

**Ping Pong Center
Grows in
Westchester
...page 13**

FREE

The **WHITE PLAINS** Examiner

**COVID-19 Cases
Breakdown:**
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Harrison 430 (12)
Scarsdale 369 (1)
Elmsford 212 (1)

Westchester
(Active) 339

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August 11- August 17, 2020

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 10, Issue 469

Officials' Frustration Boils Over at Con Ed's Storm Response

By Martin Wilbur

Supervisors of Westchester towns hard hit by Tropical Storm Isaias last Tuesday fumed over Con Edison's painfully slow response and restoration of power outages that left thousands of households in the dark through the weekend.

By Sunday night, more than five days after the storm hit the area, about 19,000 Con Edison customers in Westchester remained without power. Many of them were in the most severely hit towns of New Castle and North Castle. The Town of Cortlandt and other communities in the northern part of the county also took the brunt of the storm, and extensive outages continued to plague municipalities throughout the county late into the weekend.

Con Edison, which initially projected that nearly all customers would have power restored by Sunday night, then revised that target to Monday at 11 p.m. for Westchester residents. Scattered service outages were expected to linger into Tuesday, Tim Cawley, the utility's president, said on Saturday.

But officials in the most heavily impacted communities had little optimism that Con Edison would meet their latest deadline. North Castle Supervisor Michael Schihiro, who still had 1,180 customers without power on Sunday afternoon, accounting for about 23 percent of the town, expressed the frustration felt by many officials throughout the county.

Following the devastating back-to-back winter storms in March 2018, promises were made for improved communication and coordination of crews to clear roads



One of the many streets throughout Westchester that were remained closed after Tropical Storm Isaias blew through the area last Tuesday.

only 407 customers saw restoration during the previous 24 hours, Supervisor Ivy Pool reported. There had been 4,022 customers out on Thursday.

In an update e-mailed to residents on Sunday, Pool listed 41 road closures in town, down from 48 on Saturday.

"It's shocking and appalling and unbelievable Con Ed has not made any marked improvements in their ability to restore power in the two years that have passed

120,000 in Westchester shortly after the storm. He said Con Edison was doing everything it could to restore service. While high winds hadn't damaged the utility's infrastructure, a large number of trees toppled, taking out poles and wires and wreaking havoc on the system.

"The high winds, the 70-mile-per-hour gusts, and 50-plus-mile-an-hour sustained winds really took down trees and limbs and those caused significant damage to our

overhead distribution system, the poles, the wires and the transformers," he said. "This is really significant damage."

All 1,700 Con Edison crew members were working around the clock along with 2,100 contractors from outside the region. During a Saturday briefing, Cawley did not address the issue of staging extra crews before a storm and sidestepped a question about complaints from local officials.

"We're just focused on restoration at this point, and that's consuming and it should be consuming and it has consumed all of our efforts," Cawley said.

But Mount Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi, who still had 2,000 households without power on Saturday, said Con Edison lacks adequate manpower to effectively handle emergency situations, preferring to wait to bring in out-of-state crews to save money.

"I blame upper management," Fulgenzi said. "They're obviously looking at the bottom line and they bring in the contractors at the last minute. The question is everybody else needed these contractors also, so we'll probably get the last of the draw."

In Yorktown, which is served by Con Edison and NYSEG, the difference in the response was stark. NYSEG has about 14,000 customers in the municipality while Con Edison serves 8,451.

"NYSEG cleared 12 roads yesterday and Con Ed cleared three," Highway Superintendent Dave Paganelli said Friday. "It's a joke. 'NYSEG has already accomplished their make-safe phase and they are now working on power restoration.'"

Meanwhile, he and Supervisor Matt

continued on page 2

Greenburgh Schools Unveil Reopening Plan for September

By Rick Pezullo

With Governor Andrew Cuomo giving the go-ahead for school districts to reopen in September, the Greenburgh School District has unveiled its plans for students, faculty and staff to function safely with the coronavirus pandemic still lingering.

Like many school districts in the region, Greenburgh is considering three options: Full-time online instruction, in-person instruction with social distancing practices, or reducing the number of students that can be in a building at the same time as per Center

for Disease Control regulations via a hybrid model for Pre-K through 12th Grade.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has been a tremendous challenge for our school community in many ways," stated Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tahira DuPree Chase. "We now face the task of planning for a safe and responsible return to school for the 2020-21 school year. We know the decision to open our schools is one of the most important decisions we can make for our children, staff, faculty, administrators, families and the community itself."

The Greenburgh Central

School District Reopening Task Force Committee recommended research-based safety protocols each school should follow.

"When we eventually return to school, our buildings will be different," DuPree Chase stated. "The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families are our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses."

DuPree Chase and Dr. Corey W. Reynolds, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Personnel, will serve as the district's COVID-19 Coordina-

tors and will work closely with the Westchester County Department of Health. They will serve as a central contact for schools, stakeholders, families, staff and other school community members and will ensure the district is in compliance and following the best practices per state and federal guidelines.

The district plans to expand square footage in order to enable improved social distancing by renting at least two tents for temporary office space use. Application will be made in order to follow requirements or all spaces to be occupied by school district staff and students.



DR. TAHIRA DUPREE CHASE

WCF Distributes \$861,500 COVID-19 Grants to Nonprofits

The Westchester Community Foundation announced last week that it has raised \$2 million for its Westchester Covid-19 Response Fund and distributed \$861,500 to 38 human services nonprofits.

The initial priority was to ensure that nonprofits could continue to do their work remotely by accessing requisite technology, that they could comply with public health measures through the purchase of protective equipment and cleaning of facilities, and that childcare was available for the children of first responders, essential workers, and low-income families.

"This pandemic has laid bare the disparities in Westchester County, one of the wealthiest counties in the nation," said Laura Rossi, Executive Director of the Westchester Community Foundation. "We are also one of the most generous communities,

and our residents have not disappointed. They have dug deep to help meet the needs of their neighbors, and we thank them."

With over \$1 million remaining in the Westchester Covid-19 Response Fund, the Foundation will shift its funding focus to a longer-term recovery phase to ensure that nonprofits will be positioned to provide programs and services in the months ahead. "Thanks to our generous donors, the Foundation is uniquely prepared to meet emerging needs in the coming months," said Rossi.

Scores of individuals contributed to the fund as did the following businesses and private foundations:

"We enthusiastically support Westchester families in need at this difficult time. Philanthropic giving is more urgent than ever. We are all in this together," Elias

Foundation Board.

"The COVID-19 crisis has affected our community in ways we never imagined. The Westchester Community Foundation is a wonderful organization that we have worked with for many years, so it was an easy decision for the Westchester Market Leadership Team to commit to an investment in the Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund. The fund identifies the neighborhoods and organizations with the greatest needs, and with our support I'm proud to say that the Foundation will now be able to provide more relief to those that need it most," Ed Badillo, managing director, J.P. Morgan Private Bank

"People's United Bank and our Foundation are working diligently to ensure we remain a strong philanthropic partner during this time of uncertainty and working with our community partners to provide support

to those who have been impacted by COVID-19 as efficiently and effectively as possible. The Westchester Community Foundation is well-positioned to address the impact of COVID-19 on our communities and help frontline nonprofits in responding to the most urgent needs of residents in Westchester County. We can't thank our community partners enough for all they are doing to help those in need during this unprecedented time," Karen Galbo, executive director.

The Westchester Community Foundation connects generous people to the causes they care about and invests in transformative ideas and organizations to improve lives and strengthen our community. The Foundation is a division of The New York Community Trust. For more information, visit .wcf-ny.org.

Officials' Frustration Boils Over at Con Ed's Storm Response

continued from page 1

Slater said Con Edison's failure to send an adequate number of tree-removal crews to clear streets is the main reason behind the delays.

"They are staging in Yorktown, but you can't find them," Slater

said. "We were assured we would have multiple crews from Con Edison in our town and we have just one."

In Greenburgh, The Knolls, an independent senior housing facility, has seen its units without power,

air conditioning, refrigeration and information from Con Edison about when power will return, said Supervisor Paul Feiner.

Cawley said everyone at Con Edison understands what's at stake.

"We are working diligently to get you back," Cawley said. "We understand the hardship and we're not going to stop our singular focus until you are all restored."

Con Edison announced Satur-

day that customers without power for 48 hours or more starting last Thursday can fill out a claims form on its website to cover spoiled food, medication or perishable commercial merchandise.

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Schools to Reopen; Bedford, Hen Hud Refute Cuomo on Lack of Plan

By Martin Wilbur

Gov. Andrew Cuomo gave the go-ahead for schools to reopen for the 2020-21 academic year last Friday provided districts submitted an in-person plan that is approved by the state.

However, the governor's office released a statement Monday afternoon revealing that two local districts were among the 107 across New York that had not yet filed reopening plans.

In Westchester, the Bedford and Hendrick Hudson school districts appeared on the governor's list of districts that had failed to submit plans.

The threshold of having a regional transmission rate of less than 5 percent for a school to resume some level of in-class instruction was easily met. The seven-day rolling average on the state's website through Sunday showed all of the state's 10 regions at or near 1 percent except for the North Country, which was barely above 0 percent.

Daily transmission rates in all 10 regions were below 1 percent on both Saturday and Sunday except for Long Island's test results on Sunday, which stood at 1.2 percent.

"Every region is well below our COVID infection limit, therefore all school districts are authorized to open," Cuomo tweeted last Friday. "If the infection rate spikes, the guidance will change accordingly."

However, Cuomo threatened the delinquent districts by saying that if the state fails to receive plans from those school systems by the end of this week, their buildings would remain shuttered. He said districts' plans have to pass muster with parents and teachers who would be the arbiters of whether they are adequate for a community.

