Schoenfeld Celebrated for Nearly Four Decades as WP District Clerk

By Bailey Hosfelt

Michele Schoenfeld, who has served the White Plains Public Schools for 39 years as district clerk and is retiring at the end of this month, was celebrated at the December Board of Education (BOE) meeting.

Schoenfeld’s nearly four-decade career with the district was honored with a heartfelt video, two proclamations from White Plains Mayor Tom Roach and Westchester County Executive George Latimer and a named dedication of the Education House Assembly Room at 5 Homeside Lane.

“I don’t think anyone will ever come close to touching your record of dedication as the district clerk,” White Plains Superintendent Dr. Joseph Ricca said. “I love you, I care about you like a second mom and I want only the best for you.”

In addition to handling information services and all Board of Education communication, Schoenfeld oversaw the district’s annual budget vote and election, its policy manual and the school calendar, among many other duties.

“I thank everyone for their kind words,” Schoenfeld said. “The video was wonderful hearing from so many people from the past, and I’ve got to tell you, I’ve enjoyed every minute of it.”

“It’s been a long time and a lot of meetings, superintendents and board members, but I’ve enjoyed it,” Schoenfeld continued. “I hope I’ve given a little back from what it’s given me.”

Colleagues, former Board of Education members and those from the greater White Plains community highlighted Schoenfeld’s impressive knowledge of the district’s history, commitment to its students and dedicated work ethic in their congratulatory messages.

Grandpas United in White Plains Honors Three for Service

By Rick Pezzullo

White Plains Grandpas United held a virtual Awards Breakfast Dec. 21 honoring three grandfathers for their community service.

The program was attended by Westchester County Executive George Latimer, Mayor Tom Roach, Senators Andrea Stewart Cousins and Shelley Mayer, County Board of Legislator Chairman Ben Boykin and other county and community leaders. Honored at the Breakfast were David Greene, Douglas Peterson and Ervan Caesar.

Grandpas United in White Plains has grown from a handful of grandfathers in 2018 to more than 80 grandfathers. The program has been instrumental in helping to establish two other municipal Grandpas United community partners which include Port Chester and Ossining.

The mission of Grandpas United is to utilize their talents, skills and experiences to improve the community. They aspire to serve as male role models and mentors to their grandchildren.

Westchester Teen Honored for Good Deed

Thirteen-year-old Sky Sams, a STEER Student Athlete from Port Chester, set a goal to collect as many $25 Visa Gift Cards as there are teenagers in Westchester County’s Foster Care System. After making a video and posting it on social media to enlist the help of her family, friends and peers, Sams was able to raise enough money to purchase 118 $25 dollar gift cards, enough for the 116 teenagers in Westchester County Foster Care. Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Social Services Leonard Townes said, “Sky’s compassion is an example to us all. Her willingness to sacrifice her time and consider others above herself is a true reflection of the spirit of the holidays and the meaning of Christmas. The heart she displayed is one we all need to imitate.”
Iona College Celebrated Many Accomplishments in 2021

From acquiring a new campus and launching the NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences to rediscovering a lost Baroque painting hidden in plain sight for decades, Iona College celebrated dozens of notable accomplishments in 2021.

Guided by the leadership of President Seamus Carey, Ph.D., Iona’s forward-thinking strategies have helped this Catholic liberal arts college emerge as an anomaly in higher education, with new student enrollments spiking 32 percent in the past two years. “Despite the headwinds facing higher education, 2021 was a remarkable year for Iona College,” said Carey. “Iona is a school on the rise, and I believe the momentum will continue to build as many of our plans are still coming to fruition. Thank you to the Iona community for heeding the call to innovate. Together, we continue to ‘Fight the Good Fight’ and lead by example.”

Iona’s top 10 accomplishments in 2021 include:

1. NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences: Supported by a $20 million gift from NewYork-Presbyterian, the NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences offers a new vision for collaborative health care education, modern workforce development and community care in collaboration with NewYork’s #1 hospital, as ranked by U.S. News and World Report’s Best Hospitals. The NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences be housed on Iona’s newly acquired campus in Bronxville, N.Y. Classes are expected to begin at Iona Bronxville by January 2023.

2. Bronxville campus acquisition: Iona College closed on its new Bronxville campus on January 7, 2021. The new health sciences campus also creates opportunities for expanded student programming in the performing arts, varsity and club athletics and other extracurricular activities.

3. Enrollment surge: Fueled by the addition of new academic programs as well as expanded student opportunities across all campuses, Iona’s enrollment grew by 32% from 2019 to 2021.

4. Men’s basketball undefeated at home: Hall of Fame men’s basketball coach Rick Pitino and the Gaels kicked off their fall season undefeated at home in 2021. In November, the Gaels became the first team in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference’s history to beat an AP top-10 team after upsetting No. 10 Alabama 72-68.

5. Rediscovered masterpiece: Visual arts professor Thomas Ruggio knew that a painting of the Holy Family with the infant St. John was a 17th-century Italian Baroque work when he visited the Church of the Holy Family. Yet after conferring with fellow scholars in Italy and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cesare Dandini was identified as the artist — and news of the rediscovered masterpiece went viral.

6. Murphy Green: A new green space in the heart of campus will transform a parking circle into a lively outdoor landscape thanks to a generous gift from Joseph M. Murphy ‘59, ‘83H and his late wife, JoAnn M. Murphy ‘86H, a longtime Iona trustee. The Murphy Green is expected to open by spring 2022.

7. Gaels Go Further Mentoring: Iona launched a new mentoring program this fall, focused on advancing students’ personal and professional goals while giving alumni an impactful new way to support the next generation. With the growth of this strategic new initiative, mentoring is poised to become a cornerstone of the Iona experience.

8. Innovation leader: U.S. News and World Report ranked Iona College in its top 20 list of the nation’s most innovative schools.

9. $10,000 stipend up: Up to 112 graduate students pursuing degrees in Marriage & Family Therapy or School Psychology could receive a $10,000 check in their final year thanks to a $1.9 million federal grant to support the training of skilled professionals.

10. $154 million campaign completed: Launched in 2015, the Iona Forever fundraising campaign supported affordability through scholarships; attracted and developed world-class faculty; enhanced support for academic centers; and responsibly developed campus infrastructure to improve learning and living environments. Iona Forever was the biggest campaign in Iona’s history and was completed a year ahead of schedule, demonstrating the enthusiasm for Iona among alumni, partners and supporters.

Founded in 1940, Iona College is a master’s-granting private, Catholic, coeducational institution of learning in the tradition of the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers. Iona’s 45-acre campus is just 20 miles north of Midtown Manhattan. With a total enrollment of nearly 12,000 students and an alumni base of over 50,000 around the world, Iona is a diverse community of learners and scholars dedicated to academic excellence and the values of justice, peace and service.

Grandpas United in White Plains Honors Three for Service

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The program has received awards from Encore and Generations United.

Greene is a former 38-year Social Studies teacher and mentor at Alfred Stevenson High School in the Bronx, Woodlands High School in Greenburgh and Scarsdale High School. He coached football at all three schools and after retiring from teaching continued to coach at Arsdley High School for more than six years. He has two grandchildren. He also supervised and taught new teachers while working for Fordham University and was a member of WISE Services, assisting high schools create individualized experiential learning programs to help students to learn the nonacademic life skills necessary to succeed in life after high school.

Greene has published two books, and his blogs have appeared in Education World, US News and World Report, the Washington Post and the New York Times. He has also appeared on radio, local TV, and a TV documentary entitled, The Growing Movement Against Teach For America.

Caesar worked as a trucker for 42 years. As a trucker, be traveled mostly from New York to Boston, twice a day, for about 19-20 hours per day. While attending White Plains High School, he worked night shifts at the New York Hospital as an orderly at the psychiatric hospital. From the hospital, he moved to driving trucks. Supported from a trucking employer, he was able to attend Tractor Trailer Trade School in New Jersey. Now retired, he enjoys golf and travel.

In addition to Grandpas United, Caesar is a member of the Men’s Ministry at Bethel Baptist Church in White Plains.

His main role is father to two daughters, Melissa and Monique, who he considers his best friends. He has a wonderful partner, Vincenza, who he has been with for more than 20 years. He has four grandchildren from his family, as well as eight grandchildren from Vincenza’s family.

Peterson is relatively new to White Plains. A retired engineer who saw an opportunity when he was 26 years old and started a consulting engineering firm. He built the company into a forerunner in its industry with an international book of clients.

Peterson and his family resided in a small town in Western Massachusetts. The

Schoenfeld Celebrated for Nearly Four Decades as WP District Clerk

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Pupil Personnel Services.

Steven Schoenfeld, Michele’s son, thanked his father for the incredible example she provided for him growing up and shared an added perk of growing up with the district clerk as a parent: knowing very early in the morning if school would be canceled for snow.

“To say that you are a fantastic role model is quite an understatement,” he said.

As the face of the White Plains School District for so long, many shared sentiments about Schoenfeld’s kindness, thoughtfulness and unwavering support she provided to fellow staff, parents, students and the surrounding community.

“It’s hard to even imagine White Plains without you sitting in your office, executing your job with perfection,” BOE President Rosemarie Eller said. “And for that, we thank you.”

Many current and former colleagues expressed how much they cherished Schoenfeld’s collaboration, professional, integrity and partnership over the years — not only as district clerk but also as a PTA leader, volunteer for the school district and member of the White Plains community.

“You’ve been the heart, the head, and the history of White Plains, and you will be missed greatly,” said Lenora Boehlert, Former Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.

BOE member James Hricay estimated the time, and I’m happy you’re being behind it.”

“You’re the type of person that weaves the community together, that’s out all the time, and I’m happy you’re being recognized,” Roach continued.

While Latimer could not attend the meeting due to testing positive for COVID-19, she shared a message in the video and also bestowed December 14, 2021 as Michele Schoenfeld Day in Westchester County.
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Dan’s Wine of the Year
2014 Casa Santos Lima Reserva
The nose on this wine bursts through the seems with dark fruit notes early spice tinged berries that remind you the wine is old school. The palate brings Very complex on the palate with coconut, blackberry, jam and dried fruit, prune and fig. The addition of the Syrah in this blend is what separates this wine from anything ordinary.

