

Mt. Pleasant, Residents Demand Action After Cottage School Incidents

By Martin Wilbur

Mount Pleasant residents living near the Pleasantville Cottage School called on the town and representatives of the school's operating agency to better protect the community after a recent escalation of incidents involving its residents.

Last Wednesday, members of the Coalition for a Safe Mount Pleasant organized a meeting at Town Hall attended by officials from the town and the Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA) that runs the Cottage School in hopes getting a handle on the number of problems that have spilled over into the community. The Cottage School serves a population of children from seven to 16 years old who have educational, behavioral and emotional needs.

"There are very good kids, but the ones

that aren't good, it's becoming a problem, and my biggest fear is that one day one of these kids is going to walk into the residential community and do something, and a resident is going to react and it's going to become a news story and we're all going to look like the bad guys," said Gary Rushneck, a Coalition for a Safe Mount Pleasant member. "We're trying to prevent that from happening."

As of Nov. 30, Mount Pleasant police have responded to 682 calls related to the Cottage School, according to the department. Of those calls, 580 have been for on-campus incidents while 102 were in the community at large, including criminal offenses.

Police Chief Paul Oliva said while the number of calls is not out of line compared to recent years, the severity of some of the recent incidents are. That's especially true

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Holiday Work of Art

MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Beehive Designer Collective was one of four winners of the inaugural Holiday Windows of Mount Kisco contest held by the village's Chamber of Commerce. Beehive, located on Main Street, was voted Most Unique Holiday Window by the judges – Mayor Gina Picinich and Village Justice Mark Farrell. The jewelry store Limited Unlimited was voted best Classic Holiday Window, All Together Now the Most Whimsical Window and D'Errico Jewelers the Best Overall Window.

P'ville Officials Conduct Post Mortem on Development Forum

By Abby Luby

The Pleasantville community town hall meeting on village development on Nov. 16 was given a full debriefing at last week's Village Board meeting.

Pleasantville Mayor Peter Scherer and trustees shared their impressions of the three-hour forum as well as information gleaned from informal conversations with residents since the meeting.

Last week a handful of residents aired their thoughts on residential and business growth in the village. Numerous requests for a moratorium were a big takeaway, Scherer said.

"A moratorium would be a legal pause of some aspect of

development and it is something we are open to," he said. "We've had preliminary conversations with our planner and legal counsel about it and the goal would be to tailor a moratorium that would address issues people have raised as opposed to a blanket moratorium."

Board member Michael Peppard agreed he was open to a moratorium but warned of unintended consequences.

"There are legal concerns if it looks like we are targeting some property owners and not others," Peppard said.

Holding a copy of the village's 1961 Comprehensive Development Plan was village resident Thomas Rooney, who read a section on land use to keep the village small and to avoid building apartment houses.

"They were concerned then and we are still concerned now," Rooney said. "It's clear to me that the majority of villagers are asking the board to do something. If you can't do it one way, find another way to do it."

Board members appeared eager to engage with residents last week. A lengthy dialogue between former Pleasantville trustee Jonathan Cunningham and board members included anecdotal reactions.

"I hadn't heard that much pushback to the idea that we are moving forward a lot and developing too quickly," Cunningham said. "Have you received feedback from folks who are pro-development and pro-moving forward? That was not the sentiment of the meeting."

Trustee Nicole Asquith agreed

most feedback expressed concern that there has been too much development.

"But we have heard from some who like what's going on. For others, development is a non-issue," she said.

Asquith added that there was reticence to speak at the town hall by those not entirely opposed to development.

A contentious issue raised last month was the generous offer made to the village for its parcel behind the post office on Cooley Street. The land was purchased by the village in 2012 for a little over \$1 million and was turned into a parking lot.

The offer for the property came from the developer of 70 Memorial Plaza, who has proposed a four-

story office building with municipal parking on the first level.

At last week's meeting, Scherer was repeatedly asked about the Cooley Street offer.

"The project has merits but we're not rushing to do that," he said.

Village resident and parent Noelle Nicolai said she felt the safety of Pleasantville was being threatened by new office buildings and apartments. She was also concerned about traffic congestion.

"I'm concerned with bicycle safety with so many cars coming and going," Nicolai said. "I don't know that my kids have the knowledge to navigate the street."

Scherer explained village traffic has increased since the pandemic,

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during the past month, which has seen an uptick in criminal behavior perpetrated by Cottage School residents, including four burglaries of a convenience store that was targeted by the same group of kids.

Oliva also detailed another incident where a male resident was seen in the community with a rake or shovel and told a nearby resident that he was looking to hurt people. Police were called and he was brought back to campus, but the service that the Cottage School uses for mental health observations, Westchester County's Behavioral Health Center on the Westchester Medical Center campus, deemed the resident not to be suffering from mental health issues but behavioral problems.

"The next day the same young man entered someone's yard and went into a chicken coop and killed a chicken, bit its head off and was walking down the street with it when police were there," Oliva said. "It frightened the neighbors; it frightened me. Staff, obviously, wasn't happy about it."

Ronald Richter, CEO and executive director of the JCCA, said several factors have contributed to the surge in incidents. He said the Behavioral Health Center has been turning away children from treatment who are clearly in need of help, including one resident early last week who displayed suicidal tendencies. The next day, Cottage School staff prevented the youngster from hurting themselves.

A complaint has been lodged with the state Department of Health, which oversees

the Behavioral Health Center, Richter said. Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, who will represent Mount Pleasant starting next month, has also brought the concerns to the attention of the health department, he said.

Passage of the federal Families First Prevention Services Act in 2018 has also had a negative impact, according to Richter. Enacted to encourage keeping children with their families instead of out-of-home care, children at facilities such as the Cottage School are arriving and leaving at a faster rate, he said.

Because of the legislation, the number of beds statewide in residential facilities for youths has plummeted from more than 1,000 to about 450.

Similar to the general population, many of the Cottage School's roughly 200 children on campus have also been negatively affected by the pandemic, Richter mentioned.

"Ninety-five percent of the kids are pretty amazing given the circumstances that they were presented with," Richter said. "Forty to 50 of them work in this community, have jobs and are pretty responsible given the circumstance they were dealt."

Regardless, some residents want the Cottage School and state and local officials to do more. Hawthorne resident Marie Wayne said she and many of her neighbors had to deal with problems for decades stemming from Cedar Knolls, which closed a few years ago. Now the same is true for the Cottage School.

She said the town and its taxpayers

should not have to see Mount Pleasant's police officers respond to hundreds of calls a year at the Cottage School.

"It should be their responsibility to pay for the police and not our police," Wayne said. "They don't deserve to be there."

Richter said one short-term measure the JCCA is pursuing is an eight-foot fence around the perimeter of the campus, pending town approval. That will not only make it more difficult for residents to leave but will prevent unauthorized people from entering the grounds.

The organization is also going to reach out to Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center in hopes of having mental health evaluations done there, he said.

Richter said the JCCA shares the town's concerns.

"Our goal is not to be a nuisance to your community," Richter said. "Our goal is to do our important work in harmony with the community and with the knowledge that we are not always, we are not always in control of every action of every child."

Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi said the town understands the challenges facing the Cottage School, but it's critical that improvements are made.

"I will be a pain in the neck, me and the chief," Fulgenzi said. "We will not let this go and whatever we have to do to work with you to make improvements we will do that. But we do want to see some changes. Without these changes we're not going to move forward."

P'ville Officials Conduct Post Mortem on Development Forum

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with more people working from home.

"There's more congestion with picking up and dropping off kids at school even though there are fewer kids at school than 10 years ago," Scherer said. "The dynamics have changed and we're not clear where that's going to end."

The village is requesting traffic data from the state Department of Transportation that will be helpful in considering future traffic patterns, Scherer added.

Christine Iovino, who attended the development forum, inquired about fundraising and starting a committee to build a recreation center. Board members offered to help brainstorm and put together a committee.

Future discussions on development will be planned after the holidays.

"As we move into the new year, we will continue to have conversations and engage with all of you," Scherer said.



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An interview with Dr. Anna Komorowski, Regional Director, Hematology and Medical Oncology, Northwell Cancer Institute, Phelps Hospital

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\$45.5M Capital Projects Vote Proposed for Croton-Harmon Schools

By Rick Pezzullo

Croton-Harmon School District residents will be presented with a \$45.5 million capital projects referendum next Tuesday that school officials maintain is "future driven, student centered and tax neutral."

Plans include \$17.5 million in infrastructure work, most of which is a result of aging school buildings. The remaining \$28 million would be dedicated to a variety of indoor and outdoor

improvements at Croton-Harmon High School, Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School, Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School and the Spencer Field Complex.

"The capital project addresses our district's continued focus on safety and security in our schools through the creation of a visitor vestibule at Croton-Harmon High School and installation of new security cameras at each of our schools," Assistant Superintendent for Business Denise Harrington-Cohen stated. "The project

also furthers our commitment to health, wellness and environmental sustainability in several ways, including the introduction of new, high efficiency systems, ventilation improvements, roof replacements to allow for further installation of solar panels and the enhancement of our infrastructure to support additional electric school buses in the future."

School officials have explained that of the \$45.5 million price tag, about \$18 million will be eligible for building aid from New

York State, while another \$2.5 million will come from the district's capital reserve. Some existing debt expires in 2024.

The breakdown of work at each school would be:

Croton-Harmon High School: Renovating the auditorium, cafeteria and music suite; creating an innovative leaning center and STEAM center; and providing air conditioning to the cafeteria, music suite and learning center.

Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School: Renovating spaces to create a new science classroom and new student services suite; improving outdoor learning spaces; building a new playing field and playground; constructing a fourth-floor conference suite; and providing air conditioning for the student services suite.

Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School: Creating an outdoor amphitheater/classroom space; converting the current library to a research and maker space; renovating the gymnasium; and providing air conditioning for the kindergarten wing and cafeteria.

Spencer Field Complex: Installing artificial turf, a new track, stadium lighting, bleachers, press box, concession stand, scoreboard and restrooms. Improved parking and site access is also scheduled to be done at the site.

Voting will take place from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. this Tuesday, Dec. 13 in the Croton-Harmon High School gymnasium.

Chappaqua School Voters Approve Infrastructure Bond, Reject Second Proposition

By Martin Wilbur

Chappaqua School District voters approved a nearly \$34 million upgrade to the district's infrastructure and facilities last week but rejected a second proposition that would have produced a single point of entry at Horace Greeley High School.

The first proposition passed with 58 percent of the vote (590-434). Proposition 2 was defeated by 60 percent of those who voted (612-412).

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Christine Ackerman and Board of Education President Jane Shepardson were pleased that the larger proposition comfortably passed.

"I look forward to working with the board in addressing all of the improvements that

the community supported in Proposition 1," Ackerman said moments after the results were announced inside the high school gymnasium.

She said the district also wanted to give the public the opportunity to decide on whether it wanted to create a single entrance at Greeley High School to enhance safety for students and staff for \$11.3 million. It would have required the lobby and front office to be reconfigured.

With the second proposition defeated, district officials will explore other ways to maintain maximum safety for the building's occupants, Ackerman said.

The infrastructure proposition will allow for a wide variety of upgrades at each of the district's six school buildings, including

new roofs, improved communications, air conditioning in all school cafeterias and gyms and HVAC improvements.

Passage of the proposition will result in an additional \$232 annual cost for the first six years of the 17-year bond starting in 2024-25. That extra expense would be for a homeowner with a house valued at the district median of \$1.25 million before costs begin to decrease with the expiration of other debt.

Under the schedule previously outlined by district officials, plans will be sent to the state Education Department for approval next year with work beginning in 2024. It is expected the improvements will be finished during the 2027-28 school year.

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Westchester Approves Flavored Tobacco Ban; Latimer Undecided

By Martin Wilbur

The Westchester County Board of Legislators approved a controversial ban last week on the sale of flavored tobacco products but it is unclear whether County Executive George Latimer will sign the legislation into law.

By an 11-6 vote, lawmakers passed the measure that would ban the sale of all menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products, which drew the ire of some members of the Black community who argued that it would lead to additional stop-and-frisk incidents with police.

More than 80 percent of Black people who smoke use menthol cigarettes, among the products barred from sale in Westchester.

Others contended that it would hurt convenience store owners and other businesses at a time when they were recovering from the pandemic as well as a difficult economy.

Legislator Jewel Williams Johnson (D-Greenburgh), who introduced the legislation earlier this year, said flavored cigarettes entice teens to become addicted to smoking, costing New York State more than \$17 billion a year in health care expenses.

Johnson said that the law wouldn't trigger interactions with the police in communities of color because the Health Department will be enforcing the law. Furthermore, violations would only carry civil penalties for the establishments found to be selling the products. It does not prohibit the purchase, use or possession of flavored tobacco, she said.

