

**Theaters Jockey
to Survive
Pandemic...**
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FREE

The WHITE PLAINS Examiner

Covering White Plains, Greenburgh, Harrison

COVID-19 Breakdown:
White Plains 4,278 (570)
Greenburgh 2,690 (329)
Harrison 1,442 (244)
Scarsdale 706 (59)
Elmsford 462 (62)
County Deaths: 1,683

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January 5 - January 11, 2021

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 11, Issue 490



Donation Made to Lifting Up Westchester

The Hudson Gateway REALTOR® Foundation, the charitable arm of the Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS®, recently presented a check for \$2,000 to Lifting Up Westchester (LUW) in White Plains. LUW restores hope to Westchester County's men, women and children in need by providing them with food, shelter and support—and lifting them to greater self-sufficiency with dignity and respect. Each year, LUW serves approximately 3,500 Westchester residents through four key program areas.

First Ever Restaurant Month Launched in WP

By Anna Young

More than 20 White Plains restaurants will be offering special deals on dine-in and takeout meals as the city launches its first ever Restaurant Month in January.

With local restaurants in dire need of support as business owners try to recover from the long-standing impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the White Plains Business Improvement District (BID) is sponsoring the event to help drive more traffic to the city. The event will run from Jan. 2 to Jan. 31.

"When some of our members approached the BID very early this year to do a hyper local restaurant week, we all could have never known how essential bringing something like this to fruition would be for the industry," said BID Executive Director Brittany Bandwein. "Hence, we are kicking 2021 off with a full Restaurant Month January 2021 as the beginning of a Winter Outlook Series to support our local busi-

nesses."

Throughout the event, restaurants will highlight their menus with pre-fixe package deals starting at \$20.95 for lunch. Diners will vary from \$30.95 to \$40.95. Each package will offer lunch or dinner for two, family meals, unique indoor dining experiences and takeout options.

Participating restaurants include Asian Legend, The Brazen Fox, Buffalo Wild Wings, Cantina Taco & Tequila Bar, Delicias del Jireh, Graziella's Italian Bistro, Hastings Tea & Coffee Lounge, Holy Crab, Hudson Grille, La Bocca Ristorante, Lazy Boy Saloon & Ale House, Lilly's, Little Drunken Chef, Morton's Steakhouse, Papi', Ron Blacks Beer Hall, Sundance Kitchen & Cantina, TVB by Pax Romana, Via Garibaldi, Walter's Hot Dogs, Whiskey Lounge, and Wolf & Warrior Brewing Company.

To view the list of White Plains Restaurant Month participants and their menu offerings, please visit: www.wpbid.com/restaurantmonth.

Buchwald Leaves Assembly Having Worked on Slew of Issues

By Martin Wilbur

From the time David Buchwald arrived in Albany as the representative for the 93rd Assembly District, he periodically found himself involved in some fairly high-profile issues.

Buchwald's first vote as a state lawmaker on the first day of the 2013 legislative session was to support the NY SAFE Act, sweeping gun violence legislation the month after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

He also came into office about two months after Superstorm Sandy

ravaged the region, the start of an ongoing saga where legislators have battled the utilities for a more coherent response after weather-related emergencies. He would later help found and co-chair United Westchester, a group of local, county, state and federal officials that have formulated recommendations on how utilities can respond more effectively.

During his eight years as a state legislator, Buchwald also received attention for his successful push to have a state constitutional amendment for pension forfeiture if state officials were found guilty of a crime connected to their jobs and writing

legislation enabling Congress to have access to state tax returns of top elected officials, including President Trump.

But the low-key now-former assemblyman also enjoyed the task of simply answering questions from constituents or helping them if there were difficulties with myriad issues, such as problems with their unemployment insurance.

"Unfortunately, too often in government and elsewhere it exceeds people's expectations when they merely get a return phone call," Buchwald said. "Truthfully, while we do return lots of e-mails and

phone calls over time, I think we were able to help people and I think improve people's lives, hopefully."

True to form, last Wednesday, in his next-to-last day on the job, Buchwald was still in his office looking to help constituents despite knowing for the past six months that he would be out of a job following his unsuccessful congressional bid for the Democratic nomination to succeed Nita Lowey.

Buchwald said that for much of the past two months he has been working with the district's new assemblyman, former Bedford super-

continued on page 2



David Buchwald's tenure serving the 93rd Assembly District ended last Thursday after eight years.

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Westchester Covid-19 Memorial Moves Indoors for Winter

Westchester County has moved the Ribbons of Remembrance, a memorial dedicated to those lost to Covid-19, from Lenoir Preserve in Yonkers to the main floor of the Michaelian Office Building in White Plains. County Executive George Latimer said: "The Covid-19 pandemic has taken a toll on us all. We have lost family, friends and neighbors, and we were not able to mourn them properly. Lenoir Preserve provided us with a quiet place to reflect and pay tribute to those who are no longer with us. As we begin to see snow, we must move the display indoors to protect it from the weather." Visitors can still view the rope structure and ribbons collected from surrounding trees in the display case next to the entrance of the Department of Human Resources. Ribbons are available for those who have recently lost a loved one and are interested in adding their name to the memorial. The Michaelian Office Building is open to the public Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Buchwald Leaves Having Worked on Slew of Issues

continued from page 1

visor Chris Burdick, on a smooth transition.

"I would say it was quite touching to be able to reminisce about what in eight years I've been able to accomplish," he said. "I very much feel that I never let down on working to actually get things done in New York State and the Assembly District."

As he leaves office, the obvious short- and long-term goals for state officials is to restore New York's physical and fiscal health in light of the pandemic. It will take sound economic policy on the state's part to weather the storm largely created by COVID-19 as well as help from Washington for state and local governments, he said.

Buchwald said he has no regrets about running for the Democratic nomination in the 17th Congressional District. For a brief time, in late 2019 after he announced his candidacy, he was perceived to be a frontrunner based on local Democratic committee endorsements, at least in the Westchester side of the district.

But similar to how quickly a situation can change, 2020 was a wildly unpredictable year and that certainly held true on the political stage.

"I thankfully can look back on the congressional run and say there's no one thing I could

have done that would have led to a different outcome," Buchwald said. "It was a wholly unpredictable year and political environment to run in. I feel like I put my best foot forward and it just wasn't my time. Sometimes in politics, timing is everything."

While Buchwald did not rule out another run for a political office, he said he hopes to combine his skills and experiences as an attorney and a government official along with his economic expertise to have a rewarding experience in his life's next chapter.

Last week he was still mulling his choices, but for now his only plans are to continue living in White Plains, where he served as a councilman before being elected to the Assembly, with his wife and two children.

"I am not looking to do something just as sort of a holdover until the next political opportunity," Buchwald said. "That would be a disservice to whomever my next employer is."

For now, Buchwald leaves office knowing that every day he fought hard to help the residents of his district and thanked his constituents for electing him four times and putting their trust in him.

"It has been a privilege to be there for folks and actually come away from the experience with a firm belief that I made a difference," he said.

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Westchester's Active COVID-19 Cases Approaching Last Spring's Levels

By Anna Young

As Westchester County experienced a three-day surge in coronavirus cases just one week after Christmas, state and county officials anticipate the numbers will continue to worsen in the weeks ahead.

After the county started to see new and active cases dwindle, the area accounted for nearly 3,000 new cases in a matter of three days, indicating a post-holiday surge that health officials spent months warning about. Last Thursday, there were 959 cases reported, with 953 added on Friday and 1,013 recorded Saturday.

"We were hopefully optimistic about 10 days ago when we saw the numbers start to decrease just a little bit, but now they've increased much more dramatically," County Executive George Latimer said during his Monday briefing. "The numbers that we're at today is analogous to the numbers we had in April."

Coronavirus cases increased by 544 on Monday, bringing the total number of positives in Westchester to 72,762 since the start of the pandemic. The county currently has 9,389 active cases, an increase of 1,432 over last week.

Latimer noted how Westchester had reached a peak of 12,000 active cases in April, fearing the area's caseload will continue to climb and surpass that number based on recent data.

"We're not far from the peak," Latimer said. "The way we've jumped up in the last few weeks would lend us to think we still have some climbing to do."

The daily positivity rate is now 7.58 percent, a number that is based on 7,180 COVID-19 tests administered on Saturday. Overall, over 1.4 million tests have been given since March.

The county reported two more deaths on Monday, raising the COVID-19-related death toll to 1,683 since March, according to the state tracker. While 31 people have died of the virus in the last week, Latimer said the county has had a total of 165 fatalities since Thanksgiving.

He added that Westchester lost the same number of people to the virus in the span of five months between May 23 and Oct. 20, signaling the significant rise has been the result of the holiday season, folks gathering in large numbers indoors and ignoring health guidelines.

Latimer called it "very sobering statistics." "We hope we'll see a cresting or flattening of the curve here, but we have no reason to think that's going to happen given the number we've seen," Latimer said.

As of Jan. 2, there are 455 virus patients in Westchester hospitals, an increase of 63 over the last week. A month prior, the county reported 244 hospitalizations.

Putnam County's total caseload has reached 5,162, with 78 additional positive cases recorded on Monday. The county's daily positivity rate is 9.47 percent, with 824 tests administered Saturday.

Putnam currently has 956 active cases. There have been 67 coronavirus-related deaths in Putnam. No new deaths were reported on Monday.

Statewide there were 11,209 new positive cases on Monday. The daily positivity rate is 8.34 percent.

The state recorded 170 additional COVID-19-related fatalities, bringing the death toll to 30,648 since March.

Total hospitalizations are at 8,251, an increase of 288 over the previous day. Across New York there have been 1,028,362 positive coronavirus cases since the start of the pandemic.

"What we're seeing in New York and all across this county is growing numbers of hospitalizations, infections and deaths, they are all a consequence of our actions," Gov. Andrew Cuomo said. "If the infection rate increases, then regions can close and that's the last thing anybody wants. If you don't want that, then do something about it - be smart, practice safe behaviors and reduce the infection rate."



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

New Quarantine Guidelines

Weeks after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reduced its quarantine guidelines from

14 days to 10, Cuomo announced last week that New York will be following suit.

Under the new guidelines, individuals exposed to COVID-19 can end their quarantine after 10 days without a testing requirement if no symptoms have been reported. After Day 10 is reached, individuals must continue monitoring for symptoms through Day 14, and if any develop, they should immediately self-isolate.

Infected individuals are also advised to contact the local health department or health care provider to report the change and determine if testing is needed.

COVID Super Strain in NY

Cuomo announced New York's first case of the United Kingdom variant of COVID-19 has been confirmed in 60-year-old man from Saratoga County. The individual had no known history of travel when he tested positive for the strain, he said.

The strain, which has also been found in California, Florida and Colorado, is thought to be 70 percent more transmissible but doesn't appear to make people more ill.

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The Ashikari Breast Center has joined Northwell Health and moved to two new state-of-the-art locations.

Andrew Ashikari, MD, FACS and Pond Kelemen, MD, FACS of the Ashikari Breast Center, recognized as leading experts in compassionate breast surgery, have joined Northwell Health Cancer Institute in Westchester. They are now part of our multidisciplinary team of breast specialists who work together to develop an individualized treatment plan to achieve the best possible outcome.

Dr. Ashikari and Dr. Kelemen are now part of Northwell Health and have moved to these new locations:

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Westchester Releases Recommendations on Utilities' Storm Response

By Martin Wilbur

A group of Westchester officials released a report Monday containing recommendations to address the failures of utilities and telecommunications companies after last August's tropical storm that left large swaths of the county without power and internet for days.

The Storm Response Report containing 42 recommendations from United Westchester, which was formed in the wake of the back-to-back March 2018 winter storms, outlines infrastructure and communications improvements for the providers to consider that is designed to speed restoration of service and provide the public and officials with more accurate information.

There was deep frustration expressed many residents and local officials and once again calls for change when tens of thousands of customers throughout Westchester lost power, internet or phone service for days when Tropical Storm Isaias battered the area on Aug. 4.

Assemblywoman Amy Paulin (D-Scarsdale), co-chair of United Westchester, said the pandemic and sharply greater dependence on electricity and telecommunications service makes the companies' response to severe weather and outages more critical than ever.

"In identifying problems that need to be addressed, it is our hope that solutions will be developed whether by these companies,

or if not, by government intervention," Paulin said.

