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May 17 - May 23, 2022

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 16, Issue 767

Pleasantville Renews Contentious Gas Leaf Blower Ban Discussion

By Abby Luby

Pleasantville residents and several landscaping company owners filled the Village Hall meeting room last week to debate a proposed spring-to-early fall ban on gas-powered leaf blowers, the latest municipality to consider such a measure.

The May 9 public hearing on whether to impose the seasonal prohibition, which would extend from May 15 to Oct. 1, featured speakers who argued it would infringe on property owners' rights while those in favor cited health and environmental benefits.

"One of the biggest investments that a homeowner can make is in their property," said Mark DeFabio, owner of M.G.'s Lawn Green and a 34-year Pleasantville resident. "If a homeowner chooses to keep their property a

certain way, who are we to say they shouldn't keep it a certain way. A good, landscaped, well-maintained property is worth about 15 percent of the property value."

Mayor Peter Scherer disagreed with DeFabio's take about infringement on property rights.

"We're not trying to hem in your personal rights up to the point in which they conflict with other people's rights, and that's why we are here now," he said.

The law would allow the gas-powered machines during the fall leaf season and through winter and into early spring to permit residents to more easily clean their properties. Many other communities in Westchester have adopted some leaf blower restrictions in recent years, including New Castle and Mount Kisco.

continued on page 2



ANDY JACOBS PHOTO

Belting it Out of the Park

Westlake High School's Krista Dronzek sings the Star Spangled Banner during Friday afternoon's Senior Day Tribute for the Wildcat softball team, which went on to defeat Briarcliff High School 10-9 in the last game of the regular season.

North Castle, Summit Club Appear Ready to Sign Water Agreement

By Martin Wilbur

A solution to provide water to 73 proposed condominiums in Armonk may be near after a plan was discussed last week to create separate water subdistricts that should protect the supplies of neighboring homeowners.

Summit Club Partners and the town are close to an agreement that would see the developer use wells on its 156-acre property to supply the luxury residences once they are built, golf course clubhouse and other amenities without using water from the rest of North Castle's Water District No. 2 or commingling the supplies. The remainder of the district, including about 370 Windmill Farm homeowners across Route 22, would continue to use its water source as it is currently doing.

During the more than decade-long review of the project, The Summit Club agreed to join town Water District No. 2 to make sure it had

enough water for its needs while agreeing to pay for costly improvements and contributing to capital repairs. However, Windmill Farm residents became increasingly concerned that the golf course and condominium community could either draw down their supply or could contaminate the district's water with the use of any pesticides on the golf course.

To comply with the requirement of having output that is twice the amount needed for the project, The Summit Club was required to test for additional wells in well fields often referred to as the gravel pits near Windmill Farm. However, attempts to find up to 100 gallons a minute turned out to be fruitless.

Under the proposed agreement, which could be approved at the Town Board's May 24 meeting, the current Water District No. 2, except for The Summit Club, would continue operating as it is now doing and be considered Water District No. 2A, while

Summit's supply for their property's project would be considered Water District No. 2B.

The applicant's hydrogeologist, Tom Cusack, said during the May 11 work session with the Town Board that when The Summit Club's property was pump tested nearly a decade ago, it produced about 180 gallons a minute.

Councilman Saleem Hussain asked Cusack if The Summit Club's wells are in the same aquifer what kind of effect that could have on the remainder of the district, including Windmill. Cusack said they share the same bedrock aquifer but that should not present a problem.

"There were no significant impacts during the previous pump test and we expect that to be the same," Cusack said.

Current water usage estimates for the project are now about 30 gallons a minute, requiring Summit to find only about 60 gallons a minute, he said.

Next month Summit is expected to conduct a 72-hour performance test, Cusack said.

Despite the encouraging news presented by the applicant, several Windmill residents wanted greater assurances that Summit's usage would not be a burden on neighboring water customers. Resident Garrett Kennedy said he would like to have data that is derived from the 72-hour pump test to be provided early to nearby residents when they are submitted to the regulatory agencies, the Westchester County Department of Health and the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

"Given so much of the data is nearly 10 years old, I think (that's) only appropriate and just, given the potential that it is going to have on a significant portion of the Armonk population," Kennedy said.

The Town Board indicated at its regular meeting last Wednesday evening it will likely vote on the agreement at its next meeting.

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Pleasantville Renews Contentious Gas Leaf Blower Ban Discussion

continued from page 1

Previously, village officials have expressed hope of eventually banning the gas-powered machines year-round, although New York State may soon address that issue.

Other landscaping company owners claimed that if the currently proposed law went into effect, they would be forced to use electric leaf blowers, which would put them out of business. It was argued that since electric blowers are less powerful the job at each property would take longer. They would also have to be charged frequently.

Resident John Mueller spoke on behalf of his landscaper and friend, Tony Sanchez, who joined him at the meeting. Mueller said

landscapers like Sanchez generally employ five people using gas-powered leaf blowers.

"These are people who don't have a lot of money and may not be able to feed their families," he said. "I'm asking you to put this off until the electric leaf blower technology can compete with the gas power leaf blowers."

A highly controversial portion of the proposed ordinance would temporarily exempt the Pleasantville School District and the Pleasantville Country Club from using electric leaf blowers. The ban would not exempt residents living at the country club, however.

Village Trustee Nicole Asquith said the owners of the country club indicated they

weren't ready to transition to electric-powered landscaping equipment, triggering accusations of discrimination against homeowners.

"The country club is a private, for-profit organization," said village resident Tom Rooney. "It's not my problem if the golf course can't use electric equipment, so maybe it shouldn't be used at all."

Asquith, who introduced the proposed law, summarized how the village arrived at the proposed ordinance.

"There's been conversations around leaf blowers for many years, but we started hearing a lot more complaints after the (COVID-19) shutdown when more people were working from home," she said.

Asquith referred to last year's presentation by the Pleasantville Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) that focused on adverse environmental impacts of noise and air pollution caused by gas-powered blowers. She also reminded residents of a June 2021 survey with more than 600 respondents, which showed that 158 village residents owned electric leaf blowers and 123 had gas-powered mowers.

Resident Sophie Worley, a supporter of the law, said her two children are on the autism spectrum and had difficulty processing in the presence of loud sounds.

"During the pandemic, when my children were home and everyone was using their leaf blowers, it was really hard for them," Worley said.

CAC Chair Helen Meurer, along with other council members, supported the ban. They said natural gardening techniques such as using rakes and mulching leaves is an alternative to

blowing leaves.

Scherer said e-mails were received from residents who are cancer survivors or who had other health issues whose peace and quiet at home has been disturbed by the noise from gas-powered blowers.

"Their capacity to recover in their own home has been badly, badly harmed," Scherer said. "We're trying to craft something that lets everybody live. To say no one is being hurt by this is not true."

Trustee Paul Alvarez said the village has also received hundreds of e-mails about the proposed leaf blower ban and many complained of the loud noise from gas-powered leaf blowers.

"They have written how they are just trying to sit in their house and watch TV and they can't or they have to close the windows because of the smell of the smoke and the gas," he said.


However, Marilyn Lamb spoke of her father's landscaping business and urged the board to reconsider the ordinance.

"My dad is still running his business, it's just him, my brother and one other guy," Lamb said. "If they had to use an electric blower and a rake, they would never be able to make a living."

If the ban becomes law, Asquith said the implementation of it would be a soft landing.

"We're not going to expect everyone to turn on a dime," she said. "We'd have to discuss if there will be a grace period."


The hearing was adjourned and is expected to continue at the Village Board's next meeting on May 23.



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Q: How do I decide whether a lumpectomy or mastectomy is the best option?

A: More often than not, you will choose the type of surgery you feel most comfortable with. The survival data of lumpectomy with radiation is equivalent to that of a mastectomy, so we've learned that more surgery is not necessarily better.

Q: How soon does surgery need to be done?

A: Typically, we try to operate within a month of a diagnosis — you don't have to decide immediately. You can learn about breast cancer, understand your options, and then make a decision you're comfortable with. A woman's gut feeling is most important. My patients often ask me, "What would you do?" But it's not about me — it's what the woman wants and what makes sense for her, her family, and her life.

Q: How do I choose a surgeon?

A: Seek a fellowship-trained breast surgeon. These are surgeons who, after their residency, do a fellowship specific to oncologic breast surgery. At Northern Westchester Hospital, we work as a team to care for you through surgery, medical oncology, radiation oncology, genetics and plastic surgery.

Q: How can I find support during this difficult time?

A: Northern Westchester Hospital's Bruce and Andrea Yablon Cancer Health and Wellness Program provides supportive care and holistic treatments that complement medical treatment. You can choose free integrative medicine services, including reiki, acupuncture, massage, nutrition planning, fitness and exercise plans, mindful wellness and emotional support, and a survivorship program.

We also partner with Support Connection, a group that offers free emotional, social and educational support services to women and their families and friends affected by breast and ovarian cancer. I encourage my patients to take part in these programs. The support enables women to help each other and empowers them to become their own health care advocates.



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COVID Cases Trending Higher; Latimer Urges for Precautions

By Martin Wilbur

COVID-19 Infection rates and active cases are accelerating locally and statewide as most of New York, including the lower Hudson Valley, appear to be in the midst of another wave.

With statewide rates reaching 10 percent on Sunday and all seven counties in the Mid-Hudson region at that level or higher, Westchester County Executive George Latimer urged residents to take common-sense precautions.

The statewide reading was the first time the transmission rate had reached double digits since Jan. 19, according to the state's COVID tracker.

"There is no question that we are in another surge of COVID," Latimer said Monday afternoon. "We had hoped that COVID was behind us and I think that most people felt that when the Omicron surge weathered out at the end of January into February, that we were past the worst of it."

On Sunday, Westchester had 5,476 active cases of COVID-19, noticeably higher than the 3,047 cases on Apr. 15 and about five-and-a-half times the 966 cases on Mar. 15, Latimer said.

Perhaps more discouraging is that COVID-19-related hospitalizations have picked up

again, standing at 113 over the past weekend, just about double the 57 people who were being treated a month earlier. Sunday's count was nearly four times higher compared to Mar. 15 when there were 30 people hospitalized.

Every county in the region also had at least a 10 percent infection rate, ranging from a high of 14.6 percent in Dutchess County to a low of 10.2

percent in Ulster on Sunday. Westchester registered 11.1 percent and Putnam 12.9 percent.

"The fact that the increase in cases has also given us an increase in hospitalizations tells us it's not just the frequency of the disease but to some degree the severity," Latimer said.

While the county does not plan to institute mandates, Latimer said there are discussions about taking some action, such as possibly reinstituting a mask mandate for county buildings. Given that Westchester and most of the state have percentages that the Centers for Disease Control has characterized as high, Latimer recommended for everyone, but most importantly those who are in higher-risk categories, to put on a mask in public while indoors.

He also suggested that residents stay current on their COVID vaccine.

"The concern that we have continues that this disease is not, unfortunately, behind us," Latimer said.

Despite the discouraging data in recent

weeks, Westchester still plans to go forward with various summer activities as of now. Latimer said the county plans to open its beaches on Friday, May 27 and the county swimming pools will open for the season on June 24, the last Friday in June.

The return of the weekend ethnic festivals kicked off last Sunday with the Polish festival and will continue through the summer at Kensico Dam Plaza. (The June 25 Irish-American festival will be located at Ridge Road Park in Hartsdale.) For a complete list of the festivals that run through August, visit <https://parks.westchestergov.com/press-releases/3089-the-43rd-annual-polish-heritage-festival-to-kick-off-2022-cultural-heritage-celebrations>.

Westchester is still offering free COVID tests at the County Center in White Plains Monday through Friday. The hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday and Thursday, 8 a.m. to noon on Wednesday and Friday and from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday.

The county is requesting that only those with a known exposure or who are feeling symptomatic should be tested at that location.

Latimer said area of encouraging news despite most of the numbers trending in the wrong direction recently, have been fatalities. During the past week there were two COVID-19-related deaths in the county, which is low considering the uptick in cases.

"I think what we have seen, as the rate of transmission is higher, the rate of severity is less where you have a highly vaccinated population," Latimer said. "Westchester, in general, is a highly vaccinated population."

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Mt. Pleasant Sued After Refusing to Furnish Town E-mail List

By Martin Wilbur

A fierce opponent of Mount Pleasant's proposed Comprehensive Plan update has filed an Article 78 to gain access to the town's list of residents' e-mail addresses that shares information with the public about town events and issues.