$11.97

Jason’s Wine of the Year
2019 Oak Farm Tievoli Cabernet Sauvignon
Deep garnet in color, this Cabernet Sauvignon is composed of complex aromas of black currant, blueberry, cedar, and floral characteristics. The wine is full bodied with echoing aromas on the palate. The finish is abundant in textured tannins, yet smooth and velvety.

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Suburban’s Sparkling Wine of the Year
NV Isotta Manzoni Prosecco Rose
Subtle and fresh aromas with hints of small red berries, rose, and pomegranate. On the palate it is silky and full with elegant flavors of strawberry and crushed violets. Finishing with well-balanced minerality. You will have no problem finishing the bottle once it is opened. This is crushable!

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Mt. Pleasant Schools to Convene Public Forum as COVID-19 Fears Persist

By Martin Wilbur

Mount Pleasant school officials are arranging a community forum with elected officials at every level of government after several parents recently expressed concern that COVID-19 vaccines might be mandated for children to attend school.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Peter Giarizzo said the district, possibly in partnership with the Valhalla School District, is hoping to hold a public session sometime in January on education-related matters.

Vaccines are certainly one issue that we can talk about but it’s not the only issue we face as a school system, so we would want that session to be about lots of different things,” Giarizzo said.

One parent pointed to legislation introduced in October by Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (D-Bronx), whose bill would require every student to be immunized against COVID-19, adding it to the list of other vaccines mandated by the state for children to attend school, and vowed to fight any mandate.

Two parents who spoke on the issue during the Mount Pleasant Board of Education’s last meeting on Dec. 15 said they were looking for the government to continue to allow them to make the choice for what is best for their children and family.

“If we can get them here as soon as possible and we can get all of their support and no matter which way you choose, but that’s what we’re looking for, a choice,” said resident Carlo Valente. “That’s all we’re asking for.”

Giarizzo said Mount Pleasant will steer clear of any vaccine mandate for the school community.

“There is no mandate and we do not intend to impose one for either our staff or our students,” he said. “We will not. As (Board of Education) President Horan has stated, parents can make these informed decisions with their pediatricians and health care professionals.”

Another parent, Lauren Stanco, said she fears that with the recent surge in COVID-19 cases, the situation could result in a switch back to remote learning, which has occurred in several districts before the holiday break in the region.

“It’s such a concern for these kids. They’ve lived through this,” Stanco said. “I feel like it’s March again, two years ago. How much of this can we avoid shutting down again.”

One step that the district has taken is its “test to stay” program, which started the week of Dec. 13 and has saved 647 student school days across the district, Giarizzo said. The program provides a rapid test before the start of the school day to unvaccinated students who have been exposed to COVID-19.

Each exposed student must be tested for a seven-day period. If they test negative, they can stay in school, if not they are sent home. Parents must fill out a consent form in advance to allow their children to be tested, which is found on the district’s website.

The purpose of program is to keep schools open, the superintendent said, and with the cooperation of parents and the hard work of staff, it’s been going well.

“My job is to keep kids in school,” Giarizzo said. “Our principals and administrators and the board (are) very committed to make sure that happens. We have not discussed any kind of extended closure. Honestly, that is like the last resort for me.”

Harckham Calls for COVID-19 Testing Site at FDR Park in Yorktown

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) has sent a letter to Gov. Kathy Hochul calling on the state to open a mobile testing site at Franklin D. Roosevelt State Park in Yorktown Heights to help fight the latest spike in COVID-19 cases.

Harckham’s letter comes after Hochul announced that the state plans to open more state-run testing sites to combat the surge. However, as of Sunday there were still no state-run testing sites in the lower Hudson Valley.

“As we continue to fight this pandemic, we need to utilize all of the resources and tools available to us, and we know that testing is a crucial component in stopping the spread,” Harckham said. “I urge the governor to promptly open a site in the Hudson Valley region and recommend utilizing FDR State Park as a testing site. It’s large enough to easily accommodate a drive-thru testing site, and it’s easily accessible off the Taconic State Parkway and Route 202.”

Last week Westchester County Executive George Latimer announced that he planned to request the state use a site in the Hudson Valley region and accommodate a drive-thru testing site, and it’s easily accessible off the Taconic State Parkway and Route 202.

“I urge the governor to promptly open a site in the Hudson Valley region and accommodate a drive-thru testing site, and it’s easily accessible off the Taconic State Parkway and Route 202,” Harckham said. “I urge the governor to promptly open a site in the Hudson Valley region and accommodate a drive-thru testing site, and it’s easily accessible off the Taconic State Parkway and Route 202.”

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Westchester Increases Testing as COVID-19 Cases Explode

By Martin Wilbur

As active COVID-19 cases soar to pandemic highs, Westchester County is increasing its testing for residents who show symptoms or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for the virus.

County Executive George Latimer said Monday that Westchester is partnering with Quadrant Biosciences to make free PCR tests available at the County Center in White Plains for those who most urgently need to learn whether they are positive. Testing will begin this Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and continue on Thursday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Testing will then resume on weekdays starting next Monday, Jan. 3 from 12 to 4 p.m. then continue from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. each weekday through at least Jan. 11.

Appointments are mandatory and can be made up to three days in advance at www.westchestergov.com/health.

“The demand for testing will exceed the amount of tests that we have available, but the tests that we’re given we’ll give them to everybody that we can up to the satisfaction of the amount that we have available,” Latimer said.

The county could not immediately provide how many tests may be available each day.

Over the past couple of weeks there have been long lines outside testing sites, with some residents unable to get the PCR test or forced to wait days for an appointment.

Latimer stressed that what the County Center will offer is meant to help those who are in the most need of a test – only those who have symptoms or were exposed to a person who is a confirmed positive.

“What we are witnessing is a nationwide explosion in the incidents of active cases as well as a nationwide explosion...in demand for testing,” he said. “No matter what system you’re looking at the demand has far exceeded the supply of tests nationwide.”

The announcement came after Latimer, who along with Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins returned to work after their own bouts with COVID-19, presented the explosive rate at which the virus is spreading. As of Sunday, Westchester had 16,819 active cases, easily eclipsing the high of more than 12,000 in the early stages of the pandemic in spring 2020. Last winter’s surge, which peaked on Jan. 18, saw more than 11,500 active cases.

On Nov. 26, there were 2,078 cases. On that same day, the infection rate was 2 percent; on Sunday it reached 13.7 percent in Westchester while New York State saw a 16 percent positivity rate. Within the last week infections in the county more than doubled.

While hospitalizations and fatalities are not rising at the same rate as active cases, they have still quadrupled during the past month. On Nov. 24, the day before Thanksgiving, there were 50 COVID-19-related hospitalizations, while on Christmas Eve that number stood at 214.

There were seven deaths from COVID-19 in the month ending with Thanksgiving. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas there were 30 fatalities in the county.

Latimer did not have the latest statistics on how many unvaccinated people accounted for the latest deaths and hospitalizations, but up until the latest surge about two-thirds of those totals consisted of the unvaccinated, he said. Some of the vaccinated in those situations also have had other health issues or may not have received at least two shots.

“What we do seem to see is that those people that have been vaccinated properly, either at the two-(shot) level or at the booster level, still may get the disease but don’t suffer seriously, do not wind up being hospitalized because of the disease,” Latimer said. “So to that extent we’re somewhat encouraged, but to go up from 50 hospitalizations to 214, that number has been rising each day this week. That is of great concern to us.”

In the early weeks of the pandemic, there were about 600 hospitalizations. Last winter that number rose to more than 500.

There have been 94 percent of adults 18 years old and up in Westchester who have received at least one dose. The rate of those with two doses is at 84 percent. The county did not have the numbers on the percentage or residents who received boosters or pediatric vaccinations.

Latimer urged residents to remain vigilant, wear masks in indoor public spaces and get vaccinated or boosted.

“We have the opportunity, if we show proper discipline, if we show proper perseverance to get through this,” Latimer said. “We can have our kids in class and get the proper learning. We can continue to function without shutting down the government, without shutting down the business community, which has happened.”

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Rivera Toyota Approved to Upgrade Dealership, Build New Service Shop

By Martin Wilbur

Approvals were granted earlier this month to Rivera Toyota to renovate the existing dealership and build a new service and repair shop at the site of a former burger restaurant in Mount Kisco.

The village’s Planning Board voted in favor of site plan approval and to issue a special use permit to upgrade the existing dealership building at 325 N. Bedford Rd. to allow continued car sales and create 12 vehicle service bays, customer service accommodations and employee and administrative space.

Customer sales and display will be in the front of the building while the service area will occur at the rear entrance.

At the same meeting on Dec. 14, the board also approved the site plan and a special use permit along with a steep slopes permit to allow the auto group, which is owned by former Yankees great Mariano Rivera, to build a 12,672-square-foot, two-story service and repair shop at 353 N. Bedford Rd. It will house eight service bays, a customer drop-off area, customer service areas, and interior parts storage and will be for more routine service and repairs.

Representatives for Rivera Toyota have stated that if any patrons’ vehicles need to be taken to the repair and service location at 325 N. Bedford Rd. it will be done by employees to avoid worsening an often-congested roadway. There will also be appointment times when car owners will need to report to the site so there isn’t overflow at the site.

The current structure, which housed the Westchester Burger Co. before it went out of business on about a .8-acre parcel, will be demolished.

The approvals at the two sites will enable the auto group to relinquish its current service operations at 255 Kisco Ave. when the lease ends sometime in 2023.

The existing Rivera Toyota dealership at 325 N. Bedford Rd. in Mount Kisco.


The Hilb Group announced recently that it has welcomed Charles Newman Co. Insurance and Employee Benefits to its portfolio, adding to the company’s growing presence in the New York metropolitan area. The transaction became effective Dec. 1.

Based in Peekskill, Charles Newman Co. is a licensed full-service broker providing clients with a broad array of products and offerings including group health as well as ancillary and voluntary employee benefits coverage. Charles Newman, Ilana Arbeit, David Arbeit and their team of insurance professionals will join the Hilb Group’s tristate regional operations.