Among the key recommendations proposed for Con Edison and NYSEG, the two utilities that provide Westchester with electricity, are the use of Smart Meters to track customers who are without power; compiling a list of residents who have critical medical needs; providing an updated map of Con Edison's grid to each municipality; submission of a storm hardening and resiliency plan; creation of a utility reserve corps that will have extra line workers in place when there is a forecast for a severe storm; and a more effective dry ice distribution plan.

Con Edison brings electricity to 80 to 90 percent of Westchester residents while NYSEG's serves several communities in the northeast section of the county.

For telecommunications outfits Altice and Verizon, United Westchester urged for improved coordination with Con Edison and NYSEG during restoration efforts; providing customers credits when they lose telecommunications service; and providing local governments with operational contacts.

Altice was also urged to upgrade its infrastructure and powering network nodes.

During a live-streamed United Westchester presentation Monday morning led by County Executive George Latimer, there was also focus on the firms evaluating the accuracy and effectiveness



The loss of electricity and telecommunications services last summer following Tropical Storm Isaias forced Westchester officials to reconvene a group that issued recommendations for better response to outages from Con Edison, NYSEG, Altice and Verizon.

of their weather forecasting services to make sure they have the most reliable sources.

Former assemblyman David Buchwald, whose idea was to create United

Westchester in 2018, said as severe weather approaches the area, information must be shared with local and county leaders.

"We believe that a lot more attention needs to be paid to these forecasts and recognize their limitations," Buchwald said.

Officials noted that while the performance of Con Edison, Verizon and Altice was substandard following last summer's tropical storm, particularly after the group's 2018 recommendations were largely ignored, there were improvements in NYSEG's response.

"Utility companies, if they take it seriously, something good will happen," said Pound Ridge Supervisor Kevin Hansan.

Ivy Pool, supervisor in the Town of New Castle, which has been among the hardest hit communities in the county when storms have hit, appealed to Con Edison to partner with the local municipalities, particularly to identify those residents who have critical medical needs where a loss of power could be dangerous.

"Local governments stand ready to work with you, Con Edison, to update and maintain your critical customer list," Pool said.

Paulin also said she wants to hear from the utilities why repairs and restoration take longer in Westchester than in other areas of the state.

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Gearity Reflects on Six Years as Village of Ossining Mayor

By Rick Pezzullo

Victoria Gearity reflected last week on her six years as the Village of Ossining's mayor, stressing she was "proud to have honored the courage of my convictions."

"The votes we cast are among an elected official's most enduring legacies," she stated in the last of her Mayor's Messages to the community. "Whether or not you liked my position on a given issue, you knew where I stood. My position was well-informed and reflected what I believed was in the best interest of the community, regardless of whether it was politically expedient."

Gearity, who served two years as a trustee before unseating William Hanauer in 2014, opted not to seek a fourth term in 2020.

"Being mayor has been the journey of a lifetime. I fought hard to earn and keep the seat, and that has helped me appreciate the honor of serving as your mayor," Gearity wrote. "Being mayor means many things. Cutting ribbons, walking in parades, officiating weddings, acknowledging milestones, bearing witness, being a role model, advocating justice, celebrating the arts, honoring heroes, supporting entrepreneurs, learning history, protecting the environment, inspiring young voices, visiting classrooms and nursing homes, and noticing the everyday beauty that makes Ossining special."

"These actions build a stronger

community," she added. "All mayors perform these duties, and in doing so, we can't help but feel great love for the people we serve. I am grateful for the opportunity to know Ossining in this most special way."

Gearity's more notable accomplishments were a stronger and more efficient municipal government, a more vibrant local business community and a new standard of communication.

"I challenged my colleagues to address our high effective tax burden by freezing, and then lowering, the village tax rate. This approach was previously unheard of, but I hope it will become a new starting point each budget session," she stated.

"Bureaucracies are not known for being cutting edge. It took years of leading by example, and bringing on new staff, to shift the municipal mindset on outreach. We know connect with thousands of residents each week through a rich combination of communication tools, and regularly engage a diversity of community stakeholders."

During the last Village Board meeting Gearity led on Dec. 16, staff, family and other elected officials paid tribute to Gearity. She was presented on Zoom with a crystal gavel from her board colleagues.

Trustee Rika Levin, who ran unopposed in November and succeeds Gearity, praised her predecessor, remarking, "Your tenacity, perseverance, work ethic and passion for the community are second to none. You made a lot of change."

Gearity, who was unsuccessful at her



Now former Ossining mayor Victoria Gearity looks back on her six years leading the village.

last meeting in trying to convince the board to change the village seal, offered some unsolicited advice to future leaders.

"Walk every block of Ossining. It's the best way to understand every neighborhood, learn local history and connect with residents on their turf," she said. "Make well-informed decisions on controversial issues in the interest of

the community, and then stand for what you believe in regardless of whether you ruffle feathers, or even lose friends; and if you aren't failing sometimes, you aren't trying hard enough to accomplish anything worthwhile."

"Serving in elected office is not a thankless job. People thank me for my service all the time," Gearity added. "Not all feedback is gracious, particularly on social media. Still, being mayor has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. If it paid a living wage, I may never want to leave."

Meanwhile, Gearity announced her next venture. She will be working as Director of Constituent Services for newly-elected state Sen. Elijah Reichlin-Melnick in the 38th Senate District.

"Elijah is well prepared for the job having worked for a senator in a neighboring district, plus early career experience as a teacher, and recent service as village trustee in his hometown of Nyack," Gearity said. "He's a quick study, and is up to speed on Ossining's priorities for Albany. I am excited for the opportunity to continue to serve the public in this new way."

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

A GOOD READ WHILE YOU'RE STAYING SAFE INSIDE

Four days after being temporarily assigned to the detective division of a sleepy suburban police department, a young officer is thrust into the task of investigating a double homicide. The investigation takes the upstart officer through unfamiliar and dangerous encounters, including suspicion that his agency is incapable of an investigation of this magnitude.

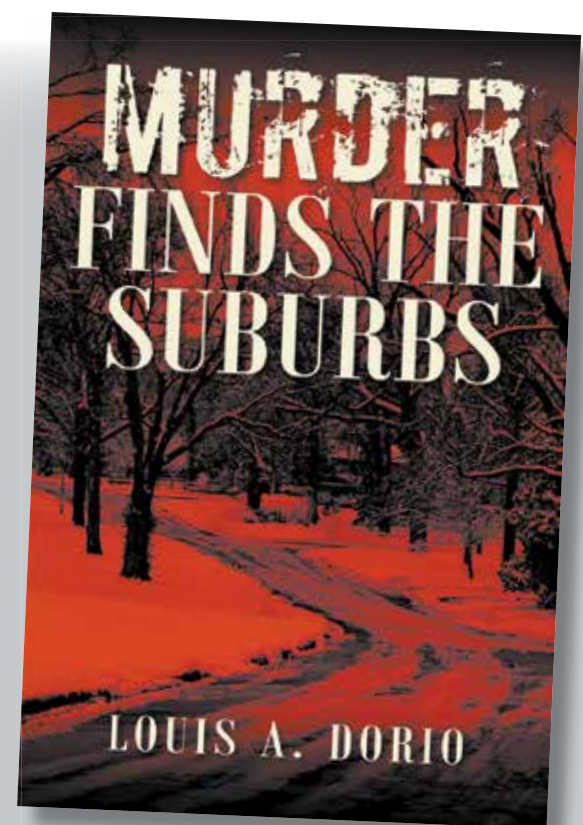
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Louis A. Dorio retired as Chief of Police after a 20-year decorated career with a suburban NY Police Department.

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GoFundMe Set Up for Family of Ossining Crash Victim

By Rick Pezzullo

An acquaintance of an Ossining woman killed by a drunk driver in Peekskill has established a GoFundMe account to help with final expenses and establish a college fund for the two youngsters injured in the crash.

The car, driven by 41-year-old Mark Cope of Yorktown, was traveling northbound in the southbound lanes of Route 9 in the area of Main Street at about 9:10 p.m. on Dec. 23 killing Shina McClam, 32, her six-year-old daughter Kennedy and 18-year-old niece Indya. State police said Cope was under the influence of alcohol.

"On December 23, 2020, tragedy struck when our beloved Shina was taken from us by an intoxicated driver who hit her car head on," Michelle Martin posted on GoFundMe. "Shina had a sweet spirit that touched all who encountered her."

The GoFundMe effort, called Shina's Wishes, organized by Martin, has raised more than \$28,000 to date. The goal is \$50,000.

Cope was driving a 2018 Black Audi when he crashed into McClam's 2020 Acura. McClam was pronounced dead at the scene, while her daughter and niece

serious injuries that were deemed non-life-threatening. Indya was transported to Westchester Medical Center by ambulance, while Kennedy was airlifted to the hospital for further care.

Cope was charged with first-degree vehicular manslaughter, a class C felony. He was remanded to the Westchester County Jail in lieu of \$100,000 cash bail or bond.

Martin stated that while McClam's daughter and niece survived the accident, they are still in the hospital recovering from their injuries. The impact of the tragedy will affect them for the rest of their lives, she said.

"Kennedy, Shina's daughter, is facing both rehabilitation from her injuries and life without the loving presence of her mother," she continued. "Indya has lost the aunt she loved and cherished. Friends and Family have started this fund to help take care of any of Kennedy's expenses and to start a college fund for both Kennedy and Indya. All donations will be greatly appreciated."

Peekskill crash victim Shina McClam, left, and her niece. McClam was killed by an intoxicated wrong-way driver on Route 9 in Peekskill on Dec. 23 while her niece, Indya, remains hospitalized.



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APPLICANT: New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) 59-17 Junction Blvd. Flushing, NY 11373

NYSDEC APPLICATIONS AND ID NUMBERS:

Article 17, State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) Permit Modification DEC #3-9909-00023/00006 (SPDES # NY)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) was prepared to evaluate the proposed modification of NYCDEP's Catskill Aqueduct Influent Chamber State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (Catalum SPDES Permit). An Order on Consent (NYSDEC Case No. D007-001-11.01) was executed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) on October 4, 2013, and was amended in 2018 (2018 Modification) and in 2020 (2020 Modification) (collectively as modified, the Consent Order). Among other provisions, the Consent Order includes specific requirements and timeframes for carrying out a State Environmental Quality Review Act review, including the preparation of an EIS for the Proposed Action (a modification of the Catalum SPDES Permit). Pursuant to the Consent Order, the Proposed Action would modify the Catalum SPDES Permit to incorporate the following:

1. Turbidity control measures, including operation of Ashokan Reservoir in accordance with the Interim Ashokan Release Protocol (IRP); and

2. Delay of dredging accumulated material (alum floc) from Kensico Reservoir until the completion of certain infrastructure projects.

Implementation of the turbidity control measures analyzed in the Draft EIS would allow NYCDEP to continue to provide reliable, clean, and safe drinking water while reducing reliance on chemical treatment of the water supply, specifically the use of alum, during episodic turbidity events.

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT (SEQRA):

The project is a Type I Action as designated by 6 NYCRR §617.4(b)(6)(i). The Consent Order required the preparation of a Draft EIS. A Draft EIS has been prepared and the NYSDEC, as lead agency, has determined that the Draft EIS is adequate for public review and comment. As noted below, written public comments will be accepted on the Draft EIS until March 16, 2021. In addition, pursuant to 6 NYCRR §617.9(a)(4), NYSDEC has made the determination to hold a public comment hearing, the details of which are provided below in the legislative public comment hearing section of this notice.

NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION:

The NYSDEC has determined that the permit application filed for the proposed SPDES permit modification is complete for purposes of further NYSDEC review and public comment pursuant to the Uniform Procedures Act (UPA) 6 NYCRR §621.7. NYSDEC permit jurisdiction includes the State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit (ECL Article 17). As noted below, written public comments will also be accepted on the application and Draft SPDES Permit until March 16, 2021.

ADDITIONAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS:

State Historic Preservation Act ("SHPA") Determination:

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) was consulted and their determination indicated that the Proposed Action would have no impact on archaeological or historic resources within the study area.

Coastal Zone Management: This project is not located in a Coastal Management Area and, therefore, is not subject to the Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:

The Draft EIS, which includes permit application materials are available for public review on the internet at the following websites:

NYCDEP Website: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dep/about/catskill-influent-chamber.page> NYSDEC Website: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/79771.html>.

