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November 17 - November 23, 2020

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 10, Issue 483



Lending a Helping Hand

In this time of COVID, an endless number of families and individuals are facing housing challenges while being shuffled from one temporary shelter to another. The Brothers of the Beta Alpha Alpha Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., headquartered in White Plains, felt they had to do something to help. Brother Byron Smalls spearheaded a project to collect and distribute new and gently used luggage to help families move and store their belongings. When speaking with the Shelter Directors to coordinate the delivery of luggage, Smalls discovered there was also a great need for school supplies for children as well as toiletries for other family members and adults. The Chapter decided to expand their project and immediately started purchasing and securing donations of school supplies (e.g., paper tablets, pens, pencils, crayons, etc.) and toiletries (e.g., soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, lotions, tissues, bath clothes, etc.) to contribute to the needs identified by the Directors. Within a short period of time, the Brothers were able to collect various items for close to 200 individuals. They spent a weekend organizing, sanitizing and packaging the items that were delivered to agencies and individuals throughout Westchester.

Sears to Close in February at the Galleria White Plains

By Rick Pezzullo

The last remaining Sears in Westchester County at the Galleria White Plains will soon be closing its doors.

Another victim of the circumstances created by COVID-19, Sears, one of the anchor stores at the Galleria for about the last 20 years, and its accompanying auto center is set to depart on February 21, 2021.

"Sears has been an asset to Galleria White Plains for many years," stated Josh McCord, the Galleria's retail manager. "Although we are disappointed with their business decision to close, this is an opportunity to continue to evolve the asset through a transformative redevelopment with the integration of a mix of

uses to meet the needs of the market."

The closure of Sears will mean the loss of employment for 59 workers.

"Our biggest concern at this time is the affected number of Sears employees," McCord stated. "To assist with their job transition, we will partner with local community groups and host a job fair for those seeking new employment opportunities."

Transformco, which acquired Sears and Kmart from Sears Holding in February 2019, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in November 2019. At the time, the company announced the liquidation of 51 Sears locations and 45 Kmart stores. Sears in the Cross County Center in Yonkers closed in July 2019.

Sonesta to Take Over Crowne Plaza in White Plains

By Rick Pezzullo

A four-star landmark hotel in White Plains is changing hands.

The Crowne Plaza White Plains on Hale Avenue, which has been a city staple for 35 years, has been taken over by Sonesta International Hotels Corporation.

Sonesta, which plans to add 81 Extended-Stay Hotels and 22 Full-Service Hotels & Resorts in the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada before the end of the year, is taking reservations at its new downtown White Plains hotel as of December 1.

"This is a momentous time for the company, underscoring the continued growth and amplifying the long-term success of

Sonesta and its branded hotels," Sonesta stated on its company website.

The 400-guest room hotel in White Plains is the first owned by Sonesta in New York State. Another is planned in Nanuet in Rockland County.

Sonesta is looking to attract customers with the following pitch: "Looking for unrivalled comfort and convenience with easy access to metro New York City? Look no further than Sonesta White Plains. With our ideal location near Grand Central Terminal, you can hop a train to The Big Apple. The beauty of the Hudson River Valley is also a short drive away. Whether you're here for business or leisure, our hotel boasts all the amenities you need to make the most of

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Starting at the end of November, more than 100 hotels presently operated by Intercontinental Hotel Group will be renamed when Sonesta International Hotels Corporation takes over the management and branding.

The Crowne Plaza in White Plains.



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New Playground to Open at Gillie Park in White Plains

By Rick Pezzullo

White Plains Mayor Tom Roach and members of the Common Council will celebrate the opening of the city’s newly re-furnished playground at Gillie Park with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on November 17.

Gillie Park is one of the city’s neighborhood parks and is located at 85 Gedney Way, at the corner of Gedney Way and Mamaroneck Avenue.

The new playground, which is ADA compliant, has separate areas for two to five-year-olds and five to 12-year-olds. It is fully accessible and inclusive for all children.

The five to 12-year-old area features an array of play structures including slides, ramps, climbers, surface-level play features, built-in shade, and a color-coated rubberized safety-surface.

Children in the two to five-year-old area will have access to an expanded play structure with 23 interactive activities addressing developmentally appropriate skills

aimed at sparking their imagination in a fun and engaging way.

Features of this area include a Loft to Market Playhouse, Find-It Signs, Elevated Crawl Tunnel, Vegetable Climber, Mailbox/Flower Talk Tube, Crawl Tunnel, Vegetable/Leaf Sliders, Flower/Leaf Spinners, Flower Gear Panel, Meal Table, Alphabet and Counting Panels, Menu Board and a Vegetable Stand.

“Parks are an extremely important amenity and the city takes pride in providing quality active and passive recreation spaces for its residents,” Roach said. “This investment at Gillie is part of our ongoing commitment to our parks.”

City Recreation and Parks Commissioner Wayne Bass said, “Space to recreate is essential for a healthy community. Since 2013, the city has completed playground renovations at Delfino, Kittrell, Turnure, Druss, Mattison, and now Gillie Parks. In addition, the city recently created at Dog Run at Battle Hill Park and expanded the Jack Harrington Greenway Walking Trail.”

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COVID-19 Cases Continue to Surge in Westchester

By Anna Young

Westchester County Executive George Latimer indicated the area is beginning to see the effects of a second wave of COVID-19, with the positive infection rate and caseload increasing at a rapid and aggressive rate.

Westchester saw its positivity rate clock in at 4.6 percent on Sunday, with 230 positive coronavirus results from 6,167 tests. Between Nov. 9 and Nov. 15, the county recorded 2,122 new positive cases, with the number of active cases within the county now 3,515, a nearly 1,300 increase over last week.

Over the last month, COVID-19 cases have more than doubled, with the county registering 942 active cases on Oct. 16. Latimer pressed the numbers are significant, comparing the latest caseloads to those reported in May.

"The 3,500 number is very concerning to all of us," Latimer said. "It was predicted by all health professionals that we would see a second wave and I think we're now clearly seeing that second wave in the number of infections and the spread of the infections."

Hospitalizations have nearly tripled over the last two weeks, with the county reporting 121 as of Sunday. Westchester saw 11 coronavirus-related deaths last week, Latimer said, comparing the one-week fatality number to the amount of deaths logged in July and August combined.

Since March, Westchester has had 1,490 coronavirus-related deaths.

"Now we're seeing hospitalizations go up as there is an increase in the degree of severity in the number of cases," he said. "The line is heading straight up. It's an increase across the board."

As the positive rate continues to rise, Latimer said his office will now conduct two COVID-19-related briefings a week – one on Monday's and the other on Thursday's – to ensure residents remain informed. He said with cases moving at a high speed, the response by county and other municipal governments will need to be even faster.

To mitigate the spread of coronavirus, Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins said county facilities will begin operating with a 25 percent staff on Nov. 23, with boards and commissioners required to move fully remote.

Latimer warned residents to take precautions and follow safety measures to slow the spread of the virus. If the

caseload continues to rise, he said the area risks being labeled a yellow, orange, or red hotspot zone by the state and will face similar restrictions implemented early in the pandemic.

With Gov. Andrew Cuomo implementing mandates to target micro-clusters statewide, red, orange, and yellow zone designations are applied to areas with rising coronavirus cases that meet the states criteria. The label would apply more stringent restrictions on gatherings, activities, businesses, and schools, in addition to the current mandates in place.



