



North Castle Election Inspector Accuses Board of Elections of Discrimination

By Martin Wilbur

A longtime North Castle election inspector has filed a complaint with the state Division of Human Rights alleging the Westchester County Board of Elections (BOE) engaged in discriminatory behavior for failing to assign her without explanation.

Geri Mariano, who began serving as a Republican inspector in 1989 after college graduation, said over the past six years she's been increasingly treated as an outcast by BOE personnel. Mariano was born with the congenital condition of Diastrophic Dysplasia, a form of dwarfism. Since 2014, the year before she had two back surgeries, Mariano has used a wheelchair.

Mariano charged she wasn't assigned for the November 2021 general election despite completing the annual online training. She said she tried to contact Republican

Commissioner Douglas Colety after failing to receive an assignment last year but received no answers.

On Oct. 28, 2021, Mariano, an Armonk resident, said she traveled to BOE offices in White Plains in hopes of understanding why she'd been overlooked and was assured an explanation.

"It's really sad," Mariano said. "It's just like my whole 30 years of work, with breaks here and there, is just wiped away."

After last year's election, Mariano hoped to speak with Colety or other BOE officials, but wanted to wait until there was an opportune time. Between the hectic post-election schedule, the holidays, and then the unexpected January death of Democratic Election Commissioner Reginald LaFayette, she never followed up.

Finally, on Sept. 1, 2022, Mariano wrote *continued on page 2*



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Read All About It

Crowds swarmed the Chappaqua train station parking lot last Saturday for the ninth annual Chappaqua Children's Book Festival. It was the first time in three years that the festival had a full roster of authors on hand and a large turnout of parents and children. While reading was front and center, there were plenty of other children's activities and delicious food to eat.

Pleasantville Plans Town Hall Forum to Address Village Development

By Abby Luby

Escalating negative sentiment against new development in Pleasantville at meetings and on social media has compelled the Village Board to schedule a town hall for Wednesday, Nov. 16 at 7 p.m. to discuss the issue.

The meetings' location has yet to be determined.

"A lot of folks are talking to one another, talking to us and on social media about development in the village," Mayor Peter Scherer said at the Oct. 13 Village Board meeting. "It was driven by a preliminary proposal by the current owner of the former Chase Manhattan Bank on Wheeler and Bedford Road to convert the building to residential use."

Scherer referenced an informal

presentation a few weeks ago by Michael Beldotti, whose family has owned the 97-year-old building since 1980 and who appeared before a recent joint meeting of the village's Planning Commission and Architectural Review Board.

Beldotti, who has yet to apply for a building permit, floated initial plans for a mixed-use project that includes 22 one-bedroom apartments and 18 two-bedroom units in a new adjacent complex along with others in the existing building. There would also be 49 parking spaces.

"One of the issues that prevails is whether we as a community or as a board need to be thinking about changing our zoning to change the developmental potential for various properties," Scherer said.

Potential property sales have also

made residents nervous. The likely buyer of the Girl Scout property on Bedford Road and Great Oak Lane could legally subdivide the current lot into six lots and build two two-family homes facing Bedford Road and four one-family homes on Great Oak Lane.

Also for sale are four contiguous parcels totaling 20 acres, advertised by the realtor as sites conducive for residential development. The properties are 1 and 3 Campus Drive, 71 Bedford Rd. and a parking area on Manville Lane that serves 1 Campus Drive.

Completed projects in recent years are Toll Brothers' Enclave at Pleasantville on Washington Avenue and the mixed-use project at 39 Washington Ave.

Another two projects are under construction – 70 Memorial Plaza

and residences on Depew Street off Grant Street and the Saw Mill Parkway. The demolition at 70 Memorial Plaza started in 2019, and as the new structure has emerged over the last year, some village residents became worried about more apartments downtown. Some have called for a moratorium to allow for time to consider zoning changes/

The mixed-use building at 70 Memorial Plaza will include 82 apartments on the upper three floors with 7,691 square feet allotted to street-level retail space. The three-level underground parking garage is expected to accommodate 137 parking spaces for residents' use and for shoppers in the central business district.

Scherer pointed out that the village's zoning law has existed for

several decades and has shaped the downtown by allowing three-story structures. When the four-story 70 Memorial Plaza was proposed, the village weighed the plan because the two vacant buildings that had to be demolished were located over a 30-foot rock mountain.

"There was essentially no development potential there if we required that any new construction provide on-site parking," Scherer said. "Nobody could afford to take down the rock and build on-site parking without a little more economic potential so we expanded that zone to allow four stories. No other (zoning) changes were made anywhere else."

Pleasantville's Tom Rooney questioned the village's direction.

"I'm not opposed to things going *continued on page 2*

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Colety a letter hoping for an explanation “as to why my 30 years of experience was summarily dismissed without reason and notice.”

After no response, she sent the complaint to the Division of Human Rights on Oct. 5.

“I made the decision on my own to go ahead with (the complaint) because I’m really frustrated,” said Mariano, a motivational speaker.

“I’m not getting any answers. They expect me to slink away and I just decided to go for it,” she added.

In addition to Colety, other BOE officials named by Mariano in the complaint are Deputy Republican Commissioner Dorothy DiPalo, Republican Election Inspector Coordinator Jaime Scuderi and Jonathan Cannella, a Republican election inspector coordinator and supervisor.

There was no response last week and Monday to The Examiner’s attempts to reach Colety and Democratic Commissioner Tajian Nelson by phone and e-mail.

Mariano, who initially served at North Castle’s District 1 polling place at the Banksville firehouse before being transferred to District 6 at the Armonk firehouse, said she noticed a change in 2016. After taking 2015 off mainly because of the death of her parents, Mariano returned the next year, but wasn’t given anything to do, she said.

She wasn’t assigned in 2017, then worked on Election Day for the next two years. Because of a shortage of poll workers in 2020 due to COVID-19 concerns, Mariano said she wanted to work but was given a “demotion” to a poll entrance worker, someone who welcomes voters and directs them to the correct table.

She decided to withdraw herself from consideration after failing to receive permission to have friends check on her throughout the 16-hour day.

Mariano said she’s also been told she talked too much to voters when they came to the polling place and had heard comments questioning whether she was mobile enough to alternate working the table and machines.

Last year and this year, Mariano received a mailed postcard asking people to consider becoming inspectors; a need remains, she noted.

“They have the obligation, where if they have concerns, they should talk to me about it,” Mariano said.

According to material provided by the Division of Human Rights, investigators conduct interviews and evaluate evidence, which would result in either a finding of probable cause or no probable cause. If it’s the latter, there’s 60 days to appeal.

After most probable cause findings, there’s an attempt to settle the matter. If that cannot be achieved, a hearing is scheduled before an administrative law judge. If there’s a finding in favor of the complainant, remedies can include policy changes, training, fines and/or damages.

Mariano isn’t seeking monetary damages. She’d like an apology, a meeting with BOE officials and reasonable accommodations to allow her to work. She doesn’t intend to work past 2024.



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Armonk resident Geri Mariano filed a complaint with the state Division of Human Rights. Mariano is pictured above at a July celebration of the 32nd anniversary of the Americans With Disabilities Act in White Plains.

After experiencing discrimination throughout her life, Mariano said the experience has been especially hurtful.

“It’s a dagger through my heart,” she said.

Pleasantville Plans Town Hall Forum to Address Village Development

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forward, I’m opposed to getting inundated with more and more apartments,” Rooney said.

Another issue for some residents is limiting affordable housing that two-family and multifamily homes could offer.

Three village trustees voiced similar

concerns about some anti-development rhetoric.

“It was the number of people saying we don’t want renters, and the implication being that renters don’t care the same amount about the village or they are not the kind of people we want,” said Trustee David Vinjamuri. “There is a shred of a soft bigotry

that can seep into these conversations about the difference between people who own property and those who rent.”

Trustees Nicole Asquith and Michael Peppard echoed Vinjamuri’s concern.

“It wasn’t until I was running for the board when I realized just how many multifamily, two-family homes and apartment complexes

there are in the village,” Peppard said. “As we head to the town hall meeting, it’s important for people to realize the things that already exist in the village they live in and see it with clear eyes.”

Scherer said the 2020 Census says one-third of village residents are renters while two-thirds are homeowners.



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Eagle Ridge Developer Amends Hotel Plan; Adds Fourth Story, Nine Rooms

By Martin Wilbur

The developer of a proposed hotel and age-restricted 72-townhome project in Armonk last week proposed two changes to the hotel application that will require amending the findings statement and a return to multiple boards.

Madd Madonna's plan for Eagle Ridge will now see the hotel increase from 115 to 124 rooms with an increase from three to four stories, said Kory Salomone, the attorney for

the applicant. Despite the hotel going to four floors, the height of the building is expected to remain at 45 feet, he said.

Salomone said each prospective hotel operator that the Eagle Ridge team has contacted are requiring that they be allowed to build four stories. Only certain chains, like Red Roof Inn or La Quinta, for example, would agree to a maximum of three stories, he said.

"That's the general consensus from everybody, that unless this is four stories and that type of programming with that key count,

it's not going to work," said developer Frank Madonna.

As a result of the revision to the hotel plan, Madd Madonna must return to the Town Board in hopes it will agree to amend the findings statement. Furthermore, the applicant must also head to the Zoning Board of Appeals to be approved for the extra story as well as to the Architectural Review Board. A trip to the Conservation Board will also be needed.

The developer revealed there has been discussions with an unidentified operator for the lodging facility. The hotel would be situated on a just over 10-acres, which had been subdivided from the original 32-acre site. Previously, the land had been owned by IBM.

At last week's North Castle Planning Board meeting, one of the project's consultants, landscape architect John Imbiano, also gave a brief presentation regarding a landscape plan for the residential portion of the site. The plan includes more than 500 new trees to give the site a neighborhood character.

There would be a variety of species, including elms, oaks, maples, rosebuds and dogwoods, Imbiano said.

There is also a lighting plan for the residential area that would feature street lights of no more than 12 feet high, he said. That would differ from the hotel side of the property, which would be slightly taller.

Director of Planning Adam Kaufman said he was encouraged with the proposed landscaping.

"We were going to create a neighborhood that is going to be a place where these

residents are going to want to live," Kaufman said. "We started to get that and John is off to a good plan here."

While the landscaping may have received encouraging remarks, board Chairman Christopher Carthy noticed that there were relatively minor revisions to the layout of the residential units.

In the spring, the board criticized the layout of the rows of 72 townhome units, referring to it as "stadium seating" because of the rows of structures one behind the others and the grade of the property.

"To be blunt, this has been tweaked, it hasn't been redesigned," Carthy said. "But on the other hand, they introduced this landscape plan and dress it up as best they can and this is what they come in with. I think we as a board need to really get serious about moving this forward or not."

Another issue that resurfaced last week was whether there could be a crosswalk across Route 22 that would allow pedestrians to potentially walk from the complex into downtown Armonk. The state Department of Transportation has not been enthusiastic about putting in a crosswalk across a wide and busy thoroughfare such as Route 22.

Throughout the process, the Town Board has asked for that to be considered in hopes of limiting the number of vehicles to the downtown to limit congestion and avoid possible parking difficulties.

"I don't think we have DOT participation in this," Carthy said.



Deserving Recognition

State Sen. Shelley Mayer recently presented the New York State Empire Award, given to nonprofit organizations and small businesses that have positively impacted their communities, to American Legion Post 1097 in Armonk for its dedication to veterans and for its commitment to accessibility. The post completed construction of a handicap accessible bathroom, added a handicap stairlift to its rear entrance, installed new exterior doors, light fixtures, windows, paint and carpeting. The work was made possible through a \$60,500 county grant.



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Controversy Simmers Over Bedford Teachers Book Read

By Martin Wilbur

An annual community read in Bedford turned controversial last week after some residents believed that the school district pulled its support for the event due to complaints over one of the featured books.

Fox Reads, a voluntary event organized by the Bedford Teachers Association (BTA), drew the ire of some parents who were critical over the inclusion of "The Poet X," a critically-acclaimed novel by Elizabeth Acevedo, in the read. The book is on the district's recommended reading list for high school students but is not assigned. It is a coming-of-age story and includes passages where sexual feelings are expressed.

Cries of censorship went out among some parents, including the local grassroots advocacy group Every Single Student, which organized a petition drive to protest school officials who removed any promotion of Fox Reads from the district's website and social media.

District parent John Long, who read a statement on behalf of Every Single Student at last Wednesday's Board of Education meeting, said that the group had collected about 130 signatures up to that point. However, they were concerned that the district may have been pressured by those looking for reasons to target books with certain subject matter.

"This program should be applauded as it is an asset to our students and our community," Long said of Fox Reads. "We appreciate the effort that was put into each book, making

sure that there was a choice for different age groups and reading abilities. We welcome books exploring topics that may be difficult, but ultimately help us look deeper into ourselves and/or help us see others. In the wake of banned book week, we value the opportunity to come together and discuss these valuable books."

The BTA convenes a selection process each spring and typically decides on which books to include by the end of the school year for the fall event. There were apparently no objections to the other two books that were part of the read, "Alma and How She Got Her Name" by Juana Martinez-Neal and "Merci Suárez Changes Gears" by Meg Medina.

Several other parents spoke, a few expressing support for the book while others said it was their responsibility to determine if their child should read certain material.

However, Board President Edward Roder and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Glass clarified that the district was not taking a stand against Fox Reads or "The Poet X." Instead, it learned that the activity, which the district has no part in organizing even though the BTA is involved, was wrongly posted on its various channels of communication.

"There was no board action at this table to not participate or to shut that book down," Glass said.

Roder mentioned the district had no input into the books that were selected because it was an outside event run by the BTA.

"This year has not been any different than that," he said. "We were not contacted about

the selection. We were not involved in the process. I would not be presumptuous that we should interject ourselves into any kind of third party or any organization, a community read event that they want to run."

Discussion turned to whether the district should be listing or promoting events that are not its own or it doesn't have a partnership or co-sponsorship with. Board member Steven Matlin said the issue in this instance has nothing to do with whether the book is appropriate.