Hawthorne resident James Russell submitted the litigation on May 3 to the state Supreme Court in White Plains after his Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request was denied by the town and a subsequent appeal was rejected by Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi last December.

Russell said he would like to communicate with the roughly 2,000 residents who are signed up for and receive the town's e-mail notifications to provide them with a different perspective of the impact the updated plan and zoning code could have on the town. Furthermore, he said many residents are unfamiliar with or unaware of the proposed changes.

"They're just talking about a corridor that is one-and-a-half miles long and if that is turned into even three-story apartments, if you have a large builder like Toll Brothers come in there and start building, that could have a major impact, perhaps several properties at a time," Russell said.

He has repeatedly criticized a key provision of the Comprehensive Plan's update at public hearings and meetings that would allow for second- and third-floor apartments above ground-floor



Hawthorne resident James Russell has taken the town to court to try and gain access to the town's email list.

commercial, arguing that it would change the character of the town.

Officials are eyeing the stretch of Route 141 from near the Hawthorne train

station to Thornwood and about a dozen properties on Broadway behind the train station to provide owners a financial incentive to make aesthetic improvement

to their structures by allowing them to add second- and third-floor apartments. It would also help diversify housing stock in the town, officials have argued.

In his filing with the court, Russell cited a 2016 Appellate Division ruling against the Town of Greenburgh, which was forced to provide a member of the public with its list of e-mail addresses of residents who had signed up for the town's alerts.

"It's totally allowed and that's why I want to provide some information," Russell said.

However, Fulgenzi said last week that the town has denied Russell's request because he believes furnishing the list to anyone outside of the town's operations would invade people's privacy.

"I felt that it is a privacy issue because (when) people sign up for e-mail alerts they sign up for town information, they don't sign up to give their personal e-mail outside of what we're sending them," Fulgenzi said.

He also disputed Russell's characterization that many residents are unfamiliar with the Comprehensive Plan. The town has held at least six months of hearings and held public engagement sessions in the spring and summer of 2018 to build the proposal that reflected those sentiments, Fulgenzi said. The Town Board will soon schedule a resumption of

continued on page 6

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Fox Lane Middle School Teacher Placed on Administrative Leave

By Martin Wilbur

A Fox Lane Middle School teacher was removed from the school last Thursday after the Bedford Central School District became "aware of concerns" about the individual.

District officials immediately began an investigation and the Bedford Police Department is also looking into the matter, although there were no details provided to the public. Members of the community have provided The Examiner with the name of the teacher, who was placed on administrative

leave, but the newspaper will not be publishing it at this time.

"The parents of the students involved have already been notified," a May 12 communication from the office of Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joel Adelberg stated. "The employee has been directed not to have contact with students pending the conclusion of the investigation. Due to confidentiality and privacy requirements, we are not permitted to release further

details at this time."

Bedford police told The Examiner that the department would not provide any details because the matter is "still under investigation because it involves minors."

The teacher's removal is the latest incident to bedevil the Bedford School District this year. In March, parents of special education students went public with allegations that photos had been taken of naked special education students in a

Fox Lane High School bathroom and circulated on social media. Parents and community members have charged that the administration failed to act swiftly in identifying the perpetrators.

That matter also remains under investigation. The Westchester County District Attorney's office confirmed to The Examiner last week of its involvement in that case but would not provide any additional details.

Mt. Pleasant Sued After Refusing to Furnish Town E-mail List

continued from page 5

the hearings.

In his Article 78, Russell argued that the town promises to post agendas on its website for its Tuesday evening Town Board meetings at least 72 hours in advance. However, that schedule is sometimes not kept, he contended.

He provided a screenshot of the website from Monday, Apr. 25 at 9:24 a.m., which failed to show a posted agenda yet for the following evening's meeting, one example of "depriving Town residents of the timely knowledge of the Town business that is to be discussed, regarding which some may wish to attend and offer their opinions."

Russell said he would only use the

e-mail list to address town issues and it would not be for solicitation or any commercial purposes.

A statement to The Examiner from the Committee on Open Government in Albany, a state office that provides legal opinions regarding New York's Open Meetings laws and public documents, mentioned that the burden is on the municipality to prove that privacy is being violated, a standard not met by Greenburgh.

"It sort of left open a little bit of wiggle room for other municipalities that might do a better job at justifying non-disclosure," according to the statement.

Fulgenzi said the litigation has been discussed with the town's counsel, and even though the Town of Greenburgh lost in what appears to be a similar case, the town will not budge.

"I disagree with it in this particular case because I know exactly what he's trying to do," Fulgenzi said of Russell. "What resident wants to hear from a disgruntled resident, saying that what you hear from the town is BS? Everyone's entitled to come to a meeting and voice their opinion and ask questions or come into my office at any time."

If the town is forced to provide the list, residents who have signed up

for the e-mail alerts will be notified to ask them whether they care to continue receiving alerts.

But Fulgenzi said that Russell's intent is likely to keep the town from having too much diversity. He referred to an old essay Russell had written that was uncovered during his 2010 congressional run against Nita Lowey where he opposed integration and immigration.

"It's just not right," Fulgenzi said. "His thinking is not clear to the general public. We want people of all nationalities in our town, all religions, and to say others should not be allowed to be in our town, that's wrong."

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Westchester Land Trust Announces New President

Westchester Land Trust's current President, Lori Ensinger, will step down from her leadership role and pass the baton to Kara Hartigan Whelan, who currently serves as vice president of the organization.

Ensinger has led Westchester Land Trust since 2013 and will join the organization's staff as a senior adviser focusing on land protection projects. Whelan has been a valued staff member and leader since 2012, holding the role of director of conservation programs before becoming vice president in 2015.

Ensinger and Whelan will shift roles later this year, enabling the team to continue advancing the organization's conservation goals.

"I've been honored to serve as president of the Westchester Land Trust over these past nine years and I'm immensely proud of what we've accomplished together as a team," Ensinger said. "When I reflect on the special places we've protected, relationships we've forged in the

community, and connections to nature we've helped spark throughout Westchester, I'm confident that we have made a difference. I feel that now is the perfect time for me to pass the leadership torch to Kara, whose unique perspective and expertise will allow (the land trust's) work in the community to continue to grow, and I look forward to remaining a part of those efforts as senior adviser."

During her tenure, Ensinger led the nationally accredited organization through the protection of more than 1,500 acres, including



Lori Ensinger will be stepping down from her role as president of the Westchester Land Trust and will see Vice President Kara Hartigan Whelan take over later this year.

the protection of Stuart's Fruit Farm, the oldest working farm in Westchester County. Ensinger negotiated complex projects that led to the protection of parcels ranging in size from one-third of an acre to 275 acres and spanning the organization's entire geographic region from urban to rural landscapes.

Whelan, a Westchester native, is a highly regarded land conservationist and industry thought leader who currently directs WLT's fundraising, events, marketing and conservation programming. She has overseen community outreach initiatives at the land trust and has worked closely with Ensinger on strategic land protection projects.

"Lori has done a tremendous job stewarding this organization and I look forward to building upon all that she has achieved during her tenure," Whelan said. "I've learned so much about leadership from Lori over the years and I'm grateful for the opportunity to step into this new role knowing she will continue to work as a member of our professional team."

In 2016, Whelan helped to launch and coordinate a regional conservation partnership known as Hudson to Housatonic, a collaboration of more than 50 conservation organizations in Connecticut and New York. She leads the organization's farmland linking and food justice work and represents the organization as a regional navigator for American Farmland Trust.

Whelan holds degrees from Boston College and the University of Michigan and has more than 25 years of conservation experience,

including land protection and fundraising positions with The Trustees of Reservations, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, City Parks Foundation, and most recently, The Greenwich Land Trust.

"Kara is a passionate and talented conservation professional who brings a wealth of experience in fundraising and collaborative conservation to the Presidency position," said Bruce Churchill, chairman of the board. "The Board of Directors are thrilled that she will be leading Westchester Land Trust to ever higher levels of mission impact and implement our ambitious conservation agenda."

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Police Blotter

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

May 7: A Grand Street caller reported at 1:28 p.m. a suspicious person looking into cars and potentially scanning them. The person was described as a white male wearing blue jeans, a blue jacket and a blue baseball hat. Patrol dispatched and reported the individual to be a village parking enforcement officer.

May 8: A loss prevention employee for ShopRite called to report at 11:42 a.m. an unknown male stole a television from the store. The incident was captured on video surveillance. Patrols completed depositions on the scene and will have the employee make a copy of the footage for police.

Kent Police Department

May 10: An officer observed a Chevy Tracker with a front passenger side flat and its hazard light on in the area of routes 52 and 311 at 1:10 a.m. The officer stopped the vehicle being driven by Marvin Perez-Ramirez, 32, of Carmel. It was determined that Perez-Ramirez was driving while intoxicated. Perez-Ramirez was arrested and charged with two felonies, first-degree aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, and DWI, his second offense, and two misdemeanors, operating without an interlock device and aggravated DWI. Perez-Ramirez was processed and issued an appearance ticket for a future court date.

New Castle Police Department

May 5: A 62-year-old male was arrested

and charged with assault stemming from a domestic incident complaint.

May 9: A South Greeley Avenue reported that a small partition-style window and garage can were damaged sometime during the overnight hours.

May 9: A resident reported an unauthorized transfer of \$50,000 from their bank into an unknown Wells Fargo account. Wells Fargo advised that a subject did the fraudulent transactions with identification bearing the victim's name. The matter is still under investigation.

May 12: At about 4 a.m., state police advised that while pursuing a stolen vehicle, they noticed two other vehicles which seemed to be traveling with the pursued vehicle. Those two vehicles were registered to the same address on Hollow Ridge Road in New Castle. Officers responded to the owner's home and verified that both vehicles were stolen. They were left unlocked with the keys inside. Vehicles were recovered separately, both abandoned in Connecticut. The matter is still under investigation.

May 12: The Walgreens on King Street reported that two males entered the store and stole about \$800 worth of health supplements. The subjects then left the area in a white BMW. Police are reviewing surveillance footage and attempting to identify the perpetrators.

North Castle Police Department

May 6: An officer conducted a traffic stop on Route 22 at 8:58 a.m. An e-Justice

inquiry revealed the operator and vehicle registration were both suspended for failing to have insurance. The operator's suspension date was Apr. 12, 2021, and the vehicle's suspension date was Feb. 26, 2021. The operator was processed roadside and released with an appearance ticket to return to the Town of North Castle Justice Court. The vehicle was removed by Armonk Garage.

May 9: AAA employees reported locating a black envelope in a driveway on North Broadway at 12:24 p.m. The envelope contained checks and medical paperwork. The responding officer secured the items.

May 9: Report of a car bumper in the roadway on Whippoorwill Road East at 5:41 p.m. The debris is obstructing one lane causing vehicles to cross over into the opposite lane to pass it. The responding officer reported that the roadway is clear at this time and that the object had apparently been removed.

May 10: A woman who lives on Castle Heights Drive reported at 5:22 p.m. that there was a squirrel in her living room and she is requesting police assistance. The responding officers reported that he attempted to get the squirrel out of the living room with negative results. Westchester County Animal Control Services phone numbers were provided to the complainant, but the officers subsequently reported that they were able to clear the squirrel from the residence.

May 10: A caller reported at 7:18 p.m. that there is an unresponsive female in the driver's seat of a vehicle in a Bedford Road parking lot. The caller attempted to wake up the person several times with negative results. The vehicle was described as a gray Toyota RAV4; 60 Control was notified. The responding officers stated that the individual was transported to Northern Westchester Hospital, the vehicle was locked and the keys were secured at headquarters.

May 10: A caller reported at 9:52 p.m. observing a black bear crossing the road at Cox Avenue and Maryland Avenue and headed toward Maryland Avenue. Units responded. The responding officer reported

checking the area with negative results. The area will be monitored during the remainder of the tour.

May 11: Report of a vehicle stolen from the driveway of a Leisure Farm Drive residence at 6:03 p.m. The resident looked out the window and noticed her vehicle was missing. She checked her Ring camera and observed a male dressed in black enter her vehicle and drove away. All units responded and canvassed the area with negative results.

Pleasantville Police Department

May 8: Report of a potentially hazardous condition on Sky Top Drive at 2:23 p.m. A resident smelled oil from a sewer drain. An investigation revealed the smell was coming from a malfunctioning sump pump from a nearby resident.

May 9: A New Hampshire resident was arrested on Bedford Road at 9:54 p.m. for DWI and for being in possession of stolen vehicle license plates.

May 10: A report of criminal mischief was filed by a Lenox Avenue resident at 3:06 p.m. after an unknown person had smashed the resident's rear windshield. The next day, a Hawthorne resident turned himself in claiming responsibility and was arrested.