It will also keep all communities healthier, particularly youngsters, Johnson said. States and municipalities that have enacted previously enacted a similar law, such as Massachusetts and California, reported their use diminishes when flavored tobacco sales are discontinued.

"The lives of our children and families are worth so much more than the millions of dollars manufacturers will make from very intentional, long-term destruction of our communities," Johnson said. "This is a proactive step for public health in Westchester County."

But Legislator Tyrae Woodson-Samuels (D-Mount Vernon) said his constituents have valid reasons to fear that the law would work as intended. Instead, he called on for more investment in cessation programs and to improve access to health care.



Furthermore, if officials are concerned about protecting teens, then there should be greater enforcement of the current law, which prohibits anyone under 21 to purchase tobacco products, Woodson-Samuels said. It would be likely that sales would increase on the black market to fill the void, he said.

"Why not just enforce the laws on the books?" Woodson-Samuels said. "I think that's pretty clear what has to happen here."

The vote followed a public hearing on Nov. 14 where more than 60 speakers spoke on the issue. Close to two-thirds of the

speakers supported the law.

Last Friday, Latimer told The Examiner that he and his team were analyzing the pros and cons of the bill, but did not tip his hand on whether he would support it. The measure landed on his desk last Thursday, three days after the vote. If he were to veto it, 12 votes would be needed for an override.

As a legislator Latimer said he supported measures such as raising the age to buy tobacco from 18 to 21 and banning smoking in restaurants. However, in addition to health concerns, he said he wants to look at potential impacts on business, communities of color

and those areas of the country that have passed similar laws.

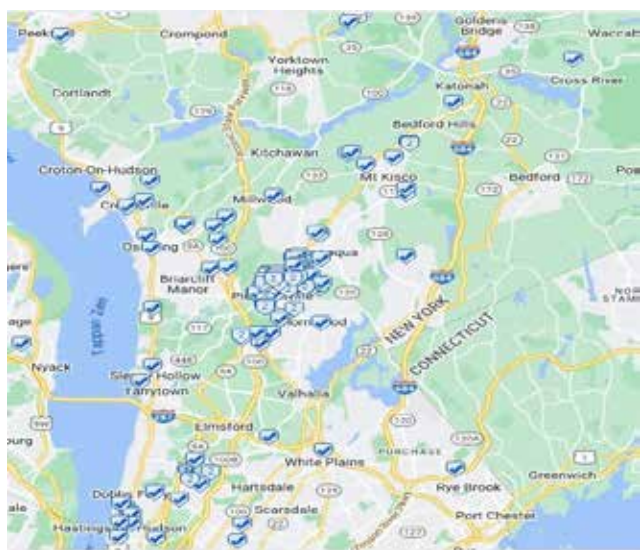
"My record of pushing back on tobacco is pretty strong," Latimer said. "But this bill covers more than just candy-flavored cigarettes. It goes into cigars and pipes and other things. So we really want to go through it in detail. We want to look at all the public testimony that's been given to the legislature."

The issue drew a wide range of opinions. Dr. Hazel Dukes, president of the New York State Conference of the NAACP and a former president of the organization, co-wrote an op-ed in the New York Amsterdam News on Nov. 24 that strongly backed the law. Dukes argued that there would be no criminal enforcement; meanwhile, tobacco companies have been racially targeting the Black community to start smoking through enticing ads, she wrote.

But Gwen Carr, the mother of Eric Garner, spoke during the hearing of the dangers of passing the law. Garner was killed in an interaction with police in Staten Island in 2014 after selling loose cigarettes. She warned that could happen again and urged lawmakers to ban all cigarettes if they are health conscious.

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Teatown Expands Preserve, Adds Five Acres Next to Shadow Lake

By Abby Luby

Five pristine acres on the southern edge of Shadow Lake in Yorktown were purchased last month by the Westchester Land Trust and transferred to Teatown Lake Reservation.

Adjacent to existing Teatown land, the tract was the last remaining unprotected property next to the lake. The acquisition is the culmination of a 20-year effort by local organizations and government agencies to protect all available open land around Shadow Lake.

The property cost \$555,000, of which \$475,000 was awarded to the land trust through a Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) grant administered by the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The balance of the money came from an anonymous donor.

After the purchase in October, the Westchester Land Trust transferred ownership to Teatown.

Located on Spring Valley Road and Kitchawan Road (Route 134), the land hadn't been on the market for years. The family owning the property put it up for sale about a year ago.

"This parcel has been on our watch list," said Kevin Carter, Teatown's executive director. "Its high conservation value land, meaning that it's in the watershed so we're



ABBY LUBY PHOTO

Representatives of the Westchester Land Trust, Teatown Lake Reservation and Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater gathered at the reservation last week to announce the acquisition of five critical acres next to Shadow Lake. Pictured, from left, are Lori Ensinger, a senior adviser for Westchester Land Trust; land trust President Kara Hartigan Whelan; Teatown Executive Director Kevin Carter; Slater; and Geoffrey Thompson, past chair of Teatown Lake Reservation.

protecting clean water."

Joining Carter to formally announce the acquisition on Monday at Shadow Lake

was Lori Ensinger, a senior adviser for the Westchester Land Trust, its President Kara Hartigan Whelan, Yorktown Supervisor

Matt Slater and Geoffrey Thompson, past chair of Teatown Lake Reservation.

"This acquisition represents a great public-private partnership that benefits and improves the watershed," said Slater. "We are environmental stewards and Teatown is a great asset. The partnership with Yorktown fits with our environmental goals."

Shadow Lake feeds into the nine-acre Vernay Lake, which, along with 59 acres, were acquired by Teatown in 2011 with the help of Westchester County and the Trust for Public Land. Vernay Lake drains into Teatown Lake, which flows into Bailey Brook and eventually to the Croton Reservoir.

The three-lake linkage protects a significant supply of water entering the reservoir and was the driving factor behind the state's award of the WQIP grant.

Whelan said the project was an effort several years in the making.

"We are thrilled to continue prioritizing the conservation of lands that protect our public drinking water supplies," she said.

Teatown has 15 miles of hiking trails and more than 1,000 acres of protected land.

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Westchester Closing in on Final 2023 Budget Featuring Another Tax Cut

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester residents will have one more chance to comment on the county's \$2.3 billion general budget this week as county officials eye next Monday to wrap up work on next year's spending plan.

When submitted last month, County Executive George Latimer proposed a fourth consecutive property tax levy cut, this time about \$6 million. While there may be final items deleted or added before deliberations are complete, he doesn't expect wholesale revisions proposed by the Board of Legislators before next week.

The final public hearing is scheduled for

Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. at the Board of Legislators chamber at the county office building in White Plains.

Latimer said in addition to having another tax reduction, fully funding law enforcement, including the departments of correction and probation, and adding positions for Hilltop Hanover Farm in Yorktown and Kingsland Point Park in Sleepy Hollow are among his top priorities.

"We are not going to come up with some different strategy where we underfund law enforcement, and it's very important because there's a perception out there, certainly at the state level, that the Democrats are soft on crime and they don't support the police," Latimer said. "We've been very clear that from a financial standpoint, we fund the police because of the work that they do and the services they provide and how important they are."

In all, Latimer proposed \$260.9 million in funding for public safety, said county Budget Director Larry Soule.

Another eight positions have been earmarked to address Hilltop Hanover Farm, although two of those positions already exist, Soule said last week. The county intends to add four positions for Kingsland Point Park, he said.

About \$238 million will be dedicated to the county Department of Health and the Department of Community Mental Health as effects from the pandemic continue to put demands on those departments.

Latimer said while the 2023 budget



County Executive George Latimer is hopeful the Board of Legislators will complete work on next year's operating budget early next week.

shows openings for about 5,000 county employees, the overwhelming number of those positions will not be filled above the current staffing of 4,530. He wants funding to be in place in the event department heads need to have an additional post filled.

"If I don't have the budgeted position ready to go, it could take up to two months for me to get it authorized, funded, transfer funds, where if I have it ready to go, then you can plug it into these slots,"

Latimer said.

Soule said the county is on target to add another \$65.9 million into its fund balance, elevating the level of the reserve fund to about 19 percent of the operating budget.

Latimer explained that with potential unknown fiscal hurdles that might have to be navigated, including predictions from some economists that the United States could fall into a recession sometime next year and guarding against unforeseen emergencies, it is prudent to have a robust fund balance.

Because the county gets a reliable source of funding through the property tax, it is somewhat less vulnerable than the state in the event of an economic downturn.

"At this point, I think the budget that we have before the board can accommodate what is likely to happen later in the year," Latimer said. "But who knows? If we deal with something more serious than what they're telling us, anything can happen. We'll have to deal with it then."

Latimer proposed a \$662 million capital projects budget in October. The key capital features for next year are close to \$200 million to upgrade the county's seven wastewater treatment plans; \$125 million for environmental conservation and flood mitigation, including \$95 to help convert the Bee-Line bus fleet to hybrid or electric vehicles; and \$90 million to encourage the development of more affordable and workforce housing.

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Obituaries

Former Mount Kisco Mayor Reilly Dies at 91

Former Mount Kisco mayor Patricia Reilly, who served for 10 years on the Village Board and was also the daughter of a village mayor, died last Tuesday with her family by her side. She was 91.

The daughter of the late Mayor J. Edward Fox and Mary (Malin) Fox, and the sister of Joan (Fox) Stewart, Reilly was born on Apr. 16, 1931, and learned early in life the importance of volunteering, community service and faith, and dedicated herself to the betterment of Mount Kisco through her many years of service in various settings.

Reilly served six years as a village trustee, from 1993 to 1999, and the next four years as mayor.

Another former mayor, Michael Cindrich, whose time on the board overlapped with Reilly's and succeeded her as mayor, called her "an exceptional person."

"She found the time to volunteer in a whole host of volunteer activities," said Cindrich, who first interacted with Reilly when she was chair of the Recreation Commission and he was involved in youth sports in the 1980s. "It takes not only ambition; it takes a tremendous amount of sacrifice. I consider her an exceptional community volunteer."

Current Mayor Gina Picinich said Reilly was a mentor, friend and coach.

"It is rare to meet an individual who so effectively lives the values of kindness, service and generosity," Picinich said. "She brought humor and positive outlook to every conversation and interaction. Pat has left an

indelible mark on Mount Kisco. She will be greatly missed and never forgotten."

Reilly attended St. Francis Grammar School and the Academy of Our Lady of Good Counsel before moving onto her post-secondary education at St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing, NYU, where she earned her bachelor's degree in nursing, and Western Connecticut State University, where she earned her master's degree.

She first worked at the former Mount Kisco Hospital (now Northern Westchester Hospital), beginning her career there in 1951, and was the longest living employee of the hospital until late. After raising her six children, she was employed as a nurse-teacher and health services coordinator in the Bedford Central School District for many years, continuing to serve as a substitute nurse in the school system after her retirement. She also worked at the Swiss Home in her free time.

Faith was also incredibly important in her life. Reilly was a lifelong parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi Church, having served as a Lay Eucharistic Minister and as a member of the Parish Council.

Reilly was involved in or honored by a wide range of organizations over the years, including serving as past president of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, as a trustee of the Mount Kisco Historical Society and as a 48-year board member of the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester. She also was on the village's Beautification Committee, Mount Kisco Seniors, the Memorial Day Committee



Patricia Reilly

and the Woodcrest Homeowners Association, along with many other organizations. She had also been a grand marshal of the Mount Kisco St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Reilly is also a member of the Westchester County Senior Citizens Hall of Fame and was named Mount Kisco Citizen of the Year in 1991.

Former village trustee Peter Grunthal said Reilly seemed to be everywhere and participating in a wide assortment of organizations, including the Beautification Committee and Historic Society.

"She was always present at whatever was going on," Grunthal said. "She was always

upbeat; she was always helping people. I think she was very much loved by members of the community."

Ralph Vigliotti, who served as a village trustee in the 1990s with Reilly, said he especially enjoyed his time on the Village Board, in part because she always brought home cooked meals for the board during executive sessions.

"Pat had the energy and she made sure that energy was spread, and you were thrilled to be involved with anything that Pat was involved in," Vigliotti said. "It was good energy, very good energy. She'll be sorely missed."

She leaves behind her beloved sister, Joan (Fox) Stewart; her cherished children, Marlene (John) Wallace, Edward (Beth) Reilly, Patrick J. Reilly, Kathy Reilly, John (Kathleen) Reilly and Kevin (Kristina) Reilly; and her adored 13 grandchildren, Kristina, Dustin, Kelly (Steve), Ian, Bridget, Patrick A., Brian, Catie, Martha, Charlie, Teddy (Madeline), Aleah, and Danny (Molly). Reilly also thought the world of her many cousins, nieces, nephews and friends who became family throughout her lifetime.

She was predeceased by her brother-in-law, William (Bill) Stewart.