"It's not our place to say yay or nay to that event," Matlin said. "I think we should not promote outside third-party events. It puts us in a very difficult position where we say yes to some or no to others and we become the morality police or whether we think an event is good or bad, and we've seen tonight

that we have community members on both sides of this book even as to whether they thought it was appropriate or not, and I don't think that's a position we should be in."

Board member Amal Shady, who had no objection to the book, said the district should promote all events or none that are not its own in the community.

Glass said it can get difficult because there are some events that fall into grey areas.



"There are really a lot of great things that go on in our community in which we have said, no, we won't be able to promote that because it's not directly related to the school district," he said. "This one seems to come a little closer and because it involves reading and something that is near and dear to our hearts and the teachers association."

Rebellion Research Head Featured at Local Investment Group

The Northern Westchester Investment Group, which meets at the Kittle House in Chappaqua to hear speakers from the investment, medical, political and legal fields, will feature Alex Fleiss, partner at Rebellion Research, on Tuesday, Nov. 1. Fleiss

will discuss the firm's quantitative approaches to stock market analysis, which uses artificial intelligence to forecast market action.

Anyone interested in attending the luncheon should contact Phil Sirlin at sirlin@optonline.net.

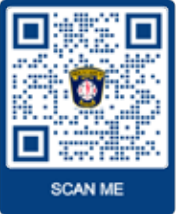
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Latimer Proposes \$662M Budget for Capital Projects in 2023

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County Executive George Latimer last week presented a \$662.5 million capital budget for 2023 that stresses protection of the environment, investment in infrastructure and additional commitments to affordable housing.

Unveiled last Thursday at the County Office Building in White Plains, Latimer said next year's capital plan addresses issues that the county and its residents depend on, including key infrastructure and transportation.

"I made a promise to the people of this county years ago, that I would invest in our infrastructure, take care of our people, help the environment, raise the county's bond rating and cut taxes responsibly," Latimer said. "We have done all of this and more."

There would be \$198.5 million earmarked by the administration to continue upgrades at the county's seven wastewater treatment facilities to ensure the wastewater being discharged into the Hudson River and Long Island Sound is at its highest possible quality, Latimer said.

Another \$125 million is proposed for environmental conservation and flood mitigation efforts. The largest chunk of that money is \$95 million to continue to convert the county's Bee-Line bus fleet to hybrid or electric vehicles.

There would also be money to aggressively install electric vehicle charging stations at county and municipal properties, including a \$5 million grant program that



Westchester County Executive George Latimer hands over his capital projects proposal for 2023 to Board of Legislators Chair Catherine Borgia last week. Most of the money addresses environmental and infrastructure needs around the county.

would allow local governments to bid for money to help install the charging stations in their communities.

Another \$12 million would be set aside for flood mitigation efforts, particularly in flood-prone areas, Latimer said.

Latimer has pledged to increase the county's share toward affordable and workforce housing from the current year's \$50 million to \$90 million. Of that amount, \$40 million would be used toward land

acquisition and infrastructure improvements to entice developers to build affordable units while the balance would be combined with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds Westchester had received to encourage the development of workforce units.

"While we spend that money in the short-term to make sure that these housing projects happen, the benefit extends for 20 and 30 years, all beyond the lifetime of this administration and my lifetime on the

planet," Latimer said.

Just over \$40 million would be set aside for improvements to parks facilities with the majority of that money (\$28 million) being put into Playland for the amusement park and Ice Casino upgrades. The remainder would be for work at Hilltop Hanover Farm (\$7 million) in Yorktown and \$3.3 million toward Cranberry Lake Preserve in North White Plains.

The final major piece would be a \$50 commitment to repair roads and bridges, including improvements to Central Park Avenue, the Austin Avenue Bridge over I-87 in Yonkers and repaving portions of the Bronx River Parkway.

Latimer handed off the proposed capital plan to Board of Legislators Chair Catherine Borgia (D-Ossining) for county lawmakers to review. Borgia said many of the items included on the list helps the county catch up with much-needed maintenance.

"Especially during the COVID years, we know how significant those things are to people's enjoyment of living in Westchester County," Borgia said.

The administration's proposed 2023 operating budget is expected to be released in about three weeks, Latimer said. The county will hold two public input sessions on next year's spending plan starting this Thursday, Oct. 20 at the Field Library, located at 4 Nelson Ave. in Peekskill, at 6 p.m. and at the Pelham Town House, located at 20 Fifth Ave. in Pelham, on Wednesday, Nov. 2 at 7 p.m.

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Zeldin, GOP Leaders Protest Release of Larchmont Police Killer

By Rick Pezzullo

New York Republican gubernatorial candidate Lee Zeldin, Assemblyman Mike Lawler, other GOP leaders and law enforcement officials gathered in White Plains last week to protest the pending release of a man who was convicted 44 years ago of murdering a Larchmont police officer.

Anthony Blanks shot and killed Police Officer Arthur DeMatte on Oct. 12, 1976, with the officer's service weapon while DeMatte, a 20-year officer and married father of four, was attempting to remove a transient from the New Haven Railroad tracks.

On Feb. 2, 1978, Blanks, who was convicted of first-degree murder and criminal possession of a weapon, was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison. Recently, the state Parole Board granted Blanks parole, which could take place as early as this week.

Last Wednesday, on the anniversary of DeMatte's death, Zeldin and others stood outside the Westchester County Courthouse along with DeMatte's family to call for the overhaul of the Parole Board and legislation that would keep anyone convicted of killing a police officer behind bars for life.

"This isn't some one-off. Dozens of cop killers have been released. If we don't stand up and do something about it, dozens more will be released in the future,"



RICK PEZZULLO PHOTO

Republican gubernatorial candidate Lee Zeldin appeared outside the Westchester County Courthouse in White Plains last week with law enforcement and family members of a Larchmont police officer killed in 1976. Zeldin lambasted the state Parole Board for its release of the officer's murderer.

said Zeldin, a congressman from Suffolk County and a former prosecutor. "Nothing we say today will bring back an amazing, dedicated officer. This is our stand for all of the other families right now who are able to go to sleep with peace that the person

who murdered their loved one is behind bars."

Lawler, who is looking to unseat Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney next month, pointed much of the blame at Gov. Kathy Hochul and the Parole Board.

"This Parole Board is slapping law enforcement in the face and forcing another family to relive those horrific events," Lawler remarked. "Kathy Hochul should be embarrassed, but she's not. She should be demanding every member of the Parole Board to resign. We need reform in the state when it comes to parole. It's insane and it has to stop."

Parole Board members are appointed by the governor and must be confirmed by the State Senate. Each member serves six-year terms. There are 19 spots on the Parole Board. Currently, 15 of those seats are filled.

Since Hochul succeeded Gov. Andrew Cuomo, five convicted killers of police officers have been released on parole.

Zeldin said family members of murdered police officers should have the opportunity to appeal any decisions of the Parole Board. He noted DeMatte's wife and children were never notified about the vote on Blanks.

"Officer DeMatte was responding to a call of someone who was stuck on the tracks. He saved that life minutes before giving up his own," Lawler said. "This is about leadership. The New York Parole Board is an utter disgrace."

Zeldin and Lawler have been among the Republican candidates running for state and federal offices trying to portray Democrats as responsible for an increase in crime in the state as a result of bail reform measures and other policies.

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Peekskillcandidates@gmail.com
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Letters to the Editor

Abortion Rights Would Be Under Attack if Lawler is Elected to Congress

Mike Lawler is the Republican candidate running for Congress in our district, the 17th Congressional District.

I am very concerned about his view on abortion. Mr. Lawler tries to have it both ways, saying that while he is personally against abortion, New Yorkers needn't worry because abortion rights are protected here.

There are a couple of disturbing things about this position:

--Remember when Brett Kavanaugh,

among others, assured us that Roe was "settled law?" Until it wasn't. Abortion rights are only safe in New York for as long as there is a Democratic majority in Albany. Did you know that New York State was controlled by a Republican (anti-choice) majority until just a few years ago?

--As a congressman, Lawler would be making laws, not just for New Yorkers, but for the entire country. If the Republicans win a majority of seats in Congress, they intend to pass a federal abortion ban. If

passed, this would supersede the laws of New York and other states that currently protect abortion rights. Mr. Lawler says that he is against such a law and believes that states should regulate abortion. In other words, a woman's right to control her own body should depend, as it does now, on her zip code.

There are many issues to consider when electing a candidate to Congress. I have been around long enough to know that the price of gas, energy and groceries goes up

and down. But when you lose your rights, it's a long, uphill battle to claw them back. That's one reason that I'm voting for Sean Patrick Maloney for Congress. He has been a consistent advocate for a woman's right to decide for herself when and whether to become a mother.

Celeste Theis
Croton-on-Hudson

Maloney Needed in Congress to Continue Fight for Women's Rights

I believe that women in New York's 17th Congressional District are in danger. Fifty years ago, I worked tirelessly for women's reproductive rights and cannot believe that I am needing to do the same thing again on behalf of the women in my family and community right here in my home state of New York.

In contrast to what most women believe, independent of political affiliation, one of the district's candidates for Congress, Mike Lawler, is bent on joining the Supreme Court and his fellow Republicans in taking back a woman's right to choose an abortion in the state of New York.

Lawler's website (no mention of

women's rights) and his six votes against reproductive health rights bills during 2022 alone show his lack of support for his district's women.

Although he claims women don't have to be concerned about losing any rights in New York due to the 2019 passage of the Reproductive Health Act, he knows full well that the protections under this act can change in a split second, should he and other Republicans be elected. Federal legislation is the only solution to ensure all women's

rights are equitable across all states.

The congressional candidate that has consistently represented the interests of women in New York is Sean Patrick Maloney. His voting record is a stark contrast to that of Lawler. He consistently holds that maintaining women's rights is critical to ensuring all of our rights. I'm voting for Maloney in November.

Madeline Hunter
Ossining

Maloney Understands Why Retaining the Right to Choose is Crucial

Mike Lawler said in an Oct. 6 Journal News article, "I'm personally pro-life. My wife and I experienced a miscarriage in 2020. Thankfully, we were blessed with a healthy baby girl this year!"

I'm glad for them. How nice that Mike is happily married and he and his wife want children. But what about women who've been sexually assaulted by a husband, father or other male relatives? What about women who've been date raped? Or a young single woman with no family or friends for financial or emotional support? A woman who can barely manage to pay her rent or buy food?

His opponent, Sean Patrick Maloney, speaks for pro-choice and is a strong advocate for women and for families. He co-sponsored the bill to ensure abortion rights nationwide.

Sean believes that a woman should have the freedom to control her own body, and health decisions should be made with her doctor, not by politicians.

How can Mike Lawler appreciate what it means for a woman to conceive and birth a child; it's both physically and emotionally impossible. And, therefore, he has no right to impose his will on any woman.

Vote for Sean Patrick Maloney. He understands the issues and agrees with a woman's right to choose. Her body, her choice.

Karen Sevell Greenbaum
Croton-on-Hudson

Slater Possesses All the Attributes Needed for Success in Assembly

Matt Slater is a natural for the state Assembly. We are going to vote for him on Tuesday, Nov. 8. I say that as a longtime friend who understands his great enthusiasm and energy. He is a tireless worker and has a proven passion for public service.

His wife, Kellie, and their two children, Charlie and Elizabeth, are also contributors to the well-being of our community. They care about us and share the dream of Matt representing us in Albany.

Matt's record as Yorktown supervisor is exceptional, and his extensive legislative experience is impressive. I believe that as

the assemblyman in the 94th District, it will be his intelligence and common-sense approach to issues that will most benefit me, my family and our community. He will be sorely missed by many of us as supervisor but realize that for the greater good he should now represent us in the Assembly and do the fantastic job there that we know he can do.

Join us in voting for Matt Slater on Nov. 8.

Daryl and Len Lindholm
Jefferson Village

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Letters to the Editor

Byrne's Lack of Diversity on His Transition Team is Telling

The Highlands Current recently published an article announcing the members of incoming Putnam County Executive Kevin Byrne's transition team, who are, unsurprisingly, all White men. No Democrat is running against Byrne so he is virtually guaranteed the position.

While we all know Byrne, and Putnam County Republicans in general, are vocally opposed to fostering diversity, one would think Byrne might be interested in at least the appearance of propriety by pulling from his Log Cabin Republican or women supporters, for example. This announcement is nothing less than a

slap in the face to the nearing 50 percent of his constituents who do not support Republican views or values, whether they are Democrats, Independents or some other party.

In 2020, as an assemblyman, Byrne refused to vocally denounce the violent, racist actions of a local man who drove a truck decorated with the words "F**k Black Lives" through a Black Lives Matter protest in Carmel. While the Westchester Fair Campaign Practices Committee failed to find evidence that Byrne refused to condemn the act, we know he did, because many of us and others we know asked

him to, via both phone calls and on social media, and we were ignored. He said at the time in replies to social media posts that not every act by a "disturbed" person deserves a public statement.

This transition team, along with his history of failing to condemn racism and public championing of groups like Moms for Liberty, is further proof that Byrne plans to run Putnam County just like it has been for decades – a good old boys club headed by corrupt White cronies who are all in bed together trying to preserve their power at the price of keeping women, people of color, LGBTQ+ and other Putnam County

minority groups relegated to the shadows and without services or community.

Of course, Byrne still has time to make it right if he wants to and to diversify his team. But we won't hold our breath.

**Eileen McDermott (Brewster),
Baila Lemonik (Mahopac), Judy Allen
(Putnam Valley), Dwight Arthur
(Mahopac), Janet Mahoney (Kent),
Juergen Tempel (Patterson), Karen
Freede (Putnam Valley) and Other
Concerned Citizens of Putnam County**

Harckham's List of Legislative Accomplishments Merit His Re-election

I am writing to support Pete Harckham's campaign for re-election as state senator for District 40.

Pete is exactly the type of hands-on advocate that we need, and I want to make sure people are aware of the positive impact his efforts have already had here in our district. Pete has been a state senator since 2019. Since then, Pete has delivered significant accomplishments to our community in areas that are important to so many families in Westchester, ranging from women's rights to the environment. For example, he helped pass the Reproductive Health Act, which will ensure all women in New York will be able to make their own reproductive health choices.