Hard Copies of these documents can also be requested from NYCDEP by emailing catalumeis@dep.nyc.gov or calling 718-595-4614.

LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING:

A legislative public comment hearing on the permit application and the Draft EIS will be held before Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Michele M. Stefanucci to receive unsworn statements from the public at 4:00 P.M. on Thursday, February 4, 2021, through the Webex Events electronic webinar platform. All persons, organizations, corporations or government agencies that may be affected by the proposed project are invited to attend the legislative public comment hearing and to submit oral comments on the Draft EIS, applications and draft permits. Instructions on how to "join" the hearing webinar and provide an oral statement may be ac-

cessed at the NYSDEC webpage for the Ashokan Reservoir at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/79771.html>. Persons who wish to receive the instructions by mail or telephone may call the NYSDEC at 518-402-9003. Please provide your first and last name, address, and telephone number and reference the NYCDEP Catalum SPDES Permit public comment hearing. The ALJ may restrict the time available for each person to ensure that all persons will have an opportunity to be heard. It is recommended that lengthy comments be summarized at the hearing and submitted in writing as indicated below. Equal weight will be given to both oral and written comments.

Interpreter services shall be made available to deaf persons, and English language translator service shall be made available to persons with limited English-language proficiency, at no charge upon written request to the ALJ identified above, at least ten (10) business days prior to the hearing. The written request must be addressed to ALJ Stefanucci, NYSDEC Office of Hearings and Mediation Services, 625 Broadway, 1st Floor, Albany, NY 12233-1550 or emailed to ALJ.Stefanucci@ohms.dec.ny.gov.

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS:

All interested parties may submit written comment concerning the Draft EIS and permit applications to the DEC Contact Person listed below by March 16, 2021. Comments sent by regular mail must be postmarked no later than March 16, 2021. E-mail comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. March 16, 2021.

DEC CONTACT PERSON:

Kristen Cady-Poulin,
Environmental Analyst,
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233,
Phone: 518-402-9167, E-mail
DEPPermitting@dec.ny.gov

Local Eateries Struggle to Stay Afloat as COVID Pandemic Persists

By Sydney Stoller

With temperatures dropping and COVID-19 cases on the rise, local restaurants are struggling now more than ever to adapt to the continued challenges brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

Since March, restaurants have been among the businesses hardest hit by the health crisis, being forced to survive through forced closures and restricted business practices, including limited seating capacity, transforming parking lots or sidewalks into dining rooms with tents and at one point solely relying on curbside pickup and delivery orders.

Eating locally is more important than ever as establishments try to stay afloat with what promises to be a difficult winter. While restaurants being permitted to open indoor dining to 50 percent capacity since June has granted a much-needed respite for many, some owners have opted to avoid the risk.

Ngawang Sherpa, manager of Jewel of Himalaya in Yorktown, said that while the country's health has been impacted by the virus, mentally, he believes, everyone is still scared. The Yorktown business is still only offering takeout and curbside service. Safety and comfort are Sherpa's prime concerns.

"We are all scared and (taking these precautions) gives our customers peace of mind that they are in a safe zone," Sherpa said. "It is not only important for us to run and survive in the business but to run the business very safely."

Despite a dip in infection rates through the summer, coronavirus cases have surged locally and nationally since Halloween, with many people disregarding the advice of health professionals to limit large gatherings and avoid travel. The rise in case numbers has shown that fewer patrons are willing to eat indoors or go out at all, business owners say.

With the threat indoor seating capacity could be lowered or suspended if an area is designated a COVID-19 hotspot, Isi Albanese, owner of Exit 4 Food Hall in Mount Kisco, is prepared for whatever may come. But for now, he's adapted to the situation with indoor dining an option for patrons, as well as some outdoor seating.

The restaurant currently has tables set up on the sidewalk with a tarp erected over it and heating lamps in place to ease the chill of the winter weather.

However, while Albanese has been fortunate to see his patronage increase since the start of the pandemic despite the expected downturn in in-person diners, he noted the importance of building an online presence through social media platforms. Due to that, the restaurant has amassed a sizable group of takeout and delivery customers who have adjusted to ordering meals online.

"Customers need to know that they can shop online and still shop locally," Albanese said. "Especially in these times when you may not want to go into a store, not having a strong digital presence can really prevent you from moving forward and surviving through the pandemic."



Restaurants throughout the region, including Exit 4 Food Hall in Mount Kisco, have had to show ingenuity and a heavy reliance on technology and take-out service to survive COVID-19 pandemic, which has now dragged on for 10 months.

Like Exit 4 and Jewel of Himalaya, several other area restaurants have tailored their daily routine to use platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to inform followers about updates and promotions, including holiday menus, specialty meal kits, specials and unexpected closings and openings.

"In this day and age, it is so important to have an online presence," Albanese noted.

Eateries like Bango Bowls, a popular chain in lower Westchester that offers acai and pitaya bowls, poke bowls, oatmeal bowls and smoothies, has had an easier transition than most with sales predominantly focused on takeout orders prior to the pandemic.

Ryan Thorman, Bango Bowls' co-founder and president, noted that it's been beneficial

to the chain to have previously created an online presence. However, to further bolster customer engagement, Thorman said efforts have been made to upgrade the restaurant's website and improve its loyalty program through the implementation of Bango Bucks.


For others, the struggle to adapt, keep workers employed and maintain outdoor and indoor dining has come at a cost. Despite a limited cashflow, restaurants must allot funds to supply masks, sanitizing stations and other safety equipment, while also handling price increases from suppliers and increased wages for employees risking their health to work.

Furthermore, restaurants face new expenditures that come with an increase in delivery orders, whether it be hiring more drivers or paying the steep fees charged by companies such as Grubhub and Uber Eats.

"Delivery was always a big part of our business, but the increased volume through our delivery partners has definitely been challenging," Thorman said. "We have called the local legislator to support the new measure in place to cap the delivery charges at 15 percent."

Regardless of these numerous challenges, Westchester's restaurant owners are determined to survive and maintain morale among customers and employees.

"We are not in very good shape at this moment," Sherpa said. "Business has collapsed completely, and it's been a very hard journey till this date, not just us but every other business existing, but we are in no position to complain or lose hope."



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Obituaries

Dorothy Bevan

Dorothy Anne Koerner Bevan, 89 years young, peacefully passed on Dec. 27 at Joe Raso Hospice in New City due to complications from a stroke.

Bevan was born on Dec. 9, 1931, in Mount Vernon to William and Ilsa Koerner.

Dorothy graduated from Mount Vernon High School in December 1949 and from Hunter College in 1954 with a degree in elementary education. With her love of knowledge, she received her master's in elementary education from Hunter College several years later.

While in college, Dorothy met the love of her life, Robert K. Bevan, an electrical and aerospace engineering student at Lafayette College. Robert took part in Lafayette's Army ROTC program and gifted Dorothy

his prized fraternity pin as a symbol of love in 1953. Upon graduation, Robert was stationed in Tokyo. In early 1956, Dorothy traveled to see Robert in Japan where they married in a full military ceremony on July 21, 1956. Dorothy taught at the American School in Tokyo until they returned to the United States. In 1964, Dorothy and Robert moved to Pleasantville, which they called home since.

Though based in Pleasantville, their love of exploration carried them through endless adventures. Dorothy and Robert were avid skiers, sailors, scuba divers and world travelers. They would spend weeks to months at a time on their boats and exploring the world around them skiing, scuba diving and going on safaris. Dorothy and Robert even took their granddaughter's school project, Flat Stanley, on their global travels to promote learning and adventure

to her second-grade class. They continued their travels well into their 70s, and Dorothy skied until she was 80 years young. She took her final sail this past November.

Dorothy's interests expanded beyond travel as she found joy in attending the theater, art galleries, museums and the opera. She was also passionately involved in Meals on Wheels as well as her church, Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, in Chappaqua for many years.

Family, however, was the most important aspect of Dorothy's life. She cherished every moment she and Robert spent with their daughter, Gail, their son-in-law whom she considered a true son, Bob, and two granddaughters, Casey Lynn and Tyler Anne. Dorothy was so proud to be Casey and Tyler's "Mumsy" and loved making apple pies with them, even though it always ended up with more flour on them than in the pie.

In Dorothy's final days, Robert put his fraternity pin, now converted into a ring, back on her so they could be together even when apart. Dorothy will be always loved and deeply missed by her dear family both near and far. She was the life of the party and always knew how to have the best time. Her smile will live on.

A private family service and interment will take place at Plain Lawn Cemetery in Hicksville, N.Y. Messages of condolence may be left on the memorial page of Beecher Flocks Funeral Home in Pleasantville. In lieu of flowers, please send donations in Dorothy's name to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (stjude.org/give/memorials) or to Shriners Hospitals for Children at www.lovetotherescue.org/memorial-gifts.

Police Blotter

North Castle Police Department

Dec. 25: An Intervale Avenue resident reported at 3:39 a.m. that her trampoline has blown out of her yard and onto her neighbor's main electrical line to their residence. The caller also reported the trampoline is suspended in the air, hanging by the wire. The desk officer contacted the Con Edison liaison who stated the homeowner is to contact the utility directly. The desk officer advised the complainant to make notification and to stay away from the wire and trampoline.

Dec. 28: An employee of the Sunoco on Main Street reported a suspicious male subject near the location, apparently looking into vehicles, at 5:12 a.m. The subject was described as a white male wearing a black jacket and pajama pants. The subject was missing from the Town of New Castle and was subsequently retrieved by New Castle police. Matter adjusted.

State Police

Dec. 28: State police in Cortlandt investigated a serious accident on Oregon Road in Cortlandt at 5:36 p.m. Initial investigation revealed Henry Alvarado, 20, of Harrison, was riding a skateboard in the westbound lane of Oregon Road when

he was struck by a 2008 Honda Accord. Alvarado suffered serious injuries and was transported to Westchester Medical Center in critical condition. The investigation is ongoing.

Dec. 30: State police, in conjunction with the Peekskill Police Department, arrested Tysean Lee, 25, of New York City for third-degree criminal possession of stolen property, a Class D felony, and third-degree aggravated unlicensed operation, an unclassified misdemeanor. At about 10:43 a.m., police responded to a law enforcement tip that a stolen 2020 Acura TL out of New York City was in the Peekskill area. The stolen vehicle, operated by Lee, was located shortly after on East Main Street in Cortlandt by Peekskill police. Lee was arraigned in Town of Cortlandt Justice Court and remanded to the Westchester County Jail without bail.

Yorktown Police Department

Dec. 28: Nema Simpson, 31, of Poughkeepsie, was charged with third-degree grand larceny, a Class D felony, for allegedly stealing assorted merchandise from Macy's at the Jefferson Valley Mall on Aug. 28. The merchandise was valued at \$5,503.

Local Lawmakers' Bill to Help Food Pantries Signed By Cuomo

By Martin Wilbur

Legislation to take supermarkets' excess food and donate it to nonprofit organizations or religious institutions for distribution to the needy was signed into law by Gov. Andrew Cuomo last week.

The Excess Food Act, sponsored by state Sen. Peter Harkham (D-Lewisboro) and Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville), was originally proposed before the onset of the pandemic to limit the amount of refuse going to landfills. Now with the spiraling number of people who need food assistance, Abinanti said.

"This law ensures that, in New York, food formerly destined for landfills will now be available for the more than two million state residents who are food insecure," Harkham said. "And with so many great community-based organizations and initiatives at work to help our neighbors, making

sure they have access to the excess will be all around beneficial."

Abinanti said that when the 2021 legislative session opens this week, he will propose an amendment to have the new law take effect as soon as possible instead of allowing for a 180-day waiting period. If that's not changed, then it would be mid-year before it would go into effect while an estimated two million New Yorkers are experiencing food insecurity.

"People out there can use it," Abinanti said. "Now it's a crisis."

The legislation states that the organizations that receive the food must come pick it up. Donated food will be edible items that are safe to be consumed but have not been sold or used by the supermarket because of labeling, appearance or surplus.

There are restrictions on the types of food to be donated as well.

Food pantries, food banks and soup kitchens are among the entities that will receive the donations.

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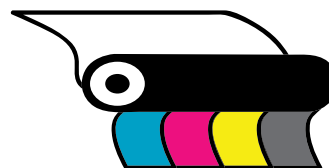
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Jones Sworn in to 17th Congressional District Seat, Hopes to Lead New Era

By Martin Wilbur

On Saturday, about 24 hours before Mondaire Jones was set to be sworn in to the House of Representatives, the historic nature of his election or his improbable ascension to succeed 32-year congresswoman Nita Lowey wasn't top of mind.

