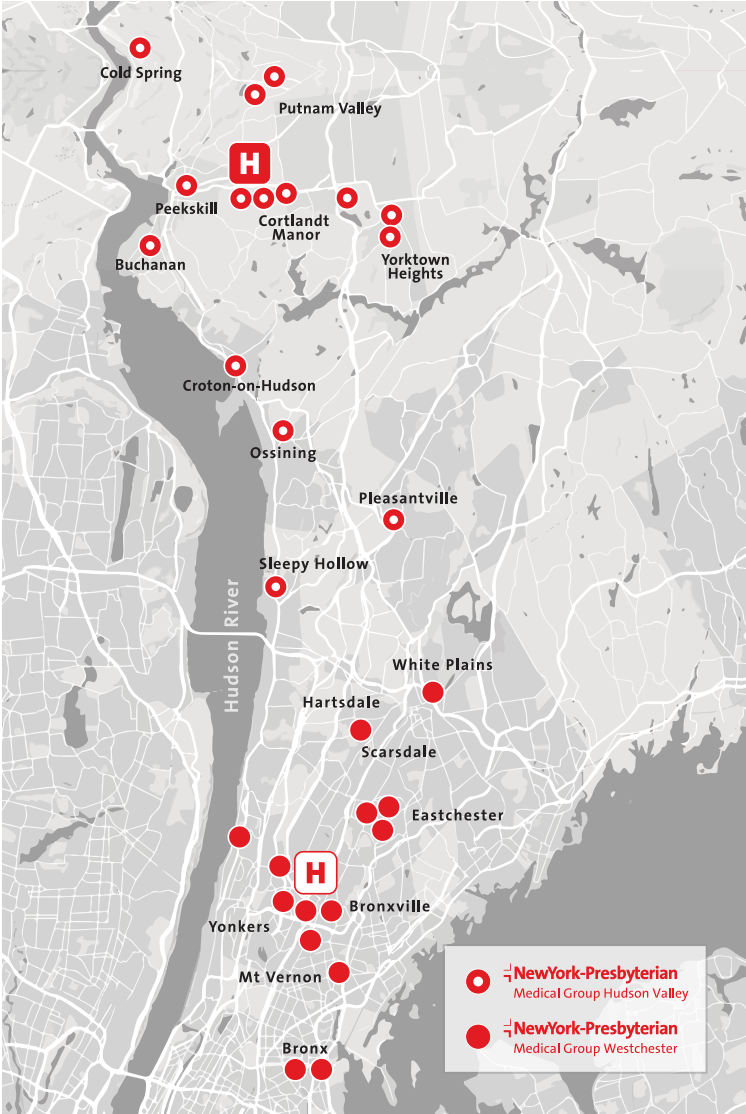
“We’ve learned about mental health and its connection to the uptick in youth suicides,” she said. “Reaching out to communities and their leaders can provide a team model to make sure a child’s spiritual health is tended to consciously and carefully. It does take a village to know what kids need to grow when we are all up against social challenges.”

The numerous lessons from the pandemic have guided us how to live, Leis said.

“We need to take those lessons and animate them into the future for the sake of our own health and wellness,” Leis said. “COVID showed us how to simplify and bring more quality to our lives. The pandemic also showed us the fault lines in our country, our health care policies and the plight of our essential health care workers.”

As the pandemic became more manageable as summer was ending, it was a time that coincided with Rosh Hashana and the Judaic year of Shmita Torah, or “year of release.” That these notable events were concurrent with each other is significant, she explained.

“Shmita Torah is called a sabbatical year where we take a rest, don’t consume and focus on learning, community and connection,” Leis said. “Shmita Torah considers the perspective of getting out on the balcony, looking at our lives and taking reflection.”



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Former Armonk Fire Chief Appointed By Hochul to State Task Force

Luci Labriola-Cuffe, chief of the fire training branch at the Westchester County Department of Emergency Services, has been appointed by Gov. Kathy Hochul to the New York State Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Task Force.

The task force is charged with developing recommendations to help volunteer fire departments increase membership in their ranks. It will examine firefighter training requirements, review the success of programs that provide incentives to volunteers and suggest new ways to assist fire departments that are facing a decline in membership.

"I congratulate Chief Labriola-Cuffe on

this appointment and thank her for being willing to take on this important work," County Executive George Latimer said. "Most communities in Westchester are served by volunteer fire departments and it is critical to public safety that their ranks remain vital and strong."

Labriola-Cuffe has longtime experience in the fire service, having served as a volunteer firefighter and chief of the Armonk Fire Department. In her role at DES, she oversees training provided to volunteer firefighters and assists with the delivery of training for Westchester's career firefighters.

"I am honored and humbled to be

appointed to serve on this important task force," she said. "I look forward to working with partners from around the state to help develop creative and resourceful ways to assist our volunteer fire departments."

DES Commissioner Richard G. Wishnie said Labriola-Cuffe brings tremendous experience to the task force.

"Her appointment is a testament to the respect she has earned from all in the fire service in Westchester," Wishnie said. "We are proud she has been selected and we stand ready to assist this task force in any way we can."

The task force was created last year through legislation passed by the state legislature. Its other responsibilities include:

- Identifying incentives and outreach programs to assist in recruiting volunteer firefighters from under-represented or at-risk populations.
- Analyzing current recruitment and retention programs successfully being utilized in other states and making recommendations to adopt those in New York.
- Examining the need for a bureau within the state's Office of Fire Prevention and Control dedicated to volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention.
- Preparing a written report to the governor and state legislature with its findings and recommendations.



Chief Luci Labriola-Cuffe is administered the oath of office to serve on a state panel that will develop recommendations to bolster volunteer fire department membership. She was sworn in by Westchester County Department of Emergency Services Commissioner Richard Wishnie.

Of Westchester's 59 fire departments, 41 are all-volunteer, 14 utilize a combination of career and volunteer personnel and four are fully staffed with career firefighters.



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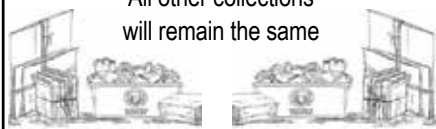
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P'ville Farmers Market to Once Again Operate Outside This Winter

Running a farmers market outdoors in warm weather? Of course! But doing it in the winter is a different kind of challenge.

"Last year COVID challenged us to find a way to continue running the market in a safe and efficient way as the temperatures dipped," said Peter Rogovin, president of Foodchester, Inc., which has operated the Pleasantville Farmers Market year-round since its inception in 2013. "We are committed to sustaining this important community resource, but we couldn't find a suitable indoor location. So we crossed our fingers and decided to stay outside in Memorial Plaza."

It worked out beautifully, said Steven Bates, executive director of market operations.

"Our producers loved it, most reporting dramatically higher sales," Bates said. "And our terrific customers were happy to adapt. Many have told me they never want us to go inside again."

They'll have plenty of products to choose from. Bates said there will be about 40 vendors throughout the winter, including Knot of This World pretzels, Edenesque nut milks and Manor Sangria, along with plenty of regionally produced veggies, baked goods, meat, fish, dairy, wine and spirits.

To ensure quick, efficient and safe shopping, the market will rely on its online store, Pleasantville Farmers Market Online (PFM-O).

"It's a huge convenience to be able to shop and prepay for everything in advance," Bates

said. "Not having to stand in line to shop and then pull out a wallet with gloved fingers was a big hit with shoppers last winter."

