Hundreds in White Plains Join National Rally for Abortion Justice

By Bailey Hosfelt

Hundreds gathered Saturday afternoon in front of the Westchester County Courthouse in White Plains for a Westchester Women’s March rally to show their support for abortion justice and reproductive rights.

The rally, which featured engaging speeches from local leaders and action tables, joined more than 600 marches and rallies that took place nationally on Oct. 2 to mobilize and defend reproductive rights in the country ahead of the Supreme Court recovering on Oct. 4.

“Today, we join women and men across the country to ensure that our right to a safe, legal abortion is protected,” said Ximena Francella, co-leader of Indivisible.

Examined Media unveiled a new digital newsmagazine last week, offering readers free and paid subscription options to its new premium coverage.

The digital newsmagazine, Examined+, will be published on the emerging Substack e-mail newsletter and website platform. Differentiating the newsmagazine from Examined Media’s print and website publications is pivotal, said Digital Editorial Director Robert Schork, the former editorial director of the award-winning Westchester Magazine and 914INC.

“As an established group of trusted local newspapers, Examined Media’s roots and connections run long and deep in our community,” Schork said. “We’re looking to leverage those local connections and expertise to expand our service platform beyond traditional ‘hard’ news coverage with our newest offering, Examined+.”

Readers can envision a Time or Newsweek magazine journalistic treatment for local news compared to, say, a New York Times or Wall Street Journal report in distinguishing the unique approach of Examined+.

“By approaching the reporting, writing and delivery of our stories in that way, we’re combining all the visual bells and whistles and the editorial sensibilities that a magazine-style treatment can bring to bear,” Schork said. “This means going deeper, wider and longer in the storytelling while employing quality color photography, infographics and other multimedia elements when appropriate. Our goal is to inform, enlighten, and hopefully, have a little fun along the way.”

Subscribers to Examined+ will enjoy exclusive content delivered directly to their inbox several times a week, including in-depth news reports of important issues; local lifestyle pieces on topics ranging from food and dining and home and garden to the arts and entertainment; and insightful interviews with notable residents; and thoughtful commentary and analysis.

Examined Media, an award-winning local news publisher since 2007, is the first existing print and web newspaper in the world to start a new publication on the Substack platform. After winning a $75,000 cash advance from Substack this spring, Examined Media started a pilot version of the publication this summer and invested further in the project, hiring full-time reporter Bailey Hosfelt and a new team of veteran freelance contributors.

Subscribing to Examined+ provides readers with an opportunity to receive premium local content while also investing in the future of independent local journalism more broadly. Publisher Adam Stone said.

“We couldn’t be more excited to broaden our journalistic horizons into the newsmagazine space,” Stone said. “Our ambitious goal is to blaze a new trail in local journalism, decoding the best way to finance professionally-reported, fact-checked local

White Plains Students Receive 1,600 Masks

Westchester County has partnered with the Westchester County Superintendent’s Association to distribute thousands of child-sized masks at school districts across the county. The mask distribution is part of an ongoing effort by Westchester County to protect children who are not yet eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. One stop last week was at Eastview Middle School in White Plains where the county delivered 1,600 masks. White Plains Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Joseph Ricca said, “Throughout the pandemic, the partnership between the local school district and the Westchester County government has been truly amazing.”

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Bond Financing Approved for Senior Learning Community

By Rick Pezzullo

The Board of Directors of Westchester County’s Local Development Corporation (LDC) last week voted final approval of tax-exempt bond financing for the development of a senior learning community on the SUNY Purchase campus.

The LDC increased the bond financing on September 28 to approximately $385 million but not to exceed $400 million.

“We are very pleased to provide tax-exempt bond financing for this exciting and innovative senior living development to be built on the SUNY Purchase campus,” said Westchester County Executive George Latimer. “I applaud the Purchase Senior Living Community and the Building Trades of Westchester for negotiating a Project Labor Agreement as part of this project. As Westchester County’s senior population continues to grow, it is important that we have communities such as this so our seniors can remain in the county.”

“We want to applaud SUNY Purchase and all of the team for moving this project forward. It’s a great project and one that will be a great addition to the county for many years to come. We appreciate the intergenerational model, and we hope it is a model for the rest of the country,” said LDC Chair Joan McDonald.

Last month, the LDC amended preliminary approval of the issuance of tax-exempt bonds of approximately $385 million not to exceed $400 million. Project developer Purchase Senior Learning Community LLC sought the increase due to higher construction costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phase 1 of the project is comprised of 220 independent living units, 18 assisted-living beds, 16 memory care beds, underground parking, a separate assisted living and memory care building, 46 single-family and duplex homes, all totaling approximately 552,000 square feet of space, together with supporting infrastructure and property site improvements.

The project, which will be built in two phases, is located on approximately 40-acre parcel of land located on the campus of Purchase College at 735 Anderson Hill Road. The LDC assists Westchester not-for-profit organizations in securing tax-exempt bond financing benefits. These benefits are provided at no cost or risk to the taxpayers of Westchester County. Since its inception in 2012, LDC has assisted not-for-profit organizations in securing tax-exempt bond financing totaling more than $400 million.

Hundreds in White Plains Join National Rally for Abortion Justice

continued from page 1

New Rochelle and the co-chair of Hispanic Democrats of Westchester “We demand dignity and respect.”

Tesa Young, a community activist and member of the Westchester Women’s Agenda and the Westchester Black Women’s Political Caucus, shared in her remarks that 77 percent of Americans don’t want to see Roe v. Wade overturned, despite increasing attempts from both conversative states and politicians to reverse the landmark 1973 decision.

“There is no state in the country where banning abortion is popular,” Young said.

“Yet since 2011, more than 480 abortion restrictions have been enacted in states making abortion inaccessible for people with low income and Black and brown people already forced to navigate a legacy of racist and discriminatory systems.”

In addressing the crowd, Cheryl Brannan, founder of Sister for Sister International, spoke about access to reproductive health care, Black maternal mortality rates and voting rights — and the interconnected nature between them all.

“There is a relationship between voter suppression and reproductive rights,” Brannan said, underscoring the importance of getting the John Lewis Voting Rights Act passed.

Congressman Mondaire Jones (D-17) praised Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi’s leadership in passing the Women’s Health Protection Act and spoke about the Supreme Court’s current makeup, which is set to hear arguments on Mississippi’s ban on abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy — a direct challenge to Roe v. Wade — on Dec. 1.

“Of course, the reason we are here is that we know the Supreme Court of the United States, that far-right 6-3 supermajority, has shown itself not only to be hostile to democracy but to be hostile to the laws that even Congress enacts,” Jones said, sharing that the Judiciary Act of 2021, which he introduced in April, looks to add four seats to the Supreme Court.

“We must restore balance to the Court, and we must salvage reproductive freedom for everyone,” Jones said.

Congressman Jamaal Bowman (D-16) said that Jones’ bill to expand the Supreme Court is exactly what is needed right now.

“This conservative Supreme Court will uphold what happens in Texas and will uphold what happens across the country if we don’t do something about it,” Bowman said.

Bowman continued that the fight isn’t just about reproductive rights, but it’s also about equal pay, the maternal health and maternal morbidity crisis for Black women and systemic racism in the health care system.

“In the dead of the night, the Supreme Court failed millions of Texans and turned back on 50 years of precedent, rendering Roe v. Wade practically meaningless in Texas,” Vincent Russell, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic, said, underscoring that BIPOC individuals, those with low incomes and people in rural areas will be most drastically impacted by the six-week abortion ban in the state.

“This is the loudest alarm yet that abortion rights are in grave danger in Texas and across the country,” Russell said. “This bill is extreme and is part of a national agenda and access to abortion in this country.”

New York State Senator Alessandra Biaggi (D-55) highlighted that New York is not only a reproductive sanctuary state but also a place that other states look to for guidance, leadership and safety. Biaggi said passing Senate Bill S758, which would establish an abortion access fund in New York and provide funds to make abortion not only a right but also accessible for all.

“It is essential, and it is what New York can do next,” Biaggi said.

Small groups of pro-life counter protesters were also in attendance at the rally, standing on the outskirts of the crowd. But they were significantly outnumbered by those there to show their support for safe, legal access to abortion.

Realtor Chosen to Market Berkeley College in White Plains

By Rick Pezzullo

RM Friedland has announced it is marketing Berkeley College’s Westchester campus at 99 Church Street in downtown White Plains.

Berkeley is closing its operations in Westchester County and consolidating to its New York City location. The property features two detached buildings, a four-story, 110,000-square-foot office building with full basement at 99 Church Street and a six-story dormitory style residential building at 6 Cottage Place with 55 dormitory units that have 140 beds.

The office building, which is owned by Berkeley 99 Church Street LLC and formerly occupied by Berkeley College, is partially leased. The building is ideally situated in institutional user who may also need the dormitory units in the residential building, equally attractive to a developer as the nearly one-acre site could accommodate an estimated 136,000 sf of new development assuming the demolition of all existing buildings and could also be attractive to a value-add investor as the office building currently has four tenants leasing a total of 24,103 square feet of space.

“This outstanding property offers a wide range of benefits for a purchaser including an excellent location in the Central Business District, easy access to mass transit, great demographics and a rare opportunity to be part of the momentum of a vibrant and booming downtown,” said John Barrett of RMF’s Investment Division. “This property could be perfectly suited for repurposing, a trend which has become a prominent one in the Westchester office market,” added Chris O’Callaghan of RMF’s office division.

RM Friedland, which celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, is the largest commercial real estate brokerage company in Westchester County.

Examiner+ Digital Newsmagazine Launches

continued from page 1

Small News is Big News

By Rick Pezzullo

Readers can access some of the content on Examiner+ for free, but a paid subscription delivers access to all of the newsmagazine’s journalism. A paid subscription costs $5.99 per month, or $49 for the year. There’s also an option for the publication’s biggest supporters to invest $99 or more to become “Examiner Ambassadors,” a way to signal support for local journalism and receive occasional perks, like E+ swag and newsletter shoutouts.

