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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

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## Mt. Pleasant Police Reform Committee Creates Draft Recommendations

By Martin Wilbur

Mount Pleasant's Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Committee announced a draft list of more than a dozen recommendations for consideration that is designed to improve how the town's police department operates and interacts with the public.

The wide-ranging recommendations revealed at the committee's Mar. 3 meeting are a combination of reaffirming some existing policies while recognizing the importance of certain types of training, transparency and communication and greater diversity on the force.

Last Wednesday, Chief Paul Oliva reviewed the 14 recommendations with the committee that will be forwarded to the Town Board for its approval later this month. The deadline for an approved plan to

be submitted to the state is Apr. 1 following last June's executive order signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo for all communities with police departments to review policies and procedures.

"I think a lot of benefit's going to come of this," said Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi.

Among the more notable suggestions is Mount Pleasant will partner with the Bedford Police Department to expand de-escalation training for its officers and collaborate with other law enforcement agencies in the county to train selective officers on crowd control techniques so the department is better equipped to handle large protests, Oliva said.

De-escalation training will also focus on having other officers come forward to relieve their colleagues before a situation can spiral out of control.

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MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

## That Wasn't So Bad

County Executive George Latimer relaxes last Friday after he received his first dose of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine at Westchester Community College in Valhalla. Latimer said that he felt a little arm soreness for several hours after getting the shot but didn't experience any other side effects. He will return for his second shot on Apr. 2. For the latest local updates on COVID-19, see page 3.

## Mt. Pleasant Incumbents to Run Again; Picinich, New Candidates in Mt. Kisco

By Martin Wilbur

The three Mount Pleasant Town Board incumbents up for re-election this year are officially running for another term while it appears that two first-time candidates are in line to take over on the Mount Kisco Village Board.

Mount Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi will be joined on the Republican ticket by two-term incumbent Councilwoman Laurie Smalley and Councilman Thomas Sialiano, who has served on the Town Board for about 15 years over two stints.

"I think we have a very strong ticket, a tremendous amount of experience in the boardroom," said Sialiano, who also has 10 years of prior experience on the town's Planning Board and a short stay on the Architectural Review Board. "It takes a long time to learn how to be an excellent councilmember and an excellent official. We're essentially running a \$50 million



Mount Kisco Mayor Gina Picinich and Mount Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi are each running for another term later this year.

business and it's a very serious matter."

They will be challenged by Democrats Joe



Bonanno, the party's supervisor candidate, and former councilwoman Francesca

Hagadus-McHale and political newcomer Evan Echenal for the board seats.

Fulgenzi, in his seventh year as supervisor, made known his intentions to run for re-election in early February, mentioning multiple projects that he wanted to see through to completion, including the update of the town's Master Plan. At that time, it wasn't official that Smalley and Sialiano would run for re-election.

Smalley said completing the Master Plan update and seeing the town work toward encouraging the development of some senior housing options are two key priorities. She said she had weighed whether to run again but concluded that she wanted to continue contributing to the community.

In Mount Kisco, Mayor Gina Picinich has been endorsed by the village's Democratic Committee; however, the two other seats up for election this year will see changes.

Incumbent trustees Peter Grunthal and

*continued on page 2*



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# Mt. Pleasant Police Reform Committee Creates Draft Recommendations

*continued from page 1*  
“Police officers are human, you can get excited and overreact, so I’m teaching officers if you witness another officer getting excited over something, tap him out and then you take over,” Oliva said. “We kind of have it now but we’ll formalize

it a little bit more.”  
To help increase diversity on the force, Oliva said the department will reach out to communities of color in hopes of recruiting a wider population of candidates. In December at the start of the committee’s meetings, Oliva said there were no Black

officers on the 46-member department and only a few of mixed races.  
The county announced last week that for the first time in five years it will be offering a police civil service exam in May, with increasing diversity of police departments as one of its priorities.

but eliminating the D.A.R.E. Program, which has been deemed to be less effective in recent years; and holding semiannual meetings with the public to increase interaction between the residents and officers.

Perhaps the most extensive area of discussion last week was when to deploy social services personnel on a call that involves a person with mental illness.

Oliva said that the committee determined that social services are not equipped to handle “acute” situations. There are times when an officer needs to determine whether a person has a weapon or if they are a danger to themselves, he said. If someone is determined to be a danger to themselves, then there could be a greater likelihood they are a danger to someone else.

“We’re not always sure what we have, and to place a worker, a social services worker in that, when it’s unknown or not really safe potentially, I guess the best word is an acute situation in the field, may not be the safest,” Oliva said.

Committee member Kelsey Padgett asked the chief how an acute situation would be defined or determined. The chief responded that access to weapons is one example of an acute situation.

Oliva noted that he supports use of the county’s mobile crisis unit, which is equipped to handle those types of emergencies.

# Mt. Pleasant Incumbents to Run Again; Picinich, New Candidates in Mt. Kisco

*continued from page 1*  
David Squirrell have opted against running for re-election, and will be replaced on the Democratic slate by attorney Karine Patino and resident Anne Bianchi.

In addition, Deputy Mayor Anthony Markus has confirmed he is running for village justice later this year.

As of now, there aren’t any known Republican or independent party opponents lined up.

Despite Picinich having been endorsed by the party, she said she is not running with Patino or Bianchi. Petitions that are being carried must be submitted to the Westchester County Board of Elections no later than Mar. 25.

“A candidate has to stand up and give the community a reason to vote for them and the simple reality is there is a lot going on in this community and I have not been able to complete my letter and my strategic plan yet,” Picinich said.

Grunthal, who has served two seven-year stints – 2003 to 2010 and 2014 until now – said

it’s time to give other people a chance to serve. “It’s truly time to pass the baton on to new blood,” Grunthal said.

Meanwhile, Squirrell indicated that he wanted to devote more time to other interests without being more specific. He will complete his two-year term before bowing out in December.

Markus, who is on the Village Board for the second time, previously serving for 14 years, will be looking to make the leap to replace Justice John Donohue, who is leaving the local bench. Markus is a partner in his Mount Kisco law firm Markus & Sheridan and currently handles matters related to divorce and Family Court issues. Early on in his legal career, he practiced criminal law.

“That opportunity presented itself and I thought it would be a good idea for myself and the community and so that’s why I made that decision,” Markus said of his nomination.

If Markus becomes village justice, a trustee would have to be appointed to serve the remaining year of his unexpired term.

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# W'chester Asks State to Loosen Quarantine Rules for the Vaccinated

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County has asked the state to relax quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated residents returning home from out-of-town trips within the United States.

County Executive George Latimer said Monday the request has been made because it's been a hardship for many residents and has been one impediment to fully reopening schools. The request follows guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, he said.

"We don't want to wait," Latimer said. "This is an impact on people's lives and we want to make it as realistic as possible for people to resume normal functioning in society to help us move forward to get out of this situation."

For that to happen, vaccine availability will have to continue to increase and people will need to take it. On Monday, the county received its first 1,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. That vaccine is being reserved for seniors because it is a one-shot dose, therefore, not requiring a second trip.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines call for a second shot three and four weeks later, respectively.

For those who are eligible, Latimer urged residents to get signed up for any of the vaccines as soon as they are able to. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has an 85 percent effective rate, slightly less than the 90-plus percent rates for Pfizer and Moderna.

"Right now, if you're not vaccinated, you have zero, zero, protection," Latimer said. "So we think that substantial protection goes a long way in helping people being able to function, even with masks, even with social distancing and hand sanitizing, and the things that we have to do."

It was a point Gov. Andrew Cuomo tried to drive home during his briefing earlier in the day, particularly relating to the lagging vaccination percentages among the Black and Latino communities. Speaking from the Javits Center in Manhattan, Cuomo said that in New York City, for example, the population is 27 percent Black and 28 percent Hispanic, but those two groups of people account for just 18 and 20 percent of the vaccinations, respectively.

Vaccination rates for white and Asian residents in the city exceed their percentage of the population. Part of the problem is "health care deserts," Cuomo said, but also a deep distrust of the system. It's an obstacle that must be overcome.

"We can't put the needle in your arm if you don't bring your arm forward," Cuomo said. "That's what we're asking you to do today. This vaccine can save your life. This vaccine can save your mother's life, your grandmother's life, your sister's life, your brother's life. It literally is a matter of life or death."

Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins announced Monday that Westchester will be extending free Paratransit service to seniors and the disabled for transportation to and from a vaccine appointment, even if they are not signed up for the service.

If a county resident has a vaccine appointment, they can call 914-995-7272 ext. 1 for a ride.

So far, the County Center, which opened

as a vaccine site on Jan. 13, has administered 91,815 doses through Sunday while the county's two clinics have provided 17,981 shots. Since all shots through Sunday in Westchester were the two-dose Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, those figures do not represent full vaccinations, only shots given, Latimer said.

Active cases in Westchester fell slightly to 5,930 through Mar. 7, down 46 from the previous Sunday. It represents the lowest active caseload in the county since Nov. 30, and the fifth consecutive week of declines.

Virus-related hospitalizations are also following an encouraging trend, with only 270 as of last Saturday, less than half from a month ago.

Additional COVID-19 fatalities slowed last week with 28 deaths, which pushes the Westchester death toll to 2,125 since the start of the pandemic.

On Monday, Putnam County reported 271 active cases and nine hospitalizations from COVID-19. There have been 86 deaths.

## Fans Allowed at School Sports

High school athletes and participants in recreational sports may each have up to two spectators at their games provided that social distancing can be maintained and the venue's capacity does not exceed 50 percent.

Latimer announced the guidelines last Thursday set by the county Health Department based on guidance from the state. Individual schools and recreational facilities

may still choose to have stricter guidelines.

He said the guidelines, which took effect on Monday, allow an athlete's parents or other family members to attend their game, something that was never in question previously but could be considered a luxury as society struggles to return to normal.

The guideline would apply to both the home and visiting teams, Latimer said.

"We understand that parents want to see their children play sports, this is a huge part of our culture and parents should be involved in their children's lives," said County Health Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler. "As long as social distancing is observed, and masks are worn, we can accomplish both goals – safety and involvement."

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# Westchester Pauses to Remember Victims of Pandemic a Year Later

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester paused last Wednesday to remember the more than 2,000 lives lost in the county from COVID-19 and the struggles it and the nation have faced while fighting the pandemic.

The day marked a year to the day that New Rochelle became the state's first coronavirus hotspot and the focus of an increasingly nervous country when about 100 cases of the coronavirus were linked to a gathering at Temple Young Israel a week or two earlier.

Since then, 2,122 Westchester residents have died from the virus as of Mar. 7, along with more than half a million other Americans.

County Executive George Latimer, who led an hour-long program in the county office building's lobby late last Wednesday morning, said a year of losing friends, family and neighbors has been made worse by being unable to celebrate milestones and holidays together as a community.

"We're here on a day of commemoration to remember those we have lost and to learn from the experiences we have lived through for the last year," Latimer said. "This pandemic is not yet over and we have more days ahead of us. It's a proper time to stop and consider the path we've taken so far and to find new resolve for the path that's ahead of us as well."

Clergy from three different faiths, Father Luke Hoyt from Holy Innocents parish in Pleasantville, Rabbi Annie Tucker of



County Executive George Latimer leads a remembrance ceremony last Wednesday in White Plains as student and faculty musicians from White Plains High School look on.

Temple Israel Center in White Plains and Imam Shaffieq Chace from the Westchester Muslim Center led interfaith prayers. Westchester's poet laureate, J.K. Fisher, and youth poet laureate Danielle Kohn read appropriate passages from their own work or those of other poets.