Visitation was at Cassidy-Flynn Funeral Home in Mount Kisco last Thursday and Friday. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Francis of Assisi Church last Saturday morning followed by burial at St. Francis Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Search for Change, an organization near and dear to her and her family's heart, at Search for Change, Inc., 200 Columbus Ave., Suite 201E, Valhalla, N.Y. 10595 or at www.searchforchange.org.

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Karna Hoaglund

Karna Lynne Hoaglund died on Nov. 29. She was 80.

Born Karna Lynne Bjorklund on Dec. 30, 1941, to Katherine and Lorence Bjorklund in Croton Falls with both parents being artists, she grew up curious and creative. An animal lover from a young age, she would have a wide variety of pets throughout her life, from dogs and cats to birds and monkeys. If it could be tamed, she probably had it as a pet.

A well-rounded scholar-athlete, she played a variety of sports growing up, and continued to play basketball and volleyball through her senior year, where she was also named valedictorian of North Salem High School in 1959. She was a published author at a young age, writing a book in her early 20s on Native Americans, "The Indians of Northeastern America," which was illustrated by her father.

She went on to study at Colby College in Maine before transferring to New Paltz College to earn her teaching degree. This is where she met Robert Hoaglund, whom she would spend the rest of her life with as husband and wife, best friends and parents of three children – Kim Breidenbach (Tommy), Kristin Jandzinski (John), and Erik (Amy). In addition to her children, she is survived by seven grandchildren: Keith, Summer, Karna, Maya, Grady, Camden and Thatcher.

Professionally, she taught a number of



Karna Hoaglund

different elementary school grades before settling in as a kindergarten teacher to hundreds of fortunate Yorktown students for the majority of her 30-year teaching career.

In her free time, she loved to travel, spend time at her summer house in Maine, collect shells at her favorite beach in South Carolina, tend to her garden and plants, read and enjoy life with friends and family.

In lieu of flowers, please honor her memory by enjoying your family, friends and favorite things as Karna loved to do before she was afflicted with the cruel repercussions of an Alzheimer's/dementia diagnosis.

Advocates Press for Bill to Seal Criminal Records After Prison Release

By Martin Wilbur

Supporters of legislation that would automatically seal the criminal records of most individuals after they have completed their sentence gathered in Ossining last Thursday to press state lawmakers to pass the bill.

The campaign for the Clean Slate Act held several rallies around the state last Thursday, including in Ossining in front of Hudson Link, an organization that assists former prisoners with employment and education, to drive home their point a month before the new legislative session opens in Albany.

Advocates of the Clean Slate initiative argued that many employers, landlords and other entities use background checks and often eliminate those with a criminal record from consideration. Former convict Roberto Ramos, who helped lead the rally in Ossining, said while New York does a good job in its rehabilitation program in jail, many former prisoners have trouble when they are released because of a lack of access to a job, housing and even trade licenses.

"It doesn't matter how good they are, it doesn't matter the skills they provide, they say no, you can't get it because of something that you did years back," said Ramos, who was released in February after serving 25 years. "There's no change, no rehabilitation, it is just continuing punishment. This bill will make a difference."

The proposed law will automatically clear a person's conviction record once they become eligible. As many as 2.3 million New Yorkers



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Supporters of the Clean Slate Act, which would clear a person's conviction record after they have finished their sentence, rallied for the legislation in Ossining on Dec. 1. Currently, many former prisoners have a difficult time finding jobs and housing because of background checks.

have a criminal record, Ramos said.

Supporters also argued it hurts the economy because many of those people are unable to find work. Furthermore, it disproportionately impacts people of color, they said.

Earlier this year during the 2022 session, the state Senate passed its version of the bill but it has languished in the Assembly.

Ossining Supervisor and Assemblywoman-elect Dana Levenberg and Assemblyman Chris Burdick (D-Bedford) attended the rally and voiced their support for the measure.

Without that protection, ex-convicts are unable to fully rejoin society and the chance of recidivism increases, Levenberg said.

"The Clean Slate Act gives previously incarcerated people who served their time a fighting chance to have access to education, to get out of poverty, to have a chance to support their families and have a chance for good jobs, good paying jobs and also for safe housing," Levenberg said. "Those, we know, are the bedrock of strong communities. We need to make sure we get this Clean Slate Act passed right out of the gate. We can't wait any

longer."

She and Burdick vowed to push the bill for a vote in the upcoming 2023 session.

The current system also doesn't make distinctions between shorter or longer sentences. Alfred Roberts served a 42-day sentence and faces obstacles similar to those of his fellow former convicts who completed longer prison terms.


Because of those hurdles, Roberts said there is a feeling of doom among some prisoners who have their release pending unless they have support from family and organizations such as Hudson Link.

"Without this Clean Slate Act, there is a lack of hope that we have on the inside because we don't know what tomorrow's going to bring once we get out," Roberts said. "Will I be able to find employment? Will I be able to get housing, and with the Clean Slate Act, we'll be able to do that."

Michigan's Sealing Act that is currently in effect is very similar to the Clean Slate Act and it has resulted in an 11 percent increase in employment of former prisoners and a 25 percent growth in earnings, Ramos said.

Nada Khader, executive director of WESPAC, a peace and justice action organization, said the legislation is a moral issue that must be addressed.

"Our current system punishes people perpetually, defines that person based on that one moment they made a bad decision or they did something wrong," Khader said. "That's immoral, to define a whole person's life for that one act."



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Letters to the Editor

Westchester Should Consider Offering Year-Round Free Bee-Line Service

Westchester County Executive George Latimer deserves to be praised for offering residents free bus transportation during the upcoming holiday season and for providing Westchester commuters with free bus service during the summer months. This is an exciting and bold initiative that I hope will eventually lead to Westchester County joining more than 100 cities around the world that currently offer free public transit all year around.

Perhaps Albany and Washington might be willing to provide financial help to local and county governments that offer free

public transportation.

Free bus service is catching on nationally. Olympia, Wash. embraced free bus service this year. The city passed a ballot measure to approve an additional sales tax for public transportation purposes going to fare-free options.

In other communities, private businesses, such as the merchants in a shopping mall, contribute to the free transportation in the hope that doing so will increase sales. After just one month of the program, Olympia saw a 20 percent increase in ridership compared

to the previous year. A majority of the City Council in Washington, D.C. plans to introduce free bus service to that area shortly.

In December 2019, Kansas City, Mo. became the first large U.S. city to implement free buses. They did so to allow Kansas City residents improved access opportunities for employment and education. Luxembourg became the first country in the world to make all public transportation (including buses, trams and trains) free to use. Malta and Estonia also have free transportation service.

Free public transportation has benefits. Road traffic will see decreased congestion. It will be easier to get parking in business districts. There will be fewer accidents. Roads will see reduced wear and tear. And it's great for the environment.

Let's have a county dialogue on the benefits of free public transportation year-round. And a big thank you to our county executive for starting the pilot program. What do you think?

Paul Feiner
Greenburgh Town Supervisor

What Can We Do to Win the War in Ukraine? Become Energy Efficient

Russia unleashed a brutal assault on Ukraine with indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas, killing innocent people and children, torturing and murdering the people it conquered.

The United States and our allies have given Ukraine weapons to repel Russian aggression, but Russia has weaponized the supply of fossil fuel in the global energy market, trying to force the coalition supporting Ukraine out of the war. We can help win this economic war by reducing our use of fossil fuel.

If you buy a hybrid car, a plug-in electric hybrid or an all-electric car or truck, you will be doing your part to win the war in Ukraine, and you'll save money. Ditto for solar panels and electric heat pumps.

Don't take our word for the savings. Google it. Get multiple estimates. Clean

energy has become more efficient and cheaper in recent years. Be sure to include what you will save on energy when determining what you can afford.

Encourage your town and school district to get electric buses and vehicles, solar panels and electric heat pumps to help win the war and save taxpayers money.

Every gallon of gasoline, diesel, heating oil (or unit of natural gas) we don't burn, every kilowatt hour of electricity we make ourselves, makes it less likely that Putin will win his war in Ukraine.

Let's all do our part to help the Ukrainians in their valiant struggle against Russian aggression.

Larry and Mary Jane Kilian
Yorktown Heights

The National Debt May Be the Downfall of the U.S.

The national debt has reached \$31.4 trillion. The debate will soon begin in Washington between the President and Congress about permitting our national debt to grow even more. What's another trillion or two between friends?

President Biden and Congress should freeze overall spending. Any extension of the debt ceiling should be matched by corresponding real cuts in spending.

Implement pay-as-you-go budgeting, means testing for all government assistance and sunset provisions for agencies and programs that have completed their missions. End pork-barrel member item spending, stop paying farmers to not grow crops and abolish corporate welfare subsidies via tax deductions.

Everyone needs to do their fair share in bringing the budget deficit under control. It is time for government to destroy its own credit cards.

How ironic that after winning the Cold War against the Evil Empire of Communism, it may be mismanagement of our economy that results in a decline of our standard of living. It may also end our reign as the world's superpower as we become the world's super debtor nation.

It's time for President Biden and Congress to come together and end this madness.

Larry Penner
Great Neck, N.Y.

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Column

How To Destroy Democracy in a Few Easy Steps

We have poisoned our politics to such a degree that it is becoming extremely difficult to look at our current system of government as an ongoing conversation between competing interests who compromise to help advance the nation's interests rather than a war in which the other side must be obliterated.

Yes, the midterm elections helped the electorate put a stake in the ground that said, "We stand proudly against extremism." We now have a Democratic Senate and a Republican House. Many election deniers were defeated.

However, many elections were won with very tight margins. Saving our democracy this time was a nail-biter. Political commentators have pointed out that dozens of election-deniers still sit in Congress. Kari Lake, an election-denier who lost her race for governor of Arizona, is claiming, without any evidence whatsoever, that the vote was somehow manipulated against her. The biggest election-denier in American history, a former president, is once again running for the office, constantly complaining that he was cheated out of winning in 2020, again with no objective proof.

The damage this does to our political system cannot be exaggerated. It's as corrosive as rust on iron, turning solid metal into flakes that can crumble in your hands.



By Michael Gold

If you can't trust the system and the people who run it, then you've put yourself on the road to chaos.

Politics is never going to turn into afternoon tea with the Queen of England, but it seems to have grown exponentially more vicious these last seven years.

In ancient myths humans created enemies who were horribly threatening to our lives, from one-eyed giants and monster sea snakes with razor-sharp teeth, to the minotaur, which had the body of a man and the head of a bull, who ate people.

We must question if we have advanced so much from these crude and fantastic tales, more than 2,000 years old, when a current member of the U.S. Congress, Marjorie Taylor Greene, from Georgia, declared during the campaign season that Democrats are murdering Republicans right now. (Source: The Washington Examiner, Oct. 2, 2022. The Washington Examiner is a conservative newspaper and has no relationship to Examiner Media.) Where is the evidence for that? Wouldn't Fox News feature such an awful event every night of the week if it really happened?

After the husband of the House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, was attacked with a hammer in her home in late October by a man looking for "Nancy," the former and possibly future

president said Pelosi was "an animal." (Source: C-SPAN.org)

These disgusting lies are not spoken just for the sake of breaking new ground in some weird bad taste contest. They're used to help turn the other party into an enemy, who must be attacked without mercy because they've transgressed the moral boundaries we have set as a society.

Our democratic system is set up as a constant negotiation. For this to work, it implies that you see the other side as having legitimate interests and you accept them as equals. It is in this space where the system is breaking down. If you see the other side as being irredeemably evil, you don't negotiate with them; you try to see that they are suitably punished.

Rhetoric that claims the other side hates our country and is committing heinous crimes is designed to help create monsters in the minds of the listening audience, which justifies cutting them off at the knees. These politicians are saying you can't talk to the other side – they are criminals without regard for human life and therefore, they must be eliminated. This type of language is laying the groundwork for destroying our democracy and establishing an authoritarian state.

I can't speak for anyone else, but I love my country. It's the greatest country in the history of the world. What got us here

started with these words, in the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..."

The political system gets perverted beyond recognition, however, when extremist politicians use their rhetoric not to talk about how to improve the lives of our citizens, to attempt to win the consent of the governed and address our many problems, but to turn the other party into a low-budget movie monster out to destroy the listening audience.

Most people are just trying to get by, raise their children, and send them off to a good future. To deny that fact, and attribute to your political rivals every kind of malign intent, portray them as blood enemies and implicitly encourage violence against them is a great way to begin wrecking the carefully designed political system of the Founding Fathers.

Pleasantville-based writer Michael Gold has had articles published in the New York Daily News, the Albany Times Union, The Virginian-Pilot, The Palm Beach Post, other newspapers and The Hardy Society Journal, a British literary journal.

On the Street

Fire Safety Tips: Let's Hear Sleigh Bells This Holiday Season, Not Fire Alarms

The holiday season is here. All across the state, New Yorkers are setting up holiday candles, trees and lights to decorate their home.