Yorktown Police Department

May 6: Redouane Tazi, 62, of Yorktown, was charged at 3:31 p.m. with third-degree attempted robbery, a Class E felony, for allegedly trying to steal two suitcases, valued at \$960, from Macy's in the Jefferson Valley Mall.

May 12: A 17-year-old Yorktown male was charged at 5:52 p.m. with criminal possession of stolen property, a Class E felony, following a complaint of a larceny from a motor vehicle. During the investigation, police recovered a credit card that did not belong to the defendant.

Editor's note: The policy of providing names for people who have been arrested varies between each department.

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Obituary

Frederick Lantz

Frederick "Fred" H. Lantz Jr., beloved husband, cherished father, loving "Papa" and brother, of West Harrison passed away peacefully on May 7 after a courageous battle with cancer. He was 75.

Fred was born on Dec. 2, 1946, to Frederick and Louise Lantz in New Rochelle. A former resident of New Rochelle and Valhalla, where he raised his two sons, he called West Harrison his home. He married his beloved wife, Linda Mason Lantz, on July 31, 2009, and they had a loving partnership for the past 21 years.

Fred served in the United States Army from 1966 to 1968 as corporal and was honorably discharged. Fred then began a 40-year career with the Westchester County Department of Correction, retiring as associate warden in 2010.

He is survived by his loving wife, Linda Mason Lantz; sister Carol Kraft, his son, Michael (Jennifer); and his two grandchildren, Ella and Tyler. Fred was predeceased by his father, Frederick H. Lantz Sr., his mother, Louise (Camera) Lantz, and his son, Frederick "Rick" H. Lantz III.

A memorial service to celebrate Fred's life was held on Sunday, May 15 at Beecher Flocks Funeral Home in Pleasantville.

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Westchester Mom on a Mission to Make Children's Books More Inclusive

By Nora Lowe

Children are notoriously curious, asking questions such as "Why are the trees green?" and "Why is the sky blue?"

But Erica Blit, a Harrison resident and mother of two, was posed a more difficult question by her daughter Skylar before she reached her second birthday: "Why doesn't Brandon talk?"

Skylar's older brother, Brandon, has a rare genetic disorder called MED13L. After being born prematurely at 30 weeks, Brandon spent the first three months of his life in the NICU at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital before receiving care at Blythdale Children's Hospital in Valhalla for about six weeks. Brandon came home with a trach and feeding tube.

Also associated with the disorder are certain behavioral traits, such as being nonverbal.

That information may be a lot for a younger, albeit curious, sibling to absorb.

Blit said she believes curiosity is both positive and to be expected.

"I always welcome questions from kids. I think that's natural," she said. "Lots of people shush them, thinking they're going to offend somebody, but if things are asked in a nice way, there's no reason not to ask."

Hoping to explain things to Skylar in the best way possible, Blit contacted the psychiatrist working at Brandon's school for some advice. They then worked together to create a simple book explaining, "this is my brother Brandon, and this is what he does



Erica Blit, founder of My Heart Books, which creates custom-made books for children that address disabilities, with her husband, son Brandon and daughter Skylar.

and doesn't do." They also added a couple of photos of Brandon and Skylar, who are now 14 and 10 years old, respectively, and

it quickly became one of Skylar's favorite books.

That experience motivated Blit to establish and founder of My Heart Books in 2019. She offers pre-made and customizable stories about differently-abled characters.

During Parent Day at Skylar's preschool, Blit decided to read the newly-created "My Brother Brandon" to the class because "empathetic kids just have such greater success in life." Also, early exposure is crucial when educating children about respect and understanding, Blit said.

It was such a positive experience that she started running similar workshops at the school every year.

The epiphany came, though, during a visit with family friends. Brandon "loves being around people" and was tagging along with their friend's son of comparable age, but he was finding Brandon's presence off-putting and became aggravated. The parents of both children tried to de-escalate the situation with no success. Then Blit pulled out the "My Brother Brandon" e-book on her iPhone. Soon after she read it, things improved rapidly.

"We read the book, they love it and the little boy's attitude totally turned around,"

Blit recalled.

Witnessing the power of storytelling to change perceptions of disability was the true "a-ha" moment for her.

"There are so many kids with different challenges and different disabilities, and wouldn't it be great if there was a way for everybody to have a book like the 'My Brother Brandon' book?" Blit wondered.

My Heart Books' mission to make books easily accessible for everyone. The project helps families of differently-abled children and adults create a storybook about them. This is a helpful tool for teaching others about the individual's medical and behavioral challenges, but also highlights what makes them special and loved.

Four other titles were created by Blit, each addressing a different health challenge, based on families having used My Heart Books' custom template on its website.

They are "My Aunt Helen," about a woman who is unable to walk and is deaf; "My Cousin Ryan," who is blind, among other challenges; "My Friend Samantha," about a girl who has a learning disability; and "My Son Evan," who is autistic.

Blit noted that high-quality children's books about disabilities, especially ones that don't generalize, are "few and far between." The customizable and individualized offerings of My Heart Books are designed for those who don't "fit in a box." For example, before Brandon's genetic diagnosis, he was

continued on page 10



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Westchester Mom on a Mission to Make Children's Books More Inclusive

continued from page 9



The five titles created by Harrison resident Erica Blit, founder of My Heart Books.

labeled with the term "global developmental delays."

My Heart Books serves a community of people who might not fit perfectly into a predefined category, she said.

Blit, who has a marketing background, used her expertise in establishing My Heart

Books. It has a national market range and on-demand printing, which helps the company reach a growing audience.

To customize a book, the My Heart Books website includes a simple questionnaire with inclusive, comprehensive drop-down menus and photo/illustration options, taking about 15 minutes to complete. The resulting book can be purchased as a softcover, hardcover or e-book. My Heart Books also offers a number of pre-made selections for the general population to learn about different types of disabilities. In addition, they offer social skills classes and maintain an expanding Ambassador Program.

"The thing that is really important to me about the books is that they don't just focus on what's difficult for the child," Blit pointed out. "These are their challenges, but here's something that they're great at and isn't it amazing how this person works extra hard to do all these things that are so easy for us? And this is what I love about them."

"I think that's the story," Blit said. "Somebody is not just their disability. They're so much more, and that's what people really need to see."

To learn more about My Heart Books, visit www.myheartbooks.com.

New York Blood Center Announces Blood Emergency

The New York Blood Center announced last week that there is a blood emergency due to an alarming drop in blood donations over the past six weeks.

Contributing factors include recent school spring breaks and holiday travel, coupled with a two-year period of almost no youth donations during the pandemic.

All blood types are low and type O is at just a one-to-two-day level.

This shortage occurs amid increasing COVID rates, which can be attributed to the highly contagious Omicron subvariant BA.2.12.1 that has been spreading rapidly throughout New York and surrounding areas. For example, last week New York City's COVID transmission rate had increased 32 percent.

Hospitals and patients rely upon a steady flow of volunteer donors to receive life-saving blood donations, but the recent spike in cases and spring break travel has caused uncertainty. Donor participation has reached record lows at blood drives and donor centers.

"Memorial Day marks the start of summer, when it becomes even more difficult to get donors in. We need more donations to prepare for this period but our supply is currently very low," said Andrea Cefarelli, senior executive director at the New York Blood Center. "We are asking New Yorkers to sign up and donate. One blood donation

has the ability to save up to three lives. We highly encourage all who are able to donate today to help the New Yorkers who need it most."

It only takes one hour to donate.

Roughly one in seven hospital admissions require a blood transfusion. Those in need include cancer patients, accident, burn or trauma victims, transplant recipients, surgery patients and chronically transfused patients suffering from sickle cell disease or thalassemia.

To make an appointment for an upcoming blood drive, call 1-800-933-2566 or visit nybc.org.



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Harckham Secures Funds for New School Playground in Ossining

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) attended a special ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Roosevelt Elementary School last Thursday to commemorate the opening of a new playground funded by a \$160,000 state grant he secured for the Ossining Union Free School District.

Joining Harckham at the event was a group of fifth-grade students, Ossining Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ray Sanchez and Dr. Nicole Nover, principal of Roosevelt Elementary School.

“Classroom time is important for student success, as is outdoor time during the school day, so students can be physically active and socialize,” Harckham said. “I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to see students enjoying the new playground that we are able to secure the funds for, and appreciate the work by the leaders in the Ossining schools for seeing this project through.”

Harckham added that what makes this particular project special is that two years ago Roosevelt fifth-graders chose the structure by vote of the Student Council from a pair of design options.

Prior to the new playground and its eye-catching equipment, there were no physical structures for students to use at the playground behind the school, other than a basketball court. The new playground equipment is age-appropriate, and the project as a whole includes painting and asphaltting.



TOM STAUDTER PHOTO
State Sen. Peter Harckham, center, with students and Dr. Ray Sanchez, left, superintendent of Ossining schools, with the new playground equipment at Roosevelt Elementary School.

The new playground area is being used for physical education classes.

“On behalf of the Ossining Union Free School District, I want to thank Senator Peter Harckham for his assistance in securing funding for a new playground at

Roosevelt School,” said Sanchez.

“We appreciate the support for our schools and the senator’s commitment to helping us meet the needs of our scholars, whether it be through academic achievement or exploring the outside

world through fun and play,” Sanchez said.

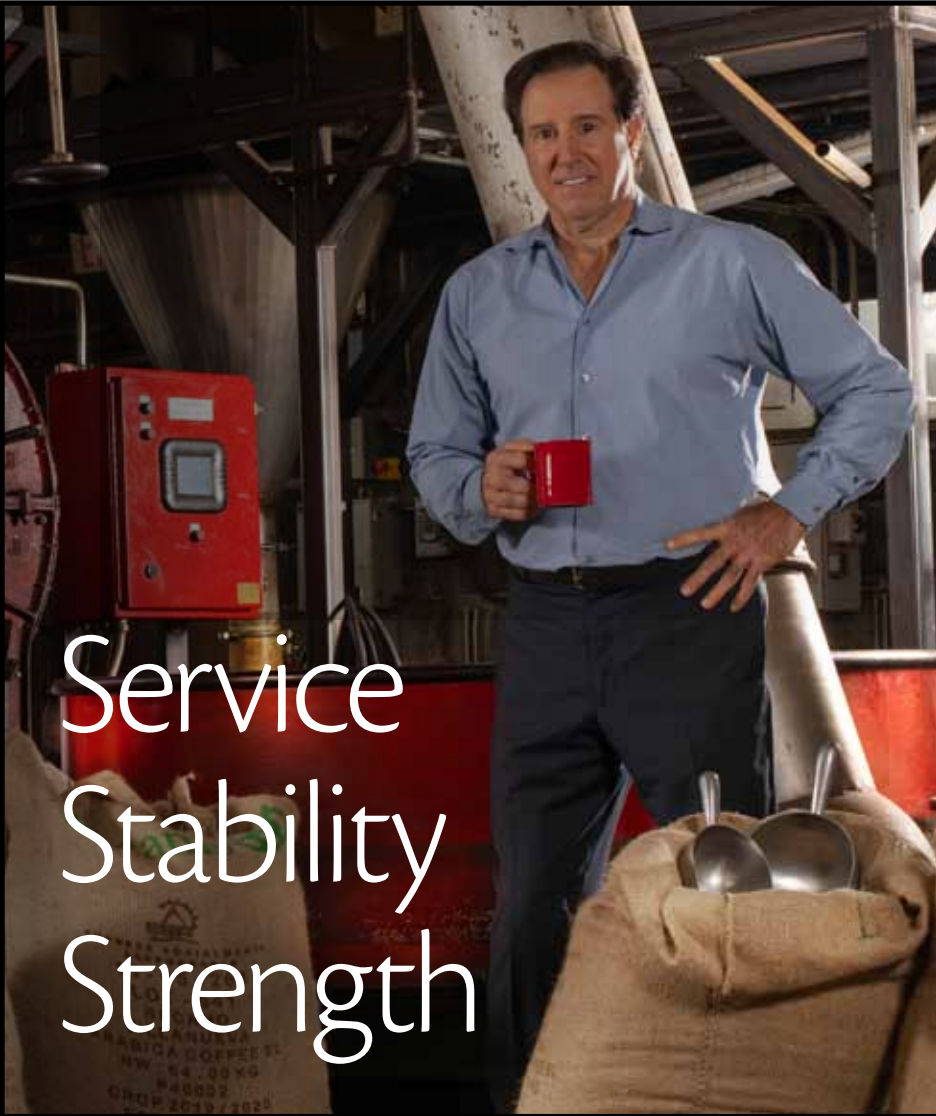
Nover said this project is especially gratifying because former students helped design the equipment.