"If they don't submit a plan by this Friday, they can't open," Cuomo bluntly stated.

However, there were reports that officials from districts around the state had submitted plans that were not recorded as being received. On Monday, the Bedford School District issued a statement refuting the governor's assertion that it had failed to meet the state's deadline.

"We submitted our plans to the New York State Department of Education several weeks ago and have since submitted our plans to the NYSDOH," Bedford's statement read. "Please be assured that all our plans have been submitted to the appropriate state agencies."

The district's website also had a link to its 2020-21 reopening plan.

Two weeks ago, administrators announced its recommended plan of opening schools five days a week for students in grades K-2 and a hybrid plan for the remainder of Bedford's students.

Hendrick Hudson officials similarly provided a statement saying that it had

submitted a return-to-school plan on July 31 and instructional plans on Aug. 5. Those were also posted on that district's website.

"While the Hendrick Hudson School District currently appears on a list put out by the Governor's office of schools that did not submit plans for in-person learning, it is believed to be in error," according to the district's statement. "The District received multiple confirmations that its plans were submitted and accepted, and it expects the state to update and correct its information in the next few days."

The governor's office also stated that each district must complete three to five

public sessions with parents and teachers and post their plans for remote learning, testing and tracing on their website by Aug. 21 to be in compliance with state standards.

While the state must sort out the confusion regarding the submission of reopening plans, the New York State Union of Teachers (NYSUT) warned that infection rates is not the only consideration when deciding to open schools. NYSUT President Andy Pallotta said that educators and parents are anxious about individual plans. About 50 districts' plans have been considered incomplete.

Among the concerns is lack of guidance

on specific procedures for closure, testing and contact tracing in the event of a COVID-19 case in a school, Pallotta said.

"Right now, there may be some areas where parents and educators are confident in their district's plan, but in many others, we know they aren't," he said. "No district should consider themselves ready to reopen buildings until their plans are safe and everything in that plan meant to keep the school community safe is implemented."

Pallotta suggested that in districts where there are concerns, school officials should phase in the reopening of buildings.



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Census 2020 Operations Have Been Shortened By a Month to Sept. 30

Westchester County was notified last week that the U.S. Census Bureau will be halting Census 2020 efforts one month early, with operations concluding on Sept. 30.

With the new timeframe restrictions in place, it has become more important that all families fill out their Census forms.

During a normal Census, the Bureau recruits thousands of people across the country to do field work beginning in mid-May through July 31. With the 2020 Census timeframe being cut short one month early, Census workers will now only have a month-and-a-half in the field.

There are an estimated 370,000 housing units in Westchester, from single-family homes to accessory apartments to multifamily buildings. At the current reporting of about 64 percent of households counted, there are still more than 130,000 housing units that have not yet had their residents counted.

The impact of this is significant because the Census Bureau estimates that every resident not counted is a loss of about \$2,500 per year to local governments. This translates to a \$1 million loss for every

400 households each year. Therefore, it is crucial that all Westchester County families participate in the Census.

Most recently, with funding for COVID-19 relief based on Census population data, the county needs accurate numbers to ensure funding for health care, schools, road repairs and many other programs. The Census Bureau will not ask for any citizenship information, and the Census can be completed in just minutes.

To help ensure an accurate count, the Census Bureau is having staff enumerators knocking on doors of households that have not yet responded to the Census. Please ask to see the official ID badge of any individual who knocks at your door, or you can confirm a Census taker's identity by calling 1-844-330-2020.

The Census enumerators will follow all COVID-19 protocols set forth by the Centers for Disease Control, including mask wearing, and will keep a safe distance, but can assist any household with completing the Census.

To find out more, visit www.2020Census.gov.

Mount Kisco Tree Art Contest Deadline on Monday

Mount Kisco's popular Arbor Day My Favorite Tree competition is now open to youngsters under 18 years old. There is no entry fee, and the deadline for submitting entries is Monday, Aug. 17.

"We have also opened up the contest and exhibition to include all students in the Bedford Central School District," said Jim Gmelin, one of the organizers and chairman of the Mount Kisco Tree Preservation Board. "In addition, we've launched a writing competition in conjunction with the art category. Our youth are encouraged to also express their love for trees in poetry, song or essay."

This year's entries will be judged in three age groups: age 6 and under, ages 7-12, and ages 13-18. Winners will receive an award at an event in Leonard Park during the town's postponed Arbor Day celebration, which will be held later this year. All entries will be displayed in an online gallery.

Entries should be sent to mkarborday2020@gmail.com.



Participants, parents, teachers or other helpers should photograph or scan the painting and send it by e-mail with the artist's name and age in the message area. Entries in the writing category should be e-mailed as well.

"Mount Kisco has beautiful trees, walking trails and parks, and we hope residents and visitors will enjoy this summer discovering nature at its best," said John Rhodes, chairman of the Mount Kisco Conservation Advisory Council, the competition's co-sponsor.

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State Legislators Call for Hearings After Con Ed's Abysmal Response

By Martin Wilbur

A pair of local state senators last weekend vowed that there would be hearings scheduled and accountability following Con Edison's poor response to Tropical Storm Isaias last Tuesday.

State senators Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers) and Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) on Sunday called for hearings as about 19,000 Con Edison customers were still had no power Monday afternoon six days after the storm.

There were post-storm reviews following the March 2018 nor'easter and snowstorm, which occurred less than a week apart, but if there were improved plans devised, they weren't used during the past week, local, county and state officials charged.

"I intend to continue to press for power and service restorations, and then for significant changes in the way these companies operate," Mayer said. "I also intend to challenge the Public Service Commission, which is charged with regulating some of these monopolies. Their oversight has been woefully inadequate and must change."

While Con Edison has continued to struggle throughout the past week, Mayer and others noted that NYSEG, which services the northeast part of the county, including into Somers and portions of Yorktown along with Putnam and Dutchess counties, has been far more communicative

and effective in its response.

As of Monday afternoon, there were less than 40 NYSEG customers without power in Westchester, County Executive George Latimer said.

Harckham said that for the past dozen years there has been no change in how most utilities respond to severe events. He said policies and procedures need to be identified and strengthened to ensure better responses.

"The widespread damage and resulting power outages from Tropical Storm Isaias have revealed, once again, that our public utilities do not seriously prepare for natural disasters nor have they sufficiently hardened their infrastructure to withstand the magnitude of the storms that are now the new normal," Harckham said. "I have worked storm recovery response since 2008 and little has changed. It is as if every time they forget the lessons learned."

Mayer said that this time around the utilities providing power won't be alone. She called the telecommunications firm Altice, which took over Optimum, "absolutely irresponsible" following the storm.

While thousands of customers lodged complaints about power loss for days, thousands more who had power were without internet, landline or cell service at a time when large portions of the public are working from home.

"Not only are thousands of our neighbors without phone and internet, the company



State Sen. Shelley Mayer was among local state lawmakers demanding to haul Con Edison and Altice in for hearings to address why thousands of residents were without power or telecommunications service six days after Tropical Storm Isaias struck the area.

that will require backup generators for cell phone towers throughout the state. The goal is to reinforce communications capabilities following a storm or other natural disaster where power is lost for an extended period of time.

Wireless carriers are not required to have backup power supplies for their cell towers, Harckham said. When he was serving on the Board of Legislators following Superstorm Sandy, he proposed a bill requiring cell towers have at least 72 hours of generator backup, but the county legislation was never passed.

Latimer also called for the state to establish a reserve corps system to ensure there are ample crews in place before a storm that will make restoration smoother rather than wait for days before out-of-state contractors arrive.

"Nothing will change until we have enough people cutting and clearing, and enough people capable of restoration on the ground fast enough before we get to Day Six," Latimer said.

Last Friday, Latimer also blasted Con Edison for having some of its personnel try to pass blame for the substandard response onto the municipal governments.

"The local government has turned into the de facto place for complaints when no town, no city and no village nor county government has the ability to direct the utility company to take an action," he said.

has been unavailable, non-communicative with local residents and elected officials, and uncoordinated with Con Edison in their response," Mayer said of Altice.

Harckham also announced over the weekend that he will introduce legislation

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Obituaries

Carol Walsh

Carol Frances Walsh of Pleasantville passed away suddenly on Aug. 2. She was 82.

Walsh was born on Christmas Day 1937 and was named accordingly. She was the second of three children of Sarah (née Anderson) and Deleon Walsh of Scarsdale (Edgemont). Her older sister, Delsa Wilson, resides in Harpswell, Maine and her younger sister, Diana Losche, lives in Buena Vista, Va.

She was a Bronxville High School ('55) and NYU ('59) graduate. She received a master's degree in English from NYU and taught English as a second language at NYU for a number of years. She had a vast vocabulary and took pride in her abilities as a writer. Her writing skills landed her jobs for long stints at Ebasco and later the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey as a technical writer.

She wrote a short story for children called "The Lonely Thumb," which was featured on a children's television show and she published numerous articles on a wide range of topics including a story about kettle holes entitled "The Vernal Pond."

Carol loved animals, both domesticated and wild, and had an innate curiosity for the natural world. She was married twice and had a child from each marriage. Her older daughter, Gretchen Walsh, also resides in Pleasantville and her son, Andrew Walsh of Montauk, cared for his mother the last nine months of her life and was residing with her at the time of her death.

The role she really cherished was as grandmother to Sarah and Max Parauda. They called her "Poppins" after the Mary Poppins character because of the magic she brought to all her interactions with them. Over the years she read them countless books, including all

seven Harry Potter novels, which imbued them with a love of words and learning. Sarah says she was inspired to be a doctor (neurologist) by her grandmother.