Hoyt recalled a funeral he presided over late last March for a man who had died of COVID-19. The only two people allowed at the graveside service were himself and the funeral director, who was livestreaming the

service so the man's loved ones could watch on computers.

There were similar stories from thousands of others, but Hoyt said that while there was the heartbreak of his family and friends unable to say goodbye, he trusted in his God.

"Even in the direst of circumstances that we've experienced, even in the direst of circumstances that we may yet experience, we may never be alone," he said.

Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins said that on Mar. 3, 2020, he knew something

was wrong when he received a phone call from Latimer before 8 a.m. That was when he learned of the New Rochelle outbreak.

Jenkins lauded the first responders, health care workers, health officials and essential workers who rushed people to the hospital, cared for the sick and stocked the shelves in food stores. But he asked everyone to keep those who have died in their thoughts.

"We want to remember every soul, every one of the over 2,000 members of our Westchester community, more than a half a million across the country, that these people and individuals, friends and family members, brothers, sisters, mothers, sons, daughters, fathers, friends, forever," said Jenkins. "We want to make sure we recall each and every one of them."

Ben Boykin, chair of the Board of Legislators, said the pandemic has tested everyone's capacity to come together as a nation, a county and a community. It is a challenge that Westchester has met.

"From somebody helping an elderly neighbor with grocery shopping to volunteers helping to land vaccine appointments to those who are less tech savvy, they have been there helping our neighbors," Boykin said.

The program concluded with a moment of silence at noon. Latimer called on all residents to go to their front doors at 7 p.m. last Wednesday night for a county-wide applause for health care workers who have risked their health and safety to care for others.

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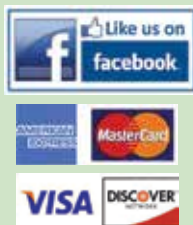
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# Buchanan Incumbents Challenged by Ex-Mayor, Running Mate

By Rick Pezzullo

Two incumbent Village of Buchanan trustees are being challenged in the Mar. 16 election by a former mayor and a third-generation resident.

Duane Jackson, who has been a trustee since 2012, and Cesare Pasquale, a seven-year trustee, are squaring off on the Democratic and Residents lines against Sean Murray and Anthony Capicotti, who have secured the Republican, Conservative and Buchanan United lines.

"I will continue my efforts to offer young families and retirees the quality of life that is the hallmark of our beautiful village," said Jackson, who is chairman of the village's New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Committee.

"For the past seven years, I have been able to dedicate and commit to serving as a trustee for the residents of Buchanan," said Pasquale, a retired New York City police officer who responded to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. "I am always thinking and working with the rest of the board to make the village the best we can for our residents."

Murray served as mayor from 2010 to 2014 and was a trustee the two years prior. He is currently chairman of the village's Planning Board.

"The board has really lost its direction. It's like they're going through the motions," Murray remarked. "The people of this village deserve a voice. Nothing is vetted



Pictured, from left, Democratic incumbents Cesare Pasquale and Duane Jackson are facing Republican challengers Sean Murray, a former mayor, and Anthony Capicotti in next week's contested Buchanan village election.

any more. It's the board's job to question what the mayor is doing and let the public speak. They don't do anything."

Capicotti, a married father of five, has worked as a Local 137 Operating Engineer for 29 years. He is a board member of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Society and has followed in the footsteps of his late father and uncle in coordinating the spectacular fireworks display at the annual Italian Feast in Verplanck.

"I think the mayor pretty much runs the show. I think they (trustees) can say more. I don't know what they have in mind," Capicotti said. "Nobody knows what's going on. It's been a little closed down. I think I can stir it up a little."

Jackson and Pasquale both responded to Murray's criticism.

"As a member of the board my job is to have an open mind and listen before coming to any decision," Jackson said. "I make my decisions based on what I believe is best for our village. At times I stood in disagreement with other members of the board on issues concerning policies and procedures, employment and human resources issues."

"We work together as a board, regardless of what people think for the best interest of the village," Pasquale said. "Our process is to have open discussions and respect each other's opinions. We listen to each other and try to come to a consensus. We have had many heated discussions at workshops, but solutions and compromises are accomplished."

The village's largest employer and revenue generator, the Indian Point nuclear

power plants, is scheduled to shut down by the end of April. With the closure, Buchanan is set to lose 46 percent, or \$4 million, of its annual budget.

Pasquale said the board has responded the best it could under the circumstances after Entergy blindsided local officials in 2017 with the plant's planned departure.

"We provide the information to our residents as soon as we have it," he said. "An important proactive thing we did was to write and have our representative pass the legislation on the taxing of the dry casks. We did not take this lying down, and we are the only municipality that have such a law."

Murray has worked at Indian Point for 29 years and is one of about 300 employees that will remain if Holtec International winds up

*continued on next page*

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# New Castle Completes Police Reform Review With Set of Recommendations

By Martin Wilbur

The New Castle Town Board unanimously approved its police reform report last week outlining seven recommendations that are designed to increase trust between the public and the police and improve transparency.

In addition to the suggestions at the town level, the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Committee's report also highlighted several improvements that could be considered at the county and state levels.

Committee Chairman and Deputy Supervisor Jeremy Saland said that the 19 committee members representing a wide cross-section of the town devised a strong plan and the police department was receptive to new ideas.

"They were very accepting and open and

it shows," Saland said. "We have a very good relationship but we can always do better, we can always look at ways to go in the right process and make sure everyone's protected and the right response is appropriate."

The report calls for creation of an independent community advocate, which would eliminate the current system of anonymous public complaints and doesn't allow for needed follow-up.

A chief's advisory board will also be established, comprised of various stakeholders to address policing issues. The advisory board would meet semiannually and help ensure police use best practices and form a stronger bond with the community.

A key component of the town's report suggests a resource line for mental health emergencies. While the committee stated

that the police's goal in that situation is to maintain the health and safety for the person in need, it calls on the county to consider creating a 211 line that would make mental health resources available and have mental health PODS throughout Westchester consisting of personnel who could respond in a crisis.

A 211 line to address those calls was praised by committee member Rev. Dr. Martha Jacobs of the First Congregational Church of Chappaqua.

"I think if there's a 211 line for people to call, I think that will go a long way, particularly those who have mental health issues, and let their families be able to help them, especially when they're in a crisis," Jacobs said.

Other parts of the report called for use of community surveys to track and create goals and determine trends as it relates to residents of color and other marginalized citizens; tracking demographics, including race, age, gender and ethnicity, of traffic stops by town police that do not result in a ticket; expanding the role of the Town Board in its capacity as police commissioners, including holding semiannual meetings with the chief to analyze performance; and posting department policies on the town's website.

In addition to the suggestion for the 211 mental health line, the committee concluded it supports funding from the state and/or county to pay for body cameras for officers to wear and more education

to address issues such as racial and cultural sensitivities, recognizing bias and procedural justice.

Councilwoman Lori Morton said the committee should be proud of its work, coming up with excellent suggestions that will help the department, its residents and the town.

Saland echoed the sentiments and thanked everyone involved.

"It's really been a team effort," he said. "Sometimes we sparred, sometimes we agreed, but it's our product and I'm certainly proud of it and all the people who did their part and make this happen."

## Buchanan Incumbents Challenged by Ex-Mayor, Running Mate

*continued from previous page*

coordinating the decommissioning of the plants. He claimed the village lost a \$150,000 grant from Holtec after it requested to intervene in the license transfer process with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Village officials and Holtec said Murray's claim is unfounded.

"There's no foresight. No matter what

Indian Point is going to close. You have to bite the bullet. You can't fight it to your detriment," Murray said. "This village was built on commercial development. This current board, all they want to do is residential. The Village of Buchanan has shown they have not been able to develop recreation on our waterfront. It's time to think outside the box."

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# Obituaries

## Marianne Steiner

Marianne E. Steiner, who fled Nazi Germany as a girl by enrolling as a student in Belgium and England and went on to live the American dream, died on Feb. 26. She was 101.

Known for her unshakably optimistic attitude, Steiner was born Marianne Esberg in Braunschweig, Germany to a family of successful livestock traders. She often described an idyllic early childhood of family gatherings and fun but in her early teens, as the Nazis' influence rose, she would recall looking out her window horrified to see Nazis marching in the streets.

By 1933, her parents made the wise decision to send her to a Catholic school that would protect her in Ghent, Belgium. Steiner recalled being only one of two Jewish girls, though she'd never tell anyone she was Jewish. Her father, looking to avert the authorities, stored money in the back of her camera, which she would give to her uncle, Ivan, in Belgium.

In 1937, Steiner would go to England to study at the Reimann School of Art and Design, a Berlin-based private school that moved to England after Nazi persecution. Always with an eye for color and design, she studied window display.

By 1938, the oppression against Jews had become too much to bear for her parents in Germany. Once the police came to confiscate their passports, her father went to the local

police to ask how they could retrieve them. By paying up, they were able to get their documents and escape the country. While the family considered immigrating to Sweden, they chose America, stopping in England to pick up Marianne and her late brother, the accountant Andy Esberg, before boarding a ship to New York.

Settling on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, the Esbergs rented out rooms, and one of the renters was a young Austrian Jewish writer named Paul Steiner, whom Marianne immediately said she wanted to marry. As with most things for the rest of her life, she got her way. They had their only son, Tom, and moved to the Westchester suburb of Harrison.

Meanwhile, during World War II, the Third Reich had confiscated Steiner's father's property in Wolfenbuettel. In an odd twist, it was sold to Curt Mast, mostly known as the creator of the popular liquor Jagermeister. He was a member of the NSDAP, and he profited highly through the distribution of Jagermeister, called Goering-Schnaps among German soldiers, during the war.

After World War II, Steiner's uncle, Ivan, initiated a lawsuit against Mast, which was settled in a mutual agreement.

Back in Vienna, Mr. Steiner, who successfully fled Austria in 1939 after one failed attempt, had studied law and had aspirations to be a writer. In the United States, he would turn to publishing, launching Chanticleer Press, which is regarded as the first of the nation's book packagers, an



Marianne Steiner

entirely new business model, as The Times wrote in his obituary.

His biggest success was dreaming up the popular National Audubon Society Field Guide, believed to be the first guide to use photographs of birds rather than drawings. It has sold more than 29 million copies.

Entering Steiner's home on Fifth Avenue, where she lived since the 1970s, was the near-equivalent of entering a wing of a small museum of antiquities. Steiner would proudly and cheekily tell people she only collected B.C. art, which she and her husband would often acquire on trips abroad.

The piece de resistance were Cycladic sculptures from the mid-2000s B.C. that are considered canonical. According to the Los Angeles Times, the Getty Museum spared no effort to acquire the female idols from Steiner, which they did in 1988.

A fierce lover of New York City, Steiner relished every opportunity to soak up the city's arts, including the Metropolitan Opera, and was independent well into her 90s, living in her Upper Manhattan apartment overlooking Central Park. She read book after book even after her 100th birthday.

Known for her vibrancy, we can only assume her longevity was due to some combination of genetics, staying physically active, keeping her stimulated by books, art and music and regularly quaffing a good, stiff drink.

Active in philanthropy, the organization she supported most was Leo Baeck Institute, a New York- and Berlin-based research library and archive focused on the history of German-speaking Jews.

Steiner is survived by a son, Tom, and his wife Susie; grandchildren Nina Harrison, Nevin and his wife, Katherine, and Keenan; and her great-grandchildren, Abbott and Laurel Steiner.