To be classified as a yellow zone, the lowest of the three-tier system, an area would need a 7-day rolling average positivity rate above 2.5% for 10 days and the addition of 10 or more new daily cases per 100,000 residents on a 7-day average.

Port Chester is currently the only Westchester municipality to receive a

designation, with Cuomo upping it from a yellow zone to an orange warning zone last week.

"This disease is a serious disease and to whatever extent people have called it a hoax in the past and so forth, the bodies that have piled up should clear our minds of any false sense of what the jeopardy is here," Latimer said. "These zones are not meant to restrict you for the sake of restriction, this is to fight the disease, and if you don't believe that is true, let me be blunt, you need to rethink your point of view."

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Cuomo Imposes Curfew on Restaurants, Bars & Gyms

By Anna Young

With COVID-19 cases on the rise throughout New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced last Wednesday new restrictions that will be placed on bars, restaurants, gyms, and residential gatherings to ease the spread of the virus.

Bars, restaurants, gyms, and fitness centers will now be required to close from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. daily. Restaurants will still be allowed to provide curbside, food-only pick-up or delivery service after 10 p.m., but will not be allowed to serve alcohol to go.

The rules also apply to any establishment

with a state liquor license, Cuomo said, with local governments in charge of enforcing these new mandates.

"If you look at where the cases are coming from, if you do the contact tracing, you'll see they're coming from three main areas: establishments where alcohol is served, gyms, and indoor gatherings at private homes," Cuomo explained. "The reason we have been successful in reducing the spread in New York is we have been a step ahead of COVID."

Furthermore, Cuomo stated that indoor and outdoor gatherings at private residences will be limited to no more than 10 people.

He said the limit will be implemented due to the prevalence of COVID spread from small indoor gatherings, including recent Halloween parties.

Cuomo added that gatherings have become a major cause of cluster activity across the state.

"The rules are only as good as the enforcement," Cuomo said. "There are only two fundamental truths in this situation: it's individual discipline and it's government enforcement. Period. End of sentence. I need the local governments to enforce this."

Greenburgh School Shuttles for Two Weeks After COVID-19 Exposure

By Anna Young

Lee F. Jackson Elementary School closed last week and will continue remote learning for the remainder of the week after an individual within the building tested positive for COVID-19.

In a letter to the community on Nov. 9, Greenburgh Central School District Superintendent Dr. Tahira Dupree Chase said officials opted transition to remote learning for two weeks to ensure those exposed can fulfill their quarantine requirements. The building is expected to reopen on Nov. 23.

However, the school's Early Childhood Program will continue in-person instruction at the Highview Elementary school site. Officials said the program wasn't impacted by the exposure.

"I will continue to seek your partnership in keeping our beloved school community safe and healthy," Chase said. "If you believe at any point you and/or your child may have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you/or your child should self-quarantine and be tested."

Ossining School District Temporarily Moves to Remote Learning

By Anna Young

With an abundance of teachers and staff members currently in quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure, the Ossining Union Free School District has transitioned to remote learning this week.

Superintendent of Schools Ray Sanchez said Park School and Ossining High School will resume in-person instruction on Nov. 23, but students who attend the BOCES CTE program may attend their classes in-person, unless they have been instructed not to.

Students in self-contained and CALP classes will also attend in-person instruction, he said.

Each elementary school and Anne M. Dorner Middle

School will reopen on Thursday for hybrid learning. The district's five-day kindergarten program will be postponed until after the Thanksgiving break, with Nov. 30 the new start date.

"Regrettably, we have been compelled to move to a 100% remote model due to quarantine requirements among staff members," Sanchez said in a letter to the community last Friday.

"No district schools are currently experiencing anything more than isolated COVID-19 determinations; however, the necessity for faculty to quarantine in these cases leaves us short-staffed. This makes it temporarily impossible to hold in-person instruction for a period of time."



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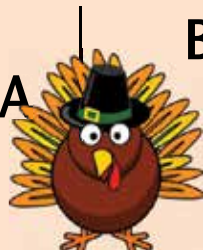


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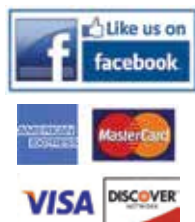
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Federal Officials Push for Hearing Before Indian Pt. License Transfer

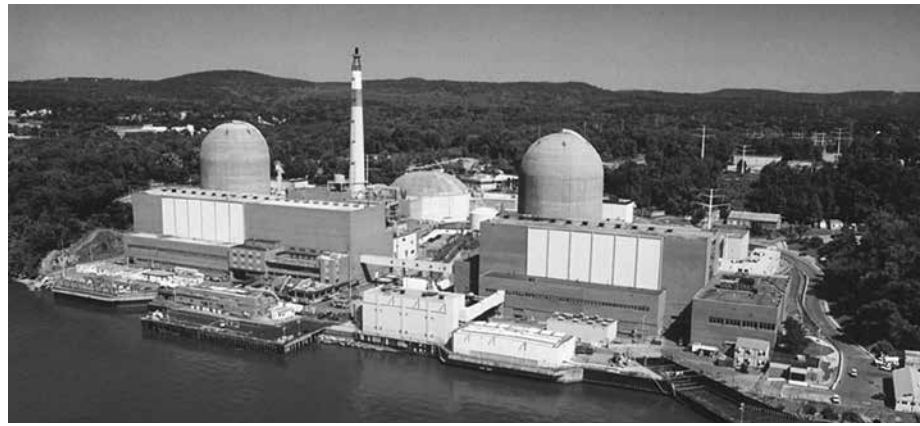
By Rick Pezzullo

Federal officials are calling on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to conduct a public hearing before approving the pending transfer of a license for the Indian Point nuclear power plants in Buchanan.

Congresswoman Nita Lowey, U.S. Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and U.S. Representatives Eliot Engel and Sean Patrick Maloney recently sent a letter to the NRC Commission urging the body not to move forward with the application submitted by Entergy, current owners of the plants, and Holtec Decommissioning International, in November 2019.

The lawmakers described the publicly declared intentions of the NRC to grant the license "deeply disturbing" since during the last eight months the NRC has failed to act on the petitions of New York State, the Town of Cortlandt and the Village of Buchanan to intervene in the process.

"We now face the prospect that the decision by NRC staff to transfer the plant's license and grant regulatory exemptions may well be made before the various stakeholders representing the communities surrounding Indian Point have had an opportunity to fully present its contentions to the Commission in a hearing," the lawmakers stated. "Such an outcome would be wholly unacceptable to our constituents in the Lower Hudson Valley. Industry-driven timelines cannot,



The last operating nuclear reactor at Indian Point is scheduled to shut down in April 2021.

and should not, come before their health and safety and relevant economic concerns are duly considered."

In January 2017, Entergy, which purchased the Indian Point nuclear power plants more than 16 years ago, announced, to the complete surprise of local leaders, its plan for the early and orderly shutdown of the Indian Point by April 30, 2021 as part of a settlement with New York State and Riverkeeper.

Since that time, local leaders have been putting their heads together in an effort to plan for the financial hit municipalities, the Hendrick Hudson School District and other entities will suffer after the \$32 million revenue stream from Indian Point runs dry.

Once Indian Point is completely shut down in 2021, Holtec would then carry out all of the activities to decommission the plant, store the spent nuclear fuel, and restore the 240-acre site to its original condition.