Charter membership comes with benefits. Subscribing to the publication today locks in introductory rates for the lifetime of a subscription. See special print section supplement inside for excerpts of newsmagazine articles from our pilot publication.

Visit www.examiner-plus.com and go to subscribe to join our Examiner+ digital newsmagazine community.
COVID Cases Decline as Officials Hope Delta Impact Lessens

By Martin Wilbur and Rick Pezzullo

A noticeable drop in the number of COVID-19 cases locally and throughout the state has officials hopeful that the summer surge fueled by the Delta variant may be waning.

Westchester reported that the active cases have fallen to 1,668 as of Sunday, a drop of nearly 500 cases from a week earlier. For the five-day period ending Oct. 2, the statewide positivity rate was less than 3 percent each day, the first time that has occurred since July.

“We hope that this is the trend, but we still have to see what happens as the weather gets colder, as we move indoors and the disease spread more easily indoors than outdoors,” Westchester County Executive George Latimer said. “So we’re by no means through the worst of this, but we are progressing ahead as we think these numbers are very encouraging.”

There had been a late August high of 2,836 active cases. COVID-19-related hospitalizations in Westchester have dropped to 52 less than half of the 110 from late August.

Another encouraging sign is Westchester has reached an 89.1 percent vaccination rate. As of Sunday, there were 735,541 residents 18 years old and up who have received at least one dose of a vaccine, while 688,317 have completed the series, Latimer said.

In the region, Westchester had an infection rate on Saturday of 1.3 percent, the lowest in the seven-county Mid Hudson region.

Putnam County stood at 2.9 percent as the active number of cases has risen to 158 as of last week. There are two patients hospitalized in Putnam with COVID-19. Its vaccination rate is 83.6 percent, according to the state tracker.

In Putnam County, the Department of Health recently approved to give a third dose of a COVID-19 shot, leaving about 6,000 residents still unvaccinated.

“The most effective way for people to get their shots,” said Councilwoman Vanessa Agudelo. “They have a willingness to partner with community leaders to identify people who haven’t received their shots.”

Neighbors Link Executive Director Carola Bracco and Chief Strategy and Development Officer Laura Newman told the council they have already successfully assisted about 1,200 individuals get the COVID-19 vaccine.

“We have not come across many people who are adamantly opposed to getting vaccinated,” Bracco said.

As part of its efforts, Neighbors Link will identify congregate events, community leaders and local vaccinated people to create peer-to-peer educational outreach and partner with Peekskill companies that have high numbers of immigrant employees to provide education to owners and possible vaccine points of distribution for workers.

Bracco noted Neighbors Link will also offer incentives to try to entice individuals to get the vaccine.

“I think the Neighbors Link proposal sounds terrific,” said Councilman Dwight Douglas. According to data provided by Westchester County, Peekskill has had 4,204 cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic started. There were 54 reported active cases in the city.

Peekskill, Neighbors Link Partner on Vaccinations

The City of Peekskill has entered into a contract with Neighbors Link to help increase the COVID-19 vaccination rate for Hispanic residents.

Under a professional services agreement unanimously approved by the Common Council on Sept. 27, the Mount Kisco-based immigrant advocacy organization will be compensated up to $30,312 to implement a variety of outreach methods in the city now through June 30, 2022.

City officials have estimated that 40 percent of Peekskill’s population is of Hispanic origin. City Manager Andy Stewart said almost 75 percent of city residents have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 shot, leaving about 6,000 residents still unvaccinated.

“I’m really excited about this partnership,” said Councilwoman Vanessa Agudelo. “They have a willingness to partner with community leaders to identify people who haven’t received their shots.”

Neighbors Link Executive Director Carola Bracco and Chief Strategy and Development Officer Laura Newman told the council they have already successfully assisted about 1,200 individuals get the COVID-19 vaccine.

“I have seen this one-on-one work is the most effective way for people to get vaccinated,” Bracco said. “We have not come across many people who are adamantly opposed to getting vaccinated.”
Mt. Kisco, New Castle Must Pay Country Club Tax Cert Settlement

By Martin Wilbur

The country club had challenged the village’s assessments from 2017 through 2021. According to an outline of the settlement from Village Assessor Roger Miller, 104 acres and 13 of the 18 holes are located in Mount Kisco but the clubhouse and all amenities are in New Castle. The country club’s appraiser argued the property is worth $6.5 million.

Under the settlement, the property was worth $8 million for 2017 and 2018 and $8.15 million for 2019 through 2021. In the settlement, Mount Kisco was able to increase its allocation of the total value of the property from 30 to 35 percent for the years in question and 40 percent in the future. “The assessment for country clubs has changed and it’s become very advantageous to the country club themselves,” said Mount Kisco Village Attorney Whitney Singleton. “They’re not taxed at their highest and best use; they’re taxed basically on a contract that assumes people are just going to come, pay to play on the golf course and leave, and really that’s not a reality for golf clubs. That’s not why people go there.”

The settlement comes on the heels of last year’s court decision in favor of Sleepy Hollow Country Club against the towns of Ossining and Mount Pleasant. According to an outline of the settlement released, then the details will be released. Miller said for Mount Kisco, which negotiated in tandem with New Castle, it is preferable to avoid lengthy litigation. “In our opinion this settlement is reasonable and favorable to a potential trial, given market conditions, the specifics of this property, and the methodology required for golf course valuation for tax purposes,” Miller wrote to the Village Board. “It is additionally favorable given the increased allocation we were able to obtain for Mount Kisco.”

Columbus Day Celebration This Sunday in Mt. Kisco

The Italian American Club of Northern Westchester is having its annual Columbus Day Celebration on Sunday, Oct. 10 starting at 11 a.m. at 104 Main St. in Mount Kisco. The celebration will be followed by an Italian Feast. The celebration will last until 5 p.m. All are welcome.

The celebration will include the Legato Latino Club and music by “Pane e Cioccolato.” From 11 a.m. to noon at the Columbus statue there will be our Columbus Day Celebration on Sunday, Oct. 10 starting at 11 a.m. at 104 Main St. in Mount Kisco. The celebration will be followed by an Italian Feast. The celebration will last until 5 p.m. All are welcome.

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Several Residents Remain Skeptical of Mt. Pleasant Zoning Proposal

By Martin Wilbur

Several speakers at a public hearing last week criticized Mount Pleasant’s proposed rezoning of its downtown hamlets fearing a concentration of mixed-use developments would alter the town’s character and negatively impact quality of life.

The Sept. 28 hearing on the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) on the form-based zoning code for the hamlets and the town’s Comprehensive Plan update was preceded by a long-awaited presentation from planning consultant Patrick Cleary. He explained the rationale behind the proposed rezoning in the town’s C-NR zoning districts, which are confined to the business hamlets of Thornwood, Hawthorne and Valhalla, and the form-based code, which stresses appearance over specific uses so the town can make its commercial centers more attractive.

Cleary said a key objective is to encourage local folks to do these developments, not necessarily outside developers to come in and assemble a block to do a larger building.” Clearly said.

One of the skeptical residents was Kensico Road resident Gloria Newman. Newman said her neighborhood currently has a small number of commercial uses and she feared that the proposal could invite builders who would trigger an influx of new residents in areas that are relatively quiet today.

She also expressed concern that a development like the 70 Memorial Plaza project in Pleasantville, which she called “disgusting,” would come to Mount Pleasant.

“We need to encourage local developers to come in and assemble a block to do a larger building,” Clearly said.

Cleary said the zoning proposal threatens the town’s single-family home districts. He urged the board to update the Comprehensive Plan, which hasn’t been done since 1970, and eliminate consideration of the form-based zoning.

An integral part of the form-based zoning is bringing in so-called affordable housing, and also what can be called low-income housing, and increasing the population density of these hamlets, and that wasn’t really addressed in this presentation,” Russell said. “I think the impetus for this has come from the (town’s) Industrial Development Agency and not from some groundswell of public opinion within the town.”

Cleary said the zoning proposal would be beneficial to the community.

“By putting the development in the hamlets, we are protecting the residential neighborhoods in the community,” he said.

Conservation Advisory Council Chairman Steven Kavee responded that there is no incentive for a developer to build large quantities of affordable housing, although one of the town’s challenges is to find a way to incorporate workforce units into the housing stock.

Kavee, a supporter of form-based zoning, said it’s a tool to encourage growth in specific areas of town. The town should also be focusing on green building standards.

“The form-based code portion of the Comprehensive Master Plan is one good step that we hope will encourage growth along transportation corridors, increase housing diversity with well-executed design, and most importantly, incorporate green building construction,” he said.

The hearing was adjourned until the Town Board’s next regular meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 12.

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An Evening With Bestselling Author Zakiya Dalila Harris This Thursday

Castle Conversations events are back! Manhattanville College is kicking off a new year of the popular program this Thursday at O’Byrne Chapel with an evening with Zakiya Dalila Harris, author of instant bestseller “The Other Black Girl,” in conversation with Lauren Christensen, senior staff editor at The New York Times Book Review.

Harris’s premiere novel speaks to issues of representation and power in the world of publishing.

Harris quickly rose to fame this summer off a new year of the popular program Castle Conversations are back! Manhattanville College is kicking part of a program this week at Manhattanville College to discuss her novel.

Zakiya Dalila Harris, author of The New York Times Bestseller “The Other Black Girl,” will be part of a program this week at Manhattanville College to discuss her novel.

Masks are required.

Manhattanville College is located at 2900 Purchase St. in Purchase.

Bonding Approved for Senior Project at SUNY Purchase

The Board of Directors of Westchester County’s Local Development Corporation (LDC) voted last week to approve tax-exempt bond financing for the development of a senior learning community on the SUNY Purchase campus.

Financing for the project would be about $385 million with a limit of $400 million. The vote took place at the LDC’s Sept. 28 meeting.