Bates added that every item will be on PFM-O, but some producers will also bring products for spontaneous walk-up purchase. Preordering is the best way to go, he said.

After making their selections online, PFM-O customers pay with a single click, and enjoy a quick, contact-free pickup during their visit to vendors at the market each Saturday. A small pickup fee applied to each order helps defray software costs for Foodchester, a nonprofit organization run by volunteers and a small staff.

PFM-O is open for pre-ordering each week from Tuesday at 7 p.m. until Thursday at 7 p.m.

As winter closes in, Bates said the market will open at 9 a.m. and close at 11:30 a.m. The shorter hours limit exposure to the cold for the producers and their products.

Shoppers are encouraged to visit www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org to register for the online store, check the list of participating vendors and register to receive the market's weekly newsletters.

The market will be closed on Nov. 27 to allow for the transition to the winter market, which debuts on Dec. 4.

The Pleasantville Farmers Market, Westchester's largest, has been voted "Best of Westchester" 2014-21, eight years in a row, and attracts customers from across the tristate area. Continually evolving to do what's best for its community, the market is



CHAD DAVID KRAUS PHOTO

The Pleasantville Farmers Market will operate outside each Saturday for the second consecutive winter. The winter market will kick off on Dec. 4.

known for its wide selection of high-quality products, rigorous selection process and inspections of all participating vendors.

Learn more at www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org.

New Castle Historical Society to Present Holiday Train Show

The Great Holiday Train Show at the Horace Greeley House Museum will open this Saturday, Nov. 20 and run through Jan. 9, on Saturdays and Sundays, at 11 a.m. and 12:30, 2 and 3:30 p.m.

The display will feature numerous vintage train sets running throughout the festively decorated rooms of the museum. Visitors can enjoy such backdrops as a Bavarian countryside scene, the Rip Roaring '20s or ride the rails with the

rugged Jesse James Gang.

Admission is \$10 each for New Castle Historical Society members and \$15 for non-members. It's \$8 for children eight and under. Tickets can be purchased online at www.newcastlehs.org/events.

The Horace Greeley House is located at 100 King St. in Chappaqua. For more information call 914-238-4666 or e-mail director@newcastlehs.org.



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Retired Teacher Writes Children's Book From a Heartwarming Experience

By Martin Wilbur

Theresa Perna wasn't planning on becoming a children's author at her stage in life.

The 33-year Armonk resident who had been a teacher for 40 years answered the pleas of her four adult children, particularly her youngest, to write a story that happened decades ago.

The result was "Robbie Robin," based on the true story of a baby bird that had fallen out of its nest on a friend's farm in upstate New York that Perna and her family frequently visited and stayed at. With illustrations by Kayla Medina, it details how they nursed the young bird back to health so it could grow up to be independent.

"I did this as a gift to my children and grandchildren because they wanted that story to be put into book form and I thought it was good," said Perna, 82. "My work only took me a short time but because of the pandemic and trying to get a publisher, trying to get an illustrator, that was a little bit difficult."

Two years after agreeing to her family's wishes, Mascot Books released "Robbie Robin" on Nov. 2. Its target audience is children six to 10 years old, although Perna weaves in scientific facts that she had researched on how to feed and care for a young bird and how to cope with happiness and loss.

But the story is one that would resonate



Armonk resident Theresa Perna with her recently released children's book "Robbie Robin."

with almost anyone who is old enough to read. Perna said she has a friend who's 66 who loved it.

"I'm happy about the positive response to it," she said. "My main teaching experience was in early childhood and also in elementary school and so that was my

focus when I did my book."

While her family's interaction with the bird lasted no more than three weeks, all these years later the experience continues to make a vivid impression. Her three oldest children were 12, 11 and seven years old at the time.

However, Perna said writing a book, even as recently as two years ago, was not something that she was keen on doing. She was apprehensive on trying to embark on a project where she had no prior experience. Perna surmised that it was her fear of rejection, but thought since her children were so adamant that she would give it a try.

Interestingly, it was her youngest child, not even born at the time, who was perhaps the most enthusiastic about her getting the story into print. He has a friend who is a children's author, who they called on for assistance in progressing "Robbie Robin" from concept to reality.

"It made for a really nice story about nurturing and taking care of something besides yourself and I thought it was a good children's story," said Perna, who was born and raised in Charlotte, N.C. before coming to New York for college.

She and her husband, Thomas, lived in Yonkers for many years before moving to Armonk. They will be celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary next year.

Despite having many other stories, Perna doesn't anticipate there will be any more books even though "Robbie Robin"

has received such positive feedback and some people have told that they can't wait for her next work.

Instead, she will likely write her remaining stories and store them on her computer for her family's enjoyment.

"If I was 20 years younger, I would say sure I'll let you know when it comes out," Perna said. "But I'm a realist. I'm strong and I'm reasonably well, but I'm going to be 83 and I don't think I'm going to fight the real truth."

"Robbie Robin" is available on Amazon or by ordering it through Mascot Books at <https://mascotbooks.com/mascot-marketplace/buy-books/childrens/picture-books/robbie-robin/>

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Finding Items to Collect for All Different Types of Reasons

When my wife Margaret and I ran an antiques shop in Brooklyn Heights called 'The Saturday Shop' (which was a misnomer because we were also open on Sundays), we had a weekly customer named Abe Stransky who would always buy any daguerreotype we happened to have for sale.

(The daguerreotype was the first commercially successful photographic process, where the image appeared on a silvered copper plate.)

Whenever we happened upon one from our various sources, we would set it aside until he had the opportunity to look at it, and he always bought whatever we had. Years later, long after our shop had gone the way of a new venture or two, we read that, when he died, he left the most impressive collection of daguerreotypes ever assembled by one person. As I recall, the collection was auctioned off for a handsome return to his family.

My wife started several collections early in our marriage, first a collection of anything that had mushrooms depicted, then small ceramic boxes. As for me, I was drawn to children's playing marbles from the 1800s and early 1900s and collected a significant number of them. To me, they are beautiful as objects, but more than



By Bill Primavera

that, they represent the pleasure of children who came long before me.

Identifying the reasons for people collecting was merely guesswork on my part, so I did some research online to learn why people collect. I learned of the theories that the value of their collections is not monetary but emotional. The collections may allow people to relive their childhoods or connect themselves to a certain period or to a time they feel strongly about.

Some collect for the thrill of the hunt. Collecting is a quest, a lifelong pursuit that can never be completed. Also, collecting may provide psychological security by filling a part of the self that one feels is missing. Motives may not be mutually exclusive; rather, different motives may combine for each collector for a multitude of reasons.

My research discovered the most common reasons people collect things for knowledge and learning, relaxation and stress reduction, personal pleasure (including appreciation of beauty and pride of ownership) and social interaction with fellow collectors and others (i.e., the sharing of pleasure and knowledge), which is more my personal reason for collecting.

It may also present a competitive



BILL PRIMAVERA PHOTO

A collection of playing marbles gathered and enjoyed on his coffee table by The Home Guru.

ultimately provide a measure of security.

The majority of collectors often reap several of these benefits, though some may invest excessive amounts of time, energy and discretionary funds. For some, it can be addictive.

My most recent interest for collecting may be considered somewhat specific, since it involves games people played – carpet balls that were all the rage in the late 19th and early 20th century. Not only are they beautiful in their varied designs, but invite the owner to once again use them for what they were intended – playing. Be assured that I

intend to do exactly that with them.