“It truly means so much to us,” she said. “Our scholars have been having an amazing time using their new playground. To see the smiles and hear the giggles from our scholars when they are enjoying their new playground is truly wonderful.”

“We know how important it is for children to have an opportunity to step away from the books for a few minutes and enjoy some fresh air and exercise,” Nover added. “The new playground is a great addition to their school day, and I look forward to sharing many more years of fun with all our students.”

Two years ago, when he announced the funding for the new playground, Harckham visited the Roosevelt school and met with the school’s students, answering questions about government service and his career.

Although Harckham does not represent the Town of Ossining, there are a number of school-age residents in the Town of Yorktown and Town of New Castle, which are part of the 40th Senate District, who attend Ossining public schools.



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Things to Keep in Mind During Indian Point Deconstruction

By Marilyn Elie

Nuclear reactors are decommissioned. The rest of the clean-up is a massive deconstruction job, a lot of which involves low level or non-radioactive material. Items like laundry and workers' gear are considered low level. Some of the buildings on the property fall into the non-radioactive category.

Not that the site is benign. It is not. Forty years of radioactive use has left radioactive particles in the environment and on surfaces, which is why dust control is so important.

Most spectacular of all is the pool of radioactive water underneath the reactor. Current plans call for capping it off and allowing the water to continue to make its way to the Hudson River. This is allowable under the regulations of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

What Happens to Radioactive Water in the Spent Fuel Pools?

Holtec, the company that now owns the closed reactors, is known for cutting corners. Their current plan for getting rid of the water in the fuel pools is to dump it into the Hudson. Depending on how much

they dump at one time, this could also be allowed under NRC regulations.

Seven towns draw their water from the Hudson River; however, since these towns are upriver from Indian Point, the NRC does not recognize them. The agency only regulates discharges downstream from the reactors and disregards the fact that the Hudson is a tidal estuary, which flows both ways.

Keep in mind that nuclear reactors are allowed to dump liquid and gaseous radioactive waste into the water and air in specified amounts. These discharges are labeled "below regulatory concern." The same standards continue to apply even though the reactors are shut. In fact, since the amounts are cumulative for the year, the water in the spent fuel pools could be pumped out at once as long as the concentrated radioactivity is below the annual permit. This is a great community concern and will be on the agenda of the Decommissioning Oversight Board (DOB).

Are Gas Pipelines Near the Site a Safety Risk During Deconstruction?

Another major concern for the community is the 42-inch diameter, high-pressure AIM fracked gas pipeline that runs adjacent to the fuel pools and a nearby elementary school. The DOB heard testimony from Rick Kuprewicz, a pipeline expert, that the science was known and he did not see any danger to the pipeline during deconstruction work as long as normal safety procedures were observed. This directly contradicted his earlier testimony to the NRC. People in the community have made it clear that they do not feel safe with the pipeline in operation while deconstruction is ongoing. They plan to continue their work to have the pipeline shut down.

Ongoing Oversight of Deconstruction

The Decommissioning Oversight Board, which is composed of representatives from various state agencies, will play an important role in supervising Holtec and guaranteeing the final clean-up of the site. It has the regulatory power of the Public Service Commission behind it and to some extent the power of New York State; no other state has this arrangement.

Citizen oversight remains as important now as it was when the reactors were operating. As you can see, many things that are allowed under the regulations do not protect public health and safety.

We must all stay informed and active and working together to communicate with the DOB in shaping the important decisions they will be making. We are in this for the long haul and must pay attention.

Dates for Decommissioning Oversight Board meetings are May 19, July 27, Sept/ 21 and Dec. 7. Add them to your calendar now!

To keep in touch and for occasional clean energy updates, contact eliewestcan@gmail.com to be added to the United 4 Clean Energy listserv.

Marilyn Elie was a co-founder of Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition and has tracked events at Indian Point for more than 25 years.

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Letter to the Editor

Having Trouble Finding Baby Formula? Formula Finders Can Help

Many parents with babies are stressed because they are having a difficult time getting the formula they need for their child. I would like to help.

If you are having difficulty finding a formula your child needs, please e-mail me at pfeiner@greenburghny.com. I will be asking student interns and volunteers to help you find the formula and will also

connect you to familiar resources. There are formula finder sites on social media. We will also reach out to medical professionals and other parents and find out if there are substitute formulas that your child can use.

This past weekend after we posted requests for specific hard-to-obtain formulas, some residents were kind enough to donate unopened, unused formulas that they

have. We have a very caring community of neighbors who want to help fellow neighbors. This is what makes our town special.

If you don't have a baby but want to volunteer and help parents get the formula they need for their child, please contact me. The formula finders initiative is inspired by the COVID Angels program we started last year. We helped thousands of Greenburgh

residents get vaccinated when it was difficult to find the vaccines. I can also be reached at 914-438-1343.

Working together we can make this crisis less stressful and difficult for parents. Leave your worries to us!

Paul Feiner
Greenburgh Town Supervisor

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Help Your Yard, and Yourself, With Less Pesticide and More Nature



By Michael Gold

The pesticides, herbicides and fungicides we put on our lawns aren't just killing insects and weeds, Filipina Hoogland explained. The vast majority of them are infiltrating our waters, harming a host of animals that

support our ecosystems, including beneficial insects, frogs, fish, bats and birds and endangering our health, too.

Westchester County is the single biggest user of pesticides in New York State, consuming more than 380,000 gallons per year. That works out to about 765 gallons per square mile, according to the Cornell University Cooperative Extension.

"Insects are an important part of our ecosystem," said Hoogland, who, with Fiona Mitchell, runs Healthy Yards, a nonprofit organization that supports sustainable and regenerative landscaping in Westchester.

"Every pesticide chemical has a specific issue," Hoogland pointed out. Neonicotinoids, for example, are dangerous for pollinators, such as bees. Neonicotinoids are absorbed by the plant and stay inside it for years, she said.

Pesticides have been proven to harm human health, according to Beyond Pesticides, a nonprofit environmental organization based in Washington, D.C.

Pesticides can cause many different types of cancer, ALS and other diseases, and harm your kidneys, lungs, nervous system and other organs, the Beyond Pesticides website states.

"In the U.S., you can use something here unless it's proved unsafe," explained

Hoogland, who is originally from the Netherlands. "In Europe you have to prove it's safe before it's on the market."

"Insects are important for our ecosystem," Hoogland added. "Insects are fed on by natural predators, from birds and bats to squirrels and skunks. Spiders eat all kinds of stuff. We depend on bugs. Also, we need to make sure our plants propagate, which stores carbon."

Healthy Yards encourages residents to rethink their yards.

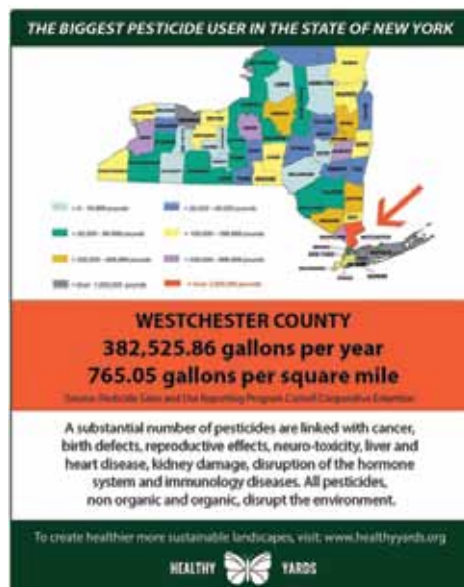
"Turf grasses are exotic. They're hard to keep alive," Hoogland pointed out.

"Give part of your yard back to nature. Make your yard into a habitat if you have the space for it. I am turning my lawn into a meadow."

Hoogland, who also has two chickens and is hosting a nest for bluebirds, said the meadow will attract butterflies, birds, lightning bugs and other insects.

The other pernicious part of landscaping in Westchester is the oil used by all that equipment.

"Our landscaping practices have surpassed



On the Street

get certified or licensed. Electricians need a license. Landscaping requires little knowledge. These guys know more about their engines than the landscape."

Healthy Yards provides help to landscapers to offer sustainable services. The organization recommends using electric lawnmowers and leaf blowers, chainsaws and other equipment. It also offers suggestions for lawn care that does less harm to the environment by using non-oil-based herbicides to kill weeds if you really need to get rid of them, cutting fertilizer usage, which pollutes the air and water, and provides other guidance, on everything from soil

all our private cars in terms of emissions," Hoogland said. "Landscape equipment is very toxic."

Hoogland recommends purchasing an electric leaf blower if you must use one.

"We live in a woodland habitat," she said. "It needs leaf litter. That adds nutrients to the soil."

"I've been a landscaper for 20 years," Hoogland said. "Landscapers don't need to

management to composting.

For homeowners, Healthy Yards recommends planting native plants, which will attract pollinators. There are many other things homeowners can do, from mulching or mowing your leaves, using electric equipment and conserving water.

"Plant wisely, to get flowers for bees and butterflies, putting in plants that provide food for larva to feed on," Hoogland said. "Remove invasives. Provide habitats for insects."

"Invasives cause loss of biodiversity, habitat degradation and other environmental and economic problems," the Healthy Yards website states.

Deer obviously pose a big problem in Westchester.

"There are 100 deer per square mile in Westchester," Hoogland said. "We can only support 10 deer per square mile."

"They're helping invasive plants to spread. They're harmful to birds, which are dependent on the understory," Hoogland said.

The understory – shrubs that grow in the woods and young trees – provide a habitat for birds for foraging and nesting, the Audubon Society states on its website.

Hoogland also works with Bedford 2030, a local nonprofit that is dedicated to reducing local greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2030 and eliminating them by 2040. Bedford 2030 and Healthy Yards work together to offer periodic plant swaps, in which residents can exchange native plants and seeds with others for planting.

For more information, visit www.healthyyards.org and www.bedford2030.org.

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

Q&A With Sally Lehrman, CEO and Founder of The Trust Project

Q: What is the goal of The Trust Project?

A: I founded the Trust Project in 2014 as a response to a world in which social media and search engines mixed news, advertisements, propaganda and opinion together as if they were the same. As a result, people were losing trust in journalism. I want people to easily recognize journalism that has integrity behind it and to help the technology platforms that distribute news do the same.

Now, more than 245 news sites are showing the eight Trust Indicators on their pages and working together toward greater transparency and accountability. These eight Trust Indicators, a globally accepted standard, show who and what is behind a given news site so people can make their own decisions about whether to trust it.

Q: How do people know who is a participant in The Trust Project?

A: News sites that commit to the principles of social responsibility, accuracy, impartiality and inclusion make sure they have policies that support their commitments and show them to you. They complete the editorial, design and development work, pass through a compliance review and finally they earn the Trust Mark, which is a T-logo that they place on their pages.

Our news partners include large companies like The Washington Post, BBC, The Globe and Mail, Hearst Television and Tegna, syndicators like Public News Service, regionals such as the Denver Post and El Periódico de Catalunya, and also locals and digital natives.

Q: Why is it important now more than ever to have trusted media across the globe? A: The whole journalistic enterprise is founded on trust – between journalists and their sources, the communities they cover and the people that read, listen or watch the news. And in this time of COVID-19, climate change and political unrest, people absolutely need news media in which they know there is no bias in the story other than honesty, transparency and ethical content – and a commitment to serve the public interest.

They need to know that a news site can be trusted to guide them through all of today's complexity. Research by the Reuters Institute has found that globally, the public deeply appreciates and desires impartial news.

Q: What do you think about the growth of digital content and the challenges people face in finding real stories amidst all that content?

A: First of all, for too long we've allowed the digital space to control the

way we work in journalism, changing our priorities in harmful ways because of the pressures of the algorithm. We are working to flip the picture, to enhance the digital space by providing the Trust Indicators in machine-readable form, so that Facebook, Google and Bing can use them, and also right on the news pages that people see.

We want to underline and support quality, reducing the influence of inflammatory headlines or dramatic narrative. We also want news sites to work with one another to promote high standards and accountability.

Q: Where does the Trust Project's funding come from?

A: We are incredibly grateful to have been funded by Craig Newmark Philanthropies, the Democracy Fund, Google, Facebook, the Knight Foundation and the Markkula Family Foundation. And, like the journalism on our partner news sites, the Trust Indicators and our policies are completely independent of funder influence.

Q: What do people want from the news media and journalists?