“We are very pleased to provide tax-exempt bond financing for this exciting and innovative senior living development to be built on the SUNY Purchase campus,” Count Executive George Latimer said. “I applaud the Purchase Senior Living Community and the Building Trades of Westchester for negotiating a project labor agreement as part of this project. As Westchester County’s senior population continues to grow, it is important that we have communities such as this so our seniors can remain in the county.”

Last month, the LDC amended preliminary approval of the issuance of the tax-exempt bonds. Project developer Purchase Senior Learning Community LLC sought an increase due to higher construction costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We want to applaud SUNY Purchase and all of the team for moving this project forward. It’s a great project and one that will be a great addition to the County for many years to come. We appreciate the intergenerational model, and we hope it is a model for the rest of the country,” said LDC Chair Joan McDonald.

Phase 1 of the project is comprised of 220 independent living units, 18 assisted living beds, 16 memory care beds, underground parking, a separate assisted living and memory care building and up to 46 single-family and duplex homes, totaling about 552,000 square feet. The project will also include supporting infrastructure and property site improvements.

The project, which will be built in two phases, is located on about a 40-acre parcel located on the campus of Purchase College at 735 Anderson Hill Rd.

The LDC assists Westchester nonprofit organizations in securing tax-exempt bond financing benefits. These benefits are provided at no cost or risk to the taxpayers of Westchester County.

Since its inception in 2012, LDC has assisted nonprofit organizations in securing tax-exempt bond financing totaling over $400 million.
Westchester Initiates Mobile Crisis Unit to Respond to Mental Health Calls

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County is launching a mobile response team that will contain specially trained members to deal with people who are experiencing mental health and behavioral issues.

The initiative, called Project Alliance, will include 911 dispatch diversion training, enhanced training for EMTs responding to behavioral health calls, enhancement of a countywide behavioral health response line, crisis intervention team training and mobile response teams.

Police may respond alongside the personnel or the mobile teams will head out on their own depending on the nature of the call.

County Executive George Latimer said incidents in Westchester County and throughout the nation that were primarily mental health matters have had deadly consequences because first responders were not specifically trained in helping people with mental health issues.

“This is a bold step, it’s an innovative approach, there are patterns of things that we’re doing that other counties have adopted at various times and we hope to pull it together and make it work and work effectively,” Latimer said.

The first three of what will be eight mobile units will launch in their respective counties of Ossining, Peekskill, White Plains/Mount Vernon and Yonkers. Each team’s territory will also include neighboring municipalities so the entire county will be covered when fully implemented, Latimer said.

Finding appropriate responses for calls that involve people suffering from mental health issues was a key recommendation from the county’s Police Reform & Reimagining Task Force, one of 52 suggestions that the group issued last year. It followed former governor Andrew Cuomo mandating that all jurisdictions in New York State operating a police department examine their operations and submit a plan for improvement in the wake of the George Floyd murder in Minneapolis.

Representatives across multiple county agencies, including the Office of Community Mental Health, the Department of Public Safety, Emergency Services and the Department of Social Services collaborated on the plan.

Task force co-chair Mayo Bartlett said it will markedly improve services to get people the help that they need while preventing police officers from being forced to handle situations they may not be trained for.

“The beauty of it, in my estimation, is that it will permit every person who’s in Westchester County, there will be available appropriate services, mental health services 24 hours a day, no matter where you live in Westchester County, and that when you make a call, and that call is regarding a loved one who may be in need of mental health assistance, that there will be trained 911 operators who will be able to properly route that call so that the appropriate services will be sent to your home,” Bartlett said.

Others within county government said they believe Project Alliance could become a national model. It is patterned after a program developed in Eugene, Ore. more than 30 years ago called the Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets, which seeks to help people with mental illness, homelessness and addiction.

Michael Orth, commissioner of the Westchester County Office of Community Mental Health, said critical resources for those types of issues have not been made a priority in part because of the stigma of mental health issues. Community members with substance abuse issues and developmental intellectual disabilities often fail to receive the services they need.

“All this culminates in unmet needs, repeated calls to the police as well as an over-representation of people experiencing a behavioral health crisis entering hospital emergency rooms, jails and shelters,” Orth said.

Project Alliance also received support from county police. It will be a valuable tool for the police and the public, said Terrance Raynor, the county’s deputy commissioner for public safety.

“...The implementation of this project means mental health experts will employ their skill sets in the field where they have an immediate opportunity to assist a person in crisis,” Raynor said. “Having a mobile response, the mobile crisis response teams in place, will free uniformed police officers to respond to other calls for service.”

Westchester Initiates Mobile Crisis Unit to Respond to Mental Health Calls

County Executive George Latimer announces last week the formation of trained mobile response teams to respond to mental health emergencies rather than relying on police to address crises.

Director, Business Development and Sales sought by Certified Origins, Inc. (Port Chester, NY) to create & implement a strategic plan to mkt products & dvlp new business across US & int’l mkt.

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# THE POLITICIANS WON’T TELL THE TRUTH SO HERE IT IS:
## THE TOWN OF CORTLANDT BUDGET, A DECADE OF DEFICITS

### Town of Cortlandt, New York
#### Changes in Net Position

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### General Revenues
- **Taxes:**
  - Real property taxes: 21,075,000
  - Other taxes: 2,075,000
  - Sales taxes: 325,000

### General Expenditures
- **General operations:** 21,075,000
- **Pension and retirement:** 2,075,000
- **Interest:** 325,000

### Summary
- **Total General Revenue:** 23,475,000
- **Total General Expenditure:** 23,875,000
- **Net Change in Net Position:** (400,000)

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**Paid for by Danial Pagano.**

**Contact Danial Pagano at danialpaganolaw@optonline.net**
## THE POLITICIANS WON’T TELL THE TRUTH SO HERE IT IS:

**THE TOWN OF CORTLANDT BUDGET, A DECADE OF DEFICITS**

**TOWN OF CORTLANDT, NEW YORK**

Fund Balances of Governmental Funds

Last Ten Fiscal Years

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<td>5,221,839</td>
<td>5,463,294</td>
<td>5,192,795</td>
<td>4,180,285</td>
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<td>Total all other governmental funds</td>
<td>$5,435,598</td>
<td>13,117,342</td>
<td>11,886,165</td>
<td>11,539,452</td>
<td>11,781,714</td>
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<td>Total governmental funds</td>
<td>$10,836,270</td>
<td>18,459,997</td>
<td>17,108,004</td>
<td>17,002,746</td>
<td>18,093,824</td>
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### Revenues:

- **Real property taxes**: $21,507,036
- **Other tax items**: $2,078,992
- **Non-property taxes**: $4,486,305
- **Departmental income**: $8,005,767
- **Intergovernmental charges**: $227,253
- **Use of money and property**: $145,700
- **Fines and forfeitures**: $128,940
- **Sale of property and compensation for loss**: $3,500
- **State aid**: $2,494,436
- **Federal aid**: $60,249
- **Miscellaneous**: $147,643

### Expenditures:

- **General government support**: $5,978,397
- **Public safety**: $2,620,916
- **Health**: $1,031,264
- **Transportation**: $4,275,569
- **Economic assistance and opportunity**: $622,794
- **Culture and recreation**: $3,495,112
- **Home and community services**: $10,709,164
- **Employee benefits**: $8,255,333
- **Debt service**: $811,908
- **Capital outlay**: $11,747,851

### Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures:

- **Excess (deficiency)**: $(8,494,672) (1,161,966) (542,559) (1,091,078) (1,400,297) (1,312,140) (1,111,498) 578,238 (142,522) (2,018,259)

### Net change in fund balances:

- **Net change**: $(7,623,727) 1,351,993 105,258 (1,091,078) 2,131,852 (1,025,438) (2,961,522) 578,238 (142,522) (2,018,259)

### Debt service as a percentage of non-capital expenditures:

- **Debt service**: 2.1% 2.9% 4.3% 3.9% 4.2% 3.8% 4.1% 4.2% 4.7% 4.8%

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*Paid for by Danial Pagano.*

*Contact Danial Pagano at danielpaganolaw@optonline.net*
Police Blotter

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

Sept. 20: Patrol responded to a commercial area on Elliott Way at 9:44 a.m. on a report of criminal mischief to a fence at Senasqua Park. DPW was notified and a report was to be filed.

Sept. 21: Patrol responded to Scenic Drive West at 7:13 p.m. after a woman was heard screaming from an unknown location. The area was checked and it was found to be people who were at a nearby playground.

Sept. 22: Report of a group of youths on Old Post Road South who had thrown what appeared to be crabapples at a vehicle at 2:40 p.m. The area was checked with negative results.

Sept. 22: Patrol responded to an area on Elliott Way at 6:24 p.m. for a report of a kayaker on the Hudson River in distress. The parties were located on the river and assisted to safety by another Westchester agency. The parties refused medical assistance.

Sept. 22: Patrol responded to ShopRite at 1 p.m. on a report of two past larcenies of items from the store. There was no value available of the items stolen, but it appears to be the same subject(s) involved in both incidents. No report was filed at this time.

Sept. 26: Report of a group of motorcycles traveling at a high rate of speed on southbound Route 9 at 2 p.m. The area was canvassed with negative results. Ossining Police Department was notified.

North Castle Police Department

Sept. 24: A Pheasant Drive resident reported at 9:01 a.m. that while getting her child on the bus for Coman Hill Elementary School earlier this date, a gold Mercedes SUV sped through the school bus stop sign while her child was getting on the bus. The complainant wanted this to be made a matter of record in case the same vehicle does it again in the future.

Sept. 25: A party arrived at headquarters at 9:39 a.m. to request that we take possession of and destroy three pellet gun revolvers. Inventory was secured, documented and placed into a temporary evidence locker.

Sept. 25: Report of a loud party occurring on Washington Avenue at 6:46 p.m. The responding officer reports a mariachi band was playing, but has since ceased and is vacating the residence. Matter adjusted.