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). His real estate site is www.PrimaveraRealEstate.com. To engage the services of The Home Guru and his team to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.

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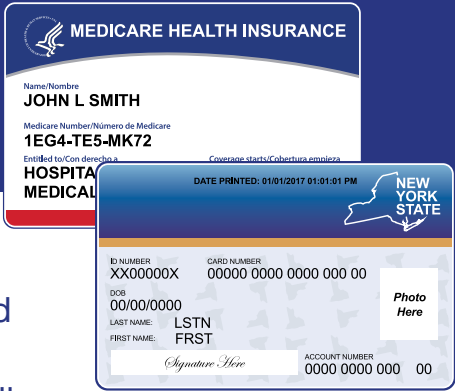
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Arthritis Foundation's Jingle Bell Run Welcomes New Chair

Bruce Heller of Halston Media is the chair of the Arthritis Foundation's 2021 Jingle Bell Run at Westchester Community College in Valhalla on Dec. 4.

As chair, Heller will provide leadership to help the community reach its fundraising goal of \$95,000. Jingle Bell Run is the original fun holiday-timed 5K for charity where everyone makes their own festive fashion statement to raise awareness and funds for arthritis, which touches the lives of one in four Americans.

More than 400 locals are expected to participate in this year's run, scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 4. Participants will support the Arthritis Foundation in its dedication to raising awareness and funds for research, resources and a cure. In New York State, nearly two million people live with arthritis and need support.

"The pain of arthritis may not be visible, but it is incredibly real and the leading cause of disability in America," said Heller, who is also the parent of a juvenile arthritis warrior. "By supporting the Arthritis Foundation's Jingle Bell Run, we will raise funds to help find a cure and eradicate arthritis once and for all."

Heller is a longtime Arthritis Foundation volunteer and was chosen as this year's chair because of his strong leadership skills, passion for helping others and dedication to removing the burden of arthritis from the community.

Heller's son, Jared, was diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis just before his third birthday. In 2007 and 2008, Heller ran the New York City Marathon and raised more than \$22,000 for the Juvenile Arthritis Research Fund. In 2015, Jared was the Westchester Jingle Bell Run Youth honoree and the Heller family has been raising awareness and significant funding for the Arthritis Foundation for nearly a decade.

Leading the fight for the arthritis community, the Arthritis Foundation helps conquer daily battles through life-changing information and resources, access to optimal care, advancements in science and community connections. The foundation's goal is to chart a winning course, guiding families in developing personalized plans for living a full life and making each day another stride toward a cure.

The 2021 Jingle Bell Run is nationally sponsored by AbbVie, Janssen, Johnson & Johnson and Novartis. Local sponsors include Northwell, Everyday Health, Amgen, Ivy Rehab, Rothman Orthopedics, MVP Health, The Bristol Assisted Living and more.

To learn more and register for the Westchester Jingle Bell Run, visit www.jbr.org/westchester or contact Nancy Sorbella at 1-929-446-0939. To learn more about the fight to cure arthritis, visit www.arthritis.org.

Children's Author Finds Sharing Best Therapy at Bethel

By Rick Pezzullo

A local special needs educator and author received more than quality care during a recent stay at Bethel Nursing and Rehabilitation.

Cristina Ortolani needed short-term rehabilitation following an injury, but ended up with a life experience that healed her body and soul.

As she was working with a recreation therapist, Ortolani mentioned she recently published her first children's book called "Turtle and Bird Spring." The book is a story about an unusual friendship between an eastern box turtle and a song sparrow that begins on a backyard compost pile.

As their friendship grows, they learn how to accept the limitations of their differences, how to support each other through challenging times and grow to care deeply for each other even while separated.

A simple message of learning, according to Ortolani: "How people can be friends even though they are different."

When Ortolani asked if anyone at Bethel might enjoy listening to her book, the therapist suggested the Memory Care Unit might be the perfect spot



Cristina Ortolani

and arranged an event. The residents were mesmerized as Ortolani gave each character a unique voice and brought each of them to life.

Ortolani has been discharged from Bethel but she plans to return to volunteer, along with participating in the Bell Choir therapeutic.

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Paddy Moloney: A Giant Departs, Leaving a Rich Musical Heritage

A brief mention was made in the last issue of the passing of Paddy Moloney, co-founder and lead composer and arranger for the Irish musical group The Chieftains, along with a promise to do Paddy more justice in a future article. This week we fulfill that promise.

If you don't know who The Chieftains are, it's sorry I am for your loss. Famous the world over, the band has been delighting audiences for more than 50 years, and in that time have been one of the most profound driving forces behind the revival of Irish traditional music. They have been instrumental in introducing it to audiences far and wide, of every nationality and ethnic derivation.

The list of their accomplishments is epic: 44 albums produced, beginning with their first in 1964, and continuing to their last release, "Voice of Ages," in 2012; renowned film soundtracks; live performances; and collaborations ranging from The Rolling Stones to Luciano Pavarotti. At the heart of the band, cradling his uilleann pipes and his tin whistles, sat Dublin-born Paddy Moloney, a musical genius if ever there was one, and a thoroughly charming

character.

Coming from a family with strong musical roots, Moloney early on was strongly influenced by another giant of Irish traditional music, Sean O'Riada. He joined O'Riada's musical group, Ceoltóirí Chualann, in the late 1950s. Moloney and a group of like-minded musicians, including Sean Potts and Michael Tubridy, then formed The Chieftains in November 1962.

Their first album, "The Chieftains," was released two years later. My first exposure to The Chieftains came with their fifth album, "The Chieftains 5," released in 1975. It was this album that sparked their true breakthrough to international acclaim.

For me, it was a revelation. Though I grew up in a family proud of its Irish roots, we had become "Americanized"

over time. The Irish music we listened to was that of John McCormack, or Irish-American "stage hall" music, or later The Clancy Brothers, as they rode the American folk music revival to fame.

So, it was a strange voyage to sail through an album of Irish music that had not a single vocal track upon it, and be

entranced with the magic of uilleann pipes, fiddles, flutes, tin whistles, the harp and the bodhran drum. I was hooked, and almost 50 years later, still am.

Though the band often veered in slightly different directions than a purely traditional style would dictate, and drew some criticism from purists as a result, they were key players in reviving a popular interest in the reels, jigs and harp tunes of pre-famine Gaelic Ireland. And under Moloney's influence they charted a course to a different, and totally vibrant, manner of playing the music than any others had done before.

Moloney was born on Aug. 1, 1938, the Celtic feast of Lughnasadh. His father, John, was an accountant, his mother, Catherine, a homemaker. She bought him a tin whistle when he was six, and he was off to the races. At eight he was learning the uilleann pipes, one of Irish music's most difficult instruments. His teacher was Leo Rowsome, known as the "king of the pipers." And Paddy became a master of it, as well as the tin whistle, the bodhran drum and the button accordion.

Under Moloney's leadership, the band won six Grammy Awards, as they shifted



By Brian McGowan

from pure tradition to innovative collaborations with non-Irish groups, blending different musical traditions together to produce sounds truly unique. A major love of Moloney's was American country music, and he performed with artists such as Emmy Lou Harris and Earl Scruggs. He was also a fan of, and beloved by, Mick Jagger and The Rolling Stones and Paul McCartney as well.

Moloney died on Oct. 21 in a Dublin hospital, survived by his wife Rita O'Reilly, two sons, one daughter, a sister and four grandchildren. He and his wife were one year short of a 60th wedding anniversary. He was 83 years young.