During a virtual visit with the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce November 5, Joe Delmar, senior director of government affairs and communications with Holtec International, said 300 current Entergy employees will be working with Holtec during the decommissioning, which is expected to be completed in 15 years.

"The real focus is for us to do this job right and safely," Delmar said. "We take a lot of pride in protecting public health and safety."

Holtec has been in charge of handling the spent fuel at Indian Point for the last three decades. Delmar noted the spent fuel rods will remain on site until they are transferred to the Department of Energy or to an offsite interim storage facility.

At a recent Indian Point Community Advisory Panel meeting, Joe Lynch, director of government affairs/decommissioning with Entergy, said 125 additional casks are required to hold all the spent nuclear rods generated from the Indian Point plants.

There is currently \$2.3 billion in a Indian Point Nuclear Decommissioning Trust Fund.

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Letters to the Editor

Thirty Years of Tax Control in Cortlandt

From the beginning of my administration that began thirty years ago I pledged to our taxpayers that I would make it my priority to deliver town tax controls, tax relief and very low town tax increases every year.

I am proud to announce that for 30 years our total town tax increase, on average, has only been 1%. Many years were zero (0%) increases, one year was a

-4% reduction and in other years there were reductions, as well. In addition, we have met the recent New York State mandate to cap the tax levies of 2.0% each year and for 2021, 1.56%.

Over the years, we have had a voluntary and real tax cap in the Town of Cortlandt that has benefited all of our property owners both residential and business owners. At the same time we have tripled our town savings (fund balance) and every year produced a surplus.

The Town has always maintained a positive Fund Balance without deficits. We've always had a balanced budget. Once again last year we generated a surplus, which was used for tax control and relief, and maintained our very strong savings account. These monies were also utilized for capital projects from town hall renovations, new recreational areas, road improvements, water projects and for acquisition of land for open space purposes. Cortlandt has completed over \$160 million dollars of projects and did not impact our taxpayers with tax increases during many of these 30 years for these large projects.

Also, Moody's has graded Cortlandt with an Aa1 bond rating recently, based on our excellent financial practices and achievements. Even during recessions we kept an excellent bond rating status and were just upgraded. An accomplishment we are very proud of.

Our local economy is doing well. New businesses have come to Cortlandt throughout these thirty years and thousands of new jobs have been created from this economic growth. This is a remarkable statistic considering what occurred in our Country during the recession that began in 2008 and continued for several years and throughout this year's pandemic.

To achieve this record we began early on to share services and consolidate departments in order to have a more efficient government. This was accomplished way before the recent state tax cap became mandatory and a New York State law.

Cortlandt is a large Town with 40 square miles and 42,000 people. It is a wonderful community in a lovely setting adjacent to the Hudson River. We have excellent schools, a state of the art recently expanded hospital center, dedicated emergency service providers, a Cortlandt train station and a Veterans medical facility that has served our Veterans for 60 years. Also, a new shopping center, Cortlandt Crossing, has opened which will provide more jobs and revenue. One third of our

land is parkland and open space and we have excellent recreation programs for every age group. We have also recently completed a new Master Plan to guide us for the next several years. In summary, Cortlandt is a wonderful and affordable community to reside and to raise our children.

"I am very proud to have served as Town Supervisor in Cortlandt for now thirty years. I have worked very hard along with our entire team in our government (town board members, department heads and all of our 180 employees) to deliver and maintain a very close to one percent town tax increase, on average, for our taxpayers while at the same time always seeking new ways to improve our services and community."

- 30 Years of Tax Caps (only 1% on average for town tax increases for the entire 30 years)
- 30 Years of a Balanced Budget
- 30 Years of NO DEFICITS
- 30 Years of an Increased Savings Account (tripled in this administration)
- 30 Years of a Surplus (each year)
- 30 Years of Low Town Debt (only 1.2% of the total bonding capacity has been used)
- 30 Years of Major Improvements and Capital Projects (over \$160 million dollars)

Linda D. Puglisi,
Supervisor Town of Cortlandt

Truth Prevailed with Defeat of Somers Sewer District

Somers Sewer District #2 was voted down on November 10th. I would like to thank the SomersSewers.com Group and all the residents in Shenorock and Lake Lincolndale who helped fight this battle. If it wasn't for people getting involved, we would never have been able to do it.

Our Town Board put together two flawed Map, Plan & Reports that had errors and were very expensive, with no guarantees on how much this would have cost us in the future. I believe the Town Board rushed this Plan through because they didn't want us to find out about the developer buying Lincoln Hall property. When a Town Board does not notify their constituents and doesn't answer questions, there is usually a reason why.

The Lake Lincolndale Property Owners Association Chairman of the Board, who is pro-sewer, never disclosed that the Clubhouse wasn't included in the Sewer District. In Shenorock, the Hebrew Congregation, the Somers Community Center, and the commercial building on Tighe Road were all included. We were told that the LLPOA could petition to join the district, so why didn't all the residents

have that option? The Town Board wouldn't let my neighbors and me petition to take out our street when we asked, since we have larger lots and live a half a mile away from our lake. Why? The main reason is money! They wanted everyone who did not need sewers to pay for those who do. Strangely, this plan didn't include Lake Road, Mancini Drive, Route 118, or Horton Estates, which are closer to Shenorock Lake than we are.

Residents think we'll lose the \$10 Million but that's not true. That money was allocated to Shenorock 21 year ago and it's been earning interest since. It's not going anywhere anytime soon; that was a scare tactic. If there is anyone to blame if we ever lose the money - it will be the Town Board's fault.

It would be far more important if the Town Board addressed our water main issues in Shenorock. We had yet another water main break last week. Our mains are rusting and their solution is to put phosphorus into the water to try and stop it. Not only is this phosphorus going into the ground and running off driveways and into our lake, but it's going into our

bodies. Nobody seems concerned about this except for us.

The sewer proponents created a website that included a Town Board Member, which just shows you how one sided this process was. Some vocal proponents attacked opponents on social media discussing our livelihoods, our businesses, and spoke negatively about us. Are they angry because we found the errors and they didn't? Only we had the courage to call out the Town Board and Engineers on their incompetence.

For weeks I handed out information to anyone who wanted it. If they were for sewers, I didn't yell at them or throw things at them, like some proponents did to us. We only wanted people to know the truth so they would know what they were voting on. Proponents and the Town Board accused our group of spreading propaganda and misinformation, when everything we talked about came right from the Map, Plan & Report. We told the truth - and the truth prevailed.

Linda Luciano
Shenorock Resident

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Letters to the Editor

Write-In Campaign in Pleasantville Empowered Residents to Vote

This September, I conducted a write-in campaign pursuing a seat on the Village Board. The decision to run was independent of my role as a School Board trustee. I ran as an individual resident of the village. The action was vetted by lawyers and was deemed to have no legal, ethical or conflict of interest issues associated with it. I used a legal write-in process for the exact purpose for which it was created - to allow voters to support someone not on the ballot. I did so due to the lack of transparency regarding the village election. To insinuate otherwise is a form of voter suppression.

The Feb 10th Village Board meeting was the first time the

election was discussed – a mere two days before the petition deadline. One trustee announced he would not be running for re-election, important information for a resident only considering running if there is an open seat. Another trustee whose term was also up said nothing.

My write-in campaign empowered people to vote in an election many didn't even know was happening. The pandemic doesn't alleviate the critical obligation of the Village to broadly notify residents in a multi-tiered fashion about an election, let alone excuse the overreach in telling residents they don't need to vote, as was implied by the Mayor in the October 20th Examiner article.