Sept. 27: A Bayberry Road resident reported at 8:34 a.m. that he believes he has a rattlesnake inside his vehicle at the listed location. The responding officers reported no snake was present; condition unfounded.

Pleasantville Police Department

Sept. 25: Criminal mischief was reported at 11:52 p.m. after an outer door was broken on Pleasantville Avenue. The matter is under investigation.

Sept. 29: A suspicious person was reported on Manville Road at 6 a.m. The matter is under investigation.

Sept. 30: A 39-year-old man was arrested at 12:14 p.m. on a warrant from other districts. The suspect was turned over to another agency.

Yorktown Police Department

Sept. 29: Victor Toribio, 27, of New York City, was charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended registration and several traffic infractions at 5:40 p.m. following a stop on Route 6 for traveling through a red light.

Obituary

Charles Vilarino

Charles J. Vilarino, a Yorktown Heights resident and a foreman for the Yorktown Highway Department, died Sept. 24. He was 58.

He was born Dec. 31, 1962, in Brooklyn. He is survived by his wife, Lenz; his mother, Anna; his two daughters, Marisa and Alyssa; his brother, Manny (Katherine); two sisters, Ann Marie Macchia (Tony) and Dolores Pogact (Joseph); several nieces and nephews; and his beloved dog, Thor. He was predeceased by his father Manuel.

His friends were extremely cherished by him. Charles was an avid softball and hockey player and Mets and Giants fan, and most important to him was his family.

Three Arrested in New Castle in Stolen Car Chase

By Martin Wilbur

A Danbury man and two accomplices were taken into custody last Wednesday afternoon in New Castle after county police were alerted that there was a stolen BMW being driven in Mount Kisco.

On Sept. 29, at 1:10 p.m., the Real Time Crime Center at county police headquarters issued an alert that the vehicle, a 2011 BMW sedan reported stolen by a Waterbury, Conn. resident, was traveling on North Bedford Road in Mount Kisco, according to county police.

As county police officers responded, a parking authority employee who heard the alert reported that he had observed the vehicle in a gas station at North Bedford Road and Barker Street.

When an officer pulled into the gas station, the driver fled, even though the vehicle was being fueled at the time, police said. A gas station attendant was knocked to the ground and the gas pump hose was torn away from the pump. The attendant suffered cuts and bruises.

The driver fled the wrong way on North Moger Avenue and onto Route 133. The driver and two occupants abandoned the vehicle at Route 133 and Garey Drive in New Castle, police said.

Westchester County and New Castle police officers established a perimeter and began a search. A female passenger was quickly taken into custody.

County Police Officer Brian Tierney and his tracking canine Genesee, a bloodhound, commenced a track from the stolen car that took them down Garey Drive, into a backyard and adjacent wooded area, and then into the backyard of another Garey Drive home. Two men were found hiding in a patio area and were taken into custody.

The driver, Brandon McLaughlin, 27, of Danbury, Conn., was charged with second-degree assault and third-degree criminal possession of stolen property, both felonies; reckless driving, a misdemeanor; and seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, both violations.

The passengers, Orlando Martinez, 36, of Waterbury, Conn., and Diane Patterson, were each charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance. The possession charge was lodged against all three suspects because several glassine bags of a narcotic substance containing fentanyl was found in the vehicle after it was impounded.

Martinez and Patterson were booked at the Mount Kisco county police precinct and released on their own recognizance. They are due in Mount Kisco Justice Court on Nov. 4.

McLaughlin was held overnight pending arraignment in Mount Kisco Justice Court.
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A Leader with Real-World Management Experience

VOTE FOR
Someone with a Demonstrated Love for Yorktown

VOTE FOR
SERGIO ESPOSITO
FOR TOWN BOARD

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• Former IT Analyst conducting piracy investigations for the Motion Picture Association
• Bachelor’s Degree in Philosophy and Political Science from Iona College

LOCAL VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP
• Current President of the Yorktown Chamber of Commerce
• Current Member of the Yorktown Ethics Board
• Current Volunteer Firefighter with the Yorktown Heights Fire District
• Current Volunteer Fund Raiser for Camp Sunshine to benefit local children with life-threatening diseases — raising over $40k.
• Former Volunteer with Yorktown Athletic Club

VOTE FOR SERGIO ESPOSITO ON NOVEMBER 2

WWW.ESPOSITO4YORKTOWN.COM
Paid For By Friends Of Sergio Esposito
Obituary

Andrea Karl

Andrea Karl, a Putnam Valley resident and retired peer counselor at Support Connection, died peacefully Sept. 29. She was 64.

Karl leaves behind her husband of 38 years, Bill; her children, Andrew (daughter-in-law Courtney) and Julia and two grandchildren, Ethan and Hudson. She is also survived by her sisters, Gail Tartaglia and Irene Stillman (brother-in-law Roger); her nieces Dawn Baxter, Laura Cox, Kate Stillman and Lauren Watson and their husbands; and numerous great-nieces and great-nephews.

As a mom, she worked a variety of jobs over the years to ensure that she was able to commit to Andrew and Julia’s various activities. You may have met her through her work at Playcare, where she taught while her kids were going to preschool, or at Santos’ Deli in Putnam Valley, Club Fit, StoneCrop Gardens, A Natural Touch or at any of the other positions she held over the years. She worked with pride, care and a smile in every aspect, all while putting her children’s needs first.

Not only did she become a jack-of-all-trades while working, she also volunteered with a few different organizations as well. She lent a hand to the Putnam Valley Soccer Club as a secretary while Andrew and Julia played, and continued her duties as the Team Mom for Andrew’s youth teams through high school. These soccer duties did not end there, however. She tirelessly drove both kids to all of their summer development tournaments and camps, allowing them to pursue their dreams of playing at a higher level.

As her kids grew older and more independent, she began volunteering, and then working for Support Connection. You could say that this organization became her passion project. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2003 and had used Support Connection’s services as a safe space to process that journey.

Andrew and Julia were none the wiser at home, as she remained the dependable woman we all know and love. Andrea was compelled to give back to such a beautiful charity and began volunteering in her spare time. This role eventually grew into her full-time position as a peer counselor for the last 15 years. Andrea used her strongest qualities of humanity and compassion to work with “her ladies” (as she called them), making sure they knew that they were not alone in their journeys. She made sure that each of them and their caregivers was heard, supported and provided with the information they needed. She would never end a phone call or visit without at least a little laughter or moment of light-heartedness. One will never fully know the extent to which her impact reached, but the stories of her actions, as told by those in the organization and the families that she worked with, will remain with us for a very long time.

As she continued to work with her ladies, she drew on their strength and her own to pursue physical feats in her 50s that she would have never attempted before, even prior to her breast cancer diagnosis. After immeasurable hours of watching her children grow on a soccer field, and at the prodding of a dear friend, Andrea joined a local group of Mahopac women to play in the Goals for Hope soccer tournament. She would also go on to run the New York City Marathon in 2010, finishing in 4:31:24, the entire time with “Amazing Grace” emblazoned on her shirt and a huge smile on her face. Throughout these activities, her ladies were at the forefront of her mind; she thought of their fight, their strength, their personal marathons that they had to endure, all with such amazing grace.

Andrea and Bill were together for 40 years and remained strong and steadfast in their commitment to each other. At their core, they loved one another and their family and friends fiercely. They watched lovingly as the children they raised became successful in each of their pursuits. As their children grew into adulthood, Andrea and Bill began traveling again, whether it was day trips or short vacations. They visited Vermont in the fall and Cape May in the summer, and in between, frequented upstate to play with their grandchildren. They enjoyed their time together and reminisced about the trips to California and Canada they had taken in their younger years, as well as their family trips up and down the east coast. When all was said and done, one always had the other to rely on.

Andrea’s love for her family, her sisters, her nieces and nephews, and of course, her grandparents, was widely known. She regaled everyone she met with an uplifting, and more often silly story that centered around these characters in her life. Countless nights were spent around a table, enjoying happy company with stories, love and laughter. And when Andrea became a Yiayia to her grandchildren, she could talk and laugh for hours. Ethan and Hudson could do no wrong. She watched them grow with only love for them in her eyes and heart. They became the brightest stars in her life, her “superheroes” whose superpower was joy. There wasn’t a single moment that Yiayia didn’t oblige Ethan and Hudson’s every whim (and whine) and that adoration was mutual.
Lawyer's First Novel Infuses Sexual Misconduct in Political Thriller

By Martin Wilbur

It had been a longtime dream of Dan Schorr to author his first novel. So when he sat down in early 2019 to make his literary debut, he turned to what he knows best. Schorr, a former prosecutor in the Queens and Westchester district attorney’s offices who specialized in investigating sexual assault cases, now operates his own law firm conducting sexual misconduct matters.

The book, “The Table: A Novel,” is scheduled for release this week, an international political thriller that contains elements from a multitude of cases he’s worked on professionally.

“I brought in all the experiences in my life,” said Schorr, 48, a White Plains resident. “For instance, I lived in China teaching law for a year and that was a very surreal, interesting experience where I got to travel around to different countries, including North Korea, and experiences like that weigh into this book also, where there’s this international crisis and high stakes poker tournament and sexual misconduct allegations and they’re all woven together in this fictional account.”

He worked on writing “The Table” for a year and was finishing just as the pandemic hit in March 2020. Schorr spoke with local authors about how best to retain a publisher, and was able to get Sparks Press to agree to take him on. The publisher was able to help him with editing and marketing, which has been a tremendous advantage for him.

Schorr, who ran unsuccessfully for Westchester County district attorney in 2009, said the book is a fast-moving story about many of the topics that people have either experienced or read about regularly. “Although I’ve been investigating sexual assault cases for over 20 years, this is very much focused on what’s going on today in the #MeToo Movement,” Schorr said.