Rest assured, Paddy is still playing his pipes, only now in an "Angel Band."

Irish Eclectic

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 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.

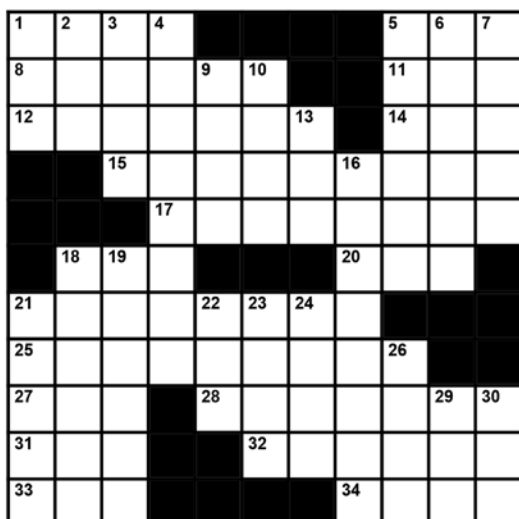
Crossword

Across

1. Motley Crue's genre, with rock
5. Handheld
8. "Nothing doing!"
11. Emirates, for short
12. Prepared carefully
14. Ref's call, abbr.
15. Former NY governor or Putnam auto body shop
17. Puts back in office
18. Wet-dry ____ (cleaning equipment)
20. "Caught you!"
21. Belonging to the "man who loves a woman" or Mt. Kisco garden center - ____ Nursery
25. Edible seaweed
27. Ceiling
28. Obstructs
31. The whole shebang
32. Subjects to chemical analysis
33. Napoleonic marshal
34. Distort

Down

1. Econ. indicator, abbr.
2. Laughter on the internet, abbr.
3. With no delay
4. Kings of the butterfly world?
5. Plotted overthrow
6. Territory divided into two states



7. Time without end
9. Feed the kitty
10. Sampras of tennis
13. East Coast state (abbr.)
16. Make a new valuation of
18. Macho
19. In an acerbic manner
21. Fashion capital
22. Tuna type
23. Austen heroine
24. Chops off
26. Neighbor of Minn., abbr.
29. Optometrist's interest
30. Opposite NNE

Answers on page 26

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Con Edison Warns Public of Scam Artists Using Payment Apps

Demanding payment with apps like Cash App, Venmo and Zelle is now the favorite dirty trick of scammers who contact Con Edison customers to steal their money.

Scammers call the company's customers and tell them they must make an immediate payment using a payment app to avoid having their service shut off.

Con Edison does not accept payment via these platforms and does not demand immediate payment. Any customer who gets a request to pay a Con Edison bill by Cash App, Venmo, Zelle or a similar platform should hang up the phone.

"The emergence of payment apps as the favorite method of scammers shows how inventive these people are," said James Duggan, a department manager in Con Edison's corporate security group. "They never stop looking for dirty tricks they can use to steal from our customers. We want to be just as relentless in urging our customers to recognize signs that someone is a scammer."

Con Edison gets complaints every day from customers who received calls from impostors claiming to be from the company and demanding money.

It is an expensive and painful problem. In 2021, scammers have stolen more than \$550,000 from Con Edison customers. But the problem is probably much more widespread, as the company believes that

many people who are targeted do not file complaints.

The scammers target residential and business customers in all parts of Con Edison's New York City and Westchester County service area. Spanish-speaking customers often receive calls from scammers who are fluent in Spanish.

Scam callers can even make a Con Edison phone number show up on the customer's caller ID.

Con Edison is joining more than 140 electric, gas and water providers from North America in dedicating this week to educating customers on how to avoid becoming a victim. The companies, members of Utilities United Against Scams, have declared the week Utility Scam Awareness Week and this Wednesday Utility Scam Awareness Day.

The theme of this year's campaign is End the Call, End the Scam. Customers who receive a suspicious call should hang up and dial 1-800-75-CONED to check as to whether the call was legitimate.

Those targeted by scams can also notify their local police department or the New York State Public Service Commission at 800-342-3377.

Though scammers are trying new tricks, they're still using their old tricks.

The company still gets reports of calls from scammers who instruct the



customer to buy a pre-paid card to avoid an immediate service turnoff. These callers sometimes point the customer to a store that sells pre-paid cards.

Once the customer puts money on the card and provides the scammer with the card number, the scammer steals the money.

Con Edison does not accept payment by pre-paid debit cards, MoneyGram or similar transfers.

Never arrange payment or divulge account or personal information, including debit or credit card information, over the phone unless you are certain you are speaking to Con Edison.

When a customer gives money to a scammer, the scammer will often claim that the payment did not go through and demand another payment. The company has gotten reports from customers who provided multiple payments totaling thousands of dollars to a scammer.

Sometimes impostors go to a customer's

home or business and try to get money by saying the customer is delinquent on Con Edison bills and threatening a service turnoff.

If someone comes to your home or business claiming to be from Con Edison, ask for identification.

Customers should also be aware of these scammer tactics:

- A scammer may call a business or residential customer and say a computer glitch prevented the customer's payments from being recorded. These scammers then urge the customer to buy a pre-paid card.
- Someone calls and says the customer owes Con Edison a deposit for a smart meter. The caller tells the customer to make an immediate payment by Bitcoin. This scam usually targets businesses. Con Edison does not require deposits for smart meters or accept payment by Bitcoin.
- Some impostors who knock on a residential customer's door try to talk their way inside to steal or even commit an assault.

Con Edison's website, www.coned.com, offers approved options for bill payment.

If you are suspicious that a Con Edison impostor called you or showed up at your home or business demanding payment, call 1-800-75-CONED.

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Westchester to Honor 44 Inductees Into Senior Hall of Fame

The achievements of 44 senior citizens from throughout Westchester will be recognized at the 39th Annual Senior Citizens Hall of Fame Awards on Friday, Dec. 3 at 11:30 a.m.

This year's program names Judy Fink of Purchase and Lloyd Cort of Greenburgh with top honors. This will be the second year that the event will be live-streamed virtually via the Westchester Public Private Partnership for Aging Services website.

"It is my honor to commend this active group of Westchester County residents, and induct them into our Senior Citizens Hall of Fame for their dedication and commitment to our communities," said County Executive George Latimer. This longstanding tradition is a simple way for us to say thank you, and recognize top honorees like Mr. Cort and Ms. Fink for their time, energy and promise to enhancing the quality of life of those around them."

The residents are all at least 60 years old. The year's class includes 18 nominees over the age of 80, and four over the age of 90. The oldest nominee this year is 93.

Department of Senior Programs and Services (DSPS) Commissioner Mae Carpenter said the achievements of the honorees show the importance of people giving back to their communities and to each other.

"The honorees show that age is never

a deterrent to being a vital member of our society," Carpenter said. "In fact, it's an advantage because of the life experiences they bring with them. Their generous contributions have helped to make Westchester County one of the most senior-friendly places in the world."

Nearly 1,250 seniors have been inducted since the Hall of Fame was established.

Among this year's award recipients, four seniors will receive special recognition: Dr. Sanat Dagli of Irvington, Jim Dolan of Verplanck, Joyce May Henery, of Yonkers and William (Billy) Thomas, of Mount Vernon.