The Steiner family held a private service on Mar. 1 in her beloved Central Park.

In lieu of flowers, the family would love if you donated to the indispensable organization that holds the archives of countless German Jewish families, including ours, The Leo Baeck Institute, at [www.lbi.org/support](http://www.lbi.org/support).



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# Stewart-Cousins: Cuomo 'Must Resign' in Sexual Harassment Scandal

By Martin Wilbur

Gov. Andrew Cuomo's grip on power may have become much more tenuous on Sunday after state Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Yonkers) bluntly urged the embattled governor to resign amid the growing sexual harassment scandal.

Stewart-Cousins ended what had been largely silence on the issue with a mid-afternoon statement, which came after most Westchester Democratic state legislators spent last week fending off questions about whether Cuomo's behavior should lead to his departure from office.

The general consensus had been to let Attorney General Letitia James' investigation run its course.

But with a direct two-paragraph statement issued on Sunday, the majority leader possibly delivered a devastating blow to Cuomo's political career despite continued insistence throughout last week and into Sunday that he will not resign.

"Everyday there is another account that is drawing away from the business of government," Stewart-Cousins' statement read. "We have allegations about sexual harassment, a toxic work environment, the loss of credibility surrounding the COVID-19 nursing home data and questions about the construction of a major infrastructure project.

"New York is still in the midst of this pandemic and is still facing the societal, health and economic impacts of it. We need to govern without daily distraction. For the good



Gov. Andrew Cuomo's political career could be in jeopardy after Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins called on the governor to resign on Sunday.

of the state Governor Cuomo must resign."

Over the weekend two more women come forward to join former staffers Lindsey Boylan and Charlotte Bennett along with Anna Ruch in detailing inappropriate behavior and interactions on Cuomo's part.

The latest revelations include claims by Ana Liss, who worked in the governor's office from 2013 to 2015. She said Cuomo called her "sweetheart," once kissed her hand and asked whether she had a boyfriend, The Wall Street Journal reported.

On Saturday, the Washington Post reported

that Karen Hinton, who worked for Cuomo when he was housing secretary, was called to his hotel room and detailed physical contact on the governor's part.

During a news conference last Wednesday, the governor said he was "embarrassed" by the allegations but that much of his interaction was friendly banter.

"I never treated anyone inappropriately. I never knew at the time I was making anyone feel uncomfortable," Cuomo said. "And I certainly never meant to offend anyone or hurt anyone or cause anyone any pain."

On Sunday afternoon, after allegations from Liss and Hinton had been reported from the day before, he insisted that he would not resign.

Before Stewart-Cousins, the only local Democratic state lawmaker to unequivocally call for Cuomo to step down was Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville), a frequent critic of the governor over the years.

Last Wednesday, Abinanti tweeted that Cuomo should resign and "spare NY the shame of having a gov. whose actions evidence disrespect for women. He no longer commands the respect necessary to lead, is distracted from giving full attention to the ongoing deadly pandemic & is a distraction to completing a good budget."

On Saturday, in one of his additional tweets, the assemblyman said "this is not who we want as the face of New York."

"The Democrats are trying to change the attitude of our communities across the country to be one of respect for all, no matter

gender, race, religion, sexual orientation," Abinanti said. "The governor's rhetoric matches the goal but his personal conduct does not. He has long been known as a bully. By definition, that's a lack of respect for other people."

He said some of his colleagues who may have been hesitant to call for his resignation had likely not wanted to incur Cuomo's wrath. In the past, anyone who crossed him often received a call, including himself, Abinanti said.

Prior to the sexual harassment allegations, Queens Democratic Assemblyman Ron Kim received a phone call from Cuomo after criticizing the governor on his handling of the nursing home deaths from COVID-19.

"I think there's a fear of retribution and an uncertainty of how his constituents feel because the governor is still popular and we represent constituents," Abinanti said.

Last week, state senators Peter Harchham (D-Lewisboro) and Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers) issued statements in support of the attorney general's investigation before calling for any action.

"We have called for an independent, thorough and expeditious investigation," Harchham said. "Then we should decide the disposition."

Mayer said the allegations are "deeply troubling" but trusts the James' inquiry.

"I have faith in the Attorney General's investigation based on the information we currently have," she said. "I am hopeful the process moves ahead expeditiously."




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# Obituaries

## Bruce Bellom

Bruce Bellom, of Peekskill passed away on Mar. 1 at Westchester Medical Center with the love of his life, Linda Belger, by his side following a month-long battle with COVID-19. He was 66 years old.

Bruce was born on Apr. 1, 1954, to the late Tony and Lillian Bellom in the Bronx.

A freespirt who lived his life unapologetically, Bruce was a devoted son, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, friend, cop and a source of love, strength, joy, support and understanding, not only to his family but to nearly every person that came into his orbit. The impact of his kindness, encouragement and insurmountable generosity stretched beyond his personal life and into many different communities, groups and organizations.

One of his greatest qualities was making you feel seen, heard and understood.

Whether he was traveling to new destinations with his love, enjoying Yankee games with his children, bowling with his sister and niece, racing his cars at full speed, watching his grandchildren grow up, cheering on his stepsons during hockey games, discussing politics or making his daily round of calls to friends and family members, everything Bruce did he did with gusto, swag and fulfillment.

He will be greatly missed by those who had the honor of knowing him.

After Bruce and his brother-in-law, Harold, took the Westchester County civil service exam together in 1979, Bruce went on to become a proud member of the Westchester County Police Department, serving for 34 years and retiring as a sergeant in 2016.

During his tenure, Bruce made an irrefutable impact on his colleagues and mentored dozens of park rangers aspiring to become law enforcement officers for five summers at Playland Park in Rye. His influence has resulted in several rangers moving on to become members of various local and state police departments.

His guidance has also propelled other rangers to reach success outside of law enforcement.

Additionally, Bruce applied his more than three decades of police experience as a member of the Westchester County Traffic Safety Board, where he served for nearly three years. He also trained the armed forces to drive Humvees in desert terrain and advised



Bruce Bellom

on how to avoid land mines at Fort Campbell.

Bruce had a deep sense of commitment for his community, serving as chairman of the Peekskill Republican Party and secretary of the Peekskill Rotary Club. His passion for local politics and civic engagement resulted in his political group launching a talk show called "Up and About with Peekskill United," where he offered political commentary on local happenings, attended momentous events and produced featurettes on influential residents and business owners as the Man on the Street.

Despite some contention between political parties in recent years, members of the Democratic community regard Bruce as a noble man who was fair and always willing to have a friendly conversation or rousing debate.

While Bruce led a rewarding life, he truly began to live in 2014 when he met his partner of seven wonderful years, Linda. Together they built a beautiful home in Peekskill and successfully blended both of their families to create an unbreakable bond that will endure years beyond his passing.

Bruce is survived by his two beloved children, Andrew Bellom and Kristen Bellom-Rohrbacher; his grandchildren, Zack, Tyler and Matthew; sister Nancy Young; brother Paul Kandell; brother-in-law Harold Young; nieces Anna and Molly Young; daughter-in-law Melissa Locatelli; son-in-law Matt Rohrbacher; and stepsons Robert and Nick Belger.

He was predeceased by ex-wife Debbie Bellom.

## Thaddeus Piekos

Thaddeus J. Piekos passed away at his home in White Plains on Feb. 12. He was 101.

Born in Woonsocket, R.I., "Ted" served in World War II in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He graduated with undergraduate and master's degrees from Columbia University, and later earned other graduate degrees in school administration and library science.

Ted had a long career in education, finishing as chairman of the Math Department at White Plains High School. He enjoyed the variety of life in New York, including town concerts, Broadway plays, museums, New York sports teams, a range of restaurants and ocean breezes. He could often be found with his friends at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church and Rooster's Gedney Way Café. He enjoyed sharing time with his family on visits to Rhode Island, Florida and Bermuda.

Ted's wife, Teresa (nee Irza), preceded him in death after over 60 years of marriage. He is survived by a sister, Joan Giard, or Narragansett, R.I.; daughters Jan Owens of Mount Pleasant, Wisc., Marilyn Woodside of York, Maine and Paula Piekos of White Plains; and many nieces and nephews.

A funeral mass at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in White Plains will be held Mar. 10 at



Thaddeus Piekos

12:15 p.m. A graveside service will be held at a later date in Rhode Island.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in White Plains or the Veterans Memorial Museum in Woonsocket.

More details of Ted's life can be found on the McMahon Funeral Home website at [www.mcmahonfuneralhome.com](http://www.mcmahonfuneralhome.com).

## Josephine Bay

Josephine S. Bay, 89, passed away on Feb. 21 at her home in Charleston, S.C.

She was the loving wife of the late Peter J. Bay, who passed away on Mar. 31, 1998. Josephine was born on June 13, 1931, in New Rochelle. She was the daughter of the late Denis E. Sibson and Josephine H. Sibson and the loving sister to the late Ann Hannigan and brothers John and Charlie Sibson.

Josephine retired after 20 years from the Village of Mount Kisco where she was a court clerk. After the move to New Bern, N.C., she was active with the Red Hat Ladies Club, Bridge Club and the Navy League.

She is survived by her six daughters, Charlotte and Jack Raby, Kathy and Tom

Krouch, Susan and Roger Zepp, Donna and Andrew Ball, Sheila and Richard Palmesi and Linda and Richard Darnell, and her sister, Denise Walter.

Josephine's legacy will live on through her grandchildren, Andrew Ball, Liz Tegano, Alexandra and Matthew Krouch, Douglas and Katelyn Palmesi and Michael and Jennifer Zepp; her great-grandchildren, Landon, Brandt and Summer Tegano, Kylin and Hadley Krouch and Elisa Palmesi; and 21 nieces and nephews.

Josephine's family received family and friends at Clark Associates Funeral Home in Katonah on Mar. 5. Interment was on Mar. 6 at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in New Rochelle.

At the family's request, donations may be made to the American Heart Association and/or American Diabetes Association.

## James Seirmarco

James Anthony Seirmarco of Buchanan passed away on Feb. 28 at the age of 78.

He was born on Sept. 3, 1942, in Nanuet to Frank J. Seirmarco and Rose Seirmarco (née Mancuso). After graduating from Hendrick Hudson High School, he earned bachelors and master's degrees in physics from Marist and Vassar Colleges, respectively.

Seirmarco married Sharon Marie Miller,

on May 23, 1962, at St. Patrick's Church in Verplanck. They were married 56 years, and have two children. Their daughter, Sherri Lee Seirmarco, resides in Denver and their son, James Jay Seirmarco, lives in San Francisco with his wife, Elizabeth. Seirmarco has two granddaughters, Sofia, a sophomore at Lewis & Clark College, and Julietta, who will be a freshman at Occidental College in the fall. He was predeceased by his sister, Frances King, and his brother-in-law, John Farley King Jr., of Cortlandt Manor.

## Paul Wallace

Paul A. Wallace, 91, died peacefully on Mar. 3 in Sleepy Hollow.

He was the beloved husband of Valerie, father of Andrew and Fiona (Stephen C. Collins), and grandfather of T.J. and Caroline.

A graduate of Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School, Columbia College and Columbia Law School, Paul practiced trusts

and estates law in New York for more than 50 years. He was a member of the Union League Club since 1971 and a resident of Chappaqua for over 30 years. Paul was a devoted fan of the Mets and the Giants.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Tuesday, Mar. 9 at 10 a.m. at The Church of the Magdalene in Pocantico Hills.

Charitable donations may be made to Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School or Columbia College.