“A big part of the novel is how media is reacting to accusations, how social media is reacting to allegations and how the media and social media drive people’s ability to make accusations and how people will respond to that. That’s a central part of the book that is very timely.”

Don’t expect Schorr to rest on his laurels and be satisfied with the publication of his novel. He plans to write a second book based on sexual misconduct cases at colleges, which his firm has much experience. It will be centered on college athletics and how universities and other organizations review accusations.

Schorr will also be doing a Zoom event later this month with Gretchen Carlson, the former Fox News anchor whose explosive sexual harassment allegations against the network’s chairman Roger Ailes was one of the key catalysts of the #MeToo Movement.

Still, one of the common misconceptions is that people become victims of predators lurking in dark alleyways, as many people have a fear of stranger danger, Schorr said. However, victims of sexual assaults are most often violated by people they know who is a trusted person in their life and that person violates that trust, he said.

“I wanted to show people, based on my having investigated hundreds of cases of sexual assault how these cases generally play out, which I think is different from the stereotypes shown in fiction,” Schorr said.

To learn more about “The Table: A Novel,” visit www.danschorrbooks.com. It can be ordered through Barnes & Noble, Amazon and bookshop.org among other outlets.

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**Letters to the Editor**

**Stewardship of Cortlandt’s Budget Has Left Town in Difficult Straits**

I am going to stick to the facts and not the personal partisan politics of Ms. Slippin, in her attempt to fool and deceive the town residents last week. The strange thing is that she does not confront the issues I raised.

The Town of Cortlandt budget has been unbalanced and running deficits for the last decade. The fund balance is down close to $9 million.

Cortlandt’s fiscal position has taken a sharp turn for the worse, starting in 2011. The town’s budgets have had deficits in nine of the last 10 years. As a result, the town has had to rely upon borrowing for annual expenditures, while the salaries of the elected officials have increased significantly.

See the chart below. Town of Cortlandt Fiscal Report 2020: Changes in Fund Balances of Government Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Deficit/Surplus</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Deficit: $2,018,259</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Surplus: $578,238</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Deficit: $3,111,498</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>Deficit: $1,312,140</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Deficit: $1,400,297</td>
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Some Town Board members have been in place for over a decade, and this November, Mr. Cirieco and Mr. Faulkner are up for re-election after nine years, I believe.

They profess that they bring financial experience, but watching Town Board meetings for two years while they tried to form a sewer district under our nose, was very disappointing. When asked financial questions, they didn’t know the answers and never caught the financial errors; in fact, they seemed like they didn’t even know what was in the report. They voted on it, and thank God residents caught the errors and notified the comptroller. Something that would have affected so many financially should have been looked at better, not to mention that Mr. Faulkner created a website to push his agenda with the pro-sewer residents. In my opinion, this was unethical and he should’ve been fired.

Our Town Board showed the residents during this fiasco that there is corrupt government everywhere.

Thankfully Supervisor Morrissey is stepping down. He has over-commercialized our small, quaint town and now an apartment building on Route 100 is going up. Why is it okay for him to take healthy trees down in Bailey Park and residents can’t on their own property? Why did we lose Pepsi and IBM and why didn’t he do more to bring in major companies to help keep our taxes down?

The board proposed putting a 7-Eleven into Bailey Park and residents can’t on their own own. We have a town code for the owner had connections and the board members didn’t care. We have a town code for members didn’t care. We have a town code for the owner had connections and the board members didn’t care. We have a town code for a reason but nobody seems to enforce them.

I presented financial facts from the Town of Cortlandt’s own fiscal report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$3,231,705</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>$3,410,342</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$647,817</td>
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<td>2019</td>
<td>$2,513,569</td>
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<td>2020</td>
<td>$4,316,342</td>
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This borrowing to avoid either raising taxes or cutting spending is not sustainable. The problem is now the bill is larger and the town fund balance is reduced to half.

Mr. Cirieco and Mr. Faulkner are up for re-election after nine years, I believe.

The current administration wants to increase the budget significantly.

Raising taxes is not sustainable and costly. Imagine you spend more than you earn and keep putting the expense on your credit card.

At the same time, Cortlandt’s fund balance has been decreasing from $19,513,216 to $10,836,270. So, the Town of Cortlandt has used savings and borrowed to avoid balancing the town budget.

The Town of Cortlandt borrowed: 2016: $3,231,705 2018: $3,410,342

This borrowing to avoid either raising taxes or cutting spending is not sustainable. The problem is now the bill is larger and the town fund balance is reduced to half.

The current administration wants to bond further to replenish the fund balance. Will the interest on the bonds be less than the interest on savings?

Ms. Slippin does not respond to these budget facts. She just denies them, says Puglisi is popular and says to ignore them. She provides propaganda without any reference to facts. So, all she is offering is propaganda rather than any truth.

I presented financial facts from the Town of Cortlandt’s own fiscal report. This is the current condition of the town’s budget; rather than deal with the truth or the present, Ms. Slippin looks back 30 years to argue irrelevant nonsense. She must look back 30 years for good news? Ms. Slippin ignores the present and the future and that is what matters today, not 30 years ago.

The last 10 years town taxes for the general fund have gone up 26.5 percent and the highway fund has gone up 45 percent. Town taxes alone in 2014 went up 11 percent in one year. The Town of Cortlandt has raised taxes nine of the last 10 years.

They kept the taxes lower by either borrowing or spending the town savings. That is not a solution for a 10-year decline. Ms. Slippin’s claims that the town has never had a budget deficit at any point in recent memory and a growing fund balance is not truthful. The facts provided herein demonstrate the untrue nature of her claims.

She points to an improving town bond as significant. This indicates the town can keep borrowing but the trend in town finances will eventually put its bond rating at risk.

Finally, Ms. Slippin refers to a recent award from New York State. This award was for the quality of the fiscal report that I reference in this response, not for the fiscal planning by the Town of Cortlandt.

Census Committee Becker and Creighton have been on the Town Board for years and they have not been able to fix this financial problem. It is time for a change.

We need to address the problem now and not kick the can down the road with borrowing, spending fund balances and leaving the problem for the next person. The current situation is only more expensive and difficult.

I, therefore, urge you to vote for the Cortlandt United Team. They do not believe in partisanship but civic service and transparency. Hiding problems does not solve them.

Early voting starts on Oct. 23 and Election Day is Nov. 2.

Vote Row C, Cortlandt United, for Laurie Ryan for supervisor, Tom Walsh and Warren Smith for councilman, Peter Matauxo town receiver and Kylee Bernard for town clerk.

Supervisor Puglisi is retiring, and I wish her well and thank her for her service to the community.

Daniel Pagano, Esq. Cortlandt Manor Daniel Pagano is chairman of the Cortlandt Republican Committee.

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**A Change on the Somers Town Board is Overdue**

Some Town Board members have been in position for over a decade, and this November, Mr. Cirieco and Mr. Faulkner are up for re-election after nine years, I believe.

They profess that they bring financial experience, but watching Town Board meetings for two years while they tried to form a sewer district under our nose, was very disappointing. When asked financial questions, they didn’t know the answers and never caught the financial errors; in fact, they seemed like they didn’t even know what was in the report. They voted on it, and thank God residents caught the errors and notified the comptroller. Something that would have affected so many financially should have been looked at better, not to mention that Mr. Faulkner created a website to push his agenda with the pro-sewer residents. In my opinion, this was unethical and he should’ve been fired.

Our Town Board showed the residents during this fiasco that there is corrupt government everywhere.

Thankfully Supervisor Morrissey is stepping down. He has over-commercialized our small, quaint town and now an apartment building on Route 100 is going up. Why is it okay for him to take healthy trees down in Bailey Park and residents can’t on their own property? Why did we lose Pepsi and IBM and why didn’t he do more to bring in major companies to help keep our taxes down?

The board proposed putting a 7-Eleven into the historic district where there is too much traffic. Why?

They have made changes to zoning laws for developments to go in and they allowed a night club on Route 118 to operate for years for developments to go in and they allowed a night club on Route 118 to operate for years with illegal activity and excessive noise in a residential neighborhood. Why? Because the owner had connections and the board members didn’t care. We have a town code for a reason but nobody seems to enforce them.

We need board members who want to do right by the residents of this town and do things the right way.

Lori Jacobs Somers

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Mount Kisco Volunteer Fire Department, Mount Kisco Volunteer Ambulance Corps
Westchester County Police Department, What’s In Westchester, The Examiner
Street Fair Participants

Ability Beyond  Maddy’s Brows & Boutique  Rockin’Jump
All Together Now  Mount Kisco Ambulance Corp  Ronald McDonald House
Arco Cleaning  Mount Kisco Child Care Center  Servpro
Athleta  Mount Kisco Democratic Committee  Sons of the American Legion
Bedford Community Church  Mount Kisco Dental Group  Suburban Picnic
Bicycle World  Mount Kisco Fire Department  Sustainable Westchester
Billy’s Hair Salon  Mount Kisco Historical Society  The Baby Bump Boutique & Imaging
Conservation Advisory Council  Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry  The Bristol Assisted Living
Emergency Shelter Partners  Mount Kisco Masonic Lodge #708  The Gap
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Fidelis Care NY  Neighbor’s Link  Tompkins Mahopac Bank
Hair Essentials  New York Dolls  U.S. Army
Houlihan Lawrence  Next Level Martial Arts  Village of Mount Kisco
Indulgence Salon & Blow Dry Lounge  PCSB Bank  Westchester House & Home
Jolie Jordan  Porch  Westchester Psychic
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Gearing Up the Home for the Winter Months

Now that I live in a maintenance-free condo, all I have to do to transition from the summer and fall months to winter is switch the HVAC from air conditioning to heat. It’s as simple as that, save to bundle up with warmer clothing when I step outside.

But when I was the owner of a single-family house, it was a much more involved process. I learned that it was best to give my home a once-over and tend to winter preparation tasks and repairs before the year’s first frost.