On gun safety, another critical issue, he facilitated increased funding for law enforcement and gun violence interruption.

Initiatives like this from truly concerned and responsible politicians like Pete will help keep our communities safe.

He is also focused on preserving the environment, which will benefit us as well as future generations. His team passed landmark legislation to require zero-emission vehicles by 2035. Further, he worked to protect clean drinking water sources and passed the toughest climate protection law in the nation.

There are considerable achievements that, due to his tireless efforts, benefit the entire community. Please join me in voting for Pete Harckham on Election Day so that we can all look forward to further progress here in District 40.

**Jennie Sendek
Briarcliff Manor**

95th Assembly District Would Be Well-Served By Levenberg's Experience

Please join me in voting for Dana Levenberg for state Assembly. Two words come to mind when I think of Dana – integrity and experience.

Dana will stand up for women's rights, social justice, equity, health, climate and democratic values like free and fair elections when you elect her to the Assembly. Dana is quite clear when she speaks on her plans to address issues such as affordability, infrastructure and education. Dana will serve you.

Dana's experience as Ossining Town supervisor, Assemblywoman Sandy

Galef's chief of staff and years on the Ossining school board, have given her the skills, knowledge, experience and awareness we want in an elected official.

Since her tenure as supervisor began in 2016, Dana has focused on building a healthy community – economically, environmentally, physically and mentally – all with a focus on equity. Assemblywoman Galef says Dana's dedication, energy, work ethic and knowledge of the legislature will enable her to deliver results that matter the most to the 95th Assembly District.

Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg will be able to hit the ground running on Day One with the same level of dedication Galef has given to the job. I know Dana will do the same because she learned from the best.

Make a plan to vote. Find your polling place by visiting www.vote411.org. Early voting begins Saturday, Oct. 29 and runs through Sunday, Nov. 6. Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 8. Vote!

**Linda Wildman
Peekskill**

Mayes Has Been a Longtime Asset to Cortlandt Who Has Much to Give

Thirty-five years ago, I was waiting at the bus stop when I first met Robert Mayes.

We grew up in the same neighborhood that was filled with close-knit families and a ton of kids. Rob treated everyone as if they were his own family, which was very impactful for us. My siblings and I would always say "Rob is going to be the president one day!"

Due to my father being den leader, scout meetings were held at my house. This allowed us the opportunity to watch Rob progress through the ranks while participating in countless events that helped our local community. Rob's patience with the younger scouts and the admiration they held for him left a lasting impression on us.

Today, he is still affiliated with the Scouts and helping our children build a path to a bright future. He has always been involved with our community, from scouts to baseball as well as any school event he could assist with.

Growing up in Cortlandt, Rob knows how family oriented it has always been and how important it is to bring the community together. The town has seen a lot of change over the years, and I believe with Robert Mayes as councilman, it will grow even stronger.

**Kelly Rogan
Cortlandt**

Electing Simon Carey Would Be a Win for Kent, Lake District

I have known Simon Carey and his wife for almost 20 years. I have seen his children grow up in the Lake Carmel Park District and was especially pleased last summer to see that his oldest daughter had become one of our Lake Carmel lifeguards.

So, I could not be prouder to learn that after knowing of Simon's involvement in many community activities, his four-year service on the Planning Board and his wife's membership on the Lake Carmel Advisory Committee, my neighbor Simon Carey is running for Kent Town Board.

First, he is an all-around good person, a fine father and a neighbor you can trust. Also important, since no current member of the Town Board is a Lake Carmel Park District resident, it is important to elect

one. Simon is the only candidate running who lives in the lake district. He knows how important it is to maintain the quality of all of Kent's lakes because the lakes are what brings us all together.

Two big projects will be coming up – the repair of the dam and the rebuilding of the community center. Simon has the business knowledge and engineering skills to be at the table advocating for our needs when those discussions are held.

Please join me in supporting Simon Carey for Kent Town Board.

**Christina MurphyBorg
Lake Carmel**

Arena Would Bring Much-Needed New Perspective, Experience to Albany

We need Gina Arena in the New York State Senate!

I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Gina for 25 years. She has what most politicians today in Albany don't have – common sense and morals. She is grounded, honest and hardworking. Having witnessed her firsthand working in Westchester County government, I know she has the experience to get things done and done correctly.

Gina is also a very dedicated, caring, family-oriented person with compassion for others. The current state of lawlessness coupled with inflation is too much for the good citizens of New York and we deserve better. We need fresh faces and ideas in Albany, which is what Gina Arena brings to the table!

**Mike Messinger
Peekskill**

Correction

In last week's article on nine-year-old Ukrainian boy David Gelfand being recognized at the Mount Kisco Photo Exhibition, the link to view all of the photos entered by the public was incorrect. Photos are posted at www.kiscophoto.org. The opening reception and awards presentation can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/758064524>.

Police Blotter

Carmel Police Department

Oct. 3: A 43-year-old Mahopac man was charged with illegal dumping in connection with an abandoned boat that was discovered on the property of Union Valley Cemetery on Union Valley Road. Police were first contacted by the cemetery's property manager on Sept. 2 regarding a 19-foot Sunbird Corsair vessel that was found. While investigating, responding officers determined all identifiable markings had been intentionally removed from the boat. Detectives then launched a probe with the Carmel Police Marine Unit. Utilizing local contacts and online sources, investigators developed clues in multiple states and New York City. Interviews in the region led police to a suspect, who confessed to the crime. He was charged by Police Marine Patrol Sgt. Sandy Crecco with illegal dumping, a violation under Carmel's Town Code.

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

Oct. 6: A caller reported a snake on the sidewalk on Grand Street at 2:27 p.m. Patrols responded, trapped the snake and requested the response of an animal trapper. The trapper responded and removed the snake.

Oct. 7: A Truesdale Drive resident reported at 8:39 p.m. that someone, possibly a group of teenagers, knocked on

her door and window and ran away. Patrol was dispatched and reported canvassing the area with negative results.

Oct. 8: A parent from Grand Street approached patrol at 4:20 p.m. stating her two children were missing. Patrols were notified and were able to locate both children and reunite them with their mother.

North Castle Police Department

Oct. 7: A caller reported at 6:48 a.m. that his brother was bitten on the arm by an unknown dog on Business Park Drive. The desk officer notified the county Department of Emergency Services for dispatch of Armonk Ambulance.

Oct. 7: An anonymous caller reported at 12:58 p.m. that a male was playing a loud musical instrument and begging for money in the area of Stop & Shop on North Broadway. The responding officer reported that the party left the scene without incident.

Oct. 8: An E-911 caller reported at 12:50 p.m. that a subject was acting erratically and causing damage to the main office at the St. Christopher's/Jennie Clarkson campus on Old Orchard Street. The subject was unable to be restrained. Responding officers subdued the individual who was transported to Westchester Medical Center.

Oct. 11: A party arrived at headquarters at 10:48 a.m. to report that he is receiving

summonses in the mail that come back to vehicle license plates he surrendered in 2015. He reported attempting to plead not guilty to the charges and fines without success. The report was made as a matter of record.

Oct. 12: An Intervale Avenue resident called at 4:39 a.m. and stated she has been constipated for the last 10 hours and is requesting an ambulance. County Fire Control was notified. The responding officer reported that the woman was transported to White Plains Hospital.

Pleasantville Police Department

Oct. 9: Report of three vehicles broken into on Thomas Street at 4:30 p.m. Multiple items were stolen from the cars. Detectives are investigating the incidents.

Oct. 11: A woman arrived at headquarters at 1:12 p.m. to report receiving a harassing phone call demanding money.

Oct. 11: A 58-year-old Foxwood Drive man was arrested in connection with a larceny from a building.

State Police/Cortlandt

Sept. 29: Joseph A. Potente, 45, of Cortlandt, was arrested and charged with second-degree criminal possession of a loaded firearm, a Class C felony. An investigation by troopers, after receiving information developed by the Westchester County Real Time Crime Center and the FBI's Safe Streets Task Force, discovered

Potente was in illegal possession of a fabricated 9mm pistol, known as a ghost gun, and ammunition. He was arraigned in Town of Cortlandt Court and remanded to Westchester County Jail in lieu of \$25,000 cash bail, \$50,000 bond or \$150,000 partially secured bond.

Yorktown Police Department

Oct. 6: Amanda Crothers, 29, of Yorktown, was arrested at 6:31 p.m. and charged with fifth-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a Class D felony. The execution of a warrant at a residence revealed three glass jars containing a quantity of cocaine in her purse.

Oct. 7: Tiesha Lee, 28, of Peekskill, was charged with fourth-degree grand larceny, a Class E felony, at 1:15 p.m. in connection with a stolen wallet containing credit cards at the Bank of America in the Triangle Shopping Center.

Oct. 8: A 55-year-old Croton-on-Hudson man was charged with DWI, an unclassified misdemeanor, leaving the scene of an accident and other traffic infractions following a two-car collision on Route 134 at 8:42 p.m.

Oct. 9: William Bready Jr., 64, of Mahopac, was arrested at 6:12 p.m. and charged with DWI with one prior conviction, a Class E felony, following a two-car accident on Route 202.



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Westchester County Stresses Lithium-Ion Battery Safety

The Westchester County Department of Emergency Services (DES) is warning residents of the fire danger posed by the improper use of lithium-ion batteries.

Last week Emergency Services Commissioner Richard G. Wishnie said an eight-year-old girl was killed in a fire in Queens recently that apparently was caused by a lithium-ion battery in an electric scooter. He called the tragedy a stark reminder of the danger posed by items that are commonly used every day that most people have in their homes.

Wishnie said Lithium-ion batteries can be found in a wide range of devices, including cordless power tools, cordless vacuums, laptops, tablets, cell phones, e-bikes and e-cigarettes. He offered the following lithium-ion battery safety tips:

- Do not charge any device under a pillow, on a bed or on a couch or arm chair;
- Keep batteries at room temperature and avoid placing them in direct sunlight or in a hot car;
- Store batteries away from anything flammable;
- Do not leave batteries and devices unattended when charging;
- Only use the battery and charging cord that came with the device.

Chief Luci Labriola-Cuffe of the DES Fire Training Division said it was important to immediately stop using any battery

that is emitting an unusual odor, leaking, changing shape or making unusual noises.

"If it is safe to do so, move the device away from anything flammable and call 911," she said.

Douglas Stiller, the chief of special operations at DES, said that lithium-ion battery fires occur during a process known as thermal runaway. This causes the battery to burst into flames and even explode. Highly toxic and highly flammable gases are emitted during thermal runaway.

"If thermal runaway occurs, you need to leave that area as fast as possible," Stiller said.

Louis Vetrone, deputy commissioner of the Department of Environmental Facilities, said lithium-ion batteries should never be disposed of with household trash. Westchester residents can make an appointment to dispose of these batteries at the county's Hazardous Materials Recovery Facility in Valhalla. For more information, visit environment.westchestergov.com.

Vetrone said residents with questions about lithium-ion and other batteries can call the county's recycling helpline at 914-813-5425.

For a related video, visit <https://www.facebook.com/WCDES/videos/403709055122702>.





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Mt. Kisco Theatre Eyes Soft Opening; Full Schedule to Return Shortly

By Martin Wilbur

The wait for the revival of the Mt. Kisco Theatre is nearly over.

The operators of the beloved movie house, AB Cinemas, hope to hold a “soft opening” later this week with the screening of two movies, “Halloween Ends” and the Harry Styles film “Don’t Worry Darling,” to let the community know that the regular operation of the venue is imminent.

About two weeks after that, once the finishing touches are placed on the facility, the five-screen theater will be fully operational, showing five first-run movies daily.

“The soft opening is just to get people to come in, welcome (them) back to the Kisco theater that they loved for so long – but it was closed, obviously – to just let them know that this place is back,” said manager Stephen Foisy. “I know when COVID happened, a lot of people were worried that this place would never reopen.”

A soft opening had been planned for last weekend, said Mount Kisco Building Inspector Peter Miley, but troubles with one of the projection cameras canceled what would have been the first screenings at the theater in more than two-and-a-half years.

Originally opened in 1962 at 144 E. Main St., it closed at the start of the COVID-19 shutdown in March 2020. About six months later, the former operator, Bow Tie Cinemas, announced it would not be reopening.

A year ago, it was learned that a new



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Closed for two-and-a-half years, the Mt. Kisco Theatre is on the verge of reopening, perhaps as soon as later this week for a soft opening, with the screening of two movies. It is expected to be fully operational soon after.

operator had signed a lease to bring the theater back.

Last Friday afternoon, before last weekend’s soft opening was called off, the candy counter was fully stocked, the carpet in the lobby was plush and vacuumed and there was even a delivery of a few movies

in boxes.

Foisy said most of the time there will be evening screenings on weeknights, while on weekends there will be afternoon and evening shows. The exception could be during school vacation weeks when the theater might be open throughout the day provided help is available.

Everything from children’s films to PG-13 and R-rated movies will be shown, he said. All will be new releases.

The theater’s interior needed extensive refurbishing because it had fallen into disrepair, Foisy said. The operators also hope that they can utilize the building’s roof to house a café or bar so it is more than a place to see movies. Foisy said they want to bring patrons “a café-esque vibe” but must first obtain approvals from the village for the café.

“So they do want to expand the building to make it an attraction not just for cinema but just somewhere if people want to hang out and get a cup of coffee they can also do it here, or if they’re waiting to go see a film that they can get together and meet up and relax here,” Foisy said.

Miley said that there is currently no plan submitted to the village for a rooftop café, but AB Cinemas confirmed to The Examiner that use will be sought in the future.

Mount Kisco Mayor Gina Picinch said she’s ecstatic that the theater will be returning. A few generations of local residents fondly remember the thousands of movies that were shown and called it “a

rite of passage” for youngsters to finally be allowed to go without their parents.

It also promises to bring people to the village’s downtown, which can only help the Mount Kisco economy.

“It’s a place where people gather and it’s another great form of entertainment,” Picinch said. “We are absolutely thrilled to have it back in the community.”

Foisy, a Mount Kisco native, knows what the movie theater has meant to the local area as much as anyone.