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# American Heart Association's Heart Walk a Digital Experience This Year

With COVID-19 still keeping many Americans at home, the American Heart Association (AHA), the leading voluntary health organization focused on heart and brain health for all, remains committed to funding groundbreaking research and helping people live healthier lives through walking together.

The AHA's Westchester & Putnam Heart Walks are being transformed into a new Heart Walk Experience, providing a way for people to get active, celebrate heart and stroke survivors and raise lifesaving funds.

"Now, more than ever, we're all looking for ways to connect with others, stay active and stay encouraged," said Howard Klein, chair of the American Heart Association's Westchester Board of Directors and Tax Partner at Citrin Cooperman. "Our week-long digital experience allows everyone to continue to have fun and support our lifesaving mission, while spending more time at home. We are grateful for the support from our community and can't wait to see how everyone makes the Heart Walk their own."

From Friday, Mar. 26 through Thursday, Apr. 1, Westchester & Putnam Heart Walk participants and teams will not physically meet but are invited to get moving at home or around their neighborhood. Here are a few activities to consider choosing from:

- Take a walk outside (while following current social distancing guidelines).
- Get the whole family involved and have an indoor dance party.
- Try out a few strength-hening exercises

like push-ups, lunges and squats.

- Create an at home circuit workout.

"This year, we will walk together as one because so much is at stake," Klein said. "COVID-19 has only strengthened our resolve because 40 percent of those hospitalized due to COVID-19 are stroke survivors or people with heart disease. With our help the American Heart Association is investing in new research and training front line workers, while they continue the fight against heart disease and stroke."

To register for the Westchester Heart Walk, visit [www.westchesterheartwalk.org](http://www.westchesterheartwalk.org) or to register for the Putnam Heart Walk visit [www.putnamheartwalk.org](http://www.putnamheartwalk.org). From there, participants can stay up to date by downloading the Heart Walk mobile app and encourage friends and family to join via e-mail or on social media.

Everyone is encouraged to wear red and post pictures on our Facebook event page at <http://spr.ly/wpheartwalk>. And check out the Heart Walk Experience Flipbook for the full Heart Walk Experience!

The Heart Walk is sponsored by FujiFilm, Phelps Hospital Northwell Health, PSCB Bank, Dr. Patrick and Mrs. Johanna Thomas, Burke Rehabilitation Hospital, New York Medical College, Nuvance Health, Tompkins Mahopac Bank, Paraco Gas, Park Ford of Mahopac, Marshall & Sterling and Volz Auto.

For more information, contact Megan Lucas at [megan.lucas@heart.org](mailto:megan.lucas@heart.org).



## Welcome to Town

Athleta clothing store held a grand opening in Mount Kisco on Feb. 23 at its location at 27 S. Moger Ave. General Manager Sue Wald cut the ceremonial ribbon as Mayor Gina Picinich and others look on. Athleta was founded in 1998 to meet the needs of athletic women. It was acquired by Gap in 2008.



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## Editorial

### Cuomo Has Lost the Moral Authority to Lead New York

That loud thud coming from Albany Sunday afternoon was Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins' terse and direct two-paragraph statement telling Gov. Andrew Cuomo that he "must resign."

One thought had been that if the three-term governor could somehow keep Stewart-Cousins' and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie's support intact, that there was a chance he could survive his rapidly growing scandals that are engulfing his administration.

One of those two pillars fell last weekend.

Of course, Cuomo must go. Now.

Whether he does or not, isn't irrelevant, but one part of his fate is sealed. Whether it's tomorrow, next month or at the end of 2022 when his term ends, Cuomo's political career is over – or should be.

As much as he may try to do his job to the best of his ability in the remaining time in office, Cuomo's presence will be an ongoing distraction for a state that has more than its share of challenges trying to emerge from the pandemic.

In the fall of 2017, as the Harvey Weinstein sexual abuse scandal mushroomed and the #MeToo movement emerged, Democrats across the country embraced a standard of zero tolerance for the type of vile behavior embodied by the predatory movie producer. The standard, by its very definition, was marked by

a moral mandate, one that refused to provide preferential treatment to abusive, powerful men.

The past failures by Democrats to hold their own to account, best represented by the contrived and desperate defenses of former President Bill Clinton's transgressions, would not happen again, the talk at the time insisted.

That is why Stewart-Cousins' statement, as difficult a decision as it may have been for her, was absolutely essential.

Here in New York, if local Democrats want to maintain the moral high ground, Cuomo must resign.

One of his most vocal local critics, Assemblyman Tom Abinanti, said calling for someone to resign who is accused by multiple victims of sexual harassment is not a knee-jerk reaction to score political points.

"The Democrats are trying to change the attitude of our communities across the country to be one of respect for all, no matter gender, race, religion, sexual orientation," Abinanti said. "The governor's rhetoric matches the goal but his personal conduct does not."

Cuomo has become toxic in nearly every way, and his continued presence as the Democratic leader in New York imperils the party's entire statewide agenda. He will also make it exceedingly difficult for his party's next nominee for governor next

year.

For those Democrats still sitting on the fence, they must ask themselves how they'd cast the controversy if the governor were a Republican. There's either zero tolerance for all levels of sexual harassment and misconduct or there's not.

In a different cultural moment, it might have been considered reasonable to allow for a more formal investigation to proceed before arriving at a conclusion as dramatic as calling for the governor to step aside. But in this morality play, elected Democrats have already adopted a policy that must be evenly applied.

Cuomo has lost his authority, legislatively and morally, to continue to lead the state. He need not look further than his own words when he released his official statement on the Brett Kavanaugh confirmation: "In New York, we will not waver and will not back down," Cuomo stated in prepared remarks in October 2018. "To Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and all survivors of sexual assault, we believe you and we will fight for you."

While the unique circumstances of the specific cases are different and should be treated as such, the fact remains that the allegations leveled against Cuomo, in their totality, undoubtedly meet and exceed the standard Democrats set.

Cuomo must resign, and do it today.

## Letter to the Editor

### Opposing Peekskill Dem Slate Never Participated in Nominating Process

The Peekskill Democratic City Committee (PDCC) is enthusiastic about the diverse and accomplished slate of candidates we have endorsed for mayor and city council this year: Deputy Mayor Vivian McKenzie for mayor, councilmen Ramon Fernandez and Dwight Douglas for re-election and Rob Scott for election to council.

We also feel the need to clear up some disingenuous and misleading statements made by a member of the slate opposing the endorsed Democratic slate in the June primary – statements made both in a recent article ("Scott to Juice Up Peekskill Common Council Election, Joins Democratic Slate") and at our last meeting.

We're speaking out because we can't afford to let "alternative facts" about how elections are run (and whether they're fair) take hold in Peekskill; we've seen all too well what that does to America.

The facts are as follows:

The Democratic committee ran a very public, open and transparent nominating process. Far from being shut out of the process, our opponents instead made a conscious decision not to participate in the process at all.

The Nominating Committee was appointed at the October 2020 public

meeting of the Democratic committee and consisted of seven members. The committee advertised in local and regional newspapers, including those aimed at the African American and Latino communities, and posted on social media, inviting any registered Democrat interested in running for local office to submit a letter of interest. The committee then interviewed all persons that responded.

I, as chair of the Peekskill Democratic City Committee, reached out to all council members up for re-election. I spoke with Councilwoman Agudelo twice – to determine whether she was running for re-election. She stated that she was undecided.

Marina Ciotti-Hodges, chairwoman of the Nominating Committee, also reached out by e-mail and by phone to explain the process and the deadlines for submitting information and scheduling interviews. Councilwoman Agudelo never contacted the Nominating Committee and never stated her interest in running for office.

Instead, she called the night before our January meeting, in which the Nominating Committee was to announce their recommendations for Democratic candidates, to say that she had not only changed her mind, but that she had put

together an entirely different slate on which she would be running. The process by which their candidates were selected is a mystery to me. It was certainly not transparent.

Nevertheless, this alternative slate came to the Democratic Committee meeting and had each of their names put into nomination. They lost decisively by a vote of the Committee, 80 percent to 20 percent.

For Councilwoman Agudelo to now say that she and her running mates were not considered, or were somehow left out of the process by the Peekskill Democratic City Committee, is simply not true. They chose not to participate, to form a ticket through some private process, neither disclosed to the Democratic committee or to the public, and then came to the Democratic Committee to have their names put into nomination.

Councilwoman Agudelo and her running mates were then considered, and were decisively rejected.

**Drew Claxton, Chair Peekskill  
Democratic City Committee  
Marina Ciotti-Hodges, Chair  
Peekskill Democratic City Committee's  
Nominating Committee**

**SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS**



# The Summit Club at Armonk Hires New Golf Course Superintendent

The Summit Club at Armonk announced last Thursday that Christopher Alonzi will join the staff as golf course superintendent.

Alonzi has earned a reputation as a talented professional who has demonstrated proficiency in providing outstanding golf course conditions that has resulted in member satisfaction at top clubs in the New York metropolitan area. He has a strong background in new course construction and state-of-the-art turf management practices, in addition to significant experience in setting up courses for tournaments.

Alonzi most recently was project manager and senior assistant at Westchester County's Saint Andrews Golf Club, America's oldest club. Prior to his golf operations experience there, he served as golf course superintendent for 11 years at another historic Westchester facility, Elmwood Country Club.

"The Summit Club at Armonk welcomes Chris as our new Golf Course Superintendent," said Jeffrey B. Mendell, managing partner. "He has many years of experience at prominent golf clubs in the (metropolitan) area and has earned a well-deserved reputation as a meticulous professional with extensive agronomic knowledge. Chris will ensure that The Summit Club is known for its superb course conditions."

Additional work experience includes assistant superintendent roles at



Christopher Alonzi is the new golf course superintendent at The Summit Club in Armonk, which is expected to operate this season.

Westchester Country Club and Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase. Alonzi is a member of the celebrated

Alonzi family that counts two father-and-son superintendent legacies in the New York area. As exceptional leaders in their profession, the Metropolitan Golf Writers Association honored the four Alonzis at their 2006 National Golf Awards Dinner as Family of the Year.

The Summit Club is scheduled to open as early as sometime next month, once

it receives final approval from the Town of North Castle for a two-year temporary permit while the site's proposal for 73 townhomes is reviewed. The applicant has been updating the course and is looking

to operate it this season with up to 300 members.

For more information about The Summit Club at Armonk, visit [www.thesummitclub.net](http://www.thesummitclub.net) or call 914-273-9300.

## Westchester's Leading Women to Be Celebrated in History Program

Since the turn of the last century, a dazzling parade of America's finest actresses have made their homes in Westchester.

On Sunday, Mar. 21 from 6 to 7 p.m., these leading women will be the subject of a Women's History Month program presented by Barbara Davis, co-director of the Westchester County Historical Society. The virtual program, to be conducted via zoom, is free.

Beginning with the silent movie stars of the Thanhouser Film Company in New Rochelle (1909-1918) and D.W. Griffith's studios in Mamaroneck (1919-1924), to blockbuster stars of the 21st century, Davis will trace the various eras of stage, film and television by highlighting the lives of the women who had starring roles – and homes in Westchester.

Geography, aesthetic appeal, good schools, recreational opportunities and peaceful refuge have all been part of the county's allure. The program is richly

illustrated with archival photographs from the historical society's collection and contemporary images.