Getting the exterior of a home ready for the cold winds, snow and ice is critical for keeping winter out and keeping it warm inside. By being proactive, one can lower a home’s energy bills, increase the efficiency and lifespan of all components and make the property safer.

Frequency I have referred to Bob Vila, TV’s famous home expert, for home maintenance preparation tasks and repairs that it was best to give my home a once-over and tend to winter preparation tasks and repairs before the year’s first frost.

Windows and Doors
• Check weatherstripping around windows and doorframes for leaks to prevent heat loss. Replace weatherstripping, if necessary.
• Replace all screen doors with storm windows.
• Replace all window screens with storm windows. (This step and the one above were always the biggest chores of the year.)
• Check window frames for signs of rot or decay. Repair or replace framing to maintain structural integrity.
• Check for drafts around windows and doors. Caulk inside and out, where necessary, to keep heat from escaping.
• Inspect windows for cracks, broken glass or gaps. Repair or replace, if needed.

Lawn, Garden and Deck
• Trim overgrown branches back from the house and electrical wires to prevent iced-over or wind-swept branches from causing property damage or a power problem.
• Aerate the lawn, reseed and apply a winterizing fertilizer to promote deep-root growth come spring. (After a few years of this practice, I engaged a trusty lawn service to do the job, which is formidable.)
• Ensure rain or snow drains away from the house to avoid damage to the foundation. The dirt grade – around the exterior of your home – should slope away from the house. Add extra dirt to low areas as necessary.
• Clean and dry patio furniture. In my case, I stored it inside my garage to protect it from the elements. I did this, I just left them where they were and did not move them for signs of rot or decay. Repair or replace framing to maintain structural integrity.
• Check window frames and out, where necessary, to keep heat from escaping.
• Inspect windows for cracks, broken glass or gaps. Repair or replace, if needed.

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• Clean and dry patio furniture. In my case, I stored it inside my garage to protect it from the elements.
• Clean soil from planters. Bring pots made of clay or other fragile materials indoors. (I laugh as I write this because I remember that when I would bring in a big planter from my patio to the dining room, my cat, Mitsey, assumed that it was meant for her as an alternate litter box.)
• Dig up flower bulbs, brush off soil and label. Store bulbs in a bag or box with peat moss in a cool, dry place for spring planting. (After a few years of tilling to do this, I just left them where they were in the ground and found that I lost very few of them. Why bother?)
• Remove any attached hoses and store them for the winter to prevent cracks, preserve their shape and prolong their life. Wrap outside faucets with covers to prevent water damage. (How well I remember the house I had listed for sale where the owner forgot to detach his hose, only to have an interior water pipe burst through expansion and ruin an entire family room of the house.)

That about covers it. After all this is done, you as a homeowner will be justified in hibernating like a bear from household chores for the winter.

Bill Primavera, while a publicist and journalist, is also a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate and founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc. (www.PrimaveraPR.com). To engage the services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.
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LET’S KEEP PUTNAM SAFE!

On November 2nd, RE-ELECT Sheriff Robert Langley

Paid for by Friends of Langley
By Bailey Hosfelt

It has been 21 months since the White Plains Performing Art Center (WPPAC) put on its last musical production. “Masquerade!,” which will premiere at WPPAC on Oct. 8, features stories and songs from Andrew Lloyd Webber’s life and celebrated work and commemorates the performing art center’s first Mainstage production since “Newsies” in January 2020.

“It’s been a long time, and we couldn’t be more excited to finally be back doing what we are meant to do – provide quality live entertainment to our community,” said Kathy Davisson, general manager at WPPAC.

Described as a “funny and warm musical portrait and a concert for the theater,” “Masquerade!” will offer the audience an intimate look at Lloyd Webber’s five decades in the spotlight as one of the most successful musical theater composers.

With new and sometimes unexpected interpretations of Lloyd Webber’s best-loved songs from “Jesus Christ Superstar,” “Evita,” “Cats,” “Phantom of the Opera” and “Sunset Boulevard,” viewers will hear familiar songs in a contemporary production.

“His music is infectious and dynamic, and the show celebrates the iconic songs we have all come to love through the years,” Stephen Ferri, WPPAC executive producer and music director, and Antoniette DiPietropolo, director of “Masquerade!” said in a joint statement.

At “Masquerade!” audience members will experience some of the ways these musicals and songs were inspired from Lloyd Webber’s creative mind. “Think of it as an inside look into the mind of an iconic composer while experiencing all the hits from his biggest shows,” Ferri and DiPietropolo said. “It’s not like anything else you have seen, and we are excited to bring it to life this season at WPPAC.”

After more than a year without performing due to the pandemic, they wanted to do something a little smaller for their reopening musical production. “This premiere was the perfect way to welcome back our audiences for an exceptional night of theater featuring this legendary composer and his creative process,” Ferri and DiPietropolo said. For this show, it was important to provide an immersive experience for viewers by casting amazing talent from New York City. “Masquerade!” features performers Brandi Burkhardt, Julian Decker, Andrew Foote, Rebecca Kuznick, Emily Royer, Cartreze Tucker, Aaron Burt and Shannon Rakow.

The cast boasts previous combined experience in Broadway and off-Broadway productions, television, film, national tours and regional theater.

“Masquerade! is also choreographed by DiPietropolo, scenic design is by Christopher and Justin Swader, lighting design is by Matt Guminiski, sound design by Don Hanna, projections by Kevan Looney and costumes by Antonio Consuegra. The stage is managed by T. Rick Jones.

“Everyone is on the same team supporting each other as artists to give an elevated performance and not just a concert of (Lloyd Webber’s) work,” Ferri and DiPietropolo said. “Being able to create this show together and hopefully give it a future life has been very rewarding.”

“Masquerade! premiers at WPPAC on Oct. 8 and runs until Oct. 24. Performance times are at 2 and 8 p.m. and tickets are available for purchase at www.wppac.org.

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Scan the QR code below or check out https://bit.ly/3kyXdhY to submit your resume and view our open positions. Qualified walk-ins also welcome.
Estate Planning for First Responders: What You Need to Know

By Alan D. Feller, Esq.

Staying away from crisis situations is usually the best method for self-preservation.

Police, fire and EMS personnel are tasked with the responsibility of moving toward emergencies and crises to protect lives. Risk of injury or death is a tangible concern. First responders’ estate planning must take this level of risk into account.

One of the most important considerations for first responders’ planning is the suddenness in which a catastrophic event may occur. Setting up insurance protection is a very important step. Disability and life insurance policies should provide accessible benefits, usually within a reasonable time frame, to cover immediate needs for loved ones. There are varying resources depending on whether the responder belongs to a volunteer or full-time professional organization.

Maintaining a detailed and organized record of available benefits will avoid confusion. Insurance face amounts should be scrutinized because beyond immediate needs, the loss of a loved one or the end of a working life will put a tremendous strain on a family’s financial well-being. Better to be over-insured than under-insured.

Executing advance directives such as health care proxies, living wills and powers of attorney is a basic step to ensure that someone can make decisions on your behalf should you be alive, but unable to properly communicate your wishes.

Creating a will or trust is also an intelligent step to organize your financial life for your loved ones. Younger first responders often choose their parents or siblings to be fiduciaries. First responders with children may want to plan how insurance proceeds or other available funds are distributed and held. Trusts as beneficiaries of insurance proceeds offer more comprehensive direction for a child’s education and living expenses as they reach adulthood.

Beyond the here and now, first responders also operate in environments that pose a danger to long-term health. Sound estate planning should also include the likelihood of exposure illnesses and contemplate the maintenance of one’s mental health. Setting up your own health care professional team (primary care as well as any specialists that may be useful) to monitor overall health is vital.

Police, fire and EMS personnel have jobs that demand extreme physical and mental concentration. The stresses on body and mind are only now being examined thoroughly.

Depending on the circumstances surrounding the first responder’s health concerns, there may be special government funds, settlements and local fundraising that provide a financial boost for a family. Expecting these types of funds to be available permanently is not realistic. Should health issues arise, long-term care planning and Medicaid planning provide avenues for protecting a family’s assets while ensuring that the loved one suffering from an illness is receiving necessary care.

Married first responders can utilize spousal asset transfer exemptions. Medicaid rules allow qualified retirement accounts to remain exempt resources. These rules carry important implications for first responders who are municipal employees with 403(b) retirement accounts that require long-term care.

Putting others’ lives ahead of your own requires a level of dedication and bravery that is truly special. First responders are recognized for their commitment and service to their communities. Taking some time to preserve their own well-being through thoughtful estate planning should be a priority.

Contact the professionals at Sloan & Feller today to explore estate planning options.

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@slonandfeller.com

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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Crossword

Across
1. Clober
4. 1996 Gwyneth Paltrow title role
8. Sends with a recommendation
11. Respectful address
12. Involve
13. “If __, I had known”
14. Monde (French daily)
15. Man’s jacket feature
17. Othello’s betrayer
19. Printemps month
20. Succumb to pressure
22. Irish poet or Yorktown accountant, RF
26. Khloe’s sister
28. Sud’s opposite
29. Pleasantville family hair salon known simply as “The Barber Shop,” La _____
33. Prosecutor, abbr.
34. Jump on the ice
35. Having deep affection for
37. Place
38. Skin soothers
39. Capri, e.g.
40. Hither and __

Down
1. Get close to
2. Frequently, for short
3. Shade close to azure
4. With happiness or sadness, for example
5. “Give that ____ cigar!”

6. W. African republic
7. Organic radical
8. Archeologist’s find
9. Grande (part of Texas’ border)
10. Bridge triumph
16. Mahal
18. Atlanta’s state, abbr.
21. Sedona
23. Hi!
24. Coward
25. Skate blades
27. Medical diagnostic procedures, abbr.
29. Indonesian island
30. Allies’ foe in WWII
31. Fishing rod attachment
32. __ manner of speaking

Answers on page 25

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LEAVE OPENING

Fallsburg School District

Mathematics Teacher

Fallsburg Jr/Sr High School is seeking a qualified math teacher to fill a high school leave replacement vacancy available immediately through Nov 29, 2021. Candidates from all New York regions are encouraged to apply as this position can be taught virtually from a remote setting. An experienced candidate may perform all duties of the job virtually through synchronous teaching. Salary: $105 to $125 per day, increases to $250 per day after 10 days.