Walsh is also survived by her three nephews, David (Florida), Tim (Maine) and Doug Wilson (California), and her cousins, Heyward (Woody) and Roger Turner. She will be interred at Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale. A memorial service will be held at Beecher Flocks Funeral Home in Pleasantville on Aug. 18 at 6 p.m. There will be a link to participate via Zoom; anyone wishing to have the Zoom link should e-mail info@beecherflocksfh.com with the preferred e-mail address for the link.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in her name to the Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan New York or to Family Services of Westchester.



Carol Walsh

Charles Oslund

Charles L. Oslund, a lifelong Ossining resident, died peacefully at home on July 31. He was 87.

Oslund was born Oct. 31, 1932, to Charles and Katherine (Reilly) Oslund. After attending Ossining schools, he graduated from Pace College in 1954 with a BBA in accounting. He went on to become a certified public accountant in New York and was employed as an accountant by CPA firms and private companies until his retirement from the Leukemia Society in 1997. Oslund was an

active member of the Independent Hose Co. of the Ossining Fire Department, where he served as treasurer for more than 65 years.

He is survived by his life partner, Lois Gizzi of Ossining; three children, Marilyn Shenton of Montrose, Charles Oslund of Milton, Fla. and Susan Buschur of Dayton, Ohio; seven grandchildren; and several great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife, Marilyn (Cornell), and his daughter, Kathleen Colone.

Paul Kennedy Jr.

Paul Thomas Kennedy Jr., a Village of Buchanan resident, died Aug. 4. He was 47.

Kennedy was born Oct. 17, 1972, in Yonkers to Paul T. Kennedy Sr. and Eileen (Kilduff) Kennedy. He was a longtime resident of Garrison (Continental Village) and then of Buchanan. He graduated from Walter Panas High School in 1990. He was a member of the carpenters' union and fulfilled his lifelong dream in 2008 when he graduated from the NYPD police academy.

Kennedy was predeceased by his father in 2006 and sister Kerri Ann Kennedy Tompkins

in April. He is survived by his son, Colin Patrick Kennedy; his mother, Eileen (Kilduff) Kennedy; his sister, Colleen Kennedy, and brother-in-law Richard Tompkins; as well as many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Kennedy had a love for the beach that began as a child, where he would look forward to spending time at Chadwick Beach each year with family. He never passed up an opportunity to enjoy a seafood dinner, often provoking laughter with the witty "one-liners" that those who loved him knew well.

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EVERYTHING MATTERS

State Health Commissioner on Hot Seat Over Nursing Home Deaths

By Lindsay Emery

State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker was grilled last week during a joint Senate and Assembly live-streamed public hearing addressing the more than 6,300 COVID-19-related deaths in nursing homes across New York since March.

Zucker concluded that the data suggested the virus came into nursing homes through staff and visitors, who then infected residents.

"The facts show that 310 nursing homes admitted COVID positive patients from hospitals, and of those 310, 304 already had COVID in their facility," Zucker said. "It is unfortunate, it is sad, but it is true. Ninety-eight percent of nursing homes already had COVID in their nursing homes and those are the facts."

Zucker emphasized that there was little knowledge about the virus early on in the crisis and initially testing was unavailable.

He was peppered with questions for hours after his opening statement, from the way the state counts COVID-19-related deaths to whether the state should have hired a third-party agency to evaluate Department of Health policies.

Michael Balboni, executive director of the Greater New York Health Care Facilities Association, and Neil Heyman, president of the Southern New York Association, argued that visitation is essential because loneliness is a comorbidity. Nursing homes were not a priority in the state's eyes when they were

distributing PPE, they charged.

"But again, we would have wished that there could have been a two-track approach and we really focused on long-term care as well," Balboni said.

Balboni and Heyman praised the Department of Health, and that at the height of the pandemic in March and April, they were on multiple calls a day with the Department of Health.

However, there was plenty of criticism from frontline workers, family members and Republican members of the state legislature.

Tyresse Byers, who is seven months pregnant and a certified nursing assistant at Sarah Neuman, a nursing home that is part of The New Jewish Home in New Rochelle, said that staff didn't have support from administrators and the Department of Health due to inadequate staffing and the lack of personal protection equipment.

"I just felt like our government, our health care (system) and our government, just let us down," she said.

Another certified nursing assistant, Nicole Whittaker from Berkshire Nursing & Rehab in West Babylon, L.I., described how PPE was worn too long and how staff was getting sick.

"We were also being told that we did not qualify for a 14-day quarantine, that we were to return to work once 48 hours fever-free," Whittaker said. "Unfortunately, many of us were asymptomatic and never had a fever or any symptoms of this virus at all."

Other speakers, including Susan Dooha,

executive director for the Manhattan-based Center for Independence of the Disabled, explained how relatives relied on hotlines that had been established, fielding calls from desperate family members since it was difficult to speak with nursing home personnel.

State Sen. Rachel May (D-Syracuse) asked Zucker about the possibility of loosening visitation restrictions that require New York's nursing homes coronavirus-free for 28 days, twice what is considered the standard incubation period for COVID-19.

"We are looking at all options out there," Zucker said. "But the last thing I want to do is create a situation where we have a surge in the number of cases here."

Zucker said the Department of Health is working on a \$1 million program that would finance technology to connect residents.

Parent Rachel Amar echoed sentiments about loosening visitation restrictions. Her son, Max, a patient at Elizabeth Seton Children's Center in Yonkers was born with a small brain stem that prevents him from breathing, swallowing or speaking. However, Max is fully cognizant of his surroundings, caretakers and his mother's presence.

"Never in his lifetime has he gone without seeing me," Amar said. "Consequently, this has negatively impacted his emotional behavior. As a result, he has regressed with a deep decline in his behavior toward the staff."

Amar said she had been looking forward to Max's birthday on July 12 but was unable

to visit because of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's restrictions. Amar tried to visit him through a tall, dark fence, but Max wouldn't even look at her.

"I can't imagine what he was feeling," she said. "The feeling of being heartbroken and abandoned by his mother. This cannot continue any longer."

A local assemblyman, Kevin Byrne (R-Mahopac), was part of a GOP-led contingent of lawmakers who blasted the state's impact of COVID-19 on nursing homes. They said Zucker, who on Mar. 25 directed nursing homes to accept patients who tested positive for COVID-19, provided little to no insight into the decisions that likely added to nursing home deaths.

"While I appreciate the willingness of Dr. Zucker to appear at today's legislative hearing on nursing homes, what he provided amounted to lip service," Byrne said. "This administration has been presenting a narrative that its actions in our nursing homes and adult care facilities were appropriate and effective. If that is truly the case, the health commissioner should have answered every question and provided basic information, rather than cut short his testimony and leave the hearing after roughly two hours."

Byrne called for an independent investigation into the issue.

A second hearing on residential health care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic covering upstate New York took place on Monday.

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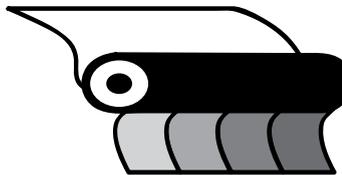
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Obituaries

Bob K. Bogen

Bob K. Bogen, a longtime Mount Kisco resident, passed away from pancreatic cancer on Feb. 7. He was 89.

Born into a prominent Jewish family in Cincinnati and raised in Arcadia, Calif., he converted to Quakerism at age 21 and was a member of the Chappaqua Friends Meeting, serving in many roles including clerk. As the son of a noted civil liberties attorney and grandson of an even more prominent social worker and war-relief leader, he put his deeply-held beliefs into action as a local organizer of civil rights rallies, anti-war protests and peace vigils from the early 1960s to recent years. Bogen also served as representative to the United Nations for Architects, Designers and Planners for Social Responsibility, traveled twice to mainland China on

environmental planning missions as co-chair of the Communications Coordination Committee of the United Nations and wrote numerous op-ed columns on related topics and events of the day for local newspapers.

Bogen received a bachelor's degree from Antioch College, where he met his wife, and a masters of regional planning from the University of Pennsylvania. In between, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served two years as a meteorologist in the Philippines, where his first two children were born.

Trained as a city planner, Bogen served as director of planning for dozens of communities in the New York and Boston metropolitan regions, as well as with the United Nations. In the latter role, he was project director for the United Nations Development Program in Karachi, Pakistan, bringing his family to live there

for a year in the early 1970s.

Among his interests was a love for traditional New Orleans-style jazz, acquired during his youth and heightened on a visit to Paris just after World War II on a Carnegie Endowment fellowship. He later briefly pursued a second career as a concert promoter, which subsequently brought him back to Europe in search of jazz artists to work with and venues to engage.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Carol Bogen; sister Judy Gilbert of Greenbrae, Calif.; sons Steven Ross Bogen of Berkeley, Calif. and Doug Bogen of Barrington, N.H.; daughters Sara Wilensky Napoli of San Diego and Margaret Coyne of Beaver Falls, Pa.; and grandchildren Lissette and Michael Wilensky and Jackson and Kate Coyne.

A private celebration of his life will be held later in the year.



Bob K. Bogen

William Dias

William F. Dias, an Ossining resident, died Aug. 4. He was 91.

Dias was born May 3, 1929, to Lawrence and Secundina (nee Coelho) Dias in Mount Vernon. He proudly served his country in the U.S. Army from 1951 to 1953 and was a proud member of the Ossining American Legion Post 506. Professionally, he was the Recreation and Parks foreman for the Village of Ossining for more than 30 years.

He was predeceased by his devoted wife, Armanda (nee Amaral) Dias, in 2008. He is survived by his two daughters, Cynthia (Edward) Villa of Buchanan and Lynn Sellazzo of Ossining; his three cherished grandchildren, Victoria Small, Carissa Korn and Gregory Sellazzo; and his three great-grandchildren, Cyana Small, Jaxon Korn and Reese Small.