The Firefighter's Association of New York (FASNY) hopes to remind everyone of a few safety tips to enjoy a safe holiday season.

"The holidays bring cheer, love and joy to New Yorkers each year," said FASNY

President Edward Tase Jr. "Unfortunately, it historically also brings an increase in home fires. Dry trees, unattended cooking and forgotten candles can all lead to tragedy. We want all New Yorkers to enjoy a safe and accident-free holiday."

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), U.S. fire departments respond to an average of 160 home fires that involve Christmas trees per year, and

an average of 7,900 home fires started by candles. From 2014 to 2018, fires caused by candles resulted in an annual average of 81 civilian fire deaths, 677 civilian fire injuries and \$278 million in direct property damage per year.

New York State has the second-most home fire fatalities this year, with 126 deaths, following Pennsylvania with 141. At this time last year, New York had 102 home fire fatalities, fifth most in the nation.

"Keep you and your loved ones safe this holiday by not leaving candles unattended and turning off all decoration lights when leaving the home," Tase said. "Also, if using a live tree to decorate your house this season, be sure to water it often and place it away from any heating sources to avoid fire risk."

Holiday Decorating Tips

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame-resistant or flame-retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.

Christmas Tree Fire Safety Tips

- Fresh trees are less likely to catch fire, so look for a tree with vibrant green needles that are hard to pluck and don't break easily from its branches. The tree shouldn't be shedding its needles readily.
- Always place your tree away from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights, and keep the tree base filled with water to prevent it from becoming too dry.
- Make sure all your indoor and outdoor Christmas lights have been tested in a lab by the UL or ETL/ITSNA for safety, and throw out any damaged lights.
- Any lights you use outdoors must be labeled suitable for exterior placement, and be sure to plug them into a ground-fault circuit interrupter protected receptacle.
- Keep all your holiday candles away from your Christmas tree, surrounding furniture and décor.
- Don't forget to turn your Christmas tree lights off each night.

This information is provided by the Firefighter's Association of New York (FASNY). It has been lightly edited and is being published by Examiner Media as a public service. FASNY was founded in 1872, and represents the interests of the more than 85,000 volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel in New York State. For more information, visit www.fasny.com.

Letters to the Editor

Lawler Must Denounce Fellow Republicans for Courting Antisemites

Shortly after his victory over Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney last month, Republican Congressman-elect Mike Lawler called for the GOP to move beyond former President Trump, telling news outlets he'd "like to see the party move forward" after the mid-term elections. However, shortly after the former president had dinner with racist Holocaust denier Nick Fuentes and antisemitic musician Kanye West, Lawler refused to criticize Trump by name, restricting his condemnation on Twitter solely to Fuentes.

Lawler, after being elected, pledged a bipartisan approach to legislating, saying he would "do the best to represent all

of the people from every community," but has now fallen in line behind House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy, who has also stopped short of condemning Trump directly over this incident.

It's concerning that Mr. Lawler, before even being sworn in, has decided to publicly hew to the MAGA line on this issue, especially considering the many Jewish voters in Westchester and Rockland's 17th Congressional District whose support he actively solicited during his campaign.

Lloyd Trufelman
Katonah

Police Blotter

Croton-Harmon Police Department

Nov. 23: A caller from Baltic Place reported hearing what she believed to be a gunshot at 11:29 a.m. Patrols and state police responded and checked the area and were unable to locate the source of the noise.

Nov. 24: A North Riverside Avenue resident reported at 2:11 a.m. that four people in dark clothing walked into a parking lot behind his home. Patrols responded and checked the area with negative results.

Nov. 27: A caller reported at 12:14 a.m. seeing a male in a gray sweatshirt and black pants who appeared to be looking into cars as he walked down Benedict Boulevard. Patrols responded and checked the area with negative results. No vehicles in the area appeared to be tampered with.

Nov. 28: A caller from Van Wyck Street reported at 4:56 p.m. that two males wearing Verizon Wireless jackets were knocking on doors attempting to sell services. Patrols responded and located the males and advised them to obtain a permit.

North Castle Police Department

Nov. 24: An e-911 caller reported at 6:35 p.m. that a male subject has returned to the premises, DJ's Auto Clinic North on North Broadway, and is apparently refusing to leave. The same party had been at the location about an hour earlier. The responding officers reported that

the subject vacated the premises and was advised that if he returns, he will be trespassing.

Nov. 26: A larceny was reported at 1:23 p.m. that occurred in the past at Stop & Shop on North Broadway. The caller stated that the larceny occurred approximately a week ago and would like it documented. The responding officer reported that information was gathered and depositions secured.

Nov. 26: An anonymous caller reported at 10:46 p.m. that a male subject was running with no jacket on southbound Route 120 heading toward Route 22. The party was described as a heavyset white male with short brown hair wearing sandals. The responding officer stated that he made contact with the subject, who stated he was going to the gas station from his friend's house to get cigarettes. The man was given a courtesy transport.

Nov. 28: An employee at Stop & Shop on North Broadway reported at 7:33 p.m. that a larceny had just occurred. The complainant stated that a male party produced a receipt for only a partial number of the items selected, and proceeded to exit the store on foot toward the entrance of the parking lot without making further payment. The subject in question was described as a Hispanic male wearing a black hat, black coat, gray sweats and white sneakers. The responding officers reported locating the individual near 26 Palmer Ave. All property was ultimately

returned to the store manager. The party was subsequently released, and all information gathered.

Nov. 29: A Stop & Shop employee reported at 4:45 p.m. that there was a male party that has been known to steal from the store, who has a full cart of merchandise. While on the phone with the employee, an officer advised the employee to stop the subject before he passes the point of payment. The employee stated that he retrieved the merchandise from the male party outside of the store without incident but would like to pursue charges. Units were advised and responded and the subject was placed under arrest.

Yorktown Police Department

Nov. 23: A 53-year-old Cortlandt man was charged with a first offence DWI, a misdemeanor, and several traffic infractions after being observed driving westbound on Route 202 at a low rate of speed at 1:17 a.m.

Nov. 26: A 21-year-old Peekskill man was charged at 1:10 p.m. with second-degree menacing, a misdemeanor, following a Nov. 1 road rage incident on Route 6 in the area of the Mohegan Diner. An investigation revealed the defendant menaced a victim when he exited his vehicle with a baseball bat and aggressively approached the victim. He fled the scene prior to police arrival, but was arrested this date when he appeared at Yorktown

police headquarters.

Nov. 28: A 47-year-old Peekskill woman was charged with third-degree criminal possession of a forged instrument and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended registration, both misdemeanors, along with several traffic infractions. The driver was pulled over on Route 6 at 5:33 p.m. for switching lanes without using a turn signal and allegedly having a fraudulent New Jersey temporary license plate affixed to the vehicle that was partially covered by a license plate cover.

Nov. 29: A 17-year-old Yorktown male was charged with juvenile delinquency at 6:35 p.m. after allegedly stealing \$46 worth of alcohol from a beverage cooler at Coco Farms on Barger Street.

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Single Mom Seeks Kidney Donor for Holiday Season

By Abby Luby

Meire Santos never believed she would be desperate for a kidney when she came to the United States from Brazil 25 years ago. But today, Santos is praying for that life-saving gift so she can lead a normal life.

Vital to finding Santos a kidney match is the Flood Sisters Kidney Foundation.

"Although Meire is still able to work as a housekeeper, she is at Stage 5, which is end-stage renal failure, her kidneys are functioning at 10 percent and anything below 18 percent means she is ready for a transplant or dialysis," said Jennifer Flood, founder and president of the foundation.

That means a donor has to be found soon.

Santos, 44, is a single mom, and she and her 10-year-old daughter Melanie live in Greenwich, Conn. Santos has no family in this country and has worked as a nanny, a housekeeper and caretaker.

Last June she began experiencing severe headaches and high blood pressure, two common symptoms of chronic kidney disease. Santos contacted the Flood Sisters Kidney Foundation to help her find a match for a kidney transplant.

Flood and her two sisters, Heather and Cynthia, established the foundation in 2008. Over the years numerous celebrities have publicly supported the foundation, which in turn, has attracted donors. The long list of people wanting to help has grown, a list Flood said they are tapping into to find Santos a match. Potential matches have been screened

in the last few days.

Based in Chappaqua, the Flood Sisters Kidney Foundation started when the sisters' father needed a kidney transplant within six months. As a nurse, Jennifer Flood knew finding a match could take years and time was against their father. The sisters decided to create a nonprofit foundation while reaching out to find a willing donor.

The Flood sisters made headlines because they bypassed mainstream medical routes and national waiting lists and used social media and Craigslist in an emotional appeal to help save their father. The response was overwhelming and the list of donors grew.

The unorthodox outreach presented problems with established protocol.

"Doctors and nurses we talked to wouldn't accept donors who weren't from their pool," Flood recalled. "They wanted to use our donors in their pool. We went from hospital to hospital asking if they would take our donors."

Many hospitals refused to transplant kidneys from donors who weren't relatives or a spouse, but that didn't deter the sisters. While holding down their regular jobs, they kept posting ads every day in cities across the country. Finally, a woman from Monterey, Calif. responded to an ad on Craigslist and was a match.

"She's the one who saved our dad," Flood said.

Today, the practice of altruistic kidney transplants, which is donating a kidney to an unknown recipient, is widely accepted.

Celebrities publicly supporting the Flood Sisters Kidney Foundation include Dolly



FLOOD SISTERS KIDNEY FOUNDATION PHOTO

Greenwich, Conn. resident Meire Santos, who is in need of a kidney, pictured with her daughter, Melanie, is waiting to be matched with a donor through the Flood Sisters Kidney Foundation.

Parton, who produced a fundraising video, and Jon Bon Jovi, who performed at the Tarrytown Music Hall in 2018 for a sold-out foundation fundraiser.

According to the federal Health Resources & Services Administration, kidneys are the organ in highest demand in the U.S. Of the more than 100,000 people waiting for transplants, 60 percent are minorities.

"There's definitely barriers for minorities and we want to break those barriers down," Flood said.

The foundation charges a one-time patient membership fee of \$10,000 to cover the cost of running the foundation, which exists solely on donations. In Santos's case, three families she used to work for paid for her membership. Currently, Santos is registered for a transplant at Yale New Haven Hospital.

The total cost for kidney transplants averaged around \$442,500 in 2020. Transplants are covered by recipients' medical insurance, and if donors are eligible, they can receive a grant from the National Donor Assistance Program.

The foundation has a record of success. Just last month it celebrated its 13th successful transplant, bringing the donor and recipient together from across the country. Currently, the foundation has four participants in need of a kidney, including Santos.

For the Flood sisters, keeping the foundation going is a labor of love. Jennifer Flood, an elementary school nurse, does most of the donor matching while Cynthia helps with marketing and Heather, a psychologist, interacts with patients.

The ultimate goal is to build a special wellness center with staff to match donors with recipients and provide nutritional and psychological counseling as part of a support team.

"We're seeing a lack of services at hospitals where donors aren't called back," Flood said. "We are advocates for donors and recipients and can walk them through the process."

The Flood Sisters Kidney Foundation will be outside Chappaqua Wine & Spirits this Friday, Dec. 9 from 5 to 9 p.m. as part of Parents Night Out, a free wine tasting and shopping event in Chappaqua. Check in is at 15 King St.

For more information about the Flood Sisters Kidney Foundation, visit <https://floodsisterskidneyfnd.org>.

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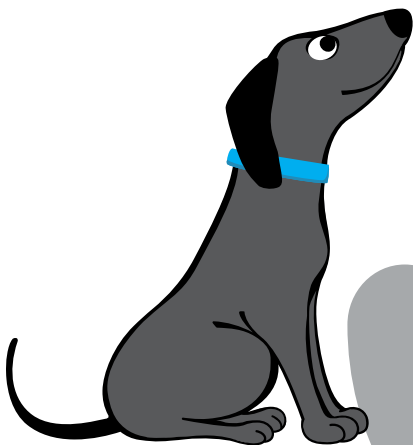


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NWH Coordinator Follows in Wife's Footsteps, Named Caregiver of the Year

By Martin Wilbur

Mount Kisco residents Jeff Kent and his wife, Heather, both work at Northern Westchester Hospital. But their place of employment isn't their only work-related similarity.

Last Friday, Jeff was named the 2022 Clayton Scanlan Byrne Planetree Caregiver of the Year Award at the hospital, beating out 14 other dedicated employees who were nominated for the honor. In 2011, Heather received the same award.

Jeff, the health unit coordinator in the hospital's Intensive Care Unit for the past eight-and-a-half years, said almost anyone who works at Northern Westchester Hospital would have been a worthy recipient.

"It's just an honor, it's an honor to represent this place (and) its amazing people," he said.

Heather, a patient care associate, said what makes the hospital a special place is the caring staff, and regardless of the department or unit, they are concerned about their co-workers, the patients and the public.