“We are extremely excited to join the Hilb Group,” said Newman, the agency’s leader. “This partnership marks a tremendous step in not only allowing us to maintain the strength of our local connections, but also to further enhance the resources and offerings we can deliver to our customers, now and for the future.”

The Hilb Group is a leading property and casualty and employee benefits insurance brokerage and advisory firm headquartered in Richmond, Va. It is a portfolio company of The Carlyle Group, a global investment firm. The company has completed more than 120 acquisitions and now has over 100 offices in 22 states.
Shimsky to Challenge Fellow Democrat Abinanti for Assembly Seat

By Martin Wilbur

Five-term Westchester County Legislator MaryJane Shimsky plans to challenge veteran Assemblyman Tom Abinanti in a Democratic primary next year after announcing her candidacy last Tuesday for the 92nd Assembly District seat.

Shimsky, the Board of Legislators’ current majority leader, said she enjoys being a legislator and hopes to carry that to the state level. The Dobbs Ferry resident was unopposed for a sixth two-year term last month but cannot serve beyond that because of Westchester’s law that limits county legislators to 12 years in office.

“Obviously, I have two years to find new employment, but I think being a legislator is far and away the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done,” Shimsky said. “You get to help people as individuals who call your office, you get to affect policy by doing legislative oversight on the executive branch and, as needed, you get to pass laws that improve your jurisdiction, whether it’s your county or your state.”

Her candidacy sets up a primary in June against Abinanti. The district has been Democratic for decades. Before Abinanti took over in 2011, Richard Brodsky represented the area for nearly three decades.

Prior to her Board of Legislators service, Shimsky worked as community relations director for Brodsky. A Yale graduate, she went to NYU School of Law and worked as an assistant district attorney in Manhattan before teaching history at Marymount College.

Shimsky said she was motivated to run, in part, because Abinanti has “sat on the sidelines” on pandemic-related issues and has failed to help Westchester obtain critical state resources to mitigate serious flooding over the past decade. The shortcomings were once again apparent after Hurricane Ida struck the region on Sept. 1, she said.

“I feel that members of the Assembly need to take a more active role in making sure that everything is as it should be and getting out and being proactive with information to help the community know where the resources are to make the right decisions,” said Shimsky, who followed Abinanti in the same Board of Legislators seat, which serves Greenburgh and Mount Pleasant.

She criticized Abinanti’s opposition to extend the eviction moratorium, which has since become outdated. Abinanti countered that he was the county legislator who drafted Westchester Master Plan to address flooding issues, which was approved in his final days in office in 2010 before leaving for the Assembly. He said former county executive Rob Astorino opted for what was called the Reconnaissance Plan a few years later, which has since become outdated.

Meanwhile, she and other county lawmakers never followed up with a plan to deal with stormwater, Abinanti said.

“I would be happy to fight on behalf of Greenburgh to get money to fix that problem, but somebody’s got to do the plan,” Abinanti said. “She’s attempting to fabricate issues, which just don’t exist. I did what needed to be done on that and it’s now a county issue.”

The assemblyman, who has been a leading advocate for providing special education resources in public schools and for the disabled population, said he supported the rent moratorium twice, but by the second extension it was hurting small landlords who weren’t receiving help from the state.

“I could not tell our one-, two- and three-family landlords that they had to continue supporting tenants and never see the possibility of state money,” Abinanti said.

He also chided Shimsky for announcing her candidacy for a district that may be altered significantly once redistricting is complete.

“We don’t even know what the districts are,” said Abinanti, a Pleasantville resident. “She’s running for a district that hasn’t even been designed yet.”

Petitioning is scheduled to begin around Mar. 1. Neither candidate has heard yet of other potential hopefuls from either major party who might consider a run.

For Abinanti, this would be the second consecutive election cycle where he would have to fend off a challenge within his own party. In 2020, he outlasted little-known Jennifer Williams in the Democratic primary before winning a fifth Assembly term in November without opposition.

By Martin Wilbur

Five-term Westchester County Legislator MaryJane Shimsky plans to challenge veteran Assemblyman Tom Abinanti in a Democratic primary next year after announcing her candidacy last Tuesday for the 92nd Assembly District seat.

Shimsky, the Board of Legislators’ current majority leader, said she enjoys being a legislator and hopes to carry that to the state level. The Dobbs Ferry resident was unopposed for a sixth two-year term last month but cannot serve beyond that because of Westchester’s law that limits county legislators to 12 years in office.

“Obviously, I have two years to find new employment, but I think being a legislator is far and away the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done,” Shimsky said. “You get to help people as individuals who call your office, you get to affect policy by doing legislative oversight on the executive branch and, as needed, you get to pass laws that improve your jurisdiction, whether it’s your county or your state.”

Her candidacy sets up a primary in June against Abinanti. The district has been Democratic for decades. Before Abinanti took over in 2011, Richard Brodsky represented the area for nearly three decades.

Prior to her Board of Legislators service, Shimsky worked as community relations director for Brodsky. A Yale graduate, she went to NYU School of Law and worked as an assistant district attorney in Manhattan before teaching history at Marymount College.

Shimsky said she was motivated to run, in part, because Abinanti has “sat on the sidelines” on pandemic-related issues and has failed to help Westchester obtain critical state resources to mitigate serious flooding over the past decade. The shortcomings were once again apparent after Hurricane Ida struck the region on Sept. 1, she said.

“I feel that members of the Assembly need to take a more active role in making sure that everything is as it should be and getting out and being proactive with information to help the community know where the resources are to make the right decisions,” said Shimsky, who followed Abinanti in the same Board of Legislators seat, which serves Greenburgh and Mount Pleasant.

She criticized Abinanti’s opposition to extend the eviction moratorium, which has since become outdated. Abinanti countered that he was the county legislator who drafted Westchester Master Plan to address flooding issues, which was approved in his final days in office in 2010 before leaving for the Assembly. He said former county executive Rob Astorino opted for what was called the Reconnaissance Plan a few years later, which has since become outdated.

Meanwhile, she and other county lawmakers never followed up with a plan to deal with stormwater, Abinanti said.

“I would be happy to fight on behalf of Greenburgh to get money to fix that problem, but somebody’s got to do the plan,” Abinanti said. “She’s attempting to fabricate issues, which just don’t exist. I did what needed to be done on that and it’s now a county issue.”

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**Police Blotter**

County Police/Mount Kisco

**Dec. 22:** A man arrived at the Green Street precint at 6:23 p.m. to report that he had found a dog running in the middle of Lexington Avenue. The man coaxed the dog into his truck and wanted to turn it over to police. As officers prepared to take the dog inside, another man drove up to report that his dog had gotten loose and was missing. The dog and owner were reunited on the spot.

Dec. 23: Police responded to Terrace Place at 12:09 p.m. on a report of a domestic dispute outside a residence. A man reported that a relative was blocking his driveway and refusing to move his car. The matter was resolved and officers left the scene.

**Dec. 23:** Report of a malfunctioning traffic light at the intersection of Preston Way and North Bedford Road at 12:36 p.m. An electrical contractor was notified and officers directed traffic until the necessary repair was completed several hours later.

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

**Dec. 16:** A civilian arrived at police headquarters at 4:36 p.m. reporting that his cell phone was stolen from his vehicle.

**Dec. 17:** Report of a past larceny at 10:43 a.m. from a complainant’s mailbox on Route 120 involving personal checks. The responding officers reported that information was gathered as a matter of record only at this time as per request of the complainant. A report to follow.

**Dec. 19:** A Wrights Mill Road resident reported at 7:55 a.m. that a large bobcat just walked thorough her backyard and into her neighbor’s yard. The responding officer reported that the bobcat was gone upon his arrival.

**Dec. 20:** A caller reported a minor dispute with the Gulf station clerk on North Broadway at 3:47 p.m. He stated that he gave the clerk four $20 dollar bills, then went out to pump his gas. He pumped $49 in gas and went inside to retrieve his change and was only given back $11 instead of $31. The responding officer spoke with all parties involved, including the owner, and reported that the owner agreed to check the register totals at midnight when the shift ends and parties will make contact tomorrow to discuss the findings. Matter adjusted at this time.

North Castle Police Department

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Pleasantville Police Department

**Dec. 22:** A security video showing a vehicle being looted by a group of youngsters was reported to police from a Hobby Street resident. The vehicle, a 2013 Toyota, was unlocked. The larceny is under investigation.

**Dec. 23:** A complainant arrived at police headquarters to report that fraudulent checks were being deposited in their name. The case is under investigation.

State Police/Cortlandt

**Dec. 20:** Alexander Cardenas, 53, of Ossining, was charged with driving with a suspended license and without insurance at 4:45 p.m. following a two-car accident on Route 100 near Seven Bridges Road.

Dec. 22: Shaina Quinones, 34, of Yorktown, was charged with unsafe passing and aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle at 9:28 a.m. following a crash on Route 6. A routine driver’s license check revealed she was driving with a suspended license.

Dec. 22: A 16-year-old male was charged with juvenile delinquency at 10:13 a.m. after allegedly entering a Crompond Road residence without approval.

**Steinbac Alum Donates $1M to Alma Mater; Largest Gift Ever for School**

Daniel P. Mahoney, a distinguished 1967 graduate and longtime supporter of Stepinac High School, recently returned with his wife, Susan, to donate to his alma mater that he credits for shaping his success as well as many other students.

This time, his commitment to Stepinac came as a $1 million gift, the single largest donation in the 73-year history of the renowned all-boys Catholic high school.

In recognition of the significance that the contribution will make in supporting the school’s mission to provide students with the skills they’ll need to be globally competitive, the groundbreaking Honors Academy will be renamed the Susan and Daniel P. Mahoney Honors Academy.

Launched four years ago, the Honors Academy, which Mahoney praised for its curriculum innovation, is a small learning program for academically top performing students that provides college-level studies focused on real-world applications in four disciplines – engineering, finance, health sciences and law – leading to potential careers.