Peekskill Woman Indicted for Attempted Murder for Stabbing Her Child

A Peekskill woman was indicted last week by a Westchester County grand jury for stabbing her eight-year-old child in February in her Main Street apartment.

Dayona Hammonds, 33, appeared in County Court Aug. 4 via video conference before Judge Anne Minihan and was charged with second-degree attempted murder, first-degree attempted assault and second-degree assault in the second, all felonies. She was also charged with three misdemeanors.

On Feb. 17, Peekskill police received a call about a child in danger at about 7:40 a.m. Officers rushed into the apartment and discovered Hammonds over the child, who had already been stabbed, still holding a knife.

The child was hospitalized with a puncture wound to the abdomen and a laceration to the liver. The child underwent emergency surgery and has recovered from the wounds.

Hammonds is free on bail. Her next scheduled court appearance is Aug. 26.

—Rick Pezzullo



Dayona Hammonds was charged last week with attempting to murder her eight-year-old child.

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Parents Disapprove of P'ville Reopening Plan Citing Child Care Issues

By Abby Luby

Students in the Pleasantville School District are on track to return to class on Sept. 8 as part of a hybrid schedule that will see most students receive in-person instruction two days a week.

But most of the 70 participants in last Thursday evening's live-streamed Board of Education meeting, parents of the youngest students at Bedford Road School were critical of the plan because for many it would require child care on days when there is remote learning.

The plan, which will be put into motion after Gov. Andrew Cuomo late last week gave the go-ahead for schools to reopen next month, includes splitting all grades into two groups: one that will attend school on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the other on Wednesdays and Fridays, with e-learning the other days. Monday is a remote learning day for the entire district.

Bedford Road School parents argued that the schedule will negatively affect families and their children.

"The reopening plan is deficient when it comes to families with young children," said Patrick Donovan, a parent of a five-year-old who will be entering kindergarten. "Young children are obviously less adept at remote learning and they are

less independent. They require more supervision and a hands-on adult presence in the form of a parent."

Parent Deepthi Prakash asked for the board's rationale for the two-day week in-person plan for younger children, which poses greater risk with a child care person coming into the home.

"The reason I ask is because a lot of parents of young children are hiring babysitters, tutors, etc., creating exposure to a broader social circle than they would have if they were in school five days per week," Prakash noted.

District officials said their primary goals are preserving the health and safety of students and creating the best educational environment under the circumstances. Given that social distancing is a key element to reopening schools safely, space in each building was a serious consideration, said Superintendent of Schools Mary Fox-Alter.

"We don't have the room," Fox-Alter said of Bedford Road School. "We are not willing to take our gyms and our stages and cut them up into classrooms with plastic shields. We want to make sure that the day on campus is as close to what an educational experience for the children is during normal times."

Principal Peggy Galotti said another factor was an enrollment increase, which

adds six second-graders this year.

"We would need another 32 classrooms for all the students," Galotti said.

"If I did cut the gym and the cafeteria and the library into extra spaces, it still wouldn't come close to housing everyone."

Fox-Alter added that this year the school's fourth-grade graduating class is half the size of the incoming kindergarten class.

According to a recent Care.com online survey of 1,000 parents with children under the age of 15, 73 percent of parents plan to make major changes to their professional lives to accommodate the lack of child care. About 15 percent of parents, mostly women, are considering leaving the workforce.

Donovan said the financial burden on two-income families would force some to consider relinquishing one of those incomes.

"Or else they have to hire someone to aid the household, which is more expensive than normal because of the overwhelming demand," Donovan said. "Help may be more than families can afford and could push them to the brink at a highly volatile economic time. They may have to sell their homes or give up their leases."

He also asked about a tax rebate to help families with young children.

"Ultimately we are not a child care facility," Trustee Angela Vella said. "We are supposed to educate all students and need to try to do the best for all students so no one group takes the brunt. Unfortunately, everybody has to share the pain."

Board of Education President Larry Boes encouraged Donovan and other parents to join the board's advocacy efforts by contacting the governor's office to appeal for help for parents with young children.

"This plan will disappoint and frustrate people and at the end of the day we realize that this is a challenge for everybody," Fox-Alter said. "I think the state needs to step up its efforts to help address the economic needs that are put upon us. Maybe there needs to be a COVID reserve or some sort of rebate or a tax deduction for families experiencing child care needs."

Pleasantville STRONG Change

At the start of the nearly three-and-a-half-hour meeting, Nicole Malgarinos, coalition coordinator for Pleasantville STRONG, announced that Trustee Shane McGaffey has succeed longtime chairman John Muller, the organization's founder.

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Letters to the Editor

Astorino's No Financial Maven, Worsening Westchester's Debt

What a shock reading a letter from lifelong New Yorker Rob Astorino, complaining so much about our beautiful, diverse and exciting state.

The complaining of someone who would be governor tries to focus on fiscal issues. This, too, is shocking once you learn that when he was in his last year as Westchester county executive, Standard and Poor's global ratings downgraded its outlook for Westchester's debt from "stable" to "negative," while citing a reliance on so-called "one-shot" revenues to balance its annual county budgets.

To be fair, when Astorino took office in 2010, he was faced with significant debt. Well,

everyone was in debt in 2010. The recovery from the 2008 Great Recession was just beginning in 2010. What a great opportunity. Take over during a recovery.

Apparently poor financial management led to Astorino borrowing to pay for expenses and pension costs. Borrowing to cover expenses is usually frowned upon because it implies, you're spending more than you're earning. The borrowing only adds to your costs due to the interest charges to cover the added debt, thus increasing your annual expenses further. If you have a credit card or any other debt, you understand this.

At the end of Astorino's final year as

county executive, he left an operating deficit of more than \$32 million. And this was during the growth years as his mentor Trump was claiming the economy was having "the best of times." Birds of a feather, because the federal deficit now hovers around \$26 trillion.

Lastly, I would like to proudly state that according to Adam McCann's "Best States to Live In" on June 11, 2019, he rated New York State as number one.

Mark A. Lieberman
Yorktown

Mark A. Lieberman is co-chair of the Yorktown Democratic Committee.

League of Women Voters Weighs in on Purchase of New Equipment

The League of Women Voters of Westchester realizes the immense challenges that the Board of Elections faced in organizing and carrying out a primary election during the COVID-19 pandemic. The League presented our post-primary election input during the Board of Legislators' public hearing on July 8, and provided recommended solutions to the legislators on July 13, as to how the non-partisan League could assist.

The League has since reached out to the Board of Elections (BOE) to meet and review these solutions. The League appreciates the due diligence conducted by both legislators and the BOE regarding the Dominion ICE voting machines and E-Poll Books and related technology. The League also recognizes the care and rigor taken by the Board of

Legislators.

Through discussions with the BOE, technology demonstrations, conduct of the public hearing input meeting on July 8, conversations with local activist organizations and evaluation of research reports, legislators were able to formulate pros and cons and strategically assess risk versus reward.

The League maintains no position of support or opposition to the Dominion ICE voting machines. However, we learned that current technology and hardware has surpassed its useful life, and that the Board of Legislators was faced with a difficult decision of how to fund the purchase request of the BOE in light of the current financial issues facing the county. The League commends legislators and the BOE for finding a compromise to fund and purchase

a lesser number of Dominion ICE voting machines, which will reduce the bond act by about 28 percent, and the additional number of E-Poll Books with related technology.

While perhaps this is not an ideal conclusion for many in the community, the League hopes this will alleviate a good number of prior election problems and provide voters with the services needed to achieve a successful 2020 General Election.

Kathy Meany,
President, on behalf of the Voter Service and County Government Committees, League of Women Voters of Westchester

Byrne, State Conservative Party's Agenda Hurts Everyone

Kevin Byrne is running on the Conservative Party line. You should know their agenda.

The New York State Conservative Party wants to reduce the rights of teachers, police and other government workers with a new version of the Taylor Law. Another anti-labor objective is to place limits on wage increases for workers, not to exceed 2 percent.

If you're in a union or support unions beware. The state Conservative Party wants to make New York a right-to-work state. This is another step toward ending unions and all forms of collective bargaining. And if all this anti-union posturing isn't enough, they also want to repeal the Triborough Amendment. This would allow employers to change existing contract terms arbitrarily.

Additionally, the Conservative Party wants to

repeal the legislation that raises the minimum wage. In other words, they are against raising the \$15-an-hour minimum wage.

As Byrne garners the Conservative Party's support, they plan to reduce business taxes and taxes on the wealthiest.

Basically, the Conservative Party is in favor of big business and stifles opportunities for working families. They even want to repeal paid family leave, which places a burden on nearly every family.

But the Conservative Party doesn't just stop with taking workers back to pre-labor organization and legislation. They also want to continue Donald Trump's efforts to reduce regulations on the environment and safety – leading to worker and consumer risk like we're experiencing with the handling of the

COVID-19 epidemic, as well as less oversight of our food and drug supply.

Here's one more: The Conservative Party of New York State is in favor of hydraulic fracturing – "hydrofracking" – and in prolonging the use of fossil fuels. They do not believe in the effects of climate change. They are the chorus singing the Trump playbook.

This partial list of the Conservative Party objectives is reactionary and will set us back 50 years. If you don't support these radical and extremist positions, then vote for Stephanie Keegan for state Assembly in the 94th District.

William Stoiber
Yorktown

Bowman, Jones Must Work to End the Forever Wars

Jamaal Bowman and Mondaire Jones shocked the nation when they won their primaries to become Democratic candidates for Congress in seats that are all but certain to be won in November. Most of the attention they have received revolved around their progressive policies, the fact that two African American men were able to win in largely suburban Westchester County and Bowman's victory over a longtime incumbent.