“Coming to this theater was like a treat, obviously, on weekends,” he recalled. “Our mom would bring us over; dad would bring us. So when it closed down, I was like, ‘Uh what is there do to except go out to dinner.’”

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ABOUT MATT SLATER

Matt Slater served as Chief of Staff for State Senator Terrence Murphy and has nearly a decade of experience serving communities in Putnam and Westchester counties.

After being elected Yorktown Supervisor, Matt cut town taxes and implemented

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Saw Mill Parkway Project Mercifully Nears Completion

By Abby Luby

For two years residents living near the Saw Mill Parkway in Pleasantville and Mount Pleasant have endured day-long ear-splitting noise from pile drivers and generators and the nighttime glare of floodlights.

The jarring disturbances were from construction by the state Department of Transportation (DOT) working to raise two bridges to alleviate severe flooding during heavy rains. Elevating the roadway to mitigate 100-year flood projections for that stretch of parkway that was notorious for serious flooding during significant rain events was crucial.

But the untenable situation for residents near the 1.3-mile stretch of construction will soon be over.

Pleasantville Village Administrator Eric Morrissey said last week that work on both the northbound and southbound lanes should be completed in the next two to three weeks after he had an informal conversation with the project manager.

"I was told that the paving operations should be completed in two weeks and both lanes should be open," he said.

The project has also caused extensive traffic congestion on the parkway and in the village. According to Gibson Craig, who lives about 100 feet from construction on Pollywoggle Lane in Pleasantville, the work seems to be slowing down.

"The project is scaling back but they still have to complete the landscaping and work around the Marble Avenue entrances," Craig

said.

Recently the Bedford Road exit was reopened and the barriers were removed.

Most frustrating for residents and local officials was how the DOT was unresponsive to addressing noise, environmental and quality-of-life issues for countless Pleasantville and Mount Pleasant residents. Many of the most affected residents lived on streets that directly faced the parkway.

Craig and his wife, Danielle, started an online petition in March 2021 that quickly collected nearly 500 signatures and brought much-needed attention to the situation.

"The petition connected those of us in the impacted neighborhoods and ultimately attracted the support of nearly a dozen politicians," Craig said. "This helped us restore the nightwork ban, implement a flood mitigation project on Hopper Street and plant trees at Parkway Field."

Planting trees at Parkway Field on Marble Avenue by the DOT made up for the line of trees that were clear-cut along the parkway to extend the drainage.

The petition also fueled the efforts of state Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) and Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) who pushed the DOT to end nightly work by 10 p.m. rather than continue past midnight.

Craig, an engineer, said it's clear the DOT's design-build process needs to be reviewed and reformed, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas.

"The original project on paper was classified as a minor rehabilitation project, which means it didn't require a state Environmental



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

A portion of the 1.3-mile stretch of the Saw Mill Parkway that has been the site of a road-raising project to alleviate problem flooding is expected to be completed in the next few weeks. For nearly two years, the work has severely impacted nearby residents.

Quality Review (SEQR)," he said. "But the way it turned out, the project evolved a lot with increased environmental impact, like the introduction of 5,000 pressure-treated piles that raised the road eight feet near homes. This made it clear it wasn't a minor rehabilitation project and a SEQR would've guaranteed a far better outcome to the whole project."

By classifying it as minor rehabilitation, the DOT was not required to run a sound impact study. Numerous requests were made to install sound barriers only to be told by the department that the project "does

not meet Federal Highway Administration requirements for additional sound mitigation measures."

For many, the \$60 million project has exposed the DOT's indifference to a community that has been negatively impacted by around-the-clock construction. Mount Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi and Pleasantville Mayor Peter Scherer along with their respective municipal boards requested the DOT attend a meeting to address residents and answer questions. The DOT responded in writing that the department "was in compliance with all regulations."



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This tragic story was shared with us by Joyce R., a Westchester resident who has peripheral neuropathy. And while no one was hurt in the accident, Joyce had suffered almost everyday with tingling and burning in her feet until numbness set in and she could no longer feel the brake pedal beneath her foot.

"The first stage is pain," shares Acupuncturist Taisha Gonzalez, L.Ac. of Signature Acupuncture Studio. "You feel burning tingling, sharp pains, or you feel like you're walking on tacks or marbles. This pain eventually subsides and the numbness sets in. Unfortunately, the numbness brings with it a whole other host of problems."

This was the case with Joyce. "I said I wasn't going to drive again. What if that had been a pedestrian?"

It is terribly common that peripheral neuropathy and its debilitating symptoms interfere with a person's ability to live their life. Joyce was now reliant on her husband to drive her around, even the simple pleasure of driving to the hair salon, or going to dinner with friends was outside her capabilities. And even more common, Joyce's general practitioner and several specialists told her there was nothing they could do other than prescribe her pills that would ease the pain of her neuropathy.

That's where Acupuncturist Taisha Gonzalez and her staff at Signature Acupuncture Studio come in. "About 50% of our current patients come to us suffering the same condition as Joyce," says Taisha Gonzalez, L.Ac.

They're in constant pain from neuropathy and it prevents them from not only living, but more importantly, it prevents them from enjoying life. Depending on the severity of their nerve damage, we typically see tremendous progress in 3-4 months of treatment. We believe in making your golden years golden.

"I can't lie," confides Joyce. "I was skeptical at first. I've heard over and over again from docs and specialists that there was nothing that could be done

and then there's a local Acupuncturist that tells me she can help. Turns out she was right! About three months after treatment I was able to confidently drive myself to my appointments! It's hard to put into words how incredible this is, quite frankly Taisha gave me my life back."

While Signature Acupuncture Studio specializes in acupuncture and it's definitely part of their protocols in treating neuropathy, the real secret is in a more modern medical solution called ATP Resonance BioTherapy. "This technology was originally developed by NASA to expedite healing and recovery", shares Taisha, acupuncturist and owner of the clinic. "It's like watering a plant. ATP Resonance BioTherapy stimulates the blood vessels to grow back around the peripheral nerve and provide them the proper nutrients to heal and repair."

You can learn more about Acupuncturist Mrs. Taisha Gonzalez of Signature Acupuncture Studio by visiting www.signatureacupuncture.com. If you're ready to schedule a consultation call us at (914) 222-5644. Signature Acupuncture is an intimate clinic and the staff takes pride in their ability to take their time with each patient.

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Quantum Healing & Wellness Center Opens in Mt. Kisco

The Quantum Healing & Wellness Center, at 175 E. Main St., Suite 202 in Mount Kisco, opened its doors last month and held a ribbon-cutting event last Wednesday.

Owner Michelle Adams said the center will help raise awareness of the new healing technology offered, including the Energy Enhancement System (EESystem), based

on Nikola Tesla's Scalar Wave/Medbed technology, and to start helping heal the public.

"Give your body the energy to heal itself," Adams said. "Recharge your core energy base in minutes. Reverse aging. Reduce stress on the first visit. Rid your body of inflammation and nagging ailments – sometimes even overnight."

Adams explained that the EESystem generates multiple bioactive life-enhancing energy fields, including scalar waves, which can allow cell regeneration, improve circulation and immune function, reduce inflammation, provide relief from pain, detoxify the body and elevate mood. It also assists in right-left brain balance for optimal meditation and sleep states, increasing cell membrane potential, mitochondrial and stem cell activity and energy levels for optimum function.

Adams also stressed that this technology has been extensively researched for its multitude of beneficial effects and recognized at dozens of medical, scientific and professional conferences worldwide.

"This amazing energy spa system is used by individuals, families, doctors, therapists, researchers, nutrition companies, veterans and veterinarians, as well as meditation and wellness centers to support all manner of physical, mental and spiritual development and well-being," Adams said.

She mentioned that it is not intended to be a substitute for conventional medical services.

For more information about Quantum Healing & Wellness Center, call 914-218-3428, e-mail info@



Quantum Healing & Wellness Center owner Michelle Adams, center, cuts the ribbon at her facility last Wednesday with Mount Kisco Mayor Gina Picinich looking on.

quantumhealingandwellnesspma.com or visit www.QuantumHealingAndWellnesspma.com.

Yorktown to Receive \$60G for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Yorktown has been allocated a \$60,000 grant for electric vehicle charging stations that will be installed at the John C. Hart Memorial Library in Shrub Oak.

Town officials will use the grant to purchase and install four dual-port, level-two chargers at seven parking spaces at the library.

"It's a great opportunity for us to lead by example," said Supervisor Matt Slater. "Electric vehicle sales are increasing, and communities must prepare themselves for the inevitable charger demand."

As part of the grant application process, town officials must decide where the chargers will be located. The parking spaces under consideration are on the end of the library past the children's department.

"I spent several hours in the library parking lot. I couldn't believe how fast it actually got filled up," said Councilman Tom Diana. "I think they would definitely get some usage there, probably a lot of usage."

The four charging stations are expected to cost \$46,000. The balance of the grant will be used to pay for unexpected expenses related to the installation.

"That's really a goal for us, to put as many EV chargers around town as you can because you're going to need them," Councilman Sergio Esposito said.

The charging stations are expected to be installed by sometime next summer. Charging station users will be expected to pay for the charging by downloading a smart phone app.

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Westchester Joint Water Works Issues Findings for Filtration Plant at Airport

Westchester Joint Water Works (WJWW), a nonprofit public benefit corporation responsible for maintaining a drinking water system for up to 100,000 Westchester County residents, has issued a findings statement certifying that all state Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requirements and regulations have been met for a proposed \$138 million drinking water filtration plant at Westchester County Airport in Harrison.

On Oct. 12, WJWW, as lead agency, adopted the findings statement. This is the final step in the lead agency's SEQRA review for the project.

"This has been a long and thorough process, and Westchester Joint Water Works is pleased to share these important findings that conclude that the Westchester County Airport site planned for the water filtration plant is superior to alternative locations," said Thomas Murphy, chair of the WJWW Board of Trustees and Mamaroneck Village Mayor. "The building of the water filtration plant will enable a diverse population to receive clean drinking water for generations. We look forward to moving this crucial project forward."

The SEQRA findings statement concludes that the Westchester County Airport site planned for the water filtration plant is superior to alternative locations, most notably "Alternative 2 – WJWW Owned Exchange Parcel" because the airport site is located within an existing business zoning district; the site is fronted by Route 120 with direct access to Purchase Street; the plant at the airport will not result in any disturbance to wetlands; and the airport site is fronted by an existing WJWW water transmission main and existing Con Edison electric transmission line.

The project calls for a daily 30-million-gallon Dissolved Air Flotation/Filtration (DAFF) plant to be built on 13.4 acres. The land, currently owned by Westchester County, is planned to be apportioned from the airport in exchange for a deed from WJWW for an equivalent 13.4-acre parcel it owns nearby.

The exchange will result in no change in acreage to Westchester County Airport or WJWW.

Other considerations for the project included:

- The water filtration plant is a permitted use on the county land and the project is consistent with Harrison's zoning and the Comprehensive Plan.

- To be consistent with the residential character of the Purchase Street neighborhoods, the water filtration plant building will include architectural elements such as stone veneer matching the stone walls along Purchase Street, and a gabled roof line with building height meeting residential zoning requirements.
- The water filtration plant building will be located behind a 100-foot buffer of existing mature trees along Purchase Street to be enhanced by landscaping with views from

- Purchase Street largely obstructed.
- An existing buffer of mature trees and vegetation to be enhanced by landscaping will provide an effective visual screen between the water filtration plant and a house of worship, which property abuts the airport site.
- An archaeological survey of the airport site was performed and reviewed by the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, which concluded the airport site "contained no properties,

- including archeological and/or historic resources, listed in or eligible for the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places."
- The airport site is located on the New York City Kensico Reservoir Watershed requiring construction to comply with stringent New York City Department of Environmental Protection regulations to protect the Kensico Reservoir Watershed. The complete Findings Statement can be read at www.wjwwfiltration.org.

For the last 5 years, according to the Putnam County Budget Reports, Putnam County has had major budget surpluses at the end of the year, but the Legislature kept voting to raise our taxes anyway!

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2021	\$23,388,124.37	2.5%

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Bedford to Hold its First-Ever Health & Wellness Fest at Fox Lane HS

By Martin Wilbur

More than ever before, attention is being paid to overall health, and not just for middle-aged adults or seniors.

To address that focus, the Town of Bedford is holding its inaugural Health & Wellness Fest this Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Fox Lane High School.

The day will feature a wide variety of workshops on health-related topics for adults and teens, children's activities and NARCAN and "Stop the Bleed" training for the public, both of which can save a person's life if someone needs help from an opioid overdose or is suffering from serious bleeding, respectively.

There will also be health screenings, music and several food trucks outside the school in case anyone gets hungry.

Best of all, you don't have to be a Bedford resident to attend, and everything is free unless you buy food from one of the trucks.

"We want to make it fun, make it enjoyable, have it really be an uplifting day and bring people together and to remember that we have a lot to offer in the community," said Cynthia Braun, a former pediatrician and the vendor coordinator for the town's Health & Wellness Fest Committee. "We have a lot of caring people who want to help. We hope we can direct people to lots of resources for assistance."

About 40 local health and community organizations will be on hand to familiarize local residents with what they do and how

to access their services, from Northern Westchester Hospital/Northwell Health, Open Door Family Medical Center and the Westchester County Department of Health to local libraries, the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry and the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester.

Workshops, most of which are about 45 minutes, include chair yoga, tai chi and Zumba sessions for those who'd like to take part in movement and exercise. There are other workshops such as one that focuses on brain health, information about 12 Step programs and how anyone can use them to improve their life and a presentation from representatives from the New York Milk Bank, an organization that provides safely pasteurized human milk for moms whose own milk is unavailable or insufficient.

Braun said the impetus for the festival came from Bedford Councilman Andres Castillo. Castillo, an administrator for Open Door Family Medical Centers, recognized that various segments of the population were in need, she said. That includes those who have suffered from stress, isolation and other consequences from COVID-19 that are not directly related to the virus along with the underserved immigrant population in the area.

The committee was looking for organizations that would be of value to a wide cross-section of the community.