A: People want to see a clear separation between impartial news and paid media (advertorials), analysis and opinion. They want to know who and what is behind a story they see, including who has funded that news site

and who the journalist is. They want to hear from people like themselves and unlike themselves. They want local news reports by journalists who know their community, and journalists who will listen carefully to those so often left out of the conversation.

Q: What's special about the new group of news sites announcing the Trust Indicators on their pages?

A: My dream is for people to have access to the Trust Indicators on reliable news sites around the world, sites of all shapes and sizes. With this group, the Trust Indicators will be shown for the first time on a Native American-focused news site, Buffalo's Fire, and on trustworthy, journalism-driven newsletters. The Examiner News publishes award-winning community newspapers, a local news website and a bonus content newsletter in Westchester and Putnam counties in New York. Capital Daily, an independent daily, brings investigative, explanatory news and analysis to Victoria, B.C., readers through its website and newsletter.

Forum Communications, a family-owned media and technology company in operation since 1878, is delivering the Trust Indicators on 20 news sites. Montana Free Press produces in-depth public-service journalism on state government and policy.

FDNY Fireboat Topic of Van Cortlandtville Historical Society Talk

The life, legacy and restoration of the historic Fireboat John D. McKean will be the topic of a talk this Saturday, May 21 at 2 p.m., at the Little Red Schoolhouse in Cortlandt Manor.

Free to the public, the program is sponsored by the Van Cortlandtville Historical Society. With concerns about COVID-19, masks are encouraged to be used and seating may be limited.

Yorktown resident David Rocco, an accomplished photographer and historic preservationist, will present a picture program of the amazing story of the retired FDNY fireboat and the ongoing efforts to restore it for all to tour and travel on, especially on the Hudson River.

Currently moored at a dock on the west side of the Hudson at Stony Point, the John D. McKean was considered "the finest fireboat in the world" when it was built in 1954 with state-of-the-art marine designs and firefighting features.

In his Powerpoint presentation, Rocco will highlight three of the most prominent parts of the McKean legacy: The Staten Island Ferry Terminal Fire in 1991; the heroic rescue and recovery operations in New York Harbor during the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center; and the "Miracle on the Hudson" plane landing in January 2009.

For information about the all-volunteer nonprofit organization The Fireboat McKean Preservation Project, Inc. that Rocco is involved with, visit www.fireboatmckean.org.



DAVID ROCCO PHOTO

The John D. McKean Fireboat at dock in the Hudson River at Stony Point will be the subject of a talk and presentation this Saturday afternoon by the Van Cortlandtville Historical Society.

This will be a return engagement for Rocco as a guest speaker at the Van Cortlandtville Historical Society. In January 2019 he presented a little-known story of a tragic military plane crash on Mount Beacon in Dutchess County in 1945 based on his book, "The Indestructible Man: The True Story of World War II Hero Captain Dixie."

In his body of work as a photographer, Rocco has chronicled in pictures some of the most important historic restoration projects in the Hudson Valley. He is known for his stunning pictorial essay – on land and by air – documenting the construction

and completion of the Mario M. Cuomo Bridge and the demolition of the old Tappan Zee Bridge. A number of those photos that were published in 2016 were considered for a Pulitzer Prize in photography.

His photography has been exhibited in several libraries in Westchester and published in a wide variety of noted publications, and his photo images on "The Damage and Destruction of Hurricane Sandy" have been exhibited at the Arts Westchester Gallery in White Plains and The Museum of the City of New York.

His on-the-scene photo work from a helicopter when a huge construction crane

collapsed across seven lanes of the Tappan Zee Bridge appeared on the Engineering Catastrophes episode of the Science Channel.

Over the years, Rocco has been a volunteer and organizer of many charitable, cultural, historical and environmental initiatives in the local area and the region, including the Bannerman Castle Trust and initial restoration work on the Yorktown Depot. He played a seminal role in the successful development of the highly-popular Walkway Over the Hudson project, the restoration of the historic Mount Beacon Fire Tower and the creation of the Yorktown Community Dog Park.

Active with the Westchester SPCA, he has also been a consistent blood donor for more than 30 years, and has been organizing blood, bone marrow and organ donor drives at the Yorktown Community Street Festival since 2015.

A native of Yonkers, Rocco and his wife, Ruby, have lived in Yorktown since 1995. They have three grown children and six grandchildren.

The Little Red Schoolhouse where the program will take place is located 297 Locust Ave. in Cortland Manor, at the north end of Locust next to historic Old Saint Peter's Church and Cemetery on the east side of the hill just south of Oregon Road. Off-street parking is available atop the schoolhouse driveway or in the adjacent cemetery on Locust Avenue.

For more information, call 914-736-78678 or visit www.vancort.net.

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Filmmakers Explore Today's Emotions Behind the American Flag

By Martin Wilbur

In the days and weeks following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Andrea Garbarini received American flags from all the United States from both children and adults.

Some were hand-stitched, others were drawn while some appeared on shirts or other objects.

It meant a lot to Garbarini to receive the unsolicited gifts because her husband, Charles, was one of the 343 New York City firefighters killed that day.

"I looked at those flags and I hung some of them up on my walls, and I looked at them, and to me it represented a collective hug and a unity with this country," Garbarini said. "And I look at it fondly."

But over the past five or six years, Garbarini said she started feeling the flag was being used differently. Like so much else in the country, it was being politicized, she felt particularly by the supporters of former President Donald Trump administration. Some groups felt like the flag was being co-opted or no longer or never did represent them.

In 2019, Garbarini decided to make a documentary about how Americans feel about the stars and stripes, whether they believe the country is polarized and what can be done to pull it back together. That film, "Flagged," which recently won Best Short Documentary at the Piermont Film Festival in Rockland County, will be the next screening for Films on Purpose this Thursday evening, a Pleasantville-based



Today, the American flag means very different things to different groups of people.

organization that periodically shows movies with social justice themes followed by a panel discussion.

Garbarini teamed with fellow Pleasantville resident Shane McGaffey, the village's television station manager, to produce the 38-minute film. They not only interviewed people locally, but they traveled the countryside, particularly in the south where in some communities displaying the flag on your property is expected.

They spoke to Black people, Native Americans, political consultants, attended Trump rallies and ended up in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 6, 2021, when in some instances the flag was literally being used as a weapon.

McGaffey said he was especially struck

by a story a woman told when putting her house on the market. The real estate agent suggested she remove her flag because she risked polarizing what could be a significant percentage of prospective buyers.

"We've come to a place now where our flag, in my mind, is supposed to represent everybody but people no longer have that feeling," he said. "How did we get there?"

"Flagged" is Garbarini's third film. In 2011, she collaborated with three other 9/11 widows for a film for the 10th anniversary of Sept. 11. In 2018, her second film followed several busloads of grandmothers from New York to McAllen, Texas who protested the policy of separating migrant children from their parents at the border.

In a country where there is not longer agreement on a basic set of facts in many instances, Garbarini said the question may be whether American society can stop and listen to people who they don't agree with and find common ground.

"You can agree or disagree with the people who you talk to on a daily basis. One thing is for sure, that we actually, I think, really do



"Flagged" filmmakers Andrea Garbarini and Shane McGaffey

want the same things when it comes down to it," Garbarini said. "Basically, we want our kids to be safe, we want good schools for our children, people should have food on their table and a roof over their head and a job that's secure and a living wage. I think everybody really believes in that."

The evening begins this Thursday with a reception at 6:30 p.m. on the porch of the Marmaduke Forster House, located at 415 Bedford Rd. in Pleasantville. The screening will be at 7 p.m. across the street at the Pleasantville Presbyterian Church.

For the panel discussion, Garbarini and McGaffey will be joined by county attorney and former Pleasantville mayor John Nonna and Westchester political strategist Bill O'Reilly.

The screening is free. Anyone entering the church must be vaccinated and masked.

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Is Maintenance-Free Living All it's Pumped Up to Be?

The other morning, I entered the elevator at my condo complex where I rarely see any other residents. But this time there was a fellow in the car when the doors opened.

I had never seen him before so I asked whether he was a new owner; he responded that he had been my neighbor for more than two years. I shared that I had lived in the building for more than six years.

When I asked how my fellow passenger liked the place, he said he enjoyed the fact that it was maintenance-free and that he didn't have to worry about yard work anymore. I heartedly agreed.

But was I being totally honest, if not with him, then with myself?

For many years, I lived in a high-maintenance house, as high-maintenance as it could be: an early 18th century colonial with very few modern updates when I first bought it. In fact, there was still an outhouse on the property when we moved in. I'm not sure how long indoor plumbing had been installed, but the waste pipe was held up in the basement by wire hangers, which collapsed our first week in the house.

During our first night, we had a huge rainstorm and the roof leaked, so right away we had to replace the roof with our first equity loan. The list went on and on with upgrades that we did slowly but surely over



By Bill Primavera

the years.

We upgraded the electrical system to be assured that the house wouldn't burn down. The boiler system that had originally burned coal and was later converted to oil (and was covered with a mixture of asbestos and cement, which had been applied before the prior owners could have known about the dangers of asbestos) was next to be replaced. Just having it removed from the house was a major project.

When I asked my contractor about the disposal of the asbestos, he simply said, "Don't worry about it." But all these years later, I still sometimes worry about it.

The bathrooms were next. We were lucky that the former owner had a thing for kitchens and completely rebuilt the one in this house, combining two rooms into one. It's what sold my wife on the house. Rolling her eyes when we first saw it, I knew that she was sold on buying the property. Didn't I read someplace that the kitchen and its condition is the main determinant among women in buying a house?

The exterior needed to be painted and the windows, not being insulated, needed to have storm windows installed each fall and taken down each summer while air conditioners were lugged down from the attic and placed on the sills of the windows.

Outside, the lawn needed to be mowed

and the gardens needed to be tended, and we didn't have the money when we first moved there to have contracted services take care of these chores. When I wasn't working my full-time job, I was commuting an hour each way, or I was working on the house or property. There was no time left for anything else.

But there were advantages to all the maintenance work; it was my exercise program. I was never in better shape than when I did all my own yard work from all the bending, lifting, digging and carting. Inside, all the physical activity related to the sanding, going up and down ladders and climbing stairs between the attic and the basement for supplies had me on the move all the time.

During those years of high-energy activity, I sometimes fantasized about the day when I might live in a maintenance-free situation or I might be able to outsource all the work. Slowly, as I got busier and had more income, I was able to outsource some, but not all the chores.

Finally, a few years ago, I sold the high-maintenance house and moved into a condo building where, literally, there is no maintenance burden whatsoever on my part. The landscaping is done by a crew. Internally, every need is tended to. All we have to do is keep the interior of our unit clean.

Am I delirious with joy over this situation? Not exactly. The perils of maintenance-free living are that I'm certain I must be lacking in Vitamin D in that I get outdoors

very seldomly to get my fair share of sun. Also, I've gained weight owing to the lack of outside work; that had been my primary source of exercise for a long time. It's much more satisfying to get exercise while accomplishing home improvement at the same time, more so than boring exercise in a gym.

The landscaping is maintained by an expert crew, and my only participation is to enjoy its beauty.

So there you have the pros and cons of maintenance-free living, demonstrating once again that getting what you wish for is not always without a down side.

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. 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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New Castle Historical Society Explores the World of Quilting

By Martin Wilbur

It was quite fortuitous that the New Castle Historical Society was able to come up with the idea for its latest exhibit that opens this weekend at the Horace Greeley House in Chappaqua.

Its new president, Georgia Frasch, said the society had been keeping some beautiful quilts in its archives for years, many of which are vintage or antique. Idea started to fly, and once word was out in the community that the historical society was looking to organize an exhibit of quilts, the floodgates opened, so to speak.

"All of a sudden, just putting the word out, we had so many generous people reach out who wanted to lend us their quilts," said Frasch. "Actually, it was more than we can use."

The exhibit, "The Art of the Quilt," which opens on Saturday, will feature about 36 quilts dating as far back as the early 1800s right up through until about 1970. What makes them special, Frasch said, is not only the intricate handwork but what they represent.

Fascinating entries include a quilt donated for the show by heirs of the Dodge family, one of the original Quaker families that settled New Castle, Frasch said. It's a family heirloom called "The Crazy Quilt," made in 1895. The historical society was able to secure a \$4,000 grant to have it restored.