One of the key factors that deserved greater attention was that both candidates had well-publicized positions in opposition to American militarism.

A quick glance at their campaign pages shows that both have called for reductions in military spending, the repeal of the Authorization for the Use of Military Force

(AUMF) that has given three presidents a blank check to wage endless war, bringing the troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan and ending weapons sales to Saudi Arabia, which is currently committing genocide in Yemen. All of these positions, with the exception of arms sales to Saudi Arabia, are essentially opposed by the leaders of the Democratic Party in Congress. It is crucial that Jones and Bowman remain vocal on these issues once they take office. These two bold progressives should lead the way in the creation of an anti-imperialist caucus in the House, joining with The Squad and others to create a voice that speaks out against American militarism overseas.

In addition to the positions on their websites, they ought to speak out against U.S. regime-change operations in countries in Latin

America and the Middle East. They should call for a massive reduction of U.S. military bases around the globe. They should demand that the U.S. lead the world in denuclearizing, setting an example for others to follow.

About 120 years ago, when the U.S. was beginning to conquer overseas territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific, an influential anti-imperialist league was formed, with members of Congress, the Senate, former presidents, literary figures, industrialists and union leaders. It is time to revive that great tradition and Jamaal Bowman and Mondaire Jones ought to lead the way!

Ron Widelec
Rye Brook

Hudson Valley Power Outages Reveal Deeper Problems With Grid

By Chele Farley

“The power’s out again.”

It’s become a frustrating and familiar refrain in my hometown of Tuxedo and the entire 18th Congressional District, where consistently poor service by electric and cable providers have left thousands of residents in the dark and/or without internet for extended periods of time over the past few years.

But the issue became critical last week when Tropical Storm Isaias hit and resulted in power outages throughout the Hudson Valley, including nearly every single customer in Putnam County, and 125,000 without power throughout the region five days later. Who knows how long power will be out this time?

With so many of our residents working remotely from home during the coronavirus, and with our children scheduled to return to school in the coming weeks, many remotely, it is critical that our area’s residents be provided with reliable and secure power and internet access.

It’s not just a problem in New York. The United States’ aging energy infrastructure has led to major disruptions across the country. To that end, we need a comprehensive plan to upgrade America’s faltering electric grid to improve its

reliability, make sure it’s safe and ensure that cable and internet providers are able to reliably meet demand.

Hudson Valley families know the problem all too well. In April, nearly 27,000 customers in northern Westchester lost power, some for days, after a minor rainstorm knocked down utility poles serving areas of Cortlandt, Peekskill, Yorktown and Ossining, among other areas. Shortly thereafter, nearly 600 customers in Tuxedo lost power midday on a Tuesday when a tractor-trailer crashed into two utility poles and a transformer, bringing down power lines.

If such minor events can cause extensive outages, it is no surprise that hundreds of thousands were left without power last week. Even when power is restored in a timely manner, internet outages can persist. After a tree fell on utility lines servicing Somers and parts of North Salem last month, electricity came back relatively quickly. But the internet remained down for days, leaving a significant number of the area’s residents without the crucial ability to work from home.

But the problem is in no way limited to the Hudson Valley, or even to New York. America’s outdated power grid has suffered major outages and electrical disruptions at a sharply increased pace since at least the mid-2000s. For three decades, between

the 1950s and ‘80s, major power outages averaged about five per year; in 2007, 76 outages were reported for the year, increasing to more than 300 in 2011.

According to a 2015 Pew Research report, the U.S. suffered more electrical disturbances from 2013 to 2015, more than any other developed nation. Losses to businesses, as a result of power outages, reach nearly \$150 billion per year. Most troubling of all is that the ever-present risks posed by our outdated power grid leave the U.S. uniquely vulnerable to foreign attack and the erosive effects of climate change and natural disasters.

In short, the U.S. desperately needs to upgrade and replace its energy grid. Yet governmental progress on this important issue has continually stalled. Electrical grid improvements are periodically tacked on to infrastructure bills that go unpassed, and our politicians continue to sit idly by, apparently content to allow our grid problems to go unaddressed.

Now, with the country in the grip of the coronavirus pandemic, it is more important than ever that the U.S. finally acts on the overdue upgrade and repair of its vulnerable electrical infrastructure. A 2017 report from the National Academies of Sciences recommended that the electricity industry expand its efforts to convene regional emergency

preparedness exercises, and that federal agencies should oversee the development of inventories of reliable backup power, including the potential deployment of fleets of mobile power generators. Gov. Cuomo announced at the beginning of the year that the expansion of cell service and the elimination of the state’s roughly 4,000 so-called “dead zones” had become a state priority.

All of this represents a start at fixing a problem that has been decades in the making. But as an engineer, I know that there is still much more that needs to be done. We need to invest significantly in shoring up residential broadband networks so that employees and students can work reliably and safely from home. We need to ensure that cell towers have long-lasting back-up batteries and fuel for their generators, so the cellular network doesn’t go down when there are electrical outages.

And most importantly, we need a comprehensive plan on the local, state and federal levels to ensure that every American, no matter where they are located, is provided with adequate and reliable access to power and the internet.

Our future depends on it.

Chele Farley is the Republican candidate in the 18th Congressional District and was a former Stanford educated engineer.

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Ronnie

Ronnie Dragoon
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Art on a Bridge: Sculptures, Mural Brings Life to the Cuomo Bridge

By Martin Wilbur

If you're an art lover, you don't have to wait until museums reopen to appreciate a series of top-notch work up close.

Head to the new 3.6-mile pedestrian and bike path on the Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, which opened on June 15, and you can take in some fascinating pieces on both the Tarrytown and Nyack sides of the path. It also provides some much-needed exercise for local residents who would like to increase their activity after five months of a pandemic.

The public art installation, which was officially unveiled on July 27, features 10 New York-based artists who were commissioned for the project. Some of the works used reclaimed steel from the old Tappan Zee Bridge that was made available by the New York State Thruway Authority. All the of the art touched upon themes that are connected to the Hudson Valley.

There were more than 100 submissions from artists to be part of the unusual permanent exhibit, and at least 65 artists vied to be commissioned for the 4,000-square-foot mural alone on the Rockland County side, said Kathleen Reckling, project manager for the series and a director at ArtsWestchester.

"It's really sort of a community-related public art project and I think that's one of the things that really makes it special, that it comes from the arts community here, and then artists from across the state can submit," Reckling said. "It's not always the case when you have a public art project."



"Leaping Sturgeon," a work by artist Wendy Klemperer on the Nyack side of the Mario. M. Cuomo Bridge art installation.

One of the pieces of artwork that incorporates reclaimed steel is Cheryl Wing-Zi Wong's work "Current" on the Westchester side. It uses 12 steel arches increasing in height from four to 25 feet, mimicking the architecture of the current bridge, Reckling said.

The sculpture provides intriguing shadows that change throughout the daylight hours, she said. Wong added colored LED lights on

the arches that responds to the movements of passersby at night.

Thomas Lendvai's piece, which has on title but was created as a tribute to his father, Reckling said, uses steel from the new and old bridges formed into octagonal forms that represent ripples on the surface of the Hudson River.

There are two types of bike racks on the Westchester portion of the installment.



KATHLEEN RECKLING PHOTO

Thomas Lendvai and his sculpture, one of 10 pieces of artwork on both sides of the Mario M. Cuomo Bridge' bike and pedestrian path.

One, "Converging Vistas," was created by Christopher Flick, whose regular occupation is a welder for the Thruway Authority, Reckling said. His piece incorporates portions of the Palisades to the north and west and the New York City skyline to the south.

The other is David Greenberg's "Bike Racks," which has mooring bollards that signify the Hudson River as a key system of transportation. The oval openings in the bollards accommodate members of the public who want to rest or walk and chain their bikes.

Fitzhugh Karol's sculpture "Approach" welcome's visitors to the exhibit on the

continued on next page

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Art on a Bridge: Sculptures, Mural Brings Life to the Cuomo Bridge

continued from previous page

Rockland side, and also incorporates steel from both the old and new spans. The piece evokes a sense of uplift, progress and momentum, visually anchoring the beginning of the bridge path in Rockland County.

“The thing that was really striking about it is you can see the Bethlehem steel marks and all the markings for 50-plus years,” Reckling said.

The mural, titled “The Flux of Being,” was designed and painted by Chris Soria who received assistance from a team of artists. It is mostly under an overpass on the path, using abstract images of marine and mountain life that represents the biodiversity of the region.

Reckling called the mural “a gateway piece,” because some of it is visible to drivers entering Rockland County.

“It’s colorful and it’s abstract and uses silhouettes of animals and plant life from the Hudson Valley,” Reckling said.

For those who are up to walking or riding some more once crossing the river, there is “Tappan Zee,” by Ilan Averbuch, which includes seven abstract figures carrying a canoe. The sculpture pays tribute to the Native American Lenape tribe and its history along the Hudson.

A walk to the river’s edge in Nyack reveals Brooklyn artist Wendy Klemperer’s “Leaping Sturgeon.” Years ago, there had been excessive fishing of the sturgeon, Reckling said, nearly leading to its disappearance from the river. Klemperer’s steel sturgeon is positioned so it appears to be leaping out of the water to signify the species’ rebirth and



TIM GRAJEK PHOTO

A panoramic view of “The Flux of Being,” a 4,000-square-foot mural by Chris Soria.

the revival of the river, she said.

Reckling said the exhibit was initiated by ArtsWestchester CEO Janet Langsam, a longtime supporter of public art projects.

“When she heard that there was going to be a shared-use path on the new bridge, she started floating the idea around somehow getting the arts involved,” she said. “She’s been, for the organization, a really big proponent of public art for a long time, and increasingly it’s an area we’re engaged in.”