The Mahoneys, who now live in Jupiter, Fla., were longtime Rye residents where they became pillars of that community. Susan Mahoney served on the Board of Trustees of Rye Country Day School for 14 years and was responsible for leading three major fundraising campaigns.

“The contributions made by the Stepinac family, especially the students, I extend deep appreciation for your very generous gift,” said Stepinac President Fr. Thomas Collins while recently accepting the couple’s gift. “It truly reflects your abiding faith in the school’s tradition of shaping tomorrow’s leaders. Thanks to your investment, you will help assure that Stepinac remains strong as a preeminent leader in secondary education.”

After graduating in 1971 from Boston College where he majored in finance, Dan Mahoney pursued a successful career spanning more than 30 years on Wall Street as a New York Stock Exchange specialist. He served as a senior partner at CMJ Partners, a leading New York Stock Exchange member firm.
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$51.99  

**JACK DANIELS BOURBON 1.75 L**
$47.99  

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**Single Malt Scotch Sale 750 ML**

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<tr>
<td>Glenlivet 15YR</td>
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**Johnnie Walker Black 1.75 L**
$69.99  

**Basil Hayden's Bourbon 750 ML**
$39.99  

**Widow Jane Bourbon 750 ML**
$59.99  

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**Dewar's Scotch 1.75 L**
$32.99  

**Johnnie Walker Red 1.75 L**
$33.99  

**Absolut Vodka 1.75 L**
$29.99  

**Smirnoff Vodka 1.75 L**
$20.99  

**Svedka Vodka 1.75 L**
$20.99  

**Jameson Irish Whiskey 1.75 L**
$51.99  

**Western Son Vodka 1.75 L**
$21.99  

**Sobieski Vodka 1.75 L**
$19.99  

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**20% Off A Case of Wine Mix & Match. Sale Items Excluded**

**LOCAL DELIVERY! CALL FOR DETAILS**

Prices good through Jan. 8, 2022  
Must present ad for sale prices

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**Celebrate with Champagne! All 750 ML**

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<td>G.H. Mumm</td>
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**7% Off Any Single Bottle Spirit Purchase**

Not valid on sale items. May not be combined with other offers. With coupon only. Expires 1/8/22

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**EVERYDAY SPECIALS**

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Time to Polish the Crystal Ball and See What’s in Store for 2022

It’s hard to believe that it’s time to turn the page on another year. After the upheaval of 2020, it’s likely most of us were looking for a better outlook in 2021. There were some hopeful signs, but it was still a difficult year for so many.

For us at Examiner Media, we look forward to 2022 and hope that if just some of these wishes come true, we’ll be in a better place a year from now.

That Americans learn to talk to each other amicably again even when we strongly disagree.

For nonprofit and charitable organizations to receive the necessary support so they may continue to bring the irreplaceable assistance and services that so many rely upon.

To fill the empty storefronts in downtown business districts everywhere.

For residents to shop local as much as possible to help all downtowns thrive.

For people to once again feel comfortable going to wherever store, restaurant or venue you choose to visit.

That all those who continue to stubbornly refuse to get vaccinated against the deadly COVID-19 virus come to their senses.

For health care professionals, whose mission is to help others, receive the thanks they deserve.

That teachers and school personnel are recognized for their dedication in educating children in the midst of some of the most challenging times.

A wonderful retirement for Cortlandt Supervisor Linda Puglisi after 34 years of impeccable public service, including the last 30 as supervisor.

That Yorktown Councilman Vishnu Patel, a selfless public servant, continues to find a way to make his community better.

For Putnam Valley Supervisor Sam Oliverio, Carmel Supervisor Ken Schmitt, Somers Supervisor Rick Morrissey, Kent Supervisor Maureen Fleming, Peekskill Mayor Andre Rainey and all others leaving office, nothing but success in the next chapter of their lives. Thank you to all of you for your public service.

For those who will continue to serve, much success and wisdom.

Great memories for all youth and high school athletes. May you all experience the joy of victories.

That all first-responders are told how much they are appreciated. Let them know whenever you get a chance.

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And a happy, healthy and prosperous 2022 for everyone.

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Letters to the Editor

Fighting Mask Mandate is Divisive and Helps No One

I read with interest your article last week “Gubernatorial Hopeful Slams Mask Mandate But Reaction is Varied.” It would be nice for the politicians to get on the same page regarding COVID-19, a benefit to us all.

The governor’s directive to businesses requiring proof of vaccination OR wearing shoppers are leaving these stores. Not really a big surprise.

The NFL, NBA and NHL players have been hit with COVID-19, causing them to postpone or cancel games because they don’t have enough players. Cornell University moved all final exams online and canceled university events due to the rapid spread of COVID. And here, in our own county, the Carmel Central School District decided to close the high school and go to remote learning for the rest of 2021. COVID figures are rising in all states.

MaryEllen Odell, our county executive, has chosen this time to announce that Putnam County will not enforce the mask mandate that Gov. Hochul recently put in place. Not that it matters that much that Odell and the county legislature passed the resolution. Everywhere I go people are masked up. They don’t want to take a chance they will get COVID-19. Odell announced that the Health Department is arranging a private-public partnership to create a COVID testing site in Carmel that will be open six days a week.

They understand the gravity of the situation. Why, then, pass a resolution that opposes their own state government, does not help county residents deal with this deadly crisis and will obviously be ignored? The legislature argues that the government does not have the right to order people to wear masks. This is empty political grandstanding. This does not save lives!

Phyllis Hoenig
Mahopac
Puglisi Looks Back on 34 Years in Cortlandt Government

By Rick Pezzullo

As she sauntered into the conference room at Cortlandt Town Hall, a building that played a pivotal role in the beginning of her historic 30-year run as town supervisor, Linda Puglisi described the personal touches she made on decorating the space, along with the many scenic locations in town, some that were on display in photographs on the wall.

It was two weeks before Puglisi, 72, would be exiting Town Hall as the longest serving chief executive in Cortlandt history and only the second woman to lead the town after deciding a year ago to retire after 15 terms.

“I would love to be supervisor the rest of my life. In my mind it’s my identity. It’s who I am,” Puglisi said during a wide-ranging and sentimental interview. “I wanted to go out on my own terms. I have been blessed and fortunate to have had the trust of residents all these years. It makes me feel satisfied that I made a difference. That was my goal from the beginning.”

Born in Canton, Ohio, Puglisi moved with her family to Rockland County when she was two years old. Her father, Ralph C. Braden, was a World War II veteran who would later serve 25 years as town historian in Orangetown. He knew John F. Kennedy; someone Puglisi would grow up to admire.

She and her ex-husband, who she met as a freshman at Pearl River High School, bought a house in the Croton section of Cortlandt to be closer to his job. Their twin children, Ali and Jeff, who grew up to be an attorney and a doctor, respectively, Puglisi first became involved with issues in the Lakeland School District, where she was president of the Mohegan Colony Homeowners Association and director of the Mohegan Colony Nursery School.

Puglisi also joined Cortlandt Watch, a homeowners’ group that promoted environmental protection and controlled development. That caught the eye of veteran town official Jack Gaffney, who was running for supervisor in 1987. Gaffney lost to his longtime nemesis, Charles DiGiacomo, but Puglisi and Thomas Carulli, his two running mates, defeated two prominent Republican candidates for Town Board seats.

“It was the right time for me to run for town council,” Puglisi said. “The community was going in a different direction. They wanted less development. I thought the whole team would win. Tom and I came out of that grassroots community.”

Two years later, Gaffney ousted DiGiacomo. Puglisi had toyed with running a Democratic primary against Gaffney, but decided to back off. But in 1991, she secured the Democratic line and prevailed in a four-way race by 83 votes, outlasting DiGiacomo, Gaffney and Alfred Donahue to win her first two-year term as supervisor.

“From Day One I wanted to be in charge. I didn’t like some of the decisions that were made. I felt I could do a better job,” Puglisi said. “I knew it was an uphill battle.”

During the campaign, Gaffney openly questioned Puglisi’s credentials, remarking, “Linda Puglisi is a nice lady who can serve milk and cookies and sing nursery rhymes, but she can’t run a business.”

“I think it backfired,” Puglisi said of Gaffney’s comments, which were echoed by others. “Sure, that was an outrageous thing to say. I wanted an opportunity. I went and marketed myself. I was pleased that people got my message, believed in me and supported me.”

Puglisi also benefited from a backlash against Gaffney from Croton-on-Hudson residents, who were bitter that Cortlandt was moving its offices from the Croton Municipal Building, where the town paid about $100,000 annually in rent, to the former Van Cortlandville Elementary School Building, which the town purchased for $1.1 million in 1991 following a referendum. Ironically, it was Puglisi’s idea to pursue the building and she was part of a negotiating team that secured it.

The town spent another $500,000 to make necessary improvements that Puglisi played an integral role in redesigning.

“In the long run it would be beneficial to the village,” Puglisi said. “I always knew that this former elementary school recycled into a Town Hall would serve our community well and it has done just that for 29 years.”

Other economic-led decisions Puglisi spearheaded were eliminating the town police department in 1999, consolidating town operating departments and other shared services.

Of course, the hallmark of her career has been the town’s average annual tax increase of 1 percent. During the same time, Cortlandt has completed more than $160 million in major improvements and capital projects, while only utilizing 1.2 percent of its bonding capacity.

“It’s a record that we are very proud of which has benefited our community, residents and local businesses during this administration,” Puglisi said.

Puglisi also led the charge to retain veterans’ services at the Montrose VA and helped add 3,000 acres of open space that have been used for recreational purposes or environmental preservation.

“Politics can be difficult, but I had a plan. I had a mission,” she said. “All the innovative ideas were what were best for the community. I don’t regret anything.”

Along the way, Puglisi faced many challenges, from hurricanes and tornados to the sudden announcement that the Indian Point nuclear power plant, the largest employer in the town, would be closing. She said Indian Point “kind of took over my life from the beginning.”

However, she emphasized that nothing compared to the obstacles created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, none of the town’s 200 employees have died from the virus.

Puglisi suffered a personal misstep in 2006 when she stepped in a pothole wearing high heels on her way to a function at Colonial Terrace where she was scheduled to introduce President Bill Clinton. She wound up getting five plates with screws in her ankle and has had to use a cane ever since.