Established in 1874, the Westchester County Historical Society is one of the oldest historical societies in America and the only organization that collects and promotes the countywide history of Westchester. The Society's comprehensive and accessible collection of books, pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, maps and atlases, and images pertaining to the history and genealogy of Westchester County is housed in the state-of-the-art temperature- and humidity-controlled environment of the Westchester County Records Center located at 2199 Saw Mill River Rd. in Elmsford.

To register for the program, please email [bbdy@westchestergov.com](mailto:bbdy@westchestergov.com) or call 914-231-1437. Participation will be limited to the first 100 registrants.

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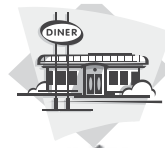


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# State Legislature Limits Governor’s Emergency Powers

By Martin Wilbur

The state legislature passed a resolution last Friday that curtails the governor’s emergency powers that temporarily leaving existing executive orders in place but prevents new directives to be issued without lawmakers’ consent.

After hours of debate and revisions, the measure keeps existing orders intact for 30 days but after that requires Gov. Andrew Cuomo to justify to the legislature why they should remain in place or be modified.

The action comes almost precisely a year

after the legislature granted emergency powers during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Today, we are in a much different place than where we were a year ago, and now it’s time to return to the traditional checks and balances in our state government that provide the level of accountability and transparency which our residents expect – and deserve,” said state Sen. Peter Harkham (D-Lewisboro).

According to the legislation, Cuomo’s authority to issue any new directives has been revoked, but it allows the governor

to extend or modify directives that are in effect. The law requires he give five days’ notice to lawmakers before the extension or modification goes into effect.

The governor is also required to respond publicly to any comments received from the legislature or from local leaders if a directive is extended. His office must also create a searchable database of all executive actions that remain in effect and allow the legislature to terminate a state disaster emergency by concurrent resolution.

Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) said the bill balances keeping the public safe by allowing to maintain common-sense steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while leaving certain decisions to the administration and public health officials.

Legislators shouldn’t be involved in the decision-making that would determine what the capacity of restaurant or other venues or facilities, he said.

“We don’t want to be involved in the day-to-day managing of how many people can be in one space,” Abinanti said. “That really has to come from the Health Department and the governor. This does require, when he modifies the existing executive orders, there be a certification from the Health Department and health commissioner that this is an appropriate response.”

As expected, Republicans panned the legislation. Assemblyman Kevin Byrne

(R-Mahopac) said the action taken did not return checks and balances. That would have forced the legislature to debate and pass laws instead of relying on the governor to make decisions. Checks and balances would have also forced the legislature to investigate Cuomo’s handling and coverup of COVID-19-related deaths in nursing homes.

“The governor has already abused his emergency powers, and has exercised them for far too long,” Byrne said. “From the very beginning, these powers were only supposed to be temporary. His emergency powers also never gave him the legal authority to undermine our constitutional rights or liberties, but it did not prevent him from trying.”

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) said many Republicans were looking to do away with all executive orders, hoping to have a repeal of mandatory mask wearing, capacity restrictions and other limits designed to protect public health.

She said there would be more oversight built into the executive order process.

“I think probably the Republicans kind of want everything to go, maybe like the Texas governor,” Galef said of Gov. Greg Abbott who recently repealed mask-wearing requirements. “I think most of us don’t want to do that, but we will specifically want to look at some things that maybe are a little too heavy.”

## Mahopac Public Library Seeks Board of Trustees Candidates

On Tuesday, June 8, the Mahopac Public Library will hold elections for three open seats on its Board of Trustees. Individuals interested in running for election to the Library Board must be residents of the Mahopac Central School District.

Petitions for the nomination of candidates are available at the library beginning Tuesday, Mar. 9. The petitions must be signed by at least

25 qualified voters of the district, shall state the name and residence of each signer, state the name and residence of the candidate and must be filed with the election clerk of the library no later than Monday, Apr. 19 at 5 p.m.

The election will be held on June 8 at the Mahopac Public Library from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. Three candidates will each serve a three-year term on the board beginning July 1.

## SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS



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# Technology Solutions That Are Just a Right Click Away

By Martin Wilbur

For many companies, pivoting last March from in-person to remote operations was an excursion into uncharted territory fraught with unknowns.

The need to quickly set up employees with safe and secure computers and connections from home was essential for businesses, nonprofits and other organizations.

Right Click Solutions, a Mount Kisco-based computer consulting and IT services business with more than 300 clients in Westchester and Fairfield counties, became a lifeline for their clients who rely on their expertise.

"Some of our clients had listened to some of our recommendations to set up a remote work environment prior to the pandemic. So they were set up, they were seamless once they had the need to work from home," said Sammi Taplitz, who co-founded the company with her husband, Dan, in 2006. "But a lot of our clients didn't foresee, most people didn't foresee this happening. So we really just had to address all the organizations we worked with in order to have that remote work environment."

She estimated that there was at least a 50 percent spike in daily calls in the first several weeks of

the crisis. Despite an operation now with only 13 employees, Right Click Solutions was able to have just over 80 percent of its clients up and running with remote access within the first two weeks of the mid-March shutdown.

However, the challenge of working remotely isn't as easily solved as employees turning on a computer or laptop from a home workspace. Most of Right Click's clients – whether it's the operation with a few hundred employees or the one-person law office – were set up to be in an office environment, said Dan Taplitz.

Virus protections, firewalls and a secure e-mail system for a company-wide network is more challenging when the overwhelming number of employees are scattered, especially when each employee's connections are different.

"We knew their network, we knew their operations in the office, we knew everything about their office, but now we're supporting homes that we've never been into," Dan Taplitz explained of the challenges faced in the early stages of the pandemic. "We don't know what computers they're connecting in from, we don't know their internet connection at home. Are they on wirelessly or are they on a hardware connection? All these other things



MARTY UMANS PHOTO

Members of the Mount Kisco-based Right Click Solutions team, a computer consulting and IT services company co-founded by Dan and Sammi Taplitz, pictured fourth and fifth from left. They helped dozens of businesses transition from an office environment to remote operations during the pandemic.

complicated things."

Some companies bought laptops for their employees to limit exposure to problems. But it's no surprise that there has been a large uptick in cybercrime, he said. The criminals know that millions more people are working from home.

Some of the issues faced by Right Click's clients has prompted Sammi and Dan Taplitz to begin a series of free one-hour, quarterly webinars to help clients and others interested in key issues technology-related issues.

Called Right Click Academy, the first workshop will be held Thursday, Mar. 25 from 12 to 1 p.m. addressing Intelligent Composable Business.

Topics are derived from industry trends and challenges that companies have faced during the past year.

"It's one of those things that we compose the IT environment for our clients really based on their needs," Right Click Solutions' office manager Sonia Kesselmark said of the first workshop. "We're not going to give them something they don't need. We've been very conscious of that from a budget perspective and from a needs perspective, so we're going to go into depth about that."

Kesselmark said the company had hosted workshops in the past but Sammi and Dan saw a need in the new work environment to address

pressing issues that arose during the pandemic.

This year's three remaining workshops will be Anywhere Operations, Internet Connectivity and Where is Your Exposure. Dates and times have yet to be determined. Anyone is welcome to register.

"The real premise behind the Right Click Academy is that we really feel there's a need to educate the community, businesses, nonprofit organizations, really just about technology issues in general," said Sammi Taplitz.

Dan Taplitz said the need to help companies with their unique challenges isn't going away anytime soon. Many are predicting post-pandemic of the likelihood that companies will continue to have their employees work from home at least a portion of the time.

"We really take this technology world and break it down to simple terms for people so they understand, so they can work more efficiently from home, making it simple for them and at the same time making it secure for them and breaking it down to their terms," he said.

For information on Right Click Solutions, including the Right Click Academy, visit <https://rightclicksolutionsllc.com/right-click-academy/>



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## Another Pandemic Home Activity: Outdoor Stone Work

As I drive our country roads in upper Westchester, I always enjoy the rugged beauty of our stone walls harking back to our 18th century agrarian roots. But I appreciate the newly-constructed versions as well, the most beautiful that I've seen of the latter is at Martha Stewart's home in Katonah.

In this region, we have plenty of stone, mostly granite, deposited in the Ice Age that formed the beautiful mountains, valleys, streams and lakes that make up our gorgeous landscape today.

For me, stonework on my former property – the terraces, stone stairs, patios, paths and walls – were built over four decades of joyful handiwork.

Most of us have more time at home now with the pandemic, so what better time to practice stonework to enhance our properties? Property enhancement with stone is a two-part process: sourcing the materials and then applying them in projects that can both utilize the stone found and create some functional or visual effect within the already-existing landscape.

The easy way to source material is simply to go to a garden supply center and buy a pallet or two of stone that is most appealing. To me, this is almost cheating, although I've succumbed to it on occasion. Most times, it's the scavenger hunt for material that I

enjoyed.

This quest for sourcing stone started when I acquired my first home, a townhouse in Brooklyn Heights. The original bluestone sidewalk had long since disappeared and there was an old, cracked concrete walkway from the house façade to the street. I hired some "preservationists" who helped me acquire some bluestone slabs from another neighborhood that was being re-developed for new housing.

Between the bluestone slabs and the curb, I installed Belgian block that I had taken from a downtown excavation site (after asking the foreman and slipping him a few bucks). I was in creative heaven, loading down the trunk of my car with these stones that had originally served as ballast on merchant ships returning from Europe. My tailpipe dragged along the ground as I returned home. The combined effect of the cobblestone and bluestone was beautiful.

When I moved to the suburbs, I bought an old farmhouse on 1.5 acres that was to become my canvas for natural stone art for the next 40 years. While it originally had been very stony land as everything in northern Westchester is, the ground had been long cleared of stone to allow for farming.

The stones taken from my property had been deposited on the other side of my road in odd stonewalls that had long ago



collapsed into amorphous mounds of rock. I asked the owner of the lot if I could take loose stones there and she agreed. Stone by stone, I gathered as much material as my wheelbarrow and my back could tolerate and started plying my talent for natural stone placement.

My system was this: I used the stone exactly as found. I have no stone cutting tools, nor do I want them. I like the challenge of designing according to individual shapes, colors and textures and how they relate to each other and to the total project, without breaking them up. And I never used mortar to fill cracks or to hold things together.

This was more fun, much like assembling a jigsaw puzzle, whether I was building a wall that needed to be steady and strong or laying paths and patios on sand. I required that the stones were up against each other on all sides, creating a visually pleasing pattern of shape and color.

If the surface is to be level and walkable it's always best to find a stone that is flat on two sides for the top and bottom. But I

have laid many stones with a curved bottom, adjusting the sand and earth beneath so that it will lie flat. I have never found a flat stone that I didn't love.

One of my most prolific sourcing opportunities came about when I was driving through Peekskill one day where an original bluestone sidewalk was being demolished to make way for brand new concrete. Again, I talked to the foreman and gave him a few bucks to drive over to my property and drop off the broken pieces behind my garage. I didn't realize how big that pile would be, almost as tall as my garage. My wife definitely was not happy when she got home.

But what fun I had, literally for years afterward, creating borders for my driveway and parking area and incorporating the deep blue color into the fieldstone of my walking paths and seating areas. I used the rest for solid bluestone walls, raised garden beds and terrace borders.

When the last survey was done of that property, I was thrilled to find that every patio, seating area, terrace and path had been included by the surveyor into the document. It was testament to something I had created that was actually architectural and long lasting and hopefully to be enjoyed by generations to come.

While a writer and publicist, Bill Primavera is also a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate and Founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc. ([www.PrimaveraPR.com](http://www.PrimaveraPR.com)). To engage the services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.