To be nominated, seniors must have made significant and enduring contributions to enhance Westchester's quality of life through their professional work, volunteer achievements or both. Nominations were made by members of the community, and the honorees are selected by a panel of judges. The names of past honorees are engraved on plaques that are permanently displayed at the DSPS office in Mount Vernon

Event can be viewed from the www.westchesterpartnership.org website. For sponsorships and more information, contact Rose Cappa at rose@theeventdepartmentny.com or 914- 747-0519.

Westchester Senior Citizens Hall of Fame, Class of 2021

Armonk: Marian Hamilton
Chappaqua: Joan S Lang
Cortlandt Manor: Wilfredo A. Perez
Croton-on-Hudson: Lindsay Audin, Dr. Heena Rajdeo
Dobbs Ferry: William (Bill) Florin
Eastchester: Arlene Gruber
Granite Springs: Nancy J. Gerbino
Greenburgh: Lloyd R. Cort
Harrison: Trevor Strayer
Hartsdale: Barbara J. High
Irvington: Dr. Sanat Dagli
Mount Vernon: The Honorable Dolores Battailia, Crystal Bowen, Rosemarie DeLuca Cornacchio, Bettie Doretha Johnson, Linda Morgan-Glover, Eulahlee Myers, William Thomas
New Rochelle: Jean Clarke, Ellen Hollander, Rev. David F. Jarvis

North Salem: John L White
Ossining: Thomasina Laidley-Brown, Northern Wilcher
Purchase: Judy Fink, Dr. Sudhir Vaidya
Rye: Dr. Sreenivas Murthy
Rye Brook: Francesco (Frank) Gullusci, Lauren Miscimarra, Barbara Stern
Scarsdale: Greg Arcaro, Donald J. Fleishaker, Madelon K. O'Shea, Dr. Pravin Patel
Somers: Ruth Green, C. Jerry Ploss
South Salem: Peter Parsons
Verplanck: Jim Dolan
White Plains: Lorraine Buonocunto
Yonkers: Maria Consuelo Garcia, Joyce May Henery, Olivia King
Yorktown Heights: Rosemary DeCapua

Zucker School of Medicine Student Joins NWH to End Opioid Abuse

America's opioid crisis has been steadily mounting over the past 20 years, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives with it.

As a future anesthesiologist, Justin Diamond, a fourth-year medical student at the Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell, welcomed the opportunity to be a part of the solution. Physicians at Northwell Health's Northern Westchester Hospital (NWH) in Mount Kisco invited Diamond to co-author a study that would become the hospital's first step in combatting the opioid epidemic locally.

The study, published in the May 2021 Journal of Opioid Management, involved more than 300 patients treated at the facility's Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) during three months and the participation of surgeons and nurses from across multiple specialties.

"The study will help Northern Westchester physicians gain deeper awareness into prescribing practices and the amount and type of pain medication used by patients," explained Diamond, who hopes to begin his residency in anesthesiology after graduating next May. "It's also important to make patients aware that they are not required to take all of the prescribed pain medication if their pain is adequately controlled."

The Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC) reported the most common drugs involved in prescription opioid overdose deaths are methadone, oxycodone and hydrocodone. According to the study's lead investigator, Dr. Warren Bromberg, director for the Center for Robotic Surgery and chief, Division of Urology at Northern Westchester Hospital, the team's local findings are consistent with other nationwide studies published on opioid prescription and use.

"We found that, on average, patients only consumed one-third of the prescribed opioids, yet they had very high (pain) satisfaction scores," explained Bromberg.

He also noted that few patients called for additional opioids.

"Many patients in the study specifically looked to non-opioid options to relieve pain post-surgery," he said.

Bromberg pointed out that nationally published data reveals surgeons prescribe 10 percent of the opioids in this country, and 2 to 6 percent of patients prescribed opioids may be at risk of becoming chronic users. With more than 50 million ambulatory surgeries performed annually in the U.S., about two million patients are at risk for persistent opioid use.

The findings in the local study corroborate with nationwide studies indicating a wide variation of prescribing

practices by physicians across states without widely accepted, evidence-based, post-operative opioid prescribing guidelines. Bromberg is currently working with NWH administrators to develop a model for prescribing standards and patient education that will help lead the way for hospitals across the country.

"We have culled the literature and combined the data with our study and are in the process of creating prescribing guidelines for all surgeons within the ASC," explained Bromberg, adding that the focus at his hospital is on physician and patient education. "We are creating brochures for our patients for perioperative pain management that include non-opioid pain management options. We are also evaluating several options for convenient disposal of unused opioids for our patients."

Initiatives to bring prescribing practices in line with patient opioid usage, such as those implemented at NWH, will help reduce medication waste, the cost of care and decrease the risk of medications ending up in the wrong hands.

"The opioid epidemic has caused a lot of suffering and death," said Diamond, who recognizes that unused prescribed opioids pose significant health consequences.

"I would like to see guidelines for

surgeons in the future so more opioid pain medications don't end up in kitchen cabinets, where they can be unnecessarily diverted into the community."

The study is the first published by Diamond, who learned about the project while shadowing at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

"As a Zucker School of Medicine student, I'm incredibly fortunate to have access to a large health network with so many different physicians," said Diamond, who hopes to match with a residency program in New York. "It's essential for us to learn in medical school how to conduct research and present it in articles. It's an important skill that can only be acquired through practice."

Crossword Answers

1	G	2	L	3	A	4	M	5	P	6	D	7	A
8	N	O	S	O	9	A	10	P	11	U	A	E	
12	P	L	A	N	N	E	D	13	T	K	O		
		15	P	A	T	T	E	R	S	O	N		
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21	M	I	C	H	22	A	E	L	S				
25	I	R	I	S	H	M	O	S	26	S			
27	L	I	D		28	I	M	P	E	D	E	30	S
31	A	L	L			32	A	S	S	A	Y	S	
33	N	E	Y					34	S	K	E	W	

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Dignity in Life, and in Death

Mid-Hudson advocates strive to legalize medical aid in dying



By Sherrie
Dulworth

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When Sidney and Stacey Gibson renewed their wedding vows for their twenty-fifth anniversary, they knew their remaining time together would be cut short. Three years earlier, when they were 60 and 55 years old, respectively, Sid had been stricken with spina cerebella ataxia, a rare degenerative brain disease.

As his condition grew worse, Sid explored moving to a state that had legalized medical aid in dying or even going to another

country, like Switzerland, but he didn't want to move away from his friends and family.

Before he died in 2014, the 68-year-old Sid asked Stacey to make another vow: this one to help pass medical aid in dying legislation in New York. She said, "He had been ill for eight long years. He made me promise that I would fight for this law in New York State so that others didn't suffer the way he did."

The year after her husband's death, Gibson, a long-time Garrison resident, became an early champion in New York's grassroots effort to legalize medical aid in dying. She said, "I was at the very first lobby day in 2015. There was a small band of us who marched on Albany and started knocking on legislators' doors. I have been at this since then."

Gibson, a petite and vivacious retired human resources

executive, testified in front of the legislature in 2018. She described how Sid's condition grew slowly and steadily worse, ultimately affecting all of his bodily functions, and how in the end, he opted to stop eating and drinking to end his suffering, dying after twelve days.

She told legislators, "He wanted the option of aid in dying so that he could die in peace surrounded by his loved ones." She said that, sadly, it was neither peaceful nor beautiful. "The current state of the law forced this death upon him," she testified.

When Larry Kelly's colon cancer recurred in 2016, doctors told him he had no more treatment options. Like Sid Gibson had done, Larry explored moving to another state. The 82-year-old widower asked his four children to investigate the possibility of his moving his residency from Michigan to Vermont, a state that legalized medical aid in dying in 2013.