My ability to garner 114 votes in three days is indicative of a bigger transparency issue. Other examples include:

- The \$2 million Memorial Plaza project and continued disregard of community feedback, including a survey which showed many residents' great concern with the project.
- The ongoing need to address the disrepair at the Pleasantville pool and the way the summer closure was addressed in an unrecorded work session and Board meeting where it wasn't on the agenda.
- If the Village Board is truly committed to

increasing openness and transparency, the following recommendations would be an excellent start. I ask the Board to consider:

- Recording all work session discussions.
- Finding better and more inclusive ways to solicit community input regarding projects. Even though a community vote on capital projects isn't required for the Village, they can conduct advisory propositions or find other broad approaches to collect feedback.
- Ensure petition deadlines and election information are well publicized and announced in a timely manner through

multiple communication channels.

Although not successful in my attempt to serve residents of the village on the board, I'll consider my effort successful if it shines a light on these issues and people work together to address them.

I have been volunteering in Pleasantville for 20 years. Service to this amazing community is at my core. I will proudly continue working to serve the children of this school district as a Board of Education member. Anyone with questions or concerns is encouraged to contact me directly.

**Angela Vella
Pleasantville**

Cuomo is Using Pandemic for Political Purposes

Governor Cuomo's comments this past Monday November 9 regarding Pfizer's announcement that their COVID vaccine was 90% effective in clinical trials were thoughtless, tasteless, and unbecoming of true leaders during a global pandemic!

First, he stated he would not allow New Yorkers to be vaccinated until President-elect Biden is inaugurated on January 20. Governor Cuomo then said on Howard Stern's radio show the president makes him so angry he wanted to punch President Trump.

It was also reported Governor Cuomo skipped 17 meetings at the White House about the vaccine. For the record, I voted

for President-elect Biden.

However, it is tremendously sad Governor Cuomo is using a pandemic for political purposes! Furthermore, Pfizer is in Rockland County! As New Yorkers and Americans, we should be celebrating this tremendous achievement. But not our great "leader" Mr. Cuomo! I doubt very much his comments were included in his book on "leadership" during a pandemic either!

Blame must also be given to the State Legislature. In March, they gave Governor Cuomo unlimited power to handle the pandemic. We have a democracy in this country and there is a reason our Founding

Fathers put checks and balances into the Constitution.

However, our state legislature rules in fear of retribution from the governor if they criticize any of his decisions. So what did we hear from the state legislature this week? That's right, complete silence! Absolutely, no checks and balances from the State Legislature!

I wrote to Governor Cuomo this week expressing my sincere displeasure with his comments. I also wrote to members of the state legislature. I asked the governor to immediately apologize to all New Yorkers. I then asked him to resign. Highly unlikely, yes, but we need elected

leaders who will lead not play politics. In my letters to the state legislature, I wrote it is time for term limits and recall in our state. Governor Cuomo should be recalled for his terrible comments.

We, unfortunately, now don't have recall in our state. Thus, the great people of New York suffer while our governor has 100% unchecked power, and the state legislature does nothing to rebuke Governor Cuomo's thoughtless and terrible comments!!!

**Steve Purciogliotti
Peekskill**

Shop Local on Small Business Saturday, Nov. 28

Small Business Saturday -- this year it's Nov. 28 -- always is a great day to support our business community by rallying around the reminder to Shop Local!

Nestled between Black Friday (Nov. 27) and Cyber Monday (Nov. 30), Small Business Saturday was created by American Express 10 years ago to promote local brick-and-mortar businesses in small

towns and large cities alike.

It's a golden opportunity for all of us who live here to boost the spirits and profits of our local eateries, salons, clothing stores, bike shops, and everything in between, so they can sustain their livelihoods, and remain part of our quality of life.

With the rise of online shopping, Small Business Saturday also is a boon for stores

with a strong online presence, who can use their websites to drive customer traffic and sales.

Since Small Business Saturday's inception in 2010, the annual sales event has generated more than \$120 billion. This year alone, sales on Nov. 28 are projected to top \$19 billion. Not a bad haul! Most important, approximately 60 cents of every dollar spent locally stays in the community.

What Can You Do?

To take advantage of this unique day, here are some ideas ...

Small-to-Medium Businesses (SMBs) can host a special event. Local eateries can offer a free beverage or free side, or feature a local celebrity or official on social media to promote your business. Use! Use! social media. Local media, such as what you are reading right now, is also one of the most powerful resources at your disposal.

What about extending your open hours for the event?

Offer incentives to customers if they "check in" on social media while on your

business premises.

How about offering incentives if your clientele takes a selfie or posts a picture of what they are buying or eating?

Promote a local charity or other organization and tie it in with your event to increase your reach to attract new customers.

These are but a few of the many ideas and opportunities for all types of businesses on SMB Saturday.

Customers can shop small and make a huge impact. Reach out to local civic groups like your Chamber of Commerce, your local media (this paper is a great start) and get the word out.

At the Yorktown Chamber of Commerce, we are offering a Small Business Saturday e-blast (for free!), so contact us at (914) 245-4599 or info@yorktownchamber.org, and we will be happy to blast out your promotions.

As always... Shop, Live, and Be Local!

**Sergio Esposito
President
Yorktown Chamber of Commerce**

Peekskill Democratic City Committee Seeks Candidates

The recent Presidential election has energized many Democrats in our community. Have you spent time thinking about how you can make a contribution in your City? We encourage you to think about running for office in Peekskill. Running for elected office is one of the best ways someone can contribute to their community. The Peekskill Democratic City Committee is interviewing candidates interested in running for Mayor and Common Council on the Democratic line for the General Election to be held in November 2021. Interested parties

must be registered to vote in the City of Peekskill and a resident of the City of Peekskill for a minimum of 3 years.

You can submit your resume, letter of intent and contact information to: Peekskilldemscandidates2021@gmail.com by 12/5/2020.

**Liz Oliveto
Peekskill Democratic City
Committee
Nominating Committee Member**

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Obituaries

Jerry Bolzak

Jerry R. Bolzak, 95, passed away peacefully in Ossining on Nov. 10.

Bolzak was born Jerry Robert Zbikowski at 106 E. 103 St. in New York City on Feb. 3, 1925, to Blanche (Piesowicz) and Walter Zbikowski, a master baker. His father assumed his good friend's surname, Balcerak (Bolzak) and Jerry legally changed his name as well in 1956. He grew up in the Bronx, and while in elementary and high school he helped his family through hard times, first by shining shoes with a handcrafted shoeshine box and then at his favorite job as

an usher at a movie theater, giving him the opportunity to see movies for free.

Bolzak served with the Army and Air Force in World War II as a communications specialist at Fort Sam Houston in Texas from March 1944 to May 1946. While in service to the country, he received the American Theater Campaign Ribbon, Good Conduct medal and Victory Ribbon.

After his honorable discharge from the Army, he worked for the government on Governor's Island in New York harbor. It was there he met Violet, who brought him into her coffee klatch to make him feel welcome. He provided day-old

danish from his father's bakery to her delight, which led to their elopement on Nov. 20, 1952.

Jerry attended traffic school, concentrating on logistics and landed an entry-level job with Sun Chemical Corporation. He retired as its director of transportation and distribution after more than 40 successful years with the company. He was asked to stay on as a consultant for the company's European operations for a period of three years. He and Violet resided in London and traveled extensively and enjoyed themselves immensely during those years.