“It changed my life. It was a stupid accident,” she said. “I’ve always been a very athletic person.”

Puglisi said she has extreme confidence that supervisor-elect Dr. Richard Becker will lead Cortlandt in the right direction.

“I know Richard will do a good job and carry forward a lot of our projects. I wanted to make sure someone would carry on the legacy,” Puglisi said. “I have confidence in Richard and the team that they will do the right thing.”

Puglisi said she has no plans to leave Cortlandt and hopes to catch up on some reading and do some traveling. She is fond of New England and enjoys being at the ocean. And, of course, she will spend more time with her children and two grandsons, Oliver and Jeremy.

“They are amazing and the light of my life,” Puglisi said. “I’m also just so proud of my kids. They’ve achieved a great deal. The most important thing is they are such good people.”

Don’t expect to see her speaking out at meetings, though. After leading more than 1,700 of them during her tenure, she’s been there, done that.

“I’ve had my turn. I’ve had my time,” Puglisi said. “I’ve worked to the best of my ability. It’s been exciting. It’s been interesting. Where can you have a profession where every day is different? I’ve met so many people that I wouldn’t have met before. Cortlandt has a bright future.”

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Art, Music is the Heart and Soul of ‘Joshua2’

By Abby Luby

Maybe it’s how he soulfully sings the blues or deftly paints his large canvases or molds his uniquely shaped vessels. Each creation by artist and musician Joshua Brittingham seems to emanate directly from his soul, from an inner space informing him of a plethora of emotions unfolding from social inequities and worldwide painful discrimination to a transformative place of where negative vibes become positive.

Brittingham’s art and music stays with you. A tall, bespectacled man with a hearty laugh, Brittingham, 69, professionally goes by the name Joshua2, a name he gave himself after a traumatic, life-threatening experience prompted him to forgive his parents for naming him after his father.

Brittingham and his wife, Holly, have two adult children. The couple moved to Somers five years ago after living in Harlem because he “needed to get closer to nature.” Brittingham regularly sings with his band. As an accomplished performing musician Brittingham regularly sings with his band. They have performed in Harlem, Delaware and abroad in New Zealand, Germany and Amsterdam. Locally, he performs outside his Somers studio twice a year. His last concert in September welcomed visitors into his gallery.

“Brittingham’s rock ‘n’ roll and blues songs may sound familiar but he often rewrites the lyrics to ‘tell the history of our people and credit those who actually wrote the words and composed the blues but died penniless in a little shack while others took credit and became famous.’”

Brittingham has his own version of the song “Strange Fruit,” composed by Abe Meeropol and recorded by Billie Holiday in 1939 about lynchings. The song compares victims to fruit hanging from trees.

Whatever mode of expression Brittingham chooses, each is a commentary on religion, the current state of racial inequality and healing. As a leader of the Black student union while attending the University of Delaware, he recalled countless protests, being arrested, beaten and going to jail repeatedly. His take on the current Black Lives Matter movement is that it doesn’t go far enough.

“I appreciate what BLM is trying to do but it’s on the surface,” he said. “I want to change the laws still on the books that say discrimination is legal. There are still Jim Crow laws that say if you are 15 percent Black, then you are a Black person. We also need to change the laws that legally allow a person from lynching Black people,” he said, referring to the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, a Black man murdered by two white men in Georgia last year.

Currently Brittingham is embracing Taoism, incorporating symbols of the Eastern philosophy in his visual work.

“The Tao tells us about peace and love, and that’s what is missing in the scriptures,” he said. “My family were all healers and I create from the heart.”

To learn more about Joshua Brittingham and his art and music, visit https://joshua2studios.com.

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 choose a surgeon?
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 decide whether a lumpectomy or mastectomy is the best option?
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 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.

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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.

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For every million Joe Schmo creators, for every dreamer whose art vanishes unheralded in the ceaseless passing of time, there’s one whose work captures the world’s attention and maintains that grip across a broad span of history. Their contributions endure in our minds, in our collective consciousness, burning a flame in our imaginations while art of equal or superior (and lesser) technical quality or artistic ambition evaporates into ash. It isn’t preordained, the select few who win the rare place. It is the byproduct of not just hard work and talent but also coincidence and serendipity. Timing and chance. Artists who possess greater ability descend into anonymity. But there’s that rarity, the one who bends history with the strum of a guitar, or the turn of a phrase, or the stroke of a paintbrush. They might have elite skill but it’s their penchant and passion for storytelling, in the right historic moment, with the right megaphone, that sets them apart and elevates their legend, mixed with elements of luck and happenstance — right person, right place, right time. In 20th century American writing, think Hemingway. In music, think early Dylan.

In modern American life, no painter/illustrator fits that description better than Norman Rockwell, a Mamaroneck High School dropout who delivered America, especially suburban, middle-class America, a new national identity. And examining Rockwell’s influence over our identity has never been more relevant than it is today. Just think, heading into last year’s presidential election, a whopping 80 percent of voters on both the Republican and Democratic sides proclaimed that contrasts with the opposing party are about core American values. But what are those values? And who helped shape them? No figure of the 20th century did more than Rockwell to create a visual vocabulary for us around those values, creating both American myths and real aspirations.

Roadtrip
All sober ruminating aside, and with just a fun getaway in mind, my wife Alyson and I recently visited the Berkshires for a weekend and included a pitstop at the Norman Rockwell Museum in his adopted adult life hometown of Stockbridge, Massachusetts. But I came away from the experience inspired by Rockwell’s legacy, with a wider understanding of the impact he had on how we look at ourselves as Americans ...

To read the rest of this article, and others like it, visit examiner-plus.com and click subscribe. We hope you’ve enjoyed this week’s excerpt from Examiner+. We love honest feedback. Tell us what you think: examinerplus@theexaminernews.com
By Martin Wilbur

For most, the day before Christmas is a time to fetch any last-minute gifts or bring home food items from the store and prepare for the holiday.

Last Friday, Robert Tomasulo and Junior Susca were hard at work completing hundreds of “burpees,” a strenuous exercise that combines a jump, squat and pushup.

The nearly herculean efforts of Tomasulo, the owner of Level Up Strength & Conditioning in Yorktown Heights, and Susca, one of his coaches, helped raise more than $1,400 for Love Holds Life Children’s Cancer Foundation, a lower Hudson Valley-based nonprofit organization.

“It was definitely challenging but doing it for the kids kind of helps you mentally to keep pushing through, and then the community that we have here at the gym helps us even more,” said Tomasulo, who completed 600 burpees while Susca did 520. “So to have support of my gym and all the coaches and everything makes it that much easier.”

After their grueling hour-long activity, two of the families that Love Holds Life helped this holiday season arrived at the gym as part of a brief presentation. Amanda Dumont, who recently moved from Cortlandt to Newburgh and whose nine-year-old daughter Zoe is recovering from cancer, was presented with a $1,000 check.

Then Jaya Karnani of Edgewater, N.J. came with her seven-year-old daughter Kiah and older son Zehn and received $2,500 and a gift for each child. For more than a year, Kiah has battled a rare bone cancer in her jaw, which has required doctors at Sloan Kettering’s pediatric unit to take bone from her leg. Her treatments can take up to 12 hours per visit.

“All this means the world to us, first getting to see Santa,” Karnani said. “She’s almost lost her childhood. I would wake her up at seven in the morning and I’ll say, ‘Kiah, do you want to wake up and see Santa?’ She’ll say yes because she doesn’t know what tomorrow will be. She knows that maybe tomorrow she’ll be stuck in the hospital.”

Richard Senato, who founded Love Holds Life nearly 10 years ago, said there was a third family that was helped this Christmas but they were unable to come because their son was completing treatment.

Aside from bringing joy during the holidays, Love Holds Life helps families throughout Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, northern New Jersey and Tampa, Fla. the rest of the year, he said.

“It’s all monetary assistance that we provide families during their time of treatment, and each family we’ll help for two years,” Senato said.

Dumont, a single mother, was overcome with emotion when she learned that she would be a holiday recipient. Someone on Cortlandt Manor Moms had contacted Love Holds Life to let them know of the challenges faced by Dumont and her daughter.

After the pandemic and Zoe’s battle, it was important to have an enjoyable Christmas this year.

“They got a hold of me,” Dumont said. “I was thinking this can’t be real.”

For Tomasulo and Susca, they had agreed to do one burpee for every dollar raised at the fitness center from members who would put donations in their stockings. Then Tomasulo’s father, Joe, matched those donations through his company Madison Environmental & Tank Services in Somers.

That required Susca to do 520 burpees and 584 for Tomasulo, who decided to round it up to 600. It was tough but they each hit their number. A third coach raised additional money but wasn’t there to participate.

“I’ve never gone over 160 before,” Susca said. “At the end of the day, I kept reminding myself what I’m doing it for, for a good cause, especially when I saw these young ladies. I said, alright, I’ve got to keep going.”

To learn more about Love Holds Life Children’s Cancer Foundation, visit www.loveholdslife.org.
The Home Library to Impress – or is it More Décor?

My favorite comedian has always been the late and delightfully crude Joan Rivers whom I first encountered in a rundown comedy club in Greenwich Village when I first moved to New York City. That was before she appeared on “The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson” and became an instant hit.

I remember many of her jokes, and one of my favorites was her contention that men preferred dumb women and, if they were exploring under their clothing, they weren’t looking for their library card.

Even though my basic skill has always been writing, ironically, I was not an avid reader of great literature or even popular novels, preferring celebrity biographies and sometimes maybe historical texts. As an editor, then public relations practitioner, I always spent so much time reading newspapers and magazines, then blogs, that I didn’t have much time left over for anything else.

Shallow as it might seem, I have always liked the looks of books. From my earliest days, while still in college, I started a collection of books that looked good on my shelves. I admit that I didn’t always read them. Only a person who’s old enough not to care what other people might think could disclose such information, right?

When I moved from my small college town to the big city, most of my moving boxes contained those books, many unread, even before I owned any bookcases.