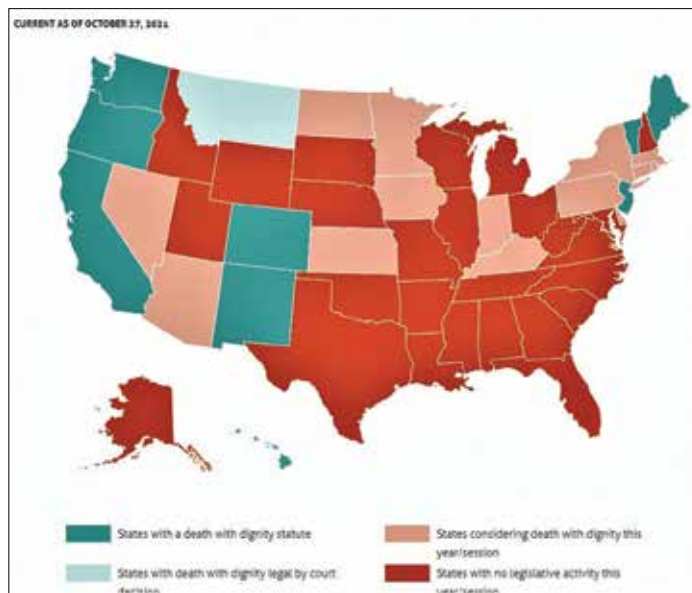


PHOTO: DEATH WITH DIGNITY TAKE ACTION

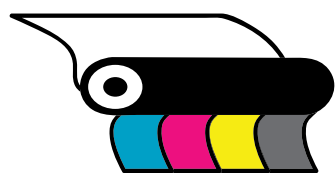
Status of Death with Dignity Legislation by State

Laura Kelly, a Mount-Kisco-based editorial and website consultant ...

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'A Christmas Carol' Coming to Yorktown Stage

A new production of "A Christmas Carol" will be presented by The Yorktown Stage for the upcoming holiday season.

Directed by Yorktown resident Veronika Hindle, "A Christmas Carol – A Story of Hope" is based on Charles Dickens' classic book and it features a spectacular set that will transport attendees to the Christmas of 1843 in London, complete with cobblestone streets and high timber beams.

"The story celebrates the importance of kindness, family, friends and community. The key message is to never give up hope," Hindle said.

The original score by Martin Harich and Matej Smutny adds elements of contemporary music while staying true to the classical setting. The stage set by Dave Benson was made in the United Kingdom and shipped in two 40-foot containers.

The show has two acts with an intermission. Running time is about 1 hour 45 minutes.

Show dates for Thanksgiving weekend are 2 and 7 p.m. on Nov. 26 and 27 and 2 p.m. on Nov. 28. Christmas show dates are Dec. 26 at 2 and 6 p.m. and Dec. 30 and 31 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets for the performances range from \$30 and \$35 and they can be bought at www.yorktownstage.org.

To enter the theater, all patrons 12 and up must show proof of vaccination and identification or the result of a negative



A new adaptation of the Charles Dickens classic "A Christmas Carol" will be presented this holiday season at Yorktown Stage.

COVID-19 test within 72 hours of the performance. Masks are always required regardless of vaccination status. Everyone is encouraged to practice social distancing while in the theater and lobby.

Holidays on the Hill Annual Train Show Coming to Lasdon Park

This year, the Lasdon Holidays on the Hill Annual Train Show is going to another level – literally.

The re-imagined show in the Conservatory at Lasdon Park, Arboretum and Veterans Memorial in Somers, opens Saturday, Nov. 27. Dates, times and tickets are available by visiting LasdonPark.org.

The show has been expanded to more than 5,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor exhibit space. Starting with a stroll through whimsical holiday scenes leading to the Conservatory where G-scale trains will be chugging on nine multilevel tracks, over bridges, under tunnels and through colorful holiday plants.

The happy elf, Santa, will be available to meet with children in his Holiday Cottage located opposite the conservatory at scheduled times during each session. Visits with Santa are available as space and time permits.

"Westchester County is filled with holiday traditions and the Lasdon Holidays on the Hill Train Show is one not to be missed," said Westchester County Executive George Latimer.

"Kids and adults will make lasting memories walking through the many holiday scenes and taking pictures with Santa."

Tickets will be sold online only with scheduled viewing times. No tickets will be sold on-site. Tickets are available through Dec. 31. Admission is \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors 62 and over and \$10 per child. Children two years old and under are admitted for free.

The Holidays on the Hill Annual Train Show will be open rain or shine.

The exhibit is presented by Westchester County Parks and the Friends of Lasdon Park and Arboretum with support from SavATree in Bedford Hills and Prospero Nursery and Masonry in White Plains.

Lasdon Park, Arboretum and Veterans Memorial is a Westchester County park on Route 35 in Somers. The GPS address is 2610 Amawalk Rd., Katonah, NY 10536.

For more information, visit the Friends of Lasdon Park and Arboretum website at <https://lasdonpark.org> or call 914-864-7268.

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Anyone who brings a donation will be eligible to win a \$50 Genesis Jewelers Gift Card! Winner will be announced on Saturday, December 11, 2021. You do not have to be present at the drawing to win.



Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic, multiple Westchester community-based organizations have extreme needs for diapers. There is no state or federal child safety-net program that allocates dollars specifically for the purchase of diapers.

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\$80 or 200 diapers provides a month's supply for one child

Your donation will make a difference! More than 10% of children under the age of four in Westchester live in or below poverty. The goal is to help get clean diapers to families that struggle to afford them in Westchester.

Local Songwriter Creates Personalized Music for Special Occasions

By Martin Wilbur

Chris Burke has found a way to make a living in the music business and continue to find a way indulge in all the engineering and recording equipment he loves to use in his downstairs studio at his Chappaqua home.

For the past seven years, Burke has worked for the audio and song production company Tunedly, where he is one of three composers on staff for the outfit's Bring My Song to Life program. He works with clients to develop a song for a special birthday or anniversary for a special someone that would fit their musical tastes and the sentiments they are trying to convey.

Since coming aboard with Tunedly in 2014, Burke has been made a project manager. He stays busy teaching private music lessons locally in guitar, piano and voice and is part of an Allman Brothers tribute band, Soulshine, that will play at the Tarrytown Music Hall next Wednesday evening.

"I was looking for a way to make that stuff pay, basically, so I could justify buying more cool stuff to the rest of my family, having it make me some money," Burke said.

A fascinating part of writing songs for clients is that advancements in technology allow Burke to compose a song, record his portion of it and send the partially completed recording to musicians around the world for them to fill in their part. Burke might play the piano and provide the vocals, then send the audio file to a cello player in Germany and a background singer in Canada.

Very often a client will furnish their own



Chris Burke at the piano. Among the Chappaqua resident's many pursuits is writing original songs for someone's anniversary or birthday.

lyrics, and Burke will work with that. Other times, he'll write the lyrics and the music. In either situation, he speaks with the person to get a feel for what their loved one is like and what they might enjoy.

Burke estimates that he completes four to six musical productions a week for clients. There is pressure to come up with a good finished product in a short amount of time. He typically works on that at night after his two young children go to sleep.

"So by doing it that much I have a better

idea whether I'm going down a wrong path or just scrap it, like this song's terrible and I would start again," said Burke, a 1997 Pleasantville High School graduate.