"It's the support around here, it's people who just really care about being here and about doing the right thing for our patients

and the community," Heather Kent said. "It's good. It's caring for each other and the staff caring for each other."

Providing excellence in person-centered care is the key hallmark of a Planetree facility, said Mandy Kilmartin, director of global services for Planetree. Northern Westchester Hospital, which received its designation from Planetree in 2005, not only has high standards for patient care and safety but also for humanity and kindness, Kilmartin said.

"It's a much more unique thing to be recognized for their compassion and for putting people at the heart of what they do, and by recognizing individuals every year, they're not only appreciating their employees, but appreciating the other stuff to display that same kind of compassion and that's really a core component of person-centered care," Kilmartin said.

Darol Bates, director of patient and customer service experience at Northern Westchester along with being the hospital's Planetree coordinator, said to receive certification from the nonprofit health care organization is a two- to three-year process, requiring site visits and evaluations.

Once certified, Planetree representatives rank a hospital on one of



Jeff Kent, a health unit coordinator at Northern Westchester Hospital, displays his award after being named the hospital's Caregiver of the Year last week. He is pictured with his wife, Heather, who won the same award 11 years ago.

three levels – bronze, silver or gold, Bates said. Not only has Northern Westchester

attained gold each time since its initial certification, it has earned gold with distinction every time, the only hospital to receive that honor, she said.

In addition to Kent, the hospital also recognized its 2022 Planetree Physician Award recipient, Dr. Rich Catanzaro, the chief of behavioral health.

Making the presentations was Jen Byrne Gilhuley, whose mother demanded that she be treated at Northern Westchester when she was terminally ill because of the high level of care provided to patients. Gilhuley, who lives in Long Island, returns each year to make the winning presentation.

"There was absolutely no other choice for her just because she knew the quality of care," Gilhuley said of her the wishes of her mother, who lived in Chappaqua. "I think of how dedicated people who work here are and how hard they work and how comfortable they made us, too."

Kent said one of the aspects of Northern Westchester Hospital that he enjoys is that everyone's contributions are appreciated, from the department heads and top medical staff to the maintenance crew and everyone in between.

"It's a completely level playing field," he said. "Everybody has a name, and I don't think other hospitals are like that."

Examiner Media is now accepting internship applications online from high school and college student journalists. Visit the following link to apply: <https://www.theexaminernews.com/examiner-internship-program-application/>

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Fair Street USA: Wishing Everyone A Holiday

As 2022 wraps up, the City of White Plains looks forward to keeping the spirit of Fair Street USA alive. Fair Street USA is a 3D, immersive, interactive arts exhibit focused on exploring fair housing challenges. Housing discrimination derails dreams. Fair Street USA aimed to change that course. Ten community organizations joined forces with artists to envision a community where fair housing reigns. Visitors to Fair Street USA learned about fair housing choice, impact of housing discrimination on communities, and how to recognize and report fair housing concerns. The exhibit premiered on the White Plains library plaza and later remained on display in the library gallery.

In October, the exhibit inhabited Court Street as part of the Serious Fun Arts Festival. White Plains Mayor Tom Roach stated, “Fair housing education is essential to eliminating housing discrimination in communities. Each community must do their part to educate stakeholders about how to identify and combat these deleterious practices so that every person has equitable access to housing.” Mayor Roach continued, “Thank you to the city staff, community organizations and artists that collaborated to bring Fair Street USA to the City of White Plains. “Every person should be treated with dignity and respect and should be able to live where they choose.”

History of Fair Housing

Community Group: Westchester Residential Opportunities.

Artist: Moira Trachtenberg



The history of fair housing is paved with problematic practices. Redlining: the discriminatory practice of denying services to residents of certain areas based on their race or ethnicity. Restrictive Covenants: covenants that prohibit racial, ethnic, and religious minority groups from buying, leasing, or occupying homes; these became common after 1926 after the U.S. Supreme Court validated their use. Blockbusting: manipulating homeowners to sell or rent their homes at a lower price by falsely convincing them that the neighborhood's socioeconomic demographic is changing because of new groups of people moving in and that this shift will affect the value of their home. Steering: influencing a buyer's choice of communities based upon one of the protected classes.

Promoting Fair Housing

Community Group: Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.

Artist: Taeesha Muhammad

We all have a role to play in promoting fair housing and realtors have a special opportunity. “Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS® believes in Equal Opportunity for all. Fair housing laws are a cornerstone of community. As REALTOR® members, we have both the opportunity and responsibility to increase efforts to support diversity and inclusivity in the real estate market. It is our commitment to uphold fair housing laws and offer equal professional service to all in their search of real property.”



Protected Classes

Community Group: White Plains Human Rights Commission.

Artist: Jennifer

Jane is a Muslim woman who wears a hijab. Jane enters an apartment building leasing office because a sign in the building's window advertised several available units. Jane speaks to the leasing officer, who says there are no units available. Jane asks to be put on the waiting list but she never receives a call. Jane files a complaint with HUD because she suspects that the leasing officer doesn't want to rent to her because she is Muslim.

Reporting Discrimination

Community Group: Westchester County Human Rights Commission.

Artist: Taeesha Muhammad

The Westchester County Human Rights Commission combats discrimination by implementing and enforcing the County's Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law and by empowering the community through its education and outreach efforts regarding discrimination and hate-related issues.



If you have experienced or witnessed discrimination or a hate-related incident in Westchester County call the Human Rights Commission at (914) 995-7710 or email the Commission at humanrights@westchestergov.com

Future of Fair Housing

Community Group: WP Mayor's Youth Council.

Artist: Moira Trachtenberg

Our youth are our future, and the young people who envisioned the future of fair housing envision housing in its broadest sense with access to healthy food, green space, recreational activities, Wi-Fi, mental health services and supports and so much more.



Protected Classes

Community Group: The Westchester County Human Rights Commission.

Artist: Taeesha Muhammad

John, who is a Black man, speaks to a property manager leasing an apartment. The landlord says there are no units available.



John contacted for a reference. John files a complaint with HUD because he suspects the real reason he was denied the apartment is because Joe, who is an Asian man, meets with the broker purchasing a house for his family. When John is interested in, the broker steers him to a neighborhood where there are more "desirable" residents of the neighborhood appear to be of a certain neighborhood because of his race.

Day Season Free of Fair Housing Challenges

As part of the Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, and familial status, and protects residents who feel they have experienced discrimination in housing,” said Alicka Ampry-Samuel, HUD Regional Administrator for New York and New Jersey. “HUD provides funding for fair housing education and enforcement to local governments and organizations that assist residents. I am pleased that the City of White Plains, stakeholders, and artists came together to create this innovative exhibit.”



White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach, HUD Regional Administrator Alicka Ampry-Samuel, Westchester County Human Rights Commission Executive Director, Tejash Sanchala, and Artist Rebecca Mills in front of the house representing discrimination on the basis of sex and gender.

Protected Class: Religion
Community Group: Interfaith Committee.
Artist: Jennifer Levine



Protected Class: Race/Color
Community Group: Thomas H. Slater Center.
Artist: Muhammad

John meets with the prospective landlord on the phone about the apartment. The landlord seems eager to rent to John, but when John meets with the landlord in person, the landlord's attitude is entirely different. Later, John receives a letter saying that his application was denied because of a negative reference from his current landlord. John is surprised because he never had problems with his landlord, and his landlord swears she was never a complaint with HUD because he was because he is Black.

The project organizers are solely responsible for the exhibit.

Protected Class: Sex/Gender
Community Group: The LOFT LGBTQ+ Community Center.
Artist: Rebecca Mills



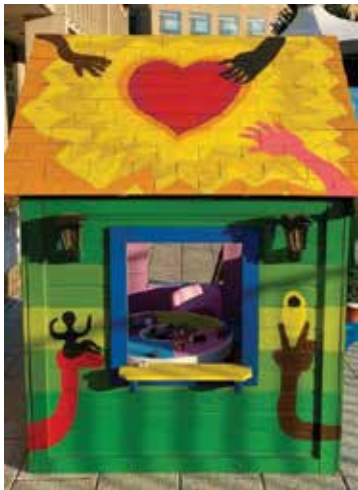
When Jane falls behind on her rent she asks her landlord if he will give her more time. He says yes but only if she will go out with him. Feeling she has no choice, Jane agrees. Jane's landlord tells her that if she does not go out with him again he is going to evict her. Jane files a complaint with HUD because sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. A realtor refuses to show houses listed for sale to a potential buyer because the buyer is transgender. A housing provider refuses to rent a house to a same sex couple because of their "family composition". A maintenance worker employed by a housing provider subjects a female tenant to pervasive harassment because she is a lesbian. A tenant is evicted after the housing provider discovers the tenant has dated persons of the same sex and identifies as bisexual. A same-sex couple asks a realtor to see rental units throughout the city but is only shown rental units in a part of the city known for having many LGBTQ residents. All these examples constitute a form of sex discrimination.

Protected Class: National Origin
Community Group: El Centro Hispano.
Artist: Jennifer Levine

John recently moved to the United States from Mexico. One day, John sees that there is a new tenant in the apartment next to his, so he welcomes her to the building. John's neighbor comments on how nice everyone in the building seems, especially the building manager who offered to waive her security deposit. John is surprised because the building manager was short-tempered with him and said that John's accent made him hard to understand. John later finds out that the building manager has waived fees and deposits for other tenants he likes, but not for John or other persons from Mexico. Providing different terms and conditions to tenants because of national origin is illegal discrimination.



Protected Class: Familial Status
Community Group: Lifting Up Westchester.
Artist: Rebecca Mills



John has three teenage children. John's building has a patio with picnic tables, and John's children decide to have lunch there. John receives a notice from the homeowners association informing him that the building rules say that the patio is for adult use only. Building rules that discriminate against children are a form of familial status discrimination. Jane & John are filling out an application for a mortgage at their local bank. Their loan officer notices that Jane is visibly pregnant and asks whether she will be taking maternity leave. When Jane says yes, the loan officer informs the couple that they either have to apply without Jane's income or wait until she returns from leave. They file a complaint with HUD because the bank's policy discriminates based on sex and familial status.

Protected Class: Disability
Community Groups: WP Mayors Advisory Council for People with Disabilities and MHA Westchester.
Artist: Moira Trachtenberg

Jane has a developmental disability and needs assistance managing her finances. Jane tells her building manager that her mother will be paying her rent and asks if all notices relating to her rent can be sent to her mother. The building manager says that the management company will only send notices to residents, no exceptions. Jane gets an eviction notice because her mother did not know that Jane's rent increased. Denying a reasonable accommodation is disability discrimination. John, a person with a disability who uses a wheelchair, views a condominium he is hoping to purchase in a new building. When John arrives, he finds there are no accessible parking spaces in the building's parking lot. Inside the unit, the thermostat and light switches are all too high for him to reach. The building has a fitness room, but the only way to get to it is to go up steps. Failing to comply with accessibility requirements is a form of disability discrimination.



COVID Has Allowed More Time for Home Projects. Here's Mine

Readers of this column have probably, like me, been spending a lot more time at home than before the outbreak of COVID-19 two years ago. While there have been few positive points and a lot of low ones as we've navigated the pandemic, I found myself with a lot more time on my hands than normal, time that could be spent catching up on promised tasks.

Just this past weekend, I was caught up on all my assignments and just itching for something to do around the house. More than just itching –

starving.

As it happens, I focused in on an end table that had a few nasty scratches that needed attention, and I set out to refinish it, but in a quick and easy way.

It had been more than 30 years since I had refinished furniture, and in those days, I was a purist, insisting on the method of refinishing known as French polish, where the old surface would be stripped paint remover, and after being sanded, the surface grain would be “filled” with a material and sanded again with fine sandpaper to make it perfectly smooth.

Then, it would be coated with several coats of either shellac or varnish that required a long time to dry, again being sanded with fine sandpaper between each coat to remove imperfections and to create a better bond for the next coat.

After three coats, I would finish the surface with two layers of Butcher's Wax, buffed



By Bill Primavera

to perfection. The process took forever to accomplish because of the drying time between each coat and also because of the sanding required to remove the imperfections caused by the brush and dust. Shellac can take up to 36 hours to dry and, if you do the math, a project of refinishing would take forever. Who wants to spend that kind of time anymore?

With this method, a small tabletop could take me a couple of weeks of part-time effort to accomplish. I don't have that kind of patience anymore, getting older as I am, so my first decision was to think about whether I wanted to make that leap to use polyurethane

for a surface.

Let me explain the difference. Polyurethane is a thermoplastic that combines the best features of plastic and rubber. It has gained popularity due to its ability to form a thicker and stronger film than coatings like varnish and shellac. It requires less coats, time and effort. Oil-based polyurethane typically dries in 24 hours, while water-based polyurethane takes six or less. I'll take the water-based, thank you.