"We were thinking families, actually parents with kids, but we really wanted to attract teenagers, too, and we wanted to



have programming for senior adults as well, the communities that were hit so hard with COVID," she said. "We've all been hit hard, but so many teens and young adults really struggled with anxiety and depression that's devastating in that population. Senior adults have been struggling, in particular, with loneliness and isolation as well as health issues."

Organizers hope to have most of the activities outdoors. In the case of rain, much of those could be moved inside the high school, Braun said.

While it's a Town of Bedford event, several surrounding communities are participating in the festival. Mount Kisco Mayor Gina

Picinich said when multiple towns can partner on bringing important resources and information to the public's attention, it has far-reaching benefits.

"In Mount Kisco, we don't have a social services arm, we don't have a health department, so fundamentally this type of activity is not something that village government has typically done," Picinich said. "We rely on our partners in our community."

For more information about the Health & Wellness Fest and the full schedule of workshops and activities, visit www.bedfordny.gov.

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Upholstery and How its History Makes Our Furniture Comfortable Today

In my living room sits a Queen Anne-style wingback chair, probably from 1900 or so, that has been through the wringer of an upholstery mishap and its correction.

When I first acquired it, the chair had come with graceful curvilinear lines that seemed to be short on padding to be comfortable.

So, when I sent it to an upholsterer to be redone with new stuffing, I made the mistake of overreacting: I specified that it be "overstuffed." The result is that it was returned to me looking like an amorphous giant blimp, with the graceful lines all but obscured.

I had to wait another 15 years or so when it was ready for another reupholstering before that condition could be corrected. I have since been more conservative in my upholstery requests.

While seating surfaces during the Dark Ages were rather hard on the posterior, the Industrial Revolution allowed for more complex furniture, as well as more elaborate stuffing and interesting fabrics. Today, upholstery is part of everyday life for everyone seeking comfort in their homes.

The foundations of what we now call upholstery were laid in the late 16th century, the Elizabethan era, when crude forms of stuffed chairs became more common as replacements for wooden stools. The word upholstery comes from the Middle English word "upholder," which referred to an artisan who "held up" their goods.



By Bill Primavera

Traditional upholstery uses materials like coil springs (post-1850), animal hair (horse, hog and cow), coir, straw and hay, hessians, linen scrim, wadding, etc., and is done by hand, building each layer up. We may be spoiled for choice when it comes to furnishing our homes with luxury fabrics and unique cushions, but things weren't always this way. Our love affair with comfortable and contemporary soft furnishing dates back to Egyptian times, when horsehair-stuffed cushions were the norm.

After the Dark Ages, people could stop worrying if they were going to be raped and pilloried, with their houses burnt down, and they

began to focus more on what was inside them. When standards of living began to improve, people's thoughts turned to comfort. Cushions could be added to solid oak chairs to offer a little comfort, but there were no cushions on the backs of chairs.

In the Elizabethan era levels of comfort significantly increased.

To accommodate large Elizabethan skirts, the farthingale chair was introduced – a chair without arms with a piece of leather stretched across the back and nailed on each side. Upholstering materials included leather, brocade or embroidered cloth and velvet trimmed with a heavy fringe. Stuffing could be anything from sawdust, grass, feathers or deer, goat and horsehair.

Sofas still didn't exist before this time;

seats for more than one person were usually benches that could be pushed against the wall.

Actually, upholstery took a while to catch on; anything slightly comfortable was often disregarded and was felt to be too fem for the guys. Jacobean furniture was still similar to Elizabethan, with a few adjustments. Furniture was still made from oak, and blocky, because the carpenters were using carpentry tools to make it.

With Charles II on the English throne, the Puritan regime ended and the decorative arts began to flourish, which settlers brought to America. People were getting used to the comfort of upholstered furniture, and the first fully upholstered chair was built in 1705, referred to as a "sleeping chair," where its occupant could rest his head on either the sides or the back.

Tapestry and fabric factories began to spring up in London and Paris, and the upholstery business began to boom.

Silk damask, wool moreen and elaborate embroidery were used increasingly more in upholstery. Cushions were made of horsehair with linen lining and down.

Upholstery would very much be integrated into the furniture-making process, and as comfort improved, the drop-in seat was invented. This meant that the seat could be upholstered in any fabric.

Louis XVI's chairs were upholstered in pastel blues, pinks and yellows. Thomas Chippendale's camelback sofas were some of the first to be completely upholstered, except for exposed legs.

Victorian opulence reigned supreme in the

19th century. Two major innovations brought about modern upholstery. The first was the steam-powered engine, which provided cheap power to machine looms so that machine-woven fabrics could be mass produced. The second was the steel coil spring, which revolutionized seat cushions.

Bold Rococo Revival styles were popular, with shiny silks, leather and brocades that featured button tufting. Cornucopia-armed sofas often featured matching, upholstered round cushions on either end.

Styles from Mission to Art Deco and Mid Century Modern followed, each influencing upholstery preferences.

A major development was the invention of nylon as a durable alternative to silk, resistant to normal wear and tear that affected more traditional upholstery. Other inventions, from bent steel to fiberglass to molded foam cores, revolutionized furniture design and simultaneously brought about many of the modern designs in furniture upholstery we still see today.

Aren't we all happy that today we don't have to settle for a bare, hard oak bench for seating? And when we do, such as in church, it mercifully is only for as long as the service.

Bill Primavera is a residential and commercial realtor associated with William Raveis Realty as well as a publicist and journalist writing regularly as The Home Guru. For questions about home maintenance or to buy or sell a home, he can be e-mailed at williamjprimavera@gmail.com or called directly at 914-522-2076.

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Local Composer Set to Unveil Premiere of 'Voices' of the Holocaust

By Martin Wilbur

About 25 years ago, when Michael Shapiro served as music consultant to the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, he found a book of Sephardic poetry of the Holocaust.

The poetry's text was in multiple languages – Italian, Spanish, French, among a few others. More than two decades later, that discovery would serve as the inspiration for Shapiro to compose his latest work.

Shapiro sat down and wrote the piece he titled "Voices." Deborah King, who is the artistic director of Ember Choral Arts and conductor of Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, urged him to write what he described as "my requiem."

"Through her good graces and influence and caring, I was inspired to write this and I wrote it in seven months," said Shapiro the former conductor of the Chappaqua Orchestra who remains its laureate conductor and continues to live in Chappaqua. "It just flew out of me, and I can tell you it's one of my most accomplished works, no question about it. I think it will have an immediate impact."

On Nov. 9, area residents will have the opportunity to hear the world co-premiere of "Voices" at Temple Shaaray Tefila in Bedford. The performance will feature



Composer Michael Shapiro, the former conductor of the Chappaqua Orchestra, will bring his latest work, "Voices," to Bedford on Nov. 9.

the Ember Choral Arts, the American Modern Ensemble, conducted by King, and tenor Daniel Mutlu, the senior cantor at Manhattan's Central Synagogue and one of the preeminent American cantorial voices.

The following evening it will be performed at Central Synagogue.

The performances coincide with the 84th anniversary of Kristallnacht, a pogrom against the Jewish people in Germany, which is often considered the beginning of the Holocaust.

Shapiro explained that the just over one-hour choral and chamber ensemble reflects the many musical styles, languages and voices of the Jewish people.

But "Voices" is more than a remembrance of the six million lost or honoring Sephardic Jews, those whose origins are traced to the Mediterranean instead of Europe. It is a cautionary tale with right-wing extremism on the rise in countries around the globe, including the United States, Shapiro said.

"I see this piece as a warning, a human rights warning to the world that I can do as an artist," Shapiro said. "What happened was, yes, six million of my people were savagely murdered. You can't compare the Holocaust to anything else, which was brought about by the most civilized country in the world, the German military, which is just crazy when you think about it – and there have been other genocides since."

The work, which opens and closes in Hebrew, leads off with "Ani Ma'Amin" ("I Believe"), which is attributed to Azriel David Fastag, who composed the piece in a cattle car on his way to a Nazi death camp.

One of the other people on board survived jumping off the train and brought the music to a head rabbi when he arrived in Israel.

"I hope in this piece, and I think I've succeeded in giving voice to those who have no voice, whose voices were destroyed," Shapiro said.

The closing portion is "Avinu Malkeinu" ("Our Father, Our King, Hear Our Prayer") and he weaves in "Hatikvah," the Israeli national anthem near the end. In between, listeners will music in other languages and styles.

Shapiro, who now conducts orchestras around the world, hopes the piece is remembered not just for the music but for the message, which people of all backgrounds can appreciate.

"So I hope that my piece will last beyond me and will be heard by a generation a hundred years from now," Shapiro said.

For those interested in attending the Nov. 9 program at Temple Shaaray Tefila, you can register for tickets by visiting www.shaaraytefila.org. Tickets are free but a donation is requested.

The program will also be broadcast on Nov. 10 on Central Synagogue's YouTube Channel and Facebook page. Both programs start at 7:30 p.m. and will be followed by a Q&A.

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Long Term Care Ombudsman Program: Serving Residents and Seeking Volunteers

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Coming Home to a Weekend of Fun and Memories



ART NELSON PHOTOS

It was quite a weekend for current Fox Lane School students, their families and alumni as the community converged on the school for Foxes Night and Homecoming Weekend. On Friday night, students celebrated their community. On Saturday, it was the homecoming football game with the Foxes hosting Brewster and the Fox Lane Hall of Fame Committee celebrating the 2022 inductees into the school's Athletics Hall of Fame.



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November 24, 2022 at 8AM

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1 MILE FUN RUN/WALK: 9AM - Medals for finishers

LOCATION: Somers High School's Scenic Cross Country Course

REGISTRATION: Scan QR Code or find our race on www.runsignup.com

Online registration is open through 11/22/22

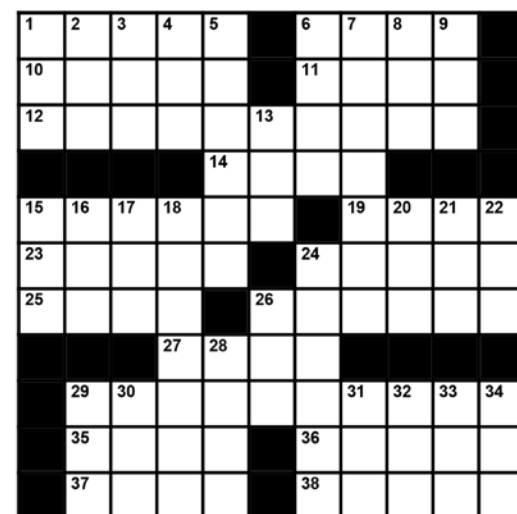
Crossword

Across

1. Inside man
6. "Babel" star first name
10. Semiprecious gemstones
11. Letterman rival
12. Orderly
14. Perfume brand by Dana
15. Your sweet tooth will love this Thornwood confectionery, _____ Bakery
19. Easy win
23. Brink
24. Pitch-black
25. "Naked Maja" painter
26. Angers
27. "The New Yorker" humorist Ogden
29. This Mt. Kisco school will turn your kids into computer warriors
35. Schusser's support
36. Feudal lord
37. China related
38. Burdened

Down

1. Sleepers, for short
2. Stretched out
3. Promotions (abbr)
4. Fish catcher
5. Nasty fly
6. Divulge a secret
7. Required filings
8. Singer DiFranco
9. ER role
13. Andy Warhol painting



15. Student's stat.
16. Stutz contemporary
17. Tax
18. Kampala native
20. Hearty cheer
21. Cambridge univ.
22. Liq. measures, abbr.
24. Arduous
26. Admiral's org.
28. Prefix with dynamic
29. Pennies, abbr.
30. Kimono closer
31. She plays Shay in NCIS Los Angeles
32. One of the Beverly Hillbillies
33. Life measurement
34. Bigwig on the Hill, abbr.

Answers on page 28

Buy Myles Mellor's easy, super easy, medium crosswords, family puzzle books, word searches and cryptograms at www.ilovecrosswords.com

White Plains Preschool to Launch Program for Little Learners

By Martin Wilbur

Most preschools begin their traditional programs for young children with a class for two-year-olds.

Starting Oct. 24, the JCC of Mid-Westchester (JCCMW) Nursery School is introducing a new program at its White Plains location that offers a class to begin the socialization process for toddlers that are as young as 16 months.

Little Learners, a three-day-a-week class for one-hour-and-45-minute sessions, will start off with parents and caregivers accompanying the child for a morning of art, music, stories and other age-appropriate activities. Sometime in January, it will transition to a drop-off program.

"I don't know of any other programs that do this," said Debbie Cohen-Bahl, the director of the JCC Mid-Westchester Nursery School in White Plains who will teach the class. "People often ask: Do you have anything more? Do you have extra days? And that's how this kind of came about."

Not only were parents requesting something more for their younger children, but the earlier acclimation to a classroom setting will help the kids when they reach two, three and four years old, Cohen-Bahl said.

While there are plenty of Mommy and Me classes in the area, those typically don't offer the robust schedule or structure that will be found in Little Learners, she said. The class will gradually introduce the young children to playing more on their own, overseen by the caregivers at first early on in the program, followed later by the teacher.

Cohen-Bahl said that since preschool is

mainly about socialization and getting children accustomed to other people and routines, Little Learners will be able to introduce that experience for an age group that is not yet old enough to attend a traditional pre-school program.

"Children go and explore on their own and (adults) step in when necessary," Cohen-Bahl said. "But then we will have extra structure time when we all sit down for story time."

"It's really about children socializing and feeling comfortable going from place to place and transitioning on their own," she added.

Classes will be held Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays through the first week in June. Cohen-Bahl explained that having three consecutive days of classes will allow children to more easily settle into a routine.

"By the time that we get to drop-off, they're going to be used to coming to the classroom, so it's going to be a familiar setting," Cohen-Bahl said.

Each class will have one teacher for up to eight children during the first three months when the parents or caregivers will be there for the classes. As Little Learners transitions into a drop-off program, there will be a second teacher for the class. Children do not have to be potty trained to attend the program.

During the time when it's a drop-off program, caregivers will be invited back in for the final 15 minutes of a session, Cohen-Bahl said.