For those who don’t bike there is a welcome center on both sides of the bridge with a parking lot that provides easy access to the exhibit and the path. The Westchester welcome center is on Broadway (Route 9), just north of Route 119. Masks or face coverings are mandatory to visit the artwork and have access to the path.



MARGARET FOX PHOTO

The “Converging Vistas” bike rack by Christopher Flick

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Strong Winds Can Knock the Wind Out of You

Nothing like strong winds closing down the functionality of a house to get you thinking about things that normally are pushed to the back of the mind by the busyness of TV, cell phones, Facebook and Twitter.

It's especially inconvenient if you are a realtor, as am I, and the plan was to visit a home with a prospective buyer that may or may not have electricity by the time of the appointment.

Luckily, for the past five years, I personally haven't had to worry about storms and losing electricity since we have a trusty generator. But before that, I was pretty much on my own.

Amusingly enough, at some time in the distant past, I wrote about how losing power for a night could actually be a charming, even romantic experience, especially when living in an historic home, which I did at that time, lit by candlelight and warmed by a fireplace.

However, recalling the week or so in 2012 that my family and I lived without electricity when Superstorm Sandy hit our town, I can remind myself that the experience was far from charming. I recall working by the light of a candle on my sixth night without power. Charm had turned to desperation. I was cold, cranky and, for the first time ever, resentful that my home had failed me as a safe refuge. But then, considering the misfortunes of others, I wasn't as bad off as some



By Bill Primavera

communities that were without power for a couple of weeks.

Just as 9/11 deeply altered my perception of many things, such as a long-held desire to move back to the city, so had Sandy with her deceptively casual name, which wrought still more change.

That night when my home offered little more than a roof over my head and cold water to drink and with which to bathe, my mind was running on overdrive, filled with images of the storm becoming worse.

On the night Sandy visited, we considered ourselves lucky that we still had electricity. But then suddenly, there was an ear-

splitting explosion on our corner, the result of a large tree crashing into a transformer on a utility pole. Looking out from our second-story bedroom window, we were treated to a fireworks display unmatched by anything I had ever seen on July 4 – certainly not within 100 feet of my house.

Then a burst of flame lit up the sky as bright as daylight, revealing that the telephone pole had been spit cleanly in two as wires snapped and flames broke out, burning brush on both sides of the street. The fire department was called and arrived to quell our fears that our house might be consumed by flames. We dodged the first bullet.

I had already pulled out my generator, bought the previous year for Hurricane



Irene and, predictably, it didn't work. So, we prayed that the rain would be kept at bay so our basement wouldn't flood without an operating sump bump. That wish was granted, dodging another bullet. But, oh my, the wind.

The next morning, venturing out timidly from my home and walking up the street, I found that my block had been hit severely with massive trees strewn across the road like matchsticks in more than 10 places, and the power lines had laced the lawns in violent patterns.

But there was something stunning: neighbors that I hadn't seen in years were out on the street, discussing their experience the night before and commiserating about the losses some had suffered. There was even one senior fellow whom I had heard incorrectly had passed away. Encountering him was like reenacting the Bible story of Lazarus. One home, hit squarely by two massive tulip trees, was all but destroyed.

We enjoyed the soft glow of candlelight and learned what it was like to tuck ourselves into bed very early, no later than 9

p.m., and sleep like logs. I enjoyed the luxury of morning meditation uninterrupted by a phone call.

For news, we listened to a battery-operated that was at least 50 years old. The only station we could get was WCBS 880, which told us what we needed to know.

After an electrician stopped by to install a generator panel, I learned how to coordinate the switch-over to generator power and took video of the process on my iPhone.

Other lessons learned in the dark:

When you dress, it really doesn't matter if colors and patterns complement each other when the main objective is to keep warm.

Layering in clothing and bedding is very effective.

And, finally, with the excuse that shivering requires an abundance of extra calories, I ate my way through the storm and its aftermath, as I did again last week, pushing to the back of my mind the inevitability of having to suck in my gut on Monday when I button my pants.

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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Westchester Table Tennis Center Expands, Now Largest in Northeast

By Abby Luby

The popularity of table tennis has grown exponentially since it became a sport in the Summer Olympics for the first time in 1988.

Local proof of that trend is the recently expanded Westchester Table Tennis Center in Pleasantville.

In April, its neighbor at 175 Tompkins Ave., Kids U, closed shop and its space became available.

"We were planning to take over the space and then the pandemic hit and Kids U left," said Westchester Table Tennis Center owner Will Shortz. "We started construction at the beginning of May but because of state mandates, we only had a few people working at the facility at a time. The expansion took over two months to complete."

When the club originally opened in 2011, the entire space was over 14,000 square feet; today, the newly-expanded space is at more than 21,500 square feet. According to Shortz, the center is the largest dedicated exclusively to table tennis in the Northeast.

"There are other spaces that are larger, but they are multi-sports spaces that include things like badminton," he said.

Shortz and his manager Robert Roberts opened the enlarged facility on July 14, adhering to state mandates limiting the number of people in the building at one time. That means a maximum of 50 people, including patrons and staffers. Since reopening, the club has extended hours of operation to Monday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Sunday from 12 to 11 p.m.



WARREN ROSENBERG PHOTO

The Thursday Night Live match last week between Juan Liu, the highest-rated U.S. female table tennis player, and Sharon Alguetti, a member of the U.S. men's table tennis team.

Prior to expanding, the center had 19 tables but can now accommodate 30 tables. However, due to COVID-19-related limitations, there are only 15 tables in use. Shortz said there have been about 25 to 30 players throughout the day since the expansion.

"Honestly, people are cautious about coming back," he said. "Even our most devoted members are being cautious."

At the height of the pandemic the table tennis center extended memberships for their existing members by four months. Memberships can still be extended for those not ready to return. For non-members, the

daily cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for those under 20 and for anyone on Thursday before 3:30 p.m.

Westchester Table Tennis Center has held competitive table tennis tournaments since its opening and awarded cash prizes. Two weeks ago, it started hosting Thursday Night Live: T2 Challenge, a new national live competition that takes place in clubs across the country for the next few months. The T2 Challenge started at the center, which will hold matches that are streamed live for four weeks.

"Because we are limited to 50 people we are asking spectators to call ahead and reserve seats," said Shortz.

The upcoming T2 Challenge tournaments at the center feature matches between professionals and members of the U.S. National Table Tennis team, including Juan Liu, Sharon Alguetti, Amy Wang, Adar Alguetti, Jennifer Wu and Tahl Liebovitz.

Its regular monthly tournaments are slated to return the last weekend in August.

"People are excited," Shortz said.

One competition that has been canceled for this year at the facility is the Westchester Crossword Puzzle Tournament. The tournament, typically held in the fall, was the brainchild of Shortz, who has been the crossword editor of The New York Times since 1993 and puzzle master for National Public Radio's "Weekend Edition Sunday" since 1987.

Crossword enthusiasts from the tristate area have flocked to Pleasantville to vie for the crossword trophy. Proceeds from the event have gone to the Pleasantville Fund for Learning.



WTTC PHOTO

Will Shortz, the owner of the Westchester Table Tennis Center, which expanded its square footage by about 50 percent last month.

"The crossword tournament is not happening. I don't think people are ready to come back into an enclosed room," Shortz said.

Shortz is also known for playing table tennis every day for nearly eight years. As of Sunday, his consecutive playing streak stood unofficially at 2,879 days. The last day Shortz failed to play was Oct. 3, 2012.

"I am playing more than ever and haven't missed a day," he said. "These days, with concerns about the virus, table tennis is about the safest sport you can play because you are naturally spaced from the other player and because the tables are spaced out from other players and tables. You get great exercise and improve your stamina as well."

For more information about the Westchester Table Tennis Center, visit www.westchestertabletennis.com.

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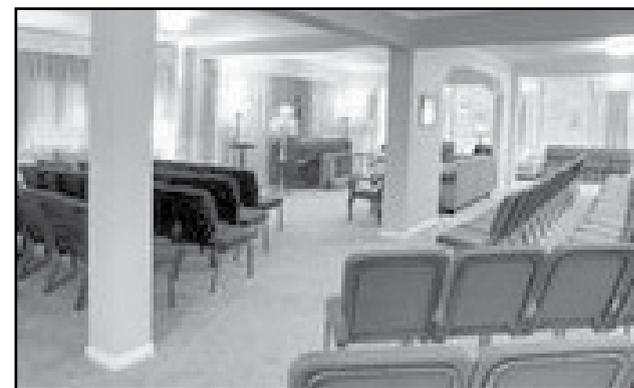
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Child Who Survived COVID Syndrome Made Hospital Ambassador

Maria Fareri Children's Hospital appointed eight-year-old Jordan Hutchins as an official hospital ambassador for its 16th Annual Go the Distance fundraising event.

Hutchins received his official ambassador sash during a special ceremony at Maria Fareri Children's Hospital last week, which was attended by his family and members of the hospital's pediatric care team.

In May, Hutchins was admitted to the hospital's pediatric intensive care unit due to complications from Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome that landed him on life support. With the help of the hospital's pediatric experts, Hutchins recovered and

is doing well today.

As a Go the Distance hospital ambassador, he will help represent the thousands of seriously ill and injured children cared for by Maria Fareri Children's Hospital services each year.

This year's Go the Distance fundraising event, which is typically attended by hundreds of supporters and includes a one-mile walk around the Valhalla campus, will be held virtually. Those interested in supporting Maria Fareri Children's Hospital and its care of the Hudson Valley's most seriously ill and injured children are encouraged to create a fundraising team and hold a socially-distant, one-mile

walk on the course of their choosing any time between now and Sunday, Sept. 13. Donated funds will support the advanced care services provided to children like Jordan at the hospital.