Through the years, I have learned that man is not so much what he eats but rather what he reads, and we all tend to partly judge other people on that. Consider that when anyone is interviewed on television in front of a bookcase, many of us have the tendency to look for the book titles to learn more about the interview subject.

If anyone were judging me by the books on my shelves, I received a tremendous boost in reputation when my wife’s aunt, an avid bibliophile, passed away and left us, among other things, a library that included 50 years’ worth of belonging to the Book of the Month Club. Suddenly we had to create a dedicated room in our home as “the library” in which there were books wall to wall as the only décor.

When we were planning our move to our new condo, we first engaged a master craftsman to design and build bookcases in our living room whose finish matched the mahogany of our kitchen cabinets. If I say so myself, they are beautiful. Interspersed with the books are various objets d’art and, overall, the effect is highly effective. It makes me feel wealthy, with easy access to the world’s great minds.

Bill Primavera is a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate and founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc., the longest running public relations agency in Westchester (www.PrimaveraPR.com). To engage the services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.
Is Wine By the Glass Worthwhile When You’re Away From Home?

By Nick Antonaccio

“May I offer you a drink?”
“Yes, I’d like a glass of (white, red, sparkling) wine.”

This seemingly innocuous interchange with a waiter or bartender can be fraught with indecision, or worse, a hurried choice that has a mediocre result.

Today’s COVID-induced dining environment seems to change seasonally, sometimes monthly, even weekly. In this column, my focus is on those occasions when you are feeling relatively safe to enter an establishment for a meal or a drink.

Recently, many of us have gravitated to watching our wallets as much as our waistlines (they seem to be heading in opposite directions). Restaurants, bars and wine bars understand this inflation awareness. Offerings of wines by the glass at reasonable prices have increased multifold around the world. But, “I’ll have the house wine” is still the typical response when ordering a glass.

Let’s change that behavior pattern. Be adventurous. Order wine by the glass with the goal of finding a “new favorite” wine. Better yet, why order a bottle when you can pick and choose multiple wines from the by-the-glass list?

As with most adventures, caution is paramount. Be aware of the pitfalls that lurk as you navigate through this process. Here are my guidelines for how and when to order a glass of wine, whether seated at your restaurant table or waiting to be seated while at the restaurant’s bar; whether meeting friends at your local watering hole or social-distancing at a wine bar.

First, the benefits.
1. When dining with the special person in our life, we tend to order one bottle for the evening, trying to find a middle ground to satisfy differing food preferences as well as the competing flavors of our first and second courses. We rarely succeed. This situation cries out for a glass or glasses of wine perfectly paired with individual dishes.
2. When socializing with friends at a local bar, it’s too easy to order generically. Be inquisitive. “Which red (white) wines are you offering this evening?” Ask the server to describe the country of origin and the style of wine. “The Chilean Cabernet sounds appealing. May I sample it?” Your server has been trained to lower the barriers of selection; multiple choices usually lead to multiple glasses.
3. If you’re like me, you have a life-list of wines to enjoy before you kick the (ice) bucket. Today many restaurants and wine bars offer high-end wines by the glass. Are they expensive? Yes. Would you otherwise have the opportunity to check them off your life list? Probably not. Besides, $25 for one glass is an extravagance I can better psychologically rationalize than $200 for a bottle. Now, the pitfalls.
1. Financially, wines by the glass yield a low return on investment for you and an extraordinarily high return for restaurants and bars. Here’s the math: the typical restaurant or bar pour is four to five ounces, which equates to five glasses. The average price to you for a glass of wine has been climbing to a current level of $10 to $13. The average cost of that bottle, at wholesale, is $17 to $26. The math: the restaurant or bar may need to sell just one glass to recover all or most of their cost of the bottle (not including overhead). The remaining pours from the bottle are nearly all profit.
2. “I’ll have a glass of the house wine.” My advice: Never order the house wine. It may be convenient to do so in the midst of conversation, but by spending a few minutes more selective, you will most likely experience a new wine and expand your knowledge and palate – for only $2 to $3 more than the house wine.
3. Be sure the wine being poured into your glass is the wine you ordered. Reputable establishments will always present the bottle as they are pouring. This helps you prevent any bait-and-switch tactic.

By the glass or buy the bottle? Do the simple math. Follow your personal logic. Find the right balance and you’ve created a win-win experience.

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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Six Movies Worth Checking Out This Holiday Season

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| The Last Duel | 8/10 | **Where to watch:** Disney+<br>**Rating:** 7/10 | By Rick M. Pezzullo

As we hit the holidays and head into Oscars season, here are some takes on a few movies that you might have missed or have been meaning to check out.

**Shang-Chi and The Legend of the Ten Rings**

By one of Marvel’s best films since “Avengers: Endgame,” “Shang-Chi and The Legend of the Ten Rings,” brings the first Asian superhero to the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

Shanu whose complicated family history involves a traumatizing childhood under the supervision of his father, Xu Wenwu. Wenwu is the leader of a powerful, merciless organization known as the Ten Rings and rules using the mystical power of the artifacts with the same name. Shanu, his sister, Xialing, and his friend, Katy, fight to stop Wenwu from destroying a mystical village, known as Ta Lo.

Simu Liu and Awkwafina have undeniable chemistry and make the film a fun and action-packed adventure. The movie has some visually stunning scenes and the choreography of the fight scenes are some of the best Marvel has ever produced.

The story is compelling, original and not overly complicated and does its best to honor Chinese culture without going over the top.

**Rating:** 9.25/10

**Where to watch:** Disney+

**The Last Duel**

This historical drama, directed by Ridley Scott, stars Jodie Comer, Matt Damon and Adam Driver and tells the story of a broken friendship amidst accusations of a heinous crime.

Set in 14th century France, the film highlights the primitive nature of this time as unresolved conflicts in the courts are resolved in a duel to the death. The film is sequenced in three different parts, the truth according to Jean de Carrouge (Damon), followed by the truth according to Jaquie Le Gris (Driver) and the truth according to Lady Marguerite (Comer).

The film showcases how women were viewed more as prizes rather than equals during that time and how people can trick themselves into believing they are someone they’re not. A lack of self-awareness and ignorance is evident from both male leads, even though they have different personalities and characteristics.

The movie is certainly intriguing, but does feel very slow at times. The acting is top-notch as one would expect and Comer certainly steals the show. I would expect her to get significant Oscar consideration.

If you can last through the 2 hours and 32 minutes, “The Last Duel” is certainly worth the watch and is a compelling drama that creates important discussions that are pertinent today.

**Rating:** 8/10

**Where to watch:** Amazon Prime Video, Youtube, Apple TV and Google Play (All for a fee).

**The Eternals**

Another installment to the MCU falls short of lofty expectations despite a star-studded cast featuring Gemma Chan, Richard Madden and Salma Hayek.

The story involves 10 superpowered beings who were created by the Celestial Arishem to exterminate all Deviants that had infiltrated Earth. The Eternals, as they are called, are immortal and live amongst humans without interfering with their natural development in society. As they witness war, conflict and tragedy for thousands of years, some begin to wonder about their true purpose and responsibilities should be. After finding out devastating secrets about their existence, conflict emerges among the group and creates a rift.

Directed by Oscar winner Chloe Zhao, “The Eternals” wasn’t nearly as poor as reviews might suggest, but it was slow and the dialogue and storyline left much to be desired. Madden, a “Game of Thrones” favorite, as at times too stoic and robotic, but Chan delivers a solid performance as Sersi. Kumail Najiani injects some much-needed humor, while Kit Harrington and Angelina Jolie do well in their ensemble roles.

“The Eternals” isn’t a groundbreaking film but is worth a watch for any superhero aficionado.

**Rating:** 7/10

**Where to Watch:** In theaters and coming soon to Disney+

**Dune**

Based on the iconic 1965 novel written by Frank Herbert, “Dune” is a science fiction film that centers around Paul Atreides who is in line to become Duke. House Atreides is in constant conflict with House Harkonnen and is sent to rule over the desert planet of Arrakis.

Devoid of abundant water supply, Arrakis is vital to the galaxy’s economy due to its abundance of “spice,” which provide heightened awareness and consciousness, but also makes the inhabitants dependent on its use. It is also valuable for navigation and interstellar travel.

Complex political intricacies become apparent, and House Atreides tries to broker a diplomatic relationship with the indigenous people, known as the Fremen. Atreides (Timothée Chalamet) discovers he has heightened abilities along with his mother, Lady Jessica (Rebecca Ferguson).

Keep in mind that this movie covers half of the novel and is only Part 1. That said, it’s long but visually stunning. Much of the film is laying the foundation and character development in preparation for the epic Part 2.

The cast does well, but there are moments of subpar writing. Chalamet and Ferguson are certainly the standouts among as Oscar Isaac and Jason Momoa, who seem to fit nicely in whatever film they’re involved in. As someone who read the novel, I enjoyed the film, but I wasn’t blown away. For science fiction fans, it is a film worth investing the time, but don’t expect a significant climax.

**Rating:** 7.5/10

**Where to watch:** Coming soon to HBO Max (included) and Amazon Prime Video, Youtube, Apple TV and Google Play (All for a fee).

**King Richard**

Based on the Venus and Serena Williams’ father, “King Richard” is a triumph of a sports drama. Richard Williams, played by Will Smith, defied all the odds by raising two of tennis’ greatest stars while overcoming financial hurdles, societal stigma and the streets of crime-ridden Compton.

Smith, in what might be the best performance of his career, perfectly encapsulates Richard’s mannerisms, determination and character flaws. Aunjanue Ellis is exceptional in her own right as Richard’s wife, Brandy. She perfectly portrays an example of a parent who sacrificed her own happiness for the betterment of her children. Sanjaya, Sydney and Demi Singleton put in solid performances as well in their roles as young Venus and Serena.

The film is compelling and suspenseful despite everyone knowing the end and will certainly be an Oscar candidate. Expect Smith to be the early frontrunner for Best Actor at the Oscars.

**Rating:** 10/10

**Where to watch:** In theaters

Even if you are not a tennis fan, “King Richard” is a must-see and is a true representation of the American Dream.