If there is enough enrollment, then the pre-school would open a second class, she said. So far, there's a lot of good feedback about the concept from the public. The class runs



Debbie Cohen-Bahl, pictured above, the director of the JCC Mid-Westchester Nursery School in White Plains, will be starting a program on Oct. 24 for children 16 to 24 months old.

from 9:30 to 11:15 a.m. when classes are in session.

"People are still learning about it," Cohen-Bahl said. "I think with the (Jewish) holidays that we've just had it put a stop to things."

While the JCCMW Nursery School is located within Temple Israel in White Plains, the program is open to parents and children of all faiths and backgrounds. The JCC's main

location is in Scarsdale but had to search for a second site because there was a need for more pre-school in the area, Cohen-Bahl said.

The JCCMW Nursery School at Temple Israel is located at 280 Old Mamaroneck Rd. in White Plains. For more information and registration, visit <https://jccmw.org/jccmw-at-white-plains/#littlearners>.

Protecting North Castle's Drinking Water

Join us for an Availability Session:

When: October 27, 2022 | 6-8 PM

Where: American Legion, 35 Bedford Road

An Availability Session (informal meeting with local and state health and environmental regulators and specialists) is being held to provide the public an opportunity to speak with the New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Health (DOH). The Availability Session is an opportunity to get information and resources related to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) contamination in North Castle's groundwater.

DEC and DOH are working together to protect public health in North Castle. As part of New York State's Emerging Contaminant Sampling Initiative to investigate groundwater for emerging contaminants at State Superfund and Brownfield Cleanup Program sites, DEC identified PFAS contamination in groundwater and private drinking water supply wells near the Armonk Private Wells site, a State Superfund site in Westchester County. Additionally, as part of New York State's Inactive Landfill Initiative, PFAS impacts were also found in the vicinity of the Westchester Garden Center/Labriola Landfill. Specifically, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) were detected at concentrations above New York State maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for public drinking water (10 parts per trillion).

At this meeting, you can speak to DEC and DOH representatives directly, and learn about ongoing private well sampling efforts, filtration options, PFAS-containing products and contamination sources, and what the State is doing to identify the source(s) of contamination in North Castle.

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Play Center to Hold Fun Family Evening to Support Scholarship Fund

By Martin Wilbur

If you're looking for something to do this weekend and want to contribute to a cause to help families with young children, then visiting the First Congregational Church of Chappaqua late Saturday afternoon and evening would be a good choice.

The church has scheduled a Fall FunFest, a family event with food and drinks, children's activities, a silent auction with several outstanding gifts and live dance music by the Don DuPont Big Band.

But the best part of the event, which is co-sponsored by the Play Care Learning Center at the church, might be that it will serve

as a fundraiser for the Mattias Edstrom Scholarship Fund to provide families with scholarships who might not be able to afford to send their children to the center.

"We've gotten some very, very generous donations and we've been able to award several families who have needed the scholarship," said Rev. Dr. Martha Jacobs, the senior minister at First Congregational. "Also, if there's a family who has a child that would benefit from more days than the family can afford, we try to help that way as well. We're trying to be creative. The idea is not to horde the money, the idea is to use it for young people."

Families that demonstrate financial need

are eligible to benefit from the scholarship, she said.

The fund was created early last year in memory of Edstrom, who attended Play Care when he was of preschool age. He died in a hiking accident about two-and-a-half years ago at the age of 11.

Jacobs said a challenge for the center is that the families that can best use the help can sometimes find the school inaccessible. Many might be from Mount Kisco, Ossining or other communities that are not terribly far away, but don't have a car to get to the site or they might have to be at work before the school opens.

"We have not been able to do that yet, but

we're trying to figure out creative ways to help them," Jacobs said.

In keeping with the family-friendly theme for Saturday, the FunFest begins at 5:30 p.m. and continues until 8:30 p.m. For children, there will be facepainting, a balloon artist and crafts, among other activities.

There will be the Westchester Burger food truck for guests to buy something to eat. Most of the activities will be inside, although the church plans to set up some seats outside should the weather cooperate, Jacobs said.

Organizers originally considered setting up a tent outside, but temperatures often turn chilly after sunset in the latter part of October, even if it had been a pleasant afternoon, she said.

The event also provides the community with a chance to visit with friends and neighbors. With many people having been hesitant to jump back into socializing as they might have before the pandemic, it could turn out to be therapeutic for some.

"I feel like the community needs these types of events, but really what this is about is for people to have fun," Jacobs said.

Admission is \$20 for anyone over 12 years old.

To learn more about the event and the Mattias Edstrom Scholarship fund, visit www.fcc-chappaqua.org. The First Congregational Church of Chappaqua is located at 210 Orchard Ridge Rd. in Chappaqua.

Sharing a Toast

Valley Market Deli owners Sam and Peter shared a beverage recently toasting the deli's 50th anniversary in business in Jefferson Valley. They cut the ribbon on a half-century of making sandwiches, including mouthwatering cheese steak sandwiches and the hot daily buffet.



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Transportation Advocates Criticize Bee-Line Bus System as Unreliable

On Monday, at the White Plains TransCenter, members of Tri-State Transportation Campaign (TSTC), standing alongside Bee-Line bus riders and representatives from TransitCenter and the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC), unveiled TSTC's latest report, Bidding for a Better Bee-Line: Bringing Westchester's Bus System into the Future.

Bus riders, community organizations and elected officials spoke about the Bee-Line's infrequent, unreliable and inaccessible service and the need for Westchester County to do more for bus riders.

The service provider, Liberty Lines Transit, must be held accountable before their contract is renewed in December 2023, according to the report.

"One truth that remains constant is that public funds must be used appropriately and efficiently," said Talia Crawford, report co-author, and Campaign Organizer for Tri-State Transportation Campaign. "As outlined in our report, the changes to the procedural framework of contracting, bidding, and oversight can result in a better Bee-Line for Westchester County's nearly one million residents."

TSTC's released recommendations for holding Bee-Line's operator accountable. They include:

- Review the Westchester County Mobility and Transit Plan to improve

service and make the most out of the budget allocated toward its operations, and provide further details to clarify how the micro-transit zones and fare reciprocity program would work;

- Open up the RFP and create a more competitive bidding process for the 2024 BeeLine Operations contract;
- Write a new contract that is fair and protects the county by adding in key performance indicators to ensure the quality of service being delivered is up to standard, while removing several concerning stipulations that favor Liberty Lines;
- Create a stronger oversight body with sufficient staff such as experts and auditors to ensure that the operator is meeting their contract standards and meeting the needs of riders; and,
- Require more transparency and data behind the contract and operations of Liberty Lines, such as publishing KPIs.

"Westchester County residents suffer from inadequate bus service primarily because of the county government's non-competitive, unaccountable contract with Liberty Lines," said David Bragdon, executive director of TransitCenter, a national research organization that has studied transit contracting. "Passively giving one private company a perpetual monopoly at public expense, with no meaningful oversight or performance measures, is totally contrary to national

best practice in the transit industry. This cozy, unusual arrangement has saddled riders and taxpayers with an inefficient, stagnant bus service that fails to meet the needs of the public."

"Mass transit could not be more important to this County than it is today," said County Legislator MaryJane Shimsky (D-Dobbs Ferry). "With a burning planet and an affordability crisis for housing and nearly everything else, Westchester County needs a transit system that will make commuting, shopping, participating in community activities and enjoying life convenient, affordable and time-efficient for its residents."

"The increased use of the Bee-Line buses during this year's fare-free summer demonstrates that demand for mass transit exists in Westchester," Shimsky continued. "Tri-State Transportation Campaign has been a staunch advocate for our mass transit users; and I look forward to incorporating their input into plans for improving our county's mass transit system."

Randy Glucksman, MTA board member, and chair of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council (MNRCC) said Metro-North rides in the county depend on Bee-Line buses to travel.

"Bee-Line provides crucial first- and last-mile connections to Metro-North stations around Westchester, helping tens of thousands of riders get where

they need to go every day without driving," Glucksman said. "Better Bee-Line service would mean faster, more equitable, and more reliable transit for riders around the region – including by making Metro-North a more accessible option for Westchester residents who live farther from Metro-North stations. Riders deserve a bus network they can depend on with seamless connections, more frequent service and better reliability, and TSTC's recommendations will help make a better Bee-Line a reality."

Maria Samuels, executive director of Westchester Disabled on the Move, said people with disabilities are often excluded from the decisions that are made for them. The Bee-Line buses often fail to address the needs and challenges among those in the disability community.

"This transportation study might be a big step forward for our county's nondisabled, but we must add the voice of the disability community into the conversation," Samuels said. "We, too, need to get to work on time, to church, to shop, to medical appointments, to go to restaurants and many of us fully rely on public transportation, including paratransit, to get around. And our transportation needs often differ from the rest of the population. I hope we still have an opportunity to become part of the decision and not just be affected by it."

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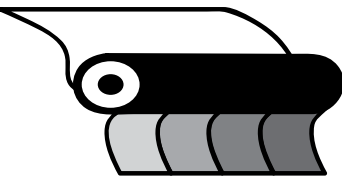
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continued on page 26

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Afghan Women's Circle Looks to Bridge Cultural Divide

Two nonprofits, Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration, Inc. (WJCI) and Elena's Light Inc. are joining forces to herald an Afghan Women's Circle initiative.

This five-week, biweekly, 90-minute support group serves as a safe and confidential cultural space for conversations relevant to the empowerment and personal growth of Afghan women who have recently arrived in the United States. The collaborative group will take place at JCC Mid-Westchester and is funded by UJA-Federation of New York.

Weekly topics at the circle will include motherhood, language acquisition, employment, socialization, cultural competence, women's health, financial literacy, the driver's license application process, women's rights, and other tools to help them transition and adjust to the cultural bridge of American life.

The common goal of each weekly topic is to provide a sense of independence and resilience while advancing their understanding and practice of empowerment – sentiments Elena's Light staff are hoping will be strengthened by the addition of a mentor for each participant once regular group meetings have ended. These mentors are conscious of each woman's situation and will cater their support services as much.

"WJCI is honored to be working alongside Elena's Light on this project," said Holly Rosen Fink, president and co-founder of



A session of the Afghan Women's Circle at the JCC Mid-Westchester. The group helps women from Afghanistan who have recently arrived in the U.S. acclimate to their new homes.

WJCI. "We look forward to seeing the results and hope that the women reap its rewards for years to come."

In the United States, Afghan women frequently lack the resources and self-confidence to address or overcome language and cultural barriers. They endure gender

discrimination and hold in trauma in unhealthy, private ways, never allowed to come up for air.

Additionally, they commonly lack knowledge of opportunities available to them and their families. They need companionship, mentorship, guidance,

psychological support, language and literacy skills, access to education and information about their options. The Afghan Women's Circle was created to address these issues.

Founded by Fereshteh Ganjavi, a refugee, Elena's Light embodies a mission to engineer brighter futures for refugee women and children. The staffers there accomplish this through consistent engagement with families, offering English tutoring, healthcare navigation, legal advocacy, covid relief, and other support. In collaboration with partners across the region, Elena's Light is also helping to build a long-term support network for the newest members of the community.

WJCI is a nonpartisan, volunteer-run and led organization dedicated to helping all immigrants. Earlier this year, WJCI partnered with UJA-Federation of New York and The Shapiro Foundation to help 15 local resettlement groups resettle Afghan refugees, effectively aiding nearly 100 Afghan refugees to come off army bases around the country.

Funding for the program was provided by UJA-Federation of New York.

For more information about Elena's Light's programs and how to get involved, visit www.elenaslight.org. For more information about WJCI, e-mail info@wjci.org or visit www.wjci.org.

Award-Winning Author Junger to Speak at Pace on November 10

Sebastian Junger, The New York Times bestselling author of "Freedom," "Tribe" and "The Perfect Storm," will speak at Pace University's Pleasantville campus on Thursday, Nov. 10 at 6 p.m.

The event, called "Sebastian Junger: In Conversation with Pace University," is being held in connection with the university's Veteran's Day festivities. Junger, a longtime war reporter, writer for Vanity Fair and ABC News correspondent, is renowned for his eloquent and thought-provoking documentaries and books that

explore the challenges and stresses of combat.

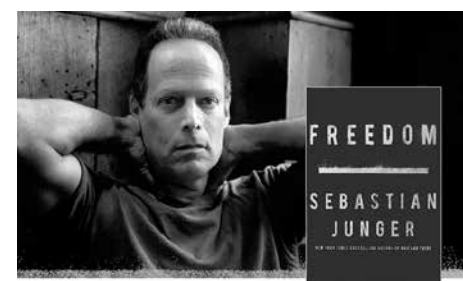
He is co-director of the documentary film "Restrepo," which was nominated for an Academy Award and winner of the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance. He is also winner of a Peabody Award and the National Magazine Award for Reporting.

His book, "The Perfect Storm," was made into a feature-length movie starring George Clooney, Mark Wahlberg and Diane Lane.

"Pace University is pleased to welcome

Sebastian Junger to campus and eager to engage in what will be a timely, thought-provoking and important discussion," Pace President Marvin Krislov said. "Our community of students, veterans and staff will no doubt appreciate his insights learned from decades of experience and impressive body of work. We're grateful to our partner Scattered Books for making this a reality and for their continued support of our OASIS program."

Tickets are \$30 and include a signed copy of either "Freedom" or "Tribe."



Bestselling Author Sebastian Junger will be at Pace University in Pleasantville on Nov. 10.

New York Drivers Can Replace Peeling License Plates for Free

New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Commissioner Mark J.F. Schroeder is reminding vehicle owners they can exchange any New York license plate that is peeling free of charge.

"We are encouraging New Yorkers who have peeling license plates to get new ones, without any charge, to avoid the risk of being ticketed and having to pay a fine," Schroeder said. "We do not want that to happen to our customers, so we made the process to replace peeling plates as easy as possible."

Customers who want the next available standard plate number free of charge can e-mail DMV at dmv.sm.peelingplates@dmv.ny.gov. They should include their current plate number in the subject line and the following information in the email:

- name as it appears on the registration
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A new registration/windshield sticker will be mailed along with the new license plates.