HELP WANTED

The Northern Westchester Joint Water Works, a municipal water utility located in Cortlandt Manor, NY is seeking part time help to assist with financial record keeping and clerical duties. Using computer applications and software such as spreadsheets, word processing, email, and data base software, examples of work include but are not limited to preparing accounts payable vouchers, preparing bank deposits, reviewing water meter reading reports for accuracy, preparing correspondence to residents, answering public inquiries for requests of information by phone and email, and independently working various office equipment, and be able to effectively understand verbal and written directions. The number of work hours per week is nineteen (19) hours, Monday through Friday. To qualify, applicants must be high school graduate, at least 18 years of age, have at least one (1) year of clerical experience involving financial record keeping, and be a U.S. citizen by the time of appointment. Preference in hiring may be shown to residents of the NWJWW service area. Applications are available online at: www.westchesternjww.org/apply or call 1-800-610-4770.

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Winter Wonderland Extravaganza Returns This Holiday Season

Westchester’s Winter Wonderland Drive-thru Holiday Light Extravaganza will return to Kensico Dam Plaza bigger and better than ever this holiday season with extended hours, thousands of additional lights, magical holiday animations and a live Santa.

Westchester Parks Foundation continues to re-imagine the eighth season of the popular holiday event while creating a safe and memorable experience the whole family can enjoy. Guests will be dazzled and delighted with 1.2 miles of holiday lights, larger-than-life displays, live characters and Santa, right from the warmth and safety of your own car.

The event is presented by the Westchester Medical Center Health Network. “The holidays are such a special time to spend with family and Westchester’s Winter Wonderland Drive-thru Holiday Light Extravaganza provides families with a fun and safe way to celebrate,” said County Executive George Latimer. “I’m thrilled the Parks Department and Westchester Parks Foundation have found even more ways to make the event spectacular.”

Starting Friday, Nov 26 at 6 p.m., the festive celebration takes place five consecutive weeks through Jan. 2, 2022. The event will be open seven mornings a week starting on Monday-Friday and 5 p.m. on weekends.

Guests will be dazzled and delighted along the 1.2 miles of holiday lights with a new electrifying Elf Disco, a whimsical display of jubilant children from around the world, a breathtaking Peace on Earth LED display with animated trumpets and angels and two new 30-foot snowflakes to light up the largest holiday tree in Westchester. There will also be a bigger and better snowstorm central that the whole family can enjoy from the warmth and safety of your own car.

“Last year we debuted the drive-thru concept because of COVID and thousands of families came out to enjoy the reimagined concept,” said Joe Stotz, executive director of Westchester Parks Foundation. “As a result, we decided to expand the drive-thru to include additional lights and displays to dazzle holiday participants even more.”

Holiday classics will be simulcast through each vehicle’s FM radio to help set the mood. Guests should allow 25 to 30 minutes to drive through the attraction. Additional attractions include favorite elves Ned and Albert, glittering angels of peace, a 50-foot dove, dancing trees, glowing snowballs, candy cane lane, a spectacular 100-foot light tunnel, Westchester’s favorite 40-foot Christmas tree, Santa and friends and more.

Special event nights will include the official tree lighting celebration on opening night and a family-friendly festive way to ring in the New Year at Winter Wonderland.

Reservations are required to avoid additional surcharges. Tickets are $25 off peak and $35 peak. (There will be an additional cost for large passenger vans and limousines; call for special reservations.)

There are also Wegman’s snack boxes available to enjoy for $15 extra along the ride. Be sure to check the box when purchasing your ticket because they are not available for purchase on site.

Con Edison also returns as a platinum sponsor; helping to light up the sky at Kensico Dam Plaza for all to enjoy.

Supplemental Summons and Notice of Object of Action

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER Action to Foreclose a Mortgage INDEX #: 70410/2019 WILMINGTON TRUST COMPANY, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUT SOLELY AS SUCCESSOR TRUSTEE TO CITIBANK, N.A. AS TRUSTEE TO LEHMAN XS TRUST MORTGAGE PASS-THROUGH CERTIFICATES, SERIES 2006-17 Plaintiff, vs FRANK O’CONNOR IF LIVING, AND IF HE/she BE DEAD, ANY AND ALL PERSONS UNKNOWN TO PLAINTIFF, CLAIMING, OR WHO MAY CLAIM TO HAVE AN INTEREST IN, OR GENERAL OR SPECIFIC LIEN UPON THE REAL PROPERTY DESCRIBED IN THIS ACTION, SUCH UNKNOWN PERSONS BEING HEREIN GENERALLY DESCRIBED AND INTENDED TO BE INCLUDED IN WIFE, WIDOW, HUSBAND, WIDOWER, HEIRS AT LAW, NEXT OF KIN, DESCENDANTS, EXECUTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, DEVISEES, LEGATEES, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES, COMMITTEES, LIENORS, AND ASSIGNEES OF SUCH DECEASED, ANY AND ALL PERSONS DERIVING INTEREST IN OR LIEN UPON, OR TITLE TO SAID REAL PROPERTY BY, THROUGH OR UNDER THEM, OR EITHER OF THEM, AND THEIR RESPECTIVE WIVES, WIDOWS, HUSBANDS, WIDOWERS, HEIRS AT LAW, NEXT OF KIN, DESCENDANTS, EXECUTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, DEVISEES, LEGATEES, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES, COMMITTEES, LIENORS, AND ASSIGNS, ALL OF WHOM AND WHOSE NAMES, EXCEPT AS STATED, ARE UNKNOWN TO PLAINTIFF, PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ACTING THROUGH THE IRS JOHN DOE (Those unknown tenants, occupants, persons or corporations or their heirs, distributees, executors, administrators, trustees, guardians, assignees, creditors or successors claiming an interest in the mortgaged premises.) Defendant(s). MORTGAGED PREMISES: 157 6TH STREET VERPLANCK, NY 10596 SBL #: 54.5 - 2 - 9 To the Above named Defendant: You are hereby summoned to answer the Complaint in this action, and to serve a copy of your answer, or, if the Complaint is not served with this Supplemental Summons, to serve a notice of appearance, on the Plaintiff(s) attorney(s) within twenty days after the service of this Supplemental Summons, exclusive of the day of service (or within 30 days after the service is complete if this Supplemental Summons is not personally delivered to you within the State of New York). In case of your failure to appear or answer, judgment will be taken against you by default for the relief demanded in the Complaint. The Attorney for Plaintiff has an office for business in the County of Erie. Trial to be held in the County of Westchester. The basis of the venue designated above is the location of the Mortgaged Premises. TO Frank O’Connor Defendant In This Action, the foregoing Supplemental Summons is served upon you by publication, pursuant to an order of HON. Lawrence H. Ecker of the Supreme Court Of The State Of New York, dated the Twenty-Sixth day of August, 2021 and filed with the Complaint in the Office of the Clerk of the County of Westchester, in the City of White Plains. The object of this action is to foreclose a mortgage upon the premises described below, executed by Frank O’Connor dated the August 10, 2006, to secure the sum of $384,000.00 and recorded at Instrument No. 462490790 in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk, on the September 26, 2006. The mortgage was subsequently assigned by an assignment executed December 19, 2011 and recorded on March 26, 2012, in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk at Instrument Number 520815383. The mortgage was subsequently assigned by an assignment executed December 4, 2013 and recorded on February 6, 2014, in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk at Instrument Number 549006363. The mortgage was subsequently assigned by an assignment executed February 24, 2016 and recorded on March 8, 2016, in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk at Instrument Number 560683020. The mortgage was subsequently modified on March 6, 2017; The property in question is described as follows: 157 6TH STREET, VERPLANCK, NY 10596 HELP FOR HOMEOWNERS IN FORECLOSURE NEW YORK STATE LAW REQUIRES THAT WE SEND YOU THIS NOTICE ABOUT THE FORECLOSURE PROCESS. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY. SUMMONS AND COMPLAINT ARE YOU IN DANGER OF LOSING YOUR HOME. IF YOU FAIL TO RESPOND TO THE SUMMONS AND COMPLAINT IN THIS FORECLOSURE ACTION, YOU MAY LOSE YOUR HOME. PLEASE READ THE SUMMONS AND COMPLAINT CAREFULLY. YOU SHOULD IMMEDIATELY CONTACT AN ATTORNEY OR YOUR LOCAL LEGAL AID OFFICE TO OBTAIN ADVICE ON HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF. SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE The state encourages you to become informed about your options in foreclosure. In addition to seeking assistance from an attorney or legal aid office, there are government agencies and non-profit organizations that you may contact for information about possible options, including trying to work with your lender during this process. To locate an entity near you, you may call the toll-free helpline maintained by the New York State Department of Financial Services at 1-800-342-3736 or the Foreclosure Relief Hotline at 1-800-269-0990 or visit the department’s website at WWW.DEF.NY.GOV. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO LEAVE YOUR HOME AT THIS TIME. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO STAY IN YOUR HOME DURING THE FORECLOSURE PROCESS. YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO LEAVE YOUR HOME UNLESS AND UNTIL YOUR PROPERTY IS SOLD AT AUCTION PURSUANT TO A JUDGMENT OF FORECLOSURE AND SALE. REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU CHOOSE TO REMAIN IN YOUR HOME, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR PROPERTY AND PAY PROPERTY TAXES IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE AND LOCAL LAW. FORECLOSURE RESCUE SCAMS Be careful of people who approach you with offers to ‘save’ your home. There are individuals who watch for notices of foreclosure to contact you and offer to take steps to ‘save’ your property in order to take any money from you until they have completed all such promised services. $ 1303 NOTICE NOTICE YOU ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING YOUR HOME. If you do not respond to this summons and complaint by serving a copy of the answer on the attorney for the mortgage company who filed this foreclosure proceeding against you and filing the answer with the court, a default judgment may be entered and you can lose your home. Speak to an attorney or go to the court where your case is pending for further information on how to answer the summons and protect your property. Sending a payment to your attorney for the plaintiff (mortgage company) and filing the answer with the court dated: August 31, 2021 Gross Polowy, LLC Attorney(s) For Plaintiff(s) 1775 Wehrle Drive, Suite 100 Williamsville, NY 14221 The law firm of Gross Polowy, LLC and the attorneys whom it employs are debt collectors who are attempting to collect a debt. Any information obtained by them will be used for that purpose.
continued from page 24

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Playwright’s Personal Experiences Part of Hudson Stage Production

By Martin Wilbur

Playwright Joshua Allen relies on his experiences of growing up in an apartment building on the South Side of Chicago for a thoughtful, yet humorous look at the characters who call it home.