By Bill Primavera

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# Lutheran Pastor Takes a Different Route to Find His Calling

By Martin Wilbur

Kevin O'Hara had dreams of becoming a teacher while growing up in suburban Philadelphia.

But as he pursued a career in education at Elizabethtown College near Harrisburg, an instructor remarked to him, "I know you're not going to be a teacher. You're going to finish this; you're going to graduate from college and good luck."

Struck by the bluntness of the assessment, O'Hara was set a bit adrift. It was his recuperation from knee surgery the following summer that unwittingly sparked what would be his new calling.

During the long days of lying on the couch, he picked up the Bible, but not because he was a believer at the time. O'Hara was a rebellious young adult and set out to prove that God doesn't exist.

O'Hara's mother, a regular parishioner at Augustus Lutheran Church where the family worshipped not far from home, saw him reading the Bible one day and suggested he attend seminary.

"She didn't know that I wasn't very happy with God, but I had nothing else to do, so by the time I graduated college I decided I was going to go straight to seminary, maybe become a youth leader," O'Hara recalled.

A mentor who was a Lutheran pastor inspired O'Hara to take the next step and consider becoming a pastor, understanding that life and people aren't perfect.

"He would take me fishing and that's all

we would do," he said. "Spend that time together and he would inspire me just to be, and just to know that no matter how screwed up I was, not matter how I don't live up to my expectations, let alone the world's expectations, it would be okay."

Last month, O'Hara, 36, became the new pastor at Emanuel Lutheran Church in Pleasantville, leading a congregation with close to 300 members. His new assignment presented itself after spending more than seven years as the religious leader of a church in Patchogue on Long Island.

What was gratifying to O'Hara was not only receiving well in excess of the two-thirds approval needed from the church's membership to become its new pastor, but a unanimous vote from the congregation's youth members.

It comes less than two years after the departure of Paul Egensteiner, who served as Emanuel Lutheran's pastor for 22 years before he was elevated to bishop.

For O'Hara, his job right now is to listen and learn more about the congregation, its leaders and the community, not try to copy his predecessor's style. In fact, upon getting the job at Emanuel Lutheran, the advice he received from Egensteiner was to do what he hears from God.

"If we think that we know where we're going at this point, we're probably not realizing the fullness of who God is at this point," O'Hara said.

Parishioner and Pleasantville resident Sandi Whynott said what struck many of



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Pastor Kevin O'Hara, who took over at Emanuel Lutheran Church in Pleasantville last month.

the church's members during the search was O'Hara's energy, enthusiasm, intellect, wit and compassion. She said that most people who meet O'Hara feel an immediate connection.

"He was quoting Leviticus and then Seinfeld in the next (moment)," Whynott said. "I mean, he's just so relatable and approachable."

At the beginning of February, O'Hara moved with his husband, also named Kevin, to an old house in the village, about a two-block walk from the church.

Looking back, part of O'Hara's challenges that he had to overcome was his sexual orientation. While in seminary in 2009, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America decided to be accepting of LGBTQ pastors.

But it wasn't clear sailing for O'Hara. In fact, the new policy document hadn't been adopted yet. Appearing before the Candidacy Committee, his relator had learned of his sexual orientation and tried to get O'Hara to incriminate himself, repeatedly asking him if there's anything that he needed to tell the members.

O'Hara replied that how he was falling deeper into debt after paying for seminary despite working multiple jobs and that he couldn't afford to visit the doctor.

He was accepted by the committee, allowing him to advance to his internship. The relator was removed.

O'Hara said the reception he and Kevin have received in Pleasantville has been overwhelming. The day they arrived their refrigerator was stocked with food and they received well wishes from the congregation.

"I'm completely humbled at this point," he said. "I'm a little overwhelmed but we'll take one day at a time and I will hopefully fill the bishop's shoes and continue to lead this congregation."



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## Westchester to Offer Police Officer Civil Service Exam in May

Westchester County will be holding a police officer civil service exam for the first time in five years and a special effort is under way to encourage more people of color to take the test and pursue a law enforcement career.

County Executive George Latimer said last week that the Department of Public Safety will be reaching out to diverse communities and organizations this month to increase awareness of the upcoming exam, to be held on May 15 or 16. The deadline to file to take the test is Mar. 29. Details are available at [www.westchestergov.com/hr](http://www.westchestergov.com/hr).

"It is more important than ever that our police departments reflect the diversity of the communities they serve," Latimer said. "That is a message we have heard consistently in a year where police reform and reimagining has been a top priority. The goal of increasing the diversity of our police departments begins with having a diverse pool of applicants take this test."

The exam, to be administered by the County's Department of Human Resources, will result in a list of eligible police officer candidates for

the Westchester County Department of Public Safety, the cities of Rye and Peekskill and all towns and villages in the county.

Latimer said the county police and the Department of Human Resources will be sharing information with a variety of organizations to help ensure that a diverse pool of applicants takes the exam. These include community-based groups, houses of worship, nonprofit agencies, local colleges, libraries and employment centers.

Paul Hood, a retired Sleepy Hollow police sergeant and president of the Westchester Rockland Guardians Association, is also encouraging men and women of color to pursue a police career.

"In a career as a law enforcement officer, you have an opportunity to learn and grow as a person," said Hood, a member of the Westchester County Police Board. "It affords you the opportunity to make a positive difference in the communities you serve, allowing you to become a beacon of light to many."

Matthew Lewis, a county police detective, is also encouraging young men and women of color to take the

upcoming test. Lewis had his eye on a career in sports media when he was in college but took a police exam after a recruiter chatted with him on campus.

"I have my degree in broadcasting and I took the police exam as a Plan B. Plan B turned into Plan A," Lewis said.

He has never looked back or regretted his choice.

"I love what I do and I wouldn't be in my 27th year if I didn't," Lewis added. "I would advise anyone to take a look at a law enforcement career. I have had a very rewarding career, and as an African-American male I know I've made a difference."

The county's recruiting and outreach efforts across Westchester will include presentations by county police personnel that may take place in person, when possible, and via videoconference to reach as many people as possible. The county and its police are also utilizing social media channels to spread the news about the test.

Commissioner Thomas A. Gleason noted that the test is only given once every four years on average. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the test

could not be held as planned in 2020. He encouraged anyone considering a law enforcement career not to miss the opportunity.

Gleason also said the county police would not only be raising awareness about the exam but encouraging test-takers to aim for a career with the Westchester County Police.

"We are very proud of our Department, very proud of our people and very proud of the work we do every day to keep Westchester safe," Gleason said. "If you are looking for a rewarding career, and an opportunity for professional growth and advancement, the Westchester County police might be the right place for you."

Gleason said anyone interested in learning more about the Westchester County police can find information on the department's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages, on its YouTube channel and on the department's website.

Organizations interested in setting up a virtual presentation can send an email request to [wcpdrecruitment@westchestergov.com](mailto:wcpdrecruitment@westchestergov.com).

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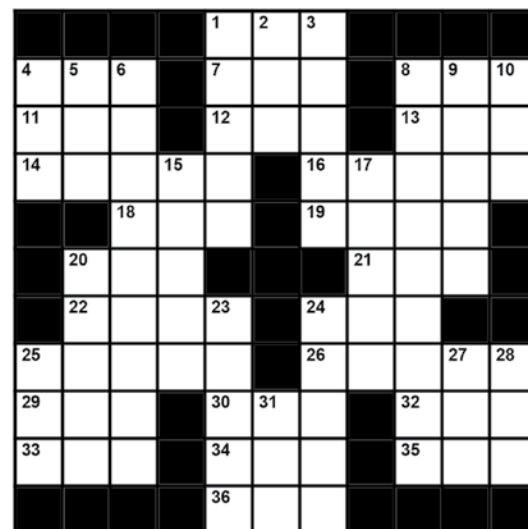
## Crossword

### Across

1. Group of criminals
4. Pants part
7. "Wise" bird
8. Command to Fido
11. Lifeboat implement
12. Latish lunchtime
13. Bolted down
14. Snares
16. Gnawed away
18. Directly
19. Snare or bass instrument
20. Vessel
21. Title box choice in a survey
22. Dangerous precipitation
24. Signal to the auctioneer
25. Come back from behind
26. Swift, graceful horses
29. Saudi export
30. "\_\_\_ show time!"
32. House vote
33. Like toast without butter
34. Penalty shot target in soccer
35. Finalize, with "up"
36. Chipper

### Down

1. Yellowstone creature
2. Control
3. Run in the wash
4. Great deal



5. \_\_\_ muffs
6. Bit by bit
8. College football days
9. Articles
10. Evening hour
15. Beginner
17. Knight's "suit"
20. Office worker's necessity
23. Telling untruths
24. Spiteful
25. Word after fishing or lightning
27. Drone, e.g.
28. Word with "rip" or "circular"
31. Oolong, e.g.

*Answers on page 23*



# Winter Turns to Spring, and Birds Abound

By Brian Kluepfel

As the last (hopefully) snows of the winter recede with each day, I look forward to the spring migration and more comfortable walking weather. It's also possible that higher temperatures may benefit my aching knee.

But that doesn't mean it's been an entirely barren landscape over the past few months. Venturing out to a few local spots, I've seen bald eagles, house finches, Carolina wrens, plenty of northern cardinals, the ubiquitous and raucous corvids (crows, ravens and jays) and even eastern bluebirds. Not to mention the eager house sparrows who congregate on my porch every morning for a handful of seed.

I have many people to thank for keeping my interest in birding alive. Anne Swaim, executive director of Saw Mill River Audubon, added me to a Whatsapp group for local bird sightings. Though I made a couple of missteps in the first two weeks, once group-replying and once mis-identifying a duck, I haven't been kicked off yet. (I fear an expulsion committee may be forming, however.)

I'd also like to thank my friends, Karalyn Lamb of Pollinator Pathway Northeast

for hiping me to the Whatsapp group's existence, and Larry Trachtenberg for giving me good directions and warning me of the many potholes on the New Croton Reservoir perimeter road.

My comrade, Scott Craven, of the Ossining Public Library, a man who'd you definitely want on your pub quiz team, sends me updates from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Almanac. This includes citizen science sightings of river denizens like the glass eel, a "fish of the week," (of 233 fish species in the river!) and lots of bird and mammal activity. Did you know that "northern stargazers have an organ in their head that can deliver an electric charge that can stun prey and perhaps ward off predators?" I didn't even know such a fish existed.

People see seals way upriver from the ocean; people find evidence of eagles murdering pileated woodpeckers. People see all sorts of things. Finch irruptions in Ulster, seal spotting off Cold Spring, the almanac is a trove of contemporary Hudson Valley natural history. So thanks, Scott.

Today my favorite birding partner – my wife Paula – and I saw three different woodpecker species, some tufted



titmice, dark-eyed juncos, a house finch, a pair of red-tailed hawks and a passel of mourning doves. And that was just taking our compost to Cedar Lane Park in Ossining.

A subsequent drive over to the New Croton Reservoir revealed dozens of coots –the true chickens of the sea – a cormorant and some lovely mergansers. I'd like to say I saw a lesser scaup, too, but I'd hate to guess wrong and get jettisoned from the Whatsapp group.

All in all, lovely birding on a crisp winter's day, and considering there is

both a Quaker Ridge Road and Quaker Bridge Road, and that they actually intersect, it's a miracle I, not the savviest of suburban navigators, made it home at all.

Good will to all and happy birding.