If a customer wishes to keep the same plate number, they should mail a completed Application for Replacement Plates-Keep Same Plate Number, a photograph of the peeling plates and a \$20 check or money order payable to Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to NYS DMV, 6 Empire State Plaza, Room 414A, Albany, N.Y. 12228.

A new registration and windshield sticker will be mailed separately from the plates.

License plates showing natural aging, chips or cracks are not eligible for a free exchange. Customers wishing to exchange plates showing natural aging must pay the \$28.75 replacement fee.

Customers should not return peeling plates to DMV and should destroy them so they cannot be reused. When disposing of peeling plates, DMV recommends using a permanent ink marker to cross out the plate number or otherwise deface the plates.

Old plates can be recycled at a local scrap metal yard or recycling drop-off station. For more information, visit [Recycle Right New York](http://RecycleRightNewYork.org).

Students and veterans will get in for free and have the option of purchasing a book separately. Registration is required as space is limited.

A portion of proceeds from book sales will go toward Pace's OASIS program, which provides comprehensive support services for students with high-functioning autism and those with other learning challenges who would like to fulfill their dream of furthering their education.

The discussion and book-signing are brought to the community in partnership with Scattered Books, an independent bookstore in Chappaqua. Jerry McKinstry, a former reporter and senior director of public affairs at Pace, will moderate the discussion.

"Since my early years as a reporter, I've been a student and admirer of Sebastian Junger's impressive collection of works," McKinstry said. "There's a lot of ground to cover and I know the Pace community is excited to welcome him to our campus for what we expect will be an interesting discussion and insightful evening."

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A History of Napa Valley Wine Over Four Eras



By Nick Antonaccio

There are a record number of wineries in the United States today: 10,000-plus. Over 42 percent are in California, accounting for 84 percent of all domestic wine production. Yet, fewer than 2 percent of all wineries in the

United States – less than 200 – account for 84 percent of all wine production.

The wineries of Napa Valley, as iconic as they have become, contribute less than 4 percent of the state's wines.

This was the introduction to my column several weeks ago. It was intended to place a perspective on the American wine industry, while at the same time, to focus on the background of Napa Valley winemakers.

Theirs has been a long, evolving history. And quite a tumultuous history.

This week I focus on this history in four distinct periods.

1. Pre-Prohibition marked the infancy and initial rise of Napa Valley. Western European immigrants, many Italians, settled in the Napa Valley and plied their trade in the local markets. Prohibition decimated the industry from 1920 to 1933.

2. The post-Prohibition era. It created a number of powerhouses, most closely held. These included Peter and Robert Mondavi, Ernest and Julio Gallo and several other notable families, who flourished and continue to exert their influence in today's market. Other notables include Jacob and Frederick Beringer, Mike Grgich and Joseph Heitz.

3. The early 1970s. This wave of new wineries stood out for their ability to lever off the inroads made by their predecessors. Many were progenies of the 1960s movement of being one with nature, without the trappings of ordered society. While many languished in anonymity, others successfully branded themselves as American icons.

These included the winemakers who participated in the Judgment of Paris in 1976, a tasting competition between upstart Napa wineries and prestigious French wines from the Bordeaux and Burgundy regions. Much to the chagrin of the French and the surprise of wine cognoscenti across the globe, American wines were ranked first in the tasting. (The movie

"Bottle Shock" focused on the backdrop of the event.)

These Napa Valley wineries, Chateau Montelena (Chardonnay) and Stag's Leap Wine Cellars (Cabernet Sauvignon), remain highly regarded to this day, along with others that competed. This single event was the

impetus that catapulted the Napa Valley into becoming the highly regarded wine region it is today.

4. The current period in the history of the Napa Valley takes a different route to fame and fortune. In the last 35 years or so, the winemaking industry has been turned upside down through modern technology and modern-day entrepreneurs.

And the profile of winemakers has been evolving. Still dominant are the traditional winemakers who grow their own grapes and produce their own wines. Others have not been as adventurous or as capital-rich, instead opting to buy grapes and process them in their wineries.

Still others have gone the investment-banking route: invest other people's money. The emergence of these trendsetting winemakers who own no land, no winery and no storage facilities continue to escalate.

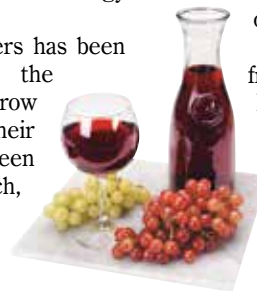
Nouveau riche entrepreneurs own many of these virtual wineries. They amassed fortunes during the last 20 years, most notably during the last two technology booms and the financial run-up prior to the Great Recession. "Gentlemen winemakers" is a term I've been using to describe these entrepreneurs, who became aware of the finer luxuries of the good life and then invested in those industries that piqued their interests.

Napa Valley is dotted with the likes of

these wine lovers-turned-winemakers. A number have grape-stained hands from crafting their own wines, while others have ink-stained hands from writing checks to purchase wineries and hire talented winemakers who are imbued with their employers' passion for a particular style of wine from a particular grape or plot of land.

Today's wine market enjoys the fruits of Napa Valley entrepreneurs. Excellent wines are available – at broad price points – to satiate the palate of discerning wine consumers. And these winemakers mirror the American social model. They are a mosaic of multicultural, financially divergent individuals and corporate-backed investors seeking the American dream: following one's passion, earning the accolades of fellow citizens and achieving the financial rewards of their sweat and dedication.

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



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STEM Alliance, AT&T Partner to Launch Digital Navigator in Westchester

The STEM Alliance of Westchester is teaming up with AT&T to help narrow the digital divide throughout the county with a new digital navigator program called Digital Pathways.

The program brings trained, bilingual STEM Alliance digital navigators to partner sites to help clients access free or low-cost digital resources like devices, internet access and beginner tech training. The navigators can assess and track client needs, refer them to relevant resources and follow up to make sure that all digital needs are being met.

This first-of-its-kind countywide program is being funded by a \$30,000 contribution from AT&T.

The STEM Alliance's Digital Pathways program will provide a range of support, including educating residents about the federal government's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which provides an up to \$30 credit toward monthly internet or mobile service to eligible households. Households typically qualify by income level or if someone in the home receives other support services such as Medicaid, SNAP, Free/Reduced Lunch or a Pell Grant.

The program is part of the federal government's \$65 billion initiative to achieve universal connectivity.

However, the ACP registration process can be difficult for those who do not have a computer or experience with online portals. Digital Pathways brings help directly to clients in their communities through partnerships with local nonprofits and other community agencies.

In addition to educating eligible residents on ACP, Digital Pathways uses a new platform to evaluate the needs of clients and help connect them quickly to needed digital resources. The STEM Alliance already provides many of those resources, such as its "on ramp" tech education classes that take students from being non-tech users to



Andrea Ruggiero, executive vice president, Open Door Family Medical Centers, speaking at last week's announcement of a partnership between the STEM Alliance and AT&T for a digital navigator in Westchester.

early-stage tech adopters in just 15 hours. Students also earn a Chromebook for their full ownership and use.

Designed to engage large numbers of eligible residents, Digital Pathways counts on countywide collaboration with community organizations, civic institutions, healthcare facilities, churches, community centers, schools, and large public events to host their navigators.

Interactions start with meeting a digital navigator at a local site or event, reviewing the opportunities with the clients and helping with questions eligible residents might have as they enroll for the ACP discount. The STEM Alliance encourages any organizations interested in hosting a Digital Pathways table at an event or at a location with significant foot traffic to contact them to partner.

Bringing Digital Pathways to those

with need where they live is critical when narrowing the digital divide.

"The Affordable Connectivity Program is a true gamechanger for so many in our country, which is increasingly dependent on digital resources," said Robin White, director, AT&T external affairs. "Digital Pathways is helping to bring internet connectivity to so many who may not have been able to access it previously."

Programs such as Digital Pathways that utilize digital navigators have been proven to drive adoption across underrepresented communities because residents feel more comfortable and safer receiving help through locally-based partner organizations.

The STEM Alliance digital navigators who reach clients through on-the-ground community partners can provide more individualized attention when discussing digital equity and digital divide needs. A

recent nationwide study conducted by the Boston Consulting Group of people who have utilized a digital navigator service revealed how vital trained digital navigators are in helping to bridge the digital divide. The study found that with the assistance of digital navigators:

- Almost half surveyed obtained better healthcare, and 40 percent received support with basic needs like food, rent and housing.
- More than 65 percent of those in the study obtained internet access and/or a computer/tablet at home; among Hispanic and Black Americans, this increased to 72 percent.
- 80 percent reported they are more confident/feel safer using technology.
- More than 85 percent said they used the internet more frequently.
- 1 in 3 found a new job or earned a higher income.

"AT&T's support lets us increase the scale and capacity of our digital equity work," said STEM Alliance President Margaret Käufer. "While we have served 1,000 clients since 2020, there is an urgent need to increase the reach of our services. With this generous support, we have designed an intake platform and trained staff to bring advising directly to clients in their communities (and) getting them support tailored to their needs: device, internet access, education or any combination of those three."

"Open Door is proud of our role in narrowing the digital divide in Westchester County," added Andrea Ruggiero, executive vice president of community health for Open Door Family Medical Centers. "We recognize how critical having connectivity, digital literacy and access to devices are for healthcare and telehealth. We encourage more community organizations to take part in this important work."

Phoenix Theatre & Arts Company to Premiere Original Halloween Musical

The Phoenix Theatre & Arts Company picked a difficult time to open its doors – during the height of the pandemic – when theaters were struggling and many were unable to perform at all. The company, known affectionately as PTAC, launched in September 2020.

Now, just two years later, PTAC is flourishing as it prepares to present a brand new, completely original show this Halloween.

"spooks & SPECTRES: Haunting Tales of Halloween" is a brand new, completely original production. The repertory-style show is comprised of two separate one-acts that are performed by the same cast of actors, and was written, composed and directed by Mike Stanton, a resident of Wappingers Falls, Dutchess County.

Performances begin Oct. 28.

Act One is a comical musical murder mystery, filled with zany characters attending a Halloween party in 1964.

Act Two is a dramatic play that is part ghost-hunters, part exorcism and all exciting.

Playwright Mike Stanton, a relative newcomer to the stage, caught the theater bug when he auditioned for PTAC's first MainStage production – Oscar Wilde's "The

Importance of Being Earnest," performed in August 2021 in Peekskill. His sister, Gina Stanton, is one of PTAC's co-founders.

"Mike is the most creative person I know," she said, "and this show is a testament to that. I couldn't be more proud of him or of this production. I can't wait for people to see it and love it as much as we all do."

But Mike Stanton is no stranger to the artistic side of things. He currently works as a software developer, but also pursues many creative endeavors, including graphic design, painting and game design. Because he doesn't come from a traditional theatrical background, his approach to things is unique. Need a gun to fire onstage? Mike builds a prop that has a computer mouse built into it and programs it to make a sound and lighting effect when the actor pulls the trigger.

"There's a lot of technical elements here that you don't normally see in a community theater performance," said PTAC's resident stage manager Laura Braun.

But why these stories? Is it just to tell a Halloween story? Yes – and no.

'spooks & SPECTRES' started as a simple little production with some goofy songs and cute stories. It evolved into a set of stories with real heart, with something to say, all

bundled up into an approachable format. The twists are turny and the turns are quite twisted, and there's enough excitement and surprise to entertain anyone, whether they typically enjoy theater or not.

The show features a cast of local actors, all of whom are volunteers with day jobs who enjoy performing on stage in their free time. Jessica Beitscher (Mohegan Lake), Naomi Hanson (Montvale, N.J.), Chris Ledogar (Highland Falls), Denny Nikolopoulos (Mahopac), Phil Pineau (Poughkeepsie), Gina Stanton (Carmel), Mike Stanton (Wappingers Falls), Steven Sylvia (Putnam Valley), Joanie Varela (Bronx) and Adrienne Voltaire (Highland Falls).

The crew is also local and made up of volunteers: Laura Braun (Mohegan Lake), Aidan Conlan (Mohegan Lake) and Sharon Wolff (Somers).

'spooks & SPECTRES' is recommended for ages 12 and up for some implied violence, mildly suggestive humor, some violence and a ghostly haunting. Please note that the production will include flashing lights and the sound of gunshots.

The show will premiere at KatonahSPACE, located at 44 Edgemont Rd. in Katonah. Performances are scheduled for Friday, Oct.

28 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Oct. 29 and Sunday, Oct. 30 at 1:30 p.m.; and Friday, Nov. 4 and Saturday, Nov. 5 at 7:30 p.m. There is a post-show talkback and Q&A following the Oct. 30.

For tickets and more information, visit www.PhoenixTheatreArtsCo.com or find them on social media (@PhoenixPTAC). You can also e-mail the company directly at phoenixptac@gmail.com.

Crossword Answers



Taconic Opera Kicks Off 25th Anniversary Season This Weekend

By Katherine Doherty

The Taconic Opera begins its main season this weekend, Oct. 22 and 23 at Yorktown Stage with a fully-staged and orchestrated production of Jules Massenet's "Manon," which will be presented in the composer's French version.

The opera delves into Manon's impoverished living and her efforts to win back her love, who decided to become a priest.

"Opera has something for everyone, and we are looking forward to welcoming new and returning audiences," said Dan Montez, the founder, general manager and stage director at Taconic Opera.

The company is commemorating its 25th anniversary with new performances beginning this month.

"We have new stage sets for this opera – one set for each act – and they are gorgeous," Montez said. "It's going to be a visually beautiful performance."

Montez, a California native, founded Taconic Opera in 1997. He moved to New York City in the early '90s to pursue a career as a professional tenor. He appeared in principal roles in productions at opera houses across the country, including Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and the San Francisco Opera.

But professional opera singers usually travel extensively for work, and Montez's career took him away from his family for months at a time.

Seeking a better work-life balance, he

settled in Westchester County and launched the Taconic Opera in Peekskill. The Taconic Opera is a resident opera company, and most of the performers live in Westchester, Rockland and Putnam counties. The chorus is comprised of 30 local singers, whom Montez trains to sing both oratorio and opera in several languages.