This spring Hutchins fell ill with a cough and had difficulty breathing. After four days of high fever, his family brought him to Maria Fareri Children's Hospital for care, where his condition worsened rapidly due to what was later identified as Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome.

He was rushed to the hospital's pediatric intensive care unit where he was placed on a ventilator. With his heart failing, the care team conducted an emergency procedure to provide extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), a treatment that the American Thoracic Society says temporarily replaces the function of the heart and the lungs.

It is a complex treatment that requires a multidisciplinary team of specialists to execute. After the second of two heart procedures during his course of care, Hutchins' health improved significantly and his ECMO and ventilator treatments ended. As his recovery continued, he was discharged.

Jordan, who turn nine years old this Saturday, Aug. 15, loves math and history and will enter fourth grade this fall at Our Lady of Victory Elementary School in Mount Vernon.

His mother, Beverly Hutchins, said her son was fortunate.

"I am so very grateful to all the doctors



Jordan Hutchins, who was treated for Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome this spring, has recovered from his ordeal. Last week he was named Maria Fareri Children's Hospital's official ambassador for this year's 16th annual Go the Distance fundraising event.

and nurses in the pediatric intensive care unit at Maria Fareri Children's Hospital," she said. "The care he received was extraordinary. He is feeling very good, and he is enjoying all of the attention."

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Brother of Somers Teacher Beats Back Injury, COVID at Same Time

By Logan Schiciano

Paul Foxen is no stranger to facing adversity. He was born with cerebral palsy. People sometimes struggle to understand him due to his speech impediment.

At 15, he fell off his bicycle and knocked out all of his top teeth; he fell again in his 30s and popped out his bottom teeth.

But at age 66, two simultaneous scares – an injury and a battle with COVID-19 – did not knock him down.

After an accident at his group home where he lives in Garden City, L.I. required emergency spinal cord surgery in mid-April, Foxen was relocated to Waterview Hills in Purdys to rehab. At the time of his arrival, no visitors were permitted and the facility was “COVID free.”

But within a week, some residents and staff tested positive for the virus. Then, caretakers noticed Foxen had developed a cough and a test revealed he was positive as well.

The news was surprising for the family, considering Foxen was essentially isolated, like other Waterview residents, upon arrival.

“Everyone was following all the protocols, but there’s just so much unknown about the disease. We were

terrified,” said Foxen’s sister, Katy Faivre. “We didn’t know if the injury or the illness would be worse for him.”

Waterview Hills is one of many care centers that have been impacted by COVID-19. More than 250 people in Westchester nursing home facilities have died from coronavirus, according to data from the New York State Department of Health.

Following his diagnosis, Foxen was sent to the emergency room at Northern Westchester Hospital. Once there, he was treated with antibiotics and hydroxychloroquine, the drug touted by President Donald Trump despite the absence of widespread evidence of being effective for helping COVID-19 patients. However, Faivre said her brother’s symptoms never worsened after receiving it.

Regardless of the treatments, the medication wasn’t the only assistance Foxen had along the way. Faivre, a 23-year Somers School District teacher who has worked with special education students, said she and her family visited Paul twice a day through the window of his first-floor room for three months.

“At first it was so stressful for him. The window was the only contact we had week



Paul Foxen, the brother of Somers special education teacher Katy Faivre, has triumphed from a spinal cord injury and COVID-19 in recent months.

after week.” Faivre said. “We did all sorts of things at the window – observed therapy sessions, played cards, memory match games, singalongs. I even had him do

wheelchair challenges to keep him busy.”

She believes the visits contributed to Paul’s recovery.

“For a while, I didn’t think he thought much of us visiting, honestly, because we came so regularly, but one day I was a little late from work and he said, ‘Where were you?’ He really needed us,” she said.

Even through isolation, occasional frustrations and the coronavirus, Foxen continued to receive therapy for the injury, which compromised his ability to walk and use his arms. His family is appreciative of the staff at Waterview Hills who cared for him and is proud of how he fought through the challenges.

Though Foxen never once had a fever and had minimal symptoms, according to Faivre, it took more than 10 weeks until he finally shook the virus and tested negative on two consecutive occasions. In mid-July, he was discharged from Waterview Hills and is now continuing his therapies at the home of another sister, Judy Courtney, back in Garden City.

Faivre said their family will keep working with Foxen until he is physically able to return to his residence.

“He has a great spirit; he never gave up. He worked really hard and he continues to work really hard,” Faivre said.

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Douglas Adams' Kakapo and Rudolfo Anaya's Owl

By Brian Kluepfel

Since there's plenty of time to read these days, I came across two interesting bird-themed books last week.

Douglas Adams is best known for his "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" series. They sold millions and earned him fame.

But in the late 1980s he traveled with naturalist Mark Carwardine on a semi-serious endeavor to observe and record some of the planet's rarest animals, including Komodo dragons, white rhinos (not really white, it turns out) and fruit bats. The book is called "Last Chance to See," and it's charming, funny and alarming in turn. One of the duo's ventures brought them to New Zealand and the endangered kakapo, the world's only flightless parrot.

Adams admits he doesn't like birds, yet he is charmed by the kakapo. He describes the landscapes of New Zealand with an awe often reserved for religious epiphanies. And his tracking of the kakapo, requiring a special guide and dog, is quite funny.

When Adams went to find the kakapo, there were only 40 left in the wild. There are now 209, three decades later. There is hope, even if incremental. Adams died of a heart attack in 2001 after a session at the gym, but his life, and that of hitchhikers, kakapos and hippos, are forever captured in his endearing words.

Rudolfo Anaya broke new ground with "Bless Me, Ultima" in 1972, a story revealing the author's New Mexican roots – a mix of indigenous and Spanish-Mexican, animism and Catholicism. It's a wonderful coming-of-age novel seen through the eyes of its protagonist, Antonio, who tries to make sense of the conflicting belief systems and

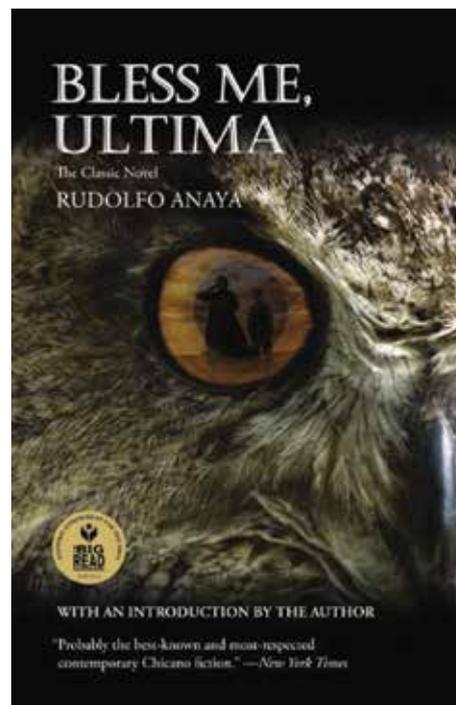
world-views of his small village. The bridge, which he crosses into town each day, is as much a philosophical, as a physical, conduit.

While the people of Guadalupe conform to the norms of the Catholic church, when real crises arise, they turn to Antonio's grandmother, Ultima, a country woman steeped in the tradition of curanderas. With Antonio, Ultima roams the hills at night, gathering herbs, revealing their healing purposes to him, bit by bit.

Antonio recognizes the presence of an owl outside the family home as Ultima's spirit, and its gentle hooting at night brings him peace. When true problems arise among the people, which the Catholic priest's prayers are unable to resolve, Ultima is able to bring about a just ending.

Too often in our literature and film we depict owls as omens of evil and bringers of darkness because, mostly, they live by night. Ultima's owl is a benevolent

presence, and in fact, when challenged, a protector, and in some ways shows that the two belief systems can coexist. The owl in the juniper tree outside the house is as powerful a symbol



The cover of Rudolfo Anaya's "Bless Me, Ultima."

as the cross atop the church in downtown Guadalupe.

Anaya flew off with the owls into the spirit world this year. Perhaps the lesson we can take from his first novel is that there is not one correct religious vision of the world, and cultures might better coexist by building bridges, not walls.

Owl Event: In keeping with the theme of the article, the Ossining Public Library will be holding an event via Zoom about owls this Friday, Aug. 14 at 7 p.m. The discussion, presented by Stephen Sciamé of Blue Campfire Experiences, covers the many evolutionary benefits of the owl in New York and include information about eyesight, hearing, camouflage and more.

The event is part of the library's teen program. You can register at ossininglibrary.org or e-mail oplteens@wlsmail.org for info.

Brian Kluepfel is an author of the Lonely Planet travel guides and has worked across the Americas. He lives in Ossining and is proud to be a member of the Saw Mill River Audubon, and encourages you to take part in the group's activities. Find him at www.birdmanwalking.com.

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Time Running Short to Protect Assets for Medicaid Home Services

Many of you who watch my biweekly Facebook Live videos already know that Medicaid eligibility has recently become even more challenging.

As if dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic wasn't enough, on Apr. 2, Gov. Cuomo's state budget implemented a new two-and-a-half-year look-back period for Medicaid home care services, also known as Community Medicaid. As discussed below, this is a drastic change for those seeking Medicaid eligibility to cover the cost of a home aide.

It also presents an immediate planning opportunity that should not be dismissed.

To understand the impact of the new law and the importance of planning immediately, you must first understand the look-back period, which is a certain period of one's financial history that will be scrutinized when one applies for Medicaid.

Until the adoption of the new law, a look-back period arose only when one applied for Medicaid to cover the cost of nursing home care. As part of that application, the Department of Social Services (DSS) asks the applicant to submit five years of financial records to determine whether the applicant – or the applicant's spouse – transferred any of their assets for less than fair market value (such as a gift) during those five years.