They raised three children, first in an apartment in Ozone Park,

Queens, then in a lovely home in River Vale, N.J., where they lived for nearly 50 years. Jerry and Violet moved to Iowa City, Iowa in 2014, then to Arcadia, Mich. in 2017 to be cared for by their daughter, Lynn, and her husband, Roger. Upon Violet's passing in December 2019, he chose to move back to New York to be near his youngest child, Diane, and her husband, Gary.

Bolzak is survived by his three children, Jerry (Reva) Bolzak, Lynn (Roger) Brown and Diane Bolzak (Gary Telfer); four grandchildren, Emily Shortreed (and partner Jarvis Hedge), Alex Bolzak, Will (Joan Wyatt) Brown and Ted Brown (partner Lindsey



Jerry Bolzak

Carol Marro

Carol Louise Marro, 85, of Putnam Valley, passed away on Nov. 7 at her daughter's home in South Carolina.

Marro was born in Waukegan, Ill. to Leila and Walter Kulibert on Dec. 25, 1934. She went to school in New York City, where through mutual friends she met and married Joseph Marro on May 14, 1960, in Saint Frances de Chantal. She was a longtime resident of Putnam Valley, where they raised their six children.

Marro was heavily involved in Holy Spirit Church in Peekskill as both a member of the church choir and a chaplain. She also had substantial involvement in the Putnam County Democratic Party, the Red Hat Society, League of Women Voters and as a leader in the Girl Scouts. She also served as a parent advocate for the Special Education Department in Putnam Valley.

Carol is preceded in death by her husband, Joseph. She was a devoted wife and mother.

She is survived by her six



Carol Marro

children, Kathryn (Peter) Valsey,

Charles (Kim) Marro, Laura (Marc) Pedalino, Leila (Karl) Meybaum, Joseph Marro Jr. and Matthew (Tina) Marro; her 19 grandchildren; her great-grandson; and her sister-in-law, Ingrid Marro. Several nieces and nephews also survive.

Funeral services were held in Albany and Carol was buried next to her husband at St. Mary's Cemetery in Troy, N.Y.

To leave a message condolence for the family or to view Carol's video tribute, visit www.CannonFuneral.com.

Kuhn); great-granddaughter River Violet Shortreed; great-grandson Miles Robert Hedge; and several nieces, grandnieces, nephews and grandnephews.

Bolzak is predeceased by his wife of 67 years, Violet; his parents; his brothers, Ted (Mary) Zbikowski and Robert Zbikowski; and sister Irene Bonnici.

While Jerry achieved much success in his long and satisfying business career, he was most elated by being able to provide his wife and children a most comfortable and abundant life and the blessing of such a long life.



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Women's Soccer Expansion Team to Play Home Games at Fox Lane

By Rick Pezzullo

An expansion team that has joined the Women's Premier Soccer League is scheduled to play its home games at Fox Lane High School.

Westchester United F.C., which is approaching its five-year anniversary, is looking to provide the highest level of amateur competition for the top female soccer players in Westchester.

"This is very exciting news for Westchester and the tri-state area for female players to be able to compete in

such an important league that will provide them immense exposure and growth," said Antonio Corrado, coach of Westchester United F.C. "We believe that this will provide local female players in high school and the collegiate level an immense opportunity to play over the late spring/summer months."

The Women's Premier Soccer League (WPSL) is in its 23rd season and is the largest women's soccer league in the world with more than 125 clubs in 35 states. WPSL rosters feature elite collegiate, post-collegiate, international

and standout prep student-athletes. Many of the United States' most accomplished women's players have played in the WPSL, including Alex Morgan, Abby Wambach, Megan Rapinoe, Julie Foudy and Brandi Chastain.

"As an organization, we have strived to help players play at the highest level," Corrado said. "With the addition of a women's WPSL team and a men's UPSL we feel that we are providing player pathways that are fundamental to changing a soccer landscape within the USA that needs more consistent playing throughout

the year and at a higher level."

Besides Fox Lane, Corrado noted Westchester United F.C. is hopeful of building relationships with some colleges in Westchester where some home games can be played.

In addition, Westchester United F.C. players plan to work with the local Boys and Girls Club of Northern Westchester where majority of the club's staff has worked as summer camp counselors.

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Happy Thanksgiving 2020

Thanksgiving Foods That Can Be Carried Through Security Checkpoints

Before you agree to bring a family favorite food item to contribute to the Thanksgiving holiday table, it's important to think about how you're planning to transport it if you are flying to spend the holiday with family or friends. Most foods can be carried through a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) checkpoint, but there are some items that will need to be transported in checked baggage.

Here's some food for thought. If it's a solid item, then it can go through a checkpoint. However, if you can spill it, spread it, spray it, pump it or pour it, and it's larger than 3.4 ounces, then it should go in a checked bag.

Food items often need some additional security screening, so TSA recommends placing those items in a clear plastic bag or other container when packing them at home and then removing those items from your carry-on bag and placing them in a bin for screening at the checkpoint.

Travelers who are unsure if an item should be packed in a carry-on or checked bag can check the TSA homepage. Another option is for passengers to tweet to @AskTSA to ask how best to travel with a specific food item.

Here are examples of the most commonly asked questions about which food items are permissible through a checkpoint and which ones need to get packed in checked baggage. It is also important to



remember food safety by storing the food properly while traveling to prevent foodborne illness. If you need to keep items cold during your trip, ice packs are permissible, but they must be frozen solid and not melted when they go through security screening. Additionally, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has recommendations on food safety. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also has suggestions on handling food safely while traveling.

Thanksgiving foods that can be carried through a TSA checkpoint

- Baked goods. Homemade or store-bought pies,

cakes, cookies, brownies and other sweet treats

- Meats. Turkey, chicken, ham, steak. Frozen, cooked or uncooked
- Stuffing. Cooked, uncooked, in a box or in a bag
- Casseroles. Traditional green beans and onion straws or something more exotic
- Mac 'n Cheese. Cooked in a pan or traveling with the ingredients to cook it at your destination,
- Fresh vegetables. Potatoes, yams, broccoli, green beans, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, beets, radishes, carrots, squash, greens
- Fresh fruit. Apples, pears, pineapple, lemons, limes, cranberries, blueberries, strawberries, bananas, kiwi
- Candy.
- Spices.

Thanksgiving foods that should be carefully packed with your checked baggage

- Cranberry sauce. Homemade or canned are spreadable, so check them.
- Gravy. Homemade or in a jar/can.
- Wine, champagne, sparkling apple cider.
- Canned fruit or vegetables. It's got liquid in the can, so check them.
- Preserves, jams and jellies. They are spreadable, so best to check them.
- Maple syrup.

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–Councilman Vishnu Patel



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Latimer Unveils \$2.1B 2021 County Budget with Tax Levy Decrease

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County Executive George Latimer introduced a \$2.091 billion county operating budget for 2021 last week that will again cut the tax levy by \$1 million with no layoffs or loss of services.

Despite fears earlier this year that the county could face a severe deficit because of lost revenues due to the pandemic, use of federal CARES Act money for pandemic-related expenses and the voluntary separation program that saw the county cut its workforce by about 225 people helped balance the budget.

Total spending will be reduced by \$15.7 million.