Jones, 33, the first openly Black gay member of Congress, was focused on the work he and the other 534 members of the 117th Congress must address starting this week – a once-in-a-century pandemic, what is for many families the worst economic crisis in generations and a looming climate catastrophe.

Even as one of the youngest members of Congress, Jones, a Democrat representing New York's 17th Congressional District, remains undaunted by the challenges that immediately lie ahead for himself and the nation.

"I'm going to be thinking about the folks who sent me to do a job and that's going to be motivating me every day," Jones said.

Before his swearing in at the Capitol, Jones, who formerly served as an attorney for Westchester County, was off to a pretty auspicious start. He was the lone freshman representative selected to serve on the House Democratic Leadership and was given his top committee request to serve on the House Judiciary Committee. (He will soon learn the second committee he will serve on.)

He was also named deputy whip of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and co-

chair of the LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus.

His inclusion on the House Democratic Leadership was a special assignment.

"It is an honor and a humbling experience and it's a role that I'm going to use to amplify the needs of folks in Westchester and Rockland counties," Jones said.

It will also give him a voice to help steer his party's agenda. For Jones, helping the country gain control of the pandemic and making sure working families get the assistance is the top priority.

"I am optimistic that this incoming administration, in coordination with Congress, which according to the framers is more important than the executive branch because the role of Congress is defined in Article I of the Constitution, will set an agenda that prioritizes the needs of this country, and of course number one, has to be COVID-19 relief," Jones said. "And, of course, democracy reforms is a gateway to the other stuff we want to see happen in this country."

Early on during the pandemic, Jones was among the first candidates locally to call for \$2,000 payments to all taxpayers, and will work to try to supplement the recent \$600 "survival checks," as he described them, with a more robust payment. Jones called the \$600 "a real slap in the face to the people of Westchester and Rockland counties."

Jones also hopes to raise the threshold of the phase out. At a \$75,000 income level for individuals and \$150,000 for married couples, the payments begin to decline.

"People are struggling to pay the cost of



Congressman Mondaire Jones, who was sworn in to the 117th Congress on Sunday, is ready for the challenges he and the country currently face.

housing and child care and put food on the table for themselves and their families," he said. "So I'm going to continue to fight for legislation that would provide significantly more cash for the people in this (area) who need it."

He also lists his other immediate priority, democracy reforms, as critical legislation. Most of the reforms are part of the For the People Act, which was approved in the

Democratic-controlled House in 2019 but never came up for a vote in the Senate. Most notably it would expand voting rights, limit partisan gerrymandering, strengthen ethics rules and limit the influence of private donor money, among other reforms.

For it to have a better chance of passing, the outcome of this week's two Georgia Senate runoffs is crucial, Jones said. A slew of other legislation may also depend on the results in the twin Jan. 5 election where control of the Senate hangs in the balance for Republicans and Democrats.

"It's difficult to overestimate the importance of the Georgia Senate runoffs and it's why I've done my part in raising money for the candidates on the Democratic side, and just elevating this subject and our national discourse, because while I believe there are some pieces of legislation that a Republic-controlled Senate will allow to be enacted, it will be nothing on the level of what is required to address the problems of this country," Jones said.

Throughout the campaign, Jones often told his story about growing up in a single-parent household in Spring Valley in Section 8 housing before going on to graduate from Stanford and Harvard Law School. He believes he can call on his experiences to open other people's eyes.

"I'm so looking forward to being a leader in the Democratic caucus in the 117th Congress and showing people that you can be somebody of my background and really help to usher this country into a new era," Jones said.



The Most Common Sexually Transmitted Disease: HPV

What you need to know about keeping yourself and your children safe

Ask the Doctor

Dr. Adina Keller
Associate Chief,
Obstetrics and Gynecology
Northern Westchester Hospital

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Q: What is the human papilloma virus (HPV)?

A: HPV is a sexually transmitted virus. There are approximately 150 strains of the virus and nearly 40 affect the genital area. Most HPV infections are asymptomatic, which means that you may never know you were exposed. The majority of HPV strains do not cause any issues and will eventually go away on their own. Some strains, however, can cause genital warts, cervical cancer, anal cancer and other cancers, including head and neck cancers.

Q: Who is at risk?

A: Studies have shown that almost everyone gets exposed to HPV at some point in their lives. Some studies have shown that up to 90% of college-aged men women have been exposed to HPV. If you're dating someone and they say they've been "tested," please know that men cannot be tested for HPV. The virus hides from our immune systems, so it will not show up on a blood test. Women can be tested for HPV by getting a pap smear, but there's no test for men.

Q: What's the best defense against HPV?

A: Condoms are the best defense against HPV, but even with condom use, the virus can still be transmitted to others. There is no cure for HPV, only prevention. That's why it's so important for both boys and girls

to get vaccinated. Vaccines against HPV have sharply reduced infections in men and women and will likely cause major drops in HPV-related cancers. Parents should discuss the optimal time for the vaccine with their pediatrician. Some may decide to delay the vaccine until the middle teen years.

Men and women, up to age 45, can get the HPV vaccine.

The CDC recommendation now includes men and women up to age 45 – especially if they are dating, widowed or have a new partner. If you're interested in a vaccine, speak with your doctor.

Q: Does my child really need this?

A: The answer is yes. You're providing your children with something that will prevent cancer down the road. So, if anybody has any concerns that they're not doing right by their child, think again. We have to assume that our children will become sexually active as they get older, therefore they need to be vaccinated. The HPV vaccine has already been shown to markedly reduce the incidence of HPV infections in young adults.

Learn more about Northern Westchester Hospital, visit nwh.northwell.edu

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Letters to the Editor

Puglisi Touts Key Accomplishments During the Past 30 Years

This report is a part of a series I'll be doing this year to inform the community of the progress and accomplishments of this administration since I've been Cortlandt town supervisor starting in 1992.

- Three Master Plans completed, each 10-year guides for a town government.
- Lobbied Metro-North for the new Cortlandt train stations.
- Zoning ordinance review plans to review zoning town-wide.
- Croton River Unique Area to assist with safety and environmental issues.
- Various moratoriums, including a town-wide prohibition while planning and zoning issues were reviewed along Routes 6, 9A and 202.
- Hamlet of Verplanck Waterfront Study and plans.
- Montrose Enhancement Plan (MEP) and current Montrose Area Study.
- Police plans for our town in the 1990s and currently with the county and state police departments.
- Indian Brook Watershed study with other municipalities including Croton-on-Hudson, Ossining and New Castle.
- Shared services planning to meet mandates, maximize efficiency and to save taxpayers money. We were leaders in sharing services early on.
- Historic roads and wall reviews and ordinances.

- ALS/Paramedics Study, which resulted in the current Cortlandt Regional Paramedics.
- Many traffic studies in key areas of town.
- Economic Development Task Forces and studies over the years to assist local businesses and attract new businesses.
- Formed the Northern Tier Coalition for Recycling to meet a state mandate in 1992.
- Lakes, ponds and streams studies to protect our waterbodies, biodiversity and wildlife plans.
- Proposed a Medical-Oriented District (MOD) and Transit-Oriented District (TOD). Both were Master Plan recommendations and are still pending.
- Local Waterfront Revitalization Program with the Village of Buchanan for properties along the Hudson River.
- Various town-wide biodiversity studies.
- Closure of the two outdated emery mines off Croton Avenue and Colabough Pond Road to preserve the quality of life in residential neighborhoods.
- Creation of the Aaron Copland Preservation Homestead Committee, which preserved his homestead for aspiring musicians. (Copland lived in Cortlandt for the last 30 years of his

life.)

- Recreation projects and events with the town's Recreation Board and Recreation Department.
- A committee for the current Hollow Brook Golf Course. Originally, the developer proposed three options. The golf course was by far the best.
- A roundabout study, which is a work in progress for northern Cortlandt.
- Northern Westchester Water Works Committee, which concluded with our water works plants filtering our water to meet an EPA mandate. I'm a member of the Executive Committee.
- Geographic Information Systems Planning.
- Several realtor forums to show what Cortlandt has to offer and to promote our brand, "Where Life Works."
- Planning for veterans, seniors and youths to address their issues and needs.

I have chaired, coordinated, established and presided over all of these studies, plans, task forces or committees in order to address issues in our community and to plan for improvements to enhance our quality of life in Cortlandt.

Linda Puglisi
Town of Cortlandt Supervisor

The Truth About 2021 Yorktown Town Taxes

In a press release issued the day after the Yorktown Town Board adopted the town's 2021 budget, Supervisor Slater told us that, "We held the line on taxes." He repeated his "hold the line" message in a Letter from Matt Slater in the latest newsletter distributed to 1,000 Jefferson Village households.

But what exactly does "hold the line" mean? Does it mean our 2021 town taxes will be going up, down or staying the same as our 2020 tax bill?

In November, Supervisor Slater told us that the 2021 budget included tax cuts that would save the typical homeowner with a house assessed at \$10,000 and on town water \$13.03 or \$11.44 for those on wells.

But at the December budget hearings, speakers pointed out that the projected 2021 tax decrease was based on using the WRONG tax rates for 2020; when the correct tax rates were used, the combined

town taxes (excluding sewer and fire district taxes) for the typical house assessed at \$10,000 actually increased \$3.36 for those with water and \$3.76 for those on wells.

When neither the town comptroller or Supervisor Slater disputed their numbers, the speakers urged the Town Board to amend the 2021 budget to show the correct 2020 taxes.

As of Dec. 31, 2020, the 2021 budget on the town website still shows the wrong 2020 tax rates.

And the town's December budget message is conspicuously silent when it

comes to talking hard numbers. Instead of the November message that touted a tax decrease, the message is now "hold the line," a nebulous phrase that implies no change in the tax impact – and which hides the fact that for many taxpayers there will be a 2021 tax increase.

Is it asking too much to expect honesty and transparency from our elected officials?

Susan Siegel
Yorktown Heights

Soundview Prep Redevelopment is Exactly What Yorktown Heights Needs

With the new year beginning, small businesses in Yorktown Heights have something to look forward to.

The proposed redevelopment of Soundview Prep, with preservation of its historic building, new walking trails and a pedestrian gateway at the estate's original entrance at the corner of Route 118 and Underhill Avenue, will provide a shot in the arm for the businesses located in the hamlet's central business district.

For businesses like mine that are located

right across the street, the prospect of people living in beautiful new homes and open space for the public to enjoy means one thing: new customers.

For the small business community in Yorktown Heights, this is exactly what we have needed and the sooner the better.

Carmine Furci
Owner, Furci's
Yorktown Heights

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Guest Column

The Saw Mill River Parkway: Our Crazy Old Uncle

By Michael Gold

If Westchester is one big family, then the Saw Mill River Parkway is the crazy, old, dangerous uncle who comes over your house every so often to disrupt everybody's life.

You know this guy. The one who suggests you adopt a racoon to help get rid of your garbage or feed your dog to a coyote to cut down on the pet bills. The guy who lights a small fire in the middle of your living room to entertain your kids.

The parkway seems to bring out the worst in drivers. I have seen drivers demonstrate all types of weird activity on the road, such as trying to make an illegal turn off the parkway onto Grant Street in Pleasantville as oncoming traffic whizzes past, putting themselves, other motorists and pedestrians in mortal danger.

Once, this past autumn, when I was sitting in my car waiting at a red light, I saw a teenage boy cross the parkway against the light. As I watched him dodge 2,000 pounds of roaring metal machines hurtling down the road, I froze with shock. In what universe did the kid think this was a smart thing to do?

Thankfully, he made it across without injury. Once I caught my breath, I wanted

to get out of my car, storm up to the boy and yell at him, "What the hell were you thinking?"

Accidents occur with alarming regularity. My neighbor across the street has told me he hears the collisions. Our local school crossing guard has told me about the recklessness of the drivers speeding down the parkway like demented bowling balls.

The Consumer Insurance Blog once posted this from an article in Forbes magazine: "Drivers on the winding, heavily traveled Saw Mill River Parkway frequently reach speeds of 78 to 85 miles per hour between the towns of Elmsford and Hawthorne, despite the 50-mile-per-hour speed limit."