While some transfers may be considered exempt transfers, most are not, and if the applicant made non-exempt transfers during that five-year look-back period, DSS will impose a penalty period



By Salvatore M. Di Costanzo, Esq.

during which Medicaid will not pay for nursing home care. During the penalty period, one must privately pay for nursing home care.

By way of background, there was previously never a look-back or penalty period for Community Medicaid. This allowed people to transfer their assets today and apply tomorrow. While friendly to those needing care at home, this policy created a false sense of security for many who thought they were never going to need nursing home care.

I often would hear people disregard my advice to create a Medicaid trust or conduct other types of advanced planning because they were "never going into a nursing home," "wanted to stay home," or a common excuse, "my kids are going to take care of me." That's all going to change on Oct. 1.

Beginning Oct. 1, there will be the 30-month look-back period for Community Medicaid that will not be retroactive. For instance, if you apply for Community Medicaid on Jan. 1, 2021, DSS will look back to Oct. 1, 2020, to determine if you made any non-exempt transfers and penalize you if you did. The look-back period will be phased in each consecutive month thereafter until it reaches 30 months (on Apr. 1, 2023). You will no longer be able to simply transfer your assets and immediately apply for Community Medicaid.

Existing non-exempt transfers remain in effect,

such as transfers to a spouse. This is going to have a tremendous impact on those wishing to remain at home, especially those without a spouse.

In anticipation of these drastic changes, planning must be done immediately. If you have a loved one that is contemplating Community Medicaid soon, that person should consider transferring their assets to a Medicaid trust prior to Oct. 1 or risk losing their assets by having to privately pay for care at home.

Even if you are not trying to beat the Oct. 1 deadline, creating a Medicaid trust and transferring assets to that trust continues to be one of the most popular and viable planning techniques to preserve your assets in the face of long-term care.

Prior to the recent changes in law, the goal has always been to create a Medicaid trust and get past the five-year look-back period for nursing home care. Now there's this new element. You must now be mindful about getting past the 30-month look-back period for Community Medicaid purposes.

For those of you who were hesitant in implementing the Medicaid trust because of the five-year look-back period, you should reconsider in light of the recent changes in law.

Salvatore M. Di Costanzo is a partner with Maker, Fragale & Di Costanzo, LLP in Rye and Yorktown Heights. He is an attorney and accountant whose main area of practice is elder law and special needs planning. Di Costanzo can be reached at 914-925-1010 or at smd@mfd-law.com. You may also visit www.plantodayfortomorrow.com.

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FAMILY COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER

In the Matter of a Proceeding Under Article 10 of the Family Court Act
BABY BOY SMITH (CIN#) Docket No. NN-1568-20 F/U No. 130968

A Child Under Eighteen Years of Age Alleged
To be Neglected by LISA SMITH, (Child Neglect Case) Respondent.

NOTICE: PLACEMENT OF YOUR CHILD(REN) IN FOSTER CARE MAY RESULT IN YOUR LOSS OF YOUR RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD(REN). IF YOUR CHILD(REN) STAYS IN FOSTER CARE FOR 15 OF THE MOST RECENT 22 MONTHS, THE AGENCY MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO FILE A PETITION(S) TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND TO COMMIT GUARDIANSHIP AND CUSTODY OF YOUR CHILD(REN) TO THE AGENCY FOR THE PURPOSES OF ADOPTION. IN SOME CASES, THE AGENCY MAY FILE BEFORE THE END OF THE 15-MONTH PERIOD. IF SEVERE OR REPEATED CHILD ABUSE IS PROVEN BY CLEAR AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE, THIS FINDING MAY CONSTITUTE THE BASIS TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND TO COMMIT GUARDIANSHIP AND CUSTODY OF YOUR CHILD(REN) TO THE AGENCY FOR THE PURPOSES OF

ADOPTION. UPON GOOD CAUSE, THE COURT MAY ORDER AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE NON-RESPONDENT PARENT(S) SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A RESPONDENT; IF THE COURT DETERMINES THE CHILD(REN) SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM HIS/HER HOME, THE COURT MAY ORDER AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE NON-RESPONDENT PARENT(S) SHOULD BE SUITABLE CUSTODIANS FOR THE CHILD(REN); IF THE CHILD(REN) IS PLACED AND REMAINS IN FOSTER CARE FOR FIFTEEN OF THE MOST RECENT TWENTY-TWO MONTHS, THE AGENCY MAY BE REQUIRED TO FILE A PETITION(S) FOR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS OF THE PARENT(S) AND COMMITMENT OF GUARDIANSHIP AND CUSTODY OF THE CHILD(REN) FOR THE PURPOSES OF ADOPTION,

EVEN IF THE PARENT(S) WERE NOT NAMED AS RESPONDENTS IN THE CHILD NEGLECT OR ABUSE PROCEEDING.

A NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT HAS THE RIGHT TO REQUEST TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT CUSTODY OF THE CHILD(REN) AND TO SEEK ENFORCEMENT OF VISITATION RIGHTS WITH THE CHILD(REN).

BY ORDER OF THE FAMILY COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT(S) WHO RESIDE(S) OR IS FOUND AT [specify address(es)]:

LISA SMITH (Mother)
Last Known Address:
128 South 12th Avenue, Apartment 2
Mount Vernon, New York 10550

A Petition under Article 10 of the Family Court Act having been filed with this Court, and annexed hereto

YOU AND EACH OF YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to appear virtually before this Court at 131 Warburton Avenue, Yonkers, New York 10701, on SEPTEMBER 30, 2020 at 9:30 o'clock in the morning afternoon of that day to answer the petition and to be dealt with in accordance with Article 10 of the Family Court Act.

Upon your failure to appear as herein directed, a warrant may be issued for your arrest and/or the Court may proceed to Inquest and hearing and determine the petition as provided by law.

Dated: July 24, 2020

_____/s/_____
Clerk of Court

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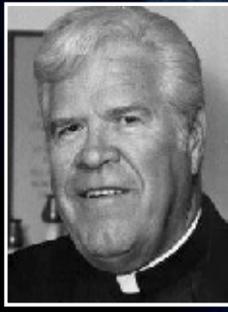
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The Overnight Dominance of America, a Half-Century in the Making



By Nick Antonaccio

In the long history of wine production and consumption, the United States has played a very minor role.

Cultivated grapes have been grown, and wine produced, for millennia. Recently discovered remnants of a winery

in Armenia are believed to be more than 6,000 years old.

In the continuum of time since the Greeks and Romans spread wine production throughout Europe over 3,000 years ago, local growers and producers steadily plied their craft, enhancing their wines and reputation across the wine consuming world.

Here in the United States, the rudimentary beginnings of wine production date back a mere 450 years to a French Huguenot settlement in Florida. And this relatively short-time continuum has been fragmented.

The wine industry in the United States languished for centuries; it wasn't until Western European immigrants settled in the Midwest and West in the 19th century that wine production, followed by wine

consumption, began to flourish.

But then Prohibition brought the industry to a screeching halt from 1920 to 1933, effectively wiping it out across the entire country. (I don't know a single soul who celebrated this centennial anniversary, especially during the pandemic.) It wasn't until the early 1970s that Americans finally began to build a head of steam in producing and consuming wine.

As with many other entrepreneurial endeavors that spawned successful industries in the United States, so too did intrepid winemakers and marketers in the 1980s and '90s build a successful and highly-regarded wine industry.

As a result, the global wine world in the 21st century has been turned upside down.

The mighty Europeans are losing their influence and the upstart United States has surged. With only 80 years of continuous winemaking expertise and experience since Prohibition – a blink of an eye in the world timeline of wine production and consumption – the United States is now a) the largest consumer of wines in the world, b) the fourth largest producer after Italy, France and Spain and c) home of a world-class wine cognoscenti.

How did we accomplish so much in such a short period of time?

1. Winemaking Culture. American

winemakers are an ambitious lot, constantly seeking the next great product/trend, coupled with a willingness to experiment. Since they are relatively new to wine, there are no allegiances to particular grapes or wine styles.

American winemakers are not burdened by the stringent regulations of Western Europe for growing specific grape varieties in specific regions. (In France, generally speaking, you may only grow Cabernet Sauvignon in the Bordeaux region and Chardonnay in the Burgundy and Champagne regions.) This provides the freedom to experiment, seeking the best grapes to suit a particular wine region or a specific plot of land.

2. Consumer Enthusiasm. Americans are much more apt to experiment with different wines from different regions than their European counterparts. If you travel in Europe you will typically be offered local wines in restaurants. In Paris, French wines; in Rome, Italian wines. Rarely will American wines be on a wine list.

However, in New York or Los Angeles, many wine lists offer a broad range of international wines. This provides American consumers a means to expand their horizons and their appreciation (and consumption) of

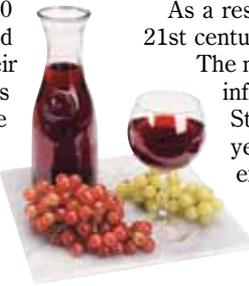
diverse wines. And catapult us to the top of the list of wine-consuming nations.

3. Consumer Knowledge. From Baby Boomers to millennials, American palates are evolving. Unlike the 1970s approach to wine (cheaper is better), today's wine consumer is more likely to seek wine with a high quality-price ratio. Millennials are becoming especially astute wine consumers, willing to spend more for a well-researched wine.

Once again, American fervor and ambition have catapulted us to the top of an industry and a culture. What is next on the horizon? Will we be challenged by the growing interest in European wines produced as table wines (not meeting specific regulations)? Will our tastes shift to other alcoholic beverages? Only (a split second in) the time continuum will tell.

Nick Antonaccio is a 40-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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