Latimer said the county, which received \$168 million in CARES Act funding, benefitted by about \$80 million from federal aid. Funds were applied to four key departments that were impacted by the pandemic – emergency services, the Health Department, public safety and corrections – without reducing its reserve funds.

“Because of COVID CARES Act money could cover those costs, we were able to drop to the reserve fund for this year as we close it out a significant amount of money – \$80 million as a round number,” Latimer said.

“That money carried forward to 2021 helps us balance this budget and that’s an important element,” he added. “We are not dipping into the reserve fund below what it



Westchester County Executive George Latimer

was when we began the 2020 year.”

Last year, Latimer also reduced the tax levy by \$1 million and had pledged with the increase in sales tax in 2019 that property taxes would not increase for at least two years.

Reserves are projected to remain at \$75 million at the end of the year, about the same level at the close of 2019.

Latimer said the county did not need to impose layoffs or furloughs and is expected to refill about 25 percent of the 225 positions that were vacated last summer through the voluntary separation program.

“Other counties laid people off, other counties had furloughs, and when you furlough somebody, when you lay them off, you hurt the economy, you make it less likely that people will be able to go out and consume, and families become unstable in the way that they’re able to handle their economics,” Latimer said.

In next year’s proposed budget, nonprofit organizations are scheduled to receive a 2 percent increase over the current year’s \$14.5 million in funding, he said.

Latimer said the 2021 spending plan assumes no additional federal assistance beyond what the county typically receives each year and the potential 20 percent reduction from the state. Gov. Andrew Cuomo has warned that unless New York State and local governments are provided another round of money from Washington, there may be 20 percent across-the-board reductions in state aid.

The budget includes \$5 million each for economic development programs and housing assistance programs and \$2 million for food insecurity.

Board of Legislators Chairman Ben Boykin (D-White Plains) said that Latimer’s proposed budget is something that lawmakers can work with and reflects the county’s priorities of providing a social

safety net, protection of health and welfare and public safety.

“Over the next month and a few days, we will be doing a deep dive into this budget, wanting to make sure that the limited resources that this county has is appropriately distributed to protect the people of Westchester County,” Boykin said.

The Board of Legislators’ Budget and Appropriations Committee will begin its review of the budget Thursday morning. A live-streamed public input session will be held on Nov. 18 at 7 p.m. with a public hearing scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 9.

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ACCOMPANIMENTS (All Included)

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Bathroom Oddities, Manners and Etiquette

The bathroom. When you think about it, while it may not be the room you spend the most time in, it's probably the room you visit most times during the course of the day. If you're in my age group, you probably visit it a little more frequently.

As a realtor, I know that the kitchen and bathrooms in a house mean more to women than men in evaluating the desirability of a home. And statistics show that women, more than men, have the final say in the purchase of a home.

I've been thinking a lot about the bathroom lately, forced by an unexpected experience I had the first day I was in my digs in Shrub Oak. This joint is outrageously outfitted with the finest materials and fixtures: granite, marble and brushed steel everywhere you look. So, when it was time for me to visit the bathroom, and I started that slow descend, I realized that I wasn't reaching my destination when I usually do. I kept bending lower and lower, convinced that I would be in a full Lotus position before I would finally come to rest. Why I wondered with all this luxury in a place originally built for the 55 plus crowd would the builder have spec'd such low-rise toilets? But a few weeks later, I saw something online that it's actually healthier to be in a more bent-over position on the toilet seat. In fact, one clever entrepreneur invented a small stool to be placed at the foot of the toilet to better

accommodate that position.

I remember a bathroom experience I had with a real estate listing client. When I visited the home to make my presentation and sign a contract, I was greeted at the door by the husband, a big guy with a hearty laugh. His wife had not yet arrived home from some errands, but his two sons were with him, both I would guess in either their late teens or early 20s, and well over six feet tall. When the mother arrived home, I was surprised to see that she was very petite, barely over five feet tall, and I commented how surprised I was by her small stature compared to how big her boys were. I was

equally surprised by her response, "Well they weren't that big coming out of me!"

The first thing I do when I go for a listing is ask for a tour of the house, and this one had three full baths. Each time we entered one, the wife would walk in and, seeing that the toilet seat was up, would immediately walk over, lower the seat and shut the lid. The first time she did it, she lowered them gently. In the second bathroom, she did it with less patience, and by the time we arrived at the third bathroom, she slammed down the lid in frustration, almost in meltdown mode, exclaiming, "Oh these guys, why won't they ever learn to lower the seat and shut the lid!"

It's important to pay attention to the toilet's seat being down and the lid closed, not only so

that women won't fall into the bowl but also for health reasons. According to scientists at Leeds University, when a toilet is flushed with the lid open, bacteria sprays into the air around the toilet. And some of those germs could pass along symptoms of diarrhea or vomiting. Yuck!

But the best reason for closing the lid is that it prevents anything and everything from falling in. Haven't you had the experience of not hearing from friends for several days, only to hear that their cell phones have taken the plunge?

There are other rules that should be considered concerning bathroom etiquette and manners, and it's not only because of airborne germs or the differences in plumbing between the sexes and actual plumbing.

For instance, not to get too personal, but while I'll do one bodily function in someone else's presence, I won't do the other. Is everybody else the same or am I just too Victorian? Wasn't it on Seinfeld where Elaine talked about going to the McDonald's bathroom when in a relationship, rather than fowling up the apartment john? I was quite impressed when, years ago, I first saw a bathroom where the toilet bowl was separated out from the rest of the room and you could do your more private business in, well, private.

And what about something as simple as replacing the toilet paper roll when it's depleted? I am always in such a rush, I'm guilty of just grabbing a new roll and leaving it on top, rather than going to the trouble of actually inserting it on the cylinder. Shame.

For those who do go through the trouble of replacing it, there's the question of positioning the roll for "over" or "under" dispensing. A female work associate told me that it must be "over" so that the last sheet can be "folded" as in a hotel. "You FOLD your last toilet paper sheet?" I asked, astounded. "Yes," she responded, not skipping a beat. "You never know when guests are going to stop by."

One other item I know about toilets. Did you notice that some are round and, in the past couple of decades, they are oblong in shape? Nobody mentions the obvious, but designers finally figured out that the male's front anatomy had to be accommodated. Thanks, guys! I say, for guys, that's the equivalent of going from jockeys to boxers.

And finally, did I mention that there should always, always be some kind of automatic air freshener in the bathroom?

There's so much going on in my head on this subject that might be categorized as "in the toilet" that there will probably be a Part II to these musings.

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

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Pleasantville Farmers Market Winter Plan Means Changes

As previously announced, the Pleasantville Farmers Market will stay outdoors in Memorial Plaza this winter, and the market's policies are evolving to make it work.

"This has been by far our most challenging year ever," said Steven Bates, executive director of market operations. "But as quickly as we've made changes, our shoppers have adapted. I think they know that we are committed to their safety, and also to making sure the market remains open."

And more changes are on the way for the winter season, which kicks off the first week of December.

"We're asking all shoppers to preorder online at www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org," Bates continued. "Preordering shortens set-up and breakdown time, reduces waste and helps get people in and out quickly, which is key because we are not out of the pandemic. It also enables us to limit vendors' time in the plaza during the cold winter months."

He added that the market's online store, Pleasantville Farmers Market Online (PFM-O), has been dramatically expanded and updated.



New this winter, every vendor will be on PFM-O with all their products. Shoppers will find the same popular items as every winter, including abundant fresh,

winter-grown and stored produce along with a diverse variety of meats, cheeses, baked goods and prepared foods – and they can prepay for it all with one click.