**Rating:** 9.5/10

**Where to watch:** Coming soon to HBO Max after theatrical release.

**Spiderman: No Way Home**

The most anticipated Marvel film in years certainly lived up to the hype. “Spiderman: No Way Home” follows the continued storyline of Peter Parker as he comes to grips with the reality that everyone now knows he is Spiderman thanks to doctored video footage from Mysterio. Parker asks for help from fellow Avenger, Doctor Strange, to conjure a spell that makes everyone forget his secret identity. During the spell, Parker disrupts Doctor Strange’s concentration, which causes breaches in the fabric of the multiverse, which allows for villains from other universes to enter Peter’s and creates chaos for Queens’ favorite superhero.

Tom Holland was outstanding and continues to show why he is the best to play the role of the web-slinger to date. Holland and Zendaya have undeniable chemistry, which makes for a thrilling and emotional roller coaster ride in all the right ways.

This film had everything a superhero fan could ask for – action, suspense, tragedy and a few twists to boot. It was everything I’ve ever wanted in a Spiderman film and I could not have enjoyed myself more. A must-see and will certainly be the talk of the town this holiday season.

**Rating:** 10/10

**Where to watch:** In theaters

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Catch the Planets in Nighttime Sky Before They Leave the Stage

If you’ve had a few minutes and looked to the southwest over the last few months, maybe you’ve noticed and stared at the long line of bright planets that have stretched across that part of the sky since the summer and fall.

There’s some uncertainty, but it’s thought that our word planet came to us from the Greek word planetes, a reference to how these few objects appeared to wander among the other stars. Other than their strange movement, the ancients had no way of knowing that these wanderers were anything different than the other lights in the night, let alone other nearby worlds orbiting the sun.

As with most things, these wandering planets come and go. After all these months with us, it’s time for our neighbors to leave the night sky. This gives us another chance to see them the way the ancients did. It’s tough to be together these days, but we can still enjoy the nights and draw a line back through time all the way to when the first people looked up and wondered.

So, let’s head out after sundown. As this year turns into next, we can watch the bright planets sink lower into the dusk than the night before. This is both because our view on them is changing, but also because our daylight hours are starting to stretch out, little by little, now that we’re past the winter solstice.

First leaving the stage is Venus. As the year starts, our solar system’s second planet will move too close to the sun and be tough to spot. On Jan. 9, it crosses into the morning sky, where it will join Mars, which has been waiting there for the last few months. Venus won’t be back into the evenings until next December.

Speedy Mercury rises higher into the night for a few days at the start of the year. Mercury is always a fun challenge because it moves fast and never gets very far from the sun in our sky. It’ll be alongside Saturn, which will look dusty and stubborn through the twilight. While we’re here, let’s try to catch the beautiful sight of a young crescent moon as it sweeps through from Jan. 4-6.

Mercury drops from the evenings until April on the 23rd. Saturn follows behind it and slips out of the nights around the 31st.

By the end of the month, Jupiter is the only planet left in our nights. It follows the others and leaves the evenings by mid-February. With a snap, we’re without any planets in the night sky until the warm months return, other than Mercury’s brief April visit.

It’s always a bit sad when the planets leave the night, but it’s amazing to see them parade away. These times let us watch the solar system do its thing, just like people have for millennia, and hopefully will for millennia more. If there’s one thing we can be sure about, it’s that the planets will be back soon.

Thanks for reading this year, and thanks to my friend Bob Kelly for his help with the dates in this article. Be safe, be well and happy new year!

Scott Levine (astroscoot@yahoo.com) is an astronomy writer and speaker from Croton-on-Hudson. He is also a member of the Westchester Amateur Astronomers, who are dedicated to astronomy outreach in our area. For information about the club including membership, newsletters, upcoming meetings and lectures at Pace University and star parties at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, visit westchesterastronomers.org.

Clear Skies

New Moon January 2
First Quarter January 9
Full Moon January 17
Last Quarter January 25

The phases of the moon chart for January.

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Crossword

Across
1. Internet laughter symbol
4. Striped insect
7. Racket
10. Nurses’ org.
11. Miss
12. Corp. exec., abbr.
13. Ripe loganberry’s hue
14. Belonging to “Sopranos” character or Thorwood restaurant - ___
15. Masterminds
18. Sprinkle on
19. Cup, plate, and fork
22. News outlet
23. Gone by
24. Laugh sound
25. Useless
28. Cordial liquor
30. Flippin
33. Believer suffix
34. Interstate sign
35. Ph.D., e.g.
36. Knight title
37. Lao-__
38. Ship’s course
39. Golfing location

Down
1. Newly hatched insect
2. Mark on a ruler
3. Southwestern bandit
4. A ship’s officer
5. “Four Quartets” poet

6. Sushi choices
7. 601 in Rome
8. “How was ____ know?”
13. Looks
17. Soldier’s helmet, slangily
20. Selfish person
21. Honeybunch
25. This Mohogen Lake floor & tile shop will give you miles of smiles - ___
26. __ orange
27. Raison
29. Popular lingerie color
30. The Beatles’ ___ Pepper
31. La ___ Bolivia
32. Tempe inst.

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**continues from page 20**
Ibby What it Be!

Moccia, Fox Lane Crush Mount Vernon, 61-33

Fox Lane senior G Ibby Moccia takes a strong run at the rim in the Foxes’ 61-33 win over visiting Mount Vernon last Wednesday when Fox Lane chalked up its first win of the season... see Girls Hoops Notebook
Christmas arrived a few days early for the Fox Lane girls’ basketball team.

Desperately in search of a win after starting the 2021-22 season with five consecutive losses, the Foxes got a visit last Wednesday afternoon from Mount Vernon, a team struggling even more and that had lost each of its first six games by at least 25 points.

With freshman guard Cara Drapala pouring in 21 points and senior Quoya Schnell adding 16, the Foxes added to the Knights’ woes with a lopsided 61-33 home victory. Scoring the game’s first nine points, a streak that began with a 3-point shot by Schnell and ended with a 3-pointer from Drapala two minutes after the opening jump, Fox Lane never trailed and built a lead as large as 32 points midway through the final quarter.

Drapala, who also finished with six rebounds, five assists and four steals, connected on her second 3-pointer of the game with just under three minutes to go in the first quarter, giving the Foxes a 12-3 lead. In the last minute of the period, Drapala drove into the lane for a one-hander that rolled in and Schnell dribbled left for a 12-foot jumper just outside the lane that enabled Fox Lane to build its advantage to 16-5.

Mount Vernon misfired on its first five shots from the field in the first quarter and began the second with four straight misses. Just 20 seconds into the quarter, Fox sophomore Lauren Antolino tossed in a shot after dribbling to the right baseline. The Foxes’ lead grew to 21-5 when Ibby Moccia drained a lefty 3-point shot near the top of the key. A pair of free throws from Antolino with 4:50 left in the half capped the extended 12-0 Fox run and left the Knights behind by 19 points.

Moccia drove the left baseline for a bucket with 2:24 remaining and Schnell, who also recorded seven rebounds and seven steals, followed with a trey from the right elbow 45 seconds later, stretching the Fox lead to 21 points. A basket by Antolino with 11 seconds on the clock sent the Foxes to the locker room with a 33-12 halftime cushion.

The second half began with Drapala driving into the lane for an easy layup and after that Mount Vernon never got any closer than 21 points. A couple of free throws by Moccia with exactly a minute left in the third quarter extended the Foxes’ lead to 49-20 and they took a 27-point advantage into the fourth quarter.

Just as she did to start the third quarter, Drapala opened the fourth with another drive through the lane for a layup. When she swished a 3-point shot from the right elbow with 5:56 left in the game, Fox Lane’s lead grew to 30 points. Two consecutive baskets by sophomore Lily Moore, the first one a short pop in the lane and the second a toss high off glass on a drive, gave the Foxes their largest lead of the afternoon, 60-28.

For the Foxes, Moccia wound up with seven points and eight rebounds. Nicole Picinich, one of Fox Lane’s senior captains, added five points, eight rebounds and six steals. Senior Susannah Kimsal grabbed 11 rebounds, while eighth-grader Morgan Clinton chipped in with seven boards.

Fox Lane Girls’ Basketball Team Earns Its First Victory

ART NELSON PHOTOS
**Sports**

**Class C Haldane Stomps Class A Peekskill, Lakeland Drops Brewer**

By Ray Gallagher

**N.West./Putnam Fab Five Hoops Poll**

No. 1 PANAS — Oh, man, praying that the COVID ghouls are silent as we come out of the break with this Panas vs. Lakeland tilt set for a league tip off on Jan. 4. Eight days later, Coach Auerbach’s Class A Panthers (5-2) welcome Poughkeepsie (5-2) for what should be another League I-D doozy.

No. 2 LAKELAND — Coach Fallo’s Class A Hornets have a little something-something cooking over there in Shrub Oak, despite the puzzling season-opening loss to John Jay CR, and they’ll have that first crack at Panas on their home court out of the break. #HiveWillBeBuzzy.

No. 3 YORKTOWN — There is a mild level of concern about Coach Pavella’s Huskers given the two blowout losses to Panas and Hastings and the 44.3 points per game scored over the last three games. John Jay CR, Somers and Mahopac out of the break, so getting back on course won’t be easy with these three league foes on tap, so the Huskers best bring it out of the break.

No. 4 Haldane — Coach V’s Blue Devils take on Croton, North Salem and Put Valley out of the break and we smell a sweep and a never-to-be-relinquished grip on the League III-D title.

No. 4A OSSINING — 80-71 double overtime loss to a quality Clarkstown South club sets up what is a rough stretch for Coach Casey’s Pride (4-2) with Fox Lane (4-1), White Plains (2-6) out better than the Hewlett Scarsdale (6-2) after the N.Y. Regents (26 points) and Dominique Bautista (18) pulled up strong vs. South, the highest scoring team in the section to date.

HM MAHOPAC — Indians are just 2-3 but the three losses were nip-and-tuck affairs with Lakeland, Byram Hills and Poughkeepsie (a combined 15-5), so we suspect this athletic unit poses additional problems out of the break.