Another captivating exhibit entry is called the "Patriotic Quilt," which was made in 1903 by a local woman and features many of the presidents and patriotic figures until that



The Patriotic Quilt, created in 1903, is one of about three dozen quilts that will be shown at the New Castle Historical Society's latest exhibit, "The Art of the Quilt," which opens Saturday at the Horace Greeley House in Chappaqua.

time, along with events and places. Those items are interspersed with Bible verses, Frasch said. To top it off the quilt was done in applique.

Frasch said that the historical society has been contacted by quilting museums inquiring about whether the organization would loan the work.

Then there is an Album quilt in the exhibit, also from the late 1800s, that was created by multiple Quaker families. Each

woman made one square and embedded their name in the portion of the fabric that they were responsible for.

"It's not just pretty quilts," Frasch said. "They're all pretty interesting and tell the story about the women who worked on them. So we always like to have a historical tie-in."

Quilting, which was highly popular in the 19th century, was likely a social outlet for many women at the time, she said.

"It was a way for women to come together, especially when families were moving out west in the mid-19th century and women were very isolated," Frasch said. "It was a way of socializing and coming together."

Frasch said it was common to find Black women quilting before and during the Civil War where they would hide messages in the material that could be used to help escaped slaves via the Underground Railroad.

On June 5, the historical society will welcome Peggy Norris, who has written two books on the history of quilting, and she will offer her insight.

The exhibit comes on the heels of one of the historical society's most successful exhibits, the holiday train show. More than 1,600 tickets were sold for its inaugural showing, said Frasch, who mentioned that that event will recur each year.

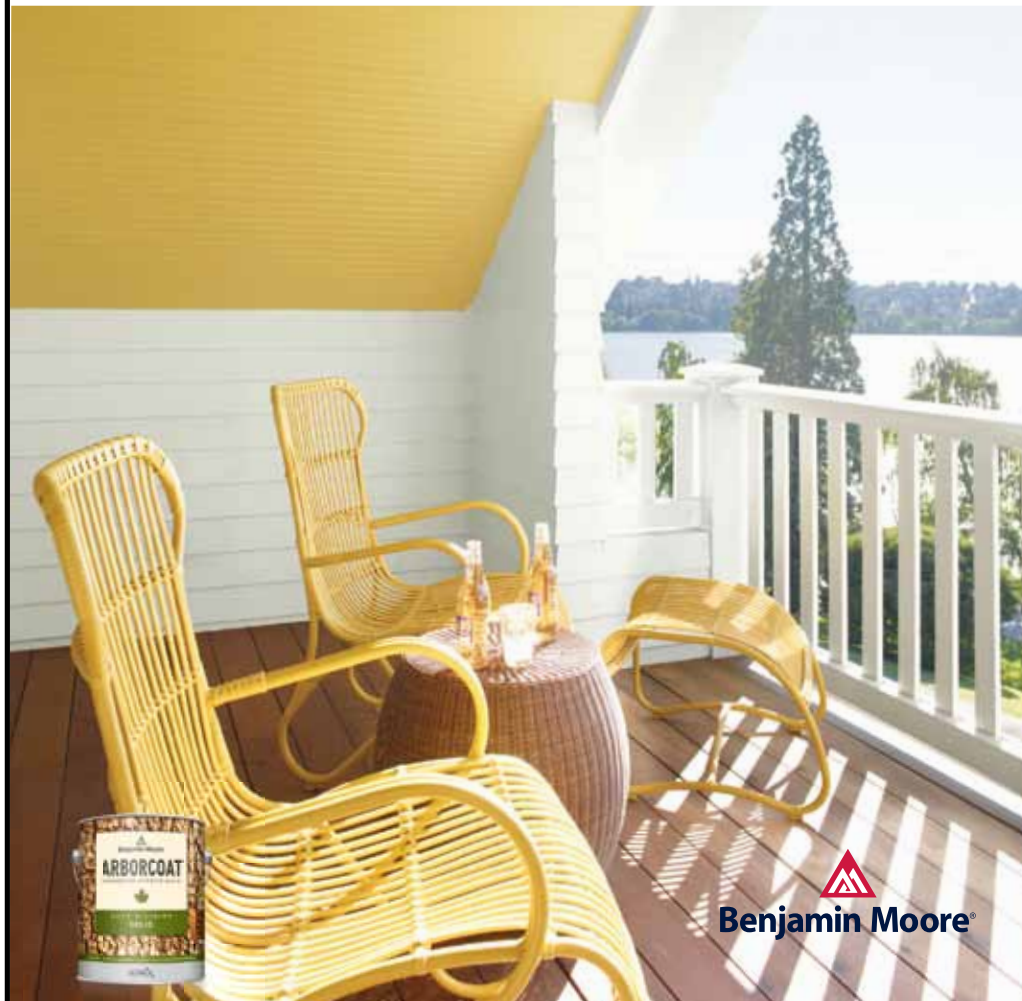
The New Castle Historical Society is trying to branch out in its exhibits and programming to appeal to a wider portion of the community, Frasch said.

"Now we are focusing less on Horace Greeley and more about becoming a center for culture and history, especially in this area," she said.

"The Art of the Quilt" is open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. starting this Saturday, May 21 and extending through Sunday, June 26. Tickets are \$10 and \$15 and can be purchased online by visiting www.newcastlehs.org.

The Horace Greeley House is located at 100 King St. in Chappaqua.

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Fox Lane Inspires Next Generation of Volunteers

By Abby Luby

Most local communities depend on volunteers to donate their time and energy to improve the quality of life.

To honor the importance and selflessness of volunteers, this Friday

about 200 Fox Lane High School juniors will be helping out at about 20 locations, including local schools, food pantries and neighborhood help centers as part of the school's Community Volunteer Day.

The day, which is being introduced this year, will be a fixture on the school calendar going forward.

It was inspired by the Suzanne Grant Foundation, a nonprofit organization created by David Grant to honor his late wife, who served six years on the Bedford Board of Education and was a passionate community volunteer. Suzanne Grant, co-owner of PORCH Home + Gifts in Mount Kisco, died in 2019 at 56 years old.

"This was just an idea six months ago

and it became grander than what we had originally thought," David Grant said. "We wanted a handful of local organizations to be involved and are pleased that the entire town and school district are participating."

Grant initially reached out to Mount Kisco parent Kristina Nye Weise who immediately agreed to help.

"This program is such a perfect reflection of who Suzanne Grant was," said Weise, whose child is currently a Fox Lane High School freshman while her two older children are graduates of the school. "Suzanne was one of the first people I met when I moved to Mount Kisco and she modeled the volunteer behavior I feel is so valuable to the community."

When Weise reached out to local organizations, she said the response was overwhelmingly positive.

"When you offer people three hours of work by volunteers, you'd be surprised

how quickly they say 'yes,'" she said. "It's important to share information about community groups with students so their volunteering will go beyond a one-day event and continue year-round."

Fox Lane Principal Dr. Brett Miller said the school fully supports having a dedicated day every year for juniors to volunteer.

"We are really excited that this is happening," Miller said. "We will have 20 of our teachers work side by side with the students. It will truly be a team effort. This strengthens the learning experience not only here at school but in students' own lives in maintaining a connection to their community."

Fox Lane Dean of Student Activities and math teacher Kristy Emery

started the ball rolling after meeting Grant and Weise last December. By last month, she had contacted each high school junior, offering them different choices of where they wanted to volunteer.

"Every student ended up in groups that were among their top choices," Emery said. There will be eight to 12 students in each group that will assist nearly 20 organizations.

Among the organizations that will be helped are the Boy & Girls Club of Northern Westchester, the Westchester Local Food Project at the Ann Manzi Center, Marsh and Westmoreland sanctuaries, the Mount Kisco Arts Council, 914 Cares and the district's elementary schools.

According to Weise, many students asked

to help out at their former elementary school to either help plant a garden or build an outdoor reading space. Others will face-paint preschoolers, sort through clothing donated for a clothing drive or help clean trails at local sanctuaries.

Nine juniors will be ripping out invasive plants at Westmoreland Sanctuary.

"We want to students to know that clearing invasive species is not busy work, but work that is impactful on the environment," said Steve Ricker, director of conservation and wildlife management at Westmoreland Sanctuary. "We get into how invasive species aren't pollinators which is needed and talk about the monoculture of lawns as compared to the biodiversity of native plants."

Ricker said that many former students who previously volunteered have returned to become interns and some were later hired by the sanctuary.

The day will start at the school's athletic field with a breakfast for all student volunteers. They will then be bused to volunteer locations and work for three hours before returning to the school for lunch.

"Never underestimate the power of a small group of people who are committed to exposing young people to volunteerism," Grant said. "It's a big deal to me and was to Suzanne. Perhaps this exposure will lead to one being a future board or another town council member. A new generation of volunteers, that's the legacy, that's what this is about."

Locations of Fox Lane High School Student Volunteers

Bedford Village Elementary School
Boys and Girls Club of Northern Westchester
Fox Lane High School
Fox Lane Middle School
Marsh Sanctuary
Mt. Kisco Arts Council
Mt. Kisco Elementary School
Mt. Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry
Mt. Kisco Library

Northern Westchester Hospital
Pound Ridge Elementary School
Pound Ridge Partnership
Town of Bedford
Ward Pound Ridge Reservation
West Patent Elementary School
Westchester Local Food Project
Westmoreland Sanctuary
914 Cares

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The Wheels on the (Electric) Bus

Westchester school districts are on a bumpy road to convert their transportation fleets from diesel



By Bailey Hosfelt

You are reading this week's print excerpt of an article from our Examiner+ newsmagazine-style email newsletter. To read the entire article and others like it, subscribe at www.examiner-plus.com to receive all of our bonus content.

Concerned parents and climate activists throughout Westchester are coming together to advocate for school districts county-wide to replace their fossil fuel-emitting diesel school buses with electric vehicles, an integral part of New York's transition to clean renewable energy.

Earlier this year, New York's chapter of Mothers Out Front (MOF), a national movement of mothers working to address

issues related to climate change, hosted a webinar on the topic. Co-hosted by County Executive George Latimer and Peter McCartt, director of the county's Office of Energy and Sustainability, the virtual forum detailed how school districts could begin the process and apply for available state funding.

Currently, there are an estimated 1,000 school buses operating throughout the county. Because the majority of the buses run on diesel fuel, transportation to and from school emits significant carbon loads into the atmosphere and, in turn, exacerbates climate change.

Additionally, recent research has found that children who ride on diesel buses have a higher risk of developing cancer later in life, particularly lung cancer. Based on lifetime risks, governmental regulators estimate that diesel exhaust is responsible for 125,000 cancers nationwide.

The particles present in diesel exhaust also impair the lungs and aggravate diseases like emphysema and bronchitis and can worsen or trigger asthma attacks. Idling, which still occurs despite an anti-idling law making it illegal to do so in Westchester, only makes matters worse.



Amy Albenda Hill, a parent and member of MOF Rivertowns based in Tarrytown, began advocating for this issue because, like other mothers, she was concerned about her children's futures due to climate change.

"We wanted to take action instead of feeling nervous and like it was out of our hands," Albenda Hill says. "As a group of moms in Westchester, we felt like we needed to do something, and electric school buses seemed like a perfect area [to focus on]."

"There are the environmental benefits, health benefits for children and the

community, and, despite the initial high price tag of an electric school bus, there are long-term savings," Albenda Hill adds. "If you can get over that initial sticker shock and think long term, it's a win-win-win."

Depending on the size and model of the vehicle, an electric school bus can range from \$200,000 to the mid \$300,000s. A larger 90-seat model, which was recently on display at Fox Lane High School in Bedford to showcase the alternative to district board members and education officials from across the region, carries a hefty price tag of \$386,975.

While cost is certainly the biggest obstacle to making the switch to electric — vehicles can be at least two or ...

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The Westchester Chordsmen Are 'Back in Business'

The Westchester Chordsmen chorus is proud to present a special spring concert, "Back in Business," at the First Presbyterian Church of Ossining, located at 34. S. Highland Ave. in Ossining this Saturday, May 21 at 7 p.m.

This will mark the first time that the chorus will be performing indoors in more than two years. The award-winning a cappella chorus and quartets will perform an entertaining mix of Chordsmen favorites and new arrangements, including familiar songs from Stephen Sondheim, Stevie Wonder, Randy Newman, Frank Sinatra and more.

Looking for a Broadway ballad, a Duke Ellington jazz tune or a rousing patriotic number? This show has something for everyone and is sure to thrill fans of all ages/

Musical Director, Keith Harris, says,

"We're excited to perform many songs that showcase the breadth and versatility of our 40-man chorus," said Musical Director Keith Harris. "We love to entertain – and it's great to be back in business"

During the pandemic, the chorus was extremely active and recorded several virtual shows, which were seen far and wide. As a result, in recognition of the chorus' efforts to keep the arts alive,



The Westchester Chordsmen will be holding their first indoor performance in two years this Saturday evening in Ossining.