When I was a kid, my Dad used to take me to our local speedway for the demolition derby, to watch cars deliberately ram and destroy each other beyond repair. The last car still running wins. That's what the Saw Mill feels like far too often.

What is it about this road that brings out the worst in drivers?

We can only speculate. But what we can do is look at ideas that might bring a measure of civilization to this Wild West of a parkway.

Here are some not very serious schemes for slowing down the drivers and helping

prevent injury or worse, along with one very practical and inexpensive proposal.

- First, help pedestrians safely cross the parkway by placing jet packs on each side so they can fly over the traffic. Accomplishing that could also be done with hot air balloons, a Star Trek transporter beam or giant pogo sticks. Another great idea would be to recruit TV wrestling stars to fling people across the parkway on giant frisbees.
- Slow down the traffic by planting trees directly on the roadway every half-mile to make it an obstacle course. Just imagine driving down the parkway like you're at the Indianapolis 500 and seeing a giant oak suddenly loom in front of you. How's that for an incentive to slow down?
- Give drivers a lollipop for staying under the speed limit every week. Other incentives for good driving could include giving out lottery tickets, free pizza, rubber duckies or the chance to win a vacation in the Arctic Circle every winter.
- Maybe that last idea wouldn't work so well. So, putting that silliness behind us, here are a couple of serious ideas for addressing the problem.
- Build a pedestrian bridge over the

parkway. If we compare the cost of paying a crossing guard every school day with the expense of building a bridge, I'm sure the crossing guard would still be cheaper.

- Lowering the speed limit might not be a deterrent either, because the drivers most likely to drive too fast are the least likely to pay attention to the new law. This leads me to my one decent and relatively cheap idea. Install a traffic camera on the light to photograph drivers who blast through the speed limit or try to make illegal turns onto Grant Street. The penalty for breaking the speed limit or ignoring the prohibition on turning could be made severe. Charging more than \$200 for violations could work. Drivers will remember that. This idea has the added benefit of increasing revenue, possibly a lot. With COVID-19 and depressed tax revenues, government could use as much help as possible.

Most crazy uncles know what to do if they get slapped on the wrist.

Pleasantville resident Michael Gold has published op-ed articles in the New York Daily News, the Albany Times Union and other newspapers.

I Went to the Movies During the Pandemic. Here's How it Went.

By Anna Young

Going to the movies has always been one of my favorite things to do. So, when a double feature of "North by Northwest" and "The Invisible Man" was my last outing to the theater before the coronavirus hit, I was pretty upset.

And although since March so many people have lost so much – jobs, family, friends, homes and their livelihood – I've been fortunate that my biggest loss was my weekly getaway to the cinema, a getaway that would transport me out of my own hectic world into another for over two hours. A getaway that was the best part of my week.

When Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced in October theaters would be allowed to reopen with restrictions, I was excited but skeptical. Case numbers were down, great, but how would theaters go about reopening after seven months while ensuring moviegoers could partake in a safe manner, I wondered.

Let's not forget the fact that no new movies were being released, with the exception of "Tenet," back in September. And some Westchester theaters, including Regal Cinemas at the Cortlandt Town Center and The Mount Kisco Theatre, had permanently closed due to financial difficulties

caused by the shutdown.

So, how would it work?

Cuomo mandated that theaters could operate at 25 percent capacity and with no more than 50 people per screening. Other requirements called for mandatory mask wearing unless someone is seated or eating or drinking; assigned seating to ensure social distancing; enhanced air filtration systems, ventilators and air purification; and additional staff to control the flow of patrons and ensure compliance.

After considering these guidelines and not hearing one horror story of people going back to the movies, possibly because they weren't going, I decided to give it a shot last Wednesday. Now, while it's been fine watching new movies at home through the various streaming options, "Promising Young Woman," a movie I had been waiting in anticipation to see, was one I felt was worth experimenting for.

It's a movie that was released straight to theaters on Dec. 25 with no mention of whether it would immediately become available for rent, similar to other new releases, like "Wonder Woman 1984," which was released both in theaters and on HBO Max.

With my go-to movie theater now shuttered and the Jacob

Burns Film Center still closed, I opted to see "Promising Young Woman" at City Center 15 on Mamaroneck Avenue in White Plains.

The theater, operated by Showcase Cinemas, was the emptiest I had ever seen it in the 15 years I've been going there. All furniture had been removed, the rope barriers at the box office were gone, the concession area was basically dark and only a handful of employees were working.

The four-story parking garage, which would normally be bustling with cars, was also vacant, except for maybe five vehicles, including mine. While I was excited to go see a movie again, it also came with a grim thought that if things continue this way movie theaters may one day become extinct.

In adhering to the safety guidelines created by Showcase Cinemas, I purchased my ticket online, assigned myself a seat and had it all downloaded to my phone to make the experience as contactless as possible. Upon arriving at the theater, signs were placed everywhere warning folks to wear a mask or to turn around if experiencing any symptoms of coronavirus.

Strict cleaning protocols were implemented and there were hand sanitizing stations in front of each theater. Markers and

arrows were placed on the floor to ensure people could walk and remain distanced.

With my mask on, my ticket was scanned and I walked into the theater, by far the cleanest I've ever seen, for the first time in more than nine months. In that moment, despite the sad thoughts that had rushed through my mind, I was happy.

I was one of four people in the theater. We all wore masks, social distanced and for over two hours enjoyed the film, which was amazing by the way. Had the theater been busier or if people weren't following the rules, maybe I would have asked for a refund and left, but it was empty enough that for the duration of the film I never thought once about the stress, agony and heartache the virus has caused.

I didn't think about having to write another update about new case numbers or deaths, the friends I haven't seen or the relationships that have faded due to distance. I didn't think about the ongoing tension between those I love over disagreements regarding the virus. I didn't think about the second or third job I work to ensure I'm financially stable if another shutdown causes me to unexpectedly be out of work.

And I certainly wasn't thinking about the months that would

go by before finally receiving a vaccine.

While wearing a mask has become second nature, sitting in that theater and getting lost in the world I was watching resembled a sense of normalcy I had missed so much since everything shut down. It's a joy that's difficult to explain, but one I'm glad I got to feel and hope to feel again soon.

Now, I know reading this might cause people to have mixed feelings. Some may feel angry that I left my apartment and possibly caused further spread of the virus over a movie; some who may have been on the fence might go to the movie theater again; and others may not care at all because they've come to adapt to this new world we've been forced to live in since March.

And that's OK.

This piece is not to encourage you to leave your home and take part in recreational activities if you don't feel comfortable or to ignore the advice of health professionals, especially with the foreseen post-holiday surge underway. It's to say that if businesses create a safe environment and we all do our part by wearing a mask, maintain social distancing, wash our hands and follow the rules, those little sparks of joy in the midst of insurmountable chaos can still be attainable.



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The illustration above is an artist's depiction of the Indian Point property after the completion of major decommissioning work.

Indian Point Energy Center



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Streaks and Moss on the Roof? How About a 'Roof Shampoo'?

Isn't it a great feeling to shampoo your hair and have it clean and shiny again? You can give your house the same treat.

Funny how problems and solutions sometimes come together. Some years ago, when I lived in a single-family colonial home, I had been noticing some dark vertical stains developing on the north side of my roof, and it seemed to happen over a short period of time. What is that, I thought?

Then, I noticed some white spots taking hold here and there on the shingles, and finally patches of green moss sprouting out. I'm under attack, I thought.

Driving around my neighborhood, I found another roof with the same problem on a relatively new house, then another and another. In each case, the problem made the house look old and uncared for.

Soon after, I was watching the local news on television and one of Mark Franzoso's commercials came on for Franzoso Contracting. I was absorbed in some work, but one phrase popped out when he said his company now offered a "roof shampoo." Cute, I thought. Even though I had never heard the phrase before, I knew instantly that it was what I needed for my problem.

The next day I called Franzoso and made



By Bill Primavera

an appointment to learn more about the process.

In short order, a representative from Franzoso showed up and walked me through a great presentation on his iPad, which described the problem and how it was to be remediated. There were many photographs as he scrolled through as well as a video. It's really neat the way the home improvement industry is moving more to technology to market its services.

"The purpose of a roof shampoo is to remove algae, lichen and mold and have it look new," the young man said, "but more than that, algae can eat

away at the granules of the shingles as it continues to grow and, besides the staining it causes, it prematurely ages your roof."

I know it sounds superficial, but I was as concerned about the look of algae than what damage it might be doing.

He further told me that it's normal to have algae build up where there is less sunlight, either on the north or west side of the house, or if a house is heavily shaded by trees.

Eager to sign on, I was assured of certain safety issues that are employed by the roof shampoo systems. While some people or contractors might use bleach



to get rid of algae, this technique uses a cleansing product that is biodegradable and environmentally friendly, not harming any vegetation or surfaces that surround the house.

The day of the cleaning, the liquid was sprayed on by workers who were harnessed from the top of the roof for safety. The liquid didn't need any "dwell" time, but rather was immediately scrubbed with a state-of-the-art device that looked like a large vacuum cleaner descending from the top to the bottom of the roof surface. I was told that it featured a low-pressure system that ensures a gentle and safe rinsing, with a circular motion, without removing the granules from the shingles.

Within a couple of hours, the roof looked like new. Gone were the black streaks of mold, the white splotches of the lichen

and the green moss. The process carried a warranty against any roof staining for one year. Also, there is an annual preventative treatment available where Franzoso will return annually to apply a special spray treatment to leave on. Every consecutive year of participation extends the warranty for an additional year.

Franzoso later told me that when this system is contracted, he will do a free 10-point inspection of the entire roof. On my roof, they found that the "boots" around my vents needed to be replaced.

"It's funny, but roofers will put on a roof that lasts 30 years, but normally the boots have only a 10- to 12-year life and need to be replaced," he said.

As Franzoso and I watched the process being done high above our heads, he said, "Trust me, when they are finished, you're going to see the 'wow' factor of this work."

And, indeed, when the roof dried from its shampoo, leaving a roof surface that looked brand new, I did say, "wow."

If your roof is looking dreary and needs a shampoo, call Franzoso Contracting at 914-271-4572. I promise, you'll say "wow" too.

Bill Primavera, while a writer and public relations practitioner, is also a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate. To engage the talents and services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.

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Local Theater Companies Fight Through Pandemic and Hope to Survive

By Martin Wilbur

It's been well-documented how COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on restaurants and the travel and hospitality industries.

The situation has been similarly challenging for local theater companies, but so far some have managed to stay afloat long enough to hopefully welcome back live audiences when the pandemic abates.

Whether receiving assistance through grants, government funding, donations from a dedicated contingent of patrons or the use of technology, three local companies are all optimistically planning a return to the stage for the fall – or whenever it's safe to do so.

"Everybody, I think, seems to be finding a way to stay alive," said Denise Bessette, co-founder of Hudson Stage Company and one of its artistic directors.

Warning signals flashed in October when Westchester Broadway Theatre announced it was closing after 45 years, a blow to the local theater scene.

"It was disheartening to see that," remarked Adam Cohen, co-founder and artistic director of Arc Stages in Pleasantville. "We've managed to keep it going, I think, mostly because of our educational programming."

Arc Stages in Pleasantville and Yorktown Stage have been helped enormously by their ability to offer those programs to youngsters as well as camp last summer. The programs have been conducted both live and in person, and both organizations

are looking to offer those choices again this year.

Cohen said virtual classes in April, followed by a full summer camp requiring social distancing, masks and adhering to occupancy guidelines, operated relatively smoothly. Tents were set up outside in the parking lot to accommodate the summer campers.

It was a similar experience for Yorktown Stage, said Barry Liebman, its president and producing director. Unable to hold performances for its professional Main Stage productions, Liebman said he and his staff of four full-timers focused their efforts to keep their educational programming going for survival but also to provide local children something to do over the summer.

During July and August, he estimated about 800 kids participated in the programs that used space outdoors as well inside at its theater space with doors open at the Yorktown Cultural and Community Center, which the company rents from the town. The children's productions were held in the empty theater but streamed online.

Yorktown Stage has also been maintaining about 100 children in its dance school programs.

However, the money from groups throughout Westchester and beyond who would normally rent the theater evaporated nearly overnight with the onset of the pandemic.