Most of the time the client is happy with the creation after one or two additional meetings, he said.

When Burke isn't creating special songs for clients, the main part of his job as project manager is to take lyrics from writers to turn it into a song, or songwriters who have demos but don't have access to a studio or

live musicians.

"That's the most common thing we do, is provide a finished product, a demo with actual musicians and actual studios but you don't have to go to one, which obviously became a pretty big deal after the pandemic because you couldn't go to studios," he explained.

Burke has impressive training in the music and recording field. After high school, he studied tuba, piano and music theory at the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music. He then graduated from the Ontario Institute for Audio Recording Technology in 2003 with a degree in recording technology.

But like any musician, there is nothing like performing in front of a live audience. In 2017, he was one member of a group of area musicians that formed Soulshine. They formed just before the May 2017 passing of Gregg Allman.

"We had a night where we had a tribute to Gregg and then it was no longer possible to see the actual Allman Brothers, and in no way, don't get me wrong, does what we do replace being able to see the actual Allman Brothers because you can't," Burke said.

They started booking shows before the pandemic, then had to take time off when events were universally canceled.

Burke said for a lot of people being able to recreate the sound of an iconic band triggers a memory, transporting the audience back to their youth.

"So we try and just play the stuff as close to the original as we can to give them the feel of seeing a real show," he said.

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Goodbye Armonk: Gratitude, Reflection and Vision for a Prosperous Suburb

By Andrew Dunn

Byram Hills Class of 2008 here. After a generation in the community, my family is moving on, which is bringing up a range of thoughts and feelings.

In reflecting on how Armonk shaped me as a person, I'm struck by how much of a gift it was to grow up here: the natural beauty, sense of safety, abundant opportunities. And how no gift comes without its price.

For me, Armonk's most potent gift was achievement culture. Like many families who flocked here in recent decades, we were drawn by the quality of the school district. My siblings and I dutifully jumped through all the academic hoops, orienting toward what seemed like a shared north star of good grades, to get into good schools, to get good jobs, to afford good things, to have a good life and create a better one for our posterity.

But because that cycle had been spiraling upward for three or four generations, and then comes along little Andrew in one of the wealthiest and most academically competitive zip codes in the United States, the story I internalized was that I had to do something big in order to feel complete, free, loved, accepted.

Which would look something like brute force way into the Ivy League, let loose to compensate for emotional and spiritual malnourishment, burnout and move to

India for detox and balance. Then brute force way through Silicon Valley, get lost in the clouds of saving the world, go to my room to think about what I've done. In both cycles, I almost didn't make it out alive.

Acknowledging the multiplicity of backgrounds and ways that others experience this neck of the woods, I wonder why we don't give more attention to the impacts of pressure of expectation and narrow definitions of success. Especially amidst an exploding global mental health crisis and an increasingly destabilized society. It makes me wonder if poor mental health and resilience are the biggest prices we pay to live here. And if so, how can we acknowledge and shift that in a good way?

I'm also curious about the impact of achievement culture in this historical moment when it has become clear that our Western consumerism lifestyles bear the responsibility for the planetary crisis. With an estimated one billion humans to be displaced by 2050, will we environmentally, socially or spiritually be able to pursue a high-earning career that will afford a McMansion(s) life, with multiple new of everything every time it breaks or the styles change, to then herd our kids into elite educational and professional paths that only exacerbate the situation? Whew. The complexities of navigating life during the sixth mass extinction are heavy. Compassion all around.

Educator Zak Stein in "Education in a Time Between Worlds" points out that when social systems are in periods of rapid transformation, the role of schools becomes contradictory. They teach knowledge that is no longer relevant, socialize individuals into roles that no longer exist and provide the mindsets needed to continue ways of life that are rapidly disappearing. Zak argues that students deserve an education relevant to the world they inherit, and that the future depends on the articulation of a new vision of humanity. What might that look like?

In 2018 I received a tear-jerking vision for Armonk's future during a meditation session. I saw the possibility of flourishing individuals, families and community.

Children coming alive, discovering their gifts, bringing their fullest expression forward, cultivating healthy lifestyles.

Beautiful threads of love and healing, weaving the fabric of our social relationships into a beautiful tapestry.

Joyful, educational and supportive interactions between neighbors, generations and unlikely friends.

Excess resources flowing naturally to the areas of greatest need.

A shared motivation to leave Armonk better than we found it.

The potential of Armonk as a role model for upper class achievement communities.

Utopian fantasy, or within reach and worth orienting toward? What is the role

for a resourced community like Armonk in the invited transition from here to there? I'm encouraged by initiatives like the Byram Hills Challenge Success program to center student well-being, and the Buy Nothing community on Facebook to promote sharing economy principles.

I believe our religious institutions have a significant role here, with time-tested wisdom that holds clues to the big questions, including how to build resilience.

And I believe in every person. Any citizen can step into leadership now. We can choose what happens next. We vote every day for the town we want with our words, dollars, choices and ideas. What would a renaissance of civic engagement look like? What do you perceive is imbalanced in Armonk? What are you positioned to change? What is your unique perspective that gives birth to your unique gift?

At the end of the day, there's no perfect town. There are no easy answers here. Armonk is a mixed blessing for many. Perhaps this is our unique paradox to wrestle with: How to create the best life for ourselves and the next generation, without crushing each other's souls, atrophying resilience and harming people or planet.

Maybe it's one we've been wrestling with since time immemorial.

How and Why to Volunteer as a Family

This Saturday, Nov. 20 is Family Volunteer Day, a global day of service that empowers families to work together in support of their communities.

Now more than ever, as we experience a global pandemic and have a renewed focus on social justice and environmental challenges, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved and advance causes your family cares about.

Here are a few of the extraordinary things that happen when families choose to volunteer together:

1. Children learn your family's values. It's always important to talk to children about what values your family holds. But one of the best ways to reinforce these conversations is to demonstrate your values in action. Volunteering shows your kids that you're dedicated, as a family, to promoting, supporting or furthering a certain issue -- and that you're willing to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

2. You spend quality time together. Volunteering is a way to bring together family members of all ages -- parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and more -- around a common mission.

3. It builds empathy. Learning emotional intelligence is a crucial part of child development, and civic engagement can accelerate this process. When volunteering, you'll interact with those who share commonalities, like passion about an issue, and those who may be different from you, like people from communities outside



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your own. Understanding where people are coming from and hearing about their lived experiences helps children flex their empathy muscles now and later in life.

4. You become lifelong learners. If kids always associate learning with school, they may see their educational journey come to an end when they graduate. Instead, show them that the world is full of learning opportunities. Through volunteering,

they'll interact with new people from various walks of life, adopt new skills needed for the task at hand and discover how they can make an impact through their time, talent and efforts.

5. You develop important skills. Everyone can gain valuable skills through volunteering. There are the hard skills often needed for volunteer roles, like carpentry, computer programming,

translation and other services, and the soft skills that come with volunteer positions, like social and communication skills.

Getting Inspired

From volunteering directly with an organization to fundraising to learning about meaningful causes, doing good comes in many forms. Get inspired by considering "Points of Light's Civic Circle." The Civic Circle is a framework developed by Points of Light, a nonpartisan global nonprofit, and it represents your power to lead, lend support and take action for causes you care about and to lead a civic life. The activities outlined by the Civic Circle are listening and learning; using one's voice; social entrepreneurship; volunteering; public, national or military service; using one's purchasing power to express their values; and working, voting and donating.