By Tony Pinciaro

Following a year in which FOX LANE did not have a 2020-21 season, because of Covid, the Foxes faced another daunting task. Fox Lane graduated 10 seniors in June, and would open the 2021-22 season without senior captain Jaime Jarquin Duarte. Duarte, a two-time all-section wrestler, tore his anterior cruciate ligament during football.

How would Fox Lane respond to the graduation departures and not having Duarte? Easy, the Foxes simply continued their winning tradition and excellence.

Fox Lane opened the season by sweeping to the Michael Nardone (Ossining) Tournament title. The Foxes did one better, winning their fourth consecutive Section 1 Division I (large school) Dual-Meet Championship by beating R.C. Ketcham (small school) powerhouse. The Panthers, under the guidance of veteran/legendary Coach Bob Bernarducci, are currently 8-1.

“With the success we had just in the first month, I’m pumped to see how we can do in the state dual-meet tournament and how much the guys can do at the sectional and state level,” Duarte said.

Once again, PLEASANTVILLE has established itself as a Section I Division II (small school) powerhouse. The Panthers, under the guidance of veteran/legendary Coach Bob Bernarducci, are currently 8-1 going into January.

Pleasantville swept its way to the Yorktown Tournament title with victories over Yorktown, Glen Cove (L.I.), Rye and Lakeland/Panas.

“I really didn’t know what to expect with this team, but they have been a pleasant surprise,” said Bernarducci, who recently became a grandfather for the second time Dec. 19th. “Eighth-graders Caran Egan and Jesse Strauss have been a pleasant surprise at 102 and 112, respectively. Luke LaMagna has been grading out wins at 126 and sophomore Asa Nurnberg has improved every time he steps on the mat.

“We have big matches with Putnam Valley and Edgemont, coming up, which will determine the league championship. Our overall goal is to be in contention for a sectional championship in February.”

Christian Perleshi, Nick Paternostro and Carl Herzner have pinned all of their respective opponents. Perleshi, LaMagna and Egan are all 9-0 this season.

OSSINING and Coach Tom Larm had a good December with an 8-4 record and top-six places in two dual-meet tournaments. The Pride hosted its annual Michael Nardone Tournament and went 2-3 to finish fifth. The victories were against Hen Hud (42-27) and Yorktown (42-33).


“I’m proud of our team for our 8-4 start,” Larm said. “We did not have a full season last year so coming in and getting off to a hot start has encouraged everyone. Each day our kids are coming in and actively working to improve. It shows each match as each wrestler has improved daily. I’m excited to watch them continue to improve and peak for the postseason.”

Larm cited senior Kwabena Boating, juniors Tristan Robinson-July and Devin Almodovar, and eighth-grader Colin Libertz with establishing themselves as among the top wrestlers in their respective weight classes.

Former YORKTOWN All-Section and Springfield College All-American wrestler Jimmy Kaishian has the Corshalkers improving daily on their way to becoming a sectional contender.

“Our guys did great at our tournament and showed great strides from the Ossining tournament which made our wrestlers feel good,” said Kaishian, who recently received an offer from his doctorate in Teaching and Administration. “You can feel the momentum in our room. Wrestlers have bought in and there’s a whole new enthusiasm for wrestling in Yorktown. I’m excited to see what this team can do by year’s end.”

Yorktown is 6-5 overall, but 3-0 in dual matches. Luca Stanford was the highlight at the Yorktown Tournament, with three pins which earned him the most outstanding wrestler award.

“Luca winning Most Outstanding Wrestler was huge for him,” Kaishian said. “Luca is having 3-1 and 4-0 days. He’s stepping up and buying in a big way.”

Sophomore Joe Tornambé, son of former Yorktown Coach John Tornambé, is currently undefeated and ranked No. 2 in the state at 110 pounds. John Tornambé was Kaishian’s coach. Senior Dillon Carter is 10-1, with his only loss to Mahopac’s Angelo Centrone and Jason Glickman is 8-2.

SOMERS’ coach Ron DiSanto, Jr., has been building for the future and he is beginning to reap the benefits. Even though the young Tuckers are not a senior; they are 8-8 and showing tremendous potential, including a second-place finish at the Conklin (Nanuet) Tournament.

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Brewster Senior Galgano Leads Surging Bears by Example

Lakeland Remains Unbeaten, Hormazabal Taking Game to Next Level

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor @Directrays

It’s one thing to be a skilled, gifted player on the court. It’s another thing to be an even better person off the court, the best student athlete one can be; both on and off the court. That means delivering in the clutch, when your teammates need you most, but more than anything, it’s about good grades and showing out in the classroom. Brewster senior Grace Galgano has mastered the craft of student athlete, delivering the goods on the hardwood for Coach Mike Castaldo since he called her up to varsity as an eighth-grader while maintaining spectacular academic standards.

“Grace has all the accolades; All-Section, team MVP but nobody sees how hard she works on and off the court, how much she cares for this program and what a great teammate she is,” Castaldo said of the Roberts Wesleyan-bound Galgano, who secured a full scholarship behind a 99.4 overall GPA and nearly 1,000 career points and rebounds.

Galgano, who, God willing, will reach those career milestones before the 2022 season concludes, has been the backbone of the Brewster program since 2019 and her recent Con Ed Award nod only amplifies her scholastic prowess.

“Grace is the most dominant player we’ve had on the court in my 10 years here, and she’s the most complete student athlete I’ve ever coached,” Castaldo admitted. “Emily Tapia (2010) was an unbelievable player for Brewster and went on to have a great career at Fordham. Grace is right behind her in my opinion as the second best girls’ basketball player in school history. It has been an absolute privilege to coach her and we’re lucky to have her.”

WALTER PANAS wasn’t quite as lucky last Tuesday when Galgano in-bounded a perfect dime to junior teammate Madison Dakin, who took Galgano’s drop-dead pass for the game-winning bucket with 1.7 seconds left in the Bears’ 44-42 win over the previously undefeated host Panthers (8-1).

Galgano was hard on the youthful Panthers, scoring 16 points, snaring 16 boards and swatting eight shots while senior teammate Sophia Alzugaray made it rain behind the arc, hitting five treys and finishing with 17 points. To date, Galgano, who hit the game-tying shot with 15 seconds left, has led the Bears (6-1) by averaging 22 PPG, 12 RPG and 4.5 BPG.

Freshman G Cadence Nicholas had a game-high 26 points for the Panthers and continued to show out like few freshmen in the region have in recent memory. The run of excellent student athletes does not end at Brewster, though.

LAKELAND senior G/F Tyler Hormazabal is another in the form of quintessential. After defeating host Pleasantville, 55-32, last Tuesday, the senior G/F Hormazabal has taken her game to the next level while serving notice that Lakeland is a strong postseason challenger this year.

Hormazabal’s double-double (23 points, 11 rebounds) was just short of a triple-double (8 steals) for the Hornets (8-0), who are currently setting the pace in Class A.

“Tyler is truly the hardest working player,” Castaldo said.

continued on next page
I have ever coached and she is extremely determined and coachable,” Lakeland Coach Miranda Mangan said. “She understands the game, has a tremendous work ethic and has not reached her full potential as a player. My favorite attribute of Tyler’s is that she makes everyone else around her better. She is an incredible student athlete and role model. The dedication and contributions she has made for this program will continue to serve as an inspiration for all of the future Hornet basketball players to come.”

Ava Lugo added 12 points and three steals for the Hornets while Megan Raefski led P’Ville with 14 points and Gianna Doto added 11.

MAHOPAC G Kristina Rush led the Indians (3-3) with 13 points in their 49-23 win over Briarcliff. The Indians, who need to identify as a better defensive team if things are going to pan out as hoped in Class A, held the Bears (4-2) to a season-low. Nine points and solid defense from junior F Lauren Beberman aided the Indians’ cause. Slow starts and sub-par defense (by their standards) have been a bit of an issue for Mahopac, which, given what the Indians have lost to graduation (defensive stalwarts Mia Klammer, Caitlyn O’Boyle), was predictable. “We have had a rough offensive start but we’ve definitely been stepping up on defense,” said Beberman, who leads the team in boards and blocks. “We are constantly training and working to gel and will continue to take our best shots. We think 2022 will bring a lot for Mahopac. We definitely have it in us to be a really good defensive team, I know it. This is what we are working toward.”

Kayla McCarthy led HEN HUD (2-5) with 17 points in the Sailors’ 80-25 opening-round win over Yonkers in the Hen Hud tourney last Tuesday. Kaitlyn Raguso added 12 points and while Alex Figueroa (11) and Hailey Pearson (11) all reached double digits. Unfortunately, the finals were cancelled due to COVID-related issues.

PEEKSKILL improved to 3-1 after its 47-39 win over a feisty Class C Haldane club, who had no answer for Red Devils F Bethany Overby (19 points, 11 boards, 5 steals). Takyla Cowan-Hongosh (14 points) and Kiki Mercado (9 points) also contributed for first-year Red Dev Coach Tyrone Searight. Haldane was led by Madison Chiera’s 10 points.

CLASS AA OSSINING will head into the break at 5-1 after the Pride’s 64-55 win over visiting Kennedy Wednesday. Pride G Ella Schnecker had a career-high 25 points and tacked on five boards. Point guard Michelle Mercado orchestrated the flow with 20 points and 10 assists to go with four steals. Karen Perriott (10 points, 15 rebounds) notched a double-double while Isabella Florez (3 points, 10 rebounds) and Angela Rios (2 points, 5 boards) also contributed.

“Fox Lane Grapplers...”

“I have a young lineup, but, as a whole, the team is adjusting to high school wrestling and gradually improving,” DiSanto said. “The team is coming together and taking pride in the team aspect. The team’s energy multiplies when they feed off each individual success. When they see someone wrestle tough and come from behind, it builds confidence and makes them believe they can do it, too.”

DiSanto credits his captains, juniors, Anthony Tucci and Luca D’Orazio, for leading the team by example and with their work ethic. Sophomore Dalton Balloy leads the team with a 13-3 record. Sophomores Liam Dwyer, Justin Dianiyan and Ethan Burns each have 10 wins and eighth-grader Ryan Ball (102 pounds) is 10-0.
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