*Brian Kluepfel is a proud member of Saw Mill River Audubon and encourages you to join, buy seed and take part in the beautiful birding community. He also writes for Westchester Magazine, Birdwatching Magazine and the Lonely Planet travel series. Find him at birdmanwalking.com.*

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*continued on page 24*

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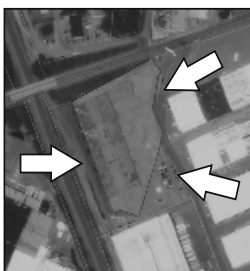
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### Crossword Answers

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## Police Blotter

### North Castle Police Department

**Feb. 27:** Report of a dispute on Round Hill Road at 3:48 p.m. A caller reported that he rented his upstairs room to two parties through Airbnb and that overnight several other parties came to that room making noise and setting off a smoke detector. The caller stated that he spoke to the parties and asked them to leave, but they refused. Officers responded and information was gathered.

**Mar. 2:** An employee of CVS on Main Street reported at 8:45 p.m. that a male party just left the premises without paying for multiple items. The subject was described as a short, heavy-set white male, who is bald and wearing an orange jacket. The employee stated that the party may have left in a vehicle but does not have a description. The responding officer stated that a deposition has been secured.

**Mar. 2:** A Jackson Road resident reported

seeing a drone hover at eye level outside her window looking inside her residence at 11:09 p.m. Her husband pointed at the drone and it flew away in an unknown direction. The caller stated that this isn't the first time she saw the low-flying drone outside her house. The responding officer canvassed the area with negative results.

### Yorktown Police Department

**Feb. 27:** At 7:59 p.m., police received a report from an individual stating he was threatened with a firearm in the parking lot of 2026 Saw Mill River Rd. Following an investigation, it is alleged one of the five defendants arranged to meet the victim in order to sell a vape pen. During the encounter, \$20 was stolen from the victim and a black-colored pistol was displayed. Four Yorktown residents, all 15 to 18 years old, and a 16-year-old Peekskill resident, were charged with second-degree robbery,

a Class C felony.

**Mar. 1:** Kristian Singh, 21, of Yorktown, was charged at about 10 p.m. with unlawfully fleeing in a motor vehicle, reckless driving, criminal possession of a controlled substance and unlawful possession of marijuana following a traffic stop on Route 6 after allegedly driving onto the shoulder.

**Mar. 2:** Jean Jiminian, 29, of Sleepy Hollow, was charged with speeding and operating a vehicle with a suspended driver's license following a traffic stop on Route 202 at 1:15 a.m.

**Mar. 4:** Elias Jallath, 19, of Shrub Oak, was charged with third-degree criminal mischief, a Class E felony. He is accused of intentionally damaging the window and taillight of a vehicle with a wooden stick in the pool parking lot of Canterbury Crossing on Westminster Road. The damage was estimated at about \$1,000.

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### LEGAL NOTICES

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Board of Trustees of the Village of Pleasantville will hold a Public Hearing on Monday March 22, 2020, 8:00pm via Zoom id 929 7652 8103 password 587581 to hear comments as it pertains to Introductory Local Law No. 1 of 2021 pursuant to subdivision 5 of General Municipal Law Section 3-c which expressly authorizes a local government's governing body to override the property tax cap for the coming fiscal year by the adoption of a local law approved by a vote of sixty percent of said governing body.

*Eric Morrissey*

*Administrator/Clerk, Village of Pleasantville*

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Board of Trustees of the Village of Pleasantville will hold a Public Hearing on Monday March 22, 2021, 8:00pm via Zoom id 929 7652 8103, password 587581 to hear comments as it pertains to amend the Official Map of the Village of Pleasantville pursuant to New York State Village Law §§ 6-614 and 7-724 to remove, abandon and discontinue the portion of Congress Street located within the boundaries of the Village of Pleasantville between Sarles Lane and Mountain Road, located between tax lots known as Section 106.5, Block 1, Lots 4 and 5, and shown on the Official Map of the Village of Pleasantville.

*Eric Morrissey*

*Administrator/Clerk, Village of Pleasantville*

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# A Tale of Two Patricks: But Who Was First?

We're in the month where all eyes turn to the Patron Saint of Ireland, as well as the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York.

Facing a second consecutive year without a parade, hearts are understandably bereft. But take heart in a fact that most of us are completely unaware of: there were two saints of the name. The one most of us recognize was likely not the first to have converted the Irish (or at least some of them) to Christianity.

What is known as the "Two Patricks" theory has been around in academic circles since at least 1942, when Irish scholar Thomas O'Rahilly suggested there were in fact two missionaries to Ireland, each of whose roughly 30-year stay spanned more than 60 years of the 5th century. They were both Roman citizens. Both were known by a number of names, including Patricius, Latin for Patrick. Both were sent to Ireland by popes.

But only one wrote down an account of his life, "Patrick the Briton", who we honor on Mar. 17, regardless of parade or not.

Why the confusion? The answer lies in the sloppy handiwork of a medieval scribe who implied there was only one Patrick, who died somewhere between 461 and 493. His error was eventually accepted as the range of possible death dates for the more known Patrick (the Briton), whose memory over time proceeded to be credited with all the work done before him by another Patrick, this one called Palladius, who really was the first.

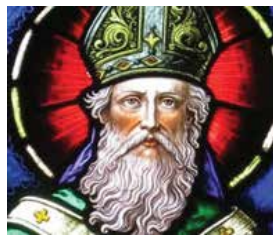
Palladius was born in the Roman province of Gaul (modern-day France) about 390. He was first sent by Pope Celestine to Britain, there to bring some heretics back into the fold, and then to Ireland. He arrived about

432, and proceeded to bring converts into his nascent church throughout Leinster and Munster, the two southern provinces of Ireland.

He also preached in Scotland, then the land of the fearsome Picts, who painted themselves blue and ran naked into battle. His mission lasted until his death, somewhere about the year 461. He may even have died in Scotland, where some sources suggest he met

a martyr's fate. He is known to have fathered a daughter, and his grandfather was a priest. The rule of celibacy was clearly not as strict in the early days of Christianity. His feast day is given in some ancient texts as July 6.

Patrick the Briton arrived in Ireland before Palladius's mission, but not as a missionary. Born about 385 in Roman Britain, he was captured at 16 by Irish raiders pillaging the west coast of Britain, by then a land no longer protected by the rapidly dissolving Roman Empire. This was the better-known saint, whose day



Saint Patrick (c. 385-493), left, and Saint Palladius (c. 390-461)



By Brian McGowan

we celebrate on the anniversary of his death, Mar. 17.

Enduring years of captivity in the north, he came to know his captors and the people of Ireland well. Eventually escaping, he vowed to return to Ireland and bring the gospel of Christ to the people he had come to love. He did just that, but not in 432, as is popularly believed, but in 461, at the same time that Palladius's days either had drawn, or were shortly drawing to a close.

The latter Patrick's mission concentrated on the north and west of Ireland, in Ulster and Connacht, places

Palladius had not touched. He died in 493, according to no less of an authority than St. Colmcille, and is buried in Downpatrick, in Ulster. Where Palladius's bones may lay is unknown, no less a loss than that of his very existence over the centuries that followed his work.

So, if the weather and COVID allow, perhaps a substitute for a March parade might be July 6. Of course, that would likely not be looked upon fondly by others on the island of Ireland who have their own celebration just six days later, on the 12th. But that's another tale, entirely!

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

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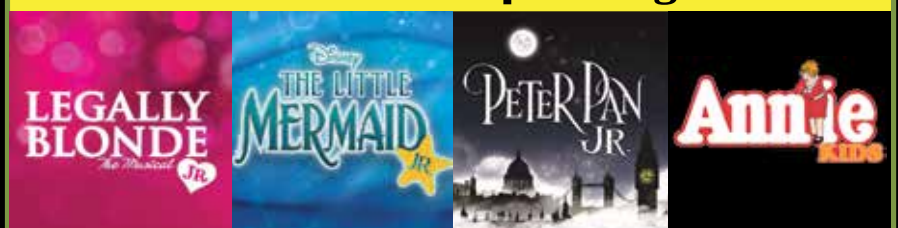


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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS



# How the Pandemic is Impacting Children and Families

More than 2.7 million American children are growing up in grandfamilies – families in which grandparents, other adult family members or close family friends are raising children.

A new report highlights how the pandemic has amplified their unique challenges, and offers solutions to better serve them.

The report, “Facing a Pandemic: Families Living Together During COVID-19 and Thriving Beyond,” authored by the non-profit Generations United and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Casey Family Programs, points out that at a time when older adults are being cautioned to keep their distance from children because of the heightened risk of infection and death from COVID-19, for grandfamilies, that distance is impossible.

Advocates point out that these caregivers are the first line of defense for children during the pandemic, having stepped in when parents cannot raise them for many reasons, including cases where children’s parents have died from COVID-19. At the same time, 30 percent of kin caregivers lack an alternative caregiving plan if they should die or become disabled, a troubling statistic in the face of the pandemic, which disproportionately affects older adults.

While grandfamilies are diverse in geography, income and race, the report finds that caregivers in grandfamilies are disproportionately Black or Native American; nearly half of grandparent



caregivers are over age 60; and one in four grandparent caregivers has a disability. These are the same populations that are more likely to be impacted by the pandemic and die as a result.

“While we’re all impacted by COVID-19, grandfamilies, especially, have had tough realities, with limited support systems,” said Donna Butts, executive director of Generations United, a nonprofit with the mission of improving the lives of children, youth and older people. “State and local

child welfare and other agencies must better support them during COVID-19 recovery and beyond.”

Federal, state and local governments recognize foster families and provide them with access to resources, but there is little available for grandfamilies raising children outside of foster care. While Congress included support for grandfamilies in the December 2020 COVID-19 relief package, including better access to kinship navigator programs, which help connect

families to information and community support as well as provide some direct help to families to meet emergency needs, advocates say this is just a start.

“With so many families continuing to struggle with impacts from COVID-19, it’s critical that state and local child welfare agencies distribute the funds in this package,” Butts said. “Congress also needs to ensure families have ongoing financial support so that caregivers can meet the basic needs of children as they live with the long-term impacts of COVID-19.”

The report also finds that about 19 percent of grandparents responsible for grandchildren live in poverty and 38 percent of grandfamilies are unable to pay or are worried about paying mortgage or rent. Among the solutions to these figures, Generations United is calling for grandfamilies to be specifically named in the next COVID relief package as an eligible population for financial relief such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

To access the report, visit [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org). To hear grandfamilies discuss the pandemic’s impacts, visit [www.everyfamilyforward.org](http://www.everyfamilyforward.org).

While the pandemic has heightened the inequities different types of families face, advocates say that sufficient support can help grandfamilies recover and thrive.

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## Nutrition Month Highlights Needs of Children During Pandemic

National Nutrition Month, held every March, has even greater meaning this year as it comes at a time when many people in the Lower Hudson Valley, particularly children, continue to reel from the effects of a now year-old pandemic.

Gina Devito, director of wellness initiatives at Open Door Family Medical Center and a registered dietitian, reports a significant increase over the last year in the number of children and families they see suffering from food insecurity – defined as a lack of consistent access to adequate, affordable and nutritious food.

This is not surprising, as the population served by the Open Door, a federally qualified health center, has historically suffered from food insecurity. This has only intensified during COVID-19.

“Being at home, especially during the winter, has made it all the more challenging for Open Door families,” said Devito.

This is due to a number of factors: the lack of access to affordable, healthy food; being physically inactive and not exercising; and families under financial stress because of job loss or a reduction in hours. Even getting to the grocery store can become an issue – whether it be because of having to quarantine, being infected with COVID or having a fear of the virus.