ArtsWestchester honored the Chordsmen with its 2021 Arts Organization of the Year Award.

"We couldn't be prouder to return to the stage for a live performance and to support the re-emergence of the musical performing

arts in Westchester," said Chordsmen President Bob Sideli.

In the recent past, the Chordsmen has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, sponsored six a cappella festivals for local area high school students, and published its OVERTONES Magazine in six separate editions for the past six years. (All attending the show will receive a free copy of the current issue.)

In addition, the chorus plans to resume in July its popular Ready-Set-Sing program, a free six-week singing and performance techniques course. Men of all ages are encouraged to register in advance at chordsmen.org/contact/

"We're excited about this show for many reasons: to return to live indoor performance, to reconnect with our audience, and to be a part of the re-emergence of the musical arts in Westchester," Harris said.

We look forward to seeing you in Ossining on May 21."

Tickets are \$20 in advance at \$25 at the door. For tickets and more information, visit www.chordsmen.org/shows.

The Westchester Chordsmen Chorus is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit performing arts group. Its mission is to spread the joy of singing throughout Westchester County and beyond.

Scouts Soar to New Heights in Putnam County

On Apr. 30, an Eagle Scout Court of Honor was held at the Carmel Emergency Command Center. Pictured, from left to right, are Peter Priolo (Brewster Elks Youth Activities Chairman), Amadeus Andrei Cruz, Cole Alexander Tinker and Grant Robert Kraemer.

Cruz's Eagle Scout service project was the construction of seven wood benches for placement on the Linder Loop Handicapped Trail in Brewster to allow visitors to rest. The beneficiary for the project was the Putnam County Land Trust.

Tinker's Eagle Scout project was for the Brewster Elks Lodge #2101. The existing handicapped ramp had a railing that failed to meet current ADA code requirements. He replaced it with a new railing system and did some minor improvements to the ramp. Tinker also put in a railing to a set of exterior steps to the basement and poured



a new concrete platform at the top of the steps in order to reduce an existing trip hazard.

Kraemer's Eagle Scout project was the construction of a new metal handicapped ramp and two sets of concrete steps placed at the front and rear entryways of the Holmes United Methodist Church Hall in Holmes.



Friends of Music Concerts Offers Local Schools Free Master Class

Through its grant-funded Partnership in Education program, Friends of Music Concerts, Inc. has worked with several Westchester County schools during the 2021-22 season in order to enhance their music programs by providing one-day residencies for young professional ensembles that perform and then conduct master classes for music students.

The series began in November with the Tesla Quartet at White Plains High School. It continued in March with the Aizuri Quartet at Hendrick Hudson High School in Montrose, in April with The Balourdet Quartet at Sleepy Hollow High School and this month with the PUBLIQuartet at Purchase College.

At the March residency, violinists

Emma Frucht and Miho Saegusa, violist Ayane Kozasa, and cellist Karen Ouzounian of the Aizuri Quartet spent the day with the up-and-coming musicians of Hendrick Hudson's Orchestral Director Lauren Morabito's Chamber Orchestra. As the quartet performed works by Gershwin, Ravel and Rhiannon Giddens, the students' rapt attention was evidence of their awe of the quartet's artistry and technical prowess.

The four visiting musicians assisted the students through guided listening, highlighting the composers' backgrounds and explaining the different music genres. According to Rosella Ranno, Friends of Music Concerts' Program and Education chair, the quartet "provided a key to

understanding the depth of the music, particularly that of the Giddens."

"The students' enthusiasm, attention, and participation were wonderful, as were their questions and comments," she added.

In April at Sleepy Hollow High School, The Balourdet Quartet worked with students from the high school's senior orchestra and from student musicians from the middle school. Small ensembles and quartets received intense master classes in which the visiting musicians advised students on bowing style, expression and timing. In its performance for the students, the Balourdet played works by Brahms, Debussy and Haydn.

During its more than 30 years of existence, the Friends of Music Concerts' Partnership

in Education program not only has enriched the music programs of many school districts at no cost to any of them, but also has helped create future generations of classical music lovers and lifelong supporters of the arts.

This fall, applications to participate in the 2022-23 Partnership in Education program will be mailed to nearly 40 public school districts in Westchester and some private schools as well. The application also is available on line at www.friendsofmusicconcerts.org/partnership-education-grant-application. Contact Rosella Ranno (rosella.ranno@gmail.com) for more information.

For more information about Friends of Music Concerts, Inc., visit www.friendsofmusicconcerts.org.

Regional Dementia Conference to Be Held in Tarrytown May 25

The Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter will host its sixth Meeting of the Minds Dementia Conference on Wednesday, May 25 at the Sleepy Hollow Conference Center in Tarrytown.

The event is intended primarily for people with early-stage dementia and their family caregivers, but professional caregivers and health care workers are also welcome to attend. The first 200 people with dementia and family caregivers who register will be admitted for the discounted rate of \$25.

"We're excited to offer this discount to make it easier for caregivers and those in the early stages of the disease to attend," said Meg Boyce, vice president of programs and services for the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter. "We hope people will take advantage of this great opportunity and look forward to having everyone gather in person at this conference for the first time since 2018."

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Claire Sexton, director of scientific programs and outreach for the Alzheimer's Association, who will speak about the latest research advances into risk reduction, early diagnosis and treatment for Alzheimer's and other dementia. She will highlight how the Alzheimer's Association is accelerating research through both its funding and

convening of researchers.

The keynote address will be followed by five breakout sessions on dementia-related topics:



Dr. Claire Sexton, director of scientific programs and outreach for the Alzheimer's Association, will be the keynote speaker at the May 25 Meeting of the Minds Dementia Conference at the Sleepy Hollow Conference Center in Tarrytown.

"Understanding Medicare, Medicaid and Long-Term Care Insurance" a panel discussion featuring three experts in the field.

"Family Dynamics in Dementia Care" a talk exploring how family roles, emotions and expectations can change when a loved one has dementia.

"Communicating Clearly," a discussion that explores modified communication techniques for interacting with the elderly and memory-impaired.

"Dementia, Delirium and Depression."

"Making Difficult Decisions," a talk that offers tips for making the difficult decisions faced by dementia caregivers and when these decisions should be made.

During lunch, there will be a panel discussion on legal and financial issues by three experts in the field. This will be followed by an educational program, "Healthy Living for the Brain and Body," before the event closes at about 3 p.m.

This biannual event was held virtually in 2020 as a series of webinars over a five-day period.

For more details or to register, visit AlzDementiaConference.org.

The Hudson Valley Chapter serves families living with dementia in seven counties in New York, including Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester. To learn more about the programs and services offered locally, visit alz.org/hudsonvalley or call 800-272-3900.

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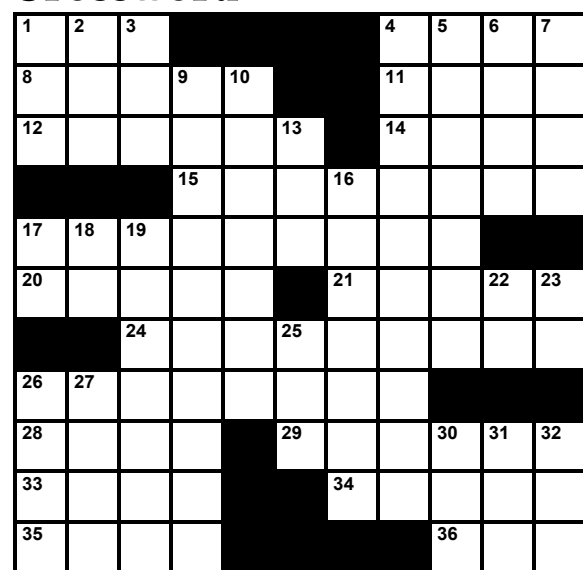
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Crossword



Solution on pg 25

Across

1. Creeping plant
4. Toast topping
8. Civil Rights gp. since 1909
11. Newspaper column, abbr.
12. High-pH stuff
14. Calendar column, abbr.
15. Punch and Judy show skill
17. Peekskill's "peak" of entertainment, The _____ Theater
20. Amorphous creature
21. Dot-commerce
24. Small cigar

16. Childish
17. Dad, for short
18. Dawn time
19. Take back
22. Chicago's state, abbr.
23. _____ and behold
25. Verb for you
26. Rock's Lady _____
27. Rent-_____
30. Belonging to something
31. Quaker cereal
32. SuperStation initials

26. White Plains famous shopping center
28. Healthy berry
29. Mama Cass _____
33. Manner of walking
34. Cornerstone abbr.
35. _____ brat
36. Aves. crossers

Down

1. Ending for concert
2. Actor Kilmer of "Top Gun"
3. Gab
4. Capacities
5. Bordering area
6. Layer
7. Website for handmade crafts
9. Aptitude
10. Peacock's pride
13. Business going public, abbr.

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Supplemental Summons and Notice of Object of Action Supreme Court Of The State Of New York County Of Westchester Action to Foreclose a Mortgage

Index #: 61376/2020 Wilmington Savings Fund Society, FSB, Not In Its Individual Capacity But Solely In Its Capacity As Owner Trustee For Cascade Funding RM4 Acquisitions Grantor Trust Plaintiff, vs Herbert Gould As Heir To The Estate Of Kathleen Gould, Deirdhre Regina Kavanagh Gould As Heir To The Estate Of Kathleen Gould, Shivaun Rowana Kavanagh Gould As Heir To The Estate Of Kathleen Gould, Gawain Greyland Kavanagh Gould As Heir To The Estate Of Kathleen Gould, Morgaana Rhianna Gould As Heir To The Estate Of Kathleen Gould, Unknown Heirs Of Kathleen Gould If Living, And If He/She Be Dead, Any And All Persons Unknown To Plaintiff, Claiming, Or Who May Claim To Have An Interest In, Or General Or Specific Lien Upon The Real Property Described In This Action; Such Unknown Persons Being Herein Generally Described And Intended To Be Included In Wife, Widow, Husband, Widower, Heirs At Law, Next Of Kin, Descendants, Executors, Administrators, Devisees, Legatees, Creditors, Trustees, Committees, Lienors, And Assignees Of Such Deceased, Any And All Persons Deriving Interest In Or Lien Upon, Or Title To Said Real Property By, Through Or Under Them, Or Either Of Them, And Their Respective Wives, Widows, Husbands, Widowers, Heirs At Law, Next Of Kin, Descendants, Executors, Administrators, Devisees, Legatees, Creditors, Trustees, Committees, Lienors, And Assigns, All Of Whom And Whose Names, Except As Stated, Are Unknown To Plaintiff, People Of The State Of New York, Board Of Managers Of The Grande At Battleground Condominium Association And Fairways At Battleground, United States Of America Acting Through The IRS John Doe (Those unknown tenants, occupants, persons or corporations or their heirs, distributees, executors, administrators, trustees, guardians, assignees, creditors or successors claiming an interest in the mortgaged premises.) Defendant(s). Mortgaged Premises: 94 Greenridge Avenue White Plains, NY 10605 To the Above named Defendant: You are hereby summoned to answer the Complaint in this action, and to serve a copy of your answer, or, if the Complaint is not served with this Supplemental Summons, to serve a notice of appearance, on the Plaintiff(s) attorney(s) within twenty days after the service of this Supplemental Summons, exclusive of the day of service (or within 30 days after the service is complete if this Supplemental Summons is not personally delivered to you within the State of New York). In case of your failure to appear or answer, judgment will be taken against you by default for the relief demanded in the Complaint. The Attorney for Plaintiff has an office for business in the County of Erie. Trial to be held in the County of Westchester. The basis of the venue designated above is the location of the Mortgaged Premises. TO Unknown Heirs of Kathleen Gould, Defendant In this Action. The foregoing Supplemental Summons is served upon you by publication, pursuant to an order of HON. Charles D. Wood of the Supreme Court Of The State Of New York, dated the Nineteenth day of April, 2022 and filed with the Complaint in the Office of the Clerk of the County of Westchester, in the City of White Plains. The object of this action is to foreclose a mortgage upon the premises described below, dated December 17, 2007, executed by Kathleen Gould (who died on February 10, 2021, a resident of the county of Westchester, State of New York) to secure the sum of \$1,162,500.00. The Mortgage was recorded at Instrument Number 480580721 in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk on March 6, 2008. The mortgage was subsequently assigned by an assignment executed November 13, 2018 and recorded on November 14, 2018, in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk at Instrument Number 583183325. The mortgage was subsequently assigned by an assignment executed May 23, 2018 and recorded on December 3, 2018, in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk at Instrument Number 583373079. The mortgage was subsequently assigned by an assignment executed September 22, 2020 and recorded on December 22, 2020, in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk at Instrument Number 603573197; The property in question is described as follows: 94 Greenridge Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605 NOTICE YOU ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING YOUR HOME If you do not respond to this summons and complaint by serving a copy of the answer on the attorney for the mortgage company who filed this foreclosure proceeding against you and filing the answer with the court, a default judgment may be entered and you can lose your home. Speak to an attorney or go to the court where your case is pending for further information on how to answer the summons and protect your property. Sending a payment to your mortgage company will not stop this foreclosure action. YOU MUST RESPOND BY SERVING A COPY OF THE ANSWER ON THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PLAINTIFF (MORTGAGE COMPANY) AND FILING THE ANSWER WITH THE COURT. DATED: April 25, 2022 Gross Polowy, LLC Attorney(s) For Plaintiff(s) 1775 Wehrle Drive, Suite 100 Williamsville, NY 14221 The law firm of Gross Polowy, LLC and the attorneys whom it employs are debt collectors who are attempting to collect a debt. Any information obtained by them will be used for that purpose. 71885

A Change of Seasons: Out With the Cold, in With the Warm

By Brian McGowan

It's been a while since we visited the Celtic calendar. Time for a refresher on where we currently stand within it.