"The camp is the reason why we've lasted this long," Liebman said. "The money that came in for camp, number



A scene from Hudson Stage Company's October 2019 production of "A Doll's House, Part 2." Like many local theater organizations, the group's co-founder, Denise Bessette, right, are improvising to survive the pandemic.

one, paid off the renters who had pre-paid who could no longer use the theater. We paid off the ticketholders for the shows that we canceled and paid off our campers who dropped out to make room for other campers."

Yorktown Stage did receive Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) money last year, but it was minimal because it only employs

four full-time employees, Liebman said.

However, Hudson Stage wasn't eligible for PPP money but was one of the arts organizations that received funds from Westchester County by applying through ArtsWestchester, Bessette said. That will go toward financing the next season, which she hopes will be a return to their theater space at the North Castle Public Library in

continued on page 18

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Local Theater Companies Fight Through Pandemic and Hope to Survive

continued from page 17

Armonk in the fall.

"They really rallied for us and they really came through so we could at least have this (next) season underwritten, which is what we're doing because otherwise I don't think we could have afforded to do anything," Bessette said of the assistance. "We have to save our money for when we're back in production."

All three local theater groups have also received donations from supporters and the community. Cohen said Arc Stages' fundraiser in September, a hybrid event with limited attendance on site along with most attendees participating virtually, was highly successful. Yorktown Stage has been helped by a patron list of close to 10,000 that it can draw upon, according to Liebman.

Bessette said while their donations have lagged compared to previous years, Hudson Stage organized a fundraising event last July, a virtual one-act play titled "Distance," written by Joshua Allen, where a woman logs onto a Zoom call to catch up with old friends but confronts someone from an unresolved relationship.

It also has scheduled one virtual reading a month starting in February for four months.

The advantage of the July event is that it connected with supporters that would have otherwise not been in town.

"It's not ideal but at least it's something to offer our audience," Bessette said.

For October, the company plans to



Actors Chris Messina and Betty Gabriel in Hudson Stage's virtual one-act last summer "Distance." The pandemic has forced local theater groups to get creative to stay in business.

present "The October Storm," a production it had planned for this past fall. It was also written by Allen and directed by Cezar Williams, a Yonkers native.

Cohen said there has been generosity

from the public because local theater is important to many in the community.

"I don't think people want to see any of these places close, and people realize that arts organizations don't start up overnight,"

he said.

But a great unknown is how quickly audiences will return for performances once public health officials deem it acceptable to go to the theater – even if the COVID-19 vaccinations efforts run more smoothly as the year progresses.

"I'm sure there will be a number of people who are hesitant to return," Liebman said. "I still won't go on an airplane. The bottom line is we're all going to suffer. Being inside is the one thing you don't want to do."

When Yorktown Stage does return, it will come back with its Main Stage production of "The Sound of Music," he said. There will also be eight events: two Main Stage offerings, three children's program shows, a young audience theater production for the entire family, an annual Halloween show and "A Christmas Carol."

Arc Stages is a little less dependent on ticket sales because its theater space is less than 100 seats, Cohen said. Still

Despite the struggles, it's been relatively minor compared to the actors and crew members, Liebman said. Without work, they don't get paid.

"The people who are really suffering are the other people who work on the production," Liebman said. "They're all independent contractors. I mean it's a large payroll – sets, costumes, props, stage managing, a choreographer, director and musical director, musicians. There's about 25 paid people on every production, and it's a shame."

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Pandemic Prompts Local Man to Use Bartending Skills to Start Website

By Lisa Mockel

Every cocktail has a story behind it.

Briarcliff Manor entrepreneur Evan Prish not only sells high-end bar accessories and shares classic and original cocktail recipes through his new online business, The Millennium Road, but includes a bar tool and glassware glossary and background information about some of the world's most beloved drinks.

Prish has arranged it so you're guaranteed to learn a thing or two when you visit The Millennium Road – maybe even a few fun facts you can impress your friends with the next time you get together for a drink – whether it be in person or virtually.

"I'd like to have people learn something in addition to providing unique and quality products," he said of his website, www.themillenniumroad.com, which launched on Nov. 23.

"It's really an experience we are trying to go for."

Did you know that the Bloody Mary, a Sunday brunch staple, is believed to be named after Queen Mary I of England, notorious for executing almost 300 religious dissenters during her reign? Or that the rye old fashioned has been around since the 1800s and has been referenced in the hit television shows "M*A*S*H" and "Mad Men" and the movie "Crazy, Stupid, Love" starring Steve Carell? The rye old fashioned

also happens to be one of Prish's all-time favorites.

Or maybe you've wondered why a particular drink should be shaken instead of stirred or why a martini glass is shaped the way it is. You can find the answers on The Millennium Road. You can also learn of the recipe for the Mayan Ruin, an original cocktail Prish created himself featuring tequila, vodka and Grand Marnier.

Prish, who enjoys playing the guitar, is a 2012 Briarcliff High School graduate. He graduated with a degree in international relations from the University of Miami in 2018. While taking a break from his studies, he earned a New York State certification in mixology and began bartending at several establishments in Westchester and New York City.

Prish said he loved the sense of community going to a bar and having a drink and decided he wanted to be at the center of it all.

"I think the whole bar culture is very important to society," he said. "People love having the experience of going somewhere and having (a cocktail) served to them... Just going to a bar and having a drink and enjoying the atmosphere and talking to the other local people."

He went on to work at the iconic Balthazar restaurant in Soho in the wine and spirits department and as an events and marketing associate where he wore multiple hats, from

managing inventory to helping create the cocktail menu to "moving beverages from the back of the house to the front of the house to quite literally into the customer's glass."

After college, he worked at the New York City corporate office of Michter's Distillery, traveling around the country and the world promoting its products. In 2018, he represented the company at Bar Convent Berlin, the world's largest trade fair for the bar and beverage industry. Prish described it as an experience unlike any other he'd had before.

"Anyone who's anyone in the spirits industry is there," he said.

Disappointed by the lack of quality bar tools on the market and disheartened by the bar and restaurant shutdowns caused by COVID-19 earlier this year, he looked for new ways to further his passion for bartending. Seeing an opportunity to help people satisfy their cocktail cravings from the comfort of their own home, Prish set out to find unique and high-quality bar tools and began promoting his new business on social media.

In 2021, Prish will be "doubling down" on content that he said will appeal to everyone from the seasoned bartender to someone newly interested in mixology. Plans include adding more original cocktail recipes and educational videos.

Prish is particularly proud of a stylish stainless steel martini spoon he designed himself and which is currently featured on the website. He hopes to add other designs in the near future, including a martini spoon



Evan Prish, the brains behind the new online business The Millennium Road, which provides bar tools and information about some of everyone's favorite drinks.

with a guitar head in addition to microfiber bar towels and copper bar products for a more luxurious feel.

The website also offers a five-piece premium stainless steel bar set in a custom Millennium Road gift box for \$65.99 as well as a smaller three-piece set for \$38.99. All items are dishwasher safe. Shipping is free on orders over \$50.

For more information, visit themillenniumroad.com.

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Kensico Cemetery Raises \$42G for Local Alzheimer's Association Chapter

In a year where so many have been hit financially, and charities have struggled to get donations, the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter has received \$41,810 in donations from Kensico Cemetery in Valhalla.

The cemetery raised the funds primarily through an appeal to previous sponsors of its annual 5K fundraiser to benefit the organization.

"We had talked about the possibility of a virtual event, but we opted not to because we thought what made our 5K run/walk successful was the idea of people gathering on our property, so with that off the table, we decided we would cancel the 5K this year," said Judith Mitchell, public relations consultant for Kensico Cemetery.

"But we did realize that the Alzheimer's Association still needed support for research and patient care, so we decided to take a chance and see if our sponsors, who have been so good in the past, could help us raise some money this year anyway."

"The whole idea in this particular year was to say to folks that we understand the challenge out there and how charities are in a difficult place because they can't hold events," said Raymond Planell, president of Kensico Cemetery.

"And most of our sponsors who had helped us through the years and our supporters responded very generously. One of the missions of the Alzheimer's Association is to help people suffering from Alzheimer's, who are at great risk if they get COVID and are also at risk from the isolation caused by it,"

Planell noted that some sponsors increased their donations this year. Thanks to their help, the cemetery's long-term fundraising goals for the organization were achieved.

"We wanted to be able to say that at the end of five years that we had contributed \$150,000, and we actually made that happen," Mitchell said.

The relationship between the nonprofit and the cemetery began five years ago, when the Kensico staff looked for an organization to utilize their historic and beautifully landscaped grounds.

"Our thought was that we wanted to open up our property to a charity so that they could conduct a fundraiser on our grounds," Mitchell said. "So, the question was: Who did we want to partner with? We reached out to the Alzheimer's Association, since their mission aligned with ours, with us both being in the memory business."

Around the same time, they were contacted by Jocylen Roberts



Mineola Lake at Kensico Cemetery, where the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter's annual 5K Run/Walk fundraiser normally ends. Last fall's 5K had to be canceled but the cemetery still helped raise nearly \$42,000 for the organization

Jocylen Roberts of Tarrytown, a volunteer and avid runner who had recently lost her grandmother to Alzheimer's. She helped the fundraiser take shape.

"We were able to draw on her background and participation in lot of runs and walks in the county," Mitchell said. "She was able to give us some guidance. Then she recruited her mother, Genee Roberts, who is an interior designer and did such a great job with the raffles. She spent hours going to all different kinds of gift stores and boutiques and restaurants gathering gift certificates and then organized them in baskets with a

theme. They became a highlight of the event. People looked forward to seeing what the raffle prizes were going to be."

Mitchell said the partnership was unprecedented for both parties.

"This was a first for Kensico, and I think it was a first for the Alzheimer's Association," she said.

"In our 150-year history, we had never opened to be used in this way. We wanted to do it in a way that reflected our ideas about hospitality. We opted for a hot catered breakfast to offer everyone along with the raffles. We wanted to distinguish ourselves in how we conducted an event to be how we conducted our

business."

Planell, who will soon retire from his role at Kensico, will remain involved as a member of its board of directors. He said the cemetery has a long history of community service.

"Kensico, over the course of many years, has tried to be a good neighbor, a good partner with charities in the area," Planell said. "We've supported many different local organizations. We've been very gratified to be involved with the Alzheimer's Association because of all the good work they do. It's been a great opportunity to reach out to people who might enjoy a nice event, but obviously there are so many people who have relatives and friends who are affected by Alzheimer's, and we wanted to continue to make the point that Kensico is here to help those in our neighborhood, and we want to continue efforts to help worthy nonprofits in our area."

The Alzheimer's Association's Hudson Valley Chapter serves families living with dementia in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester counties. To learn more about the programs and services offered locally, visit alz.org/hudsonvalley.

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'Beyond the Game' Enters 20th Season on White Plains Community Media

Pro Football Hall of Fame Coach Marv Levy reading poetry, "M*A*S*H" star Loretta Swit advocating animal rights, presidential historian Mark Will-Weber detailing not public policy of chief executives but their personal drinking habits.

These are just some of the shows on "Beyond the Game," which starts its 20th season in 2021 on White Plains Community Media via Altice 76, Fios 45 and www.wpcommunitymedia.org.

With over 5,000 episodes produced, the cable television program has stayed true to its theme of having guests talk about causes, endeavors or hobbies they hold dear. Started in 2002, "Beyond the Game" featured Major League baseball personnel who chatted about their pro careers and a unique interest.

"Padres coach Tim Lincecum shared tales of his off-season job – folk musician –former Met-Red Sox Mo Vaughn noted his affordable housing firm, once Yankee



John Vorperian, creator and host of White Plains Community Media's "Beyond the Game," speaks to Westchester native J.B. Smoove during a past episode. The show is entering its 20th season this year.

ace Dave Righetti described national improvements for the hearing-impaired

community," said John Vorperian, the program's creator and host.

Over the years, the guest list expanded into football, basketball, hockey and the music and entertainment worlds.

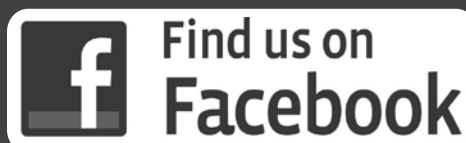
"We humans tend to put people in a box," said Vorperian, a published sports and cultural historian. "That somebody is an actor. She is a musician. And we go no further than the label placed on the person. But we should know better and 'Beyond the Game' does just that so the guest can and does go beyond their notable profession."