This time around, devoid of any materials needed, I marched myself down to Home Depot and bought a small arsenal of products for an afternoon's pleasurable pursuit. I picked up a pint of paint remover; a half-pint of Minwax Wood Finish in Colonial Maple; a half-pint of water-based, fast-drying polyurethane;



two sandpaper blocks, one medium grade and one fine; a cheap two-inch brush to apply the stripper; and a good one-and-a-half-inch brush to apply the polyurethane. In one small bag, I was a weekend project warrior.

At home, I spread an old sheet on the floor, and with my cheap brush, covered the table top, legs and drawer front with the stripper, let it do its thing for just 15 minutes, then wiped it off with old rags.

After sanding with first the medium-grade sanding paper, then the smooth, I stained the wood with Minwax and let it dry for an hour. Then I simply applied the polyurethane and, after less than four hours, I found that it was completely dry. With the fine sandpaper block, I rubbed down the imperfections, which did a pretty good job on all the flat surfaces. For the turns on the legs, I used fine steel wool.

The end product looked so good that I thought I could be ready for the finishing

wax coat, but I realized that I had forgotten to buy Butcher's Wax. However, did I tell you my favorite secret weapon around the house for repairing scratches is also a wonderful final refinishing coat, too? That is Kiwi Shoe Polish! I lathered on brown wax in two coats, and the results were deep and luxurious.

Now I have a very sweet, shiny end table with an all but impervious surface. But more than that, I've enjoyed an almost Zen-like, lazy afternoon exercise that scratched a long-held itch to do a project around the house once again.

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

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Trio Busted for Stealing Residents' Mail in Mahopac

By Martin Wilbur

Carmel police arrested two Brooklyn residents and a Mahopac man last Thursday for stealing mail from residents and leveled charges for a variety of other offenses.

Shortly after midnight on Dec. 1., police were contacted by a resident who observed a suspicious vehicle in the area of West Lake Boulevard in Mahopac. The resident reported that occupants of the vehicle appeared to be stealing mail out of various mailboxes in the area, police said.

Carmel officers responded to the scene, locating the suspected vehicle on Route 6N in Mahopac. They conducted a traffic

stop and identified the operator along with two passengers.

Police discovered that the driver, Vitaliy Lutso, 27, of Brooklyn was driving with a suspended license and registration and had a fraudulent Delaware registration tag. The two passengers in the car were identified as 29-year-old Tetiana Alive-Yolosovych, also of Brooklyn, and Mykola Popadynets, 24, of Mahopac.

Upon further investigation, several pieces of stolen mail belonging to Mahopac residents were discovered inside the vehicle. Investigating officers also recovered several stolen credit cards and about 80 stolen checks belonging to victims in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and

Tennessee, police said.

All three suspects were taken into custody and transported to Carmel police headquarters for processing.

Popadynets was charged with petty larceny, fourth- and fifth-degree criminal possession of stolen property and seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance. He was also charged with being a fugitive from justice, due to an active warrant out of Broward County, Fla. for larceny and fraud. Bail was set at \$50,000 cash and \$150,000 bond.

Alive-Yolosovych and Lutso were also charged with fourth- and fifth-degree criminal possession of stolen property and seventh-degree criminal possession of a

controlled substance. Bail was set for each at \$5,000 cash and \$15,000 bond.

Lutso was hit with the additional charges of aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, operating a vehicle with a suspended registration and not having insurance along with third-degree possession of a forged instrument.

All three suspects were arraigned by Carmel Town Justice Thomas Jacobellis and remanded to the Putnam County Correctional Facility, police said.

The Carmel Police Department and the United States Postal Inspection Service are continuing their investigation with additional criminal charge

Yorktown Grange Holiday Artisan Craft and Vintage Fair This Weekend

The Yorktown Grange Holiday Artisan Craft and Vintage Fair will be held this Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 10 and 11, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the fairgrounds at 99 Moseman Rd. in Yorktown Heights. It will be held rain or shine. Parking and admission are free.

See Santa with livestock for a free photo op. There will be a guest DC comic book writer, author and artist "Franco." There will also be arts and crafts and crafts for kids, which will be free, along with the sale of all sorts of unique vintage merchandise.

Proceeds from the sale of the items are donated to the Yorktown Grange.

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The Greater Mahopac Carmel Chamber Of Commerce acknowledges the support of our member partners. Through ongoing financial support the chamber is able to carry out it's mission of supporting local businesses.



Free Bee-Line Service to Start Wednesday Through Christmas Weekend

Just in time for the holiday season, free Bee-Line Bus fares will return from Dec. 7-26.

"This holiday season, we want people to visit with family and friends, and we want them to shop and go to work with ease. Leave the driving to us, and save some money this holiday season," said Westchester County Executive George Latimer.

This past summer, and during Thanksgiving week, the county offered free Bee-Line bus rides and the system experienced a 37 percent increase in ridership during the three-month period of June, July and August, compared to the prior three-month period in March, April and May.

Latimer said the county will provide a roughly \$2.6 million benefit to the traveling public if ridership increases by a similar percentage over the next three weeks.

The promotion is valid on all routes in the fixed route bus system, including the express route into Manhattan, the BxM4C. Free rides are also valid on the Bee-Line ParaTransit system.

"We've made a lot of recent improvements to our Bee-Line bus fleet including the addition of 106 brand-new 40-foot hybrid/electric buses," said Hugh Greechan, commissioner of the

Westchester County Department of Public Works and Transportation. "This is the perfect opportunity for Westchester residents to leave your cars at home, and take a free ride on one of our clean, comfortable state-of-the-art buses."

For more information about the free rides program, call 914-813-7777. An information agent is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Bee-Line, Westchester County's bus system, serves more than 27 million passengers annually with convenient service connecting residents to jobs, recreation, shopping and other regional transportation services. It is the second largest transit bus fleet in New York State, operated by the county's Department of Public Works and Transportation.

Over 65 percent of all Westchester residents are within walking distance of a Bee-Line bus route, making the bus both close and convenient. The system has more than 3,300 bus stops and almost 60 routes. All Bee-Line buses are accessible, and designed with many accessibility features including "kneeling" buses, ramps and lifts.

This is a press release provided by Westchester County. It has been lightly edited and is being published by Examiner Media as a public service.

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Putnam Chorale's Winter Ensemble to Perform Multiple Concerts

The Winter Ensemble, a specialty chorus of the Putnam Chorale, has an extensive performance season of holiday music in December.

Presenting a suite of historical holiday classics from the mid-1800s, the ensemble is spanning multiple venues this season in Putnam and Westchester counties.

- "A Chorale Christmas." A concert of historic holiday music will be performed at Lyndhurst, located at 635 S. Broadway in Tarrytown this Saturday, Dec. 10 at 1 and 3 p.m. For tickets, visit <https://www.showclix.com/event/a-chorale-christmas-2023>
- "A Chorale Christmas." This performance will be at St. John the Evangelist Church, located at 225 E. Lake Blvd. in Mahopac, also this Saturday, Dec. 10 at 7 p.m. Tickets will be available at the door.
- "Songs of the Season." A concert of 18th century holiday music will be held at Tompkins Corner Cultural Center, located at 729 Peekskill Hollow Rd. in Putnam Valley on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 3 p.m. Tickets are available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-putnam-chorale-tickets-465962665877>

Directed by Dr. Douglas Anderson, the Putnam Chorale and the Winter Ensemble is the sole community chorus in Putnam County. It has been drawing singers and

entertaining audiences from Putnam, Dutchess and Westchester counties and Connecticut with a spectrum of classical and other choral works since 1989.

To learn more information about Putnam County's only community chorus, visit putnamchorale.org or their Facebook page at facebook.com/PutnamChorale for updates on the current season.

The Putnam Chorale, comprised of singers from Putnam, Dutchess, Westchester and Fairfield counties, are scheduled to perform in four holiday concerts over the next two weekends, including three concerts this Saturday in Westchester and Putnam counties.



P'ville's Emanuel Lutheran to Hold Blue Christmas This Sunday

The holidays are thought to be the most wonderful time of the year, but for so many people, this season can be an incredibly difficult time of the year.

For people who are facing illness or are grieving a loss or experiencing other difficulties, the holidays can add immense pressure to an already stressful time.

Emanuel Lutheran Church in Pleasantville has created a special holiday gathering called Blue Christmas for community members who want to celebrate the holidays in a way that supports them through their difficult time.

The service will be held this Sunday, Dec. 11 at 3 p.m. at the church, located at 197 Manville Rd.

Pastor Kevin O'Hara created this special celebration to bring joy and hope in a way that acknowledges life's difficulties.

"There is a myth that everyone should be shiny and bright at the holidays, but that can feel like a double-whammy to people going through tough times," O'Hara said. "Our service is designed to let everyone feel comfortable bringing their full self, regardless of their circumstances. The assurance of hope is meaningful to everyone."

All are welcome to join Blue Christmas and be supported through this season. No tickets or reservations are needed.

Emanuel Lutheran Church is an inclusive community. More information can be found at www.emanuelelc.org. You can also get further information by calling the church office at 914-769-1559.



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Best Journalism Movie Ever Now Playing at a Theater Near You

As a local news organization in 2022, part of the job is to communicate the importance of supporting our work and evangelize about the community-binding power it delivers.

Local news advocates often correctly point out how it's the reporters working in our sector of the industry, not our more glamorous national news-reporting big brothers and sisters, who produce the journalism that glues communities together.

But admittedly, stories requiring a certain brand of world-class reporting (not to mention worldwide distribution) demand the resources and reach of national and international outlets and their investigative journalists.

While that fact is far from the focus of "She Said," a film depiction of The New York Times' heroic reporting that helped expose Harvey Weinstein's horrifying abuse and the ugly system that enabled his predacious behavior, it was that fact about the importance of national news reporters that struck me most when watching the movie this past weekend, as a local community news publisher myself.

The only avenue for justice, when all official channels fail, is often provided by the tenacious and risky work of reporters like Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey of the Times. Their brave and ferocious pursuit of the Weinstein story in the face of intimidation and tall odds take center stage in director Maria Schrader's master work.

Estate Planning

That uniquely critical role played by the Fourth Estate, especially when the other estates fail, was on vivid display in "She Said."

And more specifically, despite any of the newspaper's warts, the film also brilliantly captures the New York Times' commitment to accuracy, fairness, and excellence.

The Times has become everyone's favorite media punching bag, across the political spectrum. While the most vicious, dangerous and absurdly over-the-



By Adam Stone

top critiques are leveled by segments on the right, with preposterous claims of the outlet literally publishing intentionally false "fake news," the left also loses its collective mind over the 170-year-old great American institution, lighting its hair on fire over "bothsidesism" or claims of entrenched access journalism.

Even the center is too quick to write off the Times when the newspaper veers off track, whether over its organizational inclination to be too tough on Israel or its undoubtedly and sometimes cringy cosmopolitan, coastal sensibilities.

While some of the criticisms contain elements of truth or more, the attacks on the Times often fail to see the big picture. It's an organization employing about 2,000 of the best journalists on the planet, dotted across the world. While a flawed institution, like all human creations, the wholesale rejection of The Times because of lapses in judgment always miss the mark. (As it happens, more than 1,000 members of The New York Times union reportedly plan to walk out on the job if the company's management doesn't agree to the terms of a new contract by Dec. 8, the union publicly revealed this past Friday.)

Face the Facts

In general, and as an organization, the Times is consumed with getting the facts right. And, like any great newspaper, it owns up to mistakes as quickly as possible and displays a genuine zeal to prominently correct the record and acknowledge errors when necessary. (The same goes for publications like The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and most of the other legacy publications some people love to mindlessly bash instead of intelligently critique.)

Yes, of course, there have been serious blunders and black eyes over the years. But if all of our major institutions obsessed over detail and transparency as much as the Times, we'd be far better off. I just wish the truth-bending politicians and overpaid TV personalities endlessly

bashing the Times spent even one day working as hard as the paper's underpaid and overworked reporters do to unearth and report the facts.

(From its failure to properly cover the Holocaust, to the breathless, propaganda-laced weapons of mass destruction reporting leading up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq to the flawed 2006 coverage of the Duke lacrosse players wrongly accused of sexual assault, to much else before and after, the New York Times owns its fair share of brutal failures. But it's also true that the Times works extraordinarily hard to learn from past mistakes, in a way many other prominent institutions do not. One aspect that sets the Times apart is the staggering fact that it has remained family-owned all these years. Current Publisher A.G. Sulzberger is the great-great-grandson of Adolph Ochs, a 19th century owner of The New York Times.)

As for "She Said's" crisp, straightforward storytelling, the film beautifully captured the Times' institutional desire to seek truth and fairness to the best of the organization's abilities.

The seeking was exhibited in ways large and small in the movie, from featuring internal newsroom deliberations over how much time to give Weinstein and his legal team to respond to the charges contained in the about-to-publish Times investigation to the delicious minutia of showing a copyeditor deleting an extra space between two words.