"It is quick, easy and safe," Bates said.

While all vendors will be online, some may also bring products for spontaneous purchases but with the focus on online shopping, inventory may be limited. Online shopping for the winter season will open on Tuesday, Dec. 1 for the Dec. 5 market.

The PFM-O service charge, which is necessary to offset the costs of running the online store, is being reduced to \$2 through March, effective immediately.

Bates said the market is also

introducing an opportunity for loyal shoppers to help sustain the market through the winter.

"In return for online donations of \$50 and up, we will waive the service charge on orders through March, and also offer some snazzy market swag," he said. "We are grateful for the community's support."

Visit www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org to register for and shop at the online store, check the list of participating producers, donate and learn more.

Pleasantville Farmers Market This Winter in a Nutshell

Where: Memorial Plaza

How: Preorder at pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org and pick up at Memorial Plaza.

Why: Outdoors with quick pickups will be safer for shoppers and vendors, helping to sustain access to fresh, locally produced food and supporting our vendors through a tough season.

When: December through March, starting Dec. 1. Shop PFM-O from 7 p.m. Tuesday to 7 p.m. Thursday. Market hours are Saturday from 9 to 11:30 a.m. for pick up and limited walk-up purchasing.

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An Uncivil War, and the Irish Place in it – on Both Sides

The Irish ballad “Paddy’s Lament” recalls the fate that awaited countless Irish immigrants on their arrival in the United States: “When we got to Yankee-land, they shoved a gun into our hands, saying ‘Paddy, you must go and fight for Lincoln.’” We’ve talked about a tragic episode in the Irish-American saga, the 1863 Draft Riots in New York City. Today we look at the contribution made by the Irish – on both sides, Union and Confederate – during the American Civil War.

At least 150,000 Irish-Americans wore Union blue between the years 1861-1865, among them seven Union generals, including Waterford native General Thomas F. Meagher, who recruited and then led the famous Irish Division. On the other side some 40,000 wore grey, and provided the Confederacy with six generals, the most famous being Cork-born General Patrick Cleburne.

The Irish Division was a formidable fighting unit. In its ranks was the 69th New York Infantry, the famous “Fighting Sixty Ninth”, whose battlefield prowess was epic. The Division itself was formed after the first Battle of Bull Run (in which the 69th played a pivotal role protecting the rear of the routed Union army). Meagher’s creation ultimately comprised five Infantry regiments, three from New York (63rd, 69th, 88th), one from Massachusetts (28th), and one from Pennsylvania (116th), all of which were predominantly Irish. At Antietam, on Sept. 17, 1862, the Brigade faced the entrenched



The 69th at Antietam - 1863

Confederate center, which they attacked relentlessly before finally being forced to withdraw with a 60% casualty rate. Their sacrifice gave the Union army enough time to flank the Confederates, and ultimately win the day.

Meagher is a fascinating character. Born into affluence, at an early age he embraced the cause of Irish freedom. As a member of the “Young Ireland” movement, he participated in the abortive 1848 rebellion, was found guilty of treason, sentenced to death,

and ultimately transported to the penal colony of Australia. He made a daring escape to the United States, where he became a lawyer in New York City. Following his Civil War service, he headed west and became the progressive Governor of the Montana Territory. He met his end in 1867, aged 44, drowning in the Missouri River, a fate some allege was actually murder at the hands of political opponents.

While there was no equivalent unit to the Irish Brigade on the Confederate side, a number of Irish units were raised during the war, drawing from a surprisingly significant immigrant community. While the bulk of Irish immigrants ended up in Northern ports, a good number first set foot in America in New Orleans and other Southern port cities. Louisiana fielded a fabled Irish unit called the Louisiana Tigers. Other Irish units included the Charleston Irish Volunteers, the 24th Georgia, the 10th Tennessee, and the 33rd Virginia, who under Stonewall Jackson at First Bull Run are credited with originating the famous “Rebel Yell” as they charged against entrenched Union artillery positions.

Few of these soldiers owned slaves. Cleburne certainly didn’t. A veteran of the British Army, he originally had set out to be a doctor, as was his father. Failing to achieve that goal, in 1849 he immigrated to America,



By Brian McGowan

and settled in Arkansas. He felt adopted by the people of the South, and when war broke out, he quickly enlisted as a private, and ultimately rose to Major General. His brilliant command at battles such as Shiloh, Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge earned him the nickname “Stonewall of the West.” In 1864, as the South slid closer and closer to defeat, Cleburne proposed to emancipate the slaves and enlist them in the Southern

forces, a proposal that ostracized him from most of his fellow commanders. He was killed in the Battle of Franklin, in Tennessee, on Nov. 30, 1864, aged 36.

Wherever they were born, wherever their travels took them, both Meagher and Cleburne carried an abiding love for their native land, and simultaneously embraced and defended their adopted land with true Irish tenacity, determination and courage.

Pleasantville resident Brian McGowan was born and raised in the Bronx, a second-, third- and fifth-generation Irish-American/Canadian, as his immigrant ancestors followed several paths to the New World. Reach him at brian.m.mcgowan1952@gmail.com, or on Twitter (@Bmcgowan52M). He is the author of two books, “Thunder at Noon,” about the battle of Waterloo, and

“Love, Son John,” about World War II. Both are available at Amazon.com.



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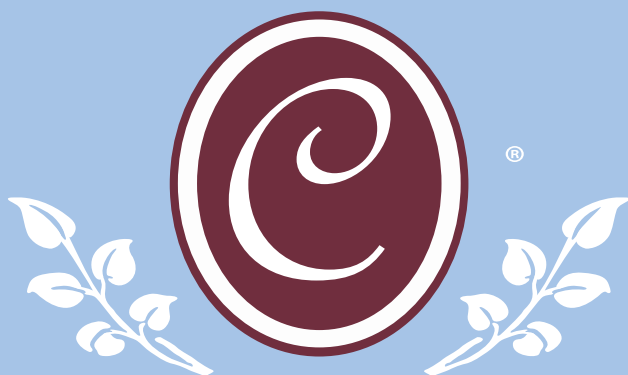
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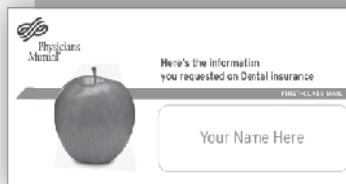
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Clinton Street Senior Center in Pleasantville Awarded \$100,000

By Abby Luby

The Clinton Street Senior Center in Pleasantville has been awarded a \$100,000 Community Development Block Grant (CBGB).
“We are restricted to use this money for senior citizen projects at Clinton Street,” Village Administrator Eric Morrissey said last week. “There is an array of projects and we are looking at three specific ones.”
Topping the list is installing a new, whole

building emergency generator to be placed in the corner of the village-owned courtyard, adjacent to 18 Clinton Street. The owner of the building is the Pleasantville Housing Development Fund Board (PHDFB) and Pleasantville Mayor Peter Scherer is on the board. Scherer said one of the many concerns over the years was the impact of a major power outage on the residents and the center.
“We talked for many years about what we would do in a circumstance where if

24 apartments were out of power and out of heat with no elevator service, some folks who live there would not be able to stay there,” Scherer explained. “A new generator would be a great asset to all of us and have the capacity to keep the center running and could potentially be a warming and charging center.”
The generator is estimated to cost \$140,000. The CBGB funds require that the village match the funds either in form of cash or in-kind work.