Of course, some guests do want to shine their sports knowledge. Rock musician

Eddie Money picked the 2014 NCAA Women's Final Four and assessed the New York Jets player depth chart. Emmy Award winner John Barbour recited the 1950s and '60s NHL Chicago Blackhawks lineups.

A memorable moment? Vorperian recalled speaking about the Boys & Girls Club's mission with Mount Vernon native J.B. Smoove.

"I had gotten him away from all by blurting out something about fashion tips," Vorperian said. "Well, about midway through our talk about his cause, he gave a newer smile and began to rattle off wardrobe ideas for me. You could say he really went beyond 'Beyond the Game.'"



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Looking Forward to More Culinary Experiences in the New Year



By Morris Gut

We all know 2020 was a difficult year and we owe it to ourselves to find some personal nirvana.

Leslie Allicks, founder of The Tea Experience, a mobile tea party catering service, may

have a soothing solution. She recently launched SimpliciTEA, an online presence for the retail sale of loose-leaf teas, and a tea of the month subscription box program.

Allicks grew up in St. Croix where there is a history of drinking and serving tea. She operated Lola's Tea House in Pelham from 2007 to 2012. She honed her expertise by attending tea school, visiting teahouses throughout New York and Connecticut, interviewing teahouse owners and joining the world tea trade association.

You can blend in with Allicks and The Tea Experience at 914-772-0126 or by visiting www.theteaexperience.com.

Forina Founder Featured on Food Network

Celebrity chef and restaurateur Guy Fieri has produced a new documentary for the Food Network titled "Restaurant Hustle 2020: All on the Line." It follows several well-known chef-owners from coast to coast as they make their way through the pandemic.

Popular Westchester chef Christian Petroni, a founder of the La Fortina restaurant group with units in Armonk, Stamford, Yonkers and Brooklyn, is one. Another New York City-based chef-owner is Marcus Samuelsson.

I caught the premier recently and thought that it was well done. Apparently,

they began shooting this early on in the pandemic, so you do get some perspective as the story moves forward. Four highly successful restaurant groups struggle through the crisis. By the end of the feature, they remain in a holding pattern, unsure what may happen to their business next.

That is exactly where the restaurant community is now. For many in the food service industry, it is already too late. Frustrating and sad. Those that are left forge ahead.

Turns out that Petroni used this platform to back out of the day-to-day business at his restaurants. COVID-19 burnout, I guess. He says he is planning to take off on what seems a mystical culinary journey in his custom-built pizza truck. Sounds a bit like "Chef," the movie.

If you missed it, check out www.foodnetwork.com/shows/restaurant-hustle-2020-all-on-the-line/episodes for future airings of the documentary.

White Plains Restaurant Month

Kicking off 2021, White Plains BID has launched White Plains Restaurant Month with a variety of dining options in the city's downtown. Restaurants are expected to offer prix fixe specials for lunch for \$20.95, dinner for \$30.95 and/or what is being called a second-tier enhanced dinner for \$40.95. Take-out is included.

If you want to take advantage, a list of participating eateries and their menus can be viewed at www.wpbid.com/restaurantmonth.

Enjoy Baccala at Vivolo

Seasonal baccala, also referred to as salt cod, has been a traditional staple in many ethnic kitchens, especially during the holiday season. Chef-owner Dean Vivolo of Trattoria Vivolo prepares several versions, and one of my favorites is baccala salad. It is delicious! Vivolo also prepares it fried or in a stew with potatoes.

His paglia e fieno con funghi was also incredibly flavorful with its mix of mushroom ragu, scallions, crispy prosciutto and pecorino cheese. We enjoyed it with a side of tender broccoli rabe.

Vivolo and his friendly staff are on top of their game. His robust regional Italian cuisine is served out of a restored diner just across from Harrison's Metro-North station. Sit at the counter, tuck into a booth or take a table in the rear greenhouse and enjoy the surprising contemporary and traditional flavors emanating from his kitchen: tasty thin-crust pizza; fresh old-fashioned meatballs and sausage; rabbit cacciatore; crostini di polenta, topped with wild mushrooms, gorgonzola and tomato sauce; lasagna Bolognese al forno; osso buco, tender braised veal shank; and an occasional roasted porchetta.

There's also a good wine list. Open seven days; parking is free. Trattoria Vivolo is located at 301 Halstead Ave. in



A basket of supplies from The Tea Experience.



The Tea Experience not only provides a variety of teas but a mobile catering service as well.

Harrison. Info: 914-835-6199 or visit www.trattoriavivolo.com.

Hudson Valley Bounty Online

Doorstep Market is an online platform for food and drink artisans throughout the Hudson Valley and across the country. It is a good source to shop for quality craft culinary products produced locally. It is sprinkled with profiles and appetizing product descriptions. A fine way to support local food service. To browse the offerings, visit <https://doorstep.market/hudsonriver>.

"Ratatouille" is Coming!

It is one of my favorite culinary-themed movies from 2007 produced by Disney/Pixar, albeit animated. It is an unlikely fable about Remy the Rat who dreams of becoming a Michelin star chef in an upscale restaurant kitchen in Paris. He sneaks into a bustling spot and begins to learn by hiding in a kitchen with a top chef. It is an extraordinary tour de force that brings smiles to everyone who sees it.

Emily Jacobsen, a Hartsdale schoolteacher, started a strong grassroots

movement of screening "Ratatouille" on the web. She composed and posted an early melody using TikTok as a platform, and it grew from there. It finally began screening on Jan. 1, and it was a great way to start 2021.

The premiere was a benefit for The Actors Fund. Work is ongoing for future airings. A Broadway musical is also planned after the pandemic has abated. We can only hope so. Info: Visit www.time.com/5925560/ratatouille-tiktok-musical.

Chowhound Great for Foodies

Homebound a lot more during the pandemic? Here is a safe way to keep in touch with the culinary world. If you are passionate about your cooking and dining and you enjoy sharing your experiences, you may want to participate on the online discussion forum Chowhound.com.

It was originally founded by Jim Leff and Bob Okumura in 1997, foodies with an unquenchable hunger for everything culinary. Chowhound.com now sports a new colorful format and offers quick posting and response times on many of your favorite food-related topics, along with posts from regions across the country and abroad. There is a Westchester/Connecticut board, Hudson Valley board, Manhattan board, New Jersey board, and so on, and cooking forums as well. You are welcome to join the conversation or just look in from time to time. There is no cost to register. Visit www.chowhound.com.

Please continue to follow COVID-19 protocols and stay safe.

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



The traditional baccala salad at Trattoria Vivolo in Harrison.

Don't Be Hesitant to Seek Direct Access if You Need Physical Therapy

In the past, in order to receive physical therapy patients were required to see a physician and obtain a prescription in advance. As of January 2015, all 50 states have adopted direct access in some shape or form. Direct access allows patients to see a physical therapist without a physician's prescription, thus making it easier to access physical therapy services.

Direct access is a great achievement by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). The APTA successfully argued before the medical boards that requiring a visit to a doctor was an unnecessary and costly step in the health care process. It not only delayed treatment, but increased costs to the patient and the insurance companies. The medical boards wanted the visit to continue to be required and argued that physical therapists didn't have the education to make a diagnosis.

Nowadays, physical therapy students must attend three to three-and-a-half years of graduate school, depending on the breakdown of the courses, following four years of a science-based



By James H. Cassell IV

undergraduate degree. Upon completion of the curriculum, students graduate with a Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree. The students then need to pass an exam to become licensed in their respective state.

The DPT curriculum has progressed greatly over the years. Originally, only a bachelor's degree was needed, but requirements

progressed to a master's degree. Now the curriculum is offered as a doctorate.

Curriculum varies slightly at each school, but all accredited programs are governed by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, ensuring that every program cover what is necessary to be an entry-level doctor of physical therapy. The curriculum includes cadaver dissection, movement analysis, kinesiology, pharmacology, examinations and interventions. This knowledge base prepares students to be autonomous practitioners.

New York is typically one of the more stringent states with respect to health care, and it is no different with direct access. New York did not begin allowing

direct access until 2006, whereas many states made this change in the 1980s and '90s. Furthermore, New York requires that a physical therapist have a minimum of three years full-time experience before they are allowed to see patients without a referral.

Many states have no experience requirement. The experience students receive after years of graduate school more than adequately trains providers to treat patients without further instruction from a physician.

As a further safeguard, patients in New York may only be treated for 10 sessions or 30 days, whichever comes first, before they are required to have a prescription.

Patients may wonder if using direct access could place an extra financial burden on them. Most health insurance companies in New York do not require that a patient have a prescription on file before seeing a physical therapist. These insurance companies will provide reimbursements for the visit regardless of whether or not the patient has a prescription on file.

There are a few cases where a prescription is required, mainly as a result of Medicare and worker's

compensation. These prescriptions must be updated regularly. Additionally, a small percentage of insurance policies do require a prescription. However, that requirement is inconsistent from one company to another, so it is advised that patients check their benefits prior to attending physical therapy. Some practices, such as ProClinix Sports Physical Therapy & Chiropractic, will check health insurance benefits for the patient.

Direct access has been a major step in the right direction toward getting patients timely care and decreasing financial burden on the health care system. As a patient, don't be afraid to seek physical therapy treatment

without a prescription, as the time spent waiting could be time spent healing.



Dr. James H. Cassell IV is a doctor of physical therapy at ProClinix Sports Physical Therapy & Chiropractic in Armonk. For questions regarding direct access, please call 914-202-0700 or e-mail admin@proclinix.com.

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

Old and New. A year has just ended, and a new one has just begun. To mark the year that passed into history, and to get ready for the new year, all the words in the quiz this week contain "old" or "new." Perhaps you will find an old favorite, or add some new words to your vocabulary. Happy New Year!

1. **stonewall** (v.)

A) to make insensitive B) stall C) dive down
2. **newsy** (adj.)

A) invisible B) intrusive C) informative
3. **newel** (n.)

A) a staircase support post B) a misadventure C) a fine example
4. **goldbrick** (v.)

A) to shirk one's duties B) have good luck C) take eagerly
5. **sinewy** (adj.)

A) swift B) thin C) vigorous
6. **folderol** (n.)

A) flashy finery B) foolishness C) a timeless tale
7. **kobold** (n.)

A) a fantastic idea B) a mischievous elf C) sudden enlightenment
8. **polder** (n.)

A) land reclaimed from the sea B) an insider C) formal politeness

- ANSWERS:
1. B. To engage in delaying tactics; stall

2. C. Full of news; informative

3. A. A post that supports a handrail at the bottom

4. A. To shirk one's assigned duties or responsibilities

5. C. Strong and vigorous

6. B. Foolishness; nonsense

7. B. An often mischievous household elf in German folklore

8. A. Low-lying land reclaimed from the sea, and protected by dikes, especially in the Netherlands

A Spiritual View

By Cantor Lilah Sugarman

In Hebrew, there are two words for happiness. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, of blessed memory, taught that these are two forms of happiness: osher and simcha.

Osher is used to describe the happiness we feel or experience on our own. This is the happiness we can experience independently from those around us. Maybe it's happiness sparked by doing something we love or the happiness we feel ignited by the gratitude for our lives. Developing this form of happiness has been especially important this year as we have had to distance ourselves physically.

Simcha, on the other hand, is the happiness that can only exist on the virtue of being shared. As Rabbi Sacks said, "It is a social state, a predicate of 'we' not 'I.'" Simcha is the

happiness we feel when surrounded by those we love or the happiness we feel celebrating together on a Zoom call. It has been equally important to harness and develop simcha this year by finding creative ways to share our happiness with others.

This coming year may we continue to be blessed with an abundance of both forms of happiness.

May you continue to cultivate a sense of osher – happiness – that we feel as an individual. May you also continue to create and feel happiness, simcha, that we feel when surrounded, virtually or in person, by friends and family.

Lilah Sugarman is the cantor at Congregation B'Nai Yisrael in Armonk and is part of the Armonk Faith Alliance. The alliance also comprises Hillside Church, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, St. Patrick's RC Church and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.



Taking the Plunge Into My 2021 Resolutions



By Nick Antonaccio

At the dawn of 2020, I suggested several resolutions for the new year to my readers. One was to abstain from all alcoholic beverages for the month of January. And I decided to undertake this resolution myself.