"When I started Taconic Opera, I only wanted to hire local artists – people who can go home to their families at night," Montez said. "We've been working with many of the same artists for the past 25 years."

A quarter-century in, the company still faces challenges with innovative forethought. During the pandemic, the opera didn't miss a beat, safely evading the restrictions associated with health protocols. It produced a version of Mozart's "Don Giovanni" for an online audience, recorded completely on iPhones; presented Verdi's "La Traviata" in a football field; and managed to present the world premiere of new oratorio, "Esther," in its return to the indoor stage.

Montez reflected on what direction he sees the company moving in its next 25 years. Aside from becoming a household name and staple in the county, he emphasizes the responsibility he feels to bring the arts to local classrooms.

"Over the next 25 years, I see the Taconic Opera...leading the way to bring more art to the cities, towns and classrooms in the county...We feel we have a responsibility to educate young people, as well as adults, about all types of classical music – not just opera," Montez said. "We want to create a



generation that seeks out classical music, and want Taconic Opera to become a household (name) and enrich their lives."

During its 25th season, the opera continues to present new content for its audiences. For the first time, it will tackle George F. Handel's beloved holiday classic "Messiah," well known for the famous Hallelujah chorus. The performance, scheduled for Dec. 10 and 11 at the Holy Name of Mary Catholic Church in Croton-on-Hudson, will feature professional opera singers and a full orchestra.

The final performance of the season is the premiere of "Joseph," an oratorio composed and conducted by Montez.

"This is the eighth oratorio that I've composed based on characters in the Bible, and I'm orchestrating it right now," he said.

The oratorio is based on the story of Jacob's son Joseph and his coat of many colors. It will be presented on Mar. 25 and 26, also at the Holy Name of Mary Catholic Church.

For more information on the Taconic Opera, visit www.TaconicOpera.org.

A version of this article first appeared in this month's issue of ArtsNews, ArtsWestchester's monthly publication. ArtsNews is distributed throughout Westchester County.

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Treatment for Severe COPD Helping Some Patients Breathe Better

More than three million Americans live with severe emphysema, a type of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) that makes breathing difficult.

While there's no cure, recent advances in treatments are helping some patients breathe better.

The American Lung Association's Treating Severe COPD Educational Campaign encourages people with severe emphysema to speak to their healthcare provider about their options, which may include endobronchial valve (EBV) treatment. As part of the campaign, they're sharing several important facts.

What is EBV treatment? When someone has emphysema, their lungs stop working effectively and air gets trapped inside their lungs instead of leaving when they exhale. With no room for fresh, oxygenated air, the person becomes short of breath. The trapped air causes that section of the lung to enlarge, putting pressure on the healthier parts of the lung and diaphragm. This is called hyperinflation. EBV treatment is a safe, FDA-approved interventional therapy in which small, removable, one-way valves are implanted in strategic areas. They allow air to be breathed out of that area of the lung, preventing air-trapping that can result in shortness of breath.

When should I consider EBV? As emphysema progresses, some medications that worked well may stop controlling symptoms. If neither medication nor oxygen is controlling symptoms well, major surgery like lung volume reduction or a lung transplant had traditionally been the next and last resort. With some individuals, EBV can fill the treatment gap between medication and surgery.

You may be a candidate if you have advanced emphysema and are highly symptomatic despite receiving optimal medical treatment. You also need to be non-smoking or willing to quit. If you're currently smoking, the American Lung Association's Freedom From Smoking program can help you quit.

What are EBV's benefits? While recovery will depend on factors like overall health and the severity of COPD, the goal of EBV is to breathe easier without the necessary recovery from a surgical treatment. EBV treatment may improve lung function, increase your exercise capacity, and improve your quality of life. Most patients who've received the treatment report feeling better and say they're now able to be more active.

Complications of the EBV treatment can include but are not limited to pneumothorax, worsening of COPD symptoms, hemothysis,

pneumonia, dyspnea and, in rare cases, death. Talk with your physician about other contraindications, warnings, precautions, and adverse events. Only a trained physician can decide whether you're an appropriate candidate for EBV treatment.

"Before my treatment, I would take a few steps and then wait to catch my breath. Now, every day I find I can do something I couldn't before," said Susan Scott, an Ohio resident who was diagnosed with COPD years ago and was experiencing worsening symptoms before getting the procedure. "My boyfriend and I hope to travel. I have a son in California and we're going to go visit him soon. Being able to do that is everything to me. I also can't wait to start cooking and leash training my dog."

What to ask your healthcare provider: Because EBV treatments are relatively new, not all healthcare providers are knowledgeable about the procedure. Speak with your provider to see if it's right for you. Keep in mind that you may have to advocate for yourself or seek a second opinion.

"My pulmonary clinic didn't have a lot of information regarding EBVs. If my doctor knew more about it, she might have recommended it to me. I was the one who kept pushing it," Scott said.

If you have emphysema or severe COPD,



COPD patient Susan Scott

you can find resources as well as learn more about EBV by visiting www.lung.org/copd.

Take time to learn about treatment options. Doing so, is for many, the first step to breathing easier.

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DMV Reminds Drivers to Observe Rules and Stop for School Buses

During National School Bus Safety Week, the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) are reminding motorists to stop and wait whenever they encounter a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing and "stop" sign extended. Drivers who pass a stopped school bus illegally could be ticketed and face fines and other penalties. Motorists should also watch for students as they walk or bike to school and always follow the posted speed limits.

"School buses are the safest way to transport students to and from school," said GTSC chair and DMV Commissioner Mark J.F. Schroeder. "Parents and caregivers should feel confident that every child will be safe getting on and off the school bus. New York State has a zero-tolerance policy for anyone that passes a stopped school bus. We count on drivers to do the right thing and keep children safe by stopping and waiting."

Motorists must always stop for school buses when the red lights are flashing, including buses on the opposite sides of divided highways, on multiple lane roadways, in parking lots and on school grounds. The fine for passing a stopped

school bus ranges from a minimum of \$250 for a first violation to a maximum of \$1,000 for three violations in three years. Jail time is up to 30 days for a first violation and up to 180 days for a second and third violation in three years. If you are convicted of three of these violations in three years, your driver license will be revoked for a minimum of six months. Conviction of unlawfully passing a school bus while it's stopped to get or let off passengers will result in five points on a driver license in addition to the penalty imposed by the court.

According to the New York Association for Pupil Transportation (NYAPT), it is estimated that 50,000 motorists pass stopped school buses with red lights flashing statewide each school day.

To address the problem, NYAPT and GTSC support Operation Safe Stop, a one-day enforcement effort in which police officers patrol selected bus routes where there is a history of illegal passing complaints. They issue tickets to drivers who pass stopped buses. The Operation Safe Stop initiative is also supported by the New York State Education Department, the New York State School Bus Contractors Association, the student transportation industry and state and local law



enforcement agencies.

DMV and GTSC also encourage parents to discuss school bus safety with their children, including teaching them to always look both ways when crossing the street and to look to the right when they step off a bus. Parents who meet their children at the bus stop after school should wait on the side

where the child will be dropped off, not across the street.

To learn more about the New York State DMV, visit dmv.ny.gov or follow the DMV conversation online at Facebook and Twitter.

For more information about GTSC, visit safeny.ny.gov or follow the GTSC conversation at Facebook and Twitter.

Mount Kisco Native Enters the 'Shark Tank' – and Succeeds

Sam Chason was just an adolescent, about 12 or 13, when a neighbor on Byram Lake Road in Mount Kisco was about to ditch a ride-on mower.

One person's junk was another young man's opportunity.

He knocked on the owner's door, got permission to take it and rode the mower home while it was tied to his parent's minivan.

One minor problem: he hadn't a clue how to fix a mower.

Sam awoke early the next morning, cleaned it, watched YouTube tutorials and ultimately met with a repairman his grandfather knew.

"Bottom line, he fixed it and sold it on Craigslist for \$500 and a \$50 tip for being such a good salesman," his mom, Sheila, marveled.

That adolescent entrepreneur is now a young adult and a 24-year-old wunderkind CEO who appeared on ABC's "Shark Tank" on Oct. 14, successfully seeking support for his company, Storage Scholars. Chason and his minority partner struck a deal with billionaire entrepreneur Mark Cuban, who decided to invest \$250,000 for a 10 percent stake in the company.

Quick Personal Note

We live on a block in Mount Kisco where a disproportionate volume of distinctively warm and kind families reside.

My wife and I first moved to the street in 2012; we were the young parents.

The empty-nesters and the moms and dads of high school students looked at us as rookies – but they were always there with a helpful word or a knowing smile.

Now we're creeping into early grey beard status ourselves, along with some other middle-aged parent friends, as new younger families begin to populate the homes on our street and surrounding neighborhoods.

Through that evolution over the past decade, the Chason family has always stood out to me as great role models to us all.

From a distance, parents Sheila and David Chason seemed to raise their kids to be fiercely independent, kind and civic-minded.

Sheilah and David are both educators. She's a veteran math and S.T.E.A.M. teacher on sabbatical from Scarsdale Public Schools, while he retired from his Ardsley High School physics teaching job in 2019 before working two years at Leffell, a private Jewish day school in Hartsdale.

They embody that spirit of seeing a world beyond yourself.

Debt Mountain

One of their three kids, Sam, was a friendly face in the neighborhood. Riding a bike, kicking a soccer ball and hustling off to work or school, he was always quick with an easy and genuine smile.

That friendly face appeared on ABC last Friday night as Chason trumpeted a business he founded in 2017.



By Adam Stone

Back then, Sam noticed how many international and out-of-state students lacked a car or means to get their stuff out of the dorms when the semester ended. Identifying a need and void in the marketplace, Sam has been growing his enterprise ever since.

He made his "Shark Tank" pitch along with chief operations officer Matt Gronberg, a fellow Wake Forest class of 2020 graduate and Storage Scholars co-founder from Boxford, Mass.

"Going into college, I was tasked with overcoming a mountain of student debt," said Chason, who now lives in Austin, Texas, told me in an e-mail interview once our chance at a phone interview passed because Sam had a plane to catch, returning home after a trip with his family to Hawaii. "Instead of procrastinating, complaining or ignoring this insecurity, I started a business. I used the fear of compounding interest to fuel my drive to succeed no matter the obstacle."

Will the Sharks Bite?

Storage Scholars bills itself as a full-service, door-to-door storage, shipping and moving company for students.

"Imagine a chaos-free move-out week with less traffic and happier students," the company's website proclaims, noting it has helped move thousands of students successfully.

Storage Scholars now employs hundreds of students nationwide.

For the uninitiated, Shark Tank delivers budding entrepreneurs the opportunity to win business deals from a panel of celebrity investors.

Not surprisingly, a forensic exam of Storage Scholars' founding unmistakably reveals the fingerprints of Sheila and David Chason – loving support mixed with a demand for self-starting independence.

Before Sam arrived at college in 2016, where he planned to study business, he struck a deal with his parents. They refused to foot the entire bill for an obscenely expensive private school.

But they agreed to pay the state school equivalent.

The 18-year-old Sam would be saddled with a \$250,000 financial obligation.

"I mimicked my parents' college plan, which was to pay for a SUNY, and anything above and beyond the kids were responsible for," Sheila explained about the approach. "So they saved from an early age. All of this made them want to work from an early age. It also taught them they could work. There were jobs available all around them."

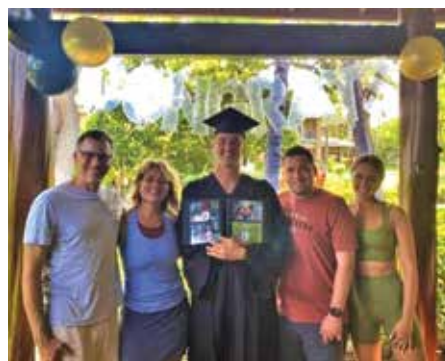
Kisco Roots

As Sam notes on his website, the debt burden was "not an onus I took lightly." But the drive and work ethic to fulfill that commitment grew its roots in Mount Kisco, not just through teachings from his folks.

The 2016 Fox Lane High School graduate borrowed many lessons learned from his



Mount Kisco native Sam Chason, left, and Matt Gronberg, his partner for their company Storage Scholars, appearing on "Shark Tank" last Friday.



Sam Chason celebrating his college graduation with his parents and siblings.

hometown in charting early success on his entrepreneurial path. Working as a teen at Frannie's Goodie Shop for Mount Kisco couple Frannie and Isi Albanese served as a seminal work (and future business ownership) experience.

He asked me to give a special shout-out to Isi and Frannie for "teaching the kids of Mount Kisco what hard work looks like."

"I used my work experiences at Frannie's Goodie Shop and Revel with Dinner Thyme Catering to set the standard of what good service looks like," Sam explained. "Many late nights cleaning yogurt machines, packing up chairs and counting back change to customers. I learned the foundations firsthand of what it looks like to run a successful business."

To be clear, Storage Scholars is far from the Texas resident's first rodeo. He even launched little startups at five years old. Whether it was a lemonade stand, pet sitting or lawn care, he's run some sort of side hustle since he was clutching a knapsack.

"The kids were taught about fiscal responsibility from an early age," Sheila said. "Lemonade stands required a reimbursement of supplies. They were given a monthly allowance and spent it how they saw fit, but that was it."

Role Models

Sheilah and David's 29-year-old son, Keith, a Philadelphia resident, is chief



Sam Chason and his family on vacation.

technology officer for Storage Scholars, building and maintaining the company website since the jump. Daughter Molly, 27, lives in New York City and works as an account manager at Stylytics.

The values the Chasons have instilled in their young adult children are similar to the values my wife and I try to teach our school-aged daughters.

Our high school sophomore is working several jobs, earning money to buy a car in a couple of years, while our third-grader takes her bed-tidying and table-clearing jobs seriously.

While it would be more than a stretch to draw a straight line between our parenting style and learning by osmosis from the Chasons, they're certainly one of the many local couples we might emulate or borrow from when thinking about the values we're trying to instill.

And when our girls eventually need to move stuff out of their dorms, they'll know who to call.

To learn more about Storage Scholars, visit www.storagescholars.com.

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