May 1, just recently past, marked the feast of Beltaine, one of the four major Celtic festival days. While prior articles have spoken of each of the four, there's no time like the present for a quick reminder on what they are, when they occur and what their significance is. And since we're already ensconced in the month of May, no better place to begin with than Beltaine.

The word is pronounced in a variety of ways, depending upon the source one draws from. My favorite is "BELL-tinnuh." Why? I really don't know. It rolls off the tongue a little easier than some others I have heard, including "Bal-HIN-nuh" or the phonetic "Bell-TAIN." Take your pick.

In case you've forgotten, or are a new reader, the Celtic calendar is in the form of a wheel, and the year proceeds counterclockwise on its path. Key dates are the four great festivals and the equally important solstices.

Also of note, in the Celtic calendar there is no concept of our more modern-day seasons – winter, spring, summer and fall. To the Celts, there were only two seasons – the season of cold and the season of warmth.

The cold season begins with Samhain (Oct. 31-Nov. 1), extends through Imbolc (Jan. 31-Feb. 1) and ends with Beltaine (Apr. 30-May 1), which ushers in the warm season.

The fourth feast, that of Lughnasa (July 31-Aug. 1), is the height of the Celtic year, smack-dab in the middle of the warm season. Love those rays of summer? Thank the Celtic god Lugh, who, while he greets



Irish Eclectic

you every morning throughout the year, shines his face upon you most favorably on the first of August.

Why, you may ask, do I show two dates for each festival? That is because to the Celts, the day did not start and end at midnight. It started, rather, at sunset, and ended with the next setting sun.

To many in today's world, May is a favored month and delivers the promise of spring. Likewise, it held a special place for the Celts. It marked the

beginning of the season of warmth, when their kine, or cattle, would begin their journey to summer pastures.

Cattle, along with horses, were the two most prominent possessions, whether an individual family or a larger clan. To protect this investment, great bonfires would be kindled during the night of Beltaine, often in pairs, and the beasts would be driven between them – harmlessly so – while family members danced around and across the embers. Hearth fires would be doused and then rekindled from the light of the Beltaine fires. A nod from the gods would be enough to ensure a good crop, plenty of calves and foals in the coming months, and good fortune for all.

We hopefully mark an equally opportune time as we head into our warm season,

and transition from an age of pandemic to one of endemic. The scourge of COVID-19 remains, though its severity seems greatly reduced from what it was in early 2020.

Entertainment venues are reopening, including such Irish staples as the Irish Arts Center and the Irish Repertory Theatre. The Irish Rep just announced two new shows for the summer season on the main stage. They are "YES! Reflections of Molly Bloom," from the novel "Ulysses" by James Joyce (June 8 through July 17) and "The Butcher Boy," a musical (July 20 through Sept. 11). Currently you can see "Belfast Girls" through June 26.

The Irish Rep is located at 132 W. 22nd St. in Manhattan (between 6th and 7th Avenues). To purchase tickets online, visit irishrep.org.

And always remember, it's never too late, you know, to invoke an older, if mainly sidelined, source of protection. While I can't endorse lighting private bonfires (illegal, pretty much everywhere nowadays), there's little harm in a casual nod to the ancients. Call it insurance!

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

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continued on next page

Still Licking Derby Wounds, New Shooters to Consider for Preakness

By Charles Palombini

It will be impossible to preview the Preakness Stakes, the second jewel of horse racing's Triple Crown, without first revisiting the May 7 Kentucky Derby and the unbelievable upset sprung by Rich Strike.

Let's just pause for a moment and absorb the enormity of the results. The single biggest race of the year showcasing the top three-year-old thoroughbreds is typically loaded with regally-bred horses,

owned by the industry's richest people, trained by the world's top trainers and ridden by the sport's top jockeys. There was more than \$6 million in regally-bred horse flesh lined up in the starting gate.

And then there was Rich Strike, a horse claimed for a meager \$30,000. That's right, he wasn't purchased in a select sale but rather claimed out of a maiden claimer for \$30,000. A claiming race is where the bulk of racing's "average" horses compete.

The jockey, Sonny Leon, competes at the minor league level at places like Belterra Park and Mahoning Valley Race Course in Ohio.

But now onto Baltimore and the Preakness Stakes.

If you read my article before the Derby, I picked a horse named Messier to win the race, and as they straightened out for the stretch run, I prematurely congratulated myself as Messier was in the lead and looked every bit a winner.

Unfortunately, the horse figured he had done enough running and decided to take the rest of the day off. But it was okay as I would salvage the race with my second choice, Epicenter. He had the lead at the 1/16-pole and could only lose if a bolt of lightning struck. The bolt came in the name of Rich Strike.

Shortly thereafter comes a second bolt of lightning. Rich Strike's connections no sooner exit the winner's circle in Kentucky, when they announce their horse

will not run in the Preakness. What? No Derby winner in the Preakness?

Apparently, the connections hate Baltimore as much as I do, or at least I'd like to think so. But that's not exactly the case. Give credit to the owner and trainer, both of whom recognize the limitations of their horse. He needs, and indeed should have, proper rest and time to recover before taking on his next challenge.

So, the connections smartly avoid the temptations of chasing a Triple Crown and do what is in the best interests of the horse. They will give him a well-deserved five weeks rest before tackling the arduous mile-and-a-half Belmont Stakes.

While it's in the best interests of the horse, it is difficult for racing as the excitement that accompanies a Triple Crown chase has evaporated overnight.

So where does that leave the Preakness? It leaves it wide open. If you read my Derby article you will remember that I called it a field without any superstars, which the results bore out. What does that say about the rest of the field? It says that this is a less-than-stellar three-year-old crop. That will invite a trainer with a decent horse to say, "Hey, I might be able to win the Preakness." It also makes anyone who ran in the Derby question whether or not they should enter the Preakness.

Anyway, without having access to the entries, which were drawn on Monday, here is my projection for the Preakness.

Secret Oath. The filly that blistered the field in the Kentucky Oaks appears poised to run against the boys on Saturday. She is trained by Hall of Famer D. Wayne Lukas, who at 86 and in the twilight of his career, was lured to showcase his talents one last time by entering his filly against the boys. And she can win! She is that good.

Epicenter. His second-place finish in the Derby was better than it looked. He was in a fight the entire way and only gave way to the winner in the long stretch duel. But did the Derby take too much out of him? He has a great trainer in Steve Asmussen, and if he enters Epicenter, you can bet he'll be ready to run and would be the likely post time favorite. Along with Secret Oath he will be on the wire at the finish.

Early Voting. A Chad Brown trainee who skipped the Derby, he's been pointed toward the Preakness for several months. He is in fine shape and comes into the race fresh, following his narrow defeat in early April in the Wood Memorial at Aqueduct. He gets my nod for taking home the winner's trophy on Saturday.

So there you have it. If you need a fourth horse to complete your trifecta or superfecta, you can throw in Simplification who finished a strong closing fourth in the Derby.

Cortlandt resident Charles Palombini is an owner of thoroughbred horses.

Crossword Solution

1	I	V	Y					4	P	A	T	E			
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continued from previous page

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Eric Morrissey
Village Administrator/Clerk

PUBLIC HEARING

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Trustees of the Village of Pleasantville shall hold a public hearing on Monday, on May 23, 2022 at 8:00pm in the second floor meeting room of Village Hall, located at 80 Wheeler Ave. Pleasantville, NY 10570 and via teleconference to consider a proposed local law to allow members of all public bodies of the Village of Pleasantville to participate in meetings via videoconference.

Eric Morrissey
Village Administrator/Clerk

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The Greatest Wines You'll Never Drink



By Nick Antonaccio

The most expensive bottle of wine on the market today, and in the history of wine? French!

The most sought-after wines of capitalists and entrepreneurs? French!

The most expensive wine regions across the globe? French! French!

Wines with the best quality to price ratio in the vast world of wine? French?

I choose my punctuation carefully. After all, "best" is the opinion of the beholder. For me, the term connotes a combination of price and quality, not simply a macroeconomic precept of supply and demand. French wines – of the high-end variety – almost singularly have been caught up in a spiraling funnel of critics' scores and high-end luxury status marketing. They've become commodities and trophies, to be inventoried and traded, rather than be enjoyed as nectars of the gods, to be savored and shared with friends and families.

Many sophisticated wine lovers, with Champagne taste but boxed-wine wallets,

may never experience these fine wines as they age to their ultimate expression of the vineyard and the winemaker.

Large corporations have acquired many French Bordeaux estates over the last decade; the bottom line has become of greater importance than distribution to the masses. As a result, large staffs of corporate professionals have developed expensive marketing plans to raise the price of their commodities.

And they have been hugely successful. A bottle of 2000 Mouton Rothschild from the Bordeaux region costs about \$150 at release. The 2020 release price? That's \$640 – and this is before market speculation affects the ultimate retail or auction price. To me it's like trading in gold futures or Dutch tulips; prices for commoditized products may bear no resemblance to intrinsic value.

Today's market for high-end French wines resembles an exchange-trading floor more so than a retail shop. These wines are bid up at auctions by well-heeled buyers to stroke their egos. They are purchased as personal trophies rather than for personal consumption, and as such, it is likely that a corkscrew will never open many of these bottles. The average avid wine consumer will most likely never have the opportunity to taste these wines.

*You Heard It
Through the
Grapevine*

*They've become
commodities and
trophies, to be
inventoried and
traded, rather than be
enjoyed as nectars of
the gods'*

I speak from my soapbox with the voice of personal experience, as I've succumbed to this temptation myself, albeit in a minor fashion. Over the years, I've invested in highly-regarded French wines for my cellar, enjoyed expense account French wines at restaurants, splurged on French memory wines to celebrate our daughter's wedding day and suffered ignominy in my tale of woe, related in this column, when I opened a treasured bottle of 1982 Mouton Rothschild.

Historically, these high-end wines were more affordable, as price increases were more or less in lockstep with the rest of the wine market (my personal rationalization). However, in protest, I am no longer a purchaser (investor?) of these wines. This is a palpable loss to my palate, as I consider high-end Bordeaux and Burgundies to be the finest representations of liquid nourishment available to humankind.

In the eyes and keystrokes of esteemed wine critics, French wines consistently draw unparalleled accolades and high scores. But in the eyes, palates and wallets of many wine connoisseurs, there are alternative wines that can bring a rush of excitement to the ethereal experience of wine appreciation.

But scores shouldn't be the determining factor for wine prices – and thankfully they are not. Is a bottle of \$500 Bordeaux, rated 96 out of 100 points by esteemed wine critics, more price-worthy than an American Cabernet Sauvignon rated 96, at one-tenth the price? Or more worthy than many other fine affordable wines from each of France's major regions that have come to market to fill the high-end void? Visit your local wine merchant and experiment. You will find highly-acclaimed wines at moderate prices in the shelf space vacated by high-end collectible French wines.

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.

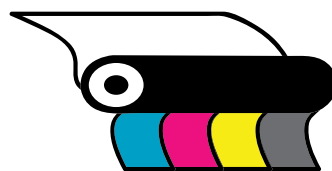
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