“Throughout the pandemic, we’ve seen weight gain at a much faster rate among our pediatric population,” she said. “The lack of access to healthy foods and opportunities to exercise has caused significant issues.

“We’re noting many metabolic changes, including weight gain, increased blood pressure and elevated glucose, cholesterol and triglyceride levels. This can lead to behavioral problems with children having trouble balancing their moods, losing focus and experiencing

sleeping problems. It may impact their school performance. There are a lot of determining factors that show us that many children are struggling.”

Due to its commitment to chronic disease prevention and wellness, Open Door has strong, longstanding partnerships with food banks, community centers and other locally-based organizations committed to ending hunger and strengthening health equity. Working closely with groups like Feeding Westchester, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Westchester County and the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Hunger Task Force, Open Door helps in the distribution of nutritious food, medical supplies and face masks to area families in need. Where food was previously picked up at Open Door sites, it’s now largely delivered directly to patients’ homes by volunteer drivers. The number of food bundles distributed has increased dramatically since last spring.

Under normal circumstances, Open Door provides integrated care services to help low-income families reduce or prevent the impact of life-threatening chronic illnesses like heart disease, diabetes, asthma, cancer and hypertension. A major component of this is education, which includes helping parents and children gain a better understanding of their nutritional needs, teaching them how to read labels, instructing them how to cook their favorite meals in a healthy manner and helping them make better food choices.

Throughout the pandemic, Open Door was able to continue to offer health education to area families through telehealth and virtual visits.

“Open Door has worked closely with families to connect them to the information or walk them step-by-step through the process,” Devito said. “Many more as a result are now equipped for digital learning.”

In acknowledgement of the vulnerability of populations like this, the White House recently sent more than 25 million masks to community health centers and food pantries across the country in an effort to increase access for low-income people. Many low-income Americans still lack affordable access to this basic protection.

“We’ve increased efforts to help our adult patients learn more about managing their chronic conditions at home,” Devito said.

This includes teaching patients how to self-monitor their blood glucose and blood pressure, promoting appropriate foods and portion sizes and monitoring medication adherence.

“Open Door specializes in working with patients who have high needs and we’re well-equipped to find ways to manage really challenging situations like this,” she said. “Patients may be hesitant about virtual visits at first, but when they try it, they are engaged and see the value of the service for themselves and their children.”

Open Door Family Medical Centers’ mission has remained consistent since it opened in 1972: to provide high-quality health care that’s affordable, accessible and efficient. Today, it cares for nearly 1,000 adults and children every day in Westchester and Putnam counties – with more than 300,000 patient visits – regardless of one’s ability to pay.

In addition to medical, dental, pediatric, women’s, podiatry and behavioral health care offered in its Ossining, Port Chester, Sleepy Hollow, Mount Kisco, Brewster, Mamaroneck and Saugerties facilities, as well as its school-based health centers, Open Door promotes wellness, good nutrition, stress reduction and physical activity to help families stay healthy.

# The Ever-changing Landscape of Virtual Wineries



By Nick Antonaccio

Last week I focused on four business models for producing wine across the globe. As I stated, many wine consumers believe that the process for making wine is similar for all wines. The supposition is that grapes are gently handpicked at the epitome of ripeness, carefully sorted for to weed out rotten grapes, leaves and insects and then lovingly crushed, fermented, aged and bottled, all under the watchful eye of a master winemaker.

Although this process does occur in many wineries, it as a far cry from the vast quantity of wines sold in the United States. For the most part, winemaking is a financially driven business, rather than an individual's passion.

According to bw166, a beverage industry advisory and research firm, we consumed about 4.8 billion bottles of wine last year in the United States, a 151-million bottle increase (largely attributable to COVID-19).

Over 80 percent of wines produced and sold in the United States come from about 2 percent of the number of producers.

By logical inference, there is very little production reaching our tables from the preponderance of wineries.

The business models for wineries break down into four broad categories: wineries that grow, process and age their own grapes; those that buy grapes but continue the production process in-house; those that purchase grapes, outsource processing the grapes, but store, blend and bottle on their own; and those that I dub virtual wineries, in which the owners outsource every aspect of their wine production.

This week I'd like to focus on several corollaries to the textbook virtual winery discussed last week.

1. Opportunistic virtual winemakers. Remember the Great Recession? Sales of mid- to high-end wines were under severe pressure. Several famous full-spectrum wineries, with bottles selling at \$40 or more, suffered from diminished sales. They decided to sell their excess harvest production to virtual wineries, which merely ran the finished product through an outsourced bottling and labeling company and sold the identical wine for one-half, or less, of the branded wine.

This model persists to this day. Great wine at a great price – a winning combination for consumers.

2. National wine retailers of private label

wines. They have huge cash clout to buy good-quality finished-product wines at a significant discount and sell them under their own private label. The profit margin against national brands is significantly higher. Hence their business model: sell national brands at steep discounts (and lower profit margins) but sell their private label brand at comparable prices (and higher profit margins). Think Costco and Total Wine stores. Bottom line: a combined high gross-profit margin.

3. A new breed of *négociants* (French for merchants) has taken the wine distribution model itself and turned it on its ear. These middlemen are providing a new service in the multitiered supply chain, mainly for high-end Bordeaux and Burgundy wines. They are placing large orders directly with producers – thereby boxing out traditional distributors – and holding their purchases in vast warehouses. High-end customers venture into the treasure troves of *négociants'* virtual cellars of aged fine wines, their virtual wallets stuffed with large-denomination bills.

The consumer's challenge: How to identify these virtual wineries when purchasing wines? It's not as difficult as it may seem. Regulators in a number of wine-producing countries require specific language to differentiate full-spectrum wineries from the rest of the crowd. Look for label language like "grown, produced and

bottled by" in the United States.

Other terminology should send up a red flag. "Cellared and bottled by" are trademarks of virtual wineries. Likewise, "Mis en Bouteille au Domaine" on French bottles and "Imbottigliato all'origine" on Italian bottles typically connote a full-spectrum winery.

Consumers consider winemaking an effort of the heart, crafted by passionate artisans who painstakingly hover over their wines like doting parents. In the 21st century, the wine industry is rapidly converting to a big business model, dispassionate and bottom-line focused.

Other than for idealistic oenophiles willing to pay escalating prices, the typical consumer is now being offered a level of price and quality wines never before experienced. That makes for a win-win business model.

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



**You Heard It Through the Grapevine**

## Exercising With a Mask is Healthy, Safe and Effective

By Sarah Sowards

Many aspects of life have changed. The typical "keys, wallet, phone" check we conduct when leaving our homes has inevitably evolved into "keys, wallet, phone, mask...shoot, I forgot the mask!"

Love it or hate it, wearing masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is still recommended by the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control.

But as restrictions have lessened and our world start to ever so slowly return to normal, what does mask wearing mean for those exercising and working at Club Fit? What is it like? Is it safe to exercise with a mask?

Most members who have returned to work out have given us positive feedback. One member noted that he was surprised that he did not find his breathing was restricted like he anticipated it would be. Another mentioned that she was hesitant to return with a mask but then found, tried and loves a product known as a lip guard. The plastic device is placed over your mouth and pushes the mask away from your face to increase the air flow within the mask. This member has since recommended the lip guard to everyone she knows who exercises with a mask on.

A third member discussed how working out with a mask is not her favorite thing,

but she wants to work out more than she wants to remain inactive as this winter has dragged on.

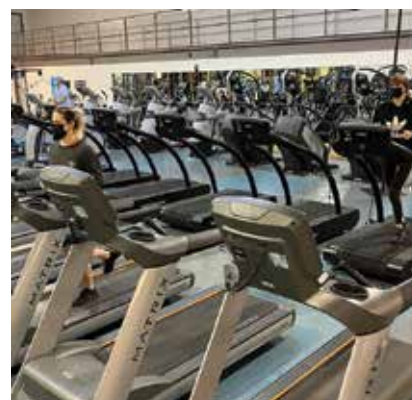
I haven't really noticed a difference in my performance or breathing when exercising with a mask on. My only discomfort stems from sweating in a mask, which then just reinforces that I am actually doing a good job with my workout. Then it doesn't bother me anymore.

But enough with anecdotal details. What does science say?

Many studies have been conducted within the last year examining the effect of wearing a mask while exercising. One experiment saw participants randomly assigned to exercise with no mask, a surgical mask and an N-95 mask. There were no significant differences between the groups in their heart rates, respiratory rates, blood pressure, oxygen saturation levels or time it took for them to reach exhaustion from their exercise with moderate to strenuous aerobic activity.

These results suggest that mask-wearing during exercise is safe for healthy individuals and that the differences between the groups were negligible at best.

Another study examined whether individuals jogging for 30 minutes at a moderate pace were affected by wearing a mask. Participants with both masks and no masks had their oxygen saturation levels measured before they started



jogging, and then every 10 minutes, for a total of four measurements. The oxygen saturation at all time intervals across both groups did not significantly differ, implying that those who worry about getting enough oxygen while jogging should probably stop worrying.

A final study examining exercise performance while wearing masks randomly assigned participants into groups that wore no masks, those who wore surgical masks and another that wore cloth masks. Using cycle ergometry, participants in all groups exercised to exhaustion. Data revealed no differences between the different groups' oxygen saturation levels, tissue oxygenation indexes, ratings of exertion or heart rate.

Subjective ratings of exercise performance, which were measured in

time to exhaustion and peak power, were not significantly different between groups. All of this evidence suggests that while working out with a mask might not be the most comfortable, it isn't something that will hurt you if you are healthy.

As we progress through these difficult times, we will have to be open-minded and learn to adapt. We will have to find a new normal. Fortunately, we will not have to do this alone.

With every precaution possible, Club Fit has adjusted that new normal with safety as the top priority. Our members have come together as a community to help ensure each other's health and safety as well. From meticulous cleaning efforts, to investments in scientifically proven sanitation products, to the staff's commitment to enforcing physical distancing and safety guidelines and the members' support of the efforts, Club Fit intends to remain a safe environment for members to exercise and maintain their physical activities and health.

We are doing our part to move forward, and we only ask that you at least try doing the same. The masks are not as bad as they might seem.

Sarah Sowards is a club experience assistant at Club Fit. For more information about Club Fit, visit [www.clubfit.com/membership-inquiry](http://www.clubfit.com/membership-inquiry) or contact [bradadvisor@clubfit.com](mailto:bradadvisor@clubfit.com) for the Briarcliff Manor site or [jvadvisor@clubfit.com](mailto:jvadvisor@clubfit.com) for Jefferson Valley.



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But due to COVID-19, most local news publications are losing money, fast. Advertising has plummeted during the crisis and readers aren't subscribing fast enough to fill the void. This has led to thousands of local reporters being laid off. Just as our society faces numerous, urgent challenges.


Millions of people are in danger of losing access to the authoritative local

information they need to stay informed. That's why the Local Media Association and the Local Media Consortium are working with local news providers to build a strong future for local journalism. And that's why our long-time partner Google is purchasing ads like this in local publications across the country, as well as providing a Relief Fund to help struggling local news outlets. But those actions alone aren't enough.

Please consider supporting the local news organizations you rely on. Subscribe to them. Donate to them. And if you have a business that's able to, advertise with them. **Your support is critical to sustaining the dedicated journalists serving your communities.**

Our local news outlets help keep us safer. Let's help keep them open.

This message supported by  local media consortium  LocalMedia association  Google Subscribe: [www.theexaminernews.com/eblast/](http://www.theexaminernews.com/eblast/)



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