“The October Storm,” which will be presented by Hudson Stage for nine performances starting this weekend at Whippoorwill Hall in Armonk, is actually part of a trilogy of plays that Allen wrote that focuses on his own family and other families who came northward during The Great Migration, where millions of Black families escaped the Jim Crow South to cities in the north from World War I until about 1970.

Allen, a fourth-generation Chicagoan, said many of his descendants were part of The Great Migration.

“I’ve always been fascinated by it,” said Allen, who has also directed “In Treatment” on HBO and “From Scratch” on Netflix. “We don’t have a whole lot in my family. We don’t have a whole lot in terms of diaries and first-hand accounts, and things like that, to have the kind of stuff that you can find on ancestry.com. So I would let my imagination go and see where it took me and where it led me.”

The trilogy takes place on different floors of the building, and there are some glancing references to characters between the different plays. In “The October Storm,” which takes place in the early 1960s, a troubled war veteran moves in and other residents become caught in an emotional whirlwind that threatens to change their lives forever.

Directing the play is Greenburgh native and current Yonkers resident Cezar Williams, who said he is thrilled to be back in the theater after about a year-and-a-half of live performances being shelved. “The October Storm” is an excellent choice to resume live theater, he said.

Having grown up in an apartment building as well, Williams said Allen’s story reminds him of many of his neighbors as well.

“The play has been a joy, it’s an incredibly enjoyable play to participate in,” said Williams said. “It’s funny, the people are relatable and humorous and it’s just a good time. It’s a lot of fun. We spent a lot of time rehearsing, so that’s always a good sign.”

Neither Allen nor Williams thought much about a career in theater and television growing up. While Allen always loved to write, he was a pre-med student at USC when he realized that he wasn’t as strong in many of the more difficult science courses that are needed to become a doctor, at least compared to high school.

Instead, he had friends who were theater majors and decided to go in that direction. He moved to New York for five years and enrolled in the playwright program at Juilliard, which put him in contact with impressively talented people.

Allen moved back to Los Angeles about 10 years ago to also write for television.

“Writing is a more solitary process, which I like, but you collaborate, which is why I love working in theater, you get both,” he said. “You get to be by yourself at the desk and work your things out and write it and you get to invite other people to collaborate with you. I love both of them equally.”

For Williams, who has had acting credits in “Law & Order: Special Victims Unit,” “The Hudson Tribes” and “Shades of Blue,” music was his passion growing up. But he switched to the theater while attending NYU as a business major after being disillusioned with what he described as drama in the recording industry.

Williams’ wife also writes plays, and she asked him to direct one of her works, which he did and that sparked his interest in directing. He is the artistic director of The Fire This Time Festival and directed an off-Broadway production of “Dancing on Eggshells.”

Hudson Stage will present nine performances of “The October Storm” starting this Friday evening at 8 p.m. There will also be performances on Oct. 9, 15, 16, 22 and 23 at 8 p.m. and matinees on Oct. 10, 17 and 23 at 3 p.m. Tickets are $40; $35 for students and seniors. Student tickets are $10 within 30 minutes of a performance, if available.

For more information and tickets, call 914-271-2811 or visit www.hudsonstage.com.

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Don’t Wait to See Your Physical Therapist

The past year-and-a-half has been very taxing, both mentally and physically. People are working from home now more than ever before due to the pandemic and it has taken its toll.

Physical therapy is a great option to alleviate some of these aches and pains and it may be easier to make an appointment than you think; it’s called Direct Access and it takes some of the stress out of the process.

In the past, patients were required to see a physician and get a prescription to see a physical therapist. This understandably made it more difficult, due to this additional step, and most likely made people push off getting therapy due to the inconvenience.

But in January 2016, the 50 states adopted Direct Access (with certain restrictions from state to state), which allows patients to see a physical therapist without a prescription. Health care is expensive, as we all know, so if a patient can seek physical therapy services without excessive tests and referrals from specialists, costs can be cut significantly.

Understandably, there was some backlash from the medical boards when Direct Access was proposed. For one thing, it was argued that physical therapists did not have enough training to diagnose a patient’s symptoms. Previously, PT students graduated with a master’s degree.

But in January 2016, the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) made the doctorate in physical therapy the required degree for all students. That meant in addition to the four years of science-based undergraduate curriculum, a PT student now had to complete three to three-and-a-half years of graduate courses. These courses include neuroscience classes, pharmacology, cardiopulmonary and musculoskeletal disorders, prosthetics and orthotics, health promotion and wellness and much more. Combining this coursework with the continuing education that a physical therapist must complete every few years to maintain their license ensures that the patient is getting the best, knowledge-based care possible to diagnose and treat their condition.

Some frequently asked questions that arise when it comes to Direct Access usually concern finances. What will Direct Access cost me? Is it more expensive in the end?

Cost is always a concern when it comes to seeing a practitioner of any kind. The best approach to take before choosing a provider you want to see is to check your benefits. Make sure that your health insurance doesn’t require a prescription for PT in the end. A very small percentage of health insurance companies do require a prescription, but it is not the norm.

There may be the requirement of a co-pay for your visit but by eliminating the physician visit, expenses are kept low. Almost all insurance companies will reimburse your PT visits under Direct Access for a set number of days or length of time depending on the state that you’re in. In New York, you may see a physical therapist for 10 visits or 30 days, whichever comes first.

By Katie Streeter

5 Questions Women Should Ask About Breast Cancer Surgery

Q: What stage is my cancer?
A: Breast cancer stages are represented on a scale of 0 to 4, with 4 being the most serious. Stage 0, also called ductal carcinoma in situ, means that your cancer is contained in a milk duct and has a low risk of spreading. Stage 4 breast cancer means the cancer has spread to other parts of your body. If your cancer is stage 4, seeking treatment immediately may improve your outcome and ultimate quality of life.

Q: How do I decide whether a lumpectomy or mastectomy is the best option?
A: More often than not, you will choose the type of surgery you feel most comfortable with. The survival data of lumpectomy with radiation is equivalent to that of a mastectomy, so we’ve learned that more surgery is not necessarily better.

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

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

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

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

Learn more about Dr. Chaterji, visit nwh.northwell.edu/Chaterji
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Having sought out new wines for several decades now, I’ve found that I prefer particular styles of wine and specific wine regions. This has certainly helped steer me in the right direction when I’m perusing the numerous offerings at my local wine shops. It has also helped me avoid spending cash on wines that might otherwise disappoint me.

What I’ve also deduced over the continuum of developing my instinctive behavior is that I tend to favor wines offered by select importers. How does an individual importer influence my wine purchasing decision? This is today’s topic.

Over the past 20 years the universe of wine importing has broadened, from monolithic importers who controlled most of the wine purchased in the United States, to a sophisticated, focused group of smaller importers that supplement the offerings of the mainstream importers.

Many of these “artisanal importers,” if you will, have a passion for a particular style of wine or particular wine regions and vigorously pursue wines that express their passions. Their focus is on the small and vigorously pursue wines that express a particular style of wine or particular wine regions. This has certainly helped me avoid spending cash on wines that might otherwise disappoint me.

It has also helped me avoid spending cash on wines that might otherwise disappoint me. It has also helped me avoid spending cash on wines that might otherwise disappoint me.

If you like the new wines coming from the south of France, there are artisanal importers who have spent hours in the cramped, damp and poorly lighted cellars of family-owned winemakers, many of whom are fourth and fifth generation producers. These artisans now have the opportunity to offer their finely crafted wines across the Atlantic to a consumer in northern Westchester.

If you like Champagne, there are artisanal importers focused on small producers who offer alternatives to the highly marketed French mega producers, at prices that are competitive to the big Champagne houses.

If you like organic or biodynamic wines, there are artisanal importers who search high and low for small producers who have simpatico philosophies, bringing these wines into the United States and creating a new awareness of natural wines to the American consumer.

Who are these artisanal importers? Their names are right there in plain sight. You can usually find them by looking on the back label of your favorite wines. Using this research tool as your guide, new vistas will open as you seek out wines to enjoy.

Only the distributor’s name is displayed on the back label, not the importer? Ask your local wine merchant for the name of the importer who is represented by the distributor, or alternatively, check the distributor’s or the winemaker’s website. Once you’ve identified the importer, begin asking for their selections at your local wine shop. The likelihood is that you will be pleased with the representative wines.

Several of these artisanal importers are right here in our backyard. Their offerings may or may not be aligned with your preferences, but in the interest of supporting local businesses, I present them to you so you may experiment to find new wines. South Salem is home to Serge Doré Selections, the eponymous house whose found long ago traded constant toiling underground. He was a unique blend of distributor and importer. They encourage consumers to open your mind and taste. Their focus is to “comb the wine world to discover and launch tiny, up-and-coming producers.”

For an expanded listing of consistently reliable niche importers, feel free to contact me via e-mail.

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