But all of the high-minded themes aside, "She Said" is just an incredibly captivating movie, skillfully directed, wonderfully written and excellently acted.

Carey Mulligan plays Twohey while Zoe Kazan co-stars as Kantor. Both actresses do a pitch-perfect part of illustrating how these first-class journalists reporting on extraordinary circumstances are ordinary middle-class people themselves.

Work It

They're working moms, earning relatively modest wages, balancing the demands of lives as young parents and the wives of supportive husbands with the demands of pressure-cooker jobs. Angry phone calls roll in to their smartphones

from readers, sources and now-former presidents, as the movie shows the women also trying to lead their everyday lives of family dinners at their modest apartments and walks in the city. Early in the film, you even hear a vile, heart-stopping death threat on the other end of Twohey's line.

But ultimately, the movie is about Twohey and Kantor's relentless pursuit of Weinstein, trying to get famous victims on the record, as well as documents, records and other evidence to corroborate allegations against the ultimate Hollywood hypocrite's beastly behavior.

And despite confronting hurdle after hurdle along the way, Twohey and Kantor, with the cautious but unflinching support of Times' leadership, finally nailed down a story that shook our culture and helped deliver justice. (Reporter Ronan Farrow and The New Yorker under editor David Remnick's leadership played an equally pivotal and courageous role in revealing the truth about Weinstein as well as about the corrupted corporate and criminal justice infrastructures that protected workplace abusers.)

Blasphemy

There are many journalism movies I love. "Absence of Malice," "Spotlight," "The Post," "Shattered Glass," "The Paper" and "State of Play" are just a few personal favorites. And I know it's blasphemy to elevate anything above "All the President's Men," let alone if we include "Citizen Kane" in the conversation. They're all fantastic, and you have to judge a movie in the context of its time.

But all that being stipulated, for my money, no journalism movie has ever done a better job of showcasing the grind involved in producing even just one explosive, fact-checked, carefully-vetted story. Somehow, the movie makes watching the plodding process entertaining.

And lucky you, "She Said" is still playing for at least a couple more days at our treasured Jacob Burns Film Center in Pleasantville.

Check it out and let me know what you think. Especially if you're a harsh critic of the Times yourself.

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continued on page 26

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While gifted gift-givers reside on the mountaintop, most of us mere mortals appreciate the utility of the gift card, the gift basket and the gift box.

This holiday season can be different. There is one gift that rises above Amazon Prime – the gift of preparedness.

Choosing between a subscription to the butterscotch-of-the-month club and a revocable trust is a daunting holiday challenge. Revocable trusts allow a trust creator to bring a diverse collection of assets under one umbrella. Real estate, bank accounts, investment accounts, tangible property and

businesses can all be owned by a trust. Revocable trusts allow assets owned by the trust to pass to beneficiaries outside of probate, avoid ancillary probate in other states and remain current through trust amendments that reflect changes in family dynamics. Butterscotch tastes good?

While holiday gifts are consumed, placed on a shelf or remain in their gift bags, estate planning documents have the power to maintain family strength for many years. A power of attorney is the ultimate stocking stuffer. Power of attorneys become vitally important during a health crisis. A hospitalization followed by a rehabilitation stay may lead to long-term care issues.

Long-term care in a nursing home or at home can be prohibitively expensive. Medicaid eligibility can reduce out-of-pocket costs significantly. Medicaid eligibility often requires a power of attorney to transfer and protect

assets. Without a power of attorney, an incapacitated person with non-exempt assets solely in their name over \$16,800 would have trouble qualifying for Medicaid, because there is no authorized person legally able to transfer assets. An Article 81 guardianship would be required, which is costly and time-consuming.

I know asking Santa for a power of attorney is a little unusual, but I am sure that Mrs. Claus would feel better knowing she was protected considering Santa is flying around the world in an open sled and entering millions of homes unannounced through chimneys.

Once all of the presents have been opened and the gift wrap unceremoniously tossed aside, there comes the reckoning. The sweater vest doesn't fit. The coffeemaker makes bad coffee. The air fryer is way too big for the counter. Time to return some gifts. Without a proper



By Alan D. Feller, Esq.

replacement for the returned gift, the whole process may make you feel frustrated.

Most estate planning documents can also be revoked, amended, updated and replaced. It is possible that new documents will be ready to go in less time than trying to reach a human being familiar with the return policy connected to an e-commerce site.

We cherish all the merrys and the happys. After a long year, the holidays arrive and offer opportunities to inject slivers of lightness and fun. A lit and decorated tree surrounded by legal documents could be a bit somber for some tastes, but one power of attorney among the toys couldn't hurt.

Alan D. Feller, Esq. is managing partner of Feller Associates, located at 625 Route 6 in Mahopac. He can be reached at alandfeller@sloanandfeller.com.

Assistance of Counsel

THERE'S A WORD FOR IT
A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

Something Borrowed. The Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) is celebrating its 125th anniversary. As part of the celebration the BPL published a list of the "125 Most Borrowed Books" from the library. The quiz words this week come from books on that list. Each word is followed by the name of the book it's found in, the books' position on the list, and the author. The full list can be found on the BPL website, bklynlibrary.org/125.

- 1. gnash (v.) Where the Wild Things Are, #1, Maurice Sendak
A) to growl B) grind C) chew on
- 2. orison (n.) Wuthering Heights, #6, Emily Bronte
A) arrangement B) beginning C) prayer
- 3. simper (v.) Little Women, #10, Louisa May Alcott
A) to smile in a coy way B) diminish in scope C) imitate
- 4. indignant (adj.) Lord of the Flies, #12, William Golding
A) disgraceful B) outraged C) impoverished
- 5. gabble (n.) Charlotte's Web, #14, E. B. White
A) rapid and indistinct speech B) a pitched roof C) an outer garment
- 6. vacuous (adj.) The Great Gatsby, #16, F. Scott Fitzgerald
A) wandering about B) whimsical C) devoid of matter
- 7. collation (n.) Cinderella, #23, Charles Perrault
A) assembling in sequence B) a sudden loss of force C) diverse fragments
- 8. pang (n.) A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, #24, Betty Smith
A) a throbbing sound B) an overpowering fright C) twinge

- 1. B. To grind (one's teeth) together, typically as a sign of anger; grate
- 2. C. Reverent petition to a deity; prayer
- 3. A. To smile in an insincere, unnatural, or coy way
- 4. B. Angered at something unjust or wrong; incensed; outraged; angry
- 5. A. Rapid and indistinct speech; jabbering; gibberish
- 6. C. Devoid of matter; empty; holding or containing nothing
- 7. A. Assembling in proper numerical or logical sequence; collection
- 8. C. A sudden sharp feeling; twinge

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A Peek Into the French State Dinner Hosted By the President



By Nick Antonaccio

Last week an event was held that I've enjoyed reporting on in past columns: a Presidential State Dinner.

The longstanding tradition of entertaining world leaders at the White House typically provides a valuable insight into the current relationships between nations and their representatives.

Last week brought to the forefront the longstanding alliance between the United States and France. American President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden hosted a White House gala in honor of French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte.

As one might expect, the 339 guests were regaled with the pomp and circumstance that surrounds such dinners: a well-curated menu, carefully selected domestic wines and all the glitter that emanates from ballroom gowns and toothy smiles.

Jill Biden planned much of the dinner, stating: "The design of this dinner was inspired by the shared colors of our flags, red, white and blue, and our common values, liberty and democracy, equality and fellowship."

President Biden emphasized this close alliance in his Champagne toast: "Vive la France and God bless America."

Before I divulge the menu, I believe a brief background of state dinners is in order.

'Our regional foods and wines are finally a showcase for visiting dignitaries and heads of state.'

Before there was fine American cuisine and wine, state dinners invariably focused on French-themed menus.

Fast forward to the mid-20th century. President Johnson began the current tradition of serving only American wines. It wasn't until the Clinton administration that state dinners became exclusively American-cuisine based. Our regional foods and wines are finally a showcase for visiting dignitaries and heads of state.

On to the American-focused menu:

First Course: Butter-poached Maine lobster paired with California-sourced American osetra caviar, garnished with celery crisp. Also served were delicata squash ravioli with tarragon sauce.

Main Course: Calotte of beef (the cut of meat wrapped around the rib-eye). The beef was sourced from ranches in Iowa, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Virginia. The calotte was served with a shallot marmalade and was accompanied by triple-cooked butter potatoes, sunchoke and creamed watercress with a red wine reduction.

Cheese Course: Three artisanal cheeses, served with macerated grapes, grenadine walnuts and honey harvested from the White House hives. The cheeses:

1. Rogue River Blue cheese (one of my all-

time favorites) from Oregon's Rogue River Creamery/

2. Humboldt Fog goat cheese (another one of my all-time favorites) from Cypress Grove in California.

3. Deer Creek Cheese Cheddar (I haven't tasted this one - yet) from a small Sheboygan, Wis. producer.

Dessert: Orange chiffon cake, roasted pears with citrus sauce and crème fraîche with distinctly red, white and blue decorations (Google a photo).

The Wines: The selection process was innovative and brilliantly pulled off. Three wines produced in California, all with strands of French influence. The order of service wasn't clear but seems self-evident.

1. Roederer Estate Brut Rosé NV sparkling wine. Founded in Anderson Valley in 1982 by the Rouzaud family of Champagne Louis Roederer, this house has been a premier producer since the 18th century. Clearly the wine for the gala toast (except for our teetotaler President, whose beverage of choice is ginger ale).

2. Newton Unfiltered 2018 Napa Valley

Chardonnay. An American favorite for decades, the wine was first produced by American Peter Newton in 1977. Now part of the French luxury goods group LVMH, this vintage was produced under the watchful guidance of its French-born general manager, Jean-Baptiste Rivail. An obvious match for the poached lobster course. And a favorite for any or all of the cheeses.

3. Anakota 2019 Knights Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. A winery under the umbrella of the Jackson Family Wines behemoth, this famous Sonoma County small production, single vineyard wine was crafted by Pierre Seillan, who emigrated from France in the 1990s. Not just a perfect match for calotte,

but perhaps for one of the cheeses, especially the blue.

Topping off the evening was musical guest singer Jon Batiste, a New Orleans native. The First Lady summed up the evening, referring to the city and the nation as "shaped by both French and American culture." The State Dinner

embodied these accolades.

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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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Board of Trustees of the Village of Pleasantville will hold a Public Hearing Monday, December 12, 2022 at 8:00pm in person at Village Hall located at 80 Wheeler Avenue, Pleasantville, New York 10570 and via Zoom Meeting id 87388256589, Password 022402 to hear comments on Introductory Local Law 11 of 2022 concerning the administration and enforcement of the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code.

Alyssa Hochstein
Deputy Clerk, Village of Pleasantville

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Sidewalk and Curb Improvements. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Village of Pleasantville will receive sealed bids for the Sidewalk and Curb Improvements. Sealed bids will be received in the office of the Village Clerk, Pleasantville, New York, until 12:00PM on December 22, 2022, and immediately thereafter the bids will be publicly opened and read aloud in the said office. Specifications and contract documents may be obtained on the third floor of Village Hall, located at 80 Wheeler Avenue, Pleasantville, NY 10570. These documents will also be made available on

the BidNet Direct website (www.bidnetdirect.com). Bids shall be made on the proposal forms furnished with the specifications. Bids shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope bearing the name and address of the Bidder, addressed to:

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Attention: **Bid 2022-6 Sidewalk and Curb**

The Village reserves the right to reject any and all Bids, to waive any informality in any Bid, and to award the Contract to other than the lowest Bidder if deemed in the best interest of the Village to do so.

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Jaw Pain Could Require Chiropractic Care, Physical Therapy

Your jaw aches. It locks up. You hear clicking and crunching when you open your mouth. Chewing hurts. You can't open your mouth all the way. You're getting headaches. Maybe you're even getting ringing in the ears or occasional dizziness.

If you're nodding your head to any of these, you may have Temporomandibular Disorder (TMD). This is a disorder of the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) that is most often caused by tight muscles of the jaw, neck and upper back or by arthritis of the TMJ. It can present as pain located immediately in front of the ear, but can cause pain to the face, neck and shoulders.

It affects between 10 million and 35 million Americans, and women are two to three times more likely to suffer from the condition. There are several ways to develop TMD, such as grinding your teeth at night, poor posture (such as forward head posture and hunched shoulders), stress, depression, nail biting, mouth breathing, and even a car accident, just to name some.

At ProClinix Sports Physical Therapy & Chiropractic, we take a multimodal approach to treating TMD,

combining chiropractic care and physical therapy. Chiropractors are musculoskeletal specialists, and although we are most well-known for treating the spine, we often also treat other areas of the body, like shoulders, hips, knees, ankles and, you guessed it, the TMJ!