Well, I made it through Dry January with nary a drop of wine, bourbon or single malt scotch. I didn't succumb to a "Wet February," but then came March and the entire world's protocols, lifestyles and health concerns dramatically changed – including my wine habit. As the pandemic began to affect every phase of my professional and personal life, I found myself looking forward to wine with dinner, but more as stress relief than as an ethereal accompaniment to the meal.

Now, as 2021 unfolds, I've decided to renew my 2020 resolutions as presented in last year's column.

Herewith, I reprise that column.

We've become polarized in many aspects of our social, political and even dietary viewpoints. In the new year, I recommend, and have personally resolved, to seek a more centrist viewpoint and demeanor in

'I encourage you to join me in experimenting with changing select aspects of your personal life.'

my inward and outward lifestyle, all with the goal of seeking a more balanced perspective on life.

I encourage you to join me in experimenting with changing select aspects of your personal life, whether you conduct yourself at either end of the social/political spectrum or closer to the center. It's always beneficial to hit the reset button on occasion.

A few recommendations:

1. Are you viewing and reading every news bulletin, e-mail, text and tweet as soon as they appear on your smartphone's home screen banner? Experiment by spending one day a week (begin with one hour a day?) with your smartphone (or Apple Watch) at least 10 feet from your reach.
2. Have you experimented with a Meatless Monday? If so, try a meatless week. Over the past two years I've witnessed an undercurrent of dietary change in our country. The western diet of the Baby Boomer generation (high levels of fat, sugar, processed foods) has slowly been

rejected by younger generations. The Millennial and Generation Z population are shifting their diets to a more plant protein-based one, grounded in natural foods. Anecdotal evidence of this is the growing number of restaurant menus and food markets featuring prominently identified vegetarian and/or vegan dishes, produce or shelf items.

3. Are you enjoying a glass of wine with meals most evenings? Try consistently abstaining from any alcohol for several days or a week. Or join the growing ranks of consumers experimenting with the concept of a Dry January (and/or March or any month(s) you select). Wine in moderation has always been my hallmark. For me, abstention for any prolonged period diminishes the joy and enhancement that a glass of wine brings to a meal. But I've noticed the growing trend of Dry January across multiple generations of adults.

This phenomenon began in Great Britain over 10 years ago and has gained popularity in the United States over the last three years. Health-conscious adults are abstaining from alcohol during this month in an effort to curb

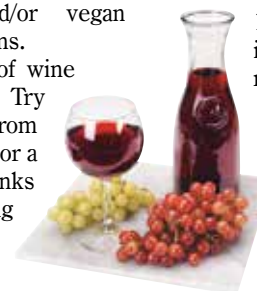
their consumption and seek a healthier diet.

Anecdotal results I've gleaned are all positive. In Britain, the University of Sussex has been tracking the results of those who practice Dry January. During and after the month-long abstention, they report a "host of health benefits, like improved sleep, more energy, and weight loss."

How to cope with the temptation of alcohol during the month? I recommend a glass of sparkling water, in place of wine, in a stemmed wine glass. And be sure not to engage in an excessively "Wet February."

The bottom line for me has always been moderation in consumption and drinking responsibly. Somewhere in these maxims lies a reasonable approach. As I'm at my desk penning this week's column, I've convinced myself it is appropriate that I too join the ranks of teetotalers for the month of January. And perhaps even cut back on my animal protein and social media consumption.

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



You Heard It Through the Grapevine

The Ways a Divorce Can Affect a Person's Will and Estate Plans

We make wills to protect our legacies and show our loved ones that their future is important to us.

Ending a marriage not only marks the end of a family unit, it also alters the direction of one's legacy. Divorce has the legal effect of removing an ex-spouse from a will as both an executrix and beneficiary. Legally, the ex-spouse is treated as if they predeceased the creator of the will.

Practically speaking, wills should have contingent beneficiaries and alternate executors named in the document. Following a divorce, simple wills that lack backups may trigger an estate plan that was not wholly anticipated and allow for the appointment of an executor that you did not want.

In the absence of a clear residuary clause with named contingent beneficiaries, simple wills that leave everything to an ex-spouse may end up leaving estate assets to a class of your closest living blood relatives as defined under New York law. A sibling that you no longer speak to may inherit a share of your estate.

Even if the will's creator was mindful about where the estate assets go should their spouse predecease them, many forget to name alternate fiduciaries

or name alternate fiduciaries that are older than themselves. With the divorced spouse being legally removed from the will and no viable alternative executor appointed, Surrogate Court has the discretion to allow a close blood family member to assume the role of a fiduciary for your will and estate.

Remember that sibling that you no longer speak to? If they petition the court to become your estate's fiduciary because your will only listed an ex-spouse as an executrix, then that sibling may be in charge of your estate and receive a commission out of your estate funds.

If there are minor children, then guardianship provisions would still remain in effect because those provisions relate to both spouses having passed away and a divorce would not impact this scenario.

Things get interesting when we review trusts, both under a will and as a reference to a pour-over will. Special needs trusts for a disabled child created under a will often name the other spouse as trustee.



By Alan D. Feller, Esq.

A divorce would remove that ex-spouse as trustee and elevate the alternate trustee.

Special needs trusts or other irrevocable trusts created outside a will would not have a divorced spouse automatically removed from that trust. Pour-over wills directing all probate assets to a separately created irrevocable trust may have an ex-spouse removed from just the will itself and not the related trust.

To avoid confusion, divorced spouses may clear up inconsistencies through properly drawn separation agreements

that address estate concerns. Making a new will is an intelligent decision in light of the issues created following a divorce.

Reach out to the professionals at Sloan & Feller to find out more information on divorce and estate planning.

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

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Sports

It's High Time We Stand Up, Champion for Student Athletes



By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports
Editor@Directrays

The buzz word being used by Section 1 football coaches during the 2021 spring phase of the coronavirus pandemic is "Advocate". Mahopac High football Coach Dominick DeMatteo has been a strong proponent of the notion of not just advocating, but tirelessly plotting, to salvage a spring high school football season in NYS for the Class of 2021-22, like much of the rest of the country did recently, and successfully, in the fall of 2020.

Like so many football coaches in and around NYS, DeMatteo knows the time for action is now, and he remains at the forefront of the social-media-driven agenda. Respected voices like DeMatteo, John Jay Coach Jimmy Clark, Byram Hills Coach Doug Car-

being. The survey was designed by NCAA Research in collaboration with the NCAA Sport Science Institute and the three national SAAC governing bodies. Over 37,000 student-athletes responded to the survey, spanning the three divisions, all sports and athletics conferences.

Remember, the amount of variables we are dealing with are insurmountable, thus clouding the facts. Here are some of their findings: A majority of participants reported experiencing high rates of mental distress since the outset of the pandemic. Over a third reported experiencing sleep difficulties, more than a quarter reported feeling sadness and a sense of loss, and one in 12 reported feeling so depressed it has been difficult to function, "constantly" or "most every day."

Unfortunately, four of five athletes surveyed indicated that both local regulations and a lack of access to appropriate facilities were barriers to athletics training. Other emotional barriers included a fear of exposure to COVID-19 (43%), lack of motivation (40%), feelings of stress or anxiety (21%), and sadness or depression (13%).

So, what's worse? Keeping our athletes in a bubble under lockdown, restricted to Xbox tantrums in their bedrooms for much of day, while depression and a lack of physicality wreaks internal havoc, or exposing them to the 5-6% chance (way less among youths)

of contracting COVID-19 -- while recovering in a matter of days? Simultaneously, we can limit exposure to grandpa and grandpa and others with comorbidities by steering clear until we get past this.

DeMatteo has met with the Section 1 grid coaches and recently met with Section 9 coaches to activate a plan that they hope can initiate a spring football season in 2021. The hope is to combine the effort between programs, players and communities throughout the state to send a very powerful, yet professional message to NYS leaders; that NYS coaches and those within their programs can do what surrounding states like New Jersey have already done, having played football cautiously and safely throughout the fall and winter of 2020.

"At this time there is no definitive timeline for authorization of "high-risk" sports to resume competition," said Dr. Robert Zayas, Executive Director of NYSPHSAA. "We'll continue working with state officials and our member schools to determine when it is safe to compete. Low and moderate (risk) sports can begin as previously authorized by the state."

People are growing despondent. Again, here's another example of "wait and see",

followed by another indefinite postponement before ultimately ending hope with an 11th-hour cancellation, which is the number one reason to advocate NOW before it falls on deaf ears.

"There seems to be some major communication breakdowns between political leaders regarding high school sports," said Coach Carpenter, a Brewster resident and former player at John Jay CR. "Coaches and parents have been asking for answers to legitimate questions from politicians for quite some

time now, and those questions remained unanswered. School districts in Section 1 are the best in the country and have done a fantastic job with keeping kids safe with in-person learning and the sports that were played in the fall. We

need to reach out to the local political leaders that represent us as New York citizens to finally get answers."

Futures are at stake here. Student athletes who had their seasons cancelled and/or postponed -- from football to cheer -- have their livelihoods on the line, their academic and potential career choices in jeopardy, not to mention their physical and emotional well being. It's time they stood up, alongside their parents, coaches and administrators to demand a safe process to #LetThemPlay again.

Everyone involved is begging state officials to please come to an agreement with school districts to allow student athletes to play "high-risk" sports, which haven't been proven to actually be "high-risk" by any measure of science or factual data.

"Our Advocacy Plan is an attempt to effectively advocate on behalf of our student-athletes to our NYS Representatives, Senators and Assemblymen (County Executives) for the opportunity to engage in interscholastic athletics," said DeMatteo, a former player at Roosevelt High.

Section 1 Athletic Directors are prepared to offer a safe playing environment with protocols in place to accomplish this. NYS has been on the sidelines watching everyone else compete, so now it's time for New York to become leaders, to do what's right for our student athletes, to join the endorsement for sports to be played cautiously yet safely.

"It would mean a lot to student athletes across the state," Somers All-NYS senior RB/LB Jack Kaiser said. "We have been playing with our friends since the fourth grade and our senior season was supposed to be special. Athletes need this season for recruiting badly just as much as they need it emotionally."

"We have been teased and told that we were going to play all year and the athletes are emotionally drained from it,"



Mahopac Coach Dom DeMatteo and his son Anthony are at the forefront of the "Advocacy Plan" for high risk sports like football.

Kaiser added, "especially all of the seniors, as it is their last season of high school football. Frustration grows as we see surrounding states play and have success with their seasons and the recruiting process. This whole delay of sports has put a lot of stress on athletes and a spring season would help us a lot."

What would help a lot is some vigilant direction on behalf of student athletes, stemming from the top of the NYSPHSAA food chain and throughout all levels of our political leadership. There are things that can be done; start by reclassifying lacrosse from high to moderate risk to throw laxers a bone and let them join baseball and softball on the field this spring. Finish by initiating a plan that enables "high-risk" sports like football, basketball and cheer to begin training for an abbreviated season in March, with limited fans and strict protocols; much like they have done in bordering New Jersey.

At the very least, the decision to compete in athletics should be made locally, allowing for each school entity to decide whether to proceed with a high-risk sports plan and which sports to sponsor, not by some political paper shuffler in Albany #LetThemPlay.



Section 1 football coaches are advocating for a plan that might enable Jack Kaiser's Somers Tuskers to face rival Yorktown in spring of 2021.



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

What local football fans wouldn't give to see Somers Coach Tony DeMatteo huddle his Tuskers up this spring for a 2021 season.

penter and the rest of the Section 1 Football Coaches Association, understand that if football coaches, players and parents sit around waiting for NYS Gov. Andrew Cuomo to make a decision regarding "high risk" sports -- like football -- is akin to a death sentence.

The hashtag #TimeToAdvocate is trending throughout the state as Section 1 and NYSPHSAA football coaches begin to form advocacy groups -- among their internal administrators, players and parents -- designed to trigger local politicians to do the right thing regarding our student athletes, who, perhaps, have suffered emotionally more than most since COVID-19 blew up in March and then reignited in the winter months while, coincidentally, influenza has all but disappeared.

Is it political? Who knows for sure. Is COVID-19 real? Yes, of course! But can we work around it in an effort to #LetThemPlay again? Studies suggest we can, and must, in order to get our athletes out of the current funk they find themselves in.

According to NCAA.org, the recently-released NCAA Student-Athlete COVID-19 Well-being Study was designed to examine the impact of the COVID-19 on student-athletes' current physical and mental well-

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