The village intends to spend \$70,000 of the CBGB funds on the generator, while the PHDFB has pledged to contribute \$35,000 towards the project. The village contribution will be about \$35,000 toward the generator.
Replacing the aging HVAC units that serve the senior center but not the top two floors at Clinton Street is the next important project which is estimated to cost \$50,000.

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Bell-Smith Named to Peekskill Industrial Development Agency Board

By Rick Pezzullo

Juliene Bell-Smith has been appointed to the Peekskill Industrial Development Agency (PIDA) Board of Directors.

The Industrial Development Agency is an active special purpose Peekskill governmental agency offering financial incentives to economic development projects that strengthen Peekskill's economy through job creation and workforce development, enhancing the social and

economic fabric of the community.

Having moved to Peekskill five years ago, Bell-Smith sought membership on the PIDA Board of Directors to become more involved in her community.

"I have worked as a Job Developer in Yonkers for over a decade, helping hundreds of adults obtain gainful employment," she said. "I see the Peekskill IDA as a vehicle for supporting the economic structure of this city – it has and continues to provide opportunities that offer upward economic

mobility to its residents."

A Job Development Specialist at SUNY Westchester Community College, Bell-Smith provides job placement assistance to all vocational students. She regularly hosts employment seminar workshops, spearheads recruitment events, establishes partnerships with local social service agencies, and connects students with various community-based organizations for additional resources.

"Workforce development aims to balance the level of socioeconomic disparities that exist within Peekskill and surrounding communities," she explained. "I'm eager to work with the other members, and excited about future developments within this great city!"

"We are thrilled to welcome Juliene to the Peekskill IDA Board," said PIDA Chairperson Deborah Post. "Our mission is to promote development that results in the creation of job opportunities in the City of Peekskill. Juliene's experience in the field of workforce development is particularly relevant and makes her an ideal fit. We very much look forward to her insights and input."

"I am very pleased to be working with the Peekskill IDA's newly appointed Board Member Juliene Bell-Smith," said PIDA Executive Director Matthew Rudikoff. "Her expertise in workforce development will be of great value to the IDA as we continue to assist economic development projects in Peekskill and realize jobs benefits – not only in permanent jobs created, but



Juliene Bell-Smith

also in creating opportunities for young people to learn workforce skills during the development and operation of projects that can benefit them during their careers."

Bell-Smith holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from CUNY Hunter College and a Master of Arts in Work & Labor Policy from SUNY Empire State. She is a member of the National Council for Workforce Education and the Coalition on Adult Basic Education.

Cortlandt Man Charged with Assaulting Troopers after Traffic Stop

By Anna Young

A traffic stop in Somers last Tuesday night resulted in a Cortlandt man violently resisting arrest and attempting to steal a state trooper's gun.

Aaron Hudson, 52, was arrested and charged with attempted robbery in the 2nd degree, two counts of assault in the 2nd degree and criminal possession of a controlled substance in the 5th degree, all class D felonies. In addition, Hudson was charged with resisting arrest, obstruction of government administration, both class A misdemeanors, and drive while intoxicated, an unclassified misdemeanor.

According to New York State Police, troopers conducted a traffic stop around 10 p.m. on November 10 on Warren Street

in Somers after Hudson was seen violating vehicle and traffic law. Following a probable cause serve for illicit substances, an amount of crack-cocaine was found in the vehicle, police said.

Hudson, when placed under arrested, violently resisted, police said, with Hudson and the trooper both falling over the guiderail into a stream bed approximately five feet below the road grade. Hudson repeatedly assaulted the trooper and attempted to steal his service weapon, police said.

An additional trooper responded to the scene and Hudson was taken into custody. All three sustained non-life-threatening injuries, police said.

Hudson was arraigned before in Town of Somers Court and remanded to the Westchester County Jail without bail.

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Differentiating the Price of One Wine Over Another



By Nick Antonaccio

For the past few weeks, we've been on a virtual tour through a number of Italian wine regions. I hope you've enjoyed our journey. However, this week's planned virtual tour to our next destination is suspended. As we are about to leave the Umbria region, a new wave of COVID-19 begins to wreak havoc on an extensive swath of the country. We decide to virtually head back to the United States to shelter in place. Watch this space for a future return to additional regions and explorations.

A few weeks ago, we ventured onto our patio for a pandemic protocol-compliant dinner with long-time friends. Both couples share an affinity for California Cabernets. The husbands decided to go into our respective wine cellars and select two "Cal Cabs": one everyday selection and one higher-end wine that we were saving for a special occasion ("special occasion" being a state of mind).

As we were enjoying our well-paced evening of food and beverage (Four wines? Yes, over six hours with equal amounts of water and wine being consumed), the thought occurred to me that both the \$75 and the \$20 wines were impressive, in their

aroma and flavor profiles and their balance of fruit and acidity. How was it then that these wines carried such different price tags? What justified such a disparity in price? Quality? Craftsmanship? Costs of production? Marketing hype?

Afterwards, as I pondered this question (with wine glass in hand), I began to consider the individual quantitative and ethereal aspects of winemaking. Is the ultimate price of a bottle of wine commensurate with the underlying cost to bring the bottle to the retail shelf?

I decided to restrict my analysis to California Cabs, specifically Napa Valley, the mother lode of fine wines across a broad spectrum of prices.

I segmented my analysis into two distinct but interrelated components: the macro issues that differentiate California/Napa Valley from other wine-producing regions and the micro issues of producing wine in the vineyards and wineries.

Below, the macros. Next week, the micros.

Each wine region around the world has varying elements of cost-to-produce: costs of land, grapes, labor and technology. These factors are markedly different in France (and other Western Europe countries), where land may be in family hands for multiple generations (no recent investment, no outstanding mortgage) and where grapes may be produced in a basic, agrarian manner without the use of modern equipment or



technology (low cost).

In Napa Valley, the wine industry is younger and certain nouveau riche winery owners have deeper pockets. Hence the cost of land tends to be higher and the temptation to invest in the latest (expensive) technology is compelling. A few macro factors to consider:

1. An acre of prime vineyard land in Napa Valley may fetch as much as \$400,000, exponentially more than any other wine region in the world.
2. Grape harvests are intentionally managed to low yields to improve fruit quality, thereby raising the average cost of a bottle of wine.
3. The average cost of a ton of Cabernet grapes last year was \$8,000, compared to less than half that in other wine regions.

These factors contribute to the higher entry-level price of many quality Cal Cabs (\$20 to \$25) when compared to Cabernets produced elsewhere.

A caveat is in order. The current economic climate has upended the price of wine up and down the price brackets. Certain consumers have increased their budgets to restaurant-level prices for bottles, while others have

been experimenting with lesser-cost wines, marking a new quality/price paradigm in the marketplace. Are these buying habits short-lived? Will the future market for Cal Cabs be permanently impacted?

Food for thought: is the incremental cost to produce cult wines with price tags of \$75 (and higher) as great as the ultimate premium commanded for these wines in the marketplace? Or is this simply a case of marketing hype (the if-it-costs-more-it-must-be-better school of thinking)? And the ultimate question: who reaps the rewards of these stratospheric prices?

(Next week, the accountant's report on the micro questions presented in this week's column.)

Nick Antonaccio is a 45-year Pleasantville resident. For over 25 years, he has conducted numerous 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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