For specific ideas for celebrating Family Volunteer Day, search the Points of Light Engage platform, the world's largest digital hub for volunteering and community engagement opportunities, at engage.pointsoflight.org or visit the Points of Light website for DIY volunteer projects.

The need for civic engagement is greater than ever before. And though volunteering may look different right now, there are many ways to be civically engaged. Take time out with your family this season to help others and make a positive mark on the world.

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Pairing Wine and Food: It's Easier Than You May Think



By Nick Antonaccio

Pairing wine and food is a favorite activity for me. Finding a complementary match creates a culinary experience that is invariably greater than the sum of its parts.

A food dish on its own may be an exhilarating experience, tantalizing our taste buds with a unique combination of flavors – and aromas. It may start with a simple summer salad of vegetables purchased on the spur of the moment from the local farmers market – spicy baby Asian greens, baby yellow and red beets, dressed with freshly-made orange citrus vinaigrette and topped with morsels of organic goat cheese.

As delicious and refreshing as it is on its own, this salad is beautifully enhanced with a glass of Grüner Veltliner, the crisp white Austrian wine with full acidity and a touch of pepper and minerality.

When consumed at the same meal, the crispness of the lettuce and dressing become more pronounced with a sip of the Grüner. The wine's individual flavors explode in one's mouth. The peppery taste

'A number of wines can coexist with varied menus.'

of the salad is much more discernable when complemented by the peppery taste of the wine. It is as if a new dish has been created, one that is at once bold and ethereal, simple and exotic.

With practice, this form of pairing is not difficult to achieve. And, if one is preparing a meal for someone with similar tastes and dietary preferences (or restrictions), a mutual sensory pleasure is readily achieved.

But, clearly, we don't all have compatible dietary preferences or restrictions. Twenty years ago, carnivores dominated the culinary planet. Hefty steaks and juicy burgers were de rigueur. Today, there is a growing proliferation of omnivores, herbivores and locavores.

Each may have a specific diet to match with wine: high protein, low calorie and low fat are just a few, not to mention those ubiquitous fad diets. At the other end of the spectrum are the allergy diets: gluten-, lactose- and nut-free. And don't forget the "earth-friendly" diets growing in popularity in restaurants and food

markets: organic, vegetarian and vegan.

Challenges arise when attempting to pair wines with the proliferation of diets that abound. Compounding this is the difficulty we now encounter when planning a dinner gathering. Vegans and Atkins-diet proponents tend not to dine well together at a communal table.

As difficult as it may be to satisfy these conflicting culinary preferences and restrictions, it is less difficult to pair these meals with wine. A number of wines can coexist with varied menus. These wines tend to be well-balanced. Their fruit and acidity live in harmony and are compatible with – and an enhancement to – a broad range of ingredients. A Burgundian-style Pinot Noir tends to be medium-bodied and balanced, with a mild fruit and spice profile. These characteristics make it as ideal for mild meat courses as for robust vegetable dishes.

The rule of thumb I generally follow is to match the wine with the dominant flavor of the dish.

A balanced Pinot Noir will be the perfect foil to a peppercorn-encrusted grilled salmon with roasted Brussels sprouts – or a pungent classic ratatouille.

An Italian Barolo will pair as well with a roasted organic mushroom fricassee as with a char-grilled porterhouse steak served with caramelized onions.

The carnivore and the vegan can graze in harmony at the dinner table with these

congenial pairings.

Other wines that I find will ameliorate potential food and wine conflicts include:

1. Beaujolais, which is subtle yet distinctive, well-balanced but with universal appeal across many foods, the unheralded ambassador of culinary détente;
2. Wines derived from the Sangiovese grape, which tend to be a bit more acidic than other red wines, creating balance between tomato-based dishes as well as wild game roasts; and
3. Sauvignon Blanc, which can just as easily tame fiery Asian vegetarian dishes as it can punch up the subtlety of seared scallops.

Wine is the great mediator of all food diets. Take advantage of this unique characteristic for your next gastronomically diverse meal.

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 or on Twitter @sharingwine.



You Heard It Through the Grapevine

Get Yourself Ready for a Winter Without Pain From Snow Shoveling

With the arrival of November, us northeasterners instantly think of the upcoming holidays and snow.

While snow is beautiful, it can also cause many problems. For one, the physical activity of shoveling snow can cause numerous injuries or conditions to our musculoskeletal and/or cardiovascular systems.

Some of these injuries or incidents range from the minor to the very serious, with the most serious being a cardiovascular event that can lead to hospitalization or even death. Research has shown that about 11,500 injuries occur annually in the U.S. due to the strenuous nature of snow shoveling. Out of these, about 55 percent are soft-tissue injuries, 16 percent are lacerations, 7 percent are fractures and another 7 percent are heart-related incidents.

The more common soft-tissue/orthopedic snow shoveling injuries we see in the physical therapy clinic occur in the back or shoulders. Unless there was a fall, then we will see various other injuries, such as fractures or ligament tears.

Here are some helpful tips to prevent musculoskeletal or cardiovascular injuries from happening to you or a loved one this winter.

Start by implementing proper warm up and cool-down periods. Warming up with a five- to 10-minute routine of some light activity prior to shoveling will help prepare your muscles and body. This can include stretches and exercises such as arm circles, jumping jacks, air squats or light or modified jogging in place. Additionally, a proper cool-down ensures a steady decrease in heart rate and blood pressure, which alleviates stress on some of your body's internal systems.

Also, before you begin to shovel, it's good to put on layers of clothing to prevent hypothermia (which happens more frequently than you think). Wear slip-resistant shoes (to prevent slipping on ice) and get yourself a well-designed shovel. Good shovels are normally lightweight and have a curved handle to stop you from bending too far forward. They will also reduce the amount you need to lift.

This leads us to talk about form. If you have ever been to physical

therapy, you know form is everything. Precise form helps prevent injuries and ensures that the correct muscles and joints are working properly and efficiently. There is a tendency for people to lift too much snow at once while using their backs. The best position is to keep your back flat, have your knees slightly bent while pushing your hips back slightly, as though you are in a squat position, and engage your ab muscles by drawing your belly button toward your spine.

It's also advisable to shovel more frequently to avoid heavy lifts of snow at one time. That would enable you to push the snow rather than lift it. When you need to lift the snow, make sure you bend your knees and don't throw the snow over your shoulder. Throwing snow and twisting the shovel can also cause significant lower back and shoulder injuries or pain.

Another tip is to take frequent breaks. The phrase slow and steady wins the race applies to snow shoveling. Take a break after 15 to 20 minutes



By Rachel Amarosa

and be sure to stand up and walk around to improve circulation. It would be best to also hydrate during these breaks. Snow shoveling is an exhausting task, hydrating helps keep you and your muscles working at their best.

Last, but certainly not least, if you feel pain, discomfort or difficulty breathing you need to take a break or stop for the day. It's your body

telling you it's enough!

Snow shoveling can be a dangerous undertaking. These simple tips will help prevent some of these common injuries and incidents from occurring and to keep you healthy throughout the snow season.

Rachel Amarosa is a certified athletic trainer for ProClinix Sports Physical Therapy & Chiropractic. She is the marketing and patient relations director for their three locations in Armonk, Pleasantville and Ardsley. For questions about her article or about ProClinix, she can be reached out 914-202-0700 or at ramarosa@proclinix.com.

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