One of the ways we treat this condition is with Active Release Techniques (ART). This is a method by which we treat the soft tissues – the muscles, ligaments, nerves and tendons – to reduce pain, increase range of motion and help speed up the healing process. During an ART session, the practitioner feels for tension or knots in the muscles that develop due to overload or repetitive use.

Once that is established, the practitioner then applies deep pressure to the muscle and instructs the patient to move that muscle from a shortened to a lengthened position, resulting in improved range of motion, improved function and less pain.



By Dr. Stefanie Tropea

The muscles of the jaw involved in chewing and opening and closing the mouth are very small but extremely powerful. They can become tight and dysfunctional, causing pain and loss of range of motion. ART is applied to these muscles, as well as to the muscles of the neck and upper back, to release tightness and tension. Gentle mobilization of the jaw and

the joints of the neck and upper back is also helpful to improve range of motion and reduce pain.

While manual therapy is helpful in treating symptoms of TMD, it's only part of the puzzle.

A TMD treatment plan would not be complete without a physical therapy component. Strengthening exercises, stretches and posture correction are critical to treating TMD effectively. During a physical therapy session, your therapist will guide you through focused exercises meant to strengthen the weak neck, upper back and shoulder muscles, as well as give you

stretches to lengthen and loosen the tight muscles. The goal is to increase range of motion, reduce pain and improve posture.

Here are some tips on how to avoid TMD:

- Be aware of your posture. Don't slouch!
- Don't look down at your phone for long periods of time.
- Find healthy ways to manage your stress, such as regular exercise, meditation and breathing exercises.
- Take frequent breaks from computer work.
- Visit your dentist. You might be grinding your teeth at night and may need a mouth guard.

If you're experiencing any of the symptoms mentioned above and think you might have Temporal Mandibular Disorder, Active Release Techniques combined with physical therapy might be for you.

Dr Stefanie Tropea is a chiropractor and a certified Active Release Techniques provider for ProClinix Sports Physical Therapy & Chiropractic in Armonk. For questions about her article or about ProClinix, she can be reached out 914-202-0700 or at stropea@proclinix.com.



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www.pawlingconcertseries.org

Places to Eat Before or After the Botanical Garden's Holiday Train Show

The glittering 31st Holiday Train Show is on track through Jan. 16 at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx near Fordham University. It's an annual seasonal treat that draws thousands from the Hudson Valley, a must for the young and the young at heart.

I look forward to visiting the Botanical Garden, walking through the beautifully restored Enid Haupt Conservatory and seeing the seductive floral arrangements and dramatic plantings. For additional information, times and advance tickets, visit www.nybg.org.

After taking in all that beauty, we do get hungry. Here are some easy-to-reach suggestions not far from the garden.

Mario's

Arthur Avenue is a quick commute from the Botanical Garden. Since 1919, five generations of the Migliucci family have worked the front and back of the house, making sure patrons are served well at this venerable institution. Amiable Regina Migliucci is at the helm.

For starters, enjoy the palate-pleasing lagnappe of marinated carrots, hot peppers and delicious, crusty Arthur Avenue bread. Great appetizers include the hot antipasto platter for two and the Spiedini alla Romana (skewered deep-fried mozzarella sandwiches).

Then move on to entrees such as the penne rustica with sausage, stuffed braciola napoletana, a generous portion of osso buco or the traditional chicken parmigiana.

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Mario's is located at 2342 Arthur Ave. in the Bronx. Info: 718-584-1188 or visit www.mariosrestarthurave.com.

Mamma Francesca

When Nick DiCostanzo was growing up on the Island of Ischia on the Coast of Naples in Italy, his earliest memories were of the simple seaside meals he would enjoy with his family, farm to table and, of course, sea to table.

As proprietor of Mamma Francesca for nearly 40 years, located on the banks of Long Island Sound with six-story views of the Queen City's boat clubs, his culinary philosophy still holds true, albeit with a sprinkling of contemporary taste. There are private and semi-private party facilities for up to 100 guests, and catering packages to suit your needs.

Robust Italian American specialties include freshly made manicotti, calamari fritti, Ischia Salad, chicken parmigiana and misto frutti di mare. There's rabbit cacciatore, too.

There are daily happy hours, off-premise catering and a new woodburning pizza oven. Free parking.

Mamma Francesca is located at 414 Pelham Rd. in New Rochelle. Info: 914-



By Morris Gut

636-1229 or visit www.mammafrancesca.com.

Artie's

Owner Spiros Chagares and his staff offer patrons an inspired melding of traditional and contemporary dishes served with flair.

Sit in one of several dining areas and enjoy changing specialties like the hearty seafood chowders; smoked salmon roll-ups; wood-grilled jumbo shrimp and scallops; the tender short rib; a massive zuppa di pesce; tender oven roasted rack of lamb; Chardonnay poached salmon with seafood; and fresh lobster prepared in a variety of styles. There are large combo platters and a loaded lobster salad roll at lunch. A selection of craft beers is available.

Check out the bar and lounge most evenings for networking. Private party facilities available. Open seven days. Free parking.

Artie's is located at 394 City Island Ave. in the Bronx. Info: 718-885-9885 or visit www.artiescityisland.com.

Maria

Three-time winners of Michelin's prestigious Bib Gourmet Award, brothers Peter and Giovanni Cucullo have been causing a stir in New Rochelle, drawing patronage from all over Westchester to their flavorful riff on Italian and global cooking.

I love their happy hours from 3 to 7 p.m. when they offer some favorite beverages and small plates that are loaded with flavor. I am already hooked on such eclectic dishes as the glazed pork ribs, truffled green beans, grilled sausage with sweet and spicy Peruvian peppers, Mom's meatballs, cauliflower fritters and roasted shishito peppers.

There's a nice dining room and bar filled with artifacts from home. Friendly staff, too. It's also a good networking spot. The family also operates bustling Fratelli's Pizza & Pasta and Pop's Espresso Bar next door.

Maria is located at 11 Huguenot St. in New Rochelle. Info: 914-636-0006 or visit www.marianewrochelle.com.

Closed Sundays.

Jack's Bar

Owner Shane Clifford and his friendly crew have delicious finger foods and generous specialties coming out of Chef Brendan Donohoe's kitchen. There are great burgers, decadent short rib mac and cheese, Jack's meatballs, seared scallops, chicken curry, shroom pizza out of their woodfired oven, the Berkshire pork chop and grilled lamb sliders. Their full Irish breakfast at brunch is a winner. Open seven days for lunch and dinner, plus Sunday brunch.

Jack's Bar is located at 219 Main St. in Eastchester. Info: 914-652-7650 or visit www.jackseastchester.com.

Ernie's Wine Bar & Eats

Out of this tiny kitchen come laudatory renditions of American and global dishes



A plate of ravioli stuffed with mushrooms at Mamma Francesca in New Rochelle.



Hot antipasto for two at Mario's on Arthur Avenue in the Bronx, a short trip from the New York Botanical Garden if you're going to see the holiday train show, now through Jan. 16.



The coconut shrimp with tropical fruit salad at Ernie's Wine Bar & Eats in Bronxville.

bursting with flavor. Also, oenophiles take note. The carefully selected wines served here, many from small-batch independent producers, can be heavenly. It is a wonderful place to unwind, take in some music on special nights and indulge. The small bar is great for networking, too.

Recent food tastings here have included escargot, Provençale style, Luisanna's amazing meatballs, a cheese and charcuterie platter, duck wontons, duck confit, a wonderful fettuccine carbonara and mushroom and pea risotto.

There is live entertainment. Check ahead for updates. Open Monday through Saturday for happy hour and dinner.

Ernie's is located at 7 Pondfield Rd. in Bronxville. Info: 914-652-7859 or visit www.ernieswinebar.com.

Dining at NYBG

There are themed dining pavilions throughout the park and near the Enid Haupt Pavilion: the casual Pine Tree Café and farm-to-table Hudson Garden Grill. Open daily. Early dining is recommended since they keep garden hours to 6 p.m. most days.

Info: 646-627-7711 or 718-817-8700 or visit www.nybg.org/visit/dining.

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

Virtual Music Program Available for People With Dementia

Music therapist Tim Doak leads a free virtual program offered by the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter for people with dementia and their loved ones called Something for Alz: Musical Moments.

The sessions take place each Friday this month through Dec. 30 from 11 a.m. to noon.

"It's completely remote, and what the goal of the group is to provide music experiences with dementia and Alzheimer's and their loved ones — whether it's their spouse, their child or a caregiver," Doak said. "It's a space for them to create connection together and have experiences with music."

He said he generally starts the group off with songs that help him get to know the participants.

"I use some songs that are from generic eras, really popular songs from various decades," Doak explained. "I'm also asking, 'What are some of your favorite songs? What are some of your favorite things to do?' That develops into a conversation."

Participants may share their wedding songs or other tunes connected to special times in their lives. Doak said they also sometimes do themed sessions, such as when they focusing on songs by the Beach Boys or other tunes with summer references, which then can lead to various activities ranging from singing to light exercise or conversation.

"I gather songs that are meaningful or are favorites or are significant to

everybody, and I then intertwine those songs into various experiences," Doak said. "It can be that we're singing, we're moving around, or we're talking about the songs and why they are significant. I ask them, 'What does this song remind you about?'"

He said that often when he brings in songs, stories arise that can be shared with the group. The music and memories can also help caregivers have meaningful interactions with their loved ones that can be very difficult when someone has Alzheimer's or another dementia.

Another activity he does with the group is lyric substitution.

"We come together; we do some songwriting," Doak said. "I do some modified lyric substitution. One of the songs that is kind of the go-to is from

'The King and I,' 'Getting to Know You,' and I substitute various words and lyrics for them to put in their favorite things. They can tell their preferences from the song itself. It's creating uniqueness; it's creating a unique experience for them. It turns a song that's familiar to them into their own."

Doak said music continues to move people with dementia even as other forms of communication become harder for them.

"Music is not centrally located in one area of the brain. Music is all over the brain," he said. "With the neural pathways that we can create with music, we can access some of their long-term memories. Music is one of the ways we can do that

very effectively."

Doak said he first started doing his Something for Alz group at the beginning of the pandemic, and has always done it virtually. He thinks the virtual format is preferable to an in-person format because it makes it easier for people to participate.

"One of the benefits of it being virtual is that people can be at home. They don't have to get their loved one ready, get into the car or go somewhere," Doak said. "Especially in late-stage Alzheimer's or dementia, that can create some agitation and confusion, so why not do an experience in the comfort of your home, where the loved one is comfortable and the caregiver doesn't have to get them ready? I often have participants having their morning coffee."

He said the virtual format also enables people from throughout the Hudson Valley to participate and connect with one another.

"I see the benefits of it being virtual, just to keep people at home and keep them safe and comfortable. It is also a larger demographic," Doak said. "We can access people who may not be able to drive to where the location would be. We have people all over the Hudson Valley who can come together and create bonds. We have many people who have attended and now have connections outside of the group."

"The biggest thing is that they come away with a sense of being musically together. There is a lot of joy and happiness that comes with it because they are doing



Musical therapist Tim Doak is leading Something for Alz: Musical Moments, a free virtual music program for people with Alzheimer's or another dementia, each Friday through the end of December.

something together that's not necessarily something they would do — something outside of the norm."

To register for Something for Alz: Musical Moments, call the Alzheimer's Association at 800-272-3900 or visit https://www.alz.org/hudsonvalley/helping_you/social-programs/something-for-alz-musical-moments



**Office of the State
Long Term Care
Ombudsman**

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program: Serving Residents and Seeking Volunteers

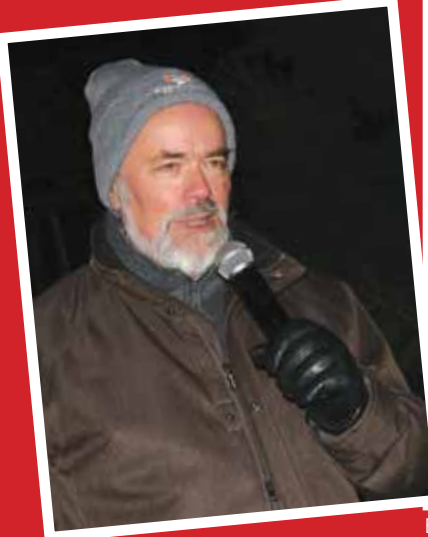
The NYS Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is a dedicated advocacy program available to anyone residing in a nursing home or other long term care facility. It advocates for residents to address their quality-of-life and quality-of-care issues, along with their rights.

Locally, the Tri-County LTC Ombudsman Program serves Westchester, Rockland and Putnam counties, and is sponsored by the Long Term Care Community Coalition (LTCCC). If you or a loved one are in need of an advocate in long term care, please call (914) 500-3406.

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

To learn more about making a difference as a volunteer with the Ombudsman Program, please visit: <https://nursinghome411.org/ltcop